

# HADDINGTON HOUSE JOURNAL

• AN INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL PUBLICATION •



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## Editor's Preface

Welcome to our 25<sup>th</sup> volume, a significant milestone for us at Haddington House for which we give thanks to the Lord. It has caused me to sit down and review our complete journal collection. We have adapted, developed, and tried to find our way as a theological publication. Twenty-five years ago, the world we were working in did not include the internet to the same level as it does today. Now we have far more readers online than we do through our paper copy. This is the new reality of theological periodicals; they have become available globally through electronic digital communication. As a result, the printing of many serials has been dropped. We have decided the time has come to do the same; thus, this will be our last paper copy version. We will move to electronic only after this volume.

Yet in the midst of change, there is the unchanging: *the faith once delivered to the saints* (Jude 4). One of our 2022 Summer Series lectures at Haddington House explored the issue of the rising tide of modern progressivism in Christianity. Yes, change comes. Change must be analysed, we must reflect on it, and then discern if it is acceptable or not. The theological underpinnings by which we operate are the historic and orthodox Christian faith. We will find some change quite acceptable, and we will navigate through it and adapt, such as with the Internet. However, some changes or challenges are in conflict with the faith once delivered to the saints. Through reflection and evaluation, we may discover that actually this “new discovery” or “evolution of thought” is not so novel but has affinities with many movements of past ages. Hence we can say, “*We have been this way before.*” So, as I have reflected on our 25 volumes, I have been reflecting both on change as well as that which does not change.

Now to the contents of this 25<sup>th</sup> volume. Looking at this year's cover you will see a beautiful image from Morocco in North Africa. This image was selected for two reasons: first, it relates to one of the main articles in this volume about a neglected area of mission history to the Jewish and Muslim peoples of Morocco and the mission work of the Scottish missionary Robert

Kerr; second, it helps to highlight another aspect of the work here at Haddington House, namely the Africa Textbook Project and the completion of volume one this year. This project has been a major focus now for several years at Haddington House and we are humbled that at last we are seeing the fruit of these labours. My “Editor’s Rambles” this year also reflect on this project.

We are grateful to Douglas Gebbie for preparing his sermon based upon Psalm 103:1–5 which asks a most striking question. May you be edified and blessed as you read this sermon.

We have a good diversity of subject matter for articles. The one on preaching and ministry by Allan Harman of Australia is an article which I hope will be read widely by pastors and also theological students. It offers the wisdom of a seasoned minister and professor. Likewise, we are very happy to encourage all to read the fine article by Christopher David of India on the subject of the role of husband and wife. Gareth Burke, one of the 2022 Haddington House Summer Series speakers, has prepared an article based, in part, on that talk. We asked Okuch Andrew Ojullo of Uganda to write an article for this volume on a religious group in his country. I believe that you will find this most interesting and challenging as a reminder of the immense task before Christ’s people in every country of the world. Kenneth Stewart takes us into some often-bypassed questions and texts in the New Testament related to family, individual family members, and faith. There is a note of spiritual realism here.

Finally, I mention an article which I asked the author Israel Guerrero (originally from Chile) to prepare for this volume. 2022 was the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of John Brown of Haddington. Many years ago, we selected the name “Haddington House” for three reasons. One of these reasons was because of John Brown of that location. He is a lesser-known theologian and writer within the galaxy of Scottish Protestantism yet represents a most remarkable theologian, writer, correspondent, husband/father, and minister. He was one who strove for the marriage of theology and piety in all that he pursued.

Now onto reviews. You will once again see that a few new publishers have made their way to us alongside the familiar ones. We trust this helps to promote and enlarge the exchange of authorial names and publishers, new and old. We are most grateful to the publishing houses who have included us in their PR work. However, without reviewers to read and write, the task does not get done. Thus, I express a sincere word of thanks not only to the article writers but also to all of our reviewers.

Every blessing now as you take up and read.

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## The Editor's Rambles: Biblical Wisdom for Writers & A Project

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I have been reflecting lately about writing and what wisdom can be learned from the scriptures about the craft of the writer and editor. I suspect this all has to do with the fact that now for over three years we have been engaged in the Africa Textbook Project here at Haddington House and volume one is now being typeset. I decided then to share with readers some of the scriptures which I have been reflecting upon in this writing and editing process and a little more about shaping these volumes which have become such major parts of the life recently at Haddington House.

### 1. Perspectives of Humility *and* Discernment

There is one verse in Ecclesiastes which has intrigued me for many years in relation to books. Perhaps it has also been a verse deep in my sub-conscious for four decades as a book reviewer and a book review editor. It is Ecclesiastes 12:12:

*<sup>12</sup> And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. KJV/AV*

Chapter 12 of Ecclesiastes has always been a favourite chapter; it is just packed with gems of wisdom to pick off the tree. The wise father to the young son is stating many truths in this compact verse (vs. 12). I need to listen and take note of what he is saying and also of what he has been saying in the preceding verses.

The production of books is continuous, they just keep coming forth! We can never manage reading them all or keeping up with everything new which rolls off the presses today or from the scribal copyists in ages past. I can illustrate this by the stream of new books that are brought my way every year, each seeking attention for a review and promotion. To attempt to study and



digest them all would weaken the flesh, and (I would be inclusive here) the mind too.

Verse 12 brings perspective—discernment *and* humility need to be cultivated when considering books. Not all books need to be read, be selective. In fact, this verse is saying more—not all books need to be written and published! “Did that really need to be published?” is a valid question. Yet we will also have to be willing in humility to admit that sometimes we will get it wrong; we will find that we should not have bypassed a certain book and our critique was off the mark. So, a spirit of humility is needed.

Now digging deeper into the verse, the preacher of Ecclesiastes is also drawing a comparison between his book and that of others. In the end, his book is divine wisdom and the path of truth. Many books we can or will read will not be in accord with this divine truth and could actually drive us further and further away from the divine truth of the Book. The preacher is not saying one cannot read other books, but there is ever a challenge to readers not to ignore the most vital message and book. Keep going back in humility to the Bible. Thus, we become evaluators of books; we must be of a humble disposition as readers acknowledging our own limitations of perspective, understanding and yes, also time.

## **2. The Writing Craft Is Hard Work**

Ecclesiastes 12 also contains lessons on the craft of the writer; that is, about how we put words together—how we paint pictures with words. Some folks are just brilliant at this, their sentences all make sense, and they combine language with depth and ease of comprehension for the reader. I have my favourite writers; I have moments of wonder and awe at their graceful writing style and fluidity of expression. I hope it is not the sin of envy. I rather think it is recognising the giftedness they have as humans made in the image of the divine Creator. I see this giftedness in works both of non-fiction and fiction—I will refrain from giving you, my list. Now back to Ecclesiastes 12. Stuart Olyott said it well,

His aim throughout was to communicate wisdom to others. He did not do this haphazardly, but made every effort to select his material carefully, to set it out in order, and to put it across in a memorable way (verse 9). By deliberately choosing pleasing words he did his best to make it interesting, so as to gain and keep the attention of his hearers and readers... (verse 10).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Stuart Olyott, *A Life Worth Living and a Lord Worth Loving: Ecclesiastes & Song of Solomon* (Welwyn, UK: Evangelical Press, 1983), 64–65.



Good writing is hard work. It demands discipline, skill, humility, careful reflection, and constant questioning—“Could this be said better, or could a better word be used here?” I have lived with a dictum that the discipline of writing is “like digging a ditch. It’s one shovelful at a time.” We must keep at it, persevere, schedule, and repeat. Discipline and craft come together here. Very few writers can produce a first draft final version. Any craftsman hones their skill by studying what other craftsmen produce then working to become their own craftsman during the process of craft production.

Let the Preacher or Ecclesiastes have the final say here:

*<sup>10</sup> The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. (Ecc. 12:10) KJV/AV*

It is a craft and a discipline to find the acceptable words. This writing craft involves labouring over communication to create something which flows and conveys meaning well. At the end of the verse 10, the writer of Ecclesiastes moves to the moral aspect of good writing: it communicates truth. There is an aesthetic here which good writing must move toward—that which is truthful and truly beautiful. Again, we are back to the principles of the craft which requires both discernment and virtue.

### 3. Uncovering and Laying it out

I had one of those eureka moments recently at a Bible Study when considering the opening verses of Luke 1. This is such a familiar text, but it hit me in a new way as relevant to the context of serving as the Editor of the Africa Textbook Project. While Luke 1 verses 1–4 sets forth a writing agenda and perspective for the divine scripture of Luke’s double volume of Luke and Acts, it also has application for writers of historical accounts in every generation.

*Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled<sup>[a]</sup> among us, <sup>2</sup>just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. <sup>3</sup>With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup>so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1–4) ESVAng*

#### *Investigations (verse 3a)*

Writing history and biography means one must be willing to carry out investigations about your subject matter and related context. This is done by

constantly asking questions. It demands an inquisitive mind. In some ways it is like being a private investigator! Sometimes the answers are right there and straightforward, but sometimes the answers just do not seem to be forthcoming, and a mystery remains. To investigate is to undertake “a searching inquiry for ascertaining facts; detailed or careful examination” and it is “the act or process of examining a crime, problem, statement, etc. carefully, especially to discover the truth.” There is both science and art involved in the investigation process. Discovering facts is only a part of it. Then there must be assembling the plot line of those facts and reflecting over them. The investigation stage is the gathering stage. Getting the facts, the story, the information as correct and as full as possible. This demands consulting sources, both written sources as well as oral interviews with eyewitnesses or those closely associated with an event or a person. In this process of consulting the sources, there is also an evaluation of the reliability or bias of the source itself. This adds a real complexity and dimension to the investigation process.

In volume one of the Africa Textbook Project, we faced incredible difficulties during the recent Covid-19 Pandemic. Many of our writers were denied access to key libraries and archives. Thus, they had to find alternative ways to find information. Also, on occasion we discovered that archives had been lost. Some were destroyed by a bombing raid in London during World War Two. Some were burnt in riots. Some were mistakenly disposed of by staff. Now as we continue our investigations for volume two, we are faced with the fact that many sources have not been assembled yet due to the relatively young age of the missions post-WW2. No one has really organised this vast mission story to tell it in a chronological fashion yet. This means that oral interviews with living missionaries or Christian leaders are crucial in the investigation stage in order to piece together a mission story from various threads. All of this takes much time and patience and a constant asking of questions.

#### *Ordering the account (verse 3b)*

Dr Luke collected his information and then had to order it into a coherent whole. I recognise the reality that what he did was dual authored by his personality and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He was part of the creation of the great canon of sacred scripture. There are differences, yet when we write we too must organise our accounts. Many years ago, students of theology were given oral chronology examinations to present. There was a good rationale for those exercises. When we have been giving out instructions to our writers for the Africa Textbook Project, we have encouraged them to think of using large titles and then breaking their chapter down through focused subheadings. Hopefully this will make for greater ease of writing and reading.

#### *The great purpose or aim (verse 4)*

Finally, Dr Luke had a clear agenda and reason for investigating, ordering, and crafting. He wanted to bring clarity to his reader whether it was Theophilus or

others about the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. This clarity would lead to edification at many different levels. When pursuing volumes one and two of the Africa Textbook Project we too have had certain aims in view: to edify, to inspire, to record mission stories and histories, and to help to bring clarity to what is often a confused multitude of tributary streams of missionary undertakings—so that in these collected volumes there is a single place to go to start to engage with this vast mission story of over two hundred and thirty years.

### **Conclusion**

I do not claim to be a polished writer by any means but a learner of the trade. A writer must be a reader. This makes one also a discerner of what we read and that is often a very humbling experience. To write is to craft and this again for many of us does not issue in a first draft ready for publication. It is very much a process to craft and is often a team process as we investigate, order, and attempt to reach the goals of the writing project. As the brushstrokes are placed on the canvas slowly a new composition emerges. Volume one is being typeset—the graphics team (more crafters) are working it into the canvas, its final form. Please join with us in prayer over these coming months as we reach this critical final stage with the first volume and start bringing the brushstrokes together for volume two.



## What is on the table?

### D. Douglas Gebbie\*

*\*D. Douglas Gebbie is a regular reviewer and contributor for this journal. He is a native of Scotland and was educated at Glasgow College of Technology and the Free Church of Scotland College, Edinburgh. He serves the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Chesley, Ontario. This sermon was preached at a Communion Service in Chesley, ON, by the Rev. D. D. Gebbie. The readings were Psalm 103 and Romans 8. **The text was Ps 103:1–5.***

### Introduction

If you look back over the history of the Reformed observance of the Lord's Supper, you will find that there is one thing, apart from the actual Lord's Supper itself, which has come down through the ages and is in all the Reformed traditions. Whether the observance is done according to a form or according to an order of service, whether the way in which it is done is prescribed or advisory, you will find that this Psalm has remained part of the service: Psalm 103, particularly these early verses.

Why is this the case? It is because in these first five verses of this Psalm we find what we need to know about the benefits which we receive from Christ in the Lord's Supper.

If we want to, we might put it this way: we might ask, "What is on the table?"

Now, sometimes we would ask what is on the table and we'd be thinking about what the terms of a negotiation are. The things on the table would be what was being offered so that a deal can be thrashed out. But that is not what we are asking today. "What is on the table?" is that question which you might ask when come home from work, and ask, perhaps, with some trepidation. Your tone better be right when you ask it because your response to the answer should always be, "Oh lovely. That is good. Thank you."

"What is on the table?" We are thinking today of the provision that is made for us here. What is it that is going to be set on the table before us here

today? What is this meal that we are going to have? These verses tell us what is on the table.

Usually, we consider the menu in these verses as the list of things which we are going to take away from the table. That is because the point in the service at which we sing these verses is when we are leaving the table. This morning, I should like to spend the time now, before we come to the table, to describe the meal that is going to be set before us.

There is a great industry in describing meals. If you look at some of the more reasonable television programming, you will find that you either have a murder mystery or a cookery programme. There is a great interest in what is on the table. There are magazines full of beautiful pictures of groaning boards, photographs of the most exquisite arrangements of food on a plate, and new recipes on which you might break your budget. It is a thing in which people are interested. So, what is on the table this morning?

We are going to describe this meal in the terms that are here in this portion of Psalm 103. We are going to consider it as a series of courses if you eat in the Russian style, or as an array of dishes if you prefer the French. The courses or dishes of this meal are the benefits listed in the Psalm.

**If we remember *HIS* death properly, we shall not forget all the benefits which are ours through *HIS* death.**

### **1. Forgiveness**

The first thing that is set before us, the first dish, is the forgiveness of all our iniquities: “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.” Or, as we read later in the psalm, in verses 10 to 12: “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, *so* great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, *so* far hath he removed our transgressions from us.” Our sins are taken far away. All our iniquities are forgiven.

We can think of “all” in two ways. Firstly, when the person who is trusting in Christ stands before the judgement, there will not be a single sin left for which to give account. All will have been forgiven, removed, forgotten, blotted out, covered. There will be no condemnation on that day. There will be complete acceptance.

Secondly, as we are here today, we take all our sins to mean all kinds of sin which we have committed. There is nothing that is beyond his forgiveness. There is nothing that we can think of and say, “Well surely this sin could not be forgiven.” The apostle Paul, speaking of himself, tells us that

he is the “chief of sinners.” Why does he say that? He says it not because he would boast nor because of some inverted snobbery. No, he does not say it for those reasons. He does not say it, even, as a sort of false modesty. He states it as a fact. And why is it a fact in that circumstance? It is the fact that he is the one who has done so many things to Christ. He has attacked and persecuted the people of Christ; and Christ, himself, said to him, “Why persecutest thou me?” In touching God's people, he had touched Christ. He had personally offended Christ because of the union between Christ and his people. That is the important thing that we need to remember in this: it is the greatness of the sins which Paul committed. He does not draw attention to them to say look at me. He draws attention to them to say that these sins were taken away, that he was forgiven. Sins against his neighbour that were also sins against the Lord Jesus Christ were forgiven.

If Paul went that far, if Paul was that far out, and he was forgiven, we can be assured that there is nothing which we have committed which is beyond the forgiveness of he who “forgiveth all thine iniquities.”

How are our iniquities removed? God forgives all our iniquities because Christ has paid the penalty for sin. He has died on the cross for sinners. His shed blood has covered sin. And in covering sin, it has diverted the wrath of God away from us and we are forgiven.

Christ has died that our sins might be removed, that our sins might be forgotten, that our sins might be blotted out. Whichever form of words, whichever metaphor, whichever illustration catches your imagination at this moment, is not important. The point is that God forgives all our sins.

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” The first benefit, the first dish upon the table, is that He forgives.

## **2. Healing**

The second dish upon the table, the second terrine or platter, is that the LORD “healeth all thy diseases.”

Again, we can think of this in two ways. Firstly, we read in Revelation that all the things of pain are left outside the New Jerusalem. At Christ's coming, as Paul says in First Corinthians, “We shall be changed.” Part of that change is a body and mind completely free from disease and disability. On that day, the Lord will heal all our diseases.

Secondly, all diseases will be healed, but not all diseases will be healed now. As we read later in the Psalm, the LORD “knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust.” Dust, indeed, we are and to dust we shall return. Returning to dust is a process. It is not done in a moment; and it is only done in the grave. It is a process which begins with life and growth. As cells die new cells come and we grow. We see it so often in a small child. A baby will have a little ragged edge on their tiny fingernail and in the morning, you will see scratches on their face; yet, by the next morning they are gone because the body is moving, and the cells are growing so fast. Ah, but the time comes

when that does not happen anymore, and it seems that a little cut takes weeks to heal, and it seems that a little twitch or a little twist takes longer and longer and longer to go away. Things do not heal as once they did. We are returning to dust.

All people, even the Lord's, will die; and disease is part of the road to death. Yet, God gives grace. In this life, he restores, and he binds up. Through the gifts of discovery and intention which he has given mankind, and according to his will, he heals, and he cures.

Nevertheless, not all diseases are cured now. Yet, God gives grace. He soothes the soul, even when he will not heal the body. The grace of God is likened to a balm. There is a product which comes from Vermont. It is a petroleum jelly with an antiseptic and some other things in it. It is used primarily in the care of udders on cattle and sheep; it is not registered for human use. That said, it is very useful for soothing broken skin, small cuts, or abrasions. It is a balm. We understand how it works.

When Paul asked God to take away the thorn in his flesh, he did so not just because of the pain in his body, but because of the effect which that pain was having on his soul. He was not wrong to ask for healing. The answer which he was given was that there would be no healing at that time, but there would be grace given sufficient for his soul to live with the pain. With this is the promise that that all things will work together for good: even the things of pain, with their heartaches, and disappointments, and troubles, and false starts.

From where does this healing and grace come? We know from Isaiah 53 that it comes from the cross. We find there that Christ has borne our sorrows and our griefs. He has carried our aches and our pains. He has taken these things upon himself. Just as he bore our sins upon the tree, so also, he bore the things of the curse upon the tree. All the things that cause grief and perplexity, all the sorrows which bring us down, belong to this world of the curse; and they are all covered by the cross of Christ as he bears our sorrows, our troubles, our griefs, our diseases, and our pains. He takes them on himself, and if he does not provide for us healing, he will provide for us that grace which is there for the asking.

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” The second benefit, the second dish on the table, is the healing of some of our diseases in life and the healing of all our diseases at the resurrection. On that day, he will heal us fully. Our bodies will be glorious, completely healed of all ailments and sicknesses, all deformities, and disabilities, and all the scars and ravages of age. And for today, there is grace to help in our need and pain.

### **3. Redemption from destruction**

The third dish is redemption from destruction: the LORD “redeemeth thy life from destruction.”



The word redeem means to buy back. It can be used in the context of paying a ransom for the release of a captive or of paying back a debt so that what was held as security is returned.

Destruction is not annihilation but living in the never to be rebuild ruin of eternal lostness.

Here, redeem is used to describe how Christ obtains the freedom of a sinner who is condemned to hell and destruction. Christ paid the price of redemption. The price was paid not in silver or gold but in his precious blood. And that takes us back again to the cross.

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” Firstly, Christ has saved us from being condemned to the lake of fire at the judgment; and, secondly, he has given us the hope of eternal life.

#### **4. Loving kindness and tender mercies**

The fourth dish is the gift of God’s loving kindness and tender mercies: the LORD “crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies.”

To crown is to place something on a person’s head. That thing is important and special. God’s lovingkindness and tender mercies are a special gift. Crowning someone also sets that person apart. This a special gift which God gives only to His own.

**The lovingkindness of the LORD is a commitment to us that *HE* will be kind, that *HE* will show mercy and compassion, and that *HE* will help in time of need. *HE* will be there for us.**

We are crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercies. These are terms that appear in our English Bible to cover words which are hard to describe simply from the Hebrew. The word behind lovingkindness is one about which you will find many articles and many essays have been written. It has such a depth of meanings. It combines so many thoughts. Lovingkindness is how it was thought of by English speaking translators. It is a gift so there is kindness in it. But it’s not just kindness because kindness would seem too little for the strength of the word, so loving is added. What the word describes most a relationship marked out by faithfulness and steadfastness. Some will speak of a steadfast love. In steadfastness, there is commitment. The lovingkindness of the LORD is a commitment to us that he will be kind, that he will show mercy and compassion, and that he will help in time of need. He will be there for us.

The illustration that is often used about this word takes us back to Old Testament covenants and treaties. This lovingkindness is shown when a strong king makes a treaty with a weak king. When somebody attacks that weak king,

the strong king will come to his aid. Almighty God, the maker of heaven and earth, is on our side.

To see God's lovingkindness and his tender mercies as entirely separate things would be wrong. There is a strong overlap, but there is no tautology, no redundancy. God is merciful and compassionate as well as steadfastly committed. There is a gentleness, a tenderness, which marks out his dealings with his people. And it is a commitment and gentleness which they do not deserve; for mercy is given to the guilty.

"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." In this fourth dish there is the benefit of our relationship with God.

### **5. Good things**

Lastly, the fifth dish holds good things: the LORD "satisfieth thy mouth with good things."

If we want to take our analogy and extend it, this last dish might be considered dessert or pudding. We are looking at the table and we are thinking, "Look at all this food. There is the forgiveness of sins, and the healing, and the redemption, and the loving kindness." Then we find that there is more. The cover is taken off another dish. And we find that we have just enough room for what is inside. And with that, our meal is complete. We are satisfied.

God provides good things. Yet, they may not always seem to be good. But as we read in Romans 8, their ultimate purpose is good. Looking over God's buffet, not everything on it will be our favourite. But everything on it is good and will do us good.

Now, the way that the punctuation flows here, certainly in our English version, does not tie the last part of verse five just to the first part, but to all the list, or menu, from verse three down. All this provision is restorative or renewing. There is a weight that comes with years of knowing the sinfulness of our own souls and in dealing with life in this fallen world with its sin-cursedness and its enmity against God. There is a tiredness. We are worn down. These gifts from God refresh our souls, lift off the weight, and roll back the years. We stretch like we are young again and light like the eagle soaring high on the breath of God.

"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits," so that "thy youth is renewed like the eagles."

### **Conclusion**

This morning, we have come to remember the death of Christ on the cross. And if we remember his death properly, we shall not forget all the benefits which are ours through his death.

Shortly, the table before you will be set with a plate on which there is a loaf of bread and a cup in which there is wine. In the elements, actions, and words of the sacrament, the death of Christ, his broken body and shed blood, will be shown to all of you in symbolic form, as will the fact that the New Covenant has been inaugurated. Those who come to the table will receive in

their bodily hands and mouths a piece of that torn loaf and a drink from that cup. But the hand of faith will take hold of Christ and his benefits. And the mouth of faith will receive Christ and his benefits. We have talked about these benefits this morning. Think on them and how Christ will satisfy your hungry soul as you sit at his table.

**Psalm 103: 1–5 (KJV)**

**<sup>1</sup>Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.**

**<sup>2</sup> Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:**

**<sup>3</sup> Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;**

**<sup>4</sup> Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;**

**<sup>5</sup> Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.**



## A Glance at Andrew Bonar: Insights for Us on the Christian Life

**Gareth Burke\***

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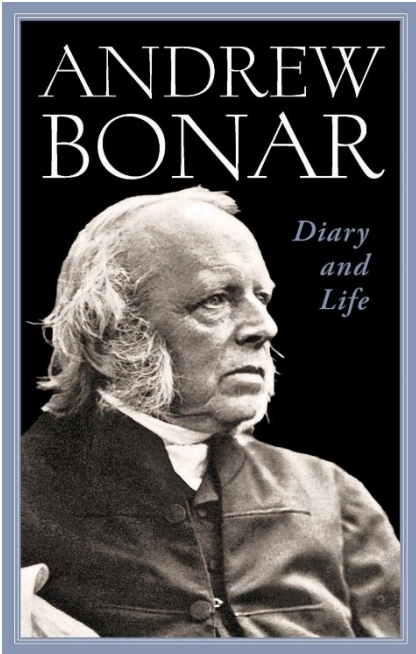
### Introduction

On 16th September 1858 in the Free Church Manse in Kingston (now Rexton), New Brunswick, there was much rejoicing at the safe arrival of a baby boy, a son for Rev James Law and his wife, Eliza. Amidst the rejoicing, however, something of a tension had arisen between James and Eliza over the name to be given to the new baby. Mrs Law had greatly admired the ministry of the saintly Robert Murray McCheyne and was keen to call her son, Robert. However, her husband felt that the whole idea was ridiculous as they already had a son called Robert! A suitable compromise seemed to have been reached whenever Eliza agreed to naming the boy, Andrew Bonar, after McCheyne's biographer. In due time this boy, Andrew Bonar Law, would become the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (1922–1923).

However, our concern in this article is not to detail the political rise and fame of the boy born in the New Brunswick manse but rather to consider the Scottish Divine after whom he was named. Who was Andrew Bonar? What was his relationship to the saintly McCheyne? What kind of ministry did he exercise? After a brief biographical sketch of Bonar's life, we will examine some of the momentous moments in his life and ministry.

### 1. Biographical sketch

Andrew Alexander Bonar was born in Edinburgh on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1810, the seventh son of James and Marjory Bonar. Two of his brothers Horatius and John, also became well known figures in the ministry of the Scottish Church.



James Bonar was Second Solicitor of Excise for Edinburgh. The Bonar family was actively involved in the life of Lady Glenorchy's Chapel in Edinburgh where James Bonar was an elder. The minister, Dr Jones, was a committed evangelical whose preaching and ministry had a profound influence on Andrew.

He entered Edinburgh High School in 1821. The Rector reportedly described him as 'the best Latin scholar who had ever passed through his hands.'

He began studies in Edinburgh in 1828 and came under the influence of Thomas Chalmers. The exact moment of his conversion is difficult to pinpoint:

Sunday November 2nd, 1828: 'A most impressive sermon in the evening from Mr Purves, upon John 9:4: 'I must work the works etc' I came home in deep

anxiety to be saved, and I was, I trust, enabled to choose Christ Jesus for my Saviour, depending upon the Holy Sprit's assistance to keep me. But I still fear and tremble lest all be not well.'<sup>1</sup>

However, on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1829 he writes: 'great sorrow because I am still out of Christ' and on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May 1829 he states: 'My birthday is past, and I am not born again.' A year later he writes: 'Yesterday was my birthday. I am not born again.' However, in his entry for Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November 1830 he writes:

'For about two weeks past, ever since I read a passage in Guthrie's *Saving Interest*, I have had a secret joyful hope that I really have believed in the Lord Jesus. I heard with much feeling, and I think understanding, Mr Purves's sermon today, 'He that spared not His own Son,' etc and I think that next Communion I may go forward to the Lord's Table as one that has received Him...Nearly twenty years of my life have been spent in the world without Christ....'

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<sup>1</sup> Marjory Bonar, ed., *Andrew A. Bonar: Diary and Life*. Original 1893 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1960).

In 1831 he was involved with others at the Divinity Hall in establishing 'The Exegetical Society for Biblical Criticism'—to study the Scriptures and to pray concerning their studies in the Bible. Other members of the Exegetical Society included Horatius Bonar, Robert Murray McCheyne, and Alexander Somerville.

In 1835 he concluded his studies at the Divinity Hall and became an assistant to Rev. John Purves of Jedburgh. His time in Jedburgh was followed by a further period of assistantship to Dr Robert Candlish in St George's, Edinburgh. In September 1838 he was called to the parish of Collace in Perthshire where he exercised a faithful ministry until 1856. In that year he was called to the City of Glasgow and to the parish of Finneston where he laboured until his death in 1892. In April 1848 Bonar married Isabella Dickson. They would have two sons and four daughters.

Having briefly considered his life and ministry it is now appropriate to highlight five particular moments in his ministry for which Andrew Bonar is still remembered.

#### *i) Friendship with Robert Murray McCheyne*

A very close friendship existed between Andrew Bonar and Robert Murray McCheyne. Both were born in Edinburgh and attended the same school and took the same path to Edinburgh University and to the Divinity Hall also. However, their close friendship was more than a matter of having a similar upbringing. They were bound up together in the Lord. McCheyne's death at the early age of 29 in March 1843 was a severe blow to Andrew Bonar who never failed to remember the anniversary in years to come. Consider these references from his diary:

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March 1843: 'This afternoon about five o'clock, a message has just come to tell me of Robert M'Cheyne's death. Never, never yet in all my life have I felt anything like this.... My heart is sore.... There was no friend whom I loved like him.'

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1844: 'It was on this day of the week last year about sunset, that a messenger came and told me of Robert M'Cheyne's illness.... Several of us are to observe Monday as a season of special prayer and fasting to ask blessing on the '*Memoir*,' and the raising up of many holy men.'

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March 1871: 'I well remember twenty-eight years ago this day the messenger came to my house in Collace to tell me that Robert M'Cheyne was taken from us.'

Throughout the year after McCheyne's death Andrew Bonar compiled a volume entitled: *Memoirs and Remains of Rev Robert Murray McCheyne* this book became widely read and continues to impact the lives of many Christians even in our own day.

ii) *The Mission of Inquiry*

In 1838, no less than sixteen petitions were sent by various Synods and Presbyteries to the Church of Scotland's General assembly on the subject of Jewish mission work. The Assembly passed an act which acknowledged

‘...the high importance of using means for the conversion of God’s ancient people, and recommend the object to the attention of the Church, and that the Ministers, in their preaching and public prayers, more frequently avail themselves of opportunities of noticing the claims of the Jews...’<sup>2</sup>

In order to bring this programme of Jewish evangelism forward the assembly decided to send four men to eastern and central Europe and Palestine to assess the possibility of establishing a witness in Jewish communities. The delegation consisted of:

Dr Alexander Keith, minister of St Cyrus in Kincardineshire

Dr Alexander Black, Professor of Theology at Marischal College, Aberdeen,

Robert Murray McCheyne, Minister of St Peters Dundee and Andrew Bonar.

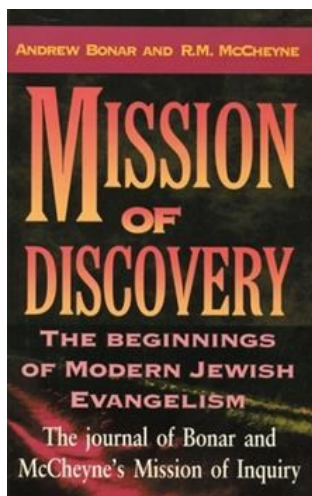
The travellers departed from Dover on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1839 and made their first stop at Boulogne. Over the course of the next six months, they travelled

through France, Italy, Malta, Greece, Egypt, and Palestine. They stopped in Jerusalem, and then on the way home they travelled through Moldavia, Austrian Poland, and Prussia before reaching Scotland. Dr Black and Dr Keith both experienced ill health and had to return home early with Bonar and McCheyne completing the journey and arriving back in Scotland in November 1839.

The reports of the journey which were given by the participants afterwards undoubtedly stirred up the church in Scotland to pray for the evangelisation of the Jews in a new way and one very tangible outcome of the whole exercise was the establishment of a Jewish Mission in Jassy, Moldavia, in 1841, under the leadership of Rev.

Daniel Edward. A few months later a similar mission was established in Pesth, Hungary under Dr John Duncan.

Andrew Bonar wrote the first draft of the report of their visit entitled: ‘*Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in 1839.*’ This initial draft was ‘proofed’ and altered by McCheyne. *The Narrative* became a much-read publication which added further impetus to the



<sup>2</sup> Sandy Finlayson, *Unity and Diversity: The Founders of the Free Church of Scotland* (Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2010), 195.



cause of Jewish evangelism within Scotland and beyond. [This book has been recently renamed and published as *Mission of Discovery*].

### *iii) The Disruption of 1843*

Throughout the period of Bonar's theological studies and early ministry a controversy was raging within the Church of Scotland on the issue of Patronage. Ministers were being imposed on parishes by wealthy patrons who paid no heed to the wishes of the congregation. Often the patrons were utterly unsympathetic to the evangelical cause and were putting forward candidates who did not hold to the truth of the Gospel. The spiritual independence of the church was being seriously affected and, as such, in 1843 a significant number of ministers and members seceded from the Church of Scotland to form the Free Church of Scotland. Andrew Bonar was among those who identified with Dr Chalmers and others in this significant moment for the Scottish Church. For a time, his congregation in Collace met in a tent until a new church building could be erected. Andrew Bonar was actively involved in the life of the wider Free Church all of his ministry serving as Moderator in 1878.

### *iv) The Moody and Sankey Campaigns*

In November 1873 the American evangelist Dwight L. Moody and his musical companion Ira D. Sankey arrived in Scotland. They drew huge crowds to their evangelistic meetings and found strong support for their work from Andrew Bonar and his brother Horatius. Moody was invited to preach at Andrew Bonar's church in Glasgow and a friendship developed between the two men which led to Bonar travelling to the USA to speak at conferences with Moody. The Bonar brothers received considerable criticism from within the Free Church for their support of the Moody Campaigns. Dr John Kennedy of Dingwall published a pamphlet entitled: "Hyper-Evangelism 'Another Gospel' though a Mighty Power: A Review of the Recent Religious Movement in Scotland." Kennedy was critical of the methods being used by Moody in his meetings, his Arminian theology, and his use of uninspired materials of praise in his services.

### *v) The Edinburgh Prophetic Studies Conference*

In October 1888 in the Free Assembly Hall Edinburgh Bonar hosted a three-day conference of prophetic studies, similar to the kind of conference he had been involved in with Mr. Moody in the USA. The Conference was significant not just because of the large numbers that attended it but also because the premillennialism which Bonar had espoused for so long was now supported by many Christians across different denominations. It is interesting to note Bonar's enthusiasm for this premillennial movement which united evangelicals around the fundamentals of the Christian faith rather than around the historic Reformed Confessions. In his diary entry for Thursday October 11<sup>th</sup>, 1888, he writes:

We have had three days of a most remarkable Conference on Prophetic Truth, in Edinburgh, and the Free Assembly Hall too. Fifty years ago, those of us that held this truth were very few and much despised. But these three days have been days when, from all sections of the Church of Christ, there have been brethren brought together and the place nearly filled.

### *Postscript*

It is important to note that despite Bonars support for the Moody campaigns and despite his adherence to a premillennial position regarding the Return of Christ (which we shall examine below) and despite his rejection of the Westminster Confessions' description of the Pope as the Antichrist<sup>3</sup> Andrew Bonar was solidly committed to the Scriptures and the Gospel. Some recent studies have suggested that he was somewhat 'wobbly' in terms of his commitment to the Westminster Confession of Faith—and that is a matter for debate and further discussion—but there must be no doubt cast upon his evangelical convictions. He resisted union with the United Presbyterian Church and was utterly unsupportive of Robertson Smith and his liberal views on the nature of scripture.

## **2. Bonar's concern for Jewish evangelism and his commitment to Premillennialism**

The best way to illustrate Bonar's concern for the Jews and his commitment to premillennialism is by referring to his own writings. As such, below, there are a series of quotations from his diary that show his commitment to premillennialism at an early stage of his Christian life. These are followed by a few brief comments from his Commentary on Leviticus and from a pamphlet entitled 'The Development of Antichrist'(1853):

### *The Diary*

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1831: 'More and more convinced that the time of Christ's coming is before the thousand years; often grieved by hearing opposition to this.'

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1832: 'Much helped yesterday in an essay upon The First Resurrection, defending the doctrine of Christ's reign, in the Exegetical Society.'

Thursday March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1832: 'My little anxiety about Christ's second Coming makes me often mourn.'

May 5<sup>th</sup> 1832: 'A remark of my brother Horace went far to satisfy me about missionary labour. He spoke about the need of labourers and minsters at home, and the witness for Christ's second Coming borne by few in this land. That may be part of our work.'

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew Bonar, *The Development of Antichrist*. Original 1853 (UK: Crossreach Publications, 2017).

October 3<sup>rd</sup> 1833: 'Spent some time in praying for the spread of the study of prophecy; then wrote a reply to an article in the *Christian Instructor* against the Pre-millennial Coming of Christ. Writing upon this subject makes me long much for that glorious day.'

Saturday 11<sup>TH</sup> July 1835: 'John Purves and I had an interesting and profitable conversation on the Second Advent, and the exaltation of Christ'.

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> January 1837 'Hope of seeing some Jews in the town.'

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> March 1837: 'On Saturday last I read an essay to the Missionary Association regarding the duty of giving the first place in missionary labours to the Jews, which was received with great attention, and seemed to convince all present, so that they wished it to be printed. I think that God has brought me here, among other things, for the sake of drawing attention to the Jews, and being able to do something for them.'

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> April 1837: 'The Committee of the Jewish Society have made me acting secretary to them. God may be thus using me for some of His purposes as to His beloved people...'

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 1837: 'Have been with a Mr C., at whose house twelve of us were present to see how the Passover is kept by the Jews. Very illustrative of the Scripture. I felt something of the reality of the twelve disciples sitting down with Christ. Prayed and rejoiced in hope that something was doing here for the Jews. I think the cause of the Jews is one reason of my having been brought from Jedburgh here.'

Wednesday September 16<sup>th</sup> 1835: 'Of late, especially after two sermons of John Purves on the subject, have felt more truly than before the desirableness of the Coming of our Lord.'

Sunday September 4<sup>th</sup> 1836: 'I have not of late been thankful enough, nor have I prayed on behalf of God's truth regarding Christ's Coming, which John Purves has been preaching, and which is here greatly opposed by an old saint with whom I had just met.'

Saturday July 1<sup>st</sup> 1837: 'Conversation with a Jew, Joseph Leo.'

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1837 'Horace's millenarian views are likely to keep him from Kelso.'

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July 1837 'Began this evening to instruct the Jew, who seems really anxious to know.'

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July 1837: 'Praying for Horace in regard to Kelso, that his testimony to Christ's Coming again may be honoured of God.'

Saturday September 9<sup>th</sup> 'Today and last night greatly cast down by the circumstance of my being kept out of several appointments on account of my millenarianism chiefly. I had prayed about the matter in the full conviction that bearing testimony to this and other truths was the way of duty.'

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 1837: 'Meeting last night much encouraged me; many men and two Jews, one lately come, Louis Konigsberg.'

Friday February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1838: 'Had a letter from Mr Wodrow in Glasgow telling me that he was to present a memorial to the presbytery about the Jews

next Wednesday, and requesting the prayers of all the friends of Israel for that object.’

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 1838: ‘There seems to be now really interest excited among some of the ministers for the Jews. I regard this as a direct and memorable answer to prayer, and all the more that I have had no direct hand in the matter.’

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February 1838: ‘Heard yesterday more news about what the Glasgow Society mean to do for the Jews. Now there is hope of getting our cause brought forward here and in several other places, and even expectation that the General Assembly this very year may be brought to take it up.’

Thursday May 17<sup>th</sup> 1838: ‘Had a very full meeting tonight to pray for the Jews. Myself and Mr. Wodrow officiated. Prayed for the General Assembly in the matter’.

Friday 18<sup>th</sup> May 1838: ‘Found unexpectedly that the Jewish cause is to be brought forward tomorrow in the assembly. A few of us agreed to meet in the evening for prayer. Accordingly, we met—Mr. Wodrow and his wife, Alexander Somerville, Jonathan Anderson, and some of our family.’

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May 1838: ‘Prayed much in the morning for Israel. Saw in God’s past doings, in regard to their cause among us, a most special answer to prayer, and encouragement to go forward, and remembered the promise, ‘Blessed is he that blesseth thee’. So many ministers and people seem interested all at once. Went to the Assembly. It was the last part of their business, and was carried with much unanimity that a committee be appointed. Praise, praise! I hope now it will be said of us, ‘Rejoice ye with Jerusalem’ our Church will be blessed in the joy of Zion. I look upon this as a given encouragement to pray for anything according to His will in the name of Christ, and another token making us hope for revival among ourselves, and more blessing upon our missions.’

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> May 1838: ‘On Saturday the Committee for the Jews was appointed.’

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> August 1838: ‘Much helped. Thought and prayed for Joseph Leo, the Jew, who is to be baptized today in St. George’s.’

### *Commentary on Leviticus*

Crawford Gribben in his article ‘Andrew Bonar and the Scottish Presbyterian Millennium’<sup>4</sup> considers Bonar’s premillennialism by examining certain statements in his *Commentary on Leviticus*. Gribben comments that ‘he (Bonar) declares that interpretative finality would only be achieved in the millennium itself, when Ezekiel’s temple would be constructed as a vast symbol of the scheme of redemption. Perhaps his readiness to anticipate a

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<sup>4</sup> Andrew Bonar, *A Commentary on Leviticus*. Original 1846, fourth edition 1861 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1966).

millennial temple owed something to the temple preparations he had witnessed on his ‘mission of inquiry.’

Bonar outlined human history in seven periods of one thousand years’ duration: God ‘allows the fallen world its six days—its 6,000 years—during which time no judgement is pronounced on it. He waits for the seventh day, when the priest, who has examined already into the case, shall come and see the ‘shut up’ leper, and declare his doom.’

### **The Development of Antichrist**

‘...Bonar argued that the Jewish people would return to Israel before the millennium, and in unbelief. Their return to the land would begin the cataclysmic final seven years of world history, and would occur at the same time as the revelation of the antichrist and the final apostasy in the Gentile churches. Under the wrath of God, they would rebuild the Temple (preparations for which were already being made in the United States), re- establish the sacrificial system, and enter a time of unparalleled tribulation.’<sup>5</sup>

Bonar’s premillennialism was also clearly set forth in his book *Redemption Drawing Nigh*. This was a response to David Brown’s magnum opus *Christ’s Second Coming: Will it be premillennial?* (1846). Brown, who had been assistant to Edward Irving in London initially espoused Irving’s premillennialism but then clearly rejected it and set forth his robust defence of the postmillennial position in his book.

### **Premillennial Influences**

In probing the question ‘How did Andrew Bonar develop these premillennial views?’ a number of answers could be given. He was undoubtedly influenced by debate and discussion with others. Friends and colleagues like Alexander Somerville, John Purves, Robert Murray McCheyne, William Chalmers Burns and others influenced him greatly. His brother, Horatius, was also a significant influence in forming his eschatological views. That is not to say that everyone within this group of friends was committed to premillennialism, but it was certainly a subject much considered among them in formal conferences and informal gatherings. Whilst all may not have been committed to

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<sup>5</sup> Crawford Gribben, “Andrew Bonar and the Scottish Presbyterian Millennium,” in *Prisoners of Hope? Aspects of Evangelical Millennialism in Britain and Ireland, 1800–1880*, eds. Crawford Gribben, Timothy Stunt. Studies in Evangelical History and Thought (Milton Keynes: UK: Paternoster, 2004), 199.

premillennialism they were united in their concern for the evangelisation of the Jewish people.

Particular attention needs to be given to the influence of Thomas Chalmers and Edward Irving. Whilst Irving was ultimately deposed from the ministry of the Church of Scotland for what were considered to be erroneous views concerning the Person of Christ, yet he exercised a mighty influence over a whole generation of young Scottish Divinity students of whom Andrew Bonar was one.

In May 1828 Irving held a series of lectures in Edinburgh timed to coincide with the meetings of the General Assembly. He spoke on prophetic themes and enlisted a huge following. Andrew Bonar attended these lectures and the following year, 1829, he asked Dr Chalmers about the wisdom of returning to hear Irving. This was Chalmers response: ‘Go on, gentlemen...this thing will do you no manner of harm.’<sup>6</sup>

In his diary he notes: ‘have been hearing Mr Irving’s lectures all the week, and am persuaded now that his views of the Coming of Christ are truth. The views of the glory of Christ opened up in his lectures have been very impressive to me.’ (24<sup>th</sup> May 1829). Irving was very much committed to a premillennial position and had, for a number of years, been assistant to Dr Chalmers. However, it is unclear as to where Chalmers himself stood in relation to the vexed question of the millennium. Most historians seem convinced that he held to the popular post-millennial position, but Andrew Bonar believed otherwise. He stated: ‘Our professor in the Divinity Hall was Dr Chalmers, and we sometimes told him our thoughts on these subjects, and the opposition shown to us.... I am glad to say that before he died he ranged himself with the Premillennialists.’<sup>7</sup>

*Why was Andrew Bonar so committed to a premillennial position?*

Having demonstrated something of Bonar’s commitment to premillennialism we now must ask the question ‘Why?’. What was it that was driving him? Why such preparedness to experience such opposition because of this premillennial commitment?

The answer to that question, of necessity, has a number of strands. Obviously, he believed that his position was Biblical. As he studied Matthew 24 and Revelation 20 as well as the relevant portions in Daniel and Ezekiel, he was convinced that in Scripture he found these premillennial truths set forth. There is further evidence of this Biblical strand in Bonar’s thinking even from the brief references from his commentary on Leviticus.

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<sup>6</sup> John S Ross, “‘Time for Favour’ Scottish Mission to the Jews: 1838–1852,” (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales, Lampeter, 2004), 81–82.

<sup>7</sup>Gribben, 201–202.

However, one of the key factors in his commitment to premillennialism was his commitment to the ‘literal interpretation’ of Scripture. John S Ross in his Ph.D. thesis ‘Time for Favour’ helpfully points out that we need to be careful as to how we understand this term as both premillennialists and post millennialists claimed commitment to ‘the literal interpretation of Scripture.’ However, Dr Ross also includes an interesting little anecdote concerning the expression which I think shows us something of Bonar’s understanding of the words ‘literal interpretation.’ The original copy of the *Narrative of Inquiry* (the record of Bonar, McCheyne and others visiting Palestine in 1839) was penned by Andrew Bonar with amendments being inserted by Robert McCheyne.

*In the original draft Bonar had stated that a missionary to the Jews, ‘should be one who fully and thoroughly adopts the principles of literal interpretation of the Bible.’*<sup>8</sup> However McCheyne altered the last few words to read ‘grammatical interpretation’ of the Bible.’ A small change perhaps but obviously of significance to the two men involved and a reflection of Bonar’s commitment to taking the words of Scripture literally. This hermeneutical method has obvious implications for the understanding of Revelation 20 and other similar portions of Scripture.

*How did Bonar’s commitment to Premillennialism affect his ministry in Collace and Finneston?*

There is no doubt as to the spiritual diligence of Andrew Bonar or of his enormous commitment to the work of the Christian ministry. In two very different contexts, in rural Perthshire and urban Glasgow he faithfully preached the Word and spent much time in visiting his people. He was very much the evangelist who was forever seeking to win lost souls to Christ. Of these things there is no doubt. The question needs to be asked, however, to what degree did his particular position on premillennialism affect his ministry? I think there are two answers to that question.

Firstly, because he believed that Jesus could appear suddenly, unexpectedly, without the fulfilment of the ‘signs,’ his ministry had a particular urgency. Men and women need to repent now because the Lord could appear at any moment. Whilst those who hold to other views on the millennium also believe in the suddenness of the Lord’s appearing there was with Bonar and colleagues of a similar viewpoint intensity to their evangelistic labours because the world, as we now know it, could end at any moment.

Secondly, Andrew Bonar longed to see the Lord at work in revival. He was privileged to see something of a ‘revival work’ in the early days of his ministry but he longed to see a greater and fuller outpouring of God’s Spirit upon the Church and the nation. He was utterly convinced that by reaching out

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<sup>8</sup> Ross, 72.



to the Jews, ‘God’s ancient people,’ the Church was acting in a way that was pleasing to the mind of God and in accord with the clear teaching of Scripture in Romans 9–11. As such when revival came to Scotland, he was able to assert that this was partly due to the fact that the Lord was pleased with the Church in Scotland for their increased concern for the salvation of the Jews. On hearing the news of the outbreak of revival in St Peter’s Dundee during the absence of the minister, Robert McCheyne, Bonar states in his diary that God had used the *locum*, William Chalmers Burns, ‘in the very year when the Church of Scotland had stretched out her hand to seek the welfare of Israel, and to speak peace to all her seed.’<sup>9</sup>

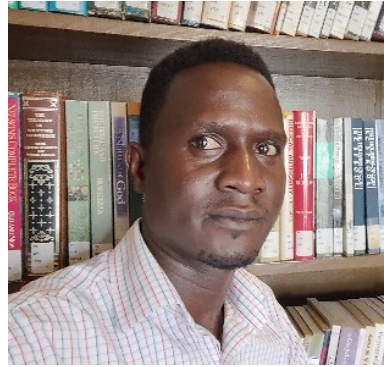
Whatever one makes of his eschatological views Andrew Bonar has set before us a worthy example to follow as we reflect upon his life of piety, his diligent zeal in Gospel ministry and his passion for the lost.

**“If you abide in Me”—that is faith. “And My words abide in you”—that is fellowship.**

**Andrew A. Bonar**

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<sup>9</sup> Gribben, 190.



## The mysterious origin of ‘the Jew Community,’ the Abayudaya, in Eastern Uganda.

**Okuch A. Ojullo**

### **Disclaimer**

This paper will not cover everything the reader would like to know about the history of the Abayudaya, but it will shed light on what you might have not known. This community is not so well known outside Uganda, and few are aware of their origin. That is why this paper will be based on interviews with members of the Abayudaya.

### **Introduction**

I did not know who Samei Kakungulu was until I moved to Mbale Eastern Uganda in 2020 just when the first Covid-19 lockdown was lifted. The first time I heard his name was that he planted most of the trees in Senior Quarters in Mbale. Very huge trees that are over hundred years old. Kakungulu seems to have done a lot in Eastern Uganda especially Mbale District during his regime as the governor of the eastern Province of Uganda under the British. It was through this man, Kakungulu that a community emerged in Uganda known as *the Jew community*. For almost 110 years they have been calling themselves *Abayudaya* (People of Judah) of Uganda. These people with help from different organisations have taught themselves the Hebrew language and they have maintained Judaistic worship.

I didn’t know about their origin until recently when I started asking questions and talking to some of their members. It is interesting to know how this community came about in Uganda and what has become of them today. The Abayudaya are convinced that they are following the Torah, the law of Moses as provided in the Old Testament. The synagogue laws of worship still being observed as it was done in the Old Testament era.

It is amazing to see their Rabbi conducting service and all the Synagogue's practices are in Hebrew on Sabbath (Saturday) just as it was done in the Old Testament. Some of the Abayudaya have mastered the Hebrew language so well and can read the Torah Scroll in Hebrew.

### **The Origin of the Jews ethnicity in the world.**

When you hear of the word Jew, your mind will quickly run to Genesis 12 where the origin of this community is traced. When God called Abram out of the land of Ur and asked him to leave his people and land and go to a land, He would give him for possession. Abram according to the Bible left without any question and he had no child at this point though he had a wife by the name of Sarai. He left as God commanded because he was a man of faith. Abram trusted God's word. As a result of his faith, God promised him not just to give him a land, but that God would make him a great nation and many descendants would come from him. Later in the same book, we are introduced to his son, the son of promise, Isaac and then out of Isaac came Jacob and out of Jacob we are introduced to 12 sons who became the 12 tribes (what African would call clans) of Israel. The word Israel was coined by God in Genesis 35 verse 10 when God spoke to Jacob the son of Isaac saying, *"your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name."* So, God renamed Jacob as Israel. With this renaming came a repetition of the promise again, when God added and said, *"I am God ALMIGHTY: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body."* (Gen.35:11).

A few chapters later, Genesis 46, at this time Joseph one of the twelve sons of Jacob had settled in Egypt and God had given him a great position in the land. Joseph was in second in command in the land at this time. The rest of Israel's children moved to Egypt in search of bread, and they lived in Egypt and after the death of Joseph, a new pharaoh was enthroned and enslaved the children of Israel in the land for 430 years. At the end of 430 years, God sent his messenger, Moses to rescue his children and sent them back to the Promised Land, the land of Canaan.

From Abram and Sarai, just two people to thousands of people at this time. That is the shortest summary I can give to how the people of Israel we know of today came about.

### **How did the Abayudaya begin?**

One wonders, is there any connection between the Abayudaya of Eastern Uganda with other black Jews within the continent? The answer is no connection between the Abayudaya and the black Jews in either Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa nor any other parts of Africa at all. The Abayudaya has no connection with any other Jew community in the world either at least in their origin because Chief Semei Kakungulu who was from the Baganda community of Central Uganda, was posted as a governor to the Eastern Province of Uganda (which today comprises of Mbale, Tororo, Budaka, and

Palisa Districts) by the British with a mission to extend the British control in this part of the country.

### **Who was Semei Kakungulu (1869–1928)?**

Gen. Kakungulu was a military leader, a General in the army who demonstrated his leadership skills by defeating and bringing under control the communities that were resisting the Baganda kingdom of central Uganda. When the British administrators saw his skills, they thought they would use him to subdue Eastern Uganda and bring all the tribes there under control of the British as well. Gen. Semei Kakungulu was therefore appointed and posted in the East of the country on behalf of the British.



Being an ambitious man, Gen. Kakungulu wanted the British to recognise him as the King in the East with equal powers with the Kabaka (the king of the Baganda) in the central Uganda. He was disappointed when he realised the British were not going to meet his request, recognising him as king, he abandoned his post and his position as the governor in 1913 and turned to religious life. He poured his soul into studying and meditating on the Torah and in 1919, Kakungulu was convinced after studying the Torah that Judaism was the right religion.

He blamed Christianity for having neglected (according to him) the bigger part of the Bible, namely the Old Testament which carries 39 books compare to the New Testament that carries only 27 books. He argued that people should pay more attention to the Old Testament because even Jesus mentioned that he came to confirm the words of Moses and not to annul them.

As a result of his new conviction, Kakungulu circumcised himself like Abraham did and also his son and later he made it a law that all the males must be circumcised if they ought to be part of the new community, the Abayudaya (people of Judah). The Abayudaya would remain faithful to the original Torah —‘*Kibina kya Bayudaya Absesiga Katonda*’ in Luganda which was Kakungulu’s native tongue a language that is very much spoken in Uganda today. That is ‘Jews who trust in the Lord.’ (Gershon, 2022)

According to Rabbi Gershon, Kakungulu observed the laws of Torah as it was written in the Torah without the rabbinic traditions which defines and

explains how the laws of Torah should be observed. He urged his followers to strictly follow these laws as they were written in the Torah. He taught his people the customer Jewish blessings and practices.

**He [Semei Kakungulu] argued that people should pay more attention to the Old Testament because even Jesus mentioned that he came to confirm the words of Moses and not to annul them.**

For a period of time, the Abayudaya for the lack of knowledge of the rabbinic traditions, therefore, would not define the laws in the Torah. For example, according to Rabbi Gershom Sizomu, the Abayudaya defined work as anything you do with your hand without involving your feet. Playing soccer/football is not considered work.

Around 1922, Kakungulu put together some rules in writings to be used during prayers and they were printed in Luganda (his native tongue) and called this special book *Ebigambo ebiva mukitabo ekitukuvu*. In these writings, he urged that the Abayudaya must observe the sacrifices in relation to Passover and the laws of the synagogue like the laws of cleanness and uncleanness. For example, if someone came in contact with a dead body, she/he became unclean for a period of seven days and cleansing rituals would be done for that person to be welcome back in the synagogue after the seven days elapsed. Women on the other hand, were not allowed to enter the synagogue when they were in their monthly period because they were considered unclean and whoever touches such a woman becomes unclean as well and would not be allowed in the synagogue for a period of seven days. (Gershom, 2022)

It was at this point that Christians in Uganda saw and realised that Kakungulu had strayed from the true teaching of Christianity to Judaism. It is in this book that all the practices and prayers and all the rules of the Synagogue are stated for every member to follow. Kakungulu used Genesis 2:2–4 and Exodus 20:8–10 to argue that God never changed the rule of Sabbath that Sabbath remained to be the day of worship since it was the day he rested and commanded in Exodus 20 that it should be observed. (A History of the Abuyudaya Jews of Uganda, n.d.)

After the death of Kakungulu in 1928, the community faced a lot of challenges. According to Rabbi Gershom, the community was hated by other religions in the nation like Muslims and Christians. Also, the other challenges were most of the children they sent to schools were converted to either Christianity or Islam and the community realised they were losing the next generation, so they stopped sending their children to schools. For a very long period, the Abayudaya distanced themselves from schools and education all together. They concentrated on farming to support themselves as a community.

The climax of these challenges came with the regime of President Idi Amin Dada who ascended to power in 1971. Amin decreed and outlawed Judaism in the nation after he fell out with Israel as a nation. Amin first expelled all Israelites from Uganda in March 1972 almost immediately he ascended to power and thereafter went after everyone who associated themselves with Israel. The Abayudaya become the prime target at this point of time. Amin decreed that these people must either turn to Christianity or Islam otherwise they would face his wrath. And that was what he exactly did by even burning down their synagogue. The community was persecuted severely in 1970s. according to Rabbi Gershom, from a population of about 8,000 people, the community was reduced to only about less than 1,000 members who remained faithful and committed to the faith. This small number of remnants remained committed to their new faith worshipping secretly for the fear of their lives and through this small remnant, the community was revived in 1980s. “Our fore parents remained faithful and committed despite the persecution by the state.” One member proudly said and with a big smile announced to me. (Interviewee 2. , 2022)

When Idi Amin’s regime fell in 1979, it was on Passover day and the Abayudaya celebrated both Passover and the fall of the dictator. “The storm had passed.” (Interviewee 3. , 2022) Another member commented. They related this event to the redemption of the Jewish from Egypt on the Passover day so they double celebrated.

Later, Gershom Sizomu was sent to study rabbinic traditions at American Jewish University where he studied for five years learning rabbinic literatures and Hebrew language and graduated in 2008. Gershom was ordained as Rabbi in the same year he graduated before he was sent back to Uganda as the chief Rabbi. He became the first in the community to earn a BA. When he came back to Uganda in 2008, Rabbi Gershom poured his soul into teaching a group of young people from among the Abayudaya community. Today, everyone in the community looks up to him for spiritual guidance. He taught them Hebrew language and all the laws and traditions as stated in Torah and rabbinic literatures.

In 2011’s general election in Uganda, Rabbi Gershom decided to run for MP of his constituency, Bungokho North Constituency but he did not succeed. he tried again in 2016 and this time he won and became the first Jew in the parliament of Uganda. Rabbi Gershom entered politics because he remembered his childhood days under the regime of President Idi Amin and he thought if Jews are represented in the parliament, their voices would be heard.

With the help of Rabbi Gershom’s American friends, he was able to build a medical clinic in 2010 naming it “New Tobin Health Center” after Dr Tobin,<sup>1</sup> his American friend who was behind most of the projects in this

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Tobin is dead now.

community. He also built a primary school which according to him, it serves the entire community and her surroundings. All kids from all faiths are allowed to enrol in this school. He also drilled boreholes in the community to provide safe drinking water for everyone.

Most importantly, he built a bigger synagogue since the old one could not contain the huge number of the worshippers anymore. It is believed that there are about 2,000 worshippers today that gather on Saturday in the new synagogue. With many more synagogues being built in other districts within Uganda. It is also believed that there are about 3,000 members of Abayudaya today country wide.

Although Rabbi Gershom is based in Kampala where his office is located as the MP, he travels to Mbale, a distance of about five hours every weekend to teach his class of “Yeshiva Students—his local rabbinical seminary” and also conducts Sabbath worships. Today, Gershom is the chief Rabbi who dedicates himself into teaching his people on all the Judaism laws and Synagogue practices. However, he is also the point of connection with the other outside world. (Interviewee 4. , 2022)

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## When Family Members are Slow to Believe

**Ken Stewart\***

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A well-known episode in the gospels records that Mary, mother of Jesus, in company with others (designated as Jesus' brothers)—tried unsuccessfully to cajole Jesus into abandoning his ministry of preaching and wonder-working in its early stages. All three Synoptic gospels record it (Matt. 12.46–50, Mark 3.31–35, Luke 8.19–21). Moreover, Mark makes it clear that this was not an isolated attempt; on an earlier occasion (recorded in 3.20–22) his earthly family had also attempted just such an intervention, voicing aloud their concern over his sanity!<sup>1</sup> We may also view Mark 6.4,5 in connection with these episodes, for there Jesus is reflecting on the frosty attitudes exhibited by his family as well as community. One modern author has described “a complete rift” as exhibited here.<sup>2</sup>

These episodes serve as a valuable counterweight to the church's long tendency to place too high a premium on the biological family. Certainly, since the age of Reformation, the emphasis of the Protestant churches has been placed there. But it was not so at the beginning. The followers of Jesus at the first were united not primarily by lines of genealogy but by a spiritual affinity;

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<sup>1</sup>Alan Cole, *The Gospel According to Mark* (London: Tyndale Press, 1961), 82 remarks, “It was not apparently because of the contents of his preaching, but because of the unexpected results; such numbers came to hear or to be healed that set mealtimes were impossible.”

<sup>2</sup>Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 48.



genealogy did not guarantee any particular outcome. So far as Jesus was concerned, “Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother” (Mark 3.35).<sup>3</sup> This—responsiveness to the will of God as disclosed in Jesus and the Gospel as the criterion for inclusion in the people of God—is a principle we need to constantly revisit. Does the church of today welcome the searching teen, the career single, the single parent, the abandoned spouse, the lonely immigrant, with the same open arms it extends to the conventional family of two parents with children in tow? The family of God is not so simply, so predictably defined as that! The New Testament abounds with examples of such spiritual affinity skirting genealogy. Consider the non-Hebrews included in Jesus’ family tree (e.g., Matt. 1.5). Think of the Syrophoenician woman (Mark 7.24–30), the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4), the Roman, Cornelius (Acts 10), and of Philemon’s vagrant slave, Onesimus (Philemon 10).

And yet this cannot be the whole story, and any congregation that determined to exchange a longstanding orientation towards biological families for one focused most upon seeking individuals would miss New Testament evidence of several kinds. Consider

### **I. There Remains the General Expectation that Children Will Follow Their Parents in Believing.**

Simon, the “man of Cyrene” who was obliged to carry the cross for Jesus (Mark 15.21) was evidently followed in the faith by sons Rufus and Alexander (compare Romans 15.21).<sup>4</sup> Timothy, though spiritual son to the apostle Paul (1 Tim. 1.2) was at the same time following in the footsteps of grandmother Lois and mother Eunice (2 Tim. 1.5, 4.15). In the Pauline churches, it was expected that the children of elders and deacons would follow the example of their fathers in believing (1 Timothy 3.4)

### **II. There are not Lacking Either Numerous Examples of Believing Families**

On Pentecost Day, the Apostle Peter had held out the promises of the gospel to “you and your children” (Acts. 2.39). Many households responded to this promise of forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Roman officer, Cornelius (as above mentioned), the household of Lydia (Acts 16.15), that of the Philippian jailer (Acts 16.34), Crispus and household (Acts 18.8) as well as that of Stephanus in the same city of Corinth (1 Cor. 1.16)—these are all examples of the young church easily incorporating biological families – though never exclusively. But the abundance of such examples

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<sup>3</sup> Compare John 20.17, which illustrates an extension of this principle. All Scripture citations in this essay are made from the NIV (1984).

<sup>4</sup> Richard Bauckham points out that the inclusion of the names of what might be called secondary or peripheral characters in the gospel story is an indication that they would have been known to the original readers of the Gospel or Epistle. *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 9, fn. 14.

brings us back to the awkward scene depicted by Mark's Gospel: Mary and Jesus' brothers are questioning his sanity and urging him to abandon his mission.

### III. What Then of this Lack of Spiritual Solidarity within the Biological Family of Jesus?

Returning to the perplexing scene the Synoptic writers describe, we ask: "What is the matter with Mary?" This is the woman said by the angel Gabriel to be "highly favored" (Luke 1.28) and by her relative, Elizabeth, to be "blessed among women" (1.42) in connection with her bearing the Christ child. Mary is the one who, observing all the wonders associated with the birth of her son, "treasured all these things in her heart" (Luke 2.19). With Joseph, she had marveled at the prophetic utterances made regarding their infant son when He was presented at the temple (Luke 2.37). After he was found more than holding his own among the teachers at the Temple, she had treasured her impressions of the event (Luke 2.51). Thus, surely, she had an enlarged expectation of Jesus' powers when, at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, she reported, "they have no more wine"? And yet, not very long afterwards, we find her "leading the pack", so to speak, in urging Jesus to abandon his ministry and to come home.

Only slightly less culpable are his brothers, named by the Gospel writers to be James, Joseph (sometimes 'Josés') Judas (sometimes 'Jude') and Simon (Mark 6.3). We take these, with un-named sisters, to be Jesus' biological half-siblings,<sup>5</sup> born (unlike Jesus) by natural conception to Joseph and Mary.<sup>6</sup> Having rubbed shoulders with Jesus in the home and family workshop, they seem to have had no strong impression made on them whatsoever, unless it was that their brother had an inflated idea of his reason for existence. John's Gospel tells us plainly (7.5) that even at a late stage of Jesus' earthly ministry, they did not believe in him. Their evident dis-interest

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<sup>5</sup> This view, called the 'Helvidian' view (after Helvidius c. 383) represented resistance to the growing view that the virginity of Mary at the time of her conception of the Christ child was continued throughout her life. According to the rival views which were then gaining ground, Jesus could have no siblings on account of Mary's perpetual virginity. Those alluded to as his brothers and sisters were, in consequence, viewed as the children of Joseph by a previous marriage, or cousins. The writing of this paper has been materially assisted by a reading of the essay of J.B. Lightfoot, "The Brethren of the Lord" in his volume of collected essays, *Dissertations on the Apostolic Age* (London: Macmillan, 1892), chap. I. It is accessible online here: <https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/blog/dissertations-from-the-apostolic-age-lightfoot/>

<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting that Luke, in treating the genealogy of Jesus in his 3rd chapter, takes care to explain the difference between Jesus' apparent biological connection with Joseph and the real connection. As Joseph disappears from the Gospel narratives once the birth narratives are completed, there has always been a readiness to suppose that he had passed away.

goes far to explain why, from the cross, Jesus entrusted the care of his mother not to them (they were nowhere to be seen) but to his disciple, John (John. 19.26, 27). The brothers were also significantly absent from his burial.

Thus, virtually all of the evidence that we have seems to point in the direction of suggesting that, in the case of Jesus' biological family, the expectation that children would follow the faith of their believing parents, is frustrated. The earthly family of Jesus seems like a casualty list in spiritual terms! But the key words here are "virtually all of the evidence."

#### **IV. The Idea of Family Solidarity Has Not Disappeared from the Gospel Narrative. It Re-Emerges**

##### *a) At the Crucifixion*

That this is not the last word is the clear implication of what took place at the foot of the cross of Christ. We will draw on both the Synoptics and John in establishing this. Most obviously, we see at the foot of the cross, Mary, mother of Jesus (John 19.25). She is not there, among other brave women, because –as earlier in Jesus' ministry—she still believes he should abandon what he is doing. No, with her companions –a sister (un-named there), a sister-in law Mary (identified as wife of Clopas) and Mary Magdalene, she is there in solidarity with and out of utter admiration for Jesus. All of Jesus' male disciples (with the exception of John) have fled, thus fulfilling the prediction of Jesus (Mark 14.27). But there, in proximity to the cross are these followers. Who, besides Mary, are these brave souls? As to the one identified by John only as Mary's sister, we are best to conclude that this is the same person identified in Matt. 27.56 as "the mother of Zebedee's sons" and in Mark 15.40 as Salome.<sup>7</sup> Evidently, Salome had long been part of the group of Galilean women who had actively supported Jesus and the disciples (Mark 15.41 & Luke 8. 2-3). Evidently it was she who somewhat assuredly requested (Matt. 20.20-28) that Jesus would grant to her sons (there un-named but known to us as the disciples, James and John) seats of prominence in the future kingdom Jesus would establish. Mary, wife of Clopas, seems to have been related to the family of Jesus through the brother of Clopas', Joseph.<sup>8</sup> That Clopas (not present at the cross) was himself a believer becomes clear in the Easter-Day

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<sup>7</sup> On this identification of Salome as mother of Zebedee's sons, see the helpful essay by John W. Wenham, "The Family of Jesus," *Evangelical Quarterly* 47.1 (1975), 11. This Wenham essay is viewable here: [https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/jesus\\_family.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/jesus_family.php) Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 13, rejects this identification.

<sup>8</sup> The identification of Clopas as brother to Joseph is one provided by second century writer, Hegesippus (c. 110–180), as quoted in Richard Bauckham, "The Relatives of Jesus," *Themelios* 21.2 (1996), 18–21. The essay is viewable here: [https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/jesus\\_family.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/jesus_family.php)

record provided in Luke 24.13–35.<sup>9</sup> There is also the strong possibility that the un-named companion of Clopas that day was none other than the aforementioned Mary; whoever this was, the two of them beckoned Jesus to “stay with us”. It was at their meal table that Jesus’ actual identity (which to that point had been concealed) became clear to them.

It is at the foot of the cross that we have begun our tallying of evidence indicating that Jesus was not without disciples from within his extended biological family. Not only his mother, but a maternal aunt, Salome (with her disciple-son, John—who would be a cousin of Jesus) and also a paternal aunt, Mary, were all there. There is the strongest likelihood that the husbands of these aunts (Zebedee and Clopas) were themselves numbered as believers. To this number we may also add the fellow-disciple and brother of John and fellow-cousin of Jesus, James. Though not present at the cross, he—like his brother, John—had earlier been recommended by their mother to Jesus for future advancement.

#### *b) At the Resurrection<sup>10</sup>*

Evidently, some of the women who were present at the cross to witness Jesus’ death, also took pains to go, early on the first day of the week, to complete the embalming of Jesus’ body. While John’s account (20.1) focuses first and foremost on Mary Magdalene, the Synoptic writers speak of “the women” (Luke 24.1), “Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome” (Mark 16.1), and “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary” (Matt. 28.1). Of this aggregate number, a proportion came away from the garden tomb utterly convinced of Jesus’ resurrection; Mary Magdalene had been granted a personal interview with the one she mistook for the gardener (John 20.15). Matthew supplies the information that a second Mary was also present to see Jesus (28.1, 9). That there were some confusing reports of the scene at the tomb is clear from the Emmaus Road account (Luke 24.22). But now, moving beyond this circle, let us note that in his summary of those privileged to see the risen Jesus alive at and after the first Easter there is the notable inclusion of Jesus’ brother, James (1 Cor. 15.7). This appearance to James is indicated by Paul to have happened earlier than Jesus’ appearance to the group of Apostles, of which we can read in Luke 24 and John 20. This appearance to James is very notable.

It is possible that Jesus appeared to James because James stood next to Jesus in the family birth-order. Whatever be the reason for his being selected for this interview, the seemingly unavoidable conclusion is that for James, the

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<sup>9</sup> In Luke 24.18 the name is spelled as Cleopas

<sup>10</sup> The author is indebted to John W. Wenham, *Easter Enigma: Are the Resurrection Accounts in Conflict?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) for his untangling of some ambiguities in identifying the persona named in the accounts. Note especially his chapter 3.

resurrection appearance of Jesus was the foundation of his faith and future service. F. F. Bruce put it well, “This experience evidently produced in James a revolutionary effect comparable to that which a similar experience later produced in Paul himself.”<sup>11</sup> Here the foundation was laid for James’ eventual emergence as the visible leader of the Jerusalem church. For after Peter’s miraculous prison escape followed by his exit from the city (Acts 12), James became the *de facto* leader, as is illustrated at the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 and at the return of Paul to Jerusalem recorded in Acts 21. Paul had earlier acknowledged this important role of James as “pillar” of the Jerusalem church in his two early visits to Jerusalem after his Damascus Road conversion (Gal. 1.19; 2.9). In due course and prior to his death by stoning in approximately 62 A.D., James—identifying himself only as the “servant of Jesus Christ”—penned the New Testament letter which bears his name. As with Paul, James serves as an example of one who saw the resurrected Jesus *without* the precondition of having already been a disciple.

*c) Within the Church at Pentecost and Beyond*

But this is to speak of only *one* of four named brothers of Jesus. The striking fact is that when Luke describes the group of about 120 believers assembled in Jerusalem to choose a successor to the traitorous Judas, there are present both “the women” (no doubt a reference to those believing women who had been present at the tomb) and “Mary, the mother of Jesus...with his brothers” (Acts 1.14). We have not been prepared for this final detail! How to account for it? We should not doubt the role played by the testimony of James, who had received a direct resurrection appearance from Jesus himself, in the reversal of outlook in a group which had earlier been among the naysayers. And their appearance together at the Jerusalem convocation was no flash in the pan. In the New Testament itself, we have two further pieces of evidence indicating that not only did the brothers of Jesus come to accept Jesus as Son of God and Saviour, but that they served Him much as did older brother James. The first of these evidences is the simple existence of the New Testament *Epistle of Jude*, in which the writer humbly identifies himself as “brother of James”. He, no more than James, is ready to flaunt his family connection to Jesus. Evidently, there is no need to do so, for as Paul indicates in Galatians 1.19, it was widely known and accepted that James was none other than “the brother of the Lord.”

For the brotherhood as a whole, it was this cementing of their family acceptance of Jesus as the awaited Messiah that opened the path to their future usefulness. And that there was a path of wider usefulness for them, we know both from a statement of the New Testament itself and the testimony of

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<sup>11</sup> F. F. Bruce, *Peter, Stephen, James and John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 87. By contrast, Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus*, 56 holds that the resurrection appearance to James presupposed a prior change in his attitude toward Jesus.

subsequent church history. In 1 Corinthians, the apostle Paul is impressing on his readers the sincerity of his motives, a sincerity demonstrated in his declining of remuneration and his determined support of his own ministry through “working for a living” (1 Cor. 9.6). This is likely a reference to tent-making. But as if to press his point further, he mentions that the practices he has adopted are not characteristic of the ministry of other Christian leaders known to his readers. In fact the right to “food and drink” and the right to be “accompanied by a believing wife” are things his readers will recognize in the ministry of “the Lord’s brothers and Cephas (Peter)” (1 Cor. 9.5). Evidently, while James was at the helm of the Jerusalem church, the other brothers were coming to be known as itinerant preachers of the gospel as far to the west as Corinth. And this is how matters unfolded in the two or three decades immediately following the first Easter.

The immediate family of Jesus, which early in his ministry had been united in opposition and criticism of his ministry, had in the space of three years done an about-face. By Pentecost Day, they were united in loyalty and service to Christ. And there is historical evidence that this loyalty was continued. Beyond the pages of the New Testament, there is the historical claim that after James, brother of Jesus, was died a martyr’s death in 62 A.D., he was succeeded as leader of the Jerusalem church by a blood relative, Simeon, a son of his own paternal uncle, Clopas.<sup>12</sup> This leadership extended forty years. Even beyond this period, there were known to be descendants of the family of Jesus living among the Christians of the East. The early Christian chronicler, Hegesippus, speaks of two sons of Jesus’ brother, Jude. The two, named Zoker and James, were Christian leaders well into the second century.<sup>13</sup>

## V. Wider Implications

We began this excursion by acknowledging the opposition from mother and siblings faced by Jesus during the years of his earthly ministry. In human terms, this appeared hopeless. The movement Jesus inaugurated—growing into the Christian Church—seemed as though it would only make headway if it focused on absorbing responsive believing individuals drawn from diverse backgrounds. And the young Christian Church in fact experienced growth by aggregating “male, female, Jew, Greek, slave and free” (Gal. 3.28). But this was never the whole story.

Even in the period when Jesus’ closest family members were ambivalent or openly opposed to him, there were numerous members of his extended family: aunts (and by implication, uncles) and at least two cousins who saw in Him what His immediate family failed to see. These were all

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<sup>12</sup> Eusebius, *History of the Church* 3.11; 3.32,3; 4.22,4 as quoted in Bauckham, *The Relatives of Jesus*, 19.

<sup>13</sup> Eusebius, *History of the Church* 3.19.1–3.20.7; 3.32.5–6 as quoted in Bauckham, *The Relatives of Jesus*, 21.

numbered among his disciples, with two (John and James) named Apostles. The first of these, John, is the person identified as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 13.23).<sup>14</sup> Evidently, in the same years when Mary and Jesus’ siblings would not embrace him, Mary had a sister and a sister-in-law who were themselves believers; the latter had been associated with the group of travelling female supporters of Jesus described in Luke 8.2,3. These will have witnessed to the wider family by example and word. In the same years when Jesus’ siblings James, Jude, Joses and Simeon had been resistant to his claims and his teaching, they were having to reckon with the fact that their Galilean cousins, James and John, had been openly committed to following Christ. Their interaction is referred to in John 2.12. There is clearly more than one way for God to work in families; in this case what might be called ‘secondary’ figures standing away from centre stage of the Gospel story, proved to be the influencers of those more centre stage than themselves.

One of the very first to grasp the significance of Jesus’ empty tomb on Easter morning was this same cousin, John, who finished second in a road race with Peter to the site. He saw the empty grave clothes and believed (John 20.8). The recorded resurrection appearance to James, brother of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15.7) will have followed sometime later that day. By this time, the report of Peter and John was in circulation (Luke 24.24). It is not unlikely that James had heard this report in advance of his own meeting with Jesus. Reports of the one-on-one appearance of Jesus to Peter had certainly spread (Luke 24.35). The witness of lateral believing family members may well have played some role. And we have already allowed that James, brought to believe by Jesus’ appearing to him, may have played some role in influencing his three younger brothers to embrace the risen Jesus in faith. God’s working in families can take many paths!

What we find recorded regarding the immediate family of Jesus, the New Testament records also regarding others. The Apostle Paul was not the only and not the first Christian believer in his extended family. In the church at Rome, he acknowledged six relatives, two of which he identifies as having believed before he did (Rom. 16.7, cf. 11, 21).<sup>15</sup> Was the witness of the first

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<sup>14</sup> The designation is used multiple times in the fourth Gospel. See also John 19.26, 20.2, 21.7, 20. It is suggested that this reflects a close proximity in age between the two, and a boyhood relationship developed during a common residence in Capernaum.

<sup>15</sup> The term used by Paul with reference to ‘Andronicus and Junias’ (7), Herodion (11), Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater (21) is ‘suggenes.’ It is a term used twelve times in the New Testament to describe non-immediate kin; only in Rom. 9.3 does it mean fellow-citizens. Richard Bauckham, *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), chap. 5, argues that the Junia of Rom. 16.7 is none other than the influential female supporter of Jesus named in Luke 8.3, Joanna, wife of Cuza. On this hypothesis, the Joanna of Luke—associated with the

two, prior to Paul's conversion, among the "goads" he had been kicking against (Acts. 26.14)? Did the witness of these, who believed before Paul also influence others among their kin? The young son of Paul's sister, taking great risks, clearly helped Paul to avoid kidnap and murder at the hand of his Jerusalem enemies (Acts 23.16). Paul's associate, Barnabas, had a nephew — John Mark (Col. 4.10; compare Acts 12.12). It is enough to say that in the first century, such family networks were a vital part of winning people to Christ and supporting them afterwards.

All who read this will share a concern for the numerical growth of Christ's church. Do we properly anticipate that God's Spirit will bring into the kingdom those who seem 'loners' or 'troubled' persons who are usually unsupported by families? And do we also believe that God will employ His own all-wise providence in using family members who *do* believe the good news of the gospel to reach other family members who, to date, have *not* believed? The gospel accounts press us to expect both and to believe both! What role may the Lord have for us to play in thus winning over our kin who are slow to believe?

**What role may the Lord have for us to play in thus winning over our kin who are slow to believe?**



# Book Reviews

## Biblical Theology

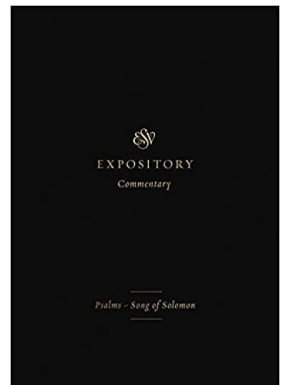
***ESV Expository Commentary, Volume 5: Psalms–Song of Solomon.* C. John Collins, Ryan Patrick O’ Dowd, Max Rogland, Douglas Sean O’ Donnell. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022, 1216 pp., hardcover. ISBN: 978-1-4335-4644-0**

The ESV Commentary series is built around the text of the ESV, a translation of the scriptures birthed in response to, what was perceived to be at the time a moving away for scriptural accuracy. The commentaries seek to continue that tradition of fidelity to the text as the word of God. However, the contributors have, where needed compared and contrasted with a variety of other translations.

The series editors, Iain M. Duguid of Westminster Theological Seminary, James M. Hamilton Jr., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Jay Sklar, Covenant Theological Seminary, are trusted names in Reformed scholarship.

The dust jacket gives the intended purpose of the series as follows:

*“Designed to help the church understand and apply the overarching storyline of the Bible, the ESV Expository Commentary is broadly accessible, theologically enriching, and pastorally wise. It features clear, crisp, and Christ-centered exposition and application from a team of respected pastor-theologians. With exegetically sound, broadly reformed, biblical-theological, passage-by-passage commentary, this volume was written to help pastors and Bible readers around the world understand the riches of God’s Word.”*



Each book begins with very generous introductions, including the typical overviews, author date, along with literary and genre considerations.

But these commentaries take the reader more deeply into the book with theology sections. In O'Dowd's commentary on Proverbs, we find, the Theology of Proverbs which is broken down into heading like, Wisdom Is Grounded in the Created Order, Wisdom Comes through Tradition, Wisdom Is Learned in Ritual, Wisdom Is a Gift Received with Wonder and Gratitude and finally Relationship to the Rest of the Bible and to Christ. Here the student is helped in making the connections between the wisdom of Proverbs and Wisdom incarnate through whom the book is applied to daily life.

The introductions, much like the ESV Study Bible, are jam-packed with full-length articles on the hard-hitting questions that preachers have to face when preaching the text. The articles are thorough without being exhausting. Collins has an excellent section on the curses in the Psalms, while Rogland writes on how Ecclesiastes points us to Christ. O' Donnell in the Song of Solomon deals at length with the obvious question "Is Songs eros or allegory?"

*For the Song is a song Adam could have sung in the garden when Eve was created from his side; and it remains a song we can and should sing in the bedroom, the church, and the marketplace of ideas. Yet, he concludes, "...it does, of course, reveal to us something of the meaning of the mystery of marriage and that, "beginning with [even!] this Scripture," we can discover eye-opening nuances regarding the "good news about Jesus" (Acts 8:35) [p. 1124].*

Each chapter is broken up into four helpful sections. The first part includes the full text of scripture in the exact format as found in the ESV translation, including textual notes.

Following on, is the sectional overview. This alone makes the commentary so very practical, regardless of the level of study. I would see this as being very useful for family worship, as it gives a summary understanding of the chapter without getting lost in the weeds.

John Collins, captures this, for example in Psalm 72 when he writes the following:

*The last psalm of Book 2 is a royal psalm, praying that the heirs of David's line might have success in the task God has assigned the king, namely, ruling God's people well, protecting the poor and needy, and bringing blessing to all nations of the earth. Like Psalm 2, this song looks forward to a worldwide rule of such an extent that it embraces in full what the Messiah will accomplish: the OT anticipates the ultimate heir of*

*David, who will take the throne and bring the light of God to all nations (cf. Isa. 2:15; 11:1–10), and the NT is careful to explain that Jesus, by virtue of his resurrection, has begun to fulfill this task through the Christian mission (Matt. 28:18–20; Rom. 1:1–6). Therefore, Christian hymns based on this psalm, such as “Jesus Shall Reign” and “Hail to the Lord’s Anointed,” have used the song according to its proper meaning. (This also explains why Christian witness, when it is true to the messianic picture of the Bible, goes beyond getting souls saved and also fosters the pursuit of justice and moral transformation of whole societies.) [p. 374].*

Notice also, how this summary of Psalm 72 comports with the thrust of the series as a whole as outlined here:

*...to provide commentary that is: exegetically sound.... biblically theological.... narrating a single storyline of redemption culminating in Christ; globally aware....in line with Crossway’s mission to provide the Bible and theologically responsible resources to as many people around the world as possible; broadly reformed ... (p. 11).*

The section outlines help break up the text into more manageable sections and is especially useful for those who are looking for a way to outline the sermon.

There is of course the main comment section, which is economical in its commentary and decidedly non-technical in its presentation, in drawing attention to languages only where needed.

Each chapter concludes with a “Response” or application section. Again, some with areas of application are richly supplied. Like the overview, this section takes the reader or family into very helpful areas of application. Hear O’Dowd as he applies the industry of the woman of Proverbs 31.

*“... we can measure the quality and value of work not by commercial standards—at least not primarily—but by the “communicative” value of our work. To what degree does our work bear fruit, restoration, and possibility in the lives of others? How does our work bring relief to others, gifts to others, and opportunity for others themselves to work and produce goods? How does our work celebrate and honor others? The*

*OT law orients God's people to do work that leaves behind goods for others, enables those in debt to start again, and allows every creature to rest from work (pp. 246–247).*

The layout and presentation of the commentary are aesthetically pleasing. Though the commentary covers four lengthy books of the bible, and contains the full text of each chapter, it doesn't sacrifice in terms of readability.

The commentary concludes with a substantial scripture index at the back.

Structurally, it is itself well put together and should stand the wear and tear of regular usage.

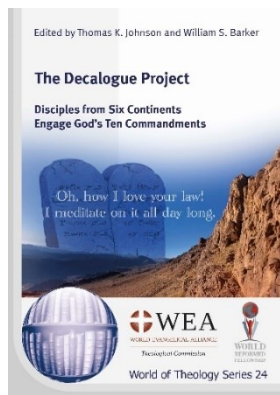
The cost of the hardcover might be a hindrance for those on a tight budget. But like their study bible, it is a veritable library of theological resources and so well worth the price.

Alternatively, it might be a better option to wait for Crossway's yearly sale and purchase the e-book at a fraction of the price.

I cannot commend this commentary highly enough!

*Reviewed by Kent I. Compton*

***The Decalogue Project: Disciples from Six Continents Engage God's Ten Commandments.* Eds. Thomas K. Johnson and William S. Barker. Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft, 2022, 264 pp., paperback. ISBN 978-3-86269-244-6**



This is a collection of chapters written by members of the World Reformed Fellowship in conjunction with the World Evangelical Alliance Theological Commission as part of a global project known as the Decalogue Project. There are sixteen authors who have contributed here, and the number alone tells one that this is larger than just a single entry per commandment. The collection begins with six thematic chapters before proceeding to the individual commandments. The opening six chapters need to be read and should not be overlooked as they address several very important and relevant areas

which need to be considered as one comes to the Ten Commandments. I highlight three of the six: Risimati Hobyane's, "Are the Ten Commandments Still Valid?"; Pierre Berthoud's, "The Ten Commandments: Given by God?"; and Thomas Schirmacher's, "God's Commandments Require Us to Read and Think Carefully." I found each of these stretching me in different ways and

setting a good tone and careful perspective to approach the commandments. Schirmmacher's chapter makes a strong presentation for developing a full-orbed understanding of the law for example in our daily economic dealings.

The chapters on the ten commandments vary as one would think in such a collection and do not follow a cookie-cake template. This allows for freedom of illustration and style of approach and with it comes a freshness and not just a regurgitation of what can be found in other books. This to me was refreshing as it can be easy to rehearse and harder to be fresh and relevant for today. Again, being selective here, I would highlight two of these commandment chapters.

I found Robert Norris's chapter on the second commandment did not simply rehearse but brought fresh application contextually and was very thought provoking about idolatry by way of political ideology. The chapter is well structured and easy to follow. Fergus Macdonald's chapter "The Fourth Commandment: Sabbath and Shalom" again addresses the contemporary scene and does not shy away from the current state-of-affairs concerning the Christian Sabbath. If one wants a good place to be brought up to date on this, Macdonald's chapter would serve as a good place to turn.

Many of the chapters provide engaging illustrations which are again relevant and helpful. I think here of John Wilson on the fifth commandment and Davi Gomes on the tenth commandment and Leah Farish and Thomas Johnson who did a double entrée on the sixth commandment.

This book will contrast in many ways with that of Herman Bavinck's newly translated work into English from the Dutch on Ethics reviewed elsewhere in this volume which is what I term a classic text. Despite contrasts, yet at the same time I suspect it has enormous common ground with *The Decalogue Project*.

*The Decalogue Project* is available as a paperback book but can also be downloaded for free at two websites:

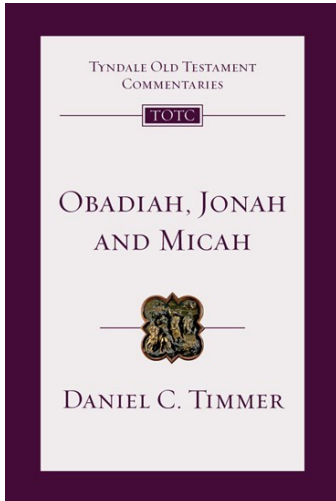
[https://theology.worldea.org/wpcontent/uploads/2022/11/WoT\\_Vol\\_24\\_The\\_Decalogue\\_Project\\_Web.pdf](https://theology.worldea.org/wpcontent/uploads/2022/11/WoT_Vol_24_The_Decalogue_Project_Web.pdf) or

[https://www.bucer.org/fileadmin/dateien/Dokumente/Buecher/WoT\\_Vol\\_24\\_The\\_Decalogue\\_Project\\_978-3-86269-244-6.pdf](https://www.bucer.org/fileadmin/dateien/Dokumente/Buecher/WoT_Vol_24_The_Decalogue_Project_978-3-86269-244-6.pdf)

Thus, this free downloadable pdf of the book makes this a helpful resource for the global church to avail itself of. My suggestion would be that this could be most helpful to use in Bible colleges or seminaries and assign select chapters either from the six introductory chapters or on specific commandments. The book is well edited and contains relevant and contemporary appendices and a scripture index.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

**Obadiah, Jonah and Micah. Daniel C. Timmer. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (TOTC) Volume 26, ed. David Firth. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021, 229 pp., paperback. ISBN 978-0-8308-4274-2.**



The Tyndale series of commentaries have been a wonderful series for entry-level evangelical commentaries for decades (they started back in the 1950s and 60s) and have been the standard fair for many colleges and pastors around the world. The name came from the old, *The Tyndale Press*, in the UK. Their pitch was that they were written to provide just sufficient introductory material that the commentary was not taken over by such background matters. It dealt with critical issues in a very concise manner. The heart of it was succinct commentary on all verses that was aimed at exegesis and not primarily homiletical in nature. Generally well-established evangelical

British-related writers wrote many of the originals, and they have stood the test of time. Many of the authors are now dead and a new generation of writers have been commissioned to write new commentaries and revise this series.

This revision text by Daniel Timmer replaces the volume which was a three-author single volume with David Baker writing on Obadiah, T. Desmond Alexander writing on Jonah, and Bruce Waltke writing on Micah and was published back in 1988, one of the later texts in the original series. Waltke went on to author a very substantial commentary on Micah which remains in print.<sup>1</sup> Daniel Timmer is a solid evangelical scholar and writer with experience teaching at three seminaries in Grand Rapids, Jackson, and Montreal and is a ruling elder in the Reformed Church in Quebec. He is the author of a major study on Jonah, *A Gracious and Compassionate God*, a work highly commended by D. A. Carson<sup>2</sup> and is also the author of a work on

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Waltke, *A Commentary on Micah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). Waltke was also a contributor to another on Micah within, *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, ed. Thomas Edward McComisky (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Timmer, *A Gracious and Compassionate God: Mission, Salvation and Spirituality in the Book of Jonah*, ed. D. A. Carson, *New Studies in Biblical Theology*, No. 26 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011).

Nahum.<sup>3</sup> These works are likely the chief reason that Timmer was selected for this replacement volume in the Tyndale series and perhaps for his other forthcoming commentaries on the minor prophets.

Those who have been using the replacement texts will notice a few changes from the original series, yet I do not think these changes should be viewed as steering the series in a totally new direction. I do believe that the series continues to stay the course on its original objectives, and I believe this Timmer volume demonstrates this. The replacement texts work to “longer blocks” rather than generally individual verses. Readers who used the old originals will of course see that the books have grown larger in format (12 cm X 18 cm, and now 14 cm X 21 cm paperback).

The key structure of the commentary section is the three sections of each block studied under the subheads: *context*, *comment* and *meaning*. The author also provides a full translation of the text of Micah. Such is not provided for Obadiah or Jonah as a whole unit. I cannot recall any of the original series giving full book translations but perhaps there were some exceptions as here. There are no maps connected with Jonah in this revised volume unlike the original, I suspect likely because of the internet age in which we live where such is readily available.

The bibliographies reflect updates over the last thirty-three years since the original was done on Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah and really show another generation of work.

I personally think it will be good for theological libraries to have the original set and also the new replacement volumes. Both will complement each other and fulfil an abiding niche as commentaries which are trustworthy and very useful to pastors and students. The series has stood the test of time.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

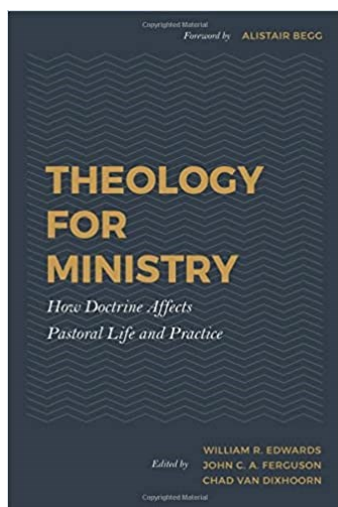
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<sup>3</sup> Daniel Timmer, *Nahum*. Gen. Ed. Daniel I. Block, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020).



## Systematic Theology

***Theology for Ministry: How Doctrine Affects Pastoral Life and Ministry.*** Eds. William R. Edwards, John C. Ferguson, and Chad Van Dixhoorn. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2022, 643 pp., ISBN: 978-1-62995-655-8 (cloth). ISBN: 978-1-62995-656-5 (ePub). [Pdf review copy received].



This book is two things at one time. It is a *festschrift* for Sinclair B. Ferguson; and it is a multi-authored collection of essays with an overarching theme. To do justice to the intentions of the editors, this review will treat the book as being these two things separately: as being, in effect, two books.

As a *festschrift*, this book, at 643 pages, is larger than most. However, the essays having an overarching theme removes some of the unevenness which is usually feature of *festschrifts*. The personal touch is found in the foreword by fellow Scot, Alistair Begg, the biographical sketch by Chad Van Dixhoorn, the tribute by friend and colleague, William Edgar, and the expressions of affection and appreciation given by the contributors. Ferguson is presented here as an example of the pastor-theologian. The connection of the essays to Ferguson is the theme of theology for ministry. There is a bibliography of Ferguson's writings to date.

Reading the personal touches, one is struck by the parallel between Ferguson and another Scot who taught systematic theology at Westminster

Theological Seminary: John Murray. Stories of Murray told by Americans tend to distinguish between Murray the theologian and Murray the eccentric, failing to see that those things which were eccentricities to American eyes were what made the man. Scotland contributed more to Ferguson than a cool accent. Ferguson's models for the pastor-theologian are Thomas Boston, preaching in his isolated parish and writing for the wider church, and Samuel Rutherford, dedicated pastor turned seminary professor. Ferguson's Scotland gave him warmth and wit. She gave him a gospel offer to be proclaimed, explained, and defended.

Transitioning from thinking of this book as a *festschrift* to considering it as a collection of essays, in the introduction, William R. Edwards identifies the problem which this book seeks to address: "A temptation in practical theology is to focus on technique and skill without relating theological substance to pastoral practice. The literature, at times, is experience-based and pragmatic rather than clearly grounded in coherent biblical and theological reflection. Systematic theological works, on the other hand, may fail to connect the substance with practice, neglecting to explore and express the relevance or implications of doctrines beyond the clear statement of truth" (p. xix). While "Theology for Ministry" is an exceedingly appropriate title for a book in honour of Sinclair Ferguson, and while he would recognise the problem, this collection of essays could stand alone without any reference to him. These are not studies in his works or his approach.

As a collection of essays, this book's purpose is "to demonstrate the relationship between theology and practice from authors experienced in both." (p. xix) There are twenty-five essays whose order and topics reflect the chapters of the Westminster Confession of Faith which treat the loci of systematic theology. The contributors are established or up and coming writers who are likely to be known by those familiar with this genre of Reformed literature. The list is "Scripture: Foundational for Life and Ministry" by R. Carlton Wynne; "The Trinity: The Doctrine of God and the Pulpit" by Robert Letham; "The Decrees of God: What Every Pastor Must Know" by Douglas Kelly; "Creation: The Essential Setting for Proclaiming Christ" by Ian Hamilton; "Providence: Confidence in God's Purpose to Perfect His People" by Michael McClenahan; "Humanity: The Need of Theological Anthropology for Everyday Ministry" by John McClean; "Covenant: The Structure of Reformed Theology and Environment of Reformed Piety" by David B. McWilliams; "The Person of Christ: The Deeper Protestant Conception and the Church's Heavenly-Mindedness" by Lane G. Tipton; "The Work of Christ: Remembering the Forgetfulness of God in Pastoral Ministry" by David Gibson; "Union with Christ: Gospel Ministry as Dying and Rising with Jesus" by Philip Graham Ryken; "The Holy Spirit: New-Creation Power for God's Redeemed People" by Dennis E. Johnson; "Justification: The Declaration of Righteousness That Shapes Our Present Ministry" by John C. A. Ferguson; "Adoption: Sons of the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit" by

Ligon Duncan; “Sanctification: A Pastor’s Labor for the Obedience of Faith” by William R. Edwards; “Faith and Repentance: Implications for the Gospel Call in Preaching” by Cornelis P. Venema; “Perseverance: The Hope-Full Gospel That Encourages Abiding Faith” by Paul D. Wolfe; “Assurance of Faith: Pastoral Wisdom for Struggling Christians” by Joel R. Beeke; “The Law of God: Preaching the Law as Competent Ministers of a New Covenant” by Philip S. Ross; “Christian Liberty: The Pastor as the Guardian of Freedom” by David Strain; “Worship: Grounding Our Practice in God’s Word” by W. Robert Godfrey; “The Church: The Well-Ordered Church in a World of Distrust” by Mark A. Garcia; “Communion of the Saints: Sharing the Spirit-Endowed Riches of Christ’s Gifts and Graces” by A. Craig Troxel; “The Sacraments: Communion with God in Union with Christ” by Chad Van Dixhoorn; “Missions: The Magnetic Person of Jesus Christ” by Daniel Strange; and “Eschatology: How the *Telos* of Humanity Must Inform Pastoral Ministry” by Michael Horton.

The problem identified by the editors seems to be one which might be better addressed at the institutional level rather than by a book directed at pastors. Essays on policy changes and curriculum development to be discussed at faculty meetings might be a more direct and foundational solution. The problem will remain until theological seminaries produce ministers of the gospel on purpose and academic theologians by accident. If theology is not for ministry, what is it for?

Taking the essays as a whole and without referring to specific contributors, there are some observations which can be made. First, in many cases, authors address valid concerns and make excellent points. That these points are expressed as new, rather than as truisms, would make one think that they consider the problem to be quite profound. Second, there does not seem to be much reflection on how the way in which theology is done in the present seminary system might be contributing to the problem. Third, these essays are a stopgap solution. They demonstrate that there is, and must be, a relationship between theology and practice; they give some direction; but their limitations demonstrate that this relationship must be integrated into all the courses of which an M.Div. programme is comprised.

That said, there is, however, one chapter which stands out both as a tribute to Sinclair Ferguson and as a demonstration of the relationship between theology and practice. Venema’s essay on Faith and Repentance expounds themes close to Ferguson’s heart and relevant to an exact biblical presentation of the gospel in the convincing of sinners and the up building of God’s people. Had more contributors followed his approach, this would be a stronger and more coherent book.

In summary, this book highlights the need for a debate on current theological training for ministry. The problem is greater in its extent than can be solved by one collection of essays. In drawing attention to the ministry of

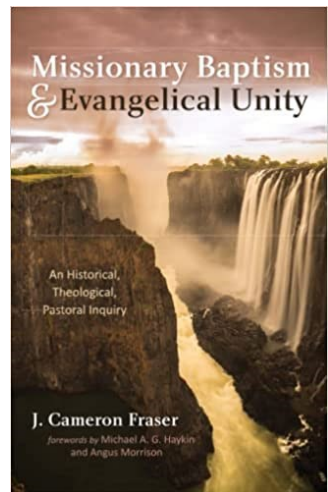
Sinclair Ferguson, it shows that his legacy will be a significant contribution to that debate, should it occur.

*Reviewed by D. Douglas Gebbie*

***Missionary Baptism & Evangelical Unity: An Historical, Theological, Pastoral Inquiry.* J. Cameron Fraser. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2021. 105 pp., paperback. ISBN: 978-1-6667-2541-4**

J. Cameron Fraser is a graduate of Edinburgh University, Westminster Theological Seminary (Philadelphia), and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, he has served in pastoral and related ministries in western Canada, as well as having twice been a magazine editor.

This study is an expanded work based on a series of articles in the *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*. The small but weighty book seeks to find common ground between those Reformed Churches who espouse infant baptism and infant dedication. The end in view is to give a more unified corporate expression among evangelicals who while agreeing on most theological matters yet differ on infant baptism/infant dedication.



What is Missionary Baptism? Fraser's starting point is household baptisms in the New Testament.

... more commonly known as household baptism, following the pattern of New Testament baptisms that included at least a few baptisms of entire households, a pattern more common in missionary situations than in established churches (p. xvii).

Fraser looks to Kenneth J. Stewart, author of *In Search of Ancient Roots*, a book that in part, addresses the practise of baptism in the early church. “Stewart suggests that a doctrine which cannot be demonstrated to be universally held throughout church history should not be considered a primary doctrine of the faith” (p. 15). He continues, “As a result, the practise of infant baptism ought to take a more modest place in the dogma of Reformed churches in the name of Ecclesial unity” (p. 15).

If I follow the argument correctly, Cunningham, who Fraser leans on heavily, is suggesting that the Westminster Divines framed their discussion of baptism around the model of adult baptism, that infant baptism moves from more primary issues to a secondary matter (p. 21). Cunningham adds, “Adult baptism, then, exhibits the original and fundamental idea of the ordinance, as it is usually brought before us, and as it is directly and formally spoken about in the New Testament” (p. 24).

Generously, Cameron leaves room in the chapter for a rebuttal from John Murray who while respecting Cunningham’s position, suggests we couldn’t conclusively know what was in the mind of the Westminster divines. Therefore, such a separation between adult and infant baptism was not warranted (p. 30). Rebuttals continue with contributions from Sinclair Ferguson and Robert Letham, who, in a collection of essays in honour of Donald Macleod, offered a stinging critique of Cunningham’s view.

Here Fraser puts a finer point to his conclusions on Cunningham’s view in saying,

Believers’ baptism in established churches need not be of adults only, but the concept of missionary baptism implies that it is of adult heads of families who then bring their families into church with them as the members of a believing family. Whether or not infants were present in the household baptisms of the New Testament is not the issue so much as on what basis members of the household were baptized—was it their own profession or that of the head of the household? What then of children growing up in Christian families, which is the norm in both Baptist and paedobaptist churches today? (pp. 39–40).

In the end, Fraser notes agreement with Tony Lane, who takes a middle road between, Infant and Believers Baptism, saying that,

The New Testament evidence for how such children were treated is not unambiguous. Both approaches can be defended on biblical grounds. No grounds exist for insisting on one way to the exclusion of the other. The policy of accepting diversity is the only policy for which the first four centuries of the church provide any clear evidence (p. 53).

Lane adds, “Both (approaches) demand a program of Christian nurture which, in the last resort, is more important than any of the ceremonies” (p. 54).

Essentially this is what Fraser is saying. Because there is not enough information to go on to affirm or reject a strict reading of infant baptism or believer's baptism, we should take a more charitable middle ground with infant dedication and infant baptism for those parents who ask for it.

I would ask, however, who is Fraser appealing to here? Is he speaking to Presbyterian Churches who want to make Baptist families feel as much at home as possible (noble as that aim is), and to do so, plays down the sacrament of infant baptism as a stringent requirement? The burden to change would be on those who hold to a paedobaptist position. Historically, with possibly few exceptions (some noted in this book) Baptist churches have seen membership into the church as expressed in baptism. It would be unlikely they would accept infant baptism as true baptism.

Would the concept of Missionary Baptism work the other way? Donald Macleod, in an article Fraser refers to in the book says,

... it is hard to imagine them (Baptists) going so far as to offer to baptize infants in order to make Presbyterians feel at home. On the contrary, they stick rigidly to their own principles, insisting that no one can be a member of their congregations unless baptized as an adult, and by immersion.

(<https://donalddmacleod.org.uk/dm/should-presbyterians-have-dedication-services/> )

Lane himself, suggests that it may even be hopelessly “idealistic” to suggest such a compromise.

Many born and raised in the Presbyterian tradition still have a hard time articulating a paedobaptist position. I fear the practice of infant dedication will be an easy replacement for people who will move from a position of not being able to explain infant baptism, to a place where they no longer need to try. And yet, I found it hard to argue with David Robertson, with whom Fraser agrees, when he says,

Remember what we are talking about here—parents publicly promising to bring up their children in the love and fear of the Lord. Parents publicly acknowledge that their children are a gift of God. Is there a scriptural warrant for having parents bring their little children to Jesus? Of course. Mark 10:13–16 tells us that parents brought their little children to Jesus to have him bless them—they were not coming for circumcision or baptism. Jesus did not give these parents a row because they were undermining the covenantal doctrine of circumcision. No, he ‘took the children in his arms,

placed his hands on them and blessed them'. But he did give a row; to the disciples who rebuked the parents for bringing their children.

(<https://theweeflea.com/2017/08/12/the-downgrading-of-the-free-church-a-response-to-donald-macleod/>)

But it also begs the question, has this historically been such an issue that it needs to come to this? I can joyfully share the view of David Robertson saying,

In my experience, those of Baptist conviction in my own congregation don't 'agitate against our own Confession either by divisive debate or by public demonstration. I have yet to see any demonstration in any Free Church against infant baptism.

(<https://theweeflea.com/2017/08/12/the-downgrading-of-the-free-church-a-response-to-donald-macleod/>)

The concept is named "Missionary Baptism." Though he states his reason above, I would think that, in order to have a broader appeal, it would be better to give it a better name other than a context that is largely foreign to most. A more technical name that gets at the meaning would be helpful before his argument becomes broadly discussed.

Rev. Angus Morrison one of the two foreword writers (the other being Michael Haykin) writes, "In a theological area in which a great deal hinges on careful conceptual nuancing, this study seeks to be fair to the many, often subtly differing, positions represented. An alert mind, it must be said, is required to follow what can be at times a rather confusing debate" (p. xiii).

An alert mind indeed! I found Fraser's work very challenging in its arguments. There is a lot to take in, but in a careful reading an enormous amount to learn! I found it surprising in terms of those he used in his arguments including James Bannerman, William Cunningham, and even Martyn Lloyd-Jones. For that reason alone, these arguments cannot be dismissed out of hand as some betrayal of the Reformed tradition.

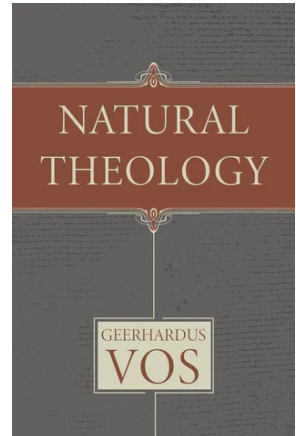
As some endorsing the book have said, this book will be part of the landscape in any serious discussion of baptism going forward. Fraser must be commended, not only for a carefully argued book but one which exemplifies a desire for true Reformed ecumenicity. Warmly recommended!

*Reviewed by Kent I. Compton*

***Natural Theology*. Geerhardus Vos. Trans. Albert Gootjes, Introduction J. V. Fesko. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2022, 184 pp., paperback. ISBN 978-1-60178-908-2.**

*Natural Theology* is a welcome primer on the Reformed understanding of natural theology. This recent translation is of Geerhardus Vos' class notes on the subject, which he conducted in a catechetical format from his time as professor of didactic and exegetical theology (1888–1893) at the Theological School in Grand Rapids (now Calvin Theological Seminary). This volume will be helpful in providing an overview of natural theology to the interested lay person or the busy pastor looking for a refresher.

This volume includes something of additional value that enhances Vos' notes: the introduction by J. V. Fesko. The introduction helpfully situates Vos' teaching in the contested history of natural theology. Fesko provides a summary of the debate within the tradition, particularly focusing on the use of Augustine and Aquinas by figures like Calvin, Junius, Alsted, the Westminster divines, and Turretin. Following this, Fesko gives a good sense of how 19<sup>th</sup> century theology, especially at Princeton Theological Seminary and in the Neo-Calvinist movement represented by Bavinck and Kuyper, also addressed natural theology.



This is an invaluable assist, particularly for the uninitiated, to understand the historic flow of the discussion and how Vos, a Dutchman trained and later teaching at Princeton, was interacting and riffing on the centuries-length tradition. Fesko then turns to an analysis of how Vos is similar and differs from those before him, and how those after Vos (Barth and Van Til) misunderstand the tradition with Vos providing a helpful counter perspective. It was interesting to note that Vos' approach to engaging the non-Christian world on natural theology was reminiscent of Bavinck's methodology in the latter's *Dogmatics*.

*Natural Theology* is bookended by Vos' overview of the historic development of natural theology at the front and a discussion on the immortality of the soul at the end. These sections are interesting, though not the best of this work. There are some absences here that stand out, such as Vos' misunderstanding of the Reformational rejection of natural theology (something Fesko addresses in the introduction) and the fact that Vos only looks towards the future of the soul's existence, not the past, thus neglecting



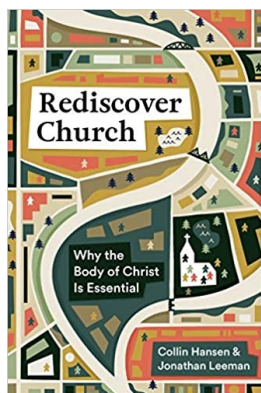
contemporary discussions of preexistence, Traducianism, and creationism which bear on the immortality of the soul (though this he does address these separately in *Reformed Dogmatics*).

The chief value in Vos' work is the way in which he outlines the various arguments for the existence of God in light of the effects of sin on man's intellect. Unburdened by the future debates brought on by Barth and Van Til, it is illuminating to read a Reformed critique and appreciation for the differing proofs of God, which takes up the vast majority of the text. In the post-Kant world, Vos is able to show both how the differing proofs for God's existence simultaneously fail on their own terms without begging the question, and are able, through the eyes of faith to strengthen the confidence of the believer in God.

In particular, Vos accessibly distinguishing between the different kinds of ontological arguments for God and showing how the cosmological and teleological arguments are derivative of Anselm's approach, is ministerially useful. This is kind of easy-to-follow argumentation for such a complex subject is pastoral gold. It better equips the minister to be able to encourage the Christian to ground their confidence in God, not in their reason, but in God himself and his revelation, which is reasonable.

*Reviewed by Cameron Shaffer, the minister of Langhorne Presbyterian Church, Pennsylvania. He can be found online at: <https://cameronshaffer.com>*

***Rediscover Church: Why the Body of Christ is Essential.* Collin Hansen and Jonathan Leeman. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021, 158pp., paperback. ISBN 978-1-4335-7957-8**



Who could have imagined in the early months of 2020 what changes “2020” would bring in the church?

Authors Collin Hansen (vice president for content and editor in chief of The Gospel Coalition) and Jonathan Leeman (editorial director for 9Marks) write as elders in local churches effected by a worldwide pandemic, lockdowns, divisions, heightened political tensions, and more lockdowns. With pastoral care, they write to the estimated one-third of churchgoers who for various reasons have left the church since 2020, with the aim to help them *rediscover church*.

As the subtitle of this book states, the authors contend that physically gathering with the church for worship is not simply a good option—it's essential. As the Spirit-filled embodied presence of Christ, the gathered church

is a central means by which God's love is revealed to his people and is an indispensable force for bringing healing to a broken world.

The authors' route for demonstrating this is through a chapter-by-chapter walkthrough of the authors' theological definition of the church: A church is a group of Christians (chapter 2) who assemble as an earthly embassy of Christ's heavenly kingdom (chapter 3) to proclaim the good news and commands of Christ the King (chapter 4); to affirm one another as his citizens through the ordinances (chapter 5); and to display God's own holiness and love (chapter 6) through a unified and diverse people (chapter 7) in all the world (chapter 8), following the teaching and example of elders (chapter 9).

At only 158 generously spaced pages, this is very broad book. The authors note there are differences in practice and polity among Christian churches (e.g., Who are the members of the church? Who are the proper recipients of baptism?), but these discussions are sidestepped for a broader platform.

Have the authors succeeded in demonstrating to those leaving the church that in-person, embodied gatherings for worship on the Lord's Day is *essential* and so helping them to rediscover church? I think not.

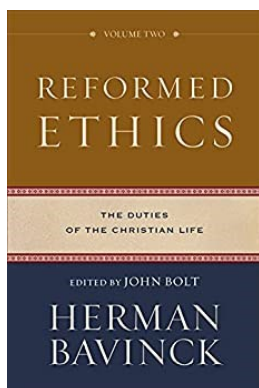
The book is a brief but solid introduction to the various marks of the church (there are nine chapters; let the reader understand), and it has its moments of showing the beauty and revolutionary nature of "the fellowship of differents" (p. 103) that makes up the gathered church, at work in a world marked by hatred and tribalism (Covid-pandemic'd or not). It would be a useful book for an introductory class on the nature of the church.

There has always been the "church is a people, not a place" crowd, and during the lockdowns, their case for online-only church was at least consistent. Collin and Leeman ably demonstrate that hearing the word preached, communicating with each other, and providing care and counsel is *best* done in-person, but not that they are *essential*. Many in the online-church crowd would suggest their insistence on physically gathering is simply a failure of imagination.

But what I most wanted to learn was how Hansen and Leeman, representative of TGC and 9Marks-evangelicalism, would argue that physically gathering is essential for the church *while at the same time* advocating for or remaining silent for nearly two years of lockdowns, the shutting down of public worship services, and the pushing of online "gatherings." How would they convince those leaving the church that physically gathering is essential? The authors carefully avoided stepping into controversial matters (they *are* legion), but in so doing, I believe they missed their target audience and perhaps the most obvious issue to those who need to rediscover church.

*Reviewed by Michael Chhangur who pastors Christ Church Halifax, Nova Scotia, a mission church of the PCA established in 2020.*

**Reformed Ethics. The Duties of the Christian Life: Volume Two.**  
**Herman Bavinck. John Bolt, ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker**  
**Academic, 2021, 522 pp., hardcover. ISBN 978-0-8010-9822-2**



This work by Herman Bavinck is the second volume in the series *Reformed Ethics* edited by John Bolt and follows the first volume, *Created, Fallen, and Converted Humanity*. In many ways it continues along on the current Bavinck renaissance where we are seeing a great interest in this theologian and his works.<sup>1</sup> In this second volume, Bavinck gives a very in-depth exposition on the Decalogue as it pertains to the reformed view of ethics and duty in the Christian life. The level of detail and scholarly attention which he gives to this subject is very comprehensive and will be a helpful addition to your bookshelf.

Volume Two begins as book III, *Humanity after Conversion* as an exposition on the doctrine and classification of duty (with very well-organized subheadings). In dealing with the doctrine of duty, Bavinck gives a very insightful statement. He writes, “*The proper ethical question to be posed to Holy Scripture is not ‘What is our duty?’ but ‘What is the relation of believers to the law?’*” (p. 1). The doctrine of duty is incorporated into ethics as Bavinck gives historical and Biblical evidence to show the relationship between the regenerated person and the law. Under the heading of precepts and counsels (p. 20), Bavinck goes on to state that “just as the law can be summarized in one word—love, so can duty.” He then goes on to discuss absolute duties and relative duties along with the concept of dual morality and the argument for the ethical category of *adiaphora*. This distinguishes between the relative or good of that which is desirable (life, health, and money) and the reprehensible (sickness, death, and poverty) along with related subjects with a historical overview. Bavinck then finishes the first section (Chapter 14) with a discussion on the collision and classification of duties. He states that “*when we are faced with what appears to be a conflict, we are called to discern a hierarchy of duties: duties toward God take precedence over all others*” (p. 61). He then discusses the problem and history of conflict that arises in the fulfilment of Christian duty along with relevant examples. When dealing with the classification of duties, Bavinck writes that since the Reformation, Lutheran and Reformed theologians classified duties based on the Decalogue. He then states, “The Decalogue, with its first and second tables, at once suggest a classification of duties toward God and toward one’s neighbour” (p. 89). He goes on to distinguish various aspects of ancient and modern classifications

<sup>1</sup> See, *Haddington House Journal*, 24 (2022), 73–75.

along with systematic classifications with a focus on the Ten Commandments. At the end of the section, Bavinck includes the statement,

All duties can even be reduced to our duties toward God, since He alone can and does obligate us in our conscience; since He alone comprehends everything, is above everything and yet in everything; since above each and every commandment are the words “I am the Lord your God...” (p. 115).

One can certainly appreciate the clear recognition of the sovereignty of God as the supreme Lawgiver along with the Creator-creature distinction that Bavinck sets forth.

In the next major section of the book, Bavinck has a very robust discussion on the Decalogue which he separates into three major headings: *Our Duties toward God*, *Our Duties toward Ourselves*, and *Duties toward our Neighbour*. In the first section Part A, *Our Duties toward God* he focuses on the first four commandments beginning with chapter 15 *No Other God; No Images*. Concerning the first, Bavinck states,

The commandment...prohibits idolatry and polytheism, heretical views of God such as Arianism, and self-justifying philosophical constructs of God by intellectuals, as well as the practical idolatry of which all are guilty who put their trust in something other than God (p. 119).

When speaking of the second, he states,

At the heart of the second commandment is the question “Who decides how God is worshiped?” It forbids all self-willed worship. God alone has the right to determine how he wants to be served; He must be worshiped and served in the way He Himself has commanded—that is, only according to His Word (p. 121).

Bavinck goes on to explain idolatry, superstition, invocation of saints and angels, images in Scripture and church history, as well as what it means to truly keep the first and second commandments. In chapter 16, Bavinck writes concerning the third, “*The Third Commandment prohibits cursing, swearing falsely, unnecessary swearing, blasphemy, and any misuse of God’s name*” (p. 177). In his discussion on the third commandment, he sees the proper use of God’s name to include prayer, the proper invocation and confession of God’s

name, and above all, the subject of oaths (p. 194). He then speaks about the history of when oaths were made. Bavinck finishes this section with a discussion on the Sabbath and he notes, “*the fourth commandment is about communal worship and rooted in the creation account of God resting*” (p. 215). In this chapter, he gives a Scriptural explanation of the Sabbath and then discusses Sunday observance in the early church and in history as well as considering various views of the Sabbath and Sunday during the Reformation. This is a very interesting discussion which I greatly enjoyed.

In Part B *Our Duties toward Ourselves*, Bavinck now considers such topics as self-preservation, bodily life, food and nourishment, clothing, the duty to life itself, and duties toward the soul, with a view towards the seventh to Ninth commandments. He states, “*We also have duties to ourselves. Although grounded in our duty to God, these are distinct from our duty to God and arise from our being made in His image*” (p. 277). Bavinck highlights the importance of self-love and self-denial as an aspect of self-preservation, yet not in a twisted sinful way of just pleasing of self and seeking of self which turns into selfishness (p. 293). We are to have a duty toward our physical life which means caring for our health while dealing with illness. We are to work to provide food for ourselves, but not to be gluttonous or to ever abuse ourselves, especially with alcohol. We are to have clothing and yet have a proper view of adornment and luxury, as well as important reasons why we are to have clothes. He talks about covering our nakedness and protecting ourselves from nature’s elements. Bavinck not only writes about the duty to the body, but also the duty we have to the soul. He states, “*God gives us life, and we are accountable to Him for its care and use in His service*” (p. 363). He declares that life is a gift from God, and it is entrusted to us for a time, but that we are accountable to God for it (p. 367). He shows the importance of life by dealing with self-defense, self-harm and suicide. When dealing with suicide, he even touches on the idea of martyrdom. Bavinck then finishes with a discussion on the duties we have toward the soul, and he speaks to one’s temperament, character, intellect, and feelings. To sum up this section, Bavinck takes an extensive view of the whole man, body and soul, and is very comprehensive in dealing with the duty we have toward ourselves as those under the sovereign direction of God.

Last, in Part C *Duties toward Our Neighbor*, Bavinck takes a look at what it is to love one’s neighbour, the degrees of that love and then the concern and duty for our neighbour’s life, chastity, property, and reputation. He ends with a discussion on covetousness. This section deals with the second table of the law, the fifth to tenth commandments. Bavinck wrote, “*Neighbor love is based on love toward God; the second table of the law follows the first, and both are headed by ‘I am the LORD your God’*” (p. 417). Concerning neighbour love in general, in chapter 43 he does make a comparison with other religions such as Buddhism, Confucianism, and that of the Greeks and Romans with the teaching of Scripture. He also notes that there are degrees of

neighbour love as some people are closer to us than others (p. 427). For example, He writes about love toward sinners (p. 435), love toward enemies (p. 436), as well as love toward brothers and sisters [in Christ] (p. 446). He concludes with a discussion of the last five commandments along with practical applications.

Again, throughout this book, Bavinck shows extensive research on this subject along with a very in-depth exposition on the Decalogue as it pertains to the reformed view of ethics and duty in the Christian life. This is a must-have book if you want to do a serious study of God's moral law with helpful commentary and application.

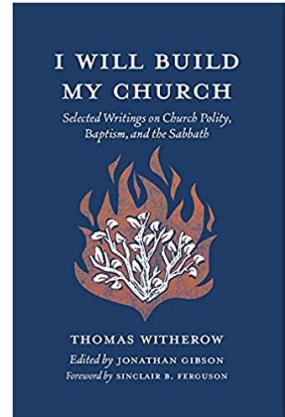
*Reviewed by Michael Jaatinen, minister of Mount Zion Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada.*

***I Will Build My Church: Selected Writings on Church Polity, Baptism, and the Sabbath by Thomas Witherow. Jonathan Gibson, ed. Glenside, PA: Westminster Seminary Press, 2021. 277pp., hardcover. ISBN 978-1-7336272-6-9***

In the west of Northern Ireland, under the shadow of the northern most peaks of the Sperrins, lies the townland of Aughlish in County Londonderry, which even today has a feel of quiet remoteness. It was here, in the humblest of circumstances, that the largely forgotten author of the three works at the heart of this volume spent his early years. Yet despite his humble beginnings, Thomas Witherow would go on to become a much-respected minister and professor of church history and pastoral theology at one of the leading theological colleges in Ireland.

Jonathan Gibson begins this work with a helpful and quite extensive biographical sketch. This follows Witherow through his childhood, and then the period of his academic studies, where interestingly, he encountered two giants. Firstly, Rev. Dr Henry Cooke in Belfast, and then secondly, Rev. Dr Thomas Chalmers in Edinburgh. Following ordination, we have an account of Witherow's time in the pastoral ministry, and then his period as professor at Magee College in Londonderry. Some of the highlights in this biographical sketch include, Witherow's approach to and Christological emphasis in preaching, his struggles with the pressures of pastoral ministry, and dealing with personal loss.

The biographical sketch helpfully sets the scene for the three works by Witherow that follow. The first of these is *The Apostolic Church*. In this work



Witherow considers Episcopacy and then Independency in the light of six Biblical principles. Having applied these principles, Witherow finds that both Episcopacy and Independency fall short of the Biblical standard. He then proceeds to make the case for Presbyterian church government. One weakness in the work is Witherow's departure from classic Presbyterianism's distinction between the minister and the ruling elder. But with this one exception, overall, his arguments in favour of Presbyterianism are well-reasoned, helpful, and convincing.

The second work by Witherow is *Scriptural Baptism*. In this work, Witherow considers two main themes, the mode of baptism and the subjects of baptism. At times, the author comes across as quite strident to modern readers, but this is largely due to the very particular historical context, where the validity of infant baptism was being called into question and Presbyterian Church members were being proselytised by other groups, following the Ulster Revival of 1859. Whilst the arguments presented in favour of infant baptism will be familiar ground to many, yet Witherow's particular approach to the subject is refreshing, and at points, masterful.

The final work by Witherow is *The Sabbath*. This work has a slightly different feel to it, being a published address originally given in 1871. Witherow helpfully considers the distinctions between the moral and ceremonial law, the abolition of the ceremonial law, and the changes to the Sabbath in the Christian era and its perpetuity. The weakest part of this work is found in the section entitled '*Attitude of Christ Towards the Sabbath*.' Here Witherow states that our Lord's instructions to the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda were 'a manifest breach of the inspired interpretation which Nehemiah gave of the Mosaic law' (p. 227). This interpretation is regrettable and diminishes an otherwise helpful work on the sabbath, where Witherow foresees the damage that society will suffer by the abolition of the Sabbath.

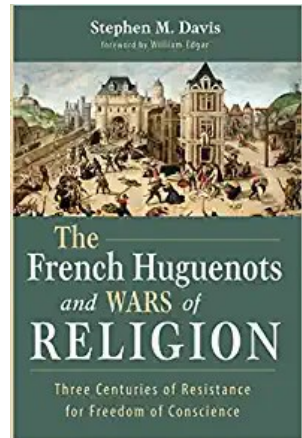
The republication of these three works by Thomas Witherow with the accompanying biographical sketch is to be welcomed, and whilst not all readers will agree with his conclusions, the time spent reading this volume will prove beneficial to all, increasing understand on all sides.

*Reviewed by Andrew J. Lucas, the minister of Omagh Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Northern Ireland. Rev. Lucas is from England and studied in Wales and has ministered in The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.*

## Historical Theology

***The French Huguenots and Wars of Religion: Three Centuries of Resistance.* Stephen M. Davis. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2021, 145 pp., paperback. ISBN 978-1-5326-6161-7**

Rarely do we review two books by the same author in one volume of this journal, and even more rare would it be to review two different, subject books by the same author. Yet here we are doing such. You will find a review of Stephen Davis's new book on missiology elsewhere in this journal and here is a book that belongs to church history, and which is a particular slice in church history, Huguenot history, and with a clearly stated theme in that historical narrative—freedom of conscience and resistance. This is also a reminder to me that good authors often have very diverse interest and abilities to apply their skills across the board.



The author has crafted eight clearly written chapters. These set the scene very well in the first three chapters with a good overview of basic Catholic context, selective and appropriate pre-reformational movements, and selective Reformation history. Then in chapter four the transition is clearly made to the Huguenots and chapter five is a survey of the eight wars of religion. Chapter six is the Edict of Nantes, chapter seven, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and then chapter eight the French Revolution. In all these chapters Davis writes carefully and not with overstatement in my estimation. He shows his ability to read carefully and to see inconsistencies and problem areas without resorting to pure hagiography.



Here is one example of the author's carefulness. I appreciated the nuance the author made about the plural "wars" of religion by commenting that he really sees it not in the strictest sense as "war" (p. 25).

The foreword by William Edgar, someone very well placed to write such, is most helpful to read first and really helps to open-up the book and also causes one to think with application in view. This is not just mastering the facts of the subject. This book highlights at many turns contemporary relevance and that is impossible to miss.

Rarely do we find many books coming out on the Huguenots today at a level such as this. It is a good introduction to the subject and also is thought provoking thematically. For those who want to read more on this subject I recommend the bibliography listed at this site:

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-71/huguenots-recommended-resources.html> which provides an excellent listing of key books on Huguenot history and various aspects of that history—persecution, resistance, as refugees and expulsion, and spirituality. Davis has also provided a very extensive bibliography in his book. He knows the field well! This is his second book related to French history, the first was *Rise of French Laïcité: French Secularism from the Reformation to the Twenty-First Century* (2020).

This is the second book I have reviewed in recent years on aspects of Huguenot history. I continue to find myself drawn to studies on the Huguenots. Davis in his Conclusion (pp. 115–121) starts with a quick content summation and then moves to modern France and the situation politically where the landscape shows signs of approaching oppression once again now with the Republic as supreme not the King, but in many regards' parallel ideologies.

The book would benefit with at least one good map illustration to help the reader unfamiliar with so many place names in France and related border regions.

I appreciate Davis's contribution and encourage readers to take it up if they have not read much before on the Huguenots.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

***The Power and the Glory: John Ross and the Evangelisation of Manchuria and Korea.* John Stuart Ross. Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 2022, 359 pp., hardcover. ISBN 978-1-5271-0891-2**

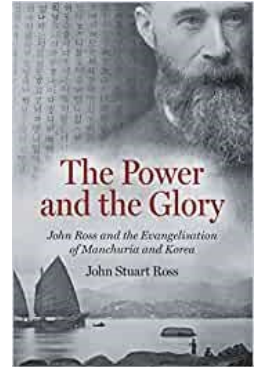
Dr John Stuart Ross (not related to the subject of this present work) has written a biography of one of the key missionaries to Manchuria and Korea in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As a retired minister and missionary with a Ph.D. in church history, the author is well qualified to research, analyse and write on the life of John Ross (1842–1915).

The first and perhaps most striking quality of this work—the first book-length account of Ross’ life and ministry available in English—is the way the author so ably sets the biographical story of his subject within the broader story of the period. This quality is clearly seen from beginning to end and moves the reader through the work in a chronological experience of years gone by—a brilliant context through which to study one life, one servant within the sovereign plans of God.

The book is divided into twenty-two chapters. The opening chapter “William Burns: ‘The Spiritual Father’” provides a moving account of Ross’ “forerunner”—William Chalmers Burns (1815–1868), missionary to China. Here the author pulls back the curtain on the Divine plan of God and challenges us to see that truly one sows, another reaps, but God gives the increase (see 1 Corinthians 3:6–9). Burns experienced this truth as both sower and reaper. His prayer for a successor to his work, a reaper, was mightily answered in the arrival of John Ross to Manchuria in 1872.

The next twenty chapters of the book outline the work that Ross undertook as evangelist, church planter and Bible translator—including the first version of the New Testament in Korean. Though the biographical details of these chapters are specific to the subject of the book, the author continually highlights universal mission themes and thereby encourages the reader to consider such subjects as cultural sensitivity; suffering and loss for Jesus’ sake; missionaries and current events; and the development of indigenous leadership, support and propagation. These themes broaden both the appeal and value of the work as readers could use this biography to evaluate missiological principles *today* in light of this carefully researched and documented historical example.

With that in mind, the final chapter, “The Hope of the Reaper,” outlines Ross’ legacy following his death in 1915 up to the present. Of particular interest may be the author’s evaluation of his subject’s methods in theological education and the possible hole that was left for higher criticism to



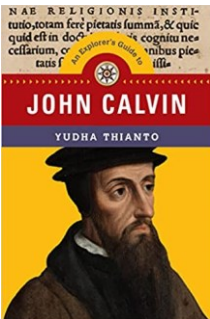
seep into the Chinese church. Ross' refreshing honesty and realism in this closing chapter, together with his clear affirmation of the sovereignty of God, brings the book to an end with thanksgiving and hope for the church in China, South Korea and North Korea.

An appendix entitled "Who's Who" gives biographical notes of some of the key people in John Ross's life. This expands the main narrative and reduces the confusion of people with similar names. A second appendix, "Geographical Note and Place Names" helps to link historic and current place names together. A few maps, a timeline, and some photos would be very helpful assets in any future editions of this work. Using endnotes instead of footnotes makes such notes a little less accessible as one reads. This is a shame, because Ross' notes are very helpful and should be considered with the text. The extensive bibliography will delight interested researchers, and the detailed index will allow readers to quickly consult specific areas of interest.

The Chinese and Korean churches were undoubtedly blessed by the labours of John Ross. The author of this biography is to be commended for his work in sharing this story with us. If you want to understand more about the evangelisation of Manchuria and Korea, read this book. If you want to read about a faithful, yet imperfect, servant of the Lord, read this book. If you want to learn how to write about a faithful, yet imperfect, servant of the Lord, read this book.

*Reviewed by Nancy J. Whytock*

***An Explorer's Guide to John Calvin.* Yudha Thianto. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022, 240 pp., paperback. ISBN 978-1-5140-0126-4**



Yudha Thianto was a new author to me. He taught for over twenty years at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois and in June 2022 was appointed professor of the History of Christianity and Reformed Theology at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI. Thianto is originally from Indonesia.

This volume is the third in the new *An Explorer's Guide Series* with previous guides being on Karl Barth (2016), and Julian of Norwich (2018). IVP Academic in promotional materials tells us that:

Anyone exploring a new territory knows the benefit of an experienced guide. A guide can make the difference between tiresome drudgery and a life-changing adventure. This is as true for exploring new thinkers and books as it is for places" and "The Explorer's

Guide Series acts as a guide for those who are exploring some of the great Christian texts and theologians from the church's history. Written by scholars with years of experience, these volumes will acquaint readers with the sometimes unfamiliar context in which these classic texts were written and help readers navigate the rich yet often complex terrain of Christian theology...

Guides like this series are highly useful books for the classroom and are worthy of very serious consideration.

The book is divided into two parts: Calvin the Man and A Guide to *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. The first half provides context and begins engagingly with the questions, why John Calvin and who was John Calvin for the first two chapters. One could easily see college students being able to be brought into Calvin studies through these chapters. Chapter three deals with frequently asked questions about Calvin and Thianto has brought forth several key ones. I suspect various scholars and would-be authorities may quibble here and conclude there could have been more such questions dealt with. I would agree however that the range selected for the purposes of this guide is sufficient and adequate. Then the last chapter in Part One the author focuses upon Calvin the pastor which is a most significant choice. It brings balance for the reader to see Calvin and the church not just Calvin as an academic type of theologian. It is a worthy reminder for us today.

In Part Two Thianto takes us through a survey as a tour-guide leader of the four books of the *Institutes*. Readers will want to know which edition he uses, and it is the standard 1960 edited edition by John T. McNeill and translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Before launching into the guide through the four books Thianto provides a chapter reviewing the various editions of the *Institutes*. He is able to make a fairly complicated story here quite digestible.

The guide through the *Institutes'* four books themselves is quick-paced and very cursory. This is not a compendium like either Tony Lane or Hugh Kerr's compendia, it is a *guide* and this must be kept in view. He is not quoting large sections from the *Institutes* but rather summarising as a guide would do. I think he generally gives accurate summary and understanding to what Calvin is writing. It is not an easy task and keep a book to a minimum length of pages. Interesting he does well on issues related to the fourth commandment for example and also Christ's descent into hell.

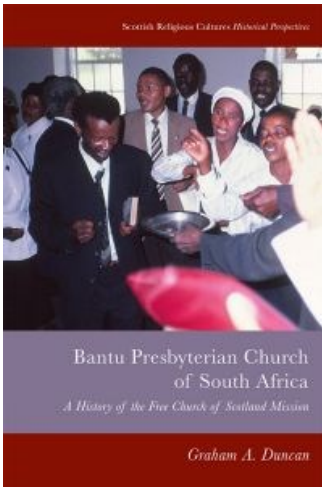
The book is beautifully illustrated and includes many shaded boxes (Fun Facts, and figures/charts), that give a certain appeal and help popularise the book to a wider audience. The author is a very good writer, and he pulls you along very nicely almost as if you were sitting down with him having a conversation. He knows the lay-of-the-land well, and it shows but never in a

way of becoming overbearing for novice readers. The suggested reading works at the end of the chapters are adequate.

I plan on using this book this year with a course that I will be teaching on Calvin. I think it will become a go-to textbook for many lecturers. I also think it would be a great read for laity who want to start a journey of discovery on Calvin and the *Institutes*. A work worth buying.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

***The Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa: A History of the Free Church of Scotland Mission.* Graham A. Duncan. Scottish Religious Cultures *Historical Perspectives*, eds. Scott R. Spurlock and Crawford Gribben. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022, 237 pp., hardcover. ISBN 978-1-3995-0393-8. epub. ISBN 978-1-3995-0396-9**



Graham Duncan has been a most prolific writer on Christian history in Southern Africa in general but also particularly on Presbyterianism in South Africa. This book is really the culmination of those many years of research, writing, teaching, and living in South Africa. One can trace it back to his first going to labour in the Alice area in 1978 as the last resident missionary there of the Church of Scotland and was ordained by the Bantu Presbyterian Church.<sup>1</sup> He has spent over 35 years in South Africa and has been very involved in teaching in various institutions—Fort Hare, Federal Seminary, University of Pretoria, St. Augustine's College, UNISA, and Baptist

Theological College, and has been very involved in mission transitions and in the ecclesial life of the African churches. Duncan combines academia and church life and is thus able to enter into the subject of this book in a most unique way (p. vii).

I recently have reviewed another book in, yet another series edited by these same two editors, Scott Spurlock and Crawford Gribben. That one was

<sup>1</sup> For a bio and listing of articles etc. up to 2016 see, Johan Buitendag, "Graham Duncan Dedication—A Tribute," *HTS Theological Studies* 72.1 (2016). [http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0259-94222016000100061](http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0259-94222016000100061) Further see the Bibliography in this book under review pp. 218–220.

for Palgrave Macmillan in their Christianities in the Trans-Atlantic World series. They are certainly active editors with these two series on the go. In the Edinburgh University Press series, a precedingly published work in that series by Retief Müller, *The Scots Afrikaners* is also a critical read, related to Southern African church history.

The first thing about *The Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa* is to see it for what it claims to be by the author. The subtitle tells us something immediately by referring to it as “*A History*.” This tells me it will not be all encompassing and deal with all aspects of perhaps fuller histories. Duncan tells us clearly what he is writing and so there are no surprises. It is not a strictly a chronological history nor a strict church history but a history of Christianity approach and much more oriented towards a thematic history (pp. 6–7). There are many brilliantly formulated factual summaries in the book such as an excellent factual summary on Lovedale (pp. 25–26) but these are in the context of the theme presented in that chapter and he does see beyond the localised and writes about Lovedale and Nyasaland and Kenya (p. 28). What one will see is Duncan’s great interest in the role and place of the Mission Councils which is the theme of chapter four and thirteen. I personally find this seems to resonate well for many as there seems to be a great interest especially in Africa on matters that relate to governance and polity but somehow this same proportionate interest may not be there for the evangelistic mission of the church. It is very interesting to go through theses and see what themes predominate.

Now there is a chronology within the book. A read through the Table of Contents does show this and it begins to be seen especially in relation to the dates from chapters eight through fourteen, more-or-less. Yet it is not an encompassing survey-type history in each of these chapters. Duncan is focused by his thesis as captured briefly within his chapter headings. Readers who have been acquainted with Duncan’s articles will also see they have been the basis for many of the chapters and have been recast no doubt for unity as a book.

The author has clearly spent years amassing information through his extensive research. He has combed numerous libraries and archives in the process. The Bibliography attested well to this, and this alone will remain for years to come a place for many to turn to commence further investigations.

I found his chapters, five and six, on the two secessions under Tsewu and Mzimba most interesting. I was very pleased to see that they were included as they are very critical to the history of Presbyterianism in Southern Africa. Duncan’s conclusion on Tsewu and that secession have much to commend for reflection and serious discussion (pp. 69–70).

The heart of the book for me was to learn more about the Bantu union of 1923 and the background history to it and the various divisions and views of the time. It is complex and yet very enlightening to study and to grasp significant issues in missiology in the backdrop of rising segregation within South Africa as a country. There are very few published works where one can

go to study this subject. This alone will make Duncan's book a significant resource for many years.

Duncan is not afraid to offer his interpretation and comment as an author. Readers will no doubt find themselves in agreement with his argument and conclusion but sometimes readers may also opt for another conclusion. Such it is in all of historical writing.

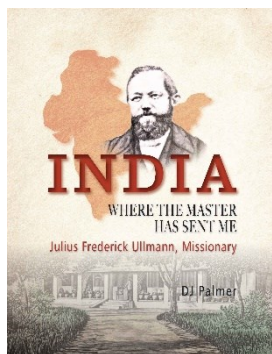
Readers will discover amazing tib-bits along the way. I found it interesting to read (p. 151) about discussion about union between the BPCSA and the Free Church of Scotland Mission (post-1900 group) and the PCA in 1958. I would like to read the source materials on this.

The cover illustration was well done and adds to the book. I did have one quibble (and I realise that this is most difficult to encapsulate given all the ecclesiastical variables of Presbyterian mission history) and that was about the book's sub-title. Does it make a reader focus their mind on one ecclesial denomination and not the complexity of the branches? For example, two things, one being a chapter on Tiyo Soga a UP, and second, the post-1900 United Free and post-1929 Church of Scotland. Maybe it is too complex to be a be more inclusive in the sub-title?

This book adds greatly to a neglected area of historical writing and will be welcomed. It leaves much room for others to take up more lines to follow and the hope is such will happen.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

***India: Where the Master Has Sent Me: Julius Frederick Ullmann, Missionary.* D. J. Palmer. Stanhope Gardens, AU: Eider Books, 2022, 354 pp., paperback. ISBN 978-0-6450875-3-6**



Here is an excellently researched book on a little-known long-term missionary Julius Frederick Ullmann (1817–1896). The author an Australian from Victoria it appears to me has gone to great lengths to collect source materials on a missionary whose main mission years were associated with the Board of Foreign Missions (BFM) of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) and their field in India. He has engaged researchers to help him in Philadelphia and the holdings of the Presbyterian Historical Society there

and he has also engaged translators to help with documents held in German archives. The proof is in the fine endnotes which accompany each chapter. The author makes abundant quotations from letters, reports, etc. and these are easily seen by italicisation so make for easy reading.

The book has high-quality illustrations with a nicely presented colour cover and is well bound. It certainly makes for a worthy contribution to the field of ongoing mission biographies and mission histories of the nineteenth century and the high-water period of evangelical mission history. The author is sympathetic to the theology of the subject and is not at odds with it. The subject is an evangelical Presbyterian (or a pietist of the Reformed German persuasion), and the author also an evangelical Presbyterian. He is also a distant “relative” by marriage, as Julius Ullmann married a Palmer woman from England (pp. 81–82). On this point the chapter on Ullmann’s wife and children (chapter 11) is very informative yet at the same time raises innumerable questions. There is room here for follow-up and discussion. In reading this chapter I immediately started thinking about William Carey and his first marriage and also about David Livingstone and his marriage to Mary Moffatt. The book gives us the facts and does not draw out forceful conclusions on this area of Ullmann’s life as some may want to see. (He does pick this theme up again in his conclusions to the book and offers a fair assessment). It would take perhaps a much larger canvas and the author likely tried to constrain the size of the book from what it potentially could have been as he tells us in his acknowledgements (p. vii).

Ullmann represents the classic conversionist paradigm in missions. Palmer summaries it well:

By the end of the nineteenth century, it was noted that many Hindus, once acquainted with the record of Jesus’ life in the Gospels, espoused enthusiasm, even devotion, for Him. Missionaries from a more or less liberal theological tradition, began considering such Hindus as Christians, or at least on the way to becoming Christian.

Whilst these trends in Hinduism and changes in the thinking of some missionaries were appearing during the latter portion of Ullmann’s missionary life, they did not alter Ullmann’s understanding of the missionary task. For him and his colleagues it remained the same: to secure the public profession of Christ, no matter the cost; recognising in Christ, the divine Son of God, the One who had come into the world to save sinners, Hindus included (p. 9).

This quotation is key in my estimation to the book and also to the subject of the book.

I found chapter one “Missionary Work in India and its Context” a most helpful contextual summary and introduction. It was very well done. This is then followed basically in a chronological fashion and with later select theme



chapters such as on his wife and also on Ullmann's literary accomplishments. Palmer walks us through Ullmann's life first in Germany then with the Gossner Mission and its India field, his transfer over to the London Missionary Society, and finally with the BFM of the PCUSA and their India (APM) field. The section on Gossner and the Gossner Mission helps fill-in background as to the nature of that mission and strategies and emphases. The story of Ullmann's changing mission agencies is not new and has many parallels in other mission biography. We are certainly reminded of frailties and limitations in all organisations/agencies. The issue of baptism also was a critical factor here as has often been the case. One leader changed his views to believers' baptism and in the end, this created a logical haemorrhage.

Palmer provided an extensive chapter (4) on the PCUSA, BFM. It is helpful to read this through and does greatly assist one to understand Ullmann's missionary life with the American Presbyterian Mission in India if one takes times to first read this background chapter. This does make this book much larger than just a biographical study. Then the focus is on Ullmann in Furrukhabad. Since the Ullmanns were there during the Indian Mutiny the author also provides a contextual chapter (8) on this subject and relates it to how this impacted the mission work.

I was particularly drawn to Ullmann's relationship with the APM missionary Samuel Kellogg and their united views concerning the discontinuation of English language medium schools and also the appointment of native pastors (p. 184).

In reading this book I found some very fascinating details and connectors to our recent writing and editing work on a survey of historic Presbyterian missions in Africa as I suspected there would be. It was very fascinating to read here the name Alfred G. Hogg, son of the famous UP John Hogg family of Egypt (UPCNA/UFS), but missionary in India (p. 315). The interconnections of the global Presbyterian mission work and its various tributary streams and theological complexities came together for me as I read this. Also, the parallels in Ullmann's mission literary productions had many parallels to our survey work in Africa (chapter 13).<sup>2</sup>

The author is to be commended for his excellent contribution to mission history and to missiology which he has made through this book and to our enlarged understanding of mission work in India primarily through the APM. The two appendices provide helpful overviews of two of Ullmann's literary productions. I personally would like to know more about Ullmann's hymns and metrical psalms. May the book be added to several college libraries and be read by many.

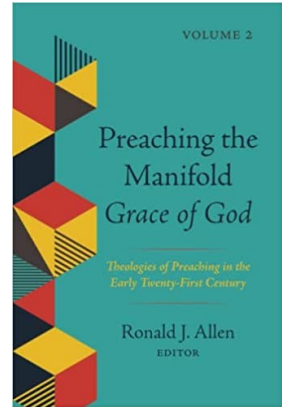
*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

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<sup>2</sup> J. C. Whytock, ed. *A Survey of Presbyterian Mission History in Africa: Historic Beginnings, c.1790s to c.1930s, volume one* (Wellington, SA: Barnabas Academic, forthcoming).

***Preaching the Manifold Grace of God: Theologies of Preaching in the Early Twenty-First Century.* Ed. Ronald J. Allen. Volume 2. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2022, 330 pp., paperback. ISBN 978-1-7252-5962-1**

Edwin Charles Dargon's two volume work *The History of Preaching* has been one of my constant companions.<sup>3</sup> It is a mine of information and was in recent times reviled by the colossal work of Hughes Oliphant Olds and his seven-volume set.<sup>4</sup> This edited work by Ronald Allen is different than that of either Dargon or Olds. It will take its own place of distinctiveness. It is two volumes with volume one on preaching as found in what are called the "historical families" such as Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Reformed, Lutheran, Stone-Campbell, and Pentecostal. It is descriptive primarily of these families and their preaching theologically. Volume two carries this forward to a very narrow time period, the early twenty-first century, not quite a 25-year period. With such chapters focusing upon historical families both truly historic and now contemporary, generalizations of course will be made and that is to be expected and recognized with such works. The author is very cognizant that there is much nuance that is missed, and the broad swath approach is the only way to contain these volumes.



Volume two contains 18 chapters on contemporary theological family movements. I will not refer to all chapters but take a selective approach. First bear in mind that most of these contemporary families have their roots long before the twenty-first century and this will consistently come out in many chapters. Just because they are contemporary does not mean they did not exist prior to the year 2000. The opening chapter is "Preaching in the Evangelical Theological Family" by Scott Gibson at Truett Seminary, Baylor University. In thirteen pages he covers an immense area of modern evangelicalism, basically taking the paradigm approach of the last 250 years for evangelicalism. He selected a sermon by the late Haddon Robinson (1931–2017) as a case study summation. Gibson had earlier done an edited work rooted in Robinson's philosophical approach to preaching so this was logical to find here. Gibson focuses upon evangelicals as having a commitment to the Bible, a commitment to the high place of preaching, and a commitment to

<sup>3</sup> Charles Edwin Dargon, *The History of Preaching*, 2 volumes. Original (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1905).

<sup>4</sup> Hughes Oliphant Olds, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, 7 volumes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998–2010).

scholarship (p.6). These commitments are preceded by trying to define this family. The chapter ends with a concise “Assessment: Strengths and Limitations in this Theological Family” and a listing “For Further Reading.” This also established the template that is more-or-less followed in several chapters.

I was drawn to read immediately the following as of first interest to me: the evangelical theological family, the liberal theological family, the neo-orthodox theological family, the postliberal theological family, and the radical Orthodox (RO) theological family (chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6). These were my first “go-to’s.” I did find myself reflecting over the preaching I have heard reaching back over my whole life and did find that I had encountered all of these very clearly. It did help me, and I hope it clarified some of my thinking and also my convictions as an evangelical and Reformed theological person.

The next set of chapters moved into some families of which I was acquainted but have also I believed morphed, and the editor has tried to capture these. For example, chapters 8, 9, and 10 very much flow together in many underlying ways. Starting in chapter 8 with “Preaching in the Black Liberation Theology Family” it is logical to find connectors to chapters 9 and 10, “Preaching in the Feminist Family” and “Preaching in the Womanist Family.” The key presupposition here is oppression. The connectors are various as womanist theology it seems likely emerged out of black theology and/or black liberationist theology yet also is interconnected with feminist theology. The author had a real challenge to establish the theological families to be included in this book, not an easy or enviable task.

Other chapters which were of interest to me were the two on “Preaching in the Asian American Family” and “Preaching in the Asian American Feminist Family” (chapters 13 and 14). Namjoong Kim tells us in chapter 13 that “Asian Americans are currently the fastest-growing and most diverse racial group in the US (p. 191).” This alone should make one want to read this chapter and come to a better understanding. These two chapters offer certain “slices” into this large community. Given the size also of the Christian presence in this community likely between 40 and 50% there will be incredible diversity, so these chapters are “slices.”

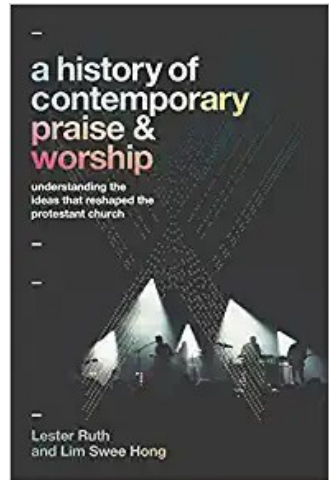
We need to see this as a collection which is in the great continuum of the history of preaching. This second volume is our contemporary scene. It is establishing an historical record and establishing a key reference work for the field. No, you will not agree with everything here, but the real point is to come to understand and see how theological convictions translate into pulpit ministry and ultimately into congregational life.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

## Applied Theology

***A History of Contemporary Praise & Worship: Understanding the Ideas that Reshaped the Protestant Church.* Lester Ruth and Lim Swee Hong. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021, 350 pp., hardcover. ISBN 9780801098284**

Have you been wondering how and why the liturgical forms of Christian worship have changed so significantly since World War Two in much of the evangelical church? Have you also wondered how to analyse these changes, how to respond to them? Lester Ruth (research professor of Christian Worship at Duke Divinity School) and Lim Swee Hong (professor of sacred music at Emmanuel College of Victoria University, University of Toronto) have written a history of contemporary praise and worship that will do exactly what the subtitle suggests—give understanding to the ideas that reshaped the protestant church. This new book builds upon their earlier seminal study, *Lovin' on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*<sup>1</sup> which continued the work of James White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*.



The book is divided into three parts. These parts are developed around what the authors call “two parallel rivers”: praise and worship, and contemporary worship. Part One outlines the history of the first river. The main theological conviction behind the first river, praise and worship, is that God inhabits the praises of His people. The way of worship was thought to be a gift from God to renew His church. It is characterized by prolonged periods of singing, and the concept of the worship leader was birthed (and increasingly grew in importance and influence) in public worship through this river of influence. The authors explain that the first river began just after World War

<sup>1</sup> *Lovin' on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2017).

Two and primarily under the leadership of a Canadian Pentecostal pastor—Reg Layzell. The story is fascinating and definitely worth the read as it occupies the first of four chapters devoted to the history of praise and worship and is foundational to its understanding.

Similarly, Part Two traces the historical development of the second river, contemporary worship. The authors explain that the main theological conviction behind this river is that there was a gap between “traditional” worship and modern (contemporary) worshippers that needed to be overcome by new songs that would especially appeal to the youth (who were bleeding out of the church at an increasing rate). Ruth and Hong trace the genesis of the second river, contemporary worship, all the way back to the second great awakening and devote a whole chapter to this history before offering two more chapters on the first then second waves respectively of contemporary worship history. It will not surprise readers that the social turmoil of the 1960s rapidly expanded the flow of this river in an attempt to respond to the perceived growing disconnect between youth and the church.

Finally, Part Three traces the more recent history of how these two rivers have merged into one. The title of the only chapter in Part Three summarizes it well—“the new liturgical normal, late 1990s.” The authors write:

By the mid-1990s both “rivers”—Praise & Worship and Contemporary Worship—were alive and roaring with activity...How the various congregations had gotten to this point varied. The underlying theological visions, drawn from the Bible, likewise varied. For some, the compelling motivation had been a promise connecting praise with an experience of the presence of God. For others, it had been to find a way to bridge the gap between an earlier, stale way of worship and people whom the church wanted to reach” (pp. 291–292).

The book is thoroughly and carefully researched with excellent footnotes and an extensive bibliography. In fact, the authors believe the bibliography is “the most complete, helpful list of materials related to this liturgical phenomenon published to date” (p. 315). The primary sources alone are impressive and exhaustive. Both the subject and name indexes are very useful as is the appendix that summarizes the two rivers in a parallel chart. This would be excellent for teaching purposes.

This book should be read by anyone who wants to take a serious look at the history of contemporary praise and worship. It will not only give understanding on the subject but will assist readers in their own response to

worship changes so that Biblical integrity can more fully shine the light on tradition and style with confidence and clarity.

*Reviewed by Nancy J. Whytock*

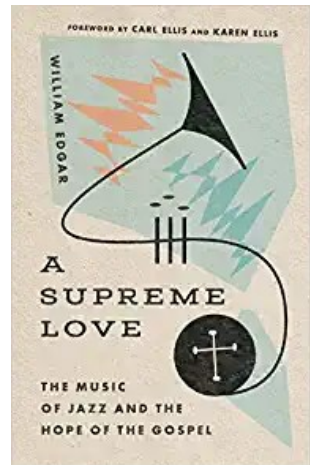
***A Supreme Love: The Music of Jazz and the Hope of the Gospel.*  
William Edgar. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022, 206  
pp., paperback. ISBN 9781514000663**

Even those who don't particularly enjoy jazz music will probably agree that there is something about it that is so deeply expressive of the human soul. William Edgar, professor of apologetics at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia (and himself an accomplished jazz musician) has written a fascinating account of the music of jazz as it relates to the hope of the gospel.

The book is divided into three parts, but before the reader gets into these sections, there is a wonderful introduction to answer some preliminary questions, "What is jazz?", "How does jazz allow for individual expression of the soul?", "What key role do aesthetics, culture and history play in the development of music?". If you only have time to read the Introduction, you will be blessed.

Part One then surveys the historical context for what would later become known as jazz music. By tracing slavery and diaspora, "the colonization of the soul", the beauty of music against the backdrop of slavery, and the remarkable embrace of the gospel amongst so many held in slavery, readers will begin to understand the deep roots of this complex and profoundly emotive music of jazz.

Part Two then examines the musical genres that developed and influenced jazz as an emerging genre itself, though not yet named "jazz". By looking at the music that developed during and then just after the abolition of slavery in America, Edgar shows how music was used to produce resilience, endurance, protest, and even humour. "Music-making characterized every aspect of the life of slaves. While the emergence of music in every aspect of life is common to many peoples, it was particularly a feature of the life of Black people, perhaps because there were so few other outlets" (p. 63). Edgar then looks at the development of spirituals, and gospel music, and The Blues. All are carefully defined and are traced historically so that the reader has a growing sense of the dynamic nature of jazz even from this careful examination of its historic roots.



Part Three takes us to jazz music “proper”. Within the five chapters contained in this section, Edgar continues his historical narrative and shows how the gospel and jazz are inextricably linked. Key musicians are noted and analysed for their contributions. It is clear the author knows a great deal about this genre of music and is eminently qualified to engage with it. Edgar, a white man, notes that jazz is by no means for black people only. He mentions Rookmaaker on this point:

When asked what drew him [Rookmaaker] and many others to jazz, the White, Dutch scholar, gave two answers. First, the entertainment music of the time was “empty, so superficial, that a good shot of something was necessary.” For him, jazz was a fresh response in the face of such vacuous music. But second, jazz also gave westerners the opportunity to protest the middle class bourgeois lifestyle (p. 116).

Edgar has a subtheme running through this work – the belief that jazz music is capable of moving us from deep misery to inextinguishable joy. The misery of the human condition is met with the power and triumph of the gospel —“sometimes quietly, sometimes clearly, but always present” (p. 180).

Readers who have not entered far into the world of jazz will appreciate the book’s appendix entitled “Selected Jazz Recordings”. In each case, a YouTube link is provided. An analysis of some of these recordings as they relate to the gospel would make a great assignment in an apologetics class or even a worship course.

While Rookmaaker’s work on jazz is very helpful, Edgar seems to have been able to go farther—perhaps because he is a musician *and* a theologian *and* a historian, so through this trivium of strength he is able to understand at a very deep level the power and blessing of music to minister to the soul in the whole spectrum of life’s conditions and challenges.

*Reviewed by Nancy J Whytock*

### ***How Should Christians Think about Sex?* Christopher Ash.**

**Questions for Restless Minds, series ed D. A. Carson.**

**Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2022, 96 pp., paperback. ISBN 978-1-68359-503-8**

This little volume is part of the ‘Christ on Campus’ initiative which has as its goal encouraging students to think Biblically about some contemporary issues.

It's author, Christopher Ash, is writer-in-residence at Tyndale House, Cambridge, having previously been Director of the Proclamation Trust's Cornhill Training Course. He has written numerous books and preaches regularly at conferences throughout the UK and beyond.

Readers should pay careful heed to the title and especially to the word 'think.' Christopher Ash is very much directing us to Scripture and encouraging us to think Biblically about the subject of sex. Those struggling with same-sex desire, pornography or marital unfaithfulness will undoubtedly find help in these pages, but Ash is really addressing our attitudes to sex. He wants us to see sex as a gift from God, given at creation, and, like all good gifts, to be appreciated and used to his glory.

His consideration of the often-asked question: 'What is the difference between unmarried cohabitation and marriage? Why not just live together?' was simply excellent. Also, though Ash is obviously totally committed to marriage as a precious gift from God, he counters the idea that the problem of human loneliness can only be solved by sex and marriage:

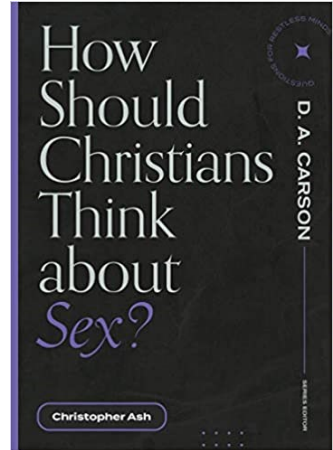
My point is not to deny our need for companionship, but to deny that sexual intimacy is the only or the necessary way in which loneliness may be alleviated...We want sexual intimacy, but we forget that much, if not all, of our human desire for companionship can be met by shared meals, conversation, laughter, activities enjoyed together, and relaxation in the company of others we trust (p. 44).

Another strength of this small volume is that it is not totally preoccupied with the issue of same sex desire and gay marriage. Ash deals faithfully and sensitively with these contemporary issues but doesn't allow discussion of them to dominate these pages.

The book is enhanced by the addition of nine Study Guide questions at the end of the book.

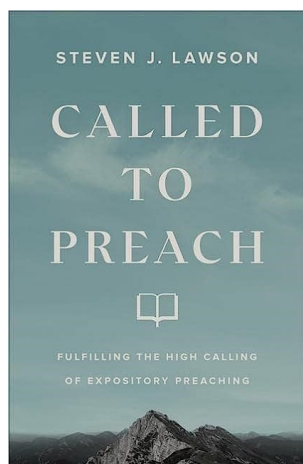
It would be wrong to suggest that this book is solely for the 'head' and not the 'heart' for the concluding chapter, 'Everyone can have a wedding day', is a delightful and devotional consideration of 'the marriage supper of the Lamb.'

*Reviewed by Gareth N. Burke, the minister of Stranmillis Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Belfast, Northern Ireland.*





***Called to Preach.* Steven J. Lawson. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2022. 203 pp., paperback. ISBN 9780801094866**



Steven J. Lawson is president of OnePassion Ministries and professor of preaching at The Master's Seminary, a teaching fellow and board member of Ligonier Ministries and the executive editor of *Expositor Magazine*. He is the author of twenty-eight books, including *The Unwavering Resolve of Jonathan Edwards*, *The Expository Genius of John Calvin*, and many others.

Lawson's view of preaching has been nourished in the rich heritage of some of the great preachers of the past and many contemporary expositors that he has known personally in seminary and ministry. From the opening chapter on discerning the call to ministry to the closing chapters on pulpit etiquette, Lawson draws upon the wisdom of some of these great expositors of the past whom God raised up in extraordinary ways to bless the church through pulpit ministry.

On the minister's calling Lawson says, "When the pulpit is strong, the church is strengthened, and her witness to the world is fortified. But when the pulpit is weak, the church languishes in spiritual listlessness, and society suffers for it." Therefore, "To exposit the word is the most strategic assignment ever entrusted to any person" (p. 13).

"Strong preachers are needed in this desperate hour, those who understand the high call that has been placed upon their lives. Biblical preaching is the vibrant heartbeat that pumps spiritual life into the body of Christ...Truly, the church is strongest when the pulpit is strongest" (p. 10).

To this ends the prospective preacher must discern a passion to preach, the ability to preach and a life of holiness which characterizes the servant of God. Lawson will return to this in later chapters. But it is in these that he and the wider church will recognize the call to pulpit ministry. The text then will place demands on the preacher to exhort, admonish evangelize and comfort; simply put to humbly and yes, bravely go where the text leads.

The holy character of the preacher comes through as he proclaims the greatness and glory of God. Insofar as the preacher maintains this relationship with God is he able to carry out this most important area of Gospel proclamation. He writes,

Not until we know who God is can the great questions of life be answered: Who am I? Why am I here? What is my purpose? Where do I find meaning? How can I know happiness? How can I be right with God? What

is death? What lies on the other side of the grave? What are heaven and hell? (p. 57)

Chapters 4-7 take us into the study and on to the pulpit.

Here Lawson looks at the need to have some familiarity with the original languages, a broad knowledge of Church history, finding a suitable place and time for sermon preparation along with careful consideration as to whom you'll be preaching to and the content that will be selected. When the content is determined then a deeper dive into identifying the genre and theology of the passage along with the grammatical structure; asking what he calls "diagnostic questions" of the text (p. 86).

In chapter five, Lawson moves from the technical aspects of the passage to the developmental aspects. Here considers how the text should take shape. On manuscripting the sermon, Lawson says that one should write the sermon out in full regardless if you preach from it or not, "Unless you are unusually gifted..." (p. 99). He suggests:

Writing a manuscript forces diligent study and careful preparation on the part of the preacher. It causes you to organize your thoughts in a structured manner with linear thoughts and well-developed order. It makes you think through your choice of words and vary your vocabulary. It leads to giving prior thought to a practical application in your sermon rather than offering it extemporaneously (p.99).

Later, Lawson will caution us not to be slavishly tied to the manuscript but to allow for the Spirit to speak in the moment and for more personal face-to-face interactions. Most of all, says Lawson,

... it must be etched into your mind and planted in your heart. What you have studied and written must be rooted and grounded within you. You need to become intimately connected with your sermon. Your entire being mind, emotion, and will must be saturated with its content. You must know your manuscript and be able to freely recount its content, feel the truth you will preach, and purpose to live the message before you can preach it to others (p. 113).

The content and manner of the preacher will flow from the mandate to preach the word of the living God. No matter the cost, the Word must be preached, and the text allowed to speak for itself. There is therefore a self-

forgetfulness about the preacher, a crucifying of oneself for the sake of the text each time its preached. Lawson quotes John Flavel who said, “A crucified style best suits the preachers of a crucified Christ” (p. 119).

Lawson recognizes that preaching is a personal matter and not a one-size-fits-all situation. He, therefore, highlights the things that are fundamental to good sermon preparation and delivery. Those fundamentals arise out of the New Testament model of proclamation. So, one preaches with humility.

Added to this, one preaches with authority, clarity, and simplicity. By this, he suggests that there should be an ordered flow from one part to the next. Along with these goes sobriety urgency and intensity. “Like a lawyer addressing the jury, you must call for their verdict today. Press for a response” (p. 128).

The areas Lawson covers are far greater than can be covered in a review. Yet, each point that he makes is so important and it's difficult not to mention them. The author is economical in his writing style. Though the book is only less than two hundred pages, it is more than just preaching 101, but is a comprehensive look at all that the preacher out to aspire.

Lawson reminds us that good preaching is something that cannot be just ‘taught’ but must also be ‘caught’. So, he exhorts us to sit under good preaching to observe how it is done. This includes the greatest from the past like Spurgeon or the present like James Montgomery Boice.

Much like good preaching, the true spirit of this book must be caught. That’s why I’d heartily commend reading Lawson’s book for yourself. The passion for the glory of God in preaching is felt on every page.

This was an exciting and refreshing book to read. It would be hard to think of anyone better suited to day to write a book like this than Steven Lawson. He has embodied the best of solidly Reformed, Evangelical, and experiential preaching; the kind that is desperately needed in the church today.

This book punches above its weight! One is amazed by the breadth of material in such a short work. Yet, one can’t come away from it without a fresh realization of the high calling privilege and joy of the pulpit ministry.

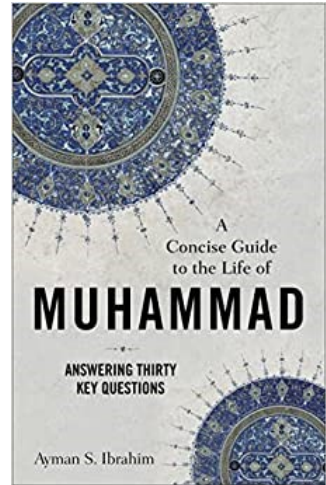
Lawson reminds us of what the pulpit ministry could be and should be.

When a book like this makes you look forward to the next time you preach you know something great is going on! Recommended!

*Reviewed by Kent I. Compton*

***A Concise Guide to the Life of Muhammed.* Ayman S. Ibrahim.  
Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022, 218 pp., paperback.  
ISBN 9781540965073**

Due to the reverence with which Muslims view Muhammed and the significance they attach to his example and doctrine; it is of immense importance to know something of his life and teaching if one is to understand Islam (p. xiv). Written primarily for non-Muslims, Ayman Ibrahim's *A Concise Guide to the Life of Muhammed* addresses this need. Ibrahim has completed two PhDs in Islamic studies and has written five books on the subject, including the companion volume *A Concise Guide to the Quran*.<sup>2</sup> He currently serves as professor of Islamic studies at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.



Ibrahim's book is precisely what its title claims it to be. Its stated aims are to provide a significant amount of information on Muhammed as he is presented in the Muslim sources, to introduce the reader to the diversity of interpretations on his life and teaching, and to encourage further research on the subject (p. xix). It is written in Q&A format and is split into two main sections: (1) Muhammed's history, and (2) Muhammed's message. The first section leads the reader chronologically through the major events of Muhammed's life as found in the *sira* (the traditional Muslim biography), and the second introduces his teaching on several important subjects. Each chapter asks a question of importance to Islamic studies, looks at the answer as presented in traditional Islamic sources, and then interacts with the questions and evaluations of current scholarship on Islamic origins. This organization and format is helpful. On the one hand, the chronological (in part 1) and logical (in part 2) layout of the questions make it easy to read cover-to-cover. On the other hand, since each question "was written to stand independently," it also makes an ideal reference tool for those who desire quick answers to specific questions (p. xvi).

One significant feature of the book is the way in which it shows the interaction between traditional sources and recent scholarly research. In the second chapter Ibrahim describes the early Muslim sources on Muhammed's life and teaching, and he highlights those viewed as the most trustworthy by Muslim teachers. The rest of the book repeatedly reveals how heavily these

<sup>2</sup> *A Concise Guide to the Quran: Answering Thirty Critical Questions*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020).

sources are relied upon in traditional Islam for knowledge of Muhammed's life, for fleshing out his teaching in numerous areas, and for interpreting the Quran. This is followed by a chapter in which he explains the cynicism with which non-Muslim scholars view the traditional sources. It is noted that most scholars "argue that these traditions are late and cannot be supported by independent evidence" and that they view "the vast majority of these traditions as forgeries and observe that the sources were probably written to address questions raised by Muslims at the time of their writing or to support political and religious claims" (16). While Ibrahim himself remains objective throughout, it becomes evident in the rest of the book that there is significant dissonance, at numerous points, between the traditional Islamic understanding of Muhammed and objective historical research. This is true with regard to such things as Muhammed's character (chapter 6), his birthplace (chapter 8), the legitimacy of miraculous events in his life (chapter 12), the nature and motivation of his treatment of non-Muslim peoples around Medina (chapters 13–17), as well as with his various teachings (chapters 21–30). In many ways, the most noteworthy takeaway from the book is precisely this: apart from the traditional sources written generations after Muhammed, we have very little information about his life and message, and yet from an objective standpoint those traditional sources stand on very shaky ground.<sup>3</sup>

Ibrahim's book is easy-to-read, informative, objective yet critical, and concise. For those with a desire to understand Islam or their Muslim neighbours, this book is a helpful guide. It not only provides a substantial amount of information about Muhammed, but it also gives the reader a sense of the wide spectrum of views on his life and teaching, both within the Muslim community and outside of it. I commend it as a concise guide to the life of Muhammed.

*Reviewed by Quinton Burton an ordained church-planting assistant in southern Ontario, Canada.*

***Missiological Reflections on Life and Mission.* Stephen M. Davis. Eugene. OR: Wipf & Stock, 2022, paperback 127 pp., ISBN 978-1-6667-3768-4.**

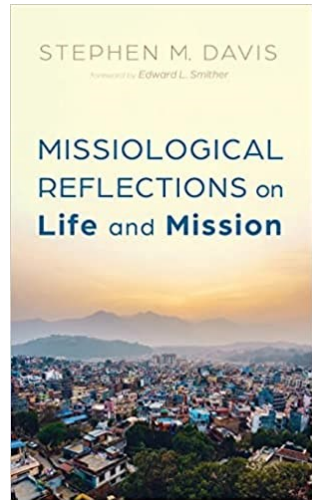
Here is a book which I have been waiting to find. It is pitched at just the right level for ease of reading and introduces to the reader many key themes and issues encountered today in missiology. I like to think of the book as sixteen questions answered in a readable and thoughtful manner but laid out as sixteen

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<sup>3</sup> Ibrahim shows that this is something realized not only by non-Muslims scholars, but increasingly by Muslims themselves (chapter 29–30)!

chapters. Though the chapters are not entitled as questions they very well could have been.

Stephen David served as a church planter in the USA, France and Romania and has taught extensively globally in Africa and Asia and elsewhere. He did a PhD at Columbia International in Intercultural Studies and a DMin in missiology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He comes to this book as a mature practitioner and has crafted well-distilled reflections with over forty years of mission and ministry labours behind this book and the book clearly has that feel. This is not someone who is just talking “off-the-cuff” but these reflections are generally well thought-out and have passed through many sieves. It is like this book has truly taken a lifetime to write.



To use the word *reflections* in a title I often find leads to a book with little unity of theme. This is not the case here. Also, reflections can often imply little scholarly interaction in the text. Again, this is not the case but nor is it overdone with half a page of footnotes either! The author knows what is going on in mission/s and missiology and does not draw back from interacting and actually saying something on many difficult points. Good reflection is akin to meditation on a subject or question. I find this book is really the author’s meditative responses to various questions.

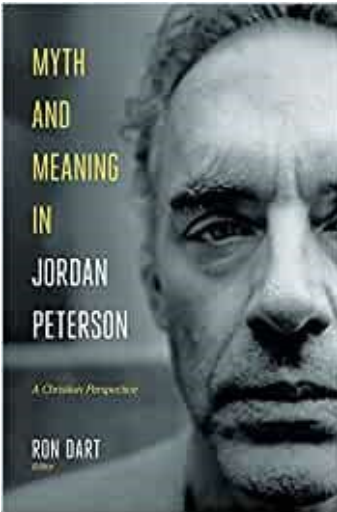
What types of matters does the author offer reflection? He opens up in chapter one with a grenade now in modern missiology just by using that one word, “priorities” in the title, “The Church’s Priorities in Missions.” He does not write to inflame but writes with conciseness and with clarity and decision. I also believe he is correct. Another “hot potato” is the whole issue of signs and wonders or power evangelism as it has become popularly known. He navigates well this subject in two chapters and also again introduces us to key names related to this without overwhelming the reader. He walks us through the paradigm shift in Charles Kraft for example. Other reflective questions addressed are about the Kingdom of God and the Gospel, poverty, Israel, the name Allah, music and missions, monoculturalism, multi-ethnicity, polygamy, African Traditional Religion (ATR), and community verses individualism.

I will admit that I was disappointed with one reflective chapter, namely chapter ten, “Music, Worship, and Missions.” I did not find these reflections as in depth with other sources, but it was more autobiographical. It is a difficult issue to navigate. His chapter on polygamy in contrast is carefully written with excellent thoughtfulness on a very complex matter. It was my first time to learn about digamy, which perhaps others will be familiar, but I was not.

This book comes with a good preface by Edward Smither of Columbia International University where he is the dean of intercultural studies. He encourages this book to be used by “younger missionaries and pastors starting their journey (p. ix).” I would add that in many college courses I think this would make for a good textbook and for seminar discussions. The book works between, the biblical, the theological and the missionary encounter and is a good blend of all three categories or as the author himself says he wants to reflect biblically, theologically, and missiologically (p. xviii). The book will not replace standard texts in missiology but makes a worthy decisive contribution, something which I find often lacking today.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

***Myth and Meaning in Jordan Peterson: A Christian Perspective.***  
**Ron Dard, ed. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020, 211 pp.,**  
**hardcover. ISBN 9781683593621**



*Myth and Meaning in Jordan Peterson* is a collection of essays which seeks to give a Christian perspective on the sudden rise and influence of Jordan B. Peterson, the title of the book being a play on Peterson’s *Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief*. This anthology seeks to understand why he is so prominent on the world stage, what positive contributions he has made to the public discussion and what critical questions can be asked of Peterson from a Christian perspective.

The reader gains a good understanding of Peterson’s views on a range of important issues and begins to understand the philosophical foundations and framework through which Peterson views the world and culture. Furthermore, the reader gains insights as to why Peterson has had such an impact on the world stage, namely with younger male audiences.

The topics discussed in the collection of essays are broad and reflect the range of issues that Peterson has tackled in his public lectures and best-selling books. Noteworthy topics include his defense of free speech and his criticism of compelled speech (especially from a Canadian context), his advocacy for personal responsibility, his critique of Marxist/neomarkist ideology, and the role of Carl Jung in shaping his perspective. Of particular note for Christians is Peterson’s lecture series on the book of Genesis, in which

he offers insights into biblical narratives that both believers and non-believers can find valuable.

The book acknowledges Peterson's contributions to public discourse while also critiquing his intellectual shortcomings. Peterson believes "not only that each individual can act in a Christ-like way...but also that if we do, the suffering in the world can be mitigated. He sums love up as 'the desire in you to see the good in others flourish'" (p. 201). While he seeks to defend the system of western thought and classical liberal order that has undergirded western traditions for several centuries, Peterson is not without his flaws. He does not describe himself as a Christian, nor does he hold to a literal reading of biblical narratives. He views the Bible as a series of archetypal narratives, not historical accounts. Nonetheless, he views the Bible as holding real and true wisdom. Although not believing in God, he believes we "should live as though God exists" (p. 28). Indeed, Peterson's conclusions are often correct, but as one contributor states, "Ultimately Peterson is right about many things, but not always for the right reasons" (p. 28).

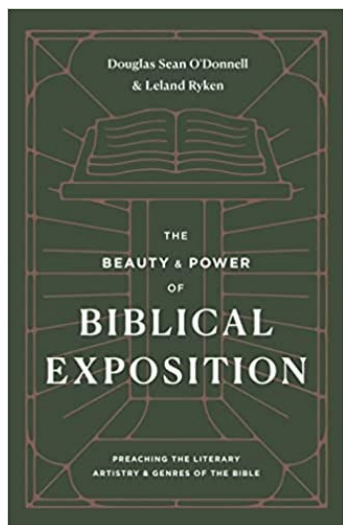
Some essays, although highlighting important aspects of Peterson's thought and his contribution to important public discussions, fail to apply or relate this to a distinctly *Christian* perspective. In fact, some essays have no reference to Scripture at all, nor do they provide insight into how Peterson's contributions on a particular topic align with historical Christian teachings. However, with that said, I found Chapter 1 "Jordan Peterson and the Chaos of Our Secular Age" by Bruce Riley Ashford and Chapter 10, "Being and Meaning: Jordan Peterson's Antidote to Evil" by Matthew and Joy Steem, to be the most compelling and fruitful chapters of this work. These two chapters alone make this book worth reading.

In conclusion, this book is a valuable resource for church leaders and laypeople alike and will serve as a helpful guide for Christians who may have questions or concerns about Peterson's teachings and how they relate to the Christian faith. This work provides a balanced and informative overview of Peterson's ideas, their strengths and weaknesses, and their relevance for contemporary culture. It remains a valuable resource for those seeking to understand one of today's most influential public figures.

*Reviewed by Peter H. Gaudet who works as a senior research scientist at BioVectra Inc. in Charlottetown, PEI and is a member at Desable Free Church of Scotland.*



***The Beauty and Power of Biblical Exposition.* Douglas Sean O'Donnell & Leland Ryken. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022, 302 pp., paperback. ISBN 978-1-4335-7044-5**



Not just another technical book on the “how to’s” of preaching, this volume seeks to “bring the thunder” back to the art of proclamation. Uniquely composed, the “voice” of this book is that of Douglas Sean O’Donnell, Vice President of Crossway and seasoned preacher of over 20 years. But in each chapter, O’Donnell is interacting with the writings of Dr. Leland Ryken (amongst others), who wrote separately on each of the genres of scripture. The goal of this book is to blend the literary and academic experience of Dr. Ryken with the preacher’s perspective of O’Donnell, with the effort of the reader appreciating the unique literary dimensions of the Bible. Simply put, the authors seek to equip preachers to

distinguish between the literary genres of scripture, making each genre come alive for the congregation.

This book is written in a very attractive style with worked-in natural humor, making it easy to keep turning the page.

The format of this book centers around the 6 main genres found within the Bible. A chapter is reserved for each genre, with practical advice and tools to help the preacher master the form so as to master the message (p. 61). The authors repeatedly stress that sermons preached from the different genres of scripture should sound significantly different to the ears of the congregation. There is no “one size fits all” approach to preaching the various literary styles of God’s Word.

Particularly appreciated in chapter 1, on preaching Biblical narrative, is the stress of the authors on making the biblical story an “everybody’s story” so that the congregant is reliving the account through their own imagination. This chapter is very helpful for those who find it a tendency to simply moralize a narrative text or use a narrative passage to proof-text for some doctrinal point.

Chapter 2 is on preaching the parables. One can consider this chapter the “Cole’s Notes” on Craig Bloomberg’s much larger works *Preaching the Parables* and *Interpreting the Parables*, which are repeatedly referenced throughout this chapter.

In the next chapter, regarding preaching the epistles, the authors urge the preacher to resist the temptation to turn the sermon into a theological

treatise. These are personal letters written to congregations and people and faithful preaching on a passage from an epistle will strive to build a bridge between the original audience and the current audience one is preaching to (p. 128). My only quibble from this chapter is the authors' failure to emphasize the importance of rhetorical question in bringing the truths of an epistolary passage home to the hearts of the congregation, a literary device used frequently within the epistles of scripture.

Chapters 4 and 5 of this book take up the Wisdom Literature of the Bible. Particularly appreciated is that these authors divide Hebrew poetry from proverbs, dealing with each in separate chapters. For this reviewer, the chapter on Proverbs "sold the book for me." As many preachers have discovered, Proverbs is a great book for daily guidance and encouragement, but a very difficult book to preach from. Full of practical aid and advice, this chapter also contains a full sermon series outline for the Book of Proverbs.

Chapter 6 on visionary writings (apocalyptic literature) rounds out this book. I particularly appreciated the opening observations on this chapter. Apocalyptic literature in the Bible is not meant to confuse or confound but to comfort the persecuted, afflicted and discouraged (p. 237). The imagery is to be memorable, to summon the readers' attention to the deep truths of a Sovereign God. The authors encourage the preacher to seek the turn the congregation's "ears into eyes," so that they can visualize the truth begin depicted (p. 271).

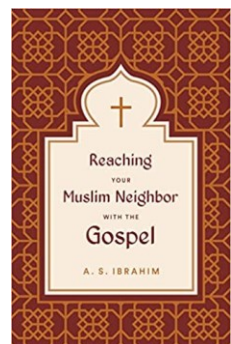
Full of helpful advice and warning, this book provides an excellent tool for the new or seasoned preachers to appreciate and bring to life the various literary genres of scripture.

*Reviewed by Doug Bylsma pastor of Hope Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Beamsville, Ontario.*

***Reaching Your Muslim Neighbor with the Gospel.* A. S. Ibrahim, Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022, 177 pp., paperback. ISBN 978-1-4335-8202-8**

*Reaching Your Muslim Neighbor with the Gospel* is an accessible and highly practical read, covering subjects in a way very few other books on the topic have managed to do, and making it a unique contribution which can be used by individuals, groups or whole churches alike.

The author A. S. Ibrahim, an Egyptian man who witnessed many Muslims coming to know and love the Lord Jesus during his years in Egypt and his time reaching out across the Arab world and beyond, is now based in the USA and writes to help Western readers "understand the Muslim mindset, so that [we] can relate



to Muslims more effectively....If [we] don't understand their paradigm, [our] words will hardly resonate with them....We want our gospel conversations with Muslims to gain fruits – eternal ones.” (p. 12). Secondly, he writes to help us have confidence and boldness in our evangelism to Muslims, centring around prayer and the scriptures. With these two aims, the book is largely divided in two.

Given the author's background and experiences, the book's advice shows that the following two often heard and well-meaning suggestions aren't true:

*“That won't work here because our culture is different”*

By sharing stories and examples across many cultures, Ibrahim helps us to see that we are called to live out some Biblical principles regardless of our culture—and they work! The author is passionate to stay close to things that scripture is clear about and heavily emphasizes (and therefore not to get caught up in the latest missiological fad or desire for quick success). In this way, this book sits apart from the vast majority of other recent books and theological papers in missiology journals on similar themes, which seem to more be about learning methodologies or finding illusive individuals who will unlock rapid gospel advance in a particular setting.

*“I'm not like you, so I don't think I could do that”*

Unlike many evangelists, it never felt like Ibrahim was placing more on my shoulders than Jesus himself places. That said, there was little mention of different roles of Christians in a community or church that is reaching out *together*. Whilst there was a lot to learn and take in from the chapters and examples, it all felt quite normal—like conversations that I could have myself, without a degree in Islamics or years of study. In fact, the author also admits in several places that things will look differently depending on who we are or where we are, but that the same principles from the scriptures will hold true. And that even when we get it ‘wrong’ that God can still use us in our weakness.

It was refreshing to read someone who clearly has great confidence in both the sovereignty of God in evangelism and also a passion to proclaim his name to all. And I pray that this book will be widely shared, read and applied across the globe. If I were to ask one thing, it would be to see how the author

applies the next stages of outreach in Muslim contexts, in seeing churches grow—I hope there will be other works in the future!

*Reviewed by Peadar Macgregor who lives and works in Ireland, helping in his spare time to equip the church to reach out with the good news to the least reached both there and globally.*

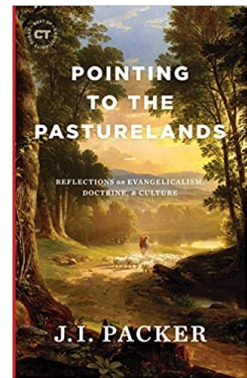
***Pointing to the Pasturelands: Reflections on Evangelicalism, Doctrine, & Culture.* J. I. Packer. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021, 304 pp., hardcover. ISBN 978-1-68359-543-4**

This is truly a heart-warming and stimulating posthumous collection of short columns and articles of previously published writings by J. I. Packer (1926–2020) published over many years in the magazine, *Christianity Today*, the earliest of which go back to 1958 and the latest 2008. The idea to bring these together as a collection was a stroke of genius otherwise most of these would be forgotten or not discovered one fears. The compilers have provided a careful Source index (pp. 297–300) for this collection.

1958 was significant for Packer as a writer as that was the year his noted work ‘*Fundamentalism and the Word of God*’ was first published in the UK, hence it was no surprise to see that sure enough entry 28 was “Fundamentalism: The British Scene” which was from *Christianity Today* 29 September 1958. That book and that article began the journey whereby Packer’s name and influence began to grow in North America.

The book has a gracefully presented jacket-cover with a wonderful illustration and a finely honed title and subtitle all of which encompass the collection so well. Pastures are for feeding and this collection is surely that! The subtitle has captured very well what is contained here. Full marks to the publishing house and compilers who have done all this work to make such a beautiful book.

The work is divided into three parts: Packer’s columns, Packer’s articles, and Packer’s answers to questions. A few I have recollection of maybe having read before. The nice thing is they are now here as a set. The reader will find them very broad ranging and always stimulating. I appreciated the variety very much because it helps us to expand our spiritual understanding beyond some of our normal paths and this is good. It is good to think through early Jazz music. It is good to think through the World Council of Churches. It is good to think through textual criticism and inerrancy. It is good to think through John Calvin on pleasure. It is good to think through the influence of



Christian writers like Klaus Bockmuehl or C. S. Lewis. I could keep going. The variety is one of the strengths of the collection.

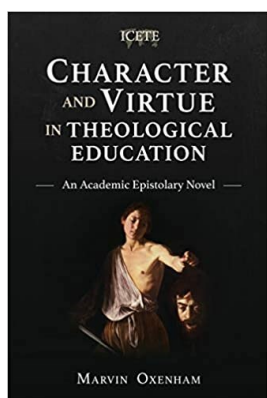
Mark Noll's Epilogue (pp. 287–295) is a succinctly crafted composition to end this collection and well worth the read. He has brought forth a very fitting summary and reflection to Packer's life and contributions. Packer was a Christian of immense brevity, clarity, and understanding as a writer who had a great command of the English language and a wonderful writing style which was rooted in a well-trained academic mind yet could communicate widely at a popular level.

This was a delight for me to read. I felt in some ways I was back in class with Dr Packer, learning theology which must lead to doxology. He was a delight to have had as an instructor. This book will be the same, an edifying delight. One curiosity about the book and jacket cover is there is no sketch or photo of Packer. Maybe this was purposeful.

I would make a suggestion—there are basically 60 units to this collection so why not do a two-month read-through? Take one unit per day and chew over it like a chewable multi-vitamin but only let it linger in the mind and heart to meditate over during the day and night. I think you will find it a real 'strengtheners' for the soul and mind.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

***Character and Virtue in Theological Education: An Academic Epistolary Novel.* Marvin Oxenham. Carlisle, UK: Langham/ICETE, 2019, 393 pp., paperback. ISBN 978-1-78368-697-1**



The author has chosen a very interesting genre for writing this book. It is in the form of letters, but (as he describes) it is "*an academic epistolary novel*." These letters are an exchange between a theological educator, Siméon and the author himself and they possess an academic tone, hence the first adjective. Taken together then it is a series of academic letters on a specific subject basically between two characters. Readers will judge whether they like the genre or would prefer just an academic work on the subject. However, the author has used footnotes to follow the academic line and the Bibliography is extensive so there is nothing in the use of the genre which takes away from the academic in my estimation rather it is the device chosen to make the subject in many ways personal and is carried along by starting with the crisis which Siméon is facing.

*Virtue* seems to be back in the spotlight, and I see it emerging in many different platforms. I heard it recently in an Albert Mohler interview: “The Centrality of Virtue and Intellectualism in Statesmanship: A Conversation with Daniel Mahoney.”<sup>4</sup> Oxenham’s thesis is clearly stated in letter 3:

My main thesis is that Christian theological education should reclaim character and virtue education. Although it should not be sought to the exclusion of the traditional aims of academic engagement, professional training and spiritual formation, it should be redeemed to a place of prominence (p. 15).

I would encourage readers of this book to go to the website: <https://virtueducation.net/> Here one will find free lessons that they can use for teaching or study concerning virtue. This is a tremendous follow-up from this book. I find myself in agreement with the author’s thesis and overall goals in this book.

Having said this, I am still not quite sure I agree with his fifth chapter/letter (pp. 27–34) where the author separates out character and virtue from spiritual formation. “My main argument in this letter is that we should keep the language of spiritual formation and character education separate” (p. 30). Oxenham argues for a four-fold theological model: academic engagement, ministerial training, spiritual formation, *and* character and virtue, rather than a three-fold model. By adopting a four-fold model he believes that “this will not only focus our efforts in character and virtue education but will also contribute to a sharper definition of spiritual formation” (p. 30). He diagrammed this well by showing discipleship as overlapping between spiritual formation and character education.

I suspect some readers may be a little shy toward the various references to Aristotle and particularly letters 13 and 14, whereas other readers will relish this. I do make a reminder here that recast-Aristotelian logic was once the basis for homiletical composition in post-Reformation training and churches.

Part three of the book, “The Practice,” is a worthy section which could serve as a series for seminars within a theological faculty. A leader could extract selections here and incorporate these into faculty workshops or retreats. Part one of the book is “The Vision” and part two “The Tradition.” The Select Bibliography could likewise be utilised for faculty seminars and selections could be assigned to read and then bring back for discussion. I believe this book should be available for theological institutions and could be one which is returned to often. I did hear the author address the subject of this book and this no doubt has influenced me.

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<sup>4</sup> 16 November 2022, <https://albertmohler.com/2022/11/16/daniel-j-mahoney>

The author is course leader for a master's programme at London School of Theology in theological education. He is an educational philosopher and theologian and resides in Rome, Italy where he was born and is the general secretary for ECTE and director for the ICETE Academy. The book should be of particular interest to all theological educators and particularly to principals I would hope. I suspect like myself some will collect quotations as they read this book and pin them to the bulletin board of their study or office area. I did so with Warfield's, "Ministry is a learned profession, but before and above being learned, a minister must be godly" and Comenius' "An educated but immoral humanity goes backward rather than forward, degenerating." A person will find it a humbling experience reading and pondering these. One other section where I found myself taking a few notes was in the short section on Cultural Imperialism or Colonialism (pp. 121–122) which I found to be most engaging and helpful.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

# Book Briefs

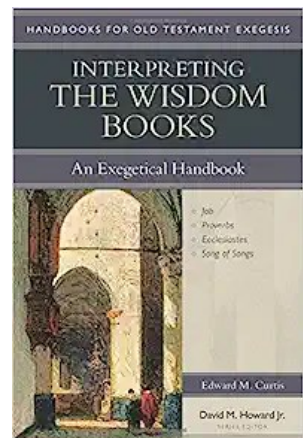
## ***Interpreting the Wisdom Books: An Exegetical Handbook.***

**Edward M. Curtis.** Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis, ed.

**David M. Howard Jr.** Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2017, 204 pp., paperback. ISBN 978-0-8254-4230-8

For anyone teaching Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs here is a helpful and manageably sized handbook written from an evangelical stance. It is also part of a series of six which will be good to have in Bible college and theological college libraries (the Psalms has its own handbook authored by Mark Futato). Curtis' book is divided into six sections plus an appendix, and all this is given a very extensive full listing in the Contents which makes it easy to find a particular theme or topic. The six sections are: 1. Interpreting Old Testament Wisdom Literature, 2. Primary Themes in the Wisdom Books, 3. Preparing for Interpretation, 4. Interpreting the Wisdom Books, 5. Proclaiming the Wisdom Books, and 6. Putting it All Together: From Text to Sermon. Wisdom literature presents many interpretive challenges and likely not all will agree here either. However, this book helps with several of these. The author also co-authored *Discovering the Way of Wisdom: Spirituality in the Wisdom Literature*.

—JCW





## Crossway Short Classics:

***Encouragement for the Depressed.*** C. H. Spurgeon. Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2020, 112 pp., paperback. ISBN: 978-1-4335-7063-6

***The Expulsive Power of a New Affection.*** Thomas Chalmers. Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2020, 80 pp., paperback. ISBN: 978-1-4335-7067-4

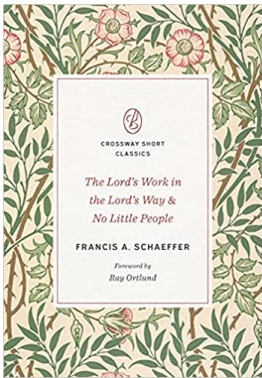
***Heaven Is a World of Love.*** Jonathan Edwards. Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2020, 128 pp., paperback. ISBN: 978-1-4335-7071-1

***The Lord's Work in the Lord's Way and No Little People.*** Francis Schaeffer. Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2022, 96 pp., paperback. ISBN: 978-1-4335-7158-9

***The Life of God in the Soul of Man.*** Henry Scougal. Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2022, 192 pp., paperback. ISBN: 978-1-4335-8048-2

***The Emotional Life of Our Lord.*** B. B. Warfield. Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2022, 120 pp., paperback. ISBN: 978-1-4335-8004-8

***Fighting for Holiness.*** J. C. Ryle. Wheaton, Ill: Crossway. 2022, 80 pp., paperback. ISBN: 978-1-4335-8008-6



Crossway have put out a series of small paperbacks under the title “Crossway Short Classics”. These books deal with the issues of Christian living in a way that is both devotionally and intellectually stimulating. The heart is reached through the mind. The authors need no introduction. The works, even if not well known today, are recognisably classics. Each book in the series contains a foreword, a series preface, a brief biography of the author, the work itself, and a Scripture index. They are sold individually and in a set.

These books are very well produced. 4.25X6.125 inches, or 110mmX155mm, in size, they should fit easily into the pocket of a coat or purse. Though small, the font is surprisingly easy to read, and the pages are not crowded. The artwork is particularly striking as each volume in the series is covered in a different William Morris print. The covers have French flaps on the front and the back which not only add to the air of distinction but mean that the reader has a bookmark for both halves of the book.

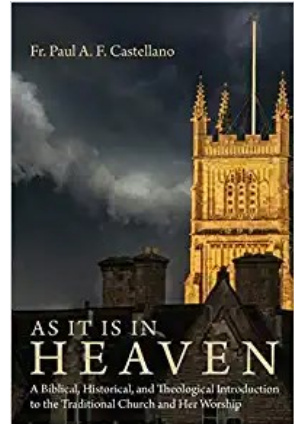
There is something retro about the feel of these paperbacks. Alas, those who download the audio versions or eBooks will miss that. Nevertheless, in whichever format they are accessed, they will expand the renewed mind and aid growth in grace.

–DDG.

***As It Is in Heaven: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Introduction to the Traditional Church and Her Worship.* Paul A. F. Castellano. Tucson, AZ: Wheatmark, 2021, 300 pp., paper. ISBN-13: [9781627878449](#). Also available as a Kindle e-book.**

The author argues for the Jewish character of the early Christian Church and the radical continuity of Old and New Testament polity and worship. His argument is along these lines: 1. God is worshiped in heaven. 2. This worship is described in Scripture. 3. While these descriptions contain symbolism, the symbols point to greater underlying truths and thus retain relevancy and force. 4. Worship in heaven, as revealed to Moses and, e.g., Isaiah and John in Revelation, provides the basis for an exact blueprint of worship on earth. 5. “Fulfilled” in the New Testament means “brought to fulness”, not “done away with” and so there is a radical continuity between the polity and worship of the Old Testament and the New. 6. Early Christianity was Jewish in character. 7. Early Christians continued to worship in the temple and synagogues. 8. Worship in Jewish synagogues continued into the 2nd cc., and early churches, which met in houses, followed the synagogue model (or were in fact synagogues themselves). 9. The Old Testament hierarchy of high priest, priest and Levite continued in the New as bishops, priests, and deacons, as did Old Testament liturgical practices, Christologically re-defined. 10. Any church that does not follow this polity and its attendant practices is not a true church.

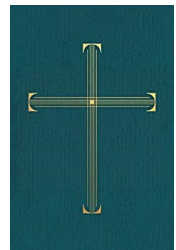
—RKB



***The 1662 Book of Common Prayer: International Edition.* Drew Keane and Samuel L. Bray, eds. Downer's Grove IL: IVP Academic, 2021, 767 pp., H/C ISBN-13: 9780830841929.**

The authors give three goals (pp. 648ff) for this edition of Anglicanism's primary document: 1. The supplementing of English state prayers with those suited to international contexts. 2. The inclusion of supplementary prayers added to prayer books since 1662. 3. The softening—but not entire removal—of archaic language.

They succeed beautifully in the first two goals; the Appendix, for example, includes prayers from Canada,



England, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, Nigeria, Scotland, South Africa, South India, Uganda, the United States and the West Indies (p. 651).

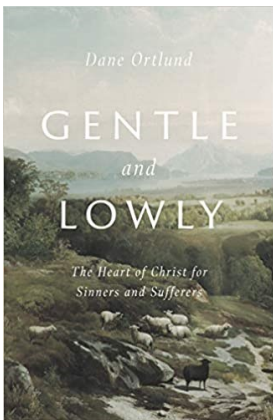
The third goal of addressing archaic language may leave some readers less satisfied. Thees, thous, and thines, which ensure the preservation of majestic language and remind the reader of the antiquity of the text, are retained. Cherubins is replaced with cherubim, Apostolick with apostolic, curates with pastors, indifferently with impartially. However, some archaic words survive, such as ensample and prevent (meaning “go before”). By way of compensation, there is a generous Glossary in the Appendix that explains all such words. The Appendix also includes the Homily on Justification.

This is a careful update to the classic Anglican 1662 AD Book of Common Prayer to better suit it for international, modern use. It is a sturdy, handsome edition. Additional editions—a pew edition and a larger minister’s edition—are in the works. For more information about this edition, interested readers may consult the Facebook 1662 Book of Common Prayer International Edition Discussion Group.

—RKB

***Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers.***

**Dane Ortlund. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020, 224 pp., hardcover. ISBN 978-1-4335-6613-4**



I thought of mining when I read this book. The book is primarily mining a text, Matthew 11:29 “*Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls*” and also it is mining some old writers, chiefly English Puritans, who dug deeply into this text or subject and mediated over its riches and attempted to live it out. The chapters are pithy and devotional and should be slowly digested and pondered. They build from the central text and develop key select texts related to the theme of each chapter. These studies bring us to see more and experience afresh the riches of the Saviour of Sinners, the Lord Jesus

Christ. Rightly so, the author concludes wisely with the preceding verse Matthew 11:28, “Come.” Dane Ortlund’s father is Ray Ortlund Jr., a familiar name whom many will have read. Dane is pastor of Naperville Presbyterian Church, Illinois. This book will be a wonderful devotional read and one that you will want to return often and will truly bless your soul.

—JCW

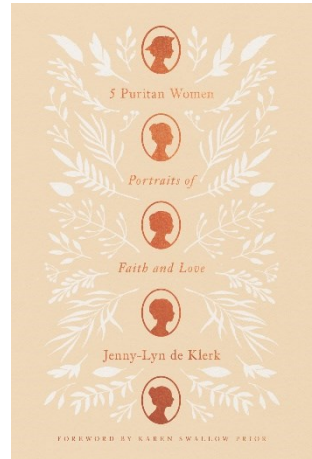
***5 Puritan Women: Portraits of Faith and Love.* Jenny-Lyn de Klerk. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023, 160 pp., e-book. ISBN: 978-1-4335-8213-4.**

This short book provides insight into the lives of Agnes Beaumont, Lucy Hutchinson, Mary Rich, Anne Bradstreet, and Lady Brilliana Harley. The author, Jenny-Lyn de Klerk of Tsawwassen, BC, Canada (Editor at Crossway and one who has devoted all of her graduate studies to the Puritans), uses whatever primary source materials available (letters, poems, published work, etc.) to show something of the depth of spiritual experience and maturity of these Puritan women, primarily with a view to counter-acting some modern stereotypes of Puritan women of the 17<sup>th</sup> century as being somehow weak or oppressed.

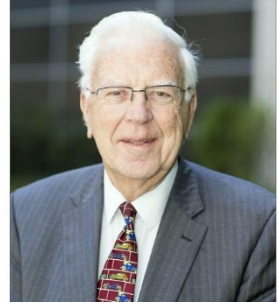
Each woman receives one chapter in the present work. Quotes from primary sources provide readers with a taste of the joys and sorrows of these women and their Biblical, Spirit-led understanding of God's providential leading in their lives. The author provides extensive commentary in each chapter—pulling out themes and applying them to common experiences of Christian women today. Without such commentary, the book would be very brief indeed as the historical information and actual source material appears to be quite limited.

This book could be used to provide helpful illustrations when discussing the timeless principles of Biblical truth and experimental experiences of believers, male and female, throughout the generations. While it does not claim to say anything new, it affirms—through five personal and candid (mostly material written without any intention of publication) glimpses into lives of the past—that the Lord is ever with His people and is accomplishing His purposes for His glory and our good.

—NJW



# Academic Articles



## ‘From Text to Pulpit’

Allan M. Harman\*

*\*This address was given at the graduation ceremony of the Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne, on 25 March 2022. It was delivered from notes, and then written up afterwards. It includes some passages that were omitted on the occasion because of time constraints, and also a few footnotes to point to some relevant literature and other information. Dr Harman served as Old Testament professor and for twenty years as principal at Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne, Australia. He has written and researched extensively on Matthew Henry.*

### 1. Introductory Comments

This address is concerned to look at some aspects of theological college teaching in relation to parish ministry. Often a sharp separation is made between these two, but I want to argue for a close connection between them. As my own teaching has been concentrated in the biblical area, I am going to use that area in the main, though many of the things I say could be applied, for example, to the teaching of Systematic Theology and its application to preaching.<sup>1</sup> I am interested in the continuity between the instruction that takes place in a theological college and the work you will carry out in pastoral ministry, especially in relation to your preparation of sermons. This is because what you do in college in regard to exegesis of the biblical text, and the application of it to today’s circumstances, is really the same as you will be doing when you move out into pastoral ministry. Preparation of sermons involves the same skills that are used when preparing exegetical papers in college.

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<sup>1</sup> I am assuming that systematic theology will be taught by exegesis of biblical passages, leading on to formal statements of doctrine.

There is not a lot of literature to guide theological students and pastors in relation to these matters, but one of the best I have found is that by John Piper and Don Carson, entitled, *The Pastor as Scholar and The Scholar as Pastor*.<sup>2</sup> One evening some years ago, these two men spoke at Trinity Evangelical Seminary in Illinois partly in an autobiographical manner about their own lives, but then they went on to deal with the ways in which one's pastoral ministry intersects with one's scholarly activities, and vice versa. I will refer later to some of their views.

## **2. Nature of Lectures on the Biblical Text**

*a. Teaching biblical texts in a college is, or should be, preaching.* In the biblical area we are basically dealing with a text of Holy Scripture. When we expound it in class there is no essential difference between that and preaching in a church situation. We are taking God's Word, opening it up, and explaining the text, and there will also be, in various ways, application of it. You may think that is not exactly the same as preaching in the church but let me begin to make further explanation by using two personal illustrations.

After doing an arts degree at Sydney University, finishing in November 1956, I spent six months at the University of Melbourne studying Greek and Hebrew, while at the same time supplying a vacant congregation. I had to preach twice on Sunday and once mid-week during that time. This meant I was a full-time student, but also preparing at least three sermons each week. I commenced my theological studies in Scotland at the Free Church College and the University of Edinburgh in October of that year. In my second year, our professor of New Testament, Professor W. J. Cameron, was away in the United States, as he had been invited by Dr Merrill Tenney of Wheaton College, Illinois, to teach there for six months. To lecture in his place we had Dr Alexander Ross, a former professor of New Testament and an author of a commentary on James and John in the New International series, which was actually one of the earliest volumes of that series. In addition, he was the author of a considerable number of articles in the IVP *New Bible Dictionary*.

On a particular day, Dr Ross was lecturing on Philippians chapter 2, 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God.' At the end of the lecture period, I was suddenly conscious of two things. One was that I'd been so enthralled by the content of that lecture that I was oblivious to the fact that I was in a college lecture theatre, and that I was sitting at a hard wooden desk! I was so gripped by the message that he was proclaiming that I was able to set aside all other thoughts, other than those related to the text. What he said had

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<sup>2</sup> See footnote 4 for full details, 124pp.

touched me spiritually and also emotionally, particularly the practical application he made.<sup>3</sup>

The other thing that struck me was that Dr Ross was standing lecturing holding a Bible in his hands, but I suddenly remembered it was not an English Bible but a Greek New Testament. I had been studying Greek for two or three years at the time, and I realized that I had not been conscious that he was explaining *Greek* words and drawing out the nuances of the teaching of that passage. Though I had heard that passage preached on a considerable number of times, there were things that were new to me from it because he was working from the Greek text. We should never despise those who are expounding Scripture using the English text, but being able to use the Hebrew and Greek texts brings out things for the hearers that are not readily apparent in the English text. In trying to compare the use of an English Bible and the Greek New Testament, I have compared it for students to the difference between viewing a black and white television set and a colour one. The message is the same from both, but it is not the same. Colour brings out nuances that you can't see when viewing a black and white screen. Similarly, there are things that you can bring out from the original Hebrew or Greek text which add to the message that is being conveyed by the English text. That happened to me in a very striking way on that occasion with Dr Ross.

My other illustration relates to something that happened in my own practical experience of teaching at the Presbyterian Theological College. A telephone call was put through to me one day from a lady who asked if she could come and see me with her husband, who was interested in studying at the college. I made the appointment, but I thought it was an odd request, because I had never had a wife phone up and make such a request on behalf of her husband. On the day appointed, the couple came to see me. The wife, Anne (I'm talking of Anne and Tony Salisbury who have been engaged in ministry to the deaf for many years now), explained that her husband was prelingually deaf, and she wanted to know whether we would consider taking him as a student. I immediately responded positively, which surprised her. I went on to explain that we had had a blind student, Stephen Slucki, and managed during his four years at the college to cope with his disability. However, I had not reckoned with the difference between a deaf student and a blind student. With a deaf student, we had to have Auslan interpreters for every lecture that he took over the four years of his college course. I'm still thankful for the individuals

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<sup>3</sup> I know of others who have had similar experiences. One very interesting one is that of Professor E. J. Young of Westminster. When Professor John Murray had left Westminster to return permanently to Scotland, Young wrote him and among other things said: 'I remember that when I was a student and you had lectured on Romans 5:12-19, I was so moved by the content of those verses that I took a long walk that afternoon just to think about them.' Iain H. Murray, *The Life of John Murray* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2007), 188.



and congregations of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria who provided the funds to employ interpreters for those four years. We obtained the services of two fine Christian women who did a wonderful job throughout Tony's course.

I want to tell you some things that happened with the Auslan interpreters. During the lecture one of them would quite often stop me and explain that I had used a technical term that she had not heard before, and therefore a sign did not exist in Auslan for it. Then too, at the end of a lecture the lady interpreter would often come across to me and say something like this: 'I never heard that explanation of that passage before, and I can see the implications that it has for us as Christians.' You see, the interpreters were listening, not just in order to convey the content of the lecture to Tony, but for themselves, and therefore they were responding to the content of the lectures and the application that I made of the biblical teaching.

It is very easy in teaching the biblical text in the lecture room to apply the message to ourselves and others. In class, I would often stop at the end of a section in the biblical text we were studying, and say, 'How are we going to apply this passage when we come to preach from it?' Or, I would ask, 'Has anyone ever heard a sermon on this passage?' When a student related something of the content of a sermon, we could then engage in discussion regarding both the teaching and the way in which application could be made. There are many ways of applying the content of what is taught in a lecture room setting, and that combination of exposition and application bring it very close to what we do in the pulpit. Both involve unfolding the text of Scripture, and then of pointing out the significance of it in our experience.

*b. The exegetical work in college is typical of what we will be doing all through our ministry.* It is intense *work* on God's inspired words. I use the word 'work' deliberately because that is how the New Testament describes our role as pastors. Paul speaks of 'the *work* of the ministry' (Eph. 4:12), while elsewhere he encourages Timothy to present himself 'to God as one approved, a *worker* who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth' (2 Tim. 2:15). The nature of Scripture calls for solid exegetical work. We are not dealing with *isolated* gems spread throughout the whole of the Bible. John Piper uses the analogy that many parts of the Bible, including Jesus' sermons and Paul's letters, are less like strings of pearls and more like chains of steel. That is, the authors 'don't just give a sequence of spiritual gems; they forge a chain of logical argumentation. Their statements hang together. They are linked. One connects to another, and those two connect to another, and those three to another, and so on as the unbreakable argument of glorious truth extends through a passage. And, when the Holy Spirit enlightens our minds, this chain of argumentation is on fire.'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> John Piper & D. A. Carson, *The Pastor as Scholar and The Scholar as Pastor*, eds. Owen Strachan & David Mathis (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 64.

The New Testament in several ways implies that Christians in a congregation need help in understanding the Scriptures. A pastor has to be able to teach the flock (1 Tim. 3:2), while Paul's repeated rhetorical question, 'Do you not know?' points to the need for knowledge that will transform lives. As John Piper puts it, Paul is writing his letters to help his readers 'have the kind of *knowledge* that will change their lives. This is the way we transform our churches. We don't manipulate them and coerce them into trying to act in certain ways. We seek to awaken affections in the heart, for out of the heart the mouth speaks and the body acts.'<sup>5</sup>

**It is not the pulpit that should drive us to the text, but rather the text to the pulpit.**

**Ds. Jan Van AnDEL**

Diligent exegetical preparation for lecturing or preaching is hard work. It takes time and effort. Professor John Murray, in an oft-quoted discussion of his on systematic theology, says: 'A biblical scholar's product may have to be sometimes as dry as dust. But dust has its place, especially when it is gold dust.'<sup>6</sup> I had the privilege of doing graduate study under him, and for two years I attended Knox Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, where he conducted the adult Bible class every Lord's Day, standing in front of it with just his Greek New Testament in his hands. In both of these settings it was easy to see how much work he had put into the preparation, and he was so familiar with the text, that he did not need to have notes with him.

I have entitled this address 'From text to pulpit.' This is borrowed from a Dutch writer on practical theology, Ds. Jan Van AnDEL, who was writing in the 1920s and 30s. He said that it is not the pulpit that should drive us to the text, but rather the text to the pulpit. Let me put that in a plainer form. It is not that I have an appointment to preach next Sunday morning at 10 o'clock that should drive me to open my Bible and try and find a suitable passage on which to preach. Instead, I should be so gripped by a particular passage and its glorious message that I am seeking a place to preach it, and to open up for my hearers the wonderful insights I have grasped from God's Word. Biblical theology should inform my mind and warm my heart.

*c. When we are gripped by insights of Scripture, especially through seeing biblical-theological perspectives, that determines how we will present the material, whether in classroom teaching or in the pulpit. We will show*

<sup>5</sup> *The Pastor as Scholar and The Scholar as Pastor*, 60.

<sup>6</sup> This discussion of Professor Murray first appeared in the *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol. XXV, 2 and Vol. XXVI, 1, and it is reprinted in the *Collected Writings of John Murray*, 4: *Studies in Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1982), 1–21. The quotation can be found on page 16.

emotion in the presentation. Our presentation of Christ will display passion. Don Carson emphasizes this point, noting that students/parishioners learn what we are excited about. This is what he says:

. . . part of my obligation as a scholar-teacher, a scholar-pastor, is to show how my specialism relates to that which is fundamentally central and never to lose my passion for living and thinking and being excited about what must remain at the centre. Failure in this matter means I lead my students and parishioners astray. . . I dare never forget that students do not learn everything I try to teach them but primarily what I am excited about.<sup>7</sup>

I left home to go and study at Newcastle Teachers' College in N.S.W. A few months after I was there, I heard it announced that Rev. John G. Ridley M. C. was to preach at Hamilton Baptist Church. I knew about him as a brave soldier from the First World War who was awarded the Military Cross, but more notably I knew about him as one of the most prominent Christian evangelists in Australia. He was coming near the end of his ministry, but I have never forgotten the passion with which he presented the Gospel. He really wanted to see sinners coming to faith as a result of his preaching.<sup>8</sup>

Such passion as John Ridley showed is all too often missing from modern evangelical preaching. I hear truth from the pulpit, but it reminds me of a Bible study rather than proclamation of the everlasting Gospel, of the urgent demands to repent and believe the Gospel. I will return to this point a little later.

I have read statements by Christians overseas who ask if Christ is being preached as fully today as he was several decades ago. The answer is normally 'No', and this is true, from my personal observation, in Australia as well. Today the preaching does not have as many examples of preachers beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:20). Direct Gospel invitations are often lacking, and hearers can come away without their consciences being awakened to their need of Christ.

*d. Students today are preaching far fewer times than students in the past did.* The problem seems to go back even before a student is accepted as a candidate for the ministry. I have sat on many committees interviewing prospective students, and rarely did committee members ask about the speaking/preaching experience of an applicant *before* they made their

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<sup>7</sup> *The Pastor as Scholar and The Scholar as Pastor*, 99.

<sup>8</sup> John Ridley was the preacher under whom Mr. Eternity, Arthur Stace, was converted, and who inspired him to write the word 'Eternity' on footpaths in Sydney.

application. My practice was to ask what opportunities the leadership of the church fellowship to which they belonged had given them to test their gifts. Surprisingly, the reply would often be, 'None'. This points to the need for change in this respect at the local level, and also at the denominational committee level that accepts students for the ministry.<sup>9</sup>

I think that while students are learning how to do exegesis, and how to translate it into sermon form, is the best time to start preaching regularly. Even if a student does not want to do much preaching in term time, the long vacation surely gives ample opportunity to exercise one's gifts in this area of pastoral ministry. In asking students here in Victoria and interstate about their pre-licensing preaching, I have been very surprised at how little experience they have had. If they had done more, then the transition into parish ministry would have been much easier. Going into one's first parish is too late to start to learn to preach. Also, it is unfair on a congregation, when the opportunity was there during one's college course, and because an exit appointee without sufficient preaching experience will have to give excessive time to sermon preparation early in his ministry.

I mentioned earlier my experience of preaching for six months before I went to Scotland to begin my theological course. Once I started my studies in Scotland, like most of my fellow students, I preached almost every second weekend, so that I preached at least 40 times a year during my theological course.

At the end of my first year at the Free Church College, I went north to stay with an uncle in Ross-shire. An elder from a neighbouring congregation came to see me, explaining that their minister had died shortly before, and asked whether I'd be prepared to preach for them. I agreed to do so. On the first Lord's Day as I went up to the church at Bonar Bridge, he pointed to a man going into the church, and said, 'That's Professor John Murray. You know him?' Professor John Murray came from that area, and he was home from Westminster Theological Seminary for the summer to stay with his two maiden sisters and a brother who worked the farm. For a month I had to preach with him in the congregation twice on the Lord's Day, and once on Wednesday evening. It was a demanding experience, but it would have been much harder on me if I had not had considerable preaching experience up to that point. Professor Murray invited me to their home, where I was entertained hospitably. He never criticized my sermons. Rather, he encouraged me in my studies, and also discussed the possibility that I might go on to do post-graduate studies at Westminster Theological Seminary.

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<sup>9</sup> When I was accepted as a theological student, I was in the midst of teacher training, and had preached perhaps four or five times in churches, and several times in mission halls. I know of students who had never preached a sermon before they were accepted as a student, so it was not surprising that some of them, though passing college exams, lacked the ability to communicate well even at the stage of licensing.

As I was finishing that month of preaching, I received a letter from Rev. Kenneth MacRae of Stornoway Free Church. His congregation in the Island of Lewis was the largest, not only in the Free Church, but probably of any denomination in Scotland at that time.<sup>10</sup> The Free Church in Stornoway was a very big building with galleries on three sides. There was another building called the Seminary, which was really an auditorium, or hall, seating about 450 people. Six smaller halls were spread around the township, and a mid-week meeting was held in all of them. The letter I received was to invite me to be his summer assistant. I did not know what my duties would be until I arrived in Stornoway. Mr. MacRae had arranged that he would take all the Gaelic services in the church (Gaelic rather than English was the predominant language), while I would take the English services in the Seminary on the Lord's Day, and also the midweek English service. The Seminary was often full, especially at the evening service. I can remember times when some of the elders had to come and sit with me in the pulpit because all seats were taken. In addition to preaching, I was expected to carry out some pastoral visitations, which was made difficult for me because, while I was learning Gaelic, I was not fluent, and especially the older people were reluctant to use their limited English in speaking with me.

When I think back upon that experience, I am surprised that Mr. MacRae asked me to come and be his summer assistant. It is true that he already knew me, because he and his wife had spent time in Australia just four years earlier, and they had stayed a week with my parents when I was home during the university vacation. I was 22 years old when I went to Stornoway, having just completed one year of my theological course. What stood me in such good stead was that I had already preached probably around 125 times before I went there. When Mr. MacRae took me to the home in which I was to stay, he brought with him the six volumes of Matthew Henry's commentary on the Bible for my use. Apart from my English, Gaelic, Hebrew and Greek Bibles, that was the only reference book that I had, unless I deliberately asked to go and consult a particular book in Mr. MacRae's own library. What helped me to carry out that preaching programme was the amount of preaching I had done, the books I had read on exegesis, and the teaching during my first year of theological training. I was invited back the following summer, and though in some respects I found the work easier, yet Mr. MacRae's absence for a month on holiday, placed great stress on me, for in addition to the normal preaching and pastoral work, I was responsible for the conduct of funeral

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<sup>10</sup> Mr. MacRae noted in his diary that the Gaelic section of the congregation amounted to 1,500, with several hundred in the English. On a communion Sunday in Stornoway Free Church congregation, there would be approximately 2,300 present at the same time at the services in the Church, Seminary, and the Town Hall, as visitors from other Lewis congregations would be present in addition to the Stornoway congregation.

services. Up to that time I had never conducted a funeral, but by the end of the month I had conducted a considerable number.

### 3. Nature of Preaching in a Parish

*a. I have already suggested that what the lecturers do in the biblical field in college is the same as preaching. But I want also to suggest that what a student does (or should do) in relation to both biblical exegesis and preaching during his college course is the same as he will be doing week by week in a parish.* Nothing can be more important than this, as it forms the basis for every aspect of pastoral ministry. Paul instructed the elders of Ephesus that they were to declare the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). Knowledge of the whole counsel of God does not come through cursory reading of the Scripture. ‘We have to ask hard questions about the different parts of how the different parts of revelation fit together. That’s called “scholarship.” It doesn’t have to be in school. It just has to be careful and honest and observant and synthesizing and constructive. It’s hard work. And it’s meant to serve the heart of our people.’<sup>11</sup> This means that exegesis leads on to biblical theology, which in turns leads to systematic statements of biblical teaching. There can be nothing deceitful in our preaching of the Gospel. Rather, we must remember that Paul calls it ‘the exposition,’ ‘the open statement’ of the truth.

**There can be nothing deceitful in our preaching of the Gospel. Rather, we must remember that Paul calls it ‘the exposition,’ ‘the open statement’ of the truth.**

Communication of God’s truth in that part of the service normally called ‘the sermon’ is not simply the setting out of facts of Scripture as though it were a lecture. The very word that Scripture uses to describe it, ‘preaching’, points to the authoritative declaration of God’s truth in a way that challenges hearers’ presuppositions, and leads them to acceptance of what is freely offered in the Gospel. It has to commend itself to the conscience of hearers (2 Cor. 4:2). The message has to control both the motive of proclamation and the form of presentation.<sup>12</sup> My father was a Presbyterian pastor. I remember well his direct appeals to his hearers when preaching, so much so that before I made

<sup>11</sup> *The Pastor as Scholar and The Scholar as Pastor*, 62–63.

<sup>12</sup> See the comments of Sinclair Ferguson, ‘Exegesis’, in Samuel T. Logan, Jr., ed., *The Preacher and Preaching: Reviving the Art in the Twentieth Century* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1986), 210.

a commitment to Christ, I felt he was preaching only to me in the church, and that was irrespective of where I sat!

Here in Australia and in other English-speaking countries, it is noticeable that far fewer people are being converted today under preaching than in years past. O. Palmer Robertson has commented on this in a pertinent way:

Preachers today have lost faith in the power of the preached Word as God's appointed instrument for saving people. So they very rarely preach in a way that specifically addresses lost sinners with the expectation that some will be saved. They may be faithfully declaring God's Word. But they do not address their message toward the goal of the conversion of sinners. So why should they be surprised when no one is saved through their preaching?<sup>13</sup>

In a theological course you will have heard the Scripture expounded repeatedly, and you should realise the approach you will have to make constantly as you prepare for public presentation of God's truth. You will also be aware of the effort that this calls from you. Not everyone in a congregation understands the time that a pastor needs for preparation. Those pastors who think that they can get by week by week with little preparation will soon find that their sermons are repetitive and lacking in true content. 'It takes hard mental work to rightly handle the Word of God', writes John Piper. He adds: 'Don't let anybody ever tell you that hard mental work is unspiritual. We are using our minds to understand God's Word, and we are depending in prayer upon the Holy Spirit to guide our minds'.<sup>14</sup>

You have to do what you've seen and heard lecturers doing, both in their college lectures and when you have heard them preaching. They are role models, both as exegetes and preachers. Learn from the way they approach the biblical text and unfold its treasures.

*b. You have to do, far more often, what you yourself have done in preparing exegetical papers, or preparing a sermon for chapel.* The task comes every week and should be the major aspect of your ministry. You need to have a plan for your preaching that extends out to some months to give yourself time for efficient preparation and also to work on the format of your sermons, including the use of illustrations. I can remember visiting preachers coming to take services for my father who didn't have such a plan, and they

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<sup>13</sup> O. Palmer Robertson, *Preaching Made Practical* (Welwyn Garden City: EP Books, 2015), 16.

<sup>14</sup> *The Pastor as Scholar and The Scholar as Pastor*, 63.

would be still searching for a text late the night before. Some of them had a view of arriving at a text by prayer, followed by what seemed to them to be almost direct revelation to a particular passage.

*c. The choice of biblical passages for preaching should not be a random matter.* For those of us in the Presbyterian Church of Australia, two statements in official documents help direct our choice of biblical passages on which to preach, and also point to our chief concern in preaching. In the Declaratory Statement that accompanies the Westminster Confession of Faith, there are these words:

And inasmuch as the Christian faith rests upon and the Christian consciousness takes hold of certain objective supernatural historic facts, especially the incarnation, the atoning life and death and the resurrection and ascension of our Lord, and His bestowment of His Holy Spirit, this church regards those whom it admits to the office of the holy ministry as pledged to give a chief place in their teaching to these cardinal facts and to the message of redemption and reconciliation implied and manifested in them.

And among the questions asked of licentiates and ministers, Ques. 5 reads:

Are zeal for the glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and a desire to save souls, and not worldly interests or expectations (as far as you know your own heart), your great motives and chief inducements to the work of the Holy Ministry?

The first of these quotations is important because it points us to the central themes of our preaching, namely, those that relate to the great redemptive acts of God in the coming of the Lord Jesus into the world to save sinners. 'Objective supernatural historic facts' must form the subjects to which we give the greatest attention in our preaching ministry. Christ's incarnation, atoning life and work, his resurrection and ascension, and the gift of his Holy Spirit must feature prominently, as Paul indicates in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5. These things are of *first importance*.

But the manner in which we deal with these facts is also very important. If our aim is to 'save souls', then our preaching must manifest urgency, and emotion must enter into our proclamation. We have to press the claims of Christ on our hearers. We have to urge them to lay hold of the promises in the gospel. There must not be any coldness or abstraction in the manner in which we invite a response to the gospel call.



In choosing passages we have to ask: ‘What is the next section of Scripture I’m going to use?’ But many omit to ask the question that should follow: ‘What effect is this preaching going to have on my audience?’ Preaching should not only give them good teaching, but it should meet them in their spiritual needs, and often their emotional ones as well. We want to see people changed by preaching, for it is the proclamation of God’s truth which has the express aim of bringing about behavioural change. But we have to know our hearers, and that means getting out of our study and into contact with them. Our preaching must be directed to the situations in which our hearers find themselves, such as their doubts and difficulties, their reading, their television viewing, their social interactions with others in their community. A statement of the content of a passage of Scripture is insufficient. What the sermons require is application to the known needs of the congregation. We have to ask ourselves repeatedly of our preaching in a congregation: ‘Are these sermons really meeting the spiritual condition of my hearers? Have I directed the challenge of the Gospel directly at needs that it alone can meet?’

I mentioned earlier my experience as a student in Stornoway. When in company in homes and listening to people speaking of biblical passages and their own experience, I realized that I was in the company of large numbers of mature Christians. They had years of Christian experience to look back upon, as over against my limited time as a believer. I could not preach to their experience except in one respect. Like other Highland Scots (and also some Dutch people) many of them lacked assurance, and even professing Christians were constantly looking for marks of a true Christian so that they could check on their own spiritual standing. They were far more introspective than Christians I knew in Australia. While I learned a lot from the conversations in the homes, I decided that I would just preach in my normal fashion and declare the great truths of Scripture on which they had to rest their souls. I knew something of the problem because my mother’s parents were Highland Scots who were never professing communicants, though they gave every evidence of being devoted believers. Family worship was held morning and night, and in that worship, they sang a psalm, and my grandfather read the Gaelic Scriptures and prayed. Some have tried to explain this reticence to come to the Lord’s Table as part of the Celtic spirituality. I rather think that it came because ministers spoke more of the Lord’s Supper as a badge of profession rather than as a means of grace.

*d. Set yourself to work hard at exegesis.* You might like to look at the recent book by Bobby Jamieson, *Essential Tools to Learn in Seminary*, published by Crossway, and some of his other books as well. I suggest you try to work at a passage of Scripture first without commentaries, but then supplement, or correct, your understanding with information from commentaries and other sources of information. *You* have to do the exegesis, not borrow it straight from commentaries. *You* have to wrestle with the text of Scripture and have the basic outlines of the teaching of a passage in your mind

before you turn to commentaries.<sup>15</sup> Recently I picked up a small book by J. Oliver Buswell, Jr. Dr Buswell for many years was President of Wheaton College, Illinois, before he went on to teach philosophy and theology at Covenant Seminary in St Louis. It struck me that a scholar like himself, who could write on difficult topics of philosophy and theology, was also well able to convey his thoughts in simple language as he spoke to common people. His style was popular, and his illustrations relevant and apposite. He was speaking on Romans 6–8, but he did not tell his audience that he had memorized the Greek text of those chapters. While he was out on long walks he would recite to himself those chapters. It is quite clear that such a thorough knowledge of the Greek text enabled him to unfold its meaning with admirable simplicity and clarity. I recalled that Professor John Murray took the adult Sunday School class at Knox Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia for many years. During the two winters that I heard him speak on Acts and the Epistle to the Romans, he did so with only a Greek Testament in his hands, and it was clear that he was thoroughly familiar with the Greek text.

*e. Let me sum up some of the things I have been pointing to by using an illustration I borrow from J. I. Packer.*

**Looking back, I think in my early years of preaching I tried to put too much doctrinal content into my sermons. That is probably a common mistake. Now I am happy if about one third is devoted to the doctrine expressed in the text, while the rest of the time is devoted to experiential and practical matters.**

He was told that a sermon was like a wooden stool with three legs, denoted by the letters D, E, and P. For many years he forgot this illustration, but he then came to realise how apt it is. The leg marked ‘D’, stood for doctrine. It was pointing to the fact that biblical teaching has to be at the centre of our preaching. True preaching cannot be bereft of the content of Scripture. The second leg, ‘E’, stood for experience. Our aim in preaching is to draw hearers closer to God, and into a deeper experience of his grace. We must direct our words to the conscience, and, by the work of God’s Holy Spirit, to touch the heart and to bring conviction of sin. The third and final leg,

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<sup>15</sup>In my little book, *Preparation for Ministry* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2014), 53–57, I have set out a simple outline of a method of sermon preparation.

designated by ‘P’, relates to the practical application of the passage on which we are speaking. The Puritans normally included within their sermons, and always at the end of them, some ‘uses.’ That is, they were really saying, ‘What use to me is the teaching of this passage of God’s Word?’ Or, ‘What practical things am I being encouraged to do, as I am being brought into closer conformity to the pattern set before us by the Lord Jesus?’<sup>16</sup> Remember, too, that these three things have to be held together, or else we have a distorted form of preaching.

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#### **4. A Closing Word**

Now a closing word. First, let me say something to those of you who have completed their course and are already out in ministry. Don’t forget the concentration on the great historical facts of the Gospel. Preach them with passion and apply them with the wisdom that comes from the Holy Spirit’s guidance and help. Your task is to set out God’s truth in a way that, under God’s blessing, changes lives. In preaching, we must expect sinners to be converted and Christian believers aided in their growth in Christian knowledge and experience.

And to those of you still in your theological course, I say, listen to the preaching on the biblical texts that you have in classes at college, learn how to apply them to your hearers, and realise that what you are doing now in college courses is going to be your life’s work. Make sure you have learned to do the hard work of exegesis, and that you are as prepared as possible for starting your weekly preaching in a congregation. Regard the college course as the first years of ministry and build upon that foundation as you enter into parish life and service. Remember Dr Packer’s ‘D’, ‘E’, and ‘P’, and set it as your aim to preach the whole counsel of God with ardour and vigour.

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<sup>16</sup> This illustration can be found in J. I. Packer, *Aspects of Authority: In our message, in our preaching and counselling, in our decision-making* (Disley, Cheshire: Orthos Fellowship, 1986), 18–19.



## Robert Kerr & Morocco: A forgotten Chapter in Presbyterian Mission History

Jack C. Whytock

### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

For the past four years I have been working on the two volume Africa Survey Textbook Project as a survey of Presbyterian Mission History, historic and modern. This grew out of teaching over many years and being frustrated on not finding a full Continent-wide survey to use showing the many streams that make up the web of Presbyterian Mission history. When trying to recruit a writer for the thematic North African chapter I would discuss some of the areas needing to be covered and one was Jewish missions in Morocco by Presbyterians. The responses were most interesting, some of which were: incongruity, never heard of it, cannot do it, you need a full specialist or researcher, *and* just drop that section, unnecessary. The last comment makes me think that nineteenth-century Jewish missions is not exactly something that mission historians view as highly popular today and not something many want to touch, but maybe I am wrong on that. Well, no writer could be found, and believing that the story needed to be included, I was left with writing that

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<sup>1</sup> I express deep thanks to Helen Weller the archivist for the United Reformed Church History Society, Westminster College, Cambridge who was truly exceptional in helping with archival material. Also sincere thanks to the staff at Special Collections and Archives at SOAS, London for helping prepare archival material to examine. I also have appreciated a researcher in Glasgow who did biographical checks for me on the Kerr family and thanks also to Chris Killacky who helped verify military matters about William MacKintosh Kerr. I also appreciated the staff at the Hebrew & Jewish library section at the University College London for their assistance. This paper was first presented at the Presbyterian Scholars' Conference, Harbor House, Wheaton College, October 2022. Thanks to all who *entered into* the paper with their questions and conversations.

section. So, today's paper has emerged from my research thus far. It is really part of a wider North African subject context, but I will limit it to Morocco and thus allow for some further complexities to be opened in this unique Federal Jewish Presbyterian Mission to Morocco.

### 1. Context

I begin with a two-fold cursory context of Presbyterian and Jewish missions in the nineteenth century and raise the question at the outset, "Why Morocco?"

#### *Presbyterians and Jewish Missions in the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century*

The watershed moment for Presbyterians and the rallying call for Jewish Missions can be symbolically and intentionally attributed to the noted and well-publicised 1839 Church of Scotland Mission of Inquiry with such luminary names as Andrew Bonar and Robert Murray M'Cheyne amongst the team members. The report of that inquiry remains in print to this day, 183 years later.<sup>2</sup> There was much lead-up story to that noted mission of inquiry and there was much activity amongst Scots Presbyterians of all stripes (CofS, FCS, UPCS, and RPCS) after the inquiry. It was the flowering of a period of the greatest Jewish missionary activity of Scots Presbyterians from the 1840s through to the end of the nineteenth-century, both foreign and home, and stands out as a unique period in mission history. It spilled over into the diaspora churches and others in North America of the same period. The ARPs in the North commenced a mission to the Jews in Damascus in the 1840s, and the Canadian Presbyterians likewise in the 1840s and 1850s culminating in work

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<sup>2</sup> Andrew A. Bonar and Robert Murray M'Cheyne, *Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in 1839*. Second Edition. (Edinburgh: William Whyte, 1842), 62ff. The latest print edition of this work has been edited by Allan Harman as *Mission of Discovery: The Beginnings of Modern Jewish Evangelism, the Journal of Bonar and McCheyne's Mission of Inquiry* (Fearn, UK: Christian Focus, 1966).

amongst Sephardic Jews in Turkey.<sup>3</sup> The rationale may be multi-reasoned<sup>4</sup> but at the core was the conviction that neglect was disobedience to the Great Commission, that the Jewish people needed to be evangelised just as the Gentiles as the Jewish peoples needed to hear of the Messiah and be called to embrace him, and a love and appreciation for this ancient people was growing in segments of the Presbyterian churches who in many ways had certain affinities with Judaism even if somewhat Romantic—the Psalms, the Sabbath, covenant theology, church governance. The Presbyterian Church in England was also part of this Jewish mission wave at the same time.<sup>5</sup> Here we must also state something else that many of these Jewish Mission endeavours were both ecclesial and society combined. Jewish Presbyterian Mission was not always purely denominational or ecclesial. The English Presbyterians in a somewhat informal way were involved in Jewish Missions from 1845 to 1865 in Corfu. It was the flavour of the day to be involved in Jewish Missions as Presbyterians. As the philio-semitic ethos grew by the 1880s so grew a desire for medical missions as a door for Jewish missions amongst many Presbyterian missions or related missions.

I see three paradigms for such Protestant Jewish mission work, and I will apply this in context using the PCE. The first paradigm I call the **conversionist paradigm**, the second the **transitional paradigm**, and the third the **dialogical and inclusivist paradigm**. **This study is completely in the first, the conversionist paradigm (a period c.1790s to end of WW1).**<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> S. B. Rohold, "Presbyterian Church in Canada Mission to the Jews. Historical Sketch..." (Toronto: Christian Synagogue, 1918), 5. Ephraim Menachem Epstein was the first missionary.

<sup>4</sup> Many Scottish Presbyterians who supported and promoted Jewish missions were in the category of premillennialists. This would be more in the category of *historic premillennialist* than the modern understanding of dispensational premillennialists. Eschatology and prophecy were an undercurrent for many at this time but not all agreed on the same system of interpretation yet could agree and be supportive towards advocating for Jewish missions as common cause. See John Ross, "Time for Favour," 91–94 and 179, for a most helpful summation on this last point.

<sup>5</sup> Hebrew Christians such as Adolph Saphir, Leone Levi, and Alfred Edersheim all being associated with the PCE amongst others.

<sup>6</sup> Chronologically the other two I would posit as, the second paradigm between the wars through c1970, and the third paradigm c1970 to present. To help explain why I have classified these as two distinctive paradigms see, *The Christian Approach to the Jew: Being a Report of Conferences on the Subject held at Budapest and Warsaw in April 1927*. (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1927). [Note, issued by the International Missionary Council and the Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland.] Next for the third paradigm, John M. Parry, "Working with people of other faiths within the United Reformed Church: an assessment of the Mission and other Faiths Committee," *The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, 9.7 (November 2015), 408–423. Thanks to Dr Robert Pope for alerting me to this paper.

*Why Morocco?*

Our paper today focuses upon Morocco and Jewish mission work there in particular. Scottish Presbyterians were involved in North Africa in societies and in ecclesial partnerships with such or just ecclesial involvements in Egypt,



Ethiopia, Tunisia, and Algeria from the 1850s but not Morocco. Yet knowledge of Morocco was growing primarily in the UK through the reports of Christian missionaries like Rev. William MacKintosh of the British & Foreign Bible Society appointed to Tangiers in 1882.<sup>7</sup> Awareness of Jewish settlements in Morocco was also being highlighted by various Jewish Missionary Societies. Numbers are imprecise for the nineteenth-century Jews in Morocco but range from

100,000 to near 500,000 by 1900. Perhaps in the 1880s there were 350,000 Jews in Morocco in three groups, the ancient Jews, who arrived possibly at the time of the destruction of the first Temple, next, those who came after the destruction of the second Temple, of which both ancient groups spoke Berber dialects and Judeo-Arabic, and finally the Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal after the expulsions there in the late fifteenth-century who spoke originally Judeo-Spanish and then added Judeo-Arabic. It is believed that Morocco had the largest number of Jews in a Muslim dominated context at the time.

The Jews were dispersed widely across Morocco with the older two elements being in the Atlas Mountains and interior cities and the more “recent” primarily in the larger urban areas including the coastal cities. In large centres the Jews lived in *mellahs* or Jewish quarters of the city behind high walls and closed gates at night.<sup>8</sup> Some in very wretched conditions. The focus was very much upon the Holy Land for Jewish missions and large urban centres in

<sup>7</sup> MacKintosh would be the key individual to recommend to the PCE Jewish Mission Committee that they locate a mission in Rabat and Salee. See, “Report of the Jewish Mission Committee” in *Digest of the Proceedings of the Synods of the PCE 1876–1905*, 138. There are two other names, but I see MacKintosh was really the most informed.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Menachen Laskier & Eliezer Bashan, “Morocco” in *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times*, eds. R. S. Simon, et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 471, 475, 481; Jane S. Gerber, *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience* (New York: The Free Press, 1992); Martin Gilbert, *Jewish History Atlas*. Revised Edition. (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976).

Europe but interest in Morocco was growing. As a postscript, the size of the Jewish community in Morocco today in contrast is about 2,100 a radically different demographic from that of the 1880s.

There is another related factor to why Morocco was suddenly of mission interest. Donald MacKenzie a Scot behind the North-West Africa Trading Company formed in 1882, after his first explorations along the coast of Morocco in the scramble for Africa in 1880 was a promoter on Morocco. This Company of which he was involved built a fort in southern Morocco at Cape Jury in 1882 and this also helped promote interest in Morocco. Leaving aside MacKenzie's ideas on the Sahara it did help focus eyes upon Morocco. He wrote against the slave trade in Morocco and encouraged mission societies to consider Morocco and do what had been done in Syria earlier, both evangelistic and philanthropic.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps there are other shadowy explorations such as Joseph Thomson and his explorations into the Atlas Mountains and southern Morocco, although that seems after this mission had already begun so I do not think that was germane here.<sup>10</sup> I will leave that at present. Now to the Federal Jewish Mission.

## 2. A Federal Mission

In 1876 a church union occurred, and a Federal Council was formed (Council of the Federated Churches). This union was of the United Presbyterian Synod in England (109 congregations) with the Presbyterian Church *in* England (150 congregations) to form the Presbyterian Church *of* England. The UP congregations in Scotland did not enter this union and continued as their own Synod yet this UP Scottish Synod was now part of the new Federal Council with the new Presbyterian Church *of* England as Federated Churches.<sup>11</sup> Thus, a way was found to unite the majority of Presbyterians in England as the PCofE yet also move forward as a Federal Council between two denomination, post-union 1876. It was a rather ingenious way forward and also held out the olive branch for others to enter into this Federal Council, namely the Free Church

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<sup>9</sup> Donald MacKenzie, *The Flooding of the Sahara* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Sealte & Rivington, 1877) a work now described as Imperialist folly; Donald MacKenzie, *The Kalifate of the West: Being a General Description of Morocco* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, 1911), 248–250 where Mackenzie writes about his role in the early 1880s promoting the need for Missions in Morocco. See his 21 December 1881 letter published in *Africa*. Mackenzie seems to see himself as really being behind most Protestant missionaries taking up work in Morocco in the 1880s which may be somewhat over-inflated.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Thomson, *Travels in the Atlas and Southern Morocco: A Narrative of Exploration* (London: George Philip, 1889). It is about his travels there in 1888.

<sup>11</sup> This Federated body is different from that used in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the USA where there arose local Federated Churches, e.g., Presbyterian and Congregational as a Federated Church in a local town or village.



of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Calvinistic Methodist Church of Wales.<sup>12</sup>

This new Federal push post-1876 had also a component related to missions. Article three:

That each of the Churches shall conduct its own missionary operations, but aim at combined efforts in regard to the same missionary enterprises, so far as they may be found practicable.<sup>13</sup>

It is this article in the terms of Federation creating a Council of the Federated Churches which concerns us in this paper (on a sidenote the FCS did finally join the Federation Council in 1889 which will be significant for our story, more on that later). The first time that a desire to particularise this clause is found in 1883 with the proposal to have a combined federal mission to the Jews overseas with a desire that it might be in Hebron, Palestine as a medical mission to the Jews. In 1884 both Federal Council Churches agreed to this through the UP Foreign Mission Committee and the PCE Jewish Mission Committee. Then in 1885 the decision was made that Hebron was not as pressing a field as formerly thought because the Berlin Medical Mission was now working there.<sup>14</sup> Thus, attention turned to somewhere in Morocco which in the 1880s as already stated interest was awakened to the Jewish population and needs there. The arrangement was decided that the UPCS would fund a medical missionary for 250 pounds per year and the PCE would fund all other mission needs and the PCE was to serve as the engager of the agent for this Moroccan Mission paid by the UPC.

**Federal Missions must demonstrate that they are working together. This proposed Jewish Mission overseas fitted that agenda.**

Although Morocco was selected there remained strong undercurrents however to develop a Jewish Federal Mission in the Holy Lands. This will emerge very quickly in 1894 and that the Holy Land was really the real choice over Morocco by many. More on that to come.

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<sup>12</sup> S. W. Carruthers, compiler, *Digest of the Proceedings of the Synods of the Presbyterian Church of England 1876–1905* (London: PCE, 1907), 1–8 on the terms of the Federation. Also, *Presbyterian Messenger* (1 January 1887), 14 and S. W. Carruthers, *Fifty Years 1876–1926*, 57.

<sup>13</sup> Carruthers, *Digest*, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Carruthers, *Digest*, 456, 457.

Federal Missions must demonstrate that they are working together. This proposed Jewish Mission overseas fitted that agenda. Yet finances also must be clearly there by all parties. This Federal Mission was constantly plagued by financial woes particularly it seems from my reading of the failure of the PCE to adequately fulfill their side of the arrangement. In addition to a medical missionary there was to also be recruited an ordained minister as a teacher/preacher/ evangelist. Yet though this fell to the PCE no such recruit was ever found in the eight years of this mission and reading the reports it does not seem that this was a priority as it would involve finances. True eventually after five years finally medical assistant workers were found but the PCE did not directly fund these but rather it came through the Women's Missionary Association and one patron a Mr. J. T. Morton who funded these. In terms of overall strategy, it was not the right approach and by comparison with other missions shows a fundamental long-term weakness.

This Federal Presbyterian Mission to Jews in Morocco will take a turn which is a crisis point in 1894 which first needs to be explained to understand how this Federal Mission would change fields from Morocco suddenly in late 1894 to Aleppo, Syria. The story is rather complex and not easy to establish clear interpretation. So now we will turn to a survey of the actual work of this pioneer Federal Mission in Morocco from 1886 through 1894.

### **3. Pioneering in Morocco, a new mission**

The agent selected for this new pioneer field of the Federal Mission was Dr Robert Kerr who had learnt about this new mission from his close friend Dr Robert Laidlaw of the Glasgow Medical Mission. Laidlaw had briefly been in Palestine and had heard that the PCE and UPC wanted to commence a new medical mission to the Jews in Hebron. Kerr was very interested and made enquires and was informed that this new Federal Mission had selected Morocco now, but he still decided to pursue this.

**This medical mission was a bridge of compassion into the Jewish communities of Rabat, Salle (Salee), and beyond.**

*Robert Kerr 1855–1918*



Robert Kerr was born to a lowland crofting family in Ayrshire in 1855.<sup>15</sup> He studied medicine at Anderson's College of Medicine, Glasgow and took his licentiate through the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh.<sup>16</sup> He had served with the Glasgow City Mission doing both medical mission work and evangelistic work for five years and was also a member of the UPC.<sup>17</sup> Before leaving for Morocco, he was given valedictory send-offs in January and February 1886 by both the UPC in Glasgow and also by the PCE, with the latter service held at Highbury Park PCE, London. The next month (March 1886) he arrived in Rabat, Morocco and was met by Rev. William MacKintosh of the BFBS and given a short crash-course into what to expect in Rabat and Sallee. He found accommodations and a house for the

medical mission to begin and then went to Gibraltar where he met his fiancée (Jane MacKay Jeffrey) and was married by the FCS minister there at the Presbyterian Church in Gibraltar.<sup>18</sup> The Kerrs would have three sons all born

<sup>15</sup> Kerr's birth year has been verified through the Archive General Register Office Record set (DCON, Vol 14, 852) for the British Armed Forces and Overseas Deaths And Burials which states his birth year as 1855. The Wikipedia entry on Kerr has no birth year. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_Kerr\\_\(missionary\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Kerr_(missionary)) accessed 21 October 2022.

<sup>16</sup> At Anderson's from 1881 to 1884. Katy Mackin, Archives and Special Collections Assistant, University of Glasgow, email correspondence 3 November 2022. Ref. DC244/9/1

<sup>17</sup> The PCE Jewish Mission Committee Report reads as follows concerning Kerr: "[they] felt that they had found one who seemed providentially prepared, as a preacher and healer" and "his experience fits him at once to teach and to heal, to deal with the souls and the bodies of men—both diseased." *Digest of the Proceedings of the Synods of the PCE 1876–1905*, 138, 133.

<sup>18</sup> The Jewish Missions Committee had advised Kerr not to get married before going to Rabat but go there first and prepare housing and a location for the medical mission and then be married.

in Rabat, the eldest son born in 1890 (William MacKintosh) and twin boys in 1892.<sup>19</sup>

The Kerrs were the first resident Protestant missionaries of Rabat and Sallee, hence the theme of Kerr's first book, *Pioneering in Morocco: A Record of Seven Years' Medical Mission Work in the Palace and the Hut*.<sup>20</sup> Itinerant Protestant missionaries had only ever passed through Rabat before. Thus, the work of the Kerrs was significant for the history of Protestant missions in central Morocco.

Here is a short summary of this mission work for the eight years of the Federal Mission.

*Medical, Colportage, Evangelistic*

Medical mission work was naturally at the heart of this pioneer mission as was evangelism and seeking converts. The medical mission was a bridge of compassion into the Jewish communities of Rabat, Salle (Salee), and beyond, "The medical work opens many doors which would otherwise be closed" and "Dr. Kerr has been using the goodwill of the people and overcoming their inveterate prejudices by his medical skill and prompt and kind assistance in cases of suffering and danger. Thus is his gift of healing opening up a way for the reception of the Gospel."<sup>21</sup> Correctly, before Kerr left for Morocco it was recognised that such medical mission work could not exclude non-Jews. So, whoever was in need or showed interest was to be treated. Despite persistent superstition Kerr gained increasingly access into Jewish homes, Muslim homes and even the palace of the Sultan and his harem. His medical work for the Sultan in the dark recesses of being escorted around the palace by eunuchs gives a glimpse into a world that few knew.<sup>22</sup>

In the early years Dr Kerr was assisted by a Syrian recruit (Stimen) who presented the Christian faith to patients, family, and onlookers while Dr Kerr performed medical services. Mrs. Kerr was assisted (recruited also by of Rev. MacKintosh) by a Syrian Bible woman (Miriam). Kerr and his Syrian assistant itinerated as far as Fez and Mequinez. In Mequinez, Kerr mentions in his journal visiting various Jewish shops and meeting

two young Jews, who, like Nicodemus, had come to have a quiet talk with reference to Christ as Messiah. 'We are not a t rest. We wish to know the truth,' said

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<sup>19</sup> The twins died in infancy in Rabat and were buried there.

<sup>20</sup> Original, London: Allenson, 1894.

<sup>21</sup> Kerr, *Pioneering*, 65; *Presbyterian Messenger* (1 January 1889), 13.

<sup>22</sup> Kerr, *Pioneering*, 69; *Presbyterian Messenger* (1 September 1883) 18. One superstition that Kerr met with in Jewish households when he tried to inoculate their children for smallpox was, "if their children are vaccinated by a Christian he will insert a small quantity of blood, and sooner or later they will become Christians."

one. We reasoned with them, and got them to read the word for themselves. When leaving, I gave each a Hebrew New Testament. Our hearts were greatly cheered by these two young Jews. Treated seventeen patients today—ten Moors and seven Jews. Sold four Hebrew Bibles, and gave away two Hebrew New Testaments.<sup>23</sup>

**...the number of patients treated continued to increase over the eight-year period of the Federal Mission. In 1890, the number was 3,686 with one in seven being Jewish; 1891, 5,046 with one in six being Jewish and 500 house visits of which 300 were into Jewish homes.**

The medical mission in Rabat was a double-house compound with one house serving as the “hospital” and it appears in time another building was added as a “hospital.” Mrs. Kerr and her Syrian Bible Woman would engage with the patients and also do visitation in Jewish homes in the Jewish Quarter. Dr Kerr had occasional nursing assistants/bible women came from the North Africa Mission (NAM). One of these was Miss Jennings.<sup>24</sup> After the Syrian assistant left Dr Kerr had a young, converted Jew from Tangiers serve as his assistant doing both Jewish evangelistic work and also assisting him in the surgery and hospital. This assistant Israel Darmond would later train in medicine in America and then return to Morocco and work with Dr Kerr in the mission there in central Morocco taking the city of Casa Blanca together with his wife a medical doctor.<sup>25</sup> Statistically the number of patients treated continued to increase over the eight-year period of the Federal Mission. In 1890, the number was 3,686 with one in seven being Jewish; 1891, 5,046 with

<sup>23</sup> *Presbyterian Messenger* (1 March 1891), but from his journal of 1890.

<sup>24</sup> Kerr, *Pioneering*, 110; *North Africa* (10 April 1890), 55; *North Africa* (June 1890); 81-82; *North Africa* (August 1890), 101. Another was Miss Herdman who describes Dr Kerr’s itineration in Fez. *Presbyterian Messenger* (1 September 1891), 15, taken from *North Africa*.

<sup>25</sup> Kerr, *Pioneering*, 181, CMM Annual Report 1908, 7–9.

one in six being Jewish and 500 house visits of which 300 were into Jewish homes.<sup>26</sup>

Colportage work was a central element of the mission to both Jews and Muslims. Some of this was through sales and some through free distribution, some through a reading ministry at the hospital. Kerr seemed to receive almost all his biblical material through Rev. MacKintosh the BFBS agent in Tangiers. There is a good trail of invoices and payments for such.<sup>27</sup>

Bible Studies and Sunday Worship services were conducted by either Kerr or the various assistants through the years. On Sundays there were two worship services, one in Arabic and one in English and usually Kerr carried all this preaching load. Hence the need for an ordained missionary was a constant theme.

Mercy ministry or benevolence was also part of the work done by the Kerrs and their assistants. This included care for orphans, some of them who lived with them for a time and also the feeding of prisoners. Although vaccination was a medical work it clearly was a mercy ministry. Dr Kerr was the first to introduce vaccination in Rabat and Salee and the mission provided valuable ministry of care during outbreaks of smallpox.

**Dr Kerr was the first to introduce vaccination in Rabat and Salee and the mission provided valuable ministry of care during outbreaks of smallpox.**

Kerr's philosophy of mission was to work as much as possible with other emerging missions in Morocco, or to encourage labouring together in Morocco as an ecumenical evangelical informal alliance. Thus, he also helped train apprentices for other mission organisations such as NAM and the Southern Morocco Mission.<sup>28</sup> Kerr was also a strong advocate of encouraging more Jewish mission work to be done in Morocco.

Although Kerr was a missionary under this Federal Council arrangement, he was the agent of the PCE. The Synod of the PCE adopted that all medical missionaries be ordained as ruling elders by presbyteries. Thus, on 18 October 1889 at Highbury Park Church, the Presbytery of London North ordained him as an elder. The Moderator of Presbytery conducted the service and Rev. Charles Moinet preached and the Presbytery laid hands upon Kerr and a second medical missionary going to the PCE field in China. In

<sup>26</sup> Kerr, *Pioneering*, 181-182, 227.

<sup>27</sup> PCE/MTJ/COE/1 Correspondence, Rabat (Jewish Mission) for many receipts, invoices and ledger reports.

<sup>28</sup> *North Africa* (April 1891), 46.

attendance were Dr Robert Laidlaw and Mr. Polan of the PCE London Jewish Mission. Moinet said in his sermon that using medicine was a “most serviceable handmaid to the Gospel... Yet it was ever to be borne in mind by them that, precious as their skill in healing disease or soothing sufferings, they were still to regard it as their great aim to reach the souls of men and lead them through faith unto salvation.”<sup>29</sup> A most interesting arrangement in terms of polity and secondly the message was clearly emphasising evangelical priority in the mission whether medical missions in Morocco or China.

Kerr had asked for more help repeatedly and the Jewish Mission Committee had made a promise to this effect when he went out that an ordained minister/teacher and also nursing assistants would be sent. An ordained agent was never sent. The Kerrs tried with whatever assistants they could secure but the work was overwhelming on many occasions and often lead to exhaustion and continuing to work when ill. One report from NAM was of the incredible help of Dr Kerr in coming into the interior but working every day when personally under the fever. Finally, five years later two nursing assistants were sent out. They were single women who were funded by a patron, Mr. J. T. Morton and they became the agents of the Women’s Missionary Association, PCE. Both had trained at the Zenana Medical College in London in midwifery and nursing. It is at this point that a twist will develop in the Federal Mission working in Morocco that best can be called “parting of the ways.”

I will now attempt to explain this situation.

#### **4. A parting of the ways, of sorts**

There is no doubt that this pioneering Jewish mission was advancing and starting to establish itself in Morocco despite many challenges whether religious hostility, superstition, political tardiness at best, to suppression, and lack of a sufficient team approach. Yet it seems the greatest challenge would actually come from within the mission both on the ground and, it could also be argued, on the home front.

Enthusiasm was the order of the day when finally, two young single female missionaries were recruited, Helen Robertson and Annie Graham, who were sent off from Marylebone Presbyterian Church, London with a well-planned valedictory service on 13 September 1890. Dr Fraser was the preacher urging the call for Jewish Missions.<sup>30</sup> The two women arrived just before Christmas 1890 at Rabat, Morocco. All seemed promising for the first few months of 1891. They started language studies in Arabic and worked in the dispensary. They were taken-up with the Kerr’s little boy Willie who was also now starting to speak Arabic. They were a great help to Mrs. Kerr and went with her on visitation, helped with sewing classes, etc. By July 1891, however,

<sup>29</sup> *Presbyterian Messenger* (1 December 1889), 15.

<sup>30</sup> *Presbyterian Messenger*, (1 November 1890), 21.

the hints of trouble start to be seen in correspondence. Annie Graham seemed most zealous in her engagements in wanting a house and went directly to the Sultan seeking such which was against the wishes of the Jewish Committee convenor, Dr Edmond. Then in October Dr Kerr reported on the Sultan's charges against the missionaries. Whether the two were directly connected one cannot say for certain, but the timing is very interesting.<sup>31</sup> We also read that Miss Graham took it upon herself to travel across the river to Salee where Dr Kerr was performing a surgery—directly against his orders not to do such but rather to stay to help with the twins and Mrs. Kerr. It was not long after this incident that the twins died. Then in November 1892, 22 months after their arrival, we read about a division between the two single missionaries, Miss Robertson and Miss Graham. Although the minutes reveal nothing of the nature of this “division,” the WMA counselled Miss Robertson to resign. “It was decided that Miss Robertson must be withdrawn, and Mrs. Mathieson was requested to write to her to this effect, at the same time suggesting to her how much better it would be for her to resign.”<sup>32</sup> She did resign and returned home to England where she found temporary employment and was given a quarter salary payout by the WMA. It seems that she arrived back in England at just around the two-year mark.

In January 1893, a letter was sent to the WMA from Mrs. Kerr concerning Miss Graham causing alienation between the Kerrs and Mrs. Kerr's brother and outlining further misunderstandings in the Rabat and Salee community. Then in February 1893, Dr Kerr wrote to the Jewish Missions Committee about Miss Graham and put it down to “mental aberration” (technical medical terminology covering a wide range of mental states).<sup>33</sup> No definition or elaboration was given concerning Dr Kerr's diagnosis of this condition. Miss Graham then also wrote a letter to the WMA and made a threefold charge against Dr Kerr. The charges were serious and involved finances, opening of private mail addressed to Miss Robertson, and the employment of guards and accusations of temper and physical abuse towards a worker. Miss Graham also stated that necessity required her to come to the aid of Mrs. Kerr's brother and seek a house for him.<sup>34</sup> This letter with the charges went from the WMA to the PCE Jewish Mission Committee. The first charge concerning finances, was immediately dropped; the second was deemed reprehensible yet “lawful,” whatever that may imply. The third matter

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<sup>31</sup> Womens' Missionary Association, Committee Minutes, (Box 20 1878–1920, SOAS), minute for 14 July 1891 and 13 October 1891.

<sup>32</sup> Womens' Missionary Association, Committee Minutes, minute for 8 November 1891.

<sup>33</sup> Minutes of Jewish Mission Committee, 16 June 1893, 63–68. MS Vol. III, PCE/MTJ/COE/1.

<sup>34</sup> Miss Graham is also in correspondence with Mrs. Jeffrey in Scotland about what she had done to help her son in Rabat. Same minute.



seems to have been complicated and full facts were never brought forward nor was there any external verification. Dr Kerr was not asked to resign but was chastened for his temper.<sup>35</sup> Kerr sensed that the Committee was now less than fully supportive towards him. He chose then to resign. The Committee did not accept the resignation and encouraged him to withdraw it. Kerr felt his reputation had been damaged and so proceeded to resign feeling that the Committee was not duly respectful towards him and overreacted by listening to the testimony of one person. Curiously a letter of testimony in support of Dr Kerr written by Rev. MacKintosh, the BFBS agent in Tangiers (who had partnered with Kerr for almost eight years at that point) was read to the Committee. This letter was the opposite of Miss Graham's.<sup>36</sup> More letters were exchanged with Miss Graham to the WMA and there is a genuine sense of frustration in the tone of the minutes of the WMA with Miss Graham:

A letter from Miss Graham to Mrs. J. E Mathieson was read. It just went over the old grounds of complaint again. Mrs. Mathieson was asked to write to her once more and to counsel submission and patience.<sup>37</sup>

With Kerr's resignation, the WMA had their reason to urge Miss Graham to resign as Rabat was no longer a field of the PCE/Federal Mission. She eventually accepted the advisement and was given a lesser pay-out than Miss Robertson which issued in a protestation and negotiation and eventually a quarter salary is paid to Miss Graham. Neither of these women served in any field of the WMA after this.

The damage was done. The Kerrs, who had given themselves to be life-long missionaries, resigned as agents of the PCE and the Federal Jewish Mission but declared they would remain on at Rabat and carry forth the work. The result was the Committee on Jewish Mission decided it was best to locate to another field of service either elsewhere in Morocco or in a totally different region.<sup>38</sup> Negotiations ensued between Dr Kerr and the Committee, and it was agreed that Dr Kerr would assume the leases for the medical Mission in Rabat as well as all medical equipment, furnishings, inventory of Bibles etc., and all liabilities for the properties for the continuing mission. In November 1894 the Federal Mission in Morocco was "handed over" and the new Federal Mission

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<sup>35</sup> Minutes of Jewish Mission Committee, 16 June 1893, 63–68. MS Vol. III, PCE/MTJ/COE/1.

<sup>36</sup> Minutes of Jewish Mission Committee, 25 September 1893, 76–77.

<sup>37</sup> WMA, Committee Minutes, Vol 5, Minute for 9 January 1894.

<sup>38</sup> Minutes of Jewish Mission Committee, 26 February 1894, 81.

was now Aleppo officially.<sup>39</sup> Thus, there was a parting of the ways of the Federal Mission of the two federated churches officially on paper.

Matters with Miss Graham resurfaced in June 1894 after her resignation and return to the UK as she was in correspondence once again. This time she requested the letter in which she had addressed her charges against Dr Kerr be given back to her.<sup>40</sup> The letter was returned and a copy of it is not to be found in the existing records of the Jewish Missions Committee or the WMA. Perhaps it was copied as many archival materials were lost during the second world war, but we will likely never know. The Federal Mission in Morocco was quickly forgotten in the official publications of the PCE and after 1895 is seldom mentioned. One gets the impression that the Committee certainly wanted to move on, and one is left wondering, “Were matters handled in a judicious manner?”

**The Federal Mission in Morocco was quickly forgotten in the official publications of the PCE and after 1895 is seldom mentioned. One gets the impression that the Committee certainly wanted to move-on, and one is left wondering, “Were matters handled in a judicious manner?”**

The Federal Mission in Morocco technically lasted from March 1886 through November 1894 when all matters of transfer were completed to the *continuing* mission. It was a rather odd parting of the ways *of sorts* as, I will argue next, it was not exactly a full parting of the ways.

Besides the issue with Miss Graham and Dr Kerr there is also another dimension that raises questions about the home support of this Federal mission. As noted already, the full strength of what was promised never materialised in this mission. Finance seemed to doggedly plague the Committee on Jewish Missions of the PCE, either it overextended itself with the opening of this foreign Jewish field or there were other factors at work such as priority to existing foreign mission work in China. Those other factors appear to have created internal division in another way. As noted, Morocco was not the field all wanted, Palestine or the Holy Land was the preferred field. This came up at different times and interestingly in the October 1893 *Presbyterian Messenger* the case was being made that a mission to Jews should be established in Palestine or Syria:

<sup>39</sup> Minutes of Jewish Mission Committee, 5 October 1894, 99–101; 14 November 1894, 102–103.

<sup>40</sup> Minutes of Jewish Mission Committee, 29 June 1894, 92–93.

It is, indeed, natural and right that the Church should set her heart on winning for her Lord the land for ever dear to her as His earthly home, and the native land also of His Apostles. The rest of Syria is only less sacred than Palestine.<sup>41</sup>

Then again at Synod in May 1894 it came up and then at Synod in May 1895, Rev. William Ewing, a PCE minister in Birmingham, addressed Synod that the decision of Aleppo was ideal.

He spoke eloquently and convincingly. Aleppo, he said, will catch hearts, because it is in Syria, where everything recalls Jesus, in a way impossible to a town in Morocco.<sup>42</sup>

There is one new fact that was also not there in 1886 when the Federal Mission began in Morocco, now in 1895 the Federal Council was three denominations as the Free Church of Scotland had joined the Federal Council in 1889. That body had strong attachments within its ranks to Palestine and it must have been a logical move to close one field and “catch hearts” or also maybe money by opening a Federal Mission to Jews in Aleppo, Syria. Ewing himself was a former Free Church missionary in the Holy Land and would return again to the Holy Land and was buried in Jerusalem.

Finally, it really must be questioned if there was internal division going back to the very beginning, even before Kerr pioneered this Morocco Federal Mission. The day following Kerr’s commissioning service at Highbury Park Church in February 1886, Kerr went to the offices of the PCE in London for final travel arrangements and was told by a member of the executive (Rev. Robert Taylor) of the Jewish Missions Committee the following:

...I may tell you that this is a mission in which nobody has an interest. We have had so many disappointments with our Jewish workers that ‘henceforth all of us have turned to the Gentiles.’ We have received the money from the United Presbyterian Board at Edinburgh to spend, otherwise we would never have undertaken this work.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Presbyterian Messenger* (1 October 1893), 233–234.

<sup>42</sup> *Presbyterian Messenger* (1 June 1895), 128 from Synod the previous month.

<sup>43</sup> Kerr, *Twenty-five Years*, 224. Quoting Rev. Robert Taylor. Whether Taylor was alluding to the 1879/80 embarrassment the Committee found itself in over Dr B. W. Jossffy being appointed to Vienna and then being withdrawn or perhaps to the earlier

Taylor would assume the chair of the Jewish Committee in 1894 after Dr Edmond's death, coinciding with the decision to close Morocco. Are the two related?

Not long before Kerr died, he authored his second book and on four pages in this 1912 work there is a reference to two unnamed female mission workers who served on a field. The reference is clearly to the incident of Misses Graham and Robertson. It seems that Kerr reflected upon this for another 20 years. The pages clearly condemn the mission committee and their failures to vet workers before sending them out.<sup>44</sup> Did Kerr have the final word?

### *Conclusion*

There appears to be five areas of concern here as to why this Federal Mission ended in Morocco after eight years. The first was financial. Sufficient funding was not there. Two, the old problem of missionary conflict was there in the last three years. Three, there appears to have been competing visions for this Federal Mission and the fields it should have served. Four, the question must be raised about the Committee supporting and guiding their respective agents. Did they have united vision, and did they fully grasp the nature of the missionary conflicts related to such within a medical mission, e.g., protocols in such, and also the context of the cultural milieu of Morocco? Fifth, was there a drive of Zionism underneath some of the competing visions for fields? Maybe, but that is hard to discern from the minutes and existing correspondence found thus far. When a comparison is made between the Federal Morocco Mission and the Federal Aleppo Mission, several of the same trajectories can be found, especially the financial so the Zionist theme may not be a significant factor in the closing of the Moroccan field.

### **5. A Faith Mission, of Sorts**

Some have described the Federal Mission in Morocco as merging into the Central Morocco Mission which immediately assumed the existing mission field in Morocco. It really was not a merger, rather more one entity ended in the field and the next continued where the last left off. The best is really to see it *as a parting of the ways, yet I add a qualifier—of sorts*, and what emerged was a new faith mission—*of sorts*. Faith missions generally mean missionaries go out in faith without guarantee of salary/stipend being provided through an agency and are usually interdenominational. Technically the new named mission CMM can be classified as a faith mission—it was

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informal Jewish mission work in Corfu where an active Hebrew Christian Church was not formed thus some deemed that mission a failure. Whatever the background, it was a stinging commentary for the start of a new field by a member of the committee of which the speaker served.

<sup>44</sup> Kerr, *Twenty-five Years*, 182–184.

interdenominational, and its agents went out without guarantee of stipend.<sup>45</sup> Yet in saying this there are certain features which are more complex. First the operating directors and referees are almost all UP (then UF) or PCE ministers, elders, or doctors. Thus, it does not come across as a very interdenominational mission. It is really more like a mission society for UP and PCE leaders and laity who have not abandoned the mission, or the Kerr missionaries.

In reviewing the limited published Annual Reports post-1894 to 1918 my guarded conclusions come to the above and further that Mrs. Kerr harnessed and created an independent women's missionary styled society/association within the predominantly Scottish UP Churches whereby many UP congregations in their heartland provided annual subscriptions. In addition, select trusts and prominent evangelicals chiefly UP/UF added donations as supporters or subscribers together with a host of UP/UF ministers whose names are included in the annual reports. I was not surprised to read the name of Lord Maclay as one of the donors and one who was also a patron of Lovedale in South Africa and also the Southern Morocco Mission. The only exceptions that I found were one Church of Scotland minister was on the list of referees and for a time one Baptist minister, although one with a large reputation, otherwise, we are dealing with about 98% Presbyterian leadership and subscribers of which the majority were UP.<sup>46</sup> The sole Baptist name was Rev. Duncan MacIntosh the noted leader of the Dunoon Bible School (where Oswald Chambers trained) whose name appeared as a referee in the 1908 Report.<sup>47</sup> No doubt he was added as West Coast Scotland was very interested in Morocco and his name would carry weight for the cause.

The lines in West Coast Scotland with Morocco ran deep in the evangelical community. It is a web of connections. For example, the SMM was founded by John Anderson the first principal of the Glasgow Bible Training Institute who had received medical attention from Dr Kerr when Anderson was visiting Morocco and it was through Kerr that the strategy was given to Anderson to take the south of Morocco below the CMM as a new mission field. The majority of the workers for that field, SMM, all came from West Coast Scotland. The NAM was predominantly in the north of Morocco and certain other key centres. Again, Scottish connections were strong. The NAM Tulloch Memorial Hospital, Tangiers was named after a female missionary worker, the daughter of a Free Church minister, in that case not West Coast but Highland. Interestingly a 2006 book describes the SMM as run by Scottish Presbyterians, well, the CMM was even far more able to make that

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<sup>45</sup> Kerr, *Pioneering*, 250.

<sup>46</sup> *Central Morocco Mission Annual Report*, 1908, I, 10–23; *Central Morocco Mission Annual Report*, 1915–16.

<sup>47</sup> *Central Morocco Mission Annual Report*, 1908, i.

claim as Scottish UP and PCE Scots who were serving across the border in England were basically running and supporting the CMM.<sup>48</sup>

What we find as we study the limited Reports is that the CMM, and the UP/UF and Glasgow BTI were all labouring together as a common evangelical cause and Morocco was their focus. The 1909 Annual meeting for the CMM was held in the premises of the Glasgow Institute. A large crowd was on hand to welcome Dr Kerr and to hear him speak. Rev. David MacIntyre was present and also a supporter. MacIntyre was a UF minister, the successor to Andrew Bonar, married a daughter of Andrew Bonar, and became the second principal of the Glasgow BTI. The lines of connection here are strong and show not just a continuity in Jewish Missions but in Presbyterian and evangelical mission activity and cooperation. It reminds one of the thesis in *Reformed and Evangelical*.<sup>49</sup>

One UF director helped edit and proof Kerr's second book. One director a PCE minister via the UPC was a strong pro-Jewish Missions advocate and had authored a work on *The Coming of the Kingdom*.<sup>50</sup> There is room there for study as to eschatology and comparisons to both Andrew Bonar and also the holiness emphasis of Andrew Murray. All of these details just by going through the list of directors, subscribers tell us that the CMM was decidedly a Presbyterian led and supported mission and secondly it was intimately connected to that strain of evangelical piety, missions and interconnectedness that was endemic in West Coast Scotland. Yet at the same time the CMM was different from the China Inland Mission and others. This mission had begun in a different way and also bore the marks of that unique origin throughout its existence. It was *a different sort of faith mission* is one way of seeing it.

The work of the CMM continued to grow and develop post-1894. In the 1908 Annual Report 8,741 patient visits had been made, 60 crossings from Rabat to Salee had been made. The mission had two doctors serving in Casa Blanca plus one doctor (Kerr) in Rabat and Salee, several native helpers and regular workers were coming out from Scotland to assist at intervals.<sup>51</sup> A

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<sup>48</sup> Jonathan G. Katz, *Murder in Marrakesh: Émile Mauchamp and the French Colonial Adventure* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 76.

<sup>49</sup> Nathan P. Feldmeth, S. Donald Forston III, Garth M. Rosell, & Kenneth Stewart. *Reformed and Evangelical across Four Centuries: The Presbyterian Story in America*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2022), ix.

<sup>50</sup> John Telfer, *The Coming of the Kingdom* (London: Marshall Brothers, [1902]). The three Presbyterian ministers in England connected to the Committee or as Referees were Revs. John Telfer, Arthur Simmons, and Thomas Murray. Telfer and Simmons served in the PCE and both appear in the PCE archival Fasti. Murray was with the FCS then UFCS latterly at Aldershot, England (*Annals of the Free Church of Scotland, 1843–1900*, I, 281). He was in Gibraltar (1885–1895) where he performed the Kerr's marriage, then to Malta, and latterly to Aldershot.

<sup>51</sup> *Annual Report CMM*, 1908, 3.

reading room was active at the Rabat Medical Mission with Bibles, scripture portions in various languages being sold or given away and such were also being distributed through Casa Blanca and also when the itinerant mission tours were done into the interior where clinics and evangelistic work continued. Resident patients in the Rabat Hospital in 1908 were 47 with some staying up to one month following major surgery.<sup>52</sup> Kerr states that he would often play the gramophone for patients and others and then have a Bible reading and short devotional commentary.

Further from the 1908 report is news about the Darmonds living in the Jewish Quarter in Casa Blanca and treating mainly Jewish patients. Dr B. Israel Darmond held Sunday services in Spanish there with an average attendance of around 25. Again, similar Bible work and very intensive Bible tract work was done by the Darmonds and their helpers. At the Christmas service there were 55 in attendance both Moors and Jews.<sup>53</sup>

The CMM saw itself as continuing in an unbroken line the mission that had begun as a Federal Mission in March 1886 as a mission to those of Ancient Israel and of Ishmael. By 1916 the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the mission (note, dated from 1886) a new medical mission house had been secured and plans were underway to build a new hospital in Rabat if challenges of the war would allow. Dispensary calls in that anniversary year alone numbered between 9 and 10 thousand. All other ministries continued along the established patterns. Mrs. Kerr paid over 1,000 home visits to Jews and Muslims that year.

The mission work from what I have discovered thus far came to a rapid end with the death of Dr Kerr in Rabat in 1918. His son William Mackintosh Kerr was back at Glasgow University training to be a medical doctor and to return after the war and help his father as his assistant in the CMM. The son was in the Royal Army Medical Corps starting in 1917 and was with that until 1922. The war years were hard on the mission. Funds did not come through during those years for the building of new hospital in Rabat. The plan that was in the works that son William would return and help in the mission work with his father appears to have been pre-empted by the father's death. Taken as a whole all these factors led to the end of the CMM and a possible merger.<sup>54</sup> The

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<sup>52</sup> *Annual Report, CMM, 1908, 6.*

<sup>53</sup> *Annual Report, CMM, 1908, 8–9.*

<sup>54</sup> It would appear the son William MacKintosh Kerr left the RAMC in 1922 and practiced in the UK (likely first in Liverpool) and had his family. He also had a son William but middle name Fraser (1923–2010) who immigrated to Canada (Paris, Ontario) and that is where I am at present trying to obtain the remainder of the story concerning the closing or merger of the CMM mission with perhaps another mission. The NAM has no record of a merger. It is unclear about the SMM if that is where a merger occurred between CMM and SMM. Records on Anderson of the SMM are also vague. Did he die in East London, South Africa?

archival trail so far as to what became of the CMM papers has alluded me. I have checked at least six possibilities, and all are dead ends. To date I have not been able to find a 1918/19 published annual report of the CMM so its demise remains shrouded.

I note there is a commending tribute to Dr Kerr in the *Missionary Review of the World*:

...The People of Robat[sic] and the tribes for many miles around feel that they have lost a beloved friend and minster by the death of Dr. Kerr. The Khalifa of Rabat wrote of his deep grief over the loss of 'our precious doctor.' Dr. Kerr's son, who is also a physician, expects when his war work is completed, to take up his father's mission.<sup>55</sup>

Yet I could find no notice of his death in the *Presbyterian Messenger* nor in the Scottish UF magazines. Again, the time was not the best, but I am still inconclusive on the demise of the CMM.

## 6. Kerr the Author of Two Travelogues

Before concluding let me make some comments on Kerr's two books. *Pioneering in Morocco* (1894) and *Morocco After Twenty-Five Years* (1912). The first book has certain affinities with travelogue books: it is vivid in description, it is personal, it does inform and bring forth commentary, it shows accounts which reflect life with locals of the region and has a clearly defined overall purpose as stated in its title which takes it beyond the normal travelogue genre. In the end it was written to awaken interest in mission work in central Morocco if not all Morocco and her peoples. Though published in 1894 it has continuing usefulness and was referred to in the last decade in a noted travelogue book to Morocco but not without warnings of the author Kerr possessing subjective bigotry as he condemns some cultural customs.<sup>56</sup> Travelogues by their very nature are subjective so I do not see that as a negative. They are narratives in part of one's own travels and impressions can and are made. It is not just stating customs observed but can also comment. It is not a holiday guide like a Lonely Planet book. It is an immersionist work. Travelogues often grow out of earlier works such as serialised letters or journal magazine submissions, and then are collected and woven together as a full-length book with various levels of editing. This is what Kerr has done in his first book. It was a fairly modest editing of previously published submissions in the *Presbyterian Messenger*. When the book came out in 1894 a reviewer

<sup>55</sup> *Missionary Review of the World* 42 (1919), 478.

<sup>56</sup> Margaret Bidwell & Robin Bidwell. *Morocco: The Traveller's Companion*. (New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2005).



in the *Presbyterian Messenger* commended Kerr for “much freshness” and “trustworthiness” in the book and stated that the author was a competent observer and gave genuine impressions—all fitting tributes of a good travelogue. The book included excellent word pictures of Rabat and Salee both geographically, civil administration, religious diversity and the cultural milieu. One very much can enter into the place.

The second book is much more developed (over 400 pages) from the first travelogue. It provides much more depth of material, fact, and background. It is not so diary or narrative like in approach. There is still the travelogue feel but he has matured and so his 25 years of living in Morocco have earned him a place to say more and know much more. Also, Morocco had been changing since the 1880s to the 1910s.

Travelogues have a long history when one thinks about Herodotus' *Histories* which are records of travels also. Even the M'Cheyne & Bonar *Mission of Inquiry* is very much also a travelogue work and continues to have appeal. Kerr's works can be compared with other travelogues written by Christian missionaries in North Africa in the same time period and a comparative study of such would be a worthy undertaking in its own right.

### **Evaluations/Reflections/Conclusions**

1. Medical mission is an important aspect of missionary service. Kerr is an excellent example of this and parallels my subject area last year with Dr Robert H. Nassau working in Equatorial West Africa. It opens doors to many closed communities and is a handservant to the ministry of the Word. It speaks of the compassion of the Lord. Dr Kerr, as Nassau, both are distinct from that of Albert Schweitzer.

**Personnel that are qualified at home may not necessarily be qualified on the field.**

2. Personnel that are qualified at home may not necessarily be qualified on the field. I am leaning to the opinion that Dr Kerr should have had more say in the appointment of personnel and that home culture was not the same as host culture and misunderstandings here lead in many ways I believe to a deterioration in the mission's unity. The subject of subordination is an interesting matter to raise in medical mission work. It is not just all about patriarchy. The context and the roles in hospital are defined with protocols as well. The mission conflict which arose in the end does have protocol issues of medicine involved with it and it is hard for us 100 and thirty years later to fully grasp those medical conditions and doubly context in the context of the structured society of Rabat and Salee.

3. Federated Missions can be difficult to sustain and have layers of extra complexity. Multiple arrangements need careful planning and co-

ordination. The idea of united missional ecclesial engagement looks great in theory. Ecclesial mission is seen as the Biblical way, yet many of the practices are not dissimilar to faith missions where also finances are a constant factor, multiple partnerships are complex to sustain, and competing visions emerge. Honesty and humility are needed in pitting one as better than the other. As the Federal Mission went in Morocco, so we find many of the same issues repeated in the Federal Mission in Aleppo. Further there was a critical factor here of foreign fields within the PCE as rivals for support through two different agencies, the Federal Mission and the Jewish Missions Committee and the Foreign Mission Committee. Kerr faced decided strains of anti-Semitism in some congregations on occasion in England when he spoke. The bonds of covenant were not universally entered into in my evaluation.

4. This vignette into Jewish Mission history reveals competing visions of field. Central Morocco was not the real field and undertones seem constant that Palestine was the ideal field location. I think this is larger than the emerging Zionist theme of the return to Palestine. Romanticism seems to be a point here which must be acknowledged, and this raises some questions about the real desire to reach all Jewish peoples regardless of location. One paint brush does not work to describe all Jewish missions and the visions, there are many paint brushes at work.

5. The study of long-term missionaries such as the Kerrs who make a lifetime commitment to missions and then see it unfold is worthy to follow over the decades. Kerr made such a commitment before he left Scotland/England. Then at their marriage in Gibraltar, this lifetime commitment was made by both Robert and Jane. Thirty-two years later Robert dies and is buried in Rabat. As we study short-term missions now, it is very good to also reflect well upon those who made such lifetime commitments and observe such over three and four decades.

6. The place of Moroccan Missions and Scottish Presbyterians and English Presbyterians needs to be fully explored. I would add the West Coast of Scotland evangelical Presbyterians and their labours in Morocco are worthy of much further investigation. The palette is larger than Livingstone, Slessor, Stewart, Laws, and Waddell to name some illustrious Scottish missionaries in Africa. There are other names and other places that need to be included.

7. Finally, this historic study still challenges the church today—what will the approach be towards the Jews and the Jewish religion? The three paradigms which I stated early in this paper are at the heart of such discussions. Recent news stories about the PCUSA<sup>57</sup> and Jews and Israel show the third paradigm moving along a certain path. Not all Presbyterians may agree with that but may favour a first paradigm perspective or the second paradigm.

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<sup>57</sup> Yonat Shimron, "American Jewish groups denounce Presbyterian Church for calling Israel 'apartheid,'" *RNS*, 11 July 2022.

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## The Role of husband and wife in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: complementarian/egalitarian?

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### Introduction

Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the roles of a man and woman in a family would have been assumed to be self-evident (at least in South Asia). However, in the last century, the sexual revolution and the women's liberation movement have challenged the traditional answers<sup>1</sup> to the question of the role of men and women in the family, church, and greater society. Today this very topic of theological anthropology has become a contentious issue with the battle lines drawn between two camps.

In South Asian societies, we observe an entrenched patriarchal system that is normally oppressive highlighting the worst forms of misogyny. Women are often second-class citizens entirely dependent upon their husbands' wills. In such a culture where there exists a wide disparity between the genders with regards to rights and dignity, domestic abuse, female selective infanticide, and other evils are prevalent and even socially tolerated, if not entirely accepted.

These traditionally patriarchal societies today are experiencing rapid liberalisation, globalisation and secularisation which challenges the established patriarchal notions from a liberal humanistic standpoint. Thus, an amalgamation of ideas of both traditional patriarchy and Western secular notions of feminism abounds in modern Asian families and society causing much confusion. Many within the church and in society can sympathise with

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<sup>1</sup> Carl Horn III, 'Sexual Ethics,' in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), 1008.

the early feminist writer Virginia Woolf who famously wrote, “Is it better to be a coal-heaver or a nursemaid; is the charwoman who has brought up eight children of less value to the world than, the barrister who has made a hundred thousand pounds? It is useless to ask such questions; for nobody can answer them.”<sup>2</sup>

It is vital that the church communicates the Biblical relationship of husband and wife with clarity and sensitivity in the South Asian context. In this paper, I will seek to answer the question of whether the role of husband and wife is complementarian or egalitarian from a Biblical point of view.<sup>3</sup>

### **Understanding the Terms**

Before we consider the nature of familial relationships, it is essential egalitarianism and complementarianism are properly defined.

### **Defining Egalitarianism**

Egalitarianism is best defined that “men and women are equal in dignity before God...to co-create the world with God as given to man and woman as the partnership they are—the humans—without any sense that one is somehow lesser or inferior.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, “women and men are equal spiritually and

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<sup>2</sup> Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 31.

<sup>3</sup> The way the question is framed “whether the role of husband and wife is complementarian or egalitarian” assumes that there are only two options. A recent trend among neo-evangelicals has been to attempt to find a third way as seen in Michelle Lee-Barnewall’s book ‘Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian: A Kingdom Corrective to the Evangelical Debate’. However, this reframing of the issue eventually devolves to criticism of both the complementarian and egalitarian positions rather than presenting any concrete distinctive third view. In her concluding chapter Lee-Barnewall confesses, “some will understandably be disappointed that I do not present conclusions that are more concrete and practical, it is a premise of the book that we need to consider the larger theological foundations of the issue before moving on to specific formulations.” Michelle Lee-Barnewall, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian: A Kingdom Corrective to the Evangelical Gender Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), Kindle Edition. Moreover, any third way presented incidentally becomes only a modified version of either one of the two views. Thus, either for lack of a viable alternative or the inevitable dichotomous nature of the gender debate, the whole discussion is reduced to either a complementarian or egalitarian view.

<sup>4</sup> John G. Stackhouse Jr., *Partners in Christ: A Conservative Case for Egalitarianism* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015), 47.

ontologically” entailing “permanently, comprehensively and necessarily”<sup>5</sup> functional equality. According to egalitarianism, there can be no subordination of roles and functions without undermining essential personhood.<sup>6</sup>

Egalitarianism insists that equality is not sameness. Thus, while men and women have biological gender differences, there is a mutuality or oneness that negates any hierarchy between them. According to Scot McKnight “this mutuality taps into this ‘oneness-otherness-oneness’” theme in scripture, “liberating women from the tradition” and challenges “reading the Bible through a long-established church tradition.”<sup>7</sup> Thus, there is no particular feminine role or masculine role. Rather gender roles are seen as social constructs forced upon the divine order of God.

The influence of feminism on the egalitarian view is undeniable. A prime example of this is the American cultural Anthropologist Margaret Maed’s work which concluded that in human history distinctions of male-female roles and interactions are shaped by culture and not nature. Mary Kassian observes that Maed’s research “provided much of the foundation for the Christian philosophy of egalitarianism.”<sup>8</sup>

**Before we consider the nature of familial relationships, it is essential egalitarianism and complementarianism are properly defined.**

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<sup>5</sup> Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, “‘Equal in Being, Unequal in Role’: Exploring the Logic of Woman’s Subordination,” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, ed. Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, and Gordon D. Fee, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005), 304.

<sup>6</sup> Groothuis, *Discovering Biblical Equality*, 315-17.

<sup>7</sup> Scot McKnight, *The Blue Parakeet: Rethinking How You Read the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 161.

<sup>8</sup> Mary A. Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel: The Movement to Unite Feminism with the Church* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1992), 31–32.

Within the paradigm of the gospel, egalitarianism sees God's created equality for man and woman being disrupted by sin at the fall. However, in Christ's work, equality is redeemed and restored in church and community.<sup>9</sup>

### Defining Complementarianism

Complementarianism is best defined in the words of John Stott that "although men and women are equal, they are not the same. Equality and identity are not to be confused. We are different from one another, and we complement one another in the distinctive qualities of our own sexuality, psychological as well as physiological."<sup>10</sup> Complementarianism, therefore, affirms that men and women are equal in dignity and value while differing in their roles and responsibilities. In other words, there is a sameness of essence (ontology) with a distinct expression of humanness giving rise to specific roles (function) for man and woman. Thus, complementarianism is "concerned not merely with the behavioural roles of men and women but also the underlying natures of manhood and womanhood themselves."<sup>11</sup>

Manhood is defined as "mature masculinity" where there "is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships,"<sup>12</sup> while womanhood is defined as "mature femininity" where there "is a freeing disposition to affirm, receive, and nurture strength and leadership from worthy men in ways appropriate to a woman's differing relationships."<sup>13</sup>

This understanding of masculine manhood and feminine womanhood has come under criticism and ridicule in recent years. Popular Christian writer Rachel Held Evans wrote a New York Times bestseller satirizing Biblical

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<sup>9</sup> Bruce Ware, 'Summaries of the Egalitarian and Complementarian Positions', CBMW, 26 June 2007, <https://cbmw.org/2007/06/26/summaries-of-the-egalitarian-and-complementarian-positions/>. The Christians for Biblical Equality International (CBE), the biggest egalitarian organisation in their values state, "Christ's redemptive work frees all people from patriarchy, calling women and men to share authority equally in service and leadership." 'CBE's Mission and Values,' CBE International, accessed 7 December 2021, <https://www.cbeinternational.org/content/cbe-mission>.

<sup>10</sup> John Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today* (London: William Collins Sons Co & Ltd, 1990), 262.

<sup>11</sup> John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *50 Crucial Questions: An Overview of Central Concerns about Manhood and Womanhood* (Hyderabad: GS Books, 2018), 20.

<sup>12</sup> John Piper, 'A Vision for Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible,' in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991), 35.

<sup>13</sup> Piper, 'A Vision for Biblical Complementarity,' 36.



womanhood.<sup>14</sup> Laywomen such as Rachel Green Miller<sup>15</sup> and Aimee Byrd<sup>16</sup> have pushed back on this notion of biblical manhood and womanhood as shaped more by conservative patriarchal beliefs of the Greco-Roman world and Victorian cultural mores than the Bible.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, Complementarianism views “the denial and neglect” of this distinct manhood and womanhood as a rebellion against God’s good design for humanity which will “lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.”<sup>18</sup>

Within the paradigm of the gospel, complementarianism sees God’s specific created design for manhood and womanhood being disrupted by sin at the fall. However, in Christ’s work, the roles are redeemed and restored to the church and community.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Rachel Held Evans, *A Year of Biblical Womanhood: How a Liberated Woman Found Herself Sitting on Her Roof, Covering Her Head, and Calling Her Husband ‘Master’* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> Rachel Green Miller, *Beyond Authority and Submission: Women and Men in Marriage, Church, and Society* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 2019). Miller belongs to the Presbyterian church.

<sup>16</sup> Aimee Byrd, *Recovering from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: How the Church Needs to Rediscover Her Purpose* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Reflective, 2020). Byrd formerly was part of the Presbyterian church but parted ways since the publication of her book.

<sup>17</sup> Byrd has written that these definitions are “troublesome” and “reductive teaching.” In these definitions “masculinity is active and potent, and femininity is merely an affirmation of this fact.” Byrd, *Recovering from Biblical*, 112–13. Byrd is not wholly wrong in her criticisms since recent complementarian literature such as the work of Doug Wilson in the name of complementarity has perpetuated dangerous and toxic masculinity that seeks dominance and power in all aspects and even legitimises sexual assaults within marriage. For example, writing about sex Wilson says, “the sexual act cannot be made into an egalitarian pleasuring party. A man penetrates, conquers, colonizes, plants. A woman receives, surrenders and accepts....true authority and true submission are therefore an erotic necessity.” Douglas Wilson, *Fidelity: What It Means To Be a One-Woman Man* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 1999), Kindle Edition. Such depictions of complementarianism as a power dynamic is not only unhelpful but do great damage.

<sup>18</sup> Affirmation 10 of ‘The Danvers Statement’, CBMW, accessed 7 December 2021, <https://cbmw.org/about/danvers-statement/>. The Danvers Statement published by the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood in November 1988 is perhaps the clearest statement on the evangelical position of complementarianism in the modern church.

<sup>19</sup> Ware, ‘Summaries of the Egalitarian and Complementarian Positions’.

### The Biblical Statement on Roles

#### *God's Original Creation (Genesis 1)*

God created man and woman in his image with intrinsic worth (Genesis 1:27) to be fruitful, multiply and have dominion over creation (Genesis 1:28). Both man and woman then are constituted as *ab alio*<sup>20</sup> in a condition of submission to the Creator to whom both are utterly dependent. Thus, both man and woman are no different in that they are created superior to all other creations but inferior to the creator. They are only distinguished by their sexuality. Thus, “sexual differentiation, then, is part of God’s original purpose for the human race on this earth, and it is good. Both men and women are essential for a fully functioning human race.”<sup>21</sup> There is both singularity and plurality – “man is first spoken of as a singular entity (“him”), then later as the plurality of male and female (“them”).”<sup>22</sup>

All this is undisputed by both complementarians and egalitarians. Both affirm that God created man and woman as integral members of humanity and commissioned them to be his representative rulers on Earth. As integral members, the task requires both man and woman to work together to

**In Genesis 1 masculinity and femininity are related to God’s image, while in Genesis 2 they are related to each other. Thus from a place of equality, distinctions of roles are defined.**

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<sup>20</sup> Latin *ab alio* meaning the attribute of having derived existence from another being (contingent being) as opposed to *a se* whereby a being exists in virtue of its own being (e.g. God). See more Paul O’Callaghan, *Children of God in the World: An Introduction to Theological Anthropology* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 498–99.

<sup>21</sup> Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ: An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in Light of Scripture and the Social Sciences* (Bloomington: Warhorn Media, 2021), 13.

<sup>22</sup> Alistair Roberts, ‘Man and Woman in Creation (Genesis 1 and 2),’ *9 Marks Journal*, no issue number. Complementarianism in Trouble?: A Moment of Reckoning (December 2019), 35.

accomplish God's purposes in this world. Thus, in the Genesis 1 narrative, the equality of man and woman is stressed.<sup>23</sup>

### *Marriage (Genesis 2)*

"In Genesis 1 masculinity and femininity are related to God's image, while in Genesis 2 they are related to each other."<sup>24</sup> Thus from a place of equality, distinctions of roles are defined. In the Genesis 2 narrative, a detailed description of the creation of man and woman is given where man is created first by God (Genesis 2:7), commissioned to be his representative ruler with special stipulations (Genesis 2:15–17) and made to realise his need for "a counterpart human but different, with whom he shares the image of God and can exercise representative rule through the procreation of offspring."<sup>25</sup> Hence the Biblical reasoning for the creation of woman is that "It is not good that the man should be alone" and requires "a helper fit for him" (Genesis 2:18).

The word helper (עֲזָרָה - *ezer*) explains the woman's role in relation to man and also clarifies the aloneness and incompleteness of man without his counterpart.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the woman's natural orientation is towards the man whom she is to support and serve by being a congenial partner and thereby fulfilling

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. Andreas and Margaret Köstenberger note that "While there is not yet in the narrative any clear indication as to the exact role differentiation between man and woman, male headship is suggested by the fact that the name for the man (*adam*) in Genesis 1:26–17 (and later in 5:1–2) is the Hebrew name for the race at large." Herein we already see the federal aspect of Adam's role. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Margaret E. Köstenberger, *God's Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical - Theological Survey* (Hyderabad: GS Books, 2014), 31. However in reality "Genesis 1 does not say much about the roles of men and women. The passage is not concerned with differences between men and women or with the implications of those differences. Those who try to make the case that Genesis 1 is upholding a view of man and woman that does not involve any differentiation in roles or subordination of woman to man are reading something into the passage that is not there.12 Since the passage does not focus on the differences between men and women in that way, interpreters exceed the bounds of evidence when they claim it represents some definite approach to the area." Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ*, 14.

<sup>24</sup> Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today*, 263.

<sup>25</sup> Köstenberger and Köstenberger, *God's Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical-Theological Survey*, 33–34.

<sup>26</sup> The social necessity of man for community is something integral to his humanness. It would be good and necessary to state here that the desire and need for community is primarily and predominately expressed in the institution of marriage. This however does not mean that singleness or the state of celibacy is a result of fallenness. Rather in the state of singleness the necessity of community is expressed and fulfilled by other means such as the church community and the fellowship of friends.

God's commission. The term by no way refers to any superiority of the man or the inferiority of the woman but rather attests to a natural God-appointed leader and the woman alongside him to "jointly represent the Creator by exercising dominion over the earth."<sup>27</sup> It is argued that the *ezer* should not refer to someone as being in a subordinate position as the Bible often uses the same word to describe God as a helper for Israel (Genesis 49:25, Exodus 18:4; Deuteronomy 33:7, 26ff.).<sup>28</sup> However, this argumentation assumes that ontological equivalence negates any functional hierarchy of relationships. God as creator though always superior and in a higher position to his creation does at times due to his covenantal love condescend and serve man and woman in this life. This sovereign, voluntary, and temporary submission to aid his creation does not nullify God's headship over creation. Rather this only establishes God's free agency to be God.<sup>29</sup>

It is important to note the order of creation signifies a primary place of authority. This is rejected by egalitarians as being an Ancient Near Eastern cultural principle of primogeniture (rights of the firstborn) and hence holds no specific significance for today.<sup>30</sup> Many feminists have even argued that Adam was initially a "sexually undifferentiated human." Thus, it is argued that from this "androgynous Adam" God created Adam and Eve and hence there cannot be any special ordering.<sup>31</sup> Such "theosophic speculations concerning an

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<sup>27</sup> Köstenberger and Köstenberger, 35. Andreas J. Köstenberger, *God, Marriage and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004), 35–37.

<sup>28</sup> Richard S. Hess, 'Equality with and without Innocence', in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, ed. Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, and Gordon D. Fee, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005), 86.

<sup>29</sup> Köstenberger and Köstenberger, *God's Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical - Theological Survey*, 38–39. If anything it must be argued that such voluntary condescension reveals a greater glory and superiority for God to self-determine his very relationship to his creation.

<sup>30</sup> Hess, 'Equality with and without Innocence,' 84.

<sup>31</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism & Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More than 100 Disputed Questions* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2012), 142. Katharine Bushnell who was one of the foundational figures in the egalitarian movement, in her feminist translation of the Bible wrote, "In the beginning . . . God created Adam, a male-female being, and it was very good.... God charged Adam to watch and protect the Garden of Eden, but in time Adam began to lose perfection, and God decided that it was not good that Adam should be alone. To prevent further falling into imperfection and to restore Adam to original goodness, God took from Adam's side and separated out the woman." Kristin Kobes Du Mez, *A New Gospel for Women: Katharine Bushnell and the Challenge of Christian Feminism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), ix.

androgynous maiden” and “magical generation” are utterly unscriptural.<sup>32</sup> As Francis Turretin observed the significance of the Spirit’s sequential ordering in that “Male and female created he them.” Indeed, there is a mutual dependence upon the declaration of the Holy Spirit who relates that Adam was formed “first” (1 Timothy 2:13) and “the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man” (1 Corinthians 11:8).”<sup>33</sup>

The manner of the woman’s creation also differs from man for she comes from the rib of the man taken from his side (Genesis 2:21-22). Finally, she is brought to the man to be united in marriage by God (Genesis 2:23). Elizabeth Elliot identifies these as the three fundamental constituents of femininity that God made woman for man, God made woman from man, and that God brought woman to man.<sup>34</sup> Thus in Genesis 2, the woman’s very being is identified according to her relationship to man and not identical to man. Thus, Stott observes that Genesis 2 “clarifies that “equality” means not “identity” but “complementarity” (including...a certain masculine headship).”<sup>35</sup> Matthew Henry in his commentary related Eve’s special creation from the side of Adam to the special complementarity relationship between man and woman saying, “the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.”<sup>36</sup>

The union of man and woman in a monogamous marital bond then is the ultimate culmination of complementarity. Man and woman created consubstantially with the same essential humanity yet differing in their sexuality, position and character are brought together to be oneness.<sup>37</sup> As Herman Bavinck states, “Together in mutual fellowship they bear the divine image. God himself is the Creator of duality-in-unity. Within that unity, they are and remain two. Each of the two has a unique nature, character, and vocation.”<sup>38</sup> “This unity of husband and wife is the “fundamental bond at the

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<sup>32</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend, vol. 2, 4 vols (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 575.

<sup>33</sup> Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 1, 3 vols (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1997), 459.

<sup>34</sup> Elizabeth Elliot, *Love Has a Price Tag* (Chappaqua, NY: Christian Herald Books, 1979), 33-34.

<sup>35</sup> Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today*, 263.

<sup>36</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible Volume I (Genesis to Deuteronomy)* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2000), 37.

<sup>37</sup> The oneness never negates the otherness and there is a harmonious relationship between the oneness-otherness of a husband and wife.

<sup>38</sup> Herman Bavinck, *The Christian Family*, ed. Stephen J. Grabill, trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman (Kampen: Christian’s Library Press, 2012), Kindle Edition.

root of society.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, in this union, God communicates to us a picture of the communion of the three persons of the Godhead within the Trinitarian relationship.<sup>40</sup>

The Genesis 2 account reveals how man and woman are distinct from each other and each bearing the image of God complements the other within the covenant of marriage whose bonds of love unite their bodies and souls as one community of two members. They are one flesh to fulfil God’s work upon this world by means of procreation and exercise of dominion.<sup>41</sup>

### *The Fall of Humanity (Genesis 3)*

The fall of humanity in sin has subverted the natural divine ordering of this world. Thus, in the disbelief of Adam and Eve and their rebellion against God, the harmonious relationships between humanity and God, man and woman are

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<sup>39</sup> Roger Nicole, ‘Biblical Concept of Woman’, in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 1176.

<sup>40</sup> It must be stated with much care that marriage resembles the Trinity in its communion relationship of diverse persons. In recent years, Bruce Ware and Wayne Grudem have rather unhelpfully argued that Jesus as the second person of the Trinity is eternally subordinate to the Father, the first person of the Trinity. See Bruce A. Ware, ‘Tampering with the Trinity: Does the Son Submit to His Father?’, in *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. Wayne Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2002), 233-255. This Eternal Subordination of the Son (ESS) erroneously mistakes the economy of redemption as an ontological reality and does great harm to the understanding of the Triune God as confessed in the Athanasian Creed that “Nothing in this trinity is before or after, nothing is greater or smaller; in their entirety the three persons are coeternal and coequal with each other.” As Liam Goligher writes, “The internal life of the Trinity is neither egalitarian nor hierarchical because of the very nature of God as God. Only in His voluntary state as a servant do we read that ‘the head of Christ is God’ (1Cor.11:3).” Liam Goligher, ‘Reinventing God,’ *The Housewife Theologian*, accessed 13 December 2021, <https://www.reformation21.org/mos/housewife-theologian/reinventing-god>. The ESS view not only subverts the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity but also does grave damage to the very conception of God. It must altogether be discarded and should not be used to argue for complementarian views.

<sup>41</sup> See also section 8 of *Humane Vitae* (Of Human Life) where the Roman Catholic Church dogma reflects this truth: “It is in reality the wise and provident institution of God the Creator, whose purpose was to effect in man His loving design. As a consequence, husband and wife, through that mutual gift of themselves, which is specific and exclusive to them alone, develop that union of two persons in which they perfect one another, cooperating with God in the generation and rearing of new lives.” Paul VI, *Humane Vitae* [Encyclical Letter on Human Life], sec. 8, accessed August 31, 2022, [https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_25071968\\_humanae-vitae.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html)

broken. A chaotic confusion emerges with equality of worth denied and a reversal of roles contrary to the original design.

The very account of the fall in Genesis 3 details that Eve first fell into temptation and sinned by listening to the serpent, and she, in turn, draws Adam into the conspiracy against God. Rather than the lines of authority being God, man, woman, creature (serpent) it becomes the exact inverse order of creature (serpent), woman, man and God. Thus, the old order of hierarchy is quickly dismantled for a newer version. It is alleged that the hierarchy seen in the text is due to a predisposition to the concept and does not arise from a careful study of the text itself.<sup>42</sup> However, considering God's response to the man and woman it is evident that there does exist a hierarchy and God refuses to recognise any new order.

God holds man as the head of the woman responsible (Genesis 3:6, 17) for "his absence, or at least acquiescence"<sup>43</sup> in the event of the woman's rebellion in spite of his defence of the contrary that the woman is to be blamed (Genesis 3:12). Adam is held ultimately complicit and culpable for the sins of humanity. This however does not at the same time negate the responsibility Eve shares in the rebellion as an individual. Thus, the cursed effects of the fall affect both man and woman definitely but differently. The woman is affected in her role of motherhood and wife (Genesis 3:16) while the man is affected in his role of fatherhood and husband to lead and provide (Genesis 3:17–19). Though both man and woman are plunged into turmoil, however, God's good design for family still remains. God neither revokes his special commission to man and woman nor does he redefine their relationship or positions.

### *The Law of Moses*

Ancient Israel was a patriarchal society where women were not afforded the same privileges as men. A woman's position legally and publicly was always in relation and dependent upon the authority of either a father, husband, brother or male guardian. Thus, it is alleged that the Old Testament Laws are regressive if not at the very least troubling for women.<sup>44</sup>

Israel's Laws strictly regulated the relationship between men and women particularly within the institution of marriage. Monogamous heterosexual marriage was legal while polygamy (or to be precise polygyny)<sup>45</sup> was univocally condemned in the Law (Deuteronomy 17:17; Leviticus 18:18). Likewise, adultery was prohibited in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:14;

<sup>42</sup> Hess, 'Equality with and without Innocence,' 90.

<sup>43</sup> Köstenberger, *God, Marriage and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*, 37.

<sup>44</sup> Ronald W. Pierce, 'From Old Testament Law to New Testament Gospel', in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, ed. Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, and Gordon D. Fee, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005), 96.

<sup>45</sup> Polygamy is the practice of marrying multiple spouses while polygyny is a form of polygamy where the man marries multiple wives.

Deuteronomy 5:18) criminalizing illicit relationships (Leviticus 18:20) with the punishment of death (Leviticus 20:20; Deuteronomy 22:22). One could not dissolve the bond of marriage without proper grounds of having found some uncleanness in his wife (Deuteronomy 24:1).<sup>46</sup> The Law specifically forbid divorce on illegitimate grounds (Exodus 22:13–19). Thus, the woman was protected against frivolous charges. At the same time, the divorce proceedings gave her the right to remarry (Deuteronomy 24:1–2). Both the husband and wife enjoyed legal parity with regards to parenting (Exodus 20:20; 21:15; Deuteronomy 5:16). Also, the Law provided certain special provisions for the wife such as the institution of the Levirate marriage in case a woman is widowed without a child (Deuteronomy 25:5–10) and for daughters and wives to inherit property (Numbers 27:1–11; 36:1–9).

### *The Israelite Family*

The Israelite family had a clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities. Andreas Köstenberger lists the primary three duties of husbands in ancient Israel as (1) to love and cherish his wife and to treat her with respect and dignity, (2) to bear primary responsibility for the marriage union and ultimate authority over the family and (3) to provide food, clothing, and other necessities for his wife.<sup>47</sup> This picture of the headship in the family was foundational for understanding the duties of Israel's monarchy as the Puritan William Plumer commented on Psalm 101 saying, "a good king in his dominions ought to be like a good father and head of a family in his house."<sup>48</sup>

The three primary marital roles for Israelite women are (1) presenting her husband with children (especially male ones); (2) managing the household;

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<sup>46</sup> The question and interpretation of what exactly constitutes uncleanness or indecency have been long disputed among scholars. The Hebrew word (עֶרְוַת – 'erwath) is often translated to nakedness (Genesis 9:22; Exodus 20:26; Leviticus 18:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13) expresses exposure of the genitals resulting in shame. This word is also used euphemistically for sexual relations. Thus, the uncleanness could refer to any indecent exposure or illicit sexual affairs. However, since the Law already stipulates punishment for adultery it is often argued this cannot be. Even within the Rabbinical schools there were differing opinions. The school of Shammai believed that the uncleanness can be nothing less than unchastity or adultery while the school of Hilel took a liberal approach stating the uncleanness refers to anything that finds no favour in the husband's eyes giving rise to the flimsiest reasons for divorce. See more W. W. Davies, 'Divorce in the Old Testament,' in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. James Orr, 1915, <https://www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/isbe/divorce-in-the-old-testament.html>.

<sup>47</sup> Köstenberger, *God, Marriage and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*, 39–40.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 860.



and (3) providing her husband with companionship.<sup>49</sup> While this list might read similar to the German understanding of *Kinder, Küche, Kirche*,<sup>50</sup> the Proverbs 31 woman reveals that the ancient Israelite ideal of womanhood was a strong woman with vibrant life both within the family and in public. She was not confined to her home. She was the ruler of her home who also engaged in trade and affairs within the community. Contrary to the Victorian ideal of delicate womanhood being weak, passive, and overly sentimental the Israelite wife was a “sturdy helper, able to shoulder significant responsibilities.”<sup>51</sup>

The wife was not regarded as a diminished person in her relation to her husband. Neither were women in the Old Testament mere objects for sexual pleasure and the convenience of man. Songs of Solomon states the mutual desire of man and woman for each other (Songs of Solomon 7:10)

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<sup>49</sup> Köstenberger, *God, Marriage and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*, 41.

<sup>50</sup> *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* or Children, Kitchen, Church was a German slogan that became popular in the Weimar Republic and was integral to Nazi Germany's ideology of the role of women in the Third Reich. In contrast to this the Soviet Union's Marxist ideology flattened all distinctions and had women serve even in combat roles during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War.

<sup>51</sup> Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ: An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in Light of Scripture and the Social Sciences*, 60.

within marriage redeeming the curse of the fall that woman would desire the love of the husband while he would seek to control her (Genesis 3:16).<sup>52</sup>

### *Jesus' Teachings*

Jesus' teachings on marriage reveal that he did not deviate from the foundational understanding in Genesis 2 (Matthew 19:6; Mark 10:9). Rather Jesus gave further illumination of this creation ordinance as a redemptive institution by revealing that in the resurrected age to come men and women will not be given to each other in marriage (Luke 20:34–35). The obvious reason for this is that their holy commission would have been fulfilled then.

Though Jesus stresses the importance of familial relationships he also subordinates it to the ultimate relationship a man or a woman has with God. He personally knew the high cost of rejection of family (Mark 3:21; 6:1–6; John 7:1–9). He wilfully chose a life of celibacy. He warns thus that discipleship entails supreme sacrifices (Matthew 10:21–23, 34–38) and stresses that the Christian man or woman's preeminent allegiance is to God to which all other roles are subservient. In this Jesus stresses the role of the natural family within the spiritual family of God.

Likewise, Jesus' work on the cross restores the original created order. Now within a renewed redemptive framework, his unconditional love becomes the ground for all relationships between man and woman.

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<sup>52</sup> The word תַּשׁוּקָה (*t'suqua*) translated as desire or longing is used in a negative manner in Genesis 3:16 (and 4:7) where the desire is wholly overpowering. The two major interpretations of this are that the woman's overwhelming desire for the man causes her to be subservient to the man's rule (Calvin, Keil and Delitzsch, C. Vos, Young) and that the woman's desire (in line with Genesis 4:7) causes her to contend for the desire and control of her husband causing her husband to rule over her (Driver, Koehler-Baumgartner, Clarke, Foh). Susan T. Foh, 'What Is the Woman's Desire?' *The Westminster Theological Journal* 37 (1994/95), 376–83. Mitchel L. Chase, 'Man and Woman in Exile (Genesis 3),' *9 Marks Journal*, no. 15 (December 2019), 41. These two interpretations are seen clearly in the various translations where the KJV translates as "desire shall be to thy husband" whereas the ESV translates as "desire shall be contrary to your husband" with a footnote of the alternate "Or shall be toward." Both these views reveal a power struggle leading to disharmony. A third view is translating the word as "turning away" instead of "desire" following the LXX translation of the word as ἀποστροφή (*apostrophē*) (Jerome, Chrysostom, Kaiser). Cf. The same Hebrew word used in Songs of Solomon 7:10 is in a positive light where this desire manifests itself in a harmonious relationship of love. See Köstenberger, *God, Marriage and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*, 54–55.

**Paul sets Jesus Christ's relationship to his church as the archetype for a Christian marriage.**

*The Apostolic Teaching*

The Pauline household codes (Ephesians 5:22–6:9; Colossians 3:18–4:1) in the model of the *paterfamilias*<sup>53</sup> culture of the Roman world gives us an understanding of a particular order within the family. Paul sets Jesus Christ's

relationship to his church as the archetype for a Christian marriage.<sup>54</sup> He states that man is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head (κεφαλῇ)<sup>55</sup> of the church and as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands (Ephesians 5:23–24). Paul's emphasis that wives submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18) and husbands love their wives (Ephesians 5:25) reveals a benevolent rule as Christ rules the church. This headship is a leadership of love as the Puritan William Gouge

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<sup>53</sup> Lit. meaning "father of the family" refers to the Roman concept of family where the oldest living male in the family acted as the head of the family being vested with all authority regarding the functioning of the family. The Roman concept of family extended beyond the modern understanding of nuclear family and would include extended descendants, slaves and their families, etc.

<sup>54</sup> This is not to state that Christian marriages have particular sacramental grace as the Roman Catholic Church states, but rather that Christian marriages are redeemed and restored from the results of the fallenness and hence the loving covenant relationship and communion between a Christian man and a Christian woman perfectly typify the loving covenant relationship and communion of Christ and his redeemed people—the church.

<sup>55</sup> The Greek word κεφαλῇ (*kephalē*) is used in Ephesians 1:22 "And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church (ESV)." Thus, the headship of Christ over the church is a redemptive reality not only in the present age but also in the age to come (Ephesians 1:21). This eschatological vision is now seen in the life of the family which also comes under the overarching dominion of Christ the Lord. Thus, by using the very same word, God is calling men and women respectively to participate in this end-time programme "to unite all things in him (Jesus), things in heaven and things on earth" (ESV; Ephesians 1:10). See more Köstenberger, *God, Marriage and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*, 66–67. Wayne Grudem, 'The Meaning of Κεφαλῇ ("Head"): An Evaluation of New Evidence, Real and Alleged,' in *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. Wayne Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2002), 145–202.

explains, “no duty on the husband’s part can be rightly performed except it be seasoned with love.”<sup>56</sup>

This headship is integral that one of the key qualifications for eldership in the church is that the man must manage or rule (προϊστάμενον – *proistamenon*)<sup>57</sup> his household well (1 Timothy 3:4–5). This criterion is given to the man aspiring for the office of shepherd since he would need to manage the household of God. Unless he is a loving leader, protector, and provider for his natural family, he cannot be trusted to do the same for the spiritual family of God.

The wife’s submission to her husband is seen as absolute as Peter exhorts wives to submit even to unbelieving pagan husbands showing the same honour as Sarah did to the patriarch Abraham (1 Peter 3:1–6). Peter sees this sacred submission as a display of the gospel which may win the unbelieving husband to Jesus.<sup>58</sup> This submission is not one of passive submission to the husband but active service. Paul instructs Titus to “train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled” (Titus 2:4–5). To Timothy, Paul writes that women ought to conduct in a manner that is “proper for women who profess godliness—with good works” (1 Timothy 2:9–10). This proper work he explains is properly manifested in childbearing which is used as a synecdoche for a woman’s

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<sup>56</sup> William Gouge, *Of Domestical Duties*, 1622 ed. (Edinburgh: Puritan Reprints, 2006), 252. Even when Gouge first preached this text in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it was met with widespread controversy even from his own parishioners. However quickly the text became the default book on family within the Puritan and Reformed traditions. Thomas Watson, another Puritan explains how this love should be manifested, “The husband should show his love to his wife by covering infirmities; by avoiding occasions of strife; by sweet, endearing expressions; by pious counsel; by love tokens; by encouraging what he sees amiable and virtuous in her; by mutual prayer; by being with her, unless detained by urgency of business.” Thomas Watson, *The Godly Man’s Picture* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), 155–56. The puritan patriarchy far from the stern oppressive images in popular media, stressed a relationship of loving leadership.

<sup>57</sup> The KJV translates the word as ruleth while the RSV translates the word as manages. Both translations reveal an inherent position of authority vested in the man.

<sup>58</sup> The Bible states that husbands are worthy of honour from their wives due to their position of being husbands and not because they have necessarily proven themselves to be worthy of honour. As John Calvin comments speaking of fathers that, “it makes no difference whether our superiors are worthy or unworthy of this honour, for whatever they are they have attained their position through God’s providence—a proof that the Lawgiver himself would have us hold them in honour.” John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), II, viii, 36.

particular calling of involvement in domestic duties. By this life is brought forth and sustained in this world, revealing a reversal of the curse of death.<sup>59</sup>

This is not to say that the domestic duties of a woman prohibit her to work outside the home. Paul himself worked and interacted with women such as Priscilla - a tentmaker (Acts 18:3), Lydia—a seller of purple goods (Acts 16:14) and Phoebe who was his patron (Romans 16:2). However, no worldly vocation overrides or negates the particular submission of the woman to her husband and her responsibilities towards family in nurturing a godly generation.

Egalitarianism contends that such submission is entirely the product of patriarchal culture<sup>60</sup> and that in Christ Jesus there is restored equality where there are no male or female (Galatians 3:28). Thus, submission is to be mutual (Ephesians 5:21).<sup>61</sup> However, Paul's statements on headship are not "Pauline privilege" but authoritative, apostolic commands.<sup>62</sup> These instructions are rooted in the created order (1 Timothy 2:12–14) and the mystical headship of Christ over the church (Ephesians 5:25). Galatians 3:28 states both man and woman are justified by faith and freed from the bounds of the Law; however,

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<sup>59</sup> Köstenberger and Köstenberger, *God's Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical - Theological Survey*, 213–14. John Calvin in his sermon on 1 Timothy 2:13–15 comments that "notwithstanding the evil that came from Eve, yet God will not put women clean out of hope. He thinketh it enough to bridle them, that they lift not up themselves, but rather humble themselves, and yet he calleth them unto him, and giveth them a means to return to the state from whence they fell—that is to say, saith he, "If they know their calling." See John Calvin, 'The True Calling of Women | A Sermon by John Calvin,' Purely Presbyterian, 23 May 2020, <https://purelypresbyterian.com/2020/05/23/the-true-calling-of-women-john-calvin/>.

<sup>60</sup> Craig Keener sees this similarly to the institution of slavery in the New Testament. He writes, "Modern writers who argue that Paul's charge to wives to submit to their husbands "as to Christ" is binding in all cultures must come to grips with the fact that Paul even more plainly tells slaves to "obey" their masters "as they would Christ" (6:5). If one is binding in all cultures, so is the other." Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women & Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), (Kindle Edition).

<sup>61</sup> See Daniel Doriani, 'The Historical Novelty of Egalitarian Interpretations,' in *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. Wayne Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2002), 203–220. for a detailed historical exploration of the egalitarian argument.

<sup>62</sup> Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today*, 297.

this cannot be used to state the distinctions of maleness and femaleness are flattened.<sup>63</sup>

The particular duties of a husband and wife are complementary to each other as each exists for the other. Paul's exhortations against any gnostic ideas leading to faux spiritual asceticism that negates the conjugal rights within marriage as abhorrent (1 Corinthians 7:1-5) reveals the mutual dependence of the husband and wife. "The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does." (1 Corinthians 7:4).<sup>64</sup> They are both one flesh existing in complementarity contrary to any repressive patriarchal attitudes that would see the wife as the role of a servant or slave belonging to the husband.

Thus, we see that the roles of a husband and wife in the New Testament are not different from the understanding of marital duties in Old Testament Israel. In fact, the duties are only further expounded in their redemptive relation of depicting the reality of Christ's relationship to his church.

### **The Question of Context: Nurture or Nature?**

The Biblical environment (ancient Israel or the first-century Greco-Roman culture) was patriarchal – a society ruled by men.<sup>65</sup> The Bible depicts a patriarchal model and this is without dispute. Thus, the question arises for the modern Bible reader if the Bible's particular patriarchal model is a product of the historical-cultural context or if it is a trans-cultural model beyond context? In other words, are distinctive roles and separation of duties of a husband and wife nurtured by the environment of society and culture or is it an integral part of nature and essential design of man and woman?

#### *Nurture: A Product of Human Culture*

Egalitarianism sees regimented roles of husbands and wives are products of a culture that defines maleness and femaleness in a particular manner which then become "encultured myths" that assert identity, mould behaviours and

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<sup>63</sup> Kevin DeYoung, *Men and Women in the Church: A Short, Biblical, Practical Introduction* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2021), Kindle Edition. Freedom from the Law in Galatians is freedom from the ceremonial demands of the Law given at Sinai and not freedom from the natural Law in creation.

<sup>64</sup> Leon Morris comments "Normally each belongs to the other so fully that Paul can call the withholding of the body an act of 'fraud.'" Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1958), 107.

<sup>65</sup> Patriarchy from πατριάρχης (patriarkhēs) literally translates as 'rule of fathers.'

perpetuate stereotypes.<sup>66</sup> This leads to a hermeneutic of suspicion where the Bible and the theological endeavour are viewed as a patriarchal enterprise. Thus, the need to recover scripture from androcentric influences gives rise to a gynocentric hermeneutic to hear the woman's voice.<sup>67</sup> This radical rereading of the Bible means a critical awareness to constantly discern and remove the perpetual patriarchy within scripture and to apply it accordingly to present-day life.<sup>68</sup> This gives rise to rejecting certain passages of scripture as being culturally informed, culturally constrained or culturally dated and thereby no longer true or relevant for the present-day culture.<sup>69</sup> Thus, the reader becomes both the arbiter and judge on the interpretation of scripture in this critical stance.

While the egalitarian critical hermeneutic has without a doubt aided in correcting certain traditionally held stereotypes and given a new perspective in approaching the Bible, it is a slippery slope towards liberalism that jettisons all Biblical gendered normal and roles in the name of equality and liberation. As Wayne Grudem writes that in line with modern feminism, "At the foundation of egalitarianism is a dislike and a rejection of anything uniquely masculine. It is a dislike of manhood itself."<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Cynthia Neal Kimball, 'Nature, Culture, and Gender Complementarity,' in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, ed. Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, and Gordon D. Fee, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005), 472–73.

<sup>67</sup> Robert Letham, 'The Hermeneutics of Feminism,' *Themelios* 17, no. 3 (May 1992), 4–5. Cf. Aimee Byrd as an evangelical proponent, calls for the Anglican theologian Richard Bauckham's concept of gynocentric interruption which considers specific female interruptions in an otherwise patriarchal text with masculine concerns. See more Byrd, *Recovering from Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: How the Church Needs to Rediscover Her Purpose*, 44, 51.

<sup>68</sup> The application of this is seen in gender-inclusive language, woman-centred analysis of scripture and theology, the feminisation of God, and godding—creating an embodiment of the incarnation in a matriarchal society/church. These radical applications are seen prominently in modern progressive churches. See more Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel: The Movement to Unite Feminism with the Church*.

<sup>69</sup> This as Scott McKnight says is, "to move forward by setting the Bible loose to renew and keep on renewing who we are, what we think, how we express the gospel, and how we live out the gospel in our world. But, unlike traditionalists, we don't freeze or fossilize our expressions of the gospel. What we decide is our way for our day. We expect the next generation to do the same." McKnight, *The Blue Parakeet: Rethinking How You Read the Bible*, 34.

<sup>70</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism?* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006), 223.

### *Nature: A Product of Divine Design*

Complementarianism, on the other hand, sees the roles of husbands and wives as divinely ordained and thus manhood and womanhood are integral natural identities that transcend culture and time. Since this is divinely ordained and divinely revealed, only God can reverse or modify any concept of role or headship. Therefore, as John Stott says,

Any attempts to get rid of Paul's teaching on headship (on the grounds that it is mistaken, confusing, culture-bound or culture-specific) must be pronounced unsuccessful. It remains stubbornly there. It is rooted in divine revelation, not human opinion, and in divine creation, not human culture. In essence, therefore, it must be preserved as having permanent and universal authority.<sup>71</sup>

This means that the interpretation of any text on gender roles or family duties are not determined by the reader's culture but by the terms of the text itself within its historical, grammatical, theological, and redemptive context. To state anything else is to do violence to God's revealed word. As Claire Smith says, "our task is to sit under God's word and have it critique our culture, our lives, our relationships, our prejudices, and our fears. Not vice versa. And when we do that, we find it speaks clearly and truthfully—even about the vexed issue of gender relationships, which our world has got so messed up."<sup>72</sup> Thus, any true evangelical hermeneutic must endorse a complementarian view of family.

### **Conclusion: A Complementarity Vision**

The Biblical view of the relationship between a husband and wife according to the Bible is complementarian where the husband lovingly leads his bride, and the woman submits to his leadership aiding him. This is God's good design transcending all culture, time and even the fallen consequences of sin.

A Reformed view of theological anthropology does not see the state of marriage between man and woman as the final teleological product of either creation or redemption. Rather it is the marriage of both man and woman with Jesus Christ that is the consummation of God's Kingdom.<sup>73</sup> Then there will no more be husbands and wives who are fathers and mothers. All will be sons and

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<sup>71</sup> Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today*, 269–70.

<sup>72</sup> Claire Smith, *God's Good Design: What the Bible Really Says About Men and Women*, 2nd ed. (Sydney: Matthias Media, 2019), 18.

<sup>73</sup> Scott R. Swain, 'Thoughts on Theological Anthropology: Man as Male and Female,' *Reformed Faith & Practice: The Journal of Reformed Theological Seminary* 5.1 (May 2020), 54–65.



daughters of God and thus brothers and sisters. This eternal siblinghood is the teleological state of God's divine order where creation is consummated, and redemption is realised. Till then man and woman created by God are to complement each other in fulfilling his commission on this earth. Thus, husbands and wives, redeemed in Christ are to live and learn together in accord with God's good design. They are to aid each other by working and walking together to realise this teleological end of being together as the beloved bride of Christ for the glory of God.

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**The doctrine of sanctification according to John Brown of  
Haddington (1722–1787):  
the duty and privilege of those who enjoy God’s covenant  
of grace**

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**Introduction**

One of the most prominent evangelical Scottish theologians of the eighteenth century was John Brown of Haddington (1722–1787). Brown exercised his pastoral ministry and theological professorship in the context of a society moulded by a combination of Enlightenment rationalism and ecclesiastical Moderatism. In this sense, the Moderate party emphasised a moralism that led to the abandonment—in different ways and degrees—of both the importance of Reformed orthodox doctrine and the *praxis* of it through the sanctification of life. At the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, the remainder of a healthy understanding of the doctrine of sanctification can be helpful in contexts where Christian life seems to be essentially shaped by different sorts of legalism or antinomianism. For this, this article will present a short sketch of the life of John Brown of Haddington and his doctrine of sanctification.

### John Brown of Haddington

John Brown was born in 1722 in the village of Carpow, near Abernethy, Perthshire, Scotland.<sup>1</sup> Despite scarce economic resources, his parents endeavoured to raise him in an environment of piety and Christian devotion. In his early years he experienced the meaning of family worship and catechetical instruction that he later highlighted as an important duty in the Christian life. He wrote, 'It was the mercy that I was born in a family which took care of my Christian instruction, and in which I had the example of God's worship, both evening and morning; which was the case of few families in that corner at that time.'<sup>2</sup>

When Brown was eleven years old, both his parents, John Brown and Catherine Millie, died. In the same year, 1733, the Associate Presbytery was constituted. This was the Church in which Brown would later exercise his ministry and in which he would become heir to the *Marrow Theology*.<sup>3</sup> Because of his family circumstances, Brown's education was very limited. Nevertheless, he was an avid reader. Thomas Vincent's and John Flavel's *Catechisms* were among the works he read in his childhood along with Samuel Rutherford's *Letters*. In addition, he carefully studied the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and its respective *Catechisms*.<sup>4</sup> These documents helped shape his Reformed theology. Importantly, from his early years Brown committed to the use of means of grace, such as prayer and Bible study. In addition, he would walk several miles to hear sermons of evangelical preachers, such as the Rev. Adam Gib (1714–88).<sup>5</sup> Gib impacted Brown's life at an early stage but would later engage in open opposition to him.

### John Brown's theological training

John Brown's theological education can be divided into two stages: self-training and formal education in the Theological Hall of the Associate Synod.

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<sup>1</sup> William Brown, *The Life of John Brown with Select Writings* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), 7. This is the new edition of the 1856, *Memoir and Select Remains of the Rev. John Brown*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> William Vandoodewaard, *The Marrow Controversy and Seceder Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2011), 117–118. For the reasons for the Secession see John Brown [of Haddington], *An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Secession* (Edition Sixth; Edinburgh: Printed by Hugh Inglis, 1791), 24–25.

<sup>4</sup> John Brown Patterson, 'Memoir of the Rev. John Brown,' v. This memoir is included in John Brown [of Haddington], *The Dictionary of the Holy Bible* (Edinburgh and London: A. Fullarton & Co., no year of publication). Brown, *The Life of John Brown*, 8.

<sup>5</sup> Brown Patterson, 'Memoir of the Rev. John Brown,' v.

Despite having studied for only a few months in the elementary school of Abernethy with only one month of Latin,<sup>6</sup> the young Brown had a thirst for acquiring knowledge of various languages. While working as a shepherd on the farm of John Ogilvie, an elder in the church of Abernethy, Brown took every free moment to learn. His minister, Alexander Moncrieff (1695–1761), who for a time was a friendly counsellor, lent him books from his own study. Brown readily acquired knowledge of Latin and Greek. So great was his desire to learn the language of the New Testament that on one occasion he began at midnight a twenty-four-mile journey to St. Andrews to buy a Greek New Testament. A professor at the university rewarded both his effort and the unexpected facility in Greek he demonstrated by buying a copy for him.<sup>7</sup>

This formidable ability of acquiring Latin, Greek, Hebrew and other languages<sup>8</sup> led to unforeseen consequences, however. It precipitated not only envy but also slander from some within his own church.<sup>9</sup> Sadly, Brown was accused of acquiring his linguistic skills from Satan,<sup>10</sup> a serious charge since the last execution for witchcraft had taken place in Scotland during the third decade of the eighteenth-century.<sup>11</sup>

Despite knowing his unfortunate family circumstances and personal hardships, Adam Gib and Alexander Moncrieff were among his accusers. Moncrieff's accusation was so vehement that he allowed 'the charge to hang around his neck.'<sup>12</sup> In an effort to defend himself against slander and obtain a certificate of church membership, Brown wrote a letter to Moncrieff, but he was intransigent. Finally, in June 1746, by unanimous vote of the elders and deacons of the church, the certificate was granted to Brown, although Moncrieff dissented and refused to sign it.<sup>13</sup>

Undoubtedly both the knowledge of biblical languages he acquired and the adversities he experienced during these years of defamation helped to shape the character of the future student, minister and professor of theology. In the middle of this conflict, Brown left his occupation as a shepherd and began to work as a travelling salesman.<sup>14</sup> But his real interest lay in books and

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<sup>6</sup> D. F. Wright, 'Brown, John (1722–1787),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3622>, accessed 31 Aug 2017]

<sup>7</sup> Brown Patterson, 'Memoir of the Rev. John Brown,' vi-vii.

<sup>8</sup> Brown, *Select Remains*, 22.

<sup>9</sup> Brown, *The Life of John Brown*, 13.

<sup>10</sup> Brown Patterson, 'Memoir of the Rev. John Brown,' vii.

<sup>11</sup> Janet Horne was executed in 1727. According to Robert Mackenzie, this execution was in 1722.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Mackenzie, *John Brown of Haddington*, Original 1918. London: Banner of Truth, 1964, 32.

<sup>13</sup> Mackenzie, *John Brown of Haddington*, 33–44.

<sup>14</sup> Wright, 'Brown, John (1722–1787),' ODNB.

learning. Books fed his desire to learn more and to become a minister. But for this, he had to formalise his theological studies.

In 1747, Moncrieff and Gib separated from the other ministers with whom they had begun the Secession Church. This separation ('The Breach') resulted in two denominations, the General Associate Synod, led by Moncrieff and Gib, and the Associate Synod with James Fisher (1697–1775) and Ebenezer Erskine (1680–1754). Brown followed the latter group.

Faced with this new situation, the Associate Synod began its own programme for training ministers. The professor appointed was Ebenezer Erskine and his first enrolled student was the twenty-six-year-old John Brown. While a previous university education was usually required for the study of theology, Brown was accepted into the Theological Hall because of his knowledge of languages and theological works. In addition, he was received as a candidate for the ministry because of his godly character. As Ralph Erskine (1685–1752) indicated, 'I think the lad has a sweet savour of Christ about him.'<sup>15</sup>

Brown studied two sessions under Ebenezer Erskine in Stirling between 1747 and 1748. The main theological textbook was the *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae* of François Turretin (1623–1687). Two years later Brown became a student of the Rev. James Fisher, another of the main leaders and initiators of the Secession Church.<sup>16</sup> Fisher's theological knowledge greatly influenced the young student. He placed considerable emphasis on biblical exegesis and on its subsequent application in preaching. The study of hermeneutics was intended to bear fruit in the pulpit.<sup>17</sup> After completing his theological studies, Brown was licensed to preach by the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh in 1750.<sup>18</sup>

Brown received simultaneous calls from the congregations of Stow (Edinburgh) and Haddington. He chose the latter for two reasons: his modest estimate of his own qualifications and because the Haddington congregation had experienced some difficulties with regard to the calling of a minister. He was ordained on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1751, and remained in Haddington until his death in 1787.<sup>19</sup> Importantly, it was in that place where Brown also developed his gifts as a Divinity professor from 1767.

The training of future ministers involved two elements. For ten months they were under the supervision of their local presbytery. During August and September however, they studied full-time under the tutelage of a single professor. For twenty years, until his death in 1787, students therefore went to Haddington to be trained under Brown. On average, there were approximately

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<sup>15</sup> Mackenzie, *John Brown of Haddington*, 68.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 69–70.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 70.

<sup>18</sup> Brown, *The Life of John Brown*, 17.

<sup>19</sup> Mackenzie, *John Brown of Haddington*, 68.



thirty students per year. Classes began at ten in the morning and ended between twelve and one in the afternoon. On Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday they met together in the afternoon to hear lectures and sermons from the students from the first to the fifth year.<sup>20</sup> On Wednesday afternoon they met for discussion and debate and every Saturday they met with Brown for prayer.<sup>21</sup>

To help his students with their exegesis of the Old Testament, Brown prepared a short Hebrew vocabulary and grammar. His knowledge of biblical languages together with his desire for biblical learning, teaching and preaching led him to write his own commentaries and publish *The Self-Interpreting Bible*.<sup>22</sup> His broad learning was also reflected in his writing on Church History.<sup>23</sup>

Brown had extensive knowledge of the works of Reformed divines such as Calvin, Owen, Goodwin, Mastricht, Perkins, Charnock, and others. But rather than use Turretin's *Institutes*, he instead produced his own material for the students. In time this became *A Compendious View of Natural and Revealed Religion*. Prior to its first publication in 1782, all students had to transcribe the entire manuscript by hand. In addition to this, they were interrogated orally and had to memorise different doctrinal definitions along with supporting biblical verses.

Brown developed his theology with strong biblical and Reformed emphases. His subscription to the *Westminster Standards*, as well as his knowledge of puritan divines bore fruit in his own *Compendious* or 'systematic theology.' Five characteristics stand out in this work:

1) His ability to be precise and concise when developing the main doctrines. In a single volume, Brown expounds material generally developed in several volumes in other authors. 2) Every chapter has many biblical references to support each doctrinal point. As Richard Muller notes, Brown's intention is 'to point his readers away from his own definitions and back to the text of the Bible and to demand that theology be grounded in Scripture.'<sup>24</sup> 3) A covenantal backbone. From the sixteenth century, Reformed theologians

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<sup>20</sup> Mackenzie, *John Brown of Haddington*, 132.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 133.

<sup>22</sup> First edition in 1778.

<sup>23</sup> *An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Secession* (1766), *A General History of the Christian Church, from the Birth of our Saviour to the Present Time. Two vols.* (1771) and *A Compendious History of the British Churches in England, Scotland, Ireland, and America, with an Introductory Sketch of the History of the Waldenses. Two Vols.* (1784). See Mackenzie, *John Brown of Haddington*, 166–171 and John Croumbie Brown, *Centenary Memorial of the Rev. John Brown, Haddington. A Family Record* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 17 Princes' Street, 1887), 128

<sup>24</sup> This is a review of Brown's *Systematic Theology* by Muller. Richard A. Muller, 'The Systematic Theology of John Brown of Haddington,' *Calvin Theological Journal* 38.2 (Nov 2003), 362–364.

developed their theological systems in terms of covenant theology. Some Scottish divines played an important role in the consolidation and development of this.<sup>25</sup> It is in this line that Brown developed his own theological system. His *Compendious* is divided into seven books. Five of them refer explicitly to the doctrine of the covenant:

Book III: Of the Covenant Bonds of Religious Connection between God and Men.

Book IV: Of Christ, the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace

Book V: Of the Principal Blessings of the Covenant of Grace.

Book VI: Of the External Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, by the Law, the Gospel &c.

Book VII: Of the Church or Society, for, and to which, the Covenant of Grace is dispensed.<sup>26</sup>

This covenantal aspect leads to 4) a practical and devotional emphasis. Almost every chapter ends with a reflection that leads the reader to examine his own heart with respect to the doctrine studied. This was the fruit of what Brown was forging in his own life and in the lives of his students. He wanted to ‘impress their consciences and hearts with a sense of their own individual interest in it, with the necessity of personal piety, and with the solemn responsibilities of the Christian ministry.’<sup>27</sup>

Finally, Brown’s work reflects the foundation and purpose of his theology: Jesus Christ. He exhorts his students to ‘*begin all things from Christ, carry on all things with and through Christ; and let all things aim at and end in Christ*’.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, their theological preparation for pastoral ministry should lead them to an experiential love for Christ: ‘if you do not *ardently* love Christ, how can you *faithfully* and *diligently* feed his lambs—his sheep?’<sup>29</sup> In the same line, this practical and Christological focus can also be seen in his *Self-Interpreting Bible*,<sup>30</sup> treatises and letters. In summary, in the midst of a

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<sup>25</sup> For example, Robert Rollock and his contribution to the differences between an explicit Covenant of Works and Covenant of Grace. Robert Rollock, *Some Questions and Answers about God’s Covenant and the Sacrament That Is a Seal of God’s Covenant* (Translated and Edited by Aaron Clay Denlinger; Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016). David Dickson and Samuel Rutherford were the first divines to differentiate between a Covenant of Redemption and Covenant of Grace. See David C. Lachman, *The Marrow Controversy 1718–1723* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1988), 37.

<sup>26</sup> Book I: Of the Regulating Standard of Religion. Book II: Of GOD, the Author, Object, and End of all Religion. John Brown, *A Compendious View of Natural and Revealed Religion* (reprinted by Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015), xix–xxii. From here, referred as *Systematic Theology*.

<sup>27</sup> Brown, *The Life of John Brown*, 58.

<sup>28</sup> Brown, *Systematic Theology*, xviii.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, xi.

<sup>30</sup> Each chapter ends with a devotional and Christological reflection.

certain decline of orthodoxy, Brown's theological works uphold the trinitarian and Christ-centred theology of the high-orthodoxy period.

For Brown, words like 'there is no learning nor knowledge like the knowledge of Christ; no life like Christ living in the heart by faith'<sup>31</sup> and 'believing that God hath made with me, and my seed after me, his "everlasting covenant, to be a God to me and to my seed"'<sup>32</sup> reflect a deep interest in living according to Christ and his covenant of grace. The memorisation by his students of sections of his *Compendious* (Brown's systematic theology) and *Cases of Conscience*, were intended to reflect this theological and practical emphasis. While every doctrinal *loci* has a devotional and practical application, his doctrine of sanctification shows a summary of the *praxis pietatis* obtained from his understanding of covenant theology and classical Christology.

### Sanctification rooted in Christ and his gracious covenant

*I advise you to read Mr Brown's tract on 'Sanctification', and especially to commit to memory all the passages of Scripture quoted therein.*<sup>33</sup>

—George Lawson

The reason for Lawson's endorsement was the deep connection that Brown makes between Christology and sanctification:

This sanctification is of unspeakable importance in itself, and as it is the end of all the offices of Christ ... the end of his humiliation and exaltation ... the end of the Holy Ghost, in all his work on Christ, and his church ... and the end of our election, redemption, effectual calling, justification, adoption and spiritual comfort.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, any study of sanctification is adequate only if it is well grounded in the person and work of Christ and the believer's union with Christ and justification through faith alone in order to live for the main end of life: God's glory.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Brown, *The Life of John Brown*, 157.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 197.

<sup>33</sup> John Macfarlane, *The Life and Times of George Lawson* (Edinburgh: William Oliphant and Co., 1862), 237.

<sup>34</sup> Brown, *Systematic Theology*, 398.

<sup>35</sup> Sanctification as 'the end of all offices of Christ' and other saving graces can be understood as a subordinate end because the chief end of religion is God, as the title

### Christology and Sanctification

Reflecting his Reformed convictions, for Brown, justification is an *act* of God's free grace, in which he imputes Christ's righteousness to the elect sinner.<sup>36</sup> Sanctification, on the other hand, is the *work* of God's free grace in which the justified sinner is renewed in his whole man, enabling him to die to sin and live to righteousness.<sup>37</sup> It is both an inestimable *privilege* and a comprehensive *duty*. On the one hand, it involves the privilege of the secure imputation of Christ's righteousness and the work of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, it involves the duty of living according to God's law as a rule of life.<sup>38</sup> While sanctification is not necessary in order to have access to Christ as a Saviour or to be justified, it is an essential aspect of initiated salvation. Believers must grow in conformity to the holy nature of God. Thus, sanctification is necessary as obedience to the will of God; as gratitude to God for his gracious redemption; to adorn the Christian profession; to gain others to Christ; and as a preparation for heaven. At the same time, sanctification is essential evidence of union with Christ, faith in him and justification.<sup>39</sup>

Although justification and sanctification are inseparably linked together,<sup>40</sup> Brown distinguishes them<sup>41</sup> in order to avoid the two errors of antinomianism and legalism.<sup>42</sup> For example, they differ in the following ways: (1) Nature: where justification changes our legal state, sanctification changes our heart and life. (2) Order: sanctification follows justification as its fruit and evidence. (3) Form: justification is an act perfected at once, being equal for all believers, while sanctification is a work that will not be perfected till death and is different in each believer, and in degree even in the same person. (4) Matter: while in justification Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, in sanctification it is implanted in us. (5) Extent: justification affects the conscience, and sanctification affects the whole man. (6) Evidence: while justification is a secret act, sanctification is open evidence of justification. (7) Their relation to the law: justification delivers the sinner from the law as a broken covenant,

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of Book I of his *Systematic Theology* indicates. The scholastic Reformed theologian, Francis Junius (1545–1602), also indicates a primary and subordinate end in theology, see for example Francis Junius, *A Treatise on True Theology* (Grand Rapids, Reformation Heritage Books, 2014), 205–12.

<sup>36</sup> John Brown, *Questions & Answers of the Shorter Catechism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006), 156.

<sup>37</sup> Brown, *Systematic Theology*, 398.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Brown, *Systematic Theology*, 399.

<sup>40</sup> Brown, *Questions & Answers*, 165.

<sup>41</sup> Brown describes thirteen points in his *Systematic Theology*.

<sup>42</sup> 'Q. Is it very dangerous to confound justification with sanctification? A. Yes; for it either tempts to turn the grace of God into sloth and licentiousness; and it leads believers into the practical error of judging their state by their frame'. *Questions & Answers*, 167.

while sanctification conforms the believer to the law as a rule of life. (8) In relation to Christ's offices: justification is founded on Christ's priesthood, while sanctification is related to Christ's prophetic and kingly offices.<sup>43</sup>

### **The Privilege and the Duty**

Sanctification is a privilege given to believers by the grace of the Triune God. Particularly, is a work of the Holy Spirit. God sanctifies sinners on the basis of Christ's surety righteousness. But sanctification is also a duty: the sanctified believer works together with God.<sup>44</sup> Brown's exposition of sanctification therefore emphasises both the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of the believer.

God's word, promises, gospel invitations, and the law in the hands of Christ are all important elements in effecting sanctification. However, 'it is not of themselves that God's word and ordinances promote our sanctification, but the Holy Ghost, with his saving influences attending them, renders them effectual.'<sup>45</sup> The law, not as a covenant, but as a rule of life, is the regulating standard here. While the justified believer cannot keep the law perfectly, 'The more perfection in holiness we attain, the more is God glorified.'<sup>46</sup>

The example of other Christians can help us here, but the only perfect pattern and example is Christ himself.<sup>47</sup> Thus, Christ and union with him lead believers to imitate Christ in keeping God's law. Brown distinguishes between the sanctification of *nature* and the sanctification of *life*. The first is related to the renewing of the whole man after God's image,<sup>48</sup> while its fruit is sanctification of life, in which the believer is enabled to die to sin and live to righteousness.<sup>49</sup> This includes the implanting of 'gracious habits,' the acquiring of Christian 'tempers' and the performing of 'holy exercises.'<sup>50</sup> It is on the basis of these three elements that Brown develops his teaching.

First, a vital principle of grace is implanted by the Holy Spirit in regeneration in opposition to indwelling sin. This principle increases in all the work of sanctification and is antecedent to any act of faith or obedience.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, believing and working out salvation are the fruits of this implanted habit, and this in turn evidences our union with Christ, the imputation of the righteousness of Christ and our adoption into the family of God. In sum, without these habits or principles of grace, we will never engage in spiritual

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<sup>43</sup> Brown, *Systematic Theology*, 399–401; *Questions & Answers*, 166–167.

<sup>44</sup> Brown, *Systematic Theology*, 401–402.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 402.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 403.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>48</sup> Brown, *Questions & Answers*, 167.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 168.

<sup>50</sup> Brown, *Systematic Theology*, 405.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 405–406.

warfare, or have any real experience of sanctification,<sup>52</sup> for, ‘all the duties of religion must flow from an implanted principle of real grace.’<sup>53</sup> Although it is one single habit of grace in itself, it is diversified according to the various faculties of the soul in which it acts, namely the mind, conscience, will, affections, memory, and body.<sup>54</sup>

Crucially, Brown carefully differentiates between legal and evangelical repentance. Legal repentance goes before faith in Christ, while repentance unto life follows it.<sup>55</sup> The cause of legal repentance is God’s judgment and wrath, but the cause of evangelical repentance is God’s holiness and love manifested in the death of Christ for the complete pardon of our sins. The object of legal repentance is the guilt of our sins, but the object of true repentance is the filth of our sin and the dishonour we have done to God. Legal repentance turns only from gross sins, but repentance unto life turns men from the love of every sin. Finally, legal repentance ‘hath no proper connection with divine pardon,’<sup>56</sup> while evangelical repentance is the fruit of the pardon of God in justification.<sup>57</sup> Significantly, evangelical repentance is Christ-centred: ‘all promises confirmed in Christ’s person and righteousness, mightily encourage to it...Christ’s execution of all his offices, and all saving discoveries of him, powerfully promote it.’<sup>58</sup>

The results of the proper exercise of these implanted graces are *Christian tempers* or *acquired* gracious habits. Brown lists as many as sixteen.<sup>59</sup> Emphasising God’s sovereign grace and his lordship in every work that the Christian does, Brown reminds that these tempers must be produced in hearts united to Christ, by gracious virtue derived from Christ and his Spirit, through his word dwelling in believers, in conformity to Christ, and exercised in obedience to the authority of Christ, and aiming at his honour and the honour of God in him.<sup>60</sup>

They are *exercised* in two ways: dying to sin and living to righteousness.<sup>61</sup> Such gradual dying to sin is essential since although believers are free from the slavery and dominion of sin, they will never be purged from

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 408–410.

<sup>53</sup> Brown, *The Christian Journal*, 149.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 411–412.

<sup>55</sup> Using the language of Westminster Shorter Catechism Q. 87.

<sup>56</sup> Brown, *Systematic Theology*, 414.

<sup>57</sup> Brown, *Systematic Theology*, 414–415. See also *Questions & Answers*, 295–296.

<sup>58</sup> Brown, *Systematic Theology*, 415.

<sup>59</sup> 1) christian wisdom and prudence, 2) spirituality of mind, 3) purity of heart, 5) sincerity, 6) humility, 7) meekness, 8) patience, 9) peaceableness, 10) tenderness of heart, 11) bravery, fortitude of virtue, 12) zeal, 13) temperance, 14) equity or justice, 15) mercifulness, and 16) truth, candour, and faithfulness. See Brown, *Systematic Theology* 416–418.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 418–419.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 419.

the indwelling corruption of sin while they live on earth.<sup>62</sup> Brown highlights several reasons why God allows sin to remain in believers; God teaches Christians about the power, sinfulness and deceitfulness of their secret sins. At the same time, remaining sin awakes their sense of need and dependence on Christ and leads to the manifestation of the riches of God's grace, because 'the more numerous and aggravated sins he forgives, the more of his grace, and of the virtue of Jesus' blood, appears in the pardon.'<sup>63</sup>

According to Brown, our sinful corruption is also called the old man, the law in the members, and the law of sin, flesh and lust. This is why mortification of sin is so necessary. This does not consist in improving our natural powers in opposition to sin, or in occasional victories over it, but in diligently seeking to destroy the root of sin through an application of Jesus' blood to the conscience, and by a hatred for sin produced by the love of God.<sup>64</sup> Crucially, this mortification also has a direct connection to orthodox Christology because it leads to increased knowledge of Christ, i.e., in his person, offices, righteousness and grace; it also manifests the interest that believers have towards Christ, as well as leading to conformity to his image.<sup>65</sup>

Pneumatology also matters because believers cooperate with the Holy Spirit and believers in the mortification of sin. For this reason, Christians must avoid grieving, resisting, or quenching his presence.<sup>66</sup> The Holy Spirit begins his mortifying influence by exposing indwelling corruptions by two means: God's law and the sufferings of Christ as their Saviour.<sup>67</sup> It is in this way that there Christ's blood applied to the conscience is important for mortification, because:

Therein is discovered the true and aggravated nature of sin, as against an infinitely high and holy law and nature of God, our creator, preserver and redeemer; and as against the redeeming love and life of the great God our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Being implicated to our conscience as exhibited and given in the gospel by faith, it renders it pure and tender, inflames our heart

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 420–421.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 421–422.

<sup>65</sup> John Brown, *Practical Piety Exemplified, In the Lives of Thirteen eminent Christians, and illustrated in Casuistical Hints or Cases of Conscience. Concerning Satan's Temptations, Indwelling Sin, Spiritual Experiences, Godly Conversation, and Scandalous Offences* (Glasgow: Printed by John Bryce, 1783), 234. We will refer to the second part of this book as *Casuistical Hints*.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 236.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 237.

with hatred of sin, and conveys a sin mortifying influence.<sup>68</sup>

Therefore, the mortification of sin involves internal spiritual warfare in the believer, for which vigorous self-denial is necessary.<sup>69</sup> In this work, the Christian renounces himself, seeks to place his chief happiness in God, and submit himself to the lordship of Christ.<sup>70</sup> Importantly, while dying to sin, believers also experience living unto righteousness. This process leads them ‘more and more to love and abound in inward holiness, and in the practice of good works.’<sup>71</sup> These works, required by God’s law must be done on a gospel foundation, influenced by gospel motives, performed in a gospel manner to an evangelical end.<sup>72</sup> Thus Brown emphasises faith in Christ as the instrument of sanctification, the holy law of God as its rule and the example of God and Christ as its pattern.<sup>73</sup> Since the good works of believers are a product of God’s grace, they must always abound and grow in them more and more.

Brown describes thirteen rules that must be considered when studying this doctrine, and thus, seeks to promote correct conceptions about it. Some of these include: (1) The real nature of sanctification must be learned with care and attention, and derived from the word of God, which is the regulating standard of it, from the covenant of grace, and from the believer’s condition in this world. (2) Believers are called to a diligent and careful study of it. (3) This requires an inward inclination to it and a real persuasion of God’s reconciliation through the imputation of Christ’s righteousness. (4) All requirements for it are received by spiritual union and fellowship with Christ, considering his person and work as the treasure of holiness. (5) As justification precedes sanctification, Christ must be received in all his offices, as offered in the gospel.<sup>74</sup> In sum, Gospel-holiness must be earnestly sought after by faith, as a necessary and principal part of our salvation, enjoyed in consequence of our union with Christ, justification by his blood, and reception of his Spirit.<sup>75</sup>

### **The duty of sanctification: improving the fullness of the covenant**

Reformed theology has always emphasised God’s grace and man’s responsibility in the work of sanctification.<sup>76</sup> Within the *Marrow* tradition, John Brown was probably one of the first to articulate sanctification in terms

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 239.

<sup>69</sup> Brown, *Systematic Theology*, 422.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 422–423.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 423.

<sup>72</sup> Therefore, no-regenerate people cannot have good works.

<sup>73</sup> Brown, *Questions & Answers*, 170.

<sup>74</sup> Brown, *Systematic Theology*, 426–436.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 432.

<sup>76</sup> See for example Mark Jones, *Antinomianism: Reformed theology’s unwelcome guest?* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing Company, 2013).



of it being simultaneously both a *privilege* and a *duty*. While the idea is not expressed in these terms in Fisher's catechism,<sup>77</sup> in the previous century, John Owen had spoken of the *grace* of God and our *duty* in our sanctification.<sup>78</sup> Interestingly, Boston and Fisher refer to sanctification as *habitual* and *actual*. For this point, Brown prefers the language of the sanctification of *nature* and the sanctification of *life* or *practice*—language that may well have been clearer to ordinary people.

For Brown, holiness is closely connected to Christology. The end of all the offices and states of Christ is the sanctification of believers,<sup>79</sup> and at the same time, sanctification has its foundation and end in Christ. There is no sanctification without union with Christ, nor any evidence of sanctification if the believer is not increasingly conformed to the image of Christ. Precisely here, the work of the Holy Spirit is vital because he unites the sinner with Christ and applies all the benefits of the covenant of grace, including conforming the believer to the image of the Saviour through the reality of sanctification.

## Conclusion

Reformed and evangelical theology stressed both the intimate relationship between Scripture and the Holy Spirit.<sup>80</sup> The written word of God is the only standard for sanctification; the work of the Holy Spirit makes it effectual in the heart of the believer.<sup>81</sup> Not the mere exercise of reading the Bible sanctifies, but the Holy Spirit, who honours the Holy Scripture, sanctifies believers through it.

At the same time, Reformed theology beautifully highlights the intimate relationship of God's sovereign grace and human responsibility. John Brown was faithful to his Reformed commitments reflected in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Marrow* school in emphasising that the duties involved in sanctification must never be viewed as the conditions of justification. As Vandoodewaard indicates, the Marrow's theology 'described the covenant of grace as absolute, arguing against those who held to a neonomian conditionality of the covenant of grace, tying it to repentance or obedience.'<sup>82</sup> Thus, for Brown,

Christ never requires holiness to warrant our receiving him in the gospel, but invites men, the very worst not

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<sup>77</sup> Fisher and Boston do not use explicitly the words *privilege* and *duty* to describe the work of God and the work of believer on sanctification.

<sup>78</sup> John Owen, *The Holy Spirit (The Works of John Owen; ed. William H. Goold; Edinburgh, Reprinted by The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009)*, III, 384.

<sup>79</sup> See also Brown, *Questions & Answers*, 170 and *Dictionary*, 582.

<sup>80</sup> See Westminster Larger Catechism Q.155.

<sup>81</sup> Brown, *Systematic Theology*, 402.

<sup>82</sup> Vandoodewaard, *The Marrow Controversy and Seceder Tradition*, 10.

excepted, but rather particularly called, to come *directly* to him, *as they are* ... No true repentance is ever required as our qualification warranting us to receive Christ as our Saviour ... Nor humiliation for sin; for that is the fruit of God's application of Christ to us ... If we could attain any true holiness or virtue before our union to Christ, it would infallibly exclude us from all warrant and access to believe in him, and demonstrate that we were none of those LOST SINNERS whom he came to seek and save, or calls to himself.<sup>83</sup>

Significantly, this emphasis on the unconditionality of the covenant of grace and the free and sovereign work of God in uniting the sinner with Christ, do not constitute an argument for passivity in the Christian life, but rather the opposite. Christ, in his person and work, is the foundation for good works in believers. Therefore, sanctification must be sought and exercised as a necessary part of salvation in union with Christ. This reflects Brown's practical theology and his covenantal Christology:

Q. What is our duty, if we find ourselves in this covenant [of grace]?

A. To admire and adore God's free grace which brought us in; and to improve the fullness of the covenant, in living like the children of God.<sup>84</sup>

This catechism was written to help new believers deepen their Christian convictions through an exposition of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. From the outset, his writings had in view not mere intellectual theology, but reaching the heart of the people to encourage them to live a practical-confessional Christianity. As his son wrote about John Brown, 'the great object which he ever had in view was the improvement of his readers in religious knowledge, and especially in personal piety.'<sup>85</sup> In summary, sanctification can be understood as the privilege and duty of those who want to grow in piety in the context of the covenant of grace.

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<sup>83</sup> Brown, *Systematic Theology*, 431–432.

<sup>84</sup> Brown, *Questions & Answers*, 98.

<sup>85</sup> Brown, *The Life of John Brown*, 53.



**John Brown of Haddington**

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# AFRICA TEXTBOOK PROJECT UPDATE

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