



HADDINGTON HOUSE JOURNAL

Volume 6

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William Campbell, D. Douglas Gebbie, Jeff J. Kingswood, Frank Z. Kovacs, Alex J. MacDonald, Leslie McDonald, Charles H. Roberts, Jack C. Whytock, Alistair Wilson.

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1. To provide students, laity, and ministers with an annual publication to develop their minds and souls through in-depth articles and reviews reflective of the theological basis and ethos of the Trust.
2. To keep readers informed about new books or other publications and thus to be a means of encouraging their stewardship of time and money.
3. The selection of articles and works for review in each journal will usually reflect the fourfold division of the departments in the theological curriculum: biblical theology, systematic theology, historical theology, and applied theology, thereby providing balance as to the content of the journal but also providing balance for the readers to see the unity of the curriculum. It will not be a journal devoted to one department of the theological curriculum.
4. The journal will endeavour to highlight, by way of articles, reviews, or book notes, works to assist students in their studies and others in their ongoing training.
5. The journal will encourage the cultivation of writing and provide an avenue for publication and the exchange of knowledge.
6. The journal will include one article or review devoted to the theme of theological education.
7. The journal will also endeavour to include some news about the wider evangelical Presbyterian community of churches or efforts in mission or theological work.
8. Prior to publication, all articles and reviews will be read by select individuals who uphold the theological basis and ethos of the Trust. It will be their task to comment, proof, and ensure the quality of the journal.

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God's People under Pressure – Psalm 123

William Campbell*

** Rev. William Campbell was ordained in 1965 as a Presbyterian Church in Canada minister and served congregations in Ontario and New Brunswick. In 1992 he transferred into Northeast Presbytery, Associate Reformed Presbyterian, as a retired minister. He also served for a time with World Vision and as a volunteer with Interserve (formerly BMMF) and presently lives in Woodstock, Ontario. The sermon that follows was delivered at the meeting of Northeast Presbytery on April 4, 2003, and we asked Rev. Campbell if he would prepare it for publication in our Journal, which he kindly did.*

Psalm 123 – A Song of Ascents.

- ¹ To you I lift up my eyes,
 O you who are enthroned in the heavens!
- ² Behold, as the eyes of servants
 look to the hand of their master,
as the eyes of a maidservant
 to the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes look to the LORD our God,
 till he has mercy upon us.
- ³ Have mercy upon us, O LORD,
 have mercy upon us,
for we have had more than
 enough of contempt.
- ⁴ Our soul has had more than enough
 of the scorn of those who are at ease,
of the contempt of the proud.

ESV

As part of their perseverance, God's people must strive against their own remaining sin, the world's mentality, and Satan's subtleties. In addition to these daily battles, all who endeavour to walk in all good conscience before God will experience times when they are gripped by unusual tribulation. Psalm 123 provides counsel as to what God's people should be and do during such pressure. This brief Psalm of Ascent¹ has universal application for all who contend earnestly for The Faith delivered to the Saints but who suffer distress under the ridicule of those who sit in the seat of the scornful. It is obviously a cry for help, for we find the Psalmist pleading with God, "Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us! For we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorn of those who are at ease, with the contempt of the proud."

The circumstances that provoked the writing of this Psalm were that God's people were literally saturated with scorn and contempt. The Hebrew word for "filled" conveys the picture of someone who has gorged himself at a meal and when his host asks him, "Would you like more," his response is, "I'd love more, but I'm stuffed to the brim." God's people during this protracted period of severe persecution cried out, "Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorn of those at ease; with the contempt of the proud." If there were a progression between contempt and scorn, perhaps it would be this: Contempt is a heart attitude verbalized by scorn.

The Sources of Scorn and Contempt

Those Who Are At Ease

Notice the *source* of this scorn and contempt. Two sources are indicated in Verse 4: "Our soul is exceedingly filled

¹ Briefly, the Psalms of Ascent refer to Psalms 120-134. It is most likely that the grouping of Psalms is a reference "to the pilgrimage up to Jerusalem, or the processional ascent of 'the hill of the Lord'" while pilgrims were on their way to the Temple for the feasts, although "Not every psalm in the group was necessarily composed for this purpose." See, Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72* TOTC (Downers Grove: IVP, 1973), I, p. 43 and Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150* TOTC (Downers Grove: IVP, 1975), II, p. 429.

with the scorn (1) of those who are at ease and (2) with the contempt of the proud". Who are those who are at ease? How are they defined? This concept is repeated throughout Scripture. You have an example of this category of people in Amos 6:1, "Woe unto those that are at ease in Zion." Those at ease in Zion, though they sit in the congregation of the righteous, will not pass the bar of God's judgment (Psalm 1:5). Their condition, as those numbered among God's covenant People, is one of carnal ease within the Visible Church. Generally they have an orthodox reputation. Their religious pedigree leads them to the false conclusion that because of their external, religious status, *ipso facto*, all is well with their souls. However, they hold contempt for all who make Jehovah and His purpose central to their lives. All who are at ease within Zion embrace a comfort-zone, Laodicean religion that Christ hates. For the Lord Jesus Christ warned the Church of Laodicea that because they were "neither hot nor cold He would vomit them out of His mouth." (Revelation 3:15,16). This comfort-zone compromise is a direct contrast to those who have a Spirit-filled witness and who, at great personal cost, "go unto Christ without the camp, bearing His reproach" in faithful, fervent discipleship. Those who are at ease in Zion are more preoccupied with what men think of them than with what God knows about them, and they "glory in appearance and not in heart" (2 Corinthians 5:12).

This posture of ease within Zion holds contempt for all who submit to Christ's all encompassing claims of absolute, unrivalled affection and trust and who, with full purpose and endeavour after new obedience, seek to live out their Redeemer's claims upon them in practical godliness. Indeed, all those at ease assume they possess eternal salvation while with hostile hearts they dispute and despise Christ's own terms of discipleship; that is, self-denial, cross-bearing and following Christ. Indeed, they oppose (whether secretly or openly) all who follow Him in obedience to His Word. Their disdain for diligent discipleship manifests itself when they are confronted with the biblical Gospel, which recognizes no salvation apart from a radical repudiation of self as the governing principle of life (*cf.* Mark 8:34-38). In their attempt to legitimize their religious position

and sometimes prominence, they scorn, and if convenient, even slander all uncompromising allegiance to Christ whenever such testimony challenges their religious reputation by exposing their hypocrisy. They are the Fifth Column within the Visible Church, who subscribe to a comfort-zone religion produced by perhaps the worst heresy in the Church today; namely the profession of an historic confessional Faith which is not at the same time an expression of Spirit-filled Christian discipleship! Such hypocritical professors are the dry rot that is sapping the North-American confessing orthodox Church of its power with God and with man.

The Proud

Secondly, the identity of “The Proud.” How are they defined? Here is the picture of a perishing people, who in the common grace of God, benefit abundantly from God’s material and temporal mercies but live in absolute indifference to the God who gives those mercies. Because they bask in the benefits of God’s common grace, but are oblivious to their need for any grace, they are strangers to redeeming grace! They acknowledge no god but their own cleverness; sense no need of Divine aid, Divine provision, or Divine providence. Indeed their world-life view eclipses the authority of Christ and His Word as interpreted by the Holy Spirit. Hence they don’t pray. They aren’t thankful to God for the breath they breathe or for their sanity. Their fundamental assumption in life is that they are the captains of their own destiny and the master of their own fate. They are ‘self-made men.’ But apparently this is only so because they view the whole of life through the blinded vision of a proud heart.

Here then is the source of this scorn and contempt. It comes from “those who are ease in Zion,” who spew out their venom against any impinging examination of their religious status and reputation. It also comes from “the proud” who play ‘God’ under the canopy of His gracious goodness and daily provision.

The Proper Activity

Looking in the Right Direction

Having identified “those who are at ease” and “the proud,” we must then ask, “What activity and attitude does the Psalmist exemplify for all who march in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ under persecuting pressure. What example may they follow?” Well, the activity in which the Psalmist engages is to *look in the right direction*. Verse 1, “Unto You O Lord, I lift up my eyes, You who dwell in the heavens.” That is, he first of all deliberately focuses his expectations in a given direction. We say to someone, “Don’t expect any help from him.” What we mean is don’t focus your expectations on that person. What then is the meaning of the phrase ‘to look’ in the context of this Psalm? It means to resolutely focus your expectation in the direction of the unchanging God who is called ‘Jehovah.’ God’s character is revealed in His names. The Psalmist is not in this situation looking to ‘El Shaddai’ the ‘Most High’ or to the ‘Lord of Hosts,’ but he is looking unto ‘Jehovah,’ that name for God which refers to Him as the covenant-making, covenant-keeping God. This is most significant in this strained setting, for the Psalmist is extremely aware of the type of compassionate help he needs in the midst of this oppression from those who are at ease, from the contempt of the proud. Yet God’s servant by faith is even more conscious of the permanent presence of God, who has pledged never to leave or forsake him. To us, living this side of the revelation of God-in-Christ, we know that Jehovah is manifested in His fullness in the Lord Jesus Christ. “He who has seen Me”, Jesus said, “has seen the Father.” Furthermore, he looked to Jehovah as an *enthroned Jehovah* who reigns from His heavenly throne of supreme, unshakable authority and power.

Most of our problem, when under scorn or contempt or any concentrated form of pressure, is that we look in the wrong direction. We may look *inward* to see if we can figure out how to resolve our problems, or we look *outward* pinning our hopes on man. If we do look *upward*, it may not be with steady confidence in the God who cannot lie and who has promised that, “He will not withhold any good thing from those who walk uprightly.” But when the believer is living by faith, he can say,

“Yes, our situation is hard. We’re being scorned and mocked, but no amount of pressure from mere creatures is able to shake God’s throne of absolute sovereignty!” That’s the perspective of Psalm 2. Here the nations are raging and the rulers take counsel together with the avowed purpose of casting off the rule of God, but He who sits in the heavens, in a place of unrivalled authority, has set His Son upon His holy hill of Zion and “has made Him Head over all things for the sake of the church.” The very first move of the Psalmist then was to focus his whole soul upon Jehovah’s throne, providing him the position and frame of reference he needed and within which he could resolve his present problems. He is engaged in the activity of looking in the right direction.



“Do you see yonder wicket-gate?”, Pilgrim’s Progress

The Proper Attitude

Next, the Psalmist sought help by merging the right activity with *the right attitude*. Apparently he is calling upon God to behold His people's proper attitude as well as cautioning God's people to be careful to have the correct attitude. So he says, "Behold, as the eyes of servants look to their master or the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to You who dwell in the heavens." The word 'behold' means to pay attention. This then is a mutual summons to the Creator and the creature to give their immediate attention to this plea for help. It's not enough for the creature to look in the right direction unless God at this precise intercessory time beholds His servant looking in His direction with the right attitude. What then comprises a right attitude?

An Attitude of Submission

The Psalmist first of all demonstrates *an attitude of submission*. He looks unto an enthroned Jehovah with an attitude that parallels that of a servant to his master and of a maid to her mistress. The very words 'servant' and 'master' place us in the context of submission. We have here the picture of an oriental servant with his hands folded, and his eyes intently fixed, waiting for the first sign of his master's glance bidding him pay attention by giving him a signal to respond to his command. It is agreed that in oriental circumstances servants were far more guided by physical gestures than by verbal directives. Their submission was so sensitive and absolute that the servant intently watched for the slightest gesture from his master, and when he perceived his master's will he would instantly respond. The Psalmist looked in the right direction with an attitude of submission, without a hint of complaining. Much of our praying is motivated by discontent with the state of our present circumstances, which deprives us of blessedness in the present. Now while it is very true that blessedness can include what distresses us, yet it doesn't contradict the truth of this experience. The same Apostle who said that he had learned to be content in whatever state he was also had such comfort of the Holy Spirit in his present weakness that he was able to rejoice in all his tribulations. He took

pleasure in his necessities. Tribulations for Paul or the Psalmist were therefore not necessarily outside of the sphere of genuine blessing. The Psalmist says, we're filled with scorning and contempt and he cries "Lord intervene," but there is no trace of whining in his pleading. Rather, his pleading with the Lord flowed from a heart that was willingly bowed beneath the discipline of God's providence. God's people must begin where he began. He says, "Lord, You are enthroned in heaven and those who sit in the seat of the scornful could be silenced in a moment if You will it." When some youths mocked God's prophet (2 Kings 2:24), God sent bears out of the woods to kill them. Similarly, when a captain with fifty soldiers in anger ordered Elijah off the hill, God sent fire out of heaven to consume them (2 Kings 1:9-14).

Apparently the Psalmist had sufficient acquaintance with how God dealt with His people in the history of Israel so as to instill confidence in his servant. God will not be mocked and in His providence will silence every opposition to His truth and every opponent of His people. Therefore, if God doesn't intervene, the Psalmist realizes that in grace He may prepare His servant as a weapon of righteousness to bring both "joy to the righteous but terror to all evildoers." So then, before we request the Lord to intervene in our circumstances, there must be an attitude of submission to His providential dealings with us and of godly contentment in our present state, not trying to interfere in our circumstances by attempting to manipulate them with our own schemes.

God's servant, therefore, looks intently toward God with this right attitude, namely an attitude of absolute, utter submission to the wise providence of the Lord his God. Is this what we do as believers during periods of pressure? What is the first thing we do? We complain! We look to God, not from the posture of absolute submission but from a position of insubordination. We say, Lord I deplore my circumstances – You must change them! Isn't that the attitude of many of God's own believing people? But the attitude and activity of faith brings serenity to the righteous soul in adversity. When evil and danger threaten the man walking by faith, he looks to God as his

hiding-place and exclaims, "Though a host should encamp against me, my heart will not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me, He shall set me upon a rock." (Psalm 27:3, 5)

Through faith comes the recognition that no affliction, no illness, tribulation, persecution or any perplexing periods in our lives are outside of God's sovereign control. Nothing that can come from any external sources or that can arise out of our own being is an accident. Nor are there neutral enclaves within which we exist beyond the reach and involvement of our sovereign Creator. The Triune God we confess to believe in "does uphold, direct, dispose and govern all creatures, actions and things from the greatest even to the least by His most wise and holy providence." (cf. WCF v.i) Therefore, nothing just happens. No event is a coincidence without purpose. Jeremiah, in a period of great darkness in his life, prayed, "O Sovereign One, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm. Nothing is too difficult for You." (Jer. 32:17) Here is God's prophet, under the harsh persecution and drudgery of imprisonment, reasoning by faith that if God has accomplished the far greater act of creating the universe by giving His fiat order, He can do the lesser thing of being his refuge, strength and present help in trouble! By faith he knew that it is God's grace that motivates His special providence with His redeemed. This is the believer's sweet solace in distress. So then, the Psalmist takes the posture of submission and says, "Unto You who dwell in the heavens." Whatever I ask of my God, my request is made to Him from a posture of absolute submission. "As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, so our eyes look to the Lord our God".

An Attitude of Expectation for Provision and Protection

Secondly, notice that the Psalmist's attitude was also characterized by *expectation* in two directions: *provision* and *protection*. Once a man was made a slave, it was no longer his responsibility to provide for himself. The master, whose property he became, assumed full responsibility for his slave's provision.

This is precisely the reason why the Saints have been such a mystery and a paradox to the unbeliever. God's redeemed children are happy, and they testify that the source of their happiness is in losing their freedom and by losing their freedom they have found true freedom! And the puzzled unbeliever shakes his head and says, "What on earth are you talking about?" You see, the believer has given up false freedom, even the great tyranny of his own self-will, only to find true liberty in doing the will of God. Then there is that wonderful recognition, "He who spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?" If I am God's property by right of creation and purchase, then I'm His bondservant. It is my Master's responsibility to meet the totality of my needs. Therefore, the attitude of the Psalmist is not only one of submission, but also one of expectation as he looks to his enthroned Lord. Certainly he observes and experiences scorn and contempt toward himself, but he steadfastly refuses to wield the arsenal of fleshly weapons. Rather, he casts all his care upon the Lord, knowing that He cares for and provides for him. So the believer is expectant concerning the provision of God.

Now, still under the attitude of expectation, is the matter of *protection*. The believer is not only expectant concerning the provision of God but also concerning the protection of God. One law that applied to slaves was that when someone tried to seize the estate, it was the responsibility of the master to protect his slave. So the Psalmist says, "as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master and the eyes of a maid to her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God until He has mercy upon us." How wonderful it is to be completely vulnerable and yet to be so thoroughly protected! Here again the Saints have been a puzzling paradox to the world. They walk about bearing their chests, and yet they say, "We're invincible." And the puzzled unbeliever exclaims, "What do you mean?" Well, if you're a Christian you understand what I'm talking about. You have no reputation to defend or any cause to promote. You're a bondservant of Christ. If men ride roughshod over you, that may teach you to humbly confess your own unworthy ease, for God resists the proud but exalts and gives grace to the humble.

God's wise incentive for all who seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness is His own assurance that every protection and provision will be provided in order to enable His servant to accomplish just that! If this is your true heart's desire, then you are neither ambitious for poverty or for wealth, for to you "to live is Christ and to die is gain." What wonderful freedom it is to know that I am invincible until my Master's purposes with me are finished! After my task for Christ is finished, who wants to hang around? Isn't that what the Apostle says in Philippians 1? He says, "I am hard pressed between the two, whether to be with Christ which is far better, however, to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account." But, he trusts his wise and gracious Lord whose timing is impeccable! "As the eye of a servant looks to the hand of his master, so our eyes look to the Lord our God" with an attitude not only with submission, but also with expectation, trusting in God alone for all His provision and protection.

An Attitude of Patience

An attitude of submission. An attitude of expectation for provision and protection. Consider now an *attitude of patience*. Notice this word "until". "So our eyes look to the Lord until! Until! This is a word expressing a measure of time. "Until He has mercy upon us." Now here again our natural anxiety and bondage to time shows itself again and again. God has His own plan and His own good time to speak to us and His own free ways to roll back the scorn and contempt of men. Yet we repeatedly attempt to bring God to the bar of our own finite wisdom, and we say, "Lord you must act now or there is no point in me continuing to pray." Our unwillingness to persevere in prayer is an eloquent testimony of our bondage to impatience; but the attitude of the Psalmist was, "As the eyes of a servant looks to the hand of his master so our eyes look to the Lord our God." How long are we to look? "UNTIL!" "UNTIL!" "Until He has mercy upon us." So the proper attitude includes also an attitude of patience. The Psalmist cried, "I am weary with my crying. My throat is dried. Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God." (Psalm 69:3)

Waiting for the Lord is one of the hardest things for us to do. Abraham got in trouble when he wasn't willing to wait for His God. God gave him a promise, but Abraham became impatient and decided that he would have to help God to fulfill His promise. He endured much suffering through the sorrowful consequences of his impatience. Oh, how much we need to learn and relearn that a right attitude of looking to God in distress is with an attitude of patience, which honours God! For if we fall short of this perspective: "Our eyes look to you Lord – until!", then we have ceased to look to Him *alone* for His provision and protection and will not experience the fulfillment of that wonderful principle and promise of godliness that if we honour Him, He will honour us." (1 Sam. 2:30) The great principle of godliness here is that faith, which works by love, finds all it requests when it resolutely obeys the injunctions of God's word to trust, delight, commit, rest in Him and wait for His leading. Psalm 37:34 encourages God's faithful servants with these words, "Wait upon the Lord and keep His way and He shall exalt you to inherit the land."

An Attitude of Humility

There is a fourth aspect to this right attitude and it is the *attitude of humility*. For *what* is the Psalmist waiting upon God? "So our eyes look to the Lord our God, until He has –" what? Justice? No! Until He has *Mercy* upon us. "Have *mercy* upon us O Lord." But aren't God's faithful, covenant people in the right and aren't those who are at ease in Zion and the proud in the wrong? Well, if they're wrong and God's people are right, surely the Psalmist shouldn't be praying for mercy! He should rather pray for Justice to be done to these hypocrites and grant the faithful what they deserve. No! The faithful above all are conscious of their own shame, the lack of purity in our lives that has so grieved the Spirit as to cause the withdrawal of His presence and power from His sanctuary, so the Psalmist pleads only for mercy. Even in this situation, when deluged with calamity, even here, God's most consecrated servants have enough corruption, failure, and all round spiritual decay to warrant God letting loose the venom of unregenerate men upon

them by lifting His restraint from those whose scorn and contempt is toward them.

Rather than focusing on the prejudice from those born after the flesh who have not the Spirit of Christ, children of Grace should be much more alarmed with themselves. Their own selfishness casts reproach upon Christ, and their lack of the sacrificial service tarnishes their testimony. Therefore, the only right attitude before God for redeemed sinners, which God won't despise, is a broken and contrite heart. It is an attitude that is clothed with humility, pleading for His mercy. This is the beginning of judgment at the house of God. Every sin and every other judgment of this post-modern culture may be laid at the door of the Church!

Many today who preside over 'churches' serve up a confident 'gospel' message of goodness for all, while embracing the rampant descent into moral and ethical incoherence under the guise of pluralistic charity. It is precisely here that God's servants are most tempted to cry, "It's not right that God's faithful, covenant people should be treated this way while the proud at ease, outrageously and blasphemously calling evil good and good evil, are allowed to flourish. Lord, please bring justice!" Oh no! The faithful Church's most pressing need is not external relief from the pressure of the ungodly. The supreme need of the Church is, with humble fear of her dreadful Judge, to seek Him for His mercy for herself. When God's people draw near to Him in worship, offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to Him, He draws near to them. (James 4:8) However, some religious services today easily accommodate every condemned innovation designed to be meaningful to men. Other services, in pharisaic pride, may offer a true *form* of worship but isolated from the *soul* of worship. The Lord loathes both! God approves and receives worship offered to Him from humble, pure hearts from blameless lives, from those who love and obey His truth.

God's true worshippers worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. If we seek to worship God with our lips, with proud hearts, far from Him, whether we do it with the instructions from His Word or with unbiblical innovations denounced by His Word, a desolate sanctuary devoid of His manifest presence will be our

portion. But when the Lord finds true, humble worship of Him in adoration of His majestic greatness as the King of Glory, He will shake the temple with His visit. Is there something in my life and the life of our church that grieves God's Spirit and merits His judgment? Our plea then is for God to revive His work in the midst of these years and in His deserved wrath to remember mercy. The cry of the hour is to plead with God that everything that hinders the Holy God from making His face to shine upon our arid altars be removed.

But oh, what marvelous encouragement and hope God gives to His Redeemed when they pray not for justice but mercy. Mark's Gospel records an eloquent example of a blind beggar named Bartimaeus pleading for mercy. Hearing the Lord coming near him, he asked who this important man was. When he was told that Jesus of Nazareth was coming by, he cried out, "Son of David, have mercy upon me!" Some sternly told him to be quiet. After all, what audacity for a mere beggar to ask for mercy! But he cried even louder, "Son of David have mercy on me!" The Lord's reaction in coming to a complete halt in response to the beggar's call for mercy no doubt flooded his heart with hope, for the record says, "*And Jesus stood still!*" What caused the Lord to stand still? It was the pleading of a blind beggar crying for mercy! This cry for mercy has the same effect upon God's only-Begotten Son to this very hour.

The Fruit of Obedience

The Church will be Blessed, The World will be Blessed

Every visitation upon the church has come on the heels of the Saints looking in the right direction, with the right attitude, offering up their desires to God for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of their sins and thankful acknowledgement of His – what? Mercies! Mercies, Brethren! What is agreeable to the Father's will? It is that we should honour His Eternal Son by giving Him the pre-eminence in all things. And when we do so, Peter tells us two results will follow. First, those "at ease in Zion" will be put to shame because of their divisive course, which trashed the apostolic mandate to "preach the Word, be diligent in season and out of season, to reprove,

rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.” Indeed, they will be humiliated that their scorn and contempt has distanced them from every faithful servant of God. Concurrently, “The Proud,” seeing the Lord Jesus Christ cherished with radiant affection and the chief desire of His people, will question them about the secret of their lives. When they see them rejoicing that they have been counted worthy to suffer scorn and contempt for His Name, their testimony won’t be ignored! This is the supreme vantage point from which God’s prepared people, with hearts on fire for Christ, make disciples, giving them reasoned defense (apologetic) of the hope that is in them. It is from such witnessing that the Spirit is pleased to demolish the barriers of unbelief and to grant those who are dead in trespasses and sins a sight of God incarnate, the wonder of His dying for sinners, the just for the unjust that he might bring them to God.

Here is the sea-worthy ship firmly beneath the feet of “fishers of men.” From this stable base we may confidently pursue rescuing the perishing, caring for the dying and building the Kingdom. Conversely, the religious community whose walls have been broken down by doctrines of devils and the ease that proves eternally fatal is not the church that Christ is building. But when His Church continues steadfastly in the Apostle’s doctrine, fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers, the Lord adds to that Church as many as are being saved. And Brethren, when lost sinners, by grace through faith, turn from their bondage of self-will and flee in naked embrace of Christ and then with love obey His commands from the heart, our heaven will be two heavens!

Reflections and Impressions from Turkey

Jack C. Whytock

Each issue of the Haddington House Journal includes one article highlighting mission activity. These articles are written in a journalistic news fashion.



On Friday evening, January 30th, 2004, I felt I was truly living the history of a modern mission movement. We were listening to a first hand account of the developments of the evangelical movement in Turkey from 1980 to the present. One will not find this in any book, at least as far as I know, so I have decided to provide an article to inform our *Journal* readers.

I had been teaching at a conference for evangelical pastors and Christian workers in Turkey, organized by the team of Christian workers from Izmir (ancient Smyrna) and the surrounding region. This was a first and in itself a milestone for the evangelical movement in the country. Our purpose, in part, was to help lead the way to develop more of a national Turkish leadership in the Church in Turkey. We had about 30 in attendance, drinking in deeply the messages of the Gospel and the training. It was a wonderful international effort; these folks were Turks, Americans, Mexicans, Koreans, and one Canadian. The site was Kusadasi, not far from Miletus and Ephesus. During the evening session of January 30th, the most senior worker, a brother with over twenty years of Turkish ministry experience, was asked to tell about the work of God in the Church in Turkey in the last two decades. I found the two to three hours that he spoke and answered questions quite simply one of those quiet times in one's life from which you can never go backwards. I hope you know what I mean. For almost three hours we sat spellbound listening to him tell about Turkey and Armenia. What follows is just a synopsis from this evening.

Turkey Through the Eyes of One Who Has Lived There

Our brother missionary to Turkey, whom we will call Johann¹, prefaced his comments with two remarks. First, it was his experience in reading reports on the work in Turkey that home or foreign missionary newsletters generally convey an exaggerated perception of what their mission impact has been. And, to be fair, a true picture is difficult to portray, as impact is not always tangible. Second, we as missionaries are "God's little foot soldiers." It is all too easy to forget that we are not the centre in the nations. Rather, God only knows and is in charge of the big picture, namely, the large political affairs and movements of peoples and His purpose in these. It is good to step back and see that there is a greater ordering of nations, and we fit in as "God's

¹ Readers will understand that for safety reasons I have changed the names of the Christians I met in Turkey.

little foot soldiers” within that context. I really appreciated what our brother was saying.

In 1980 Turkey was a land with a population of approximately 68 million. At that time the evangelical believers in Turkey were singing and praying Wesley’s hymn, “O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer’s praise,” but the words were slightly different. They were singing and praying, “O for a thousand *Turks* to sing my great Redeemer’s praise.” Why? They estimated that in 1980 there were less than one thousand evangelical Christians in all of Turkey and very few churches or workers. Praise God, today that hymn of praise and prayer has been answered!

In the early 1980’s Johann, an American of German heritage, had been burdened for some time for Turkey. Since at that time he could not enter Turkey as a missionary, he went to Germany to begin his study of Turkish and to commence work with the large Turkish diaspora there through Operation Mobilization. (The Turkish diaspora is very large in Germany, the Netherlands, and in the city of London.) During the next two to three years he mastered Turkish, preaching and teaching in their native language to the Turks there. Then the door opened for Johann, together with his wife and two children, to proceed to Turkey. They were committed to the language, the people, and the gospel, yet found their task of evangelization and discipleship very difficult. Not only did the entire family have to exit the country every three months to renew their tourist visas (a routine which continued with his growing family – now six children – until this past year!), but also life was always uncertain in Turkey in these early years because of the persecution of Christians.

When they arrived in Izmir, there was not one evangelical church in that city of 2.5 million. Indeed, there was almost nothing across all of eastern Turkey. They did find some Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and high Anglican churches, but none preaching an evangelical gospel with an outreach to the Muslim Turks, and at least some resenting Johann’s presence as a “fundamentalist preacher” and a “Bible thumper.” (I pause to add that though we look at Turkey as one land mass on the map, we need to remember that Turkey is the bridge between two

continents, Europe and Asia, and this and a host of other factors makes for the reality of a western Turkey [Thrace] and an eastern Turkey [Anatolia]. Thus, by saying that there was nothing in eastern Turkey, we are speaking of a very large population and landmass, comprising most of the country.)

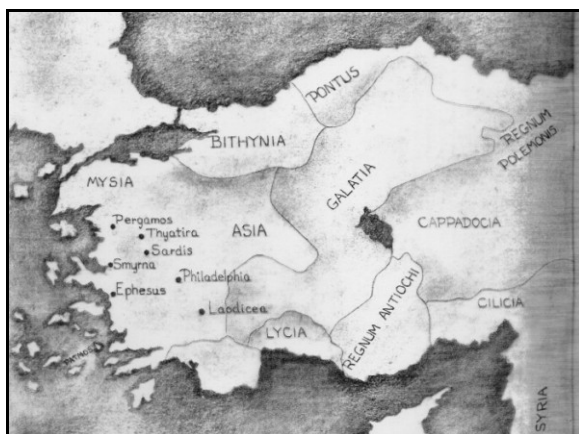
Johann and his family remained in Izmir for two to three years, sowing the Gospel seeds, from which emerged a small core group of Christians. He then felt called to move to the city of Diyarbakir on the Tigris River of eastern Turkey, a city of over one million. The year they arrived, there was one other believer working to spread the Gospel in the neighbouring town of Adana, who is believed to have been poisoned by the Muslim family he was visiting. He was invited to eat with them and the following morning was found dead – mysteriously. Although Johann pressed for investigations into the man's death, he could get no cooperation, yet it was known these citizens wanted to be rid of the Christian worker and this is a centuries-old method. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

However, the same year there were other more positive developments. It marked the beginning of Korean missionary work in Turkey, which continues to this day. One of these Korean workers, a single woman, built a retreat centre outside of Ephesus, then called for Korean pastors to come and preach! A few of the local tradesmen who helped build the facility were converted and from that grew a small congregation in Ephesus, where there had not been a congregation for several hundred years. It was wonderful to meet several of these Korean Christian workers who attended the conference.

Also in 1988, an evangelical Christian church was born out of a mini-revival among some young people within the Greek Orthodox Church in Istanbul. This group of young adults was meeting for prayer and Bible reading in the Greek Orthodox cathedral there until ejected by the patriarch. They then moved to a large apartment and continued in prayer and study. Convicted that they were not true Christians, they found repentance and true conversion. As they were barred from entering the cathedral, they formed the Turkish Protestant Church of Istanbul. This church over the years has moved into the Presbyterian fold and is

now a thriving Christian center – in essence, an “independent” Presbyterian Church. It has begun a seminary type school under the leadership of Turgay Ucal in connection with a distance education facility in Florida.

The year 1994 proved important in the development of evangelical Christianity in Turkey. That year we find the real beginnings of “evangelical churches” or “house churches” in the country, a mark of a growing base of converts. There also emerged three international churches – in Ankara, the capital, in Izmir, and in Istanbul. These were English-speaking translation churches, like those found in many places throughout Europe. (Francis Schaeffer was involved in founding several international Presbyterian churches in Europe. This is a fascinating movement in recent mission history of which little has been written.) Although not the same as the planting of indigenous Turkish-speaking churches, in that they tend to minister to the expatriated English speaking community rather than reaching out to the Turks, nevertheless their commencement in 1994 was a real encouragement for some, providing fellowship and support for the emerging national Turkish evangelical leadership. A major source of workers in Turkey since 1980 has been the Brethren. Again, documentation is difficult not only of the history of missions in Turkey, but also of the Brethren movement, which does not have centralized structures.



The Provinces of Asia Minor and the Seven Churches of Asia

In 1997, another significant move forward was the start of the Tyrannus Bible School (named for its model in Acts 19:1-10) in Selchuk, near the ancient city of Ephesus. It was moving for me to be at this small storefront and see Gospel Light amidst paganism, falsehoods, and the ancient church sites. It is located in a small building almost directly across from the famous Temple of Artemis. A few blocks from Tyrannus is a large historic mosque, Isa Beg, built in the 14th century, and above the hill stands the ruins of the ancient Byzantine Church of Saint John, where tradition says John the Apostle was buried. A kilometer away is the site where two famous church councils met in Ephesus.

The Tyrannus Bible School was the first such school in recent times in Turkey. This school has one full-time staff worker – Camel – and the other teachers/tutors are pastors in Turkey or foreign instructors who periodically come to teach a modular intensive course. We were told that one student has gone out from here to Tarsus and has begun a “meeting place” there.

Another emerging “school” is what is known as the “Bitinya Church Seminars”, another work of evangelical and Protestant churches to develop leaders, pastors, and mature church leaders in Turkey. Bitinya started in 1989 as Bible study group; however, in the 1990’s it started to move towards periodic seminars and continues in this format today.

A new ethnic element was introduced into Turkey in 1991 when half a million Kurds crossed the border into Turkey. This is something which I found absolutely challenging, as the Kurds are Muslim and very much unreached and hostile to the Gospel.

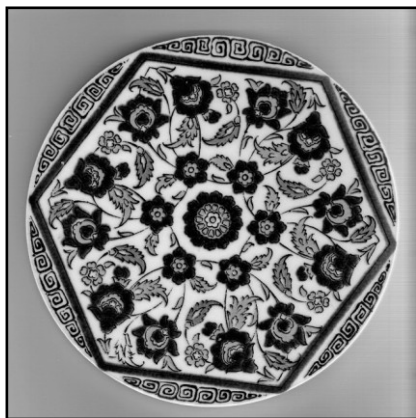
(It is interesting that some Kurds have been shown the Jesus film. No resulting conversions are known of, but it has been used to warm and soften the hearts of some.) I was indeed blessed to meet a new Kurdish Christian who attended the Sunday morning service in Izmir where I preached. This



*“I am the Way...”
Jesus*

young man of twenty-seven had found one of the small cards with a Bible verse and on the back the name of the church and pastor. He had made contact and, in the course of time, became a Christian. He has a Muslim wife and four year old son and faces great hostility at home – even beatings from his wife or her family! However, on this day he had managed to be at the service, along with his young son, probably permitted because of the novelty of a “foreign preacher.”

Slowly the foundations of a church have emerged over these last 20 years. How impossible it all looked in 1980! Johann, our Christian brother who went to Turkey in the 1980’s, is still there with his wife and his family. After seven years in Diyarbakir, they moved back to Izmir, where they have been used as a sweet offering of blessing, strength, and encouragement both in Izmir and Selchuk. It was a special evening to hear his oral history of evangelicalism in Turkey over the past twenty years. There is really no way of adequately portraying what they have seen.



A ceramic trivet hand-painted in Kütahya, Turkey, near Ankara. The Ottomans brought ceramic painters to Kütahya from Persia to teach the locals the trade. For generations now Kütahya has been the Turkish centre of the ceramic trade.

Perhaps some perceive that Turkey is being ‘westernized’; yet there is a considerable Turkish element that wants it to move eastward and return to Islam. Evangelical Christianity is seen as a threat and resistance to it is real. There are several court cases against the evangelical Christian communities, mostly at the harassment level (not allowing the evangelicals to have church buildings or rent properties), and at this point the outcome of these cases is uncertain. In contrast, the

Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches often have historic buildings and are tolerated and not viewed as a threat. Bribery and corruption are part of the “system.”

Many missionaries have come and gone since the mid-80's. Few have stayed beyond two or three years, the time it takes to master basic Turkish. We must pray for the grace of the Lord for perseverance and “permanence” of God's workers in this old land. Our brother emphasized that workers must “know who they are” and be aware of what is going on around them. Many Christians come to run a “company,” but the Turks know what that means – they are disguised Christian evangelists. There are really no illusions in the land of Turkey about the foreigner.

It caused me to ponder... how much have I really sought the Kingdom of God? .

Armenia

On my Sunday evening while in Turkey (February 1, 2004), believers and mission workers gathered in a large apartment for a time of fellowship and prayer. This turned out to be one of the most enlightening evenings I have ever had. An ardent young Armenian missionary, whom we will call Mary, told her story of how the Lord moved her with a burden for the Turkish people, a true work of grace for an Armenian, as you will understand from the following background!

On April 24, 1915, during World War I, while Europe and the Allies were totally focused on their own battles, the Turks began a systematic genocide of the Armenian population in their land. These were not the Muslims Armenians, but mainly those identified with the Armenian Apostolic Church. The massacre began stealthily in Istanbul. Officials invited all the Armenian intellectuals together for “reconciliation talks”. Once assembled, this treacherous meeting turned into a mass execution. Following that, for the next six months the Turks moved systematically out through the villages separating the men from the women and children and slaying them en masse. The results were staggering – the massacre of up to 1.5 million Armenians – the ethnic cleansing of Turkey. Anyone familiar with the life of Rousas Rushdoony will have already heard of much of this. It is an

absolutely chilling story to hear the accounts that for weeks the Tigris River ran red with Armenian blood. One of the great questions of history has been: “Where was the western world to oppose such atrocities?” In fact, Adolf Hitler gained confidence from this for conducting the Holocaust, openly stating to his generals in August, 1939, at the time of the Polish invasion, that no one recalled the Armenian genocide, and his measures would be similarly ignored.

Armenia has not been a nation that has attracted Presbyterian missionary support. In about 1875, an evangelical movement established itself as a separate Armenian Church from the Armenian Apostolic Church. Many pastors were lost during the genocide and the church limped along with mainly the elderly bearing witness for the faith. Recently a small evangelical seminary has been formed; however, the country’s population continues to emigrate at an alarming rate. This is creating a leadership crisis for the church as Armenians continue to move to key diaspora sites. In Canada the two chief Armenian centres are Montreal and Toronto, both of which have Armenian Evangelical and Armenian Apostolic Churches. The Apostolic Churches, both in Armenia and amongst the diaspora have links to the Brotherhood, the evangelical wing of the Apostolic Church. They are a highly organized unit in Armenia and supportive of evangelical causes in Armenia.

Against this backdrop, we find a young Armenian with a gospel burden for the oppressors of her people! Mary told us about being raised and nurtured in the faith in the Armenian dispersion population in America. Led to serve her people, Mary went to Armenia to pioneer the work of Inter-Varsity in that nation. However, she found her heart moved for the Turks, but her horrified parents forbade her to go to Turkey. In time, however, the Lord opened the way for her to undertake what has become a fruitful ministry in Turkey. I wish I could tell you all that I saw Mary doing, but discretion in print is truly the better part of valour here.

On Monday morning, my plane lifted off the runway from the airport in Istanbul and I found myself homeward bound, but with many profound impressions from my time in Turkey.

Perhaps the deepest was the realization that I had met and found family bonds with true brothers and sisters in Christ. How did I know? By their prayers, by their hymns, by their love of Jesus.

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William Tyndale – Reformer and Translator Supreme²

Leslie McDonald*

** Leslie McDonald was born in Southall, Middlesex, England, and was ordained to the ministry in 1961. He served as a church planter in the Philippines with Overseas Missionary Fellowship for thirteen years before coming to Canada in 1977 to pastor a Baptist church in Lively, Ontario. After eleven years, he moved to New Brunswick, pastoring in Lakeville and Florenceville for a total of thirteen years. He and his wife, Lorraine, now reside in Moncton, N.B., where Les is semi-retired, continuing to do modular teaching sessions in the Philippines with Carey Ministries.*

Elements leading up to the Reformation in England

The beginning of the church in England can be traced back to sometime in the second century. By the fourth century, the church had developed to the point where bishops were representing English interests at the Council of Arles in 314 and the Council of Ariminum in 359. During the next several centuries, Christianity spread throughout much of England. However, when William of Normandy invaded England in the eleventh century and seized the crown, he also took control of the church. What had been a completely independent church was brought under the rule of Rome as William replaced all the

² The substance of this paper was first delivered as a Haddington House lecture on March 18, 2003 in Moncton, New Brunswick. It begins with background material on the Reformation in England and gives a synopsis of William Tyndale's life before introducing the reader to David Daniell's seminal biography.

English bishops, but one, with French prelates. This marked the commencement of the process of the English church becoming nothing more than a vassal of Rome, which had culminated by the time of King John in the early thirteenth century. Rome's hold on the English church and people would remain constant for the next three hundred years until, by the grace of God, the shackles were completely broken.

During this three hundred year period, various seemingly unrelated elements contributed to lay the foundations of the Reformation. Many resented the actions and policies of the Norman kings as they moved the English church and state into the European sphere. It was in these conditions that the seeds of reformation were first sown. During this period when state and church affairs were barely distinguishable, a strong anti-papal movement developed in the upper and ruling classes. At the same time there was an equally strong anti-clerical movement growing in the middle and lower classes. The church itself, under Roman leadership, became increasingly secular and sank to the lowest levels of morality imaginable. The clergy was ignorant and immoral.

This provided the opening for John Wyclif (1324-84). His response was to teach evangelical doctrine and translate the Latin Vulgate into English. For more than one hundred years Wyclif's preachers (Lollards) traveled the length and breadth of the land proclaiming salvation by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ. So great was the influence of these itinerant preachers and Wyclif's teaching that the severest measures were taken to try to prevent any further spread of their message. Lollardy was outlawed at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and any adherents who refused to renounce their evangelical convictions were turned over by the church courts to civil authorities for punishment. Hundreds steadfastly and triumphantly went to their death through burning. This continued into the reign of Henry VIII in the next century. In 1408, the Constitution of Oxford forbade the translation of the Scriptures into the English language by any one on his own authority, any offender being regarded as a heretic. However, this did not prevent many of the English Reformers such as Cranmer,

Hooper, and Ridley from being influenced by Wyclif. Wyclif's teaching was another factor that contributed to the eventual work of reform in the English church.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Christian Humanists were also voicing strong condemnation of the abuses of the Roman church: superstitions, pilgrimages, relic-worship, and the scandalous conduct of the monks, their monasteries and religious houses. More and more money was pouring into these institutions; their real estate was ever increasing; and through state contributions to Rome, the nation was being bled financially to fund the opulence of foreign church dignitaries. This was one more aggravation to be borne by Englishmen.

While quite distinct from the Reformation in Germany, Switzerland and France, the Reformation in England was significantly influenced by such literature as the Greek New Testament of Erasmus and especially the writings of Luther. Again, both the civil and ecclesiastical authorities greatly resisted such literature, and a public burning of Luther's books took place at St. Paul's, London in June, 1521.

What brought the final break with Rome was the desire of Henry VIII to have a son who would succeed him on the throne of England. This necessitated a divorce from his wife Catherine, who had previously been married to Henry's brother, Arthur. Catherine had produced a number of children; all but one, Mary, had either died in infancy or were stillborn. Henry thought the solution for having a son would be to have a different wife, necessitating a divorce from Catherine. The grounds for divorce would be the illegitimacy of the marriage, as the Word of God forbids a man to marry his brother's widow. The Pope procrastinated in issuing a decision to annul the marriage, as he feared Emperor Charles, who was Catherine's nephew. This provided Henry the opportunity to take complete control of both state and church, and on June 9, 1534, at Westminster he signed into law the proclamation that severed the Church of England from Rome, making himself her head. It should be noted that Henry remained a quasi-Catholic the rest of his life, burning evangelicals at the stake. However, in the providence of God, he

eventually authorized the sale and reading of the Bible throughout the kingdom.

This brings us to the final element in the various ones that brought about the Reformation in England, the translation of the Scriptures into the English tongue from the original languages. It is here that we are introduced to the man so signally used by God in this work, William Tyndale.

Synopsis of the life of Tyndale.

Tyndale has been referred to as “the true hero of the English Reformation” by one writer, and also as “one of the greatest of Englishmen” by another, R. Demaus. Yet we know very little about this man to whom we are in so great a debt. This is partly because so very few of the details of Tyndale’s life are actually known. With very little information to draw upon, it would appear that historians have tended to resist the work of supplying extensive biographies of his work and life. The standard biography was the one written by R. Demaus and published in 1871, with an edited version by R. Lovett produced in 1904. The next study of Tyndale was written by J. F. Mozley, 1937 and based upon the earlier work. This was followed by the semi-fictionalized account by Brian Edwards, *God’s Outlaw*, in 1976.

There is no documentary evidence of Tyndale until he was a student at Oxford. He was probably born in 1494 in the county of Gloucester, somewhere between Gloucester and Bristol, close to Dursley, at the foot of the Cotswold Hills overlooking the River Severn. The Tyndale family properties indicate that they were reasonably wealthy, and as the family included merchants, they were people of affluence and influence. At this period in English history Gloucestershire was one of the most prosperous counties. While it was a rural area, many of the people engaged in the making of woollen cloth, with the sheep being raised on the nearby hills and Bristol close at hand to serve as the port through which the cloth could be exported. Growing up in this environment accustomed Tyndale to the fact that the world was much larger than Dursley and that English was spoken with a variety of accents and vocabulary.

Tyndale probably entered Oxford University when he was twelve in 1506. The registers record him as having taken his B.A. on July 4, 1512, and being licensed M.A. on June 26, and created M.A. on July 2, 1515. At Oxford, Tyndale would have studied Latin, philosophy and the classics. Sometime while at Oxford, Tyndale was introduced to the teaching of Paul's Epistles, possibly through the influence of John Colet, who had begun expounding the Scriptures in a way that was foreign to the Roman Church. The Greek New Testament of Erasmus probably stimulated Tyndale to begin the study of Greek, the key to understanding the Word of God in the original language. Erasmus spent time at Cambridge, where numbers of students came to a saving knowledge of Christ, some of whom would eventually be burned at the stake for their "heresy." It is uncertain whether Tyndale remained at Oxford in further studies until 1521 or not. Some place him at Cambridge for a short period before he returned to his native Gloucestershire. By now Tyndale's eyes had been opened and his mind made up that the answer to the abuses in the church was to be found in the Word of God.

For the next two years, Tyndale served as tutor to the two young sons of Sir John Walsh and his wife Anne. Anne was of the prominent Poyntz family, also of Gloucestershire. Her nephew, Nicholas, was a close acquaintance of Henry VIII. While in residence at Little Sodbury Manor, Tyndale had plenty of time for further thought and study concerning spiritual matters. Lively conversations would have been common at the meal table. As a notable family, the Walshs' frequently hosted visitors who included various church officers. With Tyndale present, many discussions focused upon truth. At some point prior to his return to Gloucestershire Tyndale had been ordained, consequently he would have been able to use the private chapel of the manor for preaching. It wasn't long before the content of his sermons and ideas were reported to the authorities, and Tyndale was eventually summoned to appear before them, where he was warned of the consequences should he persist in the holding of such erroneous views. It was at this time that he was resolved to translate the Word of God into English.

For the remainder of his life, William Tyndale gave himself to this task of translation, beginning the work in London from 1523-1525. Finding no authoritative protector, he moved to Germany. Tyndale required access to printers and finally settled in Cologne, where he continued his translation work, assisted by William Roye from Greenwich, London. Somehow knowledge of the translators became known to the church authorities, and so Tyndale and Roye moved to Worms in 1526. It was here that the first English New Testament translation from the Greek was printed. As English merchants carried copies back to London, the authorities there seized whatever copies they could and had them burned. From this time on, Tyndale became a hunted man. Tyndale spent the years from 1527 to 1529 in Hamburg, where he wrote several other works while continuing with his translating. It was during this period that he studied Hebrew and also revised his New Testament translation. By now Tyndale had begun work on translating the Pentateuch, and in 1529 the English translation was printed in Antwerp. In all likelihood Tyndale remained here until his arrest in 1535. Great efforts were made to find him, but to no avail. These were years of intense persecution in England; two close friends of Tyndale, Thomas Bilney and Richard Bayfield, were burned at the stake in 1531. Several more works were produced by Tyndale in these years, including his translation of the New Testament and his *Answer* to Sir Thomas More's *Dialogue*, written by More to counter reformed teaching. In 1533, another friend of Tyndale, John Frith, died at the stake. Although the work of the Reformation was spreading across northern Europe, church authorities were intensifying their opposition. Tyndale had to go into hiding but continued his translation work. In 1534, he was able to find shelter in the home of Thomas Poyntz, a relative of Lady Walsh. This same year Tyndale published his revision of the New Testament while continuing work on the Old Testament. He progressed as far as Ezra, and completed Jonah. He was assisted to some degree by Miles Coverdale, another young English reformer, who continued this work after Tyndale's death. On May 21, 1535, William Tyndale was arrested through the treachery of Henry Phillips, who had posed as a friend when actually in the pay of Stokesley,

Bishop of London. Tyndale was taken to Vilvorde Castle, outside of Brussels. Thomas Poyntz did all he could to secure Tyndale's release, but the authorities were not to be moved. After more than a year of imprisonment and appearances before a special commission, in August, 1536, William Tyndale was condemned as a heretic. Early in October, William Tyndale was first strangled, and then immediately burned, tied to a stake.

William Tyndale, A Biography by David Daniell

David Daniell has answered the need for a thorough study of the life and work of William Tyndale in this most excellent book published by Yale University Press as a paperback in 2001.³ Errol Hulse in *Reformation Today*, January/February, 2003, has referred to it as "a superlative definitive biography of Tyndale." David Daniell is eminently qualified to write such a work and to evaluate the translation work of Tyndale. A retired professor of English in the University of London and the editor of Tyndale's New Testament and Tyndale's Old Testament, Daniell also serves as chairman of the William Tyndale Society. The book is written from the position of a most sympathetic biographer.

The actual text of the work is 384 pages and divides the life and work of Tyndale into five parts, which are covered in fifteen chapters. There are eighteen pages of footnotes and ten pages devoted to bibliography. At the close of the text, David Daniell has included three appendices, which include outlines of two of Tyndale's works, *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon* and *The Obedience of the Christian Man*. What is so significant about the outlines is the manner in which they demonstrate so obviously the rational and biblical reasoning of Tyndale. He follows a distinct path to a clearly defined conclusion.

The book commences with a six-page introduction in which the author reveals something of his own humility in graciously acknowledging the work of previous biographers and the need of yet more work to be done on Tyndale. His own book "is offered to give strength to such studies." It is also noted by

³ David Daniell, *William Tyndale, A Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

Daniell that insufficient study is given to Tyndale as a translator. Tyndale was a most remarkable scholar and unsurpassed translator with outstanding linguistic skills. He was fluent in eight languages, including Hebrew, which was virtually unknown in England at the time. He was also a theologian and was just beginning to formulate a reformed body of doctrine, expressing in English what had never been accomplished before, when his life was terminated by the forces of darkness. But, almost 500 years after his death, his translation work continues to affect our lives and thinking.

His unsurpassed ability was to work as a translator with the sounds and rhythms as well as the senses of English, to create unforgettable words, phrases, paragraphs and chapters, and to do so in a way that, again unusually for the time, is still with us today, direct and living: newspaper headlines still quote Tyndale, though unknowingly, and he has reached more people than Shakespeare.... In doing this, he made a language for England. It is common place of Reformation history that Martin Luther seized the chance of advanced Greek studies to make a New Testament in German that gave a disunited Germany a language for the time; it has not been noised abroad sufficiently that Tyndale did something even greater for England. As used to be said with pride, the English rapidly became a people of the Book. To try to understand the literature, philosophy, art, politics and society of the centuries from the sixteenth to the early twentieth without knowledge of the Book is to be crippled. (pp. 2, 3.)

Everyday English in written form was unknown until Tyndale gave England the New Testament in a living and vibrant form.

The Making of the Translator

The first part of the book is entitled “The Making of the Translator” and comprises three chapters covering the period from Tyndale’s birth to his return to Gloucestershire following his university education. Daniell uncovers the family roots, using carefully the little documentation available but at the same time imaginatively describing the environment that Tyndale would have known as a child growing up in Gloucestershire in the west of England. He also is most helpful in suggesting the way in which Tyndale chose the vocabulary to make his translation not only clear but also accurate. The Oxford of Tyndale’s day is presented in such a way that one is able to sympathize with the young and thirsting mind having to engage in dry lectures on logic and philosophy. However, this was no ordinary young mind, and Oxford by this time had begun to move away from continental thinking to a more independent position. Daniell indicates that in general Tyndale was scornful of the theology taught at Oxford, not least of all because an M.A. had to be secured first before theology could be studied. But, by around 1522, Tyndale had attained a high degree of proficiency in Greek, with the ability to translate Greek classics, as well as being an excellent Latin scholar. With very few details to go by, Daniell can only make suggestions as to the way in which Tyndale’s thinking was being shaped. Whether Tyndale spent time at Cambridge is not really clear, the only source being a very brief reference by John Foxe. Tyndale himself never mentions being at Cambridge. Cambridge in the 1520’s was something of a hotbed as numbers of students engaged in discussion of the true meaning of the Scriptures. In 1522, Tyndale was back in Gloucestershire. At this point, Daniell traces briefly the history of the Walsh family, with whom William Tyndale would reside for the next two years. Aside from his tutoring duties, Tyndale now had time to study the Greek New Testament of Erasmus. Using this text there would have been opportunities for preaching and most certainly for lively debate and discussion with Sir John and Lady Walsh and with those who were guests at their table. His preaching aroused the ire of the local clergy, and this resulted in Tyndale being called to appear before the chancellor to answer

the charge of heresy. Tyndale referred to this incident some years later: “And indeed when I came before the chancellor, he threatened me grievously, and reviled me, and rated me as though I had been a dog, and laid to my charge whereof there could be none accuser brought forth (as their manner is not to bring forth the accuser) and yet all the priests of the country were the same day there.” (p. 76.) Tyndale was scolded and threatened by the chancellor, but nothing more came of the charges. The clergy were abysmally ignorant of the Word of God, as Daniell’s documentation shows from Bishop John Hooper’s report thirty years later:

Even in God’s Gloucestershire, thirty years later, investigation under the reforming Bishop Hooper famously reveals details not only of the ‘negligence and ungodly behaviour of the ministers of Gloucestershire’ but ‘inhospitable, non-resident, inefficient, drunken and evil living incumbents, who were to be found in every deanery’. The vicar of Wotten-under-Edge had to answer a charge of forging a will. Their ignorance was great. ‘Of the unsatisfactory clergy in 1551, nine did not know how many commandments there were, 33 did not know where they appeared in the Bible (the Gospel of Matthew was a favourite guess) and 168 could not repeat them. Concerning the Creed, 10 could not repeat it and 216 were unable to prove it; a large number said that they were perfectly satisfied that it was right because the king and Mother Church said so. Most extraordinary of all, perhaps, were the results of the Lord’s Prayer part of the examination: 39 did not know where it appeared in the Bible, 34 did not know who was its author, and 10 actually proved unable to recite it.’ (p. 78.)

By now Tyndale was fully resolved to provide England with the Word of God in the English language so that people might know what God has declared in His Word.

Until it was available in English as a whole book, the humble layman and woman had even less chance of knowing what the New Testament said: it might have been in Chinese for all the sense the Latin made, though some scattered New Testament phrases circulated as proverbs in English, and a few might have seen parts of a Lollard Bible. Tyndale saw that what was needed was a New Testament in English from the Greek. Richard Webbs' narrative concludes famously: 'And soon after, Master Tyndale happened to be in the company of a learned man, and in communing and disputing with him drove him to that issue that the learned man said, we were better without God's law than the pope's: Master Tyndale hearing that, answered him, I defy the Pope and all his laws, and said, if God spare my life ere many years, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough, shall know more of the scripture than thou dost.' (pp. 78, 79.)

Greek into English

The second section of the book is entitled "Greek into English" and covers the years 1523-26, the year that Tyndale spent in London accomplishing first printing of the entire New Testament translated from the Greek into English. In this part of the book Daniell demonstrates that he is a meticulous historian and most familiar with the texts of Tyndale's work. By referring to various pieces of autobiography supplied by Tyndale, particularly in the Prologue to the Old Testament and other sources, Daniell weaves together the facts to provide the overall picture. Where documentation is lacking or doubtful he is not afraid to say so. Tyndale first sought the patronage of the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall. However, this door remained

closed. This may have been because Bible translation was seen to be closely connected with Lutheranism.

And so in London I abode almost a year, and marked the course of the world...and saw things whereof I defer to speak at this time and understood at the last not only that there was no room in my lord of London's palace to translate the New Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all England, as experience doth now openly declare.

So wrote Tyndale in his prologue to the Pentateuch. (p. 92.) Daniell also brings to light some little known facts regarding the translation of the New Testament into other languages by this time. There had been fourteen identifiable German Bibles over a sixty-year period. The first French version of the New Testament dates from around 1474, with other versions reprinted several times. Italy had considered a printed Bible for some time. In Spain the first Bible had been printed in 1478 and parts appeared in Portuguese before 1500. A Czech New Testament had been produced in 1475 and the Bible in 1488. The Bible in Dutch was printed in 1477. In Scandinavia work was progressing in Swedish and Danish. Yet there was nothing in English. Further, such translation work in England was illegal. Revisionists try to make out a case that, left in quiet, the Roman Catholic Church would have provided such translations and corrected the abuses. However, Daniell's answer is that the Roman Catholic Church failed and shows that the Word of God never was in the hands of the ordinary individual. It is also pointed out that by this date the art of printing in England lagged far behind the continent. It was time for Tyndale to find a more conducive environment for Bible translation, and this he believed he found in Cologne in April, 1525. While in Cologne, Tyndale accepted the offer of assistance of William Roye, an apostate friar from Greenwich. Printing had actually reached Matthew 22 when the translators had to flee the authorities who were on their way to arrest them. At this point Daniell provides some very good analysis of Tyndale's work,

demonstrating how Tyndale had found help in Luther's German translation, using some of Luther's marginal notes and prologue, and following some of his mistakes. The prologue included clear statements of the Gospel, and the marginal notes explained the meaning of words in the text. Tyndale and Roye found shelter in another German city, Worms.

The translation of the New Testament was completed and printed in April, 1526, Daniell suggesting a print run of 3,000 or 6,000. Only two copies exist today, one of which was purchased about ten years ago by the British Museum from Bristol Baptist College for one million pounds (C\$2.4 m.). This was the very first complete translation from the Greek into the common spoken language of England. Daniell is at his very best as he provides numerous examples of Tyndale's genius in understanding the English language. With great insight and understanding of his own, he provides an assessment that impresses upon the reader the enormity of the debt, which we owe to William Tyndale. It is estimated that nine-tenths of the Authorized Version, written eighty-five years later, is the work of Tyndale. "In 1868, Bishop Westcott wrote of Tyndale that, 'His influence decided that our Bible should be popular and not literary, speaking in a simple dialect, and that by its simplicity it should be endowed with permanence.'" (p. 145)

Persecution and Polemics

The third section of the book, "Persecution and Polemics," involves four chapters and covers the years 1526 to 1530, during which time Tyndale wrote and published three major works. The first was *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, a treatise based upon Christ's parable in Luke 16. It is a work setting out the doctrine of justification through faith and not by works according to the New Testament teaching that good works are the result of God's saving grace within the sinner. It was published on May 8, 1528. Daniell provides his typical masterly analysis, emphasizing the clear doctrine of justification by faith and at the same time demonstrating Tyndale's wonderful use of the English language. As was the case with the New Testament, the authorities began seizing and destroying as many copies as

possible. Daniell responds to contemporary Catholic criticism that Tyndale's book was "fierce" in this manner: "We may wonder what is more fierce: printing the New Testament accurately in English, protesting when the Word of God is burned, and setting out the New Testament doctrine of faith with much quotation—or imprisoning, humiliating, repeatedly torturing and finally burning alive men and women." (p. 173.) A long chapter is devoted to the situation in England at that time – the persecution of any possessing New Testaments or parts of them or books deemed heretical or pursuing conduct that was reckoned anti-Catholic, such as failure to observe fast days. No one was spared. Rich and poor, scholar and uneducated, male and female, young and old, all were treated with the utmost severity. Both people and books were burned publicly. Cardinal Wolsey and Bishop Stokesly were the most ruthless. Thomas Cromwell, who would eventually become the most powerful man in England next to the king, did make serious attempts to induce Tyndale to return to England through an English merchant, Stephen Vaughan. Although Vaughan was able to meet with Tyndale on a number of occasions, Tyndale held to the condition, "That is, he will not promise to stop writing books, or return to England until the King grant a vernacular Bible." (p. 217.) On October 2, 1528, another work appeared, also printed in Antwerp, *The Obedience of the Christian Man*. Once again, Daniell demonstrates his skill in commenting on the book as well as his ability to analyze Tyndale's own mastery of the language and most incisive reasoning and logic. The book is an exposition of biblical obedience at all levels of society, including that of the monarch, because of our accountability to God. A further chapter is given to Sir Thomas More, the writer, including brief comment on his writings against Luther and primarily against Tyndale. Tyndale did offer one reply, *Answer*, regarding the issue of faith and works. In his succinct way, Daniell concludes the chapter, "More gave us three quarters of a million words of scarcely readable prose attacking Tyndale. Tyndale outraged More by giving us the Bible in English, England's greatest contribution to the world for nearly five hundred years." (p. 280.)

Hebrew and the Old and New Testaments

Daniell entitles the fourth part of the book, “Hebrew and the Old and New Testaments,” formed by three more chapters. These chapters concern Tyndale’s work in the years 1530 to 1535. In January, 1530, the first copies of Tyndale’s translation of the Pentateuch began to appear. These may have been printed in separate portions; existing copies show different type for different books. Daniell again relishes in the spirit and accuracy of Tyndale’s translation of the Hebrew into everyday English, especially the translator’s skill in communicating the idiom of the original. He states, “Moreover Tyndale discovered that Hebrew goes wonderfully into English—better than into Latin, and better than Latin into English.” (p. 288.) He also points out, “that the interrelation of the Bible books was, for the reformers, an essential part of the reading of Scripture.” (p. 287), hence underlining the need of the entire Bible in the English vernacular. Daniell also argues, “All Old Testament English versions descend from Tyndale; even of the books of the Old Testament which he did not reach. Miles Coverdale, who first gave us printed in English the second half of the Old Testament, had worked with Tyndale, and imitated him.” (p. 289.)

The question is raised as to where Tyndale learned Hebrew, and the only definite answer is that we do not know, other than it was probably somewhere in Germany. Tyndale had made rapid advances in his Hebrew studies, and to aid him in his translation of the Hebrew he would have been able to use Luther’s translation into German, as well as some of Luther’s marginal notes. Whether the two actually met or not is open to discussion, but there is no concrete evidence that indicates that they did. Daniell helps us understand the mind of the translator, “When translating, Tyndale had in mind two principles, it is clear. One was to understand the Hebrew text as well as he possibly could, using whatever helps he could find.... The other was to write something in English that made sense.” (p. 302.) Tyndale himself writes in the prologue, “I perceived by experience how that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth, except the Scripture were plainly laid before their

eyes in their mother-tongue, that they might see the process, order, and meaning of the text.”

While Tyndale continued with his Hebrew studies and translation of the Old Testament, he did not neglect his New Testament studies. In 1534, he published a revision of his New Testament translation of eight years before. There were a number of reasons for a revision. Firstly, a pirated edition published by George Joye had appeared in which he made a number of changes in the text, without consulting Tyndale nor securing his permission. Secondly, by now Tyndale had a much better grasp of New Testament Greek, and his understanding of the many Old Testament references in the New Testament has been greatly enlarged through his Old Testament studies. Many historians are critical of Tyndale’s work, saying his marginal notes are inflammatory. The notes are nothing more than cross-references, alternative readings, or of an expository nature. Daniell indicates that they are simply helps and explanations of what the text is saying. The authorities found Tyndale’s use of the word ‘repentance’ instead of ‘do penance’, ‘elder’ instead of ‘priest’, ‘congregation’ instead of ‘church’, etc., highly offensive, but they were stumbling over what is true. Daniell’s final word on the revision is, “It is the New Testament, as English speakers have known it until the last few decades of the twentieth century.” (p. 331.) It was during this period that Tyndale wrote to his friend John Frith, “I call to God to record against the day we shall appear before our Lord Jesus Christ, to give a reckoning of our doings, that I never altered one syllable of God’s word against my conscience, nor would this day, if all that is in the earth, whether it be pleasure, honour, or riches, might be given me.”

Daniell now takes the reader on to 1537 to show the connection between Tyndale’s Old Testament translation work and the publication that year of what was known as Matthew’s Bible, probably printed in Antwerp, Coverdale’s Bible having appeared two years before. Although published under the name of Matthew, this Bible was reckoned to be the work of John Rogers, a friend and assistant to Tyndale while he worked in Antwerp. When Tyndale was arrested in 1535, Rogers took

charge of the manuscripts that Tyndale was preparing for the press. Daniell argues convincingly that Rogers acted as editor, using Tyndale's Old Testament translation, Coverdale's for the sections not dealt with by Tyndale, and then Tyndale's revised New Testament. The Bible was dedicated to the king. It was this very version, basically that of Tyndale, that, on the advice of Thomas Cromwell and Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, King Henry VIII, authorized for public sale and ordered a copy to be placed in all churches! This was the fulfillment of Tyndale's desire for the ploughboy, accessibility to the Word of God in the English vernacular. The style of Matthews's Bible is typical Tyndale for, "One key to Tyndale's genius is that his ear for how the people spoke was so good. The English he was using was not the language of the scribe or lawyer or schoolmaster; it really was, at base, the spoken language of the people." (p. 356.)

The fifth and final section of two chapters is entitled, "Martyr". In the early part of 1535, Tyndale was living in the home of Thomas Poyntz, an English merchant in Antwerp. Here he would have continued his work of translating the Old Testament. However, this was a time when it was not advantageous to be English while living on the Continent. Just twenty-four miles away at the court in Brussels, Emperor Charles' power was felt and his open hostility towards Henry VIII was imitated. While Antwerp was safe, it was surrounded by hostile territory. Sometime in the spring of 1535, the Englishman Henry Phillips appeared in nearby Louvain. Although from a good family and a graduate in civil law, Phillips formerly disgraced himself, but now he had money. Phillips detested Henry, talked publicly, and became known among the English merchants as a traitor and rebel. But he was a man with a mission, to betray William Tyndale. Daniell carefully unfolds the events and the manner in which Phillips, posing as a friend, obtained the confidence of Tyndale, planned the trap, and then led Tyndale right into the hands of the authorities. "Tyndale was arrested on or near May 21, 1535" and taken to "Vilvorde castle six miles north of Brussels". (p. 364.)

The English merchants acted immediately upon hearing of the arrest. Letters were written to Thomas Cromwell and also Cranmer in England, but it was a difficult time because of the tensions created over the divorce issue. Thomas Poyntz was the chief carrier of letters to the authorities in Brussels, but Phillips also betrayed him to the authorities. Poyntz, having been arrested and imprisoned for three months, did manage to escape. However, his business was ruined, and he eventually died a poor man in England, even abandoned by his wife.



Tyndale imprisoned at Vilvorde castle

Daniell raises the question as to who was behind Phillips? Although there is no direct evidence, Stokesley, Bishop of London, is the most probable as he was such a hater of the reformers and all heretics, even boasting on his death bed of those whom he had destroyed. Phillips, disowned by his parents, shunned by everyone and trusted by no one, maintained total secrecy. In the final chapter, Daniell traces the eventual trial of Tyndale and his execution. He was kept in prison for almost seventeen months. During this period Tyndale was confronted by a variety of scholars, theologians and friars, but it was a body of seventeen commissioners who actually tried him and pronounced him a heretic. Tyndale wrote several books defending his position on biblical grounds during this period and answers were penned to try and refute him. Unfortunately, none of Tyndale's work was preserved by the authorities for some reason! But a letter written in Latin and hidden for three hundred years was discovered. Daniell provides the English translation given by Mozley,

I believe, right worshipful that you are not unaware of what may have been determined concerning me. Wherefore I beg your lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here through the winter, you will request the commissary to have the kindness to send to me, from the goods of mine which he has, a warmer cap; for I suffer greatly from cold in the head, and am afflicted by a perpetual catarrh, which is much increased in this cell; a warmer coat also, for this which I have is very thin; a piece of cloth too to patch my leggings. My overcoat is worn out; my shirts are also worn out. He has a woollen shirt, if he will be good enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thicker cloth to put on above; he also has warmer night-caps. And I ask to be allowed to have a lamp in the evening; it is indeed wearisome sitting alone in the dark. But most of all I beg and beseech your clemency to be urgent

with the commissary, that he will kindly permit me to have the Hebrew bible, Hebrew grammar, and Hebrew dictionary, that I may pass the time in that study. In return may you obtain what you most desire, so only that it be for the salvation of your soul. But if any other decision has been taken concerning me, to be carried out before winter, I will be patient, abiding in the will of God, to the glory of the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ: whose Spirit (I pray) may ever direct your heart. Amen. W. Tindalus. (p. 379.)

Daniell gives Mozley's comment, "A noble dignity and independence breathe through it. There is no touch of flattery, much less of cringing, yet it is perfectly courteous and respectful. Tyndale accepts his present plight with an equal mind, though he will lighten the burden as far as he can. But through it all, his chief thought is for the gospel which is committed to him." (p. 380.) John Foxe wrote of the impact of Tyndale's life, also quoted by Daniell, "Such was the power of his doctrine, and the sincerity of his life, that during time of his imprisonment, (which endured a year and a half), it is said, he converted his keeper, the keeper's daughter, and others of the household. Also the rest that were with Tyndale conversant in the castle, reported of him, that if he were not a good Christian man, they could not tell whom to trust." (p. 381.) Eventually, in August, 1536, William Tyndale was condemned as a heretic. Before he was put to death he was degraded from the priesthood publicly. "Two months after the degradation, early in the morning of one of the first days of October, 1536, Tyndale was executed." (p. 382.) A large crowd gathered at the place of execution, the commissioners seated themselves in the front, the prisoner was brought out, called upon to recant, and allowed a moment to pray. He was then chained to a large wooden cross, a noose placed around his neck, and at the given signal the executioner suddenly tightened the rope, strangling Tyndale to death. As soon as it was certain that he was dead, the straw and brushwood were torched and his body burned. But in the last moment of life, Tyndale had called upon

God in heaven in a loud voice, saying, “Lord! Open the king of England’s eyes.”

Lessons for today to be learned from the life of William Tyndale.

1. The importance of making available the Word of God to the ordinary person. Tyndale had a burning conviction that it was absolutely vital for the common person to be exposed to the Word of God, otherwise total ignorance would prevail. Only the Word of God could dispel that darkness. Tyndale was so committed to this matter that he was prepared to forsake his native England and live as a fugitive in order to achieve this goal.
2. It is also clear that Tyndale did not think it sufficient to simply place copies of the Word of God in the hands of the people. The Word must be declared in intelligent and every day language. Tyndale, when he had opportunity, preached in Gloucestershire and London. He wrote books and he included marginal notes in his translations to explain the text. Today the Christian church needs preachers to expound the text accurately and with all due application in a lively manner, and not entertainment or mere religious experience. We are required to bring people under the sound of such ministry in public services and Bible studies.
3. As we consider the life of Tyndale, we are reminded of the utmost dedication and single mindedness that he brought to translating the Word of God. How he achieved all that he did is quite extraordinary. Obviously he was a genius in the field of linguistics and communication. He had minimal helps, everything having to be written by hand, in the most humble of circumstances, and lacking so much of what we would consider to be basic needs.
4. Tyndale discerned the need of the people of England, anticipating that the Word of God would be welcomed and read by the common people. If we believe that in our day such a desire is absent, then it is incumbent upon us that we pray for such conditions through the gracious and sovereign work of the Holy Spirit. How much do we ourselves actually

- treasure the Word of God, realizing what price has been paid to give us this Word in our own language?
5. In translating the Word of God, Tyndale endeavoured to render the original text and its spirit as accurately as possible. However, he never gave the impression that he had achieved the ultimate translation, but instead he would revise, aiming constantly at improvement and greater accuracy. Therefore, his translation is not wooden but gripping, full of graphic words, rhythmic, readable and intelligible. For Tyndale, nothing less than excellence was sufficient in order to glorify the God of infinite perfections who has manifested himself through his Word.
 6. David Daniell has produced a biography of outstanding quality and, for anyone interested in understanding the origin of the English Bible and the man who gave us that Bible, this is the book to read. This book should be required reading for all pastors, missionaries, and especially Bible translators working in any language.

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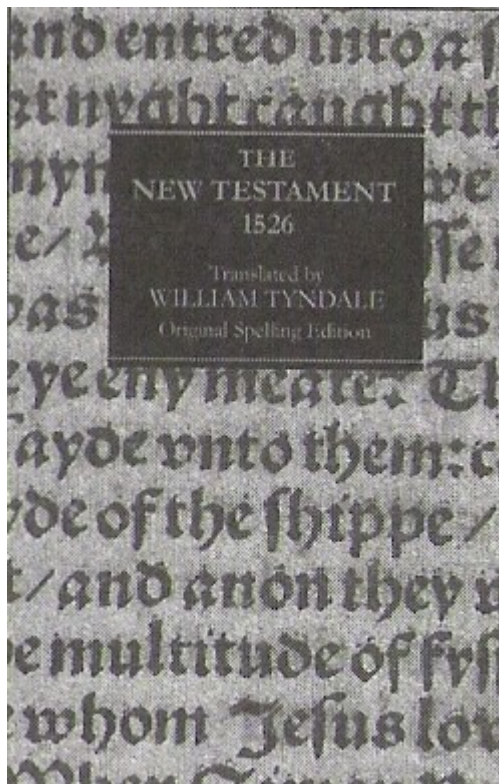
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The Significance of the Return of Jesus in 1 Thessalonians

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Introduction

The letters to the Thessalonians are widely believed to be the earliest, or at least among the earliest, of the canonical letters of Paul.¹ It is all the more significant, therefore, that the theme of the future return of Jesus Christ (often described as the

¹ Among those who regard 1 Thessalonians as the earliest of Paul's letters are R. E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1998) 456; R. B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996) 21; G. D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994) 39. Despite such strong support for this position, I would favour placing Galatians as the earliest letter (written just before the Jerusalem Council in AD 49), with the Thessalonian correspondence dated around AD 49/50. See D. A. Carson, D. J. Moo and L. L. Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Leicester: Apollos, 1992) for supporting evidence and discussion.

‘Parousia’) is prominent throughout both of these letters, in that they demonstrate that this was one of Paul’s strongly held convictions from an early point in his ministry. Indeed, with a little more narrow focus, Howard Marshall states that “the prominence of the parousia in 1 Thessalonians can scarcely be exaggerated.”²

It would seem that from Paul’s earliest days as an apostle of Jesus Christ, he held firmly to the belief that Jesus would return bodily to earth, no more as a baby or even a man in humility but as Lord.³ Indeed, Paul uses the term κύριος (Lord) frequently in both of his letters to the Thessalonians,⁴ suggesting that his eschatology and his Christology are closely related. This point is emphasised by Ben Witherington who writes,

[Paul’s] thought has an eschatological framework from start to finish, but unless we bear in mind the interplay of Paul’s soteriology, Christology and theology with that eschatological framework we will not fully understand his thinking. The eschatological framework is shaped especially by Paul’s belief that Jesus is the crucified and risen Messiah who has *already* made salvation available to all but has *not yet* completed the full work of salvation.⁵

² Marshall, “The Parousia in the New Testament – and Today” in M. J. Wilkins and T. Paige (eds), *Worship, Theology and Ministry in the Early Church* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 201.

³ J. Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997) 67: “The present epistle discloses that the Lord’s coming has been in the forefront of Paul’s thinking.” It is interesting to note that Luke, a close colleague of Paul’s, lays particular emphasis on the bodily ascension of Jesus (Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-11). Paul’s conviction regarding the bodily return of Jesus is precisely the expectation which the angelic messengers of Acts 1:11 call for.

⁴ Dunn notes that the term appears 24 times in 1 Thessalonians and 22 times in 2 Thessalonians, “a higher proportion than in any of Paul’s other letters”, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (T&T Clark, 1998) 297, n. 15.

⁵ Witherington, *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1992) 154.

The purpose of this paper is to consider *why* Paul incorporates consideration of the return of Jesus into this letter. Is it a doctrinal diversion along the way, or does this concept have a significant impact on the theological and pastoral power of this letter?

Terminology

The term *παρουσία* (*parousia*) occurs 14 times in the 13 Pauline letters, and of these occurrences, 4 are found in 1 Thessalonians.⁶ The term has a fairly flexible range of meanings such as ‘presence’ or ‘arrival,’ and is used on several occasions in the NT of human beings.⁷ However, it is most frequently associated with the future return of the Lord Jesus Christ – his “Messianic Advent in glory to judge the world at the end of this age”⁸ – and this is certainly the sense required in each of the four occurrences of the noun in 1 Thessalonians. It is worth noting that the idea of ‘return’ is not inherent in the term but is determined by the context in which the term is used. The term is never used of Jesus’ ‘first coming’ in the incarnation.

Of course, the concept of the future return of Jesus is expressed in other ways throughout the letter, also, and it is important to beware of the assumption that the absence of a particular term in any given passage implies the absence of a theological theme. We will attempt to take note of all relevant passages in what follows.

Paul’s Use of the Theme of the Return of Jesus in 1 Thessalonians

I wish to argue that the references to the future return of Jesus that are to be found in 1 Thessalonians are not theological redundancies, simply included to demonstrate Paul’s orthodoxy. Nor are they used in a mechanical way, bearing the same

⁶ References in 1 Thessalonians: 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23. References in other Pauline letters: 1 Cor 15:23; 16:17; 2 Cor 7:6; 7:7; 10:10; Phil 1:26; 2:12; 2 Thess 2:1; 2:8; 2:9.

⁷ For example, 2 Cor 7:6, 7; Phil 1:26. See BDAG, *s.v.*

⁸ BDAG, *s.v.*

significance in each case. Rather, Paul includes these references purposefully in his letter so as to provoke a variety of responses from his readers, and it is to these important passages that we now turn.

a) Jesus' return as the focus of Christian hope (1:9-10)

The first reference to Jesus' return in 1 Thessalonians appears in Paul's opening narration of the previous events in his relationship with the Thessalonian believers that provide the backdrop to what he has to say now. Paul begins with commendation for their acceptance of his preaching and their subsequent faithful Christian witness. He then goes on to indicate what has been particularly impressive in the eyes of those who observe them. He writes,

[9] For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, [10] and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead – Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

These words indicate that part of Paul's definition of Christian conversion to the living God involves a new expectation of the return of Jesus in the future. Indeed, we may say with J. D. G. Dunn and R. B. Hays that the prominence of this theme in the letter, and particularly in this recitation of the experience of the Thessalonians, indicates that the return of Jesus was probably a significant element of the preaching of Paul when he was in Thessalonica.⁹ What is interesting, however, is that the emphasis is not placed on the future event (which is not actually described) so much as on the person who is anticipated. The person, of course, is Jesus. He is the crucified one (implicit in the reference to 'the dead'), but also the one whom God raised.¹⁰ Thus Paul

⁹ Dunn, *Theology*, 302-3. Hays, *Moral Vision*, 22.

¹⁰ Compare Galatians 1:1 for Paul's identification of God by means of reference to his act of raising Jesus from the dead.

links two defining ‘eschatological’ events,¹¹ the resurrection of Jesus in the first century AD, which places all who are in Christ in the ‘age to come’, and the return of Jesus at some undefined time in the future, which will bring their experience of the age to come to its fulfilment. The one for whom the Thessalonians eagerly wait is “[God’s] Son”;¹² a description which highlights the intimacy of their newly established relationship with “the living and true God” to whom they have turned.

Paul’s summary statement regarding Jesus encompasses a great deal of profound theology in a brief phrase – “who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.” This gives us insight into the reason for the watchful expectation of the Thessalonians. Paul links the events of the cross with the return of Jesus. The latter will bring about the full experience of the former, and will bring about the final confirmation that judgement will not fall on the people of God. The relationship of sonship explains how Jesus can rescue us from the wrath that is God’s. On the other hand, these words serve to highlight the consistent NT theme that Jesus will come as Judge to administer God’s judgement (*cf.* Matt 25:31-46; 2 Timothy 4:1-8).¹³

In tension with the future emphasis, however, it is also important to avoid the impression that Paul encourages the Thessalonians to gaze out of the window watching for an absent friend. The present tense of the verb ‘rescues’ indicates that though physically absent, Jesus is not really absent from his

¹¹ ‘Eschatological’ is used here not as a description of events that will occur (in popular thought) ‘at the end of the world.’ Rather it is intended to reflect Paul’s conviction that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus has ushered in the expected ‘age to come.’ Thus, a Christian believer in the first century AD was, even then, in the midst of an ‘eschatological’ event (*cf.* Gal 1:4; 1 Cor 10:11).

¹² See M. Hengel, *The Cross of the Son of God* (London: SCM, 1986), 8-10 on Paul’s use of the term ‘Son’ to encapsulate the content of his gospel.

¹³ *Cf.* 1QpHab 8:1-3: “This refers to all those who obey the Law among the Jews whom God will rescue from among those doomed to judgement, because of their suffering and their loyalty to the Teacher of Righteousness” (M. Wise, M. Abegg and E. Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* [Harper, 1996])

people but works in them by his Spirit (cf. 1:5) so that rescue is in fact a present experience.¹⁴

We should recognise the balance in Paul's statement that apparently was not shared by all Christians at the time.¹⁵ Paul indicates that conversion, negatively, involves a turning away from idols,¹⁶ and, positively, involves a turning towards "a living and true God."¹⁷ Paul emphasizes that this turning is accomplished in order that the new Christians might 'serve' God, thus deeply rooting their Christian lives in the present reality of first century life.¹⁸ Thus the expectation of the future return of Jesus, though essential to Paul's theology, is not the whole story. Christians must take on their responsibilities in the present circumstances, but they have the hope of Jesus' return to spur them on. We may conclude, then that Jesus' return is the focus of Christian hope.

b) Jesus' return as the occasion for rejoicing in Christian relationships (2:19-20)

The term *παρουσία* is first employed in 2:19. It appears in a section of the letter in which Paul is expressing his deep affection for the believers in Thessalonica. He writes passionately,

[17] As for us, brothers and sisters, when, for a short time, we were made orphans by being separated from you – in person, not in heart – we

¹⁴ Compare 1 Cor 1:18 for a similar use of the present tense, where Paul contrasts "those who are being saved" with "those who are perishing." See G. B. Caird, *New Testament Theology* (Oxford, 1994) for discussion of the "three tenses of salvation."

¹⁵ Cf. The problems dealt with in 2 Thessalonians, such as abandonment of daily responsibilities.

¹⁶ In his *Introduction*, R. E. Brown notes that Thessalonica was "marked by a multiplicity of cults, reflecting the mixture of the population. Archaeology and historical records indicate places for worshiping the Roman pantheon and the emperor, as well as a host of Oriental deities" (458).

¹⁷ Although the Greek phrase is anarthrous (without the definite article), the words on the lips of a Jew (let alone a Christian Jew) such as Paul was would be unequivocally monotheistic and definite.

¹⁸ So Hays, *Moral Vision*, 22.

longed with great eagerness to see you face to face.

Despite Paul's fervent hope to visit these believers personally, "Satan blocked our way" (18). This, however, is not permitted to be a hindrance to encouraging and up-building fellowship. The very difficulties that Paul speaks of here provided the occasion for his various letters, including 1 Thessalonians, that now bring the Father's message of grace and mercy to the world and, as always, God's providence overruled. In a bold expression of warm love and commitment, Paul writes,

[19] For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? [20] Yes, you are our glory and joy!

The *παρουσία* is brought into a discussion of a very ordinary logistical problem, but its significance is that it provides a prospective forum for the rejoicing of Paul and his colleagues in their relationship with the Thessalonian Christians. Paul will 'boast' in the believers whom the Lord has brought to himself through the ministry of Paul, and thus Paul regards the *παρουσία* as a spur towards mission. Paul clearly understands his ministry to be carried out in the context of the eschatological event of Jesus' return (cf. 2 Tim 4:1-8), and his ministry as an apostle will be authenticated publicly by the presence of those believers on the day Jesus returns.¹⁹ The language of the 'victor's wreath' (*στέφανου*)²⁰ suggests that Paul will receive recognition for his faithful service as an apostle, and that will take the form of the presence of the believers before Jesus.²¹

But the impact of this reference in the context of a letter addressed to believers in difficult circumstances is that it allows Paul to indicate in the *present* what his actions will be in the *future*. Thus the Thessalonians are informed immediately of

¹⁹ So C. A. Wanamaker, *Commentary on 1&2 Thessalonians* (Grand rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 123.

²⁰ See BDAG, *s.v.*

²¹ Cf 1 Cor 9:25.

Paul's rejoicing in them (and therefore encouraged by that fact), while they are also made aware of the fact that Paul anticipates boasting about them at the *παρουσία* of Jesus.

The rhetorical power of Paul's question (to which the answer is assumed to be quite evident) is heightened by the joining of three terms: 'hope', 'joy', and 'crown of boasting'. This language is closely echoed elsewhere in Paul in Phil 4:1. Although these terms are separated by the word 'or', they should not be regarded as mutually exclusive alternatives but rather as mutually enhancing perspectives. The Thessalonians are all of these things to Paul, and no doubt more besides. Wanamaker comments,

The pathos of Paul's language in 1 Thessalonians 2, which is unique in his letters, perhaps suggests that the Thessalonians were particularly dear to Paul.²²

We may take Wanamaker's general point, even if the evidence of Philippians suggests that Paul's language here is not quite so unique as is claimed. Reinforcing such language, Paul uses the term 'brothers' (including 'sisters',²³) fourteen times in this fairly short letter²⁴ indicating his view of the Christian family. He is committed to these people now so that his rejoicing in the future will simply reflect the reality of the relationship. Once more we can see that the reality of Jesus' return is by no means an abstract theological notion for Paul but has a significant impact on his present life. He clearly believes that it will be a real encouragement to the Thessalonians if they take it seriously too.

c) Jesus' return as the climax of Christian holiness (3:13 and 5:23)

The third relevant passage, and the second occurrence of *παρουσία*, is in 3:13, in the context of a pastoral prayer:

²² Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 123.

²³ See BDAG and the footnotes in the recently published *English Standard Version* of the Bible.

²⁴ See, Brown, *Introduction*, 459.

[11] Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. [12] And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. [13] And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

There are several conceptual and verbal parallels between this passage and the passage in 2:17-20. Firstly, there is the longing of Paul to be with the Thessalonians. Secondly, there is the warm expression of affection. Thirdly, there is a look ahead to the *παρουσία* of Jesus.

The fact that Paul can so effortlessly incorporate mention of Jesus' return into his pastoral writing indicates how integrated was this aspect of Christian conviction. The context of these words indicates something of the purpose that lies behind Paul's reference to the return of Jesus:

[7] For this reason, brothers and sisters, during all our distress and persecution we have been encouraged about you through your faith. [8] For we now live, if you continue to stand firm in the Lord. [9] How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? [10] Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

It is of supreme importance to Paul that the Thessalonian Christians should maintain their faith in Jesus Christ. In verse 7 he indicates that the faithfulness of the Thessalonians has been an encouragement to him in difficult times, and likewise now he will support them in prayer. This interdependence of Christians is a common theme in Paul's letters,²⁵ but also, in common with other letters, it is counter-balanced by a prayer that recognises the

²⁵ Philippians provides many appropriate examples.

gracious sovereign activity of the Father in preserving the believer to the end.

Holiness is a prominent theme in 1 Thessalonians. In a recent article, Jeffrey Weima has argued that this theme is closely related to what he calls the “heightened expectancy regarding Christ’s return”²⁶ found among the Thessalonians. In translation we do not readily see the relationship between ‘holiness’ (v. 13a) and ‘saints’ (v. 13c) that is clear in the Greek text, but as Paul refers to the ‘holy ones’ (probably, though not certainly, angels)²⁷ in the same breath as he speaks of the holiness of Christians, he offers us a captivating picture of what the Lord can do with a human being when he makes him or her truly ‘holy’. It is important to recognise with Hays that,

This is ... not an exhortation but a prayer. The Thessalonians are not being told to do something; rather, Paul is asking that *God* act in their lives to increase their love for one another and to sanctify them in preparation for the parousia.²⁸

²⁶ Weima, “ ‘How You Must Walk to Please God’: Holiness and Discipleship in 1 Thessalonians” in R. N. Longenecker (ed.) *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (MNTS 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 98-119, here 113.

²⁷ So Wanamaker, *Commentary*, 145; Best, *Epistles to the Thessalonians* (BNTC; London: A&C Black, 1971) 152f.; Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 102f.; cautiously Bruce, *1&2 Thessalonians* (WBC; Waco: Word, 1982) 73-4. As Bruce (among others) points out, there is an apparent allusion to the LXX text of Zech 14:5 where angelic beings would be the most natural referent (though Peterson, *Zechariah 9-14 & Malachi* (OTL; London: SCM, 1997) does mention Isa 4:3 as possible corroboration for the view that humans are in view (143). However, Peterson rejects this view.). See also L. J. Kreitzer, *Jesus and God in Paul’s Eschatology* (JSNTS 19; Sheffield, JSOT, 1987. This view also fits most naturally with sayings of Jesus such as those found in Mark 8:38 and Matthew 25:31. Similar use of language can be found in the DSS, e.g. 1QM (“War Scroll”) 1:16; 10:12; 12:6 (“together with Your holy ones [and] Your angels”); 16:1; 18:2. Morris, *Thessalonians* (111-12) points out the presence of the word παντη (‘all’), and argues that Paul may have intended both categories of creatures by this phrase. This latter view would comport with Paul’s comment in 4:14 where it is understood to refer to the souls of Christians who have died.

²⁸ Hays, *Moral Vision*, 22.

Thus the emphasis is placed upon what God will achieve in his people. On the other hand, these words also provide a counter-balance to any excessive expectation of holiness in this present fallen existence. Calvin comments,

Paul...does not explain the nature or the extent of the holiness of believers in this world, but desires that it may be increased until it reaches its perfection. For this reason he says *at the coming of our Lord*, meaning that the completion of what our Lord is now beginning in us is being delayed until that time.²⁹

The return of Jesus, then, is a touchstone both of hope and realism for the Christian who seeks holiness. The believer may be confident that he or she will attain what now seems so unattainable when God acts to bring his purposes for his people to their fullest expression at the coming of Jesus. However, that believer would be wise to recognise that only at that time will holiness be complete by an act of God's grace and that in the present it is necessary to be patient and to seek God's enabling to remain faithful. Unrealistic expectations of complete holiness prior to God's appointed time will only frustrate and concern Christians. Similar thought is expressed in Paul's closing words in this letter (5:23):

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a significant degree of overlap between these two texts, as can be seen by a comparison of the Greek text of both verses.

²⁹ Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul to the Romans and Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960) 357.

3:13 εἰς τὸ στηριξάει υμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμεμ-
πτους ἐν ἀγιωσύνῃ ἐμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ π-
ατροσ ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶ-
ν ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ || [ἀμ-
ην] |

5:23 αὐτοσ δε ὁ θεοσ τῆσ εἰρηνησ ἀγιασαι υμ-
ασ ὀλοτελεισ καὶ ὀλοκληρον υμῶν τὸ πνευμα
καὶ ἡ ψυχη καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἀμεμπτωσ ἐν τῇ παρ-
ουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ τηρηθ-
εἶη

In both cases the goal is holiness, but the one who will accomplish it in his people is “God himself” (5:23). However, the latter prayer is particularly noteworthy for its reference to “spirit and soul and body” combined with two adverbs, which may be translated ‘wholly’, and ‘complete’. This makes explicit the physical aspect of the *παρουσία* hope in Paul’s thought. Holiness is for the whole of the human being.

d) Jesus’ return as the herald of resurrection life

The third occurrence of *παρουσία* is found in 4:15, in the context of a passage dealing with death in the Christian community where Paul writes,

[13] But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. [14] For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. [15] For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. [16] For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call and with

the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. [18] Therefore encourage one another with these words.

In these words, Paul distinguishes the believers in Thessalonica (and, by extension, everywhere else) from the mass of humanity by the character of their grief. Unbelievers, he says, grieve with no hope. But what makes the difference? What is it that should give Christians hope?

In fact, it appears that the Thessalonians had little hope in that they were deeply concerned about the fate of their brothers and sisters who had died before the return of Jesus.³⁰ Thus these words of Paul serve to reflect the confusion of the early Christians about Jesus' return. They believed that it would happen, but when Jesus did not return during the lifetime of some of their number (a rather brief time if 1 Thessalonians is among the earliest of Paul's letters), the faith of those who remained was shaken. They were 'uninformed', at least to the extent that they had not grasped the significance of what Paul had previously taught them.³¹

This passage sheds important light on the hope of the Christian because it relates to two secure historical events – one in the past and another to come in the future. Paul first looks to the resurrection as an anchor point for the perplexed Thessalonians. He draws attention to the community's

³⁰ This conclusion drawn from 'mirror reading' Paul's letter (that is, attempting to discern the problem in Thessalonica from Paul's pastoral response) is fairly widely accepted but must be treated with the caution that is necessary in all attempts to use this practice.

³¹ It seems unlikely that Paul had not previously taught them on the subject of Jesus' return, partly because of Paul's reference in 1:10, which we discussed earlier and which suggests that the subject formed part of Paul's earlier preaching, and partly because Paul seems to be dealing not with absolute ignorance on the part of the Thessalonians but with a misunderstanding of information that had been received from Paul leading to false expectations.

confession (“we believe”), and presses those who are wavering back upon it. He then moves them forward from that secure foundation to the matter of less certainty in the minds of the Thessalonians, the future experience of believers who have died.³² Christian hope is thus founded firmly on an accomplished act, the death and resurrection of Jesus. Christian hope is also closely bound up with the resurrection of believers, not only their continued existence after death.³³ Hays states it in the following way:

Paul’s answer demonstrates in the clearest possible way that his hope was fixed on the resurrection of the dead rather than immortality of the soul.³⁴

The point of the *παρουσία* hope in this text is “the dead in Christ *will rise* first” (4:16). This important theme is the topic of a significant recent volume in the McMaster New Testament Studies series, edited by Richard Longenecker and entitled *Life in the Face of Death*.³⁵ Several essays in this volume helpfully emphasize the connection in Paul’s thought between the established fact of Jesus’ resurrection and the hope of the resurrection for believers. Thus there is a real sense in which Paul’s hope is already realised to a great extent.

³² The phrase “God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus” (οὕτως καὶ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς κοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ ἰησοῦ ἀξει σὺν αὐτῷ) raises some important questions. The issue of who “those who have fallen asleep” are is in one sense simple. This must refer to Christians. But does the phrase refer to the souls of believers or the bodies of believers? If the former is the case, does that provide confirmation of the exegesis of 3:13 as a reference to believers also? There is a clear parallelism of thought with the previous statement about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Comparison with 1 Cor 6:14 and 2 Cor 4:14 and Rom 8:11 reinforces the view that the reference is to resurrection of bodies, not arrival of disembodied souls. So Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 97-8.

³³ The major study of the resurrection is now N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (London: SPCK, 2003), which contains a vast amount of relevant information and stimulating discussion.

³⁴ Hays, *Moral Vision*, 22.

³⁵ Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998

However, there is a future hope. The description of the return of Jesus that follows is one of the most dramatic portions of the NT. The cry of command, the call of the archangel, the trumpet blast, the meeting in the clouds, are all memorable images that are etched onto the reader's mind. Several commentators have drawn attention to the Jewish associations of these images. Craig Evans identifies two passages in particular, which, in the LXX, reflect the language of 4:16. The first is Exodus 19:16-20, which relates the events surrounding the giving of the law at Sinai. The second is Psalm 47:6 (46:6 in the LXX). The similarities between 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and these OT passages are indications he claims, of "echoes of Scripture"³⁶ which indicate that passages referring to the activity of Yahweh were interpreted at this early stage to refer to the activity of Jesus. Some commentators place the emphasis almost exclusively on the Jewish background to Paul's παρουσία expectations,³⁷ but it seems likely to me that the Thessalonians would have understood Paul to allude to the visit of an important dignitary, an experience many would have been familiar with.³⁸ On such an occasion, the people of the city would go out to meet the approaching procession, and then return to the city in celebration of the arrival of the ruler, as we see in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' triumphal (or 'a-triumphal') entry into Jerusalem (cf. Matt 21:1-11). If this is indeed the background to the passage it raises an interesting question as to the future destination of the Lord's people.

Paul makes it quite plain that believers will meet the Lord in the air. This might well be understood to imply that believers will spend eternity in some form of heavenly suspension, remaining in the air.³⁹ However, Paul does not tell the Thessalonians where the Lord and his people go after having met

³⁶ Evans, in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel* (JSNTS; Sheffield: JSOT, 1993) 250, alluding to R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

³⁷ So Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia*,

³⁸ So R. H. Gundry, "A Brief Note on 'Hellenistic Formal Receptions and Paul's Use of ΑΠΑΝΘΗΣΙΣ in 1 Thessalonians 4:17'" *BBR* 6 (1996) 39-41.

³⁹ Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 169-70, appears to tend towards this view.

in the air, and if Paul's language is intended to reflect the arrival of the king of the earth, then Witherington suggests,

the inference that he intended and that his audience would have taken was that they all would return to earth together.⁴⁰

The primary aspect of hope for the Thessalonians to grasp is that all believers, whether living or dead at the Lord's return, will be with him forever. Once more, personal relationship with Jesus means much more to Paul than does location or other details.

Paul's confidence in this hope is based not simply on faith in the risen Lord but, apparently, on the words of Jesus himself. While some commentators suggest that Paul is thinking of a word given to a Christian prophet,⁴¹ there is no evidence to suggest that Paul intends anything other than a saying spoken by the historical Jesus during his ministry in Palestine.⁴² The fact that the Gospels do not appear to contain such a statement is not fundamentally problematical since the Gospels explicitly declare that they record only some of what Jesus said and did (cf. John 20:30; 21:25). Paul may well have known considerably more of the traditions about Jesus than we do now.

The final words are significant, and will be echoed in the following section also; the *παρουσία* of Jesus is not a matter for theological 'Trivial Pursuit', but a foundation for Christian encouragement. True appreciation of the significance of Jesus' *παρουσία* will have an impact on Christian community.

⁴⁰ Witherington, *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World*, 158.

⁴¹ E.g. Plevnik, 93-4. In his *Theology*, Dunn appears to downplay the role of the Jesus tradition claiming "that can hardly provide the complete explanation" (303). His position is that "It is more likely, then, that the 'word of the Lord' was an inspired utterance or prophecy given to Paul (privately or in the Christian assembly, perhaps drawing on earlier Jesus tradition) as he meditated prayerfully on the Thessalonians' distress" (303).

⁴² So, for example, Marshall, "Parousia", 202.

e) Jesus' return as a challenge to Christian faithfulness

Paul moves directly from the conclusion of the discussion in chapter 4 into a further discussion of the return of Jesus but one with a different purpose in the letter.⁴³ In 5:1-11 he writes,

[1] Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. [2] For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. [3] When they say, 'There is peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! [4] But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; [5] for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. [6] So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; [7] for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. [8] But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. [9] For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, [10] who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. [11] Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Paul begins this section by saying that he has no need to write it! This is clearly an overstatement, however, because he does feel the need to write to these Christians about the return of Jesus.

⁴³ The phrase "now concerning" indicates that a new topic is to be addressed (cf. the frequent use of the construction in 1 Corinthians, e.g. 7:1; 8:1; 12:1). Dunn (*Theology*, 300, n.33) comments that the construction "indicates a further but obviously related topic, presumably also raised by the Thessalonians for clarification."

Nonetheless, he does so with the conviction that they already have sufficient information about this subject and they must now apply it properly. On this occasion, he does not use *παρουσία* but rather speaks allusively of “the times and seasons” (5:1) and then more clearly of “the day of the Lord” (5:2). The context leaves no doubt that these are references to the return of Jesus, but the application of the prophetic language of the ‘Day of the Lord’ (*Yom Yahweh*; cf. Amos 5:18, 20; Mal 4:5 [MT 3:23]) is still a startling indication of Paul’s high Christology. The complacent refrain “peace and safety” (5:3) is also drawn from the prophetic tradition.⁴⁴ Paul is here standing in the tradition of the prophets, warning God’s people of the reality of judgement to come.

Paul appeals to the knowledge that “the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night”. This statement echoes the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 24:43, and, though it is not an exact quotation of the Gospel account, Paul is almost certainly drawing on the tradition of the life and teaching of Jesus that was well known to him.⁴⁵

Paul plays with the image in order to land a telling application: “you are children of light”. Although the imagery of light and darkness is commonly found in Jewish documents, the specific phrase ‘sons of light’ is not common. It occurs nowhere in the Old Testament, and it is found in Paul’s writings only in Ephesians 5:8. However, the phrase was also favoured by the sectarian community which lived at Qumran. Some of the most interesting Jewish material relating to future expectation is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered during the last fifty years in caves on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea. The famous War Scroll (1QM) includes numerous references such as the following:

⁴⁴ Cf. Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11; Ezekiel 13:10.

⁴⁵ So J. D. G. Dunn, “Jesus Tradition in Paul” in *The Christ and the Spirit* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) Vol 1, 176-7. After surveying the Gospels, 2 Peter and Revelation, he writes (177), “The most obvious deduction to draw from all this is that there was a well-known tradition in at least many churches of Jesus having given such a warning and Paul reflects this knowledge in his formulation in 1 Thess. 5:2.”

Then at the time appointed by God, His great excellence shall shine for all the times of e[ternity;] for peace and blessing, glory and joy, and long life for all Sons of Light. On the day when the Kittim fall there shall be a battle and horrible carnage before the God of Israel, for it is a day appointed by Him from ancient times as a battle of annihilation for the Sons of Darkness.⁴⁶

Such references do not prove that Paul copied the language of the scrolls (Paul's words have quite a different tone), but they do make clear that such language was by no means out of place in the letters of a first century Jew. There is no doubt that the phrase relates to Christian holiness. Weima writes,

The metaphors of light and day versus night and darkness, which are common to the literature of the Old Testament and Second Temple Judaism, are used here, as in Paul's other letters (especially Rom 13:11-13; also Rom 1:21; 2:19; 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Cor 4:6; 6:14; Eph 4:18; 5:8-11; 6:12; Col 1:13), to refer to holy living among believers. Thus the return of Christ, which is also a key theme in the letter, is intimately connected with Paul's preoccupation with holiness throughout 1 Thessalonians.⁴⁷

The point of Paul's reference to the future return of the Lord is clear. Believers should be prepared for the Lord's return, not because they have inside information regarding its timing, but because they are prepared at any given moment to meet him. This can only be achieved by relying entirely on the resources that God himself has provided (the armour of verse 8), and by strengthening and encouraging one another. It is important to grasp the contrast that where modern authors speculate about

⁴⁶ 1QM 1:8-10 cited by Wise, Abegg and Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 152.

⁴⁷ Weima, 100.

times and dates, Paul “knows what he doesn’t know” (!), and promotes faithful vigilance.

Did Paul Expect Jesus’ Return During His Lifetime?

In the light of the Thessalonian correspondence, the question arises as to what Paul’s own expectations of the return of Jesus were. The Thessalonians (or at least some of them) clearly expected Jesus to come during their lifetimes. Was that due to Paul’s own preaching, which he then had to qualify somewhat? This is certainly the view of some authors.⁴⁸ There are two pertinent questions that we need to consider in order to do justice to Paul’s expectations concerning the return of Jesus.

a) To whom did he listen?

Commentators sometimes speak of the ‘Problem of the Delay of the Parousia’ as an important factor in the development of the early Christian church.⁴⁹ They suggest that the first Christians did not expect a lengthy period between Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, and his return in glory, and that after many years when it became clear that Jesus was not returning so soon it threw the church into turmoil and resulted in new plans being made.

As I have pointed out already, these commentators are entirely correct that for some Christians there was a ‘Problem of the delay of the Parousia’; the Thessalonians are clear examples of such people. However, it is interesting to note that since 1 Thessalonians is an early letter, the problem appears to have arisen from the earliest days of the Christian communities. The same problem is addressed in 2 Peter 3:4 where Peter refers to the mocking of non-Christians:

⁴⁸ So C. L. Mearns, “Early Eschatological Development in Paul: The Evidence of 1 and 2 Thessalonians” *NTS* 27 (1980-81) 137-57.

⁴⁹ On this issue, refer to the important article by D. E. Aune, “The Significance of the Delay of the Parousia for Early Christianity” in G. F. Hawthorne (ed.), *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 87-109.

Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since our ancestors died, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation!

The issue that concerns us, however, is not what non-Christians were saying, nor even what other Christians were expecting, but what Paul was expecting. To ascertain what was in Paul's mind, it is useful to consider the possible influences on him.

One answer is that he listened to Scripture. Paul was steeped in the Hebrew Bible, our Old Testament, and so we should expect that his thought, and even some of his words, would reflect the words of the Scriptures. Thus when we face a text such as Philippians 4:5 ("the Lord is near"), we should not assume that Paul thought that Jesus would certainly come again soon. It is likely that Paul is echoing the words of Psalm 145:18-19 which reads, "the LORD is near to all who call on him" and refer to the close attention of the LORD to his people. That this is the sense of the words in Philippians 4:5 is confirmed by the fact that Paul immediately proceeds to call the Philippians to pray, to "call on" the Lord.⁵⁰

Another important answer to our question is that Paul listened to Jesus. Some people doubt that this is the case. They believe that Paul was not very interested in the earthly Jesus and only concerned himself with the risen Lord.⁵¹ This view is to be rejected, however. We have already seen Paul referring to a 'word of the Lord' and alluding to at least one more of Jesus' sayings, suggesting that he was well acquainted with the life and teaching of the earthly Jesus and that he regarded Jesus' teaching as the authority for his views, including those concerning Jesus' return.⁵²

⁵⁰ So B. Witherington, *Friendship and Finances at Philippi* (Valley Forge: TPI, 1994) 112-3.

⁵¹ Rudolf Bultmann is probably the most famous example, though he is by no means alone in his view.

⁵² David Wenham has gathered many more examples to confirm this view in his book, *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

b) What could he have said?

A central phrase in this discussion is found twice in 1 Thessalonians 4: “we who are alive, who are left” (verses 15 and 17). Does this phrase indicate that Paul expected to be alive at the return of Jesus, and that therefore he was incorrect in his belief?⁵³

Ben Witherington has helpfully pointed out the weakness of the arguments that require that Paul confidently expected the return of Jesus in his own lifetime. If we allow that Paul was indeed relying on the words of Jesus, and that he wished to affirm that the return of Jesus *might* be imminent, but that no-one could know the precise time of his return, then we must consider what forms of words he could have used to make that point. If he had said “you who are alive” or “they who are alive” then that would assume that Paul himself had died before Jesus’ return, and Paul is not willing to make that assumption since he does not know if that will be the case or not.⁵⁴ It is true that to say “we who are alive” appears to assume that Paul would still be living at the parousia, but since Paul is alive at the time of writing, and he thinks it perfectly *possible* that Jesus will return before his death, this is the most natural expression to use in order not to make any assumption either way. As Witherington explains,

Preparedness is urged by Paul, and this exhortation is not banal, not because Paul had or could tell his converts the parousia was necessarily imminent, but because he could stress the certainty of Christ’s parousia happening, coupled with its possible imminence (possible,

⁵³ Such is the view of Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 171-2, and Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia*, 81.

⁵⁴ Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 172, does not grasp this point as he argues that Paul could have expressed himself differently “had he not wished to include himself among those who would probably survive to the parousia.” Paul has no intention of excluding himself from such a possibility; he simply does not take it for granted.

precisely because Paul did not know the timing of the event).⁵⁵

This open-ended approach to the future return of Jesus finds an interesting parallel in the famous Habakkuk commentary or ‘pesher’ of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which includes the following advice based on Habakkuk 2:3:

“If it tarries, be patient, it will surely come true and not be delayed”

This refers to those loyal ones, obedient to the Law, whose hands will not cease from loyal service even when the Last Days seem long to them, for all the times fixed by God will come about in due course as He ordained that they should by his inscrutable insight.⁵⁶

The sectarian Jews of the Qumran community were quite convinced that the answer to delay in their great vindication was continued faithfulness. In a similar way, Paul urges continued faithfulness so that the believers are ready to meet their longed-for Saviour.

With a slightly different emphasis, Richard Longenecker argues that Paul’s language in the earlier letters may well indicate a stronger conviction that he will meet the Lord before he dies than is found in the later letters. But even if this is granted, that means neither that Paul was certain of Jesus immediate return in the early years, nor that he abandoned his conviction in the Lord’s return in his later years. Longenecker correctly emphasises that,

Whatever shifts of thought, mood, or personal expectation might be postulated, it needs to be

⁵⁵ Witherington, “Transcending Imminence: The Gordian Knot of Pauline Eschatology” in K. E. Brower and M. W. Elliot (eds) *The Reader Must Understand* (Leicester: Apollos, 1997) 178-9.

⁵⁶ 1QpHab 7:9-14 cited by Wise, Abegg and Cook, 119.

emphasized and enunciated clearly that the focus of Paul's teaching regarding the resurrection of believers was always on Christ's Parousia and the resurrection of believers that would then take place. And it is this resurrection message that remains constant in his teaching.⁵⁷

Conclusion

1 Thessalonians is a significant letter in that it is one of the earliest expressions of Christian theology. Raymond E. Brown writes,

it is interesting to imagine being transported back to the year 51 and entering the meeting room at Thessalonica where this letter of the apostle Paul was being read for the first time. Within the opening ten verses one would hear references to God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and to faith, love and hope. That is a remarkable testimony to how quickly ideas that became standard in Christianity were already in place.⁵⁸

I would add that the return of Jesus is present in a very significant way also.⁵⁹ I have argued that, for Paul, the return of Jesus was both a vital theological reality, and an important and effective pastoral tool. Leon Morris writes,

It is worth asking ourselves whether the comparative neglect of the doctrine in much

⁵⁷ Longenecker, R. N., "Is There Development in Paul's Resurrection Thought?" in R. N. Longenecker (ed.) *Life in the Face of Death* (MNTS 3; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 201.

⁵⁸ Brown, *Introduction*, 464-5

⁵⁹ A similar point is made by Paul Ellingworth in "Christology: Synchronic or Diachronic?" in J. B. Green and M. Turner (eds) *Jesus of Nazareth – Lord and Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 489-99, here 492.

modern Christianity has not resulted in great loss.⁶⁰

The answer to this question will now, I hope, be clear. We have seen that Paul makes reference to the return of Jesus in order,

- To remind the Thessalonians of the focus of their Christian hope.
- To present an occasion for rejoicing in Christian relationships.
- To pray for the climax of God's activity in achieving the Thessalonians' holiness.
- To assure the concerned believers of the certainty of resurrection life.
- To challenge the Thessalonians to maintain a life of Christian faithfulness.

If Paul felt it necessary and beneficial to devote so much of this letter to the return of Jesus, have we any right to relegate that theme to the realms of scholars and cranks? The caricature that suggests that those interested in the return of Jesus spend endless hours discussing various forms of millennialism may be true of some, but it is not true of Paul in this vibrant letter. The Thessalonians, though exemplary believers in many ways, required solid instruction on the return of Jesus to bring them further on in their faith. Perhaps this is just what our churches need to give contemporary Christians, such as we are, a vision of hope.

⁶⁰ Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,) 134-5.

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The Experimental Religion of the Westminster Standards

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**A native of Scotland, the writer was educated at Glasgow College of Technology and the Free Church of Scotland College, Edinburgh. Before his induction to the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Chesley, Ontario, he served Free Church of Scotland charges in Raasay and Achiltibuie and pastored the PRC's congregation in Portland, Oregon. He is married with two children.*

For those who sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms*, these documents fix the bounds not only of theology and ethics, but also of the practical aspects of religion. The Westminster Standards, setting forth the system of truth found in Scripture, impact the preaching from the pulpit. That preaching, in turn, impacts the Christian lives of the hearers by describing the work of the Spirit in conversion and sanctification. With that information, believers are able to examine their personal experience of the Word and Spirit of God. They can determine the genuineness of their experience by experiment: just as they would prove the presence of carbon dioxide because lime water turns milky. This paper is a brief examination of three interrelated aspects of experimental religion as found in the Westminster Standards, namely the call to faith, assurance, and self-examination.

The Call to Faith

True religious experience ordinarily begins with the gospel. For, as Archibald Alexander writes, “If genuine religious experience is nothing but the impression of divine truth on the mind, by the energy of the Holy Spirit, then it is evident that a knowledge of the truth is essential to genuine piety.”¹

The Westminster *Larger Catechism* puts it this way:

The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ; of conforming them to his image, and subduing them to his will; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions; of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.²

In the gospel, the Lord freely offers to sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him that they may be saved, and testifying that whosoever believes in Him shall be saved and none who will come to Him will be excluded.³ Not only so, but He also promises to give to all those who are ordained to life His Holy Spirit to make them willing and able to believe:⁴

All those whom God hath predestinated to life, and those only, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of

¹ Archibald Alexander, *Thoughts on Religious Experience* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1989) p.xviii.

² *Larger Catechism* 155. [*The Confession of Faith* (1646), *The Larger Catechism* (1648), and *The Shorter Catechism* (1648) are bound together in *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Glasgow; Free Presbyterian Publications, 1994). References to *The Confession of Faith* (WCF) are made by citing the chapter and section. References to *The Larger Catechism* (LC) and *The Shorter Catechism* (SC) are made by citing the question number.]

³ WCF 7:3; LC 63.

⁴ WCF 7:3.

that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; [convincing them of their sin and misery⁵]; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.⁶

The faith wrought by the Spirit and the Word of God in the hearts of sinners causes them to be convinced of their sin and of their inability to save themselves. They not only give assent to the truth of the gospel, but also receive and rest upon Christ for their salvation, as He is offered to them in that gospel.⁷ As John Murray says:

Faith is essentially an entrustment to Christ as Lord and Saviour. It is self-commitment to him. It is not the belief that we have been saved, not even the belief that Christ died for us, but the commitment of ourselves to Christ as unsaved, lost, helpless, and undone *in order that we may be saved*. [Emphasis his.]⁸

⁵ *Shorter Catechism (SC)* 31. Archibald Alexander (*Thoughts on Religious Experience*, pp. 15-20) has an interesting discussion of the relation between conviction of sin and regeneration.

⁶ *WCF* 10:1&2.

⁷ *LC* 72; see also *WCF* 14:2.

⁸ John Murray, *Collected Writings of John Murray* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976) Vol. 1, p. 147.

Moreover, those who have been effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them.⁹ They have all saving graces put in their hearts, including the seeds of repentance unto life.¹⁰ By the Word and Spirit working repentance in them, they, out of the sight and sense not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of their sins, as contrary to the holy nature and righteous law of God, and upon the apprehension of God's mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, so grieve for and hate their sins, that they turn from them all to God, purposing and endeavouring constantly to walk with Him in all the ways of new obedience.¹¹

The Call to Assurance

Genuine religious experience, however, does not end with conversion. Faith and repentance continue in the lives of believers; but believers' experiences of God working these graces in their hearts by His word and Spirit are not constant. While faith grows up in many to a full assurance, it may be weak or strong and may be often, and in many ways, assailed.¹² Assurance of salvation does not so belong to the essence of faith that true believers "may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties" before partaking of an infallible assurance of faith.¹³ Again:

True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin, which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, and

⁹ *WCF* 13:1.

¹⁰ *LC* 75.

¹¹ *LC* 76.

¹² *WCF* 14:3.

¹³ *WCF* 18:3.

suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness and to have no light:¹⁴

It is also the case that the work of sanctification is imperfect in this life. Because there remain some remnants of corruption in every part of the lives of those effectually called and regenerated, they experience a continual and irreconcilable war between the flesh and the Spirit; and in this war, the remaining corruption may for a time prevail.¹⁵

Then, there is a religious experience which is not saving. There are others who are “outwardly called by the ministry of the word,” and who have some “common operations of the Spirit,” “yet they never truly come to Christ.”¹⁶ O. Palmer Robertson comments:

Just how far the working of the Spirit goes into the soul of those who reject the gospel must remain a mystery beyond the knowledge of men. But the Scriptures indicate that they may “become partakers of the Holy Spirit” (Heb. 6:4). They may taste the heavenly gift, they may taste the goodness of the Word of God, and in some undescribed way they may participate in the reality of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 6:4,5). This description must serve forever as a warning to the presumptuous who would dare to treat lightly the things of God, though it should not be allowed to terrify those who have experienced more than merely a taste of these realities.¹⁷

Clearly, it is not enough to have a religious experience. That experience must be analysed and proven experimentally to

¹⁴ *WCF* 18:4.

¹⁵ *WCF* 13:2&3.

¹⁶ *WCF* 10:4; see also *LC* 61 and *WCF* 18:1.

¹⁷ ‘The Holy Spirit in the Westminster Confession of Faith’ in Ligon Duncan (ed.) *The Westminster Confession of Faith into the 21st Century* (Fearn: Mentor, 2003) Vol 1, p. 82.

determine whether or not it is a saving work of the Spirit. Those who claim an experience of true religion must make their calling and election sure.¹⁸ This is accomplished by self-examination.

The Call to Self-examination

John Murray again states:

The duty of self-examination relates itself particularly to baptized and communicant members of the church. In connection with this subject there is admittedly the danger of morbid introspection. There are true Christians who are so much given to what is called the 'experimental' in religion that they feed to a very large extent upon their own experience. Yet the danger of experientialism does not eliminate the necessity or rightness of self-examination.¹⁹

Murray goes on to give three reasons for its necessity. The first is that no one should take his or her salvation for granted. If those regenerated in infancy are to entertain the assurance and joy of salvation, it is by examining and proving the grounds of their faith and hope. Similarly, for those who have been regenerated in the years of understanding, the assurance of their salvation does not rest upon past experience; therefore, they also must honestly examine the grounds of their faith and hope. The second is that while kirk sessions do not examine men and women to find out what the condition of their hearts is, ministers and elders must inculcate the necessity of their examining themselves, to the end that they may prove themselves and know themselves as the blood-bought possession of Christ (2 Cor. 13:5). The third: "It is not sufficient that members of the church should be true believers and be the heirs of eternal life. It is also necessary that they be self-consciously and intelligently so. (1 John 5:13; 2 Peter 1:10)."²⁰

¹⁸ *WCF* 18:3.

¹⁹ Murray, *Collected Writings of John Murray*, Vol. I, pp. 147-148.

²⁰ Murray, *Collected Writings of John Murray*, Vol. I, pp. 148-149. For regeneration in infants see Murray, *Collected Writings of John Murray*, Vol. 2,

By the Spirit's enabling, true believers may detect in themselves the inward evidences of those graces to which the promises of life are made and, from the certainty of their effectual calling, be assured of their election.²¹

Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavour to walk in all good conscience before him, may, without extraordinary revelation, by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made, and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation.²²

Self-examination is especially associated with receiving the Lord's Supper. That is the context in which the *Larger Catechism* lists areas to be examined:

They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, of their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance; love to God and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong; of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience; and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer.²³

Nevertheless:

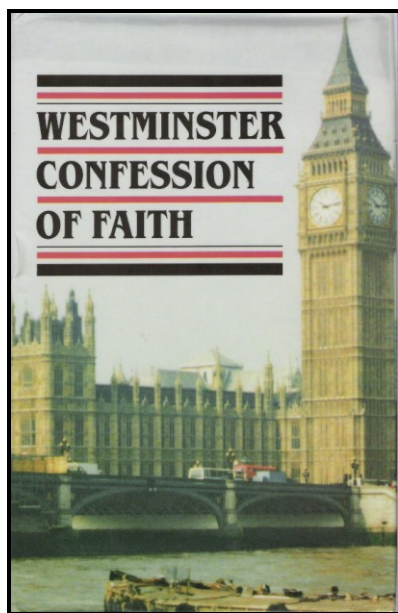
pp. 199-201, Achibald Alexander, *Thoughts on Religious Experience*, pp. 10-14, and William Guthrie, *The Christian's Great Interest* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994) pp. 38-39.

²¹ *WCF* 18:2; 3:8.

²² *LC* 80.

²³ *LC* 171.

One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity: in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians) he is to bewail his unbelief, and labour to have his doubts resolved; and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's supper, that he may be further strengthened.²⁴



²⁴ LC 172. William Guthrie deals with many of the issues raised in this outline of the experimental religion taught in Westminster Standards in *The Christian's Great Interest*. He identifies the various ways by which men are drawn to Christ. He notes the differences between that preparatory work of the law which leads to salvation and the temporary convictions of those who relapse. He delineates the evidences of saving faith; he writes to strengthen the "one who doubteth"; and for those who find no evidence of a saving work at all, he speaks of how they might come to Christ.

Thus, the *Larger Catechism* is careful to note that it is not great faith, which saves, but faith, no matter how weak, which accepts, receives, and rests upon Christ. It is not the duration or intensity of conviction of sin which makes it a saving work of the Spirit, but the fact that it has driven to Christ.

The *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms* teach that it is the work of God's Word and Spirit in the hearts of His elect which converts, preserves, and saves; but self-examination is essential to the non-presumptuous assurance of that salvation. This is the experimental religion of the Westminster Standards.

Evangelical Biblical Interpreters: Puritans, Germans, and Scots (Part II)¹

Jack C. Whytock

Purpose

The purposes of these particular lectures are the same as in Part I in this series, and so I rehearse these purposes for your benefit. First, we want to promote the serious study of the Word of God – the scriptures. To that end we want to introduce or to become better acquainted with select evangelical interpreters who have stood the test of time. In addition to this overarching purpose I offer also the following: to help with guidance for your personal library acquisitions; to give some guidance in the vast field of biblical interpreters; to help you in your studies, preaching, and writing by giving signposts to library usage; and to encourage you to see the faithful workers who have served their generation and laboured well and so may they inspire and inflame you to press forward.

Each generation can be blessed by taking a few hours of study on the heritage of evangelical biblical interpreters. Most will cite Spurgeon's two masterful lectures in the nineteenth century, which eventually became his *Commenting and Commentaries*.²

¹ These lectures were first given on February 18th, and on March 18th, 2003 as Haddington House Winter Lectures No. 3, and 4, Moncton, N. B. This paper is in substance these lectures. It is also reflective of the way Haddington House attempts to conduct theological training.

² There have been various printings of this, and it is now available in electronic format.

See, C.H. Spurgeon, *Commenting and Commentaries Two Lectures, a catalogue of Bible commentaries and expositions*. Original 1876 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1969).

Spurgeon is not alone in that practice; in our generation I think of similar efforts by D. A. Carson,³ Peter Masters, Cyril J. Barber, Derek Thomas or John F. Evans⁴ – one of which each serious bible student should possess. This lecture will I hope open the door to this subject.

At the outset I would say that your very attendance here tonight goes far in keeping us from certain dangers in the field of biblical interpretation, specifically, the attitude which pretends not to need help from commentators. I will make reference to two comments by Spurgeon to set the tone for this lecture. Commentaries should not be neglected.

...[A]s an aid to your pulpit studies, you will need to be familiar with the commentators: a glorious army...we have found the despisers of commentators to be men who have no sort of acquaintance with them; in their case, it is the opposite of familiarity which has bred contempt. ...who can pretend to biblical learning who has not made himself familiar with the great writers who spent a life in explaining some one sacred book?⁵

Spurgeon further challenged the audience of The Pastor's College:

No, my dear friends, you may take it, as a rule that the Spirit of God does not usually do for us what we can do for ourselves, and that if religious knowledge is printed in a book, and we can read it,

³ D. A. Carson, *New Testament Commentary Survey*, third edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988).

⁴ Derek Thomas, *The Essential Commentaries for a Preacher's Library*
John F. Evans, "A Guide to Biblical Commentaries And Reference Works for students and pastors", revised 1993 edition (privately produced at Haddington House, Moncton, N. B.). This list is by no means exhaustive of annotated bibliographic works or commentators. For a fuller list see Evans, page 4 and 5.

⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, "Lecture No. 1. A Chat about Commentaries", pp.1-2.

there is no necessity for the Holy Spirit to make a fresh revelation of it to us in order to screen our laziness. Read, then admirable commentaries...

Yet Spurgeon was also wise enough to know that even good things must be properly approached and went on to write:

...be sure you use your own minds too, or the expounding will lack interest...Freshness, naturalness, life, will always attract, whereas mere borrowed learning is flat and insipid... So to rely upon your own abilities as to be unwilling to learn from others is clearly folly; so to study others as not to judge for yourself is imbecility.⁶

Finally, I will give one more exhortation for us to take seriously the use of bible commentaries:

In many ways a Bible commentary is like a teacher. Instead of being taught directly in a classroom or other type of setting, you are reading the teacher's comments in book form. This commentary may teach you about Bible history and culture, perhaps give you an insight into biblical languages, or maybe even offer a devotional thought on how to apply the Scripture to your own situations in life.

The first and perhaps most important question to ask when trying to decide what Bible commentary to use is, who is the person or persons writing this commentary in the first place? Does this person share the same basic presuppositions about the Bible that you do?⁷

⁶ C.H. Spurgeon, "Lecture No. 2. On Commenting", p. 27.

⁷ David M. Fowler, *The CBD Guide to Bible Reference Resources* (Prince Press: n.p., 1998), pp. 55-56.

Criteria for Inclusion in the Study of Admirable Commentaries

The criteria I have adopted as to which commentators to include in these lectures is first, that their theological stance be evangelical (I take this in the categories of the Reformation *solas*); second, that their works are either multiple volume sets or composite multiple volume sets or at least include commentaries or works on several scripture books; third, that they represent a wider European context to educate us in the larger scope of evangelical interpretation; and fourth, as much as possible, that their works are available in reprint form or fairly readily available in good libraries. In lecture one (Part I) we concentrated upon the Puritans (The Two Matthews) and the Germans (Johann Bengel, The Exegete of Pietism; Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg, The Champion of Biblical Orthodoxy; and Johann Peter Lange, Germany's Outstanding Conservative Bible Scholar). In this second lecture (Part II), we turn now to Scotland and select evangelical biblical interpreters there.

The Seventeenth Century Scottish Expositors Series

I commence with the hallmark of Scottish expository studies, what often has been called the Scottish Covenanters Series.

Generally today very few are acquainted with this impressive seventeenth century Scottish publishing venture. Although particular authors may be known, few are aware of the intended series as a whole. It would be a tremendous series to have in its entirety for study in rhetoric, exegesis, devotional material, theology, and historical theology. I am amazed that a team of editors has not taken up the task. The series was the brainchild of David Dickson (c.1583-1663) the noteworthy Scottish Presbyterian divine, revival preacher, and author. It was compiled to “provide a series of expositions covering the whole Bible, with concise, straightforward commentary for all”.⁸ By

⁸ *DSCHT*, p. 310. It appears the original intention was not to cover every book of the Bible but “of the principal books in the Old and New Testament”. So it reads in the preface to James Durham's, *An Exposition of the Book of Job* as quoted by George Christie, “Scripture Exposition in Scotland in the

this was implied all the laity, school masters, students of divinity, and ministers. Generally a brief synopsis is given and then devotional instruction follows on a few verses at a time. The series did not aim at providing alternative interpretations but gave one single meaning. Sometimes it ends with a restatement, which often develops the argument in a scholastic fashion. The series represents a period of the Golden-Age of Scottish Presbyterianism of the 1650's and 1660's and should be a series well known by Presbyterians. The series has been charged with having certain defects beyond the obvious distance of time – the overall context of the text and book can be ignored or diminished, thus failing to connect “the natural thread”.

You may know Dickson as one of two authors who was attributed with writing “The Sum of Saving Knowledge”. He was born to a wealthy merchant father in Glasgow, served in Irvine where great revival occurred, and suffered for his convictions by being banished two years because he opposed episcopacy. Dickson also was the first writer to compose a commentary on the Westminster Confession of Faith. It was first published in Latin and later in English as *Truth's Victory Over Error* – a work extremely rare to see today in the original editions. I have examined copies in Scotland and the only copy I have found in Canada is at the University of Toronto in the Fisher Rare Book collection. Dickson also served as second Divinity Professor at the University of Glasgow, where he concentrated on the expository study of Scripture.

Dickson obviously did the “lion's share” of the series, yet he managed to induce others to join him. Why? The answer they felt to be simple – there was a dearth of such plain and short expositions available in Scotland. Banner of Truth keeps David Dickson's commentary on the Psalms in print and I believe if you turn to Psalm One you will see the style and intention. Who were the other authors? I list them here below:

David Dickson	<i>Epistles</i> , 1640
	<i>Hebrews</i> , 1637

Seventeenth Century” *RSCHT* I (1926), p. 97 in distinction from the article in *DSCHT*. I conclude the intention shifted to every Bible book as time passed.

	<i>Epistles of Paul, James, Peter, Jude</i> – Latin, 1645 English, 1659
	<i>Matthew</i> , 1647
	<i>Psalms</i> , 1653-1654
George Hutchison	<i>Twelve Minor Prophets</i> , 1653, 1654, 1657
	<i>John</i> , 1657
	<i>Job</i> , 1669
James Ferguson	<i>Philippians and Colossians</i> , 1656
	<i>Galatians and Ephesians</i> , 1659
	<i>1 and 2 Thessalonians</i> , 1674, 1675
Alexander Nisbet	<i>1 and 2 Peter</i> , 1658
	<i>Ecclesiastes</i> , (1660 ready, delayed until 1694)
James Durham,	<i>Revelation</i> , 1658
	<i>Song of Songs</i> , 1668
	<i>Job</i> , 1759 ⁹

Dickson acknowledged that other commentaries did exist, but they were too large, too expensive, or too detailed. Most of Dickson's commentaries originated as class expositions to students at Glasgow or Edinburgh, with the exception of Hebrews. There were some other commentators contemporary with Dickson who were not specifically invited by Dickson to join in the series. One such writer was William Guild, who Henry Sefton called a "reluctant Covenanter". Amongst his writings were commentaries on the Song of Songs, Revelation and II Samuel. This last commentary Guild dedicated to John Owen. Another name noticeably absent from the series was Robert Leighton. Leighton's father was a notable Covenanter, but Robert took a more moderate approach. In many ways Robert Leighton's commentary on I Peter fits many of the

⁹Christie, "Scripture Exposition in Scotland", pp. 98-111 and *DSCHT*.

James Walker, *The Theology and Theologians of Scotland*, original 1872, revised 1888 (Edinburgh:Knox Press, 1982), pp. 16 - 17.

qualities of the “Scottish Covenanter Expositor’s Series”. Some authors’ works were never published but were part of Dickson’s plan. These include works by Robert Blair, Robert Douglas and Samuel Rutherford. Unfortunately these *MS* have been lost.

Today the Bible student can still benefit from four commentaries currently in print from this famous seventeenth century Scottish series:

- *Psalms*, David Dickson¹⁰
- *Song of Solomon*, James Durham¹¹
- *1 & 2 Peter*, Alexander Nisbet¹²
- *Revelation*, James Durham¹³

We have already referred to Dickson on the Psalms. Durham on the Song of Solomon takes a Christological allegorical approach to the book. Spurgeon wrote of it: “Durham is always good, and he is at his best upon the Canticles. He gives us the essence of the good matter. For practical use this work is perhaps more valuable than any other Key to the Song.”¹⁴ The Song of Songs was of great interest to many Scottish Covenanters and others who followed them. They did not adopt a literalistic approach towards it. (Students should note that many also set it to metre, such as Ralph Erskine in volume seven of his *Collected Works*, although noticeably not reprinted in the twentieth century reprint edition.) Durham was Dickson’s colleague in drafting “The Sum of Saving Knowledge”. His commentary on Revelation is based upon his Sunday morning lectures before the service or sermon. It represents the historicist viewpoint and the older tradition of post-millennialism. Some argue that certain contemporary schools of post-millennialism are developments of

¹⁰ David Dickson, *Psalms* original 1653-1655 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1959).

¹¹ James Durham, *Song of Solomon* original 1653-1655 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965).

¹² Alexander Nisbet, *1 & 2 Peter* original 1653-1655 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1985).

¹³ James Durham, *A Commentary Upon the Book of Revelation* original 1658 (Willow Street, Pennsylvania: Old Paths, 2000).

¹⁴ Spurgeon, *Commenting and Commentaries*, pp. 112-113.

such a school as Durham. Others would argue that they are rather a radical departure from Durham's post-millennialism. I leave it with the reader and have not yet seen these two theses adequately dealt with. Spurgeon wrote of Durham's commentary on Revelation: "After all that has been written, it would not be easy to find a more sensible and instructive work than this old-fashioned exposition. We cannot accept its interpretations of the mysteries, but the mystery of the gospel fills it with sweet savour."¹⁵ Lest you think it too dated, let me say you will be shocked to see how contemporary he is, and you will see that there is still more to mine from this old Scottish Covenanter. Durham grew up the son of a Scottish Laird, yet nowhere reads like a country gentleman, but breathes piety and grace. Four works by James Durham which were never in this Scottish Covenanter's Expository series have recently been published: *Christ Crucified: The Marrow of the Gospel in 72 Sermons on Isaiah 53*; *An Exposition of the Ten Commandments*; *Concerning Scandal*; and *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ*. The reissue of these four books shows a revived interest in Durham.

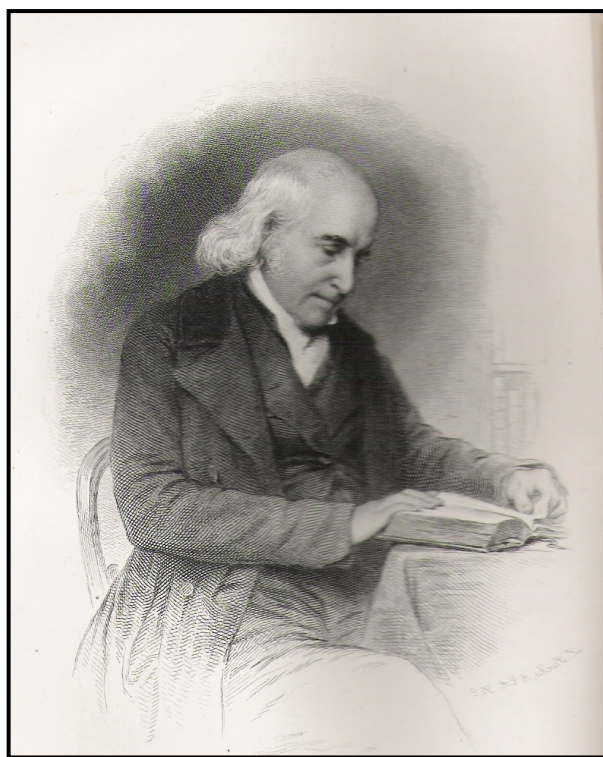
Very little is known of Alexander Nisbet's life. (I draw your attention to the fact that *1 and 2 Peter* remains in Banner's "Geneva Series" today.) I challenge all of you to dip into one of these four commentaries – taste what our forefathers really said. You will see in their own style a plainness, a piety, and an effort to encourage all to engage in scriptural study. Some of these writers were Professors of Divinity in the Scottish Universities, but there was a closeness to the church and her needs.

John Brown of Broughton Place: A Scottish Master Exegete

We now move from the seventh century to the nineteenth century and to John Brown of Broughton Place (1784-1858). He belonged to that great Brown "clerical dynasty" of Secession Presbyterians, being the grandson of the famed John Brown of Haddington and son of John Brown of Whitburn. There was an amazingly bibline thinking and writing style in these Browns. Brown of Haddington, the Professor of Divinity for twenty years,

¹⁵ Spurgeon, *Commenting and Commentaries*, p.199.

produced the famous *Self-Interpreting Bible* with its exhaustive “Thompson-like” chain reference system, hermeneutical rules, notes, and concordance, all with an experimental Calvinistic tone. He was also the author of a noted systematic theology, which was “jam-packed” with scripture references within the traditional *loci* of a Reformed theological tome. Brown of Haddington certainly knew the scriptures and wanted to expound them. His son used his pen very much as a devotional writer in the spirit of a Matthew Henry. Thus it is no wonder that this third Brown of Broughton Place became the great master of experimental Calvinistic exegesis. Never lose sight of what is being built generation to generation in our covenant homes and what a blessing they are to the nation. Every time I think of these Brown men I think of what a blessing they were to the Scottish people.



John Brown of Broughton Place

Brown of Broughton Place, who served this Edinburgh Church from 1829 to 1858 and was also Professor of Biblical Exegesis, has been sadly forgotten by many today. Yet he was truly one of the great evangelicals in Scotland in the nineteenth century. Yes, he had his faults, but I suspect he has been eclipsed by many others when he should not have been. As a prince of biblical exegesis he gave something to Scotland – he turned the Scottish Church “back and forward” to a recovery of rigorous exegesis. It was William Cunningham, (a respecter of Brown) who credited him as having “formed a marked Era in the history of scriptural interpretation in [Scotland]”. What was this “marked Era”? It built upon the best of the previous Scottish expositors, and it was in keeping with a zeal that theology had to flow forth from solid exegesis. Brown’s goal was to strive for “the exact meaning” yet always with devotion. He did this before the rise of the German higher critics and their influence upon the Scottish exegetes.

There is one story which I must recount about Brown. Cairns relates that a change came over Brown’s preaching after 1816. Before there was stress upon rhetorical style and impression; now he was concentrated, urgent, moving, keen, searching and with a tremendous passion for the unconverted. It was in 1816 that his wife of nine years died, leaving him with four children. He was to remain a widower for nineteen years before his second marriage.

Brown was appointed Professor of Exegetical Theology in 1834 in the United Secession Divinity Hall. The plan adopted by the Synod in 1834 was that the students in the junior class of 1834 were to have select scripture books critically expounded to them in the reorganized plan of Synod for the United Secession Hall. This became the focus of Professor Brown’s classes. He gave John McKerrow a description of the class he was conducting for McKerrow’s *History of the Secession*. In the Old Testament Scriptures Professor Brown gave lectures on the history of creation, the fall of man, select Messianic Psalms (numbers 2, 16, 18 and 110), and the Messianic prophecies in Isaiah (chapters 11, 52, 53, etc.). In the New Testament he gave “minute critical exposition” of Christ’s Discourses in the four

Gospels, and lectures on Romans, Galatians and Hebrews. He desired to provide more lectures from Acts and the New Testament prophecies and on the Messianic predictions in the Old Testament but could not take these up as there was insufficient time with only two sessions allotted to such.¹⁶ Professor Brown took two to three hours each weekday that the Hall was in session and divided this time equally between lecturing and student discourses. Student exercises were exegetical and were always followed by his critical comments, and each student prepared and delivered one each session in his junior years. These were still delivered *memoriter* and were to be “pieces of strict exegesis; a clear exposition of the words, phrases, and sentiments of the passage with a statement of the reasons on which the exposition is founded”.¹⁷

In reviewing McKerrow’s written account received from Professor Brown, a quick comparison to the published works of Professor Brown reveals a virtual identical listing. Wayne McCoy’s doctoral thesis of 1956 furnishes the best bibliography of the published works of Brown. McCoy divided Brown’s works into four categories: books, pamphlets, articles and essays, and works edited by Brown. The bibliography is eight pages in length and accords with what McCoy says about Brown as being very “industrious”.¹⁸ Under Brown’s published works on the Old Testament can be found his *The Sufferings and Glories of the Messiah: An Exposition of Psalm XVIII, and Isaiah LII:13-LIII:12*.¹⁹ There are no published lectures from Brown on Genesis. All of the lectures he gave on the New Testament were later published:

- *Discourses and Sayings of Our Lord Jesus Christ:*

¹⁶McKerrow, *History of the Secession Church*, p.798.

¹⁷McKerrow, *History of the Secession Church*, p.799.

¹⁸Wayne Livingston McCoy, “John Brown of Edinburgh (1784-1858), Churchman and Theologian” (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1952), pp.295-302. I will not list here or in this bibliography all the printed works of John Brown of Broughton Place but rather refer the reader to the bibliography in McCoy’s thesis.

¹⁹John Brown (of Broughton Place), *The Sufferings and Glories of the Messiah: an Exposition of Psalm XVIII, and Isaiah LII:13-LIII:12* (Edinburgh, 1853).

Illustrated in a Series of Expositions (1850)

- *An Exposition of the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Hebrews (1862)*
- *An Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians (1853)*
- *Analytical Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans (1857)*²⁰

The *Discourses and Sayings of Our Lord Jesus Christ* has been selected for brief comment to gain further insight as to Professor Brown's contributions to the United Secession Divinity Hall. These expositions must be viewed as often having originated in the pulpit of Broughton Place Church and then "re-worked" for the students by adding "philological discussions of the Hebrew and Greek texts, the detailed opinions of authorities on all controverted questions of interpretation, and the nomenclature of Biblical Exegesis". Thus, these lectures were utilized in the pulpit and in the Divinity Hall.²¹ Hence the world of the church was not far away in these lectures, something for which Brown did not apologize, because merely critical discussions in a Divinity Hall without piety turns the study of Scripture into an intellectual pursuit.²² The lectures in the Hall had a quality of godliness, humility, and solemnity about them, for the Scripture was revered and a love for Christ came through in all that was studied.²³ The overall thrust of these volumes is clearly evangelical and Christ-centred. They are not devoid of piety, yet they also contain "*scholia*, on particular words and phrases", continuous comment and "illustrated analysis". Brown states that "in all the Discourses, Exposition

²⁰John Brown (of Broughton Place), *Discourses and Sayings of Our Lord Jesus Christ: Illustrated in a Series of Expositions*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1850).

John Brown (of Broughton Place), *An Exposition of the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Hebrews*, ed. David Smith, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1862).

John Brown (of Broughton Place), *An Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians* (Edinburgh, 1853).

John Brown (of Broughton Place), *Analytical Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans* (Edinburgh, 1857).

²¹McCoy, "John Brown of Edinburgh", pp.223-224.

²²McCoy, "John Brown of Edinburgh", p.224.

²³McCoy, "John Brown of Edinburgh", p.249.

will be found to be the staple; whatever is doctrinal, experimental, or practical, being presented as the result of the application of the principles of strict exposition to the passage under consideration”²⁴.

In the “Preface”, Brown stated which works he had found most helpful in doing the exposition, but the definitive list of works consulted can be found in the third index, “Authors Quoted or referred to”. This list contains reference to almost three hundred different authors and in essence can be viewed as a working bibliography. Of these three hundred authors, several are referred to numerous times throughout the volumes. Those who were referred to most often by Brown were: Augustine, Bengel, Beza, Brewster, Calvin, Campbell, Chrysostom, Erasmus, Fuller, Grotius, M. Henry, Josephus, Kuinoel, G. Lawson, Lightfoot, Luther, Neander, Olshausen, J. Brown Patterson, Quesnel, Scott, Pye Smith, Tholuck, Trench, and Wetstein.²⁵ And of these in this list of “those most often referred to”, the top three were Bengel, Olshausen and Tholuck, with Bengel and Tholuck leading the number. Brown in many ways was a Scottish counterpart to these German pietists/scholars, although he never held a university appointment. Cairns believed that Brown’s *Discourses* represents the greatest unified work on the discourses in the English language.

Brown’s approach in his lectures was to not give lectures on the principles of hermeneutics but rather to apply such principles in class by expositing large portions of scripture. McCoy stated that Brown’s two questions were, “What was this oracle in sense to those who first received it?” and, “What is it still to us?” Further, his plan of exegesis was ““to make the Bible the basis and test of the system’ of theology and not ‘to make the system the principal and, in effect, sole means of the interpretation of the Bible.””²⁶

²⁴John Brown (of Broughton Place), “Preface”, in *Discourses and Sayings of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, original 1850, second edition 1852 enlarged (Edinburgh, 1990), pp.v, ix.

²⁵Brown, “Index III – Authors Quoted or Referred To,” in *Discourses and Sayings of Our Lord*, III, pp.505-507.

²⁶McCoy, “John Brown of Edinburgh”, p.264.

Commenting upon Brown's exegetical work, McCoy stated that Brown largely limited it "to philological, grammatical, or linguistic criticism... [and] To Lower, Higher and Historical Criticism, he contributed little or nothing." He read the German writers' works, which were written in Latin or made available in English translation, as he did not read German. This led McCoy to his conclusion that by the time Brown's exegetical lectures were actually published they were "already outdated."²⁷ By this McCoy meant that Brown wrote and published prior to the time when the German Higher Critical writings were introduced to Scotland and McCoy argued that Brown must be read within his time period. McCoy attributed Brown a special place in what he called "the general forward movement in exegetical theology in Scotland" in that Brown helped originate this movement.²⁸ William Taylor, in *The Scottish Pulpit From the Reformation to the Present Day*, said much the same concerning Brown's influence upon exegesis in Scotland:

...the name of John Brown marks the beginning of an era not only in his own denomination, but in Scotland generally. He was in that country very much what Moses Stuart was in New England, the regenerator, if not the father, of exact Scriptural exegesis, and for that he deserves to be held in lasting honor.²⁹

McCoy's words concerning Brown's place in Scottish exegesis in the nineteenth century are accurate. Brown certainly did inaugurate a new era in exegesis and this continued to develop and came "to supersede his work".³⁰ Brown certainly represents a movement to interpret the Bible historically and represents in Scotland the early steps in the nineteenth century towards the

²⁷McCoy, "John Brown of Edinburgh", p.264.

²⁸McCoy, "John Brown of Edinburgh", p.264.

²⁹McCoy, "John Brown of Edinburgh", p.258. McCoy is quoting from William M. Taylor, *The Scottish Pulpit from the Reformation to the Present Day* (London, 1887), pp.227ff.

³⁰McCoy, "John Brown of Edinburgh", p.259.

historical-critical method of biblical interpretation. Glenn Miller wrote that it was Freidrich Schleiermacher who was “the first notable Reformed thinker to struggle with the new approach...”³¹ It is not unusual to read that Brown viewed Schleiermacher with very positive accolades and mentioned him in the introduction to his *Discourses of Our Lord*.³²

In examining the *Discourses and Sayings of our Lord*, there are a total of twenty-five expositions. However, the twenty-fifth exposition has twenty-two “parts”, each of which on average is fifteen pages in length, thus making them separate expositions or lectures in themselves. Also, just because he numbered them Exposition I, Exposition II, etc. does not mean that these expositions each constituted one lecture in the Divinity Hall. Several of these would likely have been three or four lectures in the Divinity Hall.³³ These published lectures interpret scripture

³¹Glenn Miller, “Theological Education”, *ERF*, p.365.

³²Brown, “Introduction”, *Discourses and Sayings of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, I, p.vi. Brown saw Schleiermacher as opposing the German rationalists and emphasising a personal Saviour – “the soul of revealed religion”.

³³For example, Brown, *Discourses and Sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ*, I, “Exposition I”, goes from pages 1 to 52, yet is subdivided into:

- Introduction (1-11)
- I. Of the Messiah (12-15)
 - 1. The Son of God
 - 2. The Son of Man
 - 3. Sent by the Father
- II. Of the Design of the Messiah’s Mission (15-18)
 - 1. Negatively - not to condemn the world
 - 2. Positively - to save the world
 - (i) That the world may not perish
 - (ii) That the world may have eternal life
- III. Of the Means by Which the Design of the Messiah’s Mission was to be Accomplished.... Figuratively.... Literally (18-22)
- IV. Of the Manner of Obtaining the Blessings Procured by the Messiah: Figuratively... Literally... (22-27)
- V. Of the Primary Source of this Economy of Salvation, the Love of God to the World (28-36)
 - 1. The love of God, the origin of the plan of salvation
 - 2. The love of God to the world...
- VI. Of the Guilt and Danger of those who do not Avail themselves to this Economy of Salvation (37-47)
 - Notes A, B, C, D, E (47-52)

by scripture, thus making reference to other scripture passages, and either cite these passages in the text or as footnotes. The footnotes often refer to authors consulted and quite often include a quotation from these authors, in Latin, English, French, Greek, or Hebrew. The “Notes” are quite extensive and are usually comments directly upon the Greek text explaining its meaning, difficulties, and how it was treated by the Church Fathers, Reformers, etc. The “Notes” show that Brown had a vast acquaintance with the authors in his massive library.³⁴

In reading the titles of Brown’s expositions, it becomes clear that several of these were particularly valuable in Brown’s opinion for students training for the ministry. For example, Exposition XII, “The Church and Its Office-Bearers – True and False” (John 10:1-9) and Exposition VI, “The Christian Ministry; And the Character and Destiny of Its Occupants – Worthy and Unworthy” (Luke 12:35-37, 41-47).³⁵ Brown’s audience of the junior classes of the Divinity Hall were the recipients of such teaching and it was more than exegesis. It was exhortation, encouragement, and a call to self-examination. The strains of his grandfather, John Brown of Haddington, can be detected in the spirit of these expositions. We know that he continued to use his grandfather’s “Address to Students of Divinity” in the United Secession and in the United Presbyterian Divinity Halls and had it reprinted.³⁶ The Hall existed for the formation of men for the ministry who were spiritually right with God and whose characters reflected maturity for office. The study of Divinity was not a mere academic or intellectual pursuit. Yet in saying this he attempted to be as precise as possible in his lectures. For example, on that twelfth exposition “The Church and Its Office-Bearers – True and False”, he opens up the lecture with a

³⁴These statements are based upon a summary analysis of “Exposition I”, outlined in footnote 18 above.

³⁵Brown, *Discourses and Sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ*, II, “Exposition XII”, pp.90-106.

Brown, *Discourses and Sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ*, I, “Exposition VI”, pp.387-410.

³⁶John Brown (of Broughton Place), *Hints to the students of Divinity: An Address at the opening of the Annual Session of the Theological Seminary of the United Secession Church* (Edinburgh, 1841).

discussion on the distinction of John 10 as not a parable but that of an “allegorical discourse” with reference to Olshausen’s views on this distinction. This type of discussion has a fairly modern ring about it, as is evidenced by similar discussions in Craig L. Blomberg’s *Interpreting the Parables*, where a parable’s relation to an allegory is discussed.³⁷

John MacLeod makes an excellent conclusion about the exegetical place of John Brown of Broughton Place:

He did as much as any man in his day to advance the credit of that type of interpretation – the grammatical and historical one – which prevailed at the Reformation with Calvin as its most illustrious exponent, not which subsequently passed under an eclipse owing to the length to which the divines tended to go in applying the Analogy of the Faith to the decision of questions in the field of Exegesis.³⁸

The last word I give to Brown’s biographer, John Cairns:

Yet the works which live are those which ripen slowly, as the fruit of years of toil, and which, calmly disregarding ephemeral tastes and fashions, connect themselves with permanent necessities and interests. Nothing is more enduring in Christian literature than commentary, which unites the qualities of *solidity*, *clearness*, and *devotion*. These marks Dr. Brown’s expository writings bear... [*italics mine*]³⁹

³⁷Craig L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables* (Downers Grove, Illinois, 1990), pp.29ff.

³⁸ John MacLeod, *Scottish Theology* (Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1943), p.253.

³⁹ John Cairns, *Memoir of John Brown, D.D.* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1860), pp.309-310.

Next we move from Brown of Broughton Place to another noteworthy nineteenth century biblical interpreter in Scotland, Patrick Fairbairn.

Patrick Fairbairn: Scotland's Master of Hermeneutics

As we noted, some of the men God greatly used in the production of the Scottish Covenanters Expository Series came from families of wealth and security. In contrast, Patrick Fairbairn came from a family of simple farming folk. He was born in Hallyburton, Berwickshire in the Scottish Lowlands in 1805. He studied at Edinburgh University, working his way through as a family tutor in Dalry, Ayrshire. In 1830, at age 25, he was ordained and sent to serve a Church of Scotland charge in the most northern Orkney Islands – North Ronaldsay. (Note that most young men for the Scottish ministry were tutors before ordination and many had little say as to their first appointment – old style Scottish Presbyterianism!) Few willingly sought to go as ministers to Orkney as it was known as a difficult field where the men were termed “wreckers” of ministers.⁴⁰ He stayed seven years, and during that time a slow and steady spiritual transformation occurred. Fairbairn belonged to that growing party of evangelicals within the Church of Scotland in the 1830's – the prelude to the Disruption.

During these seven years in Orkney he married and was engaged in an intensive period of study, taking up German and Hebrew – teaching himself – and undertaking translation work from the German writers V. Steiger and E.W. Hengstenberg on the Psalms and Revelation.⁴¹ This itself is reflective of a minister who was well disciplined and methodical in study. Many others after their ordination have been intense in studies to refine their knowledge and understanding in the initial years of ministry. Seminary cannot afford all knowledge; it prepares and lays a foundation but that must be built upon. The initial years in

⁴⁰ The Presbyterian ministry in Orkney is very interesting reading. See, Frank D. Bardgett, *Two Millenia of Church and Community in Orkney* (Edinburgh, Cambridge, Durham: Pentland, 2000).

⁴¹ See, E.W. Hengstenberg, *The Revelation expounded for those who search the Scripture*, trans. Patrick Fairbairn, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1851-1852).

ministry must be well guarded and should not be the time for outside pursuits. Also, note the authors he selected to master were leading German exegetes and no doubt were key to the great writing and teaching ministry, which Fairbairn was destined to have.⁴²

After being in the Orkneys, he moved to a parish in Glasgow and then to a small village, Saltown, where in 1843 he left his manse and church building to labour with the Free Church of Scotland. He was but one of many ministers who bore the cost of leaving the security of the national church for conscience and principal. With the Disruption quickly followed the question of where to train the ministers. New College was established in Edinburgh and Free Church Colleges were also begun in Aberdeen and Glasgow. Fairbairn was by this time widely regarded as a Bible specialist and so in 1852 he was appointed to the Free Church College in Aberdeen. Later he was transferred to the Free Church College (Trinity), in Glasgow, where he was the first Professor of New Testament, then Principal. In essence, Fairbairn was the founder of the Glasgow Free Church College. (This physical college was noted for its famous Lombard Tower.)

I would classify Fairbairn's literary contributions (many of which were done while still in the pastorate) to either books on hermeneutics or Bible commentaries proper. Fairbairn became a Scottish giant in the field of biblical hermeneutics throughout the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Hermeneutics, being the science of interpretation, was of great concern to him, in particular the relationship of the Old and New Testaments. Today we might view him as somewhat verbose or Victorian, nevertheless he remains the classic conservative author on this subject. His *Typology of Scriptures* appeared as two volumes in 1845 and 1847 and *The Interpretation of Prophecy* appeared first in 1856. Nick Needham described Fairbairn's *Typology of Scripture* as his *magnum opus* and is "still the standard reformed text on the subject." In this work Fairbairn argues that,

⁴² *DSCHT*, pp.313-314.

There were many more Old Testament types than were mentioned in the New Testament, although castigating the mentality, which finds types everywhere. Most of the second volume is devoted to a detailed analysis of the typology of the Mosaic law, the tabernacle and the sacrificial system...⁴³

Fairbairn charges that “The Typology of Scripture has been one of the most neglected departments of theological science.”⁴⁴ He certainly did all he could to correct this and issued his *The Interpretation of Prophecy*, which went through two editions as a sequel to his *magnum opus*. [Typology is “a way of setting forth the biblical history of salvation so that some of its earlier phases are seen as anticipations of later phases” (*NBD* Second Edition, p. 1226.), e.g. the Exodus, the creation, the restorations and typical persons. As Augustine stated it, it is to see that “In the Old Testament the New Testament lies hidden; in the New Testament the Old Testament stands revealed.”]

It is interesting that the liberals continue to look back to Fairbairn’s *Hermeneutical Manual* of 1858 as more valuable than his work on typology and prophecy. The reason lies in the Christology in *Typology* and *Prophecy*, which, no doubt, is offensive to liberals. Yet few conservatives today know about Fairbairn’s outstanding *Hermeneutical Manual*. Ernest Best summarizes Fairbairn’s four hermeneutical rules, and I quote them here in full:

- 1) The exegete must be in sympathy with what he is interpreting; he consequently rejects the approach of the rationalists because of their refusal to accept miracle.
- 2) The exegete must seek and accept the simple grammatical meaning of the words while at the

⁴³ *DSCHT*, pp.313-314.

⁴⁴ Patrick Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture*, fifth edition (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1870), I, p. 17.

same time be aware that his own doctrine may affect the way he reads the words.

- 3) Since the New Testament writings are simple any explanation must be simple, though to achieve this much careful study would be necessary.
- 4) It is the current usage of words that is important rather than their etymology. (Had some biblical scholars paid more attention to this last principle in the middle of our century, fewer culs-de-sac would have been explored.)⁴⁵

Fairbairn recognizes that difficulties remain, and he wrote further on this and then proceeded to deal with specific New Testament examples, such as the relationships of the genealogies in Matthew and Luke.⁴⁶

We continue to use Louis Berkhof's *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, and the reader will note that Berkhof refers to Fairbairn's writings on *Typology* and *Prophecy* when Berkhof summarizes how to deal with the typical and prophetic.⁴⁷ Thus our ongoing debt to the seminal work of Fairbairn needs to be acknowledged and appreciated in today's evangelical hermeneutical classes. I believe we could summarize the field of hermeneutics as follows: Fairbairn was dominant for about 100 years (say to 1950), then Louis Berkhof for the next 40 or so years. Currently we are in the midst of "the new hermeneutic" and suffice it to say, Fairbairn and Berkhof still have much to offer as solid texts for the field. My personal advice is to study Fairbairn and Berkhof, which are "classics" and wait to see how things will work out with the more recent works. In saying this I

⁴⁵ Ernest Best, "The Study of the New Testament in Glasgow from the Disruption to the First World War" in *Traditions of Theology in Glasgow 1450-1990*, ed. W. I. P. Hazlett (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1993), pp.31-32.

⁴⁶ Best, p. 32.

⁴⁷ Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, original 1950 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), pp.148, 154.

am not underestimating all newer works – but is a divinity student ready to pass judgment at this stage? Time is needed.

Fairbairn was a consistent evangelical in his affirmation of the Bible's divine inspiration, authority, and unity. However he knew that scripture could be distorted by evangelicals also, therefore it was absolutely important that students of divinity have a proper biblical hermeneutic. One must hold to the "analogy of faith" as formulated in the Westminster Confession of Faith I:IX. Next one must approach New Testament passages, which draw upon the Old Testament asking if a contrast or a continuity or both is being given. Fairbairn teaches us to never denigrate the Old Testament nor Judaize the New Testament.⁴⁸

His instructions on interpreting the parables of Jesus in the *Hermeneutic Manual* of 1858 are absolutely remarkable despite their age. Fairbairn's rules here are tightly reasoned and exhibit an exactness which rivals the contemporary work by Craig Blomberg.⁴⁹

Next I turn to Fairbairn's hermeneutics applied in the Bible commentaries which he wrote: *Jonah* (1849), *Ezekiel* (1851), and *I and II Timothy and Titus* (1874). Today we can be very happy to see that Banner of Truth Trust has just issued a beautiful new edition of Fairbairn's commentary on I and II Timothy and Titus, (2002). It contains Fairbairn's actual notes to his divinity students on the subject of Pastoral Theology for the seniors preparing for Christian ministry.⁵⁰ (You will notice that Fairbairn rightly levels those who dispute Pauline authorship, and you will be struck by his own translation of the epistles.) The commentary, which Spurgeon writes "is about as complete a guide to the smaller epistles as one could desire", is in my estimation of outstanding caliber and easier to follow than

⁴⁸ "Publishers Introduction" in *Scriptural Interpretation* an abridgement of Patrick Fairbairn's *Hermeneutical Manual* (Dallas: Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1994), p.1.

⁴⁹ *Scriptural Interpretation*, pp. 23-29. See, Fairbairn, p. 28 "In their nature, parables are a species of allegory, or symbol..." Craig Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity, 1990).

⁵⁰ Patrick Fairbairn, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, "Geneva Series", original 1874 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2002), p.vii.

George Knight's worthy commentary. I share with you but one verse – I Timothy 5:17. You will no doubt be familiar with the verse. Fairbairn gives his translation, background on the controversy here, basic word studies, then his conclusions and ends with a full discussion on “double honour”. It is helpful to know some Greek, but not essential, yet nuance could be missed. The commentary goes very nicely with his work, *Pastoral Theology*, which was published the next year. We will have to wait to see if Banner of Truth will issue it in logical sequence.

Briefly, his work on *Ezekiel* is a good treatment but not always easy to read.⁵¹ It went through three separate editions – which speaks of its popularity. Fairbairn's eschatology was shared with David Brown of the Free Church College, Aberdeen, both being historic post-millennial.⁵² The commentary on Ezekiel keys in upon developing an interpretative model, thus not being chiefly concerned with a “verse-by-verse” commentary. It is full (502 pages) and shows an obvious indebtedness to German writers, applauding again, Hengstenberg's brief comments on Ezekiel in his Christological study. Spurgeon makes this point on Fairbairn's *Ezekiel*: “Dr. Fairbairn has a cool judgment and a warm heart; he has cast much light upon Ezekiel's wheels, and has evidently felt the touch of the live coal, which is better still.”⁵³ I am sorry I know nothing about the *Jonah* commentary and conclude that the Banner editors went with Hugh Martin's *Jonah* commentary perhaps for its superiority.

Fairbairn joins the galaxy of the great Free Church expositors of the nineteenth century who are rigorous, reliable, solid, and consistently evangelical. You should mine them and add them to your shelves. You will find in print in the Geneva Series of Commentaries:

Andrew Bonar, *Leviticus*

Hugh Martin, *Jonah*

⁵¹ Patrick Fairbairn, *Ezekiel, and the Book of His Prophecy: An Exposition* third edition (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1863). Original 1851.

⁵² John MacLeod, *Scottish Theology* (Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1943), p. 279. The nineteenth century Princeton divines also highly esteemed Fairbairn's work.

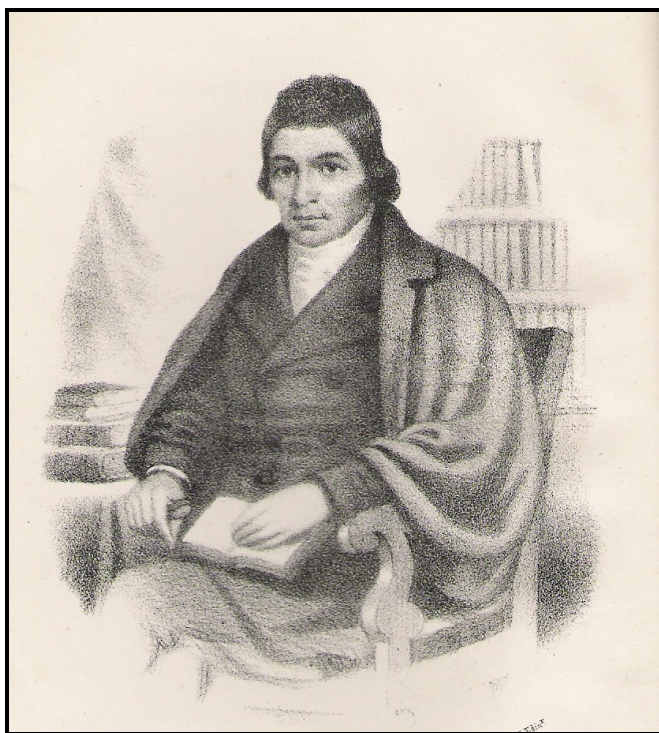
⁵³ Spurgeon, *Commenting and Commentaries*, p.125.

David Brown, *The Four Gospels*

Robert Candlish, *I John*

And, of course, Patrick Fairbairn, of whom I give the epitaph “Scotland’s Master of Hermeneutics,” reminds us, it is not sufficient simply to say, “It is inspired.” The Book must be properly interpreted.

George Lawson: A Pious Expositor in the Great Chain



I would be amiss if I did not make brief comment upon one other Scottish expositor of the early nineteenth century – George Lawson (1787-1820). Lawson was born into an Associate family, was privately tutored by John Johnstone, and proceeded to the University of Edinburgh. We know that he completed his Hebrew studies under James Robertson while at the University.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ J. MacFarlane, *The Life and Times of Dr. Lawson* original 1862 (Edinburgh: Wm. Oliphant, 1880), pp. 14-15; 30-37.

He then attended the Associate Divinity Hall for one session under Professor Swanston at Kinross. Upon the Professor's death, he attended the remainder of his theological studies under Professor John Brown of Haddington (I believe for three sessions). He then was licensed in 1769 at age 21 and remained a probationer for two years.⁵⁵ He was ordained to the Associate Church in Selkirk in 1771 and remained there until 1820, the time of his death. In 1787 he was made Professor Brown's successor, a position he held until his death. George Lawson has the distinguishing feature of being the first Seceder to receive a D.D. from a Scottish university, being awarded such in 1806 by Marischal College, Aberdeen.⁵⁶

Lawson was recognized by many of his contemporaries and by several of his students as possessing vast scholarship. He was given the nickname "the Christian Socrates". His knowledge of the classical authors and the Church Fathers was attested to by many, as was his use of the scriptural languages and French. Several of his students gave testimony of his favourite authors and his exacting knowledge of their writings. These included the works of Chrysostom (in Greek), Owen, Massillon and Saurin (in French), Jonathan Edwards, Campbell, Traill, Boston, Brown of Haddington, Plutarch's *Lives* and Homer.⁵⁷ His ability to quote from memory large sections from the Hebrew and Greek texts of scripture and the sermons of Ralph Erskine no doubt also contributed to Lawson's reputation.⁵⁸

Robert Small, *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church 1733-1900*, I (Edinburgh: David M. Small, 1904), p.44.

⁵⁵ MacFarlane, *Life and Times of Dr. Lawson*, pp.30-44.
DSCHT, p.474.

⁵⁶ Small, *History of the Congregations of the UPChurch*, II, pp.441-442.
MacFarlane, *Life and Times of Dr. Lawson*, p.54.

"Minutes of the Proceedings of the Associate Synod, 1766-1787" (May 2, 1787), MS, National Archives of
Scotland, p.2043.

⁵⁷ MacFarlane, *Life and Times of Dr. Lawson*, pp. 205, 283-284, 288, 210-212.

⁵⁸ MacFarlane, *Life and Times of Dr. Lawson*, pp. 234, 235. It is very disappointing that John MacLeod completely ignores Lawson's contributions in the field of Scottish expository studies. See, MacLeod, *Scottish Theology*, pp.237-238.

Lawson's strength as a Professor was clearly in the field of Bible exposition. Virtually all the published material we have by him is in this field. One published account of his labours here is as follows:

The Dr. was accustomed also, every session, to make his pupils read with him, and critically analyze a part of the Holy Scriptures in the original Hebrew and Greek. Pertinent questions were proposed by him, on such occasions, leading at once, to the formation of the sound critic, and the edifying practical exposition of the divine word. The continued study of the original languages of the Holy Scriptures, and of their criticism, and of the practical use of the sacred volume, were thus strongly recommended. A laudable ambition to excel in these important exercises was excited and kept alive, and, in many cases, led to very valuable results.⁵⁹

Prior to his death Lawson saw published three works, which were related to either his divinity classes or congregational lectures:

- *Discourses on the Book of Esther* (1804)
- *Lectures on the Book of Ruth* (1805)
- *Lectures on the History of Joseph* (1807-1808)

After his death came his *Exposition of the Book of Proverbs* (1821) and *Discourses on the History of David* (1833). Upon his death Lawson left 80 manuscript volumes, which makes me speculate that perhaps he planned to produce a full devotional commentary set but never did. Unfortunately these volumes have been lost.

Let us examine Lawson's *Proverbs* to see what features emerge. It is not a critical work on the text of Scripture, but rather is full of instruction for Christians and is "pious and

⁵⁹ Quoted from the *Christian Repository* in John McKerrow, *History of the Secession Church* (Edinburgh: Fullarton, 1841), pp.789-790.

sensible, full of sound doctrine and salutary admonition and instruction.” Thomas Horne writing on it and on *Joseph* and *Ruth* claimed that:

There is rarely anything of a critical nature to be found in them, which indeed was not the writer’s object; but they everywhere discover a minute acquaintance with the Bible and the human heart, and reflect a deep concern to profit the reader. The style is plain and the illustrations very brief.⁶⁰

With Proverbs, Lawson made a brief introduction of one to two paragraphs for each of the first nine chapters, followed by a verse-by-verse exposition. With the remainder of Proverbs he gave a verse-by-verse exposition without chapter introductions, nor did he attempt any categorical efforts of the proverbs by grouping them or arranging them by theme. There are absolutely no other commentaries mentioned and only about ten times does he refer to textual matters or to the LXX text.⁶¹ The chief references are to other scriptural texts and these are referenced at the bottom of the page as footnotes. The next major category of reference would be to the Greek philosophers, or to Greek culture, and on occasion also to Roman antiquities. This was not surprising due to Lawson’s knowledge of the classics. Upon occasion Lawson made very obvious anti-Roman Catholic applications, which were reflective of his theological perspective.⁶² Other references beyond the classics are limited to single references and include Dodderidge, Augustine, and Latimer but are merely illustrative and not of a deep theological

⁶⁰ Cyril J. Barber, in his “Forward” to the 1984 reprint of George Lawson’s *Proverbs* is quoting from Thomas Hartwell Horne’s, *Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures* but Barber fails to identify which edition and the page number he is referring to in Horne. See, Cyril J. Barber, “Forward”, in George Lawson, *Proverbs*, original 1821 (Grand Rapids, 1984), p.vii.

⁶¹ George Lawson, *Proverbs* original 1821 (Grand Rapids, 1984), pp. 176, 363, 366, 2-163. All references below are to the 1984 edition.

⁶² Lawson, *Proverbs*, pp.394, 447.

nature.⁶³ Lawson's chief point was to explain the text and bring forth applications that would be illustrative of Christian Morality based upon the moral law. Thus his expositions view the law as showing man's sin and then for the Christian, as being a guide for righteous living. Lawson aimed at bringing a Christ-centered perspective to the book and probing the heart of the reader, often by asking questions by way of application, not unlike the preacher in a sermon.⁶⁴

For covenantal theologians, Proverbs 22:6 and its interpretation reveal two things: first, how the book of Proverbs is approached hermeneutically, that is, as principle and precept or as promise; and second, the stress of the writer's covenantal position. Lawson treated Proverbs 22:6 as principle and not presumptively, thus telling the reader a great deal.⁶⁵ He did have a hermeneutic fixed in expositing Proverbs, and he also had an experimental piety as a Calvinist that was not presumptive.

Lawson evidently used the book of Proverbs regularly in the Hall to draw forth illustrations on "duties". On occasion this can be discovered in Lawson's commentary, where he wrote that this proverb may be applied this way to the minister and in that manner to the congregation.⁶⁶ Whether or not he did an extensive lecture series at the Hall of Proverbs cannot be proven from the published book. Perhaps it originated as a book from the manuscript of his congregational lectures more than directly from Hall lectures, other than as occasional exhortations on "duties". Likewise, Lawson's books on Joseph, David, and Ruth were no doubt incorporated in some way into the Hall's curriculum. However, it cannot be asserted with certainty that they were Hall lectures. Belfrage testified that Lawson, in his Bible lectures,

⁶³ Lawson, *Proverbs*, pp.511, 867.

⁶⁴ Lawson, *Proverbs*, p.168 "Salvation is by grace through faith, and this faith works by love, producing universal obedience to the law of our Creator and Redeemer. This law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments, and published with more particularity in this divinely inspired body of Christian morality." From the introduction to the second portion of Proverbs at chapter ten.

⁶⁵ Lawson, *Proverbs*, pp.585-588.

⁶⁶ MacFarlane, *Life and Writings of Dr. Lawson*, p.299 and Lawson, *Proverbs*, p.379.

provided well researched Bible background material on the history of the Holy Land, and no doubt such would have included Joseph, Ruth, and David.⁶⁷

Lawson's other main biblical work which went through different editions and printings is now entitled *The Life of Joseph*.⁶⁸ Its original title was *Lectures on the History of Joseph*, although this title should not necessarily be interpreted to mean that in its original form it appeared in lecture format in the Divinity Hall at Selkirk. Rather, Lawson was using the word "lecture" here in the old Scottish tradition of a continuous Bible exposition given in Lawson's case at the "forenoon" of the Sabbath.⁶⁹ In all likelihood these "lectures" on Joseph were from these Sabbath lectures and not from the Hall discourses (lectures). Lawson prefaced this published volume on Joseph by giving an exhortation to parents that: "May not this book assist parents in speaking of it to their little ones, in a manner fitted to insinuate into their minds some of the most important lessons of religion."⁷⁰ This confirms that these lectures on Joseph were aimed at the breadth of an assembled congregation, not Hall lectures. The book contains several sermons in the "Appendix" of lectures entitled "Lectures on the Blessings Pronounced by Jacob on His Twelve Children", a series of seven lectures covering Genesis 49:1-33. The series of lectures on Joseph covers Genesis 37:1-48:22 and chapter 50. The purpose of the volume was certainly not to show forth critical Hebrew exegesis, although Lawson clearly interacted with the Hebrew text, but the purpose was a devotional verse-by-verse exposition for a congregation. If anything, the expositions on Proverbs come closer to the Hall than his lectures on Joseph.

⁶⁷ Henry Belfrage, "A Short Account of George Lawson", in *Discourses on the History of David* (Berwick, 1833), p. xvi.

⁶⁸ George Lawson, *The Life of Joseph*, original 1807 (Edinburgh, 1988).

⁶⁹ MacFarlane, *Life and Times of Dr. Lawson*, p.134.

⁷⁰ Lawson, *Life of Joseph*, p. xv.

Lawson's Bible lectures would be similar to the Bible notes recently published on Genesis done by William Still, the noted evangelical Scottish expositor of the twentieth century. William Still, *Theological Studies in Genesis and Romans* "Collected Writings of William Still" eds., David C. Searle, Sinclair B. Ferguson Vol. III (Edinbutgh/Fearn, 2000).

In conclusion, with George Lawson, we can say here was a Seceder making scriptural exposition centre-stage and not confining himself to systematic theology. With John Brown of Broughton Place there is a worthy successor and a superb exegete. George Lawson must be viewed as a link in this chain of Scottish exegetes of the evangelical Presbyterian fold. Lawson was not a father of the great exegetical movement in Scotland in the nineteenth century but part of a “link in the chain” of Secession exegetes. Spurgeon summed it up well with his pithy remark on Lawson’s *Ruth* – “By a man of great genius. Simple, fresh, and gracious. Nothing critical or profound may be looked for, but wise and sound teaching may be gleaned in these pages.”⁷¹

Conclusion

If you are just beginning to build your library of commentaries, carefully review what has been said here. As a minimum, make sure you have John Brown’s *Discourses and Sayings of Our Lord* and *Galatians*. Next, obtain Fairbairn’s *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*. Then try to add Bonar’s *Leviticus* and Lawson’s *Joseph*. This will make for a solid start to your library.

Recall that these are only helps – they are not the Bible. Learn to use them diligently and with meditation. Ponder what they say. Give them time and be gracious – men have walked in the Way before us. Do not treat them such that you live in their world, but take from their age the timeless and walk in that.

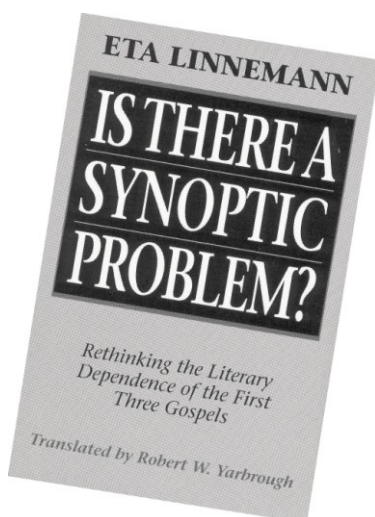
⁷¹ Spurgeon, *Commenting and Commentaries*, p.66.

A Didactic Review of Linnemann's, *Is There A Synoptic Problem?*

In the 2004 Haddington House Journal, we have included a section called "A Didactic Review." The purpose of this kind of review is for broader instruction than simply discussing a particular book, hence the name – didactic review, or instructive review. This review acquaints the reader with several technical terms and issues in the field of biblical studies; it will help students taking advanced biblical courses; and it also surveys some of the key authors in German Higher Criticism. We believe that students and readers need to know that there have been significant works written challenging several of these false assumptions. These books by Eta Linnemann are catalogued in the Haddington House Library and may be consulted by readers coming for study and sabbatical.

The Editor

***Is There a Synoptic Problem?
Rethinking the Literary
Dependence of the First Three
Gospels***
Eta Linnemann. Trans. R.W.
Yarbrough.
Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker
Book House Co., 1992, 219 pp.
ISBN 0-8010-5679-9



Is There a Synoptic Problem? Rethinking the Literary Dependence of the First Three Gospels has already received due attention a number of years ago in the book reviews of respected journals. However, the case for literary independence set forward by Linnemann still maintains a measure of relevance in the field of Source Theory. (We will define this in the following paragraph.) This is evidenced by the small but growing number of New Testament scholars who are drawing attention to the necessity for the re-evaluation of the long propagated Two-Source Hypothesis, the child of German Historical Criticism.

Historical Criticism of the Scriptures emerged as the Enlightenment and its understanding of history interacted with the Reformation's principles governing Scripture. The Enlightenment, in the words of Leonhard Goppelt,

...separated the present from the past in order to liberate the present from the domination of tradition. Out of this level of awareness and reflection arose the programmatic concerns of the historical-critical investigation of scripture. Such investigation maintained that even the biblical writings must first of all be seen as historical documents of the past and not as a word laying claim upon the present.¹

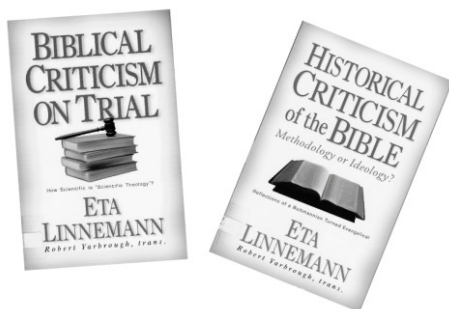
Thus, the theological task of Historical Criticism was to analyse the Scriptures using historical science and interpret them using philosophy, which, "...should in the end communicate to persons in the modern world the content of the New Testament, which is of importance to them but is obscured by church tradition."² This historical examination of the Scriptures leads to developmental assumptions and further questions about the layers of sources behind the Scriptures as well as the identity and nature of these sources. This historical investigation focused also on the process of oral and written transmission, on the order of the writing, in this case, of the Gospels, and on the literary dependence between them.

¹ Leonhard Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, ed. Jürgen Roloff, trans. John E. Alsup (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1981), 1:256.

² Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, 1:256.

The phrase, “Literary dependence... means that a writer used the writing of another as a source” (p.47). Thus, within the realm of Historical Criticism the field of Source Criticism took shape. The Two-Source theory of literary dependence postulates that Matthew and Luke independently followed Mark and another hypothetical source named Q (from the German, ‘quelle’, which means, ‘source’).

Eta Linnemann wrote, *Is There a Synoptic Problem?* initially in German, under the title *Gibt es ein Synoptisches Problem?* This was written as a “specific example” of the first book, *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology? Reflections of a Bultmannian Turned Evangelical.*³ Both of these have been translated into English by Dr. Robert W. Yarbrough, of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, along with the latest, *Biblical Criticism on Trial: How Scientific is “Scientific Theology”?*⁴



Eta Linnemann’s conversion deserves special mention. She was a student of well-known eminent German scholars such as Rudolf Bultmann. She advanced in her studies and became honorary professor of New Testament at Philipps University, Marburg, West Germany. Eventually, certain observations lead her into disillusionment until her dramatic conversion experience. After which she vehemently rejected her prior academic position

³ Eta Linneman, *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology? Reflections of a Butmannian Turned Evangelical*, trans. Robert Yarbrough (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 201), 169 pp.

⁴ Eta Linneman, *Biblical Criticism on trial: how Scientific is “Scientific Theology”?*, trans. Robert Yarbrough (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 217 pp.

and successful writings. Linnemann now writes from the position of an Evangelical Conservative repudiating the historical-critical theology she once zealously embraced. The extraordinary nature of her conversion is only heightened upon reflection on Bultmann's teaching. Rudolf Bultmann, who began to exercise influence from 1920, sought to demythologize the Scriptures, that is to say, to interpret them using existential philosophy, to reach beyond the obsolete and mythical view of the world presented in the Scriptures and grasp the intrinsic New Testament message as distilled in the kerygma, the primitive proclamation. It is with a knowledge of this that Eta Linnemann's conversion is justifiably termed, "dramatic".

Is There a Synoptic Problem? is divided into four parts. Part one, containing two chapters, is a critical review of the history of the presuppositions and method of theological science as well as that of academic pedagogy. Part two, consisting of six chapters, sets out to answer the question, "Is there literary dependence among the Synoptic Gospels?", by the quantitative comparison and vocabulary investigation of the Synoptics. Part three, containing two chapters, discusses "The possibility of understanding the Synoptic Gospels without literary dependence", and the implications of this to our understanding of the origin of the Gospels. Part four, in concluding fashion, deals with the purpose of and treatment of the four Gospels.

The introduction to the content of *Is There a Synoptic Problem?* provides the reader with a useful orientation to the general nature of the contention in Source Theory *via* answers to questions frequently asked Linnemann. Almost immediately, her austere but evocative manner of presenting the material becomes vividly apparent. However, owing to the book's specialized material, it is only moderately readable. From the start Linnemann plainly asserts, regarding the literary relationship among the Gospels, that "The alleged literary dependence is not proven." (p.10) The reader is continually reminded of this initial statement at all significant junctures throughout the book. Among five reasons stating why the issue of literary dependence has unfavourable implications for Christians, she maintains that, "...the authority of God's Word is undermined by the systematic exercise of critical predisposition to reduce the Word of God to literary-

theological construction instead of seeing it as the revelation of our creator and redeemer.” (p.15)

Linnemann begins chapter one by writing, “Scientific theology was born, not because people were committed to the Bible, but because they sought reasons to avoid obligation to its teachings.” (p.19) She points out that the majority of leaders were not theologians but philosophers. Linnemann identifies Gotthold Ephraim Lessing as the one whose “dubious reinterpretation of Eusebius” (p.27) laid the ideological foundation upon which the Synoptic literary dependence hypotheses was built. She points out that Historical Critical New Testament scholars established the views of literary dependence following the same path tread by Old Testament scholars who established the Graf-Wellhausen source theories (a particularly influential, yet an increasingly questionable theory of the historical development of the Old Testament). Both are a product of intuition/ conjecture, beginning with a “...striking absence of proof.” (p.22) Only later were biased assertions and judgements brought to bear on the theses. Linnemann writes, “...students were never told that the two-source theory resulted from no thorough investigation of the biblical data, but rather is a transitional phase in the course of a discussion.” (p.25) She then recounts the varied explanations of literary dependence as it developed from its questionable source, namely, Lessing.

In chapter two, Linnemann critically reviews the history of the presuppositions and method of academic pedagogy. She draws attention to widely used Georg Strecker and Udo Schnelle’s introduction to New Testament exegesis. Strecker and Schnelle ignore the possibility that the Gospels arose independently; instead they presuppose literary dependence and Marcan priority, and support their view by “distorting” the observations of philologist Karl Lachmann, who wrote that Matthew and Luke did not imitate Mark, but that they arose out of evangelical tradition. She then identifies other scholars in Strecker and Schnelle’s text who further perpetuated the Two-Source Hypothesis based on presuppositions, circular arguments and “outright distortions” (p.53).

Part two quantitatively compares the Synoptics and investigates their vocabularies to determine if any literary dependence really exists. Linnemann clearly emphasizes that,

“Literary dependence can only be proven or disproven from the actual wording; one must restrict study to the linguistic data.” (p.70) Agreement in the content of the Synoptics may not be sequestered as evidence for literary dependence. “Similarity in content is, however, no proof of literary dependence, for it could just as easily be due to historical rather than literary factors.”(p.149) Linnemann summarizes her findings,

...material shared by Matthew and Mark comprises 55.46 percent of Matthew; material shared by Luke and Mark comprises 42.91 percent of Luke... 50.43 percent of the three Synoptic Gospels follow a similar narrative sequence, 75.65 percent of the sequence in Matthew and Mark is similar, and 70.43 percent of the sequence in Mark and Luke is similar... extent of parallelism between Matthew and Mark at 46.5 percent, and between Mark and Luke at 36.17 percent... quantitative cross-sectional Synoptic investigation showed that only 22.17 percent of the words... are parallel in all three Synoptics are totally identical. In Matthew and Mark... 40.99 percent; in Luke and Mark...34.29 percent... similarities in vocabulary,... come to 0.22 percent of Mark... 2.3 percent for Mark and Matthew, and 0.97 percent for Mark and Luke. (p. 149-150)

She admits to some cases of literal agreement but discounts them as “rare” (p.150). She sharply concludes the summary of part two, “...not only the two-source theory but also the Griesbach hypothesis, with their underlying assertion of literary dependence among the three Synoptic Gospels, are both finished when the Synoptic data has been sifted. No room remains for free-floating hypotheses.” (p.152) The Griesbach hypothesis theorizes that Matthew wrote first and was in turn used by Luke, with Mark writing his Gospel last making use of both Matthew and Luke.

Linnemann bases her explanation of the independent origin of the Gospels on the analysis of the mechanics of “linguistic

fixation” (p.158-165) as it is governed by the effectual “forgotten factor”, memory (p.182-191). She identifies that Wolfgang Schadewaldt already promulgated these thoughts. Linnemann states that the direct independent historical deposit of the Gospels by eyewitnesses has its significance in the multiple and not single shared testimony of the Evangelists to Christ Jesus (p.195-196).

Has Linnemann successfully dismantled the edifice of literary dependence? She has unarguably achieved a plausible case for literary independence, but she has not eliminated the real possibility of degrees of literary dependence working in tandem with oral tradition. Oral tradition, not in the Historical Critical sense, but meaning that the disciples and Evangelists did repeatedly verbalize standardized historical eyewitness accounts to the communities before actually depositing these accounts in an orderly manner directly in writing (e.g. Luke 24:19-24). John W. Wenham puts forth a view similar to this in his, *Redating Matthew, Mark and Luke: A Fresh Assault on the Synoptic Problem*.⁵ It is also highly likely the individual Gospel writers had access to whichever Gospel(s), if any, was written prior to the writing of their own. It is inconceivable to think that the communities of believers did not actively circulate material written for common edification. The apostle Paul, we read, requested that his epistle to the Colossians be read in the Laodicean church and the letter sent to Laodicea be read in Colossae (Colossians 4:16).

Linnemann did commendably well to point out, as others have done, the circular arguments and biased conjectures by which literary dependence hypotheses developed. Linnemann discerningly states, “The mode of thinking of twentieth-century theologians is imposed on the New Testament.” (p.51) Linnemann’s quantitative comparison of the Synoptics is impressive and useful. Though, her selection of shared material, parallels and pericopies is at times questionable. It is unfortunate that she did not scientifically define the accepted threshold of agreement percentage necessary to determine, without a doubt,

⁵ John W. Wenham, *Redating Matthew, Mark and Luke: A Fresh Assault on the Synoptic Problem* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1992), 319 pp.

dependence. By what methods and standards is this determined? She does not satisfactorily address this crucial point.

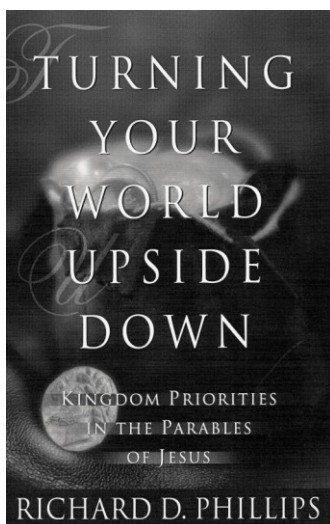
Linnemann correctly identified the importance of the “forgotten factor” of memory. This, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is indeed central to the formation of the Gospels. Linnemann correctly stated that, “Reliable historical tradition does exist” (p.187), in the testimony of the church fathers. This is an important reminder since their testimony has been prejudicially discounted as being “unscientific”. It is unfortunate that Linnemann interacts almost exclusively with German scholarship. Part three lacked clarity in nomenclature, which in turn directly affected the strength of her argumentation for literary independence, though not its plausibility. It seems that Linnemann and the reader must continually keep in mind that her statement, “We are dealing here with a methodologically new starting point...” (p.71), is equally pertinent to all parts of her book.

Linnemann is adamant in her arguments and blunt in her reproofs. She is right to draw attention to the need for re-examination of, specifically, the Two-Source Hypothesis. Her arguments are, in the end, graciously seasoned with scripture and exhortation, which demonstrates her love for the Gospel, its divine inspiration, inerrancy and its historical veracity. There is, therefore, good reason Linnemann’s writings should continue to occupy a guarded place in the realm of our knowledge of Source Theory. Pastors, divinity students and academics alike will find and continue to find this book usefully thought provoking in their studies and work.

Reviewed by Frank Z. Kovács, a Tutor with Haddington House and pastor of the Reformed Hungarian Church (ARP), Toronto, Ontario.

Book Reviews

***Turning Your World Upside Down: Kingdom Priorities in the Parables of Jesus.* Richard D. Phillips. Phillipsburg: P and R Publishing, 2003, 229 pp., paper \$12.99 (US). ISBN 0-87552-579-2**



The parables of our Lord should hold a deep abiding interest for believers, and so it is always good to find another book published which reverently endeavours to expound them. Richard D. Phillips is a Presbyterian Church in America pastor in Margate, Florida, who delivered the contents of this book first at the Sunday evening services at Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, following Dr. Boice's death. Readers may be interested to know that Phillips was also a contributor to the newly released volume on worship in honour of James Montgomery Boice, *Give Praise to God*. In that volume Phillips wrote, "The Lord's Supper: An Overview."

This book is Phillips' third to be published by Presbyterian and Reformed on his studies in Luke, with "the first two centered on Jesus' miracles and his encounters with people." (*Mighty to Save: Discovering God's Grace in the Miracles of Jesus* and *Encounters with Jesus: When Ordinary People Met the Saviour*). The miracles and parables of Jesus have been standard fare for sermon books now for generations, with R.C. Trench being a standard study. It is good for each generation to own them as their own and meditate upon them often. These sermons are evidence that biblical preaching continues to be found. The central concern of this volume is to expound the parables in Luke as seen in the context of the Lord turning our world upside down in a call to demanding discipleship. There is a clear challenge to our crass materialistic age and a probing confrontation to our worldliness.

Phillips has concentrated only on the form of dramatic story parable in Luke and is not sidetracked into the finer points of the definition of parable. In his opening chapter he properly bridges the parabolic world of Old and New Testaments and answers simply, yet well, the question of "the why of parables". He concludes this with "our response to them reveals the state of our hearts before God."

One would expect a good sprinkling of application in material that originated as sermons. The reader will not be disappointed in this regard; for example, page eight deals with the call for priorities in ministry. In good sermons there should also be some helpful illustrations and incorporation of other scriptures to consult or illustrate and further illuminate. All of this is there. In looking for application, it is not only found in the passage expounded but also in the full study questions at the back of the book for each of the thirteen chapters. I found that some of the real application is to be found here. With the inclusion of a separate study guide, one sees a niche for study: an adult class for thirteen weeks or a home study group. I think this helps us define whom the book has been published for, and as such, we should not expect to see a highly technical exegetical treatise or monograph on the parables. Rarely does the author engage with translation issues except when needed (p. 37), and even then he

does not lose sight of his audience. It is not a word study, sermonic text. Rather, he attempts to outline clearly each parable under study (the Sower, Good Samaritan, Rich Fool, Banquet, etc.) and mingle this with application.

There are endnotes at the back of the book with chapter reference materials listed. One senses that these “notes” have only the bare bones. I was surprised not to see any reference to Craig Blomberg’s *Interpreting the Parables*. Either it was not used or was deemed too technical for this work, yet it is now standard in the field. There are two references to Arland Hutgren’s new commentary on the parables. Several of the older writers are mentioned: Taylor, Ryle, Arnot, and Dodds, as well as more recent ones like Bailey, Wenham, and Hendriksen. In terms of recent books of a similar vein, I think of Gordon Keddie’s *He Spoke in Parables* and Simon Kistemaker’s *Parables of Jesus*.

Keddie’s work is more inclusive, beyond Luke, yet has no study guide. Phillips’ is sound, helpful, evangelical and biblical – a good model of sermon work, always good for ministers to read to refresh their souls and strivings. It will also be helpful for groups and as devotional literature for individuals. A minister should take time once a year to read well-crafted sermons, just as seminary students should. This is not just a good homiletical exercise, but this work will feed your souls. It is healthy for all believers, not just students for the ministry and pastors, to read well-crafted sermons. Here is a feast for the soul.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

***The Promise of the Future.* Cornelius P. Venema.
Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2000, 538pp., \$39.99 (US).
ISBN 0-85151-793-5**

Dr. Venema, Dean of the Faculty at Mid-America Reformed Seminary in Dyer, Indiana, USA, has written a book on eschatology that is a welcome addition to a field of theological study notoriously lacking in solid, biblical scholarship. As to be expected from so able a writer, the book covers the entire range of the study of Christian eschatology, and does so from a distinctively Reformed perspective. Dr. Venema used the New American Standard Bible as his translation of choice for this work. (This reviewer finds more than a few premillennial biases in that translation. See for example, Matthew 24: 30). The book is divided into six major parts ranging from Part One, "The Future is Now," to Part Six, "The Future of All Things."

Venema sets out to accomplish several things in this work: first, to give the church a standard theological text in the area of eschatology that is based primarily on biblical exposition; second, to produce an engaging, easily read text that is aimed primarily at a biblically and theologically informed laity; and third, in light of the predominance of the premillennial view, to articulate a thorough apology for the amillennial perspective. The last point is immediately obvious when the reader sees that over three-fourths of the text is devoted to issues relating to the second coming of Christ, with less than a quarter being devoted to the area of personal eschatology and such matters as the intermediate state after death. He is especially concerned, therefore, to deal with the issues in eschatology that are most likely to be of central importance to the lay person. Given the climate of eschatological speculation, the lay person is most likely to be concerned with such matters as the Rapture, the Antichrist, and Dispensationalism's peculiar views of the future. Venema's book does a superb job of both showing the biblical errors of the popular view and of setting forth a more faithfully biblical eschatology. To that end, a large portion of the book is

given over to a reasonably objective analysis of each of the four major views of Revelation 20, followed by a critical analysis of each. The author tells the reader from the outset that he is committed to the amillennial perspective. That information is most helpful to the reader as he interacts with Dr. Venema's evaluation of the views other than his own. As one committed to postmillennialism, this reviewer found Dr. Venema's work in this area generally well done. In his analysis of the postmillennial perspective, Venema makes the observation that most, if not all, of today's postmillennial advocates have embraced a modified form of that position that combines elements of the amillennial perspective with their own. Many earlier postmillennialists (such as Jonathan Edwards, among others), held that the millennial period was to be a literal one thousand year span of godly righteousness prevailing throughout the earth prior to Christ's return. Since most modern advocates of postmillennialism do not hold to the literalness of the one thousand year period, Venema sees this as a change from the original postmillennialism. This is a point where many postmillennialists would not agree with Venema, and his own discussion of the history of postmillennialism and amillennialism in the church shows the difficulties of tracing the origins of the two views. Advocates of each of the two views claim early origins in church history, and it is not unusual to find many of the same names of "famous advocates in church history" on their respective lists! On a more critical note, Dr. Venema castigates postmillennialists for what he styles "triumphalism" (see page 352 and 355) and for, in effect, claiming to be greater than Christ! He claims that postmillennialism de-emphasizes the suffering aspect of the Christian life and thus places a biblically unwarranted emphasis on victory. This is a common amillennial argument against postmillennialism, and one that has been taken to task by, among others, Dr. Kenneth Gentry in his *He Shall Have Dominion*. (Appendix B in that work is entirely devoted to this subject).

Prior to Venema's book, the standard Reformed text on eschatology was the fine work of the late Anthony Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*. That work remains a useful text and differs from Venema's work in several ways. In terms of style and

layout, Venema's book is almost two hundred pages longer than Hoekema's. One reason for that is the larger, easier to read typeface used in *The Promise of the Future*. Hoekema divided his study into two major parts, whereas Venema has divided his into six. Venema's book includes a helpful twelve page "Glossary of Terms" – a section lacking in Hoekema's work. Both books contain "selected bibliographies," but there are some notable differences between them. Such notable names as Bultmann, Barrett, Dodd, Schweitzer, Moltmann, and Barth are missing from Venema's bibliography but they are all found in Hoekema's. Hoekema, however, nowhere lists more familiar names (in certain conservative circles) such as DeMar, Rushdoony, and Gentry. For some readers, this may be a factor in which of the two books proves to be more useful. Hoekema is clearly interacting with academic, twentieth-century Protestant theology, whereas Venema, while not ignoring "mainline" Protestant theology, is more focused on orthodox Reformed and evangelical theology.

In the final analysis *The Promise of the Future* is to be confidently commended to both laity and clergy as an excellent text on the important and too often misunderstood subject of Eschatology. The seminary student, depending on his needs, may wish to supplement Dr. Venema's book with the equally valuable, though somewhat dated, text by Anthony Hoekema.

Reviewed by Charles H. Roberts, who is the pastor of Ballston Spa A.R. Presbyterian Church in New York, where he has served since 1996. He also serves as a tutor for Haddington House and is the author of Race Over Grace: The Racialist Religion of the Christian Identity Movement.

A Review Article on Puritan Studies

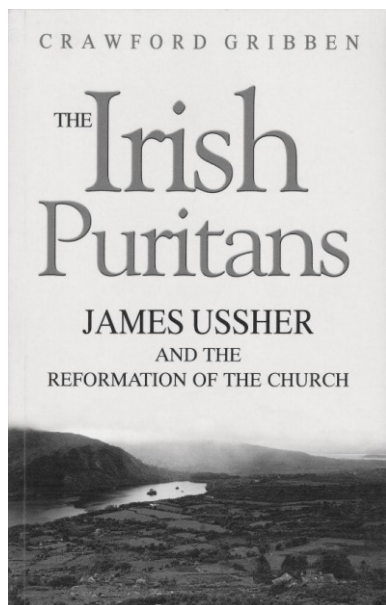
***The Irish Puritans, James Ussher, and the Reformation of the Church.* Crawford Gribben. Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2003, 160 pp., paper. ISBN 0-85234-536-4**

***John Owen the Man and His Theology.* Cd. Robert W. Oliver. Darlington, England and Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Evangelical Press and Presbyterian and Reformed, 2002, 190 pp., paper. ISBN 0-87552-674-8**

***The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience.* Geoffrey F. Nuttal. Introduction by Peter Lake. Reprint. [Original 1946] Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992, 192 pp., paper. ISBN 0-226-60941-3**

The reprinting of Puritan texts or books is certainly a valuable enterprise, and in the last forty years we have seen several published. The three books brought together here constitute a wonderful body of literature, going beyond reprints to survey themes, men, and theologies of the Puritan period, revealing that many have been returning to the sources and are offering their assessments. I believe that is good, as it allows us to grow more astute in our assessments and to develop a deeper maturity of thought on Puritanism. We find ourselves at a new stage of Puritan studies from forty, or even twenty years ago.

The first work, *The Irish Puritans, James Ussher, and the Reformation of the Church* by Crawford Gribben, at last gives us a book in print on this most neglected Puritan, James Ussher. The great advantage here, though, is that Gribben actually places Ussher in his context within the Irish reformed church and the political backdrop. I had first encountered Ussher in the mid-1980's and was amazed to see how formidable an influence he was upon the Westminster Assembly of Divines, yet



he never attended it. Twenty years later there is at last a book to truly introduce us to Ussher and the Irish Puritans.

It is evident that Gribben, a Research Fellow in the Centre for Irish-Scottish Studies, Trinity College, Dublin, has been imbibing his subject for a long time. I was disappointed, however, that he chose to limit his “notes” and bibliography in an effort to be more popular. It made me feel that now I will have to wait for the expanded version. This does not mean the work is inferior – it is not – but it will push for more research

and writing. It is not the definitive text. The work is well illustrated – Presbyterian and Reformed and Evangelical Press has been taking advantage of recent changes in the publishing trade, which is a delight to see.

The content of Gribben’s book revolves around six chapters, beginning with “Ireland Awakening” to “Why Study James Ussher and the Irish Puritans?” He has also included the valuable “Irish Articles”, a rare document to locate. The writing style is easy to follow, frequently sprinkled with words of application. He is not afraid to speak out in the first chapter about the early Reformed attempts at evangelization by preachers and the reality that they “seemed more intent upon colluding with the official policy of the Anglicization than with witnessing to the trans-cultural reality of the gospel” (p. 21). I could draw contemporary parallels also on the “Old English” and “New English” colonists and the tensions which arose.

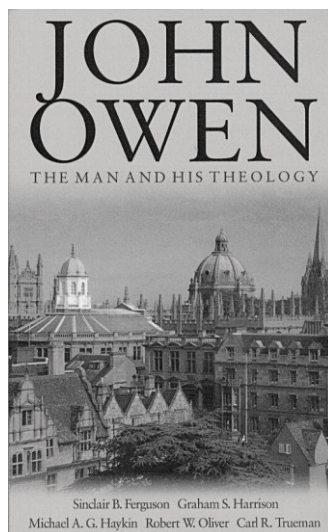
It is stirring to read of the revival in Ulster and the parallel revival in Scotland in the 1630’s. Gribben discusses well the collapse of Ussher’s Puritan church, its consensus, and the emergence of Irish Presbyterianism. His concluding chapter is

meant for contemporary Irish evangelicals, yet should not be bypassed by outsiders. It is thoughtful analysis, no doubt not relished by all, as he takes a hard hit at nationalism in all its stripes (p. 127) and admits that faithful witnesses in Ireland have still not made significant impact.

The next work, *John Owen, the Man and His Theology*, originated from the papers delivered at a symposium held on the life and teaching of John Owen at the John Owen Centre for Theological Study, (London Theological Seminary), London, England, in September, 2000. The opening paper/chapter is by the editor, Robert W. Oliver, “John Owen – His Life and Times”. This is a superb paper, one of the wonders of this book, and an excellent essay to incorporate in our course on Owen here at Haddington House.

Other chapters/papers include Carl Trueman’s “John Owen as a Theologian”, written in that even and well-reasoned manner that we have come to appreciate with this scholar. Trueman himself is the author of the book, *The Claims of Truth: John Owen’s Trinitarian Theology*, and one sees a continuation of those themes here. Owen was a scholar, a thinker, and a polemicist.

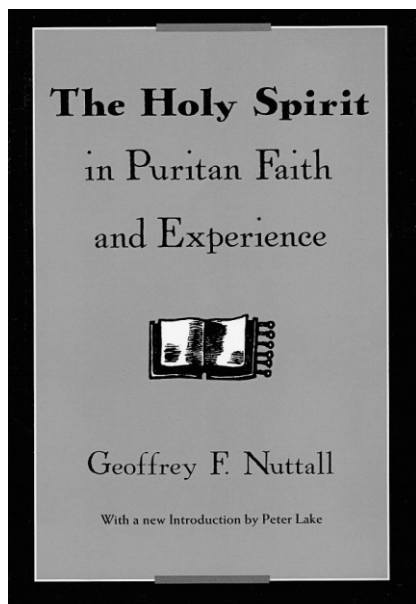
At the heart of the book are two papers by Sinclair Ferguson, who has been writing on Owen ever since his Ph.D. and his volume on Owen published with Banner of Truth. These two papers cover majestic themes in systematic theology: “John Owen and the Doctrine of the Person of Christ” and “John Owen and the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.” This last paper was splendid and robust for the soul – clearly reflective of a matured life engaged with the subject.



The final two papers, one by Michael Haykin, “John Owen and the Challenge of the Quakers” and the other by Graham Harrison, “John Owen’s Doctrine of the Church”, called to mind several questions which remained unanswered. Haykin’s paper raises our awareness of the Quakers at a time when I suspect we have largely forgotten them. It is interesting and orderly, yet left me with questions unanswered on the Word and Spirit, and this not the fault of the paper, but reflective of our state of scholarship on the subject. Graham believes that Owen was not a Presbyterian ‘wolf’ masquerading in Independent sheep’s clothing (p. 186). This, of course, is a popular idea, and I will leave it with the reader as to whether Graham convinces you. I did feel there was a shallowness in giving all the nuances of Owen’s polity. It is a big subject and hard to adequately cover in one paper.

This second volume holds together well, and although a collection, it maintains unity, something not always achieved in such works. Between *John Owen, the Man and His Theology* and Ferguson’s *John Owen on the Christian Life*, we have two excellent textbooks to open the door to Owen’s *Collected Works*.

This new work is in general not overly technical but accessible to student, reading layman, and specialist. Well done.



Now we come to the third book, Geoffrey Nuttall’s *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*. A reprint of this seminal work, which first appeared in 1946, it now has a new introduction by Peter Lake in which he attempts “to set Professor Nuttall’s book in the context of the slew of literature on Puritans and Puritanism published since the volume’s first appearance in

1946” (p. ix). Lake’s seventeen-page essay is a slow go and very humbling. Why? Nuttall has been one of the intellectual giants who roamed widely in the Puritan’s annals and manuscripts, and one feels like a pygmy when reading his works. This work originated at Oxford for the Doctor of Divinity degree by thesis in the war years. He is perhaps the world’s most erudite scholar on Baxter, Doddridge, and the Congregational Puritans. Unfortunately, his works have not been as well known in North America. James Packer was able to popularize much better, and his living in Britain and Canada allowed the North American audience to learn more about his works.

Lake summarizes well the themes of this work:

The book represents an attempt to recreate, to imaginatively inhabit, and to analyze the thought world, the spiritual climate or atmosphere of radical Puritan piety and to relate that piety backward to trends and tendencies in prewar and contemporary moderate Puritanism and forward to the emergence of the Quakers. It is a model exercise in the study of change and continuity, organized around a central doctrine, that of the Holy Spirit, but using that single topos as an entry point into a much wider subject (p. xix).

Lake is correct. Nuttall has not produced a dogmatic text, but a book on experimental theology in Puritanism through collating, comparing, and interacting with Puritan writers. This can be daunting, however, because Puritanism as a movement was not static and there are tangents. Nuttall argues that there was a development from the Word and the Spirit to the Spirit and the Word and, amongst the radical, to the Spirit alone, culminating in Quakerism. Yet, he posits a centre for Puritanism – faith and experience, hence this is their unity, this is Puritan.

For any reader not familiar with the name Geoffrey Nuttall, this work will serve as a corrective. I suspect that we are never quite sure how to label Nuttall’s theology at the end of the day. Perhaps a mingling of Barthianism with extreme Puritan

mysticism is about as close as we can come. Yet, the book stands as one of those classical works on a subject that all must try to get their heads around – namely the doctrine of the Holy Spirit for the Puritans, hence the magisterial chapters: “The Spirit and the Word”, “The Discerning of Spirits”, “The Witness of the Spirit”, “The Spirit and Prayer”, “The Spirit and the Prophecy”, “The Spirit and the Ordinances”, “The Liberty of the Spirit”, “The Government of the Spirit”, “The Life and Fellowship of the Spirit”, and “The Spirit in Every Man” (which ends with Quakerism). Some will be disappointed that the Quakers are mentioned because they suppose they were unimportant in the seventeenth century piety. Yet, they were there, and history has a way of saying that the entire story must be told. Nuttall tried to do this. The book remains one of the stones to touch and stop at if we really want to dig deep into the Puritan theology of the Holy Spirit.

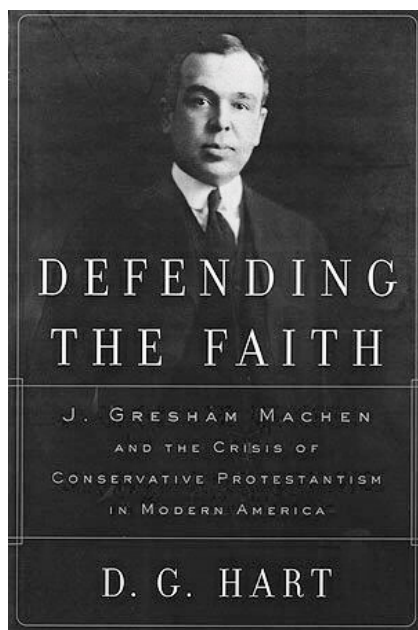
Born in North Wales, Nuttall’s writing and lecturing represent a phenomenal contribution to the study of Puritanism. As his research came out first in the World War II era, the reader should attempt to discern his theological presuppositions, just as with the other reprints coming out now with origins in the 1940’s, for example, Horton Davies or Lewis Bevens Schenck. We can learn from Nuttall, Davies, and Schenk, but need to understand the mindsets from which they operate. The reader will find Nuttall’s newly released *Visible Saints: the Congregational Way 1640-1660* by Quinta Press an absolute gold mine of Puritan Material.¹ His other recent release, *Studies in English Dissent*, is a must read for the study of non-conformity. Readers, practice discernment with your authors. As Robert Oliver recently wrote on Nuttall, “[he] knows the difference between Calvinism and Arminianism...he shows sympathy for evangelicals and men of the revivals, he stands back from them and endorses an ecumenism that sits lightly to the demands of subscription to firm doctrinal statements.”

¹ Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Visible Saints: The congregational Way 1640-1660*, second edition (Weston Rhyn, Shropshire: Quinta Press 2001), 190 pp. ISBN 1-897856-12-1

Ranking our three books, Gribben's *The Irish Puritans* is the most accessible for the non-specialist; next Oliver's edited collection *John Owen*; and last, Nuttall's *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, which is clearly the most demanding of these three books on Puritanism. What a rich field for Puritan studies has opened up since 1945. Here are two contemporary and one seminal work.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

***Defending the Faith: J. Gresham Machen and the Crisis of Conservative Protestantism in Modern America.* D.G. Hart
Original by Baker, 1995. Republished Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2003,
240pp., paper \$14.99 (US). ISBN 0-87552-563-6**



For decades the standard biographical resource for students wishing to learn more of the life of J. Gresham Machen was the comprehensive biography by Machen's protégé and colleague, Ned B. Stonehouse (third edition, Banner of Truth, 1987). Stonehouse's work has certainly not been eclipsed by Hart, and for any serious study of Machen's life, it remains the foundational text.

What Hart has sought to do is not duplicate the work of Stonehouse in producing a detailed biography outlining the life and accomplishments of Machen. Rather, he seeks to place those details in an historical context that serves to give a reference

point for the analysis of the Machen legacy in contemporary Presbyterianism.

What is striking about Machen (1881-1937), who was the darling of Fundamentalism and its most intellectually able spokesman during the Fundamentalist Modernist controversy, was that he was so atypical of Fundamentalism. In fact, as Hart shows, often there was a love-hate relationship, as Machen was very suspicious of a religion that was shaped more by 'Victorian sentimentality' than biblical scholarship. In his ordination sermon, that discomfort with a faith separated from scholarship was clearly stated (p. 32). Indeed, what distinguished Machen from so many fundamentalists was that rather than despising the liberals, Machen actually admired many aspects of their learning and had been impressed by the piety to which he was exposed during his graduate studies in Europe. He profoundly disagreed with their conclusions, and indeed many of their presuppositions, but he was loath to question their motives. Unlike so many 'angry conservatives' who demonize those who espouse heterodox opinion, Machen opposed them with respect and recognised that they presented many legitimate challenges to traditional Presbyterian and Reformed churches in the areas of spirituality, ethics and ecclesiology.

Hart's thesis is that it is the unique social and educational background of Machen that positioned him for this task. Machen was the younger son of a prominent Baltimore family that moved in the highest circles of society. Pious and learned he was weaned on the classics of art and literature, he moved with social grace among the elite, while at the same time being grounded in, and devoted to, the Scriptures and the Presbyterian confessional heritage of Westminster. Never seen to be at odds in his home, they came to be the fertile soil in which his very able mind was nurtured. Like the rest of his family, Machen was intellectually able, but for a long time he seemed to be vocationally adrift. After graduating Phi Beta Kappa with a degree in Classics from the Johns Hopkins University, he went on to earn degrees at Princeton University and Princeton Seminary. His dislike of the aforementioned sentimentality of so much of Presbyterianism and his reluctance to accept the responsibilities of ordination pushed

him to pursue further graduate work at Marburg and Göttingen Universities.

Here, Hart convincingly argues, while at Marburg studying under Wilhelm Herrmann, Machen was impressed by Herrmann's personal piety while at the same time being deeply suspicious of his Ritschlian theology. It seems that the abiding interest Machen developed in defending the scholarly integrity of historic Christianity arose from his interaction with these scholars whose desire for the unity of the church and cultivation of piety was not pretended and whose ethics often put fundamentalist Christianity to shame. At the same time Machen saw that their view of scripture undermined true historic Christianity. Machen would argue that "the ideas of first century Christians were still relevant for twentieth century audiences, in the same way that classicists thought the teachings of classical authors were applicable to modern life" (p.55).

Rather than despising the methods and findings of higher criticism and the character of those who held to them, Machen interacted with them and used the real challenges and findings of some aspects of their learning to defend historic Christianity and to challenge the liberal 'leap of faith.' What was unique about Machen was, that at the same time, he challenged the anti-intellectualism and social views of fundamentalism. Machen argued that Victorian sentimentality in religion was not theological conservatism but that it "shared the sentimentality and idealism of theological liberalism" (p.81). Both fundamentalism and liberalism placed an "undue and unbiblical emphasis on the individual's subjective encounter with God, revelation, or the church and thus theology and historical fact were sacrificed to individualism" (p.95).

In the remainder of the book, Hart goes on to develop this thesis in the light of Machen's high profile position as the leading intellectual spokesman for the 'fundamentalism' with which he was so often reluctantly allied. Machen's work in the areas of the relationship of Christianity to science, ethics and public policy, and finally ecclesiology are convincingly developed, and we see how his unique stance often made him a 'duck out of water.' Machen "tried to construct a mediating position that subordinated

the naturalism of liberal Protestantism to the supernaturalism of fundamentalism but still kept the two ideas together” (p. 104). In the end Machen hoped to preserve the historic Christian witness that did not seek to change society by environmental control, as both liberal and fundamentalist did, but that stressed Christian cultural involvement that had a concern for social responsibility. Not mere philanthropy, but a Church that “should seek to bring all people without exception, high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, compatriot and alien, into the full warmth and joy of the Church” (p. 145). However, as Hart notes, “that hope made Machen too Christian for most intellectuals and too marginal for most Protestants” (p. 159).

Interestingly it is the Epilogue, in which Hart brings his thesis to conclusion, which is the least convincing portion of the book. His thesis comes to its full expression when he states, “the Orthodox Presbyterian Church [OPC] became the institutional manifestation of the faith Machen had laboured to defend” (p. 161). In its early history it is true that the tensions that were apparent in American Protestantism and Machen’s mediating positions were reflected in the split between the OPC and the Bible Presbyterians. The OPC remained true to Machen’s views on social involvement rather than social control in issues such as temperance and in a scholarly and intellectual approach to biblical study. And without a doubt, we continue to see a cleavage in American Protestantism between the new evangelicalism, which is a full blown expression of all the concerns which Machen voiced over the flaws of sentimental, man-centred expressions of faith, and the Reformed and Presbyterian camp as a whole. The question is, however: has the OPC, or any other Reformed or Presbyterian body for that matter, fully embraced Machen’s interactive scholarship, libertarian social views, and concern for the unity of the Church of Christ, or have we slipped into another brand of isolationist, theologically Reformed fundamentalism of our own making? Hart’s work begs the question but leaves it unanswered.

We may find Hart’s conclusion less than ironclad; however, his thesis is clearly one that needs further exploration,

and this book is a wonderfully thought provoking jumping off point for that discussion and so we highly recommend it.

Reviewed by Jeff J. Kingswood, who is the pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church, Associate Reformed, Woodstock, Ontario.

[Editor's note: Machen's book, The New Testament: an Introduction to its Literature and History is used as a textbook in the Haddington House course, New Testament Introduction – NT10.]



*J. Gresham Machen in Y.M.C.A. uniform
France, 1918*

The Complete Works of Hans R. Rookmaaker

ed. Marleen Hengelaar-Rookmaaker, Carlisle, England:

Piquant, 2002, hc. ISBN for 6 volume set 1-903689-04-X

Volume 1: Art, Artists and Gauguin, 441 pp. ISBN 1-903689-06-6

Volume 2: New Orleans Jazz, Mahalia Jackson and the Philosophy of Art, 404 pp. ISBN 1-903689-04-2

Volume 3: The Creative Gift, Durer, Dada and Desolation Row, 516 pp. ISBN 1-903689-08-2

Volume 4: Western Art and the Meanderings of a Culture, 515 pp. ISBN 1-903689-09-0

Volume 5: Modern Art and the Death of a Culture, 405 pp. ISBN 1-903689-10-4

Volume 6: Our Calling and God's hand in History, 531 pp. ISBN 1-903689-11-2



I first met Hans Rookmaaker around 1971 when he spoke at Edinburgh University. His book, *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture*, had just become a bestseller, nominated by Malcolm Muggeridge as ‘a book of the year’. I was a student at the Free Church College, still struggling with seeing how the Christian faith related to contemporary life in the early Seventies. *Modern*

Art was an eye-opener (and still remains so today—both my copies have been appropriated by my children, so I'm very glad to have it included in this beautiful six volume set). But Rookmaaker's first illustrated talk was not about art. It was about music. Here was a man who not only was a highly regarded academic in his own field—he was Professor of the History of Art at the Free University of Amsterdam—he was also an authority on modern popular music, particularly jazz, but also increasingly rock. To a hippy, he looked anything but the part. Unlike his friend Francis Schaeffer, who was positively eccentric in his appearance, Hans Rookmaaker was very conventional in a three piece suit (but very unconventional to evangelicals of the time in that he smoked a pipe and took a drink). However, it was his razor sharp mind, his impish sense of humour and his compassionate understanding of the contemporary world that endeared him to those who heard him. Rookmaaker (which curiously enough is Dutch for "Smoke-maker") became a Christian in a Nazi internment camp in the Second World War and died in 1977 at the peak of his powers aged just 55. His impact on the Evangelical world in general and on Christians in the arts and entertainment worlds has been immense. The publication of his *Complete Works* should renew that impact for new generations. The production of this set has been an immense labour of love on the part of Rookmaaker's daughter, Marleen. Everything is here, from the academic *Gauguin and Nineteenth-Century Art Theories* and the popular *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture* to articles on a variety of philosophical, theological and cultural topics and a new biography by Laurel Gasque. There is a great deal published for the first time, including a book entitled *God's Hand in History*. There are full endnotes, and Volume 6 has a very full bibliography, a contents index, a Scripture index and a name index. Space does not permit to do justice to this monumental piece of work. But it will be a treasure trove of thought-provocation for a long time to come. You will find this little gem, for instance. Rookmaaker mentions the four inexplicable things Schaeffer said we must accept for everything to make sense: that zero equals one (creation), that one equals two (Christ—two natures but one person), that one

equals three (the Trinity) and that 100% plus 100% equals 100% (Divine sovereignty and human freedom). It may seem churlish to mention, but there are disappointments. I was disappointed by the absence of the original illustrations from *Modern Art* because of copyright restrictions. Similarly Rookmaaker's simple but helpful diagrams are missing from his lectures on the history of culture. In some places, also, the translation from Dutch seems stilted and not at all like Rookmaaker's dynamic English prose. I found the new biography disappointing. It concentrates too much on Rookmaaker's *influence*, and doesn't give us enough of the *man*. At that level I found the previous biography by Linette Martin much better. However, a definitive biography still waits to be written. That having been said, there is no doubt that this is a fitting literary monument to the memory of one of the most stimulating Christian teachers of the twentieth century. The six hardback volumes are beautifully produced and will withstand the hard usage of constant reference which they will receive, at least in my study. (What a pity the reissue of the works of Francis Schaeffer some years back were in paperback.) If £190 is too much for you, cajole your local library, or your college or university library to obtain a set at all costs!

Reviewed by Rev. Alex J. MacDonald, the minister of Buccleuch and Greyfriars Free Church of Scotland, Edinburgh, and the Editor of The Monthly Record, in which this review first appeared and is printed here by permission. The Haddington House Reading Library has this set and incorporates its use in the Worldview course.



Hans R. Rookmaaker

Book Notices

In *Book Notices* we inform readers about works which have been recently added to the Haddington House Library. Most entrants here are currently in print but on occasion we will include rare and valuable books we have acquired which students and patrons may want to come and consult. *Book Notices* are made in keeping with our editorial policy to help our readers in the stewardship of their resources and time. Our *Journal* uses the standard abbreviation 'hc' to denote hard cover. The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) has been included with all books.

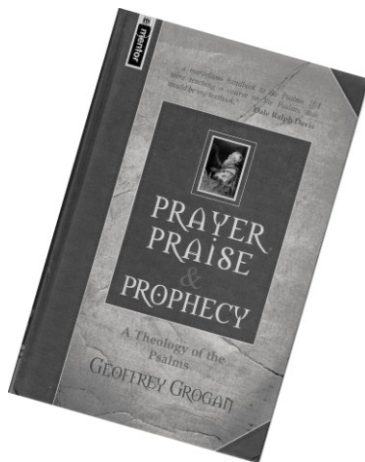
Biblical Theology

Our focus for the 2004 *Journal* for book notices in the Bible Department is upon the Psalms.

Prayer, Praise and Prophecy: A Theology of the Psalms

Geoffrey Grogan. Fearn, Ross-shire: Mentor (Christian Focus), 2001, 330 pp., hc. ISBN 1-85792-642-0

Geoffrey Grogan is one of God's servants whom, when you meet, you listen carefully to their every word. They are just so wise and gracious, a delight to meet. I recall some evening lectures I went with my wife, Nancy, who was doing a course with him on I Samuel at the Glasgow Bible College (now International Christian College),



and how full those lectures were! Thus, it is with excitement we commend his newest book, this time on the Psalms. Two reviewers express all I need to say.

Editor

“Geoffrey Grogan has given us a marvelous handbook to the Psalms. He does not tack on theological themes at the end but places them front and centre, at the heart of the book, forcing us to face the God of the psalms. He has digested a mass of Psalms research and yet releases it in the most palatable and useful doses. I profited immensely from his treatment of the literary design of the Psalter; he helps us see in the Psalms a consciously coherent work (in five books) rather than random bits of poetry. If I were teaching a course on the Psalms, this would be my textbook.”

Ralph Davis

Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson

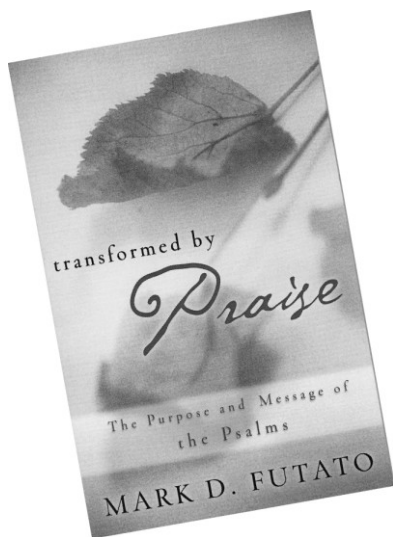
“Throughout the history of the Church, the Book of Psalms has provided an inexhaustible spiritual treasury for praise and prayer. Until recently most commentators and expositors have tended to explore the riches of individual psalms. However, the Book is more than a random collection of poetry, but one that has been skillfully and purposefully compiled. In this volume Dr. Grogan provides a knowledgeable introduction to the Book as a whole, and by adeptly drawing on material from modern studies he brings out the interconnection between the psalms in two main ways. First he examines themes that recur throughout the book and provide it with a unity that derives from the various aspects of God’s relationship with his people. Then he charts the process by which individual psalms were brought together to form the collections that eventually grew into the Book that we now have. Much light is thrown on particular psalms by understanding them in terms of their setting in the Book as a whole. Furthermore Dr. Grogan places the finished book into its total canonical context by examining how the New Testament interprets the psalms and how we may appropriate them today. This is a volume that is written with reverence, care and clarity, and is a significant

addition to evangelical literature on the Psalms. It is to be commended to those who wish to have new vistas on a well-known and well-loved part of Scripture, and also to students who [are] looking for an entry point into modern literature on Psalms.”

John L. Mackay
Free Church of Scotland College, Edinburgh

Transformed by Praise: The Purpose and Message of the Psalms.

Mark D. Futato. Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 2002, 165 pp., paper. ISBN 0-87552-190-8



“Introduces major themes of the Book of Psalms as a literary whole, and offers transformed living through an encounter with the God of the Psalms.”

P & R

“I have a lot of books on the Psalms. This one is different. With great insight, and drawing on his own experience, Dr. Mark Futato will lead you to the throne of God in a way that will renew your relationship with Christ and lift your eyes from pain to praise.”

Steve Brown

“An encouraging look into the book of Psalms as a guide not only for our theology but for our practical Christian lives as well.

I commend this book to all who yearn for a closer walk with God.”

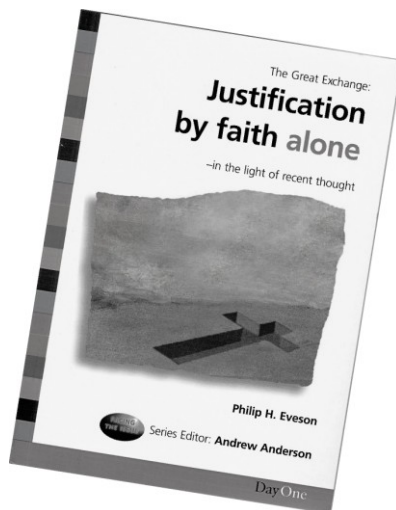
Richard L. Pratt Jr.

Includes six chapters as follows:

1. Praise the Lord: The Psalms as Praise
2. Open My Eyes: The Psalms as Poetry
3. The Abundant Life: The Psalms as Instruction (Part 1)
4. The Godly Life: The Psalms as Instruction (Part 2)
5. The Lord Reigns: The Psalms of the Kingdom
6. Blessed is He Who Comes: The Psalms and the Future

Systematic Theology

The Great Exchange: Justification by faith alone – in the light of recent thought, Philip H. Eveson, in the series “Facing the Issue.” Second Printing. Epsom, Surrey: Day One/FIEC, 1998, 227 pp., paper.
ISBN 0-902548-86-7



“FACING THE ISSUE is a series of books designed to help Christians to think biblically on a variety of pressing issues that confront evangelicals at the present time. The themes are primarily theological but, as the Bible never teaches doctrine in isolation, all have a keen practical edge to them.

“The series began its life in the cut and thrust of discussion in the Theological Committee of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches whose brief is to monitor and respond to challenges and changes in the world of evangelical theology. The committee, whose members currently are Brian Edwards (chair), Andrew Anderson, Paul Brown, Andrew Bryant, David Field, Stanley Jebb, Hywel Jones and Jonathan Stephen, commissions the writers, discusses their approach with them, and is available for consultation.”

Andrew Anderson, Series Editor

“...[Justification] it is a subject being hotly debated at the present time in scholarly circles. Many articles and books on this theme have been published in recent years. It is now fashionable

to denounce the Lutheran interpretation of Paul and of the Judaism of his day and to present what many feel to be a refreshingly new and simple approach to the understanding of justification.

“In addition, bold attempts are being made to bring justification back into the everyday thinking and preaching of the church. Concern is expressed that the church is not presenting the truth of justification. In a sincere desire to make the matter relevant to today’s needs, the term is, unfortunately, being given meanings that are at best secondary, so that the essence of the truth is lost and it ceases to be the gospel’s cutting-edge. These are the matters which are addressed in the following pages.

“The book is divided into four parts. Part one uncovers what the Bible teaches on the subject of justification including a chapter on the vocabulary associated with it. In part two attention is drawn to the traditional opposing positions on justification and the attempts that have been made recently to cross the divide. Part three discusses recent scholarly work on the subject. In the final part the crucial importance of getting it right is emphasized both for the future of the church and the eternal well-being of its individual members. An attempt is also made to show the relevance of the subject in today’s world.”

Introduction, pp. 10-11

“This piece of clear, warm theology is a priceless guide and example. Absorb, teach, rejoice in these pages! Very highly recommended.”

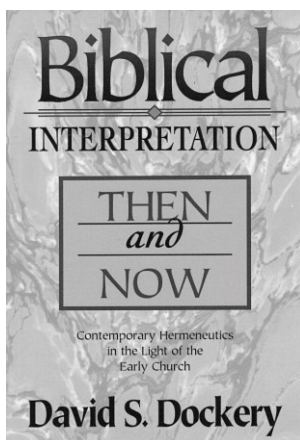
The Banner of Truth Magazine

Philip Eveson has been involved with London Theological Seminary since its founding under Dr. Lloyd-Jones’ inspiration in 1977. He is also Chairman of the Red Sea Mission Team (Britain).

Historical Theology

In recent weeks we have acquired several books for the Haddington House Reading Library. We have selected three that are used in specific courses.

A. Ancient Church



Biblical Interpretation Then and Now: Contemporary Hermeneutics in the Light of the Early Church.

David S. Dockery. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992. 247 pp., paper. ISBN 0-8010-3010-2

“In the early Christian centuries, as today, ‘biblical interpretation determined theology and theology shaped biblical hermeneutics,’ notes David S. Dockery.

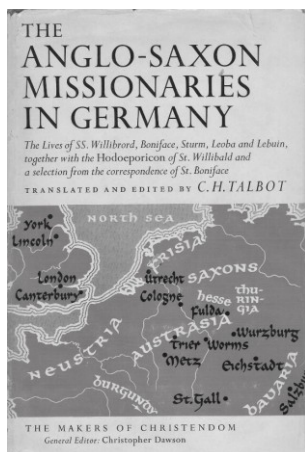
“Dockery tells the story of that interrelationship from Jesus’ use of the Old Testament through the Council of Chalcedon in 451. He identifies key models to show that few twentieth-century issues are new. Each theological movement can be categorized by its approach to Scripture.

“Some fascinating figures contributed to these models, especially Clement, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Augustine, Jerome, and Theodoret. Dockery explains the influential Alexandrian and Antiochene schools of biblical exegesis.

“This history becomes a window through which to view late twentieth-century hermeneutics. Some Bible readers still seek allegorical meanings. Teachers still struggle with making the message contemporary. How a movement views Scripture still deeply influences theology.”

Back Cover

B. Medieval Church



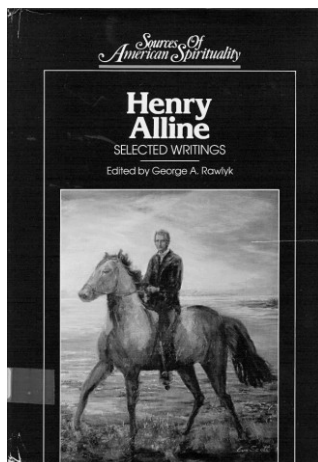
The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany.

Trans. Ed. C. H. Talbot. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1954, 234 pp., hc. (Out of Print)

This is an invaluable work, not only providing the ‘lives’ of Willibrord, Boniface, Sturm, and Lebuin, but also correspondence and travel records of the missionary movement from Britain to Germany and the Netherlands.

Editor

C. Canadian Church



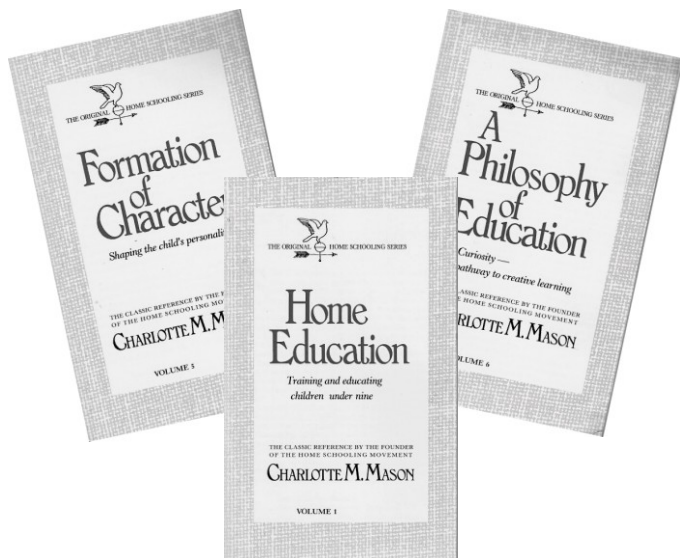
Henry Alline: Selected Writings.

Ed. George A. Rawlyk. New York: Paulist Press, 1987, 343 pp., hc. (Out of Print)

For students of Canadian church history, Henry Alline must be studied. The acquisition of this Alline reader now makes this possible at Haddington House. There is much on the web, but not the easiest to access, and there is not a critical text currently on the web. This volume contains material from Alline's journal, sermons, and hymns.

Editor

Applied Theology



The Original Home Education Series.

Charlotte M. Mason, 6 volumes, original 1935. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1989.

Volume 1: Home Education: Training and educating children under nine

Volume 2: Parents and Children: The role of the parent in the education of the child

Volume 3: School Education: Developing a curriculum

Volume 4: Ourselves: Improving character and conscience

Volume 5: Formation of Character: Shaping the child's personality

Volume 6: A Philosophy of Education: Curiosity – the pathway to creative learning

We are delighted to now have this foundational series in the Haddington House Reading Library. We hope this series will

be a blessing to our students and to folks coming for sabbatical or research.

Editor

“Sometimes treasures of unique value are unearthed while rummaging in the past. Charlotte Mason was a distinguished British educator at the turn of the century, whose work had a wide and lasting influence. At that time many of the upper-class children were educated at home, and Mason’s insights changed their lives. Her ideas were also brought to life in many schools (mostly private), which gave the children an unusual and rich start in their education and development.

“Nearly a hundred years later, a changing society often leaves us disappointed with its tangled, worn-out, and narrow practices in education. We chart a “falling capital” in the product that matters most: the life education and character of our children. Is it not the moment to look at the roots? To start again?...

“These writings will give important priorities and guidelines to parents, teachers, and schools. I believe that once again we need to think of all of life, our culture and heritage, so that our children may be nurtured with the nutrients of life and not sawdust. Welcome back, my dear valued mentor, Charlotte Mason! Our children need you as never before.”

Susan Schaeffer Macaulay

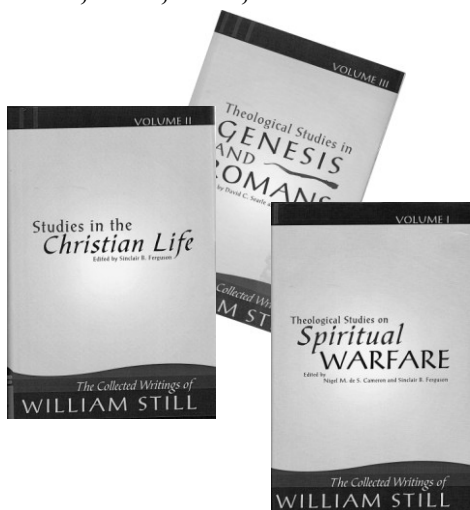
The Collected Writings of William Still.

***Volume I: Theological Studies on Spiritual Warfare*, 340 pp., edited by Nigel M. de S. Cameron and Sinclair B. Ferguson. ISBN 0-946068-38-0**

***Volume II: Studies in the Christian Life*, 327 pp., edited by Sinclair B. Ferguson. ISBN 0-946068-48-8**

***Volume III: Theological Studies in Genesis and Romans*, 341 pp. edited by David C. Searle and Sinclair B. Ferguson. ISBN 1-85792-571-8**

Edinburgh/Geanies House, Fearn: Rutherford House and Christian Focus, 1990, 1994, 2000.



We are delighted that this set of *The Collected Writings of William Still* is now complete and housed in the Haddington House Reading Library for students and guests to consult. It combines well our vision to maintain the marriage of piety and theology. William Still (1911-1997) was born in Aberdeen and pastored for over 50 years at Gilcomston South Church of Scotland, Aberdeen. His ministry was focused upon the Gospel and reached many in Scotland, having worldwide impact as well through his Daily Bible Reading Notes. Many of us first “met” Rev. Still through his *Towards Spiritual Maturity*, which had deep influence upon me in the early ’80’s. It is contained here in Volume II.

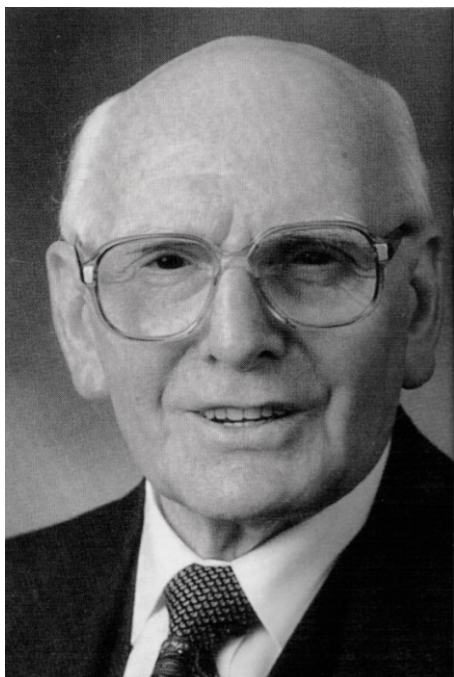
Editor

“**Volume 1** concentrates on the person and work of Christ, the Cross, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Devil, the second coming and the relationship between the Law and Grace.

Volume 2 is a series of studies in the Christian life – spiritual maturity, what happens when we become Christians, and practical topics such as prayer, morality, work and leisure.

Volume 3 comprises daily Bible readings on Genesis and Romans: two rich sources of theological truth and profundity.”

Back Cover



“It has been said of the great North American pastor-theologian Jonathan Edwards that he had the ability to take an idea and hold it in his mind, turning it round like a diamond to view it from every possible perspective. William Still would make no claim to rival Edwards, yet one of the obvious passions of his ministry has been to take several fundamental biblical insights and explore how these apply in a variety of areas of Christian thought and life. The result is striking.”

Rev. Sinclair
Ferguson

“To read...William Still’s writings is to come into touch with a mind of rare perception and profound spiritual insight. It is hardly surprising that his ministry has left such an enduring mark on generations of Christian people.”

Rev. James Philip

Haddington House

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Haddington House is a unique center in North America for the advancement of evangelical Presbyterian theological training in Canada and abroad. We pursue the fulfillment of this objective in several ways, including: 1.) providing a study house with a growing library; 2.) offering seminary level courses with several degree programme options, via distance learning combined with Summer and Winter Schools and in-house lectures; and 3.) publishing an annual *Journal*, the purpose of which is to provide students, laity, and ministers with an annual publication to develop their minds and souls through in-depth articles and reviews reflective of the theological basis and ethos of Haddington House Trust.

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We welcome, as well, the support by prayer and contributions of all who desire to see a renewed zeal in Canada for evangelical Presbyterianism.

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*for the Advancement of
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The *Haddington House Trust* is for the advancement of evangelical Presbyterian theological training. It exists to strengthen the work of conservative evangelical Presbyterian theological education and training in Canada and from Canada.

The theological basis of the Trust is the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms together with the Presbyterian form of government. The Trust stands in the great reformational tradition of the evangelical and experimental Reformed Faith and holds to a conservative Presbyterian polity rooted in a complementarian theology of the ministry and eldership. The ethos of the Trust is the marriage of theology and piety. The ethos and theological basis will be kept in view in all Trust work.

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1. To provide in harmony with its theological basis and ethos theological courses both in a residential setting and through distance by means of tutors and visiting professors (Haddington House School of Theology);
2. To advance the publication of materials in harmony with its theological basis and ethos. This will first be through its annual journal and second through the undertaking of additional publication endeavours (Haddington House Publications);
3. To advance its own library and study centre for evangelical Presbyterianism in Canada (Haddington House);
4. To advance the work of evangelical Presbyterian theological education and training by special lectures, papers, or meetings both inside and outside of Canada; and
5. To draw together a body of Trustees. The Trustees will be governed by an annual vow to uphold the ethos and theological foundations of the Trust and will provide guidance and direction in the execution of the above four items.

We welcome as *Patrons* all who share this common agenda. We encourage all in Canada and outside of Canada who desire to see a renewed zeal in Canada for evangelical Presbyterianism to become *Patrons of the Trust*.

