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AD FONTES

A JOURNAL OF PROTESTANT LETTERS

JOEL R. BEEKE

Calvin's Sermons on Job

LAYNE HANCOCK

Understanding Liberal Theology: An Interview with Gary Dorrien

AARON EDWARDS

Why the Church Needs Kierkegaard

Also featuring: Matthew Colvin on Paul and divination, Brad Littlejohn on Reformation political theology, and more

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About

AD FONTES IS A QUARTERLY JOURNAL PUBLISHED BY THE DAVENANT INSTITUTE.

Ad fontes, “to the sources,” was a rallying cry of the Reformation. The Reformers bequeathed to us a heritage, rooted in the Scriptures and their wide-ranging humanistic studies, which sought to address the hard questions of theology, philosophy, and culture in a way that was true to the revelation of God’s word and God’s world. *Ad Fontes* channels this ethos into a modern context, seeking to explore our questions alongside the great cloud of witnesses and the many exemplars who have gone before us.

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From the Editor's Desk

Recently, I have gone back to reading C.H. Spurgeon's *Morning and Evening*. It is one of the classic evangelical devotional texts—and with good reason. In general, as my wife will tell you, I have a shoddy memory when it comes to sensory details (although I am infinitely better with names than her), but I remember very clearly picking up that tall, slim little volume, bound in two-tone brown faux-leather with its embossed lettering and gold leaf pages. To a precocious evangelical teen scouring the bookstall at a Christian conference, it screamed antiquity and authority, like some artifact out of *Indiana Jones*. I'd heard him quoted many times in the pulpit, but now it seemed time to engage A Big Name for myself. I remember showing my uncle my purchase, and his disappointment that I'd bought it—he said he'd always planned to buy it for me as a gift when I got married, to read with my future wife.

I'll confess, though, that I went off Spurgeon after a while. I imagine that, like many readers, his ubiquitous presence in my younger days made me all the more ready to ditch him when I went in search of deeper roots for my Protestant faith—ironic, given what attracted me to that little devotional book in the first place. The intense focus on the affections by a great

evangelical preacher like Spurgeon began to smack too much of the anxious bench. And, I'll confess, he began to feel a bit lowbrow. In various book purges though, I could never quite bring myself to do any Spurgeon purging.

Necessity, in part, drew me back. With a young family, personal time to spend meditating on the Scriptures is at a premium for me. And so, a few weeks ago, I blew the dust off *Morning and Evening*, and found myself back in devotions I had last read over ten years ago. And one hit me right between the eyes, a meditation on Hosea 7:8: "Ephraim is a cake not turned." Spurgeon writes:

"A cake not turned is soon burnt on the side nearest the fire, and although no man can have too much religion, there are some who seem burnt black with bigoted zeal for that part of truth which they have received, or are charred to a cinder with a vainglorious Pharisaic ostentation of those religious performances which suit their humour."

I won't disclose to you what personal application I made of this. But Spurgeon's words also put me in

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mind of the work of the Davenant Institute and *Ad Fontes*.

We are seeking nothing less here than the renewal of Christian wisdom, and one reason such wisdom begs renewing is that so many of those who should have safeguarded our wisdom have become cakes not turned. The fragmentation and over-specialization that marks so much of the modern university and intelligentsia is as alive and well within Reformed and evangelical Christianity as it is anywhere else. Biblical studies and dogmatics shuffle awkwardly past one another in the corridor; church historians and professors of Christian thought make awkward cups of coffee in silence in the common room; political theologians and teachers of homiletics avoid eye contact in the canteen. One does not have to sniff hard to smell those cakes burning on the one side.

At Davenant, and in the pages of *Ad Fontes*, we strive to be cakes turned. Scripture tells us that Wisdom's house has seven pillars (Prov. 9:1), not one, and so Christian wisdom will only be renewed if we embrace it sevenfold—that is, in all its fullness. This Summer 2023 edition of *Ad Fontes* does this, if I may say so, with gusto, taking in church history, philosophy, social ethics, biblical studies, sermons, and politics.

In our opening essay, Mark Earngy delivers a fine-grained study of a now forgotten document of the English Reformation—one so influential it may even be regarded as a lost Anglican formulary. We then move forward several centuries to Adam E. Peterson's comparison of how Charles Hodge and Francis Grimké applied their Old Princetonian theology to questions

of race. Aaron Edwards then makes the surprising case for why the church needs the seemingly anti-ecclesial Kierkegaard, before Layne Hancock sits down to grapple with one of the most important liberal theologians of recent decades.

In our reviews section, we are honored to have the esteemed Joel R. Beeke reviewing a new landmark translation of John Calvin's *Sermons on Job*. The irascible Matt Colvin then unleashes his trademark combination of classical and Hebraic *nous* on a recent volume on the Apostle Paul. Finally, Brad Littlejohn closes us out in his regular President's review, assessing a recent addition to the growing wave of literature on Reformation political theology.

Along the way, for moments of contemplation, we are glad as ever to feature original poetry, this time from Donald Williams, Benjamin Phillips, and J.A. Gray.

Modern academia has brought immense gifts with it—not least of all unparalleled abilities to catalog, survey, assess, and compare. But this does not add up to wisdom—especially when we all become rather too interested in the bean-counting of our field-specific facts. T.S. Eliot famously asked “Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?” Our ambition for *Ad Fontes* is that we can confidently answer: “here.”

May we never be a cake not turned.

Rhys Laverty
Senior Editor

John Ponet's *Short Catechisme*: A Neglected Formulary?¹

MARK EARNGEY

A CATECHISM AMONG THE FORMULARIES?

What is Anglican doctrine? This question has prompted numerous debates and publications over the last five hundred years. Readers will be glad to know that this essay does not seek to resolve the matter. However, in what follows, I do want to suggest that John Ponet's *Short Catechisme* (1553)—a little-known document written by a now little-known English Reformer—is essential for comprehending the theological roots of Reformation Anglicanism.² Despite most readers likely never having heard of it, the catechism was written by one of the leading English Reformers at the height of the Edwardian church. In its day, it possessed an extraordinary degree of intellectual, ecclesiastical, and political authority, and it provides an informative window into the official theological stance of the Church of England at the end of Edward VI's reign. A fresh

look at this neglected document will prompt us to ask: should the *Short Catechisme* be considered a neglected Anglican formulary?

JOHN PONET AND ORIGINS OF THE SHORT CATECHISME

Born in Kent in 1516 and dying in Strasbourg in 1556, John Ponet lived during the exact forty years in which, according to Sir Marcus Loane, “the English Reformation was cradled and nurtured for the glory of God.”³ Ponet embodied these exciting years of evangelical progress. He was one of the leading intellectuals in his generation at the University of Cambridge, alongside Thomas Smith and John Cheke (two similarly neglected figures). Ponet shortly thereafter became chaplain to Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and King Henry VIII. Under Edward VI, he was rapidly promoted to the bishopric of Rochester before being elevated to the important see of Winchester, where he worked closely with Nicholas Ridley in London and

1. This essay is a lightly modified version of the article which goes by the same name in *Reformation Anglicanism: Essays in Edwardian Evangelicalism* (London: Latimer Trust, 2023). Republished with permission.

2. The entire catechism is printed at the Appendix of the abovementioned Latimer Trust publication.

3. Marcus Loane, *Masters of the English Reformation* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2005 [repr. 1954]), xvii

PONET WAS CRANMER'S FAITHFUL ACHATES, WHO ALWAYS PROVIDED HIM WITH EXCELLENT ADVICE IN THEOLOGICAL MATTERS.

Cranmer in Canterbury. After the accession of Queen Mary and his subsequent ejection from Winchester, he was intimately involved in Wyatt's Rebellion, and afterwards went into exile in Strasbourg, where he died the most senior ranking clergyman among the English exiles. Throughout his lifetime he advanced the study of Greek linguistics, made marvellous astronomical devices, actively promoted evangelical reform among his dioceses, and authored important theological treatises. At the apex of the Edwardian Reformation, he was the youngest among Cranmer's bench of bishops (in fact, he was the youngest Tudor bishop, period) and he was one of the most important intellectuals among the English Reformers. Indeed, according to John Bale, he was the Archbishop's faithful *Achates*, who always provided him with excellent advice in theological matters. At heart, Ponet was an educator. After completing his B.A. at Queens' College, Cambridge, he was elected fellow (1532), and after a short stint teaching philosophy, he assumed one of the university's most important teaching positions: University Greek Lecturer. Indeed, this was a plum position for the aspiring humanist scholars of Cambridge during the late 1530s, first held by Nicholas Ridley before being assumed by Ponet from 1537 until 1541.⁴ From this position Ponet enthusiastically taught the "New Pronunciation" of the Greek language, which he, Thomas Smith, and John Cheke had recently developed and disseminated through lectures and dramatic performances of Greek comedies and tragedies. This discovery—a symbol of the "New Learning"—was rapidly absorbed by the eager Cambridge evangelical tribe, which included such future luminaries as William Cecil, James Pilkington, John Aylmer, Walter and James Haddon, Edwin Sandys, and Edmund Grindal, a number of whom Ponet would teach, alongside Peter Martyr Vermigli and

Jerome Zanchi, at the end of his life during exile in Strassburg.

In the 1540s, Ponet was recruited by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, and though he was thoroughly preoccupied with ministerial duties, he did not lose his enthusiasm for the theological education of students. During Lent 1550, this enthusiasm was evident during a sermon preached before the King and Privy Council at Westminster. Ponet's subject was the Lord's Supper, and after a lengthy exposition of the Scriptural teaching on the sacrament, he detailed a number of strategies to combat the "setting up again of the doctrine and kingdom of the Romish Antichrist." Ponet dedicated the most space to the education of youth in the schools throughout the country. "Oh what hurt these popish Schoolmaster doth," preached Ponet; "They will scarcely suffer any good doctrine to be talked on in their Schools....They mar all, most noble prince, poisoning the children's ears with popery in their youth." And with that, Ponet turned, and petitioned King Edward directly:

For redress whereof I would wish (most noble prince) that there might be a Catechism made in the Latten tongue, which should be read by commandment in all grammar Schools throughout your noble realm, and so should the brood of this most noble realm, not be brought so popishly up as they be....The good education of them in true religion, shall be a fortress to all your graces proceedings. The evil education of that brood of England in popery and superstition shall in conclusion be an overthrow to all your graces most godly proceedings. Wherefore for God's love and the wealth of this your realm most noble prince. I wish that they should be remembered.⁵

4. In 1538 this position was held by Roger Ascham, while Ponet—as Senior Bursar—attended to the acquisition of the adjacent Carmelite friary (former home to John Bale) and also taught Greek to the students of Queens' College.

5. John Ponet, *A notable sermon concerninge the ryght vse of the lordes supper and other thynges very profitable for all men to knowe ...* (London: Mierdman for Gwalter Lynne, 1550), RSTC 20177, Gi^v-iii^f.

Taking their cues from scriptural injunctions to teach the young, the Reformers of the Church of England made concerted catechetical efforts to nurture the renewed faith. Indeed, the years from the 1530s through to 1553 witnessed what Philippa Tudor has described as “an ambitious programme of religious instruction for children and adolescents...planned on a nation-wide basis in England.”⁶ The ambition for catechetical instruction during the reign of Edward VI, in particular, is evident from the various authors and styles of catechisms produced. These catechisms—just as with the Primers and Catechisms of the pre-Reformation Church—uniformly expounded the Decalogue, the Apostles’ Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer. What set these Edwardian catechisms apart was the Reformational content, often involving lengthy expositions. Edmund Allen’s different catechisms are a good example of this variety: his evangelical productions of 1548, 1550, and 1551 varied in length and complexity, but they traversed the same three theological building blocks, using the typical “master” and “scholar” form of question and answer:⁷

M: Why do we call him Jesus?

S: Because he is an helper and saviour, which saveth and helpeth the children of god from sin and from all kind of evil.

M: Why do we call him Christ?

S: Because he is the anointed king of God, which governeth the children of God unto everlasting life.⁸

Archbishop Cranmer himself prioritised the catechising of youth and published an extensive catechism in 1548, the *Catechismus*, which the occasional historian has confused with the catechism mentioned by Cranmer in his 1555 examination. In fact, that later version referred to by the archbishop under duress was Ponet’s newly minted *Catechisme*. In his prefatory dedication

to Edward VI, he declared his desire that, “the youth & tender age of your loving subjects, may be brought up and traded in the truth of God’s holy word.”⁹ This *Catechismus* was largely Thomas Becon’s translation from Justus Jonas’ German catechism, and unfortunately contained some embarrassing Lutheran aspects of eucharistic theology which would later haunt the now-Reformed Archbishop. Cranmer’s more determined program for catechesis was set forth in the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer*, which contained a rubric stating that curates ought to catechize candidates for confirmation at least once every six weeks (this became a weekly catechism class under the 1552 revision of the Prayer Book). These catechetical instructions could be regulated through use of episcopal visitation articles which examined clergy on their adherence to the Prayer Book, for example:

Norwich (1549): Item, whether once in six weeks at the least your ministers do hear some children say the Catechism openly in the church of the holy-day at afternoon before Evensong.¹⁰

Lincoln (1552): Whether your curate once in six weeks at the least upon some Sunday or Holy Day before Evensong do openly in the church instruct and examine children not confirmed, in some parts of the catechism.¹¹

Gloucester & Worcester (1552): Item, that the Catechism be read and taught unto the children every Sunday and festival day in the year, at one or two of the clock after dinner, and that they may be thereof duly examined one after another by order; and that all other elder people be commanded to be present at the same.¹²

6. Philippa Tudor, ‘Religious Instruction for Children and Adolescents in the Early English Reformation’, *JEH* 3/35 (1984): 391-392; see also, Ian M. Green, *The Christian’s ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England c. 1530-1740* (Oxford, 1996): 59-60.

7. Edmund Allen, *A catechisme, that is to saie, a familiar introduccion and trayning of the simple* ... (London, 1548), RSTC 359; *A shorte catechisme A briefe and godly bringinge vp of youth* ... (Zürich, 1550), RSTC 361; *A cathechisme that is to say a christen instruccion* ... (London, 1551), RSTC 360.

8. Allen, *A catechisme*, f.iii^r-v.

9. Thomas Cranmer, *Catechismus, that is to say, a shorte instruction into Christian religion* ... (London, 1548), RSTC 5993, (?), iii^r.

10. Church of England, *Articles to be inquired of in the visitation to be had in the byshopricke of Norwiche* (London: Wolfe, 1549), RSTC 10285, sig. A.iv^r.

11. Church of England, *Articles to be enquired of, in the visitacion, of the ryght reuerende father in God, Ioh[a]n Bysshop of Lyncol[n]n* (London: Wyer, 1552), RSTC 10228, sigs. A.iii^v-A.iv^r.

12. Charles Nevins (ed.), *Later Writings of Bishop Hooper* (Cambridge: CUP, 1852), 126.

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John Ponet was an enthusiastic advocate for Cranmer's catechetical vision, and during his episcopal ministry at Winchester he made heavy use of the consistory courts for the prosecution of catechetical negligence. Though we have lost the visitation articles, John Bale's description of the "Winchester sessions" throughout 1551-1552 details their extensive and intensive nature, and indicates that they were almost as comprehensive as John Hooper's use of the consistory court in Gloucester.¹³ However, one of the major differences between Hooper's and Ponet's use of the church courts during this same period (1551-1553) is that whereas Hooper's comprehensive examinations appear not to have focused upon catechesis, Ponet's less comprehensive examinations do.¹⁴

**PONET CALLED FOR A ROYALLY
ENFORCED LATIN CATECHISM FOR
EVERY SINGLE GRAMMAR SCHOOL
IN THE REALM.**

All of this is to say that Ponet was a serious supporter of catechetical ministry, and his request to King Edward during the Lenten sermon of 1550 must be read in that context. But what is striking about Ponet's sermonic supplication was the call for a royally enforced Latin catechism for every single grammar school in the realm. There had been royally approved catechisms before, and there had been catechisms used in grammar schools also, but nothing of this rigour and scale had ever been attempted during the English Reformation.

As a short postscript to this point, it is worth noting the historiographical tradition that refers to this catechism as *King Edward's Catechism of 1553*.¹⁵ This ascription of the catechism to King Edward rather than

John Ponet rightly captures the significance of the *Short Catechisme*. However, it wrongly assumes that while the Bishop of Winchester was the driving force behind the catechism, there are insufficient grounds to prove his authorship of the same. The flaw behind this position lies in its overreliance upon secondary sources, rather than original documentation. There is clear evidence of Ponet's authorship in the State Papers held at the National Archives, various manuscripts in the British Library, the *Greyfriars Chronicle*, the *Stationers' Register*, and even in Sir John Cheke's enthusiastic letter to Heinrich Bullinger shortly after its publication: "[the King] has lately recommended to the schools by his authority the catechism of John, bishop of Winchester."¹⁶

THE CREATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE SHORT CATECHISME

Though Ponet raised the idea in 1550, the *Short Catechisme* was only published around May 1553. However, it was not simply his energetic efforts, nor the King's will, which brought the *Short Catechisme* into being. Its creation was a complex process, and understanding its twists and turns is important for our understanding of its authority.

Who else was involved in its production besides Ponet and the King? Firstly, the King's own printed prefatory note reveals that it was debated and diligently examined by "certain Bishops, and other learned men, whose judgement we have in great estimation."¹⁷ So, in addition to Ponet and the King, we now have unnamed bishops and learned men—probably Cranmer, Ridley, Vermigli, and others—involved in its production. Secondly, in a letter to William Cecil, dated 7 September 1552, Lord President Northumberland revealed that after "great labour and travail," Ponet had completed both Latin and English versions of the catechism,

13. John Bale, *An Expostulation or Complaynte agaynste the Blasphemyes of a Franticke Papyist of Hamsbyre* (London, 1552), RSTC 1294. Compare the summary above, with Barrett Beer's summary of Hooper's activity in Gloucester as described in 'Episcopacy and Reform', 242-244

14. See F. D. Price, 'Gloucester Diocese under Bishop Hooper, 1551-3', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 60 (1938): 51-151.

15. J. Ketley (ed.), *The Two Liturgies, with other Documents Set Forth by Authority in the Reign of King Edward VI* (Cambridge, 1844).

16. Lord President Northumberland to William Cecil, 7 September 1552: "After my hertie commendacions, for asmoche as the byschope of winchester hath taken grete labor and travaylle partlie at my requeste to sette forthe a Catechisme bothe in Lattyne and englishe, for the better erudition of lerners and schollers, aswelle in grammar scolles as others", TNA SP 10/15, 5⁵; John Cheke to Heinrich Bullinger, 7 June 1553, *OL* 1:150. See below for further explicit references to Ponet's authorship.

17. *Short Catechisme*, A.ii^v.

“partly at my request.”¹⁸ So, we can add Northumberland himself to the list of luminaries.

With so many parties involved, and with such a financial windfall to be had from such a big project, the publication arrangements became the bone of some contention. In the aforementioned letter of September 1552, Northumberland requested that John Day, “this poor man, who hath been always a furtherer of godly things,” should receive an exclusive licence to publish Ponet’s catechism.¹⁹ Then, less than a week later, Day obtained the royal licence in answer to this request, not simply for the English publication, but also for the Latin version.²⁰ However, Day’s licence eventually hit a snag, as Cranmer’s favourite printer, Reyner Wolfe, had also been granted the privilege of printing the Latin version, sometime before October 1552.²¹ After the mediation of Cecil during the following months, it was decided in March 1553 that Wolfe would retain the rights to the Latin publications, and Day would have the lucrative English version, with the added compensation of the monopoly of printing all the works of both Ponet and Thomas Becon.²² This contention dealt with, on 20 May 1553 King Edward VI commanded by royal injunction that all schoolmasters and teachers of youth within the realm ought to teach Ponet’s advanced catechism immediately after the basic *A, B, C. Catechisme*.²³ The *Short Catechisme* was thus printed in English and Latin, with Michelangelo Florio’s Italian translation—the first Italian book printed in England—

briefly appearing in the chaotic period shortly after the death of Edward VI.²⁴

The degree of intellectual and political authority supporting Ponet’s *Short Catechisme* was extraordinary. It was authored by one of the foremost Reformed theologians of the period, driven by the impetus of King Edward and the Lord President of the Council, the product of various bishops and divines, and imprinted under the royal seal. Ponet was not simply the author of the catechism, but—as T.H.L. Parker rightly points out—he was speaking as the mouthpiece of Cranmer’s circle of Reformers.²⁵ It was for this reason, that when Heinrich Bullinger received the *Short Catechisme* from John Cheke in the summer of 1553, the *Antistes* of Zürich excitedly sent copies to his network of fellow Reformers, including Peter Paul Vergerio, Simprecht Vogt, Philipp Gallicius, Ambrosius Blaurer, and even his own son Johannes.²⁶ Inevitably, since the *Short Catechisme* represented an indispensable part of the doctrinal stance of the Edwardian evangelicals, it became a priority target of the conservative strategy in unravelling the Reformation under the Marian regime. Edmund Bonner attacked it in his own catechism for schoolmasters; Richard Smith cited whole swathes of it disparagingly; and James Brooks preached against it at Paul’s Cross.²⁷

Thus, with respect to the authorities associated with its production, it was very much like the other key formularies of the reformed English church. Indeed, although the *Forty-two Articles of Religion* were sometimes printed as a standalone document by Richard Grafton, they were ordinarily appended to both the English and Latin editions of Ponet’s *Short Catechisme*.²⁸ The

18. TNA SP 10/15, 5^f, as printed above.

19. SP 10/15, 5^f: “... I haue thoughte good to requier yt to be meane for the kinges maiesties lycens for the printinge of the same, and that this pore man, who hath the byn allowaies a furdere of godlie things, may by his highnes gracius goodnes be auctorised for the onlie printinge of the same for a certein <uncertain word?> soche as shalbe thought mete by his maiestie, wherin the poore man shalhaue caus to pray for his highness.”

20. BL Royal MS 18 C XXIV, 254^v.

21. Peter W. M. Blayney, *The Stationers' Company and the Printers of London 1501-1557*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 2013), 2:735; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven, 1996), 524; Elizabeth Evenden, *Patents, Pictures and Patronage: John Day and the Tudor Book Trade* (Aldershot, 2008), 25-26.

22. 20 March 1553, Chancery Patent: BL MS Royal C XXIV, 318^v; 22 March 1553: Warrant, TNA C 82/962/23; 25 March 1553: Patent Roll, CPR 1553, v, 43; letters patent to John Day in *Short Catechisme*, Aiii^v-Av^f.

23. *Short Catechisme*, A.ii^{f-v}.

24. Michelangelo Florio, *Cathechismo, cioe forma breue per amaestrare i Fanciulli* ... (London, 1553), RSTC 4813; Michael Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England: A Cultural Politics of Translation* (Cambridge, 2005), 185; Frances A. Yates, *John Florio: The Life of an Italian in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge, 1934), 11.

25. T.H.L. Parker, *English Reformers* (London, 1966), 147-152.

26. Zurich StA, E II 356,546; E II 343,452; E II 365,512; E II 357,408; E II 441,f. 75.

27. Edmund Bonner, *An honest godlye instruction and information for the tradynge, and bringine vp of children* ... (London, 1555), RSTC 3281; Richard Smith, *A bouclier of the catholike fayth of Christes church* ... (London, 1554), RSTC 22816; James Brooks, *A sermon very notable, fruitefull, and godlie made at Pauls crosse* ... (London, 1553), RSTC 3838.

28. Compare *Short Catechisme* with *Articles Agreed on by the Bishoppes* (Lon-

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combined publication was the principal version (probably on account of its size), and the whole book was commonly understood as the book of the *Catechisme*, rather than the book of the articles. This can be seen in the *Greyfriars Chronicle*, which recorded that when Cranmer presented “the new book that the Bishop of Winchester, Powny [Ponet], made” to convocation on 27 May 1553, there were “diverse that denied many of the articles.”²⁹ This opposition to the combined book, spearheaded by conservative cleric Hugh Weston, carried over into the Marian reign. During the first convocation under Queen Mary, which met on 18 October 1553, Weston railed against “a book of late set forth, called the catechism” and then proceeded to attack “the articles of the catechism.”³⁰ Similarly, it was Weston who challenged Cranmer at his Oxford disputation for having “set forth a Catechism”—meaning the book of the catechism.³¹

It is important to understand the proper relationship between the articles and the catechism itself, and their combined role in the Edwardian church. While the articles received the name of the catechism, the catechism received the character of the articles.³² In fact, the *Short Catechisme* complemented the *Forty-two Articles* such that we might even say that we may not expound one place of the book of the catechism that it be repugnant to another. Therefore, just like the articles, the teaching of the catechism was representative of the Church of England at the height of the Edwardian period. This was the view of Ponet himself, who in the context of the debate over clerical marriage, wrote in 1555:

Our whole doctrine wherein we consented touching fasting, prayer and marriage etc. is plainly and fully set forth in the books of common prayers, the Homilies, the Catechisms and the Articles whereupon the whole realm concluded. Our doctrine was not

kept so secret but that it was not only preached but also printed & so printed that it hath the testimony of the whole realm.³³

And although the formulary status of the *Short Catechisme* has escaped the attention of modern scholars, it has been rightly noted by others, such as Bishop Randolph in the nineteenth century:

...a Catechism published in the time of king Edward VI and was the last work of the reformers of that reign; whence it may fairly be understood to contain as far as it goes their ultimate decision, and to represent the sense of the Church of England as then established.³⁴

THE THEOLOGY OF THE SHORT CATECHISME

Ponet's *Short Catechisme* bears three particularly significant theological features. First is its classically Reformed *loci* (e.g. discussion of relationship between the unwritten and the written Word, strongly Cranmerian accounts of baptism and the Lord's Supper, an infralapsarian accented account of predestination, etc). Second, there are some unusual features in the document's ecclesiology and its eschatology. Regarding ecclesiology, it is noteworthy that Ponet gives four marks of the church: preaching, brotherly love, sacraments, and brotherly correction or excommunication. This is an important expansion on the two marks of the church embedded in the *Articles of Religion* and probably indicates that brotherly love and discipline were to be understood as annexed to preaching and the sacraments, respectively. Regarding eschatology, the *Short Catechisme* not only equivocates on the meaning of Christ's descent (“into hell, or elsewhere”) but devotes an unusually large proportion of space to eschatological themes such as the Christ's return, final judgement, and renewal of all things. This unusual degree of devotion has been noticed recently by Tim Patrick, who observes that this eschatological feature distinguishes the *Short Catechisme* from all other Anglican formularies of this period.³⁵ The third significant theological

don, 1553), RSTC 10034; 10034.2. Florio's Italian edition does not contain the articles.

29. John Gough Nichols (ed.), *Chronicle of the Grey Friars* (London, 1852), 77-78.

30. Robert Eden, *The Examinations and Writings of John Philpot*, BCL (Cambridge, 1842), 179-180.

31. Thomas Cranmer, *Writings and Disputations of Thomas Cranmer*, John Edmund Cox (ed.), (Cambridge, 1844), 422.

32. Parker, *English Reformers*, 149.

33. John Ponet, *Apologie*, L.

34. John Randolph, *Enchiridion Theologicum; or, a Manual, for the use of Students in Divinity*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1825), 1:vi.

35. Tim Patrick, “Resurrection and Eschatology in the Reformation Formu-

feature is simply the sheer length of doctrinal discussion throughout its 88 folio pages. Thus, in the context of the whole publication (the “book of the catechism”), this makes the *Short Catechisme* an essential theological compendium for the interpretation of the reformed nature of the theology of the *Articles of Religion*.

**PONET'S SHORT CATECHISME CARRIED
THE SAME—IF NOT MORE—AUTHORITY AS
THE FORTY-TWO ARTICLES OF RELIGION**

Indeed, due to its Reformed credentials, the *Short Catechisme* became one of the heavily debated Reformation texts in the seventeenth-century theological debate between William Prynne and Peter Heylin over Calvinism and Arminianism, and in the eighteenth-century tract war between Augustus Toplady and Thomas Nowell over the same. Toplady was a great admirer of the *Short Catechisme* (“this excellent prelate’s *Catechism*”), whereas Nowell held it in contempt (“excellent only for its *Absurdity*”).³⁶ Indeed, Nowell believed that the *Short Catechisme* came into being because “some rigid Calvinists in Power, had imposed upon that good young King, and made use of his Authority to impose their Notions upon the Church.”³⁷ It would be rather anachronistic to posit Ponet as a defender of Calvinism. However, Toplady was correct to assert that Ponet’s catechism was undoubtedly Reformed in its theology. Nowell had no reply of any substance to Toplady, and was reduced to screeching at Toplady, that the “Catechism, which you call A valuable Monument of good old Church Doctrine” contained less “sound Divinity than the old Koran of Mahomet.”³⁸ Whatever Ponet’s convictions concerning the scope of the atonement, he

assuredly would have been more comfortable with Toplady’s “Calvinism” than Nowell’s scurrilous remarks. The delicious irony of the debate between Toplady and Nowell over Ponet’s supposedly “Calvinist” catechism was that Nowell seemingly had no awareness (or was perhaps too embarrassed?) that a possible relative of his, Dean Alexander Nowell of St. Paul’s Cathedral, had copied and pasted from the catechisms of both John Ponet and John Calvin to produce his own, more influential and more “Calvinistic” catechism under Elizabeth’s reign in 1570.³⁹ In fact, Nowell’s catechism—which came in shorter and longer varieties—was wildly popular during the latter half of the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century—so popular, that Canon 79 of the 1604 Canons required that all schoolmasters should teach, in English or Latin, either of Nowell’s shorter or longer versions. Thus, the spirit, while not every letter, of John Ponet’s *Short Catechisme* was eventually enshrined in Church of England canon law.

From this brief survey, it should be evident that Ponet’s *Short Catechisme* carried the same—if not more—authority as the *Forty-two Articles of Religion*, and that its contents are of an impeccably—if not progressively—Reformed nature. On this basis, I suggest that it is inadequate to conceive of the original Anglican formularies as only the usual three documents: the *Book of Common Prayer*, the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*, and the *Ordinal*. Rather, since the *Short Catechisme* represents one of the most comprehensively Reformed positions that the Church of England has ever officially taken, the study of Ponet’s work is essential for the interpretation of the *Articles of Religion* and thus for understanding the roots of Reformation Anglicanism.

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larities of the Church of England, 1536–1571”, PhD dissertation, Macquarie University (2013), pp. 177–178, forthcoming as *Establishment Eschatology in England’s Reformation: Evidence from the Doctrinally-Binding Formularies of Faith, 1534–1571* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2024).

36. Augustus Toplady, *The Church of England Vindicated from the Charge of Arminianism* (London, 1769), 42; Thomas Nowell, *The Church of England Vindicated from the Charge of Absolute Predestination* (London, 1771), 53. Capitals and italics retained.

37. Nowell, *The Church of England Vindicated from ... Predestination*, 53. Capitals and italics retained.

38. Nowell, *The Church of England Vindicated from ... Predestination*, 53.

39. Alexander Nowell, *A Catechisme, or First Instruction and Learning of Christian Religion* (London, 1570), RSTC 18708.

Charles Hodge, Francis Grimké, and the Doctrine of Human Unity in the Critique of Race Prejudice

ADAM E. PETERSON

INTRODUCTION¹

No issue embroiled nineteenth century Americans in fierce debate like slavery. Though many in the founding generation believed slavery to be on its way out at the close of the eighteenth century, the “peculiar institution” experienced rapid and sustained growth in the early decades of the nineteenth.² Debate taxed the most gifted minds of the day as they attempted to sort out the social, practical, moral, and religious implications of a system rife with abuses and contradictions in a nation ostensibly committed to liberty and equality.

The roles and views of famous Reformed theological figures in this context come under intense scrutiny today, with students of church history often demanding to know which “side” theologians were on. It is often assumed that two radically different theologies and sets of policy solutions did battle for the soul of post-Civil War America, with Black Americans on the one side and self-interested white supremacists on the other. Yet history, unsurprisingly, presents more nuanced realities.

One instance of such nuance can be found in a comparison of the renowned Charles Hodge (1797–1878) and one of his African American students at Princeton, Francis J. Grimké (1850–1937). Hodge’s response to slavery was grounded in a biblicist hermeneutic and strong doctrine of human unity—principles which Grimké enthusiastically inherited. For

1. This essay was originally delivered as a paper at the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Denver, Colorado.

2. For a brief summary of American views of slavery in the post-revolutionary era, see Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789–1815*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 508–542.

Hodge, these principles led to moderate critiques of both American slavery and elements of abolitionism. For Grimké, however, they necessitated going much further—both with regard to slavery, and its ongoing legacy in postbellum America.

How was it possible for teacher and student, working from two strongly held and shared convictions, to come down differently on racial matters of such great import? To understand this, we must first understand the men in question.

HODGE REFUSED TO BIND SOMEONE'S CONSCIENCE ON ANYTHING "NOT TAUGHT DIRECTLY OR BY NECESSARY IMPLICATION IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES."

CHARLES HODGE AND THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN UNITY

Charles Hodge remains one of the most influential American theologians of the nineteenth century.³ During his long career at Princeton Theological Seminary from 1822 to 1878, Hodge mentored over three thousand students and wrote nearly two hundred articles as editor of the *Princeton Review*.⁴ From his mentor Archibald Alexander (1772–1851), Hodge learned “the Princeton paradigm,” which placed a heavy emphasis on Common Sense philosophy, biblical revelation, and a commitment to piety.⁵

Biblicist Theological Method

Hodge’s theological method can be fairly described as “biblicist.” This has become something of a dirty word in Reformed theology of late, but not so in Hodge’s context.⁶ Hodge believed that the Bible contains only truth, and that all truths either come from Scripture or are authenticated by it.⁷ He described the Bible as the very Word of God, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit and written by human authors.⁸ Divine inspiration granted the Bible infallible authority since it contained “all extant revelations of God.”⁹ Hodge allowed for no higher authority than the Word.

The authority of the Bible hemmed Hodge in from indulging personal preferences. Hodge refused to bind someone’s conscience on anything “not taught directly or by necessary implication in the Holy Scriptures.”¹⁰ Like his esteemed teacher before him, Hodge considered theology a science, and the Bible represented the field of inquiry for the theologian. To do right theology, a theologian must study the Bible as other scientists study their field.¹¹ By this standard Hodge set “a safeguard and a limit” on the task of the theologian, who “can no more construct a system of theology to suit his fancy, than the astronomer can adjust the mechanism of the heavens according to his own good pleasure.”¹² All reasoning, philosophy, and systems must derive from the Bible, which steers theologians away from more speculative doctrinal or ethical formations. This restriction had major implications for Hodge’s understanding of human unity.

3. Biographical details on Charles Hodge are drawn from Leonard J. Trinterud, “Charles Hodge (1797–1878): Theology -- Didactic and Polemical,” in *Sons of the Prophets: Leaders in Protestantism from Princeton Seminary*, ed. Hugh Thomson Kerr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963); W. Andrew Hoffecker, *Piety and the Princeton Theologians: Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, and Benjamin Warfield* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1981); W. Andrew Hoffecker, *Charles Hodge: The Pride of Princeton* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2011); Paul C. Gutjahr, *Charles Hodge: Guardian of American Orthodoxy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

4. John W. Stewart, “Introducing Charles Hodge to Postmoderns,” in *Charles Hodge Revisited: A Critical Appraisal of His Life and Work*, ed. James H. Moorhead and John W. Stewart (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2002), 1.

5. Stewart, “Introducing Charles Hodge,” 11–12. For more on “the Princeton paradigm,” see John W. Stewart, *Mediating the Center: Charles Hodge on American Science, Language, Literature, and Politics* (Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1995), 21–28.

6. Mark A. Noll, ed., *The Princeton Theology 1812–1921: Scripture, Science, and Theological Method from Archibald Alexander to Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 117, see also 25–27.

7. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*. 3 vols. (1872. Reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1982), 1:38.

8. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:153, 156.

9. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:182.

10. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:183. Hodge, ever the faithful Presbyterian, here alluded to the Westminster Confession of Faith 1.6.

11. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (1872. Reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1982), 1:10.

12. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:15, 18–19.

The Doctrine of Human Unity

Theological anthropology occupied a central place in the nineteenth century debates surrounding human origins, which predated Charles Darwin's (1809–1882) theory of natural selection. Scientists such as Samuel George Morton (1799–1851) and Louis Agassiz (1807–1873), interested in the differences between people groups developed the theory of polygenesis, reviving eighteenth century theories which explained the differences between racial, ethnic, and regional groups by positing them as different species of humanity. Polygenesis rejected the biblical account that all humanity descended from Adam and Eve, or that differing environments created differences among humanity.¹³

Hodge condemned polygenesis, in part for the way it contradicted the biblical doctrine of human unity, but also because it severed individuals from the universal offer of salvation in Christ. Were all humanity not descended from one fallen set of parents, the universal offer of salvation would be rendered ineffective.¹⁴ In such a case, that which Hodge considered “in the very nature of the gospel,” the full unity of all believers, would be lost.¹⁵ In these debates, Hodge refined his theological anthropology, as articulated in his *Systematic Theology*, through his polemical writings against polygenesists, working this into his teaching.¹⁶ These refinements shaped how Hodge responded to the most pressing social issue of his day: American slavery.

HODGE'S MODERATE CRITIQUE OF SLAVERY

Hodge's biblicism and doctrine of human unity led him to a moderate critique of slavery. He argued against defining slavery as a sin *per se*, finding no explicit prohibition against such a practice in Scripture, the “authoritative rule of truth and duty.”¹⁷ His

commitment to biblicism, then, prevented him from making sweeping condemnations.¹⁸ However, that same commitment prevented him from defending slavery in all forms, and he demonstrated clearly his opposition to slavery as it then existed in the United States.¹⁹

HODGE DEMONSTRATED CLEARLY HIS OPPOSITION TO SLAVERY AS IT THEN EXISTED IN THE UNITED STATES.

Hodge argued for gradual emancipation, seeking to maintain a middle course between the two poles of immediate abolitionism and perpetual enslavement.²⁰ In his first essay on slavery, he actually focused his condemnation on the extreme tactics and rhetoric he saw in the abolitionist movement, such as blanket condemnations of any kind of slavery and other counterproductive methods.²¹ As the sectional crisis grew, however, Hodge began to shift his attack to the pro-slavery argument, especially as articulated by fellow Christians. At the dawn of the Civil War he conceded that “a church which regards itself as commissioned to conserve and perpetuate slavery, and a church instinct with the principles and spirit of modern abolitionism, must both alike be offensive to God, and injurious to men.”²² He also labeled Southern slavery “a crime against God and man.”²³ Hodge remained consistent in his criticisms in both directions, decrying as “unscriptural” both the idea of a wholesale rejection of slaveholding and “the slave laws of the South,” which were designed to perpetuate slavery.²⁴

13. Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 8, 15, 44–51, 58–60. Hodge addressed his main critiques of polygenesis against the writings of Morton and Agassiz. Gutjahr, *Charles Hodge*, 326–330.

14. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:557.

15. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3:810–811.

16. Henry Justin Ferry, “Francis James Grimké: Portrait of a Black Puritan” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1970), 95–101.

17. Hodge, “Slavery,” 275.

18. David Torbett, *Theology and Slavery: Charles Hodge and Horace Bushnell* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2006), 77.

19. Charles Hodge, “Slavery,” *The Biblical Repertory and Theological Review* 8, no. 2 (April 1836): 268–305.

20. Torbett, *Theology and Slavery*, 91–92.

21. Hodge, “Slavery,” 270, 301.

22. Charles Hodge, “The Church and the Country,” *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* 33, no. 2 (April 1861): 342–376.

23. Charles Hodge, “President Lincoln,” *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* 37, no. 3 (July 1865): 438.

24. For his part, Grimké displayed little of the reservations toward abolitionism that Hodge did. He often gave addresses celebrating the life and work of prominent abolitionists, including Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd

Hodge allowed for the eventual equal citizenship of African Americans, despite what would now be regarded as a racially prejudiced view of their inferiority. In considering the possibility of suffrage, Hodge compared slaves to minors: “If therefore the blacks as a class are incompetent to exercise, with benefit to themselves or others, the privileges of personal or political liberty, then, as long as that incompetency continues, they have no right to those privileges.”²⁵ Hodge believed that the experience of slavery had left African Americans unprepared to engage in civic life but assumed they had the ability to acclimatize to the advantage of the privileges of liberty (with help).²⁶ Should gradual emancipation occur, slaves “should become citizens” as a “next step.”²⁷ Scholars debate the extent to which Hodge approved of suffrage for former slaves. For his part, reviewing his own words from 1836 thirty-five years later, Hodge interpreted himself to have predicted the full enfranchisement of slaves.²⁸

While some products of Hodge’s Princeton became anti-slavery activists, others argued against integration. Hodge thus leaves a complicated legacy. How, then, should it be assessed? David Torbett contends that to do so, we must look at one of Hodge’s African-American students: Francis Grimké.²⁹

FRANCIS GRIMKÉ AND THE PRINCETON INFLUENCE

Francis James Grimké was born in 1850, the son of prominent South Carolina planter Henry Grimké (1801–1852) and his slave, Nancy Weston Grimké (1812–1895). Nancy inculcated Francis and his brothers in the Christian faith and sent them to a Presbyterian church for religious instruction.³⁰ After

the Civil War, he attended Lincoln University, where he received regular instruction in the Bible and the Westminster Catechism.³¹ As part of his religious instruction at Lincoln, Grimké also read Charles Hodge’s *The Way of Life*, which introduced him to “the uncompromising orthodoxy for which Princeton Seminary was famous.”³² Grimké graduated as valedictorian in 1870 and in 1875, the Presbytery of Philadelphia received him as a candidate for ministry. He then enrolled at Princeton Theological Seminary.³³

Grimké arrived at Princeton with fortuitous timing. Hodge had published his *Systematic Theology* four years prior, so Grimké had the opportunity to study the book with the author in the final class to receive Hodge’s full sequence of theological instruction.³⁴ According to Grimké’s biographer, “in this fashion a large part of Charles Hodge’s thought became the permanent furniture of Grimké’s mind.”³⁵

Grimké and Biblicism

Nothing from Grimké’s Princeton education proved more foundational than his commitment to the Bible as the inspired and revealed word of God. In his fiftieth anniversary sermon, Grimké declared that the challenges of modernism to Christianity “have not affected in the least my perfect faith in the Bible.”³⁶ He dismissed the “Higher Critics and the Modernists” for having nothing “to show that is comparable with the mighty achievements of the old gospel and the old faith in the Bible as the word of God.”³⁷ Likewise, he implored young ministers to commit themselves to learning and teaching the Bible “line

Garrison, John Greenleaf Whittier, and John Brown. See Carter Woodson, ed., *The Works of Francis J. Grimké, Volume I: Addresses Mainly Personal and Racial*, (Washington D.C.: The Associated Publishers, 1942), 34-71, 81-101, 101-122, 122-141.

25. Hodge, “Emancipation,” 591.

26. Hodge, “Emancipation,” 603.

27. Hodge, “Slavery,” 305.

28. Charles Hodge, “Retrospect of the History of the Princeton Review,” *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review Index* (1871): 17.

29. Torbett, *Theology and Slavery*, 178-181.

30. Ferry, “Francis James Grimké,” 21-24.

31. Ferry, “Francis James Grimké,” 45-52.

32. Ferry, “Francis James Grimké,” 58.

33. Ferry, “Francis James Grimké,” 75-76.

34. Ferry, “Francis James Grimké,” 100.

35. Ferry, “Francis James Grimké,” 95-96. Grimké also left an impression on Hodge as well, who reportedly “reckoned him equal to the ablest of his students.” Carter G. Woodson, “Introduction” in Woodson, ed., *Works, Vol. I*, x. In an analysis of Grimké’s early sermons, Ferry found references to several prominent American theologians, including Charles Hodge. Ferry, “Francis James Grimké,” 139n3.

36. Francis J. Grimké, “MS Sermon, July 1, 1928 (John 12:32),” quoted in Ferry, “Francis James Grimké,” 86.

37. Francis Grimké in Carter G. Woodson, ed., *The Works of Francis J. Grimké, Volume III: Stray Thoughts and Meditations* (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, 1942), 501.

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upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, in season and out of season.”³⁸

Grimké often described the Bible in terms reminiscent of Hodge’s writings. Writing in 1931, fifty-four years after his graduation, Grimké praised a recent book defending the Bible against critics, calling the Bible “the inspired Word of God and the infallible rule of faith and practice.”³⁹ In matters of doctrine, private devotion, and public ministry, Francis Grimké held to a biblicism in continuity with his Princeton education.

GRIMKÉ, LIKE HODGE, DERIVED HIS DOCTRINE OF HUMAN UNITY FROM HIS PRINCETONIAN BIBLICIST THEOLOGICAL METHOD.

Grimké and the Doctrine of Human Unity

Like his professor, Grimké developed his anthropological assumptions from Scripture, and stood in continuity with him on the doctrine of human unity. Grimké, like Hodge, derived the doctrine from texts such as Genesis 1,⁴⁰ Acts 17:26,⁴¹ and Colossians 3:11.⁴² Grimké often used “Hodgeian” language to describe humans as “rational, immortal, responsible beings created in the image of God.”⁴³ The doctrine of the image of God was foundational in human unity and had practical applications for Grimké. Because God created all humans in his image, all humans have inherent dignity and therefore no individual, much less an entire race, may be treated as

inferior.⁴⁴ Grimké described humans as united not only in their original created status but also in their sinful state. For Grimké, all humans stood in a fallen position that required the grace and intervention of God. Grimké declared,

“The spiritual needs of men, of all men, are fundamentally the same. It does not make any difference whether they are white, black, brown, red, or yellow...they are all human beings; they are all sinners on their way to eternity and judgment.”⁴⁵

“All men of all races stand upon precisely the same footing,” and therefore, “the same gospel is to be preached to all.”⁴⁶

Grimké, like Hodge, derived his doctrine of human unity from his Princetonian biblicist theological method, and it had significant implications for the practice of ministry. While the ministry of the gospel took preeminence, his convictions led him to offer forceful critiques of the status quo for African Americans in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, going beyond the moderate critiques of his teacher.

Grimké’s Critique of Racial Prejudice

Despite the continuity observed thus far, Grimké differed from his professor in his application of doctrine. As a Black pastor leading a Black congregation during the “nadir” of the Black experience in America, Grimké’s context prompted strident critiques of racial prejudice in America, and especially in the American church.⁴⁷

38. Francis J. Grimké, “Christ’s Program for the Saving of the World,” 1937, Box 40-6, Folder 309, Francis J. Grimké Papers.

39. Grimké, *Works*, Vol. III, 631. Grimké’s language mirrored Hodge’s *Systematic Theology*: “The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and are therefore infallible, and of divine authority in all things pertaining to faith and practice.” Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:152.

40. Grimké, *Works*, Vol. I, 319-323; *Works*, Vol. II, 335.

41. Grimké, *Works*, Vol. I, 319, 448..

42. Grimké, *Works*, Vol. I, 450, 524.

43. Grimké, *Works*, Vol. III, 52, 68, 85, 320, 366. Hodge described humans as “rational and immortal,” “rational, free, and responsible” and grounded those attributes in “the image of God” in humanity. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:49, 56, 97-99.

44. Grimké, *Works*, Vol. I, 319-320, 372, 448, 565, 596; *Works*, Vol. III, 169, 380. As demonstrated below, the image of God served as a crucial aspect of the doctrine of human unity in Grimké’s critique of race prejudice.

45. Grimké, “Religious Aspect,” 155.

46. Grimké placed the need for the gospel at the center of his anthropology. Grimké, *Works*, Vol. I, 321.

47. Rayford W. Logan, *The Betrayal Of The Negro: From Rutherford B. Hayes To Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1997). The first edition of the book ran under the title *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901*, published in 1954 under Dial Books. Logan determined 1901 to be the absolute nadir of American race relations, though other scholars have placed the date as late as 1923.

Grimké took up the pastorate of Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church in Washington D.C. in 1878—the same year Hodge died, and one year after Rutherford B. Hayes assumed the presidency and federal troops withdrew from former Confederate states. After the overthrow of Reconstruction (1865–1877), African Americans witnessed their rights dissipate as segregation and racial violence increased.⁴⁸ Grimké’s pastorate coincided with the rise of Jim Crow segregation, when racial violence and lynchings of African Americans became more common.

**GRIMKÉ RELIED ON THE DOCTRINE OF
HUMAN UNITY TO CALL OUT HYPOCRISY
WITHIN AMERICAN CHURCHES**

One question African Americans faced during this time was how they ought to respond to racial prejudice. For Grimké, the only proper response involved a reliance upon the Bible and God’s power to bring about unity. He remained aware of the growing threat of segregation and the “danger, in view of the terrible ordeal through which we are now passing, and have been passing for some time, of losing heart.”⁴⁹ He determined the best way to serve his congregation involved soberly acknowledging these challenges and pointing toward the ultimate ground of hope: what Grimké called “the religion of Jesus Christ” and the power of a sovereign God to work through prayer.⁵⁰

In the pulpit, Grimké often drew attention to recent instances of prejudice, before imploring his congregation “to stay ourselves on God...to make Him our refuge and strength.”⁵¹ If God is on the side of those who love him, then “the important thing for us, therefore, is to get on God’s side, and to stay on His

side.”⁵² If the people devoted themselves to God and to passing on the faith to their children, then “this same God will be our God.”⁵³

Due to his doctrinal commitments, Grimké believed few things could be more antithetical to Christianity than racial prejudice. In “Christianity and Race Prejudice,” his most systematic investigation into the subject, he laid out the principles impressed on Christians by “the religion of Jesus Christ.”⁵⁴ The Fatherhood of God sets “the whole plane of humanity” as equal children of God, created in His image.⁵⁵ By implication, “the human race is one” because “of one blood God hath made all the families of the earth.”⁵⁶ Christians have a special unity that goes beyond the general brotherhood of man because, according to Colossians 3:11, they are one in Christ. These principles, as well as ones dictating Christian behavior toward others, contradict all forms of race prejudice for Grimké.⁵⁷ Any impulse that would treat a person differently based on race cannot be justified by Christian faith or Scripture.

Grimké relied on the doctrine of human unity to call out the hypocrisy within American churches concerning race. Because of the antithesis between Christianity and racial prejudice, Grimké found hypocrisy within American Protestantism intolerable. He saw racial prejudice “in almost absolute control” of churches and Christians who practiced segregation. He deemed this control a humiliating failure of duty on the part of the American church, a failure that could only be remedied by either repudiating Christianity or earnestly seeking to teach and obey Christ’s teachings of the essential unity of mankind and the need to love one’s neighbor.⁵⁸ Churches, according to Grimké, could not serve God and segregation.

48. Allen C. Guelzo, *Reconstruction: A Concise History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 129–130. Guelzo’s volume provides an excellent overview of the era he deems “the ugly duckling of American history.”

49. Francis J. Grimké, “The Negro: His Rights and Wrongs, The Forces For and Against Him,” in Woodson, *Works, Vol. I*, 237.

50. See Grimké, “The Negro: His Rights and Wrongs,” 251, 267, 274–278.

51. Grimké, “God and the Race Problem,” in *Works, Vol. I*, 374.

52. Grimké, “God and the Race Problem,” 376.

53. Grimké, “God and the Race Problem,” 377.

54. Francis J. Grimké, “Christianity and Race Prejudice, May 29, 1910, and June 5, 1910,” in Woodson, *Works, Vol. I*, 442–473.

55. Grimké admits that this principle led him to stop calling certain people “poor white trash” because “we have no right to call any human being... trash.” Grimké, “Christianity and Race Prejudice,” 447.

56. Grimké, “Christianity and Race Prejudice,” 448.

57. Grimké, “Christianity and Race Prejudice,” 451–454.

58. Grimké, “Christianity and Race Prejudice,” 456, 459, 464, 466.

Grimké offered similar strident opposition to such thinking within his own church circles. When two different Southern Presbyterian denominations, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. in 1888 and then the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in 1905, moved to reunite with Grimké's Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., they both offered reunion on the condition of segregating African Americans into separate presbyteries. Though the 1888 union proposal failed, the one in 1905 succeeded, despite Grimké's opposition.⁵⁹ In both cases, Grimké rooted his critique in the essential unity of the races. Drawing on Colossians 3:11, Grimké argued Jesus "did not die for one race, but for all races. What difference does it make to Him, whether a man is white or black?"⁶⁰ Any plan that would separate the governing bodies of the denomination based on race "is contrary to the whole spirit and teachings of Jesus Christ" and "there isn't a line or syllable in the inspired record to justify any such course as that" proposed by the "unchristian, Negro-hating sentiment in the South."⁶¹

Grimké had little patience for the religious hypocrisy involved in racial prejudice. In no uncertain terms, he decried white church members who took part in a "bloody riot" in Wilmington, North Carolina, that resulted in the murder of dozens of African Americans, and destroyed the property of hundreds more: "I know that the religion...they possess is not Christianity. It is a miserable lie to say that it is."⁶² He counted a Wilmington minister, who used a portion of his sermon the following Sunday to praise the white men who led the attack, among the "hypocrites in the pulpit" who "have brought the religion of Christ into contempt."⁶³ To associate such prejudice with the name of Christianity revolted Grimké. In both instances he condemned the root

of the prejudice as the rejection of the essential human unity of all people. Grimké could only conclude that the Christianity they practiced "[was] not the Christianity of Christ and of the apostles; [was] not the Christianity of the Bible."⁶⁴ Grimké attacked racial prejudice and hypocrisy out of a Christian faith shaped first by the Bible. Grimké's commitment to Scripture, and the doctrine of human unity derived therein, informed and supported his critiques of race prejudice.

GRIMKÉ DECRIED WHITE CHURCH MEMBERS WHO TOOK PART IN A "BLOODY RIOT" IN WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA.

Alongside his condemnation of current racial prejudices, Grimké believed in the power of the gospel to change America for the better. In contrast to the false Christianity that tolerated or supported segregation and race prejudice, he saw the power of "true, real, genuine Christianity" when "white men and women under its regenerating influence lose entirely the caste feeling, to whom the brother in black was as truly a brother as the brother in white."⁶⁵ Grimké wanted Christians to know that "Christianity is not clay in the hands of the world-spirit to be moulded by it; but is itself to be the moulder of public sentiment and everything else."⁶⁶ A Christianity founded on the Word of God had the power "to conquer all prejudices, to break down all walls of separation, and to weld together men of all races in one great brotherhood."⁶⁷ Such a Christianity brought Grimké hope amid his struggles against race prejudice.

59. Full details of both affairs are found in Henry Justin Ferry, "Racism and Reunion: A Black Protest by Francis James Grimké," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 50, no. 2 (1972): 77-88.

60. Francis J. Grimké, *An Argument against the Union of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: Hayworth Publishing House, 1904), 6.

61. Grimké, *Argument against Union*, 8, 11.

62. Grimké, "Christianity and Race Prejudice," 268. For more on the event, see David Zucchino, *Wilmington's Lie: The Murderous Coup of 1898 and the Rise of White Supremacy* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2020).

63. Grimké, "The Negro: His Rights and Wrongs," 246.

64. Grimké, *Works*, Vol. III, 2, 4; cf. 19, 351-352.

65. Grimké, "The Negro: His Rights and Wrongs," 269. In this series of sermons, Grimké dismissed the power of the government, the primary political parties, or violence as a ground for hope, but directed his listeners to a Christianity that could form them into people of character and change the hearts and minds of its opponents.

66. Grimké, "Christianity and Race Prejudice," 471.

67. Grimké, "The Negro: His Rights and Wrongs," 267. Cf. Grimké, "Christianity and Race Prejudice," 463.

CONCLUSION

We have seen a distinct continuity between Hodge and Grimké in their methodology and theological convictions. Yet the two men ended up applying these very differently to the circumstances of their respective eras. Hodge lived during the era of established slaveholding and the Civil War; Grimké came of age in the postbellum era and the nadir of African American Civil Rights. Grimké's Princetonian biblicism, far from making him subservient to the status quo in terms of race and racial prejudice, brought him to a thorough critique of what he saw as outright hypocrisy. Hodge, however, was led by the same doctrine to offer merely a moderate critique of slavery, and to also criticize aspects of abolitionism.

It may seem incongruous to compare Hodge and Grimké, given that they operated in distinct parts of the nineteenth century. Yet they have this much in common: both faced an undesirable racial status quo, to which they felt theologically compelled to respond. Yet they ended up doing so in very different ways.

How, then, do we account for the difference? We can but briefly sketch some suggestions as we conclude. We who recoil at anything that violates the true ontological equality of all people may wish Hodge to have gone further than he did; history forces us to

wrestle with such disappointments and complexities. Grimké, by virtue of his different cultural and historical position in the postbellum Black church, was perhaps better positioned to turn the gem of Scripture and see the refractions of doctrine in different directions, or to greater extents, than Hodge was able to see. Whilst Reformed readers today may share Hodge's conventions regarding Scripture and human unity, we may see in him a failure of imagination regarding the implications of his doctrine. Yet whatever deficiencies we may find with Hodge, Grimké shows that the fault cannot be attributed to the theology *per se*: the same doctrines led one to a moderate response to the racial status quo, and the other to a more severe one. Grimké's example shows us at the very least that context matters, and different sociocultural contexts will lead to different points of emphasis or application. But he also demonstrates how Christians from a theologically orthodox position are able to speak into the most pressing issues of the day, not in spite of their theological convictions but because of them.

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Education Begins at Home

SONNET CXXVII

BY DONALD WILLIAMS

“I can tell on the first day of school whose mothers read to them as a child.”
—Nancy Williams Barber, veteran First-Grade Teacher

Nursery Rhymes before the child can talk;
 Fairy Tales before the child can read:
 The mind thus crawls before it learns to walk.
 To harvest fruit, you have to plant the seed.
Not that we leave the rhymes or tales behind;
 We see more in them as the years go by.
 But they were what made possible a mind
 That could be truly wise, not merely sly.
So let us never cease to sing the praises
 Of Hansel, Gretel, and of Mother Goose:
 The magic in the cadences and phrases
 Brought straight by Hermes from the throne of Zeus.
We ask: What do they teach them in those schools?
 Not much, unless at home we hone the tools.

ESSAYS

Why the Church Needs Kierkegaard

AARON EDWARDS

If you've ever wondered why Søren Kierkegaard carries something of a "reputation" within the Church, it's probably because—when describing the Church—he sometimes said things like this:

Think of a hospital. The patients are dying like flies. The methods are altered in one way and another. It's no use. What does it come from? It comes from the building, the whole building is full of poison. That the patients are registered as dead, one of this disease, and that one of another, is not true; for they are all dead from the poison that is in the building.¹

Kierkegaard penned this arresting passage on 7th July 1855, four months before his death. It is one of many vividly scornful depictions of the Lutheran state church in nineteenth-century Denmark that characterised his final years. By this point, Kierkegaard believed Christianity had been fully co-opted as an illusory ecclesial idol. He ceased attending church and publically called upon the people of Copenhagen to participate in a

full church boycott.² As far as Kierkegaard was concerned, the Church was now infected with the disease of Christendom: "the whole building is full of poison" and so the building must be condemned.

Pastors come in for special rebuke and are to be avoided at all costs. Kierkegaard compares them to cannibals who keep the bodies of Christian martyrs in brine tubs for winter provision, living off the martyrs' sacrificial legacies without being prepared to follow them personally.³ Indeed, Kierkegaard even said savage cannibals are nobler than the pastors because at least they eat their people in an up-front manner, whereas the pastors do so calculatingly, imperceptibly, and with the pretence of holiness.⁴ These pastors "apply Christianity tranquillizingly"⁵ rendering their congregational victims deadened to Christianity rather than awakened by it.

1. Kierkegaard, *Attack Upon Christendom, 1854–1855*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1944), 139.

2. Kierkegaard, *Attack Upon Christendom*, 59–60.

3. Kierkegaard, *Attack Upon Christendom*, 268.

4. Kierkegaard, *Attack Upon Christendom*, 269.

5. Kierkegaard, *Attack Upon Christendom*, 262.

For many, Kierkegaard went too far with the “attack upon Christendom,” leaving a red flag against his enduring ecclesiological value.⁶ How could somebody so apparently anti-Church possibly inform the Church about what it *is* or *ought* to be? Where Kierkegaard warned against the “poison” of Christendom, Karl Barth warned against “the poison of a too intense pietism” in Kierkegaard’s own work.⁷ Kierkegaard can certainly be critiqued for his excessively negative ecclesial stance, his accentuation of some New Testament motifs over others, and his prizing of individual decision over corporate unity. Yet it should be noted that his polemical “attack” literature was an important homiletical “moment” within a broader theological and ecclesial vision.

**KIERKEGAARD IS ESSENTIALLY A
KERYGMATIC MISSIONARY THINKER.**

TAKING KIERKEGAARD BACK TO CHURCH

In my book, *Taking Kierkegaard Back to Church: The Ecclesial Implications of the Gospel* (2022), I reflect on various ways in which Kierkegaard’s voice remains paradoxically insightful for the Church. I discuss the significance of his primarily “diagnostic” approach to the Church’s condition alongside his more conceptually positive expressions. I also introduce his nuanced conception of the role of the individual in and for the congregation, as well as his robust reflections on ecclesial reformation. A chief argument is that Kierkegaard is essentially a kerygmatic missionary thinker whose proclamatory *telos* was awakening the modern Church from its worldly slumbers.

This kerygmatic heart is why Kierkegaard’s voice remains so important for the Church. Kierkegaard’s commitment to Christian proclamation often gets lost amid the elusive caves of his complex authorship, particularly his multiple pseudonyms expressing varying points of view. It has often been easier for the anti-the-

ist to claim Kierkegaard for their own deconstructive purposes, and for the evangelical to decry him for similar reasons.⁸ Re-situating Kierkegaard as a kerygmatic thinker unlocks his potential to both critique and encourage the Church’s reception of the Gospel we profess to proclaim.

In an early chapter, “Kierkegaard’s Imaginary Rural Parish,” I consider his serious considerations of the call to pastoral ministry, piecing together how he and his congregants might have fared under week-to-week Kierkegaardian sermons! This includes some theological reflection on his corrective approach to Luther’s *sola fide*, where Kierkegaard essentially argued that to be faithful in his own time to Luther’s Gospel might mean saying very un-Luther-like things about “works.”⁹ In the next chapter, “Waddling Geese in the Pulpit,” I showcase Kierkegaard’s insightful reflections on the ironical situations which stem from an over-dependence upon the kind of biblical scholarship that “protects” hypocritical preachers from the existential demands of Scripture. This “subjective” focus often leads some to underplay Kierkegaard’s grasp of objective truth, as shown in the chapter, “What Barth Got Wrong About Kierkegaard.” Here, I compare Karl Barth’s subjectively alert prison sermons with one of Kierkegaard’s doctrinally objective sermons, and investigate the interplay between their respective homiletical theologies.

The theme of Kierkegaard’s kerygmatic expression is further developed in “Is Kierkegaard an Extremist?,” highlighting the oft-forgotten connection between the nuance and radicality inherent to a theology of sin and Gospel. This is further expounded in “Socratic Street Preaching,” interrogating Kierkegaard’s intriguing comments about street preaching as an essential mode

6. See David R. Law, “Kierkegaard’s Anti-Ecclesiology: The Attack on Christendom, 1854–1855,” *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 7 (2007), 86–108.

7. Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. E. C. Hoskyns, 6th ed (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 276.

8. The most notable negative reading of this kind was Francis Schaeffer, one of the most influential evangelical voices of his generation, who once questioned whether Kierkegaard was even a “real” Christian at all. See Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, 22. Although Schaeffer later revised his view, seeing the value of Kierkegaard’s devotional writings, he nonetheless saw Kierkegaard’s thought as an essential separation between faith and reason. For Schaeffer, Kierkegaard’s thought catalysed the modern existentialist “turn” which had led to the many erosions of objective truth with which Schaeffer was contending in the mid-late twentieth century.

9. Søren Kierkegaard, *Søren Kierkegaard’s Journals and Papers*, vols. 1–6, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967–78). 2:1923, 364.

of Gospel proclamation alongside his paradoxical advocacy for maieutically subtle “indirect communication.” In “The Image of Love and the Ideal of Christendom,” I discuss the infamous segment of his most famous pseudonymous book, *Either/Or*, interpreting a theological allusion to the “seductive” draw of Christendom’s imagined image. The final chapter then addresses the aforementioned ecclesiological issues more directly, imagining how Kierkegaard’s message might apply within a “post-Christendom” or newly imagined Christendomian context. It is to these latter themes I now turn in the hopes of arguing for at least one key aspect of Kierkegaard’s ecclesiological value, beginning with his mission in and to Christendom.

KIERKEGAARD THE MISSIONARY TO CHRISTENDOM

Kierkegaard saw the Christendom he was chastising as a worldly veil for secular bourgeois society. Whilst many proclaimed great things about God, their desire for any meaningful connection with God was only ever “to a certain degree” and on human terms rather than God’s.¹⁰ By perpetually rearticulating this essential problem Kierkegaard became something of a “missionary” to Christendom. He did not seek to preach the Gospel to those who had no access to Scripture, or no knowledge of Christian doctrines, virtues, or values. Rather, he came to re-emphasize precisely what this “Christian” society was supposed to have known all along and yet did not seem to know at all.

Even as a missionary to professing Christians, however, Kierkegaard is hardly a straightforward candidate. A missionary within a nominally Christian religious culture might normally be called a “revivalist.” Such movements were not unknown within Kierkegaard’s Denmark. But contrary to what we might expect given the pietistic influences within his upbringing, Kierkegaard was suspicious of revivalism. In his discourse “Against Cowardliness,” for example, he critiques the man returning home from a revivalistic meeting with uproarious enthusiasm and ideas for future change, only to spend his time remarking upon the passion and eloquence of the preacher and to “sit there surround-

ed by lofty resolutions.”¹¹ As Kierkegaard saw, such abstract resolutions can often act as yet another subterfuge for the cowardly reluctance to *enact* them. In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, we hear of the man whose personal revival—occurring in a fit of emotive existential excitement—leads him to “run around and proclaim Christianity,” “and yet he demonstrates—the busier he is propagating and propagating—that he himself is not Christian.”¹² As much as Kierkegaard stressed the importance of existential decision and proclamation, he knew that outward fervour was no guarantor of integrity.

Although it is still true to say that Kierkegaard’s missionary efforts were “outward” (in actively propagating a return to the Gospel), he did not seek to achieve mere outward “conversion” but to inculcate what he called “inwardness:” the existential appropriation of decisive faith in one’s life, irrespective of social, political, or ecclesial entrapments. To do this within a context in which Christianity was so thoroughly integrated within the socio-political sphere, Kierkegaard’s missionary task sought to evoke a truly existential response to the Gospel via indirect communication. This was the primary purpose behind his pseudonymous authorship, what he referred to as “a godly satire.”¹³

Echoing the contextually alert missionary approach of the Apostle Paul, Kierkegaard’s conscious missionary strategy was “to utilize everything, to get as many as possible, everyone if possible, to accept Christianity.”¹⁴ The fact that his context was Christendom, however, excluded straightforward evangelism: “a missionary within Christendom will always look different from a missionary in paganism.”¹⁵ In Christendom, unlike early paganism, everybody thought they had already *been* evangelised. Yet Kierkegaard would also describe Christendom itself as “a pleasant, sentimental pagan-

10. Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers* 2:1405, 123.

11. Søren Kierkegaard, *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 348.

12. Søren Kierkegaard, Søren, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, vol. 1, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 614.

13. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Point of View*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 17.

14. Kierkegaard, *Point of View*, 16.

15. Kierkegaard, *Point of View*, 47.

KIERKEGAARD WAS ARGUABLY AN “ANTI-EVANGELIST”—BUT ONLY BECAUSE HE BELIEVED THIS TO BE THE MOST APPROPRIATE *APOLOGIA* FOR CHRISTIANITY WITHIN CHRISTENDOM.

ism,” in which Christianity itself had become an idol, a human construction worshipped in place of the true “God-man.”¹⁶ The phenomenal impact of Christian missionaries over the generations had turned in on itself: “Now, since it has been demonstrated, and on an enormous scale, that Christianity is the truth, now there is no one, almost no one, who is willing to make any sacrifice for its sake.”¹⁷

Because of the extreme condition of nominal faith within Christendom, Kierkegaard’s missionary strategy meant, in practice, “to utilize everything to make clear what in truth Christianity’s requirement is—even if not one single person would accept it.”¹⁸ This was, in fact, a reverse outworking of his aforementioned desire “to get as many as possible, everyone if possible, to accept Christianity.” Any successful mission within Christendom actually meant making the reception of Christianity not easier but more difficult. Thus, Kierkegaard was arguably an “anti-evangelist”—but only because he believed this to be the most appropriate evangelistic *apologia* for Christianity within Christendom.

Kierkegaard’s “anti-evangelist” persona was a necessary corrective to the failures of the Christendom clergy, who sought socio-cultural prestige above the true demands of the kingdom. This led to a “socialised” or “public” conception of the pastorate, in which civic virtue or social affability alone was the criterion:

Pastors have finally ceased to be what they actually ought to be to the point that, in relation to what it really means to be a pastor, the factors by which they make a big hit and become honored, respected, and esteemed etc. are completely irrelevant—namely, that they are good mixers, people who can take part

in anything, administer, deliver occasional addresses, in short, be a sort of more elegant edition of an undertaker.¹⁹

The professionalisation of the pastorate in Danish Christendom contrasted drastically with the pastoral demands of the New Testament. Christendom produced pastors who were little more than “elegant undertakers,” charming the world in Christianese whilst despising Christianity’s world-denying demands, thus effectively “burying” Christianity beneath the world—and all in the *name* of Christianity.

In Christendom there was no shortage of sermons to hear, and no shortage of grand buildings in which to hear them.²⁰ What Christendom lacked was the heart to do something about what was heard in those sermons. Kierkegaard’s warning was that such a masquerade was not only untruthful and unfaithful, but that it would not survive. He was right. Kierkegaard actually predicted the dawn of a post-Christendom era. It would be, he warned, “a dreadful Reformation... identified by people ‘falling away’ from Christianity by the millions.”²¹ He perceived that, given the pervasive “success” of the Christendom way, once the church-going public actually realised what Christianity entailed for them *as individuals*, a mass outward exodus from the Church was inevitable. If Kierkegaard had been alive to see this happen, he would likely have said the outward exodus merely reflected the inward exodus that had been happening all along.

Given Kierkegaard’s eerily accurate prediction about the fall of Western Christendom, then, where does that leave Kierkegaard now? Has the vast decline of the

16. Søren Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 143.

17. Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity*, 144.

18. Kierkegaard, *Point of View*, 16.

19. Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers* 3:3157, 446.

20. See Aaron P. Edwards, “Kierkegaard the Preacher” in *T&T Clark Companion to the Theology of Kierkegaard*, ed. Aaron P. Edwards and David J. Gouwens (London: T&T Clark, 2020), 140–145.

21. Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers* 3:3737, 733.

Church across the Western world rendered Kierkegaard's anti-Christendomian missionary voice obsolete to the Church's very different challenges today?

THE REIMAGINING OF CHRISTENDOM

It was Paul Tillich's student, Harvey Cox, who said: "the process of secularisation [has] alleviated Kierkegaard's problem."²² Barring some unlikely re-Constantinisation of the West, it would seem that much of Kierkegaard's ecclesiological critique no longer applies. Even if one considers the complexities of what "secularism" actually entails,²³ or indeed whether various forms of "neo-Christendom" may still exist,²⁴ a theological position so acutely targeted towards a pre-secular context seemingly cannot relate as effectively to its aftermath. This is only the case, however, if one conceives of "Christendom" merely historically rather than theologically.

Christendom, as Kierkegaard saw it, though certainly corrupted *by* the Church-state alliance, need not be synonymous with it. Its ill effects may continually afflict the Church in any epoch and in many ways.²⁵ Kierkegaard is primarily concerned with the *implications* of the Christendom situation. When Christian faith is societally *en vogue*, "becoming a Christian" becomes a theological problem because the Christian faith becomes allied to an external "source" that is not God. If "Christendom" refers to any such situation in which Christian faith becomes axiomatic by appeal to mass social forces beyond the individual, then, for Kierkegaard, the authenticity of such Christianity is potentially corrupted or at the very least, highly questionable. This means that Kierkegaard's conception of Christendom, though based on an actual historical situation, rests more determinatively upon the content of Chris-

tian faith than any particular set of ecclesio-political circumstances.

Christendom, literally, is the manifestation of Christ's "dominion" in the world. But what does Christ's lordship actually look like within particular aspects of the socio-political sphere? In a more particular sense, Christendom could be described as a "Christening" of earthly "domains"; that is, a baptising and annexing of earthly institutions and powers under Christ. This may sound straightforward in theory, but what about when someone starts trying to *do* it within a particular socio-political context? That's when all the trouble starts. One obvious barrier to "applying" a Christendom logic today is the impossibility of recreating Western Christendom as it was. The Roman Empire was a unique and inimitable socio-political institution which—even well beyond its eventual collapse—continued to inform how much of medieval Christendom was imagined and structured. It is difficult to imagine what the modern-day equivalent of the conversion of Constantine would look like.

We also have living evidence in many established churches of the kind of inherited Christendomian problems to which Kierkegaard drew attention. Michael Hampson's *Last Rites: The End of the Church of England* (2006) highlighted the absurdity of the effects of "Christened" domains upon the Church's faithfulness. Even amid the ravages of secularization, Anglican clergy are still "required by law to use Christian ceremonies to baptise, marry and bury people" in the full knowledge that most of these people "do not come seeking the church: they come seeking the shrine and the shrine keeper and they want nothing to do with the congregation or its strange life and beliefs."²⁶ Where Kierkegaard quipped that Christians in Christendom participated in a metaphorical "paganism," many of the contemporary vestiges of Christendom have become a very literal form of *actual* paganism.

To be sure, we must tread very carefully around Kierkegaard when attempting to reimagine a positive view of Christendom. Yet the "post-Christendom"

22. Harvey Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (London: SCM, 1965), 91.

23. See *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age*, ed. Michael Warner et al (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

24. See Jason A. Mahn, *Becoming a Christian in Christendom: Radical Discipleship and the Way of the Cross in America's "Christian" Culture* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 3–27.

25. See Tilley's fairly open-ended construal of Kierkegaard's view of Christendom: "a geographical and sociological construct that misunderstands the church, faith, and how a Christian ought to relate to the world." J. Michael Tilley, "Christendom" in *Kierkegaard's Concepts, vol. 1, Absolute to Church*, ed. Steven M. Emmanuel et al (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2014), 210.

26. Michael Hampson, *Last Rites: The End of the Church of England* (London: Granta, 2006), 15–17.

narrative, so beloved of the modern Western academy, has become suspiciously vogue. As Joseph Boot notes, to be anti-Christendom is now “a way to score easy points in academic circles, since it conforms to the orthodox conventions of critical theory in the universities.”²⁷ What might Kierkegaard say if he knew that to be happily “post-Christendom” in outlook was the new bourgeois? Could being “pro-Christendom” (whatever that might mean) be more conducive to faith in our time, with our “anti-Christendomians” resembling Kierkegaard’s Christendomians? At the very least, these are questions worth pondering.

**WE MUST TREAD VERY CAREFULLY AROUND
KIERKEGAARD WHEN ATTEMPTING TO RE-
IMAGINE A POSITIVE VIEW OF CHRISTENDOM.**

Oliver O’Donovan notes the eschatological possibilities of a post-Christendom situation which further curtail the notion of a purely historical interpretation of Christendom, relating its effects far more closely with the implications of mission:

The conversion of Constantine, with all that followed from it, was only an intermediate frontier which developed from the effective mission of the church to society and led back to it... Christendom has ended, we say—but in what sense of the word “end”? Has it fulfilled itself in transition from the rule of the kings to the rule of the Christ, or has it simply been eclipsed by the vicissitudes of mission, perhaps to return in another form or, if not return, to provide a standing reminder of the political frontier which mission must always address?²⁸

Within some forms of the “post-Christendom” narrative there can indeed be a kind of self-congratulation at the decline of the Church and a denigrating of Gospel proclamation, as though the Church’s diminished public influence was wholly beneficial to the purposes of

mission.²⁹ Such perspectives miss O’Donovan’s qualified concession that, although imperfect, Christendom was simply the result of the kind of effectiveness in mission which we are now unaccustomed to seeing in the West. This is a perspective James K. A. Smith has also observed. Following O’Donovan’s cautiously positive account, he argues that the impetus to influence society with the virtues inherent to the Gospel means that it must be possible, on some level, to see the project of Christendom as “a missional endeavour.”³⁰

These are interesting alternatives to the usual narrative around the legacy and/or meaning of Christendom. Indeed, one wonders whether it might even be possible to construct a missional understanding of “Christendom” for our secular era which was somehow more congenial to Kierkegaard’s existential concerns than the Danish manifestation with which he was primarily engaged. I expect it would be a difficult task to convince Kierkegaard himself that Christendom was redeemable, however nuanced, but given the very different situation of the Western Church in the twenty-first century, it is certainly worth imagining the potential implications of his own dictum that “times are different, and different times have different requirements.”³¹

Whether one views Christendom-as-epoch as having been a generally good or bad thing,³² just as Christendom-as-mission can recur in other forms of the Church’s political frontier, so too can Christendom-as-sickness. As much as Kierkegaard definitely did see the Church-State connection as the root of Danish Christendom’s problem, this sickness need not be limited to “national” or “established” Church situa-

29. See, for example, Stuart Murray, *Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2004), 217–50.

30. James K.A. Smith, *Awaiting the King: Reforming Public Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 162–63.

31. Søren Kierkegaard, *For Self-Examination and Judge for Yourself!*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 15.

32. For a representative example of the negative view from a Kierkegaardian perspective, see Westphal: “Today’s task is different. But not entirely. For after Christendom is not the same as before Christendom. Remnants or traces of that Christendom still exist, and...there is a strong nostalgia for a Christendom partly remembered and partly imagined. What Kierkegaard helps us see is that theology need not mourn the steady demise of Christendom. Whatever advantages it may have brought to the Christian churches came at a high price. Too high.” Merold Westphal, “Kierkegaard, Theology, and Post-Christendom” in *T&T Clark Companion to the Theology of Kierkegaard*, 507.

27. Joseph Boot, *Ruler of Kings: Toward a Christian Vision of Government* (London: Wilberforce Publications, 2022), 144.

28. Oliver O’Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 243–44.

tions. The “poison in the building” may have cause to return in new forms, re-armed against the antibodies that fought it off, with or without state powers. This happens whenever the Church—local or universal—is content to rest in its crowds, comforts, or cultural capital, rather than resting in God’s protection alone: “But woe to the Christian Church when it has been victorious in this world, for then it is not the Church that has been victorious but the world.”³³ Such a condition can even occur for a Church that believes itself to be threatened by rampant secularity beyond its walls, or for a Church in self-imposed retreat.

The illusion of Christendom, as Kierkegaard saw it, allows the Church to trust in its comforts and numbers—however large *or* small—and to count upon its people as numerical resources rather than individuals in need of ongoing faith and formation. Beyond its walls, the issue of the Church’s faithful witness before an increasingly apathetic Western religious climate renders Kierkegaard’s voice all the more essential in spelling out what ecclesial faithfulness means at a time when the Church must be especially clear and especially sharp about whom it really stands for and what it is really willing to say about it.³⁴ Yet for Kierkegaard, outward witness without inward integrity was the very epitome of the illusion.

THE CHURCH INTERIOR

Kierkegaard’s antidote to Christendomian idolatry was to emphasize the importance of the Church’s spiritual interiority or “inwardness.” This is one very clear way in which Kierkegaard’s critique of Christendom continues to apply to the contemporary church. Many modern churches—especially those focussed upon evangelism, cultural engagement, and social action—are primarily focussed on their exteriority. Whilst such outward activities remain perennially essential to the Church’s mission, there is a modern tendency for a perpetually external focus to undermine the spiritual integrity of the Church’s “interior” life.

The spiritual impulses germane to Kierkegaard’s semi-pietistic leanings (such as contemplation, prayer, virtue formation, etc.) are easily lost in the perpetual pursuit of public statements, marketing strategies, congregational numbers, financial budgets, and reputational safeguarding. Perpetually outward-facing inclinations may appear “missional” but too often resemble the problem Kierkegaard saw in the perpetually “public” trajectory of Christendom, where social perception trumped spiritual integrity. Kierkegaard even saw this problem manifest in the very architecture of churches:

Even our churches express how superficial and externalized everything becomes. When one enters one of the old churches with those closed pews, with the old gallery, one unconsciously gets an impression of how much can lie hidden in a man’s deep inwardness—of which those closed pews were indeed a symbol. But now everything is a lounge; churches are also built this way nowadays. It is awkward and bad taste for someone to have an interior life of his own; it is an affectation—“Why should he have something like that for himself”—no, we are a public.³⁵

Kierkegaard saw that even the trappings of ecclesial furniture can speak of formerly vital existential-ecclesial practices now dormant, with the old closed pews now a physical relic of bygone existential fervour. This critique chimes in with the many ways interiority is forgotten in contemporary market-driven churches, where indeed “everything is a lounge” in the effort to maximise attendance at the expense of existential participation. Here we see how Kierkegaard’s “individualism” differs radically from that of modernity.

Perhaps more clearly than any other modern theological thinker, Kierkegaard highlights what can go awry existentially *and* ecclesiologically when individual decision is subsumed into the ideal of “the crowd.”³⁶ Kierkegaardian individualism is built upon the call for subjective confession of faith upon which Christ built his Church (cf. Matt. 16:16–18). The Church is tempted to diminish the implications of its confession

33. Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity*, 223.

34. See my reflections on radical inculturated proclamation in Aaron P. Edwards, “Secular Apathy and the Public Paradox of the Gospel: Towards Radical Inculturated Proclamation,” *International Journal of Public Theology* 13 (2019), 413–31.

35. Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers* 1:594, 241.

36. See Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers* 2:2078, 438.

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in different ways in every generation. Whether faced by the ruthless threat of the Assyrian sword or the charming invitation to the Babylonian banquet, she is perpetually enticed to forsake the cost of discipleship for something more temporally rewarding.³⁷ This is the poison from which any vision of Christendom is never too far away.

Evangelicals presently animated with rehabilitated visions for Christendom (or something like it) need not be entirely discouraged.³⁸ To reinhabit the Church's socio-political frontiers with Christ's lordship ought not mean an automatic sleepwalk into worldly compromise. But Kierkegaard is here to warn any Christendomian venturers about the perennial temptations awaiting them if and when such visions become "realised." If our eternal hope becomes realisable entirely in the realm of the "seen," our faith-filled vision for

37. Notably, Kierkegaard's critique of Lutheran Christendom and his focus on true discipleship had no small influence on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology of discipleship and even his ecclesiology. See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church*, ed. Clifford J. Green, trans. Reinhard Krauss and Nancy Lukens (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 249.

38. See for example, Douglas Wilson, *Mere Christendom* (Moscow: Canon Press, 2023).

eternal unseen hope (cf. Heb. 11:1) will grow dim. And however militant, triumphant, or persecuted the Church may become in future decades, Kierkegaard's inconvenient voice will always have something to say whenever we seem prone to forget what is truly at stake when the Church confesses its faith altogether and all at once: "The situation is this. If everyone around defines himself as being a Christian just like 'the others,' then no one, if it is looked at this way, is really confessing Christ."³⁹ Whatever else Kierkegaard may or may not offer to the Church, awkward questions like this are those from which we the Church should never dare to graduate.

Aaron Edwards is an academic theologian, author, and preacher. He is the author of various academic articles and books, including A Theology of Preaching and Dialectic (T&T Clark, 2018), T&T Clark Companion to the Theology of Kierkegaard (T&T Clark, 2019) and Taking Kierkegaard back to Church (Cascade, 2022).

39. Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity*, 219.

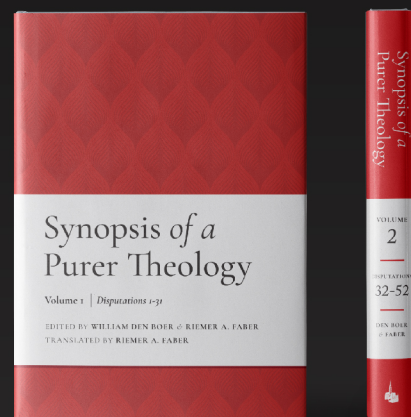
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ESSAYS

Understanding Liberal Theology: An Interview with Gary Dorrien

LAYNE HANCOCK

Regular readers of Ad Fontes have likely never heard of Gary Dorrien. But as the Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary and Professor of Religion at Columbia University, he is one of the foremost thinkers in liberal theology for over forty years.

Committed as Ad Fontes is to historic Protestant orthodoxy, our relationship with liberal theology is largely an adversarial one. Yet the fact remains that critics of liberal theology are, more often than not, ignorant of its historical origins and its contemporary developments. Robust engagement cannot be achieved without rigorous understanding, and so, earlier this year, Layne Hancock sat down with Prof. Dorrien for an in depth interview about the history of liberal theology, his own journey into it, and its evolving manifestations.

LH: *When we last corresponded, you mentioned that you were using Brad Littlejohn's modernization of Richard*

Hooker's Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity for your class on Anglican theology at Union Theological Seminary. How has this Davenant publication been received by your students?

GD: I'm grateful to Dr. Littlejohn for making Hooker accessible to students. When I first taught Union's course on Anglican theology, I assigned sections of the Folger edition, and very few students fought their way through the sixteenth-century prose. Making Hooker available to students as beautifully as Dr. Littlejohn has done is a great gift to all Anglican students and students of Anglicanism.

LH: *You told an interviewer in 2016: "I am a jock who began as a solidarity activist, became an Episcopal cleric at thirty, became an academic at thirty-five, and never quite settled on a field, so now I explore the intersections of too many fields." This is a very atypical biography-*

cal trajectory into the academy. How did you become a Christian and a theologian?

GD: I grew up in a poor, semi-rural community in mid-Michigan, on a dirt road flanked by trailers and hardcore poverty to the right of us, and working-class homes to the left. My parents grew up in similarly poor communities of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, where my father was slurred throughout his youth as a "half-breed" for having a Cree mother. The abuse scarred him, making him someone who shied away from emotional attachments. We were nominally Catholic, but I got to Mass just enough to be struck by the stunning image of a suffering God on a cross. The crucifix caught me like nothing else in Christianity. In fact, I didn't know much else about Christianity. I knew only the effect that the cross had on me, and something about God as the Creator of the world—a glimmer of transcendence.

WHEN MLK WAS CUT DOWN, THIS SECOND CROSS STORY MELDED TOGETHER WITH THE FIRST ONE.

I was in high school, and a three-sport athlete, when the civil rights movement reached its apex. Martin Luther King Jr. had a very similar effect upon me as the crucifix above the altar. I read every book that the public library owned on King and the civil rights movement. It was my first book-reading obsession. King was a formative, galvanizing, inspiring figure to me during his last years. Then he was cut down, and this second cross story melded together with the first one in my mind and heart. That was all the religion I had upon entering college. All these years later, it's still my touchstone.

LH: *When you read King and the civil rights literature, were you reading it as a first person participant in the struggle, as a descendant of Native Americans, or was it more a second person perspective?*

GD: We were taught in school that America is the greatest nation in the world and the greatest nation ever. The hateful violence on display at the Birmingham demonstration and then at Selma was hard to

reconcile with what they taught in school. I had no sense of being an ally of the struggle or any such thing; that would have been impossibly grandiose for a lonely, book-reading jock in mid-Michigan. But King and the civil rights movement were my clues to what it might mean to take the gospel seriously. I read King's book *Stride Toward Freedom* in high school. The parade of theologians and philosophers flew over my head, but I kept reading anyway because whatever King was writing about seemed far more important than what I was learning in school.

LH: *You teach social ethics, theology, and philosophy of religion as the Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary and as Professor of Religion at Columbia University. Our readers will be familiar with "theology" as a discipline, but less so with "philosophy of religion" and "social ethics." Could you provide a brief definition of those fields?*

GD: Social ethics was invented in the 1880s by activist ministers of the Social Gospel movement who taught in colleges and seminaries, notably Francis Greenwood Peabody, William Jewett Tucker, Graham Taylor, and Richard Ely. The Social Gospel movement contended that Christians have a moral obligation to be involved in reform movements for social justice.

In white Protestant churches, the Social Gospel was centrally concerned with industrialization, economic justice, the emerging labor movement, and Gilded Age corruption. Congregational minister Washington Gladden and Baptist minister-academic Walter Rauschenbusch were the leading founders of the Social Gospel that emerged in white Protestant churches. They were shamed by union organizers, who charged that ministers were on the side of the owners who paid their salary. Gladden and Rauschenbusch wanted to deny it, but knew it was true. To them, everything was at stake for the church in showing that Christians cared about poverty, suffering, and even unions. They proposed to recover the social justice emphasis of the Bible and the centrality of the kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus.

In Black churches, the Social Gospel was primarily a new abolition movement. Abolition, the Civil War, and Reconstruction had come and gone. The Reconstruction amendments were being stripped away, a mania of racist terrorism was underway, and the Jim Crow system was being established. The founders of the Black Social Gospel such as Baptist minister William Simmons, AME minister Reverdy Ransom, and AME Zion bishop Alexander Walters argued that Black churches needed to build protest organizations and become involved in political struggles for justice. The political-activist orientation of the Social Gospel was no less controversial and unwelcome in Black churches than in White churches. In both cases, Social Gospel leaders were always in a minority.

**THE SOCIAL GOSPEL LEADERS WHO
INVENTED SOCIAL ETHICS SAID THERE
SHOULD BE A PLACE IN THE ACADEMY
TO STUDY THE REFORM MOVEMENTS
FOR JUSTICE.**

The Social Gospel leaders who invented social ethics said there should be a place in the academy to study the reform movements for justice and support them. Salvation must be personal and social to be saving. Now that the emerging social sciences had established that there is such a thing as social structure, Social Gospel leaders said the church must seek to reform or transform the structures of society. A bad society makes reasonably good people do bad things. A good society would make people less selfish and violent, compelling bad people to learn to share and cooperate.

LH: *One of the few classes you taught that overlaps significantly with the interests of the Davenant Institute is your Kalamazoo College seminar on Augustine and Aquinas. What did you take from those classes and how did it shape your views on Christian orthodoxy? Was there ever a moment where orthodox Protestantism was a “live option” for you? Why or why not?*

GD: I’m an Anglican, so the entire Christian tradition is open to me! I’m interested in all of it and I’ve

always been interested in trying to bring as much of it as I can to students in whatever context I find myself. Many of my books are doorstopper-size on that account, including my forthcoming book *Anglican Identities: Logos Idealism, Imperial Whiteness, Commonwealth Ecumenism* (Baylor, 2024).

As for my intellectual formation, I studied Kant, Hegel, Karl Marx, and W. E. B. Du Bois intently in college and have sustained this set of influences ever since. I also studied Rauschenbusch, Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, James Cone, and Karl Rahner, so theologians have been in my head since my college days, and feminist theology arose when I was in seminary. But I was at the end of my twenties before I joined a church and decided that I did, indeed, have a theological perspective. King was always my model of living a meaningful life. I came through the door of social justice activism, not through a church tradition.

I finally joined the Episcopal Church because I had recently devoured William Temple’s major works and my beloved Presbyterian-pastor spouse Brenda Biggs told me not to join her church! Temple was a neo-Hegelian, a democratic socialist, a cleric with a deep spirituality, a global ecumenical leader, and the theorist of a mutual-fund form of economic democracy built on an excess profits tax. I entered the Anglican Communion with his compelling thought and witness in mind. It didn’t matter that he was the opposite of me on the social scale—he grew up in castles. His neo-Hegelian re-fashioning of Anglican logos theology was something that I could preach in Episcopal churches: Spirit is the nature of the Supreme Reality that created all things; the will of Christ is one with the will of God but not identical with it; will and personality are ideally interchangeable terms.

LH: *What is liberal theology? In *The Making of Liberal Theology* (v.1, xix) and *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit*, you define it mostly genealogically and from biographies of major figures and conflicts—Kant, Schleiermacher, Hegel, Coleridge, Rauschenbusch, etc. Elsewhere you’ve defined it as like a sevenfold cord, writing that “wherever liberal theology bloomed in Europe and North America it was defined by six things: 1) espous-*

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE IS INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM, OR NEGATIVELY, THE ARGUMENT THAT NO EXTERNAL AUTHORITY ESTABLISHES OR COMPELS BELIEF.

ing the right to academic freedom, 2) navigating a third way between orthodox over-belief and atheistic disbelief, 3) accepting biblical criticism, 4) allowing science to explain the physical world, 5) looking beyond the church for answers, 6) seeking to be relevant to the modern world,” and then later in some contexts liberal theology acquired a seventh plank which the social justice activism of the Social Gospel sometimes called “Christian socialism” in Europe but on the American front “the Social Gospel movement.”

GD: I’ve operated with the same definition of liberal theology all along. In my trilogy on American liberal theology, I framed it as a three-factor definition for the sake of simplicity, but the third category was the fourfold bundle of things concerning biblical criticism, scientific explanation, looking beyond the church, and trying to be relevant that came from accepting the first two principles. The fundamental principle is intellectual freedom, or negatively, the argument that no external authority establishes or compels right belief on any particular thing. The second factor, mediation, is equally defining of this tradition in every generation of its history: Liberals contend that there is a credible third-way between over-believing dogmatism and atheistic dogmatism, or at least, that a third-way must be carved out if Christian faith is to survive in any form. Within the churches, liberals fight for the right to criticize the Bible and Christian tradition, but the dominant predisposition in liberal theology is to worry more about the atheistic culture of disbelief. Thus, Schleiermacher addressed his speeches on religion to the “cultured despisers of religion.” The varying factor is the Social Gospel. Liberal theology and the Social Gospel are different things, but in the USA these movements gradually folded together to become one thing. So the Social Gospel became part of the definition of liberal theology in the USA and Canada.

LH: *Is the contrary case of identifying liberal theology with progressive social movements something like Harnack’s German liberalism, that was comparatively socially conservative and institutionally well-established?*

GD: The American Social Gospel had a progressive-activist spirit lacking almost any analogue in Germany. Rauschenbusch would have been far less radical had his father not moved from Germany to the USA. The Ritschlian School of Albrecht Ritschl, Adolf von Harnack and Wilhelm Herrmann swept the elite German universities in the late nineteenth century. This was a remarkable achievement when you consider that it had to push aside the traditions of iconic figures. The Ritschlians did it by claiming that none of the liberal theologies deriving from Kant, Schleiermacher, Hegel, or the mid-century mediating fusions gave historical criticism its due. All claimed to do so, but all were strategies to curtail its reach. The only credible and faithful way forward was to make theology truly historicist. Ritschl said theology needed to embrace historical consciousness, reaffirm the (Lutheran) autonomy of faith, reclaim the kingdom-oriented religion of Jesus, accept Kant’s divide between theoretical and practical reason, and defend the indispensable role of religion in society. The Ritschlian School ruled the field even as it fought bruising internal battles over the reach of Ritschl’s historicism and his attempt to expunge metaphysics from theology. It produced highly distinguished scholarship; we would remember this episode differently had the Ritschlians not signed up for defending the German Empire. It all came crashing down with an apocalyptic fury that stunned Harnack and should have shamed him.

LH: *You frequently refer to the 1880s Social Gospel movement as the “Third Great Awakening.” Can you explain what you mean by this and explain why evangelicals should give figures of this tradition a second look?*

GD: The Social Gospel movement was the Third Great Awakening because it was so much like the first two. It preached that the nation had fallen into sin and could only be saved by a movement of God's Spirit that impelled the nation to repentance. The Social Gospel founders worried that Christianity had been ruinously trivialized into something too private, self-ish, and corrupted to manage another Awakening. The God who wrote the Bible cares about justice, yet who would know it from attending American churches? Rauschenbusch was grieved and appalled that massive evils in American society went totally unmentioned on Sunday mornings. He personalized the point, lamenting that he didn't learn about justice in the church. He had to learn about it outside the church, after which his fellow Christians tried to quash it.

**JAMES CONE VEHEMENTLY REJECTED
THE LIBERAL COMMITMENT TO ENGAGING
CRITICAL DISBELIEF.**

LH: *One of the things an evangelical outsider might be surprised to learn is that "liberal theology" and "liberation theology" were not always synonymous terms. Can you talk about the long, difficult road that was taken to bring these two parties together?*

GD: The founder of Black liberation theology, James Cone, was theologically a Barthian when he started, and he retained certain Barthian markers after he re-rooted his thought in Black American culture and history. Jim vehemently rejected the liberal commitment to engaging critical disbelief, putting God in question, searching for the historical Jesus, and making claims to ethical universality, though no one ever roared for his intellectual freedom more than James Cone. In addition, if you asked Jim what he really believed about the divinity of Christ or the resurrection of Christ, he gave a Schleiermacher answer on the first question and a Paul Tillich answer on the second. When he condemned liberal theology, Jim didn't mean that the doctrinal formulations of Schleiermacher and Tillich were always wrong. He meant that Schleiermacher corrupted theology by letting his over-educated, racist, Eu-

rocentric, bourgeois, atheist friends define its agenda. Jim taught the introduction to theology class at Union, where he devoted half of one class session to liberal theology. He assigned one essay of Kant's ("What is Enlightenment?"), one chapter of Harnack (from *What is Christianity?*), and that was it, balancing them with J. Gresham Machen's *Christianity and Liberalism*. His favorite theology story was about how he founded Black liberation theology; his second favorite was about Karl Barth overthrowing the proud German professors.

I've spoken a lot in Germany, and whenever I came home, Jim would ask if anyone still talked about Barth. He was always disappointed in the answer. Cutting loose from Barth in the early 1970s was the turning point of Jim's career, which saved his career in theology, but he plainly said that he could not have become a liberation theologian if not for Karl Barth.

LH: *You wrote *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* (1998) partially to correct the secular impression that modern evangelicals were "merely fundamentalists with better manners." You also wrote in hope of an emergent fourth wave of post-conservative or progressive evangelicalism in the coming years. Granting that the politics and religion schisms of 2016 provided a generational shake up of many denominations and tribes, if you were forced to add a chapter to this book today, what would you be inclined to investigate or write?*

GD: If I updated that book, I would have to emphasize political developments of the succeeding twenty-five years. Evangelical feminism still had major proponents and a few organizations when I wrote that book. I had written frequently for *Sojourners* in the 1980s and knew the feminists in its orbit. They were battered by the 1990s, but not yet with a sense of being routed. I stuck to a theological argument in the *Remaking* book, treading lightly on the Christian Right, determined to keep theology in the foreground. Some of my friends pushed back: "You're taking their theology too seriously!" I ran long on evangelicals of that period who sought to reestablish the heritage of catholic orthodoxy, especially Donald Bloesch and Alister McGrath, and evangelicals who drank from postmodern wells, especially Stanley Grenz, Rodney Clapp, Roger Olson,

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and Henry H. Knight III. The subject that I repressed in *Making* is the history that my brilliant doctoral advisee Isaac Sharp recounts in his book, *The Other Evangelicals* (2022). As for the theology arguments in that book, they hold up on their own ground. But evangelicals have not sided with Donald Trump on the basis of theology.

LH: In “*Social Ethics for Social Justice: The Legacies of the Social Gospel and a Case for Idealistic Discontent*,” you cited three counterweights to the “too much advocacy” concern that you admired: (1) Francis Peabody’s inductive study of social crises; (2) Catholic Social Teaching and the work of John Ryan; (3) the Christian Realism of Reinhold Niebuhr. You wrote: “I treasure the modern Catholic tradition of social teaching [especially *Rerum Novarum* of 1891 and *Quadragesimo Anno* of 1931] because it focused from the beginning on the problem of capitalism and labor. It is based on one of the great philosophical traditions, with a method that works in various cultural contexts and reaches beyond Christianity. Every Catholic institution teaches some version of Catholic Social Teaching [CST]... Catholic institutions will be teaching *Rerum Novarum* long after the Protestant Social Gospel is forgotten.” Davenant is doing its best to try and keep one version of Protestant Social Teaching alive, but this last sentence is quite provocative—could you unpack it for us?

GD: Roman Catholic institutions teach their own history; Catholic periodicals usually have a wider scope than Protestant periodicals, with a higher threshold for intellectualism; the Catholic commitment to philosophical reasoning is an enabling factor; and CST ranges over many of the same issues of social justice, the social question, unions, moral critiques of capitalism, and the like that the Protestant Social Gospel was founded upon. Protestants who throw out philosophy impoverish their own discourse. I tell my students that the Catholic tradition is right about philosophy regardless of the judgment that one might make about Thomism. No theology is stronger than its philosophical undergirding. If you haven’t thought about your philosophical undergirding, you’re sure to assume a bad one, and to cut yourself off from everyone not belonging to your theological group. I take some comfort in knowing that at least some of what I care about will always be taught wherever CST is taught.

Layne Hancock is a doctoral candidate at the University of Notre Dame in moral theology and is currently writing a dissertation entitled “Saving Jonathan Edwards’ Ethics.”



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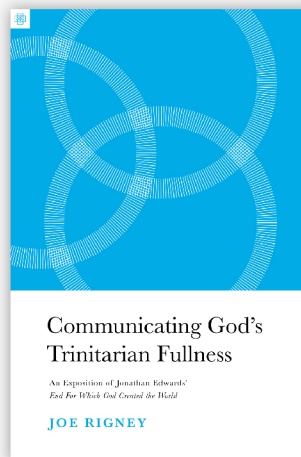
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Thrice Achilles grasped the phantom,
Thrice his hands passed through the shade.
Rage had made the oceans tremble,
Rage had slain the Trojan Prince.
But the day was done and over,
And Patróclus dead and gone.

Turned the pain to heavy sorrow,
Turned the hero to his camp.
Still he sat among the servants,
Still he longed to hold his friend.
Half his soul had gone to battle,
There, like thunder, fell in death.

What remained for Prince Achilles?
What could soothe his dire loss?
No more elder there to guide him,
No more friend to cheer his days.
Though his vengeance had been taken,
No mere mortal conquers death.

Sermons on Job by John Calvin

TRANSLATED BY ROB ROY MCGREGOR

REVIEWED BY JOEL R. BEEKE

John Calvin is best known for his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Indeed, it may be the most influential systematic theology ever written. But Calvin devoted his life to preaching, and we cannot fully appreciate his doctrine apart from reading his sermons. At the end of his life, Calvin said, “I have endeavoured, according to the measure of grace [God] has given me, to teach his word in purity, both in my sermons and writings.”¹ It was in the pulpit that Calvin most vigorously applied the truth of the Holy Scriptures to spiritual experience and practical action.

Calvin’s wedding of doctrine and application is nowhere more evident than in his *Sermons on Job*. Calvin originally preached the sermons in French in 1554 and early 1555. They were transcribed by Denis Raguenier, a stenographer hired by the deacons of the Genevan church. The French sermons were published in 1563, with a second edition in 1569. Calvin’s exposition of Job found a good reception among international Re-

formed readers. Arthur Golding translated them into English in 1574.² Four more English editions followed in the next decade. A German translation followed (1587–1588) as well as a Latin one (1593). A third French edition appeared in 1611.³

With the rising tide of the Enlightenment, however, Calvin’s sermons and other writings were increasingly neglected. Remarkably, many volumes of Calvin’s sermons were lost in the nineteenth century when the Genevan library sold them by the pound—a sign of how far the city had departed from the theology of the Reformer. Thankfully, the French sermons on Job were preserved.⁴ But with no new English editions,

1. John Calvin, “Last Will and Testament,” in *Letters of John Calvin*, ed. Jules Bonnet, trans. Marcus Robert Gilchrist, 4 vols. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1858), 4:366.

2. *Sermons of Master John Calvin, upon the Booke of Job*, trans. Arthur Golding (London: Henric Binneman, for Lucas Harison and George Bishop, 1574). This is a large folio of more than 750 pages.

3. Derek Thomas, *Calvin’s Teaching on Job: Proclaiming the Incomprehensible God* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2004), 33.

4. “Two thousand three hundred sermons were thus preserved until the nineteenth century. They filled some forty-four volumes, carefully bound. But through the criminal ignorance of librarians, they were sold for the weight of the paper. Most fortunately, it was possible to salvage some. At the present time we possess about fifteen hundred of them.” Bernard Cottret, *Calvin: A Biography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 289.

the sermons were inaccessible to most English readers through much of the modern era. A book of selected sermons from this set, translated by Leroy Nixon, was published in 1952.⁵ The Banner of Truth Trust reprinted the 1574 English edition in 1993.⁶ However, Rob Roy McGregor translated all the sermons from French into modern English for the first time, and Banner of Truth published the translation in three attractive, hardcover volumes in 2022.⁷ McGregor is an experienced Calvin translator, having already rendered into English Calvin's sermons on Genesis 1–20 and Acts 1–7.

**CALVIN'S SERMONS ON JOB ARE A
PRACTICAL, EXPOSITORY TREATISE
ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE.**

The book of Job depicts the collision of trust in the Almighty and the suffering of inexplicable tragedies. As one would expect, Calvin strongly affirmed the doctrine of God's sovereignty. For example, he said regarding Job 12:14–16, "When we see things confused in this world, we must attribute nothing to chance, but we must know it is God who is in control and is guiding everything" (2:575). But Calvin's burden in these messages was not to explain and defend the doctrine of divine sovereignty. Rather, he labored to call people to recognize God's hand in their daily lives, to find forgiveness for their sins so that they can be confident that He is not against them, and to submit humbly to His providence even when they do not understand His purposes, confessing that He is good and wise in all He does.

Calvin realized that it is one thing to understand doctrine in the head but quite another to exercise faith experientially in the heart. Even the godly can fail in this. When the Scriptures tell us that Job wanted to

take God to court, Calvin said, "He was so distressed by his anguish that he did not know what he was saying. Now if a man...given to us as an example of patience was angered to such an extent, how will we react?" (1:453). The solution, Calvin said, is for suffering sinners to look to Christ as the Mediator. Then, they will be enabled by grace to pray, "Lord, we come to you not to plead our case or to presume anything about ourselves or our persons, but because you are gracious to us and desire to receive us in the name of your Son Jesus Christ.... It pleases you to let us feel your infinite goodness, which you made known in your only Son our Saviour Jesus Christ when you gave him over to death for us" (1:456).

Therefore, Calvin's *Sermons on Job* could be considered a practical, expository treatise on divine providence. Calvin exhorted believers to exercise faith while in distress. He said, "The way our faith is demonstrated...is that in the midst of our adversities, we can contemplate God's gracious promises" (3:590). This was not mere theory for Calvin, but a principle tested by fire. As Derek Thomas notes in his introduction to the book, the Genevan Reformer could sympathize with Job. Calvin suffered heated criticism from opponents both within and without Geneva. He also had excruciating medical problems (xviii–xx). But he endured.

How did Job, Calvin, and others like them persevere? A core lesson about perseverance that we learn from the book of Job, Calvin indicates, is having the humility to acknowledge God's incomprehensibility. To bow before the infinite depth of God's wisdom in providence is the "unifying tenet" that "forms the basis for understanding the Book of Job," Thomas explains in his own book on Calvin's treatment of Job.⁸ Calvin's aim is not to promote *agnosticism*, as if God were completely unknowable, but *reverence*, because God is knowable only insofar as He chooses to reveal Himself. Calvin reminds us that we must always view God in the "mirror" He provides—His Word—for it is "intolerable arrogance" for us to demand to look God straight in the face, so to speak, as if we could probe the depths of divine wisdom. Calvin writes, "We

5. John Calvin, *Sermons from Job*, trans. Leroy Nixon (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952).

6. John Calvin, *Sermons on Job* (1574; facsimile repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1993).

7. *Sermons on Job* by John Calvin. Translated by Rob Roy McGregor. Banner of Truth, 2022. Hardback. 2120pp. \$95

8. Thomas, *Calvin's Teaching on Job*, 169.

must be sober-minded, realising the small capacity of our minds and the infinite expanse of God’s majesty” (3:365). That is eminently biblical advice (Isa. 55:8–9; Rom. 11:33–34).

**THESE SERMONS ARE A LIGHT TO
GUIDE THE MINISTER IN DOCTRINE
AND APPLICATION.**

Being full of practical applications that are still relevant today, which flow out of sound exegetical exposition and hermeneutical principles, Calvin’s *Sermons on Job* are to be highly recommended. Nearly every page contains applications that seem remarkably relevant for living the Christian life today. In fact, Calvin at times seems to almost rush through his exegesis in order to hurry on to his applications which often begin with phrases such as: “Now let us learn from this...” or simply “Let us...” For the student of Reformed experiential and practical theology, the sermons are the fruit of years of reflection on God’s sovereignty by a great teacher who dwelt almost constantly in the crucible of affliction. For the minister preparing to preach from the book of Job, they are a light to guide him in doctrine and application. For the Christian, they are spiritual armor to equip the godly to persevere in faith, entrusting themselves to a gracious Savior while they walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

Someone may ask, “Why should I purchase this set of books when I can get the 1574 English edition online for free?” In reply, while we are grateful for internet resources, we note that the modern translation delivers us from having to decipher obscure statements such as “albeit that we be fayne to be intermedled with them.”⁹ There are also the difficulties of sixteenth-cen-

9. *Sermons of Master John Calvin, upon the Booke of Job*, 5. McGregor translates, “Even though we are obliged to live in the midst of it,” that is, in this

corrupt world. *Sermons on Job*, 1:13.

tury spelling and orthography. For example, consider the following excerpt from the 1574 edition: “Doe we know him? That muft be in fuch wyfe as he hath vttered himfelfe: that is to wit, that he is our maker, our maynteyner, and one that hath fhewed fuch fatherly goodneffe towards vs, that we of dutie ought to be as children towards him, if wee will not bee vtterly vnthankfull.”¹⁰ While this is not incomprehensible, especially for readers with some experience with early modern books, McGregor’s translation is much more easily understood: “Do we know him? We must know him as he is, namely, as our Creator and the one who sustains us and shows us such fatherly kindness that we must indeed live as his children—unless we want to be unduly ungrateful to him” (1:11).

We owe Rob Roy McGregor a great debt for his fresh rendering of Calvin’s sermons into English. His translation flows in such a way that one can imagine Calvin speaking these words today, and it is a precious gift to the church to be able to hear Calvin’s voice in modern English. The Reformer’s aim was always to engender in people a knowledge of God that moves them to offer their hearts to the Lord, willingly and sincerely, in love and reverence to His holy name. May God be pleased to use this fresh translation to do precisely that.¹¹

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10. *Sermons of Master John Calvin, upon the Booke of Job*, 4.

11. Thanks to Paul M. Smalley for his research work on this review.

Divination and Philosophy in the Letters of Paul

BY MATTHEW SHARP

REVIEWED BY MATTHEW COLVIN

For any given word in the New Testament, there may be cultural background that modern readers must recover in order to understand it. But backgrounds can differ in kind, not merely degree. The word *πραιτώριον* in Acts 23:35 is a specimen of one kind: to understand this word, we need to know something about Greco-Roman military and political history. When we do, we discover that it is a Latin word (*praetorium*) for the official residence of a governor or king. And there, the matter is pretty well settled. Such research helps us transcend our own blinkered modern assumptions and “think our way into” first-century questions and the answers that the NT gives to them.

Not all background, however, is that simple. Especially in the case of abstract concepts, we should not assume that terminology is taken over by the NT authors from the Greco-Roman world without any difference. Of this kind is the term *ἀνάστασις*, used by Paul in Acts 17 to denote the “resurrection” of Jesus. It piques the interest of his Stoic hearers (“We will hear you again about this”), most likely because they thought it sounded similar to their doctrine of “eternal return” or cyclical history, by which the world is consumed in an epyro-

sis and begins again every thirty thousand years.¹ But of course, this is not at all what Paul has in mind by the term. Unlike *πραιτώριον*, the word *ἀνάστασις* carries with it distinctive and contested beliefs about anthropology, eschatology, cosmology, and theology. And while the idea of “resurrection” might bear surface-level similarity to Stoic ideas about cyclical history and “eternal return,” the reality is that the term is not really common ground. Christianity and Stoicism are, in C. Kavin Rowe’s words, “incommensurable forms of life.”² They urge not agreement, but conversion.

It is not easy to walk the tightrope between illuminating background and false syncretism. We see some of both in a recent new book by Matthew Sharp, *Divination and Philosophy in the Letters of Paul*. Sharp contends that “Paul’s various means of communication with the divine are best situated within the context

1. See Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 2.14, Alexander, *On Aristotle’s Prior Analytics* 180–181, and the other texts cited in Long & Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* vol. 1, §52.

2. C. Kavin Rowe, *One True Life: The Stoics and Early Christians as Rival Traditions*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016. “The Christian and Stoic stories are the requisite sense-makers of the particular terms within them so much so that adequate translation of words such as God from one tradition into the other requires the retelling of the story in which the words originally received their meaning....Because the stories are incommensurable and incompatible, the retelling of one story in the terms of the other is simply impossible—they are traditions in conflict.” (237)

of ancient divination” (2). He sets this in contrast to approaches to Paul that have assumed a theological framework and focused on “revelation” and “prophecy,” thereby “excluding the full range of available evidence for how people of the Graeco-roman world solicited information from the divine world.” The phenomenon of divination is an aspect of the first-century world (both Greco-Roman and Hebrew) that poses considerable challenges to modern readers. We tend to value discursive and scientific knowledge, viewing other modes of knowing with skepticism. Sharp provides the reader with a crash course in ancient divination: dreams, apparitions, omens, lots, and signs. Sources from Homer to Cicero are thoroughly cited and quoted. In my judgment, Sharp does not provide quite as many comparanda as Jennifer Eyl’s *Signs, Wonders, & Gifts: Divination in the Letters of Paul*, but he gives enough new citations that anyone who wants to place Paul’s practices within their ancient context will need to consult both books.

What benefit can we derive from this information? Sharp occasionally provides impressive corrections to received English translations by adducing comparable ancient passages. In discussing Galatians 1:16-17 (“when God was pleased to reveal his Son to me...I did not immediately *consult with* anyone”), Sharp points out that Paul’s word *προσανεθέμην* “implies the consultation of a specialist regarding the interpretation of divinatory phenomena” and cites precedents from Chrysippus and Diodorus Siculus. This is valuable work which specifies the sense of Paul’s words: he means that he did not require assistance from a vision-interpreter, but understood his vision of Jesus on his own. Sharp gives similarly helpful comparanda to clarify the meaning of several other words: *χρηματισμός/χρηματιζῶ* in Rom. 11:2-6 and the *στεναγμοὶ ἀλαλήτοις* of Rom. 8:26. Occasionally, Sharp’s data is lifted verbatim from Liddell and Scott’s Greek Lexicon, as when he cites three instances of the word *στεναγμός* from Sophocles, Euripides, and Plato, in the same sequence as they occur in LSJ, without attribution (98). But more often, he displays a knowledge that extends beyond lexicons to documentary sources, such as the technical instructions in *Papyri Graecae Magicae*. These parts are philologically grounded historical-grammatical exegesis at its best.

Sharp has made a methodological decision not to posit a qualitative distinction between divination authorized by Israel’s God and divination done in the service of the false gods of Greco-Roman religion. This amounts to a deliberate choice of an etic description of Paul’s religious practices, and Sharp admits as much:

“Paul does not describe his activities with the usual Greek words for divination, and one does not need to look too far to find a likely reason for this. In the LXX, words such as *μάντις* and *μαντεύομαι* are generally restricted to the illegitimate practices of the Gentile nations...We should be careful, however, not to confuse a taxonomic and linguistic preference with an eschewal of divination altogether.” (4)

This is a surprising admission. We should hesitate before rejecting the biblical authors’ own (emic) explanation of their choice of terms for divinatory activities in favor of an etic one. I suspect that if one were to ask the apostle Paul, “Do you engage in divination (*μαντεύει*)?”, he would reply with his characteristic *μὴ γένοιτο!* Despite this concession of deliberately different terminology, Sharp believes that he can find evidence of similar concepts and practices, e.g. that the interpretation of dreams or signs works the same way in Paul as it does in Greco-Roman religion. But too often, it is clear that there is a distinction, and that Sharp has elided it.

For instance, Sharp casts doubt on one of the main distinctions drawn between pagan divination and biblical practices: “A frequent assumption has also been that while ancient Jews and Christians enjoyed the direct divine revelation of prophecy, ‘pagan’ religions had to make do with indirect and artificial means of divination.” (15) It is true that ancient Jews and Christians did not *always* use different methods from those of the pagans.³ But are there not times when this distinction is historically accurate because the gods of Greco-Roman polytheism were *not gods*, and their deliverances by divination had to be ginned up by mountebanks using their *technē*? So-called “Delphic ambiguity” is a

3. Dru Johnson’s recent *Biblical Philosophy* distinguishes Babylonian fortune-telling via formulas that interpret the “textualized” and pre-encoded world of omens, from Hebrew prophecy and divination, which is dependent upon God as the source of knowledge. I suspect Sharp would dispute this tidy division.

documented trick of ancient oracles, and it is alive and well in the studied vagueness of modern horoscopes and fortune cookies. Then there is the matter of astrology. Augustine delivers scathing criticism of the Pythagorean philosopher and astrologer Nigidius (*CD* V.3). Sharp, though he cites the *City of God* as a source that mentions Nigidius (28-29), does not interact with Augustine's arguments.

Sharp differs from Jennifer Eyl by including more discussion of philosophy, since his main sources are Cicero's *De Divinatione* and Plutarch. How does Sharp use ancient philosophical sources? Too often, he uses them to supply conceptual definitions that are then read onto the Bible. For instance, he cites explanations of dream-visions and heavenly apparitions, which occur not only in the Bible but also in Greco-Roman literature, and attempts to use them in exegesis of 1 Corinthians 2:10: "These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God." Where we might think that Paul is making an analogical argument from human thought to divine thought, Sharp goes in a different direction: "Paul is identifying the physics through which such a visionary experience is possible."

In what sense is the Spirit the "physics" that enables divination? Sharp claims that Paul's concept of *pneuma* in the Church, which "forms believers into Christ's body", should be understood along Stoic lines, similar to the *pneuma* that unites the various bodies of the cosmos together and also differentiates them from each other through different degrees of tension (e.g. low-tension *pneuma* produces solid objects, while higher tensions produce animate, sentient, and even rational beings). Sharp consistently refers to *pneuma* as impersonal substance, not an agent with intentions, even to the extent of eschewing use of "the Holy Spirit" in favor of the impersonal "holy *pneuma*,"⁴ an anarthrous mass-noun that sounds more like "holy water" than like a person of the Trinity. When speaking of the *pneuma* of the resurrected Christ, which he concedes "is a personally identifiable title," Sharp nonetheless

claims that "by indwelling believers and forming them into a structured and unified body it operates more like the cosmic *pneuma* of Stoicism on a restricted scale." (50) Drawing on Plutarch's *Def. orac.* 432e, where "the soul receives *pneuma* into the body, from which it forms a *κρᾶσις* with the soul and enables the receipt of divine knowledge," Sharp follows Matthew Thiessen in suggesting that in Paul's thinking, reception of *pneuma* happens when the *pneuma* forms a "blending" or complete mixture with the human soul, and that this mixture enables the manifestations of *pneuma*-empowered activities like prophecy and glossolalia in believers. The implications of such "total mixture" for theology proper are deeply unorthodox, whether applied to Christ's two natures (the heresy of Eutychianism) or to the Holy Spirit and believers. Again, Sharp claims that when Paul uses the term *pneuma* in connection with his visions of Jesus or his being caught up to the third heaven, "Paul is identifying the physics through which such a visionary experience is possible." (77)

I am not persuaded that the activities of the Spirit can be accurately described as "physics." This choice of words seems rather to flow from Sharp's agreement with the Danish scholar Troels Engberg-Pedersen's thesis that *pneuma* in Paul is a material substance, and that resurrection bodies, including that of Jesus himself, are made of it. So when the apostle Paul was speaking or writing letters to the churches, we are to think he believed that *pneuma* was being passed to them in some material manner?

In discussing the appearance of the resurrected Christ to Paul, Sharp says that Paul "does not seem to have simply seen a resuscitated human body as his subsequent discussion suggests Jesus's resurrected body is pneumatic (1 Cor 15:42-49) and not composed of flesh and blood (1 Cor 15:50)." (44) This idea has been heavily criticized by John M.G. Barclay⁵ and N.T. Wright.⁶ The latter points out that Engberg Pedersen is quite mistaken to take the "spiritual body" (*soma pneumatikon*) of 1 Cor. 15 to mean "a body made of spirit."

4. So Sharp speaks of "wisdom transmitted by holy *pneuma*" (1) and translates 1 Cor. 12:3 as "no one is able to say 'Jesus is Lord' except by holy *pneuma*." (102 n.23)

5. John M.G. Barclay, "Stoic Physics and the Christ-event: A Review of Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit*" in JSNT 33, no. 4 (2014).

6. N.T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 1402.

It is a philological error, for “made of X” is simply not what the Greek adjectival suffix *-ikos* means, and the lexicography on the adjective *pneumatikon* bears this out.⁷ Unfortunately, we find Sharp identifying God’s glory with a material substance:

“The term τὴν δόξαν κυρίου, “the glory of the Lord,” (3:18) or τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, “the glory of God,” (4:6) can be taken to refer to the *kabod-YHWH* of biblical prophetic visions. This glory represents the substance of Yahweh’s body, and Paul’s claim that they have all beheld this with unveiled face is thus a striking claim” (44)

This physical language about “substance” and “body” goes well beyond what Ezekiel, Daniel, and Isaiah relate about the visual manifestations of YHWH. Indeed, the prophets are very careful *not* to assert that they know the substance of God, instead hedging and qualifying their descriptions of Him with as many hesitant words like “appearance” and “likeness” as they can (Ezek. 1:26-28). Sharp’s language of “physics” and “substance” fits better with Stoicism, where the divine *pneuma* is the material substance of the Stoic god, which permeates and fills the cosmos.⁸ Similarly, Sharp refers to the utterance “abba, *ho pater*” (Rom. 8:16) as an “ecstatic cry” that results from total mixture of the *pneuma* of believers and the *pneuma* that they have received from Jesus (55), but he does not consider why the utterance is a bilingual one in Aramaic and Greek. I would submit that the Holy Spirit has enabled this bilingual cry, not as a specimen of ecstatic speech, but as the natural result of the union of Jew and Gentile in the one body of Christ.

7. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 1401: “Aristotle, speaking of wombs that are ‘swollen with air’, uses the phrase *hysterai pneumatikai*, and nobody supposes that he thought the wombs were made of something called *pneuma*. Galen quotes the third-century BC writer Erasistratus who uses *pneumatikē* to refer to the left ventricle of the heart, the one that conveys the *pneuma*, not one that is composed of it. Similarly, the first-century BC writer Vitruvius speaks of a machine that is ‘moved by wind’, a *pneumatikon organon*, and we do not imagine that he took the machines to be made of wind.”

8. Barclay’s verdict on Engberg-Pedersen’s *Cosmology and Self in the Apostle Paul: The Material Spirit* could be equally well applied to Sharp’s work: “I regard Paul’s theology as fundamentally incompatible with Stoicism, and that not because he is more ‘Jewish’ or ‘apocalyptic’ than he is ‘Graeco-Roman’ or ‘philosophical’ (it is a huge service to the discipline to dispel those antitheses), but because his theology is configured around a narrative that is shaped, in both thought and life, around a distinctive event with its own resulting logics.” (Barclay, *supra* n.5, 413)

Confessional and orthodox Christians will have difficulty accepting Sharp’s thesis. His persistent eschewal of the definite and personal title “the Holy Spirit” in favor of the material and impersonal “holy *pneuma*” falls afoul of both Scripture and the Creeds, which depict the Spirit as a paraclete, refer to Him with masculine personal pronouns (*auton*, John 16:7, N.B. not the neuter *auto*) and by the title “the Lord and giver of life”; credit Him with personal agency, and attribute to Him actions such as convicting the world, guiding the disciples, hearing truth from the Father, speaking it to the Church, declaring what belongs to Jesus, and glorifying Jesus and the Father (16:13-15). In Paul’s letters, the Spirit “helps us,” “intercedes for us” (Rom. 8:26), “bears witness” (8:16), is called “the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18); He can be “grieved” (Eph. 4:30); and He makes predictions about the future (1 Tim. 4:1). Sharp, however, consistently treats “holy *pneuma*” as a material substance by which Paul does things, not as a divine Person who does things Himself.

In sum, this book is valuable for its detailed discussion of the various modes and techniques of divination in the ancient Greco-Roman world, and for its perceptive discovery of a few passages where Paul’s use of the same technical language should illuminate our exegesis. I would class these benefits as “background” in the same sense as the meaning of *πρατώριον*. But I was unpersuaded by Sharp’s attempts to read Paul’s letters and identify Stoic and other ancient Greek philosophical concepts at work. Rather, the errors into which he falls by this sort of Stoicizing eisegesis should serve as a warning to anyone who thinks we can adopt the intellectual artifacts of unbelieving Greco-Roman paganism without carefully pruning away the roots by which these ideas are deeply connected to narratives and conceptual models that are contrary to the Christian faith.

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Behind the House

BY J.A. GRAY

I don't know the names of any of these flowers
Nor do I know their means of generation.
I could not name for sure a single bird
Or tell what kind of tree they're singing in.
I see the ants, but don't know what they do.
I don't know what to call these armored bugs
Or whether they are good or bad for plants.
I cannot guess what wood makes up this fence
Or say it was the proper choice or not,
Though I can see it's slowly falling down,
Pushed by the thriving weeds along its base.
In short, I know nothing about this yard,
And least of all can I imagine how
The silver rocking horse with the blue blaze
Lost his springs and braces, his base and bars,
Shed his reins and rockers, and came to be
Stuck by his belly on this rotting fence,
Ridden only by spiders and by stars.

Reformation, Resistance, and Reason of State (1517-1625)

BY SARAH MORTIMER

REVIEWED BY BRAD LITTLEJOHN

The last few decades have witnessed an extraordinary flowering of scholarship on the Reformation period, and especially the long-neglected terrain of Reformation-era moral and political thought. In many ways, however, the result seems to be less knowledge and fewer certitudes than ever before. Fifty years ago, scholars and popularizers alike could pontificate about how the Reformation laid the foundations for modern political liberalism, empowering individuals, secularizing politics, or fomenting revolution. Or else they might declaim about the ways in which Protestantism discarded natural law for an autocratic or even theocratic politics, while Catholic thinkers carefully developed medieval scholasticism into the building blocks of modern constitutionalism. Today, we know too much to sustain any such generalizations, positive or negative.

Sarah Mortimer's sweeping new survey of political thought in this era, *Reformation, Resistance, and Reason*

of State (1517-1625) is a case in point. If one were to sum up her argument in a hashtag, it would be #Its-Complicated. While she does occasionally attempt to make broad generalizations about the tendencies of Protestant or Catholic political thought in this period, more often her conclusions are tentative, ambiguous, and accompanied by notable counterexamples. She also refuses to limit herself to a few pet authors, or privilege individual voices unduly. Her discussion of Luther spans just five pages, and Calvin just three; other critical thinkers garner at least as much attention, from Bellarmine and Buchanan to Vasquez and Vitoria. In a quest for comprehensiveness and perhaps to forestall charges of arrogant Eurocentricism, she even includes a chapter on early modern Islamic political thought. The material here is interesting, but hangs awkwardly like an appendage; if the Islamic angle is actually important to the argument of the book, it should occupy more than 10% of the whole, and if

ONE OF THIS BOOK'S MANY MERITS IS THAT MORTIMER HAS FULLY TAKEN ON BOARD THE RECENT RETRIEVAL OF PROTESTANT NATURAL LAW THEORY.

not, it should probably be left out. As it is, it feels like the intellectual history equivalent of a diversity hire.

In its comprehensiveness and tentativeness, the book is in many ways a model of good historiography: Mortimer surveys an extremely wide field of primary sources and sticks as much as possible to those sources, allowing them to speak for themselves; she refuses to impose her own interpretive grid or agenda on those sources as a straitjacket, even if it means leaving some untidy loose ends. But this strength is also a weakness, as the reader looks in vain for clear thesis statements or compelling conclusions. The book is replete with vague and noncommittal sentences like the following:

“All three of these authors...believed that the rules of human life must transcend the local political context and sought therefore to understand the laws of nature and of nations. At the same time, they realized that these natural and universal laws must be embedded in the practices and principles of each particular community, albeit sometimes in different ways” (251).

At the end of the book, one feels like one has just enjoyed an edifying stroll through a museum of antiquities, but a bit hazy on what the point of it all was.

That said, a recurring set of themes and questions do help to anchor the book and focus the reader's attention on enduring questions of political thought that remain intensely relevant for Christians today. Three are particularly worthy of attention.

DIVINE LAW VS. NATURAL LAW

One of this book's many merits is that Mortimer has fully taken on board the recent retrieval of Protestant natural law theory. There is no hint here that the Reformers took natural law any less seriously than their Catholic counterparts; indeed in some ways she suggests they took it more seriously. But this does not mean they understood or applied it quite the same way.

More than a century ago, Bavinck and Kuyper sought to highlight what they saw as the fundamental issue at stake in the Reformation: the relationship between nature and grace. On their reading, Roman Catholicism allowed for a separation of man's natural and supernatural ends, whereas Protestantism integrated them, insisting that human nature was always ordered toward the worship of God. Mortimer appears to corroborate this reading, arguing that Protestant thinkers refused to separate temporal and spiritual ends, natural law from divine law. That is to say, all the duties of man were summed up already in the natural law (encompassing the first and second tables of the Decalogue); church was thus part of commonwealth, rather than some add-on of detached “spiritual” duties. Accordingly, a just ruler must be a godly ruler, prescribing and maintaining right worship throughout his domain.

While Mortimer is certainly onto something here, she fails to grapple adequately with the paradox that Protestants also often proved *more* willing than their Catholic counterparts to limit politics to this-worldly ends. For instance, Protestants almost uniformly renounced capital punishment as a tool to enforce religious orthodoxy—Servetus is the exception that proves the rule. And Protestants were much quicker on the whole to entertain the possibility of tolerating religious minorities: two successive kings of France were assassinated by Catholic radicals for being too soft on Protestantism, but no Protestant ruler ever suffered a similar fate for tolerating popery.

NATURAL LAW VS. HUMAN LAW

Related to the preceding point, Mortimer several times highlights a very intriguing point of divergence between Protestant and Catholic political thought. Roman Catholicism preached a doctrine of supererogation: that is, that there was a sharp distinction between good works that were strictly *required*, as a matter of natural law, and further works of charity that might be advisable but were left up to individual discretion—it

AD FONTES

depended how much merit you wanted to earn! Protestants however denied any such distinction, arguing that if something were good, it was *required*, and if it wasn't required, then it wasn't good. This had crucial implications, Mortimer argues, for human law in the political realm: whereas Roman Catholicism left rulers plenty of discretion over what laws to promulgate and enforce, Protestants tended to be more rigid, pushing for a tighter fit between God's unified moral law and its codification in civil law. On Mortimer's account, it fell to Hugo Grotius at the end of the Reformation era to re-introduce into Protestantism an ethics of supererogation and with it a more flexible view of politics.

THE DEBATE OVER SUPEREROGATION COULD HAVE VERY CONCRETE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS.

Mortimer is onto something, but this is one point where #ItsMoreComplicated than she lets on. After all, Protestants had a very robust doctrine of *adiaphora*—things neither commanded nor forbidden by God and thus left free to the discretion of civil rulers. And it seems possible to still allow for some hierarchy of good works while refusing to allow this hierarchy to play the soteriological role that it did for the Roman Catholic theology of merit; Richard Hooker, for instance, plays around with the idea of supererogation precisely to allow the kind of legislative flexibility that Mortimer considers a Catholic distinctive.

UNIVERSALISM VS. PARTICULARISM

This debate over supererogation could have very concrete political implications. After all, if all good works are required, then it would seem that there can only be one truly just code of laws, and the best political form is a holy empire, imposing a universal vision of Christian virtue. On the other hand, if there is, as Hooker puts it, a "latitude in goodness," then there is room for different polities to establish different laws and customs in their own contexts. The best political form will be nationalism or federalism, instantiating different particular adaptations of justice and righteousness.

Mortimer is quite interested in this question, and returns to it frequently throughout. Here, though, the confessional boundaries are hopelessly blurred. On the one hand, Catholics were more likely to gravitate toward the idea of a universal empire, a political image of the universal church, while Protestants stressed the independence of territorial churches and polities. On the other hand, when afflicted by persecuting Catholic rulers, as in France and the Netherlands, Protestants tended to argue that the godly in every nation had a responsibility to intervene and protect their embattled co-religionists abroad. One can discern already in the sixteenth century the outlines of modern debates between liberal internationalists, arguing for humanitarian intervention around the globe, and autarkic nationalists, insisting that each nation must take care of itself. On all of the above points and many more, Mortimer marshals a wealth of primary source data that is intensely thought-provoking, though difficult to digest and summarize. She manages to show that while theological differences could and did inform diverging political visions, there was rarely a simple one-to-one correspondence. Ideas have consequences, to be sure, but ideas also have circumstances, and Protestants and Catholics alike tended to adapt their political teachings in response to their concrete contexts. When the ruler was Catholic, Protestants tended to toy with various justifications for resistance and revolution while Catholics preached the divine right of kings and the duty of submission. When the ruler was Protestant, the roles were often reversed.

On one point, however, there was a pretty consistent distinction between the confessional camps, one which Mortimer gives only scattered attention: the role of the laity. For Rome, the interpretation of Scripture was the exclusive prerogative of the clergy, who were thus in a position of laying down the law to civil magistrates, and even deposing them in certain circumstances. For Protestants, however, every Christian layman was called to read and apply Scripture to his vocation, and the magistrate above all. As "the foremost member of the church," the Christian ruler was called to unite temporal and spiritual concerns, cultivating the prudence that knew how to honor both in his task of ruling without allowing either to trump the other.

This stress upon the conscience of the Christian ruler perhaps explains in part the paradox that Mortimer is unable to resolve: that Protestants on the one hand integrated temporal and spiritual ends more fully in their politics, while *also* allowing more space for temporal priorities to flourish without undue ecclesial intervention. Their Catholic counterparts, on the other hand, tended to zigzag like a bowling ball between two bumpers: at times they asserted the independence of the temporal realm as a sphere of *realpolitik* widely separate from spiritual concerns, until they provoked a reaction from zealous church leaders determined to reassert the primacy of the spiritual, and responded by fierce crackdowns on “heresy.” The story of France in the seventeenth century is a case in point: its rulers managed to be both considerably more secular *and*

considerably more theocratic than their English counterparts. It is perhaps no coincidence that the latter provided much more fertile soil for the development of constitutionalism and ordered liberty. But that is a story for another day.

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