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SCOTTISH BULLETIN OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

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Contributors are free to express their own views within the broad parameters of historic evangelicalism. The opinions of contributors may not be assumed to be those of Rutherford House or the Scottish Evangelical Theology Society.

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EDITORIAL

Recently my colleagues and I were discussing a training event we had held at Dumisani for Sunday School teachers some weeks earlier. We noted that the attendance was significantly lower than for the previous event and it emerged that one possible reason for this was that there were numerous funerals taking place that day with many potential participants in our event attending these funerals. Of course, you can't make plans for events which take account of funerals. And funerals are a part of human experience in Scotland and elsewhere as much as in South Africa. But funerals within the amaXhosa community seem to me to impress themselves on the normal patterns of daily life more than they did for me in Scotland. Here I suggest (tentatively, as a fairly new observer from outside the Xhosa community) that there may be several reasons for this.

Firstly, practically, funerals are almost always held over a weekend, usually a Saturday (although the preparatory meetings and visits may extend over a week or so). This means that they tend to be concentrated together.

Secondly, the kinship system is understood by the amaXhosa differently from a typical Western understanding. In the West we tend, in general, to operate within a 'nuclear family' (which seems, debatably, to refer to its small, self-contained form – Mum, Dad and two or three children – rather than any explosive characteristics!) whereas among the amaXhosa there is a much greater sense of being part of a wider extended family. In the UK these days, it might (again, generally) be quite rare for someone to attend the funeral of, say, one's father's brother's cousin's wife. (I remember, as a student, having to argue the case for being permitted to be absent from classes to attend the funeral of my mother's brother's wife – my aunt by marriage.) Here such a person would be regarded as part of the family community. Noni Jabavu, a Xhosa woman born and raised as a child in the Eastern Cape, writes, 'I had many maternal "uncles", two of them my mother's surviving real brothers. Others were her cousins or second cousins, but all regarded as close relations because of the extended family system' (N. Jabavu, *The Ochre People*, [London: Cox and Wyman, 1963], 4). Our students frequently tell us that they will not be in classes because they have been bereaved, but when we enquire further,

the deceased person is not what a Scot might call a 'close relative'. Yet that is simply not the way families are regarded here.

Related to this is the sense of community within a village. A funeral is a community event. There will be a big (and probably very costly for the bereaved family) meal. Some advertisements on the local radio and television for funeral directors include the provision of a marquee and an ox! Most people from a local community are likely to attend the funeral of someone from that village. It will be a major social event. And there is likely to be a further similar gathering for the unveiling of a tombstone at a later date. Perhaps, this has to do with the concept of *Ubuntu*. The saying, as Jabavu relates it, is, '*Umntu ngumntu ngabantu*. A person is a person (is what he is) because of and through other people' (Jabavu, *The Ochre People*, 69).

A third reason for the significance of funerals in Xhosa culture is the sheer number of them. Death is an ever-present reality here. When we scan the death notices in *Daily Dispatch*, our local newspaper, we are struck by the contrasts: a notice regarding an old Xhosa lady who dies at 93 might sit next to a notice about the death of a young Xhosa woman of 27. Although it is rarely clearly stated why a person has died, it is clear that violence and AIDS account for many of the deaths of younger people, although at certain times of the year, traditional circumcision rituals which have gone wrong account for an alarming number of deaths among male youths in the Eastern Cape. Regarding AIDS, Pocock, van Rheenen and McConnell cite UNICEF statistics from 2002 that, 'Today some 3 million children are living with HIV/AIDS. And the disease has killed the mother, father or both parents of 13.4 million children still under 15. The vast majority of these children – 11 million – live in Sub-Saharan Africa. Their ranks will soon be swelled by millions of additional children who are living with sick and dying parents. By 2010, the total number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS is expected to nearly double, to 25 million' (M. Pocock, G. van Rheenen and D. McConnell, *The Changing Face of World Mission* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005], 51). Such figures are mind-numbing, and any theological training in this context must take account of the fact that death will be a very significant pastoral issue during a person's ministry.

When one attends funerals as frequently as many of the amaXhosa do, there is perhaps the risk that one loses sight of the fact that death is an offence against God's purposes for his people. Perhaps one begins to resign oneself to death as an all-embracing reality. But the Bible calls us to a different perspective. Certainly, death entered the world as God's judgement on sin, but Paul is clear that it was human responsibility which brought that about (Rom. 5:12). In fact, God immediately intimates his

own purpose for dealing with death (Gen. 3:16). Yet throughout human history, physical death serves as a reminder of human sin and of an even more fearful experience of spiritual death which must be addressed. Even as we live and breathe, says Paul, we belong either to those who are perishing or those who are being saved (1 Cor. 1:18).

During his earthly life, Jesus is not described as attending a funeral as such, but when he observes the impact on Mary of the death of his dear friend Lazarus, John says that he was ‘deeply moved in spirit’ and ‘greatly troubled’ (John 11:33, ESV). The wider usage of the former term, *enebrimesato*, seems to hint at anger at the effect, possibly even the existence, of death. There is certainly no sign of resignation. We also know, famously, that ‘Jesus wept’ (John 11:35). When Jesus encounters death, he does not diminish its pain and awfulness, but he does relativise it by describing it as ‘sleep’ (John 11:11; cf. Mark 5:39) – an approach which is completely misunderstood by those who are mourning around him. In addition, however, he tackles death head on, overcoming it by raising Lazarus and Jairus’ daughter and others to life again. But these events are simply foretastes of the most significant battle which is waged on the cross and through the resurrection (Col. 2:14-15). Now death is defeated (1 Cor. 15:55-57) and the hope of the Christian is resurrection life in all its fullness which death can never again influence (Rev. 21:1-4). For those who reject Jesus as Lord and Saviour, on the other hand, there are no such promises; only the prospect of justice which, for a sinner, is no good news at all.

When a lot of work has been put into preparing for an event, it is easy to feel rather frustrated when a funeral or a number of funerals have a significant impact on the attendance. But in fact these funerals are vivid reminders that Sunday School teaching and theological training are not ends in themselves, but means of bringing good news to a world that may have become resigned to the reality, perhaps even the victory, of death. The gospel declares that death is not the way it was supposed to be, that death does not have the victory now and that death will ultimately be entirely abolished. Rather than consider funerals (in the Eastern Cape of South Africa or anywhere else) as an interruption to our events, let them remind us that all our theological teaching, reflecting and writing should be done in the context of the great realities of death and (even more so) life in all its fullness as promised in the gospel.

In this number

We are pleased to include the following articles in this Bulletin:

First, we have the second part of a two-part study by Daniel Kirk of Biblical Seminary, Hatfield, PA, USA, in which he continues to discuss the nature of Christ's obedience, building on his previous historical and theological reflections to engage in exegetical study of several key Pauline texts.

The following essay by Oliver Crisp, recently appointed as Lecturer in Theology at the University of Bristol, England, evaluates the thought of the nineteenth-century Reformed theologian W. G. T. Shedd with respect to how Christ represents us in bearing the penalty for sin.

Next, Nigel Anderson, Minister of Martyrs Free Church in Ayr, Scotland, offers a study of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology of discipleship, which is both appreciative and critical, focussing on Bonhoeffer's famous book on that subject and on his controversial *Letters and Papers from Prison*. This study builds nicely on recently published articles on the theme of discipleship which have drawn on Bonhoeffer among a wider range of studies.

Finally, Dr Michael Bird, my successor at Highland Theological College, Scotland, and already a prolific writer, provides a helpful survey of the so-called 'Third Quest' for the 'Historical Jesus', a title given to a great deal of recent scholarly publication on Jesus in the last thirty years or so. In the light of recent expressions of doubt concerning the validity or value of the designation, Bird provides a cautious analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the phrase (including a wealth of bibliographical information) and calls for further engagement in this field from Evangelicals.

As always, I am grateful to these authors for submitting their research to *SBET* and I trust that their labours will inform *SBET* readers and spur them on to further personal study of the Bible; further reading of the significant authors discussed; further careful reflection on these weighty theological issues; further debate and discussion in a spirit of love; and respect and further faithful service of Jesus Christ within his church.

Alistair I. Wilson

THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE CROSS (II): THE LAW, THE CROSS, AND JUSTIFICATION

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INTRODUCTION: DELINEATING THE THEOLOGICAL QUESTION

In the first part of our study¹ we established a historical and theological context for discussing the issue of the imputation of the active righteousness of Christ: as a nascent and disputed doctrine in the mid-1600s, it was neither clearly included nor clearly excluded in the formulation of the Westminster Standards. We have therefore framed our discussion of the doctrine under the rubric of an intramural debate among Westminster Calvinists. The burden of our study, however, is one of biblical theology not of historical theology. We therefore turned our attention to four major passages, along with several minor passages, around which the debates of this doctrine have orbited. These passages provide the language of Christ's 'obedience' and his 'righteousness', and for that reason have been the flashpoints of contention over whether the 'obedience' and 'righteousness' in view are 'active obedience/righteousness' (i.e., Jesus' obedience to the law of God); or his 'passive obedience/righteousness' (i.e., Jesus' obedience to the specific command given to him to die on behalf of his people). We found that these passages, without exception, point toward the latter.

We now turn to deal with the theological logic of the New Testament as it takes up the question of the interrelationships between Jesus' work, the law, and justification. In pursuing this line of inquiry, we will not be dealing with every theological locus that proponents of the active righteousness position put forward in defence of their case. Instead, we will allow the New Testament writers to dictate the limits of the discussion. It is neither possible nor necessary to delve into the role of Jesus' ontological status as pre-existent Son of God or the complex federal theologies that have supported the active righteousness view.² With respect to Jesus'

¹ J. R. Daniel Kirk, 'The Sufficiency of the Cross (I): The Crucifixion as Jesus' Act of Obedience', *SBET* 24:1 (2006): 36-64.

² For a discussion of the role of the covenant of works in the discussion of active righteousness at the Westminster Assembly, see Chad B. Van

ontological status as Son of God, we can take our cue from John Chrysostom who says the following in his introduction to Galatians:

For had this discourse been addressed to those who had unworthy conceptions of Christ, it would have been well to mention those things; but, inasmuch as the disturbance comes from persons who fear to incur punishment should they abandon the Law, he therefore mentions that whereby all need of the Law is excluded, I mean the benefit conferred on all through the Cross and the Resurrection.³

When dealing with the question of how Jesus embodies saving righteousness and obedience, especially in the face of the failure of the law to bring these about, the NT writers lead us first and foremost to the death and resurrection of Jesus. We can argue similarly with respect to the possible role of a covenant of works in this discussion. The Westminster Confession articulates a *sola scriptura* hermeneutic when it says that the things required for salvation, faith, and life are either expressly taught in Scripture or may be derived from it by ‘good and necessary consequence’ (WCF 1:6). If, therefore, the NT passages that speak about the question of Jesus’ relationship to law, obedience, and righteousness paint a fully intelligible picture of justification without *requiring* recourse to a covenant of works, if they time and again show the sufficiency of the cross and resurrection for bringing humanity justification and entrance into eschatological glory, then the standard of ‘necessity’ is not met. Thus, when we have come to the end of our current study and shown how the NT writers themselves deal with the questions that the active righteousness position seeks to answer, the very fact that they do not make recourse to the doctrine in dispute, or to a covenant of works, becomes a powerful argument from silence that we should not do so either.

Dixhoorn, ‘Reforming the Reformation: Theological Debate at the Westminster Assembly 1643-1652’ (Ph.D. Dissertation: Cambridge University, 2004), pp. 313, 316-18; the conjunction of covenantal structures and obedience and righteousness in Turretin is the subject of Benjamin T. Inman, ‘God Covenanted in Christ: The Unifying Role of Theology Proper in the Systematic Theology of Francis Turretin’ (Ph. D. Dissertation: Westminster Theological Seminary, 2004).

³ Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Galatians* (NPNF¹ 13:3).

I) GOD'S RESPONSE TO THE FAILURE OF HUMANITY UNDER THE LAW OF MOSES

The NT writers clearly articulate the failure of humanity under the law. Romans 7 speaks of the law working sin and death (7:5-6), provoking 'knowledge' of sin (7:7-8), giving life to sin (7:9), and becoming the instrument of sin (7:13).⁴ Further, in the passage from Romans 8 examined in the first part of this study, Paul addresses the issue of the law's inability to grant life as one facet of the problem of a fallen world that God's action in Christ must overcome (8:1-4). Those who argue for the imputation of the active righteousness of Christ correctly light upon this problem of sinful humanity to keep the law (though they often miss that Paul directs this point to the Jews to whom God gave the law of Moses and not to humanity in general).⁵ They see Christ's obedience to the law of Moses as God's answer to the failure of sinful humanity to keep this law. John Owen states the position as follows:

notwithstanding that their [*sic*] was *no wrath* due to *Adam*, yet he was to obey if he would *enjoy eternal life*. Something there is moreover to be done in respect to us, if after the slaying of the enmity and Reconciliation made we shall enjoy life; *being reconciled by his death*: we are saved by that *perfect Obedience* which in his life he yielded to the Law of God. There is a distinct mention made of *Reconciliation*, through *non-imputation* of sin as Ps. 32:1. Luke 1:77. Rom. 3:25. 2 Cor. 5:19: and *Justification* through an imputation of Righteousness Jer. 23:6. Rom. 4:5. 1 Cor. 1:30 ... and this last we have by the life of Christ.⁶

Owen here acts as spokesman for the active righteousness position in saying that the cross of Christ is insufficient for justification. As Herman Bavinck and others have held, the cross is certainly sufficient for removing God's wrath or a 'reconciliation' that restores humanity to the position from which it fell, but it does not fulfil the requirement of 'perfect

⁴ For a brief summary of Paul's exposition of the failure of the law, see Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith: A Survey of Christian Doctrine* (trans. Henry Zylstra; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 450.

⁵ Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (trans. John Richard de Witt; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 130-58.

⁶ John Owen, *Of Communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* (2nd ed.; London: for William Marshall, 1700), p. 223 (italics original).

obedience' that God places upon humanity even in its state of original righteousness.⁷

We must affirm that law-breaking is a real problem and that Christ is the real solution. Each of the following NT passages, then, expressly indicates one or more of the following: (1) what God does in response to the failure of the law; (2) what it is about the work of Christ that justifies humanity; or (3) what it is about the work of Christ that gives humanity eschatological life. In no case does Paul tell his churches that the failure of the law, their justification, or their eternal life find their answer in Jesus' life of law-keeping. Space limitations dictate that the following exegetical surveys must be brief.

a) Romans 3:20-26. Paul's catena of OT Scriptures about the sinfulness of humanity finds its implication spelled out in 3:20: 'By works of law all flesh will not be justified before him, for through law [is] knowledge of sin.' In the face of the failure of the law of Moses, Paul indicates that God has provided a different means for humanity's justification. Romans 3:24 spells out how justification comes to sinners: 'through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God put forward (*proetheto*): a sacrifice of atonement through faith in his blood'. Paul says that the purpose of God's giving Jesus up in a sacrificial death was 'to show forth his righteousness at the present time in order that he might be just *and the justifier* of the one who is of the faith of Jesus' (3:26). Two points merit attention here. (1) In response to the failure of the law, Paul does *not* say that God sent Jesus to obey the law; rather, Paul says that in response to the failure of the law to accomplish salvation, the law must step back to the role of witness to God's accomplishment of justification in the death of Jesus (3:21). Jesus' death, not the law, brings about justification. (2) Without any reference to Jesus' life of law-keeping, Paul says that the death of Jesus allows God to be the justifier of the one who is of the faith of Jesus (*ton ek pisteos Iesou*). In Romans 3, a passage where Paul addresses the very problem that the active righteousness position intends to overcome, Paul makes no mention of Jesus' active righteousness; instead, he appeals to the passive righteousness of Christ.

⁷ See Bavinck, *Reasonable Faith*, pp. 461-2 (although Bavinck's discussion of righteousness on pp. 452-5 gives such a robust description of Jesus' so-called passive righteousness that the appeal to active righteousness on p. 462 seems out of place); Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (3 vols; ed. James T. Dennison, Jr.; trans. George Musgrave Giger; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1994), 2:451; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (4th ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), p. 515; Van Dixhoorn, 'Reforming,' pp. 312-13.

b) *Romans 5:9-10; 8:11,17-39; 10:6-10*. As the citation above shows, Owen divides the work of Christ into two parts: a reconciliation that comes from Christ's death and a true righteousness and justification that come from his life of law-keeping. In support of his argument he alludes to Romans 5:9-10. These verses, however, cannot be used in this way.

First, Romans 5:9 locates the justification of sinners in the *blood* of Christ: 'having been justified now in his blood (*haimati*)'. It is difficult to imagine a clearer statement to the effect that Jesus' death justifies sinners. Thus, Calvin's commentary on 5:9 is entirely to the point: 'The import of the whole is, —since Christ has attained righteousness for sinners by his death, much more shall he protect them, being now justified, from destruction.'⁸ Then, in conjunction with verse 10, Romans 5:9 undermines the distinction between reconciliation and justification.⁹ Verses 9 and 10 are parallel. Each verse looks first to a past event, brought about by the death of Jesus, an event with a present effect; and then each verse looks to a future effect of his resurrection. In verse 9 the past effect of Jesus' 'blood' is sinners' justification; in verse 10 the change that has already happened is reconciliation to God 'through the death of his son'. We cannot divide these two effects of Jesus' work by assigning the former to Jesus' life. Paul assigns them both to the cross.

Further, Owen glosses 'we will be saved by his life' (5:10) as follows: 'we are saved by that *perfect Obedience* which in his life he yielded to the law of God'.¹⁰ But such a gloss redirects Paul's statement about Jesus' *resurrection* life to Jesus' earthly life; in addition, there is no verse reference to the law in this verse.¹¹ Contemporary scholarship universally

⁸ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans* (trans. and ed. John Owen; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 196.

⁹ C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 1:267, summarizes the NT use of words for reconciliation: 'they are used with reference to the relation of God and men only in the Pauline epistles ... and there they express the quality of personal relationship which is integral to God's justification of men but which the word "justification" does not as such necessarily suggest.... The close connexion that there is between reconciliation and justification—and indeed their inseparability—is shown by the parallelism between vv. 9 and 10' (italics original).

¹⁰ Owen, *Communion with God*, 223 (italics original).

¹¹ See Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:266.

demurs against Owen's reading.¹² Moreover, other passages in Romans similarly look to future, eschatological salvation in the resurrection life of Jesus.

We do not arbitrarily look to Romans 8 for further understanding of Romans 5:1-11. It has often been noted that Romans 5 introduces themes that Romans 8 brings to completion.¹³ We find the basis for the hope of 'life' articulated in Romans 8 to be consistent with our exegesis of Romans 5:9-10. Part one of this study has already shown that Romans 8:2-4 speaks of God's meeting the failure of the law through the death of Jesus. That same discussion climaxes with an articulation of the believer's hope for resurrection life: 'But if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will also make alive your mortal bodies through his Spirit which indwells you' (8:11). Paul does look 'backward' to ground the hopes of the believer for resurrection life; however, he does not look back to Jesus' life of law-keeping. Rather, he looks back to Jesus' resurrection from the dead (cf. 2 Cor. 4:14; 1 Thess. 4:14). Paul continues to locate the believer's hope for eschatological life in the death and resurrection of Jesus in 8:17. The assurance of being an heir is founded on suffering with Christ in order also to be glorified with Christ. As always in Paul, the movement to glorification is through the cross, not through the law. In a final scene of Romans 8, Paul pictures the believer standing before the eschatological judgment throne. The believer's hope of coming safely through that judgment, and therefore attaining to eschatological life, is that God the judge is the justifier (8:33) and Christ is the one who died and was raised (8:34). Nowhere does Paul place the believer's hope for eschatological, resurrection life on Jesus' obedience to the law.

Likewise, Romans 10:6-10 speaks of the sufficiency of Jesus' death and resurrection for the justification and eschatological salvation of the

¹² In chronological order: John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 1:174; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:265-6; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (4th ed.; trans. George W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 139; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* (WBC 38a; Dallas: Word, 1988), 260; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 400-1; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 312; Simon Légasse, *L'épître de Paul aux Romains* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2002), 345-8.

¹³ Nils A. Dahl, 'Two Notes on Romans 5', *ST* 5 (1952): 37-48; see also the helpful chart of comparisons in Moo, *Romans*, 293, and the bibliography there.

believer. Paul takes the message of Deuteronomy 30 to be an indication of his own gospel message: that if one confesses with the mouth 'Jesus is Lord' and believes in the heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, that person will be saved. Here again, the prerequisite for entry into eschatological life and salvation is centred on Jesus as raised from the dead. And once again Calvin is to the point:

As the assurance of our salvation lies on two foundations, that is, when we understand that life has been obtained for us, and death has been conquered for us, he teaches us that faith through the word of the gospel is sustained by both these; for Christ, by dying, destroyed death, and by rising again he obtained life in his own power.¹⁴

The 'two foundations' for overcoming death and attaining life are not Jesus' law-keeping and subsequent death, but rather his death and subsequent resurrection.

Furthermore, it is essential to note that the witness to Christ that Paul finds in Deuteronomy 30 *replaces* the chapter's own statement about the law.¹⁵ Whereas Deuteronomy 30:12-14 warns the Israelites not to search high and low for the law, Paul uses it as a witness to his gospel and as a warning not to search high and low for the completed work of Christ. Paul's reinterpretation of Deuteronomy 30 itself indicates that the law's end is to witness to Christ instead of indicating that Christ's end is to obey the law. As Romans 10:4 puts it: *telos gar nomou Christos* (Christ is the goal of the law) not *telos gar Christou nomos* (the law is Christ's goal).¹⁶

Paul paints a consistent picture throughout Romans that eschatological life is attained by union with Christ in his death and resurrection. At times, he maintains this over against the impossibility of attaining eschatological life through the law. Paul's solution is not that Christ

¹⁴ Calvin, *Romans*, 389-90.

¹⁵ Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale, 1989), 73-82; Cranfield, *Romans*, 2:524.

¹⁶ Dunn's interpretation of the passage, in which Jesus is somehow connected with obedience to the law of Moses, falls short at precisely this point: Christianity is not eschatologically-charged covenantal nomism; rather, it is the confession of a way of salvation other than the law (*Romans 9-16*, 615). See the discussion of Romans 10 in James R. Daniel Kirk, 'Resurrection in Romans: Reinterpreting the Stories of Israel in Light of the Christ Event' (Ph.D. Dissertation, Duke University, 2004), 205-43.

obeyed the law in our stead. In the theology of Romans, the cross of Christ together with his resurrection is sufficient to secure eschatological life before God.

c) *2 Corinthians 5*. Another claim that Owen makes in the citation above is that 2 Corinthians 5:19 witnesses to reconciliation through the non-imputation of sin rather than to justification that requires the imputation of righteousness.¹⁷ In discussing the myriad questions that swirl around 2 Corinthians 5, we should note that Paul lays out the structure of Christ's work as he has it in view in this particular passage in 5:15: Christ is the one who died and was raised.¹⁸ This movement from death to resurrection embodies the movement from sin, flesh, and death to reconciliation, new creation, and life (cf. Gal. 6:14-15).¹⁹ Again, this passage nowhere mentions Jesus' life of perfect law-keeping, and it pays no exegetical dividends to introduce it. The passage instead highlights the cosmic scope of Jesus' death and resurrection. Moreover, it states that we become the righteousness of God in Christ (5:20).²⁰ The passage goes further than Owen suggests inasmuch as it holds forth the righteousness requisite for justification but it does so through participation in Jesus' death on the cross and the new cosmos wrought by God in Jesus' resurrection from the dead.²¹

d) *Galatians 2:19-21*. These verses explicitly take up the relationships between righteousness, the law, and the death of Jesus.²² Paul

¹⁷ Owen, *Communion with God*, 223.

¹⁸ In keeping with this observation is the exposition by Philip Edgecumbe Hughes, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), e.g., 201-2.

¹⁹ On the relationship between cross and resurrection and the new aeon and new creation, see Ridderbos, *Paul*, 91-3.

²⁰ Frank Matera, *II Corinthians: A Commentary* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 143-5.

²¹ See Ridderbos, *Paul*, 58-9. The reader should note in Ridderbos's summary of 'union with Christ' statements that Paul speaks of union with Christ in his death, resurrection, ascension, session, return, and glory – but not in his keeping of the law of Moses, the moral law, or any other activity prior to his passion. Ridderbos' summary is true to the content of the NT.

²² The exegesis offered here of vv. 19-21 can be applied also to vv. 16-18 if the infamous *pistis Christou* debate falls out in favour of the 'subjective genitive' interpretation. (See Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11* [2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], with its bibliography). That is to say, if *pistis Christou* in v. 16 connotes Jesus' act of faith in going to the cross for sinful humanity, then v. 16 counterpoints justification by the death of Christ

reflects on his own movement from death to life, and he claims that this movement is grounded in his union with Christ in Christ's own death: 'For I, through the law, died, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. But that which I now live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me' (2:19-20). For our purposes two things bear pointing out: (1) Paul here contrasts his life in the law with the new life that he now enjoys in Christ.²³ (2) The union with Christ that Paul claims for himself, which enables Paul to live his new life, is union with Christ precisely in Jesus' death on the cross.²⁴ In constructing an argument against the necessity of law-keeping as a necessary element for human salvation, Paul does not turn to or imply the vicarious law-keeping of Jesus. He turns instead to the death of Jesus which brings an end to the old aeon, with its life lived under the power of the law (cf. 4:1-7; Rom. 6:1-7:6). Consistent with Paul's articulations of the law in relationship to the work of Christ throughout his letters, Paul does not say that the impotence of the law of Moses is overcome through Jesus' keeping of the law. Rather, he appeals to Jesus' death to redeem humanity from the law's reign.

Paul thus concludes his argument in Galatians 2 with a statement that categorically contrasts a system of salvation by law-keeping with a confession of salvation through Christ's death: 'I do not set aside the grace of God. For if righteousness is through the law (*dia nomou dikaiosune*), then Christ died for nothing' (v. 21). In all of Paul's letters, Galatians 2 (and, indeed, Galatians in general) is *the* place where the active righteousness of Christ should be highlighted: 'Peter, you fool! We don't need to strive to keep the law, because Christ kept the law for us!' Instead,

with justification by law-keeping in a manner congruous with the counterpoints between Jesus' death and law-keeping that one finds in the latter verses of the chapter.

²³ See J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33a; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 257. Martyn highlights the shocking divorce that Paul makes between the law and life. He then continues: 'The antinomy *to live to the Law / to live to God* is a thoroughly apocalyptic antinomy created at the cross.'

²⁴ Calvin's comments on v. 19 (and, indeed, vv. 17-19) are particularly helpful in contrasting the life Paul finds in dying with Christ with the death Paul finds in living with the law (*Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians* [trans. William Pringle; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 70-5),

however, Paul argues that keeping the law is folly because it is in the *death* of Jesus, not in righteousness of law, that God has brought salvation to his people and fulfilment of his covenant promises to Abraham (3:1-14). If righteousness comes through the law, then Christ comes to keep the law – but this would render his death vain.²⁵ Christ must die because the law cannot give the righteousness needed to stand before God. Righteousness, Paul insists, comes not through the law but through the death of Christ. ‘If we could produce a righteousness of our own, then Christ has suffered in vain; for the intention of his sufferings was to procure it for us.’ In these words Calvin accurately summarizes Paul’s intention to locate saving righteousness in the sacrifice of Christ.²⁶ In Galatians 2, where Paul takes up the very question of how the law is related to the righteousness by which believers can stand before God, he not only highlights the death of Jesus, but excludes the righteousness of the law altogether.²⁷ The passive righteousness of Christ is sufficient.

e) *Philippians 3:9-11*. In this chapter we find Paul, yet again, reflecting on the interaction between law, righteousness, salvation, and the death and resurrection of Christ. And, yet again, we find Paul dissociating the righteousness that leads to salvation from the law and focusing intently on the death and resurrection of Jesus. In verse 9 Paul contrasts two kinds of righteousness: my righteousness which comes from law (*emen dikaiosunen ten ek nomou*) and the righteousness which comes from God (*ten ek theou dikaiosunen*).²⁸ This latter righteousness is also described as that which is through the faith of Christ (*ten dia pisteos Christou*). First, we must note the stunning claim that God’s righteousness and the law’s righteousness are not identical.²⁹ Then we see that Paul renounces the

²⁵ “[T]hrough the law” and “Christ crucified” are noncomplementary. To affirm the one is to deny the other, and vice versa’ (Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* [WBC 41; Dallas: Word, 1990], 95).

²⁶ Calvin, *Galatians*, 77.

²⁷ See Martyn, *Galatians*, 259-60: ‘For Paul, however, the locus of God’s grace is defined by the locus of God’s rectifying power... [H]e returns to the vocabulary of v. 16, and specifically to the antinomy showing God’s deed of rectification to have been enacted in Christ’s faithful death, not in the Law ... Rectification does not come from the Law.’

²⁸ Calvin, *Philippians*, 97.

²⁹ Gordon D. Fee, *Paul’s Letters to the Philippians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 323-4.

law's righteousness for God's righteousness – and this latter righteousness comes through Christ.³⁰

Paul then defines what it means to possess this latter righteousness by being found in Christ: 'to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings' (Phil. 3:10). Paul defines the fellowship with Christ that brings the believer into communion with God's righteousness as righteousness that comes from union with Jesus in his death ('his sufferings') and resurrection. Thus Calvin can say in reference to the death and resurrection: 'Now all things are there furnished to us—expiation and destruction of sin, freedom from condemnation, satisfaction, victory over death, *the attainment of righteousness*, and the hope of a blessed immortality.'³¹ Paul is answering the question that the active righteousness theologians are themselves addressing: what is the nature of the righteousness by which humanity can stand before God? Paul parts ways with the active righteousness position in his finding the death and resurrection to be the sufficient answer to that question.

Finally, Philippians 3:10-11 also shows us that the hope of eschatological life is founded not on Jesus' life of law-keeping for humanity but rather on his death and resurrection and the Christian's participation therein: 'being formed together with his death, if somehow I might attain to the resurrection from among those who are dead'.³² When Paul wants to assure himself and his readers of eschatological life, he looks to their union with Christ in his death and resurrection, to the time of the cross and after it rather than the time before it.³³ Although these two verses do not indicate that a reward based on law-keeping is impossible, they fit with the consistent manner of speaking in Paul, including those passages that do, in fact, say that life cannot be attained through the law. The death of Jesus, coupled with his resurrection, is sufficient for the eschatological blessing of humanity.

f) 1 Thessalonians 5:10. This final verse also illustrates the sufficiency of Jesus' death to usher humanity into eschatological life. Its logic stands in contrast to the theological structure with which Owen is working, as seen in the following quotation: 'Something there is moreover to be done in respect to us, if after the slaying of the enmity and

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 324, adds that Christ's death is the particular event that establishes humanity's relationship with God. My point stands whichever way one takes the genitive in the prepositional phrase *dia pisteos Christou*.

³¹ Calvin, *Philippians*, 98 (emphasis added).

³² Fee, *Philippians*, 329-36.

³³ Calvin, *Philippians*, 99.

Reconciliation made we shall enjoy life; *being reconciled by his death*: we are saved by that *perfect Obedience* which in his life he yielded to the Law of God.³⁴ Paul says that salvation comes to believers through Jesus Christ ‘who died for us so that whether we are awake or whether we sleep we will live together with him’ (1 Thess. 5:10). The hope of salvation and eschatological life is not found in Jesus’ law-keeping on humanity’s behalf, but in his own death and resurrection. Believers will live with Jesus because Jesus’ death was for them.³⁵ Whereas Owen sees the death of Jesus functioning negatively, merely overcoming the death that sinners deserve, Paul sees it functioning also as the guarantor of the positive element of life. Such life was the purpose (*hina*) of Jesus’ death, and Jesus’ death is sufficient in this passage to ground the hope of the Thessalonian church for resurrection life with absolute certainty.³⁶ No appeal to Jesus’ life of law-keeping is necessary.³⁷

These NT passages should not be viewed as randomly chosen proof texts. They represent Paul’s articulations of the relationships between law, righteousness, salvation, and the death of Jesus. Therefore, these passages must be appreciated more than they are in the Reformed defence of active-righteousness and in its frequent dismissal of the passive-righteousness view. Taken together, these texts are in significant tension with the notion that humanity must have something in addition to Jesus’ obedience in death (with his subsequent entry into glory) in order to merit eternal life and justification. Rather, they stand as clear testimony to the sufficiency of the cross of Christ, that we must not look beyond the cross of Christ for salvation’s requisites due to some supposed ‘theological necessity’. When the NT writers take up our questions, we do well to follow the advice of Calvin:

³⁴ Owen, *Communion with God*, 223 (italics original). See also Turretin, *Institutes*, 2:448.

³⁵ Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (rev. ed.; NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 161-2.

³⁶ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians* (trans. John Pringle; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 290, makes precisely this point in his comments on v. 10.

³⁷ Thus, Paul’s approach to Christian assurance stands in some tension with the recent statement by the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary in California to the effect that the doctrine of the imputed active obedience of Christ is part of the gospel message that is ‘foundational to all Christian assurance and holy living’ (‘Our Testimony on Justification’, May 2004, n.p. [cited 3.8.04]. Online: www.wscal.edu/resources/Justification.htm).

Let us, I say, permit the Christian man to open his mind and ears to every utterance of God directed to him, provided it be with such restraint that when the Lord closes his holy lips, he also shall at once close the way to inquiry. The best limit of sobriety for us will be not only to follow God's lead always in learning but, when he sets an end to teaching, to stop trying to be wise.³⁸

2) THE RIGHTEOUSNESS REQUISITE TO STAND IN THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

We must now take our cue from the NT evidence just analyzed to determine what indications there are about the nature of the law that makes it ineffectual for bringing salvation to fallen humanity. Once again we find the testimony about the law pointing in one, unified direction: the law does not provide the *kind* of righteousness requisite for obtaining eschatological life. In the next section we will look at one indication for why the law and the work of Jesus came to be two mutually exclusive options in the writings of the apostles.

a) Philippians 3. The law can foster righteousness, but not the right kind of righteousness to stand before God. This is what we might call the 'positive' side of the law's shortcoming: it can, in some instances, provide righteousness, but not the right kind of righteousness to enable humanity to stand before the judgment seat of God. A crucial aspect of Paul's description in Philippians 3 of the righteousness he spurns comes in his catalogue of possible boasts. He culminates his list with 'according to the righteousness which is in the law (*kata dikaiosunen ten en nomo*), being blameless' (3:6). In this case, Paul does not view the law as setting an impossible standard of perfection; rather, he views the law as holding forth a standard of righteousness that is not only hypothetically attainable but that he himself actually obtained. He was blameless. This is the righteousness that he goes on to contrast in verse 9 with the righteousness of God in Christ.³⁹ It is with this in mind that we must assess Owen's active righteousness reading of this passage:

So also, Phil. 3:9. *And be found in him not having my own Righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the*

³⁸ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (2 vols; ed. J. T. McNeill; trans. F. L. Battles; LCC; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1960), 3.21.3.

³⁹ See E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983), 43-5.

Righteousness which is of God by faith. The righteousness we receive is opposed to our own obedience to the law; opposed to it, not as something in another kind, but as something in the same kind excluding that from such an end which the other obtains. Now this is the obedience of Christ to the law, – himself thereby being ‘made to us righteousness’, 1 Cor. 1: 30.⁴⁰

Owen argues that Paul has one kind of righteousness in mind, law-righteousness, and that humans cannot obtain this righteousness because of their disobedience to the law. Paul, however, claims in verse 6 that he does, in fact, have blameless law-righteousness (*genomenos amemptos*, v. 6). Owen’s reading leaves no room for Paul’s claims about himself as a Jew under the law. As we have argued above, Paul contrasts his own righteousness with the righteousness that comes from God in the death of Christ. Owen points to obedience to the law by importing it into Philippians 3 – and that from a passage (1 Cor. 1:30) that does not itself speak of the so-called active righteousness of Christ.

Fee provides a reading of the passage that makes sense of the text without recourse to foreign theological loci: ‘Obedience under [the old] covenant could issue in blameless Torah observance, but it lacked the necessary power – the gift of the eschatological Spirit (v. 3) who alone brings life (2 Cor. 3:6) – to enable God’s people truly to know him and thus bear his likeness.’⁴¹ The problem in Philippians 3 is not that obedience to the law (and hence righteousness derived from the law) is an impossible standard for humans to attain; the problem is that obedience to the law does not provide the powerful transformation, and status of righteousness, requisite for being made partakers of heavenly glory. The law is the wrong kind of entity to provide the right kind of righteousness to stand justified and exalted in the presence of God. Although Paul had such law-righteousness he renounced it for a wholly different kind: the righteousness that comes not from the law, but from God himself.

Such a reading of Philippians 3 is not limited to biblical interpretation of the past twenty years. Herman Ridderbos highlights the way in which Christ’s death and resurrection themselves cause Paul to reinterpret the significance of his law-righteousness:

When in the light of Christ’s death and resurrection Paul came to the conviction that the law cannot be the means of life and the ground of man’s righteousness before God, this is not a dogmatical-theoretical premise or conclusion, but it rests on the redeeming significance of Christ’s death and

⁴⁰ Owen, *Communion with God*, 222 (italics original).

⁴¹ Fee, *Philippians*, 326-7.

resurrection themselves, or, as Paul himself expresses it, on the revelation of the righteousness of God found in them, by faith and without the works of the law. Nowhere does this ground for Paul's radical rejection of the law as the means of salvation and of what man supposes himself able to acquire of the righteousness and life in that way find clearer expression than in his personal statement in Philippians 3:4ff. ... It is clearly evident here that Paul's repudiation of the law and its works as means of salvation in the Jewish sense of the word is neither a theoretical dogma, nor rests on subjective experience, but is grounded on that which God has revealed and bestowed of righteousness and life in the death and resurrection of Christ.⁴²

We note here that Ridderbos holds Paul's own law-keeping as standing over and against not Jesus' law-keeping but rather his death and resurrection. This latter complex represents for Paul the attainment of *righteousness* and life that the law could not provide. What Ridderbos calls the ground of Paul's 'reconsideration' is itself the ground of his righteousness, justification, and eschatological salvation: the death and resurrection of Christ.

b) Galatians 2-3. These chapters have already been introduced above, where we argue that Paul holds the law over against the righteousness that comes from Jesus and gives salvation. With regard to 2:21, we note here that Paul does not contrast the righteousness of his own law-keeping with the righteousness of Jesus' law-keeping. Instead, Paul contrasts righteousness that comes through the law with the righteousness that comes through the death of Jesus. This, indeed, is the whole thrust of chapter 3, where Paul indicates that the covenant of Abraham has a different function in the history of salvation than the law of Moses. The continuity between the old and new covenant eras is to be found in the former, the discontinuity in the latter. Paul says that if righteousness comes through the law then the first covenant is abrogated (3:18). Within this discussion Paul highlights again that the law is the wrong kind of thing to give the righteousness that leads to life: 'But that by law no one will be justified by God is clear, because "the one who is righteous by faith will live". But the law is not of faith, but "the one who does these things will live by them"' (3:11-12). Law is of works, therefore it is inherently the wrong kind of thing to give the righteousness that leads to life before God. It is not simply a matter of someone's coming to earn law-righteousness so that humanity might be justified before God; salvation is rather a matter of God's providing another kind of righteousness altogether. Because Paul indicates that the law provides the

⁴² Ridderbos, *Paul*, 137-8.

wrong kind of righteousness to give fallen humanity justification and eschatological life before God, we must take seriously his bold claims about the sufficiency of the cross of Christ.

3) THE BLESSING AND CURSE OF THE LAW

One of the primary foundations of the active righteousness model of justification is the strict alternative posed by the law, an alternative of blessing for obedience or curse for disobedience. Meredith Kline, for example, strings together the work of Jesus, the blessings that come from obedience to law, and the righteousness associated with justification. Kline proceeds by adding up the following theologoumena: God as just and justifier (Rom. 3:26) comes through the work of Jesus; the inheritance comes through the 'law-inheritance principle', 'in Christ the principles of law and promise co-operate unto the salvation of God's people', and the obedience of Jesus shows forth the primacy of law in the covenant salvation of humanity.⁴³

Thus Kline applies to Jesus the principle of obedience to the law, with its promise of blessing and/or life that we find, for example, in Deuteronomy 11:26-28 (cf. Deut. 28-30, Lev. 18:5). Owen also leans on this facet of the promise of the law:

Then I say, this perfect *compleat* [*sic*] *obedience* of Christ to the Law is reckoned unto us. As there is a *truth* in that, *the day thou eatest thou shalt die*; Death is the reward of sin, and so we cannot be *freed* from death, but by the *death of Christ*, Heb. 2:13, 14. So also is that no less true, *do this and live*, that *life is not to be obtained unless all be done*, that the Law requires.⁴⁴

We do well to state again our agreement with Kline and Owen: Jesus was actively righteous, the only man ever to love God perfectly and love neighbour throughout the whole course of his life. This is the only man who has ever truly earned the blessings for obedience rather than the curse for disobedience. Why then would we ever want to say that Christ was not, in fact, blessed with the life that comes through the law as the blessing of obedience?

The end to humanity's hopes of being justified by law-observance came when the only man worthy of such justification, blessing, and life, was

⁴³ Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 30-1.

⁴⁴ Owen, *Communion with God*, 221 (italics original).

nailed to a tree. On the system of blessing and curse propounded on Deuteronomy, on which much of the active righteousness theology is based, there are two mutually exclusive options: righteousness, blessing, and life, on the one hand, and sin, curse, and death, on the other. Paul tells us, however, that when the only righteous, sinless man in history was nailed to the cross he became the curse of the law: 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, becoming a curse on our behalf (*genomenos huper emon katara*), for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs upon a tree"' (Gal. 3:13). Of the two mutually exclusive options, Paul claims that Christ received the curse of the law rather than its blessing. Indeed, as Paul states elsewhere, on the cross Christ became sin (2 Cor. 5:21), so that blessing by the law becomes, at the end, impossible. Therefore, those who look to Christ for righteousness and life must look elsewhere than the blessing of the law. This fact breaks the logical flow of the active righteousness position as it seeks to move from Christ's obedience to the law to his receiving its blessing.

And even so, this fact does not stand alone, divorced from a context. Paul says in Galatians 3 that the reason for Jesus' becoming the curse of the law was in order to redeem those who were cursed, so that the blessing of Abraham might go forth to all nations in Christ. In other words, it is by bearing the curse of the law, not by obtaining its blessing, that Jesus secures the covenant promise of a seed, righteousness, and life made to Abraham. If the law-righteousness model of salvation is correct, however, then the cross invalidates the work of Christ.

4) ALTERNATIVE CONSTRUAL OF THE SOLUTION: UNION WITH CHRIST BIBLICALLY DEFINED

A simpler construal of the righteousness of life that comes to believers, and one that does not create such biblical tensions, is found in the simplicity of an Adam-Christ parallel that does not import the category of law.⁴⁵ The Adam-Christ parallel indicates that their obedience devolves, in each case, to a single command. Adam was given one command regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and, as indicated in part one of this study, Romans 5 correlates this with the one command to go to the cross. Adam received one command concerning a tree, the breaking of which command led to death. The Second Adam received one command concerning a tree, the keeping of which command led to life. When we examine the Adamic work of Christ, we are drawn to his death (Rom.

⁴⁵ Pace Kline, *By Oath Consigned*, 26-38.

5:12-21) and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20-49). He represents humanity in the work the Father gave him to do. God has determined that in this one Adamic act humanity would be saved. In other words, God determined that the cross of Christ would be sufficient for bringing God's people justification and life.

This leads us to one final way in which the NT speaks of the work of Christ for the believer. The idea of 'union with Christ', of being 'in Christ', lies at the heart of the NT picture of the application of redemption. What is true of the believer is true of him or her insofar as it is true first of Christ. It is on this basis that contemporary application of active righteousness often appeals to passages such as Philippians 3:9-10 or Isaiah 61:10 ('he has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness'). All this, however, begs the question of the *nature* of that righteousness. We must allow the NT to set the parameters of what it is, exactly, to which we are united when we are united to Christ. Indeed, Owen himself appeals to union with Christ in his attempt to establish his active righteousness position, saying,

there is almost nothing that Christ hath *done*, which is a spring of that Grace whereof we speak, but we are said to do it with him. We are *crucified* with him, Gal. 2:20. we are *dead* with him, Rom. 6:4. Col. 2:12. we are *quicken'd together with him*, Col. 2:13. *risen with him*, Col. 3:1. *He hath quicken'd us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places*, Eph. 2:5,6.⁴⁶

Although there is a sense in which Owen can say that there is 'almost nothing' which Christ has done in which we are not said to participate, the list he puts forward illustrates the force of the 'almost'. His list is an accurate summary of the biblical witness that spotlights the believer's union with Christ in the salvific work of his death and resurrection. Nowhere is the believer said to be united with Jesus in his whole life of law-keeping, and now we know why: because his life of obedience, while essential for Jesus' spotless sacrifice, does not provide the kind of righteousness robed with which a person can stand as righteous before God.

The righteousness that God must provide for a sinful, fallen humanity is precisely designed to meet its need: the tree of Christ's command, the one righteous act which provides the necessary salvation for entry into eschatological life, is designed to give righteousness and life to fallen humanity precisely as fallen. Union with Christ in his death assures

⁴⁶ Owen, *Communion with God*, 210-11 (italics original).

humanity of union with Christ in his resurrection. Union with Christ in his death and resurrection seals to humanity its participation in the eschatological blessing of everlasting life. Even in our union with the same Christ who lived perfectly and loved perfectly throughout the course of his life, Scripture calls us to humbly acknowledge the sufficiency of his cross. Christ's death and resurrection are sufficient categories to encompass our salvation, especially the righteousness that comes to us in justification.

5) THE OT WITNESS TO JESUS

a) Luke 24. Twice in the final chapter of Luke's Gospel Jesus himself epitomizes the OT message about himself. Both times the fulfilment of the OT, including the law, points not to his obedience of precepts but to his death and resurrection. Luke 24:25-27 tells of Jesus' revelation of his work to the men on the road to Emmaus. Summary statements sit on either end (vv. 25 and 27). These verses indicate that the law and the prophets have Jesus as their subject matter. Jesus chastises the two men for not believing the message of the prophets (v. 25). In between these two summary statements Jesus tells the men the content of the OT message, the message they should have believed: 'Was it not necessary that the Christ suffer these things and enter into his glory?' (v. 26). The death and resurrection form the OT message of Jesus' work as Messiah.⁴⁷

The summary of Jesus' teaching to his disciples later in that same chapter makes it even clearer that Jesus sees his death and resurrection, with the subsequent proclamation of the gospel to all nations, as the sum of the OT teaching concerning himself (Luke 24:44-47).⁴⁸ When Jesus looks back to the OT to give shape to his ministry, he does not look back to it as laying out the precepts that he needed to obey in order to be Messiah; he looks back at even the law of Moses as testimony to his Messianic ministry of suffering and death. As Richard Gaffin explains:

⁴⁷ John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (trans. William Pringle; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 359-61, illustrates the ways in which the law and prophets testify to Jesus' death as mediator on behalf of God's people.

⁴⁸ Richard B. Gaffin, in his class lecture for Acts and the Pauline Epistles at Westminster Theological Seminary (PA), highlights both the summary nature of Jesus' words to his disciples in Luke 24:44-47 and the manner in which Jesus focuses the OT around his own work (section 3.C.2). Gaffin argues: 'The Old Testament in its essentially prophetic mode is essentially forward-looking and finds its fulfillment in His work.'

[The forty days] is largely a period of instruction and teaching. It is the period when Christ interprets to his disciples the significance of the sufferings he has just experienced, and consequent glory. It is a forty-days-crash-course in Old Testament hermeneutics.⁴⁹ The substance of the 'course', and thus the hermeneutical key for reading the OT as a witness to the work of Jesus, is his death and resurrection. Calvin comments on the propriety of this focus:

Whoever then desires to make great proficiency *in the Scriptures* ought always to keep this end in view. Now Christ here places first in order his death and resurrection, and afterwards the fruit which we derive from both. For whence come repentance and forgiveness of sins, but because *our old man is crucified with Christ*, (Rom. vi. 6,) and by his grace we may rise to *newness of life*; and because our sins have been expiated by the sacrifice of his death, our pollution has been washed away by his blood, and we have obtained righteousness through his resurrection? He teaches, therefore, that in his death and resurrection we ought to seek the cause and grounds of our salvation; because hence arise reconciliation to God, and regeneration to a new and spiritual life.⁵⁰

Calvin rightly sees that the subject matter of OT prophecy concerning death is indissoluble from the means of salvation itself, namely, the death and resurrection of Jesus.

b) 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. In this chapter Paul describes his gospel proclamation, in relation to the OT Scriptures, in precisely the same way that Jesus configures the relationship between himself and the OT witness in Luke 24. In addition, Paul can describe this summary statement of his gospel proclamation, that is, the death and resurrection of Jesus, as the 'first things', the things necessary and sufficient to be held onto for salvation. And, as always in the NT, Jesus' law-keeping on behalf of his people is absent: 'For I gave over to you as of first importance that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised the third day according to the Scriptures' (1 Cor. 15:3-4). Paul asserts that he is in keeping with the tradition of the entire early church when he proclaims the gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus.⁵¹ Paul conceives of the gospel, the bedrock of the Christian gospel, what one must believe to be saved, without

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Calvin, *Harmony*, 3:377 (italics original, underscore added).

⁵¹ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1186-7.

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recourse to a confession of Jesus' life of law-keeping. The OT witnesses to the gospel, as Jesus says in Luke 24, precisely by witnessing to Jesus' death and resurrection.

CONCLUSION

The question that this study has taken up is an intramural debate among theologians within the Westminster Calvinist tradition. The question at issue is not whether the righteousness of justification is imputed or infused; it is not whether the righteousness is Christ's or the believer's; it is not whether Jesus himself was actively righteous or not. All are agreed that the righteousness of the sinless Jesus alone, as it remains his and is reckoned ours through our union with him, avails for justification and eschatological life. The pointed question of debate is this: what is the quality of Jesus' righteousness that avails to sinners in justification?

The active righteousness position laudably attempts to hold together the uniquely perfect life of Jesus on earth with the unique salvation that he works on behalf of his people. However, proponents of the position must often bring their theological construct with them to various NT passages in order to hold up the argument being constructed. The active righteous position becomes unnecessary when once we realize that the NT writers give a different answer to the question the active righteousness position seeks to answer. This point should not be minimized. It is one thing to build a theological construct, using language and concepts not immediately available in Scripture, to answer questions that the biblical writers do not take up themselves. And so, for example, the work of the councils to define the Trinity and the dual nature of the person of Jesus is well pursued. In the present case, however, the NT writers, most notably Paul, take up the very question of the relationship between righteousness, Jesus' work, justification, and eschatological salvation and life. They give answers that both make the active righteousness position unnecessary and call its validity into question. Humanity cannot be justified by the law, not simply because we as fallen people cannot fulfil its precepts, but also, and even more importantly, because we see that even the One who lived perfectly (a) saved us through his death rather than through the law and (b) was himself cursed rather than blessed by the law. The cross of Christ evacuates the *entire system* of salvation by works of the law of all its purported merit.

Thus we see the wisdom of the Westminster Assembly: aware of division on this and other issues the commissioners adroitly crafted the language of their Confession to leave room at the table for divergent

trajectories within the one system of doctrine. In this case, the room they created enables those who hold to their system to consider anew, as a matter of intramural debate, the quality of Jesus' righteousness and the theological accretions that have grown up around commonly held positions. The commissioners have left room for their theological progeny to step back and consider afresh whether the Scriptures themselves can support the connections that many now make between the merit of the law and the righteousness of Christ.

In this case, the plea of the minority finds compelling grounds in the NT Scriptures. Those who wish to know of the salvation won for humanity by Christ, and the righteousness it entails, can do no better than to carefully reflect on the words of John Calvin in his comment on Romans 4:25: 'But the meaning is, that when we possess the benefit of Christ's death and resurrection, there is nothing wanting to the completion of perfect righteousness.'⁵²

⁵² Calvin, *Romans*, 185.

SIN, ATONEMENT AND REPRESENTATIONALISM: WHY WILLIAM SHEDD WAS NOT A CONSISTENT REALIST

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‘ὡσπερ γὰρ διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τοῦ ἑνὸς
ἄνθρωπου ἁμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν ὅτι πολλοί,
οὕτω καὶ διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς τοῦ ἑνὸς δίκαιοι
κατασταθήσονται ὅτι πολλοί

Romans 5:19

DOGMATIC PREAMBLE

There are many doctrines of the atonement in the history of Christian thought. One of the most important and enduring of these is the theory that Christ’s atoning work is a penal substitution. Put briefly (and somewhat roughly), this is the idea that Christ stands in the place of the sinner, the penal consequences of whose sin he takes upon himself at the cross, being punished in place of the sinner. Crucially, for the logic of this view of the atonement, although Christ is not the one guilty of sinning, God treats him as if he is the guilty party, punishing him in place of the guilty parties, namely sinful human beings (or some number of sinful human beings less than the total number of humanity). This is the central notion behind the theory of penal substitution, and it depends on what we might call a *forensic fiction*. (It is forensic because the theory concerned is penal, or judicial; it is a fiction because Christ is not literally guilty of sin, but is treated as if he were, for the sake of atonement.) Different advocates of penal substitution construe this in different ways, with different emphases, but they all share this common core understanding of the nature of the atonement.

One of the key differences between different defenders of this theory of the atonement involves a distinction between the imputations of human sin from Adam to his progeny on the one hand, and from the sinner to Christ on the other. (There is also a further matter, related to these two, which has to do with the way in which Christ's righteousness is imputed to the sinner.) There are those defenders of penal substitution who think that Adam's sin is imputed to his progeny because Adam acts as the representative of the human race such that when Adam sins, his sin may be justly imputed to those whom he represents. This representational view is sometimes called 'federalism', on account of the fact that it means Adam is the federal head, or representative of the human race. But there are other defenders of penal substitution who think that the imputation of Adam's sin is not merely a matter of representation. Rather, Adam and humanity are somehow one metaphysical entity. Adam's sin, on this second view really is my sin, because Adam and I are somehow two parts of one metaphysical whole. This view is usually called Augustinian realism, because it originates with St Augustine of Hippo, and because it implies that there is a real union between Adam and his progeny on the basis of which God may justly 'impute', or perhaps 'transfer', Adam's sin to Adam's offspring.

These are not the only views on the matter of the imputation of Adam's sin in the Christian tradition, but they are the two views relevant for our purposes. Those who are representationalists about the imputation of Adam's sin are usually also representationalists about the matter of the atonement. (This is a historical fact, not a point of logic – representationalism in hamartiology does not entail representationalism in soteriology.) Theologians who take this sort of view think that as Adam acts as the representative of the human race such that when Adam sins the rest of humanity are punished for that sin by having original sin imputed to them, just so, in the case of the atonement, Christ acts as my representative, standing in my place to take the punishment for sin due to me. Thus, God the Father punishes Christ in my place, treating him as if it were me he was punishing.

There is, therefore, a certain symmetry between the two representatives of the human race on this sort of view, which ties in with a particular way of understanding biblical texts such as Romans 5:12-19. In that passage, Paul lays out his comparison between the 'two Adams', that is, Adam and Christ. And on the representationalist rendering of Paul's argument, both Adam and Christ act as the 'federal' representatives of humankind. As Adam's sin affects human nature for the worse, so Christ's atoning act affects human nature for the better. But in both cases the act upon which

this relation between humanity and these two representatives turns, has to do with this notion of a forensic fiction. On the one hand, God treats Adam's progeny as if they are guilty of Adam's sin (although, strictly speaking, they are not guilty of his sin), and punishes them accordingly. But on the other hand, Christ is treated as if he were the guilty party, being punished in my place for my sin, although strictly speaking, he has no personal guilt whatsoever. Let us call this sort of view *consistent representationalism*, because it stipulates that both in the matter of the imputation of sin and the atonement and imputation of Christ's righteousness, Adam and Christ act as the representatives of (certain) human beings.¹ One example of just such a representationalist view of the imputation of Adam's sin is the twentieth-century American Dutch Reformed theologian, Louis Berkhof. In his *Systematic Theology* he says this:

In his righteous judgment God imputes the guilt of the first sin, committed by the head of the covenant, to all those that are federally related to him. And as a result they are born in a depraved and sinful condition as well, and this inherent corruption also involves guilt.

Later in the same work, whilst admitting the difficulty attending a penal substitutionary understanding of the atonement regarding the fact that there does not seem to be an adequate human analogy to the notion of a penal substitute, he nevertheless maintains that,

This does not mean that our sinfulness was transferred to Him – something that is in itself utterly impossible – but that the guilt of our sins was imputed to Him.... Strictly speaking, then, the guilt of sin as liability to punishment [*reatus poenae*] was imputed to Christ; and this could be transferred, because it did not inhere in the person of the sinner, but was something objective.²

¹ The standard account of the imputation of Adam's sin in the representationalist tradition in particular, is still John Murray's volume on *The Imputation of Adam's Sin* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959).

² Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1988 [1939]), pp. 242-3 and p. 377, respectively. Compare what Charles Hodge says on this matter (cited by William Shedd in *Dogmatic Theology, Third Edition*, ed. Alan W. Gomes [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2003], p. 453, from Hodge's *Princeton Essays* 1. 187): 'Adam was our representative; as a public person, we sinned in him in virtue of a union resulting from a covenant or contract. Let it be noted, that this is the only

Whatever we make of Berkhof's interpretation of penal substitution, it should be clear that this is not the only way in which the doctrine of the 'two Adams' found in Pauline theology might be taken. One alternative is the Augustinian realist view. There are two ways in which the Augustinian realist might construe the 'two Adams'.³ Both of these ways of thinking about Augustinian realism share the idea that the imputation of Adam's sin to his progeny depends upon Adam and his progeny being one metaphysical entity. The motivation behind this view is a desire to safeguard the doctrine of the imputation of original sin from the charge of injustice. For, so the Augustinian realist claims, it seems unjust that I am treated as if I were guilty of Adam's sin, and have the penal consequences of Adam's sin imputed to me by God. Yet this is what the representationalist alternative entails. However, if Adam's sin really is my sin because somehow Adam and I are really one metaphysical entity, then this problem may be evaded. If such an argument were forthcoming, then Adam's sin and guilt would be my sin and guilt, and God would be perfectly just in treating Adam and me as one entity for the purposes of the imputation of sin.⁴

union here [in the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, 22] mentioned. The bond arising from our natural relation to him is not even referred to.' The Scottish theologian William Cunningham expresses similar sentiments in *The Reformers and The Theology of The Reformation* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1967 [1862]), p. 374.

³ By this I mean there are two live options for Augustinian realists on the matter of the relationship between the 'two Adams' of Pauline theology. I do not claim they are the only logically possible alternatives; clearly they are not. But I know of no theologian who claims that (a) the imputation of Adam's sin involves a mere representationalism, whereas (b) the relation between Christ and the elect is a realist one. Yet this is a position that might be taken. Theologians like Pelagius have argued that neither Adam's sin, nor Christ's righteousness, are imputed to human beings at all. But this view is, I take it, not a live option for orthodox Christian theologians.

⁴ There are several ways for an Augustinian realist to make sense of his or her realism. An outline of two of these (not the only ones, but ones relevant to a discussion of William Shedd) can be found in Oliver D. Crisp 'Scholastic Theology, Augustinian Realism and Original Guilt' in the *European Journal of Theology* 13 (2004): 17-28, and 'Federalism vs. Realism: Charles Hodge, Augustus Strong and William Shedd on The Imputation of Sin' in *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 8 (2006): 1-17. For Shedd's views, see his *Dogmatic Theology, Third Edition*, pp. 479, 557 ff. All references are to this edition of Shedd's Dogmatics. Citations will be

The question, then, is what we are to make of the relation between Christ and his elect, that is, between Christ and those his atonement saves.⁵ Here there are two possible answers. The first is to say that there are reasons why Christ's atoning work is not like Adam's sinful act, and that these reasons are sufficiently serious to warrant a different way of thinking about the relation that obtains between Christ and the elect. For Augustinian realists sympathetic to this line of reasoning, the obvious alternative is a version of representationalism with respect to Christ's work. So, on this first version of Augustinian realism, there is an asymmetry between the work of the first and second Adam (of Paul's thinking in Romans 5). The first Adam is so united with his progeny that they are somehow one metaphysical entity, and Adam's sin passes to the later stages, or phases of the life of this same entity, that is, humanity. But Christ's union with his elect is not such an intimate relationship. Christ acts as the representative of the elect and dies in their place, taking upon himself their sin and guilt, which God the Father is happy to impute to Christ's account. So there is, on this view, a forensic fiction in the atonement that there is not in the imputation of Adam's sin. Let us designate this view, *the mediating position*, since defenders of this view claim realism is true with respect to the imputation of Adam's sin, and representationalism is true with respect to Christ's atoning work.⁶ As we shall see presently, a classic example of this mediating position is William Shedd.

But there is a second way in which the Augustinian realist argument could go. On this view, Christ is really united with his elect, just as Adam

given parenthetically in the body of the text, as DT, followed by colon and pagination, e.g. DT: 100.

⁵ I presume that Christ's atonement does actually bring about the salvation of a certain number of human beings, who come to realise that they are saved through the secret work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. We shall not deal with those who claim Christ's atoning work merely makes the salvation of fallen human beings possible, but is not sufficient to save any fallen human being without the significantly free choice of a fallen human being, required for Christ's atoning work to have purchase.

⁶ This should not be taken to imply that the mediating view is a third sort of view in-between, but not exactly the same as, either Augustinian realism or representationalism. That would be inaccurate. Rather, this mediating view is a species of realism, but one modified on the question of the atonement, by representationalism. Therefore, it is mediating only in the sense that, on the matter of the imputation of sin this view is realist, whereas on the matter of the atoning work of Christ, this view is representationalist.

is really united with his fallen descendents. Christ is somehow part of one metaphysical entity with the elect, just as Adam is somehow part of one metaphysical entity comprising Adam and his progeny. It should be clear that on this way of thinking there is an important symmetry between the two Adams of Pauline theology, which extends to the metaphysics of the imputation of Adam's sin, and Christ's righteousness, respectively. This last view we shall refer to as *consistent realism*. For according to this view, the mechanism by which both the imputation of Adam's sin and Christ's righteousness is brought about, is a realist one. However, this view is not one that, to my knowledge, has ever been defended in explicitly realist terms, in the Christian tradition, (a matter to which we shall return at the end of this essay). However, there are some theologians who, in the context of discussion of the nature of the atonement say things that sound rather realist, or could be taken in a realist direction. Take, for example, the Puritan theologian, John Owen. In his *Dissertation on Divine Justice* he says that God,

might punish the elect either in their own persons, or in their surety standing in their room and stead; and when he is punished, they also are punished: for in this point of view the federal head and those represented by him are not considered as distinct, but as one; for although they are not one in respect of personal unity, they are, however, one, – that is, one body in mystical union, yea, *one mystical Christ* – namely, the surety is the head, those represented by him the members; and when the head is punished, the members also are punished.⁷

Although Owen retains the language of representationalism here, there is also material that sounds realist. And he is not the only thinker in the tradition to use such ambiguous language about the nature of the atonement.⁸ Naturally, consistent realism would require more than realist-

⁷ See John Owen, *A Dissertation on Divine Justice*, in *The Works of John Owen*, Vol. X, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1967 [1850-1853]), p. 598 (italics original).

⁸ Compare the language of Eusebius of Caesarea: 'And how can He make our sins His own, and be said to bear our iniquities, except by our being regarded as His body, according to the apostle, who says: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members?"' in *Demonstratio Evangelica X 1*, in *The Proof of The Gospel*, ed. and trans. W. J. Ferrar, Vol. 2 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001), p. 195. I owe this and the Owen reference to Dr Garry Williams, who pointed out to me in conversation that there are several instances of such ambiguous language in the tradition (another is St Cyril of Alexandria in *De adoratione et culta in spiritu et veritate*, III. 100-2, PG

sounding language. But, at the very least this shows that even a theologian like John Owen, often taken to be a paradigm of consistent representationalism, is not unambiguously representationalist on the matter of the atonement. It may be that consistent realism is not such a theologically outlandish idea, after all.

SITUATING WILLIAM SHEDD'S VIEWS ON THESE MATTERS

William G. T. Shedd was a nineteenth-century Reformed theologian who wrestled with these issues and achieved a remarkable synthesis between aspects of the realist and representational ways of thinking, which, as I have already mentioned, corresponds to the first of our two ways of construing the Augustinian realist account of Paul's 'two Adams', that is, the mediating view. In his *Dogmatic Theology*, he set out an argument for this particular realist position. In the remainder of this essay, I want to consider his argument in some detail since it sheds light (or perhaps, Shedd's light) on some difficult matters to do with the nature of the atonement, and its relationship to the doctrine of sin. We will see that Shedd offers several interesting reasons for taking the realist-representationalist position over the consistent representationalist alternative. But he does not really address the consistently realist alternative in any systematic fashion, although it seems clear from comments he does make that Shedd was not sympathetic to consistent realism – see, for instance, DT: 461. After giving a critical account of Shedd's position on this matter, I shall offer some comments on the success of his view. It seems to me that there are some important shortcomings with his view that Shedd does not tackle adequately. Finally, in the third section of the essay, I shall offer some reflections on consistent realism as a possible alternative to Shedd's mediating position.

Shedd on the atonement

That Shedd defends the doctrine of penal substitution is not in doubt. He devoted a whole chapter of his *Dogmatic Theology* (Part 6, Chapter 2) to the vicariousness of Christ's atonement. There he says things about the nature of the atonement, like this:

The sufferings of Christ the mediator were vicariously penal or atoning because the intention, both on the part of the Father and the Son, was that

68: 293 and 296). See Williams' very helpful paper, 'God, The Individual, and Systematic Solipsism: Contemporary Anglo-American Criticism of Penal Substitution' (forthcoming).

they should satisfy justice for the sin of man.... Scripture plainly teaches that our Lord's sufferings were vicariously retributive; that is, they were endured for the purpose of satisfying justice in the place of the actual transgressor: "Christ has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust" (Gal. 3:13). (DT: 716-17).

Although some theologians writing around the same time as Shedd, such as John McLeod Campbell, argued that the atonement might be substitutionary but not penal, so that a vicarious atonement need not imply the doctrine of *penal* substitution, it is clear from this and the whole tenor of Shedd's discussion that he is not sympathetic to non-penal arguments for a substitutionary atonement.⁹ His is a staunch defence of penal substitution.¹⁰

Yet Shedd was also an advocate of Augustinian realism with respect to the imputation of Adam's sin. In discussing original sin and Romans 5:12-19, Shedd says that this passage teaches that, 'the death which came upon all men as a punishment came because of one sin and only one'. Moreover, 'this sin was the one committed by Adam and his posterity as a unity' (DT: 558). Later in the same discussion on the imputation of Adam's sin, Shedd states that,

The first sin of Adam, being a common, not an individual sin, is deservedly and justly imputed to the posterity of Adam upon the same principle upon which all sin is deservedly and justly imputed, namely, that it was committed by those to whom it is imputed (DT: 561).

He goes on to argue that the imputation of either Adam's sin or Christ's righteousness must 'rest upon a union of some kind' (DT: 561). But the union involved in each of these cases is quite different. The imputation of Adam's sin depends upon a 'natural union', that is, a version of realism, whereas the imputation of Christ's righteousness depends upon a union 'of constitutional nature and substance' (DT: 562). By this he seems to mean some version of representationalism applies to the atonement and imputation of Christ's righteousness.

⁹ See John McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement*, Sixth Edition (London: Macmillan, 1895 [1856]).

¹⁰ Compare Shedd, DT: 735, where he says that Christ's sufferings, 'were a judicial infliction voluntarily endured by Christ for the purposes of satisfying the claims of law due from man; and this purpose makes them penal'.

Shedd's argument for Augustinian realism depends upon a version of traducianism, the doctrine that the souls of human beings are passed down from parents to children, just as our genetic make-up is inherited from our parents. In a nutshell, Shedd says this: Adam and Eve both share an undifferentiated 'human nature' including a 'psychical' part, or soul. This human nature is differentiated as it is passed down from one generation to the next. So, Adam's offspring had his genes and a 'part' of his soul, which became the soul of the particular individual member of Adam's offspring.

Shedd's version of realism is intriguing and controversial. Intriguing, because it offers a theologically and metaphysically sophisticated way of conceiving realism, which avoids the caricature, too often perpetuated in text books of theology, that Augustinian realism entails some sort of seminal presence of each human being in the loins of Adam. Although there are traces of this sort of argument in some of the things Shedd says, it seems to me that his reasoning need not be taken in this direction. But his thinking is also controversial for a number of reasons, in addition to the controversial nature of his spirited defence of Augustinian realism. For instance, his construal of the doctrine requires traducianism and, as a constituent of his traducianism, the idea that souls are fissiparous. But a number of classical theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas, would have found the idea that souls can be divided deeply implausible.¹¹

Be that as it may (and this is not an exposition of Shedd's doctrine of traducianism, or his account of Augustinian realism *per se*),¹² what we need to be clear about is that Shedd is unambiguously a defender of Augustinian realism (coupled with traducianism) as well as of a representationalist argument for penal substitution.¹³

¹¹ Thomas, *ST* 1. Q. 75, Art. 6. For one thing, it seems odd to conceive of immaterial objects having parts in a way analogous to the physical parts of physical objects.

¹² For recent treatments of the nature of Shedd's Augustinian realism and his traducianism, I refer the reader once more to Oliver D. Crisp, 'Federalism vs. realism' and 'Scholastic Theology, Augustinian Realism and Original Guilt'. On the question of the application of some of these issues to Shedd's Christology, see Crisp, 'Shedding the Theanthropic person of Christ', forthcoming in *Scottish Journal of Theology*.

¹³ In other words, Shedd does not favour either a consistently representationalist, or a consistently realist position on the relationship between the imputation of Adam's sin and of Christ's righteousness. He opts for realism with respect to the former, and representationalism with respect to the latter.

(a) Shedd's historico-theological argument against consistent representationalism

What, then, are Shedd's reasons for opting for this way of understanding the imputation of Adam's sin and Christ's righteousness, respectively? There are several strands to his response. The first involves a historical-theological argument. In the context of his discussion and defence of traducianism in DT 4: 1, Shedd claims that the 'elder Calvinists', that is, Calvin and his immediate successors in the post-Reformation period, say nothing about representation on the matter of the imputation of Adam's sin. 'The term', he opines, 'is foreign to their thought' (DT: 452). In the same context, he argues that the transition from the 'elder' to the 'later' Calvinism on this particular cluster of issues can be traced to Francis Turretin, whose view could be seen as a kind of mediating position between the elder and later Calvinists.¹⁴ Like the elder Calvinists, Turretin maintained that there is a real union between Adam and his progeny (usually, it has to be said, in the context of discussing the nature of the imputation of Adam's sin). But he also speaks in terms of representationalism as well, particularly when comparing the 'two Adams'.¹⁵ This, according to Shedd, is to 'combine iron with clay'. 'For', he says, 'the two ideas of natural union and representation are incongruous and exclude each other. The natural or substantial union of two things implies the presence of both. But vicarious representation implies the absence of one of them' (DT: 449 cf. 458-9).¹⁶ According to Shedd, one must either opt for realism or representationalism with respect to the imputation of Adam's sin, but not both, or some combination thereof.

There is a good reason for Shedd's reluctance to cede ground to a representationalistic account of the imputation of Adam's sin. This reason,

¹⁴ 'Turretin marks the transition from the elder to the later Calvinism, from the theory of the Adamic union to that of the Adamic representation. Both theories are found in his system and are found in conflict' (DT: 448).

¹⁵ Compare Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, Vol. I, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1994), 9. 9. 16 on the 'two Adams' and Turretin's language of consistent representationalism, and 9. 9. 24-5 for Turretin's realist-sounding language with respect to the imputation of Adam's sin. Both are cited in Shedd, DT: 448-9.

¹⁶ Although, according to Shedd, representationalism and realism logically exclude one another, these two views on the imputation of Adam's sin can be seen side-by-side in the work of a number of other post-Reformation theologians after Turretin, such as De Moor-Marck, Witsius, and, as we noted in the dogmatic preamble to this essay, John Owen. See DT: 449-50.

although not exactly the same as the objection – alluded to earlier – that imputing Adam’s sin to me is unjust, is in the same neighbourhood as this reasoning. Shedd maintains that Adam’s sin must be both *culpable* and *punishable* in his posterity. It is not sufficient to claim that Adam’s progeny are punishable for Adam’s sin, if they are not culpable for it. For that would be unjust. But, according to Shedd, this is just what the representationalist account of the imputation of sin does state. It claims that Adam acts on my behalf, and sins as my representative. Adam’s sin is then attributed to me so that I am punishable for Adam’s sin, although, on the basis of representationalism, I am not, strictly speaking, culpable for Adam’s sin. God simply treats me as if I were guilty of that sin (the forensic fiction at the heart of representationalism, mentioned earlier – see DT: 457-9 for Shedd’s argument). Turretin appears to have seen this problem, and, according to Shedd at least, it is because he recognised this shortcoming in representationalism with respect to the imputation of Adam’s sin, that he attempts to hold culpability and punishability together in a cobbled version of realism regarding the imputation of sin (DT: 459).¹⁷

This places the consistent representationalist in something of a quandary. For if Shedd is correct, then consistent representationalism imputes injustice to God at the very point at which it attempts to demonstrate the rightness of divine justice, namely, in the imputation of Adam’s sin. And, if Shedd’s historico-theological reasoning is right, the problems that representationalism (with respect to the imputation of sin) throws up for Reformed theology, is an invention of later Calvinism. Or, to put it another way, it is a problem generated by theological innovation. What Shedd seems to be saying is this: if Calvinists had remained consistent with their own tradition, that is with the elder Calvinists and Augustinians more generally, they would have avoided speaking of the imputation of Adam’s sin in terms of representation, expressing themselves in the language of Augustinian realism instead. But they did not do so, and as a result, confused theological thinking crept into Reformed theology.

This leads us from the first, historical-theological strand of Shedd’s argument, directed against consistent representationalists, to a second strand of reasoning where Shedd argues for the dissimilarity between the ‘two unions’ (of Adam and his progeny in original sin, and of Christ and the elect in the atonement – hereinafter, simply ‘the two unions’). The

¹⁷ Interestingly, Shedd notes that Jonathan Edwards comes to similar conclusions in his magisterial treatise, *Original Sin*, for similar reasons.

objective here seems to be to offer some reason for thinking that his mediating position is preferable to consistent representationalism.

(b) Shedd on the 'two unions'

The first thing Shedd says on this matter picks up where we left off discussion in the previous section. He says, contrary to the later Calvinists after Turretin, that 'culpability and punishment stand in the relation of cause and effect and hence, like these, are inseparable' (DT: 457). Against the representationalist account of the imputation of Adam's sin, this objection has purchase. But the same cannot be said against the representationalist account of Christ's atonement. Indeed, a consistent representationalist might reply to Shedd in the following fashion: 'the theological principle you are enunciating means that where there is no culpability, there can be no just punishment (in the case of the imputation of Adam's sin). Yet you affirm that Christ is punished for human sin, despite the fact that he is without sin, and is therefore neither culpable for human sin, nor, strictly speaking, punishable for it.'¹⁸ Thus, Shedd appears to be guilty of theological doublespeak.

However, in the same passage, Shedd responds to this potential counterargument to his own position with five reasons in favour of the dissimilarity between the 'two unions' (of Adam + progeny and Christ + elect). In the first of these, he claims that there is a significant difference between Christ's voluntary consent to atone for human sin, and the fact that Adam's progeny cannot consent to Adam's sin, and that this dissimilarity between the two cases is sufficient to account for the disparity between culpability and punishment. Both are required for the imputation of Adam's sin to be just. But only the latter is required for the atonement, since Christ consents to this arrangement, and, according to Shedd,

If an innocent person, having the proper qualifications and the right to do so, agrees to suffer judicial infliction for another's culpability, of course no injustice is done to him by the infliction; but if he is compelled to do so, it is the height of injustice (DT: 457, cf. DT: 461).

There is, then, on Shedd's way of thinking, a penal or forensic asymmetry between Christ and Adam's progeny, that means it would be unjust for representationalism to obtain in the case of the imputation of Adam's sin because I am not culpable for Adam's sin (according to the

¹⁸ Compare Shedd's comments at the top of DT: 461.

representationalist view). But it would not be unjust in the case of Christ's atonement, because Christ volunteers to act as a vicar.

Shedd is right to point out the difference between the voluntary nature of Christ's atoning work, and the involuntary nature of imputed sin. It is, in fact, a feature common to all accounts of the 'two unions' that hold to a robust doctrine of original sin and its imputation and a penal substitutionary account of the atonement, whether consistently representationalist or of the mediating persuasion. But, as he rightly points out, consistent representationalism has a problem explaining how it is just for Adam's progeny to be treated as if they were guilty of a sin committed on their behalf by their federal representative. A representationalist doctrine of the atonement (that aspect of representationalism Shedd shares with his opponents) does not face the same problem, says Shedd, because Christ consents to become a penal substitute for human sin.

But it seems entirely specious to claim that because an innocent person volunteers to undergo a certain act of punishment on behalf of another, this involves no injustice. It might very well be a quite unjust punishment, and unjustly imputed to the innocent party, whether or not he or she volunteers for the task. That is to say, the fact Christ consents to act on behalf of fallen human beings in the atonement does not, in and of itself, render his being punished in the place of human sinners a just action. Consider just one example that will make the point, concerning Bill, a man who volunteers to undergo the just punishment for murder allotted to his friend, Ben. Now, suppose Ben is entirely culpable and owns up to this. Would the fact that Bill consents to take Ben's punishment upon himself render his vicarious act a just one? I think it would not, and I fancy most people would have similar intuitions about Bill, and other, similar cases of vicarious punishment. So, even if a penal substitute consents to becoming the vicar for another, this act is not, in and of itself, sufficient to ensure that no injustice is perpetrated against the person of the vicar in his or her act of substitution for the sinner. Consequently, on this particular point, Shedd's reasoning appears wide of the mark.

What, then, of his other reasons for affirming the dissimilarity between the 'two unions'? Do they fare any better? His second point is that Christ suffers undeservedly, whereas Adam and his progeny suffer deservedly (DT: 461). Christ has no personal guilt – he is not a sinner. So the fact that the connection between culpability and punishment is severed in the case of Christ is perfectly just. But the same would not be true of Adam and his progeny. In the case of Adam and his progeny, sin may only be justly imputed if they are all culpable for Adam's sin, otherwise I am punished for someone else's sin, for which I am not culpable. (And, although he

does not say so in this particular context, it is clear from the overall thrust of his thinking that the Sheddian solution to this problem is a form of Augustinian realism.)

But even if we are minded to grant Shedd's realism in the case of the imputation of sin, this fails to address the fundamental problem this raises for any representational view of the atonement, which we have just touched upon. (I mean the objection that it is unjust for anyone to suffer the punishment due another in matters where serious sin is involved.) If anything, this point only plays into the hands of Shedd's opponents. For if Christ has no personal guilt, then it seems unjust that he is punished for the sin of another at all.

The remaining three reasons Shedd offers can be given a little more briefly. I shall pass comment only after mentioning all of them.

Third, Shedd says Christ is a substitute for sin, whereas Adam and his progeny are the principals involved in an act of sin (DT: 461). Christ suffers vicariously, but Adam's progeny do not. Fourth, Christ's suffering is expiatory; that of Adam's progeny is retributive. Christ endures suffering for the remission of sin, but Adam's progeny suffer to satisfy divine justice. Fifthly, unlike Adam's progeny, Christ does not possess original guilt (for Adam's sin). As a consequence, Christ could consent to undergo suffering as a penal substitute; he was under no obligation to suffer, as Adam's progeny are, because satisfaction is required in payment of their sin.

The third, fourth and fifth of these reasons for the dissimilarity between the 'two unions' do not seem to do much more by way of persuading putative interlocutors than the first two reasons did. The third point is clearly an important difference between the 'two unions' – provided Shedd's view, or something very like it, is assumed at the outset. But the theologian unwilling to concede the point at issue between Shedd and his opponents, without some reason for doing so, will find little in what Shedd says here to persuade him or her. For according to consistent representationalism, Adam's progeny are not the principals involved in original sin, but those to whom the sin of the principal, that is, Adam, is imputed.

Shedd's fourth point tells a rather one-sided story, weighting it in favour of his own position. It is true, as he suggests, that Christ's suffering is expiatory whereas that of Adam's progeny is retributive. It is also true that Christ endures suffering for the remission of sin, but Adam's progeny suffer to satisfy divine justice. However, according to Shedd's doctrine of penal substitution, it would be perfectly correct to say that Christ suffers the divine retributive punishment I should suffer (but do not

– because he acts as my vicar), and that Christ suffers to satisfy divine justice for the debt I owe because of my sin. Put like this, the dialectical force of Shedd's point is somewhat blunted. Yet, it might be thought, all Shedd is really trying to convey here is that Christ does these things voluntarily, as my penal substitute, whereas Adam's progeny do not. Well, perhaps that is right.¹⁹ But the consistent representationalist can say exactly the same thing, albeit for different reasons. So this does not do enough to distinguish Shedd's view from that of the consistent representationalist.

Similar problems beset Shedd's fifth point. This, the reader will recall, was that Christ is without original guilt, and has no obligation to suffer for sin, as Adam's progeny do, because Adam's progeny all bear original sin for which they are punishable. But, in at least one important respect, this is a theological notion Shedd shares with the consistent representationalist. On both views Adam's progeny all bear original sin and are punishable for it. And the idea that Christ is guiltless in a way that Adam's progeny cannot be, is not at issue between Shedd's mediating position and the consistent representationalist view. The representationalist understanding of the imputation of sin does entail that Adam's progeny are punishable without being culpable for Adam's sin. That much does distinguish the two views, as Shedd has already pointed out. But, with respect to the atonement, the representationalist position is that Christ is guiltless and therefore not liable for punishment, yet takes on the punishment of (some number of) fallen human beings. The same cannot be said, on a representationalist scheme, of Adam and his progeny. So, although there is a difference between Shedd and the consistent

¹⁹ Shedd's brand of Augustinian realism + traducianism means that all of Adam's progeny are literally little chips off the old Adamic block. As Shedd understands this, you and I share a common nature with Adam that is only individualized as each new human person is generated. And the whole of human nature (understood by Shedd to mean the body + soul composite that makes up each human being, not just some set of properties that comprise human nature) is transmitted to the succeeding generation by the previous one, in an unbroken chain that goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. So there is a sense in which, on Shedd's way of thinking, Adam's progeny do not choose to commit the original sin; Adam does. Yet it is Adam with this complete human nature that sins, and I who have a small part of this human nature as it has been propagated to me. So I am culpable and punishable (in Shedd's terms) for Adam's sin because we share a common nature. But, curiously, on Shedd's realism my participation in original sin is not voluntary. For more on this see Crisp, 'Federalism vs. realism'.

representationalists on the matter of the culpability and punishability of Adam and his progeny, on the one hand, and Christ in place of the elect on the other, both affirm Christ's guiltlessness and innocence. And both affirm that Adam's progeny should be punished for Adam's sin. The difference lies in the nature of what is imputed from Adam to his progeny. Both parties agree that, unlike Christ, Adam's progeny are punishable for Adam's sin.

At the culmination of these reasons for the dissimilarity between the 'two unions', Shedd has this to say:

The obvious fallacy in this argument from the parallel between Christ and Adam lies in the assumption that because there may be vicarious penal suffering there may be vicarious sinning and that because there may be gratuitous justification without any merit on the part of the justified there may be gratuitous condemnation without any ill desert on the part of the condemned. The former is conceivable, but the latter is not. One person may obey in the place of others in order to save them; but one person may not disobey in the place of others in order to ruin them. (DT: 462)

This, I suggest, goes to the heart of Shedd's mediating position. Let us call it, *the representationalist fallacy*. It amounts to this: there are good (theological) reasons for thinking that vicarious penal suffering is viable (in the case of Christ and the elect). From this we may infer that there are good (theological) reasons for thinking that vicarious sinning is also a viable notion (in the case of Adam and his progeny).²⁰ But, Shedd points out, these two issues are distinct, and one does not imply the other. The nature of these two unions, between Adam and his progeny on the one hand and between Christ and his elect on the other, is different in important respects. For one thing, righteousness may be imputed to a person meritoriously, or unmeritoriously. But sin cannot be imputed unmeritoriously (DT: 462). For another (and here, once again, Shedd turns to Francis Turretin for assistance), the two unions are different with respect

²⁰ I think it is unjust to characterize consistent representationalists as saying the union between Adam and his progeny depends upon Adam's vicarious sinning. For there is surely a difference between Adam sinning for me (because I have authorized him to do so), and Adam acting as my representative, and committing a sin in his capacity as my representative (without my specific authorization). Shedd's language suggests the former is true of representationalism. But of course, it is not. For representationalists (at least, those who are Augustinians) both Adam and Christ act on my behalf, but without my specific authorization to do so.

to the ground and reason for the imputation in each case (DT: 463).²¹ The ground and reason for the imputation of sin is inherent and personal, viz. Adam and his progeny. But the ground and reason for the imputation of righteousness is judicial and forensic, viz. Christ's penal substitution.²² For this reason, Shedd feels able to conclude his discussion of the 'two unions' by suggesting that God 'can pronounce a man innocent when he is guilty because Christ has obeyed for him; but he cannot pronounce a man guilty when he is innocent because Adam disobeyed for him. These are self-evident propositions and intuitive convictions', (DT: 464) which, Shedd believes, concur with Scripture.

There are several things that can be said in response to this. The first is that Shedd is right to point out that the 'two unions' of Adam and Christ with (some number of) humanity present different problems for the theologian. An explanation of one does not necessarily imply an explanation of the other. And to the extent that Shedd's discussion makes this clear, his contribution is a welcome one. However, Shedd's intuitions about these differences, particularly his claim that Christ may act as a representative of human beings whereas Adam cannot, is, as I have already suggested, wrongheaded. But then, to be fair to Shedd, these matters are very difficult to make sense of; the metaphysical issues are complicated and do not admit of easy resolution. It is no wonder, then, that different theologians have such different intuitions about these matters.

That said, it seems to me Shedd does not do enough to establish the nature or metaphysical description under which the two unions are dissimilar. And the central problem, around which he organizes much of what he has to say on the subject, is that Adam and his progeny must be culpable as well as punishable for Adam's sin in order for the imputation of sin to be just. But the same reasoning does not apply to the atonement. For in the case of Christ, he may be punishable for a sin he did not commit, and for which he cannot be culpable. But, despite the fact that Shedd sets out a clear case for his mediating position which has much to recommend it, it seems to me that he does not do enough to deflect the consistent representationalist criticism that his realism should apply to both the imputation of sin and the atonement. He does raise some serious problems for consistent representationalists over the imputation of Adam's

²¹ Compare Turretin, *Institutes*, Vol. II, 16. 2. 19.

²² 'The formed imputation [viz. original sin] rests upon something propagated, inherent, and subjective in the posterity; the latter [viz. the atonement] rests upon something wholly objective – namely, the sovereign decision and judicial declaration of God' (DT: 464).

sin. But his doctrine of the atonement is as liable to claims of injustice as the consistent representationalist's way of thinking about imputing Adam's sin, albeit for slightly different reasons. In short, it seems to me that Shedd's achievement is rather mixed. He has taken the fight to the consistent representationalists over the imputation of sin, and does, in the present author's opinion, have the better of that aspect of the argument. But, in siding with the representationalists over the atonement he has not done enough to show, despite considerable efforts, that representationalism in this particular matter, fares any better than it does regarding the imputation of sin. And in that respect he is in the same metaphysical boat as the consistent representationalists.

SHEDD AND CONSISTENT REALISM

But finally, what of the consistent realist? Has Shedd any good reason for thinking that those who believe that both the imputation of Adam's sin and of Christ's righteousness depend on a form of realism are wrong about the latter? As we have seen Shedd's energies were directed against consistent representationalist arguments and in favour of his own mediating position. He has almost nothing to say about the possibility of consistent realism, although at one point Shedd does reiterate a representationalistic objection to traducianism that may be applied in a realist account of the atonement. This is that 'believers are inherently and personally meritorious through their union with Christ, that participation in Adam's disobedience carries with it participation in Christ's obedience' (DT: 461).²³

In fact, there are two objections here. The first is that a realist union with Christ through his atoning work means that believers are themselves inherently, and personally, meritorious. Shedd conflates this with the further claim, that participation in Adam's disobedience might, via some sort of transitivity relation, involve participation in Christ's atoning work. But, of course, the former claim need not include the latter.²⁴ The domain

²³ The context of this comment is the claim, made by consistent representationalists, that the 'two unions' of Adam and his progeny and Christ and the elect are so alike that, were the traducianist to be consistent, he or she would have to argue that, as Adam's posterity are inherently and personally culpable because of their union with Adam, so the elect must be inherently and personally meritorious through union with Christ.

²⁴ A transitivity relation obtains where A entails B and B entails C. Where this is the case, A entails C. Applied to the sinner and Christ, and assuming a version of consistent realism, it could be argued that (a) I participate in

comprising Christ and his elect does not necessarily contain all the same members as the domain comprising Adam and his progeny.

Still, it would appear that commitment to consistent realism ends up with the first of these problems. It is one thing to claim, with Shedd and other Augustinian realists, that Adam and his progeny are (somehow) one metaphysical entity, such that Adam's sin is really my sin (I am culpable and therefore punishable for it). But it is quite another to say that the relation between Christ and the elect is similarly realist. For how can Christ and his elect be one metaphysical entity, such that, with certain important qualifications, Christ's righteousness is my righteousness, and my original sin is taken up by Christ in his atoning work, without this also involving some much stronger metaphysical arrangement, whereby I have Christ's merits inherently and personally, whilst Christ has my demerits in a similar manner? Even more damaging: a realist doctrine of the atonement would appear to mean I am (somehow) one with the God-Man. But does this make me a *part* of the God-Man (whether in terms of metaphysical proper parts, or parts in some attenuated sense)?²⁵ Are you, and I, somehow parts of God incarnate?²⁶

These are thorny questions, at least as problematic as those posed by the representationalist account of the atonement. Even though Shedd was probably not aware of a serious contender for consistent realism, it might, at first glance, seem strange that he does not take the position more seriously than he does, especially since there is evidence that theologians like John Owen, whom Shedd admired and whose work is often cited by Shedd with approbation, sounds, at times, disconcertingly like a realist when speaking about the atonement. But I suspect Shedd is not alone in disregarding the consistently realist option. A number of classical

Adam's sinfulness (b) Adam participates in Christ's righteousness, so (c) I participate in Christ's righteousness.

²⁵ Language of 'proper parts' applied to the person of the God-Man is, for some traditional theologians, problematic, if one holds to a doctrine of divine simplicity. But I cannot go into these matters here. See Brian Leftow, 'A Timeless God Incarnate' in *The Incarnation*, eds Stephen Davis, Daniel Kendall and Gerald O'Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) for useful discussion of these issues

²⁶ While we are on the subject, here are a few more problems a realist doctrine of the atonement faces: How can Christ be part of one entity that contains sinners like you and me, when Christ is without sin? Does this mean that I am divine if I am a member of the elect and joined in this intimate way with Christ, the God-Man? Does it mean that Christ is literally a sinner, although God cannot sin?

theologians happy to endorse realism on the question of the imputation of Adam's sin have not been quite so willing to carry over this realism into their soteriology. (Jonathan Edwards is a case in point. Perhaps a realist in the matter of original sin – although I am not sure he was a realist of the standard sort – his views on the nature of the atonement were much more in keeping with Anselmian satisfaction theory, with smatterings of the governmental view of the atonement thrown in.)²⁷ Nevertheless, it seems to me that there is much more to be said on this matter than is often thought.²⁸ Shedd's account is admirable for its clarity, although not, I think, conclusive in its arguments against consistent representationalism, as I have tried to suggest. (That said, I think he makes an interesting case for his use of realism.) But if a consistently realist argument could be given that is able to overcome the considerable problems just canvassed, this would solve two important theological problems. The first has to do with the injustice of imputing Adam's sin to my account, a problem Shedd saw, and sought to address with his realist alternative. But, secondly, a consistent realism would also be able to deal with certain problems that beset penal substitution, to do with the justice of imputing my sin and guilt to the sinless and guiltless Son of God. And this is a problem which a purely representationalist doctrine of penal substitution is, it seems to me, quite unfit to offer.

Although Shedd would almost certainly disapprove of a realist argument for the atonement, he would surely applaud an Augustinian realism that showed how the deficiencies of representationalism might be attended to, without departure from the witness of Scripture. For my part, I think a realist argument for the atonement is intriguing, despite the not inconsiderable obstacles it faces. Such an argument, as part of a consistent realism, would, I think, have the metaphysical resources available to solve the problems of injustice that apply to both the imputation of Adam's sin

²⁷ See Jonathan Edwards, *Original Sin* in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. 3*, ed. Clyde A. Holbrook (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), IV: III, and Edwards, 'Miscellaneous Remarks on the Satisfaction for Sin' in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. II*, ed. Edward Hickman (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974 [1834]). Edwards' doctrine of the imputation of sin is treated at length in Oliver Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards and The Metaphysics of Sin* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005).

²⁸ The sketch of how one realist account of the atonement might go, using the contemporary metaphysical doctrine of temporal parts, can be found in an appendix to Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards*. See also the chapters on temporal parts and inherited guilt in the same volume.

and the penal substitutionary doctrine of the atonement.²⁹ But setting out such a view will have to wait until another day.³⁰

²⁹ In *Jonathan Edwards and the Metaphysics of Sin*, I intimate that the doctrine of temporal parts – a metaphysical idea that says entities that persist through time (like humans, horses and hackney cabs) are composed of temporal parts, just as they are composed of physical parts – might offer the basis upon which to argue for realism with respect to the atonement (or a temporal parts doctrine consistent with realism). This raises the problems associated with the fallacy of composition, alluded to earlier, to wit: properties of parts do not necessarily distribute to wholes, nor properties of wholes to their parts. For instance, Tibbles the cat is made up of colourless subatomic particles. But this does not mean that Tibbles the cat is colourless. Nor, if Tibbles is a ginger cat, does this mean all his parts are ginger – clearly parts of him, like his bones, are not ginger. This sort of reasoning may count against a realist argument for the atonement (am I ‘part’ of the God-Man?). But it may also be used in defending such a view: the God-Man may be one part of an entity including the elect, but this, in and of itself, does not necessarily mean that all the properties of the Christ-part of this entity are had by all the other ‘parts’ of the same entity. Nor does it follow that if the whole entity has certain properties, all the parts of the entity in question have the properties of the whole – just as with the example of Tibbles.

³⁰ Thanks are due to Prof. Paul Helm, Dr Garry Williams and Dr Steve Holmes for helpful discussions on matters pertaining to this essay.

FOLLOWING JESUS: AN ASSESSMENT OF DIETRICH BONHOEFFER'S THEOLOGY OF DISCIPLESHIP

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The theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) has generated considerable comment, both contemporaneous and during the present day, from theologians of all persuasions. While it may be admitted that his untimely execution at the hands of the Nazi regime on 9th April 1945, together with his clandestine resistance work for the opposition *Abwehr* movement, has given added interest to 'Bonhoeffer studies', nevertheless the potency of his theological pronouncements has captured the attention of a spectrum of theological observers. This can be seen especially with respect to Bonhoeffer's theology of discipleship. Central to this particular aspect of his theology is his work *Nachfolge* ('Discipleship') published in 1937 and regarded as seminal in its discussion of the church's responsibility towards its following Christ in the modern, secular world. Indeed, his later work, *Gemeinsames Leben* ('Life Together'), which reflected on the practical outworking of discipleship within the confines of seminary life at Finkenwalde, Pomerania, must also be considered crucial towards gaining an understanding of Bonhoeffer's thought. However, one cannot gain any overall insight into his theology of discipleship unless one delves into his *Letters and Papers from Prison*, in which his most enigmatic and explosive theological statements are found. Thus, these three works will be examined in order to attempt a comprehensive analysis of Bonhoeffer's theology of discipleship.

TO WHAT EXTENT IS BONHOEFFER'S 'NACHFOLGE' BASED ON A THEOLOGICALLY VALID BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF DISCIPLESHIP?

When we examine *Nachfolge*¹ we must try to analyse its teaching before we examine its broader scriptural basis. Thus, we must begin with

¹ We shall use the German title throughout this article.

Bonhoeffer's discussion of grace. For Bonhoeffer, the real struggle for the church is not external but from within in its struggle for costly grace because cheap grace is the 'the mortal enemy of the church'. He defines cheap grace as 'grace without a price, without costs' and considers cheap grace to be mere doctrinal assent, with love merely a 'Christian idea of God' (43). This cheap grace is sterile and introverted Christianity and, as such, a 'denial of God's living word, denial of the incarnation of the word of God'. Thus, the Christian who has cheap grace is no different from the world; the cheap grace of inactivity and worldly security means that such a practitioner feels he 'need not follow Christ since the Christian is comforted by [cheap] grace!' (44). Bonhoeffer surmises that 'cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without the living, incarnate Jesus Christ' (44). By implication, cheap grace is not grace at all but a self-bestowed sense of grace without the reality of true grace to change the individual into a follower of Jesus.

On the other hand, costly grace is 'the call of Jesus Christ which causes a disciple to leave his nets and follow him' (45). Grace, according to Bonhoeffer, is costly in that it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. Grace is 'costly to God because it costs God the life of God's son'. Thus, Bonhoeffer (45) defines costly grace as the incarnation of God, and so centralizes the problem of 'how we are to live as Christians today' within the christocentric perspective.

Certainly, Bonhoeffer provides much biblical support for his theology of discipleship. His promotion of 'costly grace' emanates from a hermeneutical understanding of Jesus' call to discipleship in scriptural *Sitze im Leben*. Bonhoeffer analyses those instances of calling where true discipleship is evident on the basis of obedience and not on confession alone.

We can see this when he discusses the call of Jesus to Levi (Mark 2:14) where, in response to Jesus' command, 'Follow me', Levi got up and followed him (57). Bonhoeffer notes the syntax of the sequence:² *Jesus said, 'Follow me'* ('the call') and ('without any further ado') *he got up and followed him* ('the obedient deed of the one who follows'). That Levi's obedience was demonstrated by the act of immediate compliance and not by any 'spoken confession' is central to Bonhoeffer's premise that 'there is no other path to faith than obedience to Jesus' call' (58). He sees the close proximity between 'call and deed' only through the authority of Jesus

² The quotation from the biblical text is placed in italic script and the corresponding elements in Bonhoeffer's citation are placed in quotation marks within brackets.

Christ and argues that the act of following is not centred on the follower so much as on Jesus who has called. It is because Jesus has called that the follower leaves all; it is because real security is found in Jesus that the follower leaves the former 'security' of a Christ-less life; it is because Jesus is the complete content of the follower's existence that there is complete commitment to him and not to any legalistic control.

Bonhoeffer insists that discipleship is not following any 'idea about Jesus, nor is discipleship following a doctrinal system or a general recognition of grace and forgiveness. Rather, discipleship is being in 'the right relationship' to Jesus Christ. Thus he regards discipleship as an organic, living, active relationship with Jesus, the mediator between God and humanity.

However, there has been criticism of Bonhoeffer's apparent relegation of doctrine for practice. Huntemann notes that in the 1930s Bonhoeffer was accused of 'betraying the Lutheran heritage in his emphasis on discipleship and sanctification' by his apparent questioning of Luther's *sola fide* and *sola gratia*.³ Cornelius Van Til⁴ (164) describes the 'costly grace' in *Nachfolge* as 'cheap grace' because, he argues, Bonhoeffer denies the presupposition of humans as sinners under God's wrath and of Christ's vicarious sacrifice as paramount in forming discipleship, while Lane⁵ asks, rhetorically, 'is not cheap grace to be identified with Luther's justification by faith alone?' Indeed, when we read in *Nachfolge* (64) Bonhoeffer's dialectical insistence that faith is only possible according to two equal propositions: 'only the believers obey' and 'only the obedient believe', this seems to be contrary to the Reformed position that the sinner is justified by faith and not by works. Indeed, Article IV of the great Lutheran Confession, the Augsburg Confession (1530), states clearly that 'men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favour'.

Bonhoeffer does, however, give sufficient evidence that his theology of discipleship is not existential (67). For example, he is unhesitant in his espousal of justification by faith alone. He cites Romans 1:17 with respect to Luther's translation of *ek pisteos eis pistin* as 'out of faith into faith'

³ G. Huntemann, *The Other Bonhoeffer. An Evangelical Reassessment of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 188.

⁴ C. Van Til, 'Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Review Article', *WTJ* 43:2 (1970), 164.

⁵ A. N. S. Lane, *The Lion Concise Book of Christian Thought* (Oxford: Lion Publishing, 1996), 205.

thus showing that righteousness comes out of [a situation in which one can have] faith into true faith in Jesus Christ. He argues that discipleship is the outworking of faith seen in following Jesus. That 'only the believers obey' is not, for him, a contradiction of *sola gratia* in favour of a works theology, but rather a confirmation of faith alone as the vehicle for obedience. For Bonhoeffer, believing is 'leaving everything and going with the incarnate Son of God' (62). That 'only the obedient believe' is, for him, an affirmation to believers that their obedience is demonstrated by their following Jesus. Indeed, as Bethge notes, Bonhoeffer, by making such pronouncements regarding faith, was restoring the validity of *sola fide* and *sola gratia* to their 'concreteness here on earth'.⁶ Thus, Bonhoeffer's intention is to decry a cheap grace where assent to doctrine is considered sufficient for faith; rather, costly grace must be seen in the action of the believer in following where Jesus leads.

This costly grace, Bonhoeffer asserts (85), is manifest in suffering. Again, he uses Scripture to support his thesis that 'just as Christ is only Christ as one who suffers and is rejected so a disciple is a disciple only in suffering and being rejected'. He cites Mark 8:31-38 to show the exemplification of costly grace in Christ's suffering and cross-bearing with the incumbency of Christ's disciples to take up their crosses. He asserts that in the cross-bearing of Christ's followers there is participation in the crucifixion. Indeed, he contrasts the readiness of Christ to take up his cross, and so exemplify costly grace, with Peter's rejection of Christ's suffering (Mark 8:32); he asserts that Peter's rejection of Christ's suffering 'shows that from its very beginning the church has taken offence at the suffering Christ. It does not want that kind of Lord and as Christ's church it does not want to be forced to accept the law of suffering from its Lord' (85).

Moreover, he (87) contends that the way of the cross is central to discipleship in its motif of suffering because the way of the cross 'is laid on every Christian'; the cross, Bonhoeffer argues, 'stands at the beginning of community with Jesus Christ' because the call of Christ is inexorably linked to death.⁷ On the other hand, he considers the cheap grace of those who do not want to take up their cross 'who do not want to give their lives in suffering and being rejected by people' (89); he writes that these people

⁶ E. Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 454.

⁷ The earlier English translation of 'Jeder Ruf Christi fährt in den Tod' was rendered 'When Christ calls a man he bids him come and die.' However, a more literal translation reads 'Every call of Christ leads into death.'

'lose their community with Christ. They are not disciples.' Thus, for Bonhoeffer, it is the cross of Christ that determines discipleship because cross-bearing involves suffering without which no one can be called a disciple.

It is this self-denial that Bonhoeffer develops more fully in his treatment of the Sermon on the Mount, especially in his discussion of Matthew 5 where he considers the 'extraordinary' aspect of discipleship. He entitled his study of Matthew 5 'On the "Extraordinary" of the Christian Life', with 'extraordinary' being used as an adjectival noun in translating the adjective *perisson* in Matthew 5:47.⁸ Immediately, Bonhoeffer presents a direct link between the cross-centred suffering of Christ and the teaching of Jesus on discipleship contained in the Sermon on the Mount; Bonhoeffer considers the *perisson* to consist of 'the love of Jesus himself who goes to the cross in suffering and obedience' (144). He adds that the *perisson* is the cross itself. In a footnote, the editors of *Discipleship*, G. Kelly and J. Godsey, cite an earlier New Testament lecture given by Bonhoeffer in which he explained that 'the *perisson* is the cross which places Christians outside of the ordinary order of things'.⁹ Thus when we examine the Sermon on the Mount we are considering the costly grace of discipleship as taught by Jesus whose teaching was cross-orientated. For example, Bonhoeffer (103) considers the first Beatitude ('Blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of heaven') as referring to Christ's disciples who, for Christ's sake, have lost all earthly security when they followed Jesus. They are considered blessed because they are inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, received 'at the cross... given them in the complete poverty of the cross'. Bonhoeffer considers Christ's blessing to be 'for the sake of the cross' in contradistinction to that of 'the Antichrist' who, also, declares the poor to be blessed but only for a political ideology intended to 'fend off the cross'. Here, he does make an overtly political comment against the ruling Nazi Party which glorified the poor German peasant farmer in its 'Blood and Soil' ideology and, at the same time, adhered to its Party Programme of 1920 that 'as such the Party represents a positively Christian position without binding itself to one particular faith'. Bonhoeffer reckoned that such 'cross-less' ideology was an enemy of Christ.

⁸ Luther translated *perisson* as 'something strange' ('*sonderliches*') in his 1545 edition of the New Testament; Bonhoeffer, however, used another adjectival noun: '*außerordentlichen*' as a dynamic translation.

⁹ D. Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship* (G. Kelly and J. Godsey, eds; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 144.

It is, however, in his discussion of the church of Jesus Christ and discipleship that Bonhoeffer makes his more controversial christological assertions regarding the theological underpinning of discipleship. He wishes to contemporise Jesus' call to discipleship by demonstrating that the same call given to the disciples in New Testament times is the same call Jesus gives to present-day disciples. Thus, he uses Pauline terminology to convey discipleship (arguing that Paul's writings present a risen, living Saviour) in two senses: baptism and the body of Christ. Indeed, he argues (207) that whereas the Gospels describe discipleship as hearing and following the call to discipleship, Paul expresses discipleship in terms of baptism. Thus, he considers baptism as something passive for the believer because it is 'grounded solely in the will of Jesus Christ, as expressed in his gracious call' (207). Consequently, those who are baptized belong to Christ and not to the world; thus those who are baptized are **dead** to the world in, through and with Christ and are, hence, in community with Christ. This dying to the world is only possible through the death of Christ; thus 'those who become Christ's own must come under his cross' and 'suffer and die with him'. The call of discipleship is the call to those who are baptized in a daily dying only through 'the power of the death accomplished by Christ' (208). Bonhoeffer thus equates the call of discipleship to the first disciples with the call of Christ in baptism by the notion of death. The first disciples were followers of Jesus 'in the community of the cross' (209); the call of Jesus after his death is the call received through baptism into the death of Christ. Bonhoeffer adds that the Holy Spirit is the gift given in baptism and that 'the Holy Spirit is Christ himself dwelling in the heart of the believers... it is through the Holy Spirit that Jesus Christ remains present with us and that we are in community with him' (209). Therefore, disciples being 'in community with Christ means that discipleship cannot be hidden' but has 'become externally visible through active participation in the life and worship of the church community' (210).

Notwithstanding Bonhoeffer's crucicentric emphasis and his position on baptism as indicative of discipleship, it is his discussion of the body of Christ that poses most problems in relation to the disciple being in community with Christ. He refers to 1 Corinthians 12:13 when he links baptism with the body of Christ and thus contends that those who are baptized are 'still meant to live... in the bodily presence and community with Jesus' (213). However, one must analyse what the 'bodily presence' of Christ means to Bonhoeffer, biblically and theologically. Thus, his Christology must be examined both from a historical angle (in terms of

his own antecedent thought on Christology) and from a biblical perspective.

Certainly, one can trace a christological development in Bonhoeffer's thought from his 1927 dissertation, *Communio Sanctorum*, through his 1933 lectures on Christology, to his *Nachfolge* in 1937. For example, in his discussion in *Communio Sanctorum* (138-9) on the idea of 'Christ existing as community' Bonhoeffer rejects the notion of a second incarnation of Christ; rather, he sees Paul's terminology regarding the body of Christ in relation to the church as indicating an organic relationship between believers and the head, Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer does speak of Christ as 'at all times a real presence [German: *real gegenwärtig*] for the church' (*Communio*, 139). Indeed, in his 1933 lecture on Christ as sacrament, he spoke of Jesus Christ being 'wholly present in the sacrament' (*Christology*, 54). One might assume that Bonhoeffer would follow Luther's eucharistic Christology when Luther argues for the ubiquitous presence of the risen Christ in the 'repletive' sense, i.e., being everywhere yet immeasurable and unable to be defined. However, he avoids the question of the 'how' of Christ's presence, but rather focuses on the 'who' of the presence in the eucharist: the 'who' being Christ *pro me*. Thus, Bonhoeffer argues that 'Christ exists in such a way that he is existentially present in the sacrament' even as he is present in the preaching of the Word because Christ is the Word (*Christology*, 58).

Indeed, in *Christology*, Bonhoeffer moves from placing the presence of Christ in the Word and in the sacrament to the same presence in the community. He uses the same concept as in *Communio* (1927) of 'Christ as community'; indeed, he adds, in *Christology* (1933), the notion of Christ being community by virtue of his being *pro me* (*Christology*, 59). Moreover, he asserts his belief that Christ is at the right hand of God in heaven and that this fact 'makes possible his presence in and as the community' (*Christology*, 60).

Certainly, Bonhoeffer's language regarding Christology in *Nachfolge* reflects that of his 1933 Christology lectures. Again, he refers to the body of Christ being his church community (*gemeinde*) using 1 Corinthians 12:12 as his supporting text (217). Indeed, he further argues that the 'church is the present Christ himself' and that the church, far from being considered as an institution must now be considered 'a person with a body'. It is as the body of Christ that the church community takes part in Christ's suffering because 'Christ's cross is laid upon the body of the church community'. Bonhoeffer (214-15) bases his identification of Christ with the community of followers (*Nachfolgegemeinde*) on his understanding of

Christ having assumed 'the whole of our sick and sinful human nature' and therefore having a 'bodily bond' with his disciples.

To be sure, there is much that has been criticised in Bonhoeffer's theology. Hopper implies a defective Christology in Bonhoeffer's works when he contends that a christocentric emphasis does not always equate with a 'well-defined Christology'.¹⁰ Indeed, Hopper criticises Bonhoeffer's Christology for focussing overmuch on the person of Christ in his humiliation but not enough on Christ's atoning work.¹¹ Likewise, one can see in Bonhoeffer's discussion of 'Christ as community' the danger of a consubstantive view of Christ with humanity by a literalist interpretation of the church as the actual 'Body of Christ'. Moreover, in reading Bonhoeffer, we might be inclined to subordinate the divinity of Christ to the humanity of Christ when considering Bonhoeffer's over-emphasis of the existential Christ in his relation to humanity as a human, thus questioning his christological orthodoxy.

Notwithstanding, we must be aware of interpreting Bonhoeffer through any simplistic denunciation of his Christology without considering both the theological context of his pronouncements and a biblical exegesis of key texts such as 1 Corinthians 12:12; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 1:20-23 and Matthew 25:35-40.

Furthermore, it must be emphasized strongly that Bonhoeffer as a theologian is foundationally Chalcedonian in his holding to the two natures of Christ in one person, and indeed can be seen to be Chalcedonian in his christological foundation as it is demonstrated in his Christology lectures of 1933 and applied in *Nachfolge*. Thus, in his Christology lectures Bonhoeffer acknowledges the mystery of the person of Christ in the indivisibility of the divine and human natures in the one person, and that this mystery is understood only in faith. He agrees that the theologian must 'keep within the conceptual tension of this negative formula [of the Chalcedonian Definition: 'without confusion, without change, without division, without separation'] and preserve it'. Thus, there is no attempt by Bonhoeffer to separate Christ's natures: indeed he protests against the monophysite tendencies of Luther's *genus majestaticum* whereby Luther argued that 'those things which are predicated of the eternal Godhead may and must be ascribed to the human nature' (*Christology*, 94). He applauds the Calvinistic emphasis of the Logos entering human flesh while remaining within the Trinity 'and therefore *extra carnem*'. Thus,

¹⁰ D. Hopper, *Dissent on Bonhoeffer* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), 81.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 85.

Bonhoeffer (*Christology*, 97) asserts, 'the incarnation remains, even within the Trinity, eternal' with the 'starting point' being the 'fact that the man Jesus is the Christ, is God' (*Christology*, 102). For Bonhoeffer, that Chalcedon has established the fact of the God-man must lead on beyond the question of 'How [Christ's natures are different yet his person is one]?' to the 'Who is Christ?' question which Bonhoeffer addresses in *Christology* and develops in *Nachfolge* as 'Christ *pro me*'. That Christ is 'for me' involves a relational transaction by which Christ acts as mediator between individuals and God and between one individual and another.

Notwithstanding Bonhoeffer's Chalcedonian credentials, he can be criticised for two aspects of his assumptions regarding 'Christ *pro me*'. Firstly, in order to identify Christ with humanity Bonhoeffer argues that 'the flesh borne by Christ was sinful flesh' (*Life Together*, 214). However, as Warfield rightly comments, we must see that, although Christ was fully human, being 'in the likeness of human flesh' (Rom. 8:3), he was distinct from other men thus being free 'from the sin which is associated with flesh as it exists in lost humanity'.¹² Indeed, Macleod notes that if Christ had taken a fallen nature then he would 'be in a state of sinfulness' and thus we would have to conclude that 'the Son of God was fallen'.¹³ Certainly, we may suggest that at this point Bonhoeffer was consistent with Barth's view on the 'fallen' nature of Christ and that, theologically, Bonhoeffer, as Barth, held an untenable opinion on this matter. Nevertheless, one must be careful not to demolish Bonhoeffer's theology of discipleship on the basis of a defective theological understanding of the 'fallen' nature of Christ. Bonhoeffer's salient teaching on costly grace is not dependent on a theology of Christ's nature but rather is based on a theology of the call of Christ to follow him according to the revelation of the Word of God.

Another valid criticism of Bonhoeffer concerns his existential Christology. Hegarty argues that while Bonhoeffer's Christology presupposes Chalcedon 'he veers too much towards an existential Christology in seeing Christ as community *pro me*'.¹⁴ Hegarty considers that Bonhoeffer's Christology is imbalanced in his avoiding discussing the ontological Christ in Christ's Being (thus answering the 'How?' of Christ) in favour of the existential Christ in relation to the church community.

¹² B. B. Warfield, *The Person and Work of Christ* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1950), 45.

¹³ D. Macleod, *The Person of Christ* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1998), 228.

¹⁴ C. Hegarty, 'Christ in the Theology of Bonhoeffer', *Anglican Theological Review* XLIV (1967), 367.

This is essentially a correct judgement; Bonhoeffer in *Nachfolge* does emphasise the existential relationship between Christ and his disciples in their following him. Bonhoeffer does not dwell on the ontological Christ in his Being, regarding that as a 'How?' matter rather than a 'Who?' priority. Notwithstanding, we must argue that the whole point of *Nachfolge* was more existential than ontological. Following Jesus involves a relationship with Christ as Son of God; moreover, Bonhoeffer's theology, it could be argued, was never fully developed because of his early death in 1945. His concern in *Nachfolge* was the person of Christ and the reaction of the church to the Christ of revelation in his suffering obedience to his Father.

However, this still leaves the problem of a literalist interpretation of Christ as community. Bonhoeffer certainly appears to suggest that the church is the Body of Christ, not in a figurative or metaphorical sense, but in a real sense. However, the immediate 'knee-jerk' reaction of some may be premature. The claim that Bonhoeffer's equating of the church with Christ is 'pantheism'¹⁵ must be challenged by Bonhoeffer's own theology and by a biblical overview. Bonhoeffer (*Life Together*, 220-1) is emphatic that the church only exists through the work of the Holy Spirit. Green¹⁶ comments that this shows Bonhoeffer's view of the Christian community as a *Geistgemeinschaft* (Spirit-community). Thus, Christ is present in the church community by his Spirit. As Bonhoeffer (*Life Together*, 221) states, 'The church of Christ is Christ present through the Holy Spirit.' This statement concurs exactly with Reformed writers such as Hugh Martin in his work, *The Abiding Presence*, who wrote, in relation to Galatians 2:20, that 'Christ lives in His people by the Holy Spirit.'¹⁷ Thus, we must be cautious when desecrating a literal equation of Christ with his church without seeing the church as a spiritual entity because of the indwelling of its people by the Holy Spirit. Indeed, we might also refer to Matthew 25:35-40 where Jesus refers to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, as 'me'. The 'me' of these verses cannot be taken as literally Christ but rather as a metonym of Christ. Indeed, when considering some of Bonhoeffer's more audacious statements about Christ as community such as 'the church is the present Christ himself' (218) we must balance these with the sense of the mystical union of the church as

¹⁵ B. Demarest, 'Devotion, Doctrine and Duty in Dietrich Bonhoeffer', *Bibliotheca Sacra* 148 (1991), 403.

¹⁶ C. Green, *Bonhoeffer, the Sociality of Christ and Humanity* (Missoula: Scholar Press, 1972), 181.

¹⁷ H. Martin, *The Abiding Presence* (Edinburgh: Knox Press, no date), 199.

the Body of Christ with Christ as Head of the church. For example, with reference to 1 Corinthians 12:12, Lenski¹⁸ (513) argues that the union of Christ with his church 'constitutes a unit just as the human body is a unit;' thus the mystical union of Christ, demonstrated by Paul, 'is not pantheistic but truly spiritual...'. Therefore, we cannot assume any kind of pantheistic intention on Bonhoeffer's part when he speaks of Christ as community; rather we must be prepared to see in his pronouncements a plea that the church exercise the costly grace of discipleship in that spiritual union with Christ who, as mediator of God's people, suffered death in order to secure their salvation.

SUMMARY

We have argued that in *Nachfolge* Bonhoeffer demonstrates a valid biblical understanding of discipleship in his christocentric emphasis on obedience to the call of Christ. While some, such as Hopper and Demarest, have claimed that Bonhoeffer's overall Christology is defective, nevertheless we have demonstrated that, despite a particular error in positing the incarnate Christ having assumed a sinful human nature, nevertheless we must support Bonhoeffer's central argument that discipleship is costly because it is cross-centred obedience to Jesus, whose suffering demands that his disciples follow, as Christ, in their being for others even as Christ is for others.

TO WHAT EXTENT DO BONHOEFFER'S PRISON WRITINGS PRESENT A COHERENT THEOLOGY OF DISCIPLESHIP?

Perhaps some of the most enigmatic of Bonhoeffer's writings are found in his prison letters, while he was a prisoner at Tegel Prison, Berlin, between 1943 and 1945. Expressions such as 'religionless Christianity' (*Letters and Papers from Prison*, 280); 'before God and with God we live without God' (360) and 'the world that has come of age' (327) have puzzled theologians both at the time of their writing and since. For example, in a letter written in 1952, Karl Barth described the prison letters as a 'particular thorn' with 'enigmatic utterances'.¹⁹ R. A. Finlayson considered that phrases such as 'religionless Christianity' were 'deliberately chosen to

¹⁸ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of I and II Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1963), 513.

¹⁹ John A. Phillips, *The Form of Christ in the World* (London, Collins, 1967), 250-1.

alarm and shock'.²⁰ Others have grasped the apparent disdain Bonhoeffer expresses for religion and so incorporated Bonhoeffer's words from prison into their own interpretations of secular Christianity. For example, John A Robinson²¹ clutched at Bonhoeffer's seeming rejection of religion to support his thesis that men can 'get along perfectly well without "religion", without any desire for personal salvation, without any sense of sin...'. What, then, are we to make of Bonhoeffer's pronouncements from prison?

To be sure, we must remember that when we are examining Bonhoeffer's 'new theology' we are dealing with fragments of theological statements written in private letters to his friend Eberhard Bethge while Bethge was stationed with the German Army on the Italian Front. We have no systematic compendium of a carefully thought-out theology; Bethge,²² indeed, suggests that the theology of Tegel 'is not a mature fruit of a new branch in Bonhoeffer's work...' but, nevertheless, considers it as 'more than a vague random attempt'. We must be careful not to see Bonhoeffer's prison theology as a comprehensive statement of belief; nevertheless there is sufficient material in these letters to be able to analyse their intended meaning within the context of Bonhoeffer's own theology of discipleship. We must determine the evidence of continuity with Bonhoeffer's previous pronouncements and examine whether, indeed, he intended to 'shock and alarm' or whether he was proposing a coherent biblical pattern of discipleship for a 'world come of age'.

There is no doubt that Bonhoeffer himself did realise the 'shocking' impact of his thinking regarding religion. In his letter to Bethge, written on 30th April 1944,²³ he writes that Bethge 'would be surprised, and perhaps even worried, by my theological thoughts and the conclusions they lead to...'. Certainly, as Bonhoeffer unpacks his thinking, there is, at first glance, an alarming tone of pessimism regarding Christianity in the world of 1944. He asserts, 'we are moving towards a completely religionless time' when 'people as they now are simply cannot be religious any more'. He goes on to assess the historic existence of Christianity as having rested on the "'religious *a priori*" of mankind' (*Letters*, 280) but regards that form of Christianity as having been eroded to the point where there is now a complete absence of religion; this being so the question must be

²⁰ R. A. Finlayson, *The Story of Theology* (London: Tyndale Press, 1969), 66.

²¹ J. A. Robinson, *Honest to God* (London: SCM Press, 1963), 23.

²² Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography*, 862.

²³ D. Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (London: SCM Press, 1973), 279.

asked regarding 'what Christianity really is, or indeed, who Christ really is for us today' (*Letters*, 279). Indeed, as Bonhoeffer deduces, 'what is a religionless Christianity?' (*Letters*, 280); he asks whether the 'secret discipline' (*Arkandisziplin*) of worship and prayer becomes more important in this religionless context. Furthermore, if as he argues, the world has reached a religionless form of existence, then how does one talk of God without the metaphysical trappings of religion; and how does the Christian believer follow Christ in a religionless world? Later, in a letter of 8th June, 1944 (*Letters*, 327), Bonhoeffer amplified his thinking, regarding the stage reached in humanity's historic development as 'the world that has come of age'.

Such apparently explosive statements demand attention; therefore, we must examine them critically in order to deduce their significance for Christian discipleship. Thus, it would be best to consider historical and theological evidence for the context of Bonhoeffer's 'new theology' before embarking on particular analysis of his theological statements. These statements will be considered, firstly, from the broader perspective of the 'world come of age' then focussed more directly on 'religionless Christianity' and the role of '*Arkandisziplin*' in the life of the Christian disciple.

Historically, we may trace Bonhoeffer's 'new theology' from his own immediate experiences of church life in Germany. We have already noted the decline of vital Christianity in Germany at the start of the twentieth century. However, Bonhoeffer's own experience of church life, especially in the formation and role of the Confessing Church during the Nazi years, was to affect his perception of the church in the world. He had been increasingly distanced from and disillusioned with the Confessing Church after the decision of the Confessing Synod of the Old Prussian Union on 31st July 1938 to give permission to pastors to swear an oath of allegiance to Adolf Hitler. Bonhoeffer considered his own church as having caved in to the Nazi regime. Moreover, after his return from America in 1939 he became involved with the conspiracy to assassinate Hitler. In this, Bonhoeffer worked with many non-church people. Through this disillusionment with the Confessing Church and his intimate work with men who were prepared to sacrifice their lives in the face of evil, Bonhoeffer sought to grasp the position of the church and believers in relation to the changing, secular world around him. Moreover, the prospect of a new world order after war was concluded was, for Bonhoeffer, in Tegel prison, a stimulus to consider 'the necessary basis for making it possible to reconstruct the life of the nations, both spiritually and materially, on Christian principles' (*Letters*, 146).

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that, while Bonhoeffer had become disillusioned with the church in its relation to the world, he was firm in his christocentric perspective throughout his prison letters. Bethge²⁴ stresses that all the seemingly 'explosive' maxims such as 'religionless Christianity' and 'world come of age' must be seen within the framework of Bonhoeffer's question, 'Who are you, Christ?' posed in his 1933 Christology lectures. After all, Bonhoeffer did begin his prison theology with the question of who Christ really is for us today. Thus, we must consider Bonhoeffer's 'new theology' within a continuum of christological thought regarding the relation of the church to Christ, with the prison writings presenting new insight into that christological perspective.

When we consider the expression 'the world come of age' we must not be confused with some kind of moral evolutionary progress of humanity. It is more a sense of 'growing up' with associated responsibilities. Bethge²⁵ sees in the phrase a Kantian formula, 'The Enlightenment is the emergence of humanity from self-imposed immaturity.' Bonhoeffer, indeed, welcomed the enlightened worldview as a 'coming of age in the name of the crucified and risen Christ'. Bethge further comments that Bonhoeffer's emphasis on the renewing power of the crucified Christ to the world come of age was a theological necessity; rather let Christ renew the world than 'let Hitler dictate the image of this world'. The world come of age is a *fait accompli* and, rather than be condemned as godless, should be engaged with the church's blessing. Thus, Bonhoeffer is using the maxim 'the world come of age' in a positive sense in the relationship between Christ and the world. Indeed, we must also realise Bonhoeffer's dialectic thinking in his approach. The thesis is the gospel tolerating the world come of age; the antithesis is that the world may deny the gospel; the synthesis is that the gospel 'finds its own position and essence'.²⁶

This can be attested when we consider his well-known dictum: 'Before God and with God we live without God' (*Letters*, 360). On its own, this is a meaningless statement. However, in the dialectic context we may deduce Bonhoeffer's argument for a reappraisal of discipleship in a world come of age. The context of this statement is that God is with us yet God forsakes us. Bonhoeffer cites Mark 15:34 to support this, in relation to Jesus' cry of God-forsakenness on the cross. God, in a 'moment of

²⁴ Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography*, 866.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 867.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 868.

dereliction²⁷ forsook Christ, the Son of God. God was still with Christ yet God forsook Christ at the moment of sin-bearing. Bonhoeffer (*Letters*, 360) would appear to be saying that God who is with us is the same God who allows us to live in a world which has abandoned the 'working hypothesis of God'. The 'without-ness' of God in the world come of age is, in Bonhoeffer's argument, to the world's advantage, because God has allowed the world to push himself on to the cross where he appears weak and powerless. Yet, by the wonder of the divine paradox *par excellence*, it is in the weakness of the cross that we are helped by Christ who suffers for our sake. Thus, Bonhoeffer is arguing that discipleship involves a partaking of the world come of age, a world which the disciple should not disparage or condemn for its godlessness but welcome as part of the dialectic of God's being in the world and yet out of the world.

With this hypothesis, Bonhoeffer seeks to establish the character of the 'world come of age' as that of a world where religion has passed away. Again, we must ensure that this is interpreted within a christological framework. Religion, according to Bonhoeffer, has regarded the concept of 'God' as a boundary marker in human experience. 'God' has been the *deus ex machina*, brought in as a 'God of the gaps' hypothesis 'when human knowledge has come to an end' (*Letters*, 281). However, with the world having 'come of age' 'God' is no longer even a boundary marker; thus Christianity must reassert its role in the world, not according to the religious hypothesis of God as the *deus ex machina*, but God at the centre, in the person of Jesus Christ. This is borne out in Bonhoeffer's 'Outline for a Book', written in July/August, 1944, in which he makes radical proposals for the renewal of church life on the basis of religionless Christianity. Thus, the religionless Christian is one who does not regard God as a 'working hypothesis' or as a metaphysical entity but is one who follows God in Christ in Christ's 'being for others'. Woelfel sums up this secularization of Christianity as 'an existence defined by wholehearted response to the neighbor [*sic*] in the world'.²⁸ Thus, religionless Christianity is to exhibit the costly grace of being for others in a secular age. Indeed, Bonhoeffer presents a radical vision of this 'being for others' in his suggestion that the church give up all its property to those in need and that the clergy should 'live solely on the free-will offerings of their congregations' (*Letters*, 382). Thus, he wishes to stress that the church in

²⁷ Macleod, *The Person of Christ*, 176.

²⁸ J. W. Woelfel, *Bonhoeffer's Theology* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1970), 183.

the world give up its ecclesiastical and traditional structures 'and become simply the confessing congregation living wholly in and for the world'.²⁹

To be sure, this summation of religionless Christianity in a world come of age has been heavily criticized. Hopper insists that Bonhoeffer miscalculated in his seeing the passing of religion and in his suggestion that the 'nineteen hundred years of Christian preaching rests upon the supposition of the "religious *a priori*"'.³⁰ Hopper considers that Bonhoeffer's statements 'opened a breach with the Biblical world of faith'.³¹ To substantiate this argument, Hopper condemns Bonhoeffer's use of an anthropomorphic model to interpret the demise of religion through the dictum 'man come of age'.³² He argues that the biblical evidence refutes any attempt to see any kind of evolutionary development towards a secularized world where humanity can 'cope with reality' without a working hypothesis of God.³³ For example, Hopper refers to the active sovereignty of God towards his people: Israel and the new Israel, with the intervention of God being 'the very ground of belief in God'. Thus, Hopper would appear to be arguing against Bonhoeffer's rejection of a religion where God is seen as a 'problem-solver'.

Certainly, we can agree with Hopper that Bonhoeffer overstated the demise of religion in the twentieth century for the simple reason that the evidence for the demise of *homo religiosus* is unsustainable as seen in humanity's continued 'indiscriminating search for religious experience'.³⁴ While Bonhoeffer was aware that the church in Germany had been virtually silent in its condemnation of Nazism, his sweeping analysis of religious change was premature. Notwithstanding, his belief in humanity having come of age can be substantiated scientifically. There is no doubt, as Bube points out,³⁵ that in areas such as medicine humanity is increasingly able, by God's providence, to make decisions and perform actions without recourse to a 'God of the gaps' scenario, thus gaining the knowledge to heal particular illnesses, especially those considered only curable 'in God's hands' during medieval times.

²⁹ Woelfel, *Bonhoeffer's Theology*, 183.

³⁰ D. Hopper, *Dissent on Bonhoeffer* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), 143.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

³² *Ibid.*, 141-3.

³³ *Ibid.*, 141.

³⁴ R. Bube, 'Man Come of Age: Bonhoeffer's Response To The God-Of-The-Gaps', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 14:4 (1971), 206.

³⁵ Bube, 'Man Come of Age', 210.

Nevertheless, we must concur with Bube who challenges Hopper's overall thesis. Bube states that 'some will argue that if the God-hypothesis is abandoned, then there will be no room left for God at all' and that this 'must not be allowed to influence our response.'³⁶ Certainly, Bonhoeffer is not arguing against the removal of God as a working hypothesis in the life of the Christian. Rather, he is arguing that God must not be at the periphery of human experience but at the centre, in Christ. Indeed, Bonhoeffer testified to this in a personal sense in his last extant letter (23rd August 1944) to Eberhard Bethge, where he (*Letters*, 393) speaks of his being 'so sure of God's guiding hand' and that his life has been 'brim full of God's goodness'. Moreover, his statement in the same letter that 'my sins are covered by the forgiving love of Christ crucified' indicates his assurance of faith grounded in Christ and that a personal relationship with Christ can only be through Christ's atoning work on the cross. Thus, far from rejecting the intervention of God in human experience, Bonhoeffer (*Letters*, 362) wishes to establish the christocentric existence of the follower of Jesus in a true *metanoia* which is seen in a 'sharing in the suffering of God in Christ' through a faith which involves the whole of one's life. Indeed, he wishes to steer clear of the perspective that focuses on 'the religious act' as the basis of true discipleship, considering even conversion as 'partial'. Rather, the Christian must, in Bonhoeffer's theology of discipleship, move away from self-analysis towards the messianic perspective of Isaiah 53 where the suffering servant is portrayed.

Notwithstanding Bonhoeffer's quest to distance Christianity from a 'religious' association, he was adamant that the Christian church must be rooted in Christ through the discipline of prayer, meditation and worship. For example, he (*Letters*, 286) refers to the need to restore an '*Arkandisziplin*' (secret discipline) to protect the mysteries of the Christian faith against 'profanation'. Here, Bonhoeffer appears to be criticizing Barth's 'positivist doctrine of revelation' by which Barth presented Christian dogma as 'a law of faith'; Bonhoeffer rejects this positivism as leading to a 'profane' distortion of the essential centrality of Christ. This distortion, he argues, can be obviated by the practice of '*Arkandisziplin*'. This grounding in the acts of the believer in secret is further emphasized in his letter of 21st August 1944 when he calls for the church to 'persevere in quiet meditation on the life, sayings, deeds, sufferings, and death of Jesus' (*Letters*, 391). Thus, as Woelfel (191)

³⁶ Bube, 'Man Come of Age', 208.

indicates, ‘the idea that in the “religionless Christianity project” Bonhoeffer set the church to one side is simply without foundation’.³⁷

SUMMARY

To a great extent, therefore, Bonhoeffer’s prison writings were intended to ‘shock and alarm’. Even as late as 23rd August 1944 Bonhoeffer (*Letters*, 393) himself admitted that he was sometimes ‘quite shocked at what I say...’. Notwithstanding, he firmly believed that a sea change had occurred in Christianity which had to be addressed in order that the church be able to live a life of discipleship in the new world order. That his pronouncements appeared radical, however, reflected his perspective of the critical nature of the church as the body of Christ in a world where God was no longer even a working hypothesis. Moreover, while his prison writings appear incoherent and unsystematised theological ‘soundbites’, nevertheless we have shown that Bonhoeffer’s thoughts do display much theological insight into the importance of a God-centred, Christ-centred discipleship which looks away from self and is patterned on the suffering saviour motif of Isaiah 53. His proposal of a Christian faith ‘that is not “anti-” but “a-” religious’³⁸ reflects his theology of discipleship where faith is not rooted in an individualistic experience or metaphysical understanding of God but in a sharing of the sufferings of Christ.

CONCLUSION

In providing an overall assessment of Bonhoeffer’s theology of discipleship we must draw on the salient aspects of his work which help, as far as can be reasonably possible, to define that theology. Of paramount importance is his unyielding emphasis on the centrality of the authority of Christ in calling disciples to follow him on the path of suffering. Moreover, the metanarrative of the cross of Christ overarches all of Bonhoeffer’s thought, from *Nachfolge* to his last extant letter to Eberhard Bethge. Thus, the costly grace of discipleship flows throughout Bonhoeffer’s theology, embracing a form of following Jesus which transforms the church from that of a moribund institution resting alone on a credal foundation to a dynamic spiritual force through its actively being the body of Christ. Certainly, his theology of discipleship contains much to challenge the church in its witness to a world that may well have ‘come of age’ in its

³⁷ Woelfel, *Bonhoeffer’s Theology*, 191.

³⁸ J. De Gruchy, (ed.) *Bonhoeffer For a New Day* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 59.

apparent autonomy. Bonhoeffer offers the church a positive role in engaging with such a world in his emphasis that the church is there for others, offering a hope only found in the Saviour whose death on the cross brings life to all who would follow him.

IS THERE REALLY A 'THIRD QUEST' FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS?

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I. INTRODUCTION

Evangelicals and the quest for the historical Jesus have not always had a close acquaintance or even a cordial relationship. One can understand the suspicion evangelicals have towards the quest since it has so often been dominated by mainline critical scholars who seemed bent on destroying the picture of Jesus enshrined in orthodox Christianity. Leander E. Keck writes, “the historical Jesus” often has an anti-dogmatic, anti-theological, even anti-Christian ring’.¹ As a result historical Jesus research has been a ‘no-go’ zone for evangelicals since it has often been perceived to be out to destroy orthodox beliefs about Jesus.² When evangelicals have made brief incursions into historical Jesus research it has usually been with a strongly apologetic motive.³ That of itself is entirely legitimate, but I would insist that more can be gleaned from this area of research than the construction of apologetic arguments, and perhaps there is even a place for evangelicals to make genuine contributions to this field of New Testament study. My own

¹ Leander E. Keck, *A Future for the Historical Jesus: The Place of Jesus in Preaching and Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), 18.

² The book by Michael J. Wilkins and J. P. Moreland, *Jesus Under Fire* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995) explains many of the apprehensions that evangelicals have about historical Jesus research. See also Frank Thielman, ‘Evangelicals and The Jesus Quest: Some Problems of Historical and Theological Method’, *Churchman* 115 (2001): 61-73.

³ See for example, I. Howard Marshall, *I Believe in the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977); F. F. Bruce, *The Real Jesus* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1985); James D. G. Dunn, *The Evidence for Jesus* (London: SCM, 1985); R. T. France, *The Evidence for Jesus* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1986); William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics* (rev. ed.; Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1994), 233-41; Gregory A. Boyd, *Cynic Sage or Son of God?* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1995); Gary R. Habermas, *The Historical Jesus* (Joplin: College Press, 1996); Paul W. Barnett, *Jesus and the Logic of History* (NSBT 3; Leicester: Apollos, 1997).

view is that the quest for the historical Jesus is both necessary and possible. For such reasons evangelicals should be earnestly engaged in the quest.⁴

In my judgement, the best vehicle for launching into historical Jesus research is through what has become known as the ‘Third Quest’ for the historical Jesus. Craig Blomberg offers accolades for the Third Quest when he states that ‘one of the better-kept secrets from the twenty-first-century public is the so-called Third Quest for the historical Jesus’.⁵ The Third Quest is certainly a vogue term in Gospel scholarship, but is it an accurate one? Some have questioned the usefulness of the term ‘Third Quest’ for describing trends in contemporary scholarship. For instance, is the Third Quest merely a fashionable but vacuous title in a needless taxonomy of Jesus research? Is there really anything distinctive about the Third Quest that sets it apart from other quests? Who is in the Third Quest? What has the Third Quest taught us? These are the questions I would like to address in this study in the hope that it might go some way towards vindicating the categorization of a Third Quest and also encourage evangelicals to investigate this domain of discourse in greater depth.

II. IS WRIGHT’S TAXONOMY A VALID ONE?

The 1980s saw an avalanche of studies on the historical Jesus. This resurgence of scholarship has been varyingly called ‘Jesus research’,⁶ a ‘renaissance of Jesus studies’,⁷ and N. T. Wright has labeled a certain

⁴ Michael Bird, ‘Should Evangelicals Participate in the “Third Quest for the Historical Jesus”?’ *Themelios* 29 (2004): 5-14; *idem*, ‘The Purpose and Preservation of the Jesus Tradition: Moderate Evidence for a Conserving Force in its Transmission’, *BBR* 15 (2005): 161-85; *idem*, ‘The Formation of the Gospels in the Setting of Early Christianity: The Jesus Tradition as Corporate Memory’, *WTJ* 67 (2005): 113-34.

⁵ Craig L. Blomberg, *Making Sense of the New Testament: Three Crucial Questions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 19. See also the positive appraisal of the Third Quest for evangelicals by Boyd, *Cynic Sage or Son of God?*, 50.

⁶ James H. Charlesworth, *Jesus Within Judaism: New Light from Exciting Archaeological Discoveries* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 9-29; *idem*, ‘Jesus Research: A Paradigm Shift for New Testament Scholars’, *AusBR* 38 (1990): 17-32; *idem*, ‘From Barren Mazes to Gentle Rappings: the Emergence of Jesus Research’, *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 7 (1986): 221-30.

⁷ Marcus J. Borg, ‘A Renaissance in Jesus Studies’, *TToday* 55 (1988): 280-92; *idem*, *Jesus: A New Vision* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1987), 14;

element of it the 'Third Quest for the historical Jesus'.⁸ Wright breaks down modern Jesus scholarship into four phases: Old or First Quest (Reimarus to Schweitzer), No Quest (Bultmann and Barth), New or Second Quest (Käsemann to Jesus Seminar) and the Third Quest. Brian Rosner notes the irony that 'the twentieth century will be remembered for two world wars, but in New Testament studies for no less than three quests of the historical Jesus'.⁹ Several authors have followed Wright in advancing this taxonomy¹⁰ to the point that the Third Quest has become a well-

idem, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press, 1994), 3-17.

⁸ Stephen Neil and Tom Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986* (rev. ed.; Oxford: OUP, 1988), 379-403; N. T. Wright, 'Quest for the Historical Jesus' in *ABD* (ed. David Noel Freedman; 6 vols.; ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:800-1; *idem*, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (COQG 2; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 83-124.

⁹ Brian S. Rosner, 'Looking Back on the 20th Century: 1. New Testament Studies', *ExpTim* 110 (2000): 317.

¹⁰ Cf. e.g. Craig A. Evans, 'The Historical Jesus and Christian Faith: A Critical Assessment of a Scholarly Problem', *CSR* 18 (1988): 48-63; John Riches, *A Century of New Testament Study* (London: Lutterworth, 1993), 121-4; Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*, ix; Boyd, *Cynic Sage or Son of God?*, 20-45; Craig A. Evans, *Life of Jesus Research: An Annotated Bibliography* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 3; Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997), 179-85; Ben Witherington, *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth* (rev. ed.; Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997); Craig A. Evans, 'The Third Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Bibliographical Essay', *CSR* 28 (1999): 532-43; Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (trans. John Bowden; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 10-12; Herbert Leroy, *Jesus. Überlieferung und Deutung* (3rd ed.; eds Michael Lattke and Ann Dawson; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1999), 136-49; Mark Allan Powell, *The Jesus Debate: Modern Historians Investigate the Life of Christ* (Oxford: Lion, 1999); Donald A. Hagner, 'An Analysis of Recent "Historical Jesus" Studies' in *Religious Diversity in the Graeco-Roman World* (eds Dan Cohn-Sherbok and John M. Court; BS 79; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 84-95; Darrell L. Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus: A Guide to Sources and Methods* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 141-52; Delbert Burkett, *An Introduction to the New Testament and the Origins of Christianity* (Cambridge, CUP: 2002), 245-7; James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered: Christianity in the Making, Volume 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 85-92; Grant R. Osborne, 'History and Theology in the Synoptic Gospels', *TrinJ* 24 (2003): 5-22; David A. DeSilva, *An Introduction to the New*

known entity in New Testament scholarship.¹¹ However, is Wright's periodizing of the epochs of scholarship completely accurate? Walter P. Weaver writes:

The impression that remains with me after completing this work is that our usual views of the "Quests" of the historical Jesus do not do justice to the actual history. We have grown accustomed to appealing to the "Old Quest-No Quest-New Quest-Third Quest", but we may have to reconsider, for the common language represents a distinctively German perspective for the most part.¹²

Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004), 181-2.

- ¹¹ H. Alan Brehm, 'Will the Real Jesus Please Stand?: Evaluating the "Third Quest of the Historical Jesus"', *SWJT* 38 (1996): 4-18; Halvor Moxnes, 'The Theological Importance of the "Third Quest" for the Historical Jesus' in *Whose historical Jesus?* (eds William E. Arnal and Michel Desjardins; Waterloo, Ont: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997), 132-42; M. Eugene Boring, 'The "Third Quest" and the Apostolic Faith' in *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative Critical and Social-Scientific Approach* (ed. Jack Dean Kingsbury; Harrisburg, PA: TPI, 1998), 237-52; John P. Meier, 'The Present State of the "Third Quest" for the Historical Jesus: Loss and Gain', *Bib* 80 (1999): 459-87; James D. G. Dunn, 'Can the Third Quest Hope to Succeed?' in *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus* (eds Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans; NTT 28.2; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 31-48; Bruce Chilton, 'Assessing Progress in the Third Quest' in *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus*, 15-25; Evans, 'The Third Quest', 532-43; Sean P. Kealy, 'Reflections on the Third Quest for the Historical Jesus' in *The Myriad Christ: Plurality and the Quest for Unity in Contemporary Christology* (eds Terrence Merrigan and Jacques Haers; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2000), 45-60; Bird, 'Should Evangelicals Participate?', 5-14; Tom Holmén, 'A Theologically Disinterested Quest? On The Origins of the "Third Quest" for the Historical Jesus', *ST* 55 (2001): 175-97.
- ¹² Walter P. Weaver, *The Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century, 1900-1950* (Harrisburg, PA: TPI, 1999), xi-xii. Cf. Dale C. Allison ('The Secularizing of the Historical Jesus', *PRS* 27 [2000]: 137) who thinks that there has been a tendency to view Jesus research through 'Bultmannian eyes'; James Carleton Paget ('Quests for the Historical Jesus' in *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus* [ed. Markus Bockmuehl; Cambridge: CUP, 2001], 149): 'New Testament scholars have never quite escaped the tendency to create a Germano-centric portrait whose patterns are perhaps more in the eye of the beholder than self-evidently real.'

More recently, Dale C. Allison has attacked the idea of a 'Third Quest' on the grounds that it is ignorant of prior scholarship and attempts to assert the (over-) importance of its own significance.

I am no antagonist of innovation, but I do not wish to trumpet it where it does not exist. The assertion that we have recently embarked upon a third quest [for the historical Jesus] may be partly due, one suspects, to chronological snobbery, to the ever-present temptation, instinctive in a technologically driven world, where new is always improved, to flatter ourselves and bestow upon our own age exaggerated significance, to imagine the contemporary to be of more moment than it is.¹³

Several other scholars have also criticized Wright's panoramic vision of twentieth-century Jesus research as skewed and inaccurate.¹⁴ Colin Brown is representative of the view of many when he states:

It is open to question whether the term Third Quest will succeed in establishing itself to describe post-Bultmannian developments in Jesus research. There is certainly no common methodology or sense of unity of purpose beyond the conviction that more may be known about Jesus than was known or admitted in the earlier quests. If the term Third Quest is taken to embrace all scholarly investigation of the relationship between the texts

¹³ Dale C. Allison, *Resurrecting Jesus: Earliest Christian Tradition and its Interpreters* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2005), 14.

¹⁴ Colin Brown, 'Historical Jesus, Quest of' in *DJG* (eds Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight and I. Howard Marshall; Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1992), 337-41; William R. Telford, 'Major Trends and Interpretive Issues in the Study of Jesus' in *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research* (eds Bruce D. Chilton and Craig A. Evans; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 33-74; Dale C. Allison, 'The Contemporary Quest for the Historical Jesus', *IBS* 18 (1996): 174-93; *idem*, 'The Secularizing of the Historical Jesus', *PRS* 27 (2000): 135-51; Markus Bockmuehl, *This Jesus: Martyr, Lord, Messiah* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 6; Robert H. Stein, *Jesus the Messiah: A Survey of the Life of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1996), 13; Stanley E. Porter, *The Criteria for Authenticity in Historical-Jesus Research: Previous Discussions and New Proposals* (JSNTSup 191; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 28-62; *idem*, 'Reading the Gospels and the Quest for the Historical Jesus' in *Reading the Gospels Today* (ed. Stanley E. Porter; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 32-7; Clive Marsh, 'Quests of the Historical Jesus in New Historicist Perspective', *Bib Interp* 5 (1997): 403-37; Maurice Casey, 'Where Wright is Wrong: A Critical Review of N. T. Wright's *Jesus and the Victory of God*', *JSNT* 69 (1998): 96; Paget, 'Quests', 148-9.

of the NT and the historical figure of Jesus in the light of current knowledge of the first-century world, we are at once confronted with a variety of conflicting views and methods. At first sight it may appear to be a case of *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. For connections between current research and what has gone before appear to continue without interruption. If there is a common theme, it lies in the belief that Jesus was not the Jesus of liberal Protestantism or of the New Quest, but a historical figure whose life and actions were rooted in first-century Judaism with particular religious, social, economic and political conditions.¹⁵

Brown raises four particular issues with the term Third Quest. (1) Whether it is a legitimate description of 'post-Bultmannian developments in Jesus research' and 'all scholarly investigation of the relationship between the texts of the NT and the historical figure of Jesus'. (2) The lack of any 'common methodology'. (3) The Third Quest seems to be part of a train of Jesus research which has continued 'without interruption'. (4) He surmises that its only possible distinctive is the emphasis on the Jewishness of Jesus.¹⁶

Several things can be said by way of response. First, it is indeed the case that there was never a moratorium on Jesus questing.¹⁷ What ended with Schweitzer were the romantic, rationalistic, and liberal lives of Jesus, not Jesus questing *per se*.¹⁸ In fact, Jesus research continued in earnest in many quarters, with significant works in between the wars coming out of continental Europe, Britain and the USA.¹⁹ There were, however, several

¹⁵ Brown, 'Historical Jesus', 337.

¹⁶ Brown, 'Historical Jesus', 337; cf. *idem*, 'Christology and the Quest of the Historical Jesus' in *Doing Theology for the People of God: Studies in Honour of J. I. Packer*, eds Donald Lewis and Alister McGrath (Leicester: Apollos, 1996), 74-8.

¹⁷ Wright, 'Quest for the Historical Jesus', 798; *idem*, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 21-5. The idea of a 'no-quest' predates Wright and can be found in earlier authors such as Fred H. Klooster, *Quests for the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 47-63, and W. Barnes Tatum, *In Quest of Jesus: A Guide Book* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 71-4.

¹⁸ A point already acknowledged by some, e.g. Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 144-5.

¹⁹ Porter ('Reading the Gospels', 33) states: 'it simply is not true that this became a period in which there was no questing after the historical Jesus'. Marsh ('Quests for the Historical Jesus in New Historicist Perspective', 414) writes that 'labeling this period that of "No Quest" is at best misleading, and at worst a sinister abdication of moral responsibility ... there is, strictly speaking, no such thing as a period of the No Quest, only a

factors that contributed to a general decline in the amount of historical Jesus study being done. (1) Bultmann's idea of Jesus as 'a presupposition for the theology of the New Testament'²⁰ left little room for Jesus in biblical theology. Likewise his comments that, 'I do indeed think that we can know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus' and 'Whoever wishes to put "Jesus" in quotations marks as an abbreviation for the historical phenomenon with which we are concerned is free to do so' were unlikely to promote wide-scale confidence in the prospect of finding a historical Jesus.²¹ Additionally, Bultmann's exegesis of 2 Corinthians 5:16 made interest in Jesus' historical person an existentially illegitimate attempt at justification by works.²² In response to criticism, Bultmann wrote many years later that 'from the discrepancy which I emphasize between the historical Jesus and the Christ of the kerygma it does not at all follow that I destroy continuity between the historical Jesus and the primitive Christian proclamation'.²³ But the damage had already been done! (2) Most exponents of form criticism proceeded on the assumption that the Gospels inform us about the life setting of the early church with only the 'whisper' of the voice of the historical Jesus embedded within them.²⁴

period in which the nature of the available sources was radically questioned and the creativity of the earliest Christian communities emphasized'. Allison ('Contemporary Quest', 177): 'No quest? Maybe reduced quest, but certainly not no quest. The time between Schweitzer and Käsemann was also when so many divinity students throughout Britain and North America were learning about Jesus from the first edition of A. M. Hunter's *The Work and Words of Jesus* (1950), a popular digest of the allegedly non-existent quest.' Paget ('Quests', 149): 'the account of a period of "no quest" fails to take into consideration the situation in the English-speaking world'.

²⁰ Rudolf Bultmann, *New Testament Theology* (trans. Kendrick Grobel; 2 vols; London: SCM, 1952), 1:3.

²¹ Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word* (trans. Louise Pettibone Smith and Erminie Huntress; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), 8, 14.

²² Rudolf Bultmann, 'The Significance of the Historical Jesus for the Theology of Paul' in *Faith and Understanding* (London: SCM, 1969), 241-4

²³ Rudolf Bultmann, 'The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus' in *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ: Essays on the New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (eds Carl E. Braaten and Roy A. Harrisville; Nashville: Abingdon, 1964), 18.

²⁴ R. H. Lightfoot, *History and Interpretation in the Gospels* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935), 225. Note also the skepticism towards trying to write a biography of Jesus in some strands of English scholarship: Edwyn

(3) Barth's theological program had no room to accommodate historical Jesus research resulting in the *de facto* relativisation of historical study of Jesus. Thus 'moratorium' is certainly too strong a word and I prefer to speak of a general decline in historical Jesus study facilitated by the perception in some quarters of the quest as either theologically illegitimate or methodologically impossible. Thus James Robinson's *New Quest*²⁵ is only really *new* from the perspective of the Bultmannians until the rebellion led by Käsemann who argued that the early church never lost interest in the historical Jesus as being properly basic to faith.²⁶

Second, there is undoubtedly a degree of subjectivism involved in the postulation of three distinct quests. Why not have four or six?²⁷ Yet the best hypotheses are usually the simplest. The delineation of First, Second and Third Quest is a fair overview of major trends in research and is a simple and apt designation. Of course you can have endless variations on a theme (note Wright's comments about intersections between the Wrederbahn and Schweitzerbahn),²⁸ but as an overview the framework that Wright proposes is a reasonable description of a relatively complex morass of debate and ongoing discussion. In the words of H. Alan Brehm: 'While any division of this branch of New Testament research into discreet segments is questionable, it nevertheless remains valuable as an organizing principle.'²⁹

Hoskyns and Noel Davey, *The Riddle of the New Testament* (London: Faber & Faber, 1931), 171.

²⁵ James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM, 1959).

²⁶ Ernst Käsemann, 'The Problem of the Historical Jesus' in *Essays on New Testament Themes* (trans. W. J. Montague; London: SCM, 1964), 15-47. Cf. Dieter Lührmann ('Jesus: History and Remembrance' in *Jesus Christ and Human Freedom* [eds E. Schillebeeckx and B. van Iersel; New York: Herder & Herder, 1974], 46) writes, 'if the kerygma was in fact an historical given of this kind, and its substance was Jesus of Nazareth, an historical individual, surely one then must ask what support that kerygma had in that individual and his activity'.

²⁷ Marsh, 'Quests for the Historical Jesus in New Historicist Perspective', 415-16.

²⁸ Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 21.

²⁹ Brehm, 'Will the Real Jesus Please Stand?', 5, n. 9. Cf. Donald L. Denton (*Historiography and Hermeneutics in Jesus Studies* [JSNTSup 262; London: T&T Clark/Continuum, 2004], 7): 'If one cannot exactly adopt Wright's specific use of the New Quest/Third Quest distinction, one can appreciate his effort to identify root methodological issues that must be addressed if

Third, Bockmuehl argues that it is 'premature' to speak of a Third Quest since it must compete with advocates of the Q-Thomas scholarship (i.e. Jesus Seminar, John Dominic Crossan, Burton Mack, etc.).³⁰ Bockmuehl's unstated assumption appears to be that for a strand of scholarship to be recognized as a Quest it must be either unanimously accepted or else be dominant in scholarly circles. But this seems like an odd criterion to use in determining what counts as a Quest. Does the 'New Perspective on Paul' have to be unanimously accepted or dominant in Pauline scholarship before we recognize that the label describes a legitimate trend in Pauline studies? I think not.

Fourth, several scholars think that Wright coined the Third Quest as a catch phrase designating all recent Jesus scholarship. For instance, Porter complains that under Wright's taxonomy Eduard Schweizer can write one book on Jesus during the Second Quest and another book on Jesus during the Third Quest with essentially the same criteria of authenticity.³¹ The implication is that Schweizer is paradoxically a participant in both the Second Quest and the Third Quest with the same basic methodology. Porter assumes, however, that the Second Quest is over, therefore placing Schweizer in the constituency of the Third Quest. But Wright never suggests that the Second Quest has terminated.³² The three quests are not strictly divided chronologically but are pursued concurrently in each generation accounting for the continued existence of similar

discussion among competing portraits of the historical Jesus is to advance.'

³⁰ Mark Bockmuehl, 'Jesus of Nazareth in Recent Debate', *Epworth Review* 21 (1994): 20; *idem*, *This Jesus: Martyr, Messiah, Lord* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 6.

³¹ Eduard Schweizer, *Jesus* (trans. David E. Green; London: SCM, 1971); *idem*, *Jesus: The Parable of God* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1994); Porter, *Criteria for Authenticity*, 55.

³² Allison ('The Contemporary Quest', 175, n. 7): 'Obviously Wright's taxonomy is not chronological.' Allison ('Secularizing of the Historical Jesus', 135, n. 5): 'For Wright himself, however, the new quest continues beside the third quest.' DeSilva (*An Introduction to the New Testament*, 182, n. 2): 'An important insight developed by Wright is that the "three quests" are not strictly divided chronologically but that each quest has continued in some sense, to be pursued in each generation.' Denton (*Historiography and Hermeneutics*, 6): 'Both quests in fact continue to the present, running concurrently.' Contrast this with Robert W. Funk (*Honest to Jesus* [San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996], 63): 'the new quest came to a close around 1975'; and Stephen J. Patterson (*The God of Jesus* (Harrisburg, PA: TPI, 1998), 42): 'the new quest lasted about ten years'.

methodologies. Wright thinks of the Second Quest as continuing in some circles (it was given a shot in the arm by the Jesus Seminar).³³

One can grant that there has been a steady stream of Jesus research in the twentieth century,³⁴ but the question remains as to how one classifies it. When the 'Second Quest' came on the scene, there were critics who stated that it wasn't all that new and not all that different from the old quest.³⁵ Yet the term 'Second Quest' is a useful label for the Bultmannian

³³ Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 28-82.

³⁴ James I. H. McDonald ('New Quest – Dead End? So What about the Historical Jesus?', *Stud Bib* [1988] II: 151) refers to Jesus research as 'rather like Hinduism from the Upanishads onwards – an overarching unity, a unity that comprehends rich diversity. Thus the most recent new quest is not to be taken in isolation from what has gone before – nor does it claim to do otherwise.' Robert J. Banks ('Setting "The Quest for the Historical Jesus" in a Broader Framework' in *Gospel Perspectives II: Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels* [eds R. T. France and David Wenham; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981], 61) declares: 'Despite Schweitzer's strictures, there has been an unbroken interest in the "quest for the historical Jesus" in Anglo-Saxon circles'; Marsh ('Quests for the Historical Jesus in New Historicist Perspective', 425) views the Quest not as 'a single scholarly enterprise but as a series, or collection, of local skirmishes surrounding the interest shown in the historical figure of Jesus'. In the words of Porter ('Reading the Gospels', 37): 'I believe that we can see a single yet multi-faceted quest, certainly since the eighteenth century, but perhaps even since the earliest reflection upon Jesus.' Allison ('Secularizing of the Historical Jesus', 136) remarks 'that questing for Jesus was alive and well in the decades after Schweitzer, is more than confirmed by the hundreds upon hundreds of articles then written on the historical Jesus as well as by the surveys of research that come from that time'. John Reumann ('Jesus and Christology' in *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters* [eds Eldon Jay Epp and George W. MacRae; Atlanta: Scholars, 1989], 504) states about post-Schweitzer research: 'by and large it was "The Quest of the Historical Jesus – Continued"'. Paget ('Quests', 148): 'the term "Third Quest" can give a false sense of uniformity to present-day Jesus scholarship'. Thielman ('Evangelicals', 64): 'the three quests can be viewed as one quest to reconstruct a Jesus different from the Jesus of the gospels'.

³⁵ McDonald, 'New Quest – Dead End?' 151; W. O. Walker, 'The Quest for the Historical Jesus: A Discussion of Methodology', *ATR* 51 (1969): 51-2; Banks, 'Setting', 61-2; Stephen E. Fowl, 'Reconstructing and Deconstructing the Quest of the Historical Jesus', *SJT* 42 (1989): 319-33; Leander E. Keck, 'The Second Coming of the Liberal Jesus?', *Christian Century* 111 (1994): 784-7; Denton, *Historiography and Hermeneutics*, 4.

school and its reinvigoration of *Jesu-Forschung*. Likewise, the Third Quest is a helpful tag to distinguish some streams of scholarship from this Second Quest³⁶ with its appeals to *Religionsgeschichte* and Hellenistic background, and from the First Quest with its anti-dogmatic proclivities. That seems reasonable all the more considering that the Third Quest also stands over and against the Jesus Seminar/Q-Thomas/Cynic-Jesus approach (spawned out of the Second Quest) in terms of method and conclusions,³⁷ a fact which many scholars have strangely failed to notice by mistaking the Jesus Seminar as part of the Third Quest.³⁸ Robert Funk, the convener of the Jesus Seminar, is crystal clear on this issue. He distinguishes between the work of the Seminar and that of the Third Quest, and seems to regard the latter as a feat of pseudo-scholarship.³⁹ Hence the criticism that the term 'Third Quest' does not adequately encompass 'all scholarly investigation of the relationship between the texts of the NT and the historical figure of Jesus' (Brown) misses the target completely since the term 'Third Quest' does not claim to represent all Jesus scholarship across the board. In fact, the Third Quest is easily distinguished from the Second Quest and their Q-Thomas/Cynic-Jesus progeny.

³⁶ Denton, *Historiography and Hermeneutics*, 5.

³⁷ Cf. Dunn ('Can the Third Quest Hope to Succeed?', 33): 'the second quest has enjoyed a recent flowering in the portrayal of Jesus draped in Cynic clothes'. Boyd (*Cynic Sage or Son of God?*, 59) characterizes the Jesus Seminar as the 'Post-Bultmannian Quest'. Bockmuehl ('Jesus of Nazareth in Recent Debate', 19) calls the Jesus Seminar 'The "New Quest" Resurrected'. Moxnes ('Theological Importance', 133, n. 5): 'I think the Seminar's votes on the authentic words of Jesus is an exercise more typical of the interests of the second quest.'

³⁸ Those that erroneously regard the Jesus Seminar as part of the Third Quest: Arland J. Hultgren, 'The Jesus Seminar and the Third Quest', *Pro-Ecclesia* 3 (1994): 266-70; Brown, 'Christology and the Quest of the Historical Jesus', 75; Leroy, *Jesus*, 139-40; Luke Timothy Johnson, *Real Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper, 1996), 4; Porter, 'Reading the Gospels', 35; Boring, 'The "Third Quest" and the Apostolic Faith', 238-41; David S. du Toit, 'Redefining Jesus: Current Trends in Jesus Research', in *Jesus, Mark and Q: The Teaching of Jesus and its Earliest Records* (eds Michael Labahn and Andreas Schmidt; JSNTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 110-11; Meier, 'Present State', 459; Thielman, 'Evangelicals', 64.

³⁹ Funk, *Honest to Jesus*, 65.

Fifth, there is no denying that there are genuine points of contact between the Third Quest and the previous quests.⁴⁰ Yet simply because there are continuities between the Third and Second Quest, that is no reason to regard the Third Quest as part of an uninterrupted stream of scholarship. The very fact that both Quests examine the same subject matter of the 'historical Jesus' means as a matter of course that they are bound to say similar things on some occasion. Additionally, all scholarly enterprises stand on the shoulders of those who go before them. One should not have to reinvent the historical Jesus wheel before recognition of the newness and innovation of the Third Quest is acknowledged. The question then is, what are the discontinuities between the Second and Third Quest and do they constitute a distinct delineation between the two? To that question we now turn.

III. DISTINCTIVES OF THE THIRD QUEST

If there is nothing distinctive about the Third Quest (in conclusions or methodology),⁴¹ then it might denote nothing more than 'a new burst of

⁴⁰ Brown, 'Historical Jesus', 337; Helmut Koester, 'Jesus the Victim', *JBL* 111 (1992): 5; Telford, 'Major Trends', 60-1; Porter, *Criteria for Authenticity*, 52-3; du Toit, 'Redefining Jesus', 98-9.

⁴¹ Several scholars have advocated that a distinguishing feature of the Third Quest is the lack of theological agenda (Wright, 'Quest for the Historical Jesus', 800; *idem*, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 84, 87; Craig A. Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries: A Comparative Approach* [Leiden: Brill, 1995], 10-11, 46; du Toit, 'Redefining Jesus', 109-10; Boyd, *Cynic Sage or Son of God?*, 49; James H. Charlesworth, 'The Historical Jesus: Sources and a Sketch' in *Jesus Two Thousand Years Later* [eds James H. Charlesworth and Walter P. Weaver; Harrisburg, PA: TPI, 2000], 115-16; *idem*, *Jesus within Judaism*, 16-17, 22; Boring, 'The "Third Quest" and the Apostolic Faith', 241; Birger Pearson, 'The Gospel According to the Jesus Seminar', *Religion* 25 (1990): 320; Walter P. Weaver, 'Reflections on the Continuing Quest for Jesus' in *Images of Jesus Today* [eds James H. Charlesworth and Walter P. Weaver; Valley Forge: TPI, 1994], xiv), but this seems very unlikely. The fact is that we all have agendas and biases and they are exhibited to varying degrees by authors. Crossan and Funk write with a view to reform (or deconstruct) American Christianity, and others like Boyd (*Cynic Sage or Son of God?*) possess a clear apologetic purpose in their agenda. On theological agendas and their influence on the quest see William Arnal, *The Symbolic Jesus: Historical Scholarship, Judaism and the Construction of Contemporary Identity* (London: Equinox, 2005). For this reason I do not think that lack of an agenda is a distinctive of the Third

activity' in Jesus research.⁴² According to Wright, the unique elements of the Third Quest include rethinking 'what might be involved in understanding Jesus within this [Second Temple Jewish] background'.⁴³ The Third Quest also signifies that dimension of scholarship which regards Jesus as an eschatological prophet announcing the long-awaited kingdom, and which undertakes serious historiography around that point.⁴⁴ Thus, minimally speaking, the constituent elements are attention to Jesus' Jewishness and eschatology.⁴⁵ There are several other features which I regard as being characteristic (though not necessarily unique) to the Third Quest.

First, the criterion of dissimilarity is used more cautiously, modified or even abandoned in the Third Quest. Commonly it was held that material is authentic if and only if it is distinctive of Jesus, that is, dissimilar from the tendency of Judaism and of early Christianity.⁴⁶ The purpose of this criterion was to establish 'a critically assured minimum' of information upon which one could begin to say things about the historical Jesus (after which it could be used in conjunction with coherence and multiple-attestation, etc.).⁴⁷ The problems with this criterion are manifold.⁴⁸

Quest, though one could say that there is so much diversity in the Third Quest that there is no *uniform* theological agenda. See further, Telford, 'Major Trends', 58-9; Holmén, 'A Theologically Disinterested Quest?', 175-97; Hagner, 'An Analysis', 88-9.

⁴² Marsh, 'Quests for the Historical Jesus in New Historicist Perspective', 403.

⁴³ Wright, 'Quest for the Historical Jesus', 3:800.

⁴⁴ Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 85-6.

⁴⁵ On how Jesus' Jewish background effects his eschatology see Alistair I. Wilson, *When Will These Things Happen? A Study of Jesus as Judge in Matthew 21-25* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004).

⁴⁶ For definitions see Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. John Marsh; 2nd ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1963 [1921]), 205; Ernst Käsemann, 'The Problem of the Historical Jesus', in *Essays on New Testament Themes* (trans. W. J. Montague; London: SCM, 1964), 37; Norman Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1967), 39-43; *idem*, *What is Redaction Criticism?* (London: SPCK, 1970), 71. For a history of the criterion note the work by Gerd Theissen and Dagmar Winter, *The Quest for the Plausible Jesus: The Question of Criteria* (trans. M. Eugene Boring; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2002 [1997]).

⁴⁷ N. A. Dahl, 'The Problem of the Historical Jesus', in *Jesus the Christ: The Historical Origins of Christological Doctrine* (ed. Donald H. Juel; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991 [1953]), 97; Harvey K. McArthur, 'Basic Issues: A Survey of Recent Gospel Research', in *In Search of the Historical*

(1) What is 'distinctive' could be understood as either 'unique' or else 'characteristic', which are not the same thing. That which most characterized Jesus may not have been what was unique to him. (2) This criterion presupposes a confident knowledge of both Judaism and early Christianity, both of which were highly complex and diverse, and our sources about them are scant. (3) This criterion only permits material to be deemed authentic if all traces of Judaism or Christianity are removed. But we are then left with a historical figure that bears no resemblance to his cultural environment and has no continuity with the beliefs of the early church. Raymond Brown suggested that such a criterion is a 'monstrosity: a Jesus who never, said, thought, or did anything that other Jews said, thought, or did, and a Jesus who had no connection or relationship to what his followers said, thought, or did in reference to him after he died'.⁴⁹ A similar point is made by Richard B. Hays where dissimilarity produces a Jesus who 'is necessarily a free-floating iconoclast, artificially isolated

Jesus (ed. Harvey K. McArthur; London: SPCK, 1970), 143; Walker, 'The Quest for the Historical Jesus', 48-9; David L. Mealand, 'The Dissimilarity Test', *SJT* 31 (1978): 47; Gerd Theissen, 'Historical Scepticism and the Criteria of Jesus Research or My Attempt to Leap Across Lessing's Yawning Gulf', *SJT* 49 (1996): 152; Jürgen Becker, *Jesus of Nazareth* (trans. James E. Crouch; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 14; Tom Holmén, 'Doubts about Double Dissimilarity: Restructuring the Main Criterion of Jesus-of-history Research' in *Authenticating the Words of Jesus*, eds Craig A. Evans and Bruce D. Chilton (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 54-6; Theissen and Winter, *Quest for the Plausible Jesus*, 135-6.

⁴⁸ See criticisms in Morna D. Hooker, 'Christology and Methodology', *NTS* 17 (1971): 480-7; *idem*, 'On Using the Wrong Tool', *Theology* 75 (1972): 570-81; D. G. A. Calvert, 'An Examination of the Criteria for Distinguishing the Authentic Words of Jesus', *NTS* 18 (1972): 207-19; Neil J. McEleney, 'Authenticating Criteria and Mark 7:1-23', *CBQ* 34 (1972): 440-2; Mealand, 'The Dissimilarity Test', 41-50; E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM, 1985), 17; W. G. Kümmel, 'Nachwort' in *Dreissig Jahre Jesusforschung (1950-1980)* (BBB 60; Bonn: Beltz Athenäum, 1985), 535-41; Holmén, 'Doubts about Double Dissimilarity', 47-80; Porter, *The Criteria for Authenticity*, 70-6; du Toit, 'Redefining Jesus', 104-7.

⁴⁹ Raymond E. Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 827.

from his people and their Scripture, and artificially isolated from the movement that he founded'.⁵⁰

Consequently there have been several modifications to how the criterion is applied. (1) Some have suggested that the criterion of dissimilarity should be limited to a positive examination of the historical traditions underlying a pericope, instead of being applied to disprove authenticity.⁵¹ (2) Others have abandoned dissimilarity from Judaism in order to keep Jesus Jewish.⁵² (3) Wright and Theissen have significantly revamped the criterion so as to allow for continuities and discontinuities between Jesus, Judaism and the early church. Wright uses a criterion he terms 'double dissimilarity and double similarity'. The idea is to find a saying or deed that makes sense within Judaism and also represents a starting point for the early church.⁵³ Similarly, Theissen has put forward a case for 'historical plausibility' where we try to identify whether a saying or action makes sense within the life setting of Jesus. Specifically, does it exhibit a *plausible context* in Palestinian Judaism and does it account for the *plausible consequence* within early Christianity?⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Richard B. Hays, 'The Corrected Jesus', *First Things* 43 (1994): 45; cf. Joel B. Green, 'In Quest of the Historical: Jesus, the Gospels, and Historicisms Old and New', *CSR* 28 (1999): 547.

⁵¹ Hooker, 'Christology and Methodology', 486; Calvert, *Examination of the Criteria*, 209-18; McEleney, 'Authenticating Criteria', 442; Mealand, 'Dissimilarity Test', 47; Scot McKnight, *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1988), 64; Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 21; Holmén, 'Doubts about Double Dissimilarity', 49-50; Craig A. Evans, 'Authenticity Criteria in Life of Jesus Research', *CSR* 19 (1989): 25; *idem*, 'Life of Jesus' in *Handbook to the Exegesis of the New Testament* (ed. Stanley E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 445.

⁵² Ben F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1979), 86; Charlesworth, *Jesus within Judaism*, 6; Evans, 'Authenticity Criteria', 25; *idem*, *Jesus and his Contemporaries: Comparative Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 21; Holmén, 'Doubts about Double Dissimilarity', 51, 59-62, 74-5; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 16-17; Bruce D. Chilton, *A Galilean Rabbi and His Bible: Jesus' Use of the Interpreted Scripture of His Time* (GNS 8; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1984), 86-7; Theissen, 'Historical Scepticism', 163; Theissen and Winter, *Quest for the Plausible Jesus*, 169.

⁵³ Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 131-3.

⁵⁴ Theissen 'Historical Scepticism', 152-70; Theissen and Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 116-18; Theissen and Winter, *Quest for the Plausible Jesus*, 175. See also: Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth: His Life, Times, and Teaching* (trans. Herbert Danby; London: Allen & Unwin, 1929), 127; Evans, *Jesus and his Contemporaries*, 19-21; Craig L. Blomberg, *The*

What about the future of the dissimilarity criterion? I envisage that we will observe the demise of the criterion of dissimilarity in the next twenty years. Dissimilarity in relation to Judaism has been practically abolished already; in relation to the early church it still persists.⁵⁵ Generally speaking, the criterion is employed in relation to the church in 'a controlled manner' in the Third Quest.⁵⁶ I submit that there are two considerations which will mark the end of its use as posing a discontinuity between Jesus and the early church. (1) Continuity between Jesus and the early church is becoming more widely recognized, particularly in the Third Quest.⁵⁷ Steven Bryan states, 'It may be anachronistic to think of Jesus as the "founder" of Christianity', but Christianity must in some sense be seen as part of his effective history.'⁵⁸ Markus Bockmuehl is similar, 'it can be historically legitimate to see Jesus of Nazareth in organic, causal, continuity with the faith of the early Church'.⁵⁹ Dunn comments, 'If protest needs to be lodged against the attempt, implicit or explicit, to begin by distancing Jesus from his ancestral religion, protest needs equally to be lodged against the equivalent attempt to distance Jesus from the churches which grew up from his work.'⁶⁰ (2) A radical discontinuity between Jesus and the early church is reduced when it is realized that the early church may have selected and maintained genuine sayings of Jesus in accordance with their own theological tendencies so as to emphasize what was important to them.⁶¹ Theissen and Winter state, 'Fitting well into the

Historical Reliability of John's Gospel (Leicester, England: IVP, 2001), 63-4; du Toit, 'Redefining Jesus', 106-7; Steven M. Bryan, *Jesus and Israel's Traditions of Judgement and Restoration* (SNTS 117; Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 8-11.

- ⁵⁵ Porter, *Criteria for Authenticity*, 76; du Toit, 'Redefining Jesus', 107, n. 103.
- ⁵⁶ Theissen and Winter, *Quest for the Plausible Jesus*, 169; du Toit, 'Redefining Jesus', 104-6.
- ⁵⁷ Cf. Marinus De Jonge, *Christology in Context: The Earliest Christian Response to Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 21; Bockmuehl, 'Jesus of Nazareth in Contemporary Debate', 28; Paul Barnett, *Jesus and the Rise of Early Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1999), 17-18, 418; R. H. Fuller, *The New Testament in Current Study* (London: SCM, 1963), 41; du Toit, 'Redefining Jesus', 107.
- ⁵⁸ Bryan, *Jesus and Israel's Traditions*, 9.
- ⁵⁹ Bockmuehl, *This Jesus*, 8.
- ⁶⁰ Dunn, 'Can the Third Quest Hope to Succeed?', 36.
- ⁶¹ Oscar Cullman, *Salvation in History* (London: SCM, 1967), 189; Evans, 'Life of Jesus', 444-5.

context of post-Easter Christianity does not exclude the possibility that it also fits well into the context of Jesus' ministry.⁶²

Second, a further methodological peculiarity of several studies in the Third Quest consists of forming hypotheses in response to questions posed by our sources or a more holistic approach.⁶³ For instance A. E. Harvey analyzes Jesus from the perspective of the 'constraints' imposed by the crucifixion, monotheism, and Law.⁶⁴ E. P. Sanders commences his study with several 'almost indisputable facts' about Jesus' life and sets his starting point for his study as Jesus' controversy surrounding the temple and working onwards from there.⁶⁵ N. T. Wright proceeds in the attempt to answer several macro-questions: How does Jesus fit into Judaism? What were Jesus' aims? Why did Jesus die? How and why did the early church begin? Why are the gospels what they are?⁶⁶ Paula Fredriksen establishes a beachhead in historical Jesus research with the observation that Jesus was executed as a political insurrectionist but his followers were not, and then goes on to ask why.⁶⁷ Dale C. Allison proposes an approach that commences with a particular 'paradigm' or an 'initial hypothesis'. The paradigm that Allison follows is that of Jesus as an eschatological prophet.⁶⁸ This stands in contrast to previous strategies that seemingly sift the Gospels for residue of the historical Jesus and then try to make broad blanket pronouncements about Jesus. The problem of this latter approach is that it misses the forest for the trees. Thus in contradistinction to the Second Quest, with its strong emphasis on *Traditionsgeschichte* and its atomistic study of individual units, is the process evident in the Third Quest, with a concern for a holistic presentation of the evidence, the formulation of paradigms, development of narratives, and proposals of hypotheses and verification.⁶⁹ In other words, the Third Quest paints with a thick brush and on a large canvass.⁷⁰

⁶² Theissen and Winter, *Quest for the Plausible Jesus*, 207.

⁶³ Brown, 'Christology and the Quest of the Historical Jesus', 76; Telford, 'Major Trends', 50-1; Denton, *Historiography and Hermeneutics*, 6-7.

⁶⁴ A. E. Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History: The Bampton Lectures, 1980* (London: Duckworth, 1982).

⁶⁵ Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 11-12.

⁶⁶ Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 89-113.

⁶⁷ Paula Fredriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews* (New York: Vintage, 1999), 8-9.

⁶⁸ Dale C. Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 33-44.

⁶⁹ Denton, *Historiography and Hermeneutics*, 155-67.

⁷⁰ I owe this image to Dr Robert L. Webb.

Third, Wright characterizes the Second Quest as following the ‘thoroughgoing skepticism’ of William Wrede whilst the Third Quest follows the ‘thoroughgoing eschatology’ of Schweitzer in pursuing the apocalyptic portrayal of Jesus in the Synoptics.⁷¹ The apocalyptic approaches of Allison, Ehrman and Knight give credence to resurgence in the Schweitzerean approach.⁷² Concurrently, there is more optimism in the Third Quest concerning what can be known of Jesus *from the canonical Gospels*. Contrast the following statements:

No one is any longer in the position to write a life of Jesus.⁷³

The dominant view today seems to be that we can know pretty well what Jesus was out to accomplish, that we can know a lot about what he said and that those two things make sense within the world of first-century Judaism.⁷⁴

The problem with consistent skepticism is that it fosters a rather convenient vacuum upon which one can effectively give fantasy free rein in the portrait of Jesus drawn up. However, as Fowl argues, if one author’s perspective contradicts that of the Gospel writer, then the onus is surely on the author to demonstrate how the Gospel writer’s view came to be so thoroughly misguided.⁷⁵ A penetrating criticism of such an approach was uttered by Cadbury over half a century ago:

When I read a life of Christ that in the most careful approved fashion describes at length the unhistorical character of the gospels and the aspects

⁷¹ Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 28-9.

⁷² Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth*; Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (Oxford: OUP, 1999); Jonathan Knight, *Jesus: An Historical and Theological Investigation* (UBW; London: T&T Clark/Continuum, 2004).

⁷³ Günther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth* (trans. I. Mcliskey, F. Mcliskey & J. Robinson; New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 13.

⁷⁴ Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 2. On recent optimism for using the Gospels to study the historical Jesus, see Joachim Gnilka, *Jesus of Nazareth: Message and History* (trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 24; Brehm, ‘Will the Real Jesus Please Stand?’, 8; Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 8-12, 46; Charlesworth, ‘Historical Jesus’, 101; Howard Clark Kee, *What Can We Know About Jesus?* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), 111-14; Brown, ‘Historical Jesus’, 337; Telford, ‘Major Trends’, 34; Holmén, ‘A Theologically Disinterested Quest?’, 179.

⁷⁵ Fowl, ‘Reconstructing and Deconstructing’, 327.

of their viewpoint which are to be rejected as late and secondary, but then proceeds to construct a portrait of the Master shot through with modern standards of value, I feel like saying, "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"⁷⁶

Fourth, an additional characteristic of Third Quest is the emphasis on the Jewishness of Jesus and studying him in light of a Jewish environment.⁷⁷ Thus the Jewishness of Jesus is the starting point for the Third Quest and is pursued in light of the discovery of new source materials emerging from archaeological discoveries in the last fifty years (e.g. Dead Sea Scrolls). It must be granted, as Holmén notes, 'recognition of the fact that Jesus was a Jew is ... not an innovation of the "Third Quest"'.⁷⁸ Wellhausen's dictum that 'Jesus was not a Christian but a Jew'⁷⁹ has been often quoted, and Klausner opined long ago that, "'Jesus was not a Christian," but he *became* a Christian.'⁸⁰ One need only cite works by Dalman, Jeremias, Klausner, Montefiore to know that recognition of Jesus' Jewishness precedes Vermes' *Jesus the Jew* and Sanders' *Jesus and Judaism*.

⁷⁶ Henry J. Cadbury, *The Peril of Modernizing Jesus* (London: SPCK, 1962 [1937]), 46-7.

⁷⁷ As noted by several commentators, e.g. Neil and Wright, *Interpretation of the New Testament*, 397-9; Wright, 'Quest for the Historical Jesus', 800; Evans, 'The Third Quest', 538, 543; Charlesworth, 'Jesus Research', 22; Brown, 'Historical Jesus', 337; Telford, 'Major Trends', 47-9, 52, 57-8; Boyd, *Cynic Sage or Son of God?*, 49; Theissen and Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 10-11; Bockmuehl, 'Jesus of Nazareth in Recent Debate', 20; Meier, 'The Present State', 484-6; Dunn, 'Can the Third Quest Hope to Succeed?' 33; *idem*, *Jesus Remembered*, 85-6; Bird, 'Should Evangelicals Participate', 7; Brehm, 'Will the Real Jesus Please Stand?', 11; Allison, 'The Secularizing of the Historical Jesus', 142; Boring, 'The "Third Quest" and the Apostolic Faith', 238-9; du Toit, 'Redefining Jesus', 100, 107-8; Burkett, *Introduction*, 247; Holmén, 'A Theologically Disinterested Quest', 177; Tom Holmén, 'The Jewishness of Jesus in the "Third Quest"', in *Jesus, Mark and Q: The Teaching of Jesus and its Earliest Records* (eds Michael Labahn and Andreas Schmidt; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 149-50; Leander E. Keck, *Who is Jesus? History in Perfect Tense* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2000), 23-47.

⁷⁸ Holmén, 'The Jewishness of Jesus', 146; cf. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 88.

⁷⁹ Julius Wellhausen, *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien* (Berlin: Reimer, 1905), 113 (*Jesus war kein Christ, sondern Jude*).

⁸⁰ Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 413.

It must be asked, though, does the Third Quest need to be entirely unprecedented in all of its approaches and conclusions before it is regarded as a distinctive scholarly movement in own right? The Jewishness of Jesus was indeed tagged by earlier authors as the methodological context for studying Jesus. However, these insights into the importance of Jesus' Jewish environment and character were either rejected or marginalized by the Second Quest and Q-Thomas/Cynic-Jesus adherents. This was due to either the use of the criterion of dissimilarity in relation to Judaism (Second Quest) or due to the intention to de-Judaize Jesus by adding a Hellenistic overlay upon him (Q-Thomas/Cynic-Jesus). In contrast, the Third Quest has brought the Jewishness of Jesus from the periphery of scholarship back to the forefront. It is, furthermore, this rigorous examination of a Jewish Jesus that sets the Third Quest apart from the Second Quest and from the Q-Thomas/Cynic-Jesus approach prevalent in North America.

Even so, one is still faced with the question of what kind of Jew Jesus was.⁸¹ For instance, Vermes' important 1973 publication *Jesus the Jew* brought Jesus' Jewishness back into the limelight; however, Vermes ends the book in such a way as to make Jesus a quasi-Jewish existential. Consequently, commentators are far from united and disagree as to how Jesus expressed his Jewishness, be it as a Galilean holy man (Geza Vermes, Marcus Borg), a rabbi (Günther Bornkamm, Bruce Chilton), sage (Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Ben Witherington), eschatological prophet (N. T. Wright, E. P. Sanders, Scot McKnight), social prophet (R. David Kaylor, Richard Horsley) or apocalyptic seer (Dale Allison, Bart Ehrman), or perhaps even better, a combination of the above. What is significant is that locating Jesus in a Jewish framework and trying to interpret his

⁸¹ Cf. Donald A. Hagner, *The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984); H. D. Betz, 'Wellhausen's Dictum "Jesus was not a Christian, but a Jew" in Light of Present Scholarship', *ST* 45 (1991): 83-110; James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Jesus' Jewishness: Exploring the Place of Jesus in Early Judaism* (New York: Crossroad, 1996); Daniel J. Harrington, 'The Jewishness of Jesus: Facing Some Problems' in *Jesus' Jewishness*, (ed. Charlesworth), 123-36; Bruce D. Chilton, 'Jesus within Judaism' in *Jesus in Context: Temple, Purity, and Restoration* (eds Bruce D. Chilton and Craig A. Evans; AGJU 39; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 179-201; Holmén, 'The Jewishness of Jesus', 143-62; Funk, *Honest to Jesus*, 58-9; Halvor Moxnes, 'Jesus the Jew: Dilemmas of Interpretation' in *Fair Play: Diversity and Conflicts in Early Christianity* (eds I. Dunderberg et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 83-103.

sayings and actions in a Jewish context is essentially what the Third Quest is all about.

IV. WHAT ARE THE GAINS OF THE THIRD QUEST?

In setting out the gains of the Third Quest I can only follow and add comment to those points suggested by Meier.⁸²

(1) *The interfaith and international dimension of scholarship.* The Third Quest brings a rich cast of authors who pursue their studies from a variety of different frameworks including Jewish, evangelical, liberal protestant, neo-liberal and moderate conservatives. Such an assorted range of scholars is a welcomed diversification to a quest that was ordinarily dominated by continental Lutherans and English Anglicans.

(2) *There is a greater use of the canonical Gospels as sources for studying the historical Jesus.* The reliance on the canonical Gospels is particularly discernible in Sanders and Meier and stands over and against the neo-New Questers that frequently rely on hypothetical documents such as editions of Q, a purported Cross-Gospel embedded beneath the Gospel of Peter, and the Secret Gospel of Mark⁸³ – documents we do not actually possess nor even know for sure existed. An approach such as this that prioritizes the canonical sources is highly attractive to evangelicals because it allows them to take the Gospels seriously as a representation of the historical Jesus and ensures some element of continuity between the Matthean, Marcan, Lucan, Johannine Jesus and the historical Jesus.⁸⁴

(3) *A more accurate picture of second-temple Judaism.* The publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls and further studies on the Pseudepigrapha, Josephus, and the Apocrypha have yielded a more balanced appreciation of the character and complexities of second-temple Judaism as the context for Jesus and early Christianity. These findings compensate for the loss of rabbinic sources (Mishnah, Talmud, Midrash, etc.) for reconstructing first-century Jewish beliefs since it has become widely recognized that the rabbinic writings postdate AD 135 and only a small number of traditions contained in them actually go back to before AD 70. Consequently, rabbinic materials are only of secondary value for studying

⁸² Meier, 'Present State', 459-87.

⁸³ John Dominic Crossan, *Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 427-34.

⁸⁴ See further: Wilson, *When Will These Things Happen?* 52-65; Joel Willitts, 'Presuppositions and Procedures in the Study of the "Historical Jesus": Or, Why I Decided Not to be a "Historical Jesus" Scholar', *JSHJ* 3 (2005): 61-108.

Jesus and second-temple Judaism. In fact, Jewish scholars are recognizing the value of the Gospels themselves for understanding first century Judaism (or Judaisms!).⁸⁵ Once more, this stands over against the Q-Thomas/Cynic-Jesus advocates who construct a Jesus who, though not stripped of all remnants of Jewishness, is blanketed with a Hellenistic overlay to the effect that he would be more familiar with Cynic epistles than with the Old Testament.

(4) *Insights from archaeology and sociology.* Another recent feature is that the Third Quest is making better use of archaeological findings rather than relying totally on literary studies.⁸⁶ Sociological models have been utilized in the Third Quest as well, though its application is by no means widespread.⁸⁷

(5) *Refinements concerning the criteria of authenticity.* The skepticism of the Second Quest has given way to a more moderate application of the various criteria in the Third Quest. As already noted, the dissimilarity criterion is no longer being used in the same way it was employed by Perrin or Käsemann. This is because Third Quest scholars are not seeking hard facts about Jesus or searching to uncover the real Jesus encrusted beneath tectonic plates of ecclesiastical dogma, rather, they construct hypotheses and evaluate probabilities. The search for 'facts' required the use of a rigorous criterion (e.g. double dissimilarity), whereas the search for 'probabilities' lengthens the methodological rope to permit a more restrained employment of the various criteria in order to arrive at a less certain conclusion. Thus the recognition that all knowledge (especially

⁸⁵ Cf. Geza Vermes (*Jesus and the World of Judaism* [London: SCM, 1983], 85-8); and Alan F. Segal ('Conversion and Messianism: Outline for a New Approach', *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* [eds James H. Charlesworth; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992], 299): 'The New Testament is ... much better evidence for the history of Judaism [in the first century] than is rabbinic Judaism for the origins of Christianity.'

⁸⁶ Charlesworth, *Jesus within Judaism*; *idem*, 'Historical Jesus', 92-100; John J. Rousseau and Rami Arav, *Jesus and His World: An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); Jonathan L. Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus* (Harrisburg: TPI, 2000); John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed, *Excavating Jesus: Beneath the Stones, Behind the Texts* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2001).

⁸⁷ Cf. e.g. Gerd Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978); Bruce J. Malina, *The Social Gospel of Jesus: The Kingdom of God in Mediterranean Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001).

historical knowledge) is conditional and fallible has fuelled historical Jesus study rather than stifled it.

(6) *The miracle tradition receives a more adequate treatment.* No longer are the miracle stories relegated to being entirely Gospel Myths, but are considered as part of the pattern of Jesus' ministry.⁸⁸ Morton Smith wrote, 'the gospels represent Jesus as attracting attention primarily as a miracle worker, and winning his followers by miracles. The gospels do so because he did so.'⁸⁹

(7) *Taking the Jewishness of Jesus seriously.* As already stated, the emphasis on the Jewishness of Jesus and studying him in the light of a diverse Jewish background is the most distinctive feature of the Third Quest (though not unique to the Third Quest). This Jewish approach stands in contradistinction to the Old Quest that was explicitly anti-semitic at points, the Second Quest that tried to set Jesus against 'legalistic' Judaism, and the Q-Thomas/Cynic-Jesus adherents who de-Judaize Jesus. If Christian art had painted Jesus on the cross as he really was, naked and circumcised, rather than cover his genitals conveniently with a garment, one can only wonder if the history of Jewish-Christian relations would have been different.

V. CONCLUSION

By way of summary, (1) Wright's taxonomy is essentially correct if one concedes that there never was a 'moratorium' on Jesus questing (better to speak of a diminishing interest in some circles). Furthermore, it should be recognized that the Third Quest does not refer to all ongoing Jesus research, and trends in Jesus research remain complex and defy any rigid imposition of organization other than the most general description. (2) The distinctives of the Third Quest include modification or rejection of double-dissimilarity, the development of frameworks or hypotheses as the context for Jesus studies, a more optimistic use of canonical sources, and pursuing the significance of the Jewishness of Jesus. Again, the qualification is that 'distinctive' does not mean 'unique' but 'characteristic' of the Third Quest. (3) There have been various gains made by the Third Quest that are worth taking notice of.

⁸⁸ Cf. Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1999).

⁸⁹ Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 10; see the endorsement in Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 173.

In terms of the implication of the Third Quest for evangelicalism, Mark Allan Powell writes of a recent trend in Jesus scholarship: 'I discern what I can only describe as a *resurgence of orthodoxy*. Conservatives, traditionalists, evangelicals – call them what you will – have entered the field in droves and, in many cases, have seized the offensive.'⁹⁰ Powell is correct in that there are many scholars of broad evangelical persuasion like Darrell Bock, Robert L. Webb, Steven M. Bryan, Scot McKnight, Stanley E. Porter, Graham Twelftree, N. T. Wright, Ben Witherington, Craig A. Evans and others who are engaging in fruitful contributions to historical Jesus studies. But I believe that this 'offensive' to date is little more than a vanguard for what potentially lies in store. I like to think that a *coup de main* might be the next offensive action in a conflict of cultural forces each claiming Jesus for themselves. To this end I urge other evangelical students and scholars to engage in this offensive. We stand at the Rhine and the Rubicon of evangelical participation in Jesus scholarship. We can enjoy the scholarly view so far and call for a truce, or we may seize the initiative and advance on Berlin and Rome. Now lest my military imagery gives the wrong impression, I am not advocating *ad hominem* attacks on liberal scholarship or creating a Jesus in our twenty-first century evangelical image. Instead, we must force a lethargic church and a pluralistic world to be confronted by the transforming power of the man and the message: Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God. That will mean seriously engaging and listening to advocates of the Q-Thomas/Cynic-Jesus approach so as to acknowledge their genuine contribution to the field of research, but also to show (despite some recent and impassioned apologies to the contrary)⁹¹ that they are not offering a historically plausible Jesus, but a Jesus all too conducive to modern culture. Lest we be accused of the same scholarly transgression, we should engage in introspective and self-critical reflection of our motives, methods and agendas, display an openness to the evidence, and a willingness to learn from others of different theological persuasion. Ultimately our task is not to peddle our evangelical assumptions, but to carry out the sort of open and comprehensive study that will either vindicate them or at least raise provocative questions about Jesus and the Gospels.

⁹⁰ Mark Allan Powell, "'Things That Matter": Historical Jesus Studies in the New Millennium', *SBL Forum* (Dec. 2004).

⁹¹ Arnal, *The Symbolic Jesus*; John Kloppenborg and John Marshall, eds, *Apocalypticism, Anti-Semitism, and the Historical Jesus: Subtexts in Criticism* (JSNTSup 275; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004).

IS THERE REALLY A 'THIRD QUEST'?

The historical Jesus is not exclusively the domain of liberal scholarship, as the quest for the historical Jesus probably began soon after Jesus' death and is reflected in the writings of the early church.⁹² Perhaps it is even the case that historical study of Jesus is a necessary task of discipleship, as we must all grapple with the life-changing question 'Who is Jesus?'⁹³ If my ambition for evangelical participation in Jesus studies is to be realized then it requires that evangelicals familiarize themselves with this entity known as the Third Quest. I believe, furthermore, that insights gained from this quest can enrich our relationship with Jesus, improve our preaching of the Gospels, and strengthen our resources for ministry.

⁹² Porter, 'Reading the Gospels', 32. Going further, it might have even begun during Jesus' life, see Kealy ('Reflections on the Third Quest', 59) and Stanton (*Jesus of Nazareth in New Testament Preaching*, 171): 'Interest in the life and character of Jesus was already present *in nuce* in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus' proclamation drew critical questioning: Who is this Jesus? Why does he behave in this way?'

⁹³ N. T. Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1999), 14-15.

REVIEWS

The Moral Law: Its Place in Scripture and Its Relevance Today

John L. Mackay

The Christian Institute, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2004; 64 pp., £3.50; ISBN 1 901086 27 5

A Professor of Old Testament Language, Exegesis and Theology at the Free Church of Scotland College in Edinburgh writing a little book on the moral law is an event hardly likely to set the heather on fire, you might think, and you would be wrong. These two lectures given at the Christian Institute's Autumn series in November 2003 in Newcastle maintain their learned, preachy tone in print, but more, they sing, at least they did for this Welshman. Reading this Scottish prose was a delight. I wanted John to go on and on, leading me further into the intricacies of law and gospel, the Decalogue, the Mosaic Law and the New Covenant. This summary was grand but not enough. Maybe it's the Welsh that creates the delight in me, or maybe it's the tension of the particularly divisive Baptist argument about the Christian and the law which found sweet sense and exegetical satisfaction in the theology of these pages. Allied to Iain D. Campbell's *On the First Day of the Week* (Day One), those of us who believe in the abiding use of the law of God for the Christian are strengthened by such publications.

Whereas Patrick Fairbairn's *Law in Scripture* (1868) will be acknowledged, this booklet will be read. Its ten or so chapters on the law are on the Old Testament evidence, the moral law, the Decalogue and the rest of the Mosaic Law, the application of the other laws, the law as a covenant of works, Jesus and the law, the law and love, Paul and the law, the law of liberty and the moral law in today's world.

At a recent Reformed Baptist Conference a paper was given on the subject 'Puritan and New Covenant Baptists: Co-Defenders of the Decalogue'. It was a fine paper. The speaker wants to be known as a 'New Covenant man' but he will not eliminate the Decalogue from its importance in sanctifying the believer. However, he regards the Sabbath as a ceremonial sign of the covenant. I am very close to that man; his

godliness is illuminating and one acknowledges that there are Mosaic, ceremonial and civil aspects of sabbatical regulations within the seven year and Jubilee structures of Israel. Yet the exegesis and explanation of John L. Mackay is more persuasive. I was delighted with this book. It will do good pastoral work for me amongst theological students and the more thoughtful leaders of the UCCF on the Aberystwyth campus. It will enlighten the officers of our own congregation.

Geoff Thomas, Alfred Place Baptist Church (Independent), Aberystwyth

Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament

Peter Enns

Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI, 2005; 197 pp., £9.99; ISBN 0 8010 2730 6

Normally I would steer clear of any book that refers to the Old Testament as a 'problem'. I have met many people who do find it to be a problem, though, and the advertising blurb gave me sufficient indication that this could well be a very helpful book for such people. Working with three issues that Evangelicals might have with the Old Testament, Enns provides not so much a solution as a clear delineation of the factors that would feed into a solution, and go a long way towards removing the so-called problem.

Chapter two addresses the importance of understanding the Old Testament as a document from the Ancient Near East. Besides providing an overview of literature from that context, Enns lays out the issues that arise when the Old Testament is read in this context. He sensibly dismisses some of the more outlandish claims that these texts undermine scriptural authority and demonstrates how our appreciation of the Old Testament is enhanced (rather than challenged) by this contextualised reading.

In chapter three, attention turns to the theological diversity apparent in the Old Testament. With a striking range of examples, Enns demonstrates that this diversity can neither be argued away by simplistic harmonisation, nor by pretending that the problem is only apparent (rather than actual). Here I felt the concluding section needed to be stronger. For those of us who are used to handling the Old Testament's diversity on a regular basis, the argument is moot; for Enns' main audience, his discussion needed to be stronger and more convincing. I agree with his affirmation that we do not need to be defensive about this characteristic of the Old Testament (p. 108), but feel he must be stronger in stating that the problem arises not so much

from the Old Testament itself but from our tendency to define *in advance* what Scripture should look like.

In chapter four, the concern is the use the New Testament writers make of the Old Testament. The phenomenon of texts being quoted out of context, or chopped and changed about to suit the author's need is well known. Enns starts by demonstrating that these techniques were common within the Second Temple period, and are not unique to the New Testament. In that sense, the New Testament writers were children of their time. This observation already undermines the argument that the apostolic writers had special permission from the Holy Spirit to use techniques denied to later generations. Instead, Enns suggests that rather than deny any validity to the apostolic method, we must find a way of incorporating this into contemporary exegesis. While recognising that Enns admits that this is a 'real dilemma, and there is no simple solution' (p. 156), I am not so convinced of his argument here. He provides a good start to a solution, though, and has given me much to ponder.

This book is not aimed at Old Testament specialists but at any Evangelical who feels uneasy with the Old Testament. I am impressed by the way Enns raises issues and deals with them with a refreshing honesty. He has a very high view of Scripture, and writes from a desire to help people – scholars and lay – to love the first four-fifths of the Bible as much as they do the final fifth. This book never undermines the Bible, but seeks ways to recognise that issues are sometimes more complex than we are always willing to work with. If our doctrine of Scripture is only big enough to encompass the New Testament, then we cannot really claim to have a biblical doctrine of Scripture.

A valuable book that deserves to be widely read.

John Wilks, London School of Theology

Consider the Lilies: A Plea for Creational Theology

T. M. Moore

P&R Publishing, Phillipsburg, NJ, 2005; 231 pp., £8.99; ISBN 0 87552 716 7

There are not many books that have the potential to alter the way you look at both theology and the world around you. *Consider the Lilies* is one such book. Its author, T. M. Moore, a senior pastor at Cedar Springs Church in Knoxville, Tennessee, makes an impassioned plea to the church to take seriously the resources God has provided for her in what has traditionally been called general revelation. Moore prefers the term

'creational theology' claiming that it is freer of the baggage attached to such terms as general revelation, natural law and natural theology.

One of Moore's objectives in writing is to demonstrate that theology is not merely a task for specialists but it is the great privilege of every Christian. Ordinary Christians have not quarried general revelation as a resource partly because it has been a battleground for theologians. Moore characterises the divide as being between maximisers and minimisers. The maximisers include those who maintain that general revelation is so clear and compelling it can lead a person to a true knowledge of God, e.g. certain classical varieties of apologetics. Minimisers include Barthians, with their denial of revelation apart from Christ, and also the bulk of evangelicals who simply regard the task of reaping the fruit of general revelation as too daunting. With Moore we find a reliable guide who plots a course between these two extremes. He reminds us that there is true revelation in creation, accessible to us and for which we are accountable. Nevertheless we only arrive at true knowledge of God through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Creational theology will not save the unbeliever. Rather, it is the domain of the redeemed for whom it serves to increase the knowledge of God and hence our worship and our sanctification. In addition, Moore affirms that the task of creational theology can be accomplished only in the light of Scripture and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and is to be done within the community of the church. Moore's theological surefootedness quickly disarms one of any fear that creational theology might be a capitulation to faddish earth spirituality. Indeed, he employs Scripture extensively to make clear that the 'happy task' of creational theology is one we are duty bound to undertake as Christians.

The raw material of creational theology consists first of all in creation, (not 'nature'), culture and conscience. Moore does not only mean 'high' culture but also family life, community traditions, economy, family life, etc. He instances the awe he experienced as a young man at the sight of a modern steel building in St Louis whose great height and strength pointed beyond itself to the transcendence and enduring nature of God. By conscience Moore is indicating the behaviour of people as their consciences act either in rebellion against or in obedience to the knowledge of God's law in their hearts. He instances an afternoon in a bookstore café observing two teenage girls drooling over the tawdry illusions marketed by a glossy magazine.

Engagement with creational theology promises a rich spiritual reward but requires resolution to make the time and to become 'mindful'. It should also result in some 'product' through which spiritual blessing can be passed on to others. It may result in the production of a poem, a painting,

music or even a simple exchange with a conversation partner who has agreed to discuss observations. Creational theology is thus able to bring reflection on God and his world into the whole of life rather than simply have an end point in the production of a book or a lecture. One begins to do theology rather than simply read it.

In keeping with this theological outlook, the book itself is geared to praxis. There are discussion questions at the close of each chapter and activities designed to get the reader started practising creational theology. Chapters are interlaced with the work of three great practitioners: William Cowper, Gerald Manley Hopkins and Jonathan Edwards. The result is a book that is full of beauty and inspiration. Read and enjoy!

Ivor MacDonald, Kilmuir and Stenscholl Church of Scotland, Isle of Skye

The Auburn Avenue Theology, Pros and Cons: Debating the Federal Vision

The Knox Theological Seminary Colloquium on the Federal Vision.

E. Calvin Beisner (ed.)

Knox Theological Seminary, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 2004; 331 pp., \$16.00; ISBN 0974947709

For some years now there has been a handful of voices within the American reformed community advocating for theological revision. This group of conversation partners has more recently embraced the designation 'Federal Vision' as a description of its collective aspirations. Among other things, they believe that classical Covenant Theology is in need of a biblical makeover and a fresh deployment in the reformed churches and in the lives of reformed Christians.

This book, first, provides the reader firsthand accounts of the views of key proponents and critics of the Federal Vision in their own words. Second, it is the record of a significant attempt to meet face-to-face in hopes of promoting the peace of the church by attempting to clear up misunderstandings, alleviate misplaced concerns and create consensus on disputed matters. Both of these points are significant because of the regular assertion of Federal Vision proponents that their critics are misreading them, falsely accusing them, uncharitably dealing with them and failing to meet with them and hear them out. This is clearly not the case with regard to the interactions in this book – which are the result of critics of the Federal Vision going out of their way to understand precisely what the proponents are saying, to deal fairly and Christianly with them, and yet also to express sincere concerns about the theological assertions and formulations of the Federal Vision.

Third, the Federal Vision proponents who are contributors to this volume are ministers in various reformed denominations. This is significant for at least two reasons. The first is that this indicates that the Federal Vision is having at least some influence amongst the ministry of various reformed and evangelical churches in North America. Yet it has been propounded without the affirmation of any major reformed denomination. That is, though its advocates assert it to be both consistent with and an improvement upon historic reformed confessional formulations, no reformed denomination of standing has recognized it as such, and yet ministers within those communions are openly and publicly promoting it among clergy and laity alike. This seems to be a very individualistic way to promote a view that claims to have a higher view of the church than that of the prevailing evangelical culture. Secondly, this is significant because one of the interesting features of the promotion of the Federal Vision, especially in the world of the internet, has been the factor of those who lack theological and ecclesiastical credentials advocating the doctrinal reformation of the churches.

The book is divided into four parts, and twenty-three chapters. Cal Beisner's introduction helpfully invites the reader into the debate with a healthy dose of context. It is an introduction not to be skipped. The first section of the book is an overview of some of the concerns of the proponents of the Federal Vision, as well as of concerns about the Federal Vision by its critics. It will give the reader a good feel for the issues in play in this debate.

Douglas Wilson speaks for the Federal Vision side. Wilson assures the reader of the Federal Vision's commitment to divine sovereignty and election and argues that this discussion should be treated as intramural – that is, he wants to stress that both Federal Vision proponents and opponents are legitimate members of the reformed, orthodox, Christian community, and thus that all discussion about the Federal Vision proposals should acknowledge that and reflect it in tone. Dr Joseph Pipa, President of Greenville Seminary (SC, USA) provides the rejoinder to Wilson and, after expressing appreciation for some of the Federal Vision's diagnosis of modern evangelicalism, proceeds to indicate a string of problems: (1) a faulty hermeneutic and exegesis, including a naive and sometimes irrational version of biblicism; (2) a faulty view of systematic theology; (3) confusion in theological definition; (4) an unbalanced, pastorally problematic covenant theology; (5) an incipient sacramentalism; and (6) deviant views of covenant and justification.

Section two of the book commences with Steve Schlissel's meandering essay 'A New Way of Seeing' in which he attempts to position the Federal

Vision proponents as those who see the big cultural and theological picture, while their detractors are small-minded nitpickers arguing about tassel-length on vestments while Lenin rides a boxcar into Russia.

Peter Leithart's essay in chapter five is the most impressive piece in the whole volume from the pro-Federal Vision side. Leithart's intellect and theological training come through in his outline for a trinitarian recasting of reformed theology. Those familiar with the work of T. F. Torrance will already be acquainted with a number of Leithart's themes. Leithart's signature tags regarding 'reification' and 'abstraction' appear here, and nicely complement Schlüssel's diatribe.

Rick Phillips' (PCA Pastor, and Chairman of the Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology) essay 'Covenant and Salvation or What is a "Christian"?' begins the third and longest section of the book, and is the first of two sturdy pieces he contributes. The fourth and final section of the book relates to the Federal Vision teaching on the sacraments, and Douglas Wilson's and Steve Wilkins' chapters are not to be missed. Indeed, reading these pieces will give the reader a feel for how much of the theological project of the Federal Vision is juxtaposed with baptist ecclesiology and sacramentology. Indeed, though the Federal Vision casts its conversation partner as the degenerated reformed tradition under the influence of two centuries of revivalism, the real dialogue is with their own personal story – in both baptist and reconstructionist aspects and phases. Cal Beisner's concluding comments in chapter 23 provide a superb summary of the problems of the Federal Vision, all the more valuable because they come from the pen and heart of a man who has tried valiantly to think the very best of his friends involved in this theological revision movement.

One question that ought to be asked is who should read this book, or anything else for that matter on the Federal Vision? Well, obviously ministers and professors need at least some passing acquaintance with the issue if they are to be of help to folks struggling with these topics. This volume provides, for that purpose, a good one-stop resource. When Guy Waters' *Covenant Theology Improved?* (P&R, forthcoming, early 2006) appears it will furnish a nice companion to this compilation. Ministerial students too will benefit from hearing both sides in their own words. However, material on the Federal Vision is not something that I would recommend to congregants (unless there is some special circumstance). Better that the laity feed upon healthy food and more edifying subjects.

J. Ligon Duncan III, First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, Mississippi

I Am the Lord Your God: Christian Reflections on the Ten Commandments

Carl E. Braaten and Christopher R. Seitz (eds)

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI/ Cambridge, 2005; 275 pp., £13.99; ISBN 0 8028 2812 4

This collection of essays on the Ten Commandments originated as papers presented at three theological conferences that took place in the USA in 2003. Jointly sponsored by the Society for Ecumenical Anglican Doctrine (now known as the Anglican Communion Institute) and the Centre for Catholic and Evangelical Theology, the contributors come from Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran and Methodist church traditions. All write with the conviction that the importance of the Ten Commandments as divine revelation needs to be rediscovered by the modern Western church where the prevailing spirit leans heavily towards antinomianism.

The volume is divided into four sections. In the first part, The Decalogue in Church and Society, Philip Turner, 'The Ten Commandments in the Church in a Postmodern World', and Christopher R. Seitz, 'The Ten Commandments: Positive and Natural Law and the Covenants Old and New – Christian Use of the Decalogue and Moral Law', offer various reasons for the contemporary relevance of the Ten Commandments. The essays in part two, First Table of the Law, explore those Commandments which are primarily directed towards the divine-human relationship: Thomas C. Oden, 'No Other Gods'; David Bentley Hart, 'God or Nothingness'; Ephraim Radner, 'Taking the Lord's Name in Vain'; Markus Bockmuehl, '"Keeping It Holy": Old Testament Commandment and New Testament Faith'. The third section, Second Table of the Law, focuses on those Commandments which are chiefly about inter-human relationships: William T. Cavanaugh, 'Killing in the Name of God'; Bernd Wannewetsch, 'You Shall Not Kill – What Does It Take? Why We Need the Other Commandments If We Are to Abstain from Killing'; Robert W. Jenson, 'Male and Female He Created Them'; Reinhard Hütter, 'The Tongue – Fallen and Restored: Some Reflections on the Three Voices of the Eighth Commandment'; Carl E. Braaten, 'Sins of the Tongue'; R. R. Reno, 'God or Mammon'. The final part of the volume has two contributions under the heading, The Divine Command, which reflect upon two particular issues. Robert Louis Wilken, 'Keeping the Commandments' comments on current attitudes within the USA to the presence of the Ten Commandments in the public arena. Gilbert Meilaender, 'Hearts Set to Obey' discusses contemporary Lutheran attitudes towards the Decalogue.

As might be expected from a volume of this nature, one of its strengths is the variety of approaches found within it. No attempt has been made to produce a uniform treatment of each commandment. This enables individual contributors to draw on their own particular academic expertise, producing a volume that reveals something of the rich heritage of the different Christian traditions represented here. Not all readers, however, will necessarily agree with everything that is said, and the volume presupposes that those reading it will already have a considerable degree of theological understanding. (For example, at a relatively minor level, it is assumed that every reader will be familiar with the fact that the actual numbering of the Ten Commandments varies across the different Christian traditions.)

While each essay contains much that is likely to prove thought-provoking, two possible deficiencies should be noted. Firstly, the volume is largely orientated towards the Christian scene in the USA, where the peculiar nature of the relationship between church and state has a particular bearing on the status of the Ten Commandments, especially for US society at large. Secondly, although the volume seeks to be ecumenical in its range of contributors, significant sections of the Christian church are missing (e.g., Pentecostal, Presbyterian). Allowing for these shortcomings and read with discernment, this collection of essays provides a stimulating addition to the many studies that have already been produced on the Ten Commandments.

Desi Alexander, Union Theological College, Belfast

Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490-1700

Diarmaid MacCulloch

Penguin Books, London, 2004; 832 pp., £10.99; ISBN 0 14028 534 2

To adequately explain the Reformation and its effects in any one country, between the covers of a single volume, would require economy and brevity. The triumph of MacCulloch's contribution is that much of the continent is surveyed in over 700 highly readable pages. This book has rightly been described as magisterial. Its approach is one of a rigorous academic with little sympathy towards Calvinists, Puritans or indeed most Protestants of the period, while prepared to describe in some detail their outlook.

The author is Professor of the History of the Church at Oxford University. He grew up with Scottish family roots in an East Anglian rectory, and studied at Cambridge. Spells at Wesley College in Bristol and Ripon College preceded his ordination in the Church of England as Deacon, a path he did not follow, as a result of the controversies over human sexuality at the November 1987 General Synod. Resignation from

Wesley in 1990 was followed by freelance work on Reformation research, the 1995 offer by Oxford to lecture and the 1997 professorship. His previous writings include *Suffolk and the Tudors* as well as *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (1996), both of which won him prizes. The volume under review won MacCulloch the Wolfson Prize for History.

Readers of the *SBET* constituency will find much to disagree with in it, but cannot fail to be impressed with the author's ability to find the subtle nuances and grey areas in the field he covers. Theologians will find much to interest them. The fruitful relationship between humanism and the Reformation is explored at length. One highlight is the particularly lively in-depth analysis of Luther's changing theological emphases in his lifetime, his internal tensions and the importance of the Psalms and other parts of Scripture to the German Reformer's Christology. Professor MacCulloch is reasonably fair to Calvin and highlights challenges from Bolsec and Melancthon as driving the Genevan Reformer to fine-tune his views on predestination.

He sees the Reformation as illustrating the power of ideas and being rooted in concern about salvation. MacCulloch believes that the pre-Reformation Roman Catholic Church was performing adequately and in some cases very well. His detailed discussion of the Counter-Reformation is accompanied by the view that attempts at reconciliation between Protestants and the Roman Catholic Church should have succeeded. MacCulloch is largely even-handed in discussion of martyr statistics. His handling of Oliver Cromwell's brutality is shaded by acknowledgement of his increasing the level of toleration showed to Catholics in England and decision to allow Jewish people to live there once more. The account of the Scottish Reformation and seventeenth-century experience touches on the main points but there is lack of consistent detail: Andrew Melville does not feature, while John Carswell does. (Some may query the statement that Highland Scotland quickly became Protestant.) Clear discussions of the place of the sermon and catechising in Scotland parallel MacCulloch's stress on the importance of the Bible and Psalter in the vernacular across Europe. That said, while MacCulloch hurries through the *Covenanting period* in Scotland, he repeatedly returns to the *theme* of Covenant as it developed theologically and politically in the entire period. He roots William Perkins' view of assurance in his Covenant theology; one fascinating cameo paints the effect of Perkins and Ames on the Calvinists of Transylvania.

There is not a detailed bibliography despite a legion of references; the suggested reading list is divided by topic and geographical area, reflecting

the overall structure of the book. One useful feature is the cross-referencing in the body of the text.

Norman 'TC' Campbell, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis

Postliberal Theological Method: A Critical Study

Adonis Vidu

Paternoster, Milton Keynes, 2005; xiv+269 pp., £19.99; ISBN 1 84227 395 7

This is a highly nuanced critique of postliberal theological epistemology by one who is generally sympathetic with postliberalism's accomplishments. Vidu aims in this work for a middle way between foundationalism and postliberalism's tendency to reify the social setting. His thesis is that the dominant postliberal perception of setting cannot account for the dynamic complex of mutually constitutive relations among texts, communities, and individuals within the total setting (world) created by the qualitatively infinite God who precedes all of our knowing, acting and being within particular settings.

Vidu begins by observing that there is a tension between postliberalism's philosophical commitment to the priority of the social setting and its theological conviction that God's reality is ontologically and epistemically ultimate (p. xiii). In his view, it is not the tension itself, but postliberalism's resolution of it that is philosophically and theologically problematic. Postliberal theologians too often see the 'horizon of understanding' as a territory or space with a stable and clearly defined inside and outside (pp. 1, 86). This perception immunizes 'inside' beliefs from 'outside' scrutiny, and reinforces the assumption that differences between communities are incommensurable before attempting dialogue. The spatializing of setting also lends itself to a hard perspectivalism and social constructivism that denies the individual's capacity to transcend his or her setting sufficiently to critically examine it (p. 33).

As an alternative, Vidu advocates conceiving of tradition/setting as a permeable, intersubjective, dynamic event or series of events in which a community and its individual knowers/actors take shape over time in relation to an 'end' that constitutes and sustains the tradition (p. 24). Vidu develops this proposal in Chapter One by bringing Gadamer and MacIntyre into critical dialogue with Fish and postliberal theologians who appropriate him. In Chapter Two, Vidu appropriates Frei's early view that the Gospels are 'realistic narratives', while rejecting his idea that their proper interpretive context is fictional, because a fictional reading virtually reduces

the material content of the Gospels to their textual form (p. 57). In contrast, Vidu argues that figuration or typology maintains the postliberal intuition that the biblical narratives interpret extra-Scriptural reality, while upholding the idea that text and extra-textual reality interpenetrate as aspects of God's larger purpose for the world (pp. 85-6).

If Frei's early work formalized the text, Lindbeck's influence on his later work is evidenced in its tendency to reify the interpretive community. Vidu argues in Chapter Three that this stems from a failure to discern the close relation between meaning and truth, scheme and content. Postliberals properly emphasize the traditioned shape of experience, but underestimate the role experience plays in shaping tradition. In this regard, Vidu argues that we ought to distinguish description from reference. Individuals from different settings are capable of fixing on a common object. And while their perceptions of the object will reflect their embeddedness within particular social settings, the settings themselves are porous, and will change as a result of the experiences of the individuals who comprise them (p. 101).

Given his conception of the relation between experience and setting, Vidu understandably questions the viability of a coherence model of justification that ignores external criteria and the witness of other traditions (p. 137). Such an approach wrongly assumes that paradigms are closed systems, that meaning is strictly determined by a social setting, and that the choice of one tradition over another is irrational. According to Vidu, this is a false alternative to the foundationalist assumption that belief is justified by appeal to objective neutral criteria (p. 122). He goes on to develop a 'good reasons approach' to justification which draws deeply on works by Donald Davidson and Bruce Marshall.

In Chapter Five, Vidu criticizes postliberalism for its 'Donatist-like' elevation of pure church practice to the status of *norma normans*, and its relegation of theology to second-order reflection on such practices. He then outlines a 'model of doctrine which may serve as both regulative and cognitive, with ontology as a necessary backdrop for any practice' (p. 177). The final chapter unpacks Vidu's concept of the ontological context of theological knowledge by explicating his view of the incarnation and its relation to the Gospel stories which, like metaphors and models, point beyond themselves to the self-revealing of God in the history of Jesus Christ.

Vidu's theological debut advances the discussion about the relation between divine activity and the social mediation of knowledge. At times, his critique of a tradition from which he has obviously learned much is sharp. But his detailed engagement with leading exponents of postliberal

thought suggests that his complaints are warranted. Moreover, his proposed revisions do but minimal violence, as they are developed from resources within this diverse and dynamic setting.

James R. Wilson, Union Theological Seminary, Virginia

The Birth of Christianity: The First Twenty Years. After Jesus, Volume 1

Paul Barnett

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 2005; 230 pp., £9.99; ISBN 0 8028 27810

Barnett explores the birth of Christianity during the twenty years between the death of Jesus and the first extant letters of Paul. His thesis is that 'the birth of Christianity and the birth of christology are inseparable, both as to time and essence. Christianity *is* christology' (p. 8, italics original). Barnett points out that the relatively brief space of time between Jesus' execution (c. AD 30 or 33) and Paul's arrival in Corinth (c. AD 50) leaves little room for an extended christological development in which Jesus became the Messiah and Lord, as some scholarship suggests. Rather, Barnett argues that the Christology of Paul and the Gospel writers existed in the years immediately following Jesus' death. This Christology was the same Christology that Peter preached at Pentecost and was the impetus behind the mission activity of the apostles.

In the early chapters of *The Birth of Christianity*, Barnett discusses concerns of historical study and the importance of chronology. These chapters serve as his foundation and the boundaries of his argument. In later chapters, he shows how Paul was aware of and continued to teach the same gospel that he had learned in the days and weeks immediately following his conversion. Barnett also focuses on the mission activity of Peter, John, and other apostles in Judea, and he highlights what is known of the Christians in Antioch in these first twenty years. He points out that Peter's teaching at Pentecost and to Cornelius' household was significant for the Christology of the early church. For example, traces of Peter's teaching can be found in Paul's letter to the Romans and in Mark's Gospel.

Barnett also discusses the Gospels of Mark and John and insists that no gap exists between the message of these Gospels and the early teaching of the apostles. Barnett argues that in the first twenty years of Christianity Jesus was called the Messiah, and that Jesus' resurrection was foundational to the teaching of the apostles.

The Birth of Christianity is a helpful survey of the first twenty years of Christianity. Those without much knowledge of the scholarly issues will

find Barnett's explanations helpful, while those with knowledge of the scholarly issues will find him engaging. Barnett interacts with very recent scholarship and specialists of early Christianity. He is concerned with historical method and about accurately piecing together the bits of information from the early years of Christianity. Barnett provides a significant amount of knowledge regarding the historical and political situation of the Roman world in the early first century and adeptly shows the relevant links between these events and those of the early church.

In his clear style, Barnett wrestles with the current scholarship that sees an unconnected gap between Jesus and Paul. His contentions accurately reflect Scripture and the boundaries of historical inquiry that he establishes. For those interested in further study, the bibliography and footnotes provide a helpful collection of sources.

Overall, Barnett provides a very persuasive argument for the position that the Christology of the early church emerged immediately following the death of Jesus and that this same Christology is what is found in the letters of Paul and the four Gospels. He clearly connects the evidence of the first twenty years after Jesus' death, from Paul's letters, the speeches and sermons in Acts, the narrative material in Acts, and the political and historical events of the Roman world.

Benjamin E. Reynolds, University of Aberdeen

Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make It into the New Testament

Bart D. Ehrman

Oxford University Press, New York, 2003; 342 pp., £8.99; ISBN 0 19 518250 2

Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew

Bart D. Ehrman

Oxford University Press, New York, 2003; xv+294 pp., £8.99; ISBN 0 19 518249 9

Bart Ehrman seeks to persuade lay readers that modern discoveries of an ever-growing collection of vastly divergent Christian "scriptures" prove that the only intelligent response is to open the doors wide to *laissez-faire* pluralism (pp. 47, 92). Currently the chair of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Ehrman began as an

evangelical studying at Moody Bible Institute, Wheaton and Princeton under Bruce Metzger, but now portrays himself as an enlightened agnostic.

The popularity of these books is due to their espousal of ideas supportive of Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. Ehrman's *Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make It into the New Testament* is a compilation of non-canonical books, devotionally imaginative writings, and books of Nag Hammadi Gnosticism. His translation of these documents, and those of other scholars, would be a good starting-point if it were not for his anti-orthodox bias in the introductions.

His companion volume *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* lays out his critical assessment of the formation of the New Testament as he presents a dizzying kaleidoscope of other possible Christian 'scriptures'. Ehrman raises hundreds of questions in this book but finds it intellectually untenable to propose many answers. His rambling style describes the canonization process while it chastises his former Christian background because of his concern for broadmindedness (p. 257). But does Ehrman show the same openness to those who hold to historic Christianity? No, not if they espouse an evangelical commitment to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ (p. 255). On a positive note, the book does provide insight into how people wish to think about Jesus and the New Testament, in the hope that the early diversity of scriptures will perpetuate tolerance.

Here are a few of the larger problems with *Lost Christianities*. It pays insufficient attention to the chronological superiority of the New Testament documents (pp. 239-49). He defends Gnosticism against proto-orthodoxy despite its cryptic messages. He paints pseudonymous writings as strict forgeries in modernist terms without explaining the ancient practice of disciples writing as faithful stewards of oral tradition. Ehrman focuses upon the battles of the second and third centuries, while ignoring earlier development, in order to make clear that hegemonic forces were at work eliminating books from the New Testament. He seems more interested in what the world might have looked like if orthodox Christian faith did not take shape than he does in dealing with the real world shaped by Christianity. Finally, he grossly underestimates the exclusivist Jewish roots of Jesus' teaching founded upon monotheism (pp. 24, 29, 47, 91).

The contemporary concerns regarding the canon and various views of Jesus raised by Ehrman are set forth to destroy the Christian worldview without any alternative offered. The infectious force of his questions will need to be answered intellectually, and with the gentleness of Jesus, through the combined witness of the church. Evangelicals will find reliable scholars like Larry Hurtado, Martin Hengel, Richard Bauckham, and N. T.

Wright helpful in forming a Christ-centered response. Larry Hurtado's *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 2003, 746 pp., £18.42) is a useful, generous, orthodox answer.

Ehrman, who deserted evangelical ranks, confronts us with the need for self-evaluation. God is not finished with Ehrman or others like him. We must consider how to continue to proclaim the exclusive Lordship of Christ in a world reeling from religious terrorism so that people like him can hear the voice of the Spirit speaking truth from the perspective of God's eternal kingdom. Scholarly assistance is available. Pastors should take the opportunity to digest this material in order to equip apologetic communities to speak the truth in love.

James R. Howe, Community Presbyterian Church, Waldport, Oregon

Grace Abounding. The Life, Books and Influence of John Bunyan

David B. Calhoun

CFP Mentor, Fearn, Ross-shire, 2005; 224 pp., £8.99; ISBN 1 84550 031

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Since his death in August 1688, there has been a plethora of books relating to the life, times and works of the tinker from Bedfordshire, John Bunyan. Various authors have written from every doctrinal and literary standpoint imaginable. However, to find a volume that is so compact, accurate, comprehensive and informative as this present title is rare.

It has to be said at the outset that in writing this particular book, Dr Calhoun has endeavoured to put together something which is a refreshing change from the majority of studies, and it is, I believe, a unique volume. Dr Calhoun, Professor of Church History at Covenant Seminary, Missouri, displays a style of writing which is readable, informative and authoritative. It is a very commendable modern resource for the novice or the informed, as well as the student or the tutor.

The first chapter considers Bunyan's life. This biographical sketch, in just 30 pages, is packed with detail yet flows effortlessly through the changing years of Bunyan's turbulent life in a masterly fashion. Throughout the book there are 'grey boxes' containing additional facts, relevant to the main text at that specific point of the chapter – a helpful addition!

Following this introduction to Bunyan the man and his life, the reader's attention is turned to Bunyan the writer. As Dr Calhoun points out, 'The

variety in Bunyan's writing is remarkable: autobiography, allegory, fiction, polemics, poetry, and books for children... yet most are practical expositions of Scripture.'

Chapters two and three of *Grace Abounding* are a summary of Bunyan's masterpiece *The Pilgrim's Progress* (parts 1 and 2) and here Dr Calhoun has competently encapsulated the storyline of the allegory, which will be a useful reference for any wishing to 'pick out' a particular section of the work, as well as for those that have never read these works yet are interested in an overview.

A similar approach is made to *The Holy War*, *The Life and Death of Mr Badman* and Bunyan's other writings, in consecutive chapters. Parenthetical references throughout the book to the three volume *Works of John Bunyan*, edited by George Offor in 1854, giving the relevant volume and page numbers, will be of particular value to serious students.

Bunyan's theology, which is the foundation to his writings, is also comprehensively analysed by Professor Calhoun. Bunyan the Lutheran, Calvinist and Puritan are each explored as well as Bunyan's position on Baptists and the Sacraments. His beliefs on Assurance, Sanctification, Repentance, Perseverance and Predestination are among topics considered, in a manner seldom seen from Bunyan biographers.

Each chapter concludes with helpful footnotes which underline the writer's command of his subject, and give the reader additional information with page references of excerpts quoted from Bunyan's writings and works.

The book concludes with an appreciation of Bunyan, his contemporaries, and major biographers. Another unusual resource for those studying and researching the subject includes a section on writers and artists who were inspired by Bunyan's writings, such as C. S. Lewis and William Blake. A timeline of major seventeenth-century dates and an appendix of Bunyan sites in Bedfordshire and London are an added bonus.

A fundamental failing is the title of Dr Calhoun's book, which on a bookseller's shelf will appear at first glance to be Bunyan's own self-portrait, entitled *Grace Abounding!* This comprehensive volume, which is a thrill to read and a very valuable addition to the Bunyan section of any library, deserves a more ingenious title.

John Prestell, Marston Moretaine, Bedfordshire

W. Stanford Reid: An Evangelical Calvinist in the Academy

A. Donald MacLeod

Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2005; 401 pp.; ISBN 0 7735 2770 2 (hardback) £69; 0 7735 2818 0 (paperback) £17

W. Stanford Reid was, in many ways a man who was much larger than life. He was a respected academic, prolific author and churchman, and a man who made a significant contribution to the reformed church in Canada and around the world. Reid was born in a suburb of Montreal, Canada, on 13 September 1913 and died 28 December 1996. During the course of a long life he was actively involved in the life of the Presbyterian Church in Canada as a pastor and participant in the courts of the church. The author of this well-researched and readable book is A. Donald MacLeod who is himself a Canadian Presbyterian pastor and academic.

Reid was known outside of the Presbyterian Church in Canada as a Professor of History, first at McGill University in Montreal and then at the University of Guelph (where he would successfully lead the history department for many years). Reid's successful career in the university was testimony to the fact that it was possible to be both a respected academic and an evangelical Calvinist.

As well as Reid's official university posts, his contribution to the academy also included a lengthy term on the Board of Trustees of his *alma mater*, Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. This was a post he took very seriously and which involved him in an intense theological controversy in the 1970s and 80s on the issue of justification by faith.

A. Donald MacLeod aptly describes W. Stanford Reid as a man who was 'a Calvinist... a confessional Presbyterian, committed to a creedal statement of the faith that enshrines Calvinism as defined in the seventeenth century by the Westminster Confession of Faith' (p. 300).

Given some of the robust stands that Reid took during his lifetime in defense of confessional orthodoxy, it may strike some readers as odd that during the 1980s Stanford Reid would come to accept the ordination of women in the Presbyterian Church in Canada and didn't want to make it a 'litmus test' of orthodoxy. He also came to regard *Living Faith* [the Presbyterian Church in Canada's modern statement of faith and subordinate standard] as an acceptable statement of Christian faith, 'as good, if not better than most' (p. 238).

The valuable and extensive bibliography at the end of this volume portrays the breadth of Reid's writings over the course of his long career.

He wrote extensively on the history of the Reformation, the impact of Calvin and Calvinism, and the impact of Scottish immigrants on Canadian society and culture. His articles, reviews and books sought to distill the fruits of his researches for a wider audience. Perhaps best-known of his writings is his biography of John Knox entitled *Trumpeter of God*. This work that was published in 1974 was received with generally good reviews although it did not sell as well as Reid would have wished.

A. Donald MacLeod has done a wonderful job of bringing the colourful figure of W. Stanford Reid fully to life. While there is no question that the author sympathizes with his subject much of the time, this volume is no exercise in hagiography. It is rather, a balanced account of a complex man. While one might not agree with all that Reid did and said during his long career, there is no doubt but that his was a life well lived in service of the academy and the church. This volume is well worthy of the attention of those who would seek to better understand the reformed church in Canada and around the world.

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The Worship of God: Reformed Concepts of Biblical Worship

Joseph A. Pipa (ed.)

CFP Mentor, Fearn, Ross-shire, 2005; 240 pp., £10.99; ISBN 1 8455 0055 5

This is a collection of essays, most of which were originally delivered as lectures and sermons at the annual conference sponsored by Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, South Carolina. This genesis of the book explains why some chapters are carefully academic and others exhortatory, but this should not be viewed as a disadvantage, since the intended readership is not scholars, but church officers and church members.

The standpoint of the writers is expressed in the preface through some apposite quotations from Calvin. He says, for example, that disciples of Christ should not 'frame any new worship of God for themselves at random, and after their own pleasure, but know that the only legitimate worship of God is that which He himself approved from the beginning'. Given such a basis, it is not surprising that the book expresses disquiet with contemporary worship models and contemporary Christian music.

The first chapter, by Terry Johnson, deals with the regulative principle, which he defines in the traditional way as meaning that in worship 'whatever is not enjoined by Scripture (whether by command, example, or by deduction from broader principles) is forbidden'. All the other contributors accept the regulative principle as the basis for what they say about worship, though they may differ in its application. This is particularly so in the chapters by Brian Schwertley and Benjamin Shaw, which argue respectively for exclusive psalmody and biblical hymnody.

Further chapters tackle 'Calvin and the Worship of God' (Robert Godfrey); 'The Purpose of Worship' (Joseph Pipa); 'The History of Worship in Presbyterian Churches' (Morton Smith); 'The Psalms and Contemporary Worship' (Robert Godfrey); 'Reformed Liturgy' (Joseph Pipa); and 'Worship from the Heart' (Terry Johnson).

The final chapter has the intriguing title 'The Few on behalf of the Many' by Cliff Blair. It deals with what has become a non-issue for most churches, including many in the Reformed tradition, namely the legitimacy of choirs in Christian worship. Blair, however, contends that the largely unquestioned acceptance of choirs since the nineteenth century has had a detrimental effect on worship, and advocates the view that 'the congregation is the choir in the worship of God's people'.

Well aware that his rejection of choirs is a minority position, Blair engages in a robust defence of his thesis. First, he examines the biblical data, concluding that the sacrificial implications of choir-singing in the temple era do not justify the modern practice. In the New Testament he shows the importance of corporateness in the worship of God's people, 'underscored by congregational singing and implicitly denied by the segregation of a portion of the congregation to sing separately'. As for the eschatological praise of the Book of Revelation, he says: 'What is chiefly notable in these passages is that all of God's people are envisioned as worshipping and singing. There is no distinct choir, the people are the choir.'

In a brief historical survey, Blair pinpoints John Jebb of the Anglo-Catholic movement as the initiator of choral services, following his belief that congregational singing was 'a mistaken and modern notion'. Later in the 19th century the revivalist movement in the United States adopted the use of choirs uncritically, believing they would impress the unsaved.

Blair then deals with various objections to his thesis, all the time insisting that the musically gifted in a congregation should be given scope to train and encourage the others, singing with them rather than singing to them. The abandonment of choirs should lead to the improvement of congregational singing, not the reverse.

There are those within the Reformed tradition who are happy with the much wider boundaries set by John Frame in his writings on worship. That is certainly not the case with the contributors to this symposium. Their arguments are biblical, their Reformed credentials impeccable, and their longing to see God truly glorified in the worship of his people is heart-warming.

John M. MacPherson, Edinburgh

Far as the Curse Is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption

Michael D. Williams

P&R Publishing, Phillipsburg, NJ, 2005; xv+315 pp., £9.95; ISBN 0 87552 510 5

This biblical theology is solidly in the redemptive-historical tradition of Geerhardus Vos and displays a high regard for Scripture. It uses the resurrection as a lens through which to view the unfolding of God's redemptive purpose. The Messiah is the culmination of the Old Testament promises that God would come to his people, and the author stresses that the flesh Jesus takes on in the incarnation is one that he never again lays down. This perspective leads to a healthy emphasis throughout the book on the reality and goodness of creation, and on the consummation of redemption as re-creation, not the abandonment of the original divine purpose.

After an introductory chapter on the significance of the resurrection, the author moves back through the Exodus to discuss creation in covenantal terms, elucidating how covenant permeates the thought and presentation of the early chapters of Genesis. Subsequent chapters treat the Fall, the Flood, Abraham, and the Patriarchs so that the book is well advanced before one leaves Genesis. This, however, is a strength in that the foundations of the discussion are well laid by the provision of a scripturally sound theological structure. Furthermore, the author is careful throughout to assess the present relevance of each aspect of the redemptive story and to anticipate how it will reach its culmination.

In his discussion of Sinai the author again presents an elegant synthesis of the nature of covenant and of the treaty form. He then proceeds to discuss the Law, which functions not as a way of initiating a relationship with God but of nourishing it. This is contrasted with faulty modern conceptions of the nature and function of law in general, and a careful (Calvinistic) presentation is made of the role which the Law should have in the life of the believer. A chapter each is then devoted to Kingship and the

Prophets before the culmination of the covenant in Christ is dealt with. The newness of the new covenant and the time of its institution are clearly analysed in a discussion which does not hesitate to use Adam-Christ typology. The significance of the church as the Messianic community and of the eschaton as the renewal of all things form the subject matter of the closing two chapters. In discussing Matthew 24:37-41 Williams interestingly adopts the interpretation that the one who is taken experiences divine judgement and the one who is left experiences divine grace – a view which coheres with his emphasis on restoration in the eschaton.

It would be wrong to say that this book is presenting anything new, but it sets out old truths in a fresh, warm and compelling manner. The author displays a wide acquaintance with relevant literature which is judiciously evaluated. The book is therefore far more than a retelling of the biblical story but a profound and insightful commentary on it, which refuses to avoid difficulties but grapples with them in terms of scriptural parameters. There are many perceptive summaries of key theological and interpretative themes, and so the author provides an excellent introduction to biblical theology, which not only informs but also stimulates to renewed appreciation of God's covenantal, redemptive provision.

John L. Mackay, Free Church College, Edinburgh

Old Evangelicalism. Old Truths for a New Awakening

Iain H. Murray

Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 2005; xiv+226 pp., £14; ISBN: 0 85151 901 6

Iain H. Murray is well known, I suspect, to many of the readers of this publication. Mentored by Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, he was for many years associated with the Banner of Truth publishing house, of which he is a founding trustee. Over the past forty years, he has written a variety of titles published by the Banner, including a monumental biography of his mentor and biographical studies of A. W. Pink, C. H. Spurgeon and John Murray. This recent volume, a collection of papers delivered on various occasions, also has a historical focus. The papers either explicitly deal with a historical figure – for example, ‘Spurgeon and True Conversion’ (pp. 39-70) and ‘What can we learn from John Wesley?’ (pp. 135-65) – or are heavily reliant on figures and material from the past. In fact, one of Murray’s aims in writing the book is to introduce readers to Evangelical, and particularly Puritan, figures from whom they can learn the lineaments and content of biblical Christianity.

The papers tackle major issues facing English-speaking Evangelicals today – things such as: how to go about preaching for conversion and what role conviction of sin plays in it; the imputation of Christ's righteousness and how necessary is it to our understanding of the gospel; how to relate the atonement to the love of God; and what is true Christian unity. In each of the papers, much wisdom is drawn from the past, and one observes a real contrast between the Evangelicalism of past ages and that of the last hundred years or so. For instance, where much of modern Evangelicalism is questioning, even rejecting, the doctrine of Christ's imputed righteousness, Murray rightly asserts that this truth is essential to the gospel (pp. 71-100). 'In bringing forward Christ's righteousness', he writes, we 'proclaim truth which goes to the very heart of things' (p. 94).

The only major area where this reviewer had some difficulties was with Murray's take on separation from error within a denominational body ('Christian Unity and Church Unity' – in particular, pp. 207-10). He rightly urges us to take a balanced perspective on this issue, but, to this reviewer, sounds far too hesitant a note when he states, 'withdrawal from a local congregation, where the disorderly and the false teacher have power, is a biblical duty, but the duty of withdrawal from a denomination is not necessarily equally clear' (p. 208). As Spurgeon asked at the height of the Downgrade controversy, how can one remain in a theological body which is seriously compromised where to do so involves one in a confederacy with known and vital error? I am not convinced that the two bodies – the local church and the denomination – are so different that what applies to the one in this case cannot apply to the other.

Be this as it may, this is a good book, and the truths it proclaims urgently needed for our day when Evangelicalism is in a state of theological free fall and utterly unsure of its identity. Here, we have framed for us what that identity looked like in the past so as to guide readers into biblical living in the present.

Michael A. G. Haykin, Toronto Baptist Seminary, Canada

Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance

David A. deSilva

Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI, 2004; 428 pp., £16.99; ISBN 0 8010 3103 6

Most Protestant Christians, many ministers and even some Christian scholars are woefully ignorant of the Apocrypha. We may be fully persuaded that the Reformers were right in excluding these books from the

canon, but this does not mean they are of little or no value. Calvin, for instance, while viewing them as non-canonical, nevertheless knew their contents well, and Jerome, Wyclif and Luther, as well as the authors of the Thirty-Nine Articles and the translators of the Authorised Version, all recognised their usefulness. David deSilva makes it clear that although he too would not argue for their canonicity he considers them of real value. The books show the way God's people sought to bear witness to him in the tumultuous world of their day.

There are extra reasons today for knowing more about the Apocrypha. As readers of this journal will know, there has been a major attempt to re-evaluate the Judaism of New Testament times, led by E. P. Sanders. The apocryphal books give us much information about the inter-testamental period and show us some of the theological developments during that period. Whatever we may think of the work of Sanders and others of similar outlook, their views have been very influential and have considerable bearing on the interpretation of New Testament books. Strangely, this volume is silent as to this proposed re-evaluation and the names of E. P. Sanders and major scholars sharing his outlook do not appear in the author index. Nevertheless the material presented here is relevant to this issue.

This is a paperback edition of a book first published in hardback in 2002. The range of the author's scholarship is considerable, for he is at home not only in the Bible and Apocrypha, but in the Early Fathers and Greek and Roman writings generally. His style is attractive, and this makes what would otherwise have been a daunting read accessible to the reader.

There are two introductory chapters. The first deals with the value of the Apocrypha, and indicates how they were viewed by the New Testament writers, the Early Fathers and the Reformers, and how they are seen today by the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Churches. It also classifies them in a fourfold way as historiography (e.g. 1 Maccabees), Wisdom books (Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon), historical romances (e.g. Judith and Tobit) and apocalypse (2 Esdras). The second chapter gives us their historical background.

The main part of the book consists of sixteen chapters, fourteen of them focusing on one of these books while the other two deal with the Apocryphal additions to Daniel and to Esther. In each case the writer deals with such matters as structure and contents, textual transmission, author, date and setting, genre and purpose, formative influences and influence on later writings, plus the theology of each book and special issues connected with each.

There is plenty to maintain our interest as we see, for instance, how Deuteronomy's theology of history and of suffering influenced the books, and are stimulated to ponder such questions as why the Reformers had such a bad opinion of 2 Maccabees and why Esther (which does not mention God) is accepted as canonical while Judith (which constantly refers to him) is not. The so-called Prayer of Manasseh is a moving document. Undoubtedly the readers of this journal are likely to find the sections on the theology of the books the most interesting but it is important to set this in the context of the other information given.

Geoffrey Grogan, Glasgow

Paul: Pioneer for Israel's Messiah

Jakob van Bruggen (trans. Ed M. van der Maas)

P&R Publishing, Phillipsburg, NJ, 2005; xix+411 pp., £11.95; ISBN 0 87552 648 9

The author lays out his objective to give a holistic account of the life and ministry of Paul by 'adopting a positive stance toward the *totality* of the historical sources' (p. xviii). He also seeks to address the relationship between Acts 15 and Galatians 2 and the dating of the deuter Pauline letters. Thus, the book is written to provide a 'clearer perspective' on Paul and his letters that will be useful as a textbook and resource for students, scholars and church leaders. Its clear structure and smooth readability make complex issues easily accessible.

The book is divided into two main parts. The first part (chapters 1-14) reconstructs Paul's life whereas the second part (chapters 15-18) focuses on the historical development of the church in Paul's theological framework and how it relates to Israel's salvation history. Three useful essays of appendix follow the main discussion of the book. The layout does not include footnotes in the main discussion but furnishes the reader with endnotes after the appendix. The rest of the book contains endnotes, bibliography and indexes (pp. 327-411). Diagrams and maps are provided occasionally to illustrate, collaborate and vivify the line of discussion.

The reconstruction of Paul's life is based on a literal reading of the book of Acts as a historical document and a template upon which excerpts and references from the Pauline letters are incorporated to fill apparent gaps in the Luke-Acts narrative. The scope encompasses the birth to the end of Paul's life, probably in Rome. Van Bruggen argues that Saul's encounter with Jesus on the Damascus road, though marking a turning point in his life, did not make him relinquish Jewish legalism (p. 23). Apparently, Paul rather perceived his ministry as part of the fulfilment of Messianic

promises to the Jews – where the nations are grafted to participate in God’s blessings through Christ. Paul therefore began his preaching in Arabia to give Ishmael’s descendants an opportunity to participate in the blessings of God (pp. 28-32, 120). The author indicates the occasion, time and context in which Paul writes each of his letters. He claims Pauline authorship for both disputed and undisputed Pauline letters, including Colossians, Ephesians and the pastoral epistles.

The second part deals with the historical development of the church in Paul as it relates to Israel and other apostles. The author argues that Paul neither abrogated the law nor deserted the Jews. Apparently, Paul did not dissociate himself from the other apostles but regarded them as fellow workers assigned to a different audience – Paul to Gentiles and others mainly to Jews. For van Bruggen, Paul did not condemn Jewish legalism, not even in Galatians, but ‘incorrect understanding of the grace’ that is revealed through Christ. Thus, ‘in its own time and in its proper function the law was a good gift from God for the well-being of Israel’ (p. 243). Gentiles did not have to observe the law in order to be saved but the law still had ethical relevance for Jewish believers. Van Bruggen contends that Paul never became anti-Semitic, an enemy of Jewish legalism, an apostate Jew or a defected Pharisee. On the contrary, Paul constantly expressed his affinity to Israel and painted her in a positive light (p. 263). The central thesis is well summarized as: Paul, the pioneer for Israel’s Messiah, was

given the task of going to uncultivated areas and making them fruitful for the Creator... it seems as if he was a founder of a new religion, separate from the Jewish religion. But the history of his life, and his attitude towards the law and Israel make it clear that the apostle saw Christendom as a new phase in Israel’s existence (pp. 274-5).

The style and content of the book appropriately meets the level of the target readership. The first part, which is reconstruction of Paul’s life and ministry, will be particularly helpful to beginners in Pauline studies. The second part poses pertinent questions and challenges some of the tenets of the ‘new perspective’ on Paul and the law in a manner that deserves scholarly attention in the debate. His treatment of Paul and the law is thorough and quite persuasive. However, the way he dismisses germane issues in the debate of authorship of the deutero Pauline letters is simply insufficient since a substantial treatment would have made it possible for scholars to assess how his reconstruction contributes to the ongoing debate on dating and authorship of those letters. While one may disagree with some of van Bruggen’s conclusions, he successfully raises critical

questions for us to rethink why we may want to retain, amend or reconsider our current understanding of Paul's ministry and some aspects of his theology.

Daniel Darko, King's College, London

Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International and Contextual Perspective

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen

Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002; 195 pp., £9.90; ISBN 0 8010 2448 X

The Doctrine of God. A Global Introduction. A Biblical, Historical and Contemporary Survey

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen

Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI, 2004; 315 pp., £10.89; ISBN 0 8010 2752 7

Following his work on Christology, Professor Kärkkäinen of Fuller Theological Seminary has now produced two further volumes on theology, one on the person of the Holy Spirit and one on theology proper. In both cases the aim is the same: to bring divergent and influential approaches to these subjects together in volumes accessible to students of theology.

In his discussion of pneumatology, Kärkkäinen's approach is both contextual and cultural. That means not merely paying attention to classic formulations, but listening to other (mostly corrective) voices, voices which speak out of a wide pneumatological experience. Theology and experience combine, therefore, to enrich our understanding.

Kärkkäinen's discussion of the biblical doctrine of the Spirit forms one of the shortest chapters of the book, and he is in a much greater hurry to move on to ecumenical perspectives. Montanism, the Eastern Fathers, Augustine and medieval mystics are all discussed under 'the historical unfolding of the doctrine', while the discussion on ecclesiastical perspectives surveys with broad brush the traditions of Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, Pentecostalism and the Ecumenical Movement. This is followed by a 'pneumatological smorgasbord' (the phrase is Kärkkäinen's!) of theologians, including John Zizioulas, Karl Rahner, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jürgen Moltmann and Clark Pinnock.

For Kärkkäinen, this exploration is only the beginning of a new path, a new and exciting venture on the Spirit's work. Unfortunately, by the time we have begun this new quest, we have moved away from the controls of

the biblical text into an experiential and theological free-for-all. One feels that Kärkkäinen has not taken us to new heights of understanding, but into new depths of existentialism.

Much the same is true of *The Doctrine of God*. The first two chapters deal with the Old and New Testament traditions, respectively. He is to be applauded for his insistence on the biblical metaphors of divine governance, which highlight the personal character of God. These are much to be preferred to the abstractions of discussion of attributes. Welcome too is the insistence that 'the New Testament presupposes the teaching about God as explicated in the Old Testament' (p. 37). This cannot be stressed enough in an age which tends to assume that the New Testament is talking about some deity other than that of the Jews.

The second part deals with classic theistic traditions in patristics, medieval theology, Reformed theology and modern theology. Kärkkäinen provides a fair summary, but concludes that the common fault in classic theism has been a lack of contextualisation. This is remedied, apparently, by the theologians cited in the following four sections, dealing, respectively, with contemporary European theologians (including Barth, Tillich, Küng, Moltmann and Hick), North American thought in dialogue with the classical formulation (including process theology and open theism), North American thought emphasising the need to contextualise (including African-American and feminist theologies), and non-Western perspectives (including African and Asian theologies).

The whole work is, like *Pneumatology*, a tour de force, summarising diverse and influential thinkers, and setting the discussion in a broad context. These are books to which one ought to turn to survey the lie of the land. They mark the developments of thought and the richness of the dialogue. But the discussions move quickly from their biblical moorings, and are too quick to fault the classic formulations for being time-bound and archaic. I am not so sure, however, that they leave me lost in wonder, love and praise, delighting in God and worshipping him. They leave me amazed that so many have been so quick to re-create him in the image of their secular context; and I wonder if the net result is a God so small that we can fit him in any of our boxes. I want a discussion that leaves me crying out 'Oh, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and knowledge of God!' It's not what I say after reading Kärkkäinen.

Iain D. Campbell, Back Free Church, Isle of Lewis

Created For Worship. From Genesis to Revelation to You

Noel Due

CFP Mentor, Fearn, Ross-shire, 2005; 310 pp., £10.99; ISBN 1 84550 0261

This recent addition to the Mentor series is subtitled *From Genesis to Revelation to You* and, in many respects, that sums up the book. It is essentially a consideration of the subject of worship throughout the whole Bible. It is scholarly, detailed and immensely thought-provoking. It is evident from the extensive bibliography and the many notes that the author has researched the subject thoroughly, and it is correctly referred to by David Jackman as a 'tour de force of Biblical theology'.

Certain themes develop as the book progresses with Due regularly emphasising his conviction that 'worship lies at the heart of true human identity and vocation. It is not something that can be confined to one particular venue or time (e.g. the sanctuary between 11.00 and 12.00 on Sunday)' (p. 34).

The section on Abraham and Isaac at Mount Moriah and the portions dealing with 'The worship which Christ offers' and 'The worship offered to Jesus' were insightful and fresh. Due also reflects throughout this volume, but most particularly towards the close, on the eschatological dimensions of worship. It was encouraging to read of the author's irritation with worship leaders who welcome people into the house of God: 'At best the worship leader may welcome the house of God into the building in which they are meeting!' (p. 234).

The present reviewer was filled with admiration for the scholarship which characterised this volume and recognises that as part of the Mentor series it is designed for the more serious student of the Scriptures. However, the very contemporary cover did convey the impression that this was a much more popular volume than is in fact the case, and some who consult this book will be disappointed by how little engagement there is with the current ongoing debate on worship. The author himself recognises this in his brief applicatory chapter at the close of the book in which he states: 'There are many areas in which further reflection is needed, some of which may appear in another volume' (p. 230). The appearance of this companion volume would greatly enhance the usefulness of *Created for Worship*. Having laid an excellent biblical foundation in this work, a rigorous application of these scriptural principles to the current debate on worship would be greatly valued by those seeking to make sense of the 'Worship Wars'.

Gareth Burke, Stranmillis Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Belfast

Perspectives on an Evolving Creation

Keith B. Miller (ed.)

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 2003; 528 pp., £20; ISBN 0 8028 0512 4

In seeking to be faithful to the 'two books' of revelation and nature, a key issue in engaging with the secular world is whether Darwinism and atheism can be separated. This multi-disciplinary volume of essays, edited by a palaeontologist from Kansas State University, maintains that they can. It presents a wealth of argumentation from geology, biology, theology and philosophy to make a strong case for theistic evolution. Whether or not that case is ultimately persuasive is more debatable.

In the introductory chapter the editor maintains that the 'evolving creation' of the book's title is a 'fruitful insight' rather than an 'oxymoron'. For Miller, 'the explanatory and predictive power of evolutionary theory' means that evangelical Christians '*must* [emphasis added]... pursue the integration of an evolutionary understanding... with theological understandings of God's creative and redemptive activity' (p. 14). This sets the tone of the volume but is surely too dogmatic. Well-qualified critics of evolutionary theory, such as Professor Phil Skell of the US National Academy of Sciences, have argued cogently that reports of evolution's explanatory and predictive power have been greatly exaggerated.

The volume is divided into 21 chapters grouped into three sections, headed 'providing a context', 'scientific evidence and theory' and 'theological implications and insights'. There are helpful devotional excursions throughout. In the first section the chapter by Mark A. Noll and David Livingstone on Hodge and Warfield and their respective reactions to Darwin is particularly illuminating. On the face of it, Hodge rejected Darwin's theory as 'atheism' while Warfield seemed more accepting. But the authors' careful reading of context and terminology shows that the respective positions of the Princeton men were in fact very close. Significantly, both rejected the ateleological emphasis of Darwin's theory – which with the advent of the modern 'intelligent design' movement is the very aspect that is still most controversial today.

Section II consists of 8 chapters on scientific evidence and theory, with chapters on cosmology, paleontology, anthropology and biochemistry. The cosmology chapter by Deborah Haarsma and Jennifer Wiseman is thrilling and relatively accessible. Elsewhere in the section the detail presented may seem overwhelming to the non-specialist, but there is no need to think that evolutionary conclusions of the authors are demanded by the evidence. The accepted preservation rate of fossils of only 0.1%, calculated on the evolutionary assumption that the others must have existed, means that a

highly ambitious theory is being built with 99.9% of the purported evidence missing! The chapter on biochemistry makes only a passing reference to non-Darwinist Behe's carefully-argued work on irreducible complexity and makes no mention of the answers he has given to his vociferous critics.

The final section on theological implications contains chapters on themes as varied as providence and chance, animal pain, the environment, original sin, and the cross. While there are some valuable insights here, the insistence that evolution must be true will limit the value of the essays for those who do not accept the premise. Of course God could have done his creating using evolution. The question is whether the evidence itself is so strong as to demand our acceptance that he did.

Alistair Donald, New Deer, Aberdeenshire

Mission Implausible. Restoring Credibility to the Church

Duncan MacLaren

Paternoster Press/Authentic Media, Milton Keynes, 2004; 209 pp., £15.99; ISBN 1 84227 295 0

Duncan MacLaren, Associate Rector of St Paul's and St George's Episcopal Church, Edinburgh, has written a very passionate account of the situation and decline of today's church in Britain, and how that crisis can be addressed. His starting point takes issue with Calum Brown's thesis in *The Death of Christian Britain*. 1963 is not the start of our problems, nor is the current malaise of the church's own making. Rather, 'the long-standing tradition of sociological thinking about religious change provides a far more complete account of religious decline'.

The problem for us today is that the church has lost credibility and it is the restoration of that credibility that is key to our missionary effectiveness. MacLaren identifies the causes of lost credibility in part one, titled 'The Rise of Incredulity', from the standpoints of the history of ideas and the impact of changing social processes and social institutions. The latter shows us how secularisation has been brought into the mainstream of life and therefore it is no surprise that the church has felt the impact of secularisation.

However, all is not lost: part two, 'The Dynamics of Credibility', begins with outlining eleven scenarios where sociologists identify religion to be holding its own or growing. MacLaren then looks at why these succeed, the key being how their inner credibility is constructed and maintained. MacLaren himself is convinced that Christianity is objectively true, and has far better credentials that its lack of credibility would lead us

to suspect. Which is why all is not lost – by rebuilding the right conditions to enhance its credibility, the truth and worth of Christianity will be seen. He looks at how beliefs achieve and maintain plausibility and identifies key ways to maintain religious world view: by constructing plausibility structures, through maintaining socialisation and conversations to put beliefs in the mainstream, and through cognitive defences, asserting the worth of particular beliefs and showing the flaws in alternatives.

It is often thought that the church must adopt one of two strategies: that of stressing her distinctiveness and being somewhat withdrawn from the world, or allowing religion and culture to interpenetrate. Christendom, which MacLaren regards as somewhat successful in its time, is an example of the latter. However, today a third strategy is needed: what he calls ‘the significance strategy’. This lies between resistance and accommodation, and creates plausibility for belief and social strategies to support such plausibility. It does so by addressing the shared values and norms that remain in contemporary society, by winning the competition for attention, and by building on the public relevance so achieved. It can be done – he claims it has been done before – and chapter eight is a description of how the Columban Church successfully adopted this strategy.

Some may regard the reliance on sociological analysis as too worldly. MacLaren is aware of the criticism and ends with a defence of his approach. Christians are social beings, churches social institutions and so can be looked at with the tools of social sciences. It is a valid perspective but only one perspective. Of course, the working of God in and through the church and in the world must be taken into account. The book does not replace the need for prophets, pastors and theologians, but is ‘offered to them to flesh out a missiological practice capable of restoring credibility to the church’. And a valuable offering it is too. It is not very easy reading, the material being quite densely packed, and MacLaren’s familiarity with sociology might not be shared by the reader. Nevertheless it is certainly worth persevering for a rigorous and thought-provoking analysis which challenges a number of ‘flavour of the month’ approaches – Calum Brown’s I mentioned – but also words of warning for the emerging church movement, for those dismissing Christendom as an entirely bad thing, for those who see church decline as an indication of the church’s shortcomings.

MacLaren takes time out from the detail of the argument, in chapter six, to discuss particular steps and strategies that could and should be taken – points such as using small groups, youth and children’s work, adult education, building belief structures, and re-enchanting the world, i.e. the fact that what happens in corporate worship seems unreal to the rest of life

not because what we do there is wrong or irrelevant but because seeing and tasting God has been driven out of daily living.

There is a great deal here to challenge and inspire. This is one of the best books I have read in the last few years. He made me rethink in a number of areas and even if, like me, you might not be ready to swallow all the arguments here, engaging with this book's thrusts will be of enormous benefit.

Gordon R. Palmer, East Kilbride

Contending for Our All: Defending Truth and Treasuring Christ in the Lives of Athanasius, John Owen, and J. Gresham Machen

John Piper

IVP, Leicester, 2006; 186 pp., £8.99; ISBN 978 1 84474 135 9

Charles H. Spurgeon once said, 'Controversy is never a very happy element for the child of God: he would rather be in communion with the Lord than be engaged in defending the faith.' Such is the tenor of this fourth and latest instalment in 'The Swans Are Not Silent' series. Each of these volumes originated as biographical addresses given by Piper at The Bethlehem Conference for Pastors in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The derivation of the book lends to its devotional and hortative style. Piper does not attempt to provide a dispassionate, comprehensive intellectual biography of his subjects. Rather, his method is to present three biographical portraits unified by a single pastoral point: 'some controversy is crucial for the sake of life-giving truth' (p. 17).

Piper's introduction discusses the twin dangers of pride and cowardice in the face of controversy. Pride results from revelling in controversy, where cowardice runs from it. If 'gospel-defining, gospel-defending' controversy (pp. 18, 19) is necessary, humility must be in order. However, 'Humility loves Christ-exalting exultation more than Christ-defending confrontation' (p. 17). At this point, a brief definition of controversy and discussion of when it *is* necessary may have been helpful. Nevertheless, Piper suggests that controversy is crucial when 'our all' is at stake, echoing the words of Athanasius, 'Considering that *this struggle is for our all...* let us also make it our earnest care and aim to guard what we have received' (pp. 20, 58, emphasis original). The implication is that when essential elements of the gospel are jeopardized, controversy is not simply inevitable but necessary. Contrary to the opinion that the church will not prosper amidst controversy, Piper argues from both the witness of history and Scripture to the vital though painful place of controversy for the expansion and

fortification of the church. In short, without doctrine-clarifying controversy, there would be no New Testament, no gospel, and no church (pp. 33, 23).

Three biographical chapters form the centre of the book and follow a general pattern: overview of the individual's life and teaching appended by observations for the church today. Each voice is given a platform to speak as chapters are filled with ample quotations from primary sources. Far from being anachronistic or antiquated, Piper successfully laces select citations with sufficient contextual commentary to give the reader an adequate sense of the historical setting before extrapolating practical application.

Piper's analysis of Athanasius (298-373) *contra mundum* is perhaps the best chapter. While rightly highlighting the fundamental importance of the incarnation in Athanasius's theology, Piper does not fall into the central-dogma trap of suggesting it is *the* controlling doctrine by also noting the emphasis Athanasius places upon substitutionary atonement as the 'especial cause' of the incarnation (pp. 60-3). His discussion on the relationship of deification and glorification is also a sympathetic reading of Athanasius and will surely provoke thought. Next, Piper provides an overview of Owen's life (1616-1683) and helpfully conveys the scope and solemnity of his ministry. His discussion focuses on two well-known themes of Owen's: personal holiness and communion with God. Unlike the chapters on Athanasius and Machen, no extended life-lessons section is provided. Lastly, Piper's examination of Machen (1881-1937) is the most critical but concludes that 'God uses men who are persistently flawed' (p. 154). He ably summarizes Machen's battle with modernity on the one hand and his reluctance to align himself with fundamentalism on the other. Piper's warning against the dangers of doctrinal 'indifferentism' in preaching and teaching evidences his ability to intermingle historical analysis with penetrating application (p. 141). The book concludes with an insightful exposition on the relationship of truth and love and an earnest prayer in times of controversy.

Contending for Our All is Christian biography with a purpose. Readers will not only discover their interest piqued in this bishop, pastor, and professor, but will be emboldened to join them in contending for the faith once delivered to all the saints.

John W. Tweeddale, New College, University of Edinburgh

The Search for a Common Identity: The Origins of the Baptist Union of Scotland 1800-1870

Brian R. Talbot

Volume 9, Studies in Baptist History and Thought

Paternoster, Milton Keynes, 2003; xviii+402 pp., £24.99; ISBN 1 84227 123 7.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, there were four strands of Baptist life in Scotland. This monograph admirably disentangles the threads of their diversity and traces the slow path to the formation of the first enduring Baptist Union of Scotland in 1869.

At the start of the century, there were about four hundred Scotch Baptists, with about one thousand adherents. Others, known as English Baptists, had one-tenth of these numbers. 'English' and 'Scotch' had no racial or nationalist meaning in this context, but indicated differences in church practice; one example was in leadership – English churches had a salaried minister, Scotch Baptists were led by unpaid elders acting as co-pastors.

A third strand emerged in 1808, when Robert and James Haldane, who had built up a network of Independent churches in many parts of Scotland, accepted Baptist principles. Within 20 years, there were 16 'Haldenite' Baptist churches. The fourth strand developed in the 1840s, reacting against the Calvinism of the other three groups, and teaching that Christ died for all.

Chapter 1 outlines the areas to be explored, and gives a helpful – and rightly critical – review of two dozen earlier monographs and articles. Chapter 2 analyses the contribution of the Scotch Baptists; chapter 3 covers the Haldenites; chapter 4 deals with the growing significance of the English Baptists. Chapters 5 to 8 explore early attempts to bring the bodies together, through the Baptist Home Missionary Society (Chapter 5), the short-lived Union of 1827 (Chapter 6), and the second Union of 1843 (Chapter 7). The formation of the enduring Union of 1869 is explained in chapter 8, and the final chapter draws conclusions.

The text is easy on the eye and well laid out; the subheadings are useful signposts, and there is an excellent bibliography and index. There are numerous footnotes, both citing sources and cross-referencing to chapters and pages of the book (especially useful with a complex subject).

Grasping the overall picture is not made easier by the author's assertion, twice in the introductory chapter, that there were three (not two) attempts to bring Scottish Baptists together prior to 1869 (pp. 5, 22). Only slowly did it dawn on this reviewer that an approach by one

Edinburgh church to another, in 1806, was being treated as 'the first attempt to promote union amongst Baptist churches of different ecclesiologies' (p. 141). Much to be preferred are the opening words of Chapter 6: 'The first attempt to promote the case for closer association amongst Scottish Baptist churches took place in March 1827' (p. 191).

Readers who bought this book when it was first published in 2003 may wonder why there is no mention here of some obvious printing errors, items that the author had marked but which were not picked up; they have been corrected in the print-run now on sale. Which is which? The original printing has the publishers' Carlisle address, and the current one has their address in Milton Keynes.

A few minor errors still offend the eye, such as abbreviating the Scotch Itinerant Society to SIS and S.I.S. in the same paragraph (p. 192). Words and numerals are used inconsistently throughout the book, sometimes in the same paragraph; on the first page, for example: English Baptists had 'up to one hundred hearers and the Scotch Baptists around 400 members'.

These are minor niggles; this is a major addition to the Paternoster series. Non-Scots will find useful references to wider (chiefly English) dimensions as the four disparate groups of Scottish Baptists overcame differences of practice and of theology and came together.

Ian L. S. Balfour, Edinburgh

John

Andreas J. Köstenberger

Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI, 2004; xx+699 pp., £31.50; ISBN 0 8010 2644 X

Like the man who was so impressed with the electric razor which his wife had bought him that he bought the company, the reviewer was so impressed with this commentary on John, that he bought the whole available eight volumes of New Testament Commentaries in the Bible Exegetical series.

In the commentary on John's Gospel we have an example of evangelical scholarship at its best. Köstenberger has read extremely widely and in great depth, taking ten years to prepare it. There are ninety-seven pages of references, some double, some triple, some quadruple columned, containing works cited, and indices of subjects, authors, Greek words, Scripture and other ancient writings.

The commentary works through the Gospel passage by passage, each one preceded by a short introduction followed with verse by verse

exposition of the author's own translation. Still more information is divulged by extensive use of footnotes, and additional notes at the end of each section.

Köstenberger admits the contention that it is impossible to come to the text without presuppositions of one's own theological tradition, personal experience, and understanding of biblical authority. He argues, however, that it can be an advantage to approach it with an active born-again faith in Jesus Christ, the enabling work of the Holy Spirit, and pursuing thorough and careful exegesis with openness to the findings of others of different traditions. In this way he believes that a reading can be unfolded which conforms most closely to the author's intended message. John's original audience consisted of Diaspora Jews and proselytes but he most likely envisaged an ultimate universal readership.

Köstenberger admits to a very high doctrine of Scripture which leads him to accept the Johannine authorship, despite the assaults of post-enlightenment German theologians, and the widely-held view that the Gospel was written by the Christian Jewish 'Johannine Community'. He maintains that to hold that St John the apostle was the author is as plausible as any other argument, but that all opinions should remain on the table without undue dogmatism by any party. The Gospel seems to have been written at the end of the first century when John was a very old man. If he *were* the author of the Gospel it is unlikely that he did not know of the synoptic Gospels but did not use them extensively. This Gospel was recognised as canonical by the end of the second century.

Between the prologue (1:1-18) and the epilogue (21:1-25) Köstenberger sees the Gospel as being divided into two parts, 'The Book of Signs', seven signs offered as an aid to faith, and 'The Book of Glory', Jesus' preparation of the new Messianic community.

'John's favourite designation for Jesus', Köstenberger argues, 'is that of the Son *sent* by the Father.' His mission in turn is to prepare the new worldwide missionary community. The old Jewish community is now redundant. Jews may enter the new community but only by faith like everyone else.

Köstenberger sums up: 'From the majestic prologue to the probing epilogue, the evangelist's words are as carefully chosen as they must be thoughtfully pondered by every reader of his [John's] magnificent work.'

Peter Cook, Alston, Cumbria

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