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American Theological Inquiry (ATI) was formed in 2007 by Gannon Murphy (PhD Theology, Univ. Wales, Trinity Saint David) and Stephen Patrick (PhD Philosophy, Univ. Illinois) to open up space for Christian scholars who affirm the historic Ecumenical Creeds to contribute research throughout the broader Christian scholarly community in North America and the West broadly.

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To provide an inter-tradition forum for scholars who affirm the historic Ecumenical Creeds of Christianity to communicate contemporary theologies, developments, commentaries, and insights pertaining to theology, culture, and history toward elevating Western theological discourse. ATI seeks a *critical* function as much or more so as a quasi-ecumenical one. ATI's intention is not to erase or weaken the distinctives of various ecclesial traditions, but to widen the dialogue and increase inter-tradition understanding while mutually affirming Christ's power to transform culture and the importance of strengthening Western Christianity with particular reference to her historic, creedal roots.

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EDITORIAL

Reprise On Divine Hiddenness (With Kierkegaard's Help)*

The problem of Divine hiddenness is a constituent part of academic debates between theists and atheists. A particular difficulty with these debates is the epistemological baggage they carry. For there are two very different ways of approaching the problem: the intellectual (or evidential) and the religio-existential. The first asks whether Divine hiddenness might present an added evidence for the *non-existence* of God. This is the concern the atheist wants principally addressed. The second approach inquires as to what it may *mean*. The difficulty arises, however, in that much of what belongs to the latter approach by way of a response must be borrowed from to address the former. Christianity's treatment of the problem of hiddenness is not an evidential one, but a theological response to a well-known quandary of which the faith takes no pains to conceal.

Some three millennia ago, the psalmist lamented: "But I, O Lord, cry out to you…why do you cast me off? Why do you hide your face from me?"(Ps. 88:14). And, "Why, O Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?" (Ps. 10:1). Job inquired of God, "Why do you hide your face and consider me your enemy?" (Job 13:24). The prophet Isaiah sums things up saying, "Truly you are a God who hides himself" (Is. 45:15). If the atheist requires acknowledgment of the problem, he need look no further than the Bible.

Because Christianity's response is theological rather than evidential, generic debates over whether "a god" exists are useless. Hiddenness can only be answered when one first deals with the theological question of why, according to the Christian faith, God is known by theologians as the *deus absconditus*, the "absconding god," and what purpose there may be in it. So, the difficulties become stacked. Cargo from Zone B is needed to properly stock Zone A and the interlocutor has an implicit policy of *Zone-A-cargo-only*.

Søren Kierkegaard's principle argument—with which I agree in the main and to which we turn in a moment—is that, for God to reveal himself to the atheist in the manner he demands, would be for him to become personally terrorized. The atheist would learn only to be terrified of God, not adore Him, thereby producing a form of relationally damaging coercion. Instead, God has revealed himself in the person of Jesus as a *relatable human*. Jesus the Son is the conduit to God the Father whom we cannot see.

But none of this is the answer the atheist is looking for. And, though I'm somewhat sympathetic to this frustration, it must also be acknowledged that reality often refuses to lend itself to our preferred methods for discovering it. It may very well be an objective truth that you love your family, but try proving it. You might point to all you do for them, but I can respond that I am still not satisfied and, moreover, you have failed to reproduce an observable effect in a controlled setting. Meanwhile, phenomena we might adduce for believing in God—available to all as seen in this issue's patristic selection from Clement of Alexandria—are left ill-considered.

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* Portions of this editorial were taken from my essay on Divine hiddenness in *Reasons for the Christian Hope* (2010), pp. 35-51, with kind permission from Mentor, an imprint of Christian Focus Publications.

So what, then, did Kierkegaard say? In his *Philosophical Fragments*, he tells the parable of a King and the lowly maiden whom he loves. The King, a wise and generous man, wants to make the maiden his own, but not merely so he can objectify her and own her as a kingly possession, but as equals in love. A problem emerges, however, as the King, a wise a noble man, realizes what an unbridgeable gulf exists between them. He is the sovereign of the land while the maiden scarcely owns anything. Kierkegaard writes that while "love is exultant when it unites equals . . . it is triumphant when it makes that which was unequal equal in love."[1] This triumphant love is the love desired by the King as it is far deeper than exultant love. It raises a lesser to an equal while greatly pleasing the higher to be lowered in the humility of love. And so,

> . . . there awoke in the heart of the king an anxious thought . . . Would [the maiden] be happy in the life at his side? Would she be able to summon confidence enough never to remember what the king wished only to forget, that he was king and she had been a humble maiden? For if this memory were to waken in her soul, and like a favored lover sometimes steal her thoughts away from the king, luring her reflections into the seclusion of a secret grief; or if this memory sometimes passed through her soul like the shadow of death over the grave: where would then be the glory of their love? Then she would have been happier had she remained in her obscurity, loved by an equal, content in her humble cottage; but confident in her love, and cheerful early and late. What a rich abundance of grief is here laid bare . . . For even if the maiden would be content to become as nothing, this could not satisfy the king, precisely because he loved her, and because it was harder for him to be her benefactor than to lose her. And suppose she could not even understand him? For while we are thus speaking foolishly of human relationships, we may suppose a difference of mind between them such as to render an understanding impossible. What a depth of grief slumbers not in this unhappy love . . . [2]

The King is obviously a metaphor for God, and the maiden for us. In his more technical moments, Kierkegaard often refers to God as the "Teacher" and us as a "Learner," hallmarked by error. There is thus between them a chasm of understanding. Kierkegaard comments that if this be true of an earthly King and maiden, how much more so God and man! And yet God loves us and wishes to bring us to Himself as equals. Not as *ontological* equals, but as equals in a love that seeks the glorification of the other.

Love always seeks the glorification of the other. Glory is a common theme in Scripture. We often read that God is a God of Glory who invites, even demands, glorification. Many object that God seems selfish in this regard. But what is often overlooked is that God *also* promises glorification to those who love Him. This is precisely the foundation on which the law of love is built. If I love God, then I desire to see Him in glory, even at the expense of my own. Isn't this true with our own spouse, or our own children? We gladly "decrease" ourselves if it means they will be "increased." What loving parent, for example, wouldn't desire that their child lives a fuller life than his or her own? True love therefore makes sacrifices, perhaps in career or with regard to personal aspirations, to see those they love

[1] Søren Kierkegaard, 'Philosophical Fragments' in *A Kierkegaard Anthology*. Edited by Robert Bretall (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1946), 165.

[2] Ibid., 165-6.

flourish. And, in the end, the return of this self-abnegation is a triumphant love that fills the soul like nothing else can, though it seeks not itself.

There is thus an irony in that, when God calls us to glorify Him, he knows that doing so will result in our own unspeakable joy, even if it seems to us now that to do so would be injurious to us. Faith, in this sense, is a risk. It is trusting that what at first seems harmful to us, is in fact the very thing we need most. C. S. Lewis picked up on this in his essay, "On Obstinacy In Belief":

> There are times when we can do all that a fellow creature needs if only he will trust us. In getting a dog out of a trap, in extracting a thorn from a child's finger, in teaching a boy to swim or rescuing one who can't, in getting a frightened beginner over a nasty place on a mountain, the one fatal obstacle may be their distrust. We are asking them to trust us in the teeth of their senses, their imagination, and their intelligence. We ask them to believe that what is painful will relieve their pain and that what looks dangerous is their only safety. We ask them to accept apparent impossibilities: that moving the paw farther back into the trap is the way to get it out—that hurting the finger very much more will stop the finger hurting—that water which is obviously permeable will resist and support the body—that holding on to the only support within reach is not the way to avoid sinking—that to go higher and to a more exposed ledge is the way not to fall. To support all these incredibilia we can rely only on the other party's confidence in us—a confidence certainly not based on demonstration, admittedly shot through with emotion, and perhaps, if we are strangers, resting on nothing but such assurance as the look of our face and the tone of our voice can supply . . . Sometimes, because of their unbelief, we can do no mighty works. But if we succeed, we do so because they have maintained their faith in us against apparently contrary evidence. No one blames us for demanding such faith. No one blames them for giving it. No one says afterwards what an unintelligent dog or child or boy that must have been to trust us. In Christianity such faith is demanded of us . . . [3]

Our natural inclination is to revile the risk of faith as a menace and so, from instinctive self-preservation, we recoil from it. But faith is the invitation to trust in God *as revealed*. Kierkegaard comments that,

> Men sometimes think that this might be a matter of indifference to God, since he does not stand in need of the learner. But in this . . . we prove how far we are from understanding him; we forget that [He] loves the learner . . . The man who cannot feel at least some faint intimation of this . . . is a paltry soul of base coinage, bearing neither the image of Caesar nor the image of God.[4]

But we still wonder how the "unhappy love" of which Kierkegaard speaks can be made triumphant; how the great gulf of understanding can be bridged. Continuing with the parable, Kierkegaard suggests three ways that the King might accomplish his goal of unity-in-love with the maiden. First, the union might be brought about by an elevation of the

[3] C. S. Lewis, "The Obstinacy of Belief," in *The World's Last Night, And Other Essays* (Fort Washington, PA: Harvest Books, 2002) , 23.

[4] Op. cit., 166.

learner. God could "take the human subject up to himself, transfigure him, fill his cup with millennial joys and let the learner forget the misunderstanding between them in tumultuous joy."[5] The learner might be greatly inclined to prize this happiness, for now his troubles are over and he can live in ecstasy. But, Kierkegaard writes, even the noble king would perceive the difficulty here since the maiden would only have been deceived, merely "enchanted by a change in the outward habiliments of [her] existence."[6] This would be to love what is at the Master's table without loving the Master, and the gulf between them would remain.

Second, then, "The union might be brought about by God's showing himself to the learner and receiving his worship, causing him to forget himself over the divine apparition. Thus the king might have shown himself to the humble maiden in all the pomp of his power, causing the sun of his presence to rise over her cottage, shedding a glory over the scene, and making her forget herself in worshipful admiration."[7] Here, though we wouldn't experience "millennial joys," we would at least have irrefutable evidence that God exists. "Alas," Kierkegaard writes, "this might have satisfied the maiden, but it could not satisfy the king, who desired not [merely] his own glorification but hers."[8] The king desires understanding between them rather than fawning adulation produced under duress. So now the king sits on the horns of a dilemma. If he shows himself in resplendent array, he destroys understanding and, thus, the unity and humility of love. And yet, if he merely rewards her, showing his love in an imperfect expression, he deceives her, since it isn't really him but what he has. Kierkegaard writes,

> Not in this manner then can their love be made happy, except perhaps in appearance, namely the learner's and the maiden's, but not the Teacher's and the king's, whom no delusion can satisfy. Thus God takes pleasure in arraying the lily in a garb more glorious than that of Solomon; but if there could be any thought of an understanding here, would it not be a sorry delusion of the lily's, if when it looked upon its fine raiment it thought that it was on account of the raiment that God loved it? Instead of standing dauntless in the field, sporting with the wind, carefree as the gust that blows, would it not under the influence of such a thought languish and droop, not daring to lift up its head? It was God's solicitude to prevent this, for the lily's shoot is tender and easily broken.[9]

Thus, we consider the third option. Speaking of the ancient Hebrews, Kierkegaard notes first that, "There once lived a people who had a profound understanding of the divine; this people thought that no man could see God and live. Who grasps this contradiction of sorrow: not to reveal oneself is the death of love, to reveal oneself is the death of the beloved!"[10] And so,

> . . . since we found that the union could not be brought about by an elevation it must be attempted by a descent. In order that the union may be brought about, God must become the equal of such a one, and so he will appear in the likeness of the humblest.

[5] Ibid, 167.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid, 167-8.
[10] Ibid, 168.

> But the humblest is one who must serve others, and God will therefore appear in the form of a servant. But this servant-form is no mere outer garment, like the king's beggar-cloak, which therefore flutters loosely about him and betrays the king; it is not like the filmy summer-cloak of Socrates, which though woven of nothing yet both conceals and reveals. It is his true form and figure. For this is the unfathomable nature of love, that it desires equality with the beloved, not in jest merely, but in earnest and truth. And it is the omnipotence of the love which is so resolved that it is able to accomplish its purpose, which neither Socrates nor the king could do . . . [11]

Where, then, does a person find God and enter into union and understanding with Him? Naturally, for Kierkegaard, this is to be found in the incarnation of Jesus, fully God, fully man. In the Gospels, Jesus Himself declares that the way to see God is to embrace Himself. He claims to be the one Mediator that bridges the once unbridgeable chasm. Jesus claims to be "the way" and says that, "If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well." Philip objects: "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." But Jesus answers him with a loving rebuke: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." (John 14:8-9). Interestingly, Jesus later pronounces a benediction on those who do not see, but believe. This is burnished by a promise that those who seek union with God in a pureness of heart will someday see God (Matt. 5:8).

This love is to be established and nourished now, without seeing, in preparation for the beatific vision where one day we shall. God takes on the mortal frame of humanity to make unity with it, redeem it and thereby glorify it. We, in turn, are invited—even commanded—to reciprocate this love, glorifying God. This isn't the answer the atheist wants and it fails to meet him on his own epistemological grounds, but it's the right answer.

Gannon Murphy
American Theological Inquiry

[11] Ibid.

PATRISTIC READING

Clement of Alexandria
Protrepticus, Chs. 5 & 6

Let us then run over, if you choose, the opinions of the philosophers, to which they give boastful utterance, respecting the gods; that we may discover philosophy itself, through its conceit making an idol of matter; although we are able to show, as we proceed, that even while deifying certain demons, it has a dream of the truth. The elements were designated as the first principles of all things by some of them: by Thales of Miletus, who celebrated water, and Anaximenes, also of Miletus, who celebrated air as the first principle of all things, and was followed afterwards by Diogenes of Apollonia. Parmenides of Elia introduced fire and earth as gods; one of which, namely fire, Hippasus of Metapontum and Heraclitus of Ephesus supposed a divinity. Empedocles of Agrigentum fell in with a multitude, and, in addition to those four elements, enumerates disagreement and agreement. Atheists surely these are to be reckoned, who through an unwise wisdom worshipped matter, who did not indeed pay religious honour to stocks and stones, but deified earth, the mother of these—who did not make an image of Poseidon, but revered water itself. For what else, according to the original signification, is Poseidon, but a moist substance? The name being derived from *posis* (drink); as, beyond doubt, the warlike Ares is so called, from *arsis* (rising up) and *anæresis* (destroying). For this reason mainly, I think, many fix a sword into the ground, and sacrifice to it as to Ares. The Scythians have a practice of this nature, as Eudoxus tells us in the second book of his *Travels*. The Sauromatæ;, too, a tribe of the Scythians, worship a sabre, as Ikesius says in his work on *Mysteries*.

This was also the case with Heraclitus and his followers, who worshipped fire as the first cause; for this fire others named Hephæstus. The Persian Magi, too, and many of the inhabitants of Asia, worshipped fire; and besides them, the Macedonians, as Diogenes relates in the first book of his *Persica*. Why specify the Sauromatæ, who are said by Nymphodorus, in his *Barbaric Customs*, to pay sacred honours to fire? Or the Persians, or the Medes, or the Magi? These, Dino tells us, sacrifice beneath the open sky, regarding fire and water as the only images of the gods.

Nor have I failed to reveal their ignorance; for, however much they think to keep clear of error in one form, they slide into it in another.

They have not supposed stocks and stones to be images of the gods, like the Greeks; nor ibises and ichneumons, like the Egyptians; but fire and water, as philosophers. Berosus, in the third book of his Chaldaics, shows that it was after many successive periods of years that men worshipped images of human shape, this practice being introduced by Artaxerxes, the son of Darius, and father of Ochus, who first set up the image of Aphrodite Anaitis at Babylon and Susa; and Ecbatana set the example of worshipping it to the Persians; the Bactrians, to Damascus and Sardis.

Let the philosophers, then, own as their teachers the Persians, or the Sauromatæ;, or the Magi, from whom they have learned the impious doctrine of regarding as divine certain first principles, being ignorant of the great First Cause, the Maker of all things, and Creator of those very first principles, the unbeginning God, but reverencing these weak and beggarly elements, as the apostle says, which were made for the service of man. And of the rest of the

philosophers who, passing over the elements, have eagerly sought after something higher and nobler, some have discanted on the Infinite, of whom were Anaximander of Miletus, Anaxagoras of Clazomenæ;, and the Athenian Archelaus, both of whom set Mind (νοῦς) above Infinity; while the Milesian Leucippus and the Chian Metrodorus apparently inculcated two first principles— fullness and vacuity. Democritus of Abdera, while accepting these two, added to them images (εἴδωλα); while Alcmæon of Crotona supposed the stars to be gods, and endowed with life (I will not keep silence as to their effrontery). Xenocrates of Chalcedon indicates that the planets are seven gods, and that the universe, composed of all these, is an eighth. Nor will I pass over those of the Porch, who say that the Divinity pervades all matter, even the vilest, and thus clumsily disgrace philosophy. Nor do I think will it be taken ill, having reached this point, to advert to the Peripatetics. The father of this sect, not knowing the Father of all things, thinks that He who is called the Highest is the soul of the universe; that is, he supposes the soul of the world to be God, and so is pierced by his own sword. For by first limiting the sphere of Providence to the orbit of the moon, and then by supposing the universe to be God, he confutes himself, inasmuch as he teaches that that which is without God is God. And that Eresian Theophrastus, the pupil of Aristotle, conjectures at one time heaven, and at another spirit, to be God. Epicurus alone I shall gladly forget, who carries impiety to its full length, and thinks that God takes no charge of the world. What, moreover, of Heraclides of Pontus? He is dragged everywhere to the images—the εἴδωλα—of Democritus.

A great crowd of this description rushes on my mind, introducing, as it were, a terrifying apparition of strange demons, speaking of fabulous and monstrous shapes, in old wives' talk. Far from enjoining men to listen to such tales are we, who avoid the practice of soothing our crying children, as the saying is, by telling them fabulous stories, being afraid of fostering in their minds the impiety professed by those who, though wise in their own conceit, have no more knowledge of the truth than infants. For why (in the name of truth!) do you make those who believe you subject to ruin and corruption, dire and irretrievable? Why, I beseech you, fill up life with idolatrous images, by feigning the winds, or the air, or fire, or earth, or stones, or stocks, or steel, or this universe, to be gods; and, prating loftily of the heavenly bodies in this much vaunted science of astrology, not astronomy, to those men who have truly wandered, talk of the wandering stars as gods? It is the Lord of the spirits, the Lord of the fire, the Maker of the universe, Him who lighted up the sun, that I long for. I seek after God, not the works of God. Whom shall I take as a helper in my inquiry? We do not, if you have no objection, wholly disown Plato. How, then, is God to be searched out, O Plato? For both to find the Father and Maker of this universe is a work of difficulty; and having found Him, to declare Him fully, is impossible.

Why so? By Himself, I beseech you! For He can by no means be expressed. Well done, Plato! You have touched on the truth. But do not flag. Undertake with me the inquiry respecting the Good. For into all men whatever, especially those who are occupied with intellectual pursuits, a certain divine effluence has been instilled; wherefore, though reluctantly, they confess that God is one, indestructible, unbegotten, and that somewhere above in the tracts of heaven, in His own peculiar appropriate eminence, whence He surveys all things, He has an existence true and eternal.

Tell me what I am to conceive God to be,
Who sees all things, and is Himself unseen

[So] Euripides says. Accordingly, Menander seems to me to have fallen into error when he said:

O sun! For you, first of gods, ought to be worshipped
By whom it is that we are able to see the other gods

For the sun never could show me the true God; but that healthful Word, that is the Sun of the soul, by whom alone, when He arises in the depths of the soul, the eye of the soul itself is irradiated. Whence accordingly, Democritus, not without reason, says, that a few of the men of intellect, raising their hands upwards to what we Greeks now call the air (ἀήρ), called the whole expanse Zeus, or God: He, too, knows all things, gives and takes away, and He is King of all.

Of the same sentiments is Plato, who somewhere alludes to God thus: Around the King of all are all things, and He is the cause of all good things. Who, then, is the King of all? God, who is the measure of the truth of all existence. As, then, the things that are to be measured are contained in the measure, so also the knowledge of God measures and comprehends truth. And the truly holy Moses says: There shall not be in your bag a balance and a balance, great or small, but a true and just balance shall be to you, deeming the balance and measure and number of the whole to be God. For the unjust and unrighteous idols are hid at home in the bag, and, so to speak, in the polluted soul. But the only just measure is the only true God, always just, continuing the self-same; who measures all things, and weighs them by righteousness as in a balance, grasping and sustaining universal nature in equilibrium. God, therefore, as the old saying has it, occupying the beginning, the middle, and the end of all that is in being, keeps the straight course, while He makes the circuit of nature; and justice always follows Him, avenging those who violate the divine law.

Whence, O Plato, is that hint of the truth which you give? Whence this rich copiousness of diction, which proclaims piety with oracular utterance? The tribes of the barbarians, he says, are wiser than these; I know your teachers, even if you would conceal them. You have learned geometry from the Egyptians, astronomy from the Babylonians; the charms of healing you have got from the Thracians; the Assyrians also have taught you many things; but for the laws that are consistent with truth, and your sentiments respecting God, you are indebted to the Hebrews,

Who do not worship through vain deceits
The works of men, of gold, and brass, and silver, and ivory
And images of dead men, of wood and stone
Which other men, led by their foolish inclinations, worship
But raise to heaven pure arms
When they rise from bed, purifying themselves with water
And worship alone the Eternal, who reigns for ever more

And let it not be this one man alone— Plato; but, O philosophy, hasten to produce many others also, who declare the only true God to be God, through His inspiration, if in any measure they have grasped the truth. For Antisthenes did not think out this doctrine of the Cynics; but it is in virtue of his being a disciple of Socrates that he says, that God is not like to any; wherefore no one can know Him from an image. And Xenophon the Athenian would have in his own person committed freely to writing somewhat of the truth, and given

the same testimony as Socrates, had he not been afraid of the cup of poison, which Socrates had to drink. But he hints nothing less; he says: How great and powerful He is who moves all things, and is Himself at rest, is manifest; but what He is in form is not revealed. The sun himself, intended to be the source of light to all around, does not deem it fitting to allow himself to be looked at; but if any one audaciously gazes on him, he is deprived of sight. Whence, then, does the son of Gryllus learn his wisdom? Is it not manifestly from the prophetess of the Hebrews who prophesies in the following style?

What flesh can see with the eye the celestial,
The true, the immortal God, who inhabits the vault of heaven?
Nay, men born mortal cannot even stand
Before the rays of the sun

Cleanthes Pisadeus, the Stoic philosopher, who exhibits not a poetic theogony, but a true theology, has not concealed what sentiments he entertained respecting God:

If you ask me what is the nature of the good, listen
That which is regular, just, holy, pious
Self-governing, useful, fair, fitting
Grave, independent, always beneficial
That feels no fear or grief; profitable, painless
Helpful, pleasant, safe, friendly
Held in esteem, agreeing with itself, honourable
Humble, careful, meek, zealous
Perennial, blameless, ever-during
Mean is every one who looks to opinion
With the view of obtaining some advantage from it

Here, as I think, he clearly teaches of what nature God is; and that the common opinion and religious customs enslave those that follow them, but seek not after God.

We must not either keep the Pythagoreans in the background, who say: God is one; and He is not, as some suppose, outside of this frame of things, but within it; but, in all the entireness of His being, is in the whole circle of existence, surveying all nature, and blending in harmonious union the whole—the author of all His own forces and works, the giver of light in heaven, and Father of all—the mind and vital power of the whole world—the mover of all things. For the knowledge of God, these utterances, written by those we have mentioned through the inspiration of God, and selected by us, may suffice even for the man that has but small power to examine into truth.

JAMES THROUGH THE CENTURIES*

Dale C. Allison, Jr.**

When I left graduate school, some 30 years ago, I'd learned little about the history of the interpretation of biblical texts. My teachers in the flesh, as well as the famous authors of the books I heeded most, taught me by example that the most wisdom resided in my own 20th century. Certainly I don't recall anyone ever requiring me to read any commentator or biblical critic earlier than Albert Schweitzer; and as I can remember a newspaper announcement of his death, in 1965, he wasn't really that far back. In any case, when I was younger, a one-time reading of a boring book entitled *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems*, by a German scholar, Werner Kümmel, seemed to suffice.[1] I was trained to look at the biblical books and what led up to them, their so-called background. I was not trained to investigate what came after them, until I got to the 19th and 20th centuries.

My training was typical, and today many would-be scholars undergo a similar education. It's no mystery, then, that most of the modern commentaries, monographs, and articles on the New Testament tend to privilege the ancients and the moderns and to pay far less attention to those in between. The upshot is that footnotes are often full of the OT, later Jewish writings, Greco-Roman sources, modern authors, and not much else. The presupposition seems to be that contemporary exegetes should be the informed purveyors of "the original sense" as divined through modern historical-critical study. To some degree, I suppose, my academic discipline has inherited the desire of the Protestant Reformers to read the Bible apart from church tradition. The Scriptures and what modern scholars say count; tradition, not so much.

Happily, things have begun to change. Contemporary NT scholars are, increasingly, interested in the entire history of the interpretation of biblical texts, much more than they were three or four decades ago. There are indeed now journals and a monograph series dedicated to the history of interpretation, not to mention de Gruyter's mammoth *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, projected to cross the finish line at around 30 volumes. I'm not sure why all this is happening. Maybe one factor is a fear that old-fashioned historical-criticism is nearing exhaustion, and we must find something else to do.

Whatever the motivation of others, I've got my own reasons for paying special attention to the history of interpretation, including the history of the interpretation and reception of the book of James, which is the focus of this lecture. Here at the beginning I'll enumerate four of my reasons, and then I'll spend the rest of our time filling out some details:

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* The following pages reproduce one of the Peter Rhea and Ellen Jones Lectures in New Testament delivered in January of 2013 at the McAfee School of Theology in Atlanta. They retain the informal style of the original oral presentation. The lecture summarizes some of my conclusions about the history of the interpretation of James as they now appear in Dale C. Allison, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of James*, International Critical Commentary (London/New York: Bloomsberry T. & T. Clark International, 2013).

** Dale C. Allison, Jr. is the Richard J. Dearborn Professor of New Testament, Princeton Theological Seminary.

[1] Trans. S. McLean Gilmour and Howard C. Kee (Nashville/New York: Abingdon, 1972).

First, careful attention to the history of interpretation sometimes reveals that exegetical tradition has forgotten what it should have remembered. The older books contain neglected observations and readings that merit serious consideration, even when judged by modern historical-critical standards; yet they remain buried in old books. I know from experience that all the good hypotheses haven't been passed down from book to book and from generation to generation, and I don't share the uncritical faith that anything of importance said once will be said again and so not forgotten. Today's work doesn't make yesterday's obsolete. We moderns aren't lights shining in an exegetical history of darkness. There's a very long and very distinguished line of learned, insightful, and imaginative readers. Ignoring them is stupid.

Second, the history of the interpretation and reception of James reveals the plasticity of texts, and how easily and thoroughly they succumb to interpretive agendas. Readers make meaning, and awareness of this circumstance, which reception history emphasizes, should move us to ponder how our own interests and goals affect our work. Such awareness can prevent us from presuming that our own agendas and perspectives—which will soon enough give way to different agendas and perspectives—are superior to all that has come before. By looking at how others have interpreted, over-interpreted, and misinterpreted biblical texts, we learn how cultural prejudices and confessional stances and so on affect interpreters. We learn about readers, not just about texts; and in this way maybe we can come to understand ourselves better, maybe even become better readers.

Third, reception history that looks beyond the commentaries reminds us that James isn't the exclusive property of the professionals. It instead belongs equally to popular piety and to literature in general, and likewise to artists, poets, and musicians. James indeed belongs to all who happen to ponder the book. Moreover, the original meanings that modern historians seek to uncover and defend are far from being the only consequential meanings.

Finally, the history of the interpretation of James is, I hope to persuade you, intrinsically entertaining and potentially edifying. This is why, in my experience, it can help fight the boredom that sometimes descends upon one's study in the late afternoon. A sermon by Origen or Phillips Brooks makes for an agreeable and energizing break when I'm otherwise conscientiously trying to make it to the end of yet one more dull and unpersuasive article on the structure of James.

So much for my opening summary. Let's see, by looking at some examples, whether I've claimed too much.

I start with one of my very favorite illustrations of what I call exegetical amnesia, by which I mean the phenomenon of modern interpreters being ignorant of something that earlier interpreters were well aware of. Consider these lines from the second chapter of James:

> If a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the

> kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor.

Several years ago I learned about a 1966 Harvard dissertation which argued that the scene in James 2, in which rich and poor receive different treatment in a "synagogue," doesn't depict a gathering for worship—it's not about Sunday morning—but rather an assembly met to do justice, that is, it's a court scene.[2] That dissertation and a subsequent article based upon it[3] made the case largely by appealing to rabbinic sources that discuss judicial proceedings held in the synagogue, including this source, *Deuteronomy Rabbah* 5: "R. Judah b. Ilai said: I have heard that if the judge wishes the litigants to be seated, he may have them seated; but what is not permissible? For the one to be seated and the other to remain standing. For R. Ishmael said: If before a judge two appear for judgment, one rich and another poor, the judge should say to the rich, 'Either dress in the same manner as the poor man is dressed, or clothe him as you are clothed.'"' This is indeed a remarkably close parallel to James 2, as are related texts in other rabbinic sources which discuss court etiquette.

The thesis that James 2 depicts an assembly for court has appealed to many, and several commentators now defend it. They credit it to the 1966 Harvard thesis, which itself claims that "the rabbinic passages which speak of sitting and standing have gone altogether unnoticed."[4]

When first working on James 2, I had no reason to doubt the assumption that we have here a new proposal, which was unknown until 1966. But then, one afternoon, I went over to my library's rare book room—aptly named as it is, sadly, rarely visited—to see what the commentaries on James written during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries had to say about James 2. Lo and behold I discovered that the new interpretation was a very old interpretation. For example, I found this in the once famous seventeenth-century commentary of the English Puritan Thomas Manton:

> It is expressly forbidden by the Jews' constitution that when a poor man and a rich man plead together [in court], the rich shall not be bidden to sit down, and the poor stand, or sit in a worse place; but both sit, or both stand. Which is a circumstance that has a clear respect to the phrases used by the apostle James here . . . . The synagogue here spoken of is not the church assembly, but the ecclesiastical court . . . which is an explication that clears the whole context . . . .[5]

What I discovered in my library's basement was, remarkably, that the interpretation of Manton is defended or appears as an option in commentary after commentary written in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. So the allegedly new interpretation was once

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[2] Roy B. Ward, Jr., "The Communal Concern of the Epistle of James," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1966.

[3] Roy B. Ward, Jr., "Partiality in the Assembly: James 2:2-4," *Harvard Theological Review* 62 (1969), 87-97.

[4] Ibid., p. 91, n. 17. Cf. George M. Stulac, *James* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1993), p. 90; Duane F. Watson, "James 2 in Light of Greco-Roman Schemes of Argumentation," *New Testament Studies* 39 (1993), 99, n. 18.

[5] Thomas Manton, *A Practical Commentary, Or an Exposition with Notes on the Epistle of James* (2nd ed.; London: John Macock for Luke Fawne, 1653), 187. Manton is following Herbert Thorndike, *A Discourse of the Right of the Church in a Christian Society* (London: W. J. Cleaver, 1641), 22-23.

exceedingly common. Indeed, after Manton's influential work it is, for two centuries, known to everybody writing on James in English. I dare you to try and find an old English commentator who does not mention it. Also known to everybody are a number of pertinent rabbinic parallels—precisely those parallels supposedly unnoticed before 1966.

Now it doesn't matter for us whether James 2 depicts a meeting for worship or a gathering for court. My point here is just that some quite pertinent rabbinic texts once regularly cited eventually evaporated from the pages of the commentaries and that, because of this, a plausible reading of James 2 vanished in the early nineteenth century, only to be conjured up later by scholars unaware that their brand new thesis was a very old thesis once known far and wide. The new thing under the sun used to be everywhere under the sun.

Unfortunately, one example of exegetical amnesia will have to suffice. I assure you, however, that I could regale you with quite a few more.

Why else might one pay attention to interpreters so seemingly out of date?

My second contention is that paying heed to the reception history of James reveals how malleable texts are in the hands of interpreters, and how readily we bend them to our agendas. Consider again the debate over the nature of the meeting in James 2. Does our letter depict a gathering for worship, or should we rather think of a court, an assembly met to do justice? I can tell you why, shortly after the Reformation, some began to find, for the first time, a court scene in James 2. The reason is that some early Protestants began criticizing the renting of pews. For obvious reasons, they appealed to James 2, which condemns the practice of seating the rich in better places than the poor. Consider the text again:

> If a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

You can see why, when Christian churches were holding certain pews in reserve for those who could pay enough, James 2 became an embarrassment. Manton candidly spoke of "the inconveniences of the received exposition" of James 2.[6]

In this context, members of churches that sold seats had to find a comeback to the appeal to James 2. Somebody did so, after happening upon some rabbinic texts in which preferential seating is discussed, but where the subject is court, not worship. The parallels made it possible to read James 2 as pertaining solely to legal proceedings, so that the text need not dictate seating arrangements on Sunday morning. So here was the out. One understands why the argument, once made, gained wide acceptance. Matthew Henry was confident: "we must be careful not to apply what is here said to the common assemblies for worship; for in these certainly there may be appointed different places for persons according to their rank and circumstances, without sin."[7] Clearly an ecclesiastical context incubated this interpretation. And a couple of hundred years later, when the practice of renting seats began

[6] Ibid., p. 187.

[7] Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (6 vols.; Old Tappan, New Jersey, n.d.), 6:977.

to die out, the intense debate over James 2 also died out, to the point that a plausible interpretation, with nice rabbinic parallels, was mislaid and then forgotten.

Let me offer another example of an obvious way in which social context has affected readers of James—in this case I think adversely. Our letter has quite a bit to say about the rich, and none of it's good. Those with wealth will disappear like a flower in the field; in the midst of a busy life, they'll wither away. They should weep and wail for the miseries that are coming upon them. It's as though their riches have already rotted, and their clothes become moth-eaten. Their gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against them and will eat their flesh like fire.

Tough stuff. But what do exegetes, preachers, and theologians have to say? Those more or less comfortable with the economic circumstances around them, and especially those keenly aware of their church's dependence upon well-to-do benefactors, have been anxious to emphasize that James doesn't damn all the rich; and, regrettably, this has often been the main point of their comments on the relevant passages. That is, they have turned James' complaints and warnings into defenses of the status quo.

- Here's Hildegaard of Bingen, recently declared to be an official doctor of the Roman Catholic church; she's writing on the criticism of favoritism in James 2: "rich and poor must not be regarded as equals because such a judgment would be lacking in discretion."[8]
- Here's Thomas Scott, in the 17th century: "As places of worship cannot be built and maintained, without much expense; it may be proper that they, who contribute towards defraying it, should be accommodated accordingly: but were all professed Christians more spiritually minded, less disparity would be made, and the poor would be treated with far more attention and regard, than they commonly are in worshipping congregations."[9] In other words, although James says we shouldn't honor the rich, we nonetheless have to do so; however, maybe we can fawn over them a little less.
- How about a Baptist? Here's Jonathan Gill, commenting on the proposition that God has chosen the poor: James' words hold true only "generally speaking," for some poor people are "not chosen, and are miserable here and hereafter; and there are some rich men that are chosen."[10] In commenting on the harsh criticism of merchants and the rich in chapters 4-5, Gill stresses that the apostle doesn't "condemn merchandise, and the lawful practice of buying and selling, and getting gain; but [insists] that men should not resolve upon those things without consulting God, and attending to his will, and subjecting themselves to it." "There are some rich who are good men, and make a good use of their riches, and do not abuse them."[11]
- Finally, here's Louis Hadley Evans, from the 20th century: we must caution against "maintaining our prejudices against those who are financially prosperous. We adopt a

[8] Hildegard of Bingen, *Epistle* 378, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 91B, ed. L. van Acker and M. Klaes-Hachmöller (Turnholti: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, 2001), 135.

[9] Thomas Scott, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments*, 6 vols. (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1844), 6:572.

[10] John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament*, 2 vols. (London: William Hill, 1854), 2:786.

[11] Ibid., 798.

> 'soak the rich' attitude, which is unchristian .... Some men strike the ground with industry, and it smiles back at them with produce."[12]

Now I don't want to be misunderstood here. I share some of the rationalizations of the exegetes. I'm inclined to think that poverty and riches in and of themselves make no one good or evil. Further, I see no reason to imagine that the economic stereotypes of the first century Mediterranean world hold in all times and places. The causes of wealth and poverty aren't cross-cultural absolutes, so we can't move without further ado from an ancient context, a context in which people tended to think in terms of limited goods, so that one person's gain was necessarily another's loss, to our modern context, a context in which, because of technological innovation, we can sometimes produce more of something and so increase wealth all around. There are complex hermeneutical issues here.

My point, however, is simply that so many pious Christians, when they run into James' scolding of the rich, do everything they can to make the warnings innocuous. Their unease is palpable. The explanation of course is the disjunction between the sacred text, which blasts the rich, and the everyday world of the expositors, where the rich attend and support the churches. Now again, to repeat, I am, in the end, sympathetic with some of the rationalizations regarding James. Yet it remains true that, in our epistle, "one's relationship to money is a litmus test for one's relationship with God,"[13] and to lose sight of that is to lose sight of the text. We should let James speak. But at this point commentator after commentator muzzles him, so that, in effect, he says nothing.

Much closer to the spirit of our text was the 12th-century Armenian archbishop Nerses IV, who drew upon James 5 when imploring princes not to cut the wages of workers.[14] Also more in line with James were the Puritan Manton, who clearly insisted that being rich is *not* a sign of God's favor,[15] and the Scottish pastor Edward Irving, who in 1826 used James to denounce the oppression that accompanied the gathering of multitudes in large British manufacturing towns.[16] These three individuals are, however, the distinct minority. James may be full of warnings about wealth, but in most sermons and commentaries, the rich have nothing to worry about after all.

Obviously, reception history is not always bright and beautiful.

Sadly, it gets even worse. The old commentaries and homilies that I otherwise love so much are full of anti-Judaism and ethnic stereotyping. I shouldn't have been so surprised when I first started taking notes on this, but I was. I suppose that my religious education, which taught me that Christianity is Jewish, as well as my day-to-day life, which has brought me Jewish friends, sometimes makes me forget how bad things once were. But such

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[12] Louis Hadley Evans, *Make Your Faith Work: A Letter from James* (London: Revell, 1957), 50-51.

[13] Mariam J. Kamell, "The Economics of Humility: The Rich and the Humble in James," in *Engaging Economics: New Testament Scenarios and Early Christian Reception*, ed. Bruce W. Longenecker and Kelly D. Liebengood (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2009), 157.

[14] Nerses Šnorhali, *General Epistle*, trans. A. Aljalian (New Rochelle, N.Y.: St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, 1996), 70.

[15] Manton, *James*, 193-95.

[16] Edward Irving, "God's Controversy with the Land," in *Sermons, Lectures and Occasional Discourses*, 3 vols. (London: R.B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1828), 3:893-963.

forgetting is impossible when working on the reception history of James. Let me briefly parade before you a few miserable examples.

James 1:19-20 advises us "to be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God." Although being angry and failing to listen are scarcely the privileged sins of any one human group, it's easy to find commentators who condescendingly leave another impression. According to the 19th-century Calvinist Thomas Williams, James wrote as he did because the Jews were "a very irritable people."[17] A century before, the German Lutheran, Siegmund Baumgarten, wrote: it was "the evil habit of Jews of that time to dispute about everything, to speak against all things which they did not understand, and even to dispose of a teacher of unknown things."[18] Such gratuitous stereotyping is, alas, not hard to find.

The ethnic stereotyping reaches a sort of climax in the commentaries on James 4 and 5, chapters which censure merchants and the rich. Arthur Carr spoke of "the Semite's born instinct for trading" and added that the instinct "is still eminently characteristic of the [Jewish] race."[19] According to Herbert Maynard Smith, "the Jew was ever an optimist when business was to be done," and he "had ever been inclined to over-estimate the importance of wealth," and he was "unscrupulous as to how he acquired it."[20] Moreover, "the Jew was ... not at all afraid of being untruthful" and "was willing to cheat any Gentile in business" because he "did not feel obliged to keep faith with Gentiles."[21] Equally offensive is the outrageous assertion of James Macknight: "The unbelieving Jews being exceedingly addicted to sensual pleasures, and very covetous, were of course grievous oppressors of the poor."[22] And then there's the sweeping generalization of William Boyd Carpenter: "the faults St. James censures in his letter are many of them faults to which the Jews as a race are specially liable."[23]

I could go on, but that's enough to establish the lesson, which is this. We shouldn't get romantic about reception history: the good comes with the bad.

Beyond that, all of us read ourselves, our prejudices, and our versions of Christianity into the Bible. It doesn't surprise that Jas 4:9, which admonishes hearers to turn laughter into mourning, moved the ascetical Abba Isaiah of Scetis to command: "Never rejoice nor smile but always turn your laughter into mourning and your joy into sorrow. Always walk with a somber attitude."[24] Nor does it startle that, in the Middle Ages, Leander of Seville cited

[17] Thomas Williams and William Patton, *The Cottage Bible and Family Expositor* (Hartford, Conn.: Tiffany, & Burnham, 1841), 1360.

[18] Siegmnd Jakob Baumgarten, *Auslegung des Briefes Jacobi* (Halle: Joh. Justinus Gebauers, 1750), 65.

[19] Arthur Carr, *The General Epistle of St. James* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), 56-57.

[20] Herbert Maynard Smith, *The Epistle of S. James* (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, 1914), 263, 265, 329-30.

[21] Ibid., pp. 329-30.

[22] James Macknight, *A New Literal Translation from the Original Greek, of all the Apostolical Epistles* (Philadelphia: Thomas Wardle, 1841), 599.

[23] William Boyd Carpenter, *The Wisdom of James the Just* (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1903), 73.

[24] Abba Isaiah of Scetis, *Ascetic Discourses* 21, trans. John Chryssavgis and Pachomios Penkett (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 2002), 224.

Jas 4.9 in urging nuns never to laugh.[25] And in our current, unascetical time of unprecedented prosperity, C. Leslie Mitton can gloss James with the remark that "Laughter can have great healing powers, to relieve inward stress and tension, and to ease strained personal relationships."[26]

The history of interpretation shows us how readings always change because readers are always changing. Doctrinal developments, religious experience, and cultural changes inevitably generate new interpretations. We may be grateful that the plain sense of a text usually guarantees some stability of meaning across the centuries, but such stability doesn't prevent the ceaseless and creative reapplication of the Scriptures, bad as well as good.

This should keep us humble. It's easy, in this post-holocaust era, when Jewish-Christian relations have improved so much, to look down with condescension upon our exegetical forebears; and it's happily true that ethnic stereotypes are less easy to find these days in the literature on James. One wonders, however, what prejudices we're blind to, and in what ways our descendants will look back at our exegetical work and shake their heads at how foolish and short-sighted and inconsistent we were.

With that said, let me turn to something happier. Reception history looks beyond the commentators and so reminds us of the obvious, that they aren't the sole proprietors of biblical texts; indeed, commentators make up only a tiny sliver of the readers of James over the centuries. What then do we see when we close the commentaries and instead ponder sermons, hymns, and devotional materials?

James has, more than anything else, been a source for Christian exhortation. Over and over again, in homilies and popular Christian texts, its sentences—usually without concern for their immediate literary context—have been employed to stress that bare belief is insufficient, that baptism isn't the end of the line, that being a modestly "good" Christian isn't enough, and that one must sincerely care for others, which means more than wishing them well from afar. The implicit assumption has been that the ethical issues in James are timeless concerns, and the emphasis has been upon the practical, and indeed the necessity for the practical.

Manton prefaced his mammoth collection of sermons on James with these forceful words: "In Christ there are no dead and sapless branches; faith is not an idle grace; whatever it is, it fructifieth in good works. To prove all this to you, I have chosen to explain this epistle. The apostle wrote it upon the same reason, to wit, to prevent or check ... a barren profession of true religion. Such unrelenting lumps of sin and lust were there even in the primitive times, gilded with the specious name of Christians."[27]

It doesn't surprise that, in the 19th century, Søren Kierkegaard found James most congenial when assailing and mocking a lax, state-subsidized official Christianity, a religion that he deemed nearly antithetical to what he called "the Christianity of the New

[25] Leander of Seville, *De institutione uirginum et de contemptu mundi* 21.3, ed. J. Velazquez (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1979), 153.

[26] C. Leslie Mitton, *The Epistle of James* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1966), 162.

[27] Manton, *James*, 9.

Testament."[28] A book that upholds law, that emphasizes works over faith alone, and that disparages wealth was just what he needed. And in less profound but not dissimilar fashion, myriads of preachers have called upon James to rebuke seemingly complacent congregants and prod them to "good works." For all of this, we may be grateful: faith without works is indeed worthless, and we need to hear that again and again.

So much for my hastily-made third point, which is that so much of importance lies outside the commentary tradition. I come now to my fourth point, which is that reception history is, despite the sins I've catalogued, full of edifying and even entertaining surprises. One of my favorite illustrations of this fact is the work of John Trapp, the 17th century Anglican vicar, about whom I knew nothing before I began my work on James.

We all, whether preachers, theologians, devotional writers, or NT scholars, know the value of saying the right thing in just the right way, or of having the rhetorical knack for memorable expression. Trapp had that knack, which is why, when I was working on a verse, his was the commentary I always looked forward to reading most. Let me offer three quick samples of what I found.

- James 1:19 advises: "Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." This is Trapp's comment: "We read oft, 'He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear'; but never, he that hath a tongue to speak, let him speak; for this we can do fast enough, without bidding." Trapp then adds a bit of natural theology: "hath not Nature taught us the same that the apostle here doth, by giving us two ears, and those open; and but one tongue, and that hedged in with teeth and lips?"[29]
- In James 2:16, someone says, "Go in peace" but does nothing. Trapp responds: "This age aboundeth in mouth-mercy, which is cheap. But a little handful were better than a great many such mouthfulls. Be ye warmed. But with what? with a fire of words. Be filled; but with what? with a mess of words. Away with those airy courtesies. How many have we now-a-days that will be friends at a sneeze! the most you can get of these benefactors is, 'God bless you....'"[30]
- Here's my third example: James 4:9 warns: "Make yourselves miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into dejection." Trapp remarks: "Turn all the streams into this one channel, that [it] may drive the mill, that [it] may grind the heart. Meal was offered of old, and not whole corn."[31] Truly lovely.

That will have to suffice for the quotable Trapp and the joy of good rhetoric. Let me turn briefly to edification. From time to time, when looking at the old sources, one stumbles upon the profound. I was hypnotized when I ran across a brilliant sermon by the once-

[28] On Kierkegaard and James see Richard J. Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciples of Jesus the Sage* (London/New York: Routledge, 1999), 158-74, and K. A. Roberts, "James: Putting Faith into Action," in *Kierkegaard and the Bible Tome II: The New Testament*, ed. Lee C. Barrett and Jon Stewart (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 209-17 (with bibliography).

[29] John Trapp, *A Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. W. Webster (London: Richard D. Dickinson, 1865), 695.

[30] Trapp, *Commentary*, 697.

[31] Ibid, 701.

famous preacher, Thomas Selby. Entitled "Types of Unavailing Faith," it's an exposition of James 2:19: "even the demons believe and shudder."

Selby urges that "the faith of devils is grounded in compulsion rather than in free moral choice. They believe in spite of themselves." The reason is that they "belong to spheres of being in which the fact of God's existence is forced upon them, just as faith in the objects of the external universe is forced upon us by the five senses." For this reason their faith "cannot influence character, or work towards moral ends." The upshot is that "faith is entirely worthless if it rest entirely upon the testimony of involuntary senses and perceptions," for "the choice of the will and the mighty play of sovereign affections" must enter into faith. The devils "are not one whit the less malignant for their apprehension of" theological truths; they're "not one shade holier in disposition, nor one step nearer the ascent out of hell." The lesson is this: "when unavoidable events force a truth upon us, it is a sign that the desires, the sentiments, and all the deeper sympathies have been running in a counter direction."[32]

Selby's sermon took me by surprise, and I laid everything to the side for a while as I pondered what he had said.

The same thing happened when I was working on James' assertion, in 1:17, that every good and perfect gift is from above. I discovered that the verse has moved Christians to contemplate good things outside of the Bible, which is a wonderful exercise. At the end of the 19th century, Sopford Brooke, the Irish royal chaplain, preached an eloquent sermon on Jas 1:17, the purpose of which was to commend the reading of Shakespeare. He went so far as to proclaim that the bard's inspiration was "of God."[33] Robert Flint, in a sermon preached in Edinburgh in 1889 before the National Association for the Advancement of Art, crafted a profound praise of beauty. He argued that art is from God, and he admonished artists to take their divine task seriously—all on the basis of Jas 1:17.[34] In a more academic context, E. Reeves Palmer, in a book from 1892, found in James 1:17 justification of the fact that biblical religion borrowed important elements from the Zoroastrians and the Greeks. Every good and perfect gift is from above.[35]

At this point, you may be surprised and a bit disappointed. I've said nothing about the historically large debates in which James has played a significant role. I've ignored the controversy between Protestants and Catholics over the nature of the anointing of the sick in Jas 5:14 and the topic of extreme unction.[36] I've ignored the acrimonious discussion over the nature of the confession of sins in Jas 5:16 and what it has to do with the Roman Catholic confessional.[37] I've ignored the heated, inner-Protestant debates regarding James'

[32] Thomas G. Selby, "Types of Unavailing Faith," in *The Alienated Crown* (Manchester: James Robinson, 1904), 119-20.

[33] Sopford A. Brooke, "Shakespeare and Human Life," in *The Spirit of the Christian Life* (London: C. Kegan Paul, 1881), 333-46.

[34] Robert Flint, "The Good and Perfect Gift of Art," in *Sermons and Addresses* (New York: Scribner, 1899), 28-38.

[35] E. Reeves Palmer, *The Development of Revelation: An Attempt to elucidate the Nature and Meaning of Old Testament Inspiration: A Series of Studies* (London: Clement, Sadler, Palmer, 1892), 207-18.

[36] For details see Allison, *James*, 740-43.

[37] See Allison, ibid., 743-44.

words on effective prayer in chap. 5—call the elders and pray and the sick will be healed—words beloved by faith-healers and not so beloved by so-called cessationists, who think miracles belong to the past.[38]

Above all, I've ignored the great debate about the relation of James to Paul.[39] How can James appeal to Abraham to teach that justification is by works and not by faith alone when Romans and Galatians, by contrast, appeal to Abraham to teach that justification is not by works but by faith? Why haven't I introduced you to Luther's denigration of James over against Paul?[40] Why haven't I said anything about the 16th-century Catholics who were so worried about separating religion and morality and who found Luther's dismissal of James to be obvious special pleading?[41] And what about seventeenth-century England, when George Bull, eventually Bishop of St. Davids, created controversy when he sought to demonstrate, against Lutherans and Calvinists, that the more obscure Paul should be interpreted in the light of the less obscure James, with the result that good works became for Bull a necessary condition for salvation?[42] And what about how the past continues to be replayed, so that, in the 1980s and 1990s, American evangelical circles witnessed an acrimonious debate over "Lordship salvation," adherents of "Lordship salvation" appealing to James and being resolute that salvation necessarily involves repentance and discipleship,[43] their opponents by contrast being equally adamant that such a view amounts to "works-righteousness" and is not taught by James?[44]

Those are certainly the big and obvious topics having to do with the reception history of James. I've chosen, however, to focus on smaller things. One reason is that those smaller things are lesser known, so I've got a better chance of saying something you don't already know. Another reason is that I want to use the brief time left to say something about the recent history of James. I've tried to make the case that it's prudent to keep an eye on the past and not to limit our teachers to those who just happen to be alive or have only recently passed on. But we should also want to do justice to the present moment. What, then, do we see if we look at James in more recent times?

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[38] See Allison, ibid., 744-45.

[39] For a review of the issue see Allison, ibid., 426-38.

[40] See H. Heinz, "Jakobus 2,14-26 in der Sicht Martin Luthers," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 19 (1981), 141-46.

[41] Note e.g. the "Decree on Justification" from session 6 (Jan 13, 1547) of the Council of Trent in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols., ed. Norman P. Tanner (London/Washington, D.C.: Sheed & Ward/Georgetown University Press, 1990), 2:671-81.

[42] George Bull, *Harmonia apostolica, seu, Binae dissertationes, quarum in priore, doctrina D. Jacobi de justificatione ex operibus explanatur ac defenditur* (London: William Wells and Robert Scott, 1670); cf. idem, *Examin Censurae: sive Responsio ad quasdam animadversiones* (London: Richard Davis, 1676); idem, *Apologia pro Harmonia* (London: Richard Smith, 1703).

[43] See esp. John MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel according to Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988).

[44] See e.g. Z.C. Hodges, *The Gospel Under Siege*, 2nd ed. (Dallas: Redencion Viva, 1992); idem, *Absolutely Free!* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1989). For a succinct overview of the debate see K.L. Gentry, "Lordship Controversy," in *The Westminster Handbook to Evangelical Theology*, ed. R.E. Olson (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 317-19. This movement generated "The Grace Evangelical Society," which has its own journal, "The Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society."

First, James is no longer the exclusive property of our religion, for it has a reception history outside of Christian circles. Now I suspect that a bit of James is already in the *Koran*. The conditional in Jas 5:16—"You ought to say, 'If the Lord wills,'" has an Arabic equivalent: *'in sha'Allah*. Now recitation among Muslims of "If God wills" is a scriptural commandment because the Koran says: "Do not say of anything, 'I will do such and such tomorrow,' without adding, 'If Allah wills'" (*Koran* Al-Kahf (18).23-24). This is startlingly close to James 5:13-15: "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and get gain . . . . Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and we shall do this or that.'" Given that elsewhere the Koran has been influenced by New Testament traditions, it's my bet that's the case here, too.

However that may be, the proposition of Jas 4:4, that "Love of the world is enmity with God," has found some currency among Hindus, for it well suits the Hindu idea of the world as maya, as illusion. E.g., Paramahansa Yogananda, in his famous book, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, wrote: the wheel of karma, "induces man to take the line of least resistance. But 'Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.' To become the friend of God, man must overcome the devils or evils of his own karma or actions that ever urge him to spineless acquiescence in the mayic delusions of the world."[45]

That James will increasingly become part of inter-religious dialogue is suggested by the fact that John Keenan, an Episcopal priest, has recently written a provocative commentary with the subtitle: *Parallels with Mahāyāna Buddhism*.[46] Keenan's book combines more traditional, section-by-section exegesis with comparison of James and Buddhist teaching. Some of it's quite interesting.

Even more telling is that the Dalai Lama has of late written on James, arguing that what he calls "this beautiful letter" exhibits striking similarities with his Buddhist faith. Claiming that "many of our fundamental spiritual values" are "universal" and "perennial," the Dalai Lama finds that James lines up with his own tradition in that it attacks double-mindedness and calls one to be slow to wrath, slow to speak, and quick to listen to others. He also finds it congenial in demanding that faith be translated into action, in warning that life is transient, in opposing discrimination, and in teaching respect for the poor.[47]

To come now to my final claim: if one stands back and looks at the larger world, it's my judgment that the most important and far-reaching business with James has taken place outside of both the academy and official religious circles and has nothing to do with anything I've said so far.

Alcoholics Anonymous is one of the most remarkable movements of modern times. Countless individuals throughout the world have been helped by the Twelve Steps Program and its many offshoots—Narcotics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, and so on. Now without for the most part knowing it, beneficiaries of these programs owe a great deal to

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[45] Paramahansa Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi* (Los Angeles: Self-Realization Fellowship), 560.

[46] John P. Keenan, *The Wisdom of James: Parallels with Mahāyāna Buddhism* (New York/Mahwah, N.J.: Newman, 2005).

[47] The Dali Lama, "The General Epistle of James," in *Revelations: Personal Responses to the Books of the Bible*, Introduction by Richard Holloway (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2007), 359-64.

James. For this New Testament letter was of key importance to the founders of A.A., and it greatly influenced how they conceptualized and organized A.A.

The founders stressed again and again the line from James that "faith without works is dead."[48] Indeed, the book of James was so popular among early members of A.A. that some wanted to call their fellowship "The James Club."[49] Furthermore, James 5:16—"confess your sins to one another"—was the direct inspiration for the famous and effective strategy of requiring members, when meeting together in small groups, to share honestly their failings with one another.[50] "Hello, my name is Bob, and I'm an alcoholic." That's confessing your sins to one another, just as James exhorts. Anybody who has benefitted directly or indirectly from A.A. or from one of the many related organizations owes a huge debt of gratitude to the book of James.

[48] Anonymous, *"Pass It On": The Story of Bill Wilson and How the A.A. Message Reached the World* (New York: A. A.World Service, 1984), 147, 195.

[49] Anonymous, *Dr. Bob and the Good Old Timers* (New York: A. A. World Service, 1980), pp. 71, 96.

[50] Anonymous, *"Pass It On"*, 128.

CHURCH HISTORY FOR SEMINARIANS: ENGAGING THE PATRISTIC WORLD

Daniel J. Heisey*

Each seminary and theological college offers courses on Church History, and often they are survey courses, general introductions to neatly divided sections of two thousand years of human events. Since in almost all cases these courses are required, it follows that not all seminarians, whether diocesan or religious, will be completely attracted to the material. Nevertheless, some students have a keen and innate interest in history and look forward to these courses, wishing the syllabus allowed for deeper treatment of the topics than a one- or two-semester survey course can provide.

This essay suggests straightforward ways to present historical information in order to help seminarians appreciate how that information is both intrinsically interesting and entirely relevant to their seminary formation. Here the focus will be on the teaching of Early Church History—what our seminary calls Patrology—and how the points made derive from the experience of teaching in a Roman Catholic major seminary. More broadly, these reflections hope to show that even within the constraints of a survey course, seminarians of whatever post-Chalcedonian Christian confession can learn to engage the patristic world.

When regarding a Patrology course as a test case, three main tasks confront the instructor: One is establishing the foundation for the course; another is relating history and theology; a third is making the past visible by using historical maps and images of ancient artifacts. This strategy is effective because most students need a direct and basic approach. Until the mid-1960s, Catholic seminarians tended to be in their early twenties, and they arrived at their first year of Theology with four or more years of classical and philosophical education. Now, it is not uncommon for seminarians to have degrees in engineering or computer science, to be military veterans or widowers retired early from careers in law or business.

Given the variety of backgrounds and inherent academic interests of the seminarians, the instructor must find ways to keep before the students the potential pastoral application of the material, while not compromising the integrity of the historian's craft. There exist several accessible general text books to help reinforce the instructor's lectures. These books include: Henry Chadwick's narrative yet episodic *The Early Church* (Penguin Books, 1967, rev. 1993), and James Hitchcock's vast but succinct *History of the Catholic Church* (Ignatius Press, 2012); John Vidmar's chronological *The Catholic Church through the Ages* (Paulist Press, 2005), and Boniface Ramsey's thematic *Beginning to Read the Fathers* (Paulist Press, 1985, rev. 2012).

First Task: Why Study the Church Fathers?

The instructor's first task is to make clear to the students why as seminarians they must study the Fathers of the Church. In the Roman Catholic tradition, it ought to be what is called an easy sell. On a practical level, the seminarians run into the Fathers of the Church in the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994, rev. 1997), where quotations from and references to the Church Fathers abound. Moreover, in the breviary's Office of Readings

* Daniel J. Heisey, O. S. B., is a Benedictine monk of Saint Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania, where is known as Brother Bruno. A graduate of the University of Cambridge, he teaches Church History at Saint Vincent Seminary.

seminarians read extracts from the works of the Fathers, but still there remains a deeper level that makes studying the Fathers critical to their seminary formation.

So, the first lecture should set before the seminarians sections from several relevant Church documents. Those documents span from the Second Vatican Council to the fifth edition of the *Program of Priestly Formation* (PPF). For Catholics, those texts are authoritative and normative, while for other Christians they may offer interesting food for thought, or fodder for at least mental debate.

From the most recent Church council, three documents relate to our topic. In *Dei Verbum* 23, promulgated in 1965, we read: "she [the Church] duly fosters the study of the Fathers, both Eastern and Western, and of the sacred liturgies." In another conciliar document from 1965, *Optatam totius* 16, we find: "students should be shown what the Fathers of the Church, both of the East and West, have contributed towards the faithful transmission and elucidation of each of the revealed truths." What is more, there is an ecumenical dimension to the study of the Fathers of the Church. In *Unitatis redintegratio* (1964), the Second Vatican Council's decree on ecumenism, it says at section 10, "Sacred theology and other branches of knowledge, especially those of a historical nature, must be taught with due regard for the ecumenical point of view, so that they may correspond as exactly as possible with the facts."[1]

History often has its unpredictable coincidences, what for the person of faith are the mysterious ways of divine Providence. So, from that perspective, an amusing twist worth keeping in mind is the early career of the pope who called the Second Vatican Council, Blessed John XXIII. Some fifty years before he called that Council, back when he was Father Angelo Roncalli, he had been a seminary professor of Church History.

In 1989, the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education issued "Instruction on the Study of the Fathers of the Church in the Formation of Priests." Published early the next year in *Origins*, it drew upon these conciliar documents and other texts, and it addressed at length the role that the Church Fathers ought to have in seminary formation.[2] In Section Two the "Instruction" put forth three reasons for studying the Fathers: the Fathers are "privileged witnesses of tradition;" they provide a reliable and enlightened theological method; they have left writings of "cultural, spiritual, and apostolic richness," making the Fathers "great teachers of the church yesterday and today." Here we encounter explicitly the great principle of continuity.

The "Instruction" also explained the distinction between "patristics" and "patrology," defining the former as the study of the theological thought of the Fathers of the Church and the latter as the study of the lives and writings of the Fathers of the Church. Although the "Instruction" linked patristics with doctrinal and dogmatic theology and patrology with ecclesiastical history, it is often the case that the definitions overlap, since one cannot

[1] Quotations come from Austin Flannery, ed. *Vatican Council II*, vol. 1 (Newport, NY: Costello Publishing, 1996); texts are also available at the Vatican's web site. Likewise, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* can be found on that web site, and the PPF is on the web site of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

[2] See "Instruction on the Study of the Fathers of the Church in the Formation of Priests," *Origins* 19 (25 January, 1990): 550-561. It is available also on the USCCB web site.

properly study someone's theological thought without also studying that theologian's writings. What helps clarify matters for the students is to propose that one cannot do justice to the study of the theological thought of Saint Irenaeus or Saint Augustine, to take two Church Fathers among many, without also taking account of their lives and times. Without reference to the arguments and activities of Gnostics and the Donatists, Manichees and Docetists, the polemical concerns of those two Fathers can leave the students in a fog.

In 1992, Pope John Paul II issued a post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, and in section 54 he echoed the points made both by the Council and by the "Instruction." "Hence the importance of studying Sacred Scripture," wrote Blessed John Paul II, adding, "the Fathers of the Church, the liturgy, the history of the Church, and the teaching of the magisterium." Since seminarians need to learn all these subjects and how they dovetail together, it is only right that studying the Church Fathers takes into account, say, magisterial teaching about why seminarians should study the Church Fathers.

Then, in 2006, the Catholic bishops of the United States produced the fifth edition of the PPF, paragraph 210 of which stated, "Among historical studies, the study of patristics and the lives of the saints are of special importance." This statement supports a biographical, if not hagiographical, angle to the study of the Church Fathers. In many ways a compendium of conciliar and papal teaching on priestly formation, the PPF charts a steady course. Thus, from the beginning of the semester, the seminarians see that at least fifty years of Church teaching stand behind the seminary's requirement that they have a mandatory course in Patrology.

Second Task: Integrating Theology and History

A second task for the instructor is to demonstrate how theology and history can complement one another. Although a course in Church History, whether early, medieval, or modern, must necessarily consider a large amount of theology, the instructor must always avoid turning the course into a History of Theology, which for some students can become a bewildering abstract canvas of –ologies and –isms. So, when lecturing, for instance, on the first four Councils of the Church, the instructor must present the theological debates about Christology, yet do so within the historical context of the Constantinian and Theodosian regimes.

The seminarians are done a disservice if they leave their history classroom thinking that theological ideas float through time, transcending the grit and sweat of mundane life. On the contrary, students respond well to presentations of the uncompromising, pugnacious personality of Saint Athanasius and the plausible (yet erroneous) case to be made for the urbane Arius' subordinationism; the same can be said for the vigorous confrontation between Saint Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius, or the decisive intervention of the Tome of Leo. The seminarians know in their bones that history is made by significant individuals, not by vast impersonal forces.

In order to present the seminarians with some sense of the challenge facing the bishops at the First Council of Nicaea, it proves useful to tell the students to bring a Bible to class and then to hand out index cards with citations of chapters and verses form Scripture. (Our Scripture faculty recommends use of the Revised Standard Version.) At random the instructor asks the students to read aloud the Scripture passage cited on their card. "I and the Father are one, John 10:30," reads one; "The Father is greater than I, John 14:28," reads

another. "Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, Philippians 2:6," reads a third, and then a fourth reads the same passage.

That last cited biblical text emerges as a perfect example of the problem at hand: a current English translation renders it, "Though he was in the form of God, he did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at." Some students miss the nuance that turns that version into a slogan for subordinationism. If one must *grasp at* something, one does not yet possess it. However, if one *grasps* something, then one already has it. The Greek verb here is rare and tough to interpret, whether in the twenty-first century or in the fourth.

Suddenly it comes home to the seminarians that Scripture alone cannot solve the problem. Then ask a student, "You are a bishop at the Council, and you need to decide who is right, Arius or Athanasius. Down the corridor the Emperor Constantine awaits your word. What do you say?" Invariably, the answer is, "I'm not sure." Enter terminology borrowed from Greek philosophy, and for the students the unfolding of the story takes on new life.

To give another example of how it is possible to integrate historical material with the seminarians' formation, there is the Roman Canon. As lay faithful in the pews the students most likely have heard the Roman Canon during Mass as a priest read aloud the names of those martyrs. As aspirants to the priesthood, the seminarians hope someday to be standing at the altar and reading those names as well. It is worth taking time to walk them through the list and explain who those people were and why they have been commemorated in the First Eucharistic Prayer.

A lecture on the Roman Canon can be part of a series of classes on the early martyrs. Our seminarians are required to read in English translation the letters of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, a towering figure worth a lecture in himself. For a lecture on the martyrs named in the Roman Canon, it is helpful to write the names on the board or project them by Power Point. As one talks about each martyr, it is constructive to make the seminarians aware that whereas the historical accuracy and authenticity of the accounts of the various martyrs may be disputed or even dismissed by modern scholars, it is the legends that have been influential throughout Christian history. Patrons of art have always commissioned a fresco or a statue based on the colorful legend, not the drab historical surmise.

Here it would be tedious to review all two dozen martyrs in the Roman Canon, from Saint Linus to Saint Anastasia, so let a few examples suffice. A sketch of the lives of Saints Cornelius and Cyprian leads to mention of the rigorist priest Novatian and the controversy over whether the *lapsi* could be reconciled to full communion. Mention of Saints Cosmas and Damian, according to legend twin brothers as well as medical doctors, sheds light on the role in the early Church of professional laymen. Likewise, the compelling story of Saints Perpetua and Felicity gives insight into the faith of married women, one a slave, who were also catechumens. Furthermore, the hagiographical tradition that Saint Chrysogonus was a teacher and that Saint Anastasia was his student underscores that the Roman Canon's roll call of martyrs encompasses a wide range of people.

Then there is the aspect of the patronages of these saints. Students at once recognize the implications for today that Saint Lucy intercedes for people threatened with blindness, and that Saint Agatha is an intercessor for women afflicted with breast cancer. Here religious art can help underscore the point; for example, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo's vivid depiction of Saint Agatha's martyrdom.

By the end of the lecture, seminarians usually realize the everyday importance of these hitherto foreign and seemingly random names. The students see, some with obvious "Aha!" moments of epiphany, that these archaic names represent martyrs from all walks of life and all ranks of society. There are bishops and priests, catechumens and deacons, slaves and popes. Moreover, if the legends do contain grains of truth, there are doctors and consecrated virgins, as well a teacher and one of his students. These martyrs dot the map of the Roman world, from Syria to North Africa, Sicily to Rome itself. So, by the time of Diocletian, around 300, that Roman world was becoming also, "in spite of dungeon, fire, and sword," a Christian world.

Third Task: Visual Aids

A third task facing the teacher is judicious supplementing of the lectures. The use of a reliable general text book has already been mentioned, but now the resource intended is visual aids in the classroom. In particular, maps are indispensible, namely historical maps showing the extent of the Roman Empire. Frequently, seminarians, especially those in their early twenties, will say that they have seen the movie *Gladiator* (2000) or the television series *Rome* (2005-2007), but otherwise they know nothing about ancient Rome, least of all its geographic limits or its decline (or transformation) during the centuries now called Late Antiquity.

Along with maps go images of art and artifacts from the first centuries of the Church's history, such as the Hinton Mosaic, now in the British Museum, and the mosaics from the recent excavations at Megiddo, Israel.[3] The Hinton Mosaic once adorned the floor of a Roman villa in rural southwestern England; dating probably to the early fourth century, it depicts the Chi-Rho monogram behind a beardless Christ. At Megiddo archaeologists have found in a room at a Roman military site dating to around 230 the stone base of an altar accompanied by mosaics with Greek inscriptions echoing Eucharistic terminology.

These images and others like them exemplify the huge sums of money early Christians throughout the Empire were willing to spend on depicting elements of their faith. Also, these pictures, so readily available on numerous web sites, adjust and round out the impression most seminarians seem to bring with them, that all of the first Christians were desperately impoverished and downtrodden. Seminarians thus can combine texts and images to develop a fuller understanding of the variegated world of the early Church.

At other times, the instructor can highlight the lecture's point by showing more recent images. While those images may say more about the era in which they were created than about the patristic period, they nonetheless can illustrate the story the lecturer seeks to hand on to the students. In addition to Tiepolo's *The Martyrdom of St. Agatha* (c. 1755), paintings such as Jean-Léon Gérôme's *Pollice Verso* (1872) and Henryk Siemiradzki's *A Christian Dirce* (1897) exhibit dramatic scenes of the era of the early Christian martyrs. When lecturing on the Desert Fathers and early monasticism, Hieronymus Bosch's hectic and surreal *The Temptation of St. Anthony* (c. 1500) and Matthias Grünewald's equally crowded and bizarre work on the same theme (c. 1510) always surprise and captivate the students.

[3] See Vassilios Tzaferis, "Inscribed 'To God Jesus Christ'," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 33 (March/April, 2007): 38-49. For the Hinton Mosaic, see John McManners, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 60.

Use of these and other works of art serves also to broaden the seminarians' cultural horizons. Often through no fault of their own, many have had no exposure to what once were considered famous paintings by famous artists. Fame is fleeting, and as scholars have been observing for at least a quarter of a century, cultural literacy seems to be sliding into noticeable and lamentable decline.[4]

Conclusion

In whatever way the history courses are organized, a Roman Catholic seminary's mandatory courses on Church History, in this case Patrology, must navigate between an ordinary history lecture on emperors and merchants, generals and poets, and a utilitarian presentation of what might seem relevant to future pastoral ministry. Although the burden of learning is on the students, the instructor faces several challenges, three major tasks having been outlined here.

Seminarians should be shown clearly the authoritative Church teaching, beginning at least with Vatican II, behind a required class focusing on Patrology or on later eras of Church History. Seminarians by their calling want to think with the Church, and they are naturally skeptical of anything unfamiliar, lest it prove to be some prowling lion seeking to lure them away from that fidelity. Thus, arraying before them the documents in which the Church enjoins and encourages the study of the Church Fathers is psychologically as well as pedagogically vital. Equally critical is to make the students aware of the theme of continuity, that the Church Fathers permeate conciliar and papal documents, the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and also the Office of Readings.

In Church History, the complementary and interweaving nature of history and theology must be demonstrated to the students. Along those lines, the history teacher is within bounds to integrate into the historical narrative certain theological concepts like Christology and particular liturgical texts like the Roman Canon. In order to prepare for these lectures, students ought to be assigned original texts, such as the letters of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, in English translation.

For these assignments, a variety of anthologies exist, from William A. Jurgens' three-volume *The Faith of the Early Fathers* (Liturgical Press, 1970-1979) to John R. Willis' one-volume *The Teachings of the Church Fathers* (Herder, 1966; Ignatius Press, 2002). Of special note is the Penguin Books edition called *Early Christian Writings* (1968, rev. 1987), containing modern English translations of such essential texts as the epistles of Saints Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch, and also the Didache. Some classes might benefit more from a book combining narrative framework with extensive selections from the Fathers, such as Rod Bennett's *Four Witnesses* (Ignatius Press, 2002).

An effective way to ensure the theological ideas and historical names remain tethered to *terra firma* is to employ maps and images of art contemporary with the time period being discussed. Gone are the days when seminarians arrived at First Theology with years of

[4] See E. D. Hirsch, Jr., et al., *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1988, 1991); E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987). Closer to our topic: Edward Clark, "The Liberal Arts and the Future Priest," *Origins* 35 (4 August, 2005): 178-179; Kurt Belsole, "Stewards of the Mysteries: Training Seminarians for Liturgical Leadership," *Antiphon* 8:1 (2003): 24.

grammatical and literary study grounding them in the Greek and Latin classics. Therefore, the history teacher must take some basic, even remedial, approaches to the subject.

These pedagogical suggestions may seem obvious or simplistic, but as in teaching itself, stating the obvious, just like repetition, can be beneficial. What is more, these suggested methods have been well received by diocesan and religious seminarians, some of them having braced themselves to endure what they imagine will be pointless and purgatorial facts and figures from an avatar of Thomas Carlyle's fictional Professor Dryasdust.

THEOLOGY IN CONFLICT: ANTEBELLUM AND POST-WAR SOUTH

Taylor Dean*

The Civil War has fascinated historians and history buffs alike for years now, for it is one of the most significant events in our country's history. Yet many people are unaware of the role that theology and theologians played both before and after the war. The issues of slavery and racism were not only in the thoughts of politicians, but at the pulpit as well. This piece serves to show the history of how theology and theologians shaped the antebellum period and Post-War South, and how the scriptures were used by both pro-slavery advocates and abolitionists alike to further their own causes. After the conclusion of the war theologians would again be at the forefront of the Reconstruction era. The response of theologians and the churches as a whole to emancipation would drastically affect how the freedmen were treated in the former Confederate States. This history, while not lost, has been ignored due to its tragic nature. It is time that this history came out into the open, so that we can assess the failings of our forefathers and begin to address in a new way some of these issues that are still present in our modern society.

I. Introduction

The American Civil War took place between 1861 and 1865. In the four years of the war, the bloody conflict cost over a million American lives, which was about three percent of the population at the time. The Civil War is more than just an event in history that took place over 150 years ago; it was an event that shook the foundations of the country to its core, led brother to fight against brother, and took away the innocence of the American nation. Over the past century, historians, scholars, and common men alike have set out to understand the war, its causes, and its outcomes both for personal and historical reasons in the hopes that such a tragic event might not be repeated again. Yet the Civil War was more than just a political struggle between two opposing sides; it was a theological struggle that had clergy and laity on both sides believing that God was with them and that providence would see them through to victory.

The main contention between the Northern and Southern states of the Union and the primary cause for the conflict is well known: slavery. However, many understand slavery as merely a political issue when, in fact, it was much more than that. Many have reduced the South's persistence and gallantry in trying to keep such a crude and inhumane system alive to bigotry, racism, and ignorance. But to understand this issue in this way is to not understand it all, for slavery was as much a theological issue as it was an economic and political issue. For decades before the war began, clergymen on both sides had been using the Biblical scriptures to justify this system of human bondage. Abolitionists too would use the scriptures to point out that to own another human being was clearly against God's will. The Civil War was not just fought on the battlefields of Gettysburg, Shiloh, Antietam, or Vicksburg; it was also fought from the pulpit, from divinity schools, and through theological debate. This is not to say that the political and economic reasons for the war were overshadowed by the theological causes.

* Taylor Dean is a recent graduate of Marquette University where he earned a BA in Theology and a minor in Classical Languages.

It is more to show that theology played a much larger role in the debate over slavery than most realize. Many ministers and even generals, such as the famed Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson used theology as a primary reason for going to war with the North. However, it was more often the case that slaveholders who stood to lose everything by the abolition of slavery used theology to further solidify their belief that slavery should be allowed to continue as it had for centuries.

This study seeks to point out the Biblical scriptures that were used by both pro and anti-slavery advocates, how they were used and what affect they had on the public. Although the war may have ended with General Lee's surrender at Appomattox in 1865, the theological question, especially for the South, of how to understand their defeat, and also how to understand their new relationship with their former slaves continued. Sadly, it would be the failure not only of the reconstruction efforts by the federal government, but also of the churches that would lead to the oppression of freedmen in almost every aspect of their lives.

II. Scripture and Slavery

Since the United States became a free nation in 1783, a unique mixture of ideologies had shaped the American religious life and culture. Republican ideals were held high above all else except God. Yet it was believed that God had made America to be a new promised land, a land that the corruption of the Catholic old world could not tarnish with its "popery." America was to be a new Christian land to show the way for the rest of the world not only in its new republican form of government, but also in its religious forms as well.[1] One element of this synthesis between religious and Republican ideals was the belief in what the Declaration of Independence says, "We hold these truths to be SELF EVIDENT". Self-evidence would be the key to the whole debate regarding slavery. For the vast majority of Americans believed, clergy and laity alike, that God's will was evident to all those who put their faith in the scriptures and could read them.

> The cumulative effect of these subtle ideological changes was to convince an ever-broadening number of Christians in the United States that they had the power within themselves to discover the true meaning of the sacred texts, the power to see things in general as they were, the power to act effectively against those in the wrong, and the power to choose righteously when faced by moral dilemmas—if, they would only put their minds to the task.[2]

This belief in the self-evidence of God's will would come to be at the center of the debate over slavery. One can only imagine the strength of conviction that both sides would display in their arguments, for if the will of God was so evident, then why are so many coming to opposing conclusions?

The Biblical defense of slavery was a very old tradition by the time it found its way to the United States and took up a strong foothold in the Southern states. However by the time it reached the Americas, the old arguments had lost support in nearly the entire Western

[1] Noll, Mark A, The Civil War as a Theological Crisis (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 19-25.

[2] Ibid, 25.

world. Yet many in the United States retained that slavery was sanctioned by the Biblical text citing such sources as Leviticus 25: 44-46 which states,

> Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves. You may also buy some of the temporary residents living among you and members of their clans born in your country, and they will become your property. You can bequeath them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly.

This was one of the oldest and most used passages for the defense of slavery, for almost nowhere is there a more clear sanction for slavery.

Others would point to St. Paul's Letter to Philemon in which a slave, Onesimus, a runaway slave, is instructed by Paul to return to his master. This book was extremely successful in gathering support for the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. There would be other clergymen and theologians, such as the Rev. Richard Fuller, who even pointed out that Jesus himself never said a word against the institution of slavery, despite the fact that the Romans had a regulated and cruel system of slavery themselves. Jesus might have had much to say about the other injustices of the Roman world, but he was silent on the issue of slavery.[3]

Although many in both the North and the South believed that the Bible sanctioned slavery, there were two currents of thought that were against it. The first was Christians who used the Bible to negate the arguments and passages of their pro-slavery counterparts. The other was a group of abolitionists, such as William Lloyd Garrison, who were not particularly religious, but rather suggested that common sense told him and every man willing to listen to his conscience that slavery is a basic evil of American society.

Abolitionists like Garrison were not taken seriously by those who believed that God had sanctioned slavery and it was a part of his divine will as evidenced in the scriptures above and others. Since Garrison and men like him did not use the Bible to formulate their arguments, abolitionists were often seen as atheists at worst, or at best too blind to see the divine truth that was laying right in front of their eyes. Men of little faith had no business preaching righteousness to those who knew the truth as God wrote it.

In truth the Christians who were against slavery would have a very tough time convincing their counterparts to give any ground. George Bourne attempted to use the book of Exodus to show that slavery and the slave trade was immoral and against God's commands, but unfortunately for him, many Biblical sanctions for slavery come after Exodus in the Torah. Moreover, his conviction was no less strong than those who believed whole-heartedly in the slave system. Bourne said in 1815:

> Every man who holds Slaves and pretends to be a Christian or a Republican, is either an incurable Idiot who cannot distinguish good from evil, or an obdurate sinner who resolutely defies every social, moral, and divine requisition…Every ramification of the doctrine, that one rational creature can become the property of another, is totally repugnant to the rule of equity, the rights of nature, and the existence of civil society.[4]

[3] Ibid, 33-37.

[4] George Bourne, *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable* in Ibid, 40-41.

The fact is that there is no Biblical quote or saying that directly tells us that slavery is a sin or should not be practiced; otherwise, this conflict would have been resolved much more easily. If the Christian Abolitionists would have any hope of gaining some ground they would have to take a different tack.

The tactic that Christian Abolitionists would use to combat their pro-slavery counterparts would be to utilize the message at the very heart of the gospel: love, justice, and righteousness. Whereas pro-slavery advocates were using the letter of the Christian scriptures, the abolitionists would move toward the spirit of the New Testament for their arguments. Citing Jesus' classic and well-known words such as: "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31), as well as "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12). It was the case, however, that abolitionist's arguments didn't depend on scriptural verses but the spirit of the scripture itself. Instead of leaning on passages that were direct, they focused on the messages of the Gospels as a whole. As the pro-slavery advocates believed that their message was self evident, so did their counterparts who saw in the message of the Gospel what they called "the evils of slavery".

The problem, as was stated earlier, is that there is no place in the Bible that directly speaks out against slavery, and in using the spirit of the Gospels and the Bible as a whole took more nuanced arguments and much more in-depth analysis by both clergy and laity alike. Clergy in the North and some in the South saw the wisdom in this technique. However, this was an unpopular technique for the laity because it required more in depth understanding of the scriptures.

There was another argument that would be used by abolitionists. If they couldn't use the Bible in a convincing manner to condemn slavery, they could use it to condemn the kind of slavery practiced in the South. The Southern system slavery was cruel. Men, women, and children were forced to work long hours in horrid conditions while being under the constant scrutiny of slave masters who liberally used whips and other means of harm to force slaves to work faster and more efficiently. Men like Francis Wayland and David Barrow saw such a system of slavery as contrary to the precedents found in the scriptures.[5] Abraham was known to have circumcised his slaves and brought them into the Jewish way of life, thereby treating them with a certain dignity and respect that was not to be found in the South. In order for slave owners to contend that slavery was a system allowed for by Scripture, they would need to follow the same precepts of the slave owners in the Bible. Yet there was even more damning evidence to shows that the southern system of slavery was not based on scripture. It is found in Exodus 21:27, "An owner who knocks out the tooth of a male or female slave must let the slave go free to compensate for the tooth."[6] It would seem that given the way slaves were treated on a daily basis, many, if not all, of the slaves in the South, should have been granted freedom based on this scripture.

Yet these arguments too fell on deaf ears, and failed to help win support for abolition among those in the South. These arguments were nuanced and took more education than the average man had. However, there is another reason as to why the arguments of the

[5] Ibid, 45-47.
[6] Ibid, 46.

abolitionists failed so dramatically, and it is an important one: the deep seeded racism that was rampant throughout both the North and the South. Many slaveholders and those in the South believed that the black man had always been seen as inferior, and to some, not even human.

III. The Churches Response to Emancipation

Theologians attempted to take on racism before the Civil War, but it was too entrenched for a treatise to simply convince people of the error of their ways. Slavery, it would seem, was too. The Civil War began in the spring of 1861 and would not conclude for four long years. When the smoke settled the infrastructure of the South, along with many of its major cities were in tatters. The war did what reasoning, theology, the churches, and abolitionists could not do: free the slaves. But this is not the end of the story. Slavery had left its mark not only on the southern landscape, but also within the hearts and minds of its people. Would they now be forced to learn to live with the men and women that they had once owned over as equals?

The loss in the war left scars upon the former Confederate States and their citizens. Most had been convinced that they understood God's divine providence and that going to war over slavery was not only just but divine. Many questioned God and themselves, but few lost their faith and abandoned the churches. Some accepted the loss of the war as God's way of showing them that they had been wrong, and some even accepted Emancipation joyfully as the fulfillment of God's providence and as a sign to repent. Many preachers led sermons that said just that. They taught that God was punishing the South for abusing slavery and not reforming it to conform to how it was done in the Biblical era.[7]

However, historically, and per my own experience, the people of the South are two things: bold and severely stubborn. Even the complete and utter defeat during the Civil War could not break their spirit. In 1865, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States met in Macon, Georgia. In an address they whole-heartedly reaffirmed their commitment to slavery. They even called the belief against this doctrine to be, "one of the most pernicious heresies in modern times."[8] This was the sentiment of most Southerners, and if the road to abolition was rocky, then the road to equality for black men and women in the South would be even rockier.

Before the Civil War slaves were, begrudgingly at first, taught the ways of Christianity. This had been a hot button issue in the Colonial Era, for there was a commonly held sentiment at the time that a baptized slave would have to be set free. However, after the pressure of clergy from around the world and from all denominations, slaves were given the chance to become baptized, learn the ways of Christians, and live a Christian life (so long as it didn't interfere with their work). By the 1840s and 1850s the slave population in local white congregations had grown considerably and was in fact thriving. Although slaves could be baptized in the church, attend church, and sometimes even be buried in the church cemeteries, they were not free in church. Slaves were forced to sit in segregated sections, and

[7] Foster, Gaines M, Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, The Lost Cause and the Emergence of the New South 1865 to 1913 (New York, Oxford University Press), 22-3.

[8] Smith, H. Shelton, In His Image, But…Racism in Southern Religion, 1780-1910 (Durham: Duke University Press), 208-9.

although they were baptized and confirmed in the church, they didn't have a home there like their white counterparts did.

This led blacks, both slaves and freedmen, to start their own congregations and worship in their own way that celebrated their African heritage and gave them a community in which they felt they could be a part of. Even though this had been going on since the middle of the 18th century, the practice didn't take off until 1816 when Richard Allen started the African Methodist Episcopal Church. This was the first all black denomination whereas before black congregations had no real affiliation with any of the churches.[9]

Despite the rise of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the many congregations led by blacks on plantations in the South, black membership in white churches was growing up until the end of the Civil War. Emancipation changed that, however. Many freedmen had felt oppressed by the way they had been treated in church, and sought to start their own congregations separate from their former slave masters. They also felt confined to a way of worship that was not their own, and many pastors and clergymen pointed out that even though many slaves had been regulars in their congregations, their hearts were not in the service.[10] When the slaves were freed, many of the black congregants left the churches in droves to find their own place where they could feel welcome and worship.

For the Episcopal Church, the loss of its black congregants virtually overnight posed a serious problem: how to get them back. The Episcopalian solution was found in 1865: the Protestant Episcopal Freedman's Commission, which aimed to instruct the former slaves in both religious and secular matters as well as provide relief to them in other ways. The war had left many destitute. Immediately the commission reached out to parishes all over the South for support and donations in the form of everything from money to pencils and other school supplies as well as shoes and clothing.[11] The commission also began work with orphanages, hospitals, and any other resource that sought to bring aid to the freedmen. In doing this the Episcopal Church hoped to gain a sense of trust in the black community, gain participants in their churches, to build new churches and establish a black clergy, something that was rare even in the North.[12]

It was understood that the establishment of a black clergy to cater to the needs of the freedmen was needed if the Episcopal Church was to remain attractive to the freedmen. No other denominations even considered black clergy. Many whites distrusted blacks and thought that if they were granted their own congregations and churches to meet in, a white pastor must be the one to minister to them. In this way, the Episcopalians were ahead of their time. Sadly, the commission started by the Episcopalians did not last long. In 1877 the commission closed the doors to all of the schools it had founded due to lack of funding. The remaining funding was given toward missions and missionary efforts but not to the

[9] Kim, Sebastian and Kirsteen, Christianity as a World Religion (Great Britain: Cromwell Press), 109-11.

[10] J. Charleton Hayden, "After the War: The Mission and Growth of the Episcopal Church Among Blacks in the South, 1865-1877." Historical Magazine Of The Protestant Episcopal Church 42, no. 4 (December 1, 1973) ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed April 2, 2013), 410.

[11] Ibid, 413-14.

[12] Ibid, 419.

education of the freedmen. In retrospect, the commission was doomed to fail. Although the Episcopal Church was unanimously behind the commission, many of its congregants were not and neither were the states. The commission relied heavily on both for its monetary support. One must remember that in the 1860's and 1870's churches were not as wealthy as they are today and funding such programs as the commission did required more money than anyone was willing to give.[13]

Other churches would not take such an optimistic approach on how to treat the freedmen in the congregations. Although many whites were all too happy with the exodus of blacks from their churches, many still wanted to exert control over them in some way. Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist churches founded dioceses and parishes for black communicants, but still wanted them to have a white pastor and did not like the idea of giving them much, if any, control in general assemblies, synods or conferences. In fact, most black preachers in the South weren't ordained, although some were deacons, but couldn't administer the sacraments to their congregations. Blacks sought to be ordained and treated as equals by their white counterparts, but very few were willing given the racism of the day and the belief that blacks were inferior in both intelligence and genetics.[14]

Even keeping blacks out of the clergy and giving them no say in conferences would eventually prove to not be enough to satisfy the white clergy and laity. Eventually all union between the races in their denominations was cut off and led to a split in the churches that allowed for all white and all black denominations to exist separately and independently of each other. One North Carolinian churchmen commenting on this in 1876 said that affiliations between blacks and whites "were as unthinkable as persuading 'fire and gunpowder to occupy the same canister in peace.'"[15] It would seem that there could be no cooperation between the races even in matters of the church. Whites wanted to be rid of their black counterparts and blacks were eager to find ways that suited them in regard of how to worship without being treated as slaves by the white clergy and laity.

Racism was beginning to show up in Southern religion in a more apparent and explicit way than it had previously. It would be wrong to state that racism did not always play a part in Southern religion in the decades and century before Emancipation, but in the years after the war it took a less subtle approach. Previously clergymen, scholars, and theologians had used the Bible to continue the oppressive system of slavery in the South. However, while racism certainly played a role during this time and in the minds of some of the thinkers, it was not always so. It is, in truth, difficult to determine how racism played in the minds of those who propagated the Biblical arguments for slavery. As the world was vastly changing for the Southern people, racism became a much more explicit and blatant form of expression within the clergy and laity.

[13] Ibid, 425-27.

[14] Kenneth K. Bailey, "The Post-Civil War Racial Separations in Southern Protestantism: Another Look." Church History 46, no. 4 (December 1, 1977): ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost accessed April 2, 2013), 460-2.

[15] Ibid, 463.

IV. Robert Lewis Dabney and Racial Orthodoxy

The best example of this is Robert Lewis Dabney. Dabney, a Presbyterian from Virginia who graduated from Union Theological Seminary in 1846, was one of the most influential Protestants of his day. He was a traditionalist in every since of the word, conservative and an extreme fundamentalist. Despite this he was extremely intelligent, well-versed in the scriptures and theology, and wrote several treatises that were influential in their time. He supported slavery as a beneficent institution sanctioned by God until his dying day, and was a chief purveyor of the Biblical case for slavery.

However, his views on the role of race in the post-war era would solidify Dabney's place in history. Dabney was a staunch conservative who was as racist as they came. Dabney was afraid that his church would be ruined by any sort of interaction with freedmen, and he fiercely opposed any sort of legislation within the Presbyterian Church that allowed for any ability for African Americans to gain any position in the church, ordained or otherwise. Moreover, Dabney was convinced that black men could not meet the high standards of learning required for a place in the Presbyterian Church, and to allow them to enter would lower the standards of the clergy, and, lead to the ruin of the church. Because of Dabney's position in the church and in the theological community, his peers listened and he was instrumental in setting up a separate church for African Americans.[16]

Dabney feared that separate churches wouldn't be enough for the white men to be safe from the former slaves. He set about to instill the same racism and fear that he felt into the churches. Dabney would be key in coming up with, gaining support for, and implementing a system of racial orthodoxy within the southern churches. Racial Orthodoxy is, essentially, the clergy of the South jumping on the political bandwagon and helping spread messages of hate and racism in an attempt to keep black men and women from attaining the freedom that emancipation, and the rights that the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the Constitution gave to them. From the 1870's up until the 1960s the laws that were put into place by Southern politicians, known as the Jim Crow laws, would be the result of the churches, and men like Dabney, putting the fear of the black man into the hearts and minds of the white Southern populace.

It is incredibly sad that the churches, and theologians like Dabney, gave their support to these laws. Through their hatred they totally abandoned their callings to the truth, to reason and to the scriptures. "Dabney did not even attempt a full-fledged public theology for racial separation in the public spheres; sensing that the Bible could not be used to defend a form of apartheid, Dabney instead generally played to whites sexual and social fears of miscegenation and amalgamation."[17] This is unforgivable, a theologian who forsakes his duty to the truth and to the scriptures, and instead implants fear for use in doctrine and political lawmaking. The worst part about this whole scheme is how effective it was. By playing on the fears of the white population, Dabney and others swiftly pulled off one of the most blatant forms of racial injustice in the history of man. Racial Orthodoxy and the Jim Crow

[16] Sean Michael Lucas, "Old Times There Are Not Forgotten": Robert Lewis Dabney's Public Theology for a Reconstructed South. ." Journal Of Presbyterian History (Philadelphia, PA: 1997) 81, no. 3 (September 1, 2003) ATLA Religion Database with ATLA Serials, EBSCOhost accessed (April 2, 2013), 169-171.

[17] Ibid, 169.

laws that would follow it would last for nearly one hundred years, and the damage done to both the white and black populations of the South is still not fully repaired.

V. Attempts to Fight Back

The question that must be asked in the midst of all this racism against and the oppression of free blacks on both political and theological lines in the post-war South is this: where were the heroes, the champions of racial solidarity, and ones who would dare to challenge the status quo and follow their conscience? Men like George Cable, Lewis Harvie Blair, and John Spencer Bassett would be labeled as "race heretics" for their refusal to buy into the system of Jim Crow and racial orthodoxy. Cable and Blair had even been veterans of the Confederate Army, but soon saw the error of their ways after the war and attempted to convince others that racial orthodoxy was unjust and not of God. Yet all their cries for justice and racial inclusion and equality would fall on militant and angry ears. All three men received death threats and were treated as if they had spit on the scriptures and cursed the name of the most high.[18] Bassett eventually moved northward to Massachusetts in 1906. When asked why he moved he had this to say, "The decisive factor was not a larger salary, nor a lighter academic load, nor the desire to settle in a highly intellectual section of the country. I merely wanted a peaceful atmosphere.'"[19] The futility of their efforts appears to have not been lost of any of the three men, for each slowly faded into the backgrounds and could stand to stir the pot no more. Blair even gave up the fight altogether forsaking his once spirited beliefs in equality for a rigid type of racial orthodoxy sometime in the late nineteenth century.[20]

It would seem that there was not a lot of support for equality in the South, and the few that there were did not last long enough, or have the backing, to make an impact and affect change in the system of government or in the churches. Yet there is one group powerful enough in the Christian world in America at the time that one would think could have done some good: the purveyors of the social gospel. The social gospel got started in the years just after emancipation and it worked to improve conditions of every aspect of American life, from the poor working conditions and wages of the Northern industrial workers, addiction issues, crime, and the improvement of schools. However, the majority of research seems to point to the fact that the social gospel was either not interested in race, or if they made little effort in this area.

VI. The Failure of the Social Gospel

In the many books that were reviewed for this paper, race is only mentioned in passing, and is never seriously considered. In a book by Charles Howard Hopkins he says in his conclusion that, "In the large, social Christianity was not concerned with the problems of war, imperialism, race, democracy, or the use of force."[21]Other historians seem to agree with this statement, and by and large the social gospel seems to have abandoned the south and

[18] Smith, H. Shelton, In His Image, But…Racism in Southern Religion, 1780-1910 (Durham: Duke University Press), 289-300.

[19] Ibid, 301.

[20] Ibid, 297.

[21] Hopkins, Charles Howard, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism 1865-1915 (New Haven, Yale University Press), 319.

focused on problems affecting only Northern cities and suburbs. The irony is that some of the very same people who were champions of the abolitionist movement were now on the scene with the social gospel message. Men like William Lloyd Garrison thought that once emancipation and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments had be put into place that all was well and that there was no more need to put money into campaigning for freedmen, whose rights he believed had been secured.[22]

Yet some purveyors of the social gospel did take on racism. Initially efforts were made through missions and by campaigning to have federal aid sent to the south to help combat the racism that was common there. The problem with the social gospel in race relations was the same problem the social gospel had in the north; namely, it was diverse and disagreements were common. The people who did reach out to help the south did so in varying ways.

Albion Tourgee started the National Citizens Rights Association, a coalition of militant blacks and white Northerners who modeled themselves off the Ku Klux Klan, in order to combat that exact organization and others like it. Then there was Samuel Hopkins with the American Colonization Society who wished to settle free blacks in Africa, and then finally there was Ida B. Wells who traveled to the South on an anti-lynching crusade. Still none of these made a significant impact.[23] If Northerners could have united through either the social gospel or politically in changing the South and stamping out racial orthodoxy something positive may have happened. Yet, there were too many variations of ideas and too little people in the north paying attention to the South to do anything about the injustices going on there. It would seem that even though all of the Confederate States had been rejoined to the Union by 1870, there was still a big division between North and South.

VII. Conclusion

There it is, the sad truth of the role that theology played in the pre and post-war South on the issue of race relations. It is fair to say that the Bible played a much bigger role in the debate over slavery before the Civil War than most people realize. Both pro-slavery advocates and abolitionists would use the Holy scriptures to fight for their causes. However, theology would prove to be ineffective in settling the debate, and the war followed. But just when a new area of equality should have been ushered in due to the emancipation of the slaves and the ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments, the white clergy and laity in the south would usher in new ways to keep their old hatreds alive. Racial orthodoxy and the Jim Crow Laws would become the new status quo, and African Americans would have to suffer through another system hell bent on keeping them from attaining civil and racial equality. The churches have always been in a unique position to help people, and in fact, the Bible even calls for us to do so; but, they failed to do so in the post-war South. This is a sad truth, and one that most people either don't know about, or choose to ignore because it is too painful to think about. Yet as scholars and historians, we owe it to the world and to ourselves to spread the truth to as many people as we can.

[22] Ralph E. Luker, "The Social Gospel and the Failure of Racial Reform, 1877-1898" Church History 46, no. 1 (March 1, 1977) ATLA Religion Database with ATLA serials, EBSCOhost accessed (April 2, 2013), 90.

[23] Ibid, 93-6.

ARABIA HAERESIUM FERAX (ARABIA BEARER OF HERESIES): Schismatic Christianity's Potential Influence on Muhammad and the Qur'an

Darren M. Slade*

For Eastern Christendom, Arabia was the region of exile for heretical doctrines and schismatic Christian groups. This same Arabia saw the rise of Muhammad and the Qur'an in the seventh century. As Samir Khalil Samir relates, "There is no need to demonstrate that there was a Christian influence on the Qur'ān, in as much as this is apparent from the evidence of a number of narratives."[1] Yet, the Qur'an's understanding of Christology is in conflict with orthodox Christian beliefs. In one instance, the Qur'an views Christianity as teaching modalism, assuming that Jesus comprised the entire Godhead (sura 5:72), while the next verse describes Christians as tritheists, assigning Jesus to one of three gods (v.73). The same sura contends that the Christian Trinity consists of God, Jesus, and Mary (v.116).[2] In the historical context of seventh century Arabia, it is important to recognize the impact of Christian sects on differing cultures and religions. The purpose of this article is to determine the extent, if any, of schismatic Christian influences on the Qur'an's misunderstanding about the nature of Christ. It will identify the dissonant Christian groups present in Arabia at the time of Muhammad, as well as discuss their Christological views, the probability of Muhammad's contact with them, and the likelihood that Muhammad borrowed from these groups in creating the Qur'anic view of Jesus. In the end, it is probable that the Qur'an partially, though not consistently, reflects some of the competing Christologies among Christian schismatics in Arabia at the time of Muhammad.

Qur'anic Christology

Sidney Griffith explains that it is likely Muhammad viewed all Christian denominations, Orthodox and schismatic, as possessing the same Christology because of their agreement in most other theological discussions.[3] Likewise, Samir concludes that the Qur'an takes Christological themes and juxtaposes them with Islamic dogma. Muhammad's "principle of coherence" required assimilating parallel stories to give them a new Islamic meaning.[4] Thus, while Qur'anic Christology is similar to some aspects of Orthodox Christian belief, it has a distinct flavor that is tailored to the Arab-Muslim milieu. Writing in the eighth century, John of Damascus (AD 675-753) eloquently summarized Muhammad's Christology as presented in the Qur'an:

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* Darren M. Slade, MATS, MDiv, is a deacon at WaterStone Community Church in Littleton, Colorado.

[1] Samir Khalil Samir, "The Theological Christian Influence on the Qur'ān: A Reflection," in *The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2008), 161. See, also, p. 160 for a discussion on schismatic exile in Arabia and pp. 152-61 for examples of Christian theological and philological influence.

[2] Unless otherwise noted, all allusions and quotations of the Qur'an are from M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an: A New Translation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[3] Sidney Griffith, "'Melkites', 'Jacobites' and the Christological Controversies in Arabic in Third/Ninth-Century Syria," in *Syrian Christians Under Islam: The First Thousand Years*, ed. David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 54-55.

[4] Samir, 152-160.

> He says that Christ is the Word of God [3:45] and His Spirit [4:171], created [3:59], and a servant [4:172], born from Mary [5:110], the sister of Moses and Aaron [19:28] without seed [19:20], because the Word of God entered Mary [21:91] and she gave birth to Jesus, a prophet [3:39] and a servant of God, and that the Jews, violating the law wanted to crucify him [3:54] and they seized him, but they crucified his shadow, and Christ himself was not crucified, they say, nor did he die [4:157]; God took him up to heaven unto Himself [3:55; 4:158] because He loved him. And he says that when he ascended into heaven God asked him, 'Jesus did you say that "I am Son of God, and God"?' And Jesus answered, 'Be merciful to me, O Lord; you know that I did not say so, neither shall I boast that I am your servant, but men who have gone astray wrote that I said this thing, and they spoke lies against me, and they are in error.' [5:116].[5]

Muhammad's Encounters With Christian Schismatics

Because Muhammad had an entirely different Christology from the biblical Jesus, it is important to consider the amount of influence heterodox Christians had on Muhammad. John Trimingham and Griffith conclude that there were three dominant Christian groups in contact with pre-Islamic Arabs: Oriental (Syrian) Orthodox, Monophysites, and Nestorians.[6] The majority of Syriac and Arabic-speaking Christians in the Arabian region, including monks and clergy members, were Monophysite.[7] Likewise, Robert Betts explains that the Nestorians were the second largest group to impact the Arabs.[8] In fact, the Arab Ghassānid tribe was entirely Monophysite while the Lakhmid tribe was Nestorian.[9] The presenting problem is whether Muhammad had contact with these groups and learned from their differing Christologies.

Challenges to Muhammad's Knowledge of Differing Sects

Despite the Qur'an's claim to believe in Christian revelation (29:46), Muslim and non-Muslim historians agree that Muhammad did not have access to Christian literature.[10] For Richard Bell, this means that Muhammad likely did not possess an intimate knowledge of any particular sect's Christology. Instead, he gathered most of his convictions from schismatic retellings of biblical narratives and characters. Muhammad merely collected whatever information he could assemble, oftentimes from third and fourth-hand sources. As time passed, Muhammad discovered more Christological teachings that he either accepted or

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[5] Quoted in Daniel J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam: The "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 78.

[6] John Spencer Trimingham, *Christianity Among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1979), 159; Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 8.

[7] Trimingham, 167.

[8] Robert Brenton Betts, *Christians in the Arab East: A Political Study*, rev. ed. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1978), 3.

[9] See Sidney Griffith, "Christian Lore and the Arabic Qur'ān: The 'Companions of the Cave' in *Surat al-Kahf* and in Syriac Christian Tradition," in *The Qur'an in Its Historical Context*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2008), 121.

[10] See, for example, Muhammad Farooq-i-Azam Malik, *English Translation of the Meanings of Al-Qur'an: The Guidance for Mankind* (Houston: The Institute of Islamic Knowledge, 1997), 16 and Bertold Spuler, *The Muslim World: A Historical Survey* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), 1:26n1.

rejected depending on his situation. According to Bell, it was only after Muhammad fled to Medina that he had personal contact with Christians. Thus, when the Qur'an references different sects (cf. 6:159), it is likely referring to the division between Christians and Jews. Bell believes it is improbable that Muhammad knew about the Christological controversies of the time.[11]

David Marshall acknowledges that the Qur'an has little to say about Christians in the Meccan suras, grouping them under the title, "People of the Book." It appears that Muhammad believed Christians would endorse his prophethood before arriving in Medina. Once there, Muhammad distinguished between Jews and Christians in answer to their rejection of his prophetic claim. Nonetheless, a phenomenon appears in the Meccan suras that indicates his awareness of Christological controversies. After every significant Meccan passage referencing Jesus, the Qur'an renounces Christian factionalism (cf. 21:93; 23:53; 43:65).[12] These qualifying statements indicate that Muhammad had some knowledge about the different Christian sects.

Similarly, the historical context of Muhammad's membership in the Quraysh tribe leaves little doubt that Muhammad had repeated encounters with Christian schismatics throughout his life. His specific tribesmen were well-known traders to Syria and southwestern Arabia, as well as guardians of the major Meccan pilgrimage to the Ka'aba.[13] It is not apparent, however, whether these contacts had more than a superficial influence on his Christology. According to Griffith's research, the influence of Monophysite Christians, especially from Abyssinia, gave Muhammad a version of Jesus that he later rejected in the Qur'an. Instead of borrowing directly from Christian sources, Griffith argues that Muhammad alluded to Monophysite folklore to develop his own personal theology.[14] Likewise, Trimingham states that the concept of a God-man was just too foreign for the Arabs and would not be embraced by the people.[15] Thus, for many scholars, the presence of Christian schismatics was not enough to influence or dominate the Christological beliefs of Islam's founder.

Direct Contact in Islamic Tradition

Despite these challenges, Muslim tradition discusses several major encounters between Muhammad and dissonant Christian groups. The first encounter involves a Nestorian monk who proclaimed Muhammad's prophetic ascendency. Another encounter involves Waraqa ibn Nawfal, cousin to Muhammad's wife Khadija. According to Islamic tradition, Waraqa was a Christian scholar who copied the Gospels from their Hebrew translation. Also, during the Meccan persecution, Muhammad sent his earliest followers to Negus, an Abyssinian Monophysite king in Ethiopia. Another tradition states that Muhammad had frequent

[11] Richard Bell, *The Origin of Islam in Its Christian Environment*, Islam and the Muslim World Gunning Lectures 10 (London: Routledge, 1968), 100-55. See also, Marston Speight, "Christians in the *Ḥadith* Literature," in *Islamic Interpretations of Christianity*, ed. Lloyd V.J. Ridgeon (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 37-49.

[12] David Marshall, "Christianity in the Qur'ān," in *Islamic Interpretations of Christianity*, ed. Lloyd V.J. Ridgeon (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 8-10.

[13] See William Shepard, *Introducing Islam* (London: Routledge, 2009), 15, 26-27 and Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 7-12.

[14] Griffith, "Christian Lore and the Arabic Qur'ān," 109-37.

[15] Trimingham, 310-11.

discussions with an Egyptian Christian named Jabr. Muhammad's critics claimed that Jabr was responsible for Islamic teachings. Finally, Muhammad had a Coptic (Monophysite) wife named Mariya from Egypt.[16] Even the Qur'an alludes to encounters with foreign sources of information, "We know very well that they say, 'It is a man who teaches him,' but the language of the person they allude to is foreign" (16:103). According to these traditions, Muhammad had regular contact with schismatic Christians, especially Monophysites and Nestorians.

The Rise of Christological Controversies

Mahmud Ayoub relates a common story by Muslim commentators that attempts to explain the rise of Christological controversies in Arabia. The legend describes a Jew named Būlus, who persecuted and killed Christians. In order to fully destroy Christian credibility, Būlus changed his name to Paul and pretended to convert to Christianity. He then trained three men, Nestorius, Jacob, and Malka, to claim divine knowledge and spread the resulting Nestorian, Jacobite (Monophysite), and Melkite (Syrian Orthodox) Christologies.[17] Yet, despite this revisionist legend, the Nestorians and Monophysites developed separately after the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), which defined Christ as existing in two natures, divine and human, in one person. These two natures are not mixed, divided, confused, or separated into different persons.[18] The first group was the Syrian Orthodox, known as "Melkites" because of their adherence to the Council of Chalcedon. The term "Melkites" referred to Syrian and Egyptian Christians with "royal" sympathies. They held to Orthodox Christological beliefs.[19]

The second group was the Monophysites, geographically referred to as "Jacobites" for those in the Arabian Peninsula and "Coptics" for those in Egypt. This Syriac-speaking assembly rejected the "God-man" thinking of Chalcedon and held that the person of Christ had a "natural union" of both human and divine natures. While different in kind, the two natures were mixed together to produce one distinct nature.[20] Finally, the third prominent group was Nestorian, appropriately called the "Church of the East," who were condemned at Chalcedon for maintaining a strict distinction between the human and divine natures of

[16] See Hugh Goddard, *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 15-29. For the story of Waraqa ibn Nawfal, see *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Al-Medina: Islamic University, n.d.), 1:2-4. For the story of Jabr, see Muhammad ibn-Ishaq, *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Isḥāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, trans. A. Guillaume (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), 180.

[17] Mahmud Mustafa Ayoub, "Jesus the Son of God: A Study of the Terms *Ibn* and *Walad* in the Qur'an and Tafsīr Tradition," in *Muslim-Christian Encounters*, ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Wadī Zaydān Ḥaddād (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), 71-72.

[18] Adolf Martin Ritter, "Chalcedon, Council of," in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 1:398-400.

[19] Griffith, "'Melkites', 'Jacobites' and the Christological Controversies," 11-16.

[20] See Roberta C. Chesnut, *Three Monophysite Christologies: Severus of Antioch, Philoxenus of Mabbug, and Jacob of Sarug* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 12-14.

Christ. According to their opponents, Nestorians viewed Jesus' humanity only as a participant with the divine.[21]

Possible Monophysite Influence

Trimingham explains that the Monophysites were active missionaries among the Arab tribes, which led to establishing many desert communities. Among the Arabs, there were two expressions of Monophysitism: the Severans, who followed the teachings of Severus of Antioch (d. AD 538), and the Tritheists, who adhered to the Christologies of the Cilician bishops Eugenius (fl. AD 654-657) and Conon (fl. AD 686-687).[22] According to Roberta Chesnut, Severan Monophysites held a particular view of the Trinity common at the time. They stressed the unity of God by declaring that the Father is the source of both the Son and Holy Spirit. Because the Father is unknowable, the mind of God had to appear as a divine messenger (Jesus) to make the Father fathomable.[23] It is interesting to note that the Monophysites were considered the purest form of monotheism by Nubians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians because of their view of Christ's nature and His relation to the Godhead. The Orthodox Christians were seen as possessing "two Christs" because of their belief in two natures.[24]

Remarkably, Severan Christology is not unlike the Qur'an's view of Jesus. The Qur'an declares, "The Messiah [Jesus], son of Mary, was only a messenger" (5:75; cf. v.117) and states that Jesus came to give wisdom to the people about the divine (43:63). In the Qur'an, Jesus possesses only one nature while stressing the unity of God (cf. 3:51). Unfortunately, these are mere superficial resemblances that do not fully explain the Qur'anic view of Christ. The Qur'an contends against the Severans by declaring that Jesus did not know God personally or intimately (5:116). It refutes the claim that Jesus is the "son of God" and "Lord" (9:30-31).

Rather, the Qur'an's understanding of the Trinity coincides more with tritheism than with Severan theology. It declares, "Those people who say that God is the third of three are defying [the truth]: there is only One God" (5:73). The presence of a secondary schismatic group among the Monophysites may explain this misunderstanding. In the latter part of the sixth century, some Arab Monophysites declared that the Godhead was distinct in both persons and nature. This is unlike the Severans, who believed the Godhead was distinct only in persons. Known as the "Tritheist Controversy," the dissonant sect of Monophysites gained a large following in Armenia, Alexandria, and Syria. Their Christological movement existed as late as the summer of AD 633, where records document their presence at the synod in Alexandria one year after Muhammad's death.[25] It is possible that Muhammad misunderstood the Christian concept of the Trinity due to the Tritheist Monophysites, who believed the Godhead had three distinct natures.

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[21] See Griffith, "'Melkites', 'Jacobites' and the Christological Controversies," 10n6 and Martin Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), 109-12, 207.

[22] Trimingham, 163-67.

[23] Chesnut, 36-38.

[24] See W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement: Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 297.

[25] See Frend, 289-91, 350 and Trimingham, 183.

Griffith, on the other hand, says that the term "third of three" is actually a "Syriacism," meaning that Muhammad employed Syriac words with an Arabic diction. The Syrian Christians merely called Christ "the treble one," which Muhammad rejected. According to Griffith, the phrase is not a reference to tritheism at all.[26] While there is strong evidence that Syriac had a greater influence on the Qur'an than Muslims concede, it is important to recognize that modern translations of the Qur'an do not use this Syriac translation.[27] In fact, several versions specifically combat any tritheist misconceptions by employing a Trinitarian term, though it is not in the original Arabic. Ahmed Ali's translation states, "The third of the *trinity*," while Muhammad Farooq-i-Azam Malik writes, "One of three in a *Trinity*" (5:73).[28]

Possible Nestorian Influence

Nestorian Christology reached the Arabs through evangelism by the end of the fourth century, which made the controversies of the fifth century very important to the Arabs. According to Betts, while the Monophysites virtually denied Christ's humanity, the Nestorians focused almost entirely on Jesus' human nature.[29] Martin Chemnitz's confirms this by citing Nestorius' belief that Jesus should rightly be called the "God-bearer" or the "receiver of God." Nestorius believed the divine nature merely dwelt in Jesus to a fuller degree than the average saint. Thus, it is possible to speak of Jesus' human actions, such as eating, sleeping, and dying, while at the same time speak of Christ's divine actions, such as performing miracles and rising from the dead. Making this distinction between the two natures was condemned at Chalcedon.[30]

James Bethune-Baker disagrees with this assessment and contends that Nestorius was largely Orthodox. He merely feared that the human aspect of Jesus would be diminished with the Chalcedon belief in a "hypostatic union" of the two natures.[31] Yet, Nestorius' work betrays this sentiment. He once wrote, "[The Holy Spirit] formed out of the Virgin a temple for God the Logos, a temple in which he dwelt," and, "That which was formed in the womb is not in itself God. That which was created by the Spirit was not in itself God. That which was buried in the tomb was not in itself God."[32] Later, Nestorius wrote, "What is conveyed to us is the birth and suffering not of the deity but of the humanity of Christ."[33]

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[26] Sidney H. Griffith, "'Syriacisms' in the Arabic Qur'an: Who were 'Those who said that Allah is third of three', According to al-Ma'idah 73?," in *A Word Fitly Spoken: Studies in Medieval Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible and the Qur'an; Presented to Haggai Ben-Shammai*, ed. Meir M. Bar-Asher et al. (Jerusalem: The Ben-Zvi Institute, 2007), 83-110.

[27] For more about the possible Syriac influence on the Qur'an, see Christoph Luxenberg, *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran: A Contribution to the Decoding of the Language of the Koran* (Berlin: Hans Schiler, 2007).

[28] See Ahmed Ali, trans., *Islam: The Qur'an*, rev. ed., ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, Sacred Writings (New York: History Book Club, 1992), 3:107 and Malik, 202; emphasis added to both translations.

[29] Betts, 3-5.

[30] Chemnitz, 112, 273-74.

[31] James Franklin Bethune-Baker, *Nestorius and His Teaching: A Fresh Examination of the Evidence* (1908; repr., New York: Kraus Reprint Company, 1969), 82-100, 171-73.

[32] Translated by Richard A. Norris Jr., ed., "Nestorius's First Sermon Against the *Theotokos*," in *The Christological Controversy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 125, 130.

[33] Ibid., "Nestorius's Second Letter to Cyril," 137.

The Nestorian emphasis on Jesus' humanity may have influenced Muhammad's conception of Christ. Nestorius once expressed, "Without male seed, he fashioned from the Virgin a nature like Adam's (who was himself formed without male seed) and through a human being brought about the revival of the human race."[34] A similar comparison is found in the Qur'an when discussing the virgin birth, "In God's eyes Jesus is just like Adam: He created him from dust, said to him, 'Be,' and he was" (3:59). Likewise, Nestorius proclaimed the impossibility of the divine being crucified, "Let not the Jews glory, for they did not crucify God but a man." He also renounced the foolishness of begetting the divine, "It is impossible for God to be begotten of a man."[35] A similar renunciation is found in the Qur'an, "[The Jews] disbelieved and uttered a terrible slander against Mary, and said, 'We have killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the Messenger of God.' (They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, though it was made to appear like that to them)" (4:156-57). The Qur'an states elsewhere, "[Allah] has begotten no one, and is begotten of none" (112:3, Ahmed Ali). Though the Qur'an rejects the Nestorian belief that Christ possessed a divine element, these verbal echoes between the Qur'an and Nestorius are significant because of their stress on Jesus' humanity.

Possible Gnostic Influence

Surprisingly, few authors mention the potential influence from Gnostic Christians in Arabia. According to Trimingham, documents record Arab converts to Gnosticism as early as the second century. Gnosticism also influenced the monastic lifestyles of monks in the Arabian region, being the root of Syrian asceticism.[36] Though not officially part of the Christological controversies of the former schismatic groups, the Gnostic churches held to a heretical Docetic view of Christ's nature. Found in the Nag Hammadi collection of Egypt, Gnostic Gospels portray Jesus primarily as a pure spiritual being with no actual human existence. In both the Gospel of Philip and the Gospel of the Egyptians, Jesus' human flesh is a mere deception. The divine Christ never actually acquired a human nature. Especially in the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus' body is a mere shell in order to relate to His human audience.[37]

It is possible that Muhammad may have heard some of these "Gospel" accounts during his contacts with Egyptian Christians. Samir acknowledges the probability of Muhammad having at least some contact with Gnosticism. One connection regarding the nature of Christ appears in sura 4:171, which identifies Jesus as "a spirit from [God]." Samir notes that none of the canonical writings label Jesus as a spirit of God. Only the Gnostic writings provide that characteristic.[38] Of course, the Qur'anic designation "spirit" does not imply that Jesus merely masqueraded as a human. The Qur'an is clear in its belief that Jesus was mortal.

One particular parallel connecting Gnosticism to the Qur'an is also one of the most controversial. The Qur'an famously rejects the crucifixion and death of Jesus, stating that

[34] Ibid., "Nestorius's First Sermon Against the *Theotokos*," 124.

[35] Quoted in Chemnitz, 207.

[36] Trimingham, 51-52, 102, 134.

[37] Majella Franzmann, *Jesus in the Nag Hammadi Writings* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1996), 72-79.

[38] Samir, 152-56.

God made it appear as though Jesus had been crucified (4:156-58). Norman Geisler and Abdul Saleeb note the varying interpretations regarding this passage. The most popular Islamic explanation is that Judas Iscariot, Pontius Pilate, Simon of Cyrene, or one of the disciples took Jesus' place on the cross.[39] Interestingly, the second-century Gnostic, Basilides, taught that the Jews mistook Simon of Cyrene for Jesus and crucified him instead.[40] Samir hypothesizes that the Gnostic belief in Jesus' non-crucifixion traveled to Arabia during the seventh century when Byzantines conquered Jerusalem and expelled Christian heretics.[41] Admittedly, however, there is little evidence to defend Samir's theory. Yet, the potential for Gnostic teachings should not be discounted. Muhammad would have likely met Gnostic Christians in his travels and may have learned about these substitution theories from heretics fleeing to Egypt.

Possible Nazorean Influence

The final schismatic group that may have influenced Muhammad's formation of the Qur'anic Jesus appears in the early Jewish-Christian sect known as the Nazoreans. François de Blois explores the idea that the Qur'an is actually referencing this heretical sect, which was known for maintaining adherence to the Jewish law despite believing in Christ as the Messiah. He deduces this from the Qur'an's use of the word *Naṣrānī* ("Nazoreans") to refer to Christians. This term was a Jewish epithet for the Jewish-Christian sect because of their continued presence in synagogue worship. Allegedly, the Ebionite heresy was first developed from this Nazorean sect. De Blois hypothesizes that a small group of Nazoreans existed in Arabia at the time of Muhammad and were responsible for perpetuating the mistaken notion that the Trinity consists of the Father, Son, and Jesus' mother, Mary. According to the Nazorean "Gospel According to the Hebrews," which was written in Hebrew, the text identifies Mary as the Holy Spirit. Thus, as the third person of the Godhead, Muhammad could have accurately renounced the belief that Mary was a god. For de Blois, the Qur'an does not view Orthodox Christianity as a threat; only the Nazoreans were cause for alarm.[42] Thus, the Qur'an refutes the idea that Jesus ever said, "Take me and my mother as two gods alongside God" (5:116).

In support of de Blois' theory, it is significant to note that the Ebionites existed in Syria at least until the fifth century. The Ebionites were extreme monotheists, who emphasized the Jewish law, especially ceremonial cleansing rituals similar to those in Islam.[43] Also, the tradition of Waraqa ibn Nawfal translating the Gospels from Hebrew is oddly coincidental to the Nazorean Gospel.[44] Yet, even de Blois admits that there are no records of either group having contact with Muhammad or living in Arabia. Similarly, the term "Nazoreans"

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[39] Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002), 67.

[40] Everett Ferguson, *Church History Volume One: From Christ to Pre-Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 95-96.

[41] Samir, 160.

[42] François de Blois, "Naṣrānī (Ναζωραῖος) and Ḥanīf (ἐθνικός): Studies on the Religious Vocabulary of Christianity and of Islam," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 65, no. 1 (2002): 2-26.

[43] Helmut Merkel, "Ebionites," in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 2:8-9.

[44] Al-Bukhari, 1:2-4.

is the Arabic designation for Christians and existed prior to Islam's formation.[45] At this point, de Blois' thesis begins to lose validity. Nevertheless, heresiographers cannot dismiss the similarities between the Qur'an's incorrect concept of the Trinity and the Nazorean's deification of Mary.

Possible Monastic Influence

In focusing on schismatic groups in seventh-century Arabia, one monastic story is particularly important. According to Muhammad's eighth-century biography, the *Sīrat*, by hagiographer Muhammad ibn Ishāq, Christian monk Sergius-Bahira recognized a prophetic mark on Muhammad's body and related the foretelling of his ascendency from earlier Scriptures. This short story involving Bahira was likely invented by Muslims to answer the Christian charge that Muhammad was unannounced and, thus, a false prophet. The apologetic legend was designed to give a Christian approval of Muhammad's prophethood.[46]

Yet, the legend of Muhammad's encounter with Bahira is also found in both Syrian and Arab Christian circles during the ninth century. Barbara Roggema clarifies that the Christian version tells the legend differently. Both Monophysite and Nestorian Christians had a copy of the story, which seeks to demonstrate that Bahira was the actual author of the Qur'an. One purpose of containing such a legend was to demonstrate that the Qur'an originated from Christianity. Bahira claims that Muhammad had trouble differentiating between the polytheists and the Christians. In sura 4:157, Bahira did not intend to say that Jesus never died on the cross. Instead, he meant only that Jesus did not die in His divine nature.[47]

As Griffith explains, the Christian version of the legend presents Islam as a mistaken form of Christianity. Bahira is presented as a fugitive monk from the Nestorian tradition, who attempted to convert the Arab polytheists by contextualizing Christianity for Arab culture. Originally, the Qur'an contained a pure gospel message prior to Jewish converts distorting the record and making Islam what it is known today. Bahira even gave himself the name "Nestorius," in order to promote Nestorian Christology. This may account for another Muslim legend of Muhammad meeting a monk on his way to Syria named *Nasṭûr* (Nestorius?), who also declared Muhammad's future prophethood. According to Griffith, the legend of Bahira likely originated from Monophysite Christians to blame Nestorians for the rise of Islam. Griffith summarizes the legend, "[It] is clearly a literary attempt, knowingly to depict Islam as a degraded and simplified form of Christianity, which was further distorted by the Jews."[48]

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[45] de Blois, 1-2, 12. See also, Bell, 149.

[46] See Goddard, 19-20, Sidney H. Griffith, "Muḥammad and the Monk Baḥîrâ: Reflections on a Syriac and Arabic Text from Early Abbasid Times," *Oriens Christianus* 79 (1995): 148, 153, Sahas, 73, 73n5, and Barbara Roggema, "A Christian Reading of the Qur'an: The Legend of Sergius-Baḥīrā and Its Use of Qur'an and Sīra," in *Syrian Christians Under Islam: The First Thousand Years*, ed. David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 57.

[47] Roggema, 57-70.

[48] Griffith, "Muḥammad and the Monk Baḥîrâ," 148-65.

Interestingly, John of Damascus details a polemic against Muslims by referring to an Arian monk as the teacher of Muhammad. In his eighth century work, *De Haeresibus*, John concludes that Islam is a form of Christian heresy. One codex of his book describes John's belief that Jews, Christians, Arians, and Nestorians were the cause behind Muhammad's religion. From the Arians, Muhammad learned that Jesus was created and not eternal. From the Nestorians, Muhammad learned to place a stress on Christ's humanity. The monk Bahira, according to John, was an Arian who misled the Arab people.[49] Muhammad's Arian tendencies is confirmed by the legend when Bahira says, "[Muhammad's] understanding could not encompass it, and the faith of Arius … became fixed in his thinking, who had said, 'I think that the messiah is the Word of God and the son of God, but he was created.'"[50]

Betts explains that recent theories into the legend suggest that the monk actually met Muhammad as an adult and became the dominant source of his Christological teachings.[51] However, the value of this medieval legend is not in its historicity. It is likely that neither the Islamic nor Christian version truly took place. However, the legend's importance to the present study is found in early Christian-Muslim dialogue. All three Christian communities, Syrian Orthodox, Monophysite, and Nestorian, believed that schismatic heresies were responsible for the formation of the Qur'anic Jesus. Griffith states, "There is a perceptible interest on the author's part to suggest that Islam was inspired in its origins from within the 'Nestorian' community, albeit at the hands of a monk whom the 'Nestorians' themselves had repudiated."[52] Interestingly, the Qur'an quotes Muhammad's skeptics who allude to him receiving personal instructions from an outsider, "They say, 'It is just ancient fables [apocryphal legends?], which he has had written down: they are dictated to him morning and evening'" (25:5).

Conclusion

In the end, the presence of schismatic Christian groups in Arabia must be treated as probable influences on Muhammad's concept of Christ. It is possible that the Qur'an's stress on divine unity and misunderstanding about tritheism developed from Muhammad's contact with Monophysite Christians. It is equally possible that Muhammad learned to stress Jesus' humanity from the Nestorian tradition. From Gnostic influence, Muhammad may have learned about the substitution legend surrounding Jesus' crucifixion. From the Nazoreans, Muhammad may have incorrectly learned that Mary is part of the Christian Trinity. Finally, tales about an erring monk guiding Muhammad give credence to the notion that dissonant groups were at least involved, if not directly responsible, for Muhammad's Christology.

However, it would be historically unwise to suggest that schismatic Christians were the dominant influence behind the formation of Islam. While there are similarities, the Qur'an does not conform to any one Christology. It appears that Muhammad developed his own personalized version of Jesus. Nevertheless, it would be equally unwise to suggest that these schismatic groups did not, in some fashion, influence Muhammad's convictions on proper religion. If nothing else, they demonstrated to him the factionalism present in Christianity.

[49] Sahas, 59, 67-69, 73-74, 81.

[50] Quoted in Griffith, "Muḥammad and the Monk Baḥîrâ," 168.

[51] Betts, 5.

[52] Griffith, "Muḥammad and the Monk Baḥîrâ," 159.

At best, history can identify striking resemblances between Muhammad's view of Jesus and the Christology of certain schismatic groups. At worst, Muhammad was completely ignorant of the Christological controversies and merely rejected what he believed was true of all Christians. In either case, it is apparent that Muhammad formulated much of his beliefs about Jesus from what was preached in Arabia. To further explore outside influences on Muhammad, Christoph Luxenberg's *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran* and Gabriel Reynolds' *The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context* provide excellent studies regarding Muhammad's cultural and religious environment.

HONORING MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. RIGHTLY: A CONFESSIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

Eugene A. Curry* & George B. Gaskin**

One of the most baffling and bizarre episodes from Christian history is the Church's misadventure with a pair of individuals named Barlaam and Josaphat. The traditional story of Barlaam and Josaphat goes something like this: Josaphat was the son of a wealthy pagan king in India, a king who sought to protect his child from disturbing outside influences.[1] These influences included ordinary matters like sorrow and pain, but also the pesky new faith that was winding its way through the land—Christianity. Despite his father's best efforts, though, Josaphat eventually left his palace and encountered all the sad realities that haunt the human condition. He saw sickness, debilitating old age, and even death. Then, after all this, Josaphat met Barlaam, a Christian hermit who shared the gospel with the young prince. Josaphat embraced this new spirituality with abandon, ultimately casting off the trappings of his regal birthright to live an ascetic life alongside Barlaam, meditating on the truths of God.

It is a good story. So good, in fact, that Barlaam and Josaphat were accounted as saints in both the Eastern and Western Christian churches during the medieval period. The pair were honored in the Roman sanctoral cycle on November 27th, while the Greeks hallowed the memory of their unshakable Christian faith on August 26th, and the Russians did so on November 19th.[2]

There is only one problem with all this. Josaphat had another name in life, a name that many will recognize: Siddhartha Gautama, the man known as the Buddha. Likewise, Barlaam (assuming he corresponds to a genuine historical figure at all) was not a Christian hermit but was likely a Hindu monk; he was the contented monk that the young Siddhartha saw contrasting so very sharply with the suffering all around him in the wider world.

The story of the Buddha's renunciation of temporal power and pleasure in favor of a distinctly Buddhist view of Enlightenment was Christianized over the course of centuries. The Sanskrit *bodhisattva* became the Arabic *Budasaf*, which became the Greek *Ioasaph,* which became the Latin *Josaphat*.[3] The Buddha of history—who felt that the gods (even if they maybe existed) were irrelevant—was massaged and reworked into a figure who made the Son of God the center of his whole life. And, finally, Christians living many years later and many miles away from the original events embraced the doctored legends as legitimate history and crowned the characters saints. Thus the Church unwittingly put a man with decidedly non-Christian beliefs before the faithful as an example to be emulated.

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* Eugene A. Curry is Senior Pastor of the Park Hill Baptist Church in Kansas City, Missouri and a doctoral student at the Beeson Divinity School in Alabama.

** George B. Gaskin is a history teacher at Harvard-Westlake School in Los Angeles. Mr. Gaskin adds an African-American perspective.

[1] For the full narrative, see John Damascene, *Barlaam and Ioasaph*, Loeb Classical Library, trans. G. R. Woodward and Harold Mattingly (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914).

[2] L. J. Engles, "Barlaam and Josaphat," in *A Dictionary of Medieval Heroes,* ed. Willem P. Gerritsen and Anthony G Van Melle, trans. Tanis Guest (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 49.

[3] Monique B. Pitts, "Barlaam and Josaphat: A Legend for All Seasons," *Journal of South Asian Literature* 16, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 1981): 4.

Thankfully, some of the churches who blundered into this awkward situation quietly corrected matters when they discovered their mistake. (Some, but not all; the Orthodox Church in America still lauds the "Venerable Joasaph the Prince of India."[4]) But that the mistake was made in the first place is, perhaps, not particularly surprising after all. Certainly Christians long for inspiring examples of faith and fortitude. The Bible itself is keen to refer to the great cloud of witnesses that surround us, urging us all on to greater holiness through their examples.[5] And denominations of all sorts have made saints (officially and semi-officially) of remarkable believers in all ages: Ignatius of Antioch, Augustine of Canterbury, Francis of Assisi, Martin de Porres, Lottie Moon, John Kochurov—the list goes on and on.

This desire to saint or otherwise honor great Christians continues even into our own time, with reference to impressive figures who have passed away within living memory. Pope John Paul II is on the proverbial fast-track to canonization within the Roman Catholic Church. Mother Teresa probably will not be far behind. And some modern figures are venerated by communions across a wide range of theological perspectives.

Martin Luther King, Jr. stands out as a preeminent example of this latter phenomenon. Dr. King is currently listed on the official sanctoral rolls of the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on April 4th and January 15th respectively.[6] In 2000, Roman Catholic bishops in the United States petitioned the Vatican to include Dr. King on the Pope's Jubilee list of 20th century martyrs.[7] Even Baptist voices, with all their historic aversion to ritual and so forth, have called for Dr. King to be honored as an official saint within their churches, most recently in an article entitled "Towards a Baptist Sanctoral?" in the May 2013 issue of the *Journal of European Baptist Studies*.[8] And, in addition to all this, more casual expressions of religiously themed honor for Dr. King are routinely offered by Christian thinkers of all sorts, with the titles "saint" and "prophet" commonly appended to the man.

Of course, the reasons for Dr. King's status among Christians are not difficult to find.[9] In December, 1955, black seamstress Rosa Parks was arrested in Montgomery, Alabama, for refusing to give up her seat to a white passenger in defiance of segregation laws. Almost immediately, the idea of a bus boycott spread among the black residents of the city. The Montgomery Improvement Association was organized to help guide the boycott, and Martin Luther King, Jr., the young local pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, was elected as its president and chief spokesperson. For over a year, the boycott held strong, causing serious financial hardship for city services. Eventually, as a result of the national attention Dr. King was able to bring to the issue, the Supreme Court ruled segregation on public busses to be unconstitutional.

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[4] The Orthodox Church in America, "Venerable Joasaph the Prince of India," https://oca.org/saints/lives/2010/11/19/103329-venerable-joasaph-the-prince-of-india (accessed October 22, 2013).

[5] Heb. 11-12.

[6] Richard P. McBrien, *Lives of the Saints: From Mary and St. Francis of Assisi to John XXIII and Mother Theresa* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 154.

[7] Michael Paulson, "US Bishops List King as Martyr Candidate," *Boston Globe*, January 13, 2000.

[8] Andy Goodliff, "Towards a Baptist Sanctoral?" *Journal of European Baptist Studies* 13, no. 3 (May 2013).

[9] For a fuller recounting of Dr. King's life and work, see Taylor Branch's massive three-volume series *America in the King Years*, published by Simon and Schuster over the period of 1988 to 2006.

Dr. King emerged from this episode as a prominent and respected civil rights leader. Energized by the success and effectiveness of the Montgomery boycott, Dr. King and other clergymen formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Its purpose was to capitalize on the recent gains, consolidate efforts, and to promote campaigns across the South that would draw attention to racial discrimination through non-violent direct action.

In 1963, King directed the SCLC to focus its efforts on Birmingham, the most populous city in Alabama, a state whose newly elected Governor ominously proclaimed, "Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever!" in his inaugural address.[10] Dr. King considered Birmingham the "most thoroughly segregated city in the United States."[11] Some even nicknamed the city "Bombingham" because of the large number of unsolved bombings of the homes of prominent civil rights figures and predominantly black churches.[12]

Shortly after the Birmingham campaign began, the city's jails were filled with civil rights participants, including Dr. King, who was arrested in April of 1963. King was released after only a week, but when the Commissioner of Public Safety, Eugene "Bull" Connor, realized that incarceration would not deter the demonstrators, he chose to deal with them in a harsher fashion. Nearly two weeks after King's release, Connor ordered the use of high-pressure fire hoses—whose force was strong enough to remove bark from a tree—and attack dogs on demonstrators, many of whom were children. Images were broadcast across the globe showing the shocking contrast between the non-violent demonstrators and the heavy-handed response from local police. As a result, while the purpose of the Birmingham campaign was to confront directly the injustice of racial discrimination in one particular municipality, its cultural impact extended far beyond the city limits.

During this campaign, and while Dr. King's was serving his week in jail, eight clergymen, most of whom were from segregated congregations, wrote a letter to a local newspaper criticizing Dr. King's role in the social disruption caused by the demonstrations. They pleaded for order and patience, saying that the time was not right for the changes demanded by Dr. King and his colleagues. While in his cell, Dr. King composed a response, published later in the year as the Letter from a Birmingham Jail. The open letter was a stinging indictment of the injustice inherent in racial segregation and it presented an explicit moral justification for the demonstrations. Although King's response was provoked by the clergymen who wrote to the local newspaper, he intended it to appeal to a much broader audience. He wanted to arouse the conscience of the nation and focus attention on the moral offense of racial discrimination, not allowing one to be indifferent to the injustice of Jim Crow laws. Once attuned to the moral argument, one could not sit on the fence and permit racial discrimination to continue without challenge.

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[10] Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics*, 2nd ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 11.

[11] Martin Luther King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail," in *The Civil Rights Reader: American Literature from Jim Crow to Reconciliation*, ed. Julie Buckner Armstrong and Amy Schmidt (Athens, GA: University Of Georgia Press, 2009), 181.

[12] Thomas H. Cox, "Birmingham Campaign," in *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1896 to the Present: From the Age of Segregation to the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Paul Finkelman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1:180.

The Birmingham campaign of '63 further increased the prestige of Dr. King as the premier spokesperson for the cause of civil rights and showed him to be a man of remarkable gravitas. As a result, he was invited to participate in the March on Washington later that year (the largest civil rights demonstration in history) where he delivered his keynote "I Have a Dream" speech. Time Magazine subsequently selected Dr. King as its "Man of the Year" in 1964, and shortly thereafter the Nobel Committee chose him to be its youngest-ever Peace Prize recipient. When the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964, Dr. King was invited to attend the signing ceremony. And after he devoted his efforts to increasing voter registration, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was also passed.

Over the course of his public career, Martin Luther King, Jr. became the face of the civil rights movement and a bone fide American hero. Through his marches, his speeches, his letters, and more, Dr. King clearly illustrated and opposed the injustice inherent in Jim Crow laws and the broader cultural attitudes that enabled them to endure. His cause was righteous. And for that reason, when on April 4, 1968, he was shot dead as he stepped out onto his hotel balcony at sunset in Memphis, he became a righteous martyr in the eyes of many.

All these very real, very serious, and very noble accomplishments stand behind the desire to saint or otherwise honor Dr. King in a decidedly religious way. Who can honestly look over his life and what it meant for our nation and not see the hand of Providence at work? Indeed, Dr. King seems to have been anointed by God to accomplish a great and virtuous task in his particular cultural moment—a task that would better our nation as a whole and countless individual lives within it.

Nevertheless, there is an aspect to Dr. King's life and thought that is less well known, an aspect that theologically serious Christians cannot afford to overlook. For all of Dr. King's inspiring speeches rooted in biblical imagery, for all of his seminary education, for all of his service as the pastor of Baptist congregations even, Dr. King rejected many of the central doctrines of the Christian faith. To call his theology "heterodox" would be a profound understatement.

The fact of the matter is that Dr. King denied such *de fide* dogmas as the virginal conception of Jesus, the incarnation of God in Christ, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and the Second Coming. And it should be said, to Dr. King's credit, that he did not seek to conceal his rejection of orthodox Christianity. Rather, he was very upfront about the issues, as can be seen in his writings, helpfully collated and published by the University of California Press in a multi-volume anthology entitled *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Concerning the incarnation, King wrote,

> Where then can we in the liberal tradition find the divine dimension in Jesus? We may find the divinity of Christ not in his substantial unity with God, but in his filial consciousness and in his unique dependence upon God. It was his feeling of absolute dependence on God, as Schleiermacher would say, that made him divine. Yes it was the warmness of his devotion to God and the intimacy of his trust in God that accounts for his being the supreme revelation of God. All of this reveals to us that one man has at last realized his true divine calling: That of becoming a true son of man by becoming a true son of God… To say that the Christ, whose example of living we are bid to follow, is divine in an ontological sense is actually harmful and

> detrimental… So that the orthodox view of the divinity of Christ is in my mind quite readily denied. The true significance of the divinity of Christ lies in the fact that his achievement is prophetic and promissory for every other true son of man who is willing to submit his will to the will and spirit of God. Christ was to be only the prototype of one among many brothers.[13]

When it comes to the virginal conception, King was equally forthcoming:

> First we must admit that the evidence for the tenability of this doctrine is too shallow to convince any objective thinker… A more adequate explanation for the rise of this doctrine is found in the experience which the early Christians had with Jesus. The people saw within Jesus such a uniqueness of quality and spirit that to explain him in terms of ordinary background was to them quite inadequate. For his early followers this spiritual uniqueness could only by accounted for in terms of biological uniqueness. They were not unscientific in their approach because they had no knowledge of the scientific. They could only express themselves in terms of the pre-scientific thought patterns of their day... We of this scientific age will not explain the birth of Jesus in such unscientific terms, but we will have to admit with the early Christians that the spiritual uniqueness of Jesus stands as a mystery to man.[14]

King's view of the Jesus' resurrection followed a similar anti-supernatural bent. Indeed, King declared that he had rejected the bodily resurrection of Jesus ever since he was 13 years old.[15] As an adult, King explained his thinking thusly:

> From a literary, historical, and philosophical point of view this doctrine raises many questions. In fact the external evidence for the authenticity of this doctrine is found wanting. But here again the external evidence is not the most important thing, for it in itself fails to tell us precisely the thing we most want to know: What experiences of early Christians led to the formulation of the doctrine? The root of our inquiry is found in the fact that the early Christians had lived with Jesus. They had been captivated by the magnetic power of his personality. This basic experience led to the faith that he could never die. And so in the pre-scientific thought pattern of the first century, this inner faith took outward form.[16]

Finally, concerning the Second Coming of the Lord, King wrote,

> It is obvious that most twentieth century Christians must frankly and flatly reject any view of a physical return of Christ. To hold such a view would mean denying a Copernican universe, for there can be no physical return unless there is a physical place from which to return. In its literal form this belief belongs to a pre-scientific world view which we cannot accept. Where then do we find the Christian pertinence of this belief?… As Dr. [George] Hedley succinctly states, 'The second coming of the Christ is not an event in space-time, but an experience which transcends all physical

[13] Martin Luther King, Jr., *Called to Serve, January 1929-June 1951,* vol. 1 of *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.,* ed. Clayborne Carson, Ralph E. Luker, and Penny A. Russell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 261-262.

[14] Ibid., 228-229.

[15] Ibid., 361.

[16] Ibid., 229-230.

> categories. It belongs not to the sky, but to the human heart; not to the future, but to whatever present we are willing to assign to it."[17]

To be sure, the essays from which the above quotations are drawn were written during King's time at seminary as a young man. But interviewers, such as the distinguished journalist Lee E. Dirks, found Dr. King continuing to downplay and then deny the cardinal tenets of the Christian faith as late as 1963, the same year Dr. King gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington.[18]

None of this in any way diminishes the immensity of Dr. King's social achievements. The Montgomery bus boycott was no less effective because of Dr. King's deeply unorthodox theology, nor was his signature oratory any less moving. Dr. King is truly deserving of our nation's respect and gratitude. But that respect and gratitude ought to be expressed in ways that are appropriate given what he achieved and, simultaneously, what he believed.

That our nation honors Dr. King with a day of remembrance in our secular calendar, alongside other men of great secular achievement such as Christopher Columbus and George Washington, is entirely reasonable. That cities throughout the country name streets and boulevards after the man is likewise appropriate. Commemorative stamps, coins, monuments like the one in Washington D.C.—all of these accolades are quite fitting. But to give Dr. King the title "saint" or "prophet," to place his name in a sacred Christian calendar alongside the great exemplars of the faith throughout history, to hold him forth as not only a great man generally but also as a great Christian specifically—this all just seems misconceived. To do so would be to repeat the Church's mistakes with Barlaam and Josaphat: it would put a man with decidedly non-Christian beliefs before the faithful as an example to be emulated

After all, the Church teaches its people the truths of the faith not only through formal instruction in abstract doctrine, but also through the less formal methods of approving and disapproving concrete realities. In the midst of our gathered communities of faith, the songs that we sing, the art that we display, and the saints that we crown all inform the hearts and minds of believers just as much as any catechesis class. And the theological downgrade required conscientiously to establish Dr. King as a saint or prophet among us is just too much. It would communicate that a man can deny the virginal conception of Jesus, deny his resurrection, deny his genuine divinity even, and still be considered an exemplary Christian. In other words, such an act would communicate that theology simply does not matter.

No. We can and should honor Dr. King as an influential man whom God used to improve our nation and uplift His people. We can even grant that, in a sense, the Lord anointed Dr. King to accomplish His work. But we should honor him as the Jews honored the anointed (but pagan) Cyrus, not as they honored the anointed (and orthodox) prophets.[19] The Church's awkward misadventure with Barlaam and Josaphat was quite enough, and the blunder should not be repeated in our own time.

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[17] Ibid., 269.

[18] Lewis V. Baldwin, *The Voice of Conscience: The Church in the Mind of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 274 n. 145.

[19] Isa. 45:1, cp. 1 Kings 19:16.

Cornel West spoke recently of the importance of remembering Dr. King as the three-dimensional person that he really was, as opposed to a Procrustean caricature of the man. Dr. West stated that that we must "resist the 'Santa Claus-ification' of Martin Luther King, Jr, "I don't want to sanitize Martin Luther King, Jr. I don't want to sterilize Martin Luther King, Jr. I don't want to deodorize Martin Luther King, Jr. And we're not going to domesticate Brother Martin this morning."[20] To this one could add that we ought not to Christianize Dr. King beyond his own confession either.

Let us then salute the memory of Dr. King. Let us remember him with fondness and gratitude and respect. But let us remember him as he actually was—not how we Christians perhaps wish he was. He was not a saint; he was not a prophet; he was an indefatigable hero of social justice and that is how we should honor him.

[20] Cornell West, "Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Address" (keynote address at the Ebenezer Baptist Church during the 25th Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Commemoration, Atlanta, GA, January 18, 2010). Recording available online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZdusCLR8lSA. Accessed October 24, 2013.

REVIEW ARTICLE
Considering Michael Horton's *The Christian Faith*

Jeffrey T. Riddle*

Into the mix of systematic theologies from a Reformed theological perspective came Michael Horton's *The Christian Faith*. Horton is, of course, a Reformed minister, scholar, and prolific author, and he serves as Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics at Westminster Seminary in California. He has also, notably, been a persistent critic of broad evangelicalism.[1] Recently, however, Horton himself has come under scrutiny by some in Reformed circles. Lane G. Tipton, Professor of Systematic and Biblical Theology at Westminster Seminary of Philadelphia, for example, has labeled Horton's emphasis on the doctrine of justification—to what he sees as the neglect of the doctrine of union with Christ—as more "Lutheran" than Reformed.[2] Even more pointedly, theologian John Frame has offered outspoken criticism of Horton and others (like R. Scott Brown and D. J. Hart), especially for their advocacy of "two kingdom theology," faulting their distinction between the role of the church and state in civil government and society. Frame has labeled the views of Horton and others as the "The Escondido Theology."[3] With such criticisms in mind, a detailed analysis of Horton's widely influential systematic theology will be our task in this essay.

General Impressions

We might begin with some general impressions of Horton's work. Those who expected *The Christian Faith* to provide a popular and devotional alternative among Calvinistic evangelicals to Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*[4] will be disappointed. This is a much more intellectually challenging book to read and understand. Horton's work not only presents a systematic theology but a survey of Western and Christian theological and philosophical thought. It is in many ways a historical as well as systematic theology. Horton also places much emphasis on the influence of Western philosophy (Plato, Kant, Hegel,

*Jeffrey Riddle is Assistant Professor of Humanities at Piedmont Virginia Community College and also serves as Pastor of Christ Reformed Baptist Church, both in Charlottesville, VA.

[1] See especially Michael Horton, *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church* (Baker, 2008).

[2] Tipton expressed his concerns about Horton's views in episode 200 [October 28, 2011] of the popular podcast "The Reformed Forum." Tipton's critique was based on his reading of the material in Horton's book *Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ* (Westminster John Knox, 2007). Horton responded in an interview on episode 207 [December 16, 2011]. Finally, on episode 213 [January 20, 2012], Horton and Tipton were both on the program and engaged in a dialogue concerning their views on both justification and union with Christ. All episodes may be accessed in the archive of the Reformed Forum podcast at reformedforum.org.

[3] John Frame, *The Escondido Theology: A Reformed Response to Two Kingdom Theology*, Whitefield Media, 2011.

[4] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Zondervan, 1994). This work has been widely popular and influential among those involved in the contemporary resurgence of evangelical Calvinism. For more on this movement, see Colin Hansen, *Young, Restless, Reformed: A Journalist's Journey with the New Calvinists* (Crossway, 2008) and Jeremy Walker, *The New Calvinism Considered: A Personal and Pastoral Assessment* (forthcoming from Evangelical Press).

Nietzsche, etc.) on theological method, and thus those without a strong philosophy background will likely struggle with such discussions. Horton's work also reflects his own adaptation of modern philosophical thought, most notably "speech act theory."[5]

We have here what is also a much more "catholic" work than a purely evangelical one. One might even say that Horton appears more keenly interested in interaction with Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, liberal Protestant, and Neo-orthodox theologies and theologians than he is with conservative evangelicals. The more ecumenical nature and goal of Horton's work might be indicated by the fact that he introduces the work with the Nicene Creed (11). Right out of the gate, then, Horton's historical, philosophical, and ecumenical awareness and emphases distinguish this work not only from Reformed systematic tomes, but from most systematic theologies that spring from more conservative pens.

Survey Of Content

In the introduction, Horton notes that "the goal of theology is to humble us before the triune God of majesty and grace" (13). He adds that to believe in the God of Scripture requires "an act of apostasy from the assumed creed of our age" (15). A systematic understanding of the faith is essential for all believers. It is "like the box top of a jigsaw puzzle, and every believer is a theologian in the sense of putting all the pieces together" (27). Horton makes clear that this book is not an exercise in "*dogmatics,*" which provides "a deeper analysis of Christian doctrines" but "a systematic summary" (29). Finally, he notes that he is writing "from the perspective of a Reformed Christian living in North America" (30). *The Christian Faith* is then divided into six major parts and twenty-nine chapters:

- Part 1 is "Knowing God: The Presuppositions of Theology" (35-222). This opening is dedicated to epistemology, the doctrine of revelation, and Scripture.
- Part 2 is "God Who Lives" (223-308). The emphasis here is on the attributes of God and the Trinity.
- Part 3 is "God Who Creates" (309-445). In this part the subjects are the decrees of God, creation, providence, anthropology, and the fall.
- Part 4 is "God Who Rescues" (446-550). This section is devoted to Christology.
- Part 5 is "God Who Reigns in Grace" (551-905). This part focuses on the *ordo salutis* and ecclesiology.
- Part 6 is "God Who Reigns in Glory" (906-990). This final part, appropriately enough, deals with the doctrine of last things.

[5] See Ryan M. McGraw, "Shifting Paradigms in Reformed Systematic Theology: A Review Article of Michael Horton's *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrim's on the Way*," *Puritan Reformed Journal* Vol. 5, No. 2 (July 2013): pp. 245-259. McGraw focuses on three aspects of Horton's work: "his use of speech act theory, the Eastern Orthodox distinction between divine essence and energies, and his construction of the *ordo salutis* or application of redemption" (p. 245). McGraw sees each of these as "primary deficiencies" of *The Christian Faith* (p. 259). According to McGraw, Horton's introduction of "new paradigms" in an effort to present Reformed theology to a contemporary generation unfortunately results in a significant alteration of "the substance and method of historic Reformed theology" (p. 245).

The Christian Faith also includes a number of helpful resources and appendices, including a "Glossary" of theological terms (991-1003), a "Confession Index" (1047-1048), and a brief "Annotated Bibliography" on various resources, labeling them by levels as "Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced" (1049-1052).

Points of Interest and Analysis

Horton's systematic theology might be generally described as covenantal in method, Calvinistic in soteriology, Presbyterian in ecclesiology, cessationist in extraordinary offices and gifts, and amillennial in eschatology. Such a massive work, tackling such a broad array of subjects, is difficult to analyze, however, in short space with precision. Rather than offer a micro-analysis of the whole we will instead dip in at a few points of interest:

Scripture and Text

From the perspective of his covenant theology, Horton sees Scripture as the "covenant canon" or "ruling constitution" of Christianity. On one hand, he affirms what he calls the "*verbal-plenary inspiration*" of Scripture (160). On the other hand, he is intent on criticizing what he calls "the docetic temptation" of some fundamentalists, concluding, "it is impossible to treat every word as normative, much less as the direct utterance of God. Yet the Bible as a whole is God's inspired script for the drama of redemption" (162). He notes that both fundamentalist and liberals share in what he holds to be a common error: a univocal view of divine and human agency (fundamentalism), leading the former to undervalue the Bible's humanity, while the latter interprets the obvious signs of the Bible's humanity as evidence of its merely natural process (liberalism) (163).

He is particularly hostile to the view of "mechanical inspiration" as opposed to "organic inspiration" (63), though he does acknowledge that even the Reformers used what he calls "the unfortunate language of *dictation*" (174). Horton affirms the Hodge/Warfield/Princeton view of inspiration as "the best formulation of inerrancy" (176). He notes that this view of inerrancy is not "attributed to copies" but to "the original autographic text" (177).[6] He also follows the typical evangelical line by noting that though textual discrepancies remain "they do not affect any point of the church's faith and practice" (180). In fact, Horton expresses bold confidence in modern text criticism as "an ongoing enterprise yielding ongoing results" demonstrating that "reconstructing or approximating the content of the original autographs is a viable goal and that, for the most part, it has already achieved this goal" (180).[7]

[6] See Theodore P. Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text: Text Criticism, Biblical Authority and the Popular Mind* (The Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 1997) for a trenchant critique of the contemporary evangelical embrace of the "inerrancy" of Scripture in place of the confessional language of the "infallibility" of Scripture. Letis charges Warfield, in particular, with having "made the Church a bondservant of criticism" (72).

[7] Horton's discussion does not demonstrate awareness of current trends in mainstream academic textual criticism that have largely abandoned the notion that "the original text" of the Bible can be reconstructed and challenged whether such a task can rightly be called the goal of text criticism. As D. C. Parker makes clear in *Textual Scholarship and the Making of the New Testament* (Oxford University Press, 2012) the current method of both Munster and Birmingham is not to seek "an original or authorial text," but the best they can do is reconstruct "the Ausgangstext or Initial Text" (25). Parker further observes: "The New Testament philologist's task is *not* to recover an original text, not only because we

Horton is also particularly keen to defend this inerrancy view against Barthianism (see 181-185), noting that "the inerrancy debate" is "largely a conversation between Old Princeton and Karl Barth" (181), while acknowledging that "both positions are quite different from Protestant orthodoxy" (181). Though admitting that the Hodge/Warfield/Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy "invites legitimate questions and critiques," Horton finds its alternatives "less satisfying" (184). One wishes that Horton might have spent less time analyzing, comparing, and contrasting the contemporary view of inerrancy with Barth and more with Protestant orthodoxy which affirmed the providential preservation of God's Word in the copies (the Puritans, the Westminster Confession, John Owen, etc.).[8]

Creation

As noted above, Horton's work generally aims at a "catholic" appeal to the broad Christian tradition. For example, he can approvingly cite and interact with the work of Roman Catholics like A. Dulles on revelation (see 113ff.) and J. Ratzinger (i.e., Pope Benedict) on ecclesiology (720, 736; though note also his critique on 830 ff.), of Anglicans like C. S. Lewis (e.g. 18), Lutherans like D. Bonhoeffer (see 756ff.), and of the neo-orthodox Reformed lion Karl Barth (cited throughout; in fact, according the book's "Name Index" Barth is second only to John Calvin in the number of references).

There is one segment of the Christian tradition, however to which Horton shows little acceptance and that is to Protestant "fundamentalism." In his discussion of the perspicuity of Scripture, for example, Horton observes, "There is a fundamentalist version of Scripture's perspicuity or clarity that undervalues its humanity, plurality, and richness, treating the Bible as a collection of obvious propositions that require no interpretation. However, this is not the classic Protestant understanding of Scripture" (196-197). He then proceeds to apply this thought to the fundamentalist view of creation: "For instance, if we seek from Scripture infallible information concerning the age of the earth, we will miss the point of the passages we are citing" (197). Indeed, in his later treatment of the doctrine of creation, Horton explicitly rejects a "fundamentalist" literal, six-day view of creation. In his discussion of the doctrine of creation proper, Horton states:

> It will not surprise those who have read thus far that I take the days of creation to be analogical. That is, they are not literal, twenty-four hour periods, but God's accommodation to the ordinary pattern of six days of labor and a seventh day of rest, which he created for mankind (381).

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cannot at present know on philological grounds what the original text might have been, nor even because there may have been several forms to the tradition, but because philology is not able to make pronouncements as to whether or not there was such an authorial text" (26-27).

[8] For an excellent discussion of this topic, see Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Dogmatics, Volume 2, Holy Scripture: The Cognitive Foundation of Theology* (Baker Books, 1993). For the views of John Owen, in particular, see his essays, "Of the Divine Original of the Scriptures" and "Integrity and Purity of the Hebrew and Greek Text" in *The Works of John Owen*, Volume XVI (Banner of Truth reprint, 1968): 295-343, 345-421.

The Biblical creation account is neither "a science report" nor "mythological" but "part of a polemic of 'Yahweh' versus the idols" (382).[9] Horton acknowledges his dependence on Meredith Kline and his "framework hypothesis" for his interpretation of the creation narrative (382ff.).

Oddly enough, however, when he later discusses the doctrine of the fall, Horton insists on the historicity of Adam: "Whatever one's conclusions concerning the process of human origins, Christian theology stands or falls with a historical Adam and a historical fall" (424). Horton fails to address the contradiction between his rejection of the historicity of the creation narrative and his affirmation of the historicity of Adam. This is a glaring problem not only with his doctrine of creation but also with his doctrine of sin and the fall.

Salvation

As noted earlier, Horton has come under fire from some conservative Reformed corners for his "Lutheran" view of justification. Horton clearly gives great and appropriate emphasis to the doctrine of justification, calling it "the chief insight of the Reformation" (622) and "the engine that pulls adoption, new birth, sanctification, and glorification in tow" (708). In his extended discussion of the *ordo salutis*, however, Horton also clearly emphasizes the doctrine of union with Christ, disputing a trend in Reformation Pauline scholarship to presuppose "that mystical participation in Christ stands over against a forensic emphasis on Christ's alien righteousness imputed to believers" (588).

Ecclesiology

In his discussion of the doctrine of the church, Horton points to a typical emphasis in his thought on the Word and Sacrament (i.e., preaching and the ordinances) as the primary focus of the church's ministry.[10] What some might find noteworthy in the discussion here is the fact that though Horton makes clear his preference for the Presbyterian model of church polity, he does not believe that Scripture clearly reveals a particular normative form of church government. Thus polity is a secondary matter for Horton, as evidenced by this approving reference to L. Newbigin: "Although a valid ministry of Word and sacrament is essential, Newbigin rightly argues that this does not entail a particular form of church government as essential to the very being of the church" (875). One wonders, however, if such matters are so murky in Scripture, and if they stand at a lower level of importance in defining a true church.

Horton does indeed advance the "two kingdom" view of the church in the present age: "Christ is already a king with his kingdom, but for now this realm is visible chiefly in the public ministry of Word, sacrament, and discipline, and also in the fellowship of the saints as they share their spiritual and material gifts in the body of Christ" (525). He later adds that

[9] One wonders, however, how Horton would evaluate the scholarship of Edward J. Young in works like his *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Revised Ed. (Eerdmanns, 1964). Young was a Reformed Old Testament scholar who well understood yet forcefully rejected the Enlightenment influenced historical-critical method and defended traditional positions on matters such as creation. Would Horton dismiss Young's approach as "fundamentalistic"?

[10] See Michael Horton, *The Gospel Commission: Recovering God's Strategy for Making Disciples* (Baker, 2011).

the Reformers insisted on the notion that "believers must live as citizens of two kingdoms, each with its own distinct sources, ends, and means" (926).

With regard to baptism, Horton predictably affirms infant baptism. Concerning baptismal mode, though he concedes that "immersion does seem more suggestive of being buried and raised with Christ and of being drawn out of God's waters of judgment alive," Horton concludes that immersion, sprinkling, and pouring are all "valid" (792-793).[11]

Conclusion

Michael Horton's *The Christian Faith* is a massive and sweeping survey of Christian doctrine. It is not merely a systematic theology but also a historical and philosophical theology. The prose is literary and engaging, but the density of the material will likely not make it a "popular" work. Many conservative, Reformed readers will take exception to various positions adopted by Horton (e.g., his rejection of a literal six-day account of creation, his conviction that Scripture does not clearly teach a definitive church polity, his "two-kingdom" theology, etc.). For them, it is not likely to replace works by L. Berkhof[12] or R. Reymond[13] as a suitable "contemporary" systematic. Some might wonder at Horton's persistent efforts to engage with liberal Protestant scholarship and non-evangelical and non-Reformed theologies and theologians. Perhaps the biggest question, then, may be that of audience. Some may find it too conservative and traditional, while others will find it too liberal and innovative. The pastor-theologian, however, can, at the least, always be stimulated by Horton's labors, even if he does not always find himself in agreement with his method or conclusions.

[11] For a Baptist argument for immersion as the proper mode see Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright, Eds., *Believer's Baptism: Sign of The New Covenant in Christ* (B & H Academic, 2006): especially pp. 33-34, 58-61, 81-87. For a Presbyterian perspective on mode see Joseph Pipa, "The Mode of Baptism" in Gregg Strawbridge, Ed. *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism* (P & R, 2003): pp. 112-126. Neither of these works view the issue of mode as being as fluid as Horton supposes. Pipa, for example, argues for sprinkling or pouring as the proper mode of baptism rather than immersion.

[12] Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, (originally published in two volumes by Eerdmanns: *Introductory Volume to Systematic Theology*, 1932, and *Systematic Theology*, 1938). This classic work is still widely used in Reformed theological education.

[13] Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, Second Edition (Thomas Nelson, 1998). Reymond taught at Covenant Theological Seminary (St. Louis) and at Knox Theological Seminary (Fort Lauderdale, Florida).

BOOK REVIEWS

***Theological Introduction to the Pentateuch: Interpreting the Torah as Christian Scripture*. Edited by Richard S. Briggs and Joel N. Lohr. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012, 210pp.**

Like the foundation of a soaring skyscraper, the Pentateuch provides the theological grounding for the entire canon. Its theological themes ascend through and penetrate the Old and New Testaments as girders, supporting and giving structure to the unfolding story of God and Christ. Because of its importance and character, numerous recent studies have considered the Torah according to its theological content. This edited volume contributes to these contemporary efforts in a way that is both constructive and current—specifically engaging the Torah (as the title proclaims) as *Christian Scripture*. The work is styled as a "small-scale *Festschrift*," dedicated to Old Testament scholar Walter Moberly, upon his 60th birthday. His creative and influential labors in the field of theological interpretation have influenced many, including the present authors of this volume.

The goal of this compilation of essays is to model Moberly's particular method of theological inquiry, by not only identifying key theological themes of the individual books of the Pentateuch, but also by actually examining individual texts as case-studies for that theological method. The authors differentiate their approach from historical and literary approaches; they argue that their theological approach is distinctive in its emphases and goals, while still drawing heavily upon these other approaches. In this way, the authors apply what I term an "interpretive filter"—taking what they deem to be useful from other methods of investigation, while filtering out what they perceive to be less useful.

After a brief introduction justifying the approach and structure of the volume, the remaining chapters deal with each book of the Torah in turn. Each essay includes an outline of the respective Pentateuchal book, a discussion of its place in the canon, and a description of its theological themes. And each essay concludes with an application of the theological method to selected text(s). In the Genesis essay, Richard Briggs explores theological themes like familial relations (following Westermann, von Rad, and others) and blessing. He then considers the Babel story in Genesis 11:1-9, particularly in light of literary and historical considerations, but always with a view toward targeting the theological themes of the text.

The Exodus essay by Jo Bailey Wells examines theological themes like God's character, holiness, liberation, and priesthood. She then turns her attention to the nation-defining text of Exodus 19:1-8, arguing that this passage demonstrates that Israel, as a liberated and holy nation belonging to God, must live out that holiness in relation to the nations, fulfilling her role as a "kingdom of priests."

Joel Lohr, in his essay on Leviticus, argues for the theological centrality of this book in the Pentateuch, focusing on the text that many consider to be at the heart of Leviticus—Leviticus 16 (Yom Kippur). Lohr contends that the themes of priesthood and sacrifice/ritual distance this passage from most Protestants, yet these same themes make it indispensable for understanding the New Testament. Nathan MacDonald's essay looks at Numbers 20-21 as a tool to connect the Priestly works of the Pentateuch with that of Deuteronomy. And in the final essay, Rob Barrett argues that Deuteronomy—with its major emphases on loyalty to Yahweh, covenant blessing and cursing, and practical prescriptions for living out the

covenant—grounds and anchors many future canonical texts. In particular, he looks at how these themes find their expression clearly in Deuteronomy 8 and 15 and how future canonical texts reflect upon those same themes. Finally, an appendix offers a brief discussion of R. Moberly's own contributions to the theological interpretation of the Torah.

This volume is refreshing for four reasons. First, it excels in its practicality. Scores of Old Testament biblical theological works glut the guild each year, but most tend to focus on esoteric methodological explorations or grandiose macro-textual presentations of the data. Rarely do you find Old Testament theological works that deal with "micro-textual" questions—questions that apply the respective methods on the "passage-level." As someone who enjoys seeing students connect the theology of individual texts to life and ministry, I believe this volume represents a step in the right direction.

Second, D.A. Carson (in his article on "New Testament Theology" in IVP's *Dictionary of the Later New Testament in Its Developments*) once stated that biblical theology should have an "existential bite." By this he seems to mean that biblical theology needs to be normative, not just descriptive. Though not the main emphasis, each of the essays offers some suggestions as to how the biblical text connects with the modern community of faith.

Third, the synopsis of theological themes in each essay represents an accessible and accurate summary to anyone wanting a quick overview of the major themes of each respective Pentateuchal book. Most of the themes focus on God, which fits well with the Pentateuch's own preoccupation.

Finally, the volume, as suggested above, does show how one may "filter" through different approaches to the Pentateuch—finding value in each, while at the same time maintaining a critical and discerning eye. Along those same lines, those who hold to a more conservative view of the authorship and composition of the Pentateuch will want to use a filter with *Theological Introduction to the Pentateuch*. Indeed, each of the authors seems to adopt standard critical positions on both authorship and final composition. For example, Lohr assumes that the priests composed Leviticus and were the final editors and shapers of the Torah. These assumptions do change one's view of the original author/audience, which ultimately impacts one's interpretation of the text and its theology—sometimes in a problematic manner. Still, the authors do not get lost in the critical discussions, instead choosing mostly to focus on the final form of the text.

In summary, *Theological Introduction to the Pentateuch* represents a step forward in Pentateuchal studies—one that many who want to see the Pentateuch (and individual texts within it) engaged on a more theological level will welcome.

Bryan Cribb
Anderson University, Anderson, SC

Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants. **By Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012, 848pp.**

Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum, a rare pairing of text critic and systematic theologian, collaborate in this study that treats the biblical covenants as the backbone for understanding biblical theology and its systematic implications. Theirs is a diachronic, metanarratival

approach, explaining the unity of the whole Bible along these thematic lines (34, 601-52). Thus, one might call this a "biblical theology of covenants." Readers who have enjoyed Greg Beale's *A New Testament Biblical Theology* or Charles Scobie's *The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* will find here a work that is similar in many ways, as noted by Doug Moo, in his own review of this work.

Wellum and Gentry believe that their work offers students of the Bible *a via media* between the longstanding interpretive impasse between dispensational and covenant theologies (22-24). They present their findings as the correct and biblical replacement for what they see as fundamental shortcomings of both systems. They call their approach "progressive covenantalism" or "new covenant theology" (24). Their view in many ways seeks to utilize what they see as the best from both schools but nuanced in a more biblically faithful way.

The book has three sections: 1) Prolegomena, 2) Exposition of the Biblical Covenants, and 3) Theological Integration. A helpful appendix provides a lexical analysis of the key Hebrew term *berit* (717-778). Wellum's theological acumen is on clear display for the material in chapters 1-3 and 16-17; Gentry provides the exegetical quarry work in the 12 chapters of section 2 and the appendix.

The main thesis of this work is that both dispensational and covenant theologies miss the mark in their understanding the biblical covenants and their implications. Dispensationalism misses the mark in seeing the land promise to Abraham as limited to the physical land of Israel and not in light of the connections of that promise to the restoration of Eden in Christ (607, 709-11). Covenant theology misses the mark by "reading new covenant realities back into the Old Testament" (695). In particular, covenant theology is wrong to include covenant children in the visible church (based on the parallelism with the Abrahamic covenant and circumcision); these children, the argument goes, are unregenerate and therefore not part of visible church (the detailed discussion is on 694-703). (It is worth noting, however, that a discussion of how 1 Cor. 7:14 may fit in their ecclesiology conspicuously absent). Interestingly, Gentry makes the claim that the Mosaic covenant, the Decalogue, and the ceremonial law as a whole are no longer binding for Christians (the law of Christ is binding, 355, 635). But none of the requisite grappling with 1 Cor. 7:19 or 9:21 is evident in the course of these discussions.

There is much to like in this volume. Wellum gives a good summary of the most recent work from classic and progressive dispensationalists and contrasts these works with his own, and a similarly generous survey is accorded to covenant theology. The majority of his emphasis is on the recent writers in this field. This part of his work will be very helpful for the uninitiated since Wellum has a firm grasp of the relevant literature and offers careful critiques of both systems. Similarly, Gentry interacts with the best recent material on covenants, particularly English and German scholarly works. Gentry then tracks these works point-by-point through all the covenants of the Bible. In many places, Gentry brings his first-hand text critical scholarship to bear on this investigation, particularly places where the MT is in doubt and where the LXX may offer a viable alternate explanation of the Hebrew parent text.

Gentry and Wellum suggest that Christ is the *telos* of the all the covenants of the Bible (107, 650-51). Wellum brings out the implications of this view for theology proper,

Christology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. The section on Christology is particularly engaging, indicating that the OT promises demand work done by God and a faithful Davidic king corporately representing his people. Wellum argues that this can only happen because of the incarnation, which results in understanding Jesus as fully God and fully man (657-63). Gentry's strengths in this volume are manifold; the section on the 70 weeks of Daniel and its relationship to the new covenant promises is quite compelling (531-64); his work on Isa. 55:3 is also thought-provoking and deserves multiple readings (410-21). Another important point argued is that the usual division of unconditional/conditional covenants may not be helpful; it is argued instead that biblical covenants contain both aspects (608-11, 665-66).

In terms of the work's shortcomings, it contains a focus on contemporary thinkers that borders on myopia. For example, Wellum interacts with John Feinberg over many, many pages throughout the book. By contrast, Augustine is only referenced three times, Jerome and Theodoret once each (none of these are cited by an actual work—the references to them are from other modern authors). The authors apparently find nothing of interest in the comments of Athanasius, Chrysostom, or Ephrem the Syrian. The same is true for many medieval and pre-critical scholars. The neglect of these and similar writers from so much of the conversation limits the usefulness of the work in this reviewer's opinion. (I am reminded of something a former warden of Tyndale House in Cambridge once said to me: if an interpreter cannot find at least one ancient, medieval and modern commentator agreeing with his or her view, it probably means that interpreter is wrong. This axiom rings true because such an innovative interpreter would be saying that everyone before them had somehow "missed it" until now.) In some ways, the innovative synthesis of Wellum and Gentry seems to be saying just this. Wellum's short *apologia* on this score is to invoke the reformation principle of *semper reformanda* (716).

An interpretive example of this same issue emerges in the excursus on the "sons of god" in Genesis 6, which neglects most of the ancient argument (149-51). If, as Wellum and Gentry admit, Adam is God's son, Israel is God's firstborn and corporately his son(s), and David also is God's son, is not the ancient view possible that sons of god in Genesis 6 are those who (like Israel) call on God for help but then turn away for the sake of pagan women? Could the point not be: do not intermarry with pagan wives because they will turn your hearts from God (Deut. 7:3)? This is, after all, the exact temptation that faced Israel in the incident with the Moabite women (Numbers 22-25). Moreover, such an issue caused the downfall of another "son of God", Solomon (1 Kings 11:1; Deut. 17:17), and it was the power that took down that mightiest of warriors, Samson (Judges 14-16). Furthermore, this ancient view makes sense of the two genealogies immediately preceding Genesis 6. Gentry seems uncharacteristically off-the-mark here when he appeals to discourse analysis to defend how Genesis 6 is unrelated to the wider context—it seems like special pleading. The ancient view makes sense of Deuteronomy 32 and the "son" language there applied to Israel (Deut. 32:5, 6). It is also how the LXX understood the text. Some manuscripts talk about the blood of his sons (Deut. 32:43 in DSS mss and the LXX); all of this makes the "angelic interpretation" unlikely. The wider discussion of Jude and the other OT texts are outside this

review but Gentry in his comments seems unaware of arguments against connecting 1 Peter and Jude with Genesis 6:1

Ultimately, Gentry and Wellum believe they have pioneered a passage through the exegetical-theological impasse that separates covenant theology and Dispensationalism. Their work has already brought forth substantial responses from prominent places: Michael Horton offers a covenantal review; Darrell Bock offers a dispensational one. New Testament exegete Douglas Moo also reviews it. Wellum and Gentry have begun a response to these critiques as well; all these reviews and the response of the authors can be found at thegospelcoalition.org.

My hunch is Reformed Baptists will find the work massively persuasive while covenant and dispensational writers will not. Time will tell if they have introduced a new school of Progressive Covenantalism to rival these two hermeneutical systems. I am thankful to have this interesting and useful work.

Carl Judson Davis
Bryan College, Dayton, TN

Gospel, Church, and Ministry: Thomas F. Torrance Collected Studies 1. **By Thomas F. Torrance. Edited by Jock Stein Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012, 283pp.**

Theologians often inspire an odd sense of both curiosity and loyalty in those who read them, much like that inspired by writers, comedians, or composers. For years both theologians and pastors have profited from the works of Thomas F. Torrance ("TF" as he was known to friends and students) and through this volume edited by Jock Stein, students of TF have access to some of the less well-known of his works, many of them originally addresses given at various times and places, while the rest were published as booklets in TF's native Scotland.

The "Editor's Introduction" summarizes each chapter and locates each article or address in the context of TF's own life and ministry. I found it helpful to refer back to these summaries before and after working through each chapter to gauge my understanding and interpretation against the information provided. Stein acknowledges the help given by TF's brother David and son Thomas, lending an abiding sense of authenticity to the proceedings and allowing one to assume that the summaries and statements accurately reflect TF's own thought and emphases.

The twelve chapters that comprise the body of the book are arranged in chronological order based on the date the address or paper was originally delivered or published. The only writing out-of-order is the first, a previously unpublished memoir of uncertain date but known to be written in the late eighties or early nineties. In a collection like this one might justifiably expect the chapters to be uneven, and such holds true in this case. Some chapters have a style that will be familiar to those who have read TF before (e.g., chapter 10) while others seem rather choppy or only lightly edited (e.g., chapter 1).

[1] For an excellent discussion of all this and support for the Sethite view, see K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman, 1996), 322–323. See too E. F. Sutcliffe, "Genesis," in *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, ed. Bernard Orchard and Edmund F. Sutcliffe (Toronto: Thomas Nelson, 1953), 189.

Chapters 1, 5, 6, 9 all deal with ministry in the context of the local church. Chapter 1, "My Parish Ministry: Alyth, 1940-43," is a 49 page account of TF's early parish ministry with its attendant struggles. This chapter will encourage those in pastoral ministry as they read of TF's blending personal and academic work with sermon preparation (and not just with regard to time-management).

Chapters 5, 6, and 9 ("Consecration and Ordination," "Service in Jesus Christ," and "Eldership in the Reformed Church," respectively) examine issues of interest to the ministry, with chapters 5 and 9 focused specifically on offices within the local church. They demonstrate how TF's practical theology flows from exegesis of the biblical text, and though his reasoning will convince not all readers, the arguments cannot simply be dismissed.

Chapter 2, "The Place and Function of the Church in the World," is the text of an address delivered in 1942 on the topic of foreign missions. TF called for world evangelization while remembering that the Church, though it is distinct from the world, cannot ignore or separate from the world. The Church must always evaluate her methods and structure (TF calls it "organization") and be willing to overhaul it if necessary. Such emphasis on mission will allow her to influence the State rather than be influenced by the State. TF ends with an exhortation not to forget mission by becoming self-centered, but to remember that "by losing her life for Christ's sake and the gospel's, she will find it" (84). This exhortation seems even more relevant today than in 1942 and one wonders what TF would have to say to the Church of the 21st century with her emphasis on "cultural relevance" and entertainment.

Chapter 3, "The Place of the Humanity of Christ in the Sacramental Life of the Church," brings the theology of the God-Man, the unity of the deity and humanity of Christ (following Calvin), to bear on the ministry of the Church. Though this chapter focuses on the Reformed Churches, even those who self-identify as Baptists will profit from TF's discussion of Baptism, though those who hold a memorial view of the Lords Supper will not find comments on that topic as helpful. It is interesting to see TF interact with such writings as the *Scots Confession* and the Second Helvetic Confession as well as such personages as Robert Bruce and John McLeod Campbell. One wishes there were more interaction simply to provide a model for such interactions.

Chapter 4, "The Meaning of Order," gives a more full explanation of the concept of organization spoken of only briefly in the address of chapter 2. This article, written roughly seventeen years after the address that comprises chapter 2, shows development of thought but is less focused on pragmatic concerns and more on the theological underpinnings and implications of "the co-ordinating of the life of the Church in its fellowship, worship, and mission in the service of the glory of God" (93). The Church's ordering is manifest in its obedience to Christ and its recognition that the church is part of the new creation which is being revealed and which will be unveiled fully at the *Parousia*.

Chapter 7, "The Church in the Last Quarter of the Twentieth Century," was one of this reviewer's favorite chapters. Again TF takes the mantle of reformer and calls the church to "a deeper understanding…of the essential mission of the church, away from our ecclesiastical pragmatism and legalism". TF points out that "human civilization is sick of its diet of materialism and secularism (165) and explains that this angst presents an unparalleled opportunity for the church, whose message has the ability "to penetrate into the fabric of

culture and society, reshape them from within, and put a profound Christian stamp" on civilization (167). TF urges the church once again to be on mission and he does so by comparing and contrasting the church of his day with the Early Church and the church of the Reformation. This chapter has several personal anecdotes that well-illustrate his points and, though pointed at times, it ends on an optimistic note.

Chapter 8, "God, Destiny, and Suffering," concerns Christian mission in the context of the Middle East and the tensions between Muslims and Jews in the Middle East. As Stein notes (19), TF's talk is prescient, noting the rise of militant Islam and he points to the example of the Greek Orthodox Church which has long ministered Christianly in the face of Islamic opposition. TF also notes that Christian mission must take into account the suffering of the Holocaust and point Jews to the Incarnate God who suffered in Jesus Christ before pointing out "the utter obscenity of division at the Cross of Christ" (179). Christian mission must not take sides in the division of ethnicities but at the same time Christian mission must be careful not to obliterate their converts' social identity in calling people to faith in Christ.

Chapter 10, "The Ministry of Women," though published in 1992 is perhaps even more relevant today, at least in America where the issue of women and ordination has become more divisive in certain circles over the last twenty years. This chapter will be helpful to those on both sides of the debate primarily because it covers some different ground from the well-worn arguments often used in said debate. TF interacts with the relevant Scriptures but grounds his argument in the theology of the image of God in humanity and the sexlessness with which humans represent God, both in their humanity and in officiating at the ministry of the Eucharist.

Chapter 11, "Preaching Christ Today," at 36 pages, is the second-longest chapter of the book and is wide-ranging and substantial. One could write a lengthy review and interaction with this chapter alone. This address is, as Stein notes, "one of the very clearest expositions of the way TF approached the New Testament and the preaching of the Gospel" (21) and demonstrates the almost-non-existent line between TF's systematic theology and his practical theology. It also covers ground for which Torrance is noted such as modern science and the scientific method, the relationship and interdependence between *kerygma* and *didache* (and the importance of both in preaching), the Incarnation and the humanity of Christ, and the difficulties faced by the Church in proclaiming the Gospel in today's world. The final section, labeled "The Cross of Christ," once again exhorts the Church to mission, especially mission as it relates to the proclamation of the Cross of Christ through Word and Sacrament. This chapter is, in this reviewer's opinion, the best in the book and a review of this nature cannot adequately give a sense of its depth and import.

Chapter 12, "Legal and Evangelical Priests: The Holy Ministry as Reflected in Calvin's Prayers," was one of TF's last writings intended for publication (23). Using primarily the prayers of Calvin's lectures on Malachi to reinforce the point that while there exists such a phenomena the priesthood of believers, TF furthers Calvin's point that the Gospel ministry is still more like priesthood than it is not. Demonstrating such continuity between the Old Testament priest and the New Testament minister falls short, however, of proving both Calvin's and TF's contention that the New Testament minister should be more of a priest than he is usually regarded. Also, TF notes correctly that Calvin maintained more continuity between the medieval priesthood and the Protestant pastorate than most Protestants would allow. The primary difference, Calvin, maintains, lies in that the medieval priests

misrepresented Christ. The significance of TF's contention in this regard is not simply that Calvin's view is correct, but that this view should be the historic perspective of the Scottish Kirk, given Knox's high regard for Calvin.

While this article demonstrates TF's ability to mine authors and texts and draw conclusions from what many overlook, he falls short of demonstrating that the conclusions he draws are relevant to the church today. Saying that Calvin believed this and therefore this is the heritage of the Scottish Church is different from saying that this is what Scripture enjoins on the Scottish church. The conclusions are fascinating and, like much of TF's works, one cannot overlook TF's propositions, few who self-identify as evangelicals will agree with the conclusions presented in this paper.

Michael R. Jones
University of Chester (UK)

***An Age of Infidels: The Politics of Religious Controversy in the Early United States.* By Eric R. Schlereth. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013, 295pp., $55.00.**

On 15 December 1791, under the first of ten amendments to the United States Constitution, the federal legislature was prohibited from establishing any kind of national "Church of the United States of the America" and from using its particular authority to proscribe the free exercise of religion. While virtually all Americans were in agreement that the common good was benefitted by such an institutional separation between church and state at the federal level, the tensions surrounding ecclesiastical establishments at the state level were far less consensual.

While Article Six of the United States Constitution expressly stated that "no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States," the new State constitutions adopted between 1776 and 1780 in Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Vermont established a number of religious tests for holding public office that were based either on the profession of a generic "Protestant faith" or adherence to certain orthodox doctrines (the divinity of Christ, the Triune nature of God, etc.)

The religio-historical context of these early constitutional debates was backlit by the fundamental disagreements between Protestants of all denominations as well as Deists, Naturalists, and Freethinkers, concerning not only the veracity of the basic tenets of Christianity but also their ramifications for the governance and public life of the new nation. Many Protestants feared that events in Revolutionary France had proven unbelief to be the harbinger of anarchy and doubted if the virtues thought to be essential for republican government could be maintained by an irreligious people. Oppositely, Deists and other avowed non-Christians saw Protestant efforts as attempts to gain a sort of theocratic control over public affairs, threatening religious liberty for non-Christians and undermining republican government through a form of religious establishment.

In his impressive study of this particular intersection between American religious and political history between 1770 and 1840, Eric R. Schlereth deftly examines how these clusters of interrelated concerns, which he terms the "infidel controversies" of the early national

period (16), contributed to the formation of "political religion" and "political irreligion" (203-4) and "the origins of cultural politics" (241) in the United States from the formation of the First Party System (Federalists and Republicans) to that of the Second Party System (Democrats and Whigs).

Schlereth details how by the late-eighteenth century the meaning of "infidelity" within Anglophone religious discourse had shifted from referring to adherents to non-Christian faiths to instead negatively describing anti-Trinitarians and disbelievers in the revealed religion of the Christian Scriptures—these, because of their cultural origins within Christendom, seemed particularly treacherous and socially destabilizing to some orthodox believers. Schlereth then develops two new historiographical terms to facilitate his approach to the infidel controversies: (A) "ambient infidelity," by which he refers to the widespread-yet-nebulous sense among Christians and Deists that unbelief was becoming more popular and publicly visible, and (B) "lived deism," by which Schlereth refers to the books, newspapers, and organizations that enabled Deists to construct their individual and corporate identities as such. Schlereth makes the fascinating observation that the notion that America had been, or ought to be, a "Christian nation" originated at this time in reaction to the perception that America was becoming an "infidel nation" (11-12).

In his first chapter, Schlereth examines how "political independence required Americans to reconcile religious beliefs and church institutions from their colonial past with a new set of republican political principles, in particular religious liberty" (44), with particular reference to Pennsylvania between 1776 and 1792. He provides a fascinating case study of the appearance in Philadelphia in 1790 of a Deist debating club, the Universalist Society (not to be confused with churches who subscribed to soteriological universalism). Schlereth is able to demonstrate how the non-Christian meetings of the Universalist Society were tolerated in the cosmopolitan capital of the republic, but only so long as they observed the unwritten mandate to not publicly promote their views. However, when Elihu Palmer published a spring 1792 newspaper advertisement for a Sunday morning address that he intended to give "against the divinity of Jesus Christ," he was prevented from doing so by a mob comprised of a religiously diverse cross-section of Philadelphians (31). From this example, Schlereth concludes that, despite constitutional guarantees of religious liberty, public religious expressions continued to be "policed" according to the informal standards of community consensus (44). (Schlereth also notes that some Deists, like Palmer, surprisingly opposed both religious tolerance and religious pluralism; such ideas seemed to them to impede reason's progress in sweeping away all religious superstitions.)

In the next chapter, Schlereth analyzes the history of the reception of Thomas Paine's 1794 acerbic deistic work *The Age of Reason* and that of the new civic religion of the later French Revolution, Theophilanthropy. Following Paine's sustained polemical critique of Christian beliefs and the Western civilization that had been built upon them came American editions of atheistic and deistic works by Baron d'Holbach, Marquis de Condorcet, Comte de Volney, David Hume, and Edward Gibbon. The readership of such works then began to form social networks comprised of like-minded individuals through organizations such as the Society for the Propagation of the Principles of Rosseau and Voltaire (New Providence, North Carolina, 1792), The Society of Theophilanthropists (Philadelphia, 1800; Baltimore, 1802), and the Theistical Society of New York (1802) and through subscriptions to the radical Irish immigrant Denis Driscoll's newspaper, *Temple of Reason*.

In chapter three, Schlereth builds upon his documentation of the growth of lived deism in chapter two to consider how Deists' increased public presence enabled them to participate in debates over the essence of distinctly republican citizenship and patriotism. Prior to the American Revolution, adherence to Protestantism had been concomitant with patriotism within the British Empire, especially in the North American colonies, where the British had fought four wars against the Catholic powers of France and Spain between 1689 and 1763. In the post-revolutionary period the debate became whether or not republican patriotism also necessarily continued to entail fidelity to Protestantism. Supporters of the established Protestant churches insisted that to hold infidel beliefs was tantamount to being unpatriotic—for them, lacking certain doctrinal beliefs undermined the moral fabric of republican society. But the coalition of Deists and dissenting evangelicals (e.g. Baptists, who had been persecuted under colonial Anglican establishments) who supported the Republican Party conversely argued, for different reasons and to different degrees, that it was unpatriotic to require citizens to adhere to any particular set of religious tenets because so doing threatened a loss of those freedoms won during the Revolution.

In chapter four, Schlereth examines how after the presidential victory of Jefferson over Adams in 1800, Federalist and Republican supporters attempted to construct political narratives relating to the infidel controversies, in which religion and irreligion were politicized for partisan advantage. For instance, Federalist newspaper editors endeavored to fracture the Republican electoral coalition of evangelical dissenters and Deists by promoting, if not exaggerating, accounts of the influence that non-Christians had among the Republican leadership and the alleged godlessness of leading Republicans. Following the precipitous decline of the Federalist Party, especially after the War of 1812, the infidelity controversies in the early national period became less explicitly politically partisan as the locus of opposition to deism shifted to the evangelical proponents of the Second Great Awakening and its correlative social reform movements.

Schlereth examines early nineteenth century evangelical opposition to Deism in his fifth chapter, "America's Deist Past," which he so titles to emphasize how evangelicals at this time comprehended deism as a recent historical development, whose baleful cultural influence had created the need for a corrective religious response. Schlereth here explores how deism was featured in evangelical preaching and publications, such as those of religious newspapers and tract societies.

In his final two chapters, Schlereth continues to examine the diametrically opposed cultural agendas that evangelicals and Deists envisioned for the United States and how these shaped a "reinvigorated politics of religious controversy" (201), as the former's evangelistic and social reform goals aligned with the Whig Party's belief that the common good's depended on the pre-political social virtues fostered by Protestantism, while the latter's scepticism meshed well with the Democratic Party's "emphasis on egalitarianism" (239) and general fear that evangelicals harbored theocratic ambitions. Among the many fascinating fruits of Schlereth's research are his accounts of the development of Thomas Paine's birthday as a deistic holiday and of how the cultural competition between deism and evangelicalism in New York City was regarded to be a bellwether for the future of the nation as a whole.

In terms of historiography, Schlereth's work makes a number of important contributions. It clearly highlights the religio-political divisions and alliances that subsequently appeared on

both sides of the Atlantic following the American Revolution, as both the Federalists and the Tories garnered support from the Protestant establishment, while the Republicans and Whigs benefited from coalitions comprised of Deists and dissenting evangelicals. Moreover, this work dispels the myth that the relationship between religious identity and partisan political affiliation, as well as parties' pursuits of religious and irreligious groups in building electoral coalitions, are in any way uniquely modern features of American political life.

Andrew Kloes
University of Edinburgh

***Divine Essence and Divine Energies: Ecumenical Reflections on the Presence of God in Eastern Orthodoxy*. Edited by Constantinos Athanasopoulos and Christoph Schneider. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2013, 298pp.**

The focus of this book might find its origins in disputes regarding the light of Mount Tabor, between the Hesychasts and the adherents of Barlaam and Akindynos. The question the disputers challenged concerned the light that illuminated Jesus Christ on Mount Tabor and was visible to the apostles. Was this light to be understood as the uncreated and eternal *energeia* of God or was it a material sign in the form of a sensible illumination? Certainly this "light" has stirred great debate in the past, and now it has again provoked the editors of this volume to gather a diverse group of scholars for a critical assessment of the essence-energy distinction, which has been a vital doctrine in the Eastern Orthodox tradition and persists without any corollary in the West (10). The essays included here originate from a colloquium organized by the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies at Cambridge but have reached maturity in this collection of distinct and theologically diverse studies.

'Mature' is indeed one way to describe the essays included in this volume, which not only convenes around the essence-energy conversation noted above, but also around the influential claims offered by Prof. David Bradshaw in his *Aristotle East and West: Metaphysics and the Division of Christendom* (CUP, 2004). Bradshaw's work serves as a principal source for the conversations in this volume and his opening essay to this collection labors to highlight the principal arguments of his own important book. In the course of each essay the contributors diligently consider Bradshaw's claims, carefully demonstrating how one might not only read his work closely but also critically. Moreover, the diversity of perspectives and methods on display contributes to a rich conversation through which one might encounter central ideas of the Eastern Orthodox tradition in both expected and unexpected ways. Indeed, this volume proves to carry the debate regarding the energy-essence distinction forward while also lending the reader a parade of perspectives regarding how the essence-energy might be interpreted.

Yet, in close proximity to Bradshaw's claims, Constantinos Athanasopoulos and Nikolaos Loudovikos champion an Eastern reading of the energy-essence distinction. Their apology for the Eastern Orthodox understanding is unapologetic. For Athanasopoulos, he extends Bradshaw's critique of the West, while arguing the difference in the two traditions can relate, in part, to the different readings of Aristotle that pervaded in the separate theological regions. Such advances concern the perceived *unity* or *opposition* between faith and reason in Eastern and Western thought, respectively (53). Ultimately, Athanasopoulos argues that the time is now ripe for a careful, comprehensive, and systematic study of Eastern

Orthodoxy so as to open up new and necessary insight for the advancement of metaphysics, ethics, and epistemology (66).

Loudovikos, in a similar fashion, narrates the competing sources available to the two traditions, noting in particular that neither group (East or West) offered serious scholarship of the other tradition's leading thinkers, i.e., Palamas for the East and Aquinas for the West (123). Certainly, one might challenge this generalization, but his principal concern is the lack of attention to, or misinterpretation of, the corpus of Palamite scholarship. Accordingly, he sets out to articulate criteria essential to reading Palamas so as to foster a more fruitful conciliar conversation. Ultimately, Loudovikos' claims about Palamas correlate to a theological claim regarding divine-presence and the energy-essence distinction: i.e., when one reads a work of Palamas, one encounters the writer essentially, but the essence of Palamas is not exhausted in the reading of the one work; similarly, "the essence-energy distinction highlights that the enhypostatic essence is always more than the sum of its volitional expressions, although in every such expression all the essence is present and participated in" (146).

Vasilios Karayiannis and Georgios Martzelos offer a similar perspective. Both contributors suggest that much might be learned through a close reading of texts vital to the Eastern Orthodox tradition, including those by Basil and Maximus. Roy Clouser is another contributor who might argue there is a divide in the way the essence-energy distinctions are to be understood. Yet, unlike the previous essays, Clouser does not locate the difference in purely East-West terms. Rather, Clouser argues that there is an affinity between the Eastern Orthodox and neo-Reformed theological traditions. Clouser shares certain conclusions offered by those critical of the Western tradition, while concurrently analyzing the essence-energy distinction in terms of distinctions in the doctrine of creation and the createdness (or uncreatedness) of the divine attributes.

Nevertheless, others contest Bradshaw's claims. John Milbank's argument serves to protest the Eastern Orthodox claim of superiority over the Latin West. Moreover, he presses back against East-West harmonization, as sponsored by Antoine Lévy. In fact, Milbank endeavors to articulate just how it is that Palamite theology is inferior to and without continuity with the theological tradition that has followed after Augustine and Aquinas, among others.

However, it is Nicholas Trakakis' essay that stands out most from the others as it draws the essence-energy distinction into conversation with modern and contemporary thinkers, in order to challenge theologians "to think more philosophically" (210). Yet it is also his intention to draw this controversy regarding the Uncreated Light into the view of the philosophers of religion who have, to date, not considered it. Accordingly, using the tools available in his work as a philosopher of religion, Trakakis tests the claims of Byzantine scholar Martin Jugie, who dismissed Palamite theology while examining the debate regarding the energy-essence distinctions. Ultimately, Trakakis argues, despite the differences and distinctions in the work of Palamas, Kant, and Frege, there might be great benefit when these figures are read together in order to show "there are also important and illuminating points of convergence" (231). Trakakis argues the time has come for Western philosophers to engage the East in conciliar discourse, as much might be learned. And he also argues, with "a less defensive and more appreciative approach" (231), Eastern Orthodox scholars need to do likewise.

Nevertheless, Bradshaw closes the volume with a critical stance—to be fair, he does so apologetically (273). Certainly Bradshaw recognizes the common ground unearthed in this careful study, principally, "the goal of seeking to broaden the horizon of Christian philosophical theology beyond the traditional western canon to include the Byzantine tradition" (256). Yet his task in this essay is to contest what he perceives as the limits to and misrepresentations in the preceding essays, insofar as they have considered his own claims. In this, Bradshaw's closing essay is invaluable is it draws the reader back towards the leading essay in this volume as well as the catalyst for this collection, his *Aristotle East and West*.

Certainly, this volume deserves the attention of all those interested in conciliar discourse. Yet it also serves as a vital text that might direct the reader towards deeper understanding of the "Uncreated Light" and related doctrinal concepts. The content and contours of this volume elevate the discussion of the divine energy-essence distinctions while the breadth and depth of perspectives serve to challenge the reader with a rich intellectual exercise. The writers of the ten essays walk carefully and critically across the subject matter while demonstrating the latitude in which the Christian tradition has travelled historically, philosophically, and theologically as it has sought to understand a doctrine at the center of the East-West divide. Accordingly, I would highly recommend this as a chief text for student and scholar alike.

Ashley John Moyse
Vancouver School of Theology

***Textual Scholarship and the Making of the New Testament*. By David C. Parker. Oxford University Press, 2012, 186pp.**

This book is an expanded edition of Parker's 2011 Lyell Lectures at Oxford University. Though relatively brief, it is densely packed with significant information and observations on the present state and future directions of New Testament textual scholarship from one of the discipline's chief contemporary practitioners and gatekeepers. The body of the book consists of five lectures or chapters, each of which is titled by its opening words. It is bookended by an introduction and conclusion.

In Lecture One ("The General Procedures"), Parker provides an introduction to a contemporary reappraisal of textual scholarship. He distinguishes between the *work*, "a single form of text distilled from all the varied forms in which is it known," the *text*, "the form in which the work appears in each manuscript," and the *document*, "the manuscript in which the text is found" (11). According to Parker, the New Testament is and has always been "the result of a fusion of technology of whatever kind is in vogue and its accompanying theory" (12). The New Testament, thus, is always evolving, and it will continue to change. Parker suggests the dictum: "That every written work is a process and not an object" (21).

Thus, Parker argues against "the modern concept of a single authoritative 'original' text" as "a hopeless anachronism" (24). Scholars must not think of the critical text as the "original" but only as a recovery of "the form of text from which the surviving copies are descended" (25). In the language of Münster and Birmingham, this is the *Ausgangstext* or "Initial Text" (25). The task of the New Testament philologist, then, according to Parker, "is *not* to recover an original authorial text" but simply "to recover as exactly as may be the oldest recoverable form of the text beneath the manuscript copies" (26).

In Lecture Two ("What is a New Testament Manuscript?"), Parker provides a survey of the scholarly study of the c. 5,606 manuscripts of the New Testament (including papyri, majuscules, minuscules, and lectionaries) included in the authoritative Institute for New Testament Textual Research *Liste*. Most intriguingly, Parker calls attention to a notable "weakness in the available data," arguing that in that past scholars "went in the wrong direction" by *inconsistently including* but *largely excluding* from the *Liste* the many commentary manuscripts (including catena manuscripts that collect excerpts from various commentaries). Parker concludes that the current cataloguing system is inadequate, while also acknowledging that "no system will work perfectly and that there will be anomalies" (57). More radically, Parker argues that scholarship abandon "the modern concept of a New Testament manuscript" which "is based on the theological model of canonicity" (61). He concludes: "At this point I realize that what I am propounding is that there is no such thing as a manuscript of the New Testament. The New Testament is not a work but a collection of works.... Instead, I propose that we should begin to classify manuscripts according to the basic categories of works" (63).

In Lecture Three ("Understanding How Manuscripts Are Related"), Parker turns to discuss how early Christian manuscripts are to be compared. He notes three approaches to comparison: (1) by physical evidence, (2) by artwork, and (3) by textual analysis. The latter of these is, of course, the most developed in the field. Parker first traces the development of the genealogical method, beginning with Bengel "until almost the present day" (79). Particular attention is given to evaluation of the method of Westcott and Hort and their argument for the superiority of the so-called Neutral Text. Parker concludes that the Westcott-Hort theory was based on "a totally inadequate amount of evidence" (82) and that "the theory does not deserve the reverence which has been accorded it" (83). In fact, he argues, "the time has come to abandon it completely, not because it was wrong, but because we can do better" (83). In place of the old genealogical method Parker advocates for the Münster Method or the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method (84-95 provides a detailed description of this method).

In Lecture Four ("Editing the Greek New Testament"), Parker discusses the process of creating a modern critical edition of the New Testament. He acknowledges that the Initial Text of a critical edition is "an ideal rather than a real text" since it "was never the text of an actual manuscript" (103). Parker strikingly describes the modern editor as "the person who confronts the terrifying anarchy of competing variants" and becomes "in effect the scholarly world's exorcist who drives out the legion [of] demons and leaves the work sitting and clothed and in its right mind" (103-104). For Parker, a critical edition is "a narrative" or "an attempt to make sense of the facts" (104).

Parker then proceeds to argue for the benefits of the *Editio critica maior*, for which he is serving as an editor, as the project most likely to produce the first "truly critical edition of the New Testament" (105). He notes, in particular, that the project, begun by Kurt Aland, will be realized in "a more thoroughgoing way than he could have imagined" due to technological advances (113). Parker confidently predicts it will be completed in about twenty years (c. 2032) and become the basis for future Greek handbooks (both UBS and Nestle-Aland editions), as well as almost all translations of the New Testament into vernacular languages, and that it may last for as long as 150 years (121).

In Lecture Five ("The New Testament of the Future"), Parker reflects on how the current digital revolution will impact the transmission of the New Testament. He observes, "The new world offered by the computer has already had at least as profound an effect on what we do as did the introduction of printing half a millennium ago" (125). According to Parker the most significant event in modern day humanities research is the development of "mass digitization" (129). No longer must a person physically visit a library, university, or museum to see a manuscript but he can view and examine it online. Parker points in particular to recent efforts to provide a digital version of Codex Sinaiticus online to illustrate this advance. The result of this digital revolution will be "the democratization of fields which have hitherto only been accessible to a few people with the resources and opportunities" (136). Parker even speculates that in the future users "will be able build their own critical text" (138).

Parker's lectures reveal many important developments and directions in the contemporary academic study of the text of the New Testament. It also presents several concerns, dilemmas, and ecclesiological questions. Parker tells us, for example, that the quest for the original text of the New Testament has been abandoned. The New Testament is "a process and not an object." Along the way, he even suggests that the traditional concept of the New Testament canon might be passé. If, however, the New Testament has no standard and stable text that accurately reflects what was written by the apostles and apostolic associates and no defined canonical boundaries, how can it possibly serve as authoritative Scripture for the church?

Noteworthy are Parker's criticisms and calls for the overthrow of the influential Westcott and Hort method. In his conclusion, Parker shares that one of his most surprising finds in preparing these lectures "was the realization of my dissatisfaction with Westcott and Hort and the dominance of their theories for so long" (147). Parker is critical both of confessional Christians who make the received text their standard and of Westcott and Hort's "Neutral Text", and he speaks glowingly of efforts to make the *Editio critica maior* the standard critical edition of the New Testament. It should be noted, however, that this is a project apparently undertaken purely *in academia* and *extra ecclesia*. One might well ask if it is wise for the church to hand over custody of her Scriptures to the academy. Odd, too, are the contradictory impulses in this effort. On one hand, Parker says in good postmodern fashion that he does not want "to foster the myth of an authoritative and definitive single version of the work," but is this not precisely what a critical edition is designed to do?

We might ask if there is any cause for alarm at the brave new world that Parker sees on the horizon for the transmission of the text of the New Testament. Indeed, there are amazing benefits of access that are coming with the digitization of the New Testament manuscripts. One is left wondering, however, if the result might be less "democracy" than "anarchy." If, as Parker envisions the possibility, each individual might be able to build his own critical text, will there exist an authoritative New Testament that might serve as a clear communal standard for doctrine and practice?

In his conclusion, Parker considers the irony of the fact that he offered these lectures in 2011, the 400th anniversary of the King James Version, musing on "the impact of multiple privatized versions on the concept of authorized versions to be read in churches" (146). The question, however, is whether such a development should be considered an advance for the Christian movement and its New Testament or potentially its unraveling and downfall.

Jeffrey T. Riddle
Piedmont Virginia Community College
Christ Reformed Baptist Church, Charlottesville, VA

***A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism: From Benedict Spinoza to Brevard Childs*. By Mark S. Gignilliat. Zondervan, 2012, 186pp.**

As the title indicates, this book offers a survey of modern historical-critical study of the Old Testament from the Enlightenment to the present day. The author completes this survey not through a general discussion of scholarly trends and developments, but by a "picture gallery tour" (12) that examines the key contributions of seven prominent Old Testament scholars, spanning a period of some four hundred years (Spinoza died in 1677 and Childs in 2007). Mark Gignilliat teaches Old Testament at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama.

Gignilliat opens by explaining that this work is "by no means a comprehensive attempt at expounding the very complex history of Old Testament interpretation" (12). It is instead a "historiographical approach" (13), or an attempt to convey history through historical biography. The seven figures discussed are: Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677); W. M. L. De Wette (1780-1849); Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918); Herman Gunkel (1862-1932); Gerhard Von Rad (1901-1971); William Foxwell Albright (1891-1971); and Brevard S. Childs (1923-2007).

Each chapter follows the same general pattern with enough variation to not be tedious. Gignilliat first introduces the subject and their significance. Second, he offers a biographical sketch of the person's life and a description of his cultural setting. Third, he surveys the subject's primary works and contributions to the field of Old Testament studies. Fourth, he offers a concluding evaluation.

Gignilliat writes in a popular and engaging manner. Technical topics are helpfully explained. The personal details which pepper the biographical sketches are particularly interesting and humanizing. So, we learn, among other things, that De Wette's 1804 doctoral dissertation was only sixteen pages in length (44), that Wellhausen was rumored to swim on Sunday mornings so that pious churchgoers could see him with a bathing suit over his shoulders (58), that pro-Nazi students avoided Von Rad's courses (108), and that Albright was a sickly and bookish lad who at age ten saved up enough money by doing chores to purchase a book on Babylonian history (124).

Most importantly, Gignilliat provides a winsome narrative that weaves through this "picture gallery", describing the development of historical-critical study of the Old Testament. It begins in the Enlightenment with Spinoza setting the trajectory for modern-critical study of the Old Testament by applying rational rather than supernatural interpretation. With De Wette came the influence of Romanticism, including skepticism

toward the factuality of the religious history of Israel in the Old Testament. Wellhausen was a German idealist who articulated the classic Documentary Hypothesis (J-E-D-P) of the Pentateuch and influenced the trend toward late dating the Old Testament to the exilic and post-exilic eras. With Gunkel came the emphasis upon finding the *sitz im leben* of the text, along with form and genre criticism. Von Rad championed a tradition-historical approach to Old Testament exegesis and placed the spotlight on "Israel's first and greatest theologian—the Yahwist" (115). The positivism of Albright, the "dean of biblical archaeologist," and his "Baltimore school" (over against the Alt-Noth school) emphasized comparative ANE studies, valuing one manuscript, one papyrus over a thousand theories. Finally, with Childs came the "canonical approach" and its attempt to understand the text in its final form.

On one hand, I do not think anyone would object to the seven towering figures chosen to be included in the book. On the other hand, there will no doubt be some who might wish that Gignilliat had included a few others (an objection he anticipates on p. 13). Given that Gignilliat writes from a more or less self-consciously "evangelical" perspective, it might have been interesting if he had also included some figures representing a more conservative perspective in reaction to the rise of modern historical-critical methodology, like Franz Delitzsch or Edward J. Young (again, an objection he anticipates, pp. 169-170). Admittedly, however, he chose to work with more mainstream and influential figures from the wider academy. Along these lines, it might also have been interesting if he had included some figures from the pre-critical world of Biblical studies (e.g., Augustine, Calvin, Owen, etc.).

In the introduction, Gignilliat notes that he does not come to this discussion as a "neutral observer" (13). In the postscript, he makes clear his own high regard for Child's canonical approach (169). Gignilliat also addresses in the postscript some of the tensions that exist for scholars who are attempting both to hold a confessional perspective on the Old Testament and to make use of the historical-critical method, though he ends by stating that he wonders "if the polarity is as evident today in our particular epistemological climate" (175).

Though Gignilliat expresses more confidence in the believing scholar's ability to embrace the historical-critical method and retain a high view of the Scripture than I might personally affirm, his book is to be commended. It presents an interesting and useful survey of Old Testament criticism since the Enlightenment. This will prove a helpful work, in particular for seminarians and graduate students, as well as pastors and others who wish to get a bird's-eye-view of some of the key people, moments, movements, and works in modern Old Testament critical scholarship.

Jeffrey T. Riddle
Piedmont Virginia Community College
Christ Reformed Baptist Church, Charlottesville, VA

ECUMENICAL CREEDS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

The Apostles' Creed (Old Roman Form)

I believe in God the Father Almighty. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary; crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit; the holy Church; the forgiveness of sins; [and] the resurrection of the flesh.

The Nicæno-Constantinopolitan Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Athanasian Creed

Whoever desires to be saved must above all things hold to the catholic faith. Unless a man keeps it in its entirety inviolate, he will assuredly perish eternally.

Now this is the catholic faith, that we worship one God in trinity and trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons, or dividing the substance. For the Father's person is one, the Son's another, the Holy Spirit's another; but the Godhead of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one, their glory is equal, their majesty is co-eternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, such is also the Holy Spirit. The Father is uncreate, the Son uncreate, the Holy Spirit uncreate. The Father is infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite. The Father is eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal. Yet there are not three eternals, but one eternal; just as there are not three uncreates or three infinites, but one uncreate and one infinite. In the same way the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Spirit almighty; yet there are not three almighties, but one almighty.

Thus the Father is God, the Son God, the Holy Spirit God; and yet there are not three Gods, but there is one God. Thus the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, the Holy Spirit Lord; and yet there are not three Lords, but there is one Lord. Because just as we are compelled by Christian truth to acknowledge each person separately to be both God and Lord, so we are forbidden by the catholic religion to speak of three Gods or Lords.

The Father is from none, not made nor created nor begotten. The Son is from the Father alone, not made nor created but begotten. The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, not made nor created nor begotten but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. And in this trinity there is nothing before or after, nothing greater or less, but all three persons are co-eternal with each other and co-equal. Thus in all things, as has been stated above, both trinity and unity and unity in trinity must be worshipped. So he who desires to be saved should think thus of the Trinity.

It is necessary, however, to eternal salvation that he should also believe in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now the right faith is that we should believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is equally both God and man.

He is God from the Father's substance, begotten before time; and He is man from His mother's substance, born in time. Perfect God, perfect man composed of a human soul and human flesh, equal to the Father in respect of His divinity, less than the Father in respect of His humanity.

Who, although He is God and man, is nevertheless not two, but one Christ. He is one, however, not by the transformation of His divinity into flesh, but by the taking up of His humanity into God; one certainly not by confusion of substance, but by oneness of person. For just as soul and flesh are one man, so God and man are one Christ.

Who suffered for our salvation, descended to hell, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, sat down at the Father's right hand, from where He will come to judge the living and the dead; at whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies, and will render an account of their deeds; and those who have done good will go to eternal life, those who have done evil to eternal fire.

This is the catholic faith. Unless a man believes it faithfully and steadfastly, he cannot be saved. Amen

The Definition of Chalcedon

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.