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Divine Simplicity: Article Reviews and Responses
By Paul R. Hinlicky and Steven J. Duby

A Brief Editorial Note

The editors invited Paul R. Hinlicky and Steven J. Duby to review one another's books on the topic of divine simplicity. The following presents their respective review articles and then their responses to one another's review. The order is as follows:

1. **Paul R. Hinlicky's review article of Duby's book,** *Divine Simplicity: A Dogmatic Account*

2. **Steven J. Duby's review article of Hinlicky's book,** *Divine Simplicity: Christ the Crisis of Metaphysics*

3. **Paul R. Hinlicky's response to Duby**

4. **Steven J. Duby's response to Hinlicky**

The editors would like to thank both Paul and Steve for participating in this friendly engagement. We believe that Christian scholarship is strengthen by dialogue across different Christian traditions. Paul and Steve exemplify this dialogue well between themselves. The editors would also like to thank Mark R. Kreitzer for initially suggesting that this dialogue take place in JBTS.

Ryan A. Brandt
Managing Editor

Divine Simplicity: Article Reviews and Responses
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Book Review Article of *Divine Simplicity: A Dogmatic Account*

PAUL R. HINLICKY

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Steven J. Duby, Divine Simplicity: A Dogmatic Account. London and New York: T & T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology, 2016.

Steven J. Duby has written an excellent work of theological scholarship in support of what is, to my mind, a dubious cause. He writes as a *restorationist* of Reformed scholastic orthodoxy (pp. 3, 122), and in "dogmatics" he deploys a pre-critical method of garnering and systematizing propositions found in Scripture (Lindbeck's "propositionalism"[1]). This restorationism hinges upon two special commitments which recur regularly throughout the work: first, the interpretation of Trinitarian persons as modalities of the single deity-person (pp. 24, 121, 155, 158, 218, 227-8), a move which, following Augustine, confounds the crucial distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* worked out by the Cappadocians between Nicea and Constantinople; and second, also following Augustine, the corresponding assignment of God taken "absolutely" to the category of "nature" or "essence," treating, then, Father, Son and Holy Spirit as the same divine substance taken "relatively" (e.g., p. 222).

Referencing the Athanasian Creed, Duby writes in conclusion: "With the *distinctio modalis* in hand, one can identify each of the persons as the one God and then, given that each person is not identical with God absolutely or exhaustively but just as a certain *modus subsistendi* and is thus distinct from God taken absolutely as *modus rei a re*, one can affirm that each of the persons is each modally and relatively distinct from the other persons as *modi subsistendi*" (p. 224). This conclusion yields what may be described as a psychological model of the Trinity as opposed to the social model given to us in Jesus' high priestly prayer (John 17:20-26). God is thought

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1. George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Post-Liberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984). With respect to theological method I make the same critique of neo-scholastic Lutheran restorationists. See my "Prima Scriptura: Saving Sola Scriptura from Itself," *Dialog* 55/3 (Fall 2016): 223-30.

to be one as mind subsisting in the modalities of thinking, thinking itself and willing itself in splendid, timeless and thus simple self-identity, hence as "divine simplicity."

By contrast, I have written about the Western doctrine of divine simplicity from the perspective of the criticisms of it, notably first by Karl Barth (on its tendency to quaternity, p. 32), Jürgen Moltmann (on its tendency to Sabellianism, pp. 40, 208-9), followed by Colin Gunton, Eberhard Jüngel and especially Robert Jenson (who pioneered "patrology" as a retrieval of the Eastern *pater est fons divinitatis*, p. 170). These sources of mine (which Duby discusses only to reject) betray a specific level of disagreement between the author and myself on the basis of confession—the Reformed theologians of those I just listed are all profoundly and positively influenced by the Lutheran affirmation of the Christological *communicatio idiomatum* and, because of its *universal* scope, a corresponding rejection of the necessitarian implication from classical divine simplicity: *double* predestination, with its correlative doctrine of *limited* atonement. The knowledge of God as the one creator, but also redeemer and fulfiller of all that is not God, accordingly, is not thought by these critics to arise from the protological speculation of fallen reason about a first cause or prime mover but from the Exodus and Easter events of salvation; hence the doctrine of creation is from the outset eschatologically oriented. Biblically, it is no accident that the high monotheism of the Second Isaiah has Yahweh announce the good news categorically, "Behold, I am doing a new thing!" (Isa. 43:19).

Such criticism of classical simplicity, however, does not lead me to reckless endorsements of divine passibility, or to fall into the clutches of the bogeyman, i.e., Hegel[2] (who plays this role in Duby's genealogy, p. 27), or to reject the necessity of an ecumenical doctrine of divine simplicity.[3] Rather, I have written as a revisionist who wants to unveil the definite liabilities of the classical version of simplicity, whether in its Augustinian-Platonic form or its Thomistic-Aristotelian form, and to advocate for a "weaker" rule version of the doctrine (parallel but not identical with Eleanor Stump's essentially Leibnizian proposal in the philosophy of religion, pp. 62-64).

The editor of the *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies* therefore invited Duby and me to exchange reviews of each other's books, full well knowing that we each regard the other's project as wrong-headed. *Vive la difference!* In such circumstances, however, if we are to shed light rather than heat, it is important to strive toward "achieving disagreement."[4] This is an ecumenical method in Christian dogmatics which strives to identify the common basis in Christian dogma, to recognize the legitimate concern underlying the formulations one finds problematical

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2. See the sharp critique of Hegel's toxic "negative dialectics" in Brent Adkins and Paul R. Hinlicky, *Rethinking Philosophy and Theology with Deleuze: A New Cartography* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

3. As Jordan P. Barrett rightly sees my revisionist stance in his *Divine Simplicity: A Biblical and Theological Account* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 16-17.

4. On ecumenical method in doctrinal theology, see Paul R. Hinlicky, "Process, Convergence, Declaration: Reflections on Doctrinal Dialogue," *The Cresset* (Pentecost, 2001) Vol. LXIV, No. 6, 13-18.

in an opponent's appropriation and elaboration of common Christian dogma, and to seek together new formulations which reconcile the opposing formulations. I'm not optimistic that this final goal can be achieved with our exchange, but I will review Duby's work with the two first provisos in mind.

Ecumenical Dogma: God is One as the Creator of all that is not God

As already indicated in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6, there has never been an ecumenical decision on the *sense* of the oneness of God, even though the Shema of Israel has been, and must be, taken as Scripture. Appeals to divine simplicity in elaboration of the sense of biblical monotheism range classically from Irenaeus in his battle against the Gnostics to Origen's inference to the eternal generation of the Son to the hyper-Arian Eunomius' campaign against the Cappadocian interpretation of the Nicene *homoousios* as they clarified it against Marcellus of Ancyra's modalism.[5] Manifestly, then, as a matter of historical fact the sense of divine simplicity remains an open question in critical dogmatics. Duby is a somewhat reluctant witness to this fact of the history of dogma (p. 17). To his credit, however, he acknowledges the questionableness of his use of the "Aristotelian tradition in particular as mediated and modified by Thomas and a number of the Reformed scholastic theologians…" and confesses that it "is a contingent and, in some measure, ad hoc decision…" (p. 64).

On the level of ecumenical Christian dogma, this concession to historical fact is crucial. One should not anathematize alternative understandings of divine simplicity, even if one is theologically critical of them. On the level of dogma, what must be maintained is that "God" in Christian understanding is understood as the free creator of all that is not God—the creator-creature distinction taken according to *creatio ex nihilo* to which Duby frequently and rightly avers. On this level of ecumenical dogma there is no quarrel between us, even though I will question theologically how free Duby's "deity itself subsisting" (p. 226) is and with what kind of freedom it is endowed, when the biblical witness to God who makes all things new is forced into the Procrustean bed of classical, i.e., protological metaphysics.

The *reductionism* of "protological" metaphysics is to reduce all questions to one of origin. This reductionism is a facet of the apophatic *radicalism* of "divine simplicity" in classical philosophy—what Hegel tagged as the power of the negative. It is based on an illicit inference from worldly experience of causality to initial conditions—what Kant famously exposed as transcendental illusion. One cannot hope to retrieve today without passing through these critical questions. Post-critical theology is precisely not the reassertion of the pre-critical!

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5. As alluded above, Duby evidently *endorses* Ayres' misleading representation of Marcellus (p. 8). See Paul R. Hinlicky, *Divine Complexity: The Rise of Creedal Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 203-33.

Confessional Divergence

We do have a confessional quarrel, as mentioned above, which I would simply outline here without any attempt to adjudicate it.[6] It concerns the Christological *communicatio idiomatum*, which Duby rejects (p. 192) and the Lutheran rejection (Formula of Concord XI) of double predestination, which Duby ever so gingerly affirms (p. 112, 196). What is at stake in "evangelical historicism" (attributed to the Lutheran Jenson, p. 1, 34fn) is a robust affirmation of divine freedom for creation, incarnation and the coming of the beloved community as real relations of Creator to creature. This freedom to love is not "the liberty of indifference" which Duby affirms (p. 201; he is otherwise hostile to Occam's "radicalism," p. 17) but rather divine, glorious freedom to love wisely even the unlovely through the foolishness of Messiah's cross, wiser than the wisdom of men. But in his attempt to harmonize a liberty of indifference with the necessity of God as perfect being, *actus purus*, inclusive of God's eternal and unchangeable will (p. 196), Duby at length (tacitly) concedes defeat by appealing to "mystery" (p. 207, 215). This conclusion is in reality a costly theological choice,[7] since, as Leibniz showed in his dispute with Pufendorf, the liberty of indifference is the liberty of a tyrant who offers no good reasons for acts other than the tyrant's arbitrary whim.[8] But Jesus Christ is the good reason for all of God's ways.

To be sure, the *philosophical* alternative to the tyrant's liberty is the Platonic assertion (cf. the dialogue *Euthyphro*) of eternal ideas or moral principles independent of God and by which God might be judged; Duby is right to argue with Thomas's support against "unbaptized" (Jenson) Platonism that God is not "constituted by principles" (p. 79, 107, 124). This is also a perfectly Barthian point against modern Feuerbachian theologies: subject and predicate in statements like "God is love" are not convertible.

But the *theological* alternative alike to Platonic and to Aristotelian philosophical theologies is a "dispositional ontology" such as represented by the innovative Calvinist Jonathan Edwards. Divine disposition is articulated by the doctrine of the immanent Trinity, so that God as the Beloved Community of the Father and the Son

6. For a Lutheran-Reformed *Auseinandersetzung*, see Paul R. Hinlicky, "Scripture as Matrix, Christ as Content: A Reponse to Johannes Zachuber and Anna Case-Winters," chp. 14 in *Refracted Luther: The Reformer's Ecumenical Legacy*, ed. Piotz J. Malysz and Derek R. Nelson (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 299-317.

7. This is precisely the same criticism I made of James E. Dolezal at the conclusion of my *Divine Simplicity*. See Paul R. Hinlicky, *Divine Simplicity: Christ the Crisis of Metaphysics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 197-202.

8. Reflection on possible worlds, which Duby rejects (p. 194, 203) in rejecting the *potentia absoluta/ordinata* distinction (p. 201), can illuminate the divine and free choice for this very world on which the cross of Jesus stood. One would then take this choice to create in order to redeem the creation in Christ as the mystery hidden from the ages but now revealed, aka, "the divine decree"—and not some predetermined muster of humanity into the ranks of those to be saved and those to be damned

in the Spirit is, as Leibniz would say, "inclined but not necessitated" to the great acts of creation, redemption and fulfillment attested in the Holy Scriptures; so true God is recognized by creatures as the promised harmony of power, wisdom and love on the way to the Pauline "redemption of our bodies." To his credit, Duby acknowledges that the "loss of freedom" (p. 26) represents the "poignant" objection to the classical doctrines of divine simplicity; thus he bravely and consequently denies any novelty to God (p. 123, 128). And this denial leads to the heart of the confessional objection.

Here a doctrine of Scripture as a compendium of revealed propositions bearing timeless truth has displaced the good news of the resurrection of the crucified Jesus as the very Word of God. The Word of God is *news*, no less for God than for us—if the resurrection is indeed the Father's vindication of the derelict Son hanging on the tree, having drunk the cup of wrath for his act of loving solidarity with sinners, the Lamb bearing away the *sin of the world*. If we take this gospel of *unlimited* atonement as *the* Word of God which also norms the reading of Holy Scripture, we discern the *movement* of God who *comes* in the mercy of his love surpassing the wrath of his love. This divine *advent* is the Word of God incarnate and so also preached by the Spirit.

One would accordingly not affirm, as Duby does, that relations to creatures are not real to God (p. 144), but only refer to different relations that creatures adopt toward God who, per classical divine simplicity, is and ever remains immutably the unmoved mover (p. 140). Moreover, in articulating an evangelical doctrine of God, one would infer the divine condition for the possibility of the advent of the God of the gospel by the anti-modalist middle axiom that the saving God does not deceive but is truthful to Himself as to us in this outreach to the creature. That is to say that as, per 1 Corinthians 8, God is God *for us* as the Father who sends the Son in the power of the Spirit, so God is God *to* God *in* God ("absolutely" if we must speak this way) as the eternal Father of the Son on whom He breathes His Spirit. Thus we have a doctrine of the *immanent* Trinity as the basis of divine freedom to love in history—a position that has been smartly argued by Paul Molnar[9] (conceding, then, some weaknesses to the positions taken by Jenson and especially McCormack—Duby's "illogic of self-causation," p. 130).

Theological Elaborations

If we can agree ecumenically on the dogma that the almighty Father by His Word and Spirit is the one creator of all that is not God, and agree that we disagree confessionally about how we are brought to that articulation of the common faith, we might still weigh theologically the relative merits theologically of our respective positions in fair-minded, even charitable ways.

9. Paul D. Molnar, *Divine Freedom and The Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity*, second edition (London & New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2017).

The basic question is whether regulating the knowledge of God by the Trinitarian self-revelation of the gospel evacuates God of transcendence or whether an incarnational theology limits and thus specifies the peculiar transcendence of the Christian God as freedom to love wisely. Subsidiary to this basic question is whether creation is to be conceived of protologically or eschatologically. If protologically there pre-exists a cognitively accessible generic theism, a "natural theology" as if providing a foundation upon which the superstructure of supernatural revelation may be erected. If eschatologically, then "creation" cannot be accessed by sinful creatures (for "we want to be God and do not want God to be God"—Luther) apart from their redemption and promised fulfillment. In parallel, the question arises whether predestination is to be understood anthropologically and individualistically or Christologically and socially. All this we might fruitfully explore together, if only to "achieve disagreement."

But there is an obstacle: the thicket of problems regarding the meaningfulness of language about God. The analogical approach advocated by Duby of "many representations but one and the same reference" (p. 188) seems to entail that theological language succeeds when pointing—quite literally—out of this world to an incomprehensible sheer act of perfect being, we know not what. I deny that such language is meaningful; indeed, I regard it as vacuous, the reification of a No-Thing. Thus with Plantinga, Moreland and Craig, I regard resort to analogy, which in any event finally collapses into mystery mongering, as a conversation-stopper (p. 72)— and not a benign one since assertion of it leads to modalism in the doctrine of God and Nestorianism in Christology.

To be meaningful or to have sense in this time-space continuum, human language about God must be able to state what *in the world* it is talking about, a usage that depends on semantical (not ontological) univocity. God is the One who raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus *is* the Son of God. The blessed loaf *is* the body of the risen Jesus Christ. These identity statements are catachrestic metaphors, which are deliteralized and decoded to speak of novelties in the world for which no pre-existing vocabulary is suitable (cf. Mark 10:45), referring in this way to God who *comes to us* "deep in the flesh" (Luther), as Jüngel would put it.[10]

Conclusion: Genealogy vs. *philosophia perennis*

One of the great strengths of Duby's study is that he has clearly articulated the historical significance of Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of divine simplicity as blocking Platonic emanationism, something Augustine asserted dogmatically but could not

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10. Paul R. Hinlicky, "Metaphorical Truth and the Language of Christian Theology," Chapter Six in *Indicative of Grace, Imperative of Freedom: Essays in Honor of Eberhard Jüngel in His 80th Year*, ed. R. David Nelson (London and New York: Bloomsbury/ T & T Clark, 2014), 89-100.

yet conceptualize.[11] With categories developed by and borrowed from Avicenna, Thomas was able to conceive of the identity of existence and essence in the divine and perfect being, as constituting a singularity, which as such can only be finitely reflected in various ways in creatures; creatures thus do not essentially participate in God, which would both violate the simplicity of *actus purus* and tacitly divinize creatures in the process. The fierce repudiation of ontological univocity for positing a *commune esse* to which both Creator and creature belong as instantiations is a theme that runs through the book (e.g., p. 175). The resulting Thomistic doctrine has in turn both obviously apophatic but also cataphatic elements (p. 8), since a similarity in being is asserted in positively affirming that God's act is to exist perfectly as creatures know themselves to exist imperfectly. I will go so far here as to grant that *if* we lived in a world in which Aristotelian naturalism or neo-Platonic emanationism were the metaphysical options of our times, Thomas' achievement would remain commendable. But this is long since not the case.

I have no quarrel with interpreters who hold to the ultimately apophatic implications of Thomistic doctrine. In fact, I think that the "ever greater dissimilarity" of Lateran IV finally overwhelms the "creaturely similarity." The result, as mentioned above, is that Thomas' doctrine, too, at length has to succumb to the "dialectic of the negative," which dialectic can be traced back to the pre-Socratics. Mere abstract being is, in any case, a thin reed on which to hang the cataphatic meaningfulness of Christian talk about God in the world. For the cataphatic element—that God may truly be likened to creaturely beings as the eminent "being itself"—succumbs to the critical exposé of transcendental illusion (cf. pp. 12-13).

At least since Kant transcendental inferences like this to alleged metaphysical insights are rightly suspect of accomplishing no more than illicit projections of creaturely categories onto the unknowable noumenal. Privileging "existence" does not demonstrate the reality of a perfectly existing being as God, but only, as Jenson held, an idolatrous "metaphysics of persistence." For the categories of essence and existence are worldly categories. What exists in the world persists in time. It is an illusion to think of temporal persistence as the decisive analogue of the reality of the God of the gospel, which biblically is rather the coming of the kingdom. That is why Paul Tillich, who in many respects followed out the trajectory of classical simplicity, finally had to retract his claim that God is literally being itself, and concede that this, too, is a symbolic statement.[12] Tillich's theology in this way witnesses to the revenge that will be taken on Christian theologies when they hitch their wagons to a strong doctrine of simplicity—that is, if they cease dodging its "radical" implications

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11. Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity: An Essay in the Hermeneutics of Nature and Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 249-53.

12. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 volumes (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1967), II: 5-12.

with pious invocations of mystery that slam on the brakes just before this machine drives off the cliff.

So even granting for the sake of the argument that Duby successfully defends Thomas' version of *actus purus* as blocking the road to Platonic emanationism, it seems to me that this leaves him on the horns of a dilemma. One can block platonic emanationism in this way only to succumb to the ultimate vacuity of one's language regarding God, despite being dressed out with Scriptural names. Or one can follow Maartin Wisse's lead, as I discussed in my *Divine Simplicity*, in interpreting the gravamen of Augustine's pre-Thomistic attempt to blockade emanationism by resolutely drawing the conclusion that the strong doctrine of divine simplicity "defunctionalizes the Trinity." In this way, however, one reconfirms the gravamen of the Regnon thesis.

Perhaps an underlying reason for the divergence on divine simplicity between us is that I argue in theology with a genealogical method. I hold that the community of faith in its history with the God of the gospel constructs doctrine theologically in order to indigenize its message in a given time or place. This is needful; however, it can lead to cultural captivation. So as a result revision or modernization, which includes the element of retrieval from the dogmatic heritage, is an ongoing but *critical* dogmatic task. Just as the God of the gospel kills in order to make alive, theologians of the gospel deconstruct in order to reconstruct.

My genealogical argument is that the dialectic of the negative, which inspired the pre-Socratics to the initial formulations of divine simplicity, continues on untamed and untamable even in its Christian theological appropriations. This is why I characterize Thomas' synthesis as "unstable." And it is a fact of history that the great lights of the medieval period following Thomas, Duns Scotus and William Occam, could not sustain his synthesis. Progressively detached from the Creator-creature distinction which Thomas borrowed from revealed theology to tame it, the dogma of strong simplicity came to its radical denouement in Spinoza's philosophy, which Hegel later took up and dramatized as a historical process. This genealogy of the radicalness of strong simplicity terminating in post-Christian atheism ought to send critically dogmatic Christian theologians today back to the perichoresis of John 17 for the ontology of divine being.

Book Review Article of *Divine Simplicity: Christ the Crisis of Metaphysics*

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Paul R. Hinlicky, *Divine Simplicity: Christ the Crisis of Metaphysics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016.

Debates about the doctrine of divine simplicity have escalated in recent years and given rise to defenses, rejections and modifications of the doctrine. It is a teaching that is often unfamiliar to Christians living in the twenty-first century, but it has played a significant role in Christian accounts of the triune God from the very beginning of church history. At a general level, it can be described as the teaching that God is not composed of parts but is really identical with (the same "thing" as) his own essence, existence and attributes. The divine attributes (e.g., wisdom, love) are not qualities added to God's essence but rather are descriptions of that essence viewed from different angles. The persons of the Trinity are not parts composing a greater divine whole. Rather, the whole divine essence exists in the Father, Son and Spirit, who are distinguished by their proper modes of existing in relation to one another. In patristic, medieval and early Protestant theology, simplicity is not used to eliminate all distinctions in God; rather, given that the Father, Son and Spirit are truly distinct from one another, it is used to clarify what sorts of distinctions could be drawn in theology proper without compromising God's indivisibility and aseity. For the catholic Christian tradition, to deny that God is simple is to imply that there is a reality beyond him that puts him together, so to speak, a reality upon which he must draw in order to be the God that he is. Despite its place in the development of Christian theology, a number of authors have raised questions about the doctrine, one of whom is Paul Hinlicky.

Presented as a critique of "the received doctrine of divine simplicity" (p. xiv) and a commendation of an alternative view of the doctrine, Hinlicky's work aims to argue that God's historical activity (especially in the incarnation) is the right starting point for Christian speech about God's unity. In the introduction, he announces that he will set aside "natural theology" as a basis for talk about God's "protological simplicity" and will instead propose a "weak" or "eschatological" version of simplicity, one in which God's unity "is not a rationally evident implication that comes about by analysis of the ground of a stable and manifest cosmos. Rather, it is something posited and achieved in a fraught and contested world and thus finally

demonstrated in the historical life of a particular claimant to deity by the coming, in Jesus' language, of the reign of God and, in Paul's language, the redemption of our bodies" (pp. xviii-xix). Hinlicky characterizes his account of simplicity as a "rule": "so speak of the one true God as the Father of the Son, who in the Spirit infinitely gives such that we and all creatures are spoken of as gifted" (p. xxi). "Abstractly put in terms of a characterization of the singularity of the divine nature, the freedom to love wisely is divine—the whatness of the one true God in the act of His being, also for us, when the eternal act of God's being is understood as the Father's generation of the Son, on whom He breathes His Spirit" (pp. xxi-xxii).

In chapter one, Hinlicky begins to sketch his "rule" view of divine simplicity and locates God's unity in "trinitarian perichoresis, the mutual indwelling of the trinitarian persons" (p. 1). Hinlicky expresses concerns about various features of "protological simplicity." For example, he considers it to be a modalist "subversion of robust trinitarianism" since (he thinks) it affirms a divine nature behind the persons ("the invention of a divine fourth," p. 18) that secures their unity, and since it refuses to affirm that the Father, Son and Spirit take a "risk" in engaging creatures and "[come] to their divine unity by way of a dramatic history with one another on account of their even more dramatic engagement with creatures" (p. 24). Hinlicky is also concerned that the "protological" version of divine simplicity compromises God's freedom in acting toward creatures since it leaves us asking how a God who exists in "timeless self-identity" could perform new actions in time. It seems to Hinlicky that the only option for the Christian advocate of divine simplicity would be to build into the very being of God a necessary movement toward the creature.

In chapter two, Hinlicky works through Fergus Kerr and David Burrell on Aquinas' doctrine of God. Though he acknowledges that Aquinas endeavors to speak positively of God and to take the doctrine of the Trinity seriously, Hinlicky concludes that Aquinas causes problems for a Christian account of God because his view yields an "unstable" approach to theological description. Aquinas' "cosmological" approach to God (reasoning from the reality of the cosmos to a transcendent cause) is ultimately too negative: "sheer pointing to a Beyond as the really Real of our reality that is on examination no more than a Not-Nothing" (p. 49). As an alternative to Aquinas' view of God's simplicity, Hinlicky proposes what he calls—following Robert Jenson—a "patrological" account of God's unity in which there is an "eternal circulation of the persons…beginning with the Father's begetting of the Son, on whom he breathes His Spirit, so that in the Spirit the Son returns to the Father the praise of His deity, and so circulating ad infinitum" (p. 52). According to Hinlicky, on this view the Father is the source of the divine unity, not a nature lurking behind the persons that would, in its "timeless self-identity" (p. 56), preclude the freedom of God in his action toward us. The chapter closes with a lengthy excursus on "true gnosis in Clement of Alexandria" (p. 72).

In chapter three, Hinlicky engages Augustine's reflection on the Trinity in light of 1 Corinthians 1:24, where Christ is called the power and wisdom of God. For Hinlicky, Augustine fails to grasp the real meaning of the distinction between essence and person in God and unfortunately takes a divine nature or "substance" existing beneath the persons to be "what is really real in God," a substance whose attributes cannot be divided up among the persons. Augustine is thus guilty of promoting what becomes the "de facto quaternity of Western modalism" (p. 105). By contrast, Hinlicky seems to suggest that it would be better if we took "'nature' semantically as a conceptual class specifying the perfections that befit the divine and, further, construed befitting attributes of divinity according to what properties or capacities must be at the disposal of the God who as personal subject freely creates everything other than God" (p. 103). If that is what a nature is, then in God's case "individual divine persons utilize and so manifest particular properties from that class of divine perfections according to their personal distinctions and corresponding economic roles" (p. 103), even if those roles are inseparable. Because Augustine did not find such a way to escape "the contradiction that he forced between trinitarian personalism and protological simplicity," Hinlicky concludes that Augustine merely "anointed" the contradiction to be a "mystery." But, in Hinlicky's words, this is really a "muddle" rather than a mystery (p. 105). This chapter also provides some discussion about the relevance of Christology to Hinlicky's case for an "eschatological" simplicity, in conversation with John Meyendorff and Knut Alfsvåg.

The last chapter of the book engages the topics of the analogy of being and the nature of theological language (univocity versus analogy). Hinlicky expresses appreciation for Barth's thinking on the analogy of being and suggests that the correspondence between creatures and God is "eschatologically oriented," brought about by God's redeeming work in history (p. 152). Hinlicky interacts with Richard Cross, Eberhard Jüngel and others on the question of univocity in theological language, and he contends that Aquinas' analogical view is inadequate to uphold positive speech about God. Later in this chapter Hinlicky engages Karl Barth and Bruce McCormack on a variety of issues in theology proper and Christology, concurring with some of their lines of thought but also calling some of them into question with resources from his own Lutheran tradition.

Hinlicky uses the conclusion of the book to comment on James Dolezal's recent articulation of divine simplicity, deprecating "the muddle he has made of the Trinity" and yet assuring the reader that Dolezal's work is still the "best contemporary alternative to the present case" (p. 198). For Hinlicky, there is a decision to be made between the "protological" view of God's simplicity and the "strong trinitarian personalism" he is advocating in his approach to the divine unity (pp. 201-2). Right after this, however, Hinlicky remarks that, in any event, the approach he has advocated is "hermeneutical rather than propositional, pragmatic rather than theoretical." To have "directly engaged" divine simplicity like Dolezal in a "propositional and

theoretical manner" in order to yield "metaphysical insight" would have required facing the same dilemmas on the horns of which "Dolezal willingly impales himself" (p. 202). Hinlicky appropriates George Lindbeck's account of the nature of doctrine, commenting that, while it does not necessarily set aside a realist view of doctrinal claims altogether, it does mean that a "second-order" affirmation like that of divine simplicity is one that "sorts out the right usage of possible first-order cognitive claims in theology" (pp. 202-3). Finally, Hinlicky closes with an attempt to complete his line of argument by an appeal to how the first table of the Decalogue speaks about God.

In offering some critical analysis of Hinlicky's work, I will present my thoughts under five points. First, the book's argument for a "rule" version of divine simplicity lacks clarity and, as the author acknowledges, allows him to avoid facing difficult questions surrounding the issue of divine simplicity. On the one hand, Hinlicky insists that he is simply providing some clarifications regarding our speech about God's unity. Indeed, he asserts that "[t]heology can never, not in all eternity, say or comprehend how its affirmations are true" since that is the business of God alone (p. 137). On the other hand, he makes many ontological claims about God's unity and even says "a rule version implies an ontology and is and must be grounded in a cognitive claim" (p. 122). In light of this, both defenders and critics of traditional formulations of divine simplicity will likely come away wondering what Hinlicky aims to accomplish. Does he intend to clarify what the phrase "divine simplicity" means and how it functions within the doctrine of God? If so, as he acknowledges, this cannot be accomplished without making ontological claims. Given that the book does make claims about the reality of God, it would have benefited from an engagement of some of the problems that come with denying that God is simple in the sense intended by Augustine, Thomas and others. For example, is Hinlicky prepared to say that there are parts that compose God? Would that comport with God's ultimacy and aseity? I had hoped that Hinlicky would address issues like this instead of stating that he chose to set them aside and let authors like Dolezal "impale" themselves on the horns of the pertinent dilemmas.

Second, another feature of the book that will likely be problematic for both defenders and critics of divine simplicity is its organization. The problems here are perhaps best illustrated by the fact that Hinlicky uses the very end of the conclusion to work through his argument from the teaching of the Decalogue to his view of divine simplicity. This should be undertaken in one of the main chapters. In this part of the conclusion the author also chooses to argue for Brevard Childs' view that the final form of the biblical text is the proper focus of exegesis. This is an important hermeneutical principle, but why does it merit attention in the conclusion of the book? Moreover, why call Dolezal's work the strongest alternative and then wait until the conclusion to interact directly with him and quickly dismiss his view as a "muddle"? Other examples could be multiplied. The latter part of chapter two requires the reader to move quickly from the philosophy of Muslim author Seyyed Hossein Nasr to Duns

Scotus on univocity to an excursus on Clement of Alexandria. (Scotus on univocity then appears again in chapter four.) In chapter three on pages 106-7 the author's preview of the upcoming content gives a sense of his manner of covering different topics. There Hinlicky writes, after criticizing Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity, that he will engage Gavin Ortlund's recent article on the diverse formulations of divine simplicity in the Christian tradition, return to Augustine by analyzing Lewis Ayres' and then Maarten Wisse's accounts of Augustine on divine simplicity and the Trinity and then follow with an engagement of Knut Alfsvåg on "Christological apophaticism." Both those who sympathize with the likes of Augustine and Thomas and those who disagree with them would have benefited from a more natural organization and logical development in the book.

Third, and more seriously, Hinlicky's descriptions of various authors' views are too often misleading. It is difficult to avoid the thought that these historical problems are in large part due to the dearth of actual engagement with primary sources. For example, on page 7 the author mentions Athanasius (without citing any of his works) as a champion of the perichoresis of the divine persons but neglects to mention that Athanasius anchored perichoresis in the Father, Son and Spirit sharing the simple divine essence.[1] In multiple places, Hinlicky invokes "social trinitarianism," often with a nod toward the teaching of the Cappadocians (e.g., pp., xv, 43, 58-9). However, he does not explain precisely what he means by "social trinitarianism," a view that is often associated at present with the idea that there are three sets of faculties (intellect, will) in the divine persons. Hinlicky also asserts that the Cappadocians hold that the persons are "prior" to the essence without citing any works or explaining what this priority involves (pp. 121-2). Would this be an epistemological or ontological priority? Hinlicky appears unaware of strong statements about the Father begetting the essence in the Son in Western fathers like Hilary and Augustine.[2] For an author like Hilary it is not just the essence but the Father's communication of the essence to the Son that secures the unity and equality of the persons. Hinlicky also does not take into account the fact that medieval theologians in the West like Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas offer plausible readings of patristic statements on the Father begetting the essence in the Son that fit with their understanding of divine simplicity.[3] Hinlicky emphasizes that the Cappadocians accomplished a revolution in securing a clear distinction between nature and person. Without taking anything away from the Cappadocians, one may well wonder if Hinlicky's vilification of the West might have been tempered by a study of the contributions that Hilary, Boethius, Richard of St. Victor or Bonaventure have made on this issue.

Hinlicky blames Augustine for many problems in "Western" trinitarianism. Among other things, he criticizes Augustine's "uncomprehending reduction of

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1. E.g., *Athanasius, Orations against the Arians*, III.5.
2. See Hilary, *On the Trinity*, V.11.35 and Augustine, *On the Trinity*, VII.2.3.
3. See Lombard, *Sentences*, I.5.1 and Aquinas, *Against the Errors of the Greeks*, I.4-5.

persons to the bare relations…by which they are distinguished" (p. 106), but, in fact, Augustine's identification of the persons both as relations and, with respect to what they are absolutely, as the essence itself ensures precisely that the persons cannot be mere relations. Hinlicky repeatedly appeals to differences between Eastern and Western doctrines of the Trinity, as discussed by Theodore de Régnon (pp. 120-1, 134). However, he does not actually delve into the works of the Eastern fathers to explain how they are so different from the Western fathers, and he does not engage the relevant work of authors like Michel René Barnes on the subject. In this book, Hinlicky only offers a reading (arguably a caricature) of Augustine and sets it against some unsubstantiated claims about the Cappadocians.

In his comments on Aquinas, Hinlicky suggests that the Angelic Doctor seeks a rational foundation for supernatural theology (p. 130), but Aquinas explicitly criticizes such an approach.[4] Contrary to Hinlicky's claims about Aquinas' lopsided apophaticism, a number of Aquinas scholars have explained how his approach to the knowledge of God coherently brings together both negative and positive elements.[5] Aquinas is unflinching in his statement that all the positive perfections found in creatures are found eminently in God.[6] Despite Hinlicky's comments that Aquinas and other earlier Christian authors hold that God is "timeless" or "outside" time, figures like Anselm and Aquinas in fact stress that God is present and active with creatures in time.[7] Hinlicky claims that Aquinas views the divine nature as a quasi-agent that diminishes the personal agency of the persons (p. 133), but Aquinas offers a very clear distinction between nature and person and subscribes to the axiom that actions are performed by persons (actus sunt suppositorum).[8] Furthermore, the claim that Aquinas neglects the freedom of God and that Scotus outshines him on this topic (pp. 68, 135) should not be made without attending to Aquinas' denial of God acting by a "necessity of nature" and his nuanced understanding of the communicative nature of God's goodness.[9] I am sympathetic to Hinlicky's concern to uphold God's freedom, and an article I'd written on integrating God's simplicity and God's freedom does make an appearance in the introduction of this volume (p. xiv, note 2). However,

4. See his *Exposition of Boethius* On the Trinity, 2.1 and *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.1.1.

5. See, e.g., Gregory P. Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 27-74; Thomas Joseph White, *Wisdom in the Face of Modernity: A Study in Thomistic Natural Theology*, 2nd ed. (Ave Maria: Sapientia Press, 2016), 255-74.

6. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.4.2.

7. For a brief summary, see Steven J. Duby, "Divine Action and the Meaning of Eternity," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 11 (2017), 358-65.

8. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.29.2; 39.5 ad 1.

9. Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Power of God*, III.15; *Summa Theologiae*, Ia.19.3 ad 3. See further John F. Wippel, "Norman Kretzmann on Aquinas' Attribution of Will and of Freedom to Create to God," *Religious Studies* 39 (2003): 295-97. See also the comparison of Aquinas and Scotus in Richard A. Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice: Freedom, Contingency and Necessity in Early Modern Reformed Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), chs. 3-4.

Hinlicky does not actually interact with the article's central thesis. Indeed, he ends up showing that he misunderstands it entirely by confusing the distinction between absolute divine attributes (e.g., goodness, power) and relative divine attributes (e.g., Creator, Lord) with another use of the distinction between the absolute (what is shared by the divine persons) and the relative (what is proper to the individual persons). In confusing what is relative in the first use of the distinction with what is relative in the second use of the distinction, he wrongly implies that I relegate the Trinity to the economy where attributes like Creator and Lord come into play, and he never actually deals with the proposal about divine simplicity and divine freedom.

Fourth, Hinlicky's constructive claims are problematic. In particular, he emphasizes the importance of divine freedom and faults Augustinian and Thomistic accounts of simplicity and the Trinity for undermining God's freedom in his engagement of creatures. However, Hinlicky never addresses how this emphasis on divine freedom comports with his emphasis on the unity of the Trinity having to be secured by eschatological events (so pp. xviii-xix). God's unity is the "eschatological harmony of the Three" (p. 46; see also pp. 57, 113). If God must secure his own identity by his interaction with creatures, in what sense is he free (not compelled by inward lack or outward pressure) in his economic work? Must God do what he does in relation to us in order to become the God he hopes to be? Hinlicky does not consider that an awareness of the prevenient completeness of God is precisely what is needed to confirm the freedom and generosity of God in his engagement of creatures. As Rowan Williams elegantly puts it, "With God alone, I am dealing with what does not need to construct or negotiate an identity, what is free to be itself without the process of struggle. Properly understood, this is the most liberating affirmation we could ever hear. God does not and cannot lay claim upon me so as to 'become' God; what I am cannot be made functional for God's being."[10]

After faulting the "Western" doctrine of simplicity for positing a quaternity with an essence behind the divine persons, Hinlicky does not discuss how his conception of the divine nature as a set of "properties or capacities…at the disposal of God" does not yield a quaternity. What is this set "at the disposal" of the persons? A traditional account of divine simplicity in which the essence and persons are really identical handily eliminates the prospect of a quaternity altogether and ensures that the essence can never hypertrophy into something ontologically prior to or more important than the persons. On page 201 Hinlicky suggests that "epistemic primacy" should be granted to the person of Jesus in the shaping of our understanding of God's unity. But Jesus is not where the canon of Scripture itself begins. He appears as the culminating moment in divine revelation, not the beginning of our understanding of God's unity. Furthermore, if one begins with Scripture (rather than "natural theology"), the biblical authors teach us that God is complete in himself prior to his engagement with creatures (e.g., Ps. 50:12; Jn. 5:26; Acts 17:24-25; Rom. 11:34-35), making "protology"

10. Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 72-3.

or prevenience a key element in an authentically Christian doctrine of God. In the Christology of the book, Hinlicky says that "the man Jesus…lives His human life enhypostasized in the divine Son" (p. 133), which is a formally Nestorian assertion. Given his opposition to Nestorianism throughout the book, Hinlicky surely does not mean to advocate Nestorianism, but if the man Jesus (not just the human nature of Jesus) were to subsist in the Son, there would be two persons. Furthermore, Hinlicky writes that Jesus' human nature, his "set of human possibilities" is "hypostasized in the eternal Son." Again, this is a formally Nestorian statement, insofar as it literally affirms that the human nature is made a hypostasis. In an orthodox formulation, the Son's human nature is simply made to subsist in the Son and given its proper manner of subsisting in the Son.

Fifth, there are a number of statements in this book that might, on the one hand, sound inspiring to those already sympathetic to Hinlicky's project and yet, on the other hand, will sound like caricature or mere grandstanding to those who are less convinced. For example:

> Christian theology has to ask whether the philosophical doctrine of divine simplicity is not "simply" vacuous, pointing to a No-Thing. Nor does it help before this question to say that it is precisely supernatural revelation that fills the knowledge gap with supernatural truths about God's personhood and sociality that are beyond reason's grasp. That does not help, because this cut-and-paste job does not survive the vacuity of affirming as divine a timeless self-identity—we know not what. It is betrayed by the ferocious, relentless "power of the negative," as we will see, that debunks not only the idols of the nations but also the biblical God, and in the process misconstrues what is at stake in the contest between the God of the gospel and the idols of the nations (p. xxi).

The "Western" view of the Trinity is somehow made responsible for causing the joy of the new creation to be "muted into a fading memory in the funeral societies today that still bother to call themselves Christian" (p. 26)—a remarkable statement from an author who (rightly) criticizes Radical Orthodoxy's grandiose narrative of Scotus and the decline of the modern world. Divine simplicity prevents Christians from maintaining the already-not-yet tension of biblical eschatology (p. 50). "Western modalism" causes the gospel narrative to be "swallowed up in a pseudoapophatic fog of putative ineffability that is in fact ecclesiastical mystery-mongering" (p. 105). Hinlicky's view differs from a view of simplicity that functions as "an a priori insight into the nature of absoluteness as the reified alpha privative of indivisibility" (p. 123). Many readers will also be very surprised to learn that a Thomistic view of analogical speech will prevent us from clearly speaking out against "Stalin's gulag or the Atlantic slave trade" (pp. 156-7).

In sum, while Hinlicky's book does provide a window into how some thinkers would respond to some traditional articulations of divine simplicity, it does not give us a clear line of argument with which to interact. As a proponent of a broadly Augustinian or Thomistic view of divine simplicity, I would have been happy to interact with serious criticism of that view, one informed by a close reading of primary sources. I would have been happy to interact with a proposal on retrieving other views of simplicity (e.g., from Scotus, Gregory Palamas or Karl Barth). I would have been happy to engage with a thoroughgoing denial of simplicity provided that it took seriously the hard ontological questions associated with affirming divine "complexity." However, to use one of his words, Hinlicky's book ends up giving us a "muddle" that does not really advance conversation about this important topic.

Response to Steven J. Duby

PAUL R. HINLICKY

Dietrich Bonhoeffer observed critically that we Western Christians today "are otherworldly or we are secularists, but in either case we no longer believe in God's kingdom."[1] I cited this commentary of his on the petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come!," in my systematic theology in order to explain what it would mean to believe in the Christian sense, again, "after Christendom."[1] What comes as gift from God the Father to this earth upon which stood the cross of his Son, is, in Bonhoeffer's words, "the new Earth of the promise on the old Earth of the creation. This is the promise: that one day we shall behold the world of the resurrection…" where, noting the Trinitarian formulation, "God alone will be the Lord as the Creator, the crucified and resurrected One, and the Spirit that reigns in his holy community."[2] As Bonhoeffer analyzed our contemporary Christian "lack of belief in God's kingdom,"[3] he asked, "Why should we be ashamed that we have a God who performs miracles, who creates life and conquers death…? *If God is truly God—then God is God, then God's kingdom is miraculous, the epitome of miracles.* Why are we so anxious, so cautious, so cowardly? God will shame us all one day… We will feel shame before the miraculous God."[4] Why should we be ashamed of the God who comes? My case along these lines is that it is progressively unbaptized divine simplicity which makes us ashamed in this precise way of the God whose kingdom comes.

At the outset of my book about this crisis which the gospel of Christ brings upon classical metaphysics, it was explicitly noted that the work was an addendum to my systematic theology, *Beloved Community*. It presupposed, therefore, the lengthy argument made therein for Trinitarian perichoresis as the ontological account (not theoretical explanation) of eternal divine being. The implied revision of classical simplicity therewith had everything to do with coming to terms with the collapse in the West of classical Christian culture and theology. The follow-up book on simplicity intended to make explicit the implied revision. I am cheered that Duby can imagine that some of my statements to this end can at least "sound inspiring" to those subscribing to the project.

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1. Paul R. Hinlicky, *Beloved Community: Critical Dogmatics after Christendom*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 659.

2. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, Vol. 12: Berlin: 1932-1933 ed. Larry L. Rasmussen (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 296.

3. *Berlin*: 1932-1933, 33.

4. *Berlin*: 1932-1933, 346, emphasis added. For an alternative trajectory for the future of Reformed Theology along these eschatological lines, see Philip G. Ziegler, *Militant Grace: The Apocalyptic Turn and the Future of Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017).

Lest I sound like a mere "grandstander," however, a further word on this historical context of doing theology in the West "after Christendom" is in place. In his study of the rise of the natural sciences in Protestant thought, John Dillenberger showed how classical Christian culture from Thomas on had wedded itself to Aristotelianism (in which physics, biology and metaphysics form an integrated whole). As this synthesis unraveled before the advance of science, Dillenberger concluded that "the Roman Catholic analysis of the period from the Reformation to Schleiermacher is that it represents the secularization of the West variously brought on by Luther, Kant and Descartes. For the Protestants, there seemed no alternative but to push through to a fresh beginning."[5] Well, as Duby makes plain, not *all* Protestants. But I am among those who hold to the latter alternative, even though I am sympathetic with critics, beginning with Dillenberger himself, who fault liberal Protestantism for tossing out the Reformation theology of the Gospel with the bathwater of Aristotelianism (thus following Descartes and Kant more than Luther, not to mention Calvin[6]). Manifestly, to pursue a fresh beginning for theology in the West "after Christendom" differs decisively from Duby's labor for the restoration of Reformed Scholastic Orthodoxy.

In spite of the fairly objective first several pages in Duby's review describing my book, things go south rapidly as he delineates his five points against me. It would be tedious beyond telling to provide detailed refutations of his allegations of my scholarly incompetence, disorganization, unclarity, etc.[7], when the deeper reason that these apparent deficiencies enter his mind is that I argue in genealogical, pragmatic and hermeneutical way rather than in his preferred scholastic idiom.

Alas, then, just as I feared our dialogue is "an interaction of two monologues," as Slavoj Žižek wrote against John Millbank in their battle royale; does Žižek's explanation apply to us? "[A] pure confrontation of positions is never possible: no formulation of differences is neutral, every attempt to delineate the confronted positions already formulates them from the standpoint of one position."[8] Such sterile confrontation is indeed a pity in as much as my book from the very first page acknowledged the historical achievement of Thomas' "classical" doctrine of divine simplicity for blocking platonic emanationism. Granting that, the point of my genealogical examination of recent

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5. John Dillenberger, *Protestant Thought and Natural Science: A Historical Study* (Nashville and New York: Abingdon, 1960), 190.

6. For an alternative trajectory for the future of Reformed Theology along eschatological lines, see Philip G. Ziegler, *Militant Grace: The Apocalyptic Turn and the Future of Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI:Baker Academic, 2017).

7. My engagements with primary sources are documented in my preparatory studies, clearly referenced in *Divine Simplicity* and *Beloved Community*, especially my *Divine Complexity: The Rise of Creedal Christianity*, (St. Paul, MN: Fortress Press, 2010). Duby's criticism misses the point that my book on simplicity deliberately engages with the *secondary* literature to expose for examination the often presupposed, if not concealed theological judgments made in ostensibly historical studies, such as his, which treat as inevitable and necessary what in fact is contingent and a choice.

8. Slavoj Zizek and John Millbank, *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic?* Ed. C. Davis (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2009), 247.

scholarly literature on simplicity is to impress upon the reader a two-fold historical fact: 1) there have been a variety of doctrines of simplicity, not mutually compatible, making the notion of simplicity, minimally, ambiguous; 2) Thomas' Christian baptism of simplicity, for all its historical significance, has not only proved to be unstable, but it is in no position today to face the radical challenges put to Christian theology by contemporary metaphysics.[9] Revision therefore is inevitable (as Jordan Barret recognizes[10]), while restoration impales the would-be restorer on the same dilemma that destabilized Thomas's synthesis: unprincipled oscillation between vacuous apophatism or cataphatic necessitarianism.

What I wish readers to see is that Duby charges me with a lack of clarity because I do not join him in impaling myself on the horns of this dilemma. Manifestly, engaging it "clearly" would entangle me in the very project I am trying to expose, overcome and leave behind. No thank you! Yet he might have fleshed out my case a little further to show readers the denouement to which previously baptized, now apostasizing simplicity comes. In my book I showed how this was articulated for the modern West by Spinoza: the novelty of a creation of creatures other than God cannot possibly occur to the timelessly perfect being. Now, if theologians wish to play on the field of the philosophers, they must play by their rules as Spinoza, then Kant insisted. Already wise Thomas conceded that on purely philosophical grounds, simplicity tends towards an eternal creation as an implication of God's timeless perfection (also the view of Origen), just as Spinoza came to think of God and world as *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* respectively. Thomas deflected this necessitarian implication only by resort to biblical revelation and the strong creator-creature distinction that accompanies it.

But such a cut and paste job cannot be stable. In historical fact, it collapsed. My refusing to engage Duby's "hard questions," or to own up to the implications of divine composition he imputes to me, thus amounts to faulting me for not joining his project of protological metaphysics as if to provide scaffolding for Christian doctrine. Readers of my antecedent work, *Beloved Community*, would have known the sustained argument why Christian theology today should simply leave protological metaphysics behind and argue in hermeneutical and pragmatic ways in theology that is, as per Bonhoeffer, eschatologically oriented.

His accusation, then, is lame that I affirm a divine ontology without giving a protological account of it. What I affirm in place of that is a modest, non-speculative doctrine of the immanent Trinity as providing the condition for the possibility of the fitting but free advent of the Trinity of revelation. Simplicity in this revision thus becomes a doctrinal rule to speak of the economic Trinity as of the one creator,

9. See Brent Adkins and Paul R. Hinlicky, *Rethinking Philosophy and Theology with Deleuze: A New Cartography*, (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

10. Jordan P. Barrett, *Divine Simplicity: A Biblical and Trinitarian Account* by (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017). The subtitle indicates the revisionism. See my review essay forthcoming in *the International Journal for Systematic Theology.*

redeemer and fulfiller of all that is not God, yet under the epistemic proviso that the truth of this speech is established only as the Kingdom comes. Then "God alone will be the Lord as the Creator, the crucified and resurrected One, and the Spirit that reigns in his holy community."

What difference does this make? The one who believes with Jesus does not point to heaven above but lives in expectation of the promised heaven which comes on the earth. In the latter stance I see the way forward for Christian theology after Christendom.

Response to Paul R. Hinlicky

STEVEN J. DUBY

I am grateful to Paul Hinlicky for taking the time to read and review the book *Divine Simplicity: A Dogmatic Account*. However, in a review article, one typically expects to see a summary of the book's main arguments laid out in an orderly fashion—and in a manner that would enable the author of the book to affirm that the reviewer has in fact understood the book well and represented what the author has said fairly. Unfortunately, Hinlicky has not done this, leaving his review to be a stream of observations and claims that do not give me the impression that he has sought to represent the book's argument fairly. Hinlicky's observations move quite quickly from one issue to another. After trying to determine how I might organize my response to them, I think it may be best simply to identify points at which I take issue with Hinlicky's statements and to do this roughly according to the order in which he has made these statements. Here are some of them.

1. I do not advocate "restorationism" with respect to Reformed scholastic theology, though I certainly do draw liberally from the Reformed orthodox. There are many ways in which theology since the seventeenth century has presented fresh challenges that need to be addressed with fresh insights.

2. He speaks of me using a "pre-critical method of garnering and systematizing propositions" from the Bible and labels this what George Lindbeck calls "propositionalism." Does Hinlicky believe it is better to employ what Lindbeck calls an "experiential-expressivist" view of doctrine or a "cultural-linguistic" view of doctrine? The former reduces doctrine to an articulation of one's own experience; the latter reduces it to a set of rules that govern a community's speech about God—without actually making claims about God as an object of knowledge. Divine revelation is certainly not reducible to a set of propositions, but when we are doing dogmatic theology we look at what Scripture teaches and attempt to set it forth in an orderly manner using propositions that help us understand what God has revealed.

3. Hinlicky says that I think of the Father, Son and Spirit as "modalities" of a "deity-person," but I explicitly speak of "persons" (plural) throughout and reject the notion of there being just a single divine person.

4. Hinlicky charges me with conflating *ousia* and *hypostasis* when in fact I use and distinguish these terms throughout chapter five in order to talk

about what applies commonly to the three divine persons and what applies properly to each one.

5. *Pace* Hinlicky, I do not advocate a "psychological model" of the Trinity, with the processions of the persons explained in terms of thinking and willing.

6. *Pace* Hinlicky, the "social model" of the Trinity is not given to us in John 17. Given what the language of "social trinitarianism" now connotes, it is simply anachronistic (and question-begging) to insinuate that this "model" has been directly revealed to us in Scripture.

7. *Pace* Hinlicky, Robert Jenson's "patrological" view of God's unity is simply not substantiated as a retrieval of the trinitarianism of the Eastern fathers. I noted this in my review of Hinlicky's book.

8. Authors like Jenson and Moltmann do not actually follow the classical Lutheran tradition in reading characteristics of Christ's human life back into the eternal life of God. One can say that seventeenth-century Lutheranism employed a logic that enabled nineteenth-century Lutherans and later authors to espouse what is known as a *genus tapeinoticum* in Christology (a kind of communication in Christology wherein the "humble" properties of Christ's humanity are communicated to his divine nature). But that is very different from saying that someone like Jenson is a true heir of Lutheran orthodox authors like Gerhard or Quenstedt.

9. Hinlicky questions whether divine simplicity as I have articulated it can cohere with God's freedom, but he never substantively engages with my treatment of divine freedom in chapter five. It would be fine for him to disagree with my conclusions, but he simply doesn't engage what I've said.

10. Hinlicky claims I have forced the God of the Bible into a "procrustean" metaphysical bed, but he says this without substantive interaction with what I've said about the relationship between theology and metaphysics in chapter two. This is a tired line from authors who have problems with the use of classical philosophical concepts in theology proper. It gives the impression that those who disagree with a more traditional Christian view of God are the only ones who can truly expound Scripture without using or being influenced by extrabiblical and philosophical terminology. None of us does exegesis or dogmatics in a vacuum, and all of us must argue for the fecundity of whatever extrabiblical concepts we might wish to employ in our description of God.

11. Hinlicky appears to take Kant's transcendental idealism to be axiomatic for theological epistemology. However, Kant's epistemology arguably disavows

all claims to know God as an object outside our own minds—and the approaches of authors like Barth, Jenson and Hinlicky all conflict with Kant here.[1]

12. *Pace* Hinlicky's assertion, I do not deny the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*. He could have accurately said that I do not accept the Lutheran interpretation of it. The fact that he simply asserts that I deny the doctrine is extremely careless.

13. Hinlicky suggests that acknowledging the presence of mystery in the doctrine of God is a matter of conceding "defeat." Is there no place for mystery at all? Should we not acknowledge that there is and then debate where it must be acknowledged and where our analysis must cease?

14. The "liberty of indifference" is not that of a "tyrant." It just means that God was free either to create or not to create the world without detriment to his own completeness. The idea that God has to create the world (and the evil in it) in order to actualize himself is what actually would render him an untrustworthy narcissist.

15. Hinlicky suggests that Aristotelian metaphysical concepts are no longer intelligible. Does the average person really have no capacity for distinguishing between, for example, the nature of a thing and various qualities that may be added to it? Does the philosophy of Kant or Hegel actually resonate with human persons' pre-critical experience of the world?

16. Hinlicky invokes Jenson saying that the "metaphysics of persistence" (as far as I can tell, the view that God is God by remaining the God that he eternally was) yields an idolatrous conception of God. In fact, though, it is arguably Jenson's God, who depends upon others for the establishment of his identity and must achieve his identity over time, that is implicitly like the false gods described in Isaiah and Jeremiah, for example.

Finally, I would like to conclude the interaction with Hinlicky by simply making the point that a strong understanding of God's aseity is in fact what enables the gospel of Jesus Christ to be the gospel of grace. If God is complete in himself even without reference to the world, then the incarnation is truly a generous act of God. If, however, God would not be God without the incarnation—or if the incarnation were a necessary outworking of his being—then the incarnation would be a matter of divine self-fulfillment, which means that it would no longer be a matter of free generosity. I would argue that it is a more traditional understanding of God's aseity and simplicity that makes sense of what takes place in the work of Christ announced

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1. See Martin Westerholm, "Kant's Critique and Contemporary Theology," *Modern Theology* 31 (2015), 403-27.

in the gospel for our salvation. I think Hinlicky would be in agreement with at least some of this, but his recurring appeals to Jenson lead me to believe his theology does not allow for the sort of account of divine aseity and freedom needed to confirm that grace is grace.

Idolatry: A Rhetorical-Critical Analysis of Deuteronomy 4:15–16, 23

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Introduction

The biblical injunction against פסל ("graven images") in the rhetoric of Deuteronomy 4 serves as a foundational text in framing the central idea of the second commandment for a further intertextual study of idolatry in the Scriptures. Exodus 20:4 provides a prohibition against idolatry; Deuteronomy 4 provides the theological rationale for such a prohibition. The formless image juxtaposed to the auditory revelation of the LORD[1] at Horeb posits concern for fidelity to the covenant as Israel encounters Canaanite cultures whose static representations of deities were prevalent and authoritative. The polemics in the Bible against idolatry are rooted in two primary concerns: (1) fidelity to the covenant made at Horeb, and (2) the substitution and worship of creation instead of the Creator. In order to examine the nature and meaning of idolatry in Deuteronomy 4:15-16, 23, this study will employ a rhetorical-critical[2] analysis of the specific framing structures, literary patterns, discourse, and logic in the text.[3]

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1. Out of respect for the Jewish reader יהוה will be rendered "the LORD."

2. In this study the external structure will frame the literary context, and the internal structures will inform the exegetical and theological context. Together these components accomplish the exegetical means for informing the reading of the external (historical) framing and how the audience of the text might have best understood its rhetoric and applied its theology. Of less concern is imposing Greek manuals of rhetoric onto a Hebraic text. The focus here is on interpretation which is informed by historical-context, grammar, linguistics, all of which seek to hold the unity and integrity of the final form of the text. Cf. Phyllis Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah*, Guides to Biblical Scholarship (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), ch. 1, 2, and 4.

3. Due to the brief nature of this study, a full intertextual analysis of idolatry is out of scope. However, there is still greater work that needs to be done in this area of research. Cf. *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008).

Framing Structure of Deuteronomy 4[4]

There is great irony in scholarship's struggle to visualize a theology of the ban on images in Exodus 20:4.[5] In Exodus 20:4, God prohibits the making of any פֶּסֶל ("graven image"). This prohibition of divine anthropomorphic representation (i.e., aniconism) reverberates throughout the law codes of the Old Testament.[6] The ban or prohibition of divine imagery is often encapsulated in the term "idol" or "idolatry;" however, there are fourteen different terms used for idol/idolatry in the Masoretic Text (MT). From descriptive terms like פֶּסֶל ("image") or צֶלֶם ("image") to more pejorative terms like שִׁקּוּץ ("abomination") and גִּלּוּלִים ("idols"),[7] one can see the theological concern for proper modes of the LORD's worship: monolatry.[8] The Septuagint (LXX) leans toward a transliteration of the word idol which accounts for its negative associations but misses the fullest sense of translation. As Charles Kennedy has noted, the LXX's strict rendering of idol as εἴδωλον does not employ the full Hebraic understanding of the term, using one Greek term to explain fourteen different Hebrew terms.[9] This appears problematic because the MT does not exclusively use idol in a negative sense.[10] However, Kennedy does not consider the possible theological rationale

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4. Additional texts that also carry the central idea in Ex 20:4 and Dt 4 further: 1 Kgs 12:28, 29-27; 2 Kgs 17:15; Pss 106:20, 115:4-6; Is 6:9-10; 43:17-20; Jer 2:5; Hos 4:16-17, 8:4b-7a, 10:11a, 13:2-3; Mt 13:10-15; Rom 1:21-25; 1 Cor 10; Col 2:18-22; Rv 2:20, 24, 5:20, 16:13-14.

5. Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *No Graven Image? Israelite Aniconism in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995); Moshe Halbertal and Avishai Margalit, *Idolatry*, trans. Noami Goldblum (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1992); Youn Ho Chung, *The Sin of the Calf: The Rise of the Bible's Negative Attitude Toward the Golden Calf* (New York; London: T&T Clark, 2010); Richard Lints, *Identity, and Idolatry: The Image of God and its Inversion,* New Studies in Biblical Theology 36 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015).

6. Ex 20:23, 34:17, 23:12b; Lv 19:4b, 26:1; Dt 4:16-18, 23, 5: 8-12, 7:25. Samuel R. Driver, Alfred Plummer, and Charles A. Briggs, *Deuteronomy*, The International Critical Commentary of the Old and New Testament, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1896), vii.

7. Douglas Mangum, "Idolatry," ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2014); Jośe Faur, "Idolatry," eds. Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum., *Encyclopedia Judaica,* 2nd ed, vol. 9 (Farmington Hills: Keter Publishing, 2007), 710-15; Edward P. Meadors, *Idolatry and the Hardening of the Heart: A Study in Biblical Theology* (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 14-13.

8. Monolatry is commonly understood to mean the worship of The LORD according to the prescribed and proper means.

9. Charles Kennedy, "The Semantic Field of the Term 'Idolatry," in *Ancient Stones*; Friedrich Büchsel, "Εἴδωλον, Εἰδωλόθυτον, Εἰδωλεῖον, Κατείδωλος, Εἰδωλολάτρης, Εἰδωλολατρία," eds. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 375-78.

10. Some scholars leave out this fact in their analysis of the terms. See Robert Pfeiffer, "The Polemic Against Idolatry in the Old Testament," *Journal of Biblical Studies* 43 (1924): 235; C. R. North, "The Essence of Idolatry," *Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 77 (1961): 151-60. For example, the images of cherubs are never considered as idolatry; in fact, they are prescribed to be woven on "curtains" (Ex 26:1; 36:8) and placed on the Ark (Ex 26:31; 32:35). More to this, the rendering of *teraphim* (household idol) also holds no condemnation in the account of 1 Sm 19:13ff.

behind such a rendering. The LXX removes the ambiguity of whether idol or image is meant, thus capturing the theological usage of the term in the Old Testament and carrying its meaning forward, which is not "anti-iconic but anti-idolic."[11] The lexical[12] and theological usage of פסל clarifies its meaning in three ways: (1) the terms describe a manufactured object made for pagan worship, (2) the terms refer to a physical representation or the actual deity, and (3) they refer to worship of a deity other than the LORD.

Terminology is not the only issue surrounding a biblical theology of idolatry, historical-criticism has also played its part. In the investigations to understand the second commandment, the textual development was favored over the understanding of the literary structure.[13] This is problematic because the literary structure of Deuteronomy 4 not only serves as a structural allusion to the second commandment but also a theological commentary on its rationale. Despite this shortcoming in methodological approaches,[14] which concerns text-blocks, redactions,[15] or layered interpretation, there is an agreement concerning the major structuring of Deuteronomy 4.[16] In addition, the focus on the historicity over the historiography in the textual analysis of scholarship further ossifies the literary unity and comprehension of Deuteronomy. However, in the mid-twentieth century, there was a literary shift back to the structure of the text in light of the emergence of archaeological and textual evidence.

Many of the textual problems, mentioned above, are obviated by realizing that while there is a substantial structural resemblance to a Hittite Suzerainty-Vassal

11. Barnes Tatum, "The LXX Version of the Second Commandment (Ex. 20, 3-6 = Deut. 5, 7-10): A Polemic Against Idols, Not Images," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 17 (1986): 178-181.

12. Appearing in the following: Ex 20:4; Lv 26:1; Dt 4:16, 23, 25; 5:8; 27:15, Judg 17:3, 4; 18:14, 17, 18, 20, 30, 31; 2 Kgs 21:7; 2 Chr 33:7; 34:3,4, Is 40:19, 20; 42:17; 44:9, 10, 15, 17; 45:20; 48:5; Jer 10:14; 51:17; Nah 1:14; Hab 2:18, Ps 97:7.

13. M. A. O'Brian, "The Book of Deuteronomy," in *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 3 (1995), 95-128; C. Begg, "The Literary Criticism of Deut 4:1-40," *Epheremides Theologicae Lovanienses* 56 (1980): 10-55.

14. Holter notes three main groups of literary critical approaches to Deuteronomy 4: (1) an atomistic approach (fragmented layers and sources), (2) a holistic approach (unified structure), and (3) a block approach (addresses previous two sides). He rightly notes that each approach logically leads to different results and there is much need for a synthesis of the atomistic and block approach. See Kunt Holter, "Literary Critical Studies of Deut 4: Some Criteriological Remarks," *Biblische Notizen* 81 (1996): 91-103.

15. Kunt Holter, *Deuteronomy and the Second Commandment*, SIBL 60 (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 11.

16. See A. D. H. Mayes "A. D. H. Mayes, "Deuteronomy 4 and the Literary Criticism of Deuteronomy," *Journal of Biblical Studies* 100, no. 1 (1981): 23-51. However, Mayes notes that Deuteronomy 1-4 is a speech (sermon); therefore, it is not a treaty document and should be cautiously considered in regard to the book as a whole. This analysis is unsubstantiated by geographic-cultural understandings of LBA treaty text. This view is held by the majority in the tradition of interpretation of this text. Mayes also notes that Deuteronomy 1-4 the primary rationale behind the the historical operation of Dt 4 from the rest of the structure is based on the conjunction וְעַתָּה "and now." Cf. J. D. Levenson, "Who Inserted the Book of the Torah?" *Havard Theological Review* 68 (1975): 203-33.

Treaty (SVT), there are also literary similarities between Deuteronomy and Ugaritic and Assyrian treaties. Perhaps this impasse is resolved by seeing Deuteronomy as a *mischattung* (mixed genre).[17] Meaning, Moses uses familiar discourse patterns and repurposes them in his exhortation to the Israelites. In Deuteronomy there are ten different discourse patterns,[18] which approached from a form-critical methodology is understandably confusing. Scholars such as Kline[19] and Mendenhall[20] have noted the numerous parallels to ancient Near Eastern (ANE) treaty structures found within Deuteronomy. Kline clarifies that historical prologues typically follow the preamble and stipulations, which more than qualifies Deuteronomy 1:5-4:49 as a historical prologue.[21] More to this, in Deuteronomy 4 alone, there is sufficient evidence of the entire treaty pattern: summons to obedience (cf. Dt 5:1; 6:1; 12:1), identification of author (Dt 4:1, 2, 5, 10), devotion to the suzerain (Dt 4:26), and filial knowledge (Dt 4:21-22).[22]

The considerable usage of *wayyiqṭol* and *qāṭal* in the prologue of Deuteronomy frame the historiographical discourse, which is typical of SVT. Moses builds on the *realis* mood form (Dt 2:34.3, 36.1, 37.1; 3:4.2; 4:12.3) in his hortatory dialogue. Embedded in the discourse of chapter four is a legal disputation for the anticipated failure of Israel (i.e., 4:25-31). Chapter four is an exhortative core and adjuratory core of Deuteronomy.

17. Shemaryahuu Talmon, "The Comparative Method in Biblical Interpretation—Principles and Problems," in *Essential Papers on Israel and the Ancient Near East*, Frederick E. Greenspan, eds. (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 411. See Talmon's description emphasizing cultic function: "[A] literary *Gattung* has a specific *Sitz im Leben*, i.e., a well-circumscribed anchorage in the cultic and cultural structure of the society which produced it; it is the formalized literary expression of ideas, social concepts and cultic values which that society fostered."

18. Neal Huddlson's dissertation notes that of the ten, three are absent from the ANE treaty texts: "Of these, instructional, predictive, and epitaphic discourse do not appear in the ancient Near Eastern treaty corpora." In "Deuteronomy as *Mischgattung*: A Comparative and Contrastive Discourse Analysis of Deuteronomy and Ancient Near Eastern Treaty Traditions," (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2015), 103.

19. Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority*. rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975); G. E. Mendenhall, «Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition,» *The Biblical Archaeologist*, vol. 27, no. 3 (1954): 50-76; Dennis J. McCarthy, *Old Testament Covenant: A Survey of Current Opinions*. Growing Points in Theology (Oxford: Blackwell, 1972).

20. Mendenhall notes that, "[T]he Hittite form of this treaty, it seems certain that the Hittites themselves did not originate the covenant form which we shall discuss. Rather, there is abundant indication that they borrowed the form from the East, frequently it must have been common property of any number of peoples and states in the second millennium B.C. It is by its very nature an international form." 54. Cf. The most relevant treaty texts currently available at the time of this study are the treaty texts of Munatalliš and Alakšanduš (Hittite), Muršiliš II and Duppi-Teššua (Hittite), Suppilumliuma and Mattiwaza (Assyrian), and Muršilliš II and Niqmepa of Ugarit.

21. Kline, *Structure of Biblical Authority,* 136; cf. M. G. Kline, *The Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 28-31.

22. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King*, 58-60.

Kerygma of The Episodes in Deuteronomy 4:15-16, 23

With brief analysis of the structures' historical and literary frame, exegesis of the kerygma of the episodes of Deuteronomy 4 is now in order.

Deuteronomy 4:15-16

נִשְׁמַרְתֶּם מְאֹד לְנַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם כִּי לֹא רְאִיתֶם כָּל תְּמוּנָה בְּיוֹם דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֲלֵיכֶם בְּחֹרֵב מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ פֶּן תַּשְׁחִתוּן וַעֲשִׂיתֶם לָכֶם פֶּסֶל תְּמוּנַת כָּל סָמֶל תַּבְנִית זָכָר אוֹ נְקֵבָה:

> Watch over your soul carefully; you did not see a form on the day the Lord spoke to you at Horeb in the midst of the fire. So you do not lack integrity, and make a divine image in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female.[23]

A brief discourse analysis of Deuteronomy 4:15-16 displays that these verses are primarily hortatory. Verse 15 begins with the primary injunction moving into the setting and ending with motivation for adhering to the five clauses (InjP-Set-Set-Motiv-Motiv).[24] The setting of this secondary injunction, "watch over your soul carefully," is framed in a historiographic summary of Israel's oath in the covenant of the LORD. The exhortation in this cluster is the beginning of the palindrome that leads to the prediction of Israel's failure to keep the stipulations.[25] The *weqātal* which begins in this section will resume in the negative clauses of 4:23-24.

The verb שׁחת ("to corrupt") is used in the *hifil* in verse 16 to denote a sense of destructive behavior, "to go to ruin or corruption," but perhaps a better rendering in English is "to lack integrity" for this relates to the first cause of the injunction against idolatry throughout the Law, infidelity to the covenant at Horeb. The noun תמונה helps demonstrate the marriage between the covenant at Horeb and the theological rationale behind the polemic against idolatry. This noun occurs ten times in the Old Testament and five of them are used in Deuteronomy 4 (vv. 12, 15, 16, 23, 25). From verse 15 to verse 16a there is an inversion and shift in meaning: כל תמונה develops into תמונה כל. D. Knapp, Noth, and von Rad suggest this inversion is due to a later constitution of text blocks; however, there is an alternative interpretation.[26] Perhaps the development is due to a shift in theology: moving from an emphasis from the theophany at Horeb to a theological reasoning behind the prohibition of idolatry in verses 16, 23, 25. This analysis is warranted, for Deuteronomy 4 is a theological commentary on the second commandment.

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23. Author's translation.

24. InjP: Primary Injunction; Set: Setting; Motiv: Motivation.

25. See Appendix: Chiasm of Deuteronomy 4:15-40.

26. D. Knapp, *Deuteronomium 4* (Göttengen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 112-14, 205-06; G. von Rad, *Moses*, ed. K. C. Hanson, 2nd ed. (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 28-36. I am indebted to K. Holter for pointing this analysis out in *Deuteronomy 4 and the Second Commandment*, 30ff.

The rhetoric in Deuteronomy is concerned with the memory motif. Law and liturgy are related through the medium of memory—faithfulness to preserve the words and deeds of the LORD. Moses reminds a new generation as they transition from a rural environment to an urban one that they are contractually bound to reflect the image God (via the *torah*). The Law juxtaposed to the prescribed rituals objectively grounded the past deeds and faithfulness of the LORD in the present. Law and liturgy remove the dissonance and subjectivity of memory, preserving a faithful representation of the identity and ideology of the LORD.[27] The deliverance of the past generations becomes the deliverance of the present generation.[28] The theological construct of the Deuteronomic Law (deed-consequence nexus) is built upon the explicit agreement and remembrance of the people to make the mark (keep the commands).[29] That is, Israel agreed to keep the covenant of God and accepted the divine justice and retribution that will follow in the typical suzerain treaty.[30]

Moses primarily speaks here in the second person plural, addressing Israel as a community and their temptation to manufacture visual representations of the LORD. This endeavor is problematic for reproducing a faithful image requires dependence on some original medium. Moses reminds the Israelites they saw no form of the LORD; therefore, qualitatively and teleologically, any form created by humanity is improper. Qualitatively, God transcends the physical order and rather creates humanity to consist of His image[31] (Gen 1:26).[32] Teleologically, the creation of an idol reflected humanity's desire to seek meaning or purpose apart from the confines of the convent relationship. This fallacy was indicative of the hardness of heart and desire for control and security through the possession of a deity.[33] As opposed to surrounding cultures

27. Von Rad discusses this idea when he mentions the notion of getting back the "root-memory," in *Studies in Deuteronomy* (Chicago: Henry Regency, 1953), chapters 1-2. Cf. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 99.

28. Charles L. Kessler, "The Memory Motif in the God-Man Relationship of the Old Testament,"(PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1956); Bobby B. Box, The Role of Memory in the Faith of Israel" (ThD diss., New Orleans Baptist Seminary, 1968); James M. Kennedy, "The Root G'R in the Light of Semantic Analysis," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106, no. 1 (1987): 47-64; John F. A. Sawyer, "Root-Meanings in Hebrew," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 12 (1967).

29. Cf. Ancient Near Eastern parallels to covenant administration through references to tablets: tablet of silver that Hattusilis III had made for Ramses II, Iron tablet for Ulmi-Tesumb.

30. Angelika Berlejung, "Sin and Punishment: The Ethics of Divine Justice and Retribution in Ancient Near Eastern and Old Testament Texts," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*, vol. 69, Issue 3 (2015): 272-287; Kandy Queen Sutherland, "The Futility Curse in the Old Testament," (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982); Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), 266.

31. 'Image' is semantically close to 'idol' as a theological construct. Lints notes, "The Bible often speaks of this dynamic [image and idol] of the connection between sacred artist and the work of art created." in *Identity and Idolatry*, 81; Tryggve Mettinger, "The Veto on Images and the aniconic God in Ancient Israel," 15-29.

32. D. J. A. Clines, "Humanity as the Image of God," in *On the Way to the Postmodern: Old Testament Essay, 1967-1988*, vol. 2 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 447-97.

33. This is prevalent in ANE thought, that the idol created was a living medium that one could

who believed that through the cult, they could manipulate gods,[34] the Israelites are to see the LORD through the lens of the covenant-relationship and their experience from Egypt to Canaan. In all things, they are to look to God for self-preservation, security, and significance.[35] The main rationale for the polemic here is pragmatic. The socio-cultural influence of 400 years in Egypt is not easily removed.[36] Whether animalistic or cosmic representation was depicted in worship, the temptation was to replace the uniqueness of the creator with the creation.[37] Moses reminds Israel (cf. Dt 4:5-7) of her responsibility to display the uniqueness of the LORD in her moral conduct and worship.[38] Infidelity to the covenant at Horeb is an obvious formal component to the Deuteronomic injunction against idolatry; however, there is also a functional aspect in the idea of "forming." Both constructs in these verses are used in a negative connotation concerning the representation of the LORD. The milieu of ANE religions displays a predilection towards the physical representation of deities, especially that of a bull, cow, and calf.[39] Abel Ndjerareou notes that these idols function is several ways: "reflecting man's need for substance, serving as a pedestal for the deity, serving as a companion, and as a direct object for worship."[40] Therefore, it is easy to see the temptation of Israel to falsely assimilate these functional aspects of pagan worship into the worship of the LORD.

The oration of Moses in this passage reveals two critical components concerning representation: (1) the creator's image can only be properly represented through an imageless form (i.e., words), and (2) humanity is the mirrored physical representation of the creator (not exact replicas). The reflection of God's likeness is connected to Israel's covenant-relationship and redemption. Therefore Deuteronomy 4 memorializes the prohibition in the Decalogue and why Hosea speaks of the

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manipulate to achieve security. However, that is not to say that the Israelites believed the object was animated with life and breath.

34. J. L. Burns, "Aspects of Babylonian Theocracy as Background for the Biblical Polemic," (ThD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary), 4.

35. J. Muilenburg, "The Speech of Theophany," *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 28 (1964): 39-42.

36. W. F. Albright, *The LORD and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (New York: Double Day, 1969), 122ff.

37. Von Rad states, "The present form of the commandment (Ex 20:4; Dt 5:8) is shaped by this doctrine. For wherever we go in creation, heaven, earth or under the earth all things are created by The LORD and subject to Him so that they cannot be compared with Him. Hence, it would be ridiculous to seek a likeness of The LORD in the created order." In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testamen*t, s.v. "εἰκών" by von Rad, 2:382.

38. E. Merrill, "A Theology of the Pentateuch." in *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 12.

39. In Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Canaan the gods were commonly represented by a bull, cow, or calf. If not, they were describe as wearing horns.

40. Abel L. Ndjerareou, "The Theological Bases for the Prohibitions of Idolatry: An Exegetical and Theological Study of the Second Commandment," (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1995), 83ff.

adulteress nation of Israel's relation to the LORD.[41] The construction of an idol is the deconstruction of the covenant-relationship.

Deuteronomy 4:23

הִשָּׁמְרוּ לָכֶם פֶּן תִּשְׁכְּחוּ אֶת בְּרִית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת עִמָּכֶם וַעֲשִׂיתֶם לָכֶם פֶּסֶל תְּמוּנַת כֹּל אֲשֶׁר צִוְּךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

> So watch yourselves, that you do not forget the covenant of the Lord your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a graven image in the form of anything against which the Lord your God has commanded you.[42]

The discourse of Deuteronomy 4:23 reflects a similar pattern to the verses of 15-16 with a slight variation. This verse carries the logic of verses 15-16 further, revealing the consequence in verses 26-27. It starts with the primary injunction and alternates between motivation and setting (InjP-Motiv-Set-Motiv-Set). The verb הִשָּׁמְרוּ in verse 23 is semantically tied to וּנְשְׁמַרְתֶּם in the discourse framing of this pericope. Both are used in the *niphal* and should be understood regarding cause and effect. The negative telic particle פֶּן is also evidence of a transition of focus on the Decalogue's version of the second commandment to its theological exposition in Deuteronomy 4.

This means when Israel is not mindful of the living presence of God's commands, she by default manufactures an artificial substitute for God's image and presence. This concept of memory is not unique to Israel and is found throughout antiquity.[43] God's divine election, evidenced through her deliverance from Egypt (Ex 10:2), was to remain an operative part of her identity and worship. It is not just a reminder of the LORD's deliverance and blessings, but also of the judgment the followed forgetting. The actualization of such is realized in Deuteronomy 28:28-29,

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41. Hos 4:16-17, 8:4b-7a, 10:11a, 13:2-3 carries this central idea infidelity through in the analysis of the form and function of Idolatry.

42. Author's translation.

43. Cf. The LXX's rendering of the verb ἐπιλάθησθε and its usage in the Greco-Roman world in connection to the memory-motif. Andreas Will, *Origins of the Greek Verb* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2018), 72ff; Aristotle, *On Memory and Reminiscence*, trans. W. D. Ross, in vol. 8 of *The Great Books of the Western World*. eds. Mortimer J. Adler and Robert M. Hutchins (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 695; Barbara DeConcini, "Remembering: A Hermeneutic of Narrative Time," (PhD diss., Atlanta: Emory University, 1980); Guy G Stroumsa, "Religious Memory, Between Orality and Writing," *Memory Studies* 9 (2016): 332-40; Doron Mendles, *Memory in Jewish, Pagan and Christian Societies of the Graeco-Roman World*, Library of Second Temple Studies 45 (London: T&T Clark International, 2004); Bradford Vivian, Public Forgetting: *The Rhetoric and Politics of Beginning Again* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010); Robert B. Hardy III, "The Uses of Memory in the Poetry of Vergil" (PhD diss., Brown University, 1991); Charles Price, "Remembering and Forgetting in the Old Testament and Its Bearing on the Early Christian Eucharist" (ThD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1962); James A. Notopoulos, "Mnemosyne in Oral Literature," *Transaction and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 69 (1938): 465-93.

where the breaking of the covenant will lead to a "madness of mind" (cf. VTE 40).[44] On a spiritual level, Israel will become numb, hardened, and stick-necked towards the worship of the LORD. Thus, she will give allegiance of mind and heart to the things of creation (i.e., sex, money, and power) and in this process she becomes worthless—devoid of the meaning and purpose she was created and redeemed to accomplish. From a sociological standpoint, the means that Israel will be vulnerable to the surrounding nations. They will have the power of sight over her. In the pursuit of security through the mediums of idols, she ironically forfeits the protection and security the LORD is providing.

This exhortation resumes with a second injunction which summarizes the appeal to reject idolatry based on the revelation at Sinai (Dt 4:11-14). This is recalled again in the chains formed in *weqātal* at the conclusion of the prologue (Dt 4:39-40). Moses takes his adjuratory discourse further by recalling the reality of malediction.[45] The future and fate of Israel in Canaan are contingent on the stipulations of the covenant (cf. Dt 28). According to this exhortation, forgetting is not merely a psychological act of cognitive displacement, but an act of improper worship (cf. Dt 8:19). The physical is fused to the mental and leads either to praise and obedience or forgetfulness and destruction.

The verb שׁכח ("to forget"), an antonym of זכר ("to remember"), is used four times in Deuteronomy 4 and twelve times throughout the book.[46] Deuteronomy uses the *hiphil* thirteen times in reference to forgetting.[47] The sense in the present verse is "to make one forget" or "not on one's mind." Idolatry and forgetfulness go hand in hand.[48] The grammar of this construct informs the theological rationale that by creating an idol, the worshiper's distances themselves from the morality of God and the capacity to adhere to God's commandments. Memory of past deliverance is Israel motivation to fulfill the law. Forgetting means the nothingness of the idol is

44. "May Shamash, the light of heaven and earth, not judge you justly. May he remove your eyesight. Walkabout in darkness!" In C. L. Crouch, *Israel, and the Assyrians: Deuteronomy, the Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon, and the Nature of Subversion* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 57.

45. See Sheldon H. Blank, "The Curse, Blasphemy, the Spell, and the Oath," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 23, no. 1 (1950): 73-95; M. Kline, "Oath and Ordeal Signs," *Westminster Theological Journal* 27, no. 2 (1965): 115-39; F. Fensham, "Malediction and Benediction in ancient Near Eastern Vassal-Treaties and the Old Testament," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 74 (1962): 1-9.

46. Bernd Wannenwetsch, "Sin as Forgetting: Negotiating Divine Presence," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 28 (2015): 3-20. Even Nietzsche recognized the implications of forgetfulness within social memory, *Civilization, and its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1961), 16ff; Childs, *Memory, and Tradition in Israel*, Studies in Biblical Theology, no. 37 (London: SCM Press, 1962), 18; Barat Ellman, *Memory and Covenant: The Role of Israel's and God's Memory in Sustaining the Deuteronomic and Priestly Covenants* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013).

47. Gn 41:30; Dt 31:21; Job 28:4; Pss 9:18; 31:12; Ecc 2:16; 9:5; Is 23:15, 16; 65:16; Jer 20:11; 23:40; 50:5.

48. Halbertal rightly notes, "Idolatry is rooted in forgetfulness—forgetting what God has done for Israel. Fidelity is rooted in remembering." In *Idolatry*, 35.

transposed onto the LORD, in the eyes of humanity; the living presence of God (Dt 4:9) is substituted for a plastic presence.

The functional aspects of verses 23-24 are subtle and often confused with metaphysics,[49] when, the Israelite's theological concern was the transcendence of God.[50] To forget the covenant was to forget the relationship of the LORD forged during the deliverance from Egypt. The theological rationale for the prohibition of images has more to do with faith than epistemology (cf. ראה vs. ידע).[51] The idol was about the presence of the deity. The Decalogue incorporates this prohibition because of the cultural norm that deities dwelt in the manifestation of the idol created.[52] Although veiled in the judicial language of a typical SVT, the jealous love of God (Dt 4:24) is displayed in this covenant renewal formulation. The theological motivation for avoiding idolatry is redemption. However, God's love must be reciprocated in order to inherit the blessings He desires to bestow upon Israel.[53] The lure of the idol is that it promises to mediate the needs of humanity and provide security and control. However, the overarching chides of the biblical authors (e.g., Moses, Isaiah, and Paul) is that idols do not create or redeem; in fact, they make one blind and deaf.[54]

Conclusion

The analysis of Deuteronomy 4 shows the theological rationale behind the prohibition of idolatry in Old Testament is because the LORD desires the sole devotion of His image bearers. The covenant at Horeb and the warning against manufacturing representations for worship provided a grounding for Israel to avoid becoming hardened to the LORD's revelation and relationship. Indeed, but what has this to do with the New Testament and the local church? The struggle with idolatry, evidenced by intertextual study, reaches from creation in Genesis 1-3 to consummation in Revelation 22. The writers of the New Testament witnessed the draw of idolatry in all of its new forms. Likewise, the local church must address the new forms of idolatry and proffer the biblical rationale that idols distort and invert the worship of Creation for the creator. Cultural customs and clothing changes over time, but the hearts of men remain the same. The forms of idolatry change over time, but their draw and seduction remain a strong tendency for the local church.

49. Duane L. Christensen notes this is most likely due to the influence of Jungian understandings of the relationship between images and psychological implications. See *Deuteronomy 1-11*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 6a (Dallas: Word Books, 1911), 87.

50. See Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1976), 136.

51. Cf. M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11,* The Anchor Bible, vol. 5 (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1991), 291.

52. Cf. Ex 6:1, 14:31, 16:32; 34:10.

53. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 37.

54. Ex 15; Dt 4:35; Is 43:8-13; 44:6-8; 45:5-6; 46:5-11; Acts 17:29; 19:26; Gal. 4:8.

Appendix: Chiasm of Deuteronomy 4:15-40[55]

A *Entreaty for fidelity to the Covenant* (4:15-19)

    B *Egyptian Deliverance As A Memory Trace* (4:20-22:1)

        C *Exhortative Appeal:* (4:22:2-24:2)

            D *Prediction and Outline of Israel's Future Failure* (4:25-31)

        C' *Exhortative Appeal:* (4:32-34)

    B' *Egyptian Deliverance As A Memory Trace* (4:35-38)

A' *Entreaty for fidelity to the Covenant* (4:39-40)

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55. Adapted from the analysis of Kunt Holter in *Deuteronomy 4 and the Second Commandment*, ch. 1, 4, and 8.

"If Christ be not Raised"; If Peter was not the First Pope: Parallel Cases of Indispensable Doctrinal Foundations

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Abstract: The papacy is to Roman Catholicism what the resurrection of Jesus is to orthodox creedal Christianity. If the bodily resurrection of Christ did not really happen, there is no good reason to believe the doctrines that flow from it, such as incarnation and Trinity. Similarly, Roman Catholic claims about the ecclesial authority of the pope and the Church of Rome hinge on the historical claims about papacy, beginning with the claim that Christ appointed Peter the first pope, with a primacy of jurisdiction over the whole Church. Whereas there is excellent historical evidence in favor of the resurrection of Jesus, there is no comparable evidence in favor of traditional Roman claims about the papacy. To the contrary, the consensus of historians is that those claims are false. Roman claims that hinge on the unique authority of the papacy are accordingly undermined.

Key Words: resurrection, papacy, infallibility, Lampe, Duffy, Plantinga.

It is hard to overstate the importance of the papacy to Roman Catholicism. Rome's distinctive authority claims and ecclesial identity hinge crucially on the claims that Christ made Peter the head of the church, and the bishops of Rome have succeeded him in this role. Indeed, as I shall argue below, the papacy is to Roman Catholicism what the resurrection of Jesus is to orthodox creedal Christianity.

Parallel Cases

The fact that the resurrection of Christ is utterly foundational to classic creedal Christianity is a familiar one. One way to bring this point into sharp focus is to consider the difference between what we can call the order of being and the order of knowing. By the order of being, I simply mean there is a certain logical priority in the relationship among central creedal convictions. In the order of being, Trinity is the aboriginal fact, the most fundamental reality from which everything else originates, and follows. The incarnation of the Son of God in Jesus comes later in the order of

being, and his atoning death on the cross is later still in the order of events. Finally, the resurrection of Jesus comes as the climax of the story of incarnation and redemption.

In the order of knowing, however, it is exactly the opposite. The resurrection was the explosive act of God that set in motion the definitive revelation of the extraordinary truths that followed from this singular event in human history. The resurrection was the decisive demonstration that the man Jesus was more than a mere human being. As remarkable as his miracles surely were, and as profound and authoritative as his teaching undoubtedly was, his unique identity as the Son of God was not fully disclosed until the resurrection. As Paul put it, Christ was "declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). The realization that it was the very Son of God who died on the cross and was resurrected led to the insight that the meaning of his death was to save us from our sins. And the truth that God is a Trinity was eventually understood and formally articulated as the apostles and church fathers reflected on the revelation that Jesus was the Son of God incarnate who was distinct from the Father (and the Holy Spirit), yet in some sense one with them. This is only a bare sketch of the unfolding revelation of the central doctrines that are most distinctive to orthodox Christianity, but the central point is clear: the essential doctrines of incarnation, atonement, and Trinity flow from the stunning event of the resurrection of Jesus. When Jesus was raised from the dead, this event demanded a profound rethinking and a startling reformulation of the non-negotiable truth that God is one, and a surprising account of how he saves us from our sins.

All of this must be taken into account when we read Paul's stark and pointed reflections on the resurrection in I Corinthians 15 and his insistence that it is utterly essential to the integrity of the Christian faith. In a series of counterfactual statements, Paul unflinchingly drives home the enormous consequences that would ensue if Christ were not raised. "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (I Cor 15:17). There is no salvation from our sins in the death of Christ if he has not been raised. If Christ is not raised, Paul's preaching has been in vain (v 14). If Christ has not been raised, rather than being blessed with the greatest of all gifts, we are most to be pitied (v 19). If Christ has not been raised, Christians are speaking falsely of God (v 15). They are ascribing things to him and insisting those things are of monumental importance, but in fact, they are falsehoods. If Christ has not been raised, Christians badly misrepresent God and what he has done to reveal himself when they proclaim incarnation, atonement and Trinity. The truths sketched above in the order of being depend completely on the truth and reality of the resurrection of Jesus as the pivotal truth that generates knowledge of these distinctive doctrinal claims.

Now let us turn to consider how claims about the papacy play a role in Roman Catholic theology that is analogous to the role of the resurrection of Jesus in orthodox Christianity. That is, the distinctive claims of Roman Catholicism depend on the

truth of papal claims in a way similar to the way core Christian doctrines such as incarnation and Trinity depend on the resurrection.

Roman Catholic claims about the papacy have undeniably played a central part in the issues that divide Roman Catholics not only from Protestants, but also the Eastern Orthodox. These points of contention are undoubtedly ecclesial broadly speaking, and reflect different views about the nature of the Church, but claims about the papacy are integral to these disputes. Rome views itself and Churches in communion with it as the only ones that have full Christian integrity in terms of doctrine and ecclesial authority. Other Christians and ecclesial communities are seen (at best) as "separated brethren" who remain out of communion with the one true Church. Consider the claim that the task of interpreting the word of God is the exclusive prerogative of the teaching office of the Roman Catholic Church.

> 'The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ.' This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome.[1]

In the same vein, consider this claim: "'It is clear therefore that, in the supremely wise arrangement of God, sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the Magisterium of the Church are so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others.'"[2] The Magisterium, again, is composed of those bishops in communion with the pope, the bishop of Rome. The claim that scripture and tradition cannot stand without the Magisterium obviously denies that integrity of any Church that seeks to follow the authority of Scripture, but rejects the claims of Rome and the authority of the pope.

The apex of Roman claims pertaining to papal authority was articulated in the doctrine of papal infallibility, which was dogmatized at Vatican I in 1870. This dogma, which is rejected by the Orthodox as well as Protestants, declares that when the pope speaks EX CATHEDRA in defining a doctrine of faith or morals "he possesses, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed his Church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals. Therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves, and not by the consent of the Church, irreformable."[3] Most famously, the pope has spoken EX CATHEDRA in defining the dogmas that the Virgin Mary was immaculately conceived and bodily assumed into heaven. Given the fact that Rome has defined

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1. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, second ed. par. 85. The sentences quoted in this paragraph come from the Vatican II document, *Dei Verbum*, par 10

2. *Catechism*, par. 95.

3. https://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/V1.HTM#6, First Vatican Council, session 4, chap. 4.

these Marian doctrines with the highest degree of dogmatic authority possible, these doctrines are also emblematic of the sharp lines of division that separate Rome from the Orthodox as well as most Protestants.[4] Indeed, it is worth noting that when pope Pius XII defined the dogma of the bodily assumption, he asserted that "if anyone, which God forbid, should dare willingly to deny or call into doubt that which we have defined, let him know that he has fallen away completely from the divine and Catholic Faith."[5]

Now let us delve into these matters more deeply by considering classic Roman claims about the grounds and nature of papal authority. In particular, I will quote at some length from the aforementioned First Vatican Council, where papal infallibility was formally defined. More specifically, I will quote from Session Four of this Council, which has the following heading: "First dogmatic constitution on the Church of Christ." The definitive dogmatic authority of this material is further emphasized by the fact that each of the four chapters of Session 4 concludes with an anathema directed at those who deny the teaching that is promulgated. Examining these passages will make clear not only what Rome has traditionally claimed about the papacy, but also what is at stake in these claims.

> 1.1. We teach and declare that, according to the gospel evidence, a primacy of jurisdiction over the whole Church of God was immediately and directly promised to the blessed apostle Peter and conferred on him by Christ the lord.

> 1.3. And it was to Peter alone that Jesus, after his resurrection, confided the jurisdiction of Supreme Pastor and ruler of his whole fold, saying: Feed my lambs, feed my sheep.

> 1.4. To this absolutely manifest teaching of the Sacred Scriptures, as it has always been understood by the Catholic Church, are clearly opposed the distorted opinions of those who misrepresent the form of government which Christ the lord established in his Church and deny that Peter, in preference to the rest of the apostles, taken singly or collectively, was endowed by Christ with a true and proper primacy of jurisdiction.

> 1.6. Therefore, if anyone says that blessed Peter the apostle was not appointed by Christ the lord as prince of all the apostles and visible head of the whole Church militant; or that it was a primacy of honor only and not one of true and

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4. The doctrine of Mary's bodily assumption is affirmed by the Orthodox as an ecclesiastical conviction, but is not a dogma as it is in Rome. The Orthodox reject the doctrine of the immaculate conception.

5. http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_p-xii_apc_19501101_munificentissimus-deus.html. Paragraphs 44-45.

proper jurisdiction that he directly and immediately received from our lord Jesus Christ himself: let him be anathema.[6]

2.2. For no one can be in doubt, indeed it was known in every age that the holy and most blessed Peter, prince and head of the apostles, the pillar of faith and the foundation of the Catholic Church, received the keys of the kingdom from our lord Jesus Christ, the savior and redeemer of the human race, and that to this day and forever he lives and presides and exercises judgment in his successors the bishops of the Holy Roman See, which he founded and consecrated with his blood.

2.5. Therefore, if anyone says that it is not by the institution of Christ the lord himself (that is to say, by divine law) that blessed Peter should have perpetual successors in the primacy over the whole Church; or that the Roman Pontiff is not the successor of blessed Peter in this primacy: let him be anathema.[7]

3.2. Wherefore we teach and declare that, by divine ordinance, the Roman Church possesses a pre-eminence of ordinary power over every other Church, and that this jurisdictional power of the Roman Pontiff is both episcopal and immediate….

3.3. In this way, by unity with the Roman Pontiff in communion and in profession of the same faith, the Church of Christ becomes one flock under one Supreme Shepherd.

3.4. This is the teaching of the Catholic truth, and no one can depart from it without endangering his faith and salvation.[8]

This is only a small selection from similar passages in the preface and first three chapters of session four of the First Vatican Council leading up to the climactic chapter 4, which affirms and defines the doctrine of papal infallibility.

It is worth noting that the Second Vatican Council in its document "Lumen Gentium" reiterated the doctrine of infallibility for the "successor of Peter," and "the supreme shepherd and teacher of all the faithful."[9] This council also attempted to balance the claims of Vatican I by giving a stronger emphasis to collegial leadership for the whole council of bishops. But this effort was resisted by pope Paul VI, who thought the document had compromised papal authority, and he made an unusual move to rectify the matter. After the document had already passed the Council, he

6. First Vatican Council, session 4, chap. 1.

7. First Vatican Council, session 4, chap. 2.

8. First Vatican Council, session 4, chap. 3.

9. *The Documents of Vatican II: Vatican Translation* (St Pauls: Staten Island, NY, 2009), 39-40. (*Lumen Gentium*, 3.25)

inserted a "Note of Explanation" that asserted a stronger view of his own authority than the document seemed to affirm. Part of the Note reads as follows.

> It is up to the judgment of the Supreme Pontiff, to whose care Christ's whole flock has been entrusted, to determine, according to the needs of the Church as they change over the course of centuries, the way in which this care may be best exercised—whether in a personal or a collegial way. The Roman Pontiff, taking account of the Church's welfare, proceeds according to his own discretion in arranging, promoting, and approving the exercise of collegial activity.
>
> As Supreme Pastor of the Church, the Supreme Pontiff can always exercise his power at will, as his very office demands.[10]

I have quoted at length here to show both the substance of the classic Roman Catholic claims about the papacy, and also how strong these claims are. Both the substance and the strength of these claims show how much is riding on them for the distinctive claims of Roman Catholicism. These passages also enable us to see how Roman claims about the papacy are analogous to the role of the resurrection of Jesus in classic creedal orthodoxy. If these papal claims are not true, Rome's distinctive claims founder and fail. So let us spell out some of the ways Roman claims about the papacy are analogous to the resurrection.

First, both claim that God has acted in certain definitive ways to reveal his truth to us for our salvation. God the Father acted in the resurrection by raising Jesus from the dead to vindicate him and demonstrate that he is his divine Son. In a similar fashion, the Roman claim is that God the Son acted to found the papacy by appointing Peter Prince of the apostles and visible head of the whole Church militant, immediately and directly promising him, and thereby conferring upon him, a primacy of jurisdiction over the whole church (1:1,6) Moreover, he instituted the papacy as a permanent office so that Peter should have perpetual successors with jurisdiction over the whole Church (2:5; 3:2). Notice also that Rome claims that its understanding of Christ's words to Peter in this regard represents the "absolutely manifest teaching of the Sacred Scriptures" (1:4).

Second, in both cases it is claimed that these acts of God were performed in the context of human history and the effects were observable by human witnesses. God the Father did not raise Jesus in such a fashion that it was a closely guarded secret that no one knew or witnessed. It is noteworthy that Paul begins his discussion of the resurrection by citing the various appearances of the risen Jesus (I Cor15:3-8). His confidence that the risen Christ truly appeared to various witnesses, including himself, matches his insistence that our faith is not in vain. Similarly, the claim that Christ instituted the papacy in the fashion Rome teaches also strongly implies

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10. *The Documents of Vatican II*, p. 76. (*Lumen Gentium*, Appendix, 3,4)

that it would be clearly known by Peter, and presumably his successors, especially if the Roman interpretation represents "the absolutely manifest teaching of the Sacred Scriptures." Peter would presumably hand on to his successors what he had "immediately and directly" received so clearly from Christ, just as Paul carefully handed on what he had received (cf I Cor 15:3). Moreover, the claims of Rome entail that Peter had immediate and ongoing successors, men who existed in history and were known as the bishop of Rome by their contemporaries. Indeed, notice that the First Vatican Council insists that it "was known in every age" and cannot be doubted that Peter received the keys of the kingdom from Christ, and "that to this day and forever he lives and presides and exercises judgment in his successors the bishops of the Holy Roman See, which he founded and consecrated with his blood" (2:2).

It is important to emphasize that he claim that this "was known in every age" obviously refers to the Roman interpretation of Jesus' words about the keys of the kingdom and not the mere fact that Jesus spoke these words to Peter. For it is hardly a matter of controversy between Roman Catholicism and other Christian traditions that Jesus spoke these words. The issue is the correct interpretation of those words.

Third, given the claims made about both the resurrection and the papacy, our salvation is at stake in accepting or denying these claims. Faith in Christ for salvation essentially involves the belief that God raised him from the dead. Faith that he died for our sins hinges on the belief that he rose from the dead, and confessing that he is Lord hinges on believing that God raised him from the dead (Romans 10:9-10). Similarly, the document cited above repeatedly anathematizes those who deny its claims, and warns that no one can depart from its teaching about the status and authority of the pope "without endangering his faith and salvation" (3:4). In both cases, very strong claims are made about the vital importance of accepting the truth of what is proclaimed and the clear implications that follow.

Major Evidential Divide

Now then, with these similarities and analogies in mind, let us turn to consider a way in which the case of the resurrection and that of the papacy sharply diverge. In short, there is impressive historical evidence for the resurrection, but there is not such evidence for the Roman papal claims. My point here is a simple one, but one with far reaching implications. If the historical evidence is at odds with Roman papal claims, then Rome's distinctive claims for itself are undermined and lose credibility.

Of course, how one assesses the relevance of historical evidence depends on how much credence one gives evidence in general when assessing theological truth claims. Those who for various reasons place little stock in purported objective evidence may dismiss this negative historical evidence as utterly irrelevant. But for those with evidentialist inclinations, historical facts and considerations can hardly be waved off in this fashion.

So let us consider the issues before us in light of a very modest evidentialist standard, namely, one suggested by Pascal. First, consider this couplet in which Pascal indicates that revelation from God imposes obligations on us, but also that God has certain obligations to us not to mislead us in his revelation. "Men owe it to God to accept the religion he sends them. God owes it to men not to lead them into error."[11] The claims involved in the Christian revelation are so monumentally important that Pascal repeatedly stresses that all rational persons must earnestly seek the truth until they find it. While he is under no illusion that reason is the ultimate source or measure of truth, he is also confident that reason is an essential guide that we must trust so far as it goes. While the truths of faith surpass reason and empirical evidence, God never requires us to go against clear deliverances of reason or empirical evidence in our quest for truth. He writes: "Faith certainly tells us what the senses do not, but not the contrary of what they see; it is above, not against them."[12] More generally, he proposes the following as what we should expect as we consider the relevant evidence for Christianity: "But the evidence is such as to exceed, or at least equal, the evidence to the contrary, so that it cannot be reason that decides us against following it, and can therefore only be concupiscence and wickedness of heart."[13]

Returning to our two cases, it is a happy fact for orthodox Christian belief that there is substantial evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. A robust belief in the bodily resurrection can be defended by rigorous critical scholarship. Indeed, the evidence arguably far surpasses Pascal's minimal standard. Numerous first rank Biblical scholars, theologians, and philosophers have defended this claim, and there is no need to belabor this point. Of course, I do not mean to deny that there are numerous scholars on the other side who are more skeptical, or who strongly deny the resurrection. These issues are deeply contested to be sure. But the fact remains that there are many outstanding scholars who have brilliantly defended traditional claims about the resurrection and have argued that there is ample reason for doing so. Here I will simply cite a couple of interesting examples to illustrate the point.

Several years ago, Richard Swinburne employed probability theory to defend the resurrection. Taking all of what he took to be the relevant factors into account, Swinburne argued that the balance of probability heavily favored the resurrection. In fact, in a formalization of the argument, Swinburne contended that the resurrection had a probability of 0.97.[14] More recently, Michael Licona has defended the resurrection by employing rigorous standards of evidence as employed by historians. Relying only on what he calls "historical bedrock" composed of facts that are a matter of consensus

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11. laise Pascal, *Pensees*, trans. A. J. Krailsheimer (London: Penguin, 1966), no. 840.

12. *Pensees*, no. 185.

13. *Pensees*, no. 835.

14. Richard Swinburne, *The Resurrection of God Incarnate* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 2003), 204-216.

among almost all scholars, he concluded that "Jesus' resurrection is 'very certain,' a rendering higher on the spectrum of historical certainty than I had expected."[15]

When we turn to the Roman claims about the papacy, however, matters are altogether different. In brief, there is a strong scholarly consensus that the classic belief that Peter was the first pope is a pious myth, and indeed, there was not even a monarchical bishop in Rome—let alone anyone who was recognized as having jurisdiction over the entire Church—until sometime in the latter half of the second century, if not later. It must be stressed that this is not merely a consensus among Protestant and Eastern Orthodox scholars, but Roman Catholics as well. Given the importance of this claim, let us take a few minutes to document it.

A good place to begin is with the distinguished Roman Catholic papal historian Eamon Duffy (who served on the Pontifical Historical Commission) and his observation that "all modern discussion of the issues must now start from the exhaustive and persuasive analysis by Peter Lampe, From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries, London 2003. This is a difficult read for the non-specialist, but it conveys as no other work does the extraordinary ferment of early Roman Christianity."[16] Lampe's work is exhaustive in the sense that he studied every scrap of archaeological evidence as well as pertinent literary sources in his account of early Roman Christianity. We can hardly go into the details of this technical work here, but it is important to note Lampe's "fractionation" thesis, in which he shows that the early Roman church was composed of house churches in various districts that matched the layout of the city. "The fractionation in Rome favored a collegial presbyterial system of government and prevented for a long time, until the second half of the second century, the development of a monarchical episcopacy in the city."[17] Lampe documents the significant fact that early Christian writers living in Rome or familiar with church life in Rome in the late first and early second century consistently describe the leadership there in terms of plural leaders, with no indication that there was a single leader who exercised the sort of authority claimed by later monarchical bishops.

Another facet of Lampe's work worth noting is his historical analysis of Irenaeus's famous list of Roman bishops,[18] a passage popular apologists use to support Roman papal claims. Lampe argues that this list "is with highest probability a historical construction from the 180's, when the monarchical episcopacy developed in Rome."[19]

15. Michael R. Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2010), 619.

16. Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes*, fourth ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 469. Lampe is a Protestant scholar.

17. Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 397.

18. *Against Heresies*, 3.3.3.

19. Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 406. For an excellent account of Lampe's argument, and a discussion of the larger issues, see the article by Brandon Addison: http://www.calledtocommunion. com/2014/03/the-quest-for-the-historical-church-a-protestant-assessment/

In other words, it anachronistically imports into earlier decades what was emerging in the 180's. If Lampe's historical and grammatical analysis of this list is correct, it has little value as a historical source for the contested issues about the papacy.

In view of this, it is hardly surprising that right at the outset of his authoritative book on the papacy, Duffy begins by sorting out the crucial distinction between legend and reliable history. After noting that legend filled in the details of Peter's later life where the New Testament, is silent, Duffy went on as follows:

> Neither Peter nor Paul founded the Church at Rome, for there were Christians in the city before either of the Apostles set foot there. Nor can we assume, as Irenaeus did, that the Apostles established there a succession of bishops to carry on the work in the city, for all the indications are that there was no single bishop of Rome for almost a century after the deaths of the Apostles. In fact, wherever we turn, the solid outlines of the Petrine succession at Rome seem to blur and dissolve.[20]

These are stark observations indeed in view of the strong claims of traditional papal theology and all that rides on those claims.

Duffy, however, is not an exception in this regard, but again, his claims here represent the consensus of critical historians.[21] For one more example, consider the Roman Catholic papal historian Robert Eno, who sizes up the evidence as follows:

> But the evidence available seems to point predominantly if not decisively in the direction of a collective leadership. Dogmatic a priori theses should not force us into presuming or requiring something that the evidence leans against….This evidence (Clement, Hermas, Ignatius) points us in the direction of assuming that in the first century and into the second, there was no bishop of Rome in the usual sense given to that title.[22]

We do not have space to look in detail at any of the three figures Eno mentions, but let us take a brief look at Ignatius.

Ignatius is interesting because the theme of episcopal leadership was such a prominent theme in his letters to various churches. In the seven letters we have, he made frequent mention of the bishop, and his authority, mentioning him by name in some cases. Consider, for instance, these typical passages from his letter to the Magnesians:

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20. Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, 2.

21. See also Allen Brent, "How Irenaeus Has Misled the Archaeologists," in *Irenaeus: Life, Scripture, Legacy*, eds Sara Parvis and Paul Foster (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 35-52. For a notable example of an Eastern Orthodox scholar, see John Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons: Identifying Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). For an example of a Roman Catholic who challenges the consensus, see David Albert Jones, "Was there a Bishop of Rome in the First Century" *New Blackfriars* 80, no 937 (1999), 128-143. For a critique of Jones, see Eamon Duffy, "Was there a Bishop of Rome in the First Century?" *New Blackfriars* 80, no 940 (1999), 301-308.

22. Robert B. Eno, *The Rise of the Papacy* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008; Originally Published by Michael Glazier, 1990), 26, 29. For a concise discussion of this evidence, see Duffy, "Was there a Bishop of Rome in the First Century?" 303-308.

> Inasmuch as I was found worthy to see you in the persons of Damas, your godly bishop, and your worthy presbyters Bassus and Apollonius, and my fellow servant, the deacon Zotion—may I enjoy his company, because he is subject to the bishop as to the grace of God, and to the council of the presbyters as to the law of Jesus Christ….Be eager to do everything in godly harmony, the bishop presiding in the place of God and the presbyters in the place of the apostles and the deacons, who are especially dear to me, since they have been entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ…[23]

So prevalent is the theme of the importance of the episcopacy and the authority of the bishop, and so often does he reiterate these points that it is no exaggeration to say he almost seems obsessed with these issues. There are over forty such passages referring to bishops scattered throughout these letters.

But here is what is interesting and telling for our concerns: all these references occur in just six of his seven letters. Such passages fail to appear in only one of his letters, namely, his letter to the Romans. Remarkably, in his letter to the church where the bishop of bishops, the visible head of the whole church is supposed to reside according to Rome, there is no mention of the bishop. Eno is not alone in finding it strange that there are no comparable passages in his letter to the Romans if Rome had a bishop. "But we have only silence, which leads many to conclude that Ignatius did not address such a person because the Roman community of the time had no such leader."[24] Indeed, this silence speaks volumes, especially when combined with the similar silence of other early Christian writers who were situated to comment on the presence of a bishop in Rome had there been one, but did not.[25]

Now given the fact there has been a consensus along these lines among historians, including Roman Catholic historians, for some time now it is somewhat surprising that popular Roman Catholic apologetics often proceeds as if the claims of the First Vatican Council remain altogether intact. These apologists are either unaware of the state of scholarship in their own church, or they blithely ignore it, and assure their readers that traditional papal claims are the uncontroverted truth. For an example, consider these lines from Devin Rose: "The Church had a pope, a visible head, from the beginning. In fact, we know the names and approximate dates of all the popes, all the way back to the first century: Peter first, then Linus, Anacletus and Clement I."[26] The profound difference between the lines from Duffy, quote above, and those

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23. "The Letter of Ignatius to the Magnesians," *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd edition, edited and translated by Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 2:1, 6:1

24. Eno, *The Rise of the Papacy*, 27.

25. For a formalized version of an argument from silence that takes into account Clement, Hermas, Ignatius, and Justin Martyr, see Kenneth J. Collins and Jerry L. Walls, *Roman But Not Catholic: What Remains at Stake 500 Years After the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 244-251.

26. Devin Rose, *The Protestant's Dilemma: How the Reformation's Shocking Consequences Point to the Truth of Catholicism* (San Diego: Catholic Answers Press, 2014), 35.

of Rose are quite striking. What a serious historian acknowledges to be simply false is trotted out as the simple uncontroversial truth by a popular apologist.[27]

It is worth noting here that popular Roman apologists are reminiscent of young earth creationists who continue to assert that the earth is only ten thousand years old in the face of the massive scientific evidence that it is much older, evidence which is acknowledged by leading Christian physicists and cosmologists, as well as other scientists. Popular apologists who continue to assert traditional papal history in the face of the best scholarship of their own church are doing the same sort of thing.

But perhaps there is more going on than simple disregard for serious scholarship in such popular apologetics. Perhaps what we see reflected in Rose's breezy reiteration of traditional papal claims is a stark recognition of what is at stake in those traditional claims and the implications that follow if those claims are given up.[28] If Rome's distinctive claims to be the one true church do indeed hinge essentially upon the truth of its traditional papal theology and the related historical claims, then to give up that theology and history is to give up those distinctive claims to be the one true church. And if those claims are given up, the motivation and mission for popular Roman Catholic apologetics is lost.

In any case, the main point here is that whereas there is arguably excellent historical evidence in favor of the resurrection of Jesus that far surpasses Pascal's modest evidentialist standards, the historical evidence in favor of traditional papal claims falls far short of Pascal's standards. Indeed, it is worse, for the historical evidence, starting with the "historical bedrock" excavated by Lampe, counts strongly against Rome's claims. And for those committed to Rome's distinctive claims to ecclesial authority, this appears to pose a serious difficulty.

Saving the Hypothesis?

Now then, what sort of moves are available to Roman Catholics who are apprised of the consensus of historians within their own church, but want to maintain Rome's distinctive ecclesial claims, and the papal theology that underwrites those claims? I will mention four.

One obvious move to make is to simply insist that the consensus of critical historians is irrelevant. Even Pascal's modest evidentialist principles should be

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27. Popular Roman apologists who continue to assert traditional papal history in the face of the best scholarship of their own church are reminiscent of young earth apologists who continue to assert that the earth is only ten thousand years old in the face of the best scientific evidence acknowledged by leading Christian physicists and cosmologists, which strongly demonstrates otherwise.

28. Cf. Duffy's comment on David Albert Jones, and his attempt to defend the traditional view (cited in note 21): "I suspect that he feels that Catholic orthodoxy and church order will be compromised if it turns out that after all there was not pope in first century Rome." (Duffy, "Was there a Bishop of Rome in the First Century?" 308).

rejected. The essential claim is that Christ "immediately and directly" conferred on Peter and his successors jurisdiction over the whole church, and that this "was known in every age," not that there is objective historical evidence for these claims. There was a visible head of the church from the beginning even if he was invisible to history for some time. Indeed, the truth of these claims is perfectly compatible with the historical evidence pointing "predominantly if not decisively" (as Eno put it) in another direction altogether. There are possible scenarios we can imagine in which these claims are true, even if this requires us to construe the available evidence in a way that is at odds with the conclusions historians think most probable. Perhaps among the multiple bishops in early Rome, one always had preeminence, and it was he who was Peter's successor even if he is never identified as such by writers such as Ignatius, Clement and Hermas.

Duffy addresses this sort of appeal in his response to Fr David Albert Jones, who acknowledges that Clement says nothing to indicate that there was a mono-episcopate in Rome, but insists that this possibility is not excluded, and strictly speaking is compatible with the evidence. In reply, Duffy observes that "Fr Jones's valiant insistence that nevertheless, Clement *might* have been the presiding bishop of Rome, which he then modulates into the claim that it is just as likely as not that he was, looks like historical fideism, assertion unencumbered by the need for evidence."[29] The view Duffy is criticizing here represents a classic dogmatic approach to the matter. Consider this description of such an approach:

> In dealing with these claims we are passing along the border line between history and dogmatic theology. The primacy of Peter and his appointment by Christ to succeed Him as head of the Church are accepted by the Catholic Church as the indubitable word of inspired Gospel, in its only possible meaning. That Peter went to Rome and founded there his See is just as definitively what is termed in Catholic theology a dogmatic fact. This has been defined by an eminent Catholic theologian as 'historical fact so intimately connected with some great Catholic truths that it would be believed even if time and accident had destroyed all of the original evidence therefor.'[30]

So long as the standard is possibility, or an appeal to what *might be true*, or to a "dogmatic fact" lacking any sort of evidence to which we have access, this sort of move can provide an ever elusive sort of option. It does come with certain costs, however. First, it may be an *ad hoc* appeal that one would not otherwise rely on. It will be awkward, to say the least, for those who make this move to appeal to objective historical evidence when it supports their beliefs (as in say, the resurrection), unless they have some principled reason why they trust history in some cases but not others. Second, and far more serious, it is deeply counterintuitive that truths as important as traditional

29. Duffy, "Was there a Bishop of Rome in the First Century?" 305.

30. James Shotwell Thompson and Louise Ropes Loomis, *The See of Peter* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), xxiii-xxiv.

papal claims with so much riding on them must be believed in the face of considerable counterevidence. Recall that those who reject these claims are anathematized and their salvation is said to be in jeopardy. This is rather jarring conclusion to swallow, to put it mildly. Would a good God, let alone a perfectly loving God, require us to believe something on pain of damnation that even the best Christian historians, including Roman Catholic historians, judge to be highly improbable? But again, for those not troubled by these implications, this remains an option.

Next, it might be suggested that papal doctrine required time to develop in a fashion similar the incarnation and the Trinity. In view of this, is should not be surprising that there was not a monarchical bishop in Rome until the late second century. While the appeal to doctrinal development is a natural one for Roman Catholics who must defend infallible dogmas first given formal definition in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is doubtful that the appeal can be made for its traditional papal claims.

First, what is at stake here are purported factual claims about history which underwrite the distinctive Roman papal and ecclesial claims, namely that Peter was "immediately and directly" given universal jurisdiction over the church by promise from Christ, and that his successors also had this role. It was allegedly to "Peter alone" that Jesus "confided the jurisdiction" saying "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep." [31]

For traditional papal theology to be underwritten, it must have a secure foundation in these claims about Peter and his successors. If the claims just cited are true, we have very strong reason to think Peter and his successors (and probably the other apostles as well), understood these essential claims from the outset, and that it did not take several decades to develop this understanding. This is all the more likely if it is true that the Roman Petrine doctrine is the "absolutely manifest teaching of the Sacred Scriptures, as it has always been understood by the Catholic Church" and that "it was known in every age that the holy and most blessed Peter…received the keys of the kingdom from our lord Jesus Christ…and that to this day and forever he lives and presides and exercises judgment in his successors the bishops of the Holy Roman See." In short, these claims seem clearly to insist that the fundamental elements of papal doctrine were clear from the outset rather than only emerging or developing gradually over time. The classic papal theology of Vatican I rests on robust historical claims, not on the far more modest notion of more recent vintage that the papacy of the first several decades was present only in "embryonic" form.

Now it is worth noting that the claim the Roman Petrine doctrine is the "absolutely manifest teaching of Sacred Scriptures" is, of course, a hermeneutical claim, and not a historical one. But the claim that "it was known in every age" that Peter and his successors had the distinct role and authority Rome claims they had is a historical claim, and one that it is reasonable to think would be confirmed by the historical record. Here is a preliminary question worth pondering in light of this

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31. This is, of course, a reference to John 21:15-17.

claim: why is there no affirmation or even reference to Peter's extraordinary authority in the Epistles of Peter?[32] If he received directly and immediately from Christ the sort of authority Rome claims, why does Peter not invoke, or at least mention his unique role? He merely identifies himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ, or an apostle and a servant of Christ, and he goes on his first epistle to address the elders as a fellow elder (I Peter 1:1; 5:1; 2 Peter 1:1).

The fact that he does not invoke any special kind of authority is all the more noteworthy when we consider that Paul, by contrast, repeatedly underscores his distinctive commission from Christ to be the apostle to the Gentiles, and the authority that entailed (Acts 9:15; Romans 11:13-14; 15:15-16; Galatians 1:15-17; 2:6-10; Ephesians 3:7-9). Surely it is surprising that Peter, who allegedly had a far more important commission, never records that fact.[33] It is in Galatians, incidentally, where Paul informs us that he withstood Peter when Peter was acting in a way that was contrary to the gospel (Galatians 2:11-14). A few verses previous to this report, Paul notes that "he who worked through Peter making him an apostle to the circumcised worked through me in sending me to the Gentiles" (Galatians 2:8). Paul's understanding of Peter's role as apostle to the circumcised parallel to his role as apostle to the Gentiles hardly suggests that he thinks Peter was given jurisdiction over the whole church. He does point out that James, Peter and John (in that order) are acknowledged as pillars, but again, does not single out Peter in any way.

But here is another historical fact that must be noted, and one that is hard to square with the traditional claims of Rome. The first known appeal to the classic texts in Matthew by a bishop of Rome to support his unique authority was not until the middle of the third century by Stephen. He invoked this text in a dispute over rebaptism with Cyprian, an African bishop, and Firmilian, a Greek bishop. But what is even more telling is that these bishops neither yielded to his authority, nor did they accept his appeal to the authority of Peter. Indeed, according to Eno, "we must note as well that Firmilian not only does not accept the claim, he seems never to have heard of it before."[34] This is rather surprising if the claims of the First Vatican Council that we have been examining are true. One would have expected that the fundamental claims of the Petrine theory would be have been reasonably well known, at least among bishops, and not disputed as a novel claim.[35]

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32. The authorship of the Epistles of Peter is, of course, controversial, especially 2 Peter.

33. It might be suggested that Peter never invoked his special authority due to his humility. But this objection is based on a misunderstanding of humility. True humility owns God's calling and aspires to live up to it and to fulfill it, not to hide it or downplay it.

34. Eno, *Rise of the Papacy*, 64.

35. Likewise, early Patristic interpretation of John 21 does not support the Roman claim that their interpretation of this text is the "absolutely manifest teaching of Sacred Scripture." See David Bradshaw, "Giving Honor to Whom Honor is Due: A Reply to Michael Root," in *The Gospel of John: Theological-Ecumenical Readings*, ed. Charles Raith (Eugene: OR: Wipf and Stock, 2017), 239-250.

Doctrinal development as represented in the classic creeds was a matter of giving a more exact definition to beliefs that had been very much in evidence for centuries. Long before Nicea and Chalcedon, Christians had already been affirming their belief that Jesus was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven, that he was Lord, that he was the Son of God, and so on. The extraordinary substance of classic Christology, the "raw material," was already heartily affirmed and its meaning was discussed and debated long before Nicaea and Chalcedon provided philosophically precise language to express these convictions.

The papacy emerging in later centuries was not a similar case of doctrinal development because there was no similar affirmation all along of the substance of the classical Petrine theology as traditional Roman papal theology claims. It is not the case that all along reasonably informed Christians believed that Peter and his successors had been given authority over the whole church directly and immediately from Christ, even if the precise details of what that meant still needed to be worked out. In short, we do not have the same sort of robust body of raw material supporting the papacy that would be necessary to make the case that it is a doctrinal development that parallels classic Christology.

There is one more reason why the late second century emergence of the episcopacy in Rome is not a case of doctrinal development analogous to Christology. And that is the simple fact that traditional papal theology is not conceptually challenging and difficult in anything remotely like the way Trinity and Incarnation are. Indeed, these doctrines are extremely difficult and have proved challenging to some of the greatest minds in human history down to the present day. It is hardly surprising that it would take some time reflecting on the fundamental data of biblical revelation to articulate these doctrines with some degree of precision. By contrast, there is nothing particularly difficult in traditional papal theology. If the traditional claims of Rome are true, there is no reason the fundamental elements of papal theory should not have been understood and affirmed all along, at least in Rome and among bishops and other leaders.

A third suggestion, similar to the idea of development, is that perhaps papal theology can be justified on other grounds than a literal claim that Christ instituted the papacy immediately and directly by conferring authority on Peter and his immediate successors. Even if history undermines these traditional claims and warrants for papal authority, perhaps the actual history of how the papacy emerged can provide suitable material to justify it. In the conclusion of Eno's book, he writes as follows:

> The history of the Papacy in antiquity can be divided into two periods. The first is that before the time of Damascus, the period in which the documentary evidence, especially that concerning Roman sources, is very sketchy and episodic. The texts and historical cases surveyed and evaluated are subject to a variety of interpretations, some of which, to be sure, are more likely than others. Yet there is enough evidence of a Roman consciousness of its

authority to show that the later firm and steady claims did not arise *ex nihilo* after 366. Non Roman attitudes are another matter.[36]

In view of this, one might appeal to "a Roman consciousness of its authority" even as one recognizes that the texts and cases to support this are "subject to a variety of interpretations." Eventually, Rome came to make unequivocal claims for its unique authority, and to justify those claims by insisting that Christ bestowed upon Peter and his successors authority over the whole church, even if the historical evidence is at odds with those claims. Is this enough to sustain traditional Roman papal authority?

Well, the mere fact that Rome had a certain "consciousness of its authority" is hardly enough to warrant that authority or to legitimize it. The question remains what is the source and warrant for this sense of authority?

These questions are particularly pertinent when we consider the "non Roman attitudes" that Eno mentions. Roman claims to authority have not in fact been a source of unity in the church as they are supposed to be, but quite the opposite. Indeed, the claims of Rome to have authority over the whole church have been a point of contention with the Orthodox for centuries before it was an issue for Protestants, and the papacy remains a point of contention to this day. While the Orthodox have acknowledged a "primacy of honor" to the Roman See, they reject the Roman claims to papal authority. (Recall that the First Vatican Council anathematized those who hold the Orthodox view of Roman primacy; 1:6).

A notable emblem of the historic conflict between Rome and the Orthodox is the famous Canon 28 of the Council of Chalcedon, which acknowledged Constantinople as the New Rome when it became the capital of the empire. The rationale for this is particularly interesting:

> For the Fathers rightly granted privileges to the throne of old Rome, because it was the imperial city. And the One Hundred and Fifty most religious Bishops, actuated by the same consideration, gave equal privileges to the most holy throne of New Rome, judging justly that the city which is honored with the Sovereignty and the Senate, and enjoys equal privileges with old imperial Rome should in ecclesiastical matters also be magnified as she is, and rank next after her…[37]

This canon was rejected by Rome, but the point remains that it shows that the Fathers of Chalcedon judged that Roman authority rested in no small part on the fact that it had been the capital city, not on an irrevocable conferral of authority by Christ. To what extent these political realities shaped Rome's "consciousness of its authority" is debatable, but for these early Fathers, Rome's authority was in no small part due to political factors.

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36. Eno, *Rise of the Papacy*, 147.

37. Cited by Clark Carlton, *The Truth: What Every Roman Catholic Should Know About the Orthodox Church* (Salisbury, MA: Regina, 1999), 117.

When we consider the larger history of the papacy, with its ever growing bid for secular power, and the moral and spiritual corruption that often attended those bids for power, it is even more difficult to sanctify Rome's "consciousness of its authority" as warranted by God.[38] Indeed, it appears to be very much an unholy grasping for power and political control, as both Orthodox and Protestant critics have argued.

The deeper problem with trying to vindicate papal claims in this fashion, however, is that it is a rather radical break with the traditional claims of the First Vatican Council. Consider again the analogy with the resurrection. In particular, consider how liberal theologians explain how faith in Jesus's resurrection actually emerged. Here, for instance is how Roman Catholic theologian Edward Schillebeeckx thinks this happened:

> May it not be that Simon Peter—and indeed the Twelve—arrived via their concrete experience of forgiveness after Jesus' death, encountered as grace and discussed among themselves (as they remembered Jesus' sayings about, among other things, the gracious God) at the "evidence for belief": the Lord is alive? He renews for them the offer of salvation; this they experience in their own conversion; he must therefore be alive.[39]

According to Schillebeeckx, faith in the resurrection was not generated by actual appearances of Jesus after his death, nor by an empty tomb, as traditional biblical scholars contend. Rather, it was produced by a conversion experience in which the disciples were gathered together, and felt that they were forgiven by Jesus for their cowardice when he was crucified. If they were forgiven by Christ, they inferred that he must therefore be alive. The stories about the appearances and the empty tomb only came later.

It is important to stress how much of a radical reversal this sort of approach represents. In short, it is not the case that actual appearances of a bodily resurrected Jesus, along with an empty tomb, are what actually generated belief in his resurrection—rather, experiences of forgiveness generated the belief that he was alive, and later, the stories of the appearances and the empty tomb.

Now Schillebeeckx's views are hardly the consensus of critical scholars. But now let us suppose they were. Let us suppose that there was a strong consensus among scholars of all stripes that Jesus did not in fact appear to the disciples after his death, nor did they actually witness an empty tomb. Rather, belief in the resurrection was entirely generated as Schillebeeckx suggests, by a conversion experience in which the disciples felt themselves forgiven. Moreover, let us suppose that only late in the second century did anyone claim that Jesus had actually appeared bodily to

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38. See Collins and Walls, *Roman But Not Catholic*, 220-243.

39. *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, trans. Hubert Hoskins (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 391.

the disciples, and that the tomb was empty.[40] And only centuries later was there any sort of clear theology of resurrection based on appearances of Jesus and an empty tomb. Given this sort of scenario, would it not undermine rational confidence that the resurrection as traditionally understood really did happen? And would it not make it highly doubtful that this rather amorphous account of resurrection could provide warrant for the traditional doctrines such as Incarnation and Trinity that are premised upon it?

Likewise, it is dubious that historically "sketchy" accounts of how papal theology arose out of Rome's sense of its own authority can support the strong claims that have traditionally been made for papal authority. If the robust historical claims that have traditionally supported papal theology emerged out of that theology rather than producing it, we have a radical reversal similar to that represented in Schillebeeckx's account of the resurrection.

In the same vein, consider the views of the distinguished Roman Catholic New Testament scholar Raymond Brown, who agrees with the consensus of scholars that Peter was not the first pope, that the episcopacy in Rome did not emerge until the second century, and indeed that the episcopacy in general was not founded by the historical Christ.[41] Brown defends the episcopacy (including, presumably the papacy), however, as established by Christ "in the nuanced sense that the episcopate gradually emerged in a Church that stemmed from Christ and that this emergence was (in the eyes of faith) guided by the Holy Spirit." Brown insists that it does not detract from the dignity of bishops to trace the "appearance of the episcopate more directly to the Holy Spirit than to the historical Jesus."[42]

Again, robust claims about objective events that are visible to the "eyes of history" are replaced by a much more subjective gradual emergence ascribed to the guidance of the Holy Spirit visible only to "the eyes of faith."

The fourth and final strategy for saving the papal hypothesis that I will mention here is one that might be inspired by Alvin Plantinga's account of warranted Christian belief. Plantinga argues, of course, for an account of faith that is "a belief-producing process or activity, like perception or memory."[43] As such, when faith is produced in the right way, it leads to knowledge just as our other faculties do when functioning properly. The aim of faith is to allow us to know a particularly important set of truths, namely, what God has graciously done to provide for our salvation. In order to do this, Plantinga contends that God first arranged for the production of scripture, the inspired set of books of which he is the primary author. But our knowledge of the truth of Scripture does not depend on us and our critical reading skills. Rather,

40. Schillebeeckx, of course, does not claim that these reports were that late.

41. Raymond E. Brown, *Priest and Bishop*: Biblical Reflections (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 1999; Previously published by The Missionary Society of St. Paul, 1970), 51-54; 72-73.

42. *Priest and Bishop*, 73.

43. Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 256.

this knowledge is ultimately due to the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit, who witnesses to our hearts and minds to convince us of the truth of the gospel:

> We read Scripture, or something presenting scriptural teaching, or hear the gospel preached….What is said simply seems right; it seems compelling; one finds oneself saying, 'Yes, that's right, that's the truth of the matter; this is indeed the word of the Lord.' I read, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself'; I think: 'Right; that's true; God really was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself!'[44]

When we find ourselves believing the gospel in response to the witness of the Holy Spirit in this fashion, this counts as knowledge just as much as our memory and perceptual beliefs do when these faculties are functioning properly. Indeed, Plantinga emphasizes that faith produced in this way is warranted "even if I don't know of and cannot make a good historical case for the reliability of the biblical writers or for what they teach. I *don't* need a good historical case for the truth of the central teachings of the gospel to be warranted in accepting them."[45]

Here the defender of traditional Roman papal theology may appeal to Plantinga's model of warranted Christian belief to support his convictions. He may say that when he reads Matthew 16, he finds himself believing traditional Roman claims about Peter and his successors. Maybe he even finds those claims compelling. He admits he has no good historical case for these views, but insists he does not need such a case. He believes the Holy Spirit has witnessed to him that traditional Roman papal claims are true, and he is altogether warranted in holding that belief, and even insisting he knows it is true.[46]

Now the first thing to notice here is that Plantinga's "extended" model of warranted Christian belief is only extended to "the central teachings of the gospel," the beliefs that are "common to the great creeds of the main branches of the Christian church."[47] It makes no claims about controversial doctrines that divide the various

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44. Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 250.

45. Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 259.

46. A similar move to defend papal doctrine was made several years ago by Cardinal Alfons Stickler, in response to Brian Tierney's erudite historical argument that the doctrine of papal infallibility was invented in the thirteenth century during a debate on the place of poverty in the Franciscan tradition. Stickler responded to Tierney as follows: "Theology deals with revealed data, and all scholarly research in *theology*, therefore, must begin with the acceptance of a valid revelation even when it exceeds rational verifications, and it must accept as its own scientific criteria not only the written revealed truths but also their cognitive development and their binding definitions through the living magisterium supported by a tradition which is likewise under the guidance of a higher revealed light. If, therefore, a historian sets up criteria of research, with the results derived therefrom, of a purely rational nature, he is not a historian of theology." Cited by William J. Abraham, *Canon and Criterion: From the Fathers to Feminism* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1998), 79. The similarity here is that Stickler appeals to the authority of the magisterium, "under the guidance of higher revealed light" to warrant papal doctrine.

47. Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, vii.

Christian denominations and traditions. So it is doubtful that Plantinga would endorse stretching it to form an "extra-extended Plantinga/Papal" model for settling denominational disputes.

But setting this worry aside, there is a deeper problem for such an attempt to employ Plantinga's model to this issue. Here it is. While Plantinga insists that belief in the central truths of the gospel can be warranted even if there is no good historical case for the reliability of the gospels, this does not mean that there can be warrant in the face of any and all sorts of historical evidence. Warrant does not require a positive historical case, but a sufficiently strong negative case has the potential to undermine warrant:

> Isn't it clearly possible that historians should discover facts that put Christian belief into serious question, count heavily against it? Well, maybe so….The Christian faith is a historical faith, in the sense that it essentially depends on what in fact did happen: 'And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile' (I Corinthians 15:17). And it could certainly happen that by the exercise of reason we come up with powerful evidence against something we take or took to be a deliverance of the faith….Then Christians would have a problem, a sort of conflict between faith and reason.[48]

And this would be a serious problem indeed if we assume that our divinely given belief forming faculties, functioning properly and at their best, should deliver beliefs that are mutually compatible. If our reasoning faculty when properly functioning led us to believe that a historical claim was very probably or almost certainly false, it would be quite a conundrum if that claim was a foundational belief of the deliverances of faith.

Plantinga concludes his discussion of this matter in a rather open-ended way as he ponders what the appropriate response would be if he were actually faced with such powerful negative evidence. After mentioning several possibilities, he acknowledges that does not know which, if any, of those possibilities he should choose. But what is clear is that he does not think such evidence could simply be waved off, or defeated by taking the deliverances of faith as properly basic beliefs.

But what Plantinga raises as a mere hypothetical possibility for Christian faith appears to be an actual dilemma for conservative Roman Catholics who affirm traditional papal doctrine. The bottom line here is that the strong claims that Rome makes for herself require sufficient warrant if those claims are to be taken as true. The robust claims of traditional papal doctrine have purported to provide that warrant. The dilemma is posed by the fact that there is very strong evidence that the historical claims that have traditionally underwritten papal theology and Rome's distinctive claims to authority are simply false. And if they are false, Rome's traditional papal theology and distinctive claims to ecclesial authority are accordingly undermined and should also be rejected as false.

48. Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 420-421.

Early Christian Liturgy: A Reconstruction of All Known Liturgical Components and Their Respective Order

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Abstract: Recent studies on early Christian gatherings have demonstrated convincingly that the Greco-Roman banquet was the context in which Christians gathered for their meetings. What has not been provided, however, is a comprehensive discussion of what Christians did during said gatherings, and in what order they did it. This article attempts to discuss all known components of early Christian gatherings and to arrange them in their relative order.

Key terms: liturgy, early Christian gatherings, Greco-Roman banquet, meals

I. Introduction[1]

Over approximately the last twenty years, liturgiologists have been experiencing a paradigm shift in their field, with recent studies shifting away from looking to Greco-Roman and/or Jewish liturgies (especially the synagogue) as possible origins for early Christian liturgy,[2] and instead looking to the broadly defined Greco-Roman banquet.[3] This paradigm shift has forced liturgiologists to study afresh the original sources, and has resulted in many significant findings. However, there remain at least two interrelated lacunae, namely, to provide a comprehensive treatment of all

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1. I would like to thank Andrew McGowan and Valeriy Alikin for their helpful discussion and comments on earlier stages of this article.

2. For a survey of this shift, cf. Valeriy Alexandrovich Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering: Origin, Development and Content of the Christian Gathering in the First to Third Centuries* (SVC 102; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 2-14.

3. Dennis Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 1-46; Alikin, *Earliest History*, 17-78; Paul Bradshaw and Maxwell Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 1-24; Andrew McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 19-64.

known liturgical components that were practiced by Christians during their banquet gatherings in the first decades of the Christian movement's existence,[4] and to arrange them, to the extent possible, according to their relative order.

While it is true that during the last twenty years some studies have provided in-depth treatments of some of the known liturgical components (usually extending to cover the first few centuries), nothing yet exists that purports to set forth all of them from the first few decades of the Christian movement, and to do so in such a way that organizes them in their respective order. To this end, this article is divided into two parts: the first discusses some preliminary issues important to early Christian liturgy, and the second itemizes the various known liturgical components from the first few decades of the Christian movement and attempts to arrange them, to the extent possible, according to their respective order. As for sources, the New Testament writings form the primary sources,[5] while Greco-Roman, Jewish, and other early Christian sources have been relegated primarily to the footnotes and should be used to compare and contrast with the early Christian sources, rather than understood as strict parallels.

II. Preliminary Issues

Before discussing the various known liturgical components of early Christian liturgy, two preliminary issues must be discussed.

II.1. The Greco-Roman Banquet

First, it should be remembered that, as the new paradigm has demonstrated, the setting in which early Christian liturgy took place was the Greco-Roman banquet. Thus in 1 Corinthians 10-14 Paul discusses Christian gatherings at length and refers specifically to a δεῖπνον (*deipnon*; "evening meal", "banquet"[6]) in the context of their gatherings (11:17-32, esp. 20-21), and uses the verb συνέρχομαι (*sunerchomai*; "come together") to refer to both a gathering (11:17-18) as well as a meal (11:20-22, 33-34).[7] Such a claim does not negate any influence that Greco-Roman and/or Jewish liturgies

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4. That is, approximately during the first century, or during the time period covered by the various New Testament writings.

5. For the sake of this article, I have included the (quite limited) data from Acts 1-2, even though technically speaking they occur before the founding of the Church, that is, before the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The data from Acts 1-2 serve an ancillary role that is corroborated by other texts.

6. For the linguistic connotations of δεῖπνον from Homer to New Testament times, cf. Smith, *From Symposium*, 20-22.

7. Smith, *From Symposium*, 176. Paul also briefly discusses or alludes to early Christian gatherings in the context of a common meal in Rom 14:1-4, 13-23; Gal 2:11-14. It is within the banquet context that other New Testament texts make good sense; cf. 1 Cor 14:26; Eph 5:18.

might have had on early Christian gatherings, but rather understands the structure of early Christian gatherings to be shaped by the two-part Greco-Roman banquet, in which the first part consisted of a meal during which diners reclined and ate at short tables, and the second part of a symposium during which the tables were removed, wine was served, and discussion and entertainment began.[8] As Andrew McGowan writes of the centrality of meals in Christian gatherings, "They were not merely one sacramental part of a community or worship life but the central act around or within which others—reading and preaching, prayer and prophecy—were arranged."[9]

II.2. Two Related Elements

Second, there are at least two elements of early Christian gatherings that do not form part of liturgy proper, but that are so closely related to it that they ought to be mentioned briefly. The first element is the gathering days, times, locations, and size. As for the days, Sunday gatherings were common (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:1-4; Rev 1:10),[10] but there is evidence that Christians gathered on other days of the week as well (Acts 2:46; 20:31).[11] As for the times of day that they met, there does not appear to be any dominant pattern: there is evidence that they gathered at mid-morning (Acts 2:15; 19:9[12]), in the afternoon (Acts 3:1), and in the late evening (Acts 20:7). This evidence coheres with the testimony that Paul had admonished the church in Ephesus νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν (*nukta kai hemeran*; "night and day"; Acts 20:31). As for the locations, since meals provided the setting and framework in and around which Christian gatherings took place, it is of no surprise that there is extensive evidence that Christians gathered in houses (Acts 1:13; 2:2, 46; 5:42; 8:3; 12:12; 16:40; 17:4-6; 20:8, 20-21; Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; 1 Tim 3:4-5, 15; Phlm 2 [cf. 22]; 2 Jn 10).[13] Perhaps one of the reasons why it was imperative for bishops to be hospitable (1 Tim 3:2) was because they hosted the gatherings. This should be balanced, however, with evidence that other Christians hosted gatherings as well (Acts 5:42; 8:3; 20:20;

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8. Smith, *From Symposium*, 28-29; Alikin, *Earliest History*, 17-39; Bradshaw and Johnson, *Eucharistic Liturgies*, 3.

9. *Ancient*, 19-20; cf. 30. For meals in a Greco-Roman context, cf. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11:24 (initiation banquet); for an Essene context, cf. Josephus, *War* 2:130, 132.

10. *Barnabas* 15:8-9 is the first undisputed reference to Sunday gatherings for worship; cf. Justin Martyr, *Apol.* 1:67. Other probable references to Sunday gatherings are *Did.* 14:1; Ignatius, *Magn.* 9:1. For discussion, cf. S. R. Llewelyn, "The Use of Sunday for Meetings of Believers in the New Testament," *NT* 43 (2001): 205-223; Alikin, *Earliest History*, 40-49.

11. This appears to be the case with the Christians under Pliny's jurisdiction in Pontus-Bithynia (cf. *Letter* 96:7) and may be the case in *Did.* 4:2; 16:2.

12. That is, if the Western reading of "from the fifth hour to the tenth" is historically reliable.

13. There is evidence, however, that early Christians gathered in other settings as well; cf. Acts 2:46 (temple courts); 5:12 (Solomon's Colonnade); 19:9 (Tyrannus' lecture hall).

Rom 12:13; 1 Tim 5:10; 2 Tim 3:6-7[?]).[14] If Revelation 3:20 is to be understood as a reference to early Christian gatherings, then it would be significant testimony to early Christian belief in the (spiritual) presence of Christ at said gatherings (cf. Mt 18:20).[15] Nevertheless, some texts suggest that unbelievers were not unwelcomed at early Christian gatherings, thus making uncertain the "purity" of these gatherings.[16] As for the size, archaeological excavations of homes belonging to the wealthy in Roman cities reveal that dining rooms could accommodate around nine people for the purposes of dining (taking into consideration the tables and reclining couches), or perhaps twice as many if the attendants were seated as opposed to reclined (as appears to have been the case; cf. 1 Cor 14:30; Jas 2:2-3);[17] otherwise, the atrium area of Roman villas could accommodate around forty or fifty people.[18]

The second element included here is baptism. While it does appear that baptism had its own (simple) liturgy from very early times (ex., Mt 28:19; Acts 8:36-37; cf. *Did.* 7), it seems best to include baptism as one of the final elements of missionary preaching (ex., Acts 2:37-41) and thus functioned as a gateway through which one must pass before participating in a Christian gathering proper (ex., Acts 2:41-42; cf. *Did.* 7-10).[19] It is possible that baptism was accompanied by a formula pronounced by the baptizer (Mt 28:19; Rom 10:9-10[?]; 1 Cor 1:13; cf. *Did.* 7:1) and/or a confession

14. In the case of the early Jerusalem church with at least 5,000 of Christians (Acts 4:4; 6:7), hundreds of host homes would have been necessary (cf. Acts 5:42). Nevertheless, even with the presence of so many homes, divided perhaps based on issues such as language (Acts 6:1), it is important to note that early Christians still saw themselves as part of *one* church; cf. Acts 6:2; 8:1; 1 Cor 14:23(?).

15. For discussion and argumentation tending in this direction, cf. G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 308-309.

16. For New Testament texts that may suggest the presence of unbelievers in early Christian gatherings, cf. Acts 27:35-36; 1 Cor 5:9-13; 14:16, 23-25; Rev 3:9. Perhaps the Christians continued this practice based on Jesus' example, ex., Mk 2:15-17. How this practice may be harmonized with other evidence that unbelievers and/or false brethren were to be excluded from the meal (Heb 13:10; 2 Pet 2:13; Jd 12; cf. Did 4:14; 14:1-3) is uncertain; one possible solution is that it was left to the discretion of each church.

17. Acts 15:5, 7 also implies that Christians were seated during gatherings, but the context of this particular gathering is unclear. Although somewhat later, Irenaeus states that he remembered where Polycarp was accustomed to sit and discourse (Eusebius, *HE* 5:20), thus implying that at times even the speaker(s) was (were) seated while teaching (cf. Mt 5:1).

18. Smith, *From Symposium*, 14-17, 25-27. For gathering days, times, locations and size in a synagogue context, cf. Philo, *Hypothetica* 7:12; *On Dreams* 2:127; Lk 4:16-20; Acts 13:14-16; 16:13-16(?); Josephus, *Apion* 1:209; 2:175; *Life* 279, 280; *Antiq.* 14:258, 261, 263-264; 16:43; Theodotos' synagogue dedicatory inscription; *m*. Meg. 3:6-4:1; for an Essene context, cf. Philo, *Every Good Man*, 81; for a Therapeutae context, cf. Philo, *Contemplative Life*, 30, 32.

19. For evidence that baptism had a shaping influence on Christian theology and self-understanding, cf. Rom 6:1-11; 1 Cor 1:13-16; Gal 3:27; Tit 3:5.

pronounced by the baptized (Acts 8:37), and that it included a change of clothing of some sort (Gal 3:27; Col 3:5-14 [esp. 9-10]).[20] Later Christian sources connect baptism with other liturgical elements such as fasting, prayer(s), exchange of the kiss (of peace), the Eucharist, and a prayer of thanksgiving, but it is unknown to what extent they reflect the practice of Christians from the first decades of the movement.[21]

III. Early Christian Liturgical Components

Whereas the Greco-Roman banquet setting is becoming a more established theory amongst liturgiologists, a comprehensive discussion of the known liturgical components as well as their relative order are less well-established. These less well-established aspects of early Christian liturgy form the focus of this section.[22] Regarding the issue of relative order, while it is true that some texts imply freedom and spontaneity during early Christian gatherings (1 Cor 14:26; Jas 5:13-16), nevertheless the Greco-Roman banquet itself offers a broad macro-structure for the relative ordering of at least some of the liturgical components,[23] and other texts and logical inference can be used to deduce the relative ordering of others (see below). Finally, the evidence suggests that some components were more regularly celebrated than others due to the fact that the former were essential components to (weekly) early Christian gatherings whereas the latter were more sporadic and depended on external factors to necessitate their celebration. This aspect, too, is treated briefly in the ensuing discussion.

III.1. Liturgical Components During the Meal

The meal was the first part of the Greco-Roman banquet, and therefore was the first part of the early Christian gathering. Being that this part of the banquet was centered

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20. Regarding the issue of nude baptism, Andrew McGowan refers to the "common expectation that candidates strip" before baptism. He later writes, "As a form of bathing, baptism of course required the removal of clothing and then subsequent reclothing.…So the Pauline metaphor of new clothing belongs to that context, and to custom" (*Ancient*, 152, 173). For other (possible) references to baptism in general, cf. Acts 16:15; 1 Cor 15:29; Tit 3:5(?); Heb 6:4(?); 10:22(?).

21. Cf. Acts 9:3-9, 17-19; *Did.* 7-10; Justin Martyr, *Apology* 1:61, 65-67. For baptism in a Greco-Roman context, cf. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11:23; for an Essene context, cf. Josephus, *War* 2:129, 137.

22. It should be noted that the listing and ordering of all the known liturgical components is not meant to imply their presence in all churches at all times. For example, the fact that some churches were rebuked for eating with false brethren (2 Pet 2:13; Jd 12) implies that they had not been carrying out church discipline. Nevertheless, this was an expected liturgical component.

23. Thus Alikin, *Earliest History*, 31. The evidence of Acts 20:7-11, in which (part of) the speaking element preceded the meal, diverges from the Greco-Roman banquet order.

around food and dining, liturgical components that have to do with table fellowship and the Eucharist meal are included here. The various liturgical components that were celebrated during this part of the banquet are discussed below.

As Christians entered the home, the evidence strongly suggests that they greeted one another with a kiss. Paul and Peter commanded the members of the respective churches to ἀσπάζομαι (*aspazomai*; "greet") one another with a φίλημα ἅγιον (*philema hagion*; "holy kiss"; Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Th 5:26) or φίλημα ἀγάπης (*philema agapes*; "kiss of love" 1 Pet 5:14).[24] The verb ἀσπάζομαι is frequently translated as "greet" and thus is included at the first liturgical component, but it should be noted that in other contexts it clearly carries the meaning of "dismiss" (ex., Acts 20:1; 21:6).[25] Thus it is not surprising that there is evidence that Christians also dismissed themselves with a kiss (Acts 20:36-38).[26] Given the inherent necessity of greeting (and dismissing) one another at early Christian gatherings, the holy/love kiss should be regarded as a regular liturgical component.[27]

Next, church discipline was carried out if necessary. In 1 Corinthians 5:3-8, 11 Paul states that the Eucharist meal was to be shared only among Christians who were not living in (certain kinds of) sin, and other texts speak negatively about non-faithful Christians and/or false brethren participating in the Eucharist meal (Heb 13:10; 2 Pet 2:13; Jd 12; cf. Did 4:14; 14:1-3), thereby implying that they should have been excluded beforehand. It is true that some aspects of church discipline appear to have taken place outside of the gathering (Mt 18:15-16), but the church's eventual involvement in the process (Mt 18:17; 3 Jn 10), or at least their being informed of the results (2 Th 3:6; 1 Tim 1:19-20; Tit 3:10-11), makes it clear that church discipline was a component of early Christian liturgy. It may have been at this point that elders were

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24. It is uncertain whether the kiss was accompanied by a verbal component, such as a formalized greeting and/or blessing.

25. Whatever the case may have been, there does not appear to have been any confusion amongst Paul's and Peter's original recipients, since they feel no need to explain or justify the practice (McGowan, *Ancient*, 55). McGowan suggests that the practice may already have been established among the followers of Jesus based on texts such as Mk 14:44-45; Lk 7:45 (*ibid*).

26. Additional evidence for a dismissal kiss may be extrapolated from the fact that the letter-reading component of the liturgy took place during the symposium (see below), at which time the Christian communities would have heard Paul's and Peter's commands to greet/dismiss one another with kisses. Nevertheless, this is not a necessary conclusion to be drawn.

27. An argument could be made to include here the component of foot washing (cf. Alikin, *Earliest History*, 266-268). The only potential evidence from the New Testament that this was practiced in early Christian gatherings is 1 Tim 5:9-10 (but cf. Lk 7:44-46; Jn 13:12-15), which is not necessarily a reference to liturgy proper (although neither does it exclude its possibility). The same problem is encountered with oil anointing (cf. Lk 7:44-46). For an interesting comparison to physical interaction in an Essene context, cf. Josephus, *War* 2:150.

rebuked as well (1 Tim 5:19-20), although this is not certain.[28] Additionally, it may have been at this point that repentant Christians were restored to fellowship, such as the forgiveness and restoration described in 2 Corinthians 2:10.[29] Since church discipline depended on external factors such as the exposure of sin to those of the community, it should be regarded as an occasional liturgical component.[30]

It seems best to include here, also before the Eucharist meal, introductory matters such as public greetings, introductions, and the reception of visitors. Second John 10-11 assumes the practice of greeting and receiving fellow (travelling) Christians, something that should not be extended to heretics (cf. v. 9). Similarly, Acts 9:26-28 states that Saul was unable to participate in Christian gatherings because the community was afraid and did not believe that he was truly a Christian, and that it was only after the mediation of Barnabas that he was able to have fellowship with them. The many other texts that speak of public greetings, introductions, and the reception of visitors reinforce its presence as a liturgical component (Acts 15:4; 18:22; 21:7, 17; 1 Cor 16:10; Col 4:10). Since this component depended on the travel of fellow Christians, it should be regarded as an occasional liturgical component.[31]

With these components of the gathering completed, the Eucharist meal itself was initiated. First Timothy 4:3-5 implies that meals were preceded by thanksgiving and/or prayer, and there seems to be no reason to exclude this pattern from the Eucharist meal. The phrase "Eucharist meal" is intentional in that the evidence suggests that the Eucharist considerably overlapped with, or perhaps was even identical to, the banquet meal. As Andrew McGowan has summarized the relationship, "At the earliest point, the structural relationship between Eucharist and banquet is one more of identity than of mere homology; the Eucharist is not *like* a banquet, it is a banquet."[32] Thus according to 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, the Eucharist meal consisted of two major parts:

28. Acts 11:1-3 may be an example of rebuking elders similar to the situation described in 1 Tim 5:9-10. If it is within this context that Gal 2:11ff. should be interpreted (as appears probable), then it underscores the seriousness of the situation, both of Peter's act (not participating in Eucharist meals with other Christians) as well as Paul's (publicly rebuking an elder).

29. Phil 4:2-3; Ignatius *Phld.* 3:2 may hint at restoration acts, but this is uncertain, as are their relative placements in the liturgy.

30. For another text that may speak of church discipline, cf. 1 Cor 4:21; for another early Christian text, cf. *Did.* 15:3; for a Temple context, cf. Josephus, *Apion* 2:194(?); for a synagogue context, cf. Josephus, *Life* 284(?); for an Essene context, cf. Josephus, *War* 2:143-144.

31. For public greetings, introductions, and the reception of visitors in a Christian context, cf. *Did.* 11:4-6; 12:1-5; for a Temple context, cf. 2 Mac 3:9; 4:22; for a synagogue context, cf. Theodotos' synagogue dedicatory inscription.

32. "Rethinking Eucharistic Origins," *Pacifica* 23 (2010): 173-191, here 186. Similarly Alikin, "Originally the Lord's Supper was celebrated as a full meal within the framework of the Sunday evening gathering" (*Earliest History*, 103) and Bradshaw and Johnson, "the meal was the Eucharist" (*Eucharistic Liturgies*, 10).

1) the bread part, which consisted of taking of bread (perhaps just one loaf; cf. 1 Cor 10:17), blessing (or giving thanks for) the bread, breaking the bread, distributing the bread, and interpreting the bread[33] and 2) the cup part, which consisted of taking the cup, giving thanks for the cup (cf. 1 Cor 10:16: εὐλογέω; *eulogeo*; "bless"),[34] distributing the cup, and interpreting the cup.[35] Bread in this context would not have been something foreign to the banquet meal, but rather formed an integral part of the meal itself. As Paul Bradshaw and Maxwell Johnson explain:

> As we have said, among the poor—and the Christian community in Jerusalem is constantly described as having been impoverished—bread would have constituted the main, if not the sole, ingredient of most meals. A Christian meal that consisted principally of bread might well therefore be adequately described by its opening ritual: in this case the breaking of bread really *was* the meal.[36]

Thus other references to the breaking of bread may be seen as references to the Eucharist meal as well (Acts 2:42, 26; 20:7, 11). Based on Paul's use of the verb καταγγέλλω (*katangello*; "proclaim") in 1 Corinthians 11:26, there may have been a verbal component to the Eucharist meal which focused on the Lord's death, but this is still uncertain.[37] Matthew 26:30 and Mark 14:26 further relate that after Jesus' meal with His disciples a hymn was sung,[38] but again it is uncertain if this pattern was

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33. For similar patterns, cf. Lk 9:16; 22:19; 24:30; Acts 27:34-36.

34. For an early example of Eucharist prayer, cf. *Did.* 9:2-4.

35. Lk 24:14-23; 1 Cor 10:16-17, 21; *Did.* 9:1-3 contain the order cup-bread instead of bread-cup. The order does not appear to be significant as it relates to meaning, and at any rate the components remain the same. The order of bread-cup found in Mt 26:26-30; Mk 14:22-25; 1 Cor 11:17-34 (esp. v. 25) is followed here.

36. *Eucharistic Liturgies*, 13.

37. Dennis Smith argues that "when the community eats with unity and equality, that is when they proclaim the death of the Lord" (*From Symposium*, 199), and *BDAG* agrees with this assessment: "τὸν θάνατον τοῦ κυρίου καταγγέλλετε *you proclaim* (by celebrating the sacrament rather than w. words) *the Lord's death* 1 Cor 11:26" (Fredrick William Danker [ed.], *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* [3rd ed.; Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000], s.v. καταγγέλλω; *katangello*). However this seems odd given the overwhelming propensity for the word group associated with *αγγελ (*angel*) to refer to oral communication. The verbal components of blessing, giving thanks, and interpretation of the bread and cup referred to in 1 Cor 11:23-26 might explain this "proclaiming."

38. Being that this was during the time of Passover, it is plausible that one of the Hallel Psalms (Ps 113-118) was sung; cf. Martin Hengel, "Das Christuslied im frühesten Gottesdienst," in *Weisheit Gottes—Geisheit der Welt: Festschrift für Kardinal Ratzinger zum 60. Geburtstag*, vol. 1, ed. Walter Baier *et al* (St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1987), 357-404, here 364; McGowan, *Ancient*, 115.

carried over into early Christian liturgy. The foregoing evidence makes it clear that the Eucharist meal was a regular liturgical component.[39]

III.2. Liturgical Components During the Symposium

The symposium was the second part of the Greco-Roman banquet, and therefore was the second part of the early Christian gathering. Being that this part of the banquet was centered around discussion and entertainment, liturgical components that have to do with oral communication are included here. The various liturgical components that were celebrated during this part of the banquet are discussed below.

Near the beginning of the second part of early Christian gatherings seems to be the public reading of texts. The evidence from 1 Timothy 4:13 and 2 Timothy 4:2 imply that the reading component preceded the preaching component.[40] Evidence for the public reading of texts is found in numerous writings, and the following references provide evidence or give commands that texts were to be read (with the texts in question placed in parentheses): Matthew 24:15 (Mt); Mark 13:14 (Mk); Acts 15:30 (council's letter); 16:4 (council's letter); 18:27 (letter from Ephesus to Achaia; cf. 19:1); 2 Corinthians 7:8 ("sorrowful letter"); 10:9-10 (Paul's letters to the Corinthians); Ephesians 3:4 (Eph); Colossians 4:16 (Col and Laodicean letter); 1 Thessalonians 5:27 (1 Th); 2 Thessalonians 2:15 (1-2 Th?); 3:14 (2 Th); 1 Timothy 4:13 (Old Testament?); Philemon 1-2 (Phlm); Hebrews 13:22 (Heb); 2 Peter 3:1 (1 and 2 Pet);[41] 1 John 5:13 (1 Jn); 2 John 1 (2 Jn); 3 John 9 (3 Jn); Revelation 1:3; 13:18; 17:9-10; 22:18-19 (all Rev).[42] Strangely absent from this list is any reference to the Hebrew Scriptures, but based on the well-established fact that the Hebrew Scriptures played

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39. However, it should be noted that at least occasionally Christians gathered while fasting (ex., Acts 13:1-3), thus removing the Eucharist meal as a liturgical component on these occasions. For probable New Testament references to the Eucharist meal, cf. Heb 13:10; 2 Pet 2:13; Jd 12. For possible New Testament allusions to (or echoes of) the Eucharist meal, cf. Lk 24:30; Acts 27:34-36. For probable and possible references to the Eucharist meal outside of the New Testament, cf. Ignatius, *Eph.* 20:2; *Magn.* 7:2(?); *Trall.* 2:3(?); *Phld.* 4; *Smyrn.* 6:2; 8:1-2; *Did.* 9-10; 14:1; for communal meals in a Therapeutae context, cf. Philo, *Contemplative Life* 37, 65, 73.

40. Evidence from various Jewish liturgies demonstrates that this was the normal order for their contexts. For a synagogue context, cf. Philo, *Hypothetica* 7:12-13; *On Dreams* 2:127; Lk 4:16-28; Acts 13:14-48; Josephus, *Apion* 2:175; *Antiq* 16:43(?); Theodotos' synagogue dedicatory inscription; for an Essene context, cf. Philo, *Every Good Man* 82; for a Therapeutae context, cf. Philo, *Contemplative Life* 31(?), 75-78. Moreover, logic and historical awareness tend to lead to this conclusion: Upon what else would early Christians routinely base their preaching?

41. 2 Pet 3:15-16 may also be a reference to the public reading of some of Paul's letters.

42. The space limitations of homes suggests that the same work was read multiple times in the same geographical area (ex., 1 Th 5:27[?]). For other early references to public readings, cf. *1 Clem. Salut*; 47:1; *2 Clem.* 17:3; 19:1; Ignatius, *Eph. Salut*; 20:1; *Magn. Salut*; *Trall. Salut*; *Rom. Salut*; *Phld. Salut*; *Smyrn. Salut*; *Mart. Pol. Salut*; 20:1; *Barn.* 1:5.

a central role in early Christian teaching and preaching, and based on the numerous quotations of and allusions to various passages from the Hebrew Scriptures in early Christian writings that suggest the recipients' familiarity with said passages, this corpus may also be assumed to have been read.[43] At least on certain occasions public readings were followed by an oral report that would complement the reading (Eph 6:21; Col 4:7-8). With so many known references to public reading, as well as its close relationship to preaching and teaching (see below), it should be considered as a regular liturgical component.[44]

Following the public reading, it seems that some type of preaching and teaching, conceived of in their broadest terms possible, took place (Acts 2:42; 5:42; 11:23-26; 18:11; 1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 4:2; Heb 2:3[?]; 13:7). As noted above, 1 Timothy 4:13 and 2 Timothy 4:2 connect reading and preaching, and thus it seems likely that the reading formed the basis (or starting point) of preaching and teaching at least occasionally.[45] Other preaching and teaching, however, may have been independent of any text (1 Cor 14:26?; Col 3:16?).[46] As far as the form of preaching and teaching, the tendency was towards dialogue and open discussion as opposed to monologue. Acts 20:11 says that Paul ὁμιλήσας ἄχρι αὐγῆς (*homilesas achri auges*; "conversed until dawn"). Such a lengthy gathering suggests that the teaching time was not restricted to a monologue but rather was more opened to dialogue and discussion,[47] and other Jewish texts from

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43. For discussion, cf. Philip Towner, "The Function of the Public Reading of Scripture in 1 Timothy 4:13 and in the Biblical Tradition," *SBJT* 7 no 3 (2003): 44-55, here 48. Alikin's claim that "there is no indication until the third century that Christians in their gatherings read the Law of Moses" and that therefore they read the Prophets, is extremely unlikely in my opinion (*Earliest History*, 156-157).

44. For references to public reading of texts in a Temple context, cf. 1 Mac 10:7, 14:16-23(?); 15:1-9(?), 24; *m.* Tamid 5:1; for a synagogue context, cf. Philo, *Hypothetica* 7:12; *On Dreams* 2:127; Lk 4:16-19; Acts 13:15; 15:21 (cf. 2 Cor 3:14-15); Josephus, *Apion* 2:175; *Life* 285; *Antiq.* 16:43(?); Theodotos' synagogue dedicatory inscription; *m.* Meg. 3:6-4:1; 4:4-6; for an Essene context, cf. Philo, *Every Good Man* 82; Josephus, *War* 2:136, 159; for a Therapeutae context, cf. Philo, *Contemplative Life*, 31(?), 65, 75.

45. Alikin contests the idea that early Christian preaching was based on the public reading of texts (*Earliest History*, 189-191), but the texts cited above combined with evidence from various Jewish liturgies makes it likely that it was based on the public reading of texts. For a synagogue context, cf. Philo, *Hypothetica* 7:11-13; *On Dreams* 2:127; Lk 4:16-30; Acts 13:13-48(?); Josephus, *Apion* 2:175-178; *Antiq.* 16:43(?); Theodotos' synagogue dedicatory inscription; for an Essene context, cf. Philo, *Every Good Man is Free* 81-82; for a Therapeutae context, cf. *Contemplative Life* 30-90.

46. There are other examples of speaking, such as discussing community issues, giving updates, and bringing news, that do not appear connected to any reading at all (Acts 1:15-22; 4:23-31; 15:4; 16:4; 3 Jn 5-6).

47. *BDAG* provides general glosses that are broad enough to include both types of communication (s.v. ὁμιλέω; *homileo*). For other examples of lengthy gatherings, cf. Acts 3:1 and 4:3 (evangelistic context); 5:7 (text suggests no break in the meeting).

the time period[48] combined with the indirect evidence of Acts 15:1-2 and 1 Cor 14:35,[49] support this thesis. In fact, it appears that the gathering's "primary" speaker was not the only speaker, since 1 Corinthians 14:26 says that ἕκαστος (*hekastos*; "each one") had a διδαχή (*didache*; "lesson"), and Colossians 3:16 similarly testifies to reciprocal teaching and admonition (διδάσκοντες καὶ νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτούς; *didaskontes kai nouthetountes heautous*; cf. Rom 15:14; Heb 5:12[?]).[50] Due to the centrality of preaching and teaching in early Christian gatherings, it should be seen as a regular liturgical component.[51]

After reading and preaching, it becomes practically impossible to establish a relative order of the remaining liturgical components. The freedom and spontaneity attested to in 1 Corinthians 14:26 and James 5:13-16 appears to apply especially to this part of the gathering. Thus while pneumatic experiences and spontaneous outbursts, healing, singing, prayer, appointments, and the collection and distribution of goods and monies are discussed in this order in what follows, it does not reflect any known relative order.[52]

Pneumatic experiences and spontaneous outbursts appear at various places throughout the book of Acts (ex., 2:4, 43; 11:27-30; 21:4, 8-14), and the evidence from other texts implies that such experiences were frequent (Gal 3:5; 1 Cor 11:2-16; 14:26, 29; Heb 2:4). As regarding the specific pneumatic experience of prophecy, it tended toward a two-part process, namely, the prophecy proper (always containing an audible component, although at times accompanied by a visual component) followed by its evaluation by others.[53] The evaluation component could be what 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21;[54] 1 John 4:1-3; and Revelation 2:2 are referring to by δοκιμάζω and πειράζω (*dokimazo* and *peirazo*; "testing") the prophets and apostles that speak to the community. Although the meaning of texts such as 1 Corinthians 14:13-16 are still debated, it appears that some acts such as speaking in tongues, praying,

48. For a synagogue context, cf. Philo, *Hypothetica* 7:13; *On Dreams* 2:127; Lk 4:21-28.

49. That is, although women were not allowed to ask questions during the gathering, the same prohibition was not given to men, thereby implying their permission to ask questions.

50. Cf. Rom 12:6-8 for another text that implies that multiple people had speaking gifts, thereby implying multiple speakers during the gathering.

51. For references to preaching and teaching in a Christian context, cf. *Did.* 4:1; for a Temple context, cf. Lk 19:47; 20:1; 21:37-38; Acts 5:42; for a synagogue context, cf. Philo, *Hypothetica* 7:13; *On Dreams* 2:127; Lk 4:21-28; Acts 13:16-48(?); Josephus, *Apion* 2:175; *Antiq.* 16:43(?); Theodotos' synagogue dedicatory inscription; for an Essene context, cf. Philo, *Every Good Man* 82; for a Therapeutae context, cf. Philo, *Contemplative Life*, 31, 75-78.

52. This is essentially the view stated by Alikin, *Earliest History*, 65. There also may be an echo of spontaneity in early Christian gatherings in 1 Th 5:16-22.

53. A similar two-step process may be found in Ignatius, *Phld.* 7. On certain occasions, however, a prophet is not to be tested or evaluated (cf. *Did.* 11:7). *Shep.* 43:9 refers to prophesying but does not mention the evaluation component.

54. Note prophecy's connection with the Spirit via v. 19.

and singing were closely related to the S/spirit, and therefore may have manifested themselves spontaneously (although not uncontrollably; cf. 1 Cor 14:30-33). Whatever the case may have been, it was assumed that at least some would respond to these acts with τὸ ἀμὴν (*to amen*; "the Amen"; 1 Cor 14:16). A similar phenomenon may be found in 1 Corinthians 12:3 with reference to the confessions Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς[55] and Κύριος Ἰησοῦς (*Anathema Iesous* and *Kurios Iesous*; "Jesus is accursed" and "Jesus is Lord"), but not enough is known to draw any conclusion. Due to their pervasive presence in various New Testament works, pneumatic experiences and spontaneous outbursts should be considered as a regular liturgical component.[56]

Healing appears as a spiritual gift in 1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30, and it is set within the context of a Christian gathering in James 5:13-16. In the James text, the process is structured, with the sick person calling for the elders of the church, followed by the elders anointing the sick person and praying over him or her, followed by the sick person being healed and forgiven of his or her sins.[57] As 2 Timothy 4:20 demonstrates, this component either was not always evoked or did not always work. Since healing depended on the infirmities of the members of the community, it should be seen as an occasional liturgical component.[58]

Singing appears as a communal activity at various places in the New Testament writings. The example of Jesus and His disciples places singing at the end of their gathering (Mt 26:30; Mk 14:26), but other texts more directly related to Christian liturgy testify that singing was carried out more spontaneously and was performed either individually (ex., 1 Cor 14:26; Jas 5:13) or in groups (Rom 15:5-6;[59] Eph 5:19; Col 3:16; Heb 13:15[?]). It is almost certain that the Psalms were sung by Christians (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16; cf. Lk 24:44) and Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 1:15-20; and Revelation 5:9-10 may reflect they type of original compositions that were sung in contexts such as the one described in 1 Corinthians 14:26 (the Christological focus of these original compositions should not be overlooked).[60] Of the taxonomy "psalms,

55. A similarly terse and apparently blasphemous declaration attributed to pneumatically inspired speech may be found in *Did.* 11:12 which says that a prophet who says in the S/spirit δός μοι ἀργύρια (*dos moi arguria*; "Give me money!") is not to be listened to.

56. For references to pneumatic experiences and spontaneous outbursts in a synagogue context, cf. Philo, *Hypothetica* 7:13; for an Essene context, cf. Josephus, *War* 2:159; for a Therapeutae context, cf. Philo, *Contemplative Life* 31, 77.

57. Note the parallels with Acts 8:18-24, where Peter confronts Simon (Magnus) over his sin, upon which he asks Peter to pray for him that he may be forgiven and not punished.

58. It is unclear if texts such as Acts 4:15-16 took place during Christian gatherings or not. There are no known references to healing in Greco-Roman or Jewish sources (that is, within liturgical contexts).

59. Martin Hengel considers Rom 15:5-6 the oldest Christian reference to "hymnischen Gotteslobs" ("Das Christuslied," 386).

60. For another example of Christian song during the gathering, again with a Christological focus, cf. Pliny, *Letter* 96:7. A. N. Sherwin-White states that the Latin phrase "carmen…dicere" used by Pliny is "the ordinary Latin for singing a poem or song" and

hymns, and spiritual songs" (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16), Andrew McGowan writes, "That familiar phrase 'psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs' is less likely to refer to three specific kinds of song than to be three words or phrases combined to convey one complex idea. The songs of the earliest Christian assemblies could nevertheless have included scriptural texts, traditional hymns, and original compositions."[61] It is possible that musical instruments were used to aid the singing (ex., 1 Cor 14:7-8; Rev 5:8), but they do not receive much attention in early Christian literature, thereby suggesting their limited importance.[62] Whatever the nature of singing may have been, singing itself appears to have been a regular liturgical component.[63]

Prayer is frequently cited in the context of Christian gatherings. It is one of the activities that goes back to the very beginning of the Church (Acts 1:14, 24-25; 4:24-30; 12:5, 12),[64] and Paul places it πρῶτον πάντων (*proton panton*; "first of all") of the practices that he παρακαλῶ (*parakalo*; "urge") Timothy and the Ephesian church to do (1 Tim 2:1, 8). The evidence suggests that various people prayed for various reasons: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 assumes that men and women regularly pray, 1 Corinthians 14:14-16 understands prayer to be more of a pneumatic experience, James 5:13 says that those who suffer should pray, and James 5:15 places prayer on the lips of elders praying over the sick. The evidence from Romans 8:15 assumes that Christians addressed God as αββα (*abba*; "father"), which itself may have been the "shorthand" form of evoking the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:9; Lk 11:2). As for bodily postures, kneeling (Acts 9:40; cf. Eph 3:14) and the raising of hands (1 Timothy 2:8)[65] is attested, and other postures such as standing and laying prostrate may be implied

thus "hymns with responses (*uicem*) are probably meant" (*Fifty Letters of Pliny* [2nd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969], 177). For an explanation of various views as well as an argumentation similar to Sherwin-White's proposal, cf. Ralph Martin, "A Footnote to Pliny's Account of Christian Worship," *VE* 3 (1964): 51-57. Acts 16:25 may carry an echo of Christian liturgical practice. For other examples of early Christian songs, cf. *Odes of Solomon* and *Phos Hilaron*, the former probably from the turn of the first century and the latter probably from the middle of the second.

61. *Ancient*, 114.

62. Other early references to instruments in early Christian gatherings are *Odes Sol.* 14:8; 26:3.

63. For references to singing in a Greco-Roman context, cf. Manilius, *Astronomy* 1:22(?); for a Temple context, cf. Sir 50:18; 1 Mac 4:54-55; 2 Mac 1:30; 10:7; *m*. Tamid 7:4; for a Therapeutae context, cf. Philo, *Contemplative Life*, 83-89.

64. Note that there are several texts that testify of Christians praying at set times of the day: Acts 2:15; 2:42; 3:1; 10:3, 9; *Did*. 8:3. The repeated mention of praying at the 3rd, 6th, and 9th hours suggests that these were Jewish prayers times, and not prayers recited during the evening Christian banquets, which is the focus of this study.

65. For other references to outstretched hands, cf. *1 Clem*. 2:3; Philo, *Contemplative Life* 66, 89; Josephus, *Apion* 1:209. McGowan states that standing with extended arms and raised eyes was "the typical posture for prayer" in the second and third centuries, thus suggesting its antiquity (*Ancient*, 193). For evidence that orientation was towards the east, cf. *ibid*, 193-194.

from other texts.[66] Given the diversity of contexts in which prayer was utilized, it can safely be concluded that prayer was a regular liturgical component.[67]

Appointments, in the sense of dedicating certain individuals for specific roles and responsibilities, appear in various contexts throughout the New Testament writings, such as the ordaining of men to church leadership and diaconal work, the sending of messengers and/or representatives from one church to another, and the sending out of missionaries (Acts 1:23-26; 6:1-6; 11:33; 13:1-3; 14:23; 15:2-3, 22-23, 30; 2 Cor 8:19).[68] In the case of Timothy's ordination to church leadership, the appointment was accompanied by the laying on of hands and prophecy (1 Tim 1:18; 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6; cf. 1 Tim 5:22).[69] While many of the appointment texts differ from one another, three repeated elements include prayer, fasting, and the laying on of hands (Acts 6:6; 13:3; 14:23; 1 Tim 4:14). Since this component depended on external factors such as the need(s) of (a) church(es), it should be considered as an occasional liturgical component.[70]

Finally, the collection and distribution of goods and monies appears in various texts, especially in the book of Acts (2:45; 4:32-37; 5:1-11; 6:1-6; 11:27-30). Other texts such as Romans 15:25-28; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 and 2 Corinthians 8-9 speak of the collection of funds to be sent to the Christians in Jerusalem, and the financial remuneration of at least some of church leadership implies some form of collection

66. For standing, cf. Lk 18:11, 13. For Jewish references to prayer while standing, cf. Philo, *Contemplative Life* 66, 89; *m. Ber* 5:1. Although not specifically mentioning prayer, 1 Cor 14:25 may be interpreted to imply that some also fell prostrate in prayer; for other references to prostration, cf. Sir 50:17, 21; *1 Clem.* 48:1.

67. On several occasions it is difficult to know if individual or corporate prayer is being referred to: Rom 15:30-31; 2 Cor 1:11; Eph 5:20; 6:18-20; Col 4:3; 1 Th 5:17, 25. This difficulty of distinguishing between individual and corporate prayer has been noted also by Ralph Martin (*Worship in the Early Church* [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1975], 28). For other references to early public prayer, cf. *1 Clem.* 59:3-61:3; Ignatius, *Eph.* 5:2; *Magn.* 7:1; *Trall.* 12:2; Polycarp, *Phil.* 12:3; *Did.* 9-10; *Shep.* 43:14; for a Greco-Roman context, cf. Manilius, *Astronomy* 1:21; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11:25 (initiation ceremony); for a Temple context, cf. Sir 50:16-17, 19, 21 (prostrated vv. 17, 21); 1 Mac 7:36-38; 12:11; 2 Mac 1:23-29; 3:15-21; 10:4; 14:34; 15:12; Mt 21:13; Mk 11:17; Lk 18:9-14; 19:45-46; Acts 3:1; Josephus, *Apion* 2:196-197; *m.* Ta'anit 4:1; for a synagogue context, cf. Acts 16:13-16(?); Josephus, *Life* 277, 295; *Apion* 1:209; *Antiq.* 14:258, 260; *m.* Ber 5:1; for an Essene context, cf. Josephus, *War* 2:128; for a Therapeutae context, cf. Philo, *Contemplative Life* 66, 89.

68. Other possible texts that speak of appointments are Acts 8:14; 9:38; 11:22, 25(?).

69. First Tim 6:12 may be referring to the same event, in which case Timothy's confession would also have formed part of this appointment service. According to Alikin, there is no known Greco-Roman background to the laying on of hands, and Jewish evidence is contemporaneous with New Testament times. It may be, therefore, that this act "arose simultaneously among Christians and Jews, in one common or two parallel developments" (*Earliest History*, 261).

70. For other early references to appointments, cf. *1 Clem.* 44:3; *Did.* 15:1; Ignatius, *Phil.* 10:1-2; *Smyr.* 11:2-3; *Poly.* 7:2; for a Temple context, cf. 1 Mac 14:25-29; Heb 5:1; 7:20.

and distribution of monies (1 Cor 9:3-14; 1 Tim 5:17-18; cf. *Did.* 11:12; 13:1-7). First Timothy 5:3, 16 speaks of the church's responsibility to provide financial care for its widows, and other texts call on those with financial resources to provide for the poor (Rom 12:13; 1 Tim 6:17-18; Jas 2:15-16; 1 Jn 3:17). The spiritual gifts of giving and repartitioning appear in Romans 12:8.[71] These texts demonstrate that the primary purpose of this act was to help the poor and widows and to compensate church leadership for their labor. Some of the needs were more occasional (ex., poor relief) whereas others were more regular (ex., remuneration of church leadership), which is how this component should be evaluated.[72]

As for the end of the gathering, there is not enough evidence to postulate a closing liturgical component. Perhaps there was a closing song (cf. Mt 26:30; Mk 14:26) or dismissal kiss (cf. Acts 20:36-38; see above), but no firm conclusion can be drawn.

IV. Conclusion

This study has attempted to discuss all known liturgical components of early Christian gatherings and to organize them in their relative order. In total, twelve different liturgical components have been identified,[73] with seven identified as regular components, four as occasional components, and one as a partly regular and partly occasional component. Based on the Greco-Roman banquet setting in which early Christian gatherings took place, four liturgical components took place during the meal part of the banquet (centered around table fellowship and the Eucharist), and eight liturgical components took place during the symposium part of the banquet (centered around oral communication).

In brief, what can be reconstructed reasonably of a banquet-centered, early Christian gathering is as follows: after greeting one another with a kiss, communal issues such as church discipline, public greetings, introductions, and the reception of visitors were carried out if necessary. After this, the Eucharist meal was celebrated,

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71. Based on the structure of Rom 12:6-8, it appears that the gifts of prophecy and service in vv. 6-7 function as head terms (cf. 1 Pet 4:11) that are further explicated in their respective turns (*contra* Dunn, *Romans 9-16* 729). Thus, service is further explained in vv. 7-8 as giving, repartition (of said gifts), and acts of mercy. This seems to fit within the diaconal sphere of ministry, and thus it could be that the liturgical component of the collection and distribution of goods and monies was (primarily) entrusted to them.

72. For references to the collection and distribution of goods and monies in the context of early Christian gatherings, cf. Acts 2:44-45; Gal 6:6; Jas 2:15-16; 1 Jn 3:17; *Did.* 4:5-8(?); 13:4; 15:4(?); Ignatius, *Trall.* 2:3(?); *Shep.* 103:2(?); for a Temple context, cf. 2 Mac 3:6, 10; Mk 12:41-44; Lk 21:1-4; Heb 7:5, 9; Josephus, *Antiq.* 16:45; for a synagogue context, cf. Josephus, *Life* 284; for an Essene context, cf. Josephus, *War* 2:134.

73. This number could be increased to as high as fourteen if foot washing and oil anointing were included (see above), and as high as fifteen if baptism were included (see above).

with bread and wine playing a central role.[74] After the Eucharist meal, there was a reading from a text followed by preaching and teaching. After this, various items could happen, such as pneumatic experiences and spontaneous outbursts, healing, singing, prayer, appointments, and the collection and distribution of goods and monies. Perhaps the gathering ended with a song or dismissal kiss, but this is conjectural. Whether or not there were other liturgical components of early Christian gatherings, the evidence only allows this much to be reconstructed.

74. However, Acts 15:20, 29; Rom 14:2-3, 14-23; 1 Cor 8; 10:25-26 demonstrate that other foods such as meat and vegetables were also eaten, and Rom 14:21; 1 Tim 5:23 suggest that some Christians were hesitant to drink wine. For discussion, cf. Andrew McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Reforming Credobaptism: A Westminster Alternative for Reformed Baptist Identity

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Abstract: This paper argues that there is a pathway for Baptists to confess the spirit of the Reformed faith and the heart of the Reformed covenantal understanding while maintaining their position on credobaptism. To defend this claim, this paper defines the spirit of the Reformed faith, which is the litmus test for the legitimacy of historical and contemporary "Reformed" Baptist belief. In doing so, it analyzes the most common Baptist failures in relation to the Reformed faith. Despite their significant failures, it is argued that there is a twofold pathway for Baptists to affirm Reformed theology and credobaptism simultaneously while remaining theologically coherent.

Key Words: Reformed theology, covenant theology, baptism, sacrament, Baptist

Introducing the Problem

It is common for traditional Reformed folk to scoff at the idea of a "Reformed Baptist." They consider Reformed theology and believer's baptism to be like oil and water—the two cannot mix. Claiming the theology of the Magisterial Reformers while holding to Baptist principles on the sacrament of baptism is incoherent.[1] Baptists cannot believe and confess the Reformed covenant theology (henceforth CT) of Westminster while rejecting its vision for baptism and withholding the waters from the children of believers. Despite this, Reformed CT does not necessarily deny credobaptism.[2] Credobaptism has the theological resources to heartily affirm all that is essential to Reformed identity. To prove this claim, the argument proceeds in three steps. First, it provides a traditional account of the essential Reformed identity as a litmus test for credobaptism. Next, it shows how most Baptists revise the essentials of Reformed identity. Finally, it offers a potential path for the Baptist convinced

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1. See Matthew C. Bingham, ""Reformed Baptist": Anachronistic Oxymoron or Useful Signpost?" in *On Being Reformed: Debates over a Theological Identity* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 28.

2. *Contra* Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 725-41. Most paedobaptist's assume that CT necessarily implies paedobaptism.

of the theological essentials of Reformed identity alongside their Baptist distinctive of credobaptism.

As seen from the overall goal, this paper is not intended to join the overly populated landscape of typical anti-paedobaptist literature. Both theological positions (the essentials of Reformed identity and credobaptism) are assumed as accurate and the defense of such views is left to other works. The main goal is to show various popular revisions to Reformed identity as false hopes for Baptists desirous of Reformed theology. With those removed, it makes clear the most promising ways for someone who desires to affirm Reformed theology *and* credobaptism.

Clarifying Reformed Identity

Calvinistic Baptists who are fond of the Reformed label usually think they are as Reformed as any other. Once they lay hold of Calvin and the Reformers they enjoy claiming the title of "Reformed." But is this true? Can they be Reformed if they fail to uphold all of Reformed identity? Therefore, what is essential to Reformed identity? The easiest description of Reformed identity is found in the original Westminster or Belgic confession. R. Scott Clark argues in this direction, saying that Reformed "denotes a confession, a theology, piety, and practice that are well known and well defined and summarized in ecclesiastically sanctioned and binding documents."[3] The confessional doctrine as a whole is a unified system that cannot be taken only at points of agreement and rejected elsewhere.[4] Yet, it is not possible for the Reformed identity to be synonymous with the wording of the original documents (i.e. a full-subscription position). For example, is it necessary to Reformed identity to hold that the civil magistrate has power to call synods (Westminster 23.3)? Most would disagree. Therefore, not all of the original confession is necessary for Reformed identity.[5] Not every word and line must be binding. There is room for diversity in particular doctrinal loci. But just how much room for diversity is there? Since the confession is the only stable definition of Reformed theology, how can diversity be allowed? The best way to allow for diversity is by holding to a *system* subscription model rather than a *full* subscription model.[6] Reformed theology is not defined by the exact wording but by the unified system of doctrine. But what constitutes the unified system of the confessions?

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3. R. Scott Clark, *Recovering the Reformed Confession: Our Theology, Piety, and Practice* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R: 2008), 3; See also Chris Caughey and Crawford Gribben, "History, Identity Politics, and the "Recovery of the Reformed Confession"" in *On Being Reformed: Debates over a Theological Identity* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 23. They say: "the term does not have any fixed meaning—unless the meaning is to be strictly historical."

4. Richard A. Muller, "How Many Points?" *Calvin Theological Journal* 28 (1993), 428.

5. See Caughey and Gribben, "History, Identity Politics," 6-13.

6. See Clark, *Recovering*, 172.

Certainly, being Reformed is vastly thicker than being a "Calvinist" as thought of in current terminology.[7] Contemporary "Calvinism" is often a thinly veiled focus on divine sovereignty in salvation. Holding to such Calvinism and the Synod of Dort alone does not make one Reformed. But Reformed identity is not less than such Calvinism. Therefore, it is appropriate to distinguish between first order Reformed doctrines and second order Reformed doctrines. Broadly, Reformed theology is often identified by an Augustinian doctrine of providence, an orthodox doctrine of God, and a Protestant soteriology. These are of first importance. But none of these are unique to Reformed theology.[8] For example, the church catholic has confessed the same doctrine of God throughout its existence.[9] There is no unique contribution made by the Reformed here. While these are necessary beliefs for the Reformed, they are not *sufficient*. Therefore, it is best to focus on the doctrines unique to the Reformed to find their true identity. Three doctrinal loci best define Reformed identity: covenant, sacrament, and ecclesiology.[10]

Foremost Reformed theology confesses covenant theology which is the ahistorical covenant of redemption and the historical covenants defined by the covenant of works and grace.[11] There are two aspects to this broad definition of CT that are expressive of Reformed identity. First, it holds to the classical one substance and two administrations CT, rather than any revisionist version. The one substance and two administrations construction is the beating heart of Reformed CT. For example, Michael Horton says, "*Reformed* theology is synonymous with covenant theology."[12] Herman Bavinck agrees, considering the Reformed vision of covenant to be "the fundamental premise and controlling principle of dogmatics as a whole…." for Reformed believers.[13] But it seems these quotations merely press the importance of the covenantal idea and not the particular doctrinal formulation. While true, William J. Van Asselt concurs with the necessity of one substance and two administrations by making the substantial claim that "all federal theologians

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7. Muller, "How Many Points?" 426.

8. Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 1:63-64.

9. Richard A. Muller, "Reformed Theology between 1600 and 1800," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology, 1600-1800*, ed. Ulrich L. Lehner, Richard A. Muller, and A. G. Roeber (Oxford: Oxford University, 2016), 170.

10. A full explanation of these doctrines is not given due to space. They are assumed for the sake of focusing on the primary argument.

11. See Muller, "Reformed Theology," 176; William J. Van Asselt, "Christ, Predestination, and Covenant in Post-Reformation Reformed Theology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology, 1600-1800*, ed. Ulrich L. Lehner, Richard A. Muller, and A. G. Roeber (Oxford: Oxford University, 2016), 222; R. Scott Clark, "Christ and Covenant: Federal Theology in Orthodoxy," in *A Companion to Reformed Orthodoxy*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 428.

12. Michael Horton, *Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids, Baker Books: 2006), 11.

13. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 3:210. See also Muller, "Reformed Theology," 174.

agreed on the twofold administration of the covenant of grace."[14] The word "all" needs emphasis. The Reformed universally refuse deviance from the confessional position of one substance and two administrations. Therefore, to deny this essential meaning of CT is to depart from the course of Reformed theology.

In contrast, some think Reformed CT means using the *concepts* of the covenant of works, grace, and redemption, while the formulation of the concepts and their meaning does not matter. They allow for difference in "degree—not in kind" on this point.[15] However, this makes little sense in light of the unified system. For example, there are CT adherents who use the phrase "dispensation" frequently when constructing their theology, yet their meanings for this word differ vastly from dispensationalists. Does this mean they merely differ in degree and not kind? Surely not. Granted, there is latitude here. As O. Palmer Robertson states, "Particular details of the covenants may vary. A definite line of progress may be noted. Yet the covenants of God are one."[16] While the details may vary, the core unity of the covenants cannot be surrendered. They are the same in substance, origin, and content, only differing in form.[17] Thus, the Reformed argue for a difference in clarity and form but not in objective benefit.[18] The content of salvation is the same, the means of salvation is the same, and the benefits of salvation are the same. For example, none in the Old Testament lack the internal substance or gifting of the Holy Spirit. The covenantal structure of one covenant under two administrations is *necessary* for Reformed identity. Reformed CT requires the oneness of God's covenants. Second, Reformed theology confesses the law of God as divided into three types of law: civil, ceremonial, and moral. Reformed theology believes that while the civil and ceremonial ended with the death and resurrection of Christ, the moral law exists in perpetuity.[19]

The second essential Reformed identity marker is a confession of the means of grace and the objectivity of grace in word and sacrament. It is necessary for Reformed identity to believe that God works primarily through his promised signs and seals of word and sacrament which objectively speak of God's grace to his people.[20] Baptism and the table do not merely take on qualities of remembrance for

14. Van Asselt, "Christ, Predestination, and Covenant," 223. See also I. John Hesselink, *On Being Reformed: Distinctive Characteristics and Common Misunderstandings* (New York: Reformed Church, 1988), 97.

15. See Brandon C. Jones, *Waters of Promise: Finding Meaning in Believer Baptism* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 81.

16. O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R: 1980), 28.

17. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:207; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox), 2.10.2.

18. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:211.

19. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, trans. George Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1997), 2:2, 141-45.

20. Clark, *Recovering*, 326-37.

the loyal soldier pledging his allegiance. They speak on behalf of God and promise grace to those who believe. And the word proclaimed is not a relic of a bygone age transfixed by monologues without the attention distractions of the Internet. It is the power of God unto salvation. Thus, for the Reformed, God is the primary referent of the sacraments, and the church focuses spirituality on these ordinary means by which God has promised to bless his people.

Third, Reformed theology has a particular vision of the church. They confess a visible and invisible doctrine of the church and a regulated religious worship.[21] Like covenant, two major themes are subsumed underneath this heading. First, the church is visible and invisible. There is a visible church in the world that gathers and confesses but contains both wheat and tares. In its external and visible administration it is mixed. There is also an invisible church worldwide that is completely pure and contains all true believers. Second, the Reformed church worships according to the regulative principle, which safeguards proper worship of God and its own Reformed identity. No formal worship of God should be attempted outside the explicit or necessarily entailed proscribed means within Scripture itself. This contrasts with the normative principle that would allow for worship of any kind not explicitly prohibited by Scripture.

Denying any of these substantial Reformed convictions is to cast oneself outside the camp of Reformed identity. These constitute the unified spirit of the Reformed faith and confession. Diversity in Reformed theology is possible, and a reality, but unity is necessary in these doctrines for the term "Reformed" to have any legitimate meaning beyond pop Calvinism. So, these are the markers of a "Reformed" identity. To make the coming argument as clear as possible, below again are the three markers in propositional format:

> (R1): Reformed theology confesses CT. It confesses the covenant of redemption and the historical covenants subsumed under the covenant of grace and works.
>> (R1*): Reformed CT confesses one substance and two administrations of the covenant of grace.
>> (R1**): Reformed CT confesses the Law of God as tripartite and the moral law as perpetually binding.
> (R2): Reformed theology confesses the two sacraments as the means of God's objective grace.
> (R3): Reformed theology confesses a visible and invisible doctrine of the church and a regulated religious worship.

Therefore, to be Reformed, one must hold to all three points at minimum—these summarize the distinctively Reformed characteristics of the unified system. One can be Reformed *if and only if* he holds to these, along with the first order doctrines.

21. See Wilhelmus A Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, ed. Joel R. Beeke, trans. Bartel Elshout (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 1992), 2:5-8; Clark, *Recovering*, 227-91.

There are no 2 or 2.5 point R's that can count as "Reformed." These are necessary conditions to obtain identity. Without these markers, the unified system is broken.

Surely many will quibble with these markers. Paedobaptist's will cry foul for not including infant baptism as a necessary condition. However, no matter how much one wants perfect uniformity on the doctrine of baptism in the church—even the Reformed tradition—it is not there.[22] Further, it is *not* a foundational doctrine—it is an inference from a foundational doctrine (that of CT). Many assume that the affirmation of classical CT necessarily leads to paedobaptism but such a view is not a valid argument. To obtain the conclusion of paedobaptism, a further premise must be offered alongside CT. Even more, paedobaptism is not a uniquely Reformed doctrine but one practiced by Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and the Eastern Orthodox.[23] Thus, the goal is to mark the universal necessary foundational designators of identity. Once (R1), (R2), and (R3) are confessed, debate over legitimate inferences may progress within the Reformed camp.

Baptists and the Reformed Identity

Now that Reformed theology has a more perceivable face, the following three questions need to be answered to understand where Baptists fit among the Reformed. First, is there any historical precedence for being a Reformed Baptist? Second, are there contemporary Reformed Baptists? Third, how would one remain Baptist and uphold the three Reformed identity markers? Any Baptist who desires to own the name "Reformed" needs to satisfy the three criteria for Reformed identity since denying any of the three is to deny the unified system of the Reformed faith. For example, no Roman Catholic can remain Roman Catholic and deny the Pope. Now, the first question is answered in the affirmative, but it is less clear than both typical Reformed non-Baptists believe and contemporary "Reformed" Baptists think. The second is answered affirmatively as well. There are contemporary Reformed Baptists, but they are few because of a myriad of factors. Finally, the final question is answered in the affirmative once again. There is a pathway for Reformed credobaptism without denying (R1), (R2), or (R3).

Historically, Reformed Baptists?

Historically, Baptists are no doubt genetic heirs of Reformed theology, but do they have more than a genealogical link—is there any theological connection?[24] Having

22. See Paul K. Jewett, *Infant Baptism & The Covenant of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 78.

23. Bingham, "Reformed Baptist," 43.

24. See Muller, "Reformed Theology," 169. He says Baptists "…are certainly to be regarded as branches of the Reformed movement…" but that some differ over more than merely infant baptism—even soteriology. No one can deny the Reformed family heritage of Baptists but that alone does not

Puritans as fathers does not automatically bestow agreement with Reformed identity. The first London Baptist Confession of 1644 opens by saying, "a confession of faith of seven congregations or churches of Christ in London, which are commonly, but unjustly called Anabaptists." So, Baptists at least from the time of 1644 were both labeled as non-Reformed and self-consciously desired to distance themselves from non-Reformed theology. They wanted to share in the lot of the Reformed heritage. These same Baptists, in their updated and expanded confession penned in 1677 (commonly known as the 1689 confession), virtually copied the Westminster and Savoy confession in order to prove their substantial unity with traditional Reformed theology. Yet the mainline Reformed denominations continually ostracized them. Does this mean they were not "Reformed?" Do Baptists historically maintain all three markers of Reformed identity?

The Second London Confession is the poster child for most "Reformed" Baptists. Thus, it seems best to consider whether it affirms the three necessary Reformed tests to know whether Baptists historically *or* in the future have the option of confessing the Reformed faith. It affirms (R2) and (R3) with little debate. In section 26 on the church, it explicitly affirms the invisible and visible church of (R3). In chapter 26.3 it follows Westminster in saying "the purest churches under heaven are subject to mixture and error…" They also affirm the regulative principle of (R3). Even the Reformed who intend to keep the label from Baptists concur that confessional Baptists of the 1689 variety agree with their practice of religious worship. Their chapter on religious worship is synonymous with Westminster. The confessional agreement with (R2) is a little murkier. They affirm God's objective means of grace in the Lord's Table in section 30.7, saying that receivers take it by faith and are nourished spiritually. However, the 1689 confession, unfortunately, is unclear on baptism. It seems liable to be taken in a memorial subjective means, which most contemporary Baptists seem fond of doing. Yet, susceptibility and vagueness do not necessarily remove one from the camp of the Reformed. Baptists can define the means of grace as objective and include both sacraments, like Westminster. Question 95 of the Baptist Catechism affirms both the table and baptism as ordinary objective means of grace. Thus, they can and some do affirm (R2).

Finally, what about (R1)? Confessional Baptists agree with (R1**). They agree with Westminster in chapter 19 of their confession, remaining resolute to maintain Reformed catholicity. But, what about (R1*)? Here is where the major debate lies. While the 1689 confession may copy (R1) broadly, confessing the covenant of grace and the Spirit as the means of regeneration across redemptive history, many Baptists struggle to affirm (R1*). The confession itself seems to muddy the waters in its own interpretation. It is best to read chapter 7 section 3 in full:

This covenant is revealed in the gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by farther steps, until the

bequeath Reformed *identity.*

full discovery thereof was completed in the New Testament; and it is founded in that eternal covenant transaction that was between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect; and it is alone by the grace of this covenant that all the posterity of fallen Adam that ever were saved did obtain life and blessed immortality, man being now utterly incapable of acceptance with God upon those terms on which Adam stood in his state of innocence.

As seen, it speaks of the covenant of grace as revealed in the gospel and "by farther steps" in the Old Testament until it is finally and fully discovered in the New Testament. This is the covenant that saves all believers. So, it appears that the 1689 confession does deviate from Westminster here, potentially substantially, but most Baptists insist that it only deviates to allow for greater diversity in the growing "Reformed" tribe.[25] J. V. Fesko thinks it goes too far, saying, "at least at a technical level, it seems more appropriate to call the Baptist Confession a Particular Baptist (or Calvinistic) confession rather than a Reformed confession."[26] Thus, 1689 departs from (R1*) according to Fesko. But does the CT of 1689 need to be read in this modified way? Must it depart from Westminster in its meaning?

Baptists need not depart from CT to affirm 1689. While Fesko is right in sentiment—if the confession is interpreted in this way—the language is vague enough to allow for freedom of Westminsterian interpretation.[27] The greater latitude afforded to understanding the covenants in section 7 has the propensity to lead Baptists to reject (R1*) but it does not make it necessary. The classic understanding of (R1*) is not ruled out with the 1689's confessional wording. There are some Reformed Baptists who subscribe to (R1*).[28] Therefore, these "Reformed" Baptists can theologically claim Reformed identity, though, it is no doubt anachronistic to apply retroactively the label to them from a purely historical viewpoint.[29]

25. Jones, *Waters of Promise*, 73.

26. J. V. Fesko, *Word, Water, and Spirit: A Reformed Perspective on Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010), 155.

27. There is growing popularity of the "1689 Federalism" reading of section 7 of the 1689 confession, which I very likely historically correct. However, it is a wrong reading theologically and certainly not Reformed. And it is very well possible to read the 1689 to follow Westminster and remain faithful to the spirit of the confession.

28. See for example Earl M. Blackburn, "Covenant Theology Simplified," in *Covenant Theology: A Baptist Distinctive*, ed. Earl M. Blackburn (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2013), 20, 34-36. He is a contemporary example, though he is inconsistent in his confession at times. See also John Spilsbery, *A Treatise Concerning the Lawfull Subject of Baptisme* (London: 1643), 8.

29. See Bingham, "Reformed Baptist," 32-35. See R. Scott Clark, "A House of Cards? A Response to Bingham, Gribben, and Caughey" in *On Being Reformed: Debates over a Theological Identity* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 72. He notes that "Reformed Baptist" is not first used until 1826 and does not become popular until after World War II.

Contemporary Reformed Baptists?

With the confessional position in view, are there contemporary "Reformed" Baptists? No. The vast majority of contemporary Baptists are not Reformed if the three Reformed identity markers are accurate. Despite the growing group of Baptists that seek to claim the heritage of Reformed theology, they deny essential elements of Reformed theology—(R1), (R2), or (R3)—sometimes all three. The two most popular attempts that intend to maintain the Reformed label and the CT banner are popularly termed 1689 Federalism and Progressive CT. These two groups are not monolithic in their beliefs. 1689 Federalists who read the 1689 confession in the modified way that denies (R1*) are much more consistent in belief. However, the Baptists who subscribe to the newly popular "Progressive" CT are generally not confessional, have much more diversity, and deny (R1**) and (R3).[30] For example, Tom Schreiner denies (R1**) when he says, "New covenant believers say good-bye to the Sabbath, for it belongs to the old covenant, and we do not live under that administration."[31] While those who affirm Progressive CT are like 1689 Federalism by affirming Calvinism and certain key covenantal arguments, their denial of crucial tenants of Reformed identity requires them to be primarily marginalized from a research standpoint. The goal is to determine how one can hold to credobaptism and affirm Reformed identity. So outright rejections of clear tenants like (R1**) and (R3) makes them outside the bounds from the start. Therefore, the referent for "Baptists" throughout this section will refer primarily to 1689 Federalists, though where Progressive CT agrees with 1689 Federalism they may be noted.

To better show how Baptists can affirm Reformed identity, the common missteps among Baptists in relation to the three central Reformed doctrinal claims will be given. Thus, what follows will be the lengthiest portion of this paper. The inner workings of these Baptist theologies that deviate from Reformed theology will be put on display to understand why Baptists so frequently conflict with Reformed identity. By removing these as live theological options for credobaptism, a twofold goal is achieved. First, the removal of faulty arguments ensures logical and theological rigor. Those arguments that are legitimate are given focus and strength. Second, only once the faulty arguments have been cleared away is it feasible to obtain a better vantage point to see the legitimate Reformed Baptist possibilities.

To begin, how do Baptists often revise (R1)? While theological discourses on covenant abound in contemporary Baptist literature, attempts to revise (R1) abound no less. But voluminous literature on the topic and use of the CT terminology does not free one from revisionary thinking. (R1) in full is necessary to affirm Reformed

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30. See *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theology*, ed. Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016).

31. Thomas R. Schreiner, "Good-bye and Hello: The Sabbath Command for New Covenant Believers," in *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theology*, ed. Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016).

CT. So, where do these Baptists go wrong regarding CT? There are several areas of revision, primarily on (R1*), and five will be listed. Therefore, the majority of space will be dedicated to (R1*) and will mostly ignore those who deny (R1**) since there are enough Baptists who affirm (R1**).[32]

First, Baptists who desire to be Reformed frequently equate the Mosaic Covenant with the Abrahamic Covenant. Here, Baptists deny (R1*) by denying two administrations. They build their argument against (R1*) by thinking Abraham is actually Moses. They assume that the contrast between old and new covenants so often found in Scripture is that of Abraham and Christ, but in reality it always signifies Moses and Christ.[33] This is the most common covenantal mistake made by Baptists when attempting to critique Westminster. But, as Beeke and Jones say, "nowhere do we read of anyone contrasting the new covenant with the promises made to Abraham." The warrant does not come from Moses.[34] Because of their confusion, Baptists like Jeffrey Johnson think this is the hill on which (R1*) dies. He says, "the fatal flaw of the theology behind infant baptism is this notion that the Mosaic Covenant is a manifestation of the covenant of grace."[35] But (R1*) need not deny the legal nature of the Mosaic Covenant.[36] Moses is not Abraham. For example, Michael Horton argues that, "the new covenant is not a renewal of the old covenant made at Sinai, but an entirely different covenant with an entirely different basis."[37] The Baptist critique against Moses is a non-starter because the Reformed can agree and still affirm (R1*).

Second, many Baptists commonly locate regeneration/heart circumcision in the New Testament era alone. This is a denial of (R1)—and a denial of the 1689 confession itself (see section 7.2). Denying heart circumcision in the Old Testament means that there is not one substance since the substance differs across redemptive history. 1,000 notebooks could be filled with the amount of Baptist ink spilled here. Baptists generally begin with their "stronghold" of Jeremiah 31 and proclaim checkmate. But their reading of Jeremiah 31 requires a denial of (R1).[38] Conner represents most Baptists when he says, "the New Covenant is a New Covenant, not merely a renewed

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32. See Walter J. Chantry, "Baptism and Covenant Theology," in *Covenant Theology: A Baptist Distinctive*, ed. Earl M. Blackburn (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2013), 129-30.

33. See Phillip D. R. Griffiths, *Covenant Theology: A Reformed Baptist Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016), 77-78. Griffiths cites 2 Corinthians 3:7 for his justification that the old covenant is legal in nature and not a covenant of grace. The problem is that he conflates all covenants from the Old Testament, making no distinction between Abraham and Moses. Indeed, in his treatment he has chapters on the Mosaic, Davidic, and New Covenant but lacks any chapter dedicated to Abraham.

34. Beeke and Jones, *Puritan Theology*, 728.

35. Jeffrey D. Johnson, *The Fatal Flaw of the Theology Behind Infant Baptism* (Conway, AR: Free Grace, 2010), 69.

36. Horton, *Covenant Theology*, 101.

37. Horton, *Covenant Theology*, 53.

38. See A Brakel, *Reasonable Service*, 1:454.

covenant and should, therefore, not be pressed into the mold of the Old Covenant."[39] He clarifies further what this means, saying, "up until now, the nation of Israel did not have the law of God written in their hearts in this sense. They had the law written in stone, but not written by the Spirit in their hearts. This is not to say that no one in the Old Testament had this blessing, for certainly some did."[40] Baptists of this stripe think circumcision of the flesh marks the Old Testament while circumcision of the heart marks the New Testament.[41] Thus, Old Testament circumcision does not signify a spiritual reality; it points to a future reality of spiritual circumcision. Johnson is quite clear when he says, "the New Testament emphatically teaches that the new covenant replacement of circumcision is inward circumcision of the heart."[42] Richard Barcellos agrees, saying, "the New Covenant counterpart to physical circumcision is spiritual circumcision."[43] Therefore, they think the New Testament concept of spiritual circumcision has nothing to do with the Old Testament besides a typological relationship.[44] But this betrays the Reformed claim of the one universal plan of God—the one substance of the covenant of grace of (R1). And there is nothing in credobaptism that requires such a view.

However, many of these Baptists do not deny regeneration in principle to saints of old. Most Baptists who argue against (R1) by using these remarks do backtrack and agree that some experienced these blessings.[45] But this remains confusing if Jeremiah 31 is a future prophecy. If it truly is referencing a change of heart alone, then Old Testament saints should not be regenerate at all. And that poses a major problem for any saint of old to experience salvation. But maybe there are Baptists who wholeheartedly agree that regeneration is available for all the saints of old despite contrasting flesh and heart circumcision so strongly.[46] They do not think

39. Alan Conner, *Covenant Children Today: Physical or Spiritual?* (Owensboro, KY: RBAP, 2007), 35.

40. Conner, *Covenant Children*, 44-45; See also Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 276. He makes a similar statement, saying "unique to the administration of the new covenant according to Jeremiah will be the internalized inscription of the law of God…. The new covenant therefore boasts a unique feature in its power to transform its participants from within their hearts." This is unfitting of (R1) and strange for a confessing Presbyterian.

41. See Jeffrey D. Johnson, *The Kingdom of God: A Baptist Expression of Covenant & Biblical Theology* (Conway, AR: Free Grace Press, 2014), 52.

42. Johnson, *The Fatal Flaw*, 46.

43. Richard C. Barcellos, "An Exegetical Appraisal of Colossians 2:11-12," *Reformed Baptist Theological Review* 1, no. 2 (January 2005), 19.

44. Matt Waymeyer, *A Biblical Critique of Infant Baptism* (Woodlands, TX: Kress Christian Publications, 2008), 64; John D. Meade, "Circumcision of Flesh to Circumcision of Heart: The Typology of the Sign of the Abrahamic Covenant" in *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theology*, ed. Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016).

45. See Johnson, *The Fatal Flaw*, 127, 160; James R. White, "The Newness of the New Covenant: Better Covenant, Better Mediator, Better Sacrifice, Better Ministry, Better Hope, Better Promises (Part II)" *Reformed Baptist Theological Review* 1, no. 2 (January 2005), 88.

46. See W. Gary Crampton who says that the Old Testament saints had their sins forgiven (Psalm

the argument about the typological relationship (where internal circumcision is the culmination of external circumcision) necessarily denies regeneration in the Old Testament. Their point is to deny the paedobaptist conclusion that baptism replaces circumcision in a one-to-one format. This is fair enough if the goal is to explain the typological shape of external signs versus internal signs. However, it is difficult to remain consistent in this critique considering that the New Covenant also has an external sign. Further, most of the critiques aim at promoting the internal sign as the chief blessing the Old Covenant lacked that the New brings. If the Old lacks it, they cannot help but deny (R1). While most likely do not intend to exclude regeneration from the Old Testament, the argument seems to entail it. Maybe it is possible to argue that the meaning behind the replacement of physical with spiritual circumcision is about the purity of the covenant community. If so, the argument is vague in how many present it. But this would not deny (R1), though it would deny (R3). Therefore, it is not a useful argument if Baptists desire to maintain Reformed identity.

Before moving on, it is important to develop the problem with the argument that the New Testament is internal while the Old Testament is external. First, how is anyone saved without internal heart circumcision? Can it be said that Old Testament saints were regenerated without spiritual circumcision? Such a belief in effect de-spiritualizes the Old Testament as if the Spirit could not work. As seen from the previous section, many Baptists change their conclusion when presented with the objection. They remain happily inconsistent. Second, the New Testament is also marked by an external physical sign: water baptism. It is not as if the New Testament suddenly sheds all external signs that point toward an inward reality. Water baptism guarantees a baptized heart as much as physical circumcision guarantees a circumcised heart. Why do Baptists think the New Covenant is purely internal when they have an external and physical sign in water baptism? It is the same situation as the Old. Conner is typical when he says "circumcision was also a sign of their greatest spiritual need, a circumcised heart, but many wore the sign without the spiritual reality."[47] But water baptism also is a sign of the New Covenant member's greatest spiritual need, a baptized heart, and many wear the sign without the spiritual reality.

Third, Baptists often attempt to destroy the link between circumcision and baptism, especially in Colossians 2:11-12. They know that linking these two signs is all but echoing Westminster. Therefore, they deny (R1*) in their effort to remove the link from the two signs. Some attempt to change the translation of Colossians 2 to

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32:1-2), had the law of God written on their hearts (Psalm 40:8; 119:11; Isaiah 51:7) and professed faith in the Messiah. W. Gary Crampton, *From Paedobaptism to Credobaptism: A Critique of the Westminster Standards on the Subjects of Baptism* (Owensboro, KY: RBAP, 2010), 30. See also Griffiths, *Covenant Theology*, 127-28. He says, "there has never been a believer in all of history who has not possessed a heart of flesh, a heart upon which the laws of God have been written on account of their being in the new covenant."

47. Conner, *Covenant Children*, 59-60.

break the link.[48] Most argue on theological lines. The two signs cannot be signifying the same reality. Why? Since Baptists cannot deny that infants were circumcised, it appears that the only way to refute infant baptism is to deny the connection between baptism and circumcision.[49] So, there are six primary ways that Baptists attempt to deny the link (besides changing the translation). First, they posit that circumcision threatens judgment and baptism does not.[50] Second, they say circumcision demands regeneration while Baptism proclaims it.[51] Third, they say circumcision does not require a profession of faith while baptism does.[52] Fourth, they say baptism and circumcision were allowed to be practiced simultaneously during the initial New Testament period, therefore they cannot be the same.[53] Fifth, they say circumcision signifies realities that baptism does not signify. Therefore, they cannot be the same since they have different referents.[54] Sixth, they say spiritual circumcision, not baptism, replaces physical circumcision, therefore there is no link.[55]

However, none of these conclusions should follow. First, baptism also signifies judgment. It too is a double-edged sword. 1 Peter 3:20-21 proclaims a baptism of judgment as well as blessing. Water baptism is not fully efficacious, just like physical circumcision is not fully efficacious. Those who partake of the sign without the thing signified are bound for judgment.[56] Second, Baptists seem to forget that baptism is both a physical and spiritual reality—like outward and inward circumcision. There are plenty of people Baptists have baptized who are not carrying the internal reality of spirit baptism. As noted in the previous section, both baptism and circumcision demand and proclaim regeneration. Neither sign is automatically linked with regeneration nor do they lack the signification of regeneration. Third, circumcision also requires a profession of faith. What ancient Babylonian was allowed to administer or receive Israelite circumcision without a profession? What excommunicated Israelite was allowed to administer or receive the sign with their broken profession? Fourth,

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48. See Barcellos, "Colossians 2:11-12," 12.

49. Jewett, *Infant Baptism*, 85.

50. Bobby Jamieson, *Going Public: Why Baptism is Required for Church Membership* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015), 73. For what it is worth, Jamieson's book title is somewhat misleading. Who argues for church membership without baptism? His primary polemical target, Reformed paedobaptists, certainly would not practice such polity.

51. Jamieson, *Going Public*, 74; Fred A. Malone, "The Subjects of Baptism," *Reformed Baptist Theological Review* 1, no. 2 (January 2005), 78.

52. Crampton, *Paedobaptism to Credobaptism*, 25-27.

53. Crampton, *Paedobaptism to Credobaptism*, 28. Crampton says, "another difficulty involved with equating circumcision and baptism is that in the first century they were both practiced in the covenant community at the same time….If baptism and circumcision are one, not only would circumcision be unnecessary, it would also be confusing and contradictory."

54. Stephen J. Wellum, "Baptism and the Relationship between the Covenants" in *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2006), 155-57.

55. Barcellos, "Colossians 2:11-12," 20.

56. See Fesko, *Word, Water, and Spirit*, 249-58.

noting the concurrent administration of circumcision and baptism as a reason to deny the link fails to recognize the necessary overlap during the administrative shift. Peter continued to abstain from unclean foods until Acts 10. Does this mean these laws were not fulfilled by Christ and have no inherent meaning in him? No. There is a necessary overlap between the signs during the administrative shift. Fifth, in order for baptism to replace circumcision there only needs to be analogy.[57] Identity between the signs is not necessary for the link to hold. Yes, there are distinctions between the two signs. Circumcision promises a host of earthly blessings that baptism does not, but they are analogously related as signs of entrance into the covenant community that are designed ultimately to point to spiritual regeneration by means of outward signification. And no Baptist needs to deny the link of circumcision and baptism as proclaimed in Colossians 2 to deny paedobaptism. One can remain Reformed on this point and not succumb to baptizing their infant children, as shown in the following section.[58] The administration of the two signs may be different but the substance remains the same according to CT—the spiritual referent remains unchanged.[59] Sixth, as has already been shown, spiritual circumcision is not new to the New Testament.

Fourth, many Baptists say that the covenant of grace is not formally administered in the Old Testament. This is a denial of (R1*). Pascal Denault, in explaining the position of the authors of the 1689 confession, says, "the Baptists believed that before the arrival of the New Covenant, the Covenant of Grace was not formally given, but only announced and promised."[60] He continues saying, "the Baptists believed that no covenant preceding the New Covenant was the Covenant of Grace. Before the arrival of the New Covenant, the Covenant of Grace was at the stage of promise."[61] If anyone believes the covenant of grace was not historically administered in the Old Testament, they cannot follow Reformed CT as (R1*) confesses. Since the covenant of grace is identified with the New Covenant alone on this interpretation, these Baptists then argue that the Abrahamic covenant is not the covenant of grace. For example, Gary Crampton says, "the Abrahamic covenant is not, in and of itself (i.e. simpliciter), the covenant of grace."[62] The Abrahamic covenant is conditional, based on obedience, and never justified anyone, according to Griffiths.[63] But this goes against the argument of (R1*) and its interpretation of Galatians 3. The promise made to Abraham was not revoked because of the coming of Christ who remains

57. Crampton, *Paedobaptism to Credobaptism*, 35; Jewett, *Infant Baptism*, 104, 238.

58. Jewett, *Infant Baptism*, 88, 96.

59. Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 153; Fesko, *Word, Water, and Spirit*, 341.

60. Pascal Denault, *The Distinctiveness of Baptist Covenant Theology: A Comparison Between Seventeenth-Century Particular Baptists and Paedobaptist Federalism* (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2013), 62.

61. Denault, *Baptist Covenant Theology*, 63.

62. Crampton, *Paedobaptism to Credobaptism,* 94.

63. Griffiths, *Covenant Theology*, 106.

the same today as yesterday (Heb. 13:8). He remains the same in the Old Covenant administration and the New Covenant administration.[64]

Interestingly, Francis Turretin similarly calls the covenant of grace the "varied dispensation of the new covenant"—apparently making the term synonymous with the covenant of grace.[65] But he distinguishes between two administrations and one substance. If 1689 Federalism intends to rename the covenant of grace as the New Covenant and have it functionally equivalent, there is no problem.[66] However, they are less clear than that. Many who follow 1689 Federalism intend to remove the covenant of grace from the Old Testament despite giving it retroactive power.

Fifth, when considering the relationship of the Abrahamic covenant, 1689 Baptists often have a unique view. Jeffrey Johnson sums up the view, saying, "the early Baptists of the seventeenth century understood that both the covenant of grace and the covenant of works were exhibited in the Abrahamic covenant."[67] He says in another work, "Abraham received a covenant of grace in Genesis 12 and a covenant of circumcision/works in Genesis 17."[68] Thus, there are two covenants in Abraham.[69] These Baptists think there is no hint in Genesis 17 that it had spiritual meaning.[70] Jones says, "both General and Particular Baptist accounts of covenant theology distinguish God's promise to Abraham from God's subsequent covenant of circumcision with him. This distinction is the heart of Baptist covenant theology, because it separates baptism from circumcision."[71] Therefore, some of these Baptists, such as Nehemiah Coxe, Thomas Grantham, and many contemporary 1689 Baptist thinkers argue not only that the covenant of grace is not historically administered in the Old Testament but also that Abraham has two covenants made with him—one of grace and one of works.[72] Even Charles Hodge proposes such a view, saying, "it is to be remembered that there were two covenants made with Abraham. By the one, his natural descendants through Isaac were constituted a commonwealth, an external, visible community. By the other, his spiritual descendants were constituted a church…."[73] Therefore, as Micah and Samuel Renihan say, the Abrahamic Covenant

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64. A Brakel, *Reasonable Service*, 1:453.

65. See Turretin, *Elenctic Theology*, 2:216.

66. See Griffiths, *Covenant Theology*, 125. He appears to follow this logic, saying, "the new covenant, in regard to its blessings, was before the old covenant. After the making of the old covenant, it ran parallel to the promise of the new covenant."

67. Johnson, *Kingdom*, 36. There is a glaring inconsistency that appears here—removing the covenant of grace from the old altogether by limiting it to the new covenant alone *and* making it part of the Abrahamic covenant.

68. Johnson, *Fatal Flaw*, 216.

69. Johnson, *Kingdom*, 47.

70. Waymeyer, *Infant Baptism*, 66.

71. Jones, *Waters of Promise*, 87.

72. Jones, *Waters of Promise*, 99; Jewett, *Infant Baptism*, 97.

73. Charles Hodge, *Church Polity* (New York: Scribner, 1878), 66-67.

"differs from the New Covenant not merely in administration, but also in substance."[74] Obviously, this view denies (R1*) but it also struggles on biblical grounds according to linguistic expert and Progressive CT advocate Peter Gentry.[75] Regardless, it is impossible to claim two covenants in Abraham and uphold (R1*).

Now, how do Baptists deny (R2)? Most Baptists deny the sacramental definition of signs and seals of the covenant while also abolishing the link between circumcision and baptism as noted above. They also deny (R2) by their definition of baptism. For example, see the following definitions of baptism from several Baptists who represent the typical Reformed Baptist approach. Bobby Jamieson defines it as a "personal profession of faith."[76] Matt Waymeyer says, "baptism does not merely point to a profession of faith—baptism is a profession of faith..."[77] Since so many Baptists define baptism in such a thin and narrow way, they think it categorically denies paedobaptism since infants cannot profess faith and "go public."[78] Leonard Vander Zee follows the Baptist logic. He thinks that how one defines baptism— either as marking a believer's profession of faith or as a sacramental sign and seal of God's grace—determines one's view of infant baptism.[79] But not all Baptists deny the sign and seal theology of (R2). For example, Paul Jewett affirms baptism as a seal.[80] Brandon Jones also says, "the covenantal view of baptism states that the Spirit graciously uses baptism as a confirming sign and seal of a believer's initiation into the new covenant, thereby strengthening his or her consciousness of salvation."[81] Therefore, confessing (R2) does not necessarily bind one to infant baptism according to some Baptists. Following the Baptist Catechism Question 100, Baptists are free to confess baptism as a sign and seal of the covenant of grace.

Finally, how do these Baptists deny (R3)? Most deny the mixed church classically known as Presbyterian polity. They argue that the prophecy of Jeremiah 31 means the church is to be presently wholly pure and unmixed.[82] This is the primary reason to

74. Micah and Samuel Renihan, "Reformed Baptist Covenant Theology and Biblical Theology," (Lecture, Westminster Seminary California), 3.

75. See Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 258-80.

76. Jamieson, *Going Public,* 2, 49.

77. Waymeyer, *Infant Baptism*, 102.

78. Jamieson, *Going Public,* 53; Waymeyer, *Infant Baptism*, 85.

79. Leonard J. Vander Zee, *Christ, Baptism and the Lord's Supper: Recovering the Sacraments for Evangelical Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 122.

80. Jewett, *Infant Baptism*, 87.

81. Jones, *Waters of Promise*, 132.

82. Wellum, "Relationship between the Covenants," 138. See also Johnson, *Kingdom*, 105. He says, "the Church has been God's redemptive plan from the beginning, for spiritual Israel has always consisted of believers alone in both the Old and New Testaments." This is very confusing. It seems he argues for an unmixed society in both Testaments or simply is misunderstanding the classic visible/invisible distinction that is available to him.

deny baptism of infants according to the newest Baptist manifesto on the covenants.[83] The authors flatly deny the validity of the visible/invisible distinction for the church.[84] But empirical evidence is enough to reconsider the timing of the Jeremiah 31 fulfillment in reality. What church is made of purely believers on this earth until the glorified state? Most Baptist churches have membership rolls far larger than weekly attendance. Is this not enough to convince them of the Reformed tradition on the visible and invisible church? The typical Baptist retort is that believing in a mixed church means laxity regarding the goal of purity. But J. V. Fesko responds by saying, "ministers and elders should always seek the purity of the church, but to say that the church is not a mixed body flies in the face of the biblical evidence."[85] Again, Fesko says, "the administration of the covenant is broader than election; the visible covenant community is not synonymous with the elect of God."[86] James White, a self-professed "Reformed Baptist," also agrees with the invisible/visible church distinction.[87] The Reformed confess that the only true members of the church are the invisible members, but in this covenantal epoch, the external church has false members within its fold that will eventually be exposed as goats.[88] The covenant is always administered in a real and organic way. There is no way to avoid that this side of the eschaton. Sinclair Ferguson makes the burden of Jeremiah 31 clear, saying, "now, in the new covenant, the boundaries of the Mosaic economy within which the Spirit had, by and large, previously manifest himself are rendered obsolete."[89] The point is not a perfectly glorified pure church in the New Testament era—that is reserved for the eschaton. Rather, the point is a larger community of faith made of all nations, tribes, and tongues, bonded by spiritual unity rather than national descent. Baptists need not follow an alternative interpretation to maintain credobaptism.

How to be Reformed and Baptist Without Losing Your Confession

Now that the typical Baptist objections to (R2), (R3), and particularly (R1) have been given, should Baptists tamper with these commitments, particularly (R1)? No. Need they tamper with them to maintain credobaptist convictions? No. No revision of any of them, even (R1*), is necessary to uphold believer's baptism. Most Baptists

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83. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 685.

84. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 688, 691.

85. Fesko, *Word, Water, and Spirit*, 316.

86. Fesko, *Word, Water, and Spirit*, 351.

87. White, "The Newness of the New Covenant," 85.

88. See A Brakel, *Reasonable Service*, 2:10; Turretin, *Elenctic Theology*, 3:33.

89. Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 62. See also Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. Edmund Hill (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 2015), IV.5.29.

assume that (R1*) necessitates paedobaptism. Most Presbyterians think the same.[90] R. Scott Clark even says, "at key points the Particular Baptists did not affirm and could not affirm the Reformed view that the covenant of grace is substantially one administered variously in redemptive history."[91] However, this is not the case. There is a safe haven for Baptists by conviction who see Westminster as largely accurate and nearly all other Baptistic revisionist attempts as crude forms of dispensationalism in disguise. Therefore, affirming (R1), (R2), and (R3) does not require conversion to paedobaptism. There is a Westminster Baptist alternative. How is this possible? There are two primary avenues one can maintain (R1), (R2), (R3), and credobaptism. First, one must clarify the second administration of the one covenant of grace. Second, one must notate the nature of the covenant signs of circumcision and baptism as positive rather than moral law.

The first avenue revolves around Galatians 3:16 which says "now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, 'And to offsprings,' referring to many, but referring to one, 'And to your offspring,' who is Christ." This verse is crucial for understanding the nature of the covenant sign of baptism and who has warrant to receive it. It signifies the differing nature of the administration of the same covenant of grace. The covenant given to Abraham is the same covenant in substance that is given to Christ. Each covenant is given to the heir and their offspring—indeed, offspring are not removed from any covenantal administration. God always includes children.[92] However, the updated administration of this singular promise differs in scope of offspring. They continually narrow—from Noah to Abraham to David. Each includes a narrower segment of posterity. In the New Covenant administration of the same covenant of grace, the offspring of the covenant head (Jesus) are to receive the New Covenant sign of baptism. Jesus is the great patriarch with a promised offspring in the New Testament.[93] Therefore, who are the offspring of Christ? Believers alone.[94] Conner argues that "Christ is the last physical seed in Abraham's covenant line to whom the promises were made. There is no other physical seed beyond Christ to whom these promises were directed….In Christ the physical line stops, even as the spiritual line continues."[95] Thus, all aspects of the Abrahamic covenant are transformed from physical to spiritual in the new

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90. For example, see the arguments made by A Brakel, *Reasonable Service*, 2:508-11. He assumes a confession of (R1*) necessitates a belief in paedobaptism. But this conclusion does not necessarily follow from the agreed upon premises. Affirming (R1*) does not require paedobaptism. It may be consistent with (R1*) but it is not necessary.

91. Clark, "A House of Cards," 79.

92. Greg Nichols, *Covenant Theology: A Reformed and Baptistic Perspective on God's Covenants* (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2011), 118.

93. Nichols, *Covenant Theology,* 115.

94. Johnson, *Fatal Flaw*, 152, 201; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 697.

95. Conner, *Covenant Children*, 18.

administration, including land, nation, and seed.[96] As Philippians 3:3 proclaims, "for we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh."

If this is a fair reading, an appeal to Ockham's razor could also be raised at this point. This understanding of covenantal administration and the subjects of baptism is simpler than the alternative. The paedobaptist typically must offer significant theological and pastoral applications from the old administration to the new administration that are not necessary on a Reformed Baptist reading. For example, there is no need to explain why the children of believing grandparents but unbelieving parents should not be baptized like typical Reformed paedobaptists must explain. It is enough to require baptism upon profession. Of course Ockham's razor has the habit of causing self-inflicted wounds. So it is possible that Ockham offers no help regarding this suggestion, but it appears to work in its favor.

Now, the problem with the aforementioned argument is this: Galatians 3 is not showing how believers are the offspring of Christ but how believers are the offspring of Abraham (Gal. 3:29). In fact, nowhere are Christians referred to as the "offspring of Christ." They are referred to as his co-heirs and even his siblings, but never his offspring. So it appears wrong to say that there is a "new" offspring different from Abraham. It is the same offspring, the offspring of Abraham, to whom believers are united by faith and baptism.[97] If this is the case, the argument of Galatians 3:16 is significantly weakened but can still run in favor of credobaptism by claiming that Christ is the sole offspring and the sign is applied only to those united by faith. However, this is not as clean or elegant as making the link with Christ and his spiritual offspring.

Such a formulation of the second administration of the one covenant of grace still appears to stand or fall on whether the immutable promise of God in Genesis 17 is to be interpreted as Abraham/believers and his/their physical children or Christ and his spiritual children alone. Genesis 17 promises to be a "God to you and your children." If this promise is made to Abraham and his physical descendants, how can it be "changed" without denying the unified substance of (R1*)?[98] The administration "changes" and not the substance because the promised seed has come who now administers his covenant in a different way. This does not remove the external administration that is given in an organic and historical way. This merely removes the format of administration. Now the offspring who receive the sign are confessing believers. Thus, Baptists can continue to uphold the commonly denied (R1*).

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96. Conner, *Covenant Children*, 24.

97. Rory Chapman, e-mail correspondence, July 30, 2018.

98. This is not to ignore the question of how the promise of Genesis 17 can reference salvation according to traditional Reformed lore and yet not save every child. Indeed, this question points to Romans 9-11. However, such an engagement would take an entire paper.

Second, circumcision and baptism as covenantal signs are positive laws. What is positive law? Positive law is dependent on special revelation/the will of God alone for its obligation.[99] It is not moral or natural. It is law like the civil and ceremonial laws of the Old Testament rather than the perpetual command against murder.[100] For example, Hebrews 9:10 speaks of "regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation." As the Renihan's state:

When it comes to positive laws we should not assume they are in effect unless rescinded. Positive laws, instead, end with the termination of the covenant in which they were given. Positive laws are given in a particular redemptive historical setting and in a particular covenant document. Positive laws only apply to the covenantal context in which they are given.[101]

These covenantal signs cannot be defined apart from God's explicit instruction since they do not exist apart from the positive institution.[102] Therefore, baptism as a positive sign of a new administration is free to be defined as its own unique sign even if it has a previous referent that it fulfills. It is not necessarily identical to the previous covenantal sign. What the previous covenantal administration has does not perfectly connect to what the new administration has.[103] Since the new administration is administered in a new way, the sign is administered in a new way. For example, women are now to receive the sign despite their inability to receive it in the first administration. No one denies this administrative shift for the sign, so why is it a cardinal sin to adjust the new administration to confessing individuals alone?

Now, to be clear, honoring the progress of redemptive history with the two signs and relegating them to positive law rather than moral law does not mean the Bible can be read as a non-Christian. The Old Testament is not some national historical footnote. It is foundational for understanding baptism. Too many Baptists follow the faulty hermeneutic expressed by Johnson when he says, "outside the New Testament there are no other inspired or authoritative writings regarding baptism."[104] He thinks, "the purpose, the effects, and the participants of baptism should be ascertained entirely from within the confines of the New Testament."[105] This is quite the proposal for someone who confesses the sufficiency of all Scripture. Now, certainly there is the ever present danger to "Christianize the Old Testament and Judaize the New."[106]

99. Turretin, *Elenctic* Theology, 2:2.

100. Micah Renihan and Samuel Renihan, "Reformed Baptist Covenant Theology and Biblical Theology," 10.

101. Renihan and Renihan, "Reformed Baptist," 11.

102. Samuel Renihan, "Methodology and Hermeneutics: The Importance and Relationship of Biblical Theology, Systematic Theology, and Typology in Covenant Theology," *Journal of IRBS Theological Seminary* (2018), 79.

103. Renihan, "Methodology and Hermeneutics," 83.

104. Johnson, *Fatal Flaw*, 25.

105. Johnson, *Fatal Flaw*, 25.

106. Jewett, *Infant Baptism*, 91.

But this does not mean that the meaning and structure of the Old Testament can be jettisoned. To deny the validity of the Old Testament for understanding Baptism is to destroy any potential theological or typological link between it and circumcision. Circumcision and its practice matter to understand baptism correctly.[107] But, since they are positive signs that are analogically related and not identical, they can have different subjects and yet remain in a typological relationship. Therefore, one must make theological judgments regarding the actual nature of the proper subjects of the sign of baptism—it is not wholly continuous with circumcision. Real exegetical and theological work needs to be done. That said, the major difference between the two signs is that circumcision is the promise of the seed while baptism is the promise of the spirit.[108] Because of these differing positive purposes, they are applied to differing subjects without denying (R1), (R2), or (R3).

Conclusion

The title of this article suggests that Baptists are in need of Reform regarding their covenantal and credobaptist convictions. It has been argued that the majority who claim the label of Reformed reject it in their beliefs but that it is possible for them to reject their faulty arguments in favor of a classical Reformed understanding without losing their credobaptism. This path allows for them to be considered "Reformed" in the theological sense even if not historical. Baptists have freedom to confess the spirit of the Reformed faith and practice baptism of confessors alone. Whether one takes to the positive arguments for Reformed credobaptism or not, at minimum by defining Reformed identity more tightly and showing the failures of many Baptists, space has been created for credobaptists to be creative in defense of their vision of baptism and for the conversation between the two parties to advance beyond the usual skirmishes. There are probably other positive arguments that have failed to be mentioned that would be consistent with (R1), (R2), and (R3) and remain consistent with credobaptism. It is only hoped that this short article prompts more constructive theological work along these lines.

107. The argument that circumcision and baptism are linked does gesture toward how Baptists ought to view infant "baptisms" in a consistent and fair manner. Since baptism is a sign of the covenant of grace (rather than a sign of faith), the *timing* of one's faith is not essential to the objective nature of the sign. While an infant baptism is irregular due to the positive command regarding the timing of the rite, it is not so distorted as to invalidate the sign. Indeed, what if an infant were regenerated? Then, on technical grounds, they are baptized as a "believer" and thus the sign is valid according to most Baptists. The essential elements of baptism are all present (including faith!). This simply relegates *timing* of faith to an accidental feature of baptism. This best promotes catholicity and texts like Acts 8 and the baptism of Simon. Indeed, this is the only way for Baptists to maintain catholicity and avoid their traditional schismatic attitude of barring those baptized as infants from membership and the table, which on logical grounds denies Christian faith to the vast majority of Christians in the history of the church. Mercy must be urged.

108. Fesko, *Word, Water, and Spirit*, 340.

"It's the Wrath of God":
Reflections on Inferring Divine Punishment

Jᴀᴍᴇꜱ S. Sᴘɪᴇɢᴇʟ

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Abstract: If God still exercises wrath today, is it possible to identify instances of this? If so, then what sorts of criteria might one use to assess whether a particular event is a case of divine wrath? In addressing these questions, I distinguish between *direct* and *indirect* divine wrath as well as between *special* and *natural* divine wrath. I propose three potential corroborating factors for inferring the occurrence of special divine wrath: (1) the occurrence of a miracle in conjunction with the event in question, (2) extraordinary coincidences associated with the event, and (3) the event occurrence constituting the fulfillment of a bold prediction. Along the way, I use numerous biblical cases of divine wrath to guide the discussion and provide standards for elucidating the distinctions and corroborating criteria I propose.

Key Words: Divine wrath, miracle, redemption, revelation, skepticism

Divine wrath—God's extreme or vengeful anger—is a recurrent theme in the pages of Scripture, and the topic has been consistently propounded in the history of Christian theology.[1] Yet it is a subject that has conspicuously evaded serious analysis by Christian philosophers.[2] Why is this? Perhaps they consider the subject to be obsolete, antiquated, or passé. If so, this is odd because the closely related doctrine of

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1. The emphasis on the wrath of God seems to reach its zenith in the Calvinist tradition. John Calvin heavily emphasized the theme in his sermons, commentaries and his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (see especially Book 2, chapter 16). And Jonathan Edwards devoted several sermons and treatises to the topic, including "The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners" (1734), "Wrath Upon the Wicked to the Uttermost" (1735), and, most famously, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (1741).

2. While serious philosophical analyses of divine wrath have been lacking, there have been a few recent theological treatments of the subject though these have mostly been limited to biblical theology and historical theology. See Erich Zenger, *A God of Vengeance?: Understanding the Psalms of Divine Wrath* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995); Reinhard G. Kratz and Hermann Spiekermann, eds., *Divine Wrath and Divine Mercy in the World of Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); and Stephen Butler Murray, *Reclaiming Divine Wrath: A History of a Christian Doctrine and its Interpretation* (New York: Peter Lang Press, 2011). The only recent systematic theological study of divine wrath I am aware of is H. G. L. Peels' The *Vengeance of God: The Meaning of the Root Nqm and the Function of the Nqm-Texts in the Context of Divine Revelation in the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 1995).

hell has generated much philosophical reflection during the last generation, and, of course, the problem of evil is a perennial fascination among Christian philosophers. Perhaps the lack of attention to divine wrath is due to a general assumption that when it comes to the concept of divine wrath there just is not much there to think *about*. If so, then that perception is sorely mistaken. Some very interesting and challenging questions include these: What exactly *is* divine wrath? Does God still exercise wrath today? If so, is it possible to identify instances of this? And if it is, then what sorts of criteria might one use to assess whether a particular event is a case of divine wrath? In what follows I reflect on these questions. And I offer a few distinctions and clarifications that might assist us as we do so.

Biblical Cases of Divine Wrath

Scripture tells us that the Lord is a God of wrath.[3] Through the prophet Micah, the Lord declares, "I will take vengeance in anger and wrath on the nations that have not obeyed me" (Micah 5:15).[4] Nahum tells us that "the Lord is a jealous and avenging God; the Lord takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The Lord takes vengeance on his foes and vents his wrath against his enemies" (Nahum 1:2). And in many places we find lengthy discourses regarding God's plans or warnings of wrath, such as in Deuteronomy 28:15-68, Isaiah 13, Jeremiah 16, throughout the minor prophets, in

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3. To be sure, some have taken issue with this claim, at least when wrath is understood in terms comparable to the human emotion of anger. Notably, Julian of Norwich denied that there is any true wrath in God: "Now this was a great marvel to the soul, continually shown in everything and considered with great attentiveness: that in regard to himself our Lord God cannot forgive, for he cannot be angry—it would be an impossibility. For this is what was shown: that our life is all grounded and rooted in love, and without love we cannot live; and therefore to the soul which through God's special grace sees so much of his great and marvelous goodness, and sees that we are joined to him in love for ever, it is the greatest impossibility conceivable that God should be angry, for anger and friendship are two contraries" (from Roberta C. Bondi, ed. *Julian of Norwich: Selections from Revelations of Divine Love Annotated & Explained* [Skylight Paths, 2013], p. 112). And C. H. Dodd challenged the notion that there is any genuine anger in God, suggesting that what Scripture portrays, especially in the writings of Paul, are not divine emotions or attitudes so much as "an inevitable process of cause and effect in a moral universe." Dodd adds that, "we cannot think with full consistency of God in terms of the highest human ideals of personality and yet attribute to Him the irrational passion of anger" (from C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 2nd ed. [London and Glasgow: Collins, 1959], p. 50). Such challenges to the common conception of divine wrath as an expression of genuine anger in God raise the question of divine emotion and lead to the debate over divine im/passibility. This is certainly relevant to the broader discussion of divine wrath, but my analysis of divine wrath in this paper does not hinge on a particular view in this debate.

4. All scriptural quotations are taken from the New International Version of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973).

some of Jesus's discourses (Mt. 3:5-12; Mt. 23:29-39; Mt. 24:15-22), throughout the book of Revelation, and in many other places as well.

Particular instances of divine wrath are to be found in both Old Testament and New Testament narratives. Here are some select cases of divine wrath which I take to be paradigmatic.

The Worldwide Flood

The opening chapters of the book of Genesis are turbulent with rebellion and strife, and by the sixth chapter we find this divine lament:

> The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. So the Lord said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them" (Gen. 6:5-7).

As we know, God did exactly this, destroying all of human civilization except for Noah and seven other members of his family. Although this passage does not explicitly assert that the worldwide flood was an instance of divine wrath, we can infer this from the context of the narrative as well as several New Testament passages, such as Luke 17:26-30; Hebrews 11:7; and 2 Peter 2:4-5.

Sodom and Gomorrah

Merely a dozen chapters later in Genesis, not only have humans populated numerous cities but some of these cities are again displaying extreme wickedness, so much so that God has planned the annihilation of two of them. He sends two angels in human form to warn Lot and his family of the coming doom:

> The two men said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here—sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the Lord against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it. So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters. He said, "Hurry and get out of this place, because the Lord is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was joking….

> By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. Then the Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the Lord out of the heavens. Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, destroying all those living in the cities—and also the vegetation in the land (Gen. 19:12-14, 23-25).

While there is some debate as to exactly what sins of these two cities prompted such divine vengeance, the writer of Jude clarifies this for us, saying that "Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion" and thus "serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 7).

The Egyptian Plagues

A succession of cases of divine wrath are to be found in the account of God's liberation of the Israelites from Egypt. As a prodding to Pharaoh, the Lord strikes Egypt with numerous plagues, including frogs, gnats, flies, locusts, hail, and darkness. After each, the Egyptian leader only "hardened his heart," becoming more resolute in his refusal to set the Israelites free. The final, most devastating plague is effective however:

> At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead (Exod. 12:29-30).

This was not the final act of wrath against Egypt, however. Though Pharaoh set the Israelites free, he relented and his soldiers pursued the Israelites to the Red Sea. There God famously parted the waters to allow Moses and his people to walk across, but when the Egyptian soldiers followed, God closed the waters and they were drowned en masse.

The Golden Calf

After Israel's liberation, they wandered in the desert for decades, waiting for the fulfillment of God's promise to give them possession of Canaan, the land "flowing with milk and honey." During this period there were pockets of rebellion within Israel's ranks that God thwarted in severe ways. For example, as Moses conversed with the Lord on Mount Sinai, the Israelites fashioned a golden calf idol to which they bowed down and made sacrifices. In response, the Lord directed the killing of about 300 Levites (Exod. 32:27-28), then he punished the entire whole assembly with a plague (vs. 33-35).

The Korah Rebellion

Later, Korah, Dathan and Abiram and 250 others rose up to oppose Moses and Aaron, complaining about their leadership: "Why do you set yourselves above the Lord's assembly?" (Num. 16:3). In response, Moses declares,

> "This is how you will know that the Lord has sent me to do all these things and that it was not my idea: If these men die a natural death and experience only what usually happens to men, then the Lord has not sent me. But if the Lord brings about something totally new, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them, with everything that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the grave, then you will know that these men have treated the Lord with contempt."

> As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, with their households and all Korah's mean and all their possessions. They went down alive into the grave, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the community. At their cries, all the Israelites around them fled, shouting, "The earth is going to swallow us too!" And fire came out from the Lord and consumed the [other] 250 men (Numbers 16:28-35).

After this, the Israelite community were angry with Moses and Aaron, saying, "You have killed the Lord's people." Because of their grumbling, the Lord struck them with a plague that killed 14,700 more of them.

Other Old Testament Cases of Wrath

Many other cases of divine wrath are to be found in the Old Testament, including the Lord's striking the Israelites with venomous snakes in response to their grumbling and complaining during their desert wanderings (Numbers 21:4-9), God's vengeance on the Midianites via the Israelite army (Numbers 31), God's subjecting the Israelites to a defeat by the Amorites because of Israel's refusal to obey the Lord (Deut. 1), divine punishment of Israel for the sin of Achan (Joshua 7), and the case of Elisha and the bears (2 Kings 2:23-25).

Ananias and Sapphira

In the New Testament, there are only a few narrative accounts of divine wrath, but they are dramatic. One of these is recounted by Luke in Acts 5:

> Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied

to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God." When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price." Peter said to her, "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events (Acts 5:1-11).

Although it is clear from this passage that Peter condemns Ananias, and presumably also Sapphira, for lying to God, commentators speculate as to whether their sin also included covetousness, vain ambition, or breaking vows to the Lord. In any case, the hypocrisy of this couple clearly provoked a severe divine response.

Herod's Demise

Later in the book of Acts we learn of the fate of Herod Agrippa, the great persecutor of the early church:

Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there. He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. After securing the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply. On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died (Acts 12:19-23).

The Jewish historian Josephus provides a detailed account of these events, noting that those present were declaring Herod to be a God. And yet, "upon this the king did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery."[5] It appears, then, that Herod's silence was tantamount to consent and therefore blasphemy.

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5. Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 19.8.2, William Whiston, trans. (1737 edition): http://sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-19.htm.

Redemptive Dimensions of Wrath

There are many other biblical events that may be regarded as instances of divine wrath, but these are particularly clear cases, as they all involve the termination of human lives. I select these cases in part for just this reason, as one might object that narratives where God causes suffering or discomfort without killing anyone (e.g., Paul's "thorn in the flesh" described in 2 Cor. 12:7-10) are too mild to properly be described as wrathful.

Still, despite the consistent theme of death, there is variety among the narrative accounts reviewed above. Some involve the killing of thousands of people, while others involve a more surgical strike on a few people. Some are preceded by warnings, while others are sudden and unanticipated. Yet what they all have in common is *a severe divine response to human sin*. Such responses appear to serve a number of functions, including vengeance, rebuke, warning, discipline, and purification. And it is here where things begin to get interesting regarding divine wrath and our usual way of viewing it. For at least three of these functions may be construed as potentially redemptive. That is, God's wrath may be seen as serving a positive or constructive aim. In this regard divine wrath apparently mirrors the principal functional roles of human punishment—retribution, correction, and deterrence. As in civil, familial, or contexts of human punishment, particular cases of divine wrath could fulfill one or more of these aims. For example, the plague on Israel in Exodus 32 and the snakes in Numbers 21 appear to serve corrective and deterrent functions, as do many of the Egyptian plagues, which seem to be repeated attempts at correcting, enlightening, and otherwise improving people.[6] But the worldwide flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the killing of Ananias and Sapphira seem to be primarily instances of retributive wrath with a secondary deterrent effect on survivors who witnessed or otherwise learned of these events.

Some biblical reinforcement of this idea of a redemptive function of divine wrath can be found in this passage from the book of Jeremiah:

> The word of the Lord came to me. He said, "Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?" declares the Lord. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel. If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it. Now therefore say to the

6. The book of Jonah warrants mention here as an example of the deterrent function of divine wrath. For it was the threat of destruction which prompted the Ninevites to repent and thus avoid this fate. So here is a vivid illustration of how divine wrath *in prospect* can serve a redemptive function *in reality*.

people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, 'This is what the Lord says: Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you. So turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and your actions'" (Jeremiah 18:5-11).

Here God's aim in threatening "disaster" is to prompt Israel's repentance from the evil in which they are currently indulging. In cases where God actually exercises his wrath rather than merely threatening it, the effect can be even greater. Jude tells us that God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah served "as a warning of the eternal fire of God's judgment" (Jude 7). Regarding the case of Ananias and Sapphira, Luke tells us that "great fear seized the whole church" when they heard of the sudden death of these two dishonest people (Acts 5:11), which we may assume resulted in an increase of moral seriousness among the early Christians.

So as severe and disturbing as these events must have been to the communities who witnessed them, they do seem to have served the end of prompting repentance and motivating more virtuous living among the people of God. And, of course, this is redemptive. So it seems that if the reticence of the contemporary church regarding the doctrine of divine wrath is due to the perception that the subject is entirely negative (as I suspect is a prevailing perception), this is a mistake. While certainly divine retribution is an uncomfortable idea—as any instance of severe punishment is—we should be encouraged by the notion that God (1) does not tolerate human wickedness indefinitely and (2) he is committed enough to our moral improvement to go to extremes to warn, chide, rebuke, and prod us to greater obedience and virtue. And this certainly seems consistent with genuine love.[7]

Some Distinctions

Now there are some distinctions to be made that are potentially helpful in analyzing and categorizing particular instances of divine wrath. For example, we may distinguish between *direct* and *indirect* wrath. By "direct" divine wrath I mean those cases where God immediately causes death or suffering, whereas in cases of "indirect" wrath God uses some other agency, whether human, animal, or angelic. Biblical examples of each of these categories are plentiful. Beginning with instances of indirect wrath, we find plenty of wrathful deployments of human beings, such as God's use of the Israelite army to bring "vengeance" on the Midianites in Numbers 31. Similar instances are to be found throughout the Old Testament, and God explicitly declares as much in such passages as Isaiah 10:5 ("Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my wrath!") and Ezekiel 25:14 ("'I will take vengeance on Edom by the hand of my people Israel, and they will deal with Edom

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7. This observation is made, for example, by Thomas Aquinas who regarded divine wrath as a manifestation of the justice of God but insisted that all divine justice has divine mercy as its foundation (see *Summa Theologica*, I., Q. 21, Art. 4).

in accordance with my anger and my wrath; they will know my vengeance,' declares the Sovereign Lord").

As for divine use of animals to execute wrath, here is a particularly memorable example:

> Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, some youths came out of the town and jeered at him. "Get out of here, baldy!" they said. "Go on up, you baldhead!" He turned around, looked at them and called down a curse on them in the name of the Lord. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths. And he went on to Mount Carmel and from there returned to Samaria (2 Kings 2:23-25).[8]

Other examples include the Lord striking the Israelites with venomous snakes in Numbers 21 and the use of frogs, locusts, gnats and flies to plague the Egyptians in Exodus 8-10.

As for the third category of indirect wrath, where God uses angelic beings to bring vengeance, biblical instances include the case of Herod noted above (Acts 12:19-23), Exodus 33:2, where God promises to "send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites," and 2 Sam. 24:15-17, where the angel of the Lord strikes the Israelites. Possibly the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is an instance of divine deputizing of angels, as regarding the city of Sodom the angels declare to Lot, "*we* are going to destroy this place" (Gen. 19:13). There are also references to God's use of a "destroying angel" to execute judgment in such passages as 1 Chron. 21:15, Ps. 78:49, and 1 Cor. 10:10.

As for cases of direct divine wrath, apparent examples include the worldwide flood (Gen. 6-9), the Egyptian plagues of hail, darkness, and boils (Exod. 7-12), the plague on Israel because of their golden calf idol (Exod. 32:35), and the case of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). I say guardedly that these are "apparent" cases of direct divine wrath because it is possible that God deployed some deputy agency as well to bring these punishments, though the texts do not inform us of this. This possibility seems evident in the fact that many of the aforementioned cases of indirect wrath are referred to elsewhere in Scripture (and among extra-biblical writers) simply as cases of divine punishment without any mention of the secondary

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8. The narrator offers no further commentary regarding this strange event. At first blush, this certainly seems to be excessive divine punishment, especially since the targets are young. But biblical commentators note that the ages of the "youths" is not clear; it is possible they were adolescents. Furthermore, we do not know whether any of them actually died as a result of the attacks. Also, the significance of their mockery should be understood in light of where Elisha was going and the prophetic work he seemed intent to do there. At this time Bethel was a major center of idolatry in the Northern Kingdom, and Elisha was God's select messenger to address this evil. So in mocking Elisha, the youths were effectively mocking the very work of God intended to protect them and the rest of their people.

finite agencies involved. If it makes sense to refer to these cases in such terms, then it is conceivable that *all* divine wrath is similarly executed through secondary causes.

Another distinction regarding forms of divine wrath is that between what may be called *special* and *natural* wrath. By "special" divine wrath I mean any case where the wrathful event is somehow extraordinary, unique, or out of step with the usual course of nature or human events, though not necessarily a violation of the laws of nature. Thus, the cases of the worldwide flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, the Egyptian plagues, Elisha and the bears, and the sudden deaths of Ananias and Sapphira would all qualify as special divine wrath. These are all strikingly special events in that there was nothing routine or predictable about them. Each occurred, as it were, "out of the blue" and, thus, was more easily identified as divinely orchestrated.

In contrast, what I am calling "natural" wrath does concern events that are in some way ordinary, routine, and predictable, because their natural causes are—at least at this point in scientific history—easily traced and analyzed. However, they may have just as much of a corrective and deterrent effect on those involved as cases of special wrath. They are the sorts of cases to which the biblical proverb applies which says, "there is a way that appears to be right but in the end it leads to death" (Pr. 14:12 and Pr. 16:25) and to which the apostle Paul refers when he declares, "a man reaps what he sows" (Gal. 6:7; see also 2 Cor. 9:6-7). The basic idea is that if you engage in particular kinds of bad behaviors then certain negative consequences will follow. In addition to these general biblical statements we find specific illustrations in Scripture, such as where the deadly effects of adultery are guaranteed in this passage: "For a prostitute can be had for a loaf of bread, but another man's wife preys on your very life. Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched?" (Pr. 6:26-28).

This is what we might think of as a divinely ordained moral law of reciprocity, in the sense that certain forms of conduct bring very unpleasant consequences. Some extra-biblical examples might include the negative effects—physical, psychological, and relational—of alcohol abuse and the tendency of sexual promiscuity to result in STDs as well as emotional and relational distress. This distinction between natural and special wrath is potentially controversial, however, because, depending upon one's view of divine providence, one will be more or less inclined to accept the natural moral law of reciprocity as featuring enough specific divine intent for the pain and suffering that follows from bad behaviors to properly qualify as divine wrath. Those who hold a "high" view of providence which affirms God's meticulous governance of all things will no doubt be more amenable to this distinction.

The Contemporary Viability of Inferring Special Divine Wrath

Now with these distinctions in hand, I would like to raise a few questions regarding the contemporary applicability of the concept of divine wrath. My overarching query

is this: When, if ever, may we justifiably believe a current event to be a case of special divine wrath? That is, are there contemporary phenomena that we might reasonably conclude are instances of God's punishment of a person or people group? I am concerned with special wrath in particular because claims that fall into this category are the most common and controversial. Throughout history Christians have made bold declarations that various disasters and atrocities were instances of God's vengeance, from the destruction of the ancient city of Pompeii by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius[9] to the Black Plague of the 13th century[10] to Hurricane Katrina in 2005.[11] Might some such judgments have merit? If not, why not? One natural response would be to say that all such claims are problematic simply because they do not enjoy any biblical sanction. Unlike the accounts of the world-wide flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and so on, we have no special revelation to *confirm* that these later, extra-biblical events constituted divine punishment. Thus, one might take the view that all assertions of divine wrath since biblical times are speculative at best and perhaps even irresponsible. They may be regarded as speculative because of the lack of direct biblical corroboration of divine intent to punish with these phenomena, and they may be judged irresponsible because such declarations could erroneously ascribe motives and purposes to God, therefore potentially slandering the deity. Let's call this approach to contemporary ascriptions of divine wrath the *skeptical thesis*. Note that the reasons I've given to motivate this perspective are *epistemological* and *moral* in nature. We will look at both of these in turn.

The Epistemological Argument for the Skeptical Thesis

The concern here has to do with identification criteria when it comes to possible cases of divine wrath. The assumption is that without explicit biblical sanction for describing an event as a case of divine wrath, application of the term to a given phenomenon is illegitimate. But what warrant have we to accept this criterion? Why maintain that explicit sanction by a divinely inspired text is needed to infer that an event is a case of divine wrath? While such corroboration is certainly a *sufficient* condition to be confident of this, it does not follow that this is a *necessary* condition for

9. See, for example, Scott Ashley, "The Day the World Ended: Lessons from Pompeii," *Beyond Today* (Dec. 2, 2005): http://www.ucg.org/the-good-news/the-day-the-world-ended-lessons-from-pompeii. Accessed Dec. 27, 2018.

10. At the time of the Black Plague Christians commonly assumed that the pestilence, or "Great Mortality" as it was called, was an act of divine punishment.

11. In reference to Hurricane Katrina and the damage it caused, New Orleans mayor Ray Nagin is said to have declared, "Surely God is mad at America" (Douglas Brinkley, *The Great Deluge: Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast* [2006], 618). And Nation of Islam minister Louis Farrakhan claimed that the hurricane was "God's way of punishing America for its warmongering and racism" (Michael Eric Dyson, *Come Hell or High Water: Hurricane Katrina and the Color of Disaster* [Basic Civitas Books, 2006], 178–202).

such confidence. For all we know, there might be some other reasonable identification criteria the satisfaction of which could also be sufficient to provide strong warrant for making the divine wrath inference.

So what are some possible candidates of corroborating factors that might provide sufficient conditions for inferring that a current event is an instance of divine wrath? One possibility is the *occurrence of a miracle* associated with the event in question. Miracles certainly provided grounds for an inference to divine wrath in many of the Old Testament miracles, from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah to the parting of the Red Sea. Another possibility is *extraordinary coincidence*. This, too, applies to many biblical instances of divine wrath, including Elisha and the bears, the timely earthquake in the case of the Korah rebellion, and the sudden deaths of Ananias and Sapphira. A third possibility is if the phenomenon comes as a *fulfilled bold prediction* by someone connected to the event somehow. Such a criterion is fulfilled in the cases of the world-wide flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and Korah's rebellion, and the death of Sapphira, all of which were foretold, or at least strongly intimated, by key players in the narratives. Finally, we might also consider the occurrence of *highly beneficial consequences* for righteous people involved. While this would not provide as strong a corroboration as the previous three conditions, and thus would not rise to the status of sufficient grounds for confident belief, it might nonetheless provide some confirmation that a given event is an instance of divine wrath. After all, in every biblical case of divine wrath we find that significant benefits follow, pertaining to such things as repentance, enhanced faith, and the purification of the faith community.

In short, then, when inferring divine wrath about a given event, some other corroborating factors besides explicit biblical sanction might be possible. Scripture itself suggests as much in the above mentioned cases where *at the time of the events* it was reasonable to conclude that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the drowning of the Egyptian soldiers, the engulfing of Korah and the other rebels, and the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira were instances of divine wrath. There were strong indicators or markers of divine intent to punish in each case, *even prior to and independent of later biblical writers' divinely inspired statements to this effect*. So it seems that explicit sanction in scripture is not a necessary condition for properly inferring divine wrath. Other factors may be sufficient to supply corroborating grounds for confidence in such a claim. And this shows that the epistemological argument for the skeptical thesis, at least as I've represented it here, fails. For all we know, there are other criteria besides direct biblical sanction which, if satisfied, can provide warrant for identifying a given phenomenon as a case of divine wrath.[12]

12. Another confirmation of this might be found in 1 Corinthians 11, where the Apostle Paul addresses the problem of abuse of communion among the church at Corinth. Paul appears to infer divine wrath when he notes that "For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many

One might point out, though, that however compelling the extra-biblical sanctions for inferring divine wrath, be they miracles, extraordinary coincidence, or fulfilled bold predictions, there remains an epistemological disparity between cases where we have special revelation guiding us and cases where we do not, such as regards any current event. Confidence that a given text is divinely inspired in turn lends the same confidence to any particular claims that text makes, whether concerning morals, metaphysics, or historical events. So the alternative corroborating factors just discussed ought not be construed as being as reliable as explicit biblical sanction when it comes to making inferences to divine wrath. Just because one or more of them might be sufficient to instill confidence in this regard, it does not follow that they provide the *same degree* of confidence as is gained from an explicit biblical declaration of divine wrath.

But consider this complicating scenario. Suppose someone experiences or somehow receives an explicit *personal* divine revelation that corroborates a particular divine wrath inference. I have in mind here such things as visions, dreams, or other special divine communications, which could effectively serve the same epistemic function in a person's life as divine sanction through an inspired biblical text. If someone were to have such an experience and it strongly inclined her to believe that certain events in her or someone else's life constituted divine punishment, then such might also constitute strong corroborating grounds for believing those events were indeed God's wrath. The questions to raise in such a case, of course, would be the standard ones when it comes to religious experience in a Christian belief context, e.g., questions about whether the experience coheres with Scripture, orthodox Christian belief, church tradition, etc. Unlike the additional corroborating factors I posed above, personal religious experiences have an irreducibly subjective dimension which properly invites public scrutiny. Passing such scrutiny, it seems reasonable to suppose that such experiences might provide similarly corroborating grounds for inferring divine wrath in a given case. But, alas, establishing the veridicality of such extraordinary personal religious experiences is a very difficult thing to do. So grounding a claim of special divine wrath in this way only pushes a significant justificatory burden back one step.

The Moral Argument for the Skeptical Thesis

Now let us turn to the moral argument for the skeptical thesis—the claim that somehow ascriptions of divine wrath are irresponsible because they risk imputing motives to God that he does not have. In considering this worry, notice that if there turn out to be reasonable epistemic grounds for concluding that a given phenomenon

among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment" (1 Cor. 11:29-31).

is a case of divine wrath, then this would by itself considerably reduce the risk of divine slander. Depending on the corroborating factors regarding the case in question, we might even imagine that the risk is eliminated altogether. Consider again the Sodom and Gomorrah case. Even prior to any explicit biblical sanction it would seem reasonable for someone to confidently assert that God had destroyed those cities as an act punishment. The facts that the sulfur raining down from heaven was a miracle and that the destruction had just been foretold by Lot's two visitors strongly corroborate this belief and thus provide sufficient grounds for inferring it was a case of divine wrath. And it is possible that the warrant for this conclusion is so strong as to preclude any worries about misrepresenting or slandering God by making assertions to this effect. The same goes for the death of Sapphira. This event, too, was foretold by Peter and, though not evidently miraculous, it was extraordinarily coincidental that she would drop dead immediately upon hearing Peter's declaration about her impending demise. These factors, too, might so strongly corroborate the divine wrath interpretation that it could eliminate all moral reservations when declaring it to be a case of divine wrath. The fact that, as Luke tells us, "great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events" (Acts 5:11) suggests that the inference to divine wrath in the case of Ananias and Sapphira was indeed popular in the early church community. Of course, this does not prove that their approach was sound, since, after all, the early church could have been mistaken in drawing this conclusion. But to the extent that we trust the wisdom and prevailing judgments of the early church community, their practice in this matter will provide a model for us today as we think about the issue of inferring divine wrath.

My point, then, is that the moral concerns regarding inferences to divine wrath might stand or fall on the epistemic questions regarding such inferences. The stronger the epistemic grounds for such an inference, the less one need worry about slandering God. And, conversely, the weaker the epistemic grounds, the stronger the moral concerns become. But given the significance of the moral wrong that is slandering God with an errant claim about his acts or intentions, it is probably prudent to maintain an especially stringent standard for making such assertions. After all, it is always possible to err in one's interpretations regarding each of the potential corroborating factors discussed above. What *seemed* to be a miracle might not have been miraculous after all. What *seemed* to be an extraordinary coincidence might have been, in fact, fairly ordinary. And what *seemed* to have been the fulfillment of a bold prediction might have been otherwise. Given human fallibility, one must always consider that it is possible that one's inference to divine wrath is invalid. And to the degree that this is possible, one risks slandering the Lord in making a public proclamation regarding one's inference.

> This consideration suggests a final distinction, this one practical in nature. It is one thing to *privately* draw a conclusion about divine purpose behind an event, and it is quite another to make a *public* declaration regarding one's

conclusion. We may personally believe that X was a case of divine wrath, even where we would never proclaim this to others. This is simply to recognize that there are different standards for private and public intellectual practice. Perhaps all of us hold views about various issues that we would never share with anyone, except perhaps our closest confidants. Usually this is because those views are vague hunches, seemings,[13] or simple intuitions that we know we are unable to support with objective data or strong arguments. Or perhaps because, though well-reasoned and evidentially justified, they are highly unpopular or potentially incendiary positions, socially speaking. In any case, since we recognize that our rational grounds for these beliefs are not likely to be publicly compelling, we do not share them with most people. Nevertheless, we do affirm them. Such might be the case regarding one's belief that X was a case of divine wrath. It might be altogether appropriate to believe this, and perhaps even to air this judgment with one's spouse or close friend, but it might also be most prudent to otherwise keep this view to oneself. In this case, doxastic discretion might be the better part of intellectual valor.

Conclusion

Is it possible to identify instances of special divine wrath in contemporary times? Here I have taken some steps toward an answer to this question. As I have noted, in making such claims, one incurs serious moral and epistemic risks. Because of this, a generally skeptical posture regarding all such claims seems to be warranted. This skepticism might be surmounted, however, if certain corroborating conditions exist, such as (1) the occurrence of a miracle in conjunction with the event in question, (2) extraordinary coincidences associated with the event, or (3) the association of the event with a fulfilled a bold prediction. Although such factors may mitigate skepticism regarding a given claim regarding special divine wrath, they do not justify the same degree of confidence that Scripture provides when it identifies a particular phenomenon as such. We also considered the possibility of a personal extra-biblical divine revelation, such as a dream or vision, which corroborates a claim of special divine wrath.

While such an experience could provide strong corroborating grounds for inferring divine wrath in a given case, this introduces justificatory problems of its own, especially as regards demonstrating veridicality in a public way. I conclude,

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13. For some critical discussions of assorted epistemic issues related to so-called "seemings" (how things just seem to us), see Chris Tucker, ed., *Seemings and Justification: New Essays on Dogmatism and Phenomenal Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

therefore, that while it may be reasonable to hold private beliefs about a phenomenon being a case of special divine wrath, it is quite another to make such claims publicly.[14]

Comparative Ecclesiology: Roger Haight's *Christian Community in History* for Evangelical Resourcement

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Introduction

Due in part to its late arrival within systematic theological loci, ecclesiology remains fertile soil for wide-ranging investigative inquiries from academic scholars and thoughtful clergy.[1] Paul Avis, doyen of academic ecclesiology, positions the discipline in the forefront of modern theological attention, even claiming, "during the past couple of centuries, ecclesiology became a major theological discipline; today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century of the Christian era, it is at the heart of theological research and debate."[2] Ecclesiology lies at the heart of modern theological dialogue because the identity, purpose, and power of the church are inextricably connected to all other biblical and theological emphases. One can hardly discuss any salient aspect of Christianity without acknowledging its connection to the church as God's people, or explain in some sense how God uses this eschatological people as the conduit through which he presently engages human history.[3] As research progresses to analyze global ecclesiological phenomena or specific issues within any longstanding church tradition, debates will persist as interlocutors grapple with multiform critiques and proposals.[4]

Broadly speaking, contemporary theological works fall within two approaches. One approach is decidedly categorical and/or descriptive. In this sense, authors seek to explore an aspect of theology for the purpose of summarizing or making accessible

1. Scholars frequently attribute the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century Conciliar Movement and the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation as the genesis of modern ecclesiology as its own systematic field. This claim, however, does not suggest ecclesiological constructions and formulations were absent in previous generations or traditions.

2. Paul Avis, "Introduction to Ecclesiology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Ecclesiology*, ed. Paul Avis (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 1.

3. John Webster's caution warrants mentioning at this point. Due in part to its contemporary emphasis among academic theologians and clergy, one can mistakenly advocate for an "inflation of ecclesiology so that it becomes doctrinal *substratum* of all Christian teaching." This error inevitably leads to a diminished view of theology proper, for as Webster famously noted, "a doctrine of the church is only as good as the doctrine of God which underlies it." See John Webster, *Confessing God: Essays in Christian Dogmatics II* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 155-56. Emphasis in original.

4. The growth of Christianity in the global south alone will fuel new ecclesiological inquiries undoubtedly requiring fresh reappraisals. See, especially, chapter five in Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

a topic for their intended audience. This approach benefits readers by providing assistance in understanding relevant information within a field, or framing for readers where historical tension points exist among theologians and church traditions. In descriptive theological approaches, church history is routinely consulted.[5] Consequently, this approach is decidedly pedagogical in purpose and presentation.

Alternatively, a second contemporary approach proves more constructive in design and presentation. In this sense, authors seek to build upon or challenge the descriptive theological material and impose new models or alterations to theological constructs.[6] Within academic ecclesiology, descriptive works focus upon longstanding discussion points such as the church's origination, its marks, its sacraments, its purpose and mission, and its varied geographical history replete with struggle and complex ecumenical ambitions. Because of the importance and frequency of the church's practices and doctrinal formulations, however, academic ecclesiology remains active with constructive approaches spanning Christian traditions throughout the world.[7]

Some constructive proposals jettison previously held views, while others expand upon or clarify the work of others. Further, that constructive approaches are critical within ecclesiology is seen in Avis's definition of ecclesiology. Avis asserts, "ecclesiology may be defined as the discipline that is concerned with *comparative, critical, and constructive reflection on the dominant paradigms of the identity of the church*."[8] One can quibble with what Avis's definition omits while affirming what he substantiates, and in that sense, constructive ecclesiology encourages assessment across traditions for critique and contemporary resourcement.

With these parameters in place, this review article explores Roger Haight's ecclesiological trilogy, believing Haight's pioneering work warrants both critique

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5. A clear example of this approach is the "Doing Theology" series recently published by T&T Clark. This series of books introduces major Christian traditions in concise, accessible volumes where readers are exposed to major thinkers, key concepts, and key theological and historical developments within each tradition. As of this writing, there exists volumes on Catholic Theology, Baptist Theology, Anglican Theology, Methodist Theology, Lutheran Theology, and Reformed Theology.

6. For introductory reading on constructive theology, see Jason A. Wyman, *Constructing Constructive Theology: An Introductory Sketch* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017). See especially chapter one.

7. A few notable examples are worthy of mention. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); Everett Ferguson, *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); Gregg R. Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012); Neil Ormerod, *Re-Visioning the Church: An Experiment in Systematic-Historical* Ecclesiology (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014). Scott MacDougall, *More Than Communion: Imagining an Eschatological Ecclesiology* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015); Gordon T. Smith, *Evangelical, Sacramental, and Pentecostal: Why the Church Should Be All Three* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2017). As for systematic theologies, perhaps the most significant constructive effort among modern theologians belongs to Lutheran Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

8. Paul Avis, "Introduction to Ecclesiology," 3. Emphasis in original.

and resourcement for its descriptive *and* constructive proposals.[9] It is probable that many Evangelicals are unaware of Jesuit theologian, Roger Haight (born 1936). Yet his broad theological corpus, his leadership roles within worldwide ecumenical endeavors, and his tenuous relationship with the Roman Catholic Church all evidence the requisite ingredients for Evangelical curiosity.

Earning his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, and his S.T.L. (The Licentiate in Sacred Theology) from the Jesuit School of Theology at Chicago, Haight taught for numerous institutions throughout the world and served as the president of the Catholic Theological Society of America. His widely published works received both acclaim and criticism, but the substantive and lingering criticism arose from his 1999 work, *Jesus Symbol of God*. Among the usual critics from within various academic scholarly societies, Haight faced increasing scrutiny from The Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (CDF).[10] This focused critique against Haight led to a longstanding disruption of his official position as a Catholic theologian.

The Vatican's evaluation and eventual censure of Haight occurred during Pope Benedict XVI's tenure, 2005-2013. Benedict's eight year reign included a conservative realignment within Roman Catholic theology; thus, the CDF enhanced its scrutiny of theological approaches which challenged, adjusted, or borrowed ideas from other sources, inevitably challenging longstanding Catholic dogma. Haight's work received continual scrutiny, leading to his official censure in 2005. According to The Vatican, Haight was censured for "causing great harm to the faithful," and initially, he was prohibited from teaching in Catholic institutions.[11] As the controversy endured, in 2009 the CDF barred Haight from writing on theology and prohibited him from teaching in any institution. As a result of this action, Haight transitioned to a scholar in residence for Union Theological Seminary, an interdenominational seminary.

During Pope Francis's reign, however, Haight has been allowed to teach and write again, publishing among other things, *Spirituality Seeking Theology* (Orbis, 2014). While Haight's in-house controversy with The Vatican yields interesting discussion points for evaluating Haight's theology *in toto*, his ecclesiological trilogy can be assessed without making definitive conclusions regarding his official status with the CDF or The Vatican. In other words, his ecclesiological project can be isolated for Evangelical resourcement with or without Haight's reconciliation with

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9. Gerard Manion published an edited volume where academic scholars evaluated Haight's proposals from a broadly ecumenical approach. See *Comparative Ecclesiology: Critical Investigations*, ed. Gerard Manion (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2008).

10. The CDF is The Vatican's doctrinal agency tasked with evaluating and protecting Catholic theology. This group is responsible for a collective doctrinal unity among Catholic teachings throughout the world. For further reading on Haight's doctrinal conflict with The Vatican, see Thomas P. Rausch, "Postmodern Jesus: The Vatican's Quarrel with Roger Haight," *Christian Century* (May 3, 2005): 28-31; John L. Allen, "Rome Orders Roger Haight to Stop Teaching, Publishing," *National Catholic Reporter* (January 5, 2009). https://www.ncronline.org/news/rome-orders-roger-haight-stop-teaching-publishing. Accessed May 19, 2019.

11. Allen, "Rome Orders Roger Haight to Stop Teaching, Publishing," para. 1.

Rome. The nature of his work calls for an academic compartmentalization of his ecclesiological project alone. In the following assessment, each volume will be succinctly reviewed individually before providing general areas of resourcement for Protestant ecclesiology.

Volume One: Historical Ecclesiology

Roger Haight, *Christian Community in History: Historical Ecclesiology*, vol. 1 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), pp. 464, $39.95, softcover.

Before proceeding, it seems prudent to clarify Haight's intended audience throughout this multi-volume project. He notes,

> I intend this work to be read by all Christians; its projected audience is not limited to one particular church or Christian denomination. I am in fact Roman Catholic, and this membership surely manifests itself in a variety of ways. But we live in a pluralistic church in a pluralistic world. Thus I do not write confessionally as a Catholic but try to represent an evenhanded approach to the many ecclesiologies that have developed in the course of history and thus speak to all Christians.[12]

This generous ecumenical tone lingers throughout Haight's work in both his critiques and assertions of all ecclesial traditions. Readers should take note of Haight's admission that his goal is *not* to defend Roman Catholic ecclesiological foundations; instead, constructing an ecclesiology *out of* the church's pluriformity will to some degree challenge and perhaps amend aspects of his tradition's confessional commitments. Haight is aware that his approach will necessarily move beyond Catholic formulations, but he believes this consequence proves necessary because the church *and* the world are decidedly pluralistic. These aims and his constructive approach require a specific methodology to move forward any substantive proposal. With this in mind, the initial challenge of volume one is to identify and evidence a method for his project.

Consisting of six expansive chapters under the rubric of three broad headings, Haight's first volume acknowledges the inseparable relationship between the church's history and any ecclesiological formulation. Irrespective of any specified tradition, ecclesiology is inherently historical, but this fact creates critical methodological questions when evaluating the church and the historical contexts of her existence. How does any one group within the church judge rightly any other group belonging to the same global organism? Is there an overarching standard? Or how does any contemporary investigation give contextual integrity to those Christians whose lived experiences were in previous periods of church history?

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12. Roger Haight, *Christian Community in History: Historical Ecclesiology*, vol. 1 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 9.

Aware of these and other challenges, Haight rightly begins volume one of his trilogy with a robust account of theological method, critiquing the ease with which methods are adopted and haphazardly instituted, yet carefully defending his approach which he interestingly labels an "ecclesiology from below." In fact, ecclesiology from below *is* historical ecclesiology in Haight's estimation.[13] Before defending an ecclesiology from below, Haight juxtaposes an ecclesiology from above approach in helpful detail. Because Haight intends a wide audience (he is writing for "all Christians"), readers new to the field of theological method will appreciate Haight's clear descriptions and distinguishable categories.

Haight rejects an ecclesiology from above methodology for the following six reasons. First, Haight believes ecclesiology from above is ahistorical, resulting in an ignorance to the church's contextual moorings in its varied history. For Haight, one is methodologically employing an ecclesiology from above approach when one evaluates the church with broad summations absent any critical examination or appreciation of contextual factors. An example of this error could be the descriptions of post-Reformation views of the Eucharist which often mistakenly and narrowly focus on the theological conclusions of each position while ignoring the experiential and contextual narratives surrounding the formulation of those views. Whatever one may conclude about Luther's view of the Eucharist, one cannot provide an adequate evaluation absent an honest consideration of his experience as a Catholic priest. His lived experience in Catholicism necessarily shaped his later views of the Eucharist. Thus, the first mistake in an ecclesiology from above approach is its tendency to view the church in the abstract. This inevitably leads one to a truncated view of the church based on "constitutive elements that transcend its particular instantiations."[14] For Haight, the instantiations are critical, and the church's historical nuances have to be mined for constructing a contemporary ecclesiology.

Second, Haight rejects an ecclesiology from above approach because it inevitably shifts into a denominational focus. Christians have a tendency to "appeal to one's own tradition to understand one's own ecclesial community or communion," Haight claims.[15] The danger of this practice is the tendency to norm all other traditions based upon the accepted practices of one's own. Denominationalism blinds the viewer from incorporating beliefs and practices which may prove beneficial. The inevitable consequence of this posture is that it fails to take advantage of what could

13. In the field of Christology, theologians commonly speak of "Christology from above," and "Christology from below." This terminology addresses methodological approaches one employs in Christological inquiry. Generally speaking, a "Christology from above" approach focuses upon Jesus's pre-existence, the Divine Logos who entered human history via the incarnation; on the other hand, generally speaking, the "Christology from below" approach examines Jesus's human history through the Old Testament anticipation and the witness of the synoptic gospels. While others may use the "from above/from below" verbiage for ecclesiological method, Haight appears to be the modern pioneer of this distinction borrowed from Christology.

14. Haight, *Christian Community in History: Historical Ecclesiology,* 19.

15. Ibid.

be learned among the pluralistic expressions of Christianity. Third, Haight rejects an ecclesiology from above approach because he perceives it to be authority-driven, seeking to source its doctrinal formulations in the sacred texts it upholds. This action bifurcates the church from the secular world, certainly creating an authority and a language for each. In doing so, the church loses a potential audience because the church and the secular world salute differing authorities, and their allegiances often fall into conflict.

Fourth, Haight rejects an ecclesiology from above due to its tendency of viewing the church's history through the lens of doctrinal commitments. Thus, an ecclesiology from above approach could "simply cite scriptural and traditional sources as proof-texts that reflect divine authority in representing the character of the church."[16] But Haight senses this practice could lend one to have an underdeveloped view of God's providence, which for Haight, is how one is to view the historical developments and changes within the church's doctrinal commitments and practices. In fact, Haight desires a "confidence in God's providence guiding the church."[17] This could mean, for Haight, that instead of concluding a changing culture has led to theological compromise, one should consider if God's providence has led the church to adjust her theological constructs.

Fifth, Haight believes an ecclesiology from above methodology tends to blur the lines between Christology and ecclesiology. Because the risen Christ is head of the church, Christians can overwhelmingly view the church in soteriological terms and purposes, rather than exploring how Christ is present in other forms which may not have, at first, clear ties to the institutional church. This tendency could lead, Haight fears, to a bifurcation of who is in and who is out of the church, thus, leading to what Haight refers to as "ecclesiocentrism."[18] Instead, Haight wants to account for those Christian traditions who view Christ's total work to provide salvation, in some way, for *all* of humanity. In so doing, Haight desires to seek areas where Christ's presence may be located outside of the presence of institutional churches and among those whose beliefs and practices do not align with the Christian tradition.

Sixth, and finally, an ecclesiology from above views the church's ministries as hierarchical forms of power, and these forms of power descend from God to man. Regardless of tradition, those occupying the roles of minister or clergy wield power over their parishioners because they are tasked with word and sacrament (which have inherent power). For Haight, an ecclesiology from above muddles the power intended for laity, creating a dependence of the people upon clergy and a stifling of one being used in new ministerial ways. Leaning on history, Haight observes how the church "has undergone considerable change as it adapted to new

16. Ibid., 21-2.
17. Ibid., 22.
18. Ibid., 23.

situations."[19] Accordingly, these new situations birthed "new ministries" containing some form of power unexplainable in a tiered power structure. An ecclesiology from below prevents this mistake in that it validates the Spirit's work in those leading new ministries, recognizing new forms of authority among the laity's work in its particular social context.

An ecclesiology from below, on the other hand, corrects aforementioned errors. In short, Haight constructs his project with a broad formulation of an ecclesiology from below. Haight believes contemporary ecclesiology requires this approach due in large part to this approach's pliability. An ecclesiology from below possesses "historical consciousness," which requires the church to take seriously the "social forms and ideas of the age in which it existed."[20] Haight argues the Second Vatican Council demonstrates how historical consciousness takes seriously the church's past while requiring a certain openness to the church's future. Further, an ecclesiology from below takes seriously the critical issues of globalization and pluralism. With new forms of media, the church is now connected in ways previous generations could not imagine. Ecclesiology from below incorporates how this connectivity can inform needed changes and adaptations blurred by old denominational or authoritarian restrictions.

Haight believes his method also takes seriously the lived realities and challenges facing the contemporary church and the societies where they exist. Whether it is specific issues of human suffering, social injustice, poverty, or dehumanization, or more broad topics such as western individualism and secularization, Haight argues for an ecclesiology that considers these issues germane to the church's purpose and power. In sum, Haight's ecclesiology from below flows from five interrelated characteristics: history, sociology, theology, apologetics, and hermeneutics.

The remaining chapters in volume one explore the necessity and integration of these characteristics throughout church history. Thus, parts two and three of volume one offer a historical exploration of the first fifteen centuries of the church. In each chapter within these two sections, Haight includes a section incorporating "Principles for a Historical Ecclesiology." The summaries he provides prior to these sections are well written and provide clear depictions of relevant information. Haight uses the "Principles" sections to employ his ecclesiological method of exploration and critique to that particular period of church history.

Even if one does not agree with Haight's conclusions, he equally confronts all traditional interpretations, applying his method across periods with fairness and insight. For example, using his method to critique Roman Catholic institutional power during the Reformation, Haight avers, "the doctrine of papal sovereignty alone as the bond of unity would not be able to accommodate the demands for pluralism that

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19. Ibid., 24.
20. Ibid., 28.

erupted in the sixteenth century."[21] This critique challenges the depth and application of papal authority, certainly, but this critique also exposes Haight's belief in the legitimacy of non-Catholic forms of authority in wider Christianity.

Throughout volume one, Haight helps readers grasp the importance of theological method for contemporary inquiry. For students, this volume helpfully introduces critical considerations when approaching theological construction. Students will benefit from his usage of common terms and categories within the discipline. Further, his approach to integrating his own method into historical overviews demonstrates for students how to implement one's method carefully across traditions. For scholars and other informed readers, Haight provides an interesting contribution from a Catholic theologian who proves willing to question and amend his own tradition in the hopes of forming a contemporary ecclesiology that can withstand present challenges.

Volume Two: Comparative Ecclesiology

Roger Haight, *Christian Community in History: Comparative Ecclesiology*, vol. 2 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), pp. 528, $75.00, softcover.

Of the three volumes, Haight's pioneering work in volume two is principled, robust, and the lengthiest of the series. He carefully advances a constructive approach to produce his comparative historical ecclesiology. If volume one asserts an historical approach from Jesus's ministry to the dawn of the Protestant Reformation, volume two exposes the ecclesial plurality resulting from the ecclesiological restructuring of Christ's church.

Haight helpfully explains that until the Reformation, one could employ two distinct ecclesial traditions, Greek and Latin. These two self-contained camps were geographically settled, and both were insulated within their own traditions and forms. Yet the Reformation altered the simplicity of this arrangement because, as Haight observes, "the different churches that emerged in the sixteenth century were forced to give a more or less complete defense of their new polities."[22] An unwillingness to compromise in areas of theological disagreement and practice could not be overcome, inevitably creating new paradigms and challenges for what constitutes the church. The Reformation birthed plurality, and this disunity is unlikely to cease. If one desires to construct an ecumenical ecclesiology overcoming these ecclesial divisions, one must seek to do so with a willingness to appreciate but ultimately overlook unrealistic ambitions of the church moving beyond longstanding issues of disunity. Haight believes plurality and division should, therefore, cause ecclesiological aims to now shift towards a transdenominational ecclesial expression

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21. Ibid., 419.

22. Roger Haight, *Christian Community in History: Comparative Ecclesiology*, vol. 2 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), vii.

(Haight employs the term "transdenominational" in volume three). In other words, it would be an exercise in futility if one sought to undo the last five hundred years of division; instead, one must work toward realistic goals for future realignment with present divisions in mind.

Haight believes comparative ecclesiology affords the necessary tools for such a project. He states, "comparative ecclesiology is a study of the church that formally recognizes various levels of pluralism that affect the church and factors them into an understanding of the whole church."[23] How does comparative ecclesiology of volume two relate to historical ecclesiology of volume one? "Comparative ecclesiology," Haight notes, "unfolds within the larger embrace of historical ecclesiology; it is not opposed to an historical approach, but a subspecies of it."[24] Volume two, therefore, narrows the broad historical summaries Haight critiqued in the first volume.

Haight's approach consists of seven robust chapters under the rubric of two main parts. In part one, Haight utilizes four chapters to explore the church in the sixteenth century. One can hardly overlook the importance of the sixteenth century for ecclesiological movement, and Haight wisely and patiently navigates the necessary thinkers and indispensable issues. Part two consists of three broad chapters analyzing the church in the modern period. Finally, the volume concludes with a brief summation of ecclesiology in the twenty-first century. Before concluding each chapter, Haight includes a section entitled, "Principles for a Historical Ecclesiology." Similar to volume one, Haight applies his methodology in these "Principles" subsections.

The first two chapters are the only two devoted to specific historical persons. In chapter one, Haight explores Luther's ecclesiology, followed by an exploration of Calvin's ecclesiology in chapter two. The entry point for both chapters is mostly biographical material where readers are given succinct summaries and descriptions of key contextual points which shaped both Reformation giants. In his observation of Luther, Haight argues for a strong Augustinian influence to Luther's ecclesiology, and the "distinctive character [of Luther's ecclesiology] rests in defining the church primarily in theological terms of being grasped existentially by Christian faith and refusing all sociological reduction of the church to external organization."[25] Luther's pioneering work produced a "new ecclesiology," one which preserved some aspects of the medieval church, but whose reforms changed the understanding of authority, congregational focus and identity, institutional norms and practices, and a newfound interest to the role of the church's relationship to the world.

In his concluding section, Haight observes numerous applications of Luther's ecclesiology. Chief among them is Luther's commitment to reform the church. "Constant reform of the church is necessary," according to Haight, and Luther is the

23. Ibid., viii.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 41.

historical example who embraced this axiom throughout his reforming acts.[26] When considering Haight's own history with the Catholic Church, his emphasis on this principle is unsurprising. In various ways, Haight's project seeks to reform his own tradition to twenty-first century challenges through ecclesial protest, all in hopes of demonstrating how such a revision benefits every tradition in their ecclesial existence.

Surveying Calvin's life, teaching ministry, and his work throughout Geneva and Strasbourg, Haight's evaluation centers upon the church's ordinances, mission, and organization. This chapter does not offer a considerable amount of new information, nor does it offer any new critiques of Calvin's ecclesiology as it is developed through the published editions of the *Institutes*. The significance of this chapter rests upon Haight's principles for incorporating Calvin's ecclesiology into contemporary application. Haight rightly praises the trinitarian shape to Calvin's ecclesiology, claiming, "Calvin supplies ecclesiology with profound theological warrant in the trinitarian summary of God's dealing with humankind in history."[27] Whatever one makes of transdenominational ecclesiology as the goal of contemporary discourse, the trinitarian shape of the church's identity, mission, and message prove indispensable. Calvin's emphasis on this point is directly relevant to any contemporary construction.[28] With the deluge of pragmatism in modern church growth emphases, coupled with the increasing presence of biblical and theological ignorance in church gatherings, the church's grasp of its trinitarian identity might be the one principle preventing further doctrinal compromise.

The remaining two chapters in part one evaluate The Church of England and Anabaptist, Baptist, and Roman ecclesiologies. Like the previous chapters, Haight gives historical overview, carefully explaining the relevant nuances necessary for each tradition. Regarding the Church of England, Haight insists church development cannot go backward, and this is one of his primary principles of comparative integration. He claims, "church development that goes backward is regression and will not last."[29] This belief, in part, comes to light in volume three where Haight constructs a future oriented ecclesiology that appreciates its varied past but is unhindered by its boundaries.

Haight's chapters on Anabaptist, Baptist, and Roman ecclesiology follow similar patterns of development. Considerable analysis is brought to facilitate what distinguishing features exist in and between these traditions. While Haight's summaries do not tread new ground in their descriptions, he nevertheless seeks to identify fairly what enduring features warrant inclusion in comparative analysis. For example, Haight believes these traditions promote the principle of personal faith,

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26. Ibid., 77.

27. Ibid., 143.

28. On this point, see Marcus J. Serven, "The Care of Souls: John Calvin's Shepherding Ministry," *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies* 3.1 (2018): 154-74.

29. Haight, *Christian Community in History: Comparative Ecclesiology*, 212-13.

spiritual formation, and personal and corporate holiness. While these traditions do not agree on institutional identity, Haight sees institutional structure as beneficial to norming the unity of the church's witness and social posture. Institutionalism inevitably causes questions related to church polity, but Haight avoids delving into which form has the most to offer the best model for a transdenominational construction.

Titled, "Ecclesiology in the Twenty-first Century," Haight's conclusion identifies three pressing ecclesiological issues. One, the church can no longer employ labels to dismiss the challenges arising from what Haight refers to as "inculturation." By way of example, one can no longer dismiss inculturation with the old labels of syncretism, a verdict which would end serious discussion if true. Instead, according to Haight, twenty-first century ecclesiology must take seriously the fast-paced cultural changes confronting the church. Haight claims, "it seems that a new level of historical and cultural consciousness is arising spontaneously and will not be put off by an authority that comes less from the gospel and more from a different culture."[30] This challenge, in part, mirrors Haight's usage of the ecclesiology from below method, and it evidences his willingness to engage and perhaps incorporate elements from what many others would label as dubious sources.

Two, Haight believes twenty-first century Christians will be required to amend their views and attitudes toward other religions. Acknowledging the difficulty of such a task, for Christian doctrine emphatically denies the tenets of other world religions, Haight suggests other world religions are "intertwined systems of value and meaning," and Christian theology must assume a posture of honest evaluation of what these religions offer. For example, what could Christians learn about worship, prayer, or service from Islam, Hinduism, or various mystic expressions of spirituality?

Three, twenty-first century ecclesiology requires churches to embrace pluralism and strategize appropriate plans of action. This strategy must maintain unity above all by welcoming differences which do not rise to the level of seclusion. Haight uses the differences of sexual behavior as an example of how the church views the subject differently, and these varied views do not rise to the level of importance as "the unity that the Sprit forges in faith's attachment to Jesus Christ." In this sense, Haight urges churches to seek out that which is primary and explore avenues of compromise on other secondary matters. Inevitably, this posture leads to a harmful separation of Jesus's person and Jesus's teachings.

Any student of ecclesiology will benefit from Haight's work in this second volume. It is thrilling to observe Haight, the controversial Jesuit critic, explore these topics and offer insightful reflections on historical movement, doctrinal nuance, and ethical evaluations. His concessions are clear, and his appreciation of his own tradition emerges even in his critiques. The weaknesses of this volume abound, however. For all the good intentions of Haight's work within this volume, much of this proposal appears to lead toward theological reductionism. For example, as he applies

30. Ibid., 497.

his methodological principles to twentieth-century ecclesiology, he emphatically claims "no adequate ecclesiology today can ignore the issues of justice that prevail in a society."[31] Whatever one may believe about the church's responsibility to social justice, Haight fails to acknowledge the innumerable complications of this idealistic requirement. For example, questions related to the church and social justice are vastly different for Christians worshiping freely in the United States and those Christians living in areas where worship must exist in secrecy due to the clear and present reality of persecution. Additionally, Haight's conclusion proves to be the most glaring weakness or disappointment in the second volume. At just over two pages, the volume ends abruptly without any significant tying together of the volume's themes, nor does he engage further the three pressing issues mentioned above.

Volume Three: Ecclesial Existence

Roger Haight, *Christian Community in History: Ecclesial Existence*, vol. 3 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), pp. 320, $32.95, softcover.

In this final volume, Haight promotes an ecclesiology of existence, proposing ways the church can confront present and future challenges. Consisting of eight chapters, this volume is the smallest of the trilogy. He envisions an ecclesiology that reaches across the whole tradition, thriving in an "existential mode of being in the world made up of basic beliefs and practices."[32] Readers unaware of the first two volumes will appreciate chapter two. Here Haight summarizes the main emphases of this overall trilogy and their integration into this final presentation. The core of this volume is Haight's insistence upon the church's shared common "ecclesial existence" that forms what he describes as a "transdenominational ecclesiology."

With a precipitous decline of Christianity in the west, coupled with Christianity's explosive growth in the developing world, Haight urges contemporary Christians to enter into a thorough examination of the universal commonalities that unite the faith from the local beliefs and practices that may be not of universally importance. In a sense, Haight seeks to create a new theological triage for modern ecclesiology. Interestingly, Haught does not appeal to systematic theology, biblical exegesis, or missiology to construct the parameters for his ecclesiological project. Instead, Haight incorporates sociology as his guiding source, presenting five organizational principles of application, each presented in its own chapter.

His analogical approach serves his desire to confirm the maximum amount of similarities among the pluralistic forms of the church. With frequent appeals

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31. Ibid., 426.

32. Roger Haight, *Christian Community in History: Ecclesial Existence*, vol. 3 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), viii.

to Schleiermacher, a transdenominational ecclesiology "seeks to formulate a characterization of the church that is common to the Christian churches or denominations. It is a form of comparative ecclesiology that explicitly deals with pluralism by integrating into its method of understanding church sources that transcend the boundaries of a single church."[33] Viewed from the field of sociology, Haight's five organizational principles are evaluated in chapters three through seven. The nature and purpose of the church (chapter three), the church's organization (chapter four), church membership (chapter five), the church's activities (chapter six), and the church's relationship to the world (chapter seven) form the structure of his argument. Like the first two volumes, Haight employs a similar structure to each chapter. Finally, each chapter includes critical questions for further research.

Haight's work on the nature and mission of the church provide his most robust inclusion of systematic and biblical categories. The church is a sign community, and the sign signifies God's eternal mission which is to "keep alive in history the message and ministry of Jesus, indeed, to make them effective in the members' own lies and through them in the world, in society, and in history."[34] From a sociological perspective, globalization creates complications to this mission, thus requiring new forms of implementation. Regarding the organizational principle, Haight eschews the tiered approach which limits power away from laity. Instead, the ecclesial existence needed, according to Haight, is one where "any given church may actually be a community held together by a balance of power, by oppositions in tension with each other, by tacit agreements to disagree forged in some hostility."[35] How could such an authority exist long-term? By a reliance upon the Spirit to help churches reach consensus through balanced authority structures of clergy and laity. This construct, in Haight's view, allows for a wide applicability among local churches, and it evidences more avenues for diverse thought.

Chapters on church membership, church activity, and the church's relationship to the world furthers Haight's visions for a new ecclesiology. Sociological data suggests humans enjoy group membership, often forming communities with shared values and identities. Related to the church, taking advantage of this tendency requires a renewed interest in what constitutes the parameters of membership. Haight rightly notes the difficulty and complexity of constructing a new vision for church membership due to the denominational differences of this process. With regard the church's activities, Haight demonstrates the critical importance of the Lord's Supper, and he notes its indelible placement in spiritual flourishing.[36] He offers a brief overview of the pastoral office, mainly emphasizing issues of calling and ordination

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33. Roger Haight, *Christian Community in History: Ecclesial Existence*, vol. 3 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 4-5.

34. Ibid., 111.

35. Ibid., 155-56.

36. Ibid., 227-29.

while avoiding the complexity of issues related to gender roles. Finally, Haight urges churches to embrace the tensions emerging form their interaction with the wider world. "Even when churches resist certain cultural norms," he claims, "by that very fact they engage culture."[37] Haight calls for a "missionary openness" to other cultures, religions, beliefs, and practices, claiming "one of the strongest ecumenical agencies in our world today is friendship."[38]

This volume's strength rests in its formulation of principles to help Christians grapple with the difficult work of common mission, of finding the areas of common ecclesial existence subsisting in all churches. One can discern Haight's noble ambition to see a church more unified, more in line with the foundations of the faith, and less inclined to fight over minor doctrinal skirmishes. The totality of this project and the five organizational principles of this volume all require further attention from various traditions whose interests align with Haight's transdenominational goals. For all the good one finds in this volume, this volume begs for further development before seeking formal means of integration.

Assessing Transdenominational Ecclesiology

Protestant resourcement of Haight's trilogy will first depend on the acceptability of his method. The bifurcation of ecclesiology from below and above helpfully clarifies approaches to a discipline whose emphases range from doctrinal formulation to an endless array of practical applications. As with all theological verbiage, specificity of meaning must demonstrate how these descriptions differentiate methodological approaches. In an anti-denominational age, Haight's ecclesiology from below accommodates a path forward where historical context is observed and noted. Further, this methodology respectfully acknowledges the reality of denominationalism while not inadvertently making any one denomination superior by its longevity, doctrine, practices, or resources. Additionally, in Haight's estimation, when Christ's church is empowered and dependent upon the Spirit, an ecclesiological flexibility emerges, thus allowing for the formation of unique corporate ecclesial expressions.

This loose methodological entry point avoids the issues surrounding denominational differences, allowing the church to assess which cooperative options work best in pluralistic societies. Because it is governed by her God, history belongs to the church, and for her to flourish, the church must not allow the nuances of a local gathering to subvert the church's longstanding diverse tapestry. An ecclesiology from below does indeed give room for assessing the prominent lived realities of God's people regardless of theological, geographical, or experiential differences. Twenty-first century ecclesiologists could integrate the strength of Haight's proposal as it will assist in preventing idiosyncratic errors.

37. Ibid., 268.
38. Ibid., 269.

While an ecclesiology from below does thwart any tendency of oversimplification or abstraction to the church's identity, Haight's proposal is not without fault. Protestant resourcement largely depends on how comfortable one feels in establishing an ecclesial paradigm where one is required to overlook the very issues causing so much denominational separation. Many of these issues are profoundly complex, entailing the beliefs and practices across longstanding periods of church history. Historical ecclesiology helps the church explore the lived experiences of previous generations, and integrating what can be resourced from these explorations will assist emerging leaders who are currently training for church ministry. But one must remember that historical ecclesiology does not *create* the doctrinal disagreements of previous generations, it exposes them. History objectively acknowledges points of conflict and separation, and rightfully used, it exposes the responses one could seek to deploy again as it searches for clarity and unity. Further, with an ecclesiology from below, how precisely does one evaluate the strength or weaknesses of unresolved disputes without an overarching rubric? The practices of any tradition flow from its doctrinal obligations, so one cannot avoid the reality of persistent disruptions among Christians due to the unresolved doctrinal conflicts upon which these practices are grounded.

An ecclesiology from below exposes the reality of the past and present ecclesial expressions, but if not properly adjusted, this method does not adequately point to the transcendent standard by which all Christians will be judged. Further, without care, this approach could cause some to avoid using Scripture as a means for norming belief systems. The greatest weakness of this method, at least as it is presented, centers upon its tendency to distance the church from its biblical roots, ultimately overlooking the exegetical work put forth on a series of unavoidable texts. One cannot genuinely construct a Christian ecclesiology with history as its genesis. Historical evaluations must serve what one discovers first and foremost through what God has revealed in the sacred text. Perhaps a development of Haight's methodology with a corresponding ecclesiology from above would balance the benefits of both approaches. The broad nature of ecclesiology essentially warrants this sort of modification.

Haight's desire to move outside of his own tradition is evidenced by his reticence to rely exclusively upon Catholic theologians. Each volume indicates an overall commitment to make wide appeals across traditions, incorporating diverse voices and constructs throughout his project. Exploring the usefulness of diverse theological voices for contemporary application requires fairness, patience, and flexibility. Within evangelical thought, recent attention to theological retrieval matches many of Haight's ambitions. The contemporary church must retrieve from its ancient sources. This practice necessarily includes a willingness to evaluate not only what beliefs and practices allow for contemporary resourcement, but how one goes about incorporating agreed upon customs. Current evangelical work in theological retrieval could stand to benefit from Haight's work.

It seems an unintended consequence of transdenominational ecclesiology is the tendency to resort to pragmatism, at least as it relates to using a sociological entry point for evaluation. Determining how churches should exist based upon how people relate and act among sociological measurements risks obfuscating what God has already revealed. Further, it seems suspect to substantiate the theological dimensions of transdenominational ecclesiology without clear and inextricable moorings in sacred Scripture. Tacit omissions undermine the complexities of the very problematic texts which persist in modern ecclesiastical dialogue, and Haight's heavy reliance upon social theory makes his overall project theologically and practically capacious. Haight's project is wide enough to encompass the various world-wide strands of Christian expressions, but void of significant attention to the biblical parameters and emphases which inevitably cause these separations.

"We cannot wrench Christ loose from the Church, nor can we dismantle the Church to get to Christ," wrote Hans Urs von Balthasar, a twentieth century Swiss theologian and Catholic priest.[39] One might sense that Haight's overall project loosens the firm grip between Christology and ecclesiology. One might sense in Haight's project an ecclesiology where Christ is passive, being the recipient of the church's worship and not the active cause of her identity. In a sense, this is a wrenching Christ loose from his body. To be clear, this does not appear to be Haight's intention, but the inevitable conclusion to some of his proposals diminishes the church's transdenominational identity in their union to Christ.

Concluding Thoughts

Areas for Future Research

At least two areas of future research emerge from Haight's ecclesiological project. One, further work is needed in the ongoing search for a post-Vatican II ecumenical framework in the context of twenty-first century challenges. Globalization, theological pluralism, increased political tension, shifting economic forecasts, and the growth of Christianity in the global south are all factors which make such a quest necessary for interested parties.[40] Haight rightly notes, "the ecumenical movement explicitly recognized pluralism, and Vatican II opened the church up to dialogue with the modern world and its various histories and cultures."[41] Haight's work should compel further evangelical analysis, particularly as it relates to renewed

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39. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Truth is Symphonic: Aspects of Christian Pluralism*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 11.

40. For a lucid explanation of the distinguishing features of Vatican I and II, see Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "Ecclesiology," in *Mapping Modern Theology*, eds. Kelly Kapic and Bruce McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 346-53.

41. Haight, *Christian Community in History: Historical Ecclesiology,* 27.

ecumenical endeavors that advance continuity over longstanding issues of division. New ecumenical constructs will have to create templates which differ from twentieth century conclusions, incorporate more voices from emerging traditions, and include critical discussions points on the probability of increased global scrutiny upon the church's message.

Two, contemporary efforts to explore catholicity in the wider evangelical movement require a proper assessment of historical ecclesiology. Haight only devotes a few pages to catholicity in volume three, but the entirety of his project underscores his insistence upon a hopeful catholicity from the emerging ecclesiologies present today. Haight's project matters because he invites conversation with the wider Christian tradition. An ecumenical catholicity protected by the church's historical creeds and confessions reinforces how plurality serves the church's global mission. One does not have to employ the totality of Haight's method to appreciate his presence as a Catholic voice willing to question the longstanding motifs of Catholic dogma. His critiques and his willingness to converse on these matters could assist in the ongoing work of academic constructive ecclesiology.

Book Reviews

Gane, Roy E. Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Enduring Application. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017, 464 pp, $35.00, paperback.

Second Timothy 3:15–17 stands as a pillar text of biblical inspiration. Bible school students embrace it, pastors proclaim it, faithful Christians memorize it and recite it from a young age. Yet for all the attention this text receives, too many neglect one of its central claims: "all Scripture is . . . profitable." The dearth of sermons, bible studies, devotional writings, and blog posts expounding the "profit" of Leviticus for Christians today suffices for evidence. Roy Gane, professor of Hebrew Bible and ANE languages at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, comments on the current situation, "A rich source of wisdom regarding values is contained in OT laws. However, Christians have generally neglected these laws, to our loss, because we have not regarded them as relevant to our lives" (p. xiii). So, in order to help Christians profit from "all Scripture," Gane presents this guide to appropriating Old Testament law in every age of God's people. While Gane surveys numerous approaches to applying God's law as God's new covenant people, he advocates for an approach he calls "progressive training in moral wisdom" (p. 198). Pulling from his extensive work to understand and apply difficult law passages (e.g., see his commentary on Leviticus and Numbers in the NIVAC series), he aims to see the riches of "all Scripture" benefit God's church today.

Gane presents his case for a progressive moral wisdom approach (PMW) to God's law in four parts: (1) an introduction to OT law [54 pp.], (2) an introduction to legal literature [72 pp.], (3) various Christian approaches to application [98 pp.], and (4) application issues and difficult texts [171 pp.]. In his introduction to OT law, Gane addresses the relevance of law for Christians in the words of Jesus and Paul, the nature of "law" in the Bible and how it was used in its original context, and the four-fold purpose of law: theological, covenantal, sapiential, and missional. He offers the preliminary definition, that "OT law is normative, exemplary, covenantal divine instruction" (p. 19). This divine instruction reveals the nature of the deity (i.e., theological purpose). This covenantal instruction "contributes to [the] preservation of an ongoing divine-human relationship that provides important benefits for God's people" (i.e., covenantal purpose; p. 47). This exemplary instruction draws both neighbor and nations toward the deity (i.e., missional purpose). This normative instruction orders and addresses the most significant issues of living in a fallen world (i.e., sapiential purpose). Such normative, exemplary, covenantal divine instruction occurs in limited clusters but influences the entirety of the Old Testament.

While the influence of legal materials may be felt throughout the OT, not all legal passages bear equal weight. Gane introduces his survey of application

approaches by laying out the hierarchical groundwork inherent in OT law passages. Just as Jesus recognized, "love is the paramount value and virtue" (p. 148). Thus, a general command like the Shema, "Love YHWH your God with all your heart, soul, and strength" (Deut 6:5), defines whole categories of legal material. Similarly, the command to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:18) defines another broad category of laws. Gane presents the classic illustration of this from the Ten Commandments (p. 151), but also goes on to present various sub-categories between the crowning virtue of "love" and individual commands throughout the OT. This lays the groundwork for his "indirect application" of OT law passages by Christians today (p. 142).

In preparation to explore the progressive moral wisdom approach to applying OT law, Gane surveys other options from Christian history. He begins by discussing radical continuity (theonomy), moves on to radical discontinuity (practical impossibility, dispensationalism, Lutheran theology), and concludes with various medial approaches advocating some form of continuity and discontinuity (Reformed theology, principlizing, paradigmatic, redemptive-movement). Gane's medial approach (PMW) places an emphasis on personal transformation in the process of intellectual application of specific laws. He writes, "the pupose of OT law only reaches fulfillment when decisions are lived out by a whole person, who consequently grows in moral character" (p. 201). The final 200 pages of the books detail the general process for employing a PMW approach and then demonstrate what it looks like on specific passages.

Gane's progressive moral wisdom approach to reading OT law offers Christians a lot of opportunities to make all Scripture profitable today. PMW resembles the paradigmatic and principlizing approaches in a number of ways; yet it maintains a focus on the transformation of the individual through the process of applying God's law to life. This dimension of PMW provides much needed perspective to a debate overwhelmed by nuts-and-bolts proposals. Nevertheless, PMW has its own nuts-and-bolts process: (1) analyze the law by itself, (2) analyze the law within the system of OT laws and the context of ancient life, (3) analyze the law within the process of redemption, (4) relate findings regarding the function of the law to modern life (pp. 202–203). Taken by itself, this process resembles the paradigmatic process of Christopher Wright (pp. 185–186) and the principlizing process of Peter Vogt (Interpreting the Pentateuch: An Exegetical Handbook [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009], pp. 136–146). Gane himself seems to indicate this (p. 201) but emphasizes that PMW aims not just at applying laws but at moral transformation.

The most difficult stage of Gane's PMW process is stage four: relating findings regarding the function of the law to modern life. One question he introduces raises significant tension—"Does biblical development of the value exemplified by the law show a trajectory that moves beyond the law itself to a higher moral level that should be applied in the modern life situation?" (p. 203). This question arises

specifically from Gane's assessment of William J. Webb's redemptive-movement model (p. 195). Gane is careful to critique the most troublesome aspects of Webb's model (pp. 187–195), but his inclusion of Webb's positive contributions here creates more problems than it solves (p. 213). Webb's project aims to promote a male-female egalitarian hermeneutic based on the egalitarian trajectory in scripture with regard to slavery. Gane cites Galatians 3:28, "There is neither . . . slave nor free, . . . for you are all one in Christ," which Webb also cites with regard an egalitarian position on gender roles. An extended footnote at this point would have assisted readers in differentiating Gane's approach from that of Webb. Unfortunately, Gane simply uses this dimension of Webb to illustrate the concept of redemptive trajectory and leaves the reader to wonder how this relates to the issue of gender roles. Gane's overall approach does not depends on Webb, so this appears to be an unnecessary inclusion of theological baggage that complicates his presentation of PMW. Gane would have been better served by simply presenting his own exegesis and redemptive-historical approach at this point (cf. Thomas Schreiner, "William J. Webb's Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: A Review Article," The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology 6.1 [Spring 2002]: 46–64).

Despite this complicating factor, Gane's work offers much needed guidance in our current cultural context. Now, more than ever, Christians need to engage with the difficult passages of Scripture in order to respond aptly to a hyper-skeptical culture. This constitutes the greatest asset of this book—extended examples of applying the PMW approach to reading legal passages. Often these examples cannot treat the issue in full, though for more extended treatments, readers may also consult Gane's commentaries. Some issues seem to receive an imbalanced amount of attention (e.g., Sabbath, 7.5 pp.) compared to other issues in the same chapter (e.g., the first three commandments, 6 pp.). Other issues call into question modern Christian approaches to the law without offering a clear standard of application today (e.g., forbidden meat, pp. 352–358). Nevertheless, these discussions raise difficult, oft-neglected issues and attempt to walk Christians through the PMW approach to applying them so as to grow in wisdom.

Gane proves an able guide to applying difficult OT law passages through his progressive moral wisdom approach. While a reader may disagree with some of his interpretive conclusions, this books provides a wealth of wisdom for profiting from all Scripture (2 Tim 3:16). I would recommend this book for serious students of God's word who seek to understand the relevance of God's law for Christians today and aim to grow in the process. This will not be the only book needed to navigate such a difficult subject, but it provides a helpful orientation and process along with numerous case studies to work through. Most importantly, Gane serves the church today by exposing the exegetical issues that too many believers remain ill-equipped to address.

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Wegner, Paul D. *Using Old Testament Hebrew in Preaching: A Guide for Students and Pastors.* **Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2009, pp. 176, $19.99 paperback.**

In Using Old Testament Hebrew in Preaching, Paul D. Wegner provides current and former students of biblical Hebrew with the necessary tools and ample encouragement to maintain and use their knowledge of biblical Hebrew. Wegner currently serves as the Distinguished Professor of Old Testament Studies at Gateway Seminary in Ontario, CA. He is also the author of other works that may be familiar to many seminary students: The Journey from Texts to Translations and A Student's Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible.

Wegner writes Using Old Testament Hebrew in Preaching with a certain audience in mind: seminary students who have taken at least one year of Hebrew and pastors who need encouragement to maintain their Hebrew knowledge (p. 8). Observing the lack of Hebrew resources—compared to the abundance of Greek resources—Wegner provides his readers with practical tools for using biblical Hebrew in sermon preparations (p. 8). In the first chapter, Wegner answers the question of how Hebrew is helpful in ministry. In the second chapter, he provides his readers with the "crucial tools" for maintaining biblical Hebrew and preparing sermons from the Old Testament. In the third chapter, Wegner defines exegesis and briefly explains how one exegetes a passage. In the fourth chapter, he offers practical advice on how to prepare a sermon from the Old Testament. In the fifth and final chapter, Wegner provides helpful tips on how to maintain one's Hebrew vocabulary and translation skills and how to use Hebrew in sermon preparation. Wegner completes his work with five appendices containing worksheets for sermon preparation, an extensive list of scholarly and lay commentaries for Old Testament study, and a syntactical analysis of the Hebrew text of Psalm 23.

There is much to commend in Wegner's work. Wegner writes with a light style and does not burden his readers with drawn out explanations. He clearly defines his terms and methods and judiciously inserts charts and lists within the body of the text. For example, in his discussion on Bible software, Wegner provides charts with detailing the features and costs of various software packages, allowing the reader to compare the available programs. Throughout the book, Wegner follows his discussions with lists of helpful resources. For example, in his discussion on beginning Hebrew grammars, Wegner sprinkles various grammars throughout the section and then follows the discussion with a more extensive list (pp. 42-44). With easy access to lists of resources, Wegner saves his readers from having to flip to an appendix or to the end of chapters to find a resource.

Wegner strikes an encouraging tone in Using Old Testament Hebrew in Preaching. Interspersed among the chapters are quotes by and bios of great men and scholars of the Christian faith. The quotes and bios highlight the importance

of various elements of sermon preparation such as Hebrew and Greek, prayer, and the use of commentaries. The most encouraging aspect of Wegner's work is that Wegner makes the goal of maintaining and using biblical Hebrew attainable. Wegner suggests that readers consult the guidelines set by the Foreign Service Institute of the United States Department of State to determine the preferred reading level of biblical Hebrew. The levels range from R-1—an elementary level in which the reader can work through easier passages and yet heavily relies on other resources—to R-4—full proficiency (pp. 21-22). The reading levels provide the biblical Hebrew student with a realistic expectation of the work involved for the chosen level and communicate to the student that full proficiency is not required to use biblical Hebrew in sermon preparation. Furthermore, Wegner's suggestions on maintaining Hebrew vocabulary and translation skills are practical and not overbearing.

As with any reference list, readers may or may not find Wegner's suggestions helpful. However, Wegner generally keeps to resources that have proven valuable over time. Also, in his discussion on the literary analysis of various passages Wegner suggests source criticism, form criticism, and redaction criticism are useful tools to examine a specific text (pp. 72-76). Again, readers may or may not find these suggestions helpful depending on their view of various critical methods.

A seminary student, minister, or lay leader in a church who desires to continue to work on their biblical Hebrew will find Wegner's Using Old Testament Hebrew in Preaching a valuable resource. The book will give the reader an excellent place to start reviewing lost Hebrew vocabulary or to use Hebrew in a sermon. However, Wegner notes that the decision to continue to study biblical Hebrew is ultimately up to the reader (p. 121).

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Wiesgickl, Simon. *Das Alte Testament als deutsche Kolonie. Die Neuerfindung des Alten Testaments um 1800.* **Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament (BWANT), Band 214. Netherlands, 2018, pp.262, €75,00.**

The main point of this book is that both Orientalism and colonizing in practice were driven by German biblical scholarship of the OT. There is a need for a critical history of commentary, which this book seeks to meet. Roland Boer has pinpointed Martin Noth but the problem goes further back; German scholarship has not been self-aware (cf. E. Stegemann). We see it already well documented in recent histories of *philosophy*, e.g. Hegel's Master-Slave derived from discussion of slave trade in Haiti. When Schiller observed that less developed peoples remind us of childlike love, this is part of the same 'primitivism' to which the likes of Herder and the Humboldts subscribed.

Despite being a fascinating account there are times when the book 'jumps' or even doubles back on itself, repeating or expanding points already half made elsewhere. Secondary literature is rather dealt with as it goes along, like more flavouring thrown into the soup as it simmers, and usually added uncritically. *In Search of the Hebrew People. Bible and Nation in the German Enlightenment* by Ofri Ilany is one book that is possibly just too recent to be able to evaluate as so significant, and there is overall a bit of a 'shock of the new' throughout this book.

Attempts at writing histories of OT exegesis are considered: Diestel from 1869; Kraus from 1956 (with more theology and hagiography in its account, as well as an anti-Enlightenment bias); Reventlow from 2000, who affirmed archaeology, classical parallels and humanism in the history of biblical scholarship, yet who eschews projections by Enlightenment interpreters on to prophets and 'personalities'. Lastly, the great multi-authored work (*Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*)*,* edited by M. Saebø is considered to be rather traditional, and lacking in its coverage. Suffice it to say that only now in the last decade are we beginning to realise the connection of scholarship with Orientalism.

As for Edward Said's *Orientalism*, although it did acknowledge the revolution in German biblical scholarship as having a role to play, Said gave it very much only a bit part. It was perhaps not so important to Said that it was German Protestantism during the late Enlightenment that served to define *Judaism*. The idea of a *discovery* of a religion helped Europe to identify itself through 'othering'. Yet the criticism of modern scholarship led to a cosy relativism of a dubious 'international' and universal sort. From 1850 there was a German Imperialism in OT history writing, and not much escape from that style in the following century. As early as the mid-seventeenth century, travel reports provided useful archival grist to the commentators mill. The J.D. Michaelis-planned trip to Yemen 1763-7 was for the sake of his biblical scholarship. Michaelis did not go, but at least he read Carsten Niebhuhr's reports. (Max Muller never went to India, one learns *en passant*.) Then there was George Forster, who voyaged with Captain Cook, writing an account of those adventures with far from an official imperialist line, yet one that was nevertheless *culturally* imperialist.

To turn the tables and critique the critics Jürgen Osterhammel has suggested that one take non-western sources (e.g Egyptian) into account, and use them critically for a purer historiography against the western nineteenth descriptions: for these are not merely that, but in a certain light betray a spirit of cultural hegemony (Gramsci), a rhetoric of control. The fact is that the Hebrew bible is still getting used today in political discourse (as per Konrad Schmid), as if such *Nachleben* were unproblematic. This concept of *Nachleben* is double edged: it can mean a living text (Benjamin), as an antidote to Historicism, yet in disguise for while actually part of the *Nachleben* of the bible modern scholarship pretends to be pure and objective towards the text in its historical context, positioning itself as advocate of it. Foucault was right to have spotted the unconscious at work in the ordering and classifying of eastern cultures.

Furthermore, the Reader is not contextualised while the Text is: F. Segovia has seen the newer 'literary criticism' approach as taking away from author and reader to elites, and to be just as bad as a historical criticism, for each claims that it never commits eisegesis.

There is a need for a historical criticism that is more self-critical. Famously Karl Barth had said something like that, but he had seen the *Grenze* as that between humanity and God (or more accurately humanity and the gospel). Of course there is 'idolatry' in scholarship. In religious studies, Gavin Flood attacked the information gathering of the phenomenological approach in its constructing images out of raw material after its own imagination. Michaelis wanted philology to help receive the biblical words as a living language. New rules were set to reflect the idea that the text had been in flux: it was not always the majority version that were the most reliable manuscripts. There became a preference, with Bengel for the *lectio difficilior/ brevior*, not the traditional *lectio clarior*. Huet had used deceitfulness to talk of ANE myth as falsifications, with the bible responding to those in more truthful a way. This was all helpful to learn what was on offer. However, this could be inverted: the original was the purest, the less self-aware, the noblest. Thus orality came *before* writing (here Herder reversed Lowth, maybe with an anti-Jewish agenda, and Rousseau and Schelling were likewise minded.) In the minds of these late eighteenth-century thinkers, Germany, as the land of poets and thinkers was called to draw out the treasure of Jews. Futhermore, German identity as a collective formed from individuals encouraged the common enterprise of an *intellectual* conquering of world as preparation for action. The German was light on his feet and not weighed down morally; he travelled the world like the Jew, but for a different purpose.

In Chapter Five one learns that Herder disliked Michaelis's new bible translation, which he viewed as introducing a new religion, as if discovering a new world, making Hebrew religion very much 'other' and there to be mastered, like foreign shores. Indeed, Michaelis saw the present-day Arabs as practising Moses' law in their customs. Hebrew was not a divine language but related to its environment. Happy Arabs needed to be asked learned questions. There was a fixed idea that oriental culture had not developed as much as western did, since only now was it meeting other civilizations. Take the topic of blood revenge, just like Arabs in the timeless Orient is what is expressed in Num 35,12; Deut 19,6; Moses simplified it with intellectual authority, as someone like Montesquieu's rational lawgiver, as the one to educate the Hebrews to a higher level, for they very much needed it. Now for Michaelis, post-biblical Judaism differed markedly from Hebrew religion; the latter, open to being taught, was more like contemporary 'patriarch-like' Arabs whose language never changed.

Eichhorn affirmed that cultural change caused any literary change. In the bible itself however there was change—and this (the point needs more emphasising) was what was being realised around 1800. De Wette confirmed the difference between

Hebraismus and modern Judaism, but from within the biblical texts (internal evidence). The universal religion was Christianity since Judaism had narrowed itself. Eichhorn's 1794 *Einleitung* became a standard work, arguing that some biblical layers were oldest and purest, expressing a pleasing primitive religion, reaching back to the childhood of man, and religiously and culturally authentic. Such an essentialism of the Orient would last as long as Martin Buber. To this a dissenting voice was raised by Herder: each culture is different (*Ältesten Urkünde* 1775), and races are not interchangeable, although he did think Africans were more sensual due to climate, as Michaelis had suggested about the 'lusty' Arabs. Yet Herder would mostly resist Michaelis' *Compendium theologiae dogmaticae* and its conclusions. One had to breathe the fresh air of the East not just theorize from data. For Herder the job of reaching back to the far past was necessary and the job of interpretation for now had to be done with care. One could not rely on contemporary parallels to primitive folk. 'An Johann Gottfried Herders Schöpfungshieroglyphe wird schließlich deutlich, dass diese Verschiebung Teil einer generellen Verfremdung war, bei der der Orient in die Ferne rückte und nunmehr nur über hermeneutische Wege und in Form von Denkmälern der Vergangenheit zugänglich schien.' (230)

Herder borrowed the dualism from Hume of a lively faith as opposed to a thinking person's philosophy. Herder viewed the Pentateuch not as a collection of episodes from different sources, but as a wild epic (cf. the Scottish *Ossian*), and as the product of a literary culture at a despotic court, even as also the product of a primitive imagination. However by 1805 Johann Severin Vater in his *Commentar über den Pentateuch* argued that the first five books of the OT consisted of a patchwork collection, to be separated out into their strands and that was the way ahead for the rest of the century and beyond—again the significance of this move is rather underplayed.

There is a lot to learn in this book, and it is useful to see various worlds of discourse interacting. However the structure of the whole is not quite what it should be, and just what *the* conclusion or thesis is, is not totally clear. The biblical-scholar players are left behind after De Wette, yet there is a story of Orientalism in other disciplines sketched (the build-up to full speed German colonialism after 1850) that is not really given any correspondence in the history of exegesis. Instead there are things like F.W. Zachariae (1777)'s reporting on the South Sea natives: just how well does this relate to the anthropology (historical or otherwise) of the OT? Sometimes too many stories vie for space. But it is a worthwhile and thought-provoking attempt to open the conversation.

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Currid, John D., *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament.* **Wheaton, Il: Crossway, 2013, pp. 153, paperback.**

John D. Currid (PH,D., University of Chicago, is the Carl McMurray Professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, NC. He lectures worldwide on biblical and archaeological topics. He serves as Pastor of Teaching and Preaching at Sovereign Grace Church (PCA) in Charlotte. He has authored many books and journal articles.

The title of the book *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament* (AG) is an accurate statement of the contents. In the prologue, he acknowledges that the main content of the book was presented at a conference at Reformed Theological Seminary—Charlotte in 2007. He states that: "the book is about the relationship between the writings of the Old Testament and other Ancient Near Eastern literature." "And so, the question for modern minds in this regard is, what precisely is the relationship of the Old Testament to Near Eastern Literature?"

The book is divided into 11 chapters:

1. A Brief History of Ancient Near Eastern Studies.

2. The Nature of Polemical Thought and Writing.

3. Genesis 1 and Other Ancient Near Eastern Creation Accounts.

4. Ancient Near Eastern Flood Accounts and the Noahic Deluge of Genesis 6-9.

5. Joseph, the Tale of the Two Brothers, and the "Spurned Seductress" Motif.

6. The Birth of the Deliverer.

7. The Flight of Sinuhe and Moses.

8. Who Is "I Am Who I Am"? Exodus 3 and the Egyptian Book of the Heavenly Cow.

9. The Rod of Moses.

10. The Parting of the Waters of the Red Sea.

11. Canaanite Motifs.

There is a basic framework to chapters 3-11. Currid identifies significant differences between the Ancient Near Eastern literature (ANE) and the Old Testament (OT). The differences are more momentous than the similarities. Three major differences that are emphasized are: 1. ANE is legendary myth while the OT claims to be historical accounts, 2. ANE is based on polytheism while the OT purports

monotheism, 3. ANE was understood as saga while the OT engaged mankind within a historical and cultural context.

Currid demonstrates that ANE provided support for the gods while the OT was a polemic against the ANE gods. The OT did not adapt or adopt ANE but rather engaged it for the purpose of refuting and discrediting ANE theology by revealing the true God of the OT.

There is nothing that is particularly ground breaking in the book, nor does the book make such a claim. Currid states: "The study is meant to be exemplary and not exhaustive" (prologue). AG is intended to provide for the layperson a rudimentary understanding of the relationship and questions between ANE and OT literatures. Even though the book is written for the layperson, a seminarian could benefit as it is a good introduction and survey of some of the more frequently identified parallels between the ANE and OT. Chapter 1 is an excellent survey of development of this discipline since 1798. The reader should keep in mind that all of this literature addresses timeless questions and circumstances that would be explored by any society or culture. It should be expected that such queries would be deliberated throughout history.

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John A. McLean
Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity

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Hallam, Steven C. *Basics of Classical Syriac: Complete Grammar, Workbook, and Lexicon*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016, pp. 318, $49.99, paperback.

Steven C. Hallam is Assistant Professor and Chair of the General Studies department at Alaska Christian College in Soldotna, Alaska. He earned his PhD from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary and has taught courses in Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac. His Syriac grammar is the most recent addition to Zondervan's language series of grammars and workbooks, and its stated aim is to get students reading the Syriac *Peshitta* as quickly as possible (p. 10).

The grammar follows a standard layout, with specific sections on the nominal system (chapters 1-6), the G-stem of the verbal system (chapters 7-11), the derived stems of the verbal system (chapters 12-16), and weak verbs (chapters 17-23). Each chapter concludes with a vocabulary list specifically relevant for interpreting the New Testament *Peshitta* and a set of exercises. Hallam also includes several appendices that recommend resources for further study, provide a summary of all relevant paradigms, and that presents a comparison chart of the three Classical Syriac scripts.

Syriac literature, of course, is written in three main scripts: Esṭrangelā, Western, and Eastern. Hallam takes a unique approach compared to other grammars in that he utilizes a mix of two scripts. The consonants throughout the grammar are written in Esṭrangelā, while the vowel pointing uses the Western script. This

combination is not found in any actual Syriac texts, but the pedagogical purpose is to introduce the student to both the oldest and most important script for biblical studies (Esṭrangelā), and the most common vowel pointing used in scholarly writing (Western). The exercises at the end of the chapters are in a pointed and unpointed form, so if students practice both, the mixed script should not present them with any problems in reading Syriac texts.

The greatest strength of the grammar is the numerous exercises provided that allow students to read portions of the *Peshitta* early on. Additionally, the grammar intentionally tries to simplify and generalize certain grammatical principles for ease of learning. But this latter point may also be a limitation. For example, Hallam chooses not to use the *quššāyā* and *rukkākā* (dots indicating soft or hard pronunciation for *begadkepat* letters) in the paradigms, but includes them in the exercises. The intention is to simplify phonetic concepts, but this is such a fundamental point of phonology that leaving it out can actually create unnecessary confusion.

Readers should also be aware that this grammar is not intended to be used apart from other reference grammars. Hallam specifically recommends reading Nöldeke's *Compendious Syriac Grammar* in conjunction with his own for a better understanding of the grammatical points that are made (p. 10). Even with this concession, however, there are other unfortunate reasons why an additional grammar is needed.

The grammar, as it stands, has several editorial errors in both the English and Syriac portions. For a student, the English errors are minor, and Hallam's intended meaning can still be discerned. For example, when discussing pronominal suffixes, Hallam states that "feminine *verbs* are formed regularly after the same pattern as the masculine," though he clearly means feminine *nouns* (p. 61). Moreover, he points out that the 3fs and 2fs G-stem imperfect forms are identical when he actually means the 3fs and 2ms forms (p. 106). English editing mistakes like this are not uncommon, but the most problematic are the Syriac mistakes.

For example, the paradigm for the copulative *hwā* has an error in the 3fp form. The form given is *hwāy* with the vowel as *zqāphā* (p. 83). It should be *hway* with the vowel as *pthāḥā*. The same mistake is also found in the similar paradigm of enclitic *hwā* (p. 85). Additionally, the paradigm of the Peal imperative with an a-stem vowel should use a different word as an example (p. 117). Hallam uses the verb *rhṭ*, and presents the imperative forms as following the pattern *rhaṭ*. But *rhṭ* is an anomalous verb whose imperative form follows the pattern *harṭ*. Others have made more extensive lists of some of the errors throughout the grammar, but the point is that, especially for the Syriac portions, students who are unfamiliar with the language may unfortunately spend time memorizing paradigms that are incorrect if this is the only grammar they have. Students should be able to come to an introductory grammar and have confidence that especially the foreign language material is completely accurate, so a revision is needed.

Despite these problems, Hallam's grammar can still be useful for students just beginning Syriac studies. They will probably need another introductory grammar like Thackston's *Introduction to Syriac* just to check the accuracy of the paradigms, and a reference grammar for more detailed explanations of certain concepts, but the book has value in getting students to read the *Peshitta* quickly. If students, however, are interested in reading literature outside the *Peshitta*, a different grammar is recommended.

Dallas Goebel
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Allert, Craig D. *Early Christian Readings of Genesis One: Patristic Exegesis and Literal Interpretation.* **Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018, 338pp. $36.00, paperback.**

Craig D. Allert received his Ph.D. from the University of Nottingham and is associate professor of religious studies at Trinity Western University in Langley, British Columbia. He is also the author of *A High View of Scripture? The Authority of the Bible and the Formation of the New Testament Canon and Revelation, Truth, Canon, and Interpretation.*

The book begins with a helpful introduction and reminder to see the Church Fathers through their viewpoint and not our own. Allert's overarching aim is to give "a responsible appropriation of our Christian past" (p. 6) by both letting the original author speak and not imposing our worldview and hermeneutic too quickly. This theme and aim runs throughout the entire book.

Following the introduction, Allert frames his work into two primary sections: (1) Understanding the Context; and (2) Reading the Fathers. The end of each chapter has a brief recommended reading section. This provides a great starting point for those wanting further research and study.

Part I focuses on preliminary matters such as why we should care about the Fathers as well as basic misconceptions concerning the Fathers. These misconceptions include an examination of how to not read the Fathers, namely by selectively quoting them to proof text our own assertions. This section also considers what "literal" means in the context of the Fathers themselves.

Part II seeks to engage specifically with primary sources. The corresponding chapters examine either a specific Father or key concept such as *creation ex nihilo*, the meaning of "day," or the meaning of "beginning." The final chapter looks at Basil's acknowledgment of Moses as the author of the creation narrative and as one who saw the creation account as "an education in human life" (p. 324). Thus, Allert concludes that the creation narrative is more than just history, but "a call to a deeper spiritual life wherein the salvation of humankind and the ultimate goal of seeing God (contemplation) are overarching" (p. 303).

One of the great strengths of this work is the extensive background context and primary source material that Allert provides. He does an admirable job throughout the book of showing the Fathers in their detailed context. Often the reader will be able to see an extended citation from a given Father regarding an issue. Allert argues well in many areas that authors have misused the Fathers by misrepresenting their writings. The background and primary source materials are helpful tools for the scholar and displays Allert's inclination to show rather than just assume. For example, Allert goes to much length describing the differences between philosophy and rhetoric and how they might provide clues to the understanding of "literal." In this, the reader is able to see the difference in how the Fathers defined "literal" and how we might define "literal" in our present day.

However, while Allert quotes the Fathers in detail, he does not always quote those he is contending with in detail. For example, in chapter 2, *How Not to Read the Fathers*, Allert clearly cites certain authors like James Mook to have not represented the Fathers in their full context. Yet, Allert might be accused of the same as he does not always show Mook in context. It would be beneficial to see not only the fuller context of the Fathers, but also the fuller context of those he contends with. Another example of this is found in chapter 3, *What Does "Literal" Mean?*, as Allert discusses the grammatical-historical method. He takes various passages of Paul and evaluates how Paul would be judged against the grammatical-historical method. In five different passages, such as 2 Corinthians 3:12-18 and Ephesians 5:25-33, Allert uses the five-time refrain, "the context is theological, not historical" (pp. 114-123) to prove his point of Paul diverting from the "literal" sense. Nowhere in the discussion does Allert show how those he has critiqued would take Paul's interpretations. Without further context, the reader must simply take Allert's word on the matter. Granted his priority is to show the Fathers in their context, but more context from those he scrutinizes would strengthen his argumentation.

Allert admits himself that the last chapter, *On Being like Moses*, seems like an odd discussion and concluding chapter. He engages primarily with Basil to show how Moses was viewed by the Fathers. Allert summarizes with Basil's understanding of Moses and the call "to be like Moses" by living a life "unenslaved to the passions of the flesh, free, intimate with God" (p. 324). In other words, there is a call to return to paradise. While Allert lays a decent foundation for this argument, it would be reinforced by demonstrating other Fathers with the same perception. Moreover, this conclusion seems like an odd way to end the book. Perhaps a summary of Part II drawing all the chapters together and then ending with the emphasis on Moses would better serve the force and concept of "being like Moses."

Early Christian Readings of Genesis One is an excellent read for both those interested in patristics and even for those with a lesser interest. For those that are interested, it provides a great view into the Church Fathers and their interpretations of the Genesis account. It is an attempt to show the Fathers views of creation, not simply

what we want the Fathers to see or say. For those with lesser interest in patristics, the value of the book comes by reminding the reader of the importance of authorial intent. A given work, especially ones by the Fathers, can easily be used out of context to prove an argument. It is all too easy to proof text a work just to bolster our own argument. However, as Allert shows, this is not faithful to the original authorial intent. In summary, this book has value for a wide range of biblical and theological studies, from the beginning to the advanced student. It provides a foundational starting point of opening a window into the Church Fathers views on creation and also exposes the reader to primary source materials for context and further areas of study.

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Mark J. Boda. *The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology: Three Creedal Expressions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017. 220 pp. $11.99, paper.

Mark Boda is professor of Old Testament at McMaster Divinity College. Boda has made many scholarly contributions to the study of the Old Testament. His most recent works include a commentary on the book of Zechariah in the New International Commentary on the Old Testament series and *'Return to Me': A Biblical Theology of Repentance* in the IVP New Studies in Biblical Theology series. The volume under review is part of the Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology series.

In *The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology* Boda sums up the theology of the OT in "three creedal expressions." These expressions are explained through a metaphor related to the heart. He says, "I invite you to don your theological stethoscope and listen for the heartbeat that represents the very core of the theology of the OT" (pp. 1-2). With stethoscope in hand, then, the reader is invited to listen in to "three basic rhythms that compose the heartbeat of the OT, identified with three basic creeds that can be discerned throughout the OT: narrative, character, and relational creeds" (pp. 7-8). Metaphor aside, Boda's methodology falls in line with what he calls the "selective intertextual-canonical approach" (p. 7) to OT theology. As we will see, this methodology is a blend of Vod Rad's diachronic method, Eichrodt's cross-section method, and the popular canonical method (using Hasel's categories from *Basic Issues*).

We are introduced to the first rhythm in chapter two, the narrative rhythm. Here Boda is leaning heavily on the work of Von Rad and his diachronic approach. The narrative rhythm highlights the importance of Israel's history in the expression of their religion. Three key texts are used to demonstrate this: Deut. 6:21-23, 26:5-9, and Josh. 24:2-13. Boda emphasizes how each of these texts describes the redemptive story of Israel using finite verbs expressing past action. In addition, the exodus ("bringing out") and conquest ("bringing in") sum up the core historical actions of Yahweh. Both events being the focus of the three key texts. Boda says, "At the

core of Israel's story of salvation is release from a place of oppression and provision of a place of freedom" (p. 18). This narrative expression therefore teaches that the events of Israel's salvation history are "fundamental to the theological expression of Israel and the OT" (p. 22). In Boda's analysis these events become a creed for Israel, which "binds together the historical experience of the present … with the historical experiences of the past" (p. 23).

Boda builds on the work of George Ernest Wright with the second rhythm—the character rhythm. This rhythm is based on Yahweh's description of Himself in Exodus 34:6-7. The character rhythm is communicated to Israel using participles and nonperfective finite verbs that emphasize the consistent activity of Yahweh and adjectives and nouns that highlight His personal attributes. In this way, the creed "speaks of God as One who does this or that … and by extension as One who possesses these characteristics" (29). The bulk of this chapter contains a very interesting and detailed exegetical study of Exodus 34:6-7.

Chapter four contains the last rhythm—the relational rhythm. Boda draws on the work of the eminent OT scholar Walther Eichrodt and his cross-section approach. However, Boda exchanges Eichrodt's covenant language with this relational rhythm. In this chapter Boda traces the Abrahamic, Sinaitic, Priestly, Royal and New Covenants. In each he demonstrates a relational reciprocity that involves both parties. Boda argues that each covenant contains these bilateral elements. He says, "While Yahweh is clearly the initiator in the relationship, the people's response is essential. This relational agreement focuses on a clear declaration of the identity of the two partners in this relationship: God and people" (p. 62).

Having assessed the heartbeat of the OT, chapters 5 and 6 of the book demonstrate how the three rhythms are integrated together in the biblical text (chap. 5) and how these three rhythms contain global implications (chap. 6). In chapter five, Exodus 5:22-6:8 and Nehemiah 9 (a favorite of Von Rad) are used to demonstrate the integration of all three rhythms. Boda claims Exodus 20:2, "I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt," as Israel's "manifesto" (p. 82). It is in this declaration that the narrative rhythm ("I brought you out of the land"), the character rhythm ("I am Yahweh"), and the relational rhythm ("I am … your God") are expressed. In chapter six Boda labors to demonstrate how the three rhythms have universal implications. Leading his argument is a thought-provoking explanation of the Noahic covenant, which is addressed in pp. 95-101.

In chapters 7 and 8, Boda takes the OT pulse in the NT and the Christian life respectively. While Boda does not advance his argument for the three rhythms in chapter seven, the discipline of Biblical Theology demands that he move his analysis into the NT. Most readers will appreciate his attempt to prove there is some continuity between the pulse of the OT and the NT. Boda is very pastoral in chapter 8 and aims to consider what impact his biblical theology has on the creation, culture, and the church today (p. 121). Boda exhorts believers to rehearse the mighty acts of God (p.

124), to remember that salvation is defined in communal terms (p. 125), to not lose an appreciation for the "glorious redemption story" (p. 126), and for preachers to be "released from the pressure of relevance to proclaim and celebrate the transforming story of redemption" (p. 126). Boda continues, arguing that the narrative rhythm is foundational for our faith and our faithfulness (p. 127-128). Many will appreciate how Boda ends the chapter with quotes from both John Piper and D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones emphasizing the need to make the Triune God first and foremost.

Boda rounds out the book with a Postscript (chap. 9) and an Appendix. The Postscript is a transcript from a sermon the author preached in a chapel service at Acadia Divinity College. The sermon text is Exodus 33:7-11 and it is the author's attempt to demonstrate how his theology might be explained sermonically. The Appendix contains a revised edition of Boda's chapter in *Hearing the Old Testament: Listening for God's Address*, ed. Craig Bartholomew and David Beldman, 122-53 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012). Here the reader will discover a more detailed explanation of the hermeneutical principles that guide Boda's Biblical Theology.

The end matter of the book continues with a detailed bibliography (17 pages), index of modern authors, index of Scripture, and index of subjects. These tools of course help to make this book a more lasting resource. This reviewer noticed one spelling error (Noahic, p. 98) and an inconsistent subtitle (p. 95).

Some of the interpretive challenges that arise throughout the book include Boda's understanding of the bilateral nature of the covenants. Boda's relational creed seems to supersede the text in these places. He sees both the Abrahamic and Davidic covenant as bilateral in nature (p. 68). He may even see the Noahic covenant as bilateral (p. 96). Readers may also wonder exactly what Boda believes about the nature of Scripture. While Boda does provide some helpful thoughts on the character of OT revelation in the appendix (pp. 157-164), it is still unclear exactly what Boda believe about the nature of Scripture. Boda explains his view using terms like "communicative," "incarnational," "inscripturated," "authoritative," "cumulative," and "progressive." One might have appreciated the more common language of inspiration, inerrancy, clarity, necessity, and sufficiency. Certainly, this volume practically demonstrates a high-view of Scripture. This reviewer, however, would have appreciated a more detailed explanation of the nature of Scripture itself.

While some readers might chafe at the "creedal language" or tire of Boda selling his heartbeat metaphor, this volume proves to be a succinct and helpful contribution to the popular disciplines of Biblical and OT Theology. The strength of the volume is found in the authors text driven conclusions and cogent understanding of the rich heritage of Biblical and OT Theology. Further, Boda is able to encapsulate this in a mere 150 pages. Therefore, In this reviewer's opinion, *The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology* is a good introduction for anyone seeking to explore where Biblical and OT Theology has been and where it might be headed.

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Fuller, Russell T. and Choi, Kyoungwon. *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax: An Intermediate Grammar.* **Kregel: Grand Rapids, 2017, pp. 528, $64.99, hardback.**

Fuller and Choi's *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (IBHS) is a thorough discussion of biblical Hebrew syntax from a traditional Semitic approach. The book serves as a companion to their elementary Hebrew textbook: *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew.* Whereas the elementary grammar focused on morphology, the intermediate grammar focuses on syntax. Fuller is an expert of Hebrew morphology and syntax and was trained at Hebrew Union University in Cincinnati, OH. Choi too is an expert in Hebrew studies. He received his training under Fuller from SBTS. The widespread use of the author's elementary grammar to train thousands of students in biblical Hebrew leads to great expectation; IBHS exceeds expectations.

The book is divided into three main sections: The first section is a discussion of biblical Hebrew syntax proper (pp. 21–237). Although these discussions occupy the bulk of other Hebrew syntax books, this section comprises around half of IBHS. This section of the book is arranged in outline form and by section number. Moreover, grammatical terms are represented in all caps. Concise definitions of these terms are found in the first appendix (pp. 417–424). Footnotes in this section serve to vital purposes: 1) they explain in greater detail the syntax under discussion, and 2) they refer students to the appropriate section numbers of other Hebrew syntax books. Exercises accompany each syntactical discussion. These exercises include questions assessing basic comprehension while drills force students to identify and analyze.

The second section of the book is the compositions. This section begins with a discussion on methodology: namely, how to use and work through this vital section of the book. The compositions follow. Initially, the reader finds an English composition. The same English composition follows but with the addition of several footnotes describing the appropriate Hebrew syntax to be used in translating. Citations to syntactical discussions abound in this section. Based on this document, the student is to compose the English into biblical Hebrew. A key accompanies the composition. Finally, an unpointed Hebrew key concludes each composition. The first eight compositions are prose while the final four are poetry.

The third section is a discussion of prose and poetry accents. This section describes the accents and their purpose in detail. Examples and diagrams abound in this section to aid comprehension. The section concludes with a commentary on the accents of the seventh composition found in the book and of Psalm 1. In this way, the authors provide an illustration of the principles discussed throughout the section.

This book has several strengths. First, throughout the book, students will see that Hebrew syntax is constantly compared and contrasted to other Semitic languages. This characteristic pervades the book because of the author's approach to interpreting biblical Hebrew; namely, they argue that Semitic languages ought to

be the lens whereby one interprets and explains Hebrew syntactical constructions (see their discussion on pp. 11–12). By incorporating other Semitic languages into the discussions, the authors achieve several noble ends. 1) The authors provide the student the ability to make connections about how and why Hebrew developed which alleviates the language's "foreignness" (see the discussion of the imperfect on p. 28). 2) This characteristic is an encouragement to the students to learn other Semitic languages. This is a certain strength.

Second, the book provides the students with ample opportunity to practice the skills taught in the book. The exercises and drills in the first section and the compositions in the second section are all examples of this strength. The emphasis on practicing the basics of Hebrew syntax is a characteristic that sets this book apart from others and is rooted in the authors traditional pedagogy. The result of this characteristic is that students are able, not merely to identify Hebrew syntax, but they are able to create it. Those who can create Hebrew syntax will not only know more than those trained merely to recognize the syntax, but they will read the actual text of the Bible with greater ease.

Third, the book provides a thorough discussion of the Hebrew accents. The accents are often relegated to secondary or tertiary importance in Hebrew studies because they were added to the consonantal text long after the consonants. Despite their late addition, they are of vital importance since the accents often determine sense units like English punctuation marks. Although the accents are important to the proper understanding of Hebrew syntax, they are often neglected in Hebrew studies. This critique cannot be leveled against IBHS. The discussions of the accents are thorough while the compositions provide the student the opportunity to construct Hebrew with the accents. A clear strength of this book is the opportunity it provides the student to master the accents through identification and composition.

Perhaps one weakness of the book is the lack of vocabulary that accompanies each chapter. Of course, this book is a syntax book, and vocabulary is not a syntactical category. Nonetheless, the book will be used by many third semester Hebrew courses. Since the ability to recognize Hebrew vocabulary is essential to reading the Hebrew Bible—this is the hope of the authors (10)—the inclusion of vocabulary at the end of each chapter would have been a welcomed addition.

Overall, IBHS stands out among Hebrew syntax books. It provides a thorough discussion of the syntactical categories while offering the student ample opportunities to practice their newly learned skills. Students will find this book both challenging and fun as they grow in their understanding and love of biblical Hebrew. It might even invigorate many students to master other Semitic languages for glory of the Lord!

Anthony Ferguson
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Abernathy, Andrew, T, ed. Interpreting the Old Testament Theologically: Essays in Honor of Willem A. VanGemeren. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018, $33.99, hardback.

The present volume is a Festschrift in honor of Willem A. VanGemeren, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. To honor his legacy, as indicated by the title, the focus of the essays is the theological interpretation of the Old Testament, a task over which VanGemeren has labored for decades. The movement known as Theological Interpretation of Scripture (TIS) has garnered more widespread support in recent years. VanGemeren is, in many ways, a forerunner of this movement—a point noted by several contributors.

Following an introduction by the editor (pp. 17–21), this volume's 21 essay contributions are divided into three sections: 1) Theological Witness Gleaned Through Interpretive Practices, 2) Theological Witness in Specific Old Testament Books, and 3) Theological Witness Amidst Community. Both a Scripture and an author index follow the essays. The group of contributors is composed primarily of Old Testament scholars, but also includes one New Testament scholar, one systematic theologian, and one former seminary president who now occupies a pastoral position. Each contributor was asked to allow the following Christological and ecclesiological questions (respectively) to inform his or her individual chapter's topic: "how do we move from an Old Testament text to Christ?" and, "how do the Scriptures given originally to Israel address the Christian church today?" (p. 20).

The first section contains six chapters reflecting various "interpretive habits" viewed as fundamental to a theological reading of the Old Testament. In chapter 1 ("Original Context and Canon"), John Monson proposes a "context-canonical" model for interpretation that considers the land, material culture, and cognate texts of the biblical authors, in addition to the larger framework of the Old Testament. The burden of the article, however, is a theology of land. In chapter 2 ("Genre and Theological Vision"), the editor, Andrew Abernathy, provides an excellent biblical and theological foundation for the appreciation of genre in interpretation. Going beyond simply stylistic variation, he argues that different genres invite readers to experience, and live in light of, the multi-layered reality of the biblical text. Chapter 3 ("Theological Dimensions within Biblical Books: 'What is the Message from the LORD?'"), by Richard Schultz, explores the different dimensions of context for theological interpretation. These include the immediate context within the biblical book (with a discussion of the role of literary structure) and the broader canonical context. In chapter 4 ("The Tri-Partite Old Testament Canon and the Theology of the Prophetic Word"), Stephen Dempster argues that the bond between the Former and Latter Prophets is essential for understanding key themes in the Prophetic corpus. Separating these sections (as is done, for instance, in the ordering of English Bibles) obscures the patterns and continuities that emerge from a unified reading.

Next, Daniel Timmer (in "The Old Testament as Part of a Two-Testament Witness to Christ") argues that the Old and New Testaments are a complementary and unified whole due to the divine authorship of Scripture. He describes a Christian reading of the Old Testament as "guided forward reading, in which various beliefs and conclusions (exegetical, dogmatic, etc.) feed back into one's reading of the Old Testament, closing off some interpretive options and favoring others" (p. 101). He nevertheless acknowledges both unity and diversity in progressive revelation. In the final chapter of the section ("Theological Interpretation as a Traditional Craft"), Stephen Chapman calls for interpretation within the context of a community, a process he describes in terms of mentorship. This "craft-oriented approach" allows readers to depart from individualistic interpretations to be shaped instead by imitation and routinization of practices within interpretive communities. The kind of community the author has in view is both far and wide, spans location and time (especially the pre-modern period), and includes even Jewish interpreters.

The second section contains essays on specific books of the Old Testament as case studies for theological interpretation. In chapter 7 ("The Pagan Context of Abram's Call and the Mission of the Church"), Carol Kaminski looks at Genesis to appreciate the polytheistic culture from which Abram originated. This perspective, she says, allows believers to better envision God's gracious work in our own pagan culture. Richard Averbeck, in chapter 8 ("Reading the Ritual Law in Leviticus Theologically"), maintains that the sacrificial system outlined in Leviticus remains relevant for the New Covenant believer. Specifically, he looks at the sin offering, the Day of Atonement, and the food laws to demonstrate the centrality of God's presence with his people, which ultimately finds its fulfillment in Jesus. In chapter 9 ("The First Principle of Wisdom in Deuteronomy: The Fear of YHWH as Allegiance to YHWH Alone"), Daniel Block surveys the fear of YHWH in Deuteronomy as an identity marker for God's people. Just as with the original audience, the hearing of the Gospel in the Torah of Moses today should produce total allegiance to God (p. 164). The next chapter, by Lissa Wray Beal ("Setting the Table for Christ in the Elisha Narratives in 1 and 2 Kings"), synthesizes the ministries of Elijah and Elisha related to eating and drinking. These prophets, especially Elisha, prefigure the miraculous deeds of Jesus' own ministry, as well as the greater meal, namely the institution of the Lord's Supper. In chapter 11 ("A Theological Interpretation of the Cyrus Passages in Isaiah"), Bo Lim addresses the identity of Cyrus in Isaiah. Noting the various interpretive and methodological approaches, Lim concludes that a theological interpretation involves a multi-faceted view of Cyrus as a transitionary figure who is both "messiah" and "monster." Thus, some of the salvation prophecies were fulfilled in the Persian period, while others look forward to a future resolution. In chapter 12 ("The Presence and Absence of God in Jeremiah"), James Hoffmeier looks to the prophetic word, rehearsals of the exodus, the exile, and the future for characteristics of God's presence. This lays the groundwork for God's ultimate

presence in the incarnation. Chapter 13 contains a discussion by Anthony Petterson on the messiah in Zechariah ("Messianic Expectations in Zechariah and Theological Interpretation"). While Petterson rejects the idea of messianic overtones to the Angel of the Lord, he finds and traces the messianic theme in the shoot, kingship, and shepherd motifs. Mark Futato devotes chapter 14 (Psalm 8: A Christological Perspective") to the exploration of Psalm 8 from a Christological, but not 'messianic,' reading. This chapter contains a fresh translation with many explanatory notes on the Hebrew text, in addition to a section on the literary structure and canonical context of the Psalm. In the final chapter of the section ("The Prayer of Daniel [2:20–23] in the Two-Testaments Scriptures"), Ron Haydon connects the motif of wisdom in Daniel to the wisdom in Colossians within a trinitarian framework.

The third section of the volume has a more communal focus, exploring topics such as ethics, missions, family, and ministry. M. Daniel Carroll R. begins with an assessment of the connection between Old Testament theology and ethics in the works of five scholars: Childs, Scobie, Goldingay, Brueggemann, and Andiñach (chapter 16, "Ethics in Old Testament Theologies: Theological Significance and Modern Relevance"). Weighing the similarities and differences between each of these authors, Carroll R. demonstrates that there is more than one way to develop the ethics of the Old Testament from its theology. In chapter 17 ("'Live Such Good Lives Among the Nations…': The Missional Impact of Old Testament Ethics in the New Testament"), Christopher Wright emphasizes the role of a missional hermeneutic for ethics in the lives of believers. Next, Richard Hess (in "The Family in the Old Testament as a Theological Model for Covenant Community") surveys the biblical and archaeological data, in addition to the evidence from personal names, to show the family as a context for expressing devotion to God. This sets the backdrop for a concluding paragraph on Jesus' role in his human family. In chapter 19 ("Typological Trajectories in the Epistle to the Hebrews"), New Testament scholar Dana Harris demonstrates how the author of Hebrews appropriates material from the Old Testament that already contained theological reflections on earlier historical events. Thus, she says, the typology in Hebrews is not sui generis, but rather, draws upon typological trajectories already present in the Old Testament itself. Kevin Vanhoozer, in chapter 20 ("Toward a Theological Old Testament Theology?: A Systematic Theologian's Take on Reading the Old Testament Theologically"), reflects on various levels of Old Testament theological interpretation, providing two case studies from Numbers 12 and 22. He looks to Walter Moberly as a good model of sound theological interpretation. In the final chapter ("But, It's Poetry! A Pastor's Reflection on the Relevance of Old Testament Poetry"), Gregory Waybright describes the use of biblical poetry to provide pastoral care for those in emotional crisis. He summarizes a sermon he preached on Psalm 62 as an example.

As is evident from this all-too-brief summary, this book covers a plethora of topics, displaying the wide-ranging scope of theological approaches to the

Old Testament. Especially helpful are several contributions that give space to the methodological issues undergirding TIS. This orients the uninitiated reader to the foundational tenets of the movement. Vanhoozer, for example, classifies various attempts at Old Testament theology in terms of "non-theological," "weak," and "strong." What makes an evangelical Old Testament theology 'weak,' he says, is a refusal "to read the Old Testament in light of what is known of God in the communion of the saints" (p. 303). On the other hand, a 'strong' theological interpretation deploys proper theological categories involving "the nature, presence, and activity of the triune God" to "describe not only the content of Scripture but also the nature and purpose of the text itself, as well as its authors and interpreters" (p. 303). Vanhoozer's discussion, alongside Haydon and Harris in particular, provides helpful insight into what is meant by theological interpretation.

Readers looking for a monolithic application of a unified approach, however, will likely be disappointed. In fact, some chapters appear to be at odds with one another. For instance, in his methodological discussion, Haydon emphasizes a Trinitarian hermeneutic of the Old Testament as a cornerstone for a faithful reading (see pp. 224–27). Chapman, on the other hand, states that though there is a valuable role for the creeds, Trinity, and Christology in a Christian reading of the Old Testament, "biblical interpretation can still be theological without them—or at least without making them the explicit and exclusive starting points in theological reflection" (p. 119). One may suspect that Vanhoozer would rank this kind of approach low on his taxonomy of theological interpretation.

Nevertheless, the volume as a whole succeeds in honoring an esteemed member of the interpretive community, Willem VanGemeren. Together, these essays invite readers to grow in communion with the Triune God and in community within the Church, through reading the Old Testament as Christian Scripture.

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Fuller, Russell T., Kyoungwon Choi. *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax: An Intermediate Grammar*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2017, pp. 528, $64.99, hardback.

Building upon the foundation laid in *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew: A Beginning Grammar*, Russell Fuller and Kyoungwon Choi present an intermediate grammar which leads students of Biblical Hebrew (BH) towards internalization and mastery. The text is unique among similar intermediate grammars in its use of traditional Arabic/Semitic linguistic categories and pedagogy, while ignoring modern linguistic jargon. Most directly stated, this means analysis presented from linguistic scholars like Elizabeth Robar, Jan Joosten, T. Muraoka, Cynthia Miller-Naudé, and others is not incorporated in favor of traditional Semitic analysis. This makes the text

accessible to most intermediate students, yet confusing for those who have been exposed to the more modern syntactical terminology.

Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax: An Intermediate Grammar is divided into three sections, each working together using the pedagogical method put forward in the introduction. The first main section is titled "Syntax" and consists of grammatical explanations and categories with examples throughout. Each chapter ends with extensive exercise questions to reinforce the concepts, as well as drills for identifying grammatical categories and constructions from the Hebrew Bible. A detailed answer key is provided at the back of the book with full explanations which carefully incorporate the chapter's material to further help students master the syntax. This section of the text book utilizes passive learning as students learn the material through memorization and apply it through observation.

The next major section entitled, "The Compositions," ingrains the grammatical and syntactical principles from the "Syntax" into the student through the traditional recitation method of learning classical languages. Fuller and Choi provide a four-step process for using the compositions (p. 245). This process includes (1) composing the Hebrew text from the English text with detailed footnotes that reference sections of the syntax, (2) correcting the composition with the answer key, (3) mastering the Hebrew text, and (4) reciting the Hebrew text out loud using only the English text. The first nine compositions are written by Dr. Fuller using BH syntax, vocabulary, and stories while the final three are poetic texts from the Hebrew Bible.

The final section focuses on the Masoretic accents. Fuller and Choi begin by putting forward the value of the accents as well as their importance since, according to them, the accents "reflect the divinely inspired text" (p. 352) in their vocalization and chanting or they at least "represent an ancient rabbinic interpretation of Scripture, an invaluable resource for syntax and exegesis" (p. 352). This is followed by a detailed examination of how the entire accent system works by dividing them into a hierarchy and pointing out their patterns in BH prose and poetry. This is followed by a commentary on the accents in composition seven and Psalm 1.

The greatest strength of *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* is found in the compositions, yet this is largely because of their dependence upon and interaction with the syntax/grammar section. When the passive learning found in the first part of the book is combined with the active use of these principles in the compositions, a mastery of BH results that is unparalleled in other methods of learning ancient languages. Reciting the compositions force the learner to think through the vocabulary, morphology, and syntax actively, speeding up the process of internalization. This process is still unbelievably difficult and time consuming, yet it is also enjoyable, rewarding, and powerful. Upon mastering the syntactical principles and applying them in the compositions using the footnotes, students will find reading the Hebrew Bible more enjoyable, less confusing, and more natural.

The Hebrew accent section of the textbook has also been widely praised, and for good reason. Fuller and Choi have presented the accent system in a way that new students can learn efficiently yet with a detail and rigor that experienced scholars and translators are likely to benefit from as well. Fuller displays his thorough grasp of the Masoretic system with this chapter as he puts his decades of research and experience on display. At the same time, it must be stated that Fuller's view that the Masoretic tradition is "inspired as accurately preserving Ezra's inspired text, allowing for an isolated copyist mistake and/or a rare lapse in the tradition" is a minority position (p. 352). To be sure, the Masoretic accents, especially the vowels, should be considered an accurate preservation of the Jewish cantillation tradition going back quite a long time, possibly as far as the time of Ezra. Still, some room must be left for emendations when manuscript and legitimate principles of textual criticism warrants it, something Fuller appears to generally reject in favor of a practically inspired Masoretic text.

Another strength to this textbook is also one of its more important disadvantages. The text avoids categories and terminology from modern linguistics that can create a burden for students. From start to end, the Syntax section uses simple terminology and defines terms and categories with examples. Every term and category provided has a purpose and connects with BH directly. Fuller's approach and terminology is, according to the introduction, based on medieval Arabic grammar and Semitic terminology (p. 11). The grammar prefers these grammatical categories while completely disregarding modern linguistics. The advantage here is, upon mastering the text, readers will truly understand the language, the categories native to the language, and the way the language works.

The disadvantage to this approach, however, is largely found in moving beyond intermediate Hebrew studies and in utilizing a wider range of BH resources. Picking up and reading a volume from, for example, the Baylor Handbook series, may pose a challenge. The reason for this is that many of the categories being utilized within modern scholarship are disregarded by Fuller and Choi. This should not lead to the conclusion that *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* is inaccurate or a bad textbook because it rejects the use of non-Semitic linguistic phenomena to analyze BH. The textbook's lack of modern-linguistics is one of its strengths, yet students utilizing the textbook must understand the drawback found in mastering some terminology and ideas which are no longer used in the wider scholarship of BH.

In utilizing passive learning of the Syntax section, active learning in the Compositions, and an excellent analysis of the accent system, Fuller and Choi have done a massive service to those seeking mastery in BH. Faithfully laboring in all three of these sections is sure to challenge and progress students of the Hebrew Bible. After this, those desiring further proficiency may want to pick up the reference/syntax grammars from van der Merwe/Naudé, Waltke/O'Connor and/or Joüon/Muraoka to understand the different approaches used to discuss and describe BH.

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Haydock, Nicholas. *Old Testament Theology and the Rest of God.* **Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016, 87 pp., $16, paperback.**

Nicholas Haydock with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students provides a short study of 86 pages on "rest." He notes how the field of Old Testament theology has devoted scant attention to the concept of "rest" with two noteworthy exceptions. Gerhard von Rad supposes there were competing understandings and applications of the concept of "rest," while Walter Kaiser, Jr. considers both Testaments to present a unified view. Haydock intends to trace how the theology of "rest" developed and progressed through ancient Israel's history and to show how its essence remained the same. He defines "rest" as "having a holistic state of being, freely given by God in accordance to his word" (p. x). It is never achieved by human effort but always a gift from God. Haydock seeks to demonstrate the thesis that ancient Israel held one coherent theology of "rest" that was central in Old Testament theology and distinct in the context of the Ancient Near East.

He begins with "rest" in the creation narrative and Genesis 2:1-3 where God "rested" on the seventh day. Haydock notes that God's "rest" never ends and considers it to prefigure the eternal rest to come. Then he examines the story of Noah, whose name means "rest," and sees Noah as a second Adam of sorts and the post-diluvian world as a type of the new creation. Yet because sin remains, there is a tension, which calls for God's future resolution.

Haydock stresses the contrast between the biblical view and that of the Ancient Near East. He summarizes how the motif of "rest" was treated in the Enuma Elish, the Atrahasis epic, and the creation myth of the Egyptian city of Memphis. In the general outlook "rest" is the outcome of the conflict between the gods and chaos in whatever form, and humanity exists to carry the workload of the gods and thereby give the gods "rest."

The author provides a brief study of Sabbath-rest (Exodus 20:8-11), its uniqueness in the ancient world and eschatological overtones. Just as "rest" belongs to God (Psalm 95:11), so also the Sabbath (Isaiah 58:13; Ezekiel 22:8; Nehemiah 9:14). According to the promise in Isaiah 56, the experience of God's Sabbath-rest will be enjoyed by Gentiles.

He discusses the Tabernacle and the interplay between God's rest, his word, and his presence (e.g. Exodus 33:14). The theme of "rest" is closely tied to the land as an inheritance (Deuteronomy 12:8-12; 25:17-19). God promised to give Israel "rest" from the surrounding enemies. This emphasis governs the portrayal of the conquest of the land in Joshua (21:43-45). It is God's freely given gift and yet only those who hear his voice enter it (Psalm 95:7-11). According to Judges, after the military victory of each judge, "the land had rest for (x) years." That expression is repeated through the period up to Gideon and then disappears. Here the "rest" is cessation of war. While the period of judges was marked by repeated turbulence and enemy attack, God promised to David and with him Israel "rest from all your enemies" (2 Samuel

7:10-11). Again, God establishes "rest," not human effort. In this connection the author notes that promise given in Isaiah 11:10 regarding the future new David.

Haydock points out how "rest" is associated with Solomon's temple but again, only to those who are faithful (1 Kings 8:56; 6:11-13). The Zion theology flowing from the temple construction gives the eschatological hope of "rest" for all Gentiles (Micah 4:1-8). He points out some prophetic texts that speak of "rest." According to Isaiah 28:11-13 and 30:15, God's word and its call for faith would lead to "rest," but Israel refused (cf. Jeremiah 6:16-17). Instead they brought down upon themselves God's judgment, which is the absence of "rest" (e.g. Micah 2:10; Habakkuk 2:5; Lamentations 1:3; 5:5). Yet the prophets also promised a future restoration and "rest" from harsh subjugation (e.g. Isaiah 14:1-3).

The author considers the connection between "rest" and Purim in Esther (Esther 9:16-22) and sees it as having eschatological overtones along with the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths. He concludes this survey with Chronicles where "rest" comes up fairly often. Haydock states: "The direction of the Old Testament continues to look forward to the coming eternal rest; a rest inaugurated by the coming king whose rule will be eternal and where warring nations will cease and turn to worship the living God" (p. 82).

By way of evaluation, Haydock does a nice job of bringing together the Old Testament texts that speak of "rest." He rightly emphasizes that "rest" is freely promised and given by God for Israel and also for the Gentiles, yet enjoyed only by those faithful to God's word. While the study makes a fresh contribution to Old Testament theology, I did not find some of it persuasive. The author did not convince me that all the texts cited display one overall theology of "rest." Often he commits what lexicographers call an "illegitimate totality transfer" by downloading into one basket all of the statements using the vocable "rest." The word "rest" does not necessarily convey one general concept. In this respect the study would have been stronger with more lexical work. For example, the noun or verb "rest" implies "rest from something," such as "rest from the attacks and raids of enemy nations" or "rest from war." His definition is too vague, "a holistic state of being." Moreover, certain key passages call for more exegesis, such as the promise in Isaiah 11:10, "and his resting place will be glory."

In the conclusion the author suggests the need for further study of the New Testament on "rest." He helpfully points out that in Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus offers to give what only the God of Israel can give, the gift of "rest." In this connection one should also note the importance of Hebrews 3-4 on the theme of "rest." Haydock is to be thanked for highlighting "rest" in Old Testament theology. He suggests that the Lord's gift of rest "may well be a suitable way of presenting the gospel to those offering their busy lives to the idols of money and materialism in an attempt to earn rest" (p. 85).

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Barclay, John M. G. *Paul and the Gift*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015, xvi + 656 pp., $70, hardback.

In one sense, *Paul and the Gift* is a book about many things. It includes anthropology and the history of interpretation. It is a comparison of Paul and Second Temple Jewish authors. It is part Pauline theology, part commentary on Galatians and Romans. In another sense, though, Barclay's monograph is a book about one thing: grace. While its methodology traverses a wide array of disciplines relevant to biblical studies, its content never strays far from the concept of beneficence.

Barclay, who a decade and a half ago succeeded James D. G. Dunn as Lightfoot Professor of Divinity at Durham University, has proved himself a fitting heir to that professorship. Prior to *Paul and the Gift*, Barclay was perhaps best known for *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora* (1996), an overview of Jewish reactions to the wider culture, as well as many well regarded articles, chapters, and edited volumes on Paul and Hellenistic Jews. But it is *Paul and the Gift* that secures his legacy. With it, he presents Paul's theology of grace from a genuinely new perspective—no small feat!—and also reframes aspects of the debate over the New Perspective on Paul.

Part I, "The Multiple Meanings of Gift and Grace" (pp. 9–188), sets out the foundational categories for the rest of the volume. Following a vein of research in anthropology (beginning with Marcel Mauss, "Essai sur le Don" [1925]), Barclay locates the concept of grace within a wider framework of gift-giving (ch. 1, pp. 11–65). In particular, he differentiates ancient benefaction, which encouraged and expected reciprocity, from the modern idea of "pure" gift, one that brooks no return whatsoever. Barclay then develops "perfections" of grace (ch. 2, pp. 66–78). This short chapter is the most significant, because it gives Barclay the taxonomy with which he will compare Paul and his contemporaries. Barclay uses "perfection" to designate "a concept [drawn out] to its endpoint or extreme" (67), and he finds six ways grace has been perfected over the past two millennia. It can indicate (1) *superabundance* (that the gift is of great scale), (2) *singularity* (that grace cannot coexist with the possibility of judgment), (3) *priority* (that it precedes any action on the part of the recipient), (4) *incongruity* (that it does not match the worth of the recipient), (5) *efficacy* (that it causes a change in the recipient), and (6) non-circularity (that a "pure gift" breaks the cycle of reciprocity). These are important categories, for as Barclay argues, "Rival claims to maintain or defend the principle of 'grace' may turn out to constitute *not degrees of emphasis, but different kinds of perfection*" (p. 70; here and elsewhere, emphasis original).

The payoff is evident even in the next chapter, when Barclay surveys the reception of Paul's theology of grace from Marcion to Augustine, through the Reformers, all the way to the many-sided debate on the apostle today (ch. 3, pp. 79–182). Among other conclusions, Barclay finds incongruity to be the "bedrock" of Augustine's theology of grace (p. 85); that Luther's innovation is interjecting non-circularity

into the concept of grace; and that the debates between the New Perspective, the "traditional" perspective, and the apocalyptic approaches to Paul are muddied by conceptual ambiguities. Most significantly, E. P. Sanders builds his framework for "grace" in Palestinian Judaism around priority (since, in his words, "getting in" is by grace), but Barclay faults Sanders for mistakenly assuming that priority implies incongruity or other perfections of grace: "at the heart of his project," Barclay critiques, "is a lack of clarity concerning the very definition of grace" (p. 157). One upshot of these new categories, as the author notes in the conclusion to the section (ch. 4, pp. 183–88), is that it allows us to pursue a comparative investigation of Paul and other Jews on the topic of grace in a way that is "at once more complex and less loaded"; it is not a question of whether Judaism was a religion of grace but rather an analysis of "*different* Jewish perfections of grace" (p. 187).

Having constructed his conceptual boxes, Barclay begins the sorting. Part II, "Divine Gift in Second Temple Judaism" (pp. 189–328), considers five important Jewish works. Although Barclay does not claim that they are necessarily "representative of the whole gamut of Second Temple viewpoints" (p. 192), they are apt choices, presenting both diaspora and Palestinian voices, as well as varied perspectives on grace. The Wisdom of Solomon (ch. 5, pp. 194–211) perfects the superabundance of grace in particular, rejects singularity, and limits incongruity since that would violate the "system of moral and rational symmetries" that God has set up in the world (p. 211). Philo of Alexandria (ch. 6, pp. 212–38), likewise, speaks of divine beneficence especially in terms of its superabundance, but also its priority, since God is the source of all in his philosophy. Philo is further concerned to show, in keeping with the expectations of the Roman world, that the gift is given to a fitting recipient, and thus for him grace is specifically congruous. By contrast, in the *Hodayot* of Qumran (1QH^a) (ch. 7, pp. 239–65) grace is celebrated as incongruous, given to those who do not deserve it. It is also superabundant, prior, and efficacious, but not singular nor non-circular. In *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (ch. 8, pp. 266–79), God's mercy is incongruous, but not as an essential characteristic of grace, but instead in service of his "irrevocable promises and indefeasible plans" for Israel (p. 279). Fourth Ezra (ch. 9, 280–308) resolves a dialectic: the character of Ezra articulates divine grace as incongruous, since humanity's sinfulness precludes the possibility of meriting salvation, but by the *dénouement* of the work the heavenly voice (first Uriel's, then God's) insists on "a cosmic order of justice" (p. 307), that there are righteous ones who deserve God's gifts. Thus, it "displays most openly the theological problems associated with divine mercy or gift if they are perfected as incongruous benefits to the unworthy" (p. 308). Barclay ends the section with a summary of the "diverse dynamics of grace in Second Temple Judaism" (ch. 10, pp. 309–28).

A little over two fifths of *Paul and the Gift* is a close study of two of Paul's capital letters. Part III is on "Galatians: The Christ-Gift and the Recalibration of Worth" (pp. 329–446). Barclay has a chapter introducing the letter to Galatia, the conflict

behind it, and major interpretations (ch. 11, pp. 331–50). He then writes something of a commentary on the letter: Galatians 1–2 (ch. 12, pp. 351–87), 3:1–5:12 with 6:11–18 (ch. 13, pp. 388–422), and 5:13–6:10 (ch. 14, pp. 423–46), the last of which includes a summary of the section (pp. 442–46). In Galatians, Paul's major concern in terms of grace is incongruity. He assumes priority and at least hints at efficacy, but there is no real focus on divine mercy as superabundant, singular, or non-circular here. Barclay throughout mentions the social concern of Paul, that he is forming "*innovative communities*," in which "*communal practice is integral to the expression of the good news*" (pp. 443–44). He stresses that, in Christ, grace reconstitutes social "value systems" and "other forms of cultural or symbolic capital," altering hierarchies, including "the value-system of the Torah" that differentiates Jew and gentile (p. 444). Here he attempts to beat a fresh path between the "Lutheran" Paul (opposing "works-righteousness" as a means to salvation) and the New Perspective (opposing "works of the Law" as a form of cultural superiority). He also emphasizes that his interpretation "requires *no denigration of Judaism*" on the apostle's part (p. 445).

Part IV, "Romans: Israel, the Gentiles, and God's Creative Gift" (pp. 447–574), follows the same commentary-like format, dividing Paul's epistle thus: Romans 1:1–5:11 (ch. 15, pp. 449–92), 5:12–8:39 with 12:1–15:13 (ch. 16, pp. 493–519), and chapters 9–11 (ch. 17, pp. 520–61). If Galatians so recalibrates worth as to (seemingly) endanger the normative status of Torah and the special place of Jews, Romans "displays a notable development beyond Galatians, expanding, adding, modifying, and even apparently reversing aspects of the earlier letter" (p. 453). Paul adds "dialectical counterpoints" to his views of the Law and Israel, seeing the Christ-gift as corresponding to the essence of the former and retaining the ethnic priority of the latter (p. 545). Incongruity remains Paul's dominant perfection of grace, and in this letter the apostle integrates it into new matters. (For example, in ch. 17, Barclay argues that Romans 9–11, rather than veering from dark premonitions of divine condemnation to bright hopes for universal reconciliation, has a consistent theme: the incongruity of divine election, that God's people is ever a people created *ex nihilo* by God's grace.) Romans adds statements that indicate the superabundance of the Christ-gift and its priority. The other perfections of grace are absent (non-circularity), not developed (efficacy), or have an ambivalent status (singularity). Barclay's chapter on conclusions (ch. 18, pp. 562–74) rehearses the major concepts of the study and its primary implications. The book ends with a helpful appendix on Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and English words revolving around gift-giving (pp. 575–82), before a bibliography and indices of authors, subjects, and sources. (The index of subjects is short, only two pages, but otherwise the end matter is well constructed.)

The greatest strength of this important work is Barclay's sixfold taxonomy of grace. It gives us a multidimensional rubric to compare views of grace, rather than a clumsy one-dimensional ruler. A particularly helpful corollary of this taxonomy is that we can speak more accurately about the ancients. For example, consider Philo's

insistence on the congruity of divine favor. Barclay rejects characterizations of his theology as having a "debased" form of grace, something that amounts to a "payment" or an "earned" reward (p. 237). That would be to make one perfection of grace, incongruity, the sole measuring stick. (And it is one that is actually counterintuitive: In the everyday world, we regularly deem recipients "worthy" of gifts without mistaking that for payment: an elementary school student brings home straight As, and her parents take her out for a special dinner; a long-serving, hard-working, honorable policeman receives a community service award with a financial windfall. It would be crass to speak of the celebratory dinner as mere "wages," and we many would object if the community service award went to a scoundrel. The Christian affirmation of incongruous grace, stemming from Paul, is, in truth, shocking.) Therefore, Barclay can call Philo "a profound theologian of grace" (p. 238), even if his concept of divine beneficence differs markedly from Paul's. A second corollary is that the taxonomy brings conceptual clarity to contemporary Pauline scholarship. The last forty years have seen various attempts to defend or impugn the "New Perspective on Paul," but the meaning of "grace" has often imperceptivity shifted with each commentator, with the result that many of the disputants speak past each other. Barclay has brought these nuances to light, and future New Testament scholars need to make use of them. My only complaint with Barclay's taxonomy is that the full taxonomy often seems to slip from view. To be sure, the ancient authors have their own priorities, and so we should not expect each category to receive equal mention in any work. But for Paul and 4 Ezra, far and away the main focus is on incongruity, and Barclay only engages the other perfections incidentally.

Despite this signal strength and a number of other smaller ones, I remain unconvinced about a couple of matters. First, Barclay sometimes speaks of his proposal as if it were an alternate to both the "old" and "new" perspectives on Paul. For example, about Gal 5:6 ("neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything") he writes, "It seems that Paul's target is neither ethnocentrism nor the false opinion that good works can gain benefit from God. He subverts *any* form of symbolic capital that operates independently of Christ" (p. 393). But this is a generalization and combination of the two views, not an alternative to both. Paul is still against ethnocentrism, but he undermines non-Jewishness, as well as Jewishness. He is still against "earning" salvation, but he is also against any other conceivable form of merit apart from Christ. Better, then, is Barclay's final characterization of his own reading of Paul as "a re-contextualization of the Augustinian-Lutheran tradition" and "a reconfiguration of the 'new perspective' " that "reshapes them both" (p. 573). Second, Barclay's continual appeal to "worth" language threatens to bleed out other effects of God's action in Christ. When Barclay paraphrases the apostle's densely charged argument in Gal 2:15–21, for instance, almost every use of the *dik-* ("just," "right") root is glossed in terms of "value" (p. 371, defended over pp. 370–87). Yet the polarity that Paul develops in this passage is between rightness and *sin*, and

"worth" is not the most natural antonym for "sin"—not to mention that Greek has words for "worth" that Paul employs elsewhere.

More generally, *Paul and the Gift* is valuable because it contains introductions to five important Jewish writings and abbreviated commentaries on two of Paul's most important letters—all of which provide a handy point of reference. Locating the language of "grace" concretely within anthropological study of gift-giving in ancient cultures also brings a richer, fuller backdrop to classic Pauline words like *charis*, *dōrean*, and their cognates. Because of its wide scope, covering history of interpretation and Second Temple Jewish works, few undergraduate students would be able to make much use of this monograph. The writing is clear and most everything includes an English translation, so it might be suitable as early as master's-level coursework. For the most part, though, this is work of a scholar written for other scholars, and as such it succeeds. *Paul and the Gift* will stand as the definitive work on Paul's theology of grace for many years to come.

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Runge, Steven E. and Christopher J. Fresch, eds. *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016. 688 pp. $34.99.

The topic of verbal aspect has been highly contested since the publication of Stanley Porter and Buist Fanning's dissertations over twenty-five years ago. Despite the copious amount of literature written on the issue, there appeared to be no way forward in the debate. That is, the paradigms set forth by Stanley Porter, Buist Fanning, and those who followed did not create a paradigm by which solutions could be found. However, with the publication of Steven E. Runge and Christopher J. Fresch's *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis*, the apparent stalemate in this quarter-of-a-century debate shows tremendous promise for new ways forward. For that matter, the impact of Runge and Fresch's new monograph upon the topic of verbal aspect within the Greek verbal system can be summarized in the remarks of Constantine Campbell, who states that this volume "deserves careful consideration" since it will "no doubt occupy a significant position within modern discussions of the Greek verbal system" (endorsements page).

In *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis*, Steven Runge and Christopher J. Fresch edit a volume in which linguists and Biblical scholars come together and address questions concerning the Greek verbal system that have been debated for the last twenty-five years. What is more, these scholars address these questions in light of the most recent developments within linguistic studies, developments which in many respects are grounded upon discourse grammar. According to Runge and Fresch, the goal of this volume is not to give the

definitive answer to these questions that have been debated for almost three decades. Rather, it is to "break the impasse and to see the discussion move forward" (pp. 3–4). Furthermore, the thesis of this volume is that the most linguistically viable position is that the Greek verbal system is made up of a combination of both tense and aspect (p. 3). While it is beyond the scope of this review to thoroughly interact with each essay, after concisely providing a summary of the content of this book, I provide substantive interaction with a select article representative of Runge and Fresch's work.

Runge and Fresch divide the book into three sections—section one: overview, section two: application, and section three: linguistic investigation. Section one consists of four chapters which seek to provide the theoretical framework for the thesis set forth in the book. For instance, in chapter two, Christopher J. Thomson interacts with the differences between the way aspect is defined in general linguistics and New Testament studies, and then in chapter three, Rutger Allan examines how the augment and perfect developed in classical Greek.

In section two, Runge and Fresch seek to apply the theoretical framework discussed in section one, incorporating essays which apply a discourse approach to various corpora. For instance, in chapter five Stephen Levinsohn seeks to demonstrate that within narrative genre, foreground is communicated through verbs that move the story forward while background information is set-forth in verbs that do not portray an event. In chapter 6, Patrick James applies his classical Greek training to examine the function of the imperfect, aorist, historic present, and perfect within John 11.

In section three, a selection of the most controversial linguistic issues is discussed; some of these include the historical present, the augment, the middle voice and the morphology, pedagogy, semantics, and discourse function of the perfect verb form. In chapter 11, Peter J. Gentry examines the function of the augment in Hellenistic Greek, diachronically tracing its origin and usage, and providing a wholistic analysis of the function of the augment both diachronically and synchronically.

Now that the content of Steven Runge and Christopher Fresch's *The Greek Verb Revisited* has been briefly summarized, I will now more thoroughly interact with one of the essays within the book in order to provide a sampling of the type of work the reader can expect to find. In her article "The Historical Present in NT Greek: An Exercise in Interpreting Matthew," Elizabeth Robar addresses the issue of the use of the present tense verb form in historical narrative. She argues that this form is used in narrative as an "editorial device to indicate thematic prominence" (pp. 341–346; 350). Further, she states that the scope of the present verb form in narrative is the entire discourse unit in which it opens (pp. 349–350). For this reason, Robar holds that one has to understand the broader discourse episode in order to determine the units in which the historic presents are located (p. 350). She maintains that identifying discourse units is based upon two discourse features, lexical choice and developmental markers (p. 349). Moreover, she suggests the following delimiters for determining the discourse units of the historic presents, basing them upon the

section of the narrative episode in which the historic present is located—end section: the unit is the clause itself; middle section: the unit may be either a single speech unit or encompass multiple speech units; and beginning section: its scope is the entire narrative episode itself (p. 350).

Robar identifies with Steven Runge, stating that her thesis is very similar to his processing hierarchy (p. 332). Moreover, she comments that the traditional view that the historic present is used to communicate vividness, bringing an event from the past into the present, should not be completely dismissed but should simply be linguistically nuanced (pp. 332–333). That is, she replaces the traditional concept of vividness with prominence, in which the present verb form requires more processing time than the expected verb forms. What is more, in support of tense being a semantically encoded feature of the Greek indicative verb form, Robar traces the history of the historic present cross-linguistically and seeks to show that the historic present is far more prevalent in languages with a more developed tense system, particularly the present and future tense (pp. 333–335).

In conclusion, although the topic of verbal aspect will continue to be highly contested for many years to come, Steven E. Runge and Christopher J. Fresch's *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis* has made a significant contribution to this challenging topic. Although I found this work to be characterized by succinct, clear argumentation grounded upon solid research, I do have one minor criticism. Namely, I found the three-fold division to be a bit unclear. For example, in the third section the focus of the essays are supposed to be upon theoretical issues that lie behind the approach to the Greek verb by scholars represented in this work. However, the first essay within this section does not appear to match the parameters set forth in the section, since Elizabeth Robar is merely testing her theory within the book of Matthew. This essay would fit best within the second section, since it is applying the theory. Nonetheless, I enthusiastically recommend this book to anyone who desires to be conversant with and aware of the most recent research on this controversial and significant issue within Greek grammatical studies.

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Garlington, Don. *A Commentary on the Greek Text of Second Corinthians.* **Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2016, pp. 473, paperback.**

It has been said that "of the writing of commentaries there is no end." Even though this reality could lend itself to a stale treatment of texts already analyzed, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of Second Corinthians* is a welcome resource to Greek students and pastors alike. In distinction from other kinds of commentaries, this commentary by Pauline scholar Don Garlington has as its target audience "students of the Greek New Testament" and thus functions as "a kind of 'halfway house' between the likes of Murray Harris and Margaret Thrall, on the one side, and Philip Hughes and Mark Seifrid, on the other" (p. xi). The result of this endeavor is a commentary that focuses on analysis of the Greek grammar and syntax of 2 Corinthians. Even though Garlington occasionally mentions the historical-cultural background of a passage, the focus is more on exegetical insights deriving from grammatical and syntactical analysis. The introduction, therefore, is understandably minimalistic, with a brief section on the purpose of the letter (to prepare the Corinthians for Paul's upcoming visit), the contents of the letter (the opponents at Corinth are deemed to be Judaizers), and the integrity of the letter (Garlington sees no good reason to doubt its integrity).

The strength of the commentary, therefore, is its ability to provide one with analysis of the Greek text of 2 Corinthians. At the outset of each subsection, the Greek is provided, although one needs to know Greek since no translation appears alongside. Further, the Greek text is divided into clauses or phrases and indented to show subordinate and modifying relationships. Even though the nature of the relationships aren't always made clear, this user-friendly portrayal of a passage allows for easy analysis of the passage's flow of thought at a glance. The commentary is also consistently conversant with the major Greek lexica (e.g., BDAG) and grammars (e.g., BDF, Zerwick), which is convenient to a Greek student learning how to use such resources. Additionally, the commentary utilizes syntactical categories that a typical second-year Greek student should recognize (e.g., anarthrous definite article, subjective/objective genitive, first-class conditional sentence, ingressive aorist, Apollonius' Canon), and Garlington helpfully labels—and in some places defines— various rhetorical devices in the text (e.g., anacoluthon, asyndeton, hendiadys, litotes, paronomasia, metonymy, epidiorthosis, paraleipsis). Finally, whenever the syntax is ambiguous, the commentary lists the major interpretive options, with an asterisked option at the end marking the view preferred by the commentary (although the reasons for the preferred view aren't always clear).

Two other strengths are worth mentioning. First, throughout the commentary there are select bibliographies for each subsection and categorized by topic. The bibliographies provide the best up-to-date secondary literature on the theme in question (e.g., suffering in 1:8-11). The bibliography for 5:14-21 is especially good, covering the categories of "flesh" as sin, Christ the last Adam, Christ the servant,

the new creation, reconciliation, atonement/sacrifice/redemption, righteousness/justification (pp. 178-84). Students and pastors should find these focused lists helpful for deeper study of a passage.

Second, the commentary is aware of the prominence for Paul of the Old Testament in 2 Corinthians. Even though analysis is necessarily brief due to the focus of the commentary, Garlington still highlights biblical-theological themes in the letter, such as Paul's greeting in 1:2 against the backdrop of God's covenant love for his people (4), the triumphal procession in 2:14 as linked to the prophetic hope of the return to Zion (64), and the exodus imagery of 3:1-4:6 (p. 103). The last Adam imagery is likely overemphasized in a few places (e.g., 3:18; 4:4, 16; 5:21), and Garlington's view of righteousness as covenant faithfulness won't convince everyone (e.g., pp. 178, 290, 345), but this need not reduce the value of these biblical-theological highlights.

There are a few weaknesses of the commentary, although none significantly detract from its overall value. There is little discussion of the text-critical questions in various places in 2 Corinthians, even if occasionally the mention of such a question is raised (e.g., p. 392). Garlington also appears to commit an etymological fallacy in analyzing the meaning of *katargeō* in 3:13 (p. 93), and there are some questionable exegetical conclusions regarding whether or not a noun or prepositional phrase is emphasized based on where it appears in its clause (e.g., p. 129). Further, the many typos throughout the volume also may irritate some readers, even though authorial meaning is always clear.

Additionally, given the focus of the commentary on Greek grammar and syntax, it is rather surprising that the insights deriving from verbal aspect were not more prominent. The relationship between tense and aspect in the Greek verb is one of the most heavily debated questions among Greek grammarians, but the debate and its exegetical value played little role in the commentary. Moreover, many Greek grammarians believe time to be grammaticalized within the indicative mood, but almost none would argue that it is grammaticalized in the non-indicative moods. Nevertheless, Garlington appears to hold this view, labeling the aorist participles in 1:22 as indicating "past historical and once-for-all actions" (p. 39; cf. 262, 270), despite the fact that most Greek grammarians today would reject such an analysis of the aorist tense-aspect.

Nevertheless, these weaknesses do not detract from Garlington's otherwise solid analysis of the Greek text of 2 Corinthians as well as the commentary's user-friendly approach. The commentary should prove especially fruitful to a Greek student seeking to apply their knowledge to a book of the New Testament. Perhaps also a pastor preaching through 2 Corinthians would find this commentary useful in deriving exegetical and theological insight from an analysis of the syntax and structure of the Greek text.

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Boyd, Gregory A. *The Crucifixion of the Warrior God: Interpreting the Violent Old Testament Portraits of God in Light of the Cross*. **Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017, pp. 1,492, $59.00, paperback.**

Christians are largely united in the affirmation that Jesus Christ is the supreme revelation of God's character given to humans, whose person and works fulfill the highest aspirations of the Old Testament (OT). Christ reveals a God who teaches us to love our neighbors as ourselves and shows us how to love by dying an undeserved criminal's death not only for those who return his love but also for his enemies. However, this picture of a perfectly loving God appears to be incompatible with the brutally violent images of Yahweh found in the OT. Among other things, the OT command to kill every man, woman, and child in a given region plainly seems to contradict Jesus' teaching to love all persons, even one's enemies, as oneself. The 1,500 page tome, *The Crucifixion of the Warrior God: Interpreting the Violent Old Testament Portraits in Light of the Cross*, from pastor-theologian Gregory Boyd aims to reconcile, or at least refocus, these opposing visions of God. In short, the proposal is that, initial appearances notwithstanding, the violent OT depictions of God indirectly reveal God's cruciform love.

Before defending his vision as to how the violent OT depictions of Yahweh indirectly reveal God's cruciform love, Boyd argues against competing treatments of the problem of contradictory portrayals of God. Among the most prominent are the *dismissal solution* and the *synthesis solution*. Advocates of the dismissal solution claim that texts which portray God as violent are not the product of divine inspiration, and so need not be affirmed. Boyd rejects the dismissal solution principally because the NT presents Jesus as affirming the OT as divinely inspired and worries that such a path will lead to the rejection of large swaths of the OT (e.g., the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the killing of the Egyptian firstborn, the downing of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea, the conquest of Canaan, and the divinely orchestrated attacks of Assyria and Babylon against the Israelites), leaving it unclear as to whether a coherent narrative would remain. Boyd also argues that there is good reason to maintain that Scripture is infallible, which implies that the disturbing bits of Scripture cannot merely be dismissed.

For such reasons, many conservative theologians opt for the synthesis solution. This is the solution wherein one seeks to justify the violent OT portraits of God by showing that they are compatible with the God of love revealed in Christ. Defenses of the synthesis solution include the notion that humans are not appropriately epistemically situated to judge the moral quality of Yahweh's actions, that God's holy righteousness entails that he must punish sin in ways that are jarring to human sensibilities, that Yahweh must engage in violence to ensure the instantiation of certain greater goods, and that Yahweh's brutal behavior is an act of accommodation to the limitations of human sin and stage of moral development. Boyd ably dismantles

each of these synthesizing justifications for divine violence, although the last of them plays a significant role in his own constructive proposal.

Because Boyd believes that the violent scriptures concerning God can be neither dismissed nor justified, Boyd calls us to reinterpret violent scriptures concerning God in light of God's most supreme self-disclosure, namely, the self-giving divine love found in the crucifixion. This Boyd dubs the Cruciform Hermeneutic, a hermeneutical principle that Boyd defends extensively and which drives his entire reinterpretative project.

At first blush, the reinterpretative approach might seem radically novel. However, Boyd reminds us that this basic procedure can be found in Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Cassian, among others. To varying degrees, these church fathers maintained that violent OT portraits of God should be reinterpreted in light of Christ, and for them this meant using allegorical interpretation to render disturbing passages compatible with Christian revelation. While Boyd rejects the allegorical approach as not sufficiently grounded in history, he maintains that these early Christian theologians were moving in the right direction.

The implementation of the Cruciform Hermeneutic is taken by Boyd to generate what he calls the Cruciform Thesis, a thesis which is comprised of four dimensions. First, there is the Principle of Cruciform Accommodation, which takes cues from the idea that on the cross God stooped to accommodate fallen humanity by bearing the curse of human sin, thereby exemplifying the ugliness of the fallen human condition. This accommodational divine reality leads Boyd to submit that we should expect to find God assuming literary appearances that reflect the ugliness and sinfulness of God's people. And this, Boyd argues, is what God does with many of the "sub-Christlike" portraits of him in Scripture. According to the Principle of Cruciform Accommodation, God has accommodated his revelation to the fallen, culturally conditioned values of the ancient Near East, even to the point of allowing Scripture to depict him in tribal, warring ways.

The second principle of the Cruciform Thesis is labeled the Principle of Redemptive Withdrawal. This is the principle that God punishes by withdrawing his protective presence from sinners as opposed to placing external penalties on them. On this conception, punishment by withdrawal always has redemption as its ultimate goal, not that which is carried out for the sake of mere retribution. The Principle of Redemptive Withdrawal reflects the cross in that there Jesus experienced the consequences of human sin, not from the violent actions of the Father, but by the Father's withdrawal for the sake of redemption. While various OT authors might attribute violence to God, the principle at issue encourages us to see whatever violence that transpires as the mere byproduct of Yahweh's withdrawal rather than something that God specifically intends.

The third principle, the Principle of Cosmic Conflict, builds on the second. It is the principle that there are malevolent spiritual agents at work, which, in conflict

with God's heavenly hosts, bring damage and destruction to terrestrial beings when God withdraws his protective presence. In Boyd's view, the Principle of Cosmic Conflict reflects the crucifixion because it was the dark forces who orchestrated the brutal execution of Christ.

Finally, there is the Principle of Semiautonomous Power. According to this principle, when God assigns supernatural power or authority, God does not control how that authority is used. Indeed, agents may use that authority in ways in which God despises. By implication, when a prophet uses his God-given powers in violent ways, we cannot assume that God affirms the violent behavior. Supposedly, the Principle of Semiautonomous Power is represented in the fact that Jesus at least believed that he could use the divine authority granted to him to contravene the Father's will.

Taken together, these principles are said to help Christians reinterpret violent OT passages in a manner that allows for a coherent, Christlike image of God. Boyd's case for this conclusion is thorough and multifaceted and in certain places convincing. Nevertheless, many readers of Boyd's book will be left unpersuaded by the overarching Cruciform Thesis. Perhaps most centrally, many will find it difficult to believe that God has inspired large swaths of the OT that do more than inadequately grasp or even distort the character of God; they present God in ways that God, in Boyd's view, entirely detests.

But, persuaded or not, Boyd's book is a great achievement. It is well-researched and weaves together various fields of study on behalf of an original theological proposal that promises to advance insight into one of the most intractable problems affiliated with the Christian faith. *The Crucifixion of the Warrior God* is must reading for all who want to understand how violent OT texts bear witness to the God who died for humanity out of love.

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Sammon, Brendan Thomas. *Called to Attraction: An Introduction to the Theology of Beauty.* **Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017, pp. 160, $22, Paperback.**

Brendan Sammon is an Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He teaches courses on both The Beauty of God and Beauty and Consciousness at the Movies. In his first book, *The God Who is Beauty: Beauty as a Divine Name in Thomas Aquinas and Dionysius the Areopagite* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), Sammon examines the Medieval thoughts binding theology and beauty together. In *Called to Attraction: An Introduction to the Theology of Beauty*, he broadly explores how beauty and theology have interacted from ancient origins to the twentieth century.

Sammon moves through time periods for each of the seven chapters of his book. A helpful introduction sets up the book with three introductory arguments to set the boundaries for what he intends to accomplish in his short volume. First, he argues his theology of beauty is derived from a divine name approach. Consequently, all of his conclusions flow from the idea that beauty is an attribute of God. He writes, "These divine names could be called God's public identity, or the appearance that God takes in the world outside of those faith traditions that have arisen around what is believed to be God's revealed identity." (p. 3). His second introductory argument is that beauty is a more helpful category for theological discourse than aesthetics. He argues beauty is more ancient and more meaningful, and so he is making a theology of beauty and not a theological aesthetics. Last, he highlights he limited his book in scope because as it is intended to be an introduction to the subject.

The seven chapters are titled: Ancient Origins of Beauty's Association with God, The Beauty of God in the Early Church, Giving God the Name Beauty, Beauty at the Dawn of the Middle Ages, The Medieval Theology of Beauty, The Theology of Beauty in the Modern Period, and The Return of Beauty in the Twentieth-Century. Each chapter examines a few key people or themes considered significant for the period. These figures range from Plato and Augustine to Kierkegaard and Hans Urs von Balthasar. The themes highlight biblical books such as Genesis and focus on ideas such as the display of beauty or how theology developed to include beauty as a name for God.

This book hits on key figures throughout church history and holds most of the expected voices found in a theology of beauty. Such voices include Aquinas and Dionysuius the Areapogite, who the author has previous works written on. The sections on these two men are helpful and insightful. Sammon also writes on the Apostle Paul and St. Francis of Assissi. In these sections, he leads to reader to understand how these men of theological heritage contributed to the conversations on beauty. Their contributions validate the topic of beauty in theology. However, it is worth noting that Sammon does not include Jonathan Edwards. In a book on beauty that surveys key figures, leaving Edwards out is an interesting choice. Edwards's absence may be due to Sammon's Catholic background. However, he includes Fyodor Dostoeyksy (Eastern Orthodox) in his chapter on the Modern era making Edwards's absence curious. It is also worth noting the shift from the Medieval to the Modern Era misses the significant conversations in the Renaissance on beauty.

For a biblical-theological student, this book is very helpful for an entry level class or discussion on beauty and aesthetics. It is manageable in both length and content, giving preliminary facts and details to help a reader know the theological importance of beauty through the centuries. Sammon has placed discussion questions at the end of each chapter to help the reader grasp and comprehend the themes. This inclusion may prove extremely helpful in an entry level class.

The theme of beauty is woven throughout the biblical text and human history, and this book highlights how the theme has been explored in various epochs. It is helpful in giving a birds-eye view of the entire landscape for discussions of beauty. Anyone looking for a short and manageable read as in introduction to beauty and aesthetics will benefit from this book. However, it should be paired with other material covering beauty from the Protestant tradition. At the very least, Sammon's book should be supplemented with another that covers the works of Jonathan Edwards as it relates to discussions on beauty and theological aesthetics.

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Billings, J. Todd. *Remembrance, Communion, and Hope: Rediscovering the Gospel at the Lord's Table*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018, pp. 217, $25, paperback.

J. Todd Billings is the Gordon H. Girod Research Professor of Reformed Theology at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan, USA. He has written extensively on systematic and historical theology in the Reformed tradition. In addition to his academic work, Billings is an ordained minister in the Reformed Church in America. The balance of academic rigor and pastoral sensitivity that is part of Billings' own persona permeates his theological approach to the Lord's Supper in this text.

This book is a theology of the Eucharist in the Reformed tradition. Billings unabashedly theologizes from within a broad Reformed mode that takes seriously—and with relative authority—the confessional tradition of this theological and ecclesial family. Billings begins, however, with surfacing the need for a book of this nature in the contemporary Protestant scene. He helpfully diagnoses the functional theologies that often undergird the Sunday morning experience in North American churches today. In many churches, a conjunction of an overly individualistic and judicial understanding of the gospel and an overly cognitive engagement with the Eucharist, result in an anemic worship experience. Rather, Billings argues, emphasis on the Pauline motif of "union with Christ" serves as a better conceptual infrastructure for both the message of the gospel and the meaning of the Eucharist that will, Billings wages, result in deeper and more comprehensive worship. Part two of the book is the heart of the constructive portion. Here Billings offers a vision of the Eucharist that draws especially on the Reformed confessional tradition. Finally, in the third part, Billings highlights the intersection of the Eucharist with another prominent theme in Reformed theology, union with Christ. Drawing on insights made explicit in his 2011 *Union with Christ* (Eerdmans), Billings shows the telos of the gospel not to be a simple, judicial forgiveness of sins, but indeed a robust union with Christ. Billings

explores this motif in conjunction with those notions that form the title of the text: remembrance, communion, and hope.

My evaluative comments will focus on part two, Billings' constructive retrieval of a Reformed vision of the Eucharist. At the institution of the Eucharist, Christ said of a piece of bread, simply and straightforwardly, that it was his body. Interpretations of this utterance in the broad catholic tradition take this statement at face value. Yet, many in the Reformed tradition have a penchant for adding preponderance of qualifications to what Christ said. Billings is, in this regard, no different from his theological predecessors. For instance, Billings' writes that the Eucharist "not only *signifies* but also truly *exhibits*, *offers*, and *communicates* Jesus Christ" (p. 74), in the Eucharist "God *signifies*, *assures*, and *seals* his promise…the Spirit *offers*, *presents*, and *communicates* Christ's body and blood" (p. 75), and that "By the Spirit, the Supper presents a material sign that *displays* the gospel promise, and when received in faith, *assures*, *nourishes*, and *enlivens* the recipients" (p. 76, emphasis added in above quotations). Certainly many in the Christian tradition think that all these verbs are denoting veridical aspects of the Eucharist. But why not just say, "This *is* the body of Christ"?

Seemingly, for Billings and the Reformed, when in the liturgical setting, the minister refers to the elements as the "body" or "blood" of Christ, the minister does not intend to communicate that potential recipients are being offered the body or blood of Christ. Rather, potential recipients are offered "whole person of Jesus Christ" (p. 73) by means of the elements so termed "body" and "blood." Billings quotes favorably Jan Rohls, that the terms "body and blood" "do not stand 'for two different materials—that is, two parts of Christ. Instead they designate the whole person of Christ sacrificed for us, the person along with his work.'" At times, Billings goes on to say, "this is explicit in the confessions," wherein he cites the First Helvetic Confession, "In the Lord's Supper the Lord truly offers His body and His blood, *that is, Himself,* to His own to enjoy (pp. 73-4, emphasis Billings'). But it seems that this qualification is just to deny that when Jesus said that a piece of bread was his body, he meant that a piece of bread was his body. Moreover, I do not think that any proponent of a straightforward read of the dominical words would wish to hold that a recipient of the elements does not receive the whole Christ. In fact, even the Roman Catholic Catechism holds that in the Eucharist one receives the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ, which is just to say, the whole of Christ. Nevertheless, for the broad catholic (in distinction from the "Reformed" catholic), it is in virtue of the fact that the bread and the wine are the body and blood of Christ that the whole Christ is offered to potential recipients. Perhaps it is all well and good that the Supper does all these other things. But it seems odd that there is not an explanation forthcoming as to why one ought not interpret the dominical words in a straightforward manner. Despite this push back on but one—yet key—aspect of this text, there is much to glean from Billings creative retrieval of the Reformed confessional tradition.

There will be three main audiences that will benefit from this text: academic theologians, Reformed pastors, and non-Reformed pastors with an inclination for a deeper understanding of the central act of Christian worship. With respect to the first group, this book is a significant contribution to the study of sacramental theology and theologies of the Eucharist. In light of George Hunsinger's 2008 *The Eucharist and Ecumenism* (CUP), David Grummett's 2016 *Material Eucharist* (OUP), and my 2018 *An Incarnational Model of the Eucharist* (CUP), Billings' book furthers what appears to be a resurgence of interest in the Eucharist in contemporary academic theology. Secondly, pastors in the Reformed tradition will find this text a treasure trove of resources from within their own tradition for teaching their congregations a robustly Calvinian doctrine of the Eucharist. Finally, there are many pastors today in Protestant and Evangelical churches who desire a deeper appreciation of the Eucharist for their congregations, but perhaps do not know where to sail in the sea of deep metaphysical waters that are many aspects of the traditional discussion. Billings' text will be a helpful guide toward one safe harbor that is prominent in the Christian tradition. One need not take on the full package of Reformed theology to glean helpful insight into the theology of the Eucharist from this text. And, at the very least, it would serve to open up the theological imagination of many with respect to the use of the Eucharist in Christian worship.

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Kalantizis, George and Marc Cortez, eds. *Come, Let Us Eat Together: Sacraments and Christian Unity.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018, pp. 238, $26, paperback.

This edited volume is the proceedings of the 2017 Wheaton Theology Conference jointly sponsored by the Wheaton College Department of Biblical and Theological Studies (with which both editors are affiliated) and the Wheaton Center for Early Christian Studies. It brings together scholars from diversely ecumenical backgrounds to investigate theologically the role the sacraments play in bringing about, promoting, or inhibiting unity between Christians. Although such sacraments (or sacramental rites or ordinances) as baptism and holy orders receive some attention, as the title might indicate, the essays in this volume focus primarily on the sacrament/ordinance of the Eucharist. As such, this volume contributes to the renaissance, of sorts, of theological engagement with the doctrine of the Eucharist. This recent renaissance comes in the wake of George Hunsinger's *The Eucharist and Ecumenism* (Cambridge University Press, 2008) and has been followed by David Grumett's *Material Eucharist* (Oxford University Press, 2016), James Arcadi's *An Incarnational Model of the Eucharist* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), and J. Todd Billings' *Remembrance,*

Communion, and Hope (Eerdmans, 2018). I here offer some comments on a select few of the essays in this helpful text.

Given the evangelical location of this publication (the site of the conference, the publisher, the editors), it is natural that many of the contributors come from this theological background; however two Roman Catholics and two Eastern Orthodox offer their contributions. Of the two essays by Roman Catholic authors (Matthew Levering and Thomas Weinandy, OFM, Cap.), Matthew Levering's essay is much more optimistic and inviting. In his essay, he probes the manner that the Road to Emmaus vignette displays the Eucharist as a poignant locale for growing in knowledge of Christ. Yet this locale is founded upon the exposition of the Scriptures that Christ offers his fellow road-walkers, a foundation that is open to all Christians. Weinandy's essay simply describes the rationale for the Roman perspective on the nature of ordination and how celebrations of the Eucharist independent of this order are not valid. The essays by Eastern Orthodox writers (Bradley Nassif and Paul Gavilyuk) look to the beginning and the end as sources of unity. For Nassif the revitalization of study of the Patristic period within Protestantism is a point of convergence with Orthodoxy. Gavirlyuk looks to the unity of the eschaton as a means for pursuing unity here and now.

Katherine Sonderegger's essay, "Christ as *Ursakrament*," might alone be worth the cost of the book. Sonderegger, an Anglican theologian and priest, helpfully probes the thought of the twentieth-century Dominican theologian Edward Schillebeeckx who presented Christ—God incarnate—as the primal sacrament. For Schillebeeckx, Chalcedonian Christology describes Christ as a divine person who acts in and through the human nature of Christ, thereby revealing and communicating God to humans. However, Sonderegger reads beyond Schillebeeckx to bring a Pauline theme regarding Christ becoming sin for us to bear on our conception of sacrament. She writes, "We might say that this just is *sacrament* in the full and mystical sense: that the divine exchange who is Christ takes on the world's sin…and makes it his own" (p. 122). This ecumenical import of this conception consists in the purification of the church—resulting in its holiness—that Christ effects in and by his incarnation.

The essay by Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen is more centrally focused on ecumenism and thus secondarily focused on the sacraments. His essay is a good example of balancing out abstract theological principles with concrete practical application. He takes as his point of departure the statement in the Lutheran Augsburg Confession that the church is to be found here the gospel is preached and the sacraments administered according to the gospel. This minimalistic proposal, so Kärkkäinen argues, ought to be accepted by those on either end of the ecclesial spectrum. He contends that Baptistic and free church traditions ought not see their additions to these twin principles as necessary. Likewise, the Roman Catholic and Orthodox ought not insist on their particular explication of episcopal ministry as the only

location in which gospel preaching and sacramental action occurs. Kärkkäinen then offers some modest practical steps for working toward Christian unity.

I note in conclusion the delightfully surprising essay by art historian professor Matthew Milliner. One might wonder what a piece of art history is doing in a theology book and conference. But, Milliner's argument is that when one attends to various artistic streams within the tradition, one notices more points of theological convergence than one might expect given explicit theological differences between traditions. For instance, the "law and gospel" motif is typically attributed to the Lutheran tradition, yet a theme of this nature can easily be used to explicate the icon of the Sinai Pantocrator of the Orthodox tradition. Or, for another example, the Weirmar altarpiece of the Lutheran Lucas Cranach the Younger clearly displays an imputed righteousness that is the hallmark of Reformation theology. Yet, Milliner sees in the divine mercy image traced to the Roman Catholic Sister Faustina Kowalska a similar motif with, like Cranach, Christ's grace and mercy flowing out of Christ to be infused into the faithful.

This book will serve well especially for evangelicals looking for a deeper discussion of the sacraments—the Eucharist in particular—and the implications this might have for the evangelical self-conception in the milieu of ecumenical discussions. Given the conference paper style of the essays, they are not overly technical and so will be readable by a wide array of those outside the theological academy, such as pastors and interested laypersons. For those within the academy, given this text's broad and diverse author pool, this text could also serve as a textbook in an introductory course on the sacraments/ordinances or ecumenism.

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Wilder, Michael S. and Timothy Paul Jones. *The God Who Goes Before You: Pastoral Leadership as Christ-Centered Followership.* **Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2018. $29.99.**

Michael S. Wilder and Timothy Paul Jones are both serve as professors at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY. Professor Wilder is J.M. Frost Associate Professor of Leadership and Discipleship, and Professor Jones is Associate vice president for the Global Campus and also serves as Gheens Professor of Christian Family Ministry. Both are scholars but also have served as shepherds of local congregations.

Many of the books on leadership in church or in religious or denominational settings rely heavily on secular and pragmatic theories with faint references to biblical passages. According to Wilder and Jones, this often leads to confusing or non-applicable theories for leadership in religious settings. As a corrective, Wilder and Jones embark on a different path in presenting leadership from a more substantive

biblical perspective. According to the authors, their approach leads avoids using oversimplified biblical concepts, or worse, worldly principles in forced applications for leadership in religious context. By pointing out the shortcomings of the current anthology of leadership books, the authors survey the whole canon of Scripture, overviewing themes on leadership with contextual and exegetical precision.

The book is divided into 3 major sections or parts. Part One is setting the foundation for Leadership through Followership. Part Two is Precedents on leadership from the Old Covenant, and Part Three is Precedents on leadership from the New Covenant. In part one, Wilder and Jones debunk several contemporary concepts on leadership that exhibit principles more common to business and government work. The concept of "Jesus as a CEO" (pp.4-5) is their first target to demythologize and redefine as worldly, carefully demonstrating how Jesus Himself would not align with these new paradigms. In response to this trend, the authors state, "No matter how high Christian leaders may rise in an organization, we never cease to be servants" (p.29). Wilder and Jones challenge the reader to look deeper into the Scripture for a true picture of leadership, and they introduce a concept of "followership" as equally important as a quality for leadership. Their analysis on this point provides a refreshing model in a sea of faulty concepts related to church leadership. Additionally, the authors do not merely give the reader abstract concepts, but instead provide clear diagrams and figures displaying what biblical leadership might look like in a variety of settings. Further, the authors emphasize how leadership contains a moral component, a correct concept, a usage of power as delegated by the Lord, and the opportunity to proclaim truth as given by God (p.11). The authors stress that leadership is never done in a vacuum but it is a community experience. Readers will find this emphasis to be a refreshing rejoinder to the "it's lonely at the top" concept which comprises most leadership concepts being applied in churches and religious bodies.

In part two, the authors provide examples and concepts from the Old Covenant. Their primary focus is on leadership from the template of judges, priests, kings, and prophets. Here they take the "high calling and shortcomings" of each and show the reader what the intent was for these offices and how sin has corrupted our concepts of these. Using various diagrams, the authors show the reader a right exhibition of leadership and the corrupted version of such. For example, the authors explain that even kings were not exempt from servanthood, showing that "the king of Israel was never meant to possess power that was unchallengeable or absolute" (p.68). The authors demonstrate that all leaders are not lone chiefs calling others to follow them, but are listening and serving the community. The authors point out that even Israel's demand for a king was not totally wrong. Israel's error was that it wanted a "sovereign man instead of a sovereign God" (p.62).

Throughout part three, Wilder and Jones lead readers through leadership concepts derived from the New Covenant. Here they emphasize the importance of followership and the main principle for leadership quality. Leaders are to be examples

to their followers in how to follow because good leaders, the authors stress, are good followers. Leaders are shepherds who not only follow, but feed and are willing to lay down their life for the sheep. Again, using graphs and diagrams, they show the reader what this might look like (p.185). Wilder and Jones remind the reader the oft used term "co-laborer" in the New Testament reveals that leaders are on equal footings with all who work in the church. The sheep are not the property of the shepherd, but fellow laborers.

This book presents a need approach to the lively discussion of leadership. Their approach is much needed to cut through the morass of leadership concepts that do not truly display biblical leadership characteristics. Their overall work is thoughtful and a theologically fashioned approach to leadership for anyone aspiring to be in ministry or leadership in a religious setting. Students preparing for ministry will benefit from this helpful analysis. In fact, careful readers will detect clear biblical support for the model advocated in this volume, and the import for practical integration is broad. Because the authors approach the subject of leadership with acute scholarship and pastoral sensitivities, one could find a wide array of ministries for which this counsel would apply. At this juncture within the western Christian church experience, a book of this caliber and tone is a welcomed help to those seeking to model shepherd leadership.

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Smith, R. Drew, Stephanie C. Boddie, & Ronald E. Peters, eds. *Urban Ministry Reconsidered: Context and Approaches.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2018. pp. 320, $24.71, paperback.

When one speaks of contemporary cultures, it is customarily understood that cultures are shaped by members of a particular society that share a set of practices and beliefs that are dominant or ubiquitous to that particular group. Additionally, when speaking of culture, it is also understood that culture also comprises the activities and values produced out of interaction with principal objects that include, but are not limited to, religious beliefs and practice. With that general classification in mind, the book *Urban Ministry Reconsidered* attempts to answer the question: what does it mean to minister to societal groups and cultures in urban spaces? The question is grappled by each contributor, who at the conclusion of their chapters suggests means by which ministries can provide or modify their ministerial approaches to an urban community's context and needs.

Urban Ministry Reconsidered offers various insights that explore the complex and varied cultural contexts that have led to new conceptualization and arrangements for urban ministry. From the onset, a caveat is given as the editors make it clear that the topic of "urban ministry" is multifaceted and complex by the ambiguity of the terms

"urban" and "ministry" since "there is no uniform understanding of what is meant" by such terms (p. 1). The book offers various essays from over thirty contributors who explore the topic of urban ministry in and out of the context of the United States while acknowledging that large numbers of the world's population reside in urban settings. The book also explores various avenues and spaces for urban ministry within the context of large cities. However, it also includes exploration of settings not normally thought of as urban but remain at locations where a type of "urban ministry" can take place, such as prisons and university settings. Additionally, the book explores immigration issues, gun violence in the inner city, urban digital context, ministry in African churches in France, ministry to Ugandan youth affected by war, and public leadership to name a few.

Despite the broad range and varied context in which the topic of urban ministry is explored, the book's overall focus and unifying theme remains constant as each contributor outlines various suggestions by which Christians can develop strategies to properly evangelize and assimilate in the content of urbanization's fast-growing speed, intricacies, and reach. For example, chapter three explores "urban ministry approaches" that according to the author have, "tended to view cities as places marked by compromised good and unchecked evil." More specifically, the chapter focuses on the grace that is required despite a city's tendencies of wrong and evil, while pointing out some of the shortcomings of western missiology dualistic approaches. Indeed, the chapter proposes a new way of thinking about "incarnational ministry" (p. 28). The writer points out that "the urban context represents both fallen humanity and the triumph of human achievements" (p. 34). Therefore, it is within this dissonance that the church can bring complex and varied people into a knowledge of "saving grace" while they discover that grace together. Another significant chapter is chapter twenty, which proposes a different way of doing urban ministry. In particular, the chapter explores school voucher programs and the black clergy response. By focusing on educational inequalities within American, the writer suggests that school voucher issues provide a glimpse into a vast opportunity for church leaders to improve a system that could benefit all students (p. 175).

Despite the fact that the book contains over thirty chapters, there is an overall unifying theme. Each contributor outlines various suggestions by which Christians can develop strategies to properly evangelize and assimilate in the content of urbanization's fast-growing speed, intricacies, and reach. Additionally, the authors of each essay suggest that such strategies must frame theological and sociological responses to the various economic, sociopolitical, and health issues faced by the societies explored. *Urban Ministry Reconsidered* offers insights that consider how complex and varied cultural contexts have led to new conceptualization and arrangements of urban ministry. The book surveys urban ministry with ample qualitative and quantitative research that offers numerous perspectives in a multitude of context with various authors proposing constructive ideas for change.

In summary, the authors underscore the different ways churches can and should search for policy restructuring and more effective agendas that promote human thriving (p. 11). However, the breadth and depth of what both terms ''urban'' and ''ministry'' imply, coupled with the multitude of social, geographical, economic, and political context explored, give the book its strengths and weaknesses. The topic of urban ministry is broad, complex, and too comprehensive to cover, but only in a tangential way, in a work of only approximately 320 pages. The book does not allow sufficient room to better explore each context with more depth and breath. *Urban Ministry Reconsidered* is inclusive in its global perspective and therefore would serve well in introductory sociology or anthropological class for anyone, especially those considering ministry in an urban setting.

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Loose, Jonathan J., Angus J. L. Menuge, and J. P. Moreland, eds. *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publishers, 2018, pp. 528, $159.99.

In recent years, there has been an uptick of interest in the philosophy and theology of the soul. Moving beyond the disciplinary divide of philosophy and theology, there is a growing demand for interdisciplinary discussion of the soul akin to a hybrid car that runs on gas and electric. Like the gas car, there has been a flurry of philosophical critiques of physicalism/materialism with an openness to philosophical variations of the soul (e.g., *After Physicalism, The Waning of Materialism).* And like an electric car, there has also been several recent constructive defenses of the soul in light of broader theological considerations (e.g., *Soul, Body, and Life Everlasting, The Soul of Theological Anthropology,* and *The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology).* There are fewer collections defending the philosophical coherence of the immaterial self (e.g., *The Case for Dualism, Contemporary Dualism).* It appears that *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism* is a contribution to this smaller body of literature. It aims to offer a philosophically cogent defense of substance dualism, akin to cars running on gas, but it is actually more of a hybrid—running on gas and electric.

As the title suggests, many readers will come to the collection with an expectation. If the reader is at all like me, then she will likely assume that the *Companion to Substance Dualism* is, strictly speaking, a philosophical defense of substance dualism (i.e., the view that we are comprised of two substances, a soul and a body). With that comes the assumption that the authors will offer detailed defenses of variations of substance dualism, constructive developments, and implications. It accomplishes only one of these, but there is more to the collection than one expects. The *Companion* is structured in three parts. In the first part, the authors articulate the

most common conceptions of substance dualism (e.g., emergent substance dualism, Cartesian substance dualism, and Thomist substance dualism) along with defenses for substance dualism in light of the famous unity of consciousness argument and near death experiences. While not an exhaustive list of substance dualism variations, the volume gives helpful exposure to the three most common models in the literature. The second part consists of a series of essays engaging with alternatives to substance dualism. Helpfully, an alternative is presented and a response from a defender of substance dualism is given. Unfortunately, the alternatives listed only include physicalist, or nearly physicalist, alternatives to substance dualism. The reader might expect to see other monist alternatives, namely, neutral monism and/or idealism. Only giving attention to substance dualism and physicalism gives the reader the impression that these are the only options in the literature when, in fact, there is a quite vibrant and growing literature devoted to dualist and materialist alternatives. In this way, the informed reader may expect a comprehensive engagement with dualism's alternatives, but the novice will be none the wiser. In the third part, the authors give their attention not to implications of dualism, but to dualism in light of biblical and theological concerns. This leads to the more substantive concern about the volume appearing to run on gas, but actually running on gas and electric.

The focus of the volume is a concern. While the editors have elected to give a whole section to the topic of substance dualism in the Bible and in Theology, as an outside reader, I find this move a bit odd. Including these topics in a volume on "substance dualism" in a series called *Blackwell Companions to Philosophy* seem out of place. When I came to the volume I expected to see a volume devoted primarily to the philosophical exposition and defense of variations of substance dualism along with a critique of its main alternatives. The *Companion* does a pretty good job, as I stated earlier, on the exposition and defense of substance dualism, but it misses several important figures, and, more importantly, several important topics in the discussion.

By including a section on the biblical and theological issues (approximately 90 pages!), the authors were limited to specified variations of substance dualism. Granted they chose some of the most likely candidates in the debate to defend some of the most common options in the analytic literature (e.g., Cartesianism, Thomism, and emergentism), but the *Companion* could have incorporated other defenders, some lesser known defenders and some more widely known and exotic defenders (e.g., Uwe Meixner, J. M. Schwartz, Stephen Priest, David Lund). Furthermore, they could have included a wider set of arguments that favor some version of substance dualism. Instead, they were limited to the arguments in the papers defending specific versions of substance dualism along with two others (arguments from the unity of consciousness, and arguments from NDE's); but there are certainly other important arguments in a *Companion* that purports to introduce the reader to a wide set of issues concerning substance dualism. Some of the arguments that I would have liked to have seen substantially developed include the following: the Knowledge Argument, the

Modal Argument, The Simplicity Argument (Charles Taliaferro and Stewart Goetz touch on these in their chapters), rationalist arguments, and scientific arguments. All of these arguments, and others, deserve special treatment. Other topics that one might desire to see in the *Companion* include topics on the compatibility of substance dualism with biological evolution, physics, quantum physics, psychology, and, more important, a historical background section on the soul with specific defenders throughout history. A second reason why the election of a Bible & Theology section seems odd has to do with the nature of the book as a text primarily in philosophy, but one would have thought this was apparent. There is a third reason. By including this section, the editors have a pretty specific set of topics that seem to comprise a different *Companion* altogether. These topics deserve treatment in their own right and would likely find a more hospitable reception in a collection on *The Blackwell Companion to Theological Anthropology*, but even that might not be specific enough because all the authors are engaging specifically Christian issues, so maybe the volume would be entitled *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Anthropology*.

For all the reasons listed above, the inclusion of a section on Bible and Theology seems odd and out of place, but, for some, these chapters may be a welcome surprise. And this is not to say that these chapters are not useful high-quality chapters. They are. They simply do not fit the remit of the volume as it is normally conceived. Lending a bit of charity, I can conceive of why the editors chose to do so. There does seem to be an affinity between the soul and theological beliefs throughout history. Just look at Augustine's *Confessions* with the close moral relationship between the soul and God. See also Descartes' *Meditations* in which he develops the metaphysical connection between the soul and God. I imagine the editors had motivations to offer an apologetic for both the soul and Christian belief, but it seems that a section on the soul's implications for theism in general might have been a better fit as reflected in Augustine and Descartes. A section on natural theology would make some sense as it would give additional exposure to the nature and reality of the soul.

Aside from this one concern, the essays in all three parts are exceptional. In fact there are several that are worth highlighting for one reason or another. Angus Menuge offers the reader a refreshing argument for substance dualism, and a critique of physicalism, from the first-person perspective, which he then applies to the Creation narrative wherein God gives the mandate to humans to take dominion in the world. Jon Loose exposes the reader to very clear reasons for why substance dualism is favored when considering the doctrine of resurrection. J. P. Moreland gives one of the most thorough defenses of substance dualism in his development of the unity of consciousness argument. Finally, Charles Taliaferro's chapter deserves a mention for its comprehensive nature, which exposes the reader to the lay of the land on substance dualism. While some of the chapters are predictable if one is familiar with the literature, all of the chapters expose the student to a broad set of issues and literature in the growing body of literature on substance dualism. While

the *Companion* gives the appearance of running on gas in a philosophical series, the reader will be surprised to learn that it runs on both gas and electricity as it exposes the reader to biblical issues on the soul and topics typically in the domain of analytic theology.

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Kvanvig, Jonathan L. *Faith and Humility.* **Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 219, $54, hardback.**

Jonathan L. Kvanvig is Professor of Philosophy at Washington University-St. Louis. This particular monograph came out of a project funded by the Templeton Religion Trust and the contents of Kvanvig's Wilde Lectures, delivered at Oxford University in the spring of 2017. His work in philosophical theology expands far beyond the topics of faith and humility and includes questions of heaven and hell, a defense of Philosophical Arminianism as an alternative to Molinist accounts of divine providence, and serious reflection on the nature and possibility of omniscience. And, lest anyone might wonder what my own view of the merits of this book might be: it is excellent and a must-read for anyone working in philosophical theology.

In *Faith and Humility*, Kvanvig first argues that faith fundamentally is a disposition in service of an ideal (i.e., a functional account of the nature of faith that allows for a wide range of cognitive and affective components). Second, he argues that the best construal of the nature of humility is as a virtue of attention, where one possesses humility insofar as one possesses the excellence of attending to oneself no more than is reasonable. And then finally, Kvanvig argues that his other-centric construal of faith functions well as a balancing virtue with humility, where balancing virtues are (roughly) a complementary set of virtues, such that the possession of one virtue is enhanced, made easier, or rendered more likely by the possession of its complement.

Whenever Kvanvig writes something, it is worth paying attention; this is because whatever he has to say will be argued carefully with wonderfully didactic prose. This book is no different. He begins by articulating a particular methodology, which reemerges at various points throughout the book, namely, that what is *fundamental* to a concept might not be necessary and sufficient to that concept. This methodological conclusion helps advance Kvanvig's critique of the various accounts of the nature of faith, where even if he identifies something which is, strictly-speaking, a necessary constituent of faith, he can argue that it fails to be fundamental. Thus, although Kvanvig understands faith to carry with it *some* cognitive element or other, the cognitive component is not what fundamentally makes faith important. Similarly, it is not necessarily the non-cognitive components that are fundamental to faith either;

rather, what is fundamental is the way in which one has ordered one's life around an ideal (i.e., the functional account of faith).

It is worth making a few critical observations concerning the organization of *Faith and Humility* before moving on to a more substantive engagement with its contents. The book is divided into two sections that are dedicated respectively to faith and, subsequently, humility. While the section on faith is well-organized and connected in clear ways, the chapters contained in the humility section are less so. In particular, the humility chapters appear as if they once were independent papers that have been conjoined in an attempt to fill out an otherwise very brief section on the nature of humility. This is unfortunate; it would have been good to hear much more about humility on its own before turning to its connection to faith. Second, at a few points in the book, Kvanvig appears to take on a straw-man as his interlocutor. This is especially apparent in his third chapter, on cognitive accounts of the nature of faith. His primary interlocutor in that chapter appears to endorse a doxastic view of faith (as opposed to the more broadly construed *cognitive* family of views) where faith requires belief-that something or other is the case. Undoubtedly, there are plenty of fundamentalist Christians for whom such an understanding of faith might be close to accurate, but it seems to me that they would be unlikely to make the sorts of clear distinctions between beliefs and other cognitive states that Kvanvig (admirably) highlights throughout his text. Thus, in this place and others, a clear identification of Kvanvig's opponents would have been helpful to the reader.

Concerning the particular contents of the book, I found myself largely agreeing with Kvanvig's treatment of both the nature of faith and humility. One area of discussion that seems unfinished, however, is in Kvanvig's understanding of how to go about identifying the precise object of one's faith (i.e., the ideal towards which one's life is oriented). For illustration, Kvanvig writes that democracy or equal opportunity might serve as an ideal, but it is not the *concepts* which serve as ideals (p. 112). Rather, it is the instantiation of such concepts that serve as an ideal, an ideal that might be highly valuable even if it might never be fully satisfied. Faith in such possible states of affairs, however, is a different thing from faith in God, who is a person as opposed to an ideal of some sort. Thus, one is left wondering what faith in God might amount to? Is faith in God a disposition in service of realizing the state of affairs of Christ's reign? Perhaps it is instead a disposition to be obedient to the commands and teachings of God (as Kvanvig's discussion of James indicates, pp. 115-120). However, both of these objects seem reasonable as objects of faith in God based on Kvanvig's discussion of the matter; but it seems that one might in principle be disposed to realizing Christ's reign without being disposed to submit to it oneself. If so, then we have two competing possibilities for the proper object of Christian faith (and presumably more besides). A bit of disambiguation would be helpful.

A more central concern with Kvanvig's book surrounds his assumption that faith is best construed as a virtue. Now, I actually share this view, but I am not satisfied

with Kvanvig's defense of that claim. The closest to an argument I can find in support of this claim is: (i) we should order our inquiry towards an understanding of faith most worth having; (ii) the understanding of faith most worth having construes faith as a virtue; therefore, (iii) we should order our inquiry towards faith construed as a virtue. Many of the alternative views Kvanvig considers in the book would likely reject (ii) in the above argument. Rather, they would claim that their alternative cognitive or non-cognitive views of faith, at least in a biblical or Christian context, are more valuable all-things-considered in virtue of their immeasurably high practical value (i.e., since having their type of faith supposedly brings salvation along with it). This lacuna at the motivational center of Kvanvig's project is unfortunate; nevertheless, the resulting work is an astounding work of erudition.

For the student of biblical and theological studies, careful attention should be dedicated to the taxonomy of positions of faith clearly delineated by Kvanvig in chapters 2-5. Keeping straight the difference between cognitive, doxastic, non-cognitive, preference-based, and functional accounts of faith would help the reader to think critically about their own understanding of faith. Moreover, this book can be read in conjunction with Matthew Bates, *Salvation by Allegiance Alone* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), which defends a very similar account of the nature of faith from a biblical scholar's perspective.

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Moreland, J. P. *Science and Secularism—Learning to Respond to a Dangerous Ideology.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway 2018, pp. 222, $16.99, paperback.

J. P. Moreland is a household name within contemporary Christian philosophy of religion, and has been one of the most important apologists for the last thirty years, particularly in terms of supporting Christianity's compatibility with reason and natural science. This task has by necessity opposed Moreland to scientism, yet this present work is his first explicit, critical engagement with the position, building upon three decades of philosophical practice.

Moreland's *Scientism and Secularism* is a well-timed work which purports to dissect and criticize scientism as an ideology central to the contemporary secular West. In providing a thorough critique of scientism as an epistemological position, it also provides us with an accessible summary of the basic project of Christian apologetics as it has taken form within the framework of modern analytical philosophy, as well as an important defence of *first philosophy*, particularly of the epistemic primacy of philosophy in relation to the empirical sciences.

The book is intended to be accessible to the interested layman, yet without unduly watering down the case being made. The work's approachability lies both in

the clear and concise presentation of the relevant arguments, as well as the familiar touch Moreland brings in with the personal reflections and exemplifying anecdotes he intersperses throughout the text. These generally edify and help explain the case and do not detract from its analytical structure, which could easily have been the case in a less well-edited work. However, they also provide the book with something of a homiletic character that transports it outside the domain of pure philosophical argument, making the final result into a testimony which not only purports to criticize the errors of scientism, but also calls for a more thorough transformation of secular society as such. It is quite successful in the former sense, but tends to overreach in the latter.

With regard to its case against strong scientism, the work is exemplary. It recounts the plethora of decisive arguments against strong epistemological scientism which have been put forth during the last decades, and clearly portrays its incoherence as well as detrimental effects for a non-specialist audience. An additional critique of weak scientism, defined as a position that affords some epistemic space for non-scientific truth claims, while maintaining the supreme authority of empirical science, is also provided.

This latter critique is anchored in Moreland's support for the primacy of philosophy and science's inevitable dependence on extra-scientific presuppositions, and maintains that the totality of scientific presuppositions by necessity must presume the epistemic authority of philosophy, since they are based in principles of a philosophical character. Thus, empirical science, being derivative, cannot be ascribed supreme epistemic authority. Still, proponents of the general supremacy of science do not really need to eschew philosophy's epistemic authority. One can just as easily maintain that empirical science, as a set of institutions and a tradition of knowledge, supported by the necessary philosophical assumptions, generally speaking provides us with the best and most correct understanding of reality as such, and that extra-scientific traditions of knowledge therefore ought to be compatible with science and the philosophy that supports it.

Notwithstanding Moreland's incisive critique of methodological naturalism (pp. 162-171), the more nuanced position that science is the best tradition of knowledge we have given the necessary truths philosophy provides, and that extra-scientific traditions therefore ought to conform to science as far as possible, takes a bit more to defeat, and could possibly survive Moreland's direct theoretical objections presented.

This issue could fruitfully have been addressed by a more thorough general critique of scientism as a complex worldview with its associated myths and narratives, rather than merely as an epistemological position, strengthening the case in association to the more general problems associated with scientism as a secular ideology. Such a broadened understanding of scientism could also have been a useful bridge towards the critique of secularism Moreland also wants to provide, but does

not quite substantiate—save for the interesting arguments for a basic integration of religion and science presented from page 181 and onward.

While presenting a good case against scientism as an epistemological position from the point of view of modern analytical philosophy, as well as a forceful critique of the principle of methodological naturalism (Moreland ingeniously asserts that methodological naturalism, insofar as it must accept agent causation, cannot in principle rule out divine action [p. 166]) the work is to some extent weighed down by the author's insistence on presenting intelligent design as a preferred alternative to not only secular cosmologies, but theistic evolution as well. Moreland does not provide significant support in this regard (while doing so in other works), and the defence of evolution-excluding intelligent design is in this context strictly unnecessary for his critique of scientism. Nor does Moreland engage extensively with the variants of theistic evolution that are currently debated. The anti-mechanistic Artistotelian-Thomistic variant of theistic evolution in particular, would for instance entirely evade the central criticism Moreland here provides, a criticism which is based in a supposed bracketing of divine action with regard to the processes of nature (cf. Austriacio, Nicano Pier Giorgio, et al, *Thomistic Evolution* [Providence, RI: Cluny Media, 2017]).

As it stands, the book is a highly useful and detailed overview of the basic problems of strong epistemological scientism, and will effectively enable the reader to profitably engage with more detailed explorations of the field, such as Stenmark's *Scientism* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018) or classics such as Feyerabend's *Farewell to Reason* (London: Verso, 1987) or Lakatos' and Musgrave's *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: CUP, 1970). It provides decisive support for the epistemic primacy of philosophy as well as for the rational respectability of theism, and presents an accessible and detailed introduction to Christian apologetics in the modern analytical tradition. The two main drawbacks are its insufficiently supported criticism, and call for transformation of, secular society, as well as its superfluous and not fully substantiated advocacy of intelligent design. The risk is that these flaws may be heavily targeted by critics, with the result that this important book might not be judged upon its true merits, but rather disregarded as an insufficient and clandestine case for creationism.

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Speaks, Jeff. *The Greatest Possible Being*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, 175pp, $45.

In *The Greatest Possible Being*, Jeff Speaks takes aim at critically analyzing the method of perfect being theology. Perfect being theology is a philosophical method for developing a specific doctrine of God. In particular, the method claims to guide one's thoughts towards deriving the divine attributes. Speaks is skeptical about the

ability of this method to accomplish this task. Over the course of eight chapters, Speaks offers an analysis of metaphysical, epistemological, semantic, and theological issues related to the task of perfect being theology.

Speaks starts out by offering an introduction to the general idea of perfect being theology. According to Speaks, perfect being theology involves two basic steps in order to derive a specific conception of God through reason alone. The method is meant to help one identify which attributes are divine attributes. In step 1, a perfect being theologian selects a modal principle about God's greatness. In step 2, a perfect being theologian selects a greatness condition that fits with the preferred modal principle. In these two easy steps, one should have a recipe for identifying which attributes are God's.

With regards to step 1, Speaks identifies three different modal principles that a perfect being theologian might use in order to derive the divine attributes. These principles are stated as follows: 1) God is the greatest conceivable being, 2) God is the greatest possible being, and 3) God is the greatest actual being. Once a modal principle has been selected, one connects this principle with a relevant greatness condition.

In step 2, a greatness condition is meant to help the theologian identify which attributes are possessed by the greatest actual, possible, or conceivable being. Speaks claims that there are two desiderata that a greatness condition must satisfy: entailment and informativeness. With regards to entailment, it should follow from the fact that some particular property *F* is a great-making attribute, and the relevant modal principle, that *F* is a property of God's. The informativeness desiderata states that it should be possible, without relying on prior substantive claims about God, that a candidate divine property satisfies the greatness condition.

With these distinctions in hand, Speaks claims that there is an easy way to show that a particular modal principle is false. In order to show that a particular modal principle is false, one will need to show that certain implausible properties satisfy the modal principle and the greatness condition. These implausible properties are ones that are quite obviously not divine attributes. For example, the property *being a well-shaken martini* is quite obviously not a divine attribute. Yet, Speaks argues that this property can satisfy different modal principles and their relevant greatness conditions. Thus, implying that the modal principle is in fact false.

As a test case, imagine that one's preferred modal principle is that "God is the greatest actual being." Speaks says that whatever turns out to be the greatest actual being might not be that impressive. Speaks offers the comical example of Michael Jordan. Speaks argues that the modal space for the greatest actual being in our world might be much smaller than we think. It might very well turn out that the greatest actual being in our world is Michael Jordan. Surely, says Speaks, no one will think that Jordan is God. Of course, I should think that the perfect being theologian will deny that the modal space in our world is really so small that a being like Jordan turns out to be the greatest actual being. However, Speaks will say that the method

of perfect being theology, by itself, does not specify how big the modal space is, and thus the method is not useful for clearly deriving the divine attributes.

What about the other modal principles? Speaks argues the conceivability modal principle is of little help to perfect being theology. Why? Because one cannot specify the relevant sense of conceivability without making the modal principle collapse into the 'God is the greatest possible being' modal principle. Speaks offers a helpful analysis of different conceptions of conceivability, and the problems that each view faces.

Yet, one might wonder what is wrong with the modal principle 'God is the greatest possible being.' Speaks offers an assortment of arguments for why this modal principle cannot be used to derive the divine attributes. However, I often found myself thinking that Speaks has ignored some obvious moves that perfect being theologians traditionally make. One worry that I have is that Speaks has not given a proper analysis of what it means to be the greatest possible being, nor of what makes a property a great-making property.

Traditionally, theologians and philosophers have said that a proper analysis of *greatness* entails that God has all of the perfections, or great-making properties, in an unsurpassable way. This sort of analysis can be found in Anselm, John Duns Scotus, and Leibniz, among others. This analysis has also received a rigorous defense in Yujin Nagasawa's recent work, *Maximal God: A New Defence of Perfect Being Theism*. With this analysis of greatness, the perfect being theologian then gives an analysis of what makes a property a great-making property. Typically, it is said that a great-making property is a property that it is better to have than not to have. Traditionally, this has been analyzed as identifying fundamental properties that would make any being whatsoever intrinsically better. A classic example is *being powerful*. Any being with the property *being powerful* is intrinsically better than any being that lacks the property *being powerful*. Further, any being that has the property of *being powerful* in an unsurpassable way is better than any being who lacks this.

Speaks dismisses these kinds of attempts to fill out the method of perfect being theology as being *impure* forms of perfect being theology. Speaks claims that this analysis of God's greatness is an impure form of perfect being theology because it does not allow one's selected modal principle to play any role in one's reasoning about God's perfection.

I find this questionable. It seems obvious that a proper analysis of 'greatest possible being' entails having all of the great-making properties. Moreover, I find it obvious that this understanding of greatness would play a significant role in my thinking about God's perfection. This is evidenced by the fact that many debates in philosophical theology are about which model of God includes more great-making properties, and which involve God in having those properties in an unsurpassable way. For instance, classical theists often argue that open theism provides a less than

perfect model of God because open theism denies that God has certain attributes like exhaustive foreknowledge.

However, Speaks maintains that even this impure form of perfect being theology cannot be used to derive the divine attributes. In his critique of this impure method, I found that Speaks' discussion of the candidate great-making properties continually focused on kind-relative properties like *being a well-functioning cardiovascular system*, instead of fundamental properties that are intrinsically great-making, all things being equal. Traditionally, perfect being theologians have tried to clarify this point by distinguishing pure perfections from impure perfections. Speaks does offer a brief discussion of the pure/impure perfections distinction, but Speaks dismisses this as trivial.

All in all, I think that Speaks's exact analysis of perfect being theology is less obvious than it might have been; at points it is often difficult to pin down precisely where his objections lie and from where his objections come. That being said, Speaks clearly identifies a host of problems that perfect being theologians need to avoid when developing their method. More advanced theology and philosophy students will want to consider the problems that Speaks identifies, and make sure that they avoid them. Beginning students will be better off starting with a book like Thomas Morris' *Our Idea of God*, or Yujin Nagasawa's *The Existence of God*. Once beginning students have mastered this material, they should be in a good position to engage with Speaks's arguments.

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Gaffney, Donald V. *Common Ground: Talking About Gun Violence in America*. **Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2018. pp. 160, $15, paperback.**

Donald Gaffney is a Disciples of Christ minister and alumnus of Sandy Hook Elementary School. Since the massacre in 2012, Gaffney has been invested in conversations surrounding gun violence, including through support of the Sandy Hook Promise, a non-profit organization founded and led largely by family members connected to the Sandy Hook shooting with the goal of decreasing gun violence. As the title would suggest, Gaffney attempts to address the topic of gun violence through a call for self-reflection, mutual understanding, and productive conversation rather than through explicit advocacy for a singular political agenda. *Common Ground* contributes a unique voice to the politically heated topic of gun violence as it provides regular opportunity for the reader to reflect on forces which often undergird espoused positions.

In the first two chapters, Gaffney focuses on how perspectives on gun violence have evolved, first through individual narratives and then in the broader narrative

of American culture. He focuses on the narratives of Suzanna Hupp and Gabrielle Giffords, both of whom suffered from gun violence, yet arrived at differing positions as to how gun violence can be prevented. These narratives provide a framework for advocates of both sides of the gun debate to sympathize with each other's position and engage in civil conversation.

In the third chapter, Gaffney addresses contemporary gun violence statistics, gun legislation, and gun policy advocacy groups with a desire that the reader look past abstract statistics and recognize the stakes of gun violence and its potential prevention. Although he does try to maintain a "common ground" tone, he honestly discloses his support for Gabrielle Giffords's gun control advocacy efforts and makes a case for gun control legislation. In this context, he warns about the use of statistics, writing "one noticeable effect of studying data is the loss of a sense of humanity" (p. 46). Although it is most certainly true that an emphasis on statistics can lead to abstract dehumanization of human stories, a case can certainly be made that statistics have an important role to play in discerning which national policies would most likely mitigate gun violence. Nonetheless, Gaffney desires that the reader sympathize with the narratives of individuals involved in gun violence rather than numerical data. He then attempts to make an argument for gun control by comparing the largely successful results of automobile safety legislation to potential gun control legislation.

Gaffney advances his position throughout the fourth chapter as he seeks to explicate the biblical concept of violence. Here he navigates through the complex concept of violence and the Bible, ultimately concluding that, although God engages in violence as a necessity of his cosmic justice, God abhors violence and that Christians are called to sacrificial love. Gaffney asks what appears to be a pivotal question, "Are there ever times when evil needs to be faced with violence?" (p. 84). However, he then states that this question is often debated and that it is not within the scope of the book. He does implicitly answer this question, at least in part, by demonstrating how individuals have misused the Bible in support of violence. This line of thought certainly implies that there is a biblical standard regarding the use of violence, but direct and extended discussion on this topic would have been helpful to foster the conversation.

In the final two chapters, Gaffney argues that Christians should maintain allegiance to God before state, which will lead them to oppose violence and, consequently, advocate against gun culture. He links Christian gun rights advocacy with nationalism and epitomizes the basic pro-gun argument with the statement, "It takes a good guy with a gun to stop a bad guy with a gun" (p. 87). He attempts to refute this statement by explaining that all people have the potential for good and evil, thereby seeking to dispel the myth of "good guys" and "bad guys." He concludes that all people are guilty of violence, at the very least through words. This line of thought echoes the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, as the one who harbors hate in the heart and externalizes hate through speech is guilty of murder in the eyes of

God. This is an important theological point, as it not only renders all individuals as morally guilty of great violence, but it demonstrates the potential for individuals to commit violence in the world as an outworking of this internal reality. However, Gaffney does not in this chapter differentiate the spiritual culpability of "violent" speech from the civil culpability of physical violence. As this book primary focuses on issues related to public policy, the distinction between physically violent and non-violent sins is one that is worth noting. Despite this fact, Gaffney's discussion in this chapter does well to foster introspection and discussion on the culture of hostility, which is indeed related to physical violence.

Common Ground has much to offer in providing a framework for conversation between Christian laypeople who advocate for and against gun control. Although Gaffney takes a definitive position in this debate throughout the book, he does discuss both sides and provides ample ground for reflection and mutual understanding. The goal of establishing "common ground" would have been more fully achieved with a more nuanced presentation of positions opposed to his own; however, *Common Ground* is nonetheless thought-provoking and may indeed be a useful text for the lay Christian to begin thinking about gun violence in America. In attempt to maintain the presented spirit of the book, this would best be done in community with Christians of various perspectives on the topic at hand. Gaffney is most certainly correct that all Christians desire the cessation of needless violence, but the best solutions unto this end are likely to come through reason, community, and genuine mutual understanding between those who differ ideologically.

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Romaine, James, ed. *Art as Spiritual Perception: Essays in Honor of E. John Walford*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, pp. 288, $40, hardback.

E. John Walford is an important figure in the engagement of Protestant evangelical theology with art historical studies. His interest in this relationship has been fuelled by a dual concern with the relative paucity of religious voices in the literature of art history and criticism, not least in scholarly readings of seventeenth-century Dutch landscape painting, and the related issue of the spiritual substance of artworks. These concerns reflect aspects of his own life journey as an art lover who converted to Christianity in his twenties and as a former student of the late art historian Hans Rookmaaker at the Free University (Vrije Universiteit) of Amsterdam.

These interests, and the various ways they have been expressed in Walford's career—not merely in publications (most notably *Jacob van Ruisdael and the Perception of Landscape* and *Great Themes in Art*), but also in teaching art history courses in Amsterdam and at Wheaton College, Illinois—are highlighted in this Festschrift's Forward entitled "Mentoring Eyes" by Marleen Hengelaar-Rookmaaker,

daughter of Hans Rookmaaker. She shows, in what is a fittingly generous and clearly personal tribute (Hengelaar-Rookmaaker writes, for example, that in high school she "looked up to this highly articulate, uncannily wise, and seemingly brilliant student of my father's," p. 15), how important Walford's art historical work, both in publications and lectures, was and continues to be for his students, especially in the way it portrays Western visual art as a viable and vital arena for serious Christian thinking and participation.

The 16 essays which follow Hengelaar-Rookmaaker's Forward are testaments to this intellectual enterprise. They are all written by scholars who know Walford in different ways (most are his former students) and emulate his passion for close readings of visual imagery. This enthusiasm is most apparent in *how* these scholars examine works of art as visual manifestations of spiritual perception. In the introductory essay, "You Will See Greater Things Than These", James Romaine, the volume's editor, describes Walford's distinct historical methodology as "content-oriented" (distinguishable from strict form-, iconographic-, biographic-, context- and market-oriented methods of art history), which involves "a careful study of the art object's formal and iconographic elements, as well as the historical, social and religious context in which the work was created" in order to bring to light possible spiritual meanings (p. 23). This methodology undergirds the interpretive processes of every essay in the Festschrift, making most of the contributions predictably heterogeneous, some even emphasizing comparable doctrinal themes—namely, nature and the supremacy/provision of God.

A few authors, however, employ Walford's method of "meaningful seeing" to tackle broader questions (p. 24). William Dyrness, for instance, offers an intriguing essay on the capacity of Hans Holbein's painting *The French Ambassadors* (1533) to communicate an unease with the process of secularization, but also how, in conveying this information, the painting calls contemporary viewers to respond to its message. Alternatively, Calvin Seerveld attempts to philosophically ground Walford's categorical framework for the narrative of *great themes* and examines how it could be developed to provide a more dynamic reading of Rococo Enlightenment artistry, using Antoine Watteau's painting *The Dance* (1717-1718) as a case study. Linda Stratford, moreover, skilfully shows how the "complex play of overlapping trails and paths" in Jackson Pollock's painting *Autumn Rhythm: Number 30* (1950) can be seen as an "allegorical representation of spiritual rebirth" within the context of a Christian worship setting (p. 239).

Even so, most of the contributors understandably focus upon a single work of visual art and how, within the religious context of its creation, the artwork expresses a particular theological doctrine. Among the kinds of visual artworks evaluated, most are oil paintings and, perhaps in tribute to Walford's own passion for seventeenth-century Dutch artistry, half were produced by Dutch/Flemish artists. It may seem prejudicial to single out a couple works of art for special comment, but the inclusion

of pieces from other visual mediums, such as *The Brancacci Chapel* (15th c.) and Joseph Beuys' performance *Coyote: I Like America and America Likes Me* (1974), encourages different kinds of analysis—in these particular cases, the evaluation privileges the audience's perception (reception) over the artist's intended meaning (creation). Matthew Milliner's essay "Academia's 'Religious Turn'", for instance, examines past commentary on *The Brancacci Chapel* in order to show how these responses disclose a turn to the religious in art historical criticism (p. 92). Similarly, James Watkins' essay "The Liberating Myth" surveys how the viewer's perspective on the origins of Beuy's personal mythology directly influences his/her interpretation of *I Like America*'s iconic, and possibly, liberating "action" (p. 255).

Although the volume contains a helpful introductory essay by Romaine (the editor) on Walford's historical methodology and an essay by Hengelaar-Rookmaaker concerning the personal and professional relationship between Walford and several of the contributors (both essential to a Festschrift), there is no added entry by the honouree himself. While such a contribution is not necessarily expected for a Festschrift, readers would have benefitted from a brief account by Walford, say, on his then recent work in digital photography which is only touched upon in the Acknowledgments and Afterward, "A Portrait of E. John Walford". Furthermore, a few of the essays are in need of some structural editing. It does not aid the reader, for example, when the thesis is not clearly presented until nearly halfway through the essay or, in the case of two essays, omitted altogether, leaving it to the reader to work out the central claim.

Overall, however, this Festschrift is commendable not only because it offers a contextualized analysis of 16 works of visual art from 16 notable Western artists whose lives and work span from the fourth-century to the twentieth-century, but also because it provides fresh and variegated contributions to both the fields of art history and Christian theology—not least in the way it shows how art can be a powerful expression of spiritual perception and meaning. Due to the topical breadth of the essays which comprise this volume, it is perhaps best a resource to be selectively utilized in accordance with particular interests. A number of essays, for example, would directly benefit students who are examining the artistic interpretation of key Christian doctrines within a particular period of Western history, while others might better serve as topical readings for introductory or more specialized courses on art and art history. In many ways, *Art as Spiritual Perception* is a milestone of Walford's andragogical vocation even as it continues to provide readers the benefit of his artistic insight.

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Dreher, Rod. *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation*. New York, NY: Sentinel, 2017, pp. 304, $17, paperback.

Rod Dreher is a popular Christian author and blogger and is senior editor at *The American Conservative*. He has written several books: *Cruchy Cons* (2006), *The Little Way of Ruthie Leming* (2013), and *How Dante Can Save Your Life* (2015). His most recent book, *The Benedict Option*, is a bestseller and has prompted discussions in churches and small groups around the world.

In *The Benedict Option*, Dreher announces that conservative Christians have lost the culture war and that a new dark age is approaching. According to Dreher, the Waterloo of Christian conservatism was the legalization of same-sex marriage in the U.S. Supreme Court case, *Obergefell v. Hodges* (p. 9), and the enemies are several: secularism (9), moral therapeutic deism (the belief that God just wants us to be happy, pp. 10-11), and consumerism (p. 11). In response, Dreher calls Christians to withdraw strategically and form communities modeled after the sixth-century monastic, Saint Benedict, who, in order to preserve Christian culture and values safe from the cultural demise following the fall of Rome, started a monastic community at Monte Cassino in Italy. Dreher is not calling Christians to become Benedictine monks—although it is easy to be confused about this, given the title of his book. Dreher's principled application of Benedict for contemporary believers is "[working] on building communities, institutions, and networks of resistance that can outwit, outlast, and eventually overcome the occupation" (p. 12). This involves applying selected features of Benedict's handbook, the *Rule of Saint Benedict*, which are the following: living a life of order, prayer, stability, asceticism, stability, community, hospitality, and balance.

It also means applying "Benedictine spirituality" to every area of social life, including politics and education. In politics, for example, Dreher claims that Christians are "politically homeless" (p. 80). Democrats have not supported Christian values, and Republicans have been more interested in power and the economy. It is a mistake, he says, to think that the church is "the Republican Party at prayer" (p. 78) or that someone as "morally compromised as Trump" will save us (p. 79). Moreover, Christians must not think fighting the culture war was ever as easy as simply voting since laws do not change the heart. A Benedictine withdrawal from politics does not mean complete capitulation; it just means being more prudent and focusing on the political issues that matter most, such as religious liberty and local problems. Dreher also says Christians should still look for ways to cross the aisle and work with liberals to "combat sex trafficking, poverty, AIDS, and the like" (p. 83).

Dreher calls Christian parents to pull their kids out of public schools (p. 155), and he wants them to pull their children out of regular Christian schools, too (pp. 158-159). Public schools teach liberal sexual values and only prepare children for the workforce. Private Christian schools may not teach the same sexual values, but they

use the same workforce development model of education and, as an afterthought, require a few Bible classes. Dreher says, "The trite theological education many received at Christian school will serve more as a vaccination against taking the faith seriously than as an incentive for it" (p. 159). Instead, Christian families should pursue a classical Christian education, which takes an integrated approach to its curriculum, ordering all learning in accordance with the Christian worldview. If classical education is not an option, he says, then Christians should homeschool their children instead.

Dreher is correct in identifying deep flaws in both public and private schools and in criticizing those who think that the best hope for cultural change lies in politics. He is also correct in his description of the corrupting effects of technology and the pernicious nature of pornography. Hopefully, Dreher's message will awaken the slumbering church to the dangers of moral therapeutic deism and cause parents to rethink their parenting and educational strategies in order to provide their children the best chance of catching the Christian vision of the good life.

However, I have a few points of criticism. Dreher's prophetic description of our cultural demise may be correct, but it also may be too soon. Certainly, it is difficult to be a conservative Christian in the United States these days, but political correctness and rampant consumerism is not the same as religious persecution. Christians are not yet suffering in our country in ways they have in other times and places.

Moreover, Dreher's Benedictine prescription raises a couple of concerns. First, the fundamentalist movement of the early twentieth century similarly called for strategic withdrawal from the public square, but many Christians think it was a mistake and did more harm than good. How is the Benedict Option different from the fundamentalist movement? I put this question to Mr. Dreher at a recent talk he gave, and his answer was that the fundamentalists understood something important, but the early twentieth century was too early for such a strategy. Also, fundamentalism is often accompanied with anger and "siege mentality," but Christians should be characterized by joy and hope in spite of adversity. He may be right about fundamentalism, but many readers will not be convinced that now is the right time for a Benedictine withdrawal. Many Christians still take seriously Jesus' call in Matthew 5:13-16 to be salt and light in the world and are intentionally active in the world for this reason. Such Christians have not yet given up hope that the fields are still ripe for the harvest.

Second, Dreher does not give adequate attention to one particularly important opportunity and responsibility that the church has at the present time. Our society has seen racism and hate arise in ways not many could have predicted just a decade ago. This is an excellent opportunity for the church to be a light, demonstrating Christ's love for people of all races and showing the country what true Christian love looks like in a diverse society like ours. Unfortunately, when the church reflects on its own (lack of) accomplishments in this area, Christians should consider

the great responsibility and unfinished work we still have. For example, Sunday mornings continue to be the most segregated mornings of the week, and the price of Christian private schooling has created access problems for people of color. The "strategic withdrawal" Dreher proposes would likely increase the segregation in our communities unless the church addresses this. To his credit, Dreher sees the problem. He acknowledges that in the past many private schools in the South have been known as "segregation academies." He says, "Benedict Option schools would be wise to make special efforts toward racial reconciliation by recruiting black families, especially given that public schools are effectively resegregating. Additionally, the future of Christianity in America, both Catholic and Evangelical, is going to be a lot more Hispanic. So should the future of Christian schooling" (p. 159). However, Dreher says nothing more about this and gives no practical advice for addressing it. Our society needs racial reconciliation, and this is an opportunity for the church to shine. We need to make sure that any withdrawal does not lead to increased segregation. I hope Dreher can offer some practical advice for making racial reconciliation and desegregation a reality in Benedictine communities.

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Book Review Index