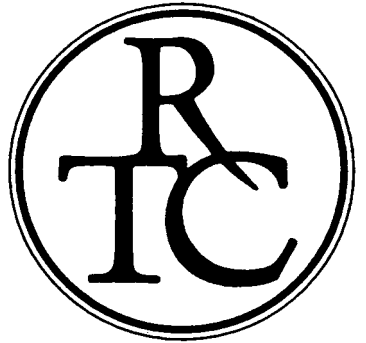
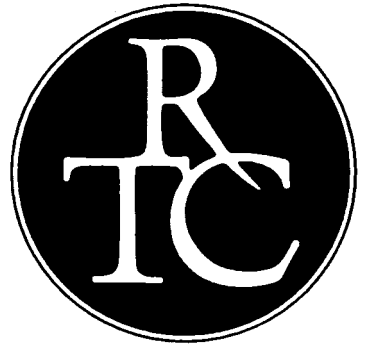
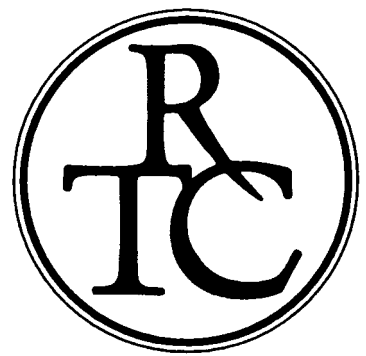




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WHAT IS MAN?

David McKay

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‘I have the right to be whoever and whatever I like’. That is the kind of claim that we hear more and more often today. People want the right to ‘self-identify’ in whatever way they choose and everyone else has to accept that right. They want to decide, for example, whether they identify as the biological gender with which they were born or as some alternative gender, and other people are to use whatever pronouns they choose when addressing them. It is no surprise that this raises all kinds of difficult questions in schools, in work settings, and indeed in many areas of life. The consequences for teachers or coworkers who ‘misgender’ a pupil or colleague can be serious, resulting in discipline and loss of employment. These are just a few indicators that we live in a society where people are claiming a right to ‘self-identify’ as the person they choose to be and where others must accept and facilitate that identity.¹

These debates raise pressing questions about identity: who am I and who are you? We are being taken right back to the basic question: what is a human being? How we answer that question has profound implications for many of the crucial ethical issues Christians have to deal with and try to address in a biblical way: reproductive technologies, cloning, euthanasia, genetic enhancements, sexuality, and many more. It is significant how many of the crucial questions in ethics that we wrestle with demand an answer to this question of human identity. With regard to developments in medical practice, for example, the question needs to be asked, ‘How is it appropriate to treat a human being?’ If that is the issue that must be dealt with, then as Christians we need to be able to state clearly what a human being actually is.

That is our goal in this study. Fundamentally we are asking, ‘What does the Bible say?’ As Christians we are not left to our own wisdom or insight. We believe that we have authoritative guidance from the Maker of human beings. If we wish to know what a human being is, we must listen humbly to what the creator has told us. Believing that the Bible is truly the Word of God – ‘God-breathed’ in the language of 2 Timothy 3:16 – we can turn to it with full confidence that the information we need is to be found there. When biblical foundations have been established, we may then, with the help of the Holy Spirit, seek to apply these principles to concrete situations.²

The answer to our question has three elements, considering man as created, fallen and restored. Notice how sound theology provides the foundation for sound ethics.

¹ Some of these issues are examined from a biblical perspective by Matt Fuller in *Be True to Your Self* (Epsom: The Good Book Company, 2020).

² For a fuller consideration of this subject, see *A Christian’s Pocket Guide to Humanity* by David McKay (Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 2021).

1. CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

(i) A unique origin

Humanity's origin is described in Genesis 1:26-27 and Genesis 2:7,21-25, an account which is assumed throughout the Bible to be historical. We are not in the realm of myths or legends, we are dealing with historical facts. Christ himself refers to the record of the institution of marriage in Genesis 2:24 as a historical event (Matthew 19:5, Mark 10:7-8). The Genesis 2 account puts the focus particularly on the first human beings as they came from the hand of the Creator – perfectly sinless creatures placed in perfect environment. The final creative act of God is included in his verdict that 'everything he had made...was very good' (Genesis 1:31).

The stress throughout the Genesis record is on human uniqueness. This is evident from the very outset. According to Genesis 1:26, God says, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' The wording is profoundly significant. The Triune God plans the creation of humans in a manner different from that of any animal. In every other case we read that 'God said...And it was so' (Genesis 1:9, for example), a word of command and its immediate fulfilment. In the case of man, however, there is what we might term a 'divine consultation' among the persons of the Trinity ('Let us'), no doubt a description of God's sovereign, timeless, action stated in language that finite human minds can, to some degree, comprehend. God's words indicate that these creatures are the objects of his special care and concern, beyond that experienced by any other creature in the entire universe.

God's method of creating man is also unique. Adam was not made out of nothing ('ex nihilo'), like all other created things, but out of preexisting material, 'dust from the ground'. Then God 'breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature' (Genesis 2:7). There is an immediate personal involvement on God's part that is without parallel. Although a living creature like others, man has a unique constitution, consisting of a material body and an immaterial soul/spirit. Thus, human beings are made up of both physical and spiritual elements – 'the dust...the spirit' (Ecclesiastes 12:7). No other creature is created in this way. That immediately signals to us that here we are dealing with a unique creature to whom the Lord relates in a special way.

(ii) Dignity and identity

God did not create man to satisfy a need in himself. He is not a lonely God, in need of a means to express his love. He enjoys perfect fellowship eternally in his Triune being, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in a relationship of infinite love. Humans were created, rather, in order to glorify God in every aspect of their lives. This is summed up in Paul's exhortation in 1 Corinthians 10:31 'So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God'. Fundamentally the calling of human beings is to manifest God to the rest of creation, showing something of what kind of a God he is. He delights in them – as created, they are 'very good' (Genesis 1:31). This is reflected in the description of God's attitude to his people provided by the prophet Isaiah: 'as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you' (Isaiah 62:5). This impacts **2 crucial issues**:

- **Human dignity:** human beings have value because God values them. Human dignity is rooted outside ourselves. It does not depend, for example, on possessing certain functioning capacities, physical or mental. This principle provides a sound foundation for asserting that every human being has an innate dignity that must be recognised and not compromised in any way. This is relevant, for example, to debates about medical ethics and to attitudes to disabilities of various kinds. Without such a foundation, some

radical ethicists have claimed that a healthy gorilla baby is of greater value than a handicapped human baby.³

- **Human identity.** It is the Creator who tells us who we are, and who alone has the right to do so. This is the definitive answer to modern claims that each person has a right to self-identify however he or she wishes. Human beings are not self-determining, nor can they legitimately be self-identifying. It is profoundly significant that the first attempt by a man to self-identify took place in the Garden of Eden, and that attempt to self-identify by Adam turned out to be fatal for him and for the rest of the human race. Christians need to be ready to assert graciously, in what may often be fraught situations, that identity is not self-generated, but God-given. The response to such a stand may be hostile, and there may be a cost for the Christian to pay, but faithfulness to God's revealed truth demands no less.

(iii) The image of God

As we said at the beginning of this study, many contemporary ethical debates raise questions regarding what sets human beings apart from other animals (if in fact anything does). The key to resolving this problem is to be found in Genesis 1:26, where God says, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness'. Human beings are God's image-bearers. As v27 makes clear, that is true of the female as well as the male: 'in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.' The death knell to any misogyny is sounded in Eden.

In the history of theology various views have been held as to what it means when man is said to be created in the image and likeness of God.⁴ For example, the focus has often been on certain capacities possessed or functions exercised by human beings that distinguish them from other creatures. For example, the human capacity for using reason has been singled out as the core of God's image in man, although other faculties have also been suggested. The best approach, however, is to ask about the God whose image we bear. That will open up a rich understanding of the wonder of the image of God in man.

Fundamentally God is **Triune** – he is one God in eternal equal, eternal persons. The three persons enjoy perfect relationships of love, the one with the other. The Father loves the Son and the Holy Spirit; the Son loves the Father and the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit loves the Father and the Son. The Triune God is one God, yet he is at the same time a community of loving persons. However difficult it is for little human minds to grasp this truth, that is how God has revealed himself to be. Bearing his image, human beings were made to enjoy loving relationships, with God primarily, then also with other people.

³ See, for example, *Rethinking Life and Death. The Collapse of Our Traditional Ethics* by Peter Singer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.201-202.

⁴ A helpful survey of the issues relating to the image of God is provided by Anthony A. Hoekema in *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids MI and Exeter: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company and Paternoster Press, 1986), cpt.5.

This basic fact shapes every aspect of life and can be thought of as having various dimensions

- **Spiritual:** we are made for the worship and service of God.
- **Intellectual:** we have minds designed to ‘think God’s thoughts after him’, and it is here that man’s capacity for rational thinking fits into the picture. We are made in the image of the God who is the source and standard of rationality.
- **Moral:** we have an inbuilt capacity to know right and wrong, which involves our possession of a conscience, and we were created with the ability, to obey the God who is the source and standard of goodness.
- **Relational:** we are made for community with others as well as with God. Human beings were not designed for solitary living.

We should note that renewal in Christ by the grace of God is renewal in ‘knowledge’ after the image of our creator (Colossians 3:10). That might at first sight appear to be a purely intellectual matter, but we must remember that in the Bible ‘knowledge’ is often relationship language, as when Adam is said to ‘know’ his wife (Genesis 4:1). The knowledge that is spoken of in Colossians 3:10 indicates a loving relationship of love with God and with other people.

(iv) The covenant in Eden⁵

The relationship between God and man that existed in Eden can be described as a ‘covenant’. God gave himself in loving fellowship and took Adam and Eve as his people, bound to respond to him in loving obedience. That understanding of the nature of a biblical covenant is to be found in, for example, Leviticus 26:12 where God says to his people, ‘I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people’. Theologians generally term this the ‘Covenant of Works’. For Adam the *condition* of continued covenant blessing was stated in the prohibition on eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17), the *penalty* was death for disobedience and the *promise* implied for obedience was continued fellowship with God.

In the Covenant of Works Adam was the representative of the human race. This meant that by God’s decree Adam’s actions had consequences for us all, not just for himself. Whether Adam was aware of that position we cannot tell. Two New Testament passages make Adam’s position clear. The first is Romans 5:12ff, which draws parallels and contrasts between the role of Adam in the Covenant of Works, and the role of Christ in the Covenant of Grace. Both occupied a representative position, Adam representing the entire human race and Christ representing all for whom he would make atonement. As we read in Romans 5:19 ‘For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous’. The second key passage is 1 Corinthians 15:22, where the same principle is stated: ‘as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive’.

While Adam obeyed God, fulfilling the mandate he had been given to subdue the earth and have dominion over it (Genesis 1:28), he would enjoy the life for which he had been created, manifesting God’s image in covenant fellowship with God.

⁵ For a fuller treatment of the covenant in Eden, see e.g. *Far as the Curse is Found. The Covenant Story of Redemption* by Michael D. Williams (Phillipsburg NJ: P & R Publishing, 2005), cpt.3-4, and *The Fulfillment of the Promises of God. An Explanation of Covenant Theology* by Richard P. Belcher (Fearn: Mentor, 2020), cpt.2-3.

(v) Man as male and female

Another covenant is operative in Eden – the bond of love between Adam and his wife – God’s solution to Adam’s being alone (Genesis 2:18). In this one flesh (v26) relationship we have one of God’s foundational institutions for humanity, namely marriage. It is a beautiful relationship that depicts Christ and his Church (Ephesians 5:22ff). Its covenant nature is evident from a text such as Malachi 2:14, where Judah’s forsaking God is described in terms of a husband forsaking his wife. That wife, the prophet says, is ‘your wife *by covenant*’.

The Genesis account sets out two aspects of marriage that must be preserved:

- **Fundamental equality** – both male and female are equally bearers of the image of God. Genesis 1:27 states that ‘in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them’. As a consequence, both are equally valuable to the Creator and both mandated to serve him. That fundamental equality must not be compromised in the face of contemporary challenges, either from feminist motives or from misogynistic ones.
- **Male headship** – this was present in marriage before the Fall. It was not a product of the entrance of sin into the world. Eve is described as a ‘helper’ (Genesis 2:20) – taking a subordinate role (as does Lord according to Psalm 121:1-2, reminding us that it is not a demeaning task). It is Adam who is the covenant head, called to exercise loving leadership and also bearing a great weight of responsibility before the Lord.

2. FALLEN INTO SIN

In our first section we thought about how human beings are created in the image of God, made to enjoy a relationship of love with the Creator, and also relationships with other people. We have not been created to live solitary lives. In the Garden of Eden, at the beginning of human history, Adam and Eve (treated as historical figures in the Bible) enjoyed perfect fellowship with God. Genesis 3:8 talks about God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. This describes unspoiled loving fellowship with God, probably in the person of the Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity.

The perfection did not last, however. Genesis 3 also provides a record of the ‘fall’ of man, a disaster which has resulted in violence, hatred, wars, natural disasters, sickness and death. To understand why our world – and our lives – are in the mess they are, we need to go back to the ancient account of what went wrong in Eden, the account given by the Creator himself.

(i) Falling to temptation⁶

The process of temptation recorded in Genesis 3 is significant, not least since these are the tactics often used by Satan. He approaches Eve, perhaps because she would provide a readier pathway to Adam’s heart, and begins by questioning God’s command – ‘Did God actually say...?’ (v1). There is a strong suggestion that this is an unreasonable restriction on human freedom. Having gained Eve’s attention, he then moves to open denial of the truth of God’s word – ‘You will not surely die’ (v4). The final step is the false offer – ‘you will be like God’ (v5). Success follows and the trap is sprung. Eve takes

⁶ The record of the temptation and fall of man is helpfully expounded by John D. Currid in *Genesis. Volume 1 Genesis 1:1 – 25:18* (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2003), p.117-141.

fruit from the forbidden tree, eats it and then gives some to Adam, who also eats. The fatal step has been taken – ‘Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked’ (v7).

What was the nature of that first fundamental sin? Whilst there may have been in it elements of pride and unbelief, as theologians have generally noted, the first sin was *covenant breaking*. Adam’s disobedience broke the Covenant of Works established in Eden. Although those terms are not used in the Genesis account, a text like Hosea 6:7 shows clearly the covenant significance of what took place. Referring to the disobedience of Israel, the Lord says, ‘But *like Adam* they transgressed the covenant’. The first act of covenant breaking took place in Eden.

Adam’s obligation in the covenant had been to render loving and willing obedience to God, in response to God’s love. When he ate the fruit Adam became a covenant breaker, refusing to accept God’s covenant kingship and attempting to make himself king. The irony of his position was that in fact he was accepting Satan’s dominion and was now a slave to sin. Adam tried to put himself in God’s place – the essence of sin, asserting godless autonomy that was an illusion. He tried to set himself up as his own standard of truth (what he believed) and goodness (what he did), whilst in fact rejecting the God who alone is the standard of truth and goodness.

(ii) Immediate consequences

The consequences of the Fall became evident straightaway and they were truly devastating. In place of loving covenant life, we see:

1. A sense of **guilt** and **shame**. That is the significance of Adam and Eve knowing that they were naked (v7). What had not been an issue previously now encapsulates the sense of sinful alienation that they feel.
2. **Loss** of fellowship with God. Instead of seeking to walk with the Lord as they once did, now they make pathetic efforts to hide from him (v8). Instead of regarding him as their Friend, they now fear him as their Judge.
3. **Disruption** of their relationship with one another. In place of loving unity in the bond of marriage, now there is division evidenced at once by blame shifting on the part of Adam (‘The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree’, v12).

As God’s sentence unfolds (v14ff) it becomes evident that the consequences of the Fall embrace the whole human race, not just Adam and Eve. All people will have to endure, for example, the resistance of the earth to cultivation and its production of thorns and thistles (v17-19). The effects of sin spread to all humanity, as well as to the material creation, and of course to Satan in the divine judgment pronounced on the serpent (v14-15).

All relationships are damaged by Adam’s action. Regarding marriage, in place of the loving headship and submission that had characterised their relationship previously, there is now a usurping of authority on the part of Eve, indicated in the wording of God’s sentence on her (‘Your desire shall be for your husband’, v16) and selfish domination on the part of Adam (‘he shall rule over you’, v16). No relationship is as it was created to be.

The ultimate result of the Fall is death, exactly as the Lord had threatened (Genesis 2:17). Most obviously this entails the death of body (v19). Although Adam did not suffer bodily death at the moment he fell, nevertheless the process of decay and return to the dust began immediately. Bodily

death, however, reflects the spiritual death that Adam experienced. In this respect death denotes separation from the God of the covenant with whom Adam had enjoyed blessed fellowship up until that point. Instead of being a friend whose walking in the garden would have been greeted with joy, the Lord has now become a judge from whom (futile) concealment is now attempted behind a tree (v8). God's image bearer has been reduced to ridiculous means to avoid facing his Creator.

In himself man has no hope, yet that is not the end of the story. In Genesis 3:15 God gives hope in his promise of a **Deliverer**.

(iii) Unity in Adam

In Genesis 3 we are reading our history – a story with implications for every human being. How can that be the case?

The explanation lies in our **covenantal unity** in Adam: in Eden he represented the whole human race in the Covenant of Works. Whilst many object that it is unfair for their spiritual condition to be made dependent on the action of one man (even supposing that they believe such a man actually existed), the sovereign Creator had the right to make these arrangements if he wished. The principle of representation is fundamental to God's dealings with the human race, with Adam the representative of the entire race and Christ the representative of those whom he saves. Representation by Christ is crucial to salvation, and consistence requires that those who object to bearing the consequences of Adam's actions must also object to receiving the benefits of Christ's actions. This representative, covenantal, arrangement meant that what Adam did would affect all his descendants.

We must of course establish the biblical foundation for such a view. There are two key texts:

- 1 Corinthians 15:22 'For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.' Two representatives set side by side, and results of their respective actions are spelled out. One brings death to all who are 'in him', whilst the other brings life to all who are 'in him'. In each case there is a covenantal principle that explains the consequences that those represented by Adam and by Christ experience.
- Romans 5:12 describes parallels and contrasts between Adam and Christ. Paul sums the matter up in v18 'as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men' and v19 'as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.' It is in Adam that all human beings are constituted sinners by nature and, consequently, by practice.

(iv) The human condition

The historical record of the Fall is essential for understanding the spiritual condition of human beings. An inadequate view of the 'disease' of sin inevitably leads to an inadequate view of the 'cure'. There will be no desire for a Saviour if there is no acknowledgment of sin.

In fact, we are not merely sick because of sin – we are dead. This is stated by Paul in Ephesians 2:1 when he describes the former condition of Christians in Ephesus as 'dead in...trespasses and sins'. We are by nature cut off from God, the source of life. In fact we are described as 'by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.' (v3).

As covenant breakers in Adam all men and women are born into the world both guilty (in relation to the law of God) and corrupt (in terms of their moral condition). They are liable to the holy wrath of God – they are, as we noted, ‘children of wrath’ (Ephesians 2:3). Sin is rooted in very first moments of our existence. This is evident in David’s description of his own condition: ‘Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me’ (Psalm 51:5). From the moment of conception a sinner is present, and as a result no human being needs to be taught how to sin.

Two elements in man’s plight can be identified:⁷

- **Total depravity.** This is not a claim that in all respects people are as wicked as they could be (‘absolute depravity’, which now characterises those who have died in sin). It is, rather, a description of the extent of sin. Every aspect of life infected by sin, at no point is man as good as he should be, and sin is, so to speak, part of our spiritual DNA.
- **Total inability.** This means that the sinner is unable to do any spiritual good, incapable of doing anything for God’s glory. He may do things that are consistent with God’s law, since that law is written on his heart, according to Romans 2:15. Such actions might seem to deserve God’s commendation, but since they are not done with reference to God and his glory, they are not truly ‘good’.

Paul states the human plight is this way: ‘the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed *it cannot*. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God’ (Romans 8:7-8).

Nevertheless, that is not the end of the story as far as human identity is concerned. People are still made in the likeness of God (as James 3:9 states). They were made for a relationship with God, however that capacity is warped. The image of God is profoundly damaged but not obliterated. By the grace of God, restoration is possible

3. RESTORED IN CHRIST

Every aspect of human life has been affected – twisted – by sin. The world is in a mess and in our own lives we experience all kinds of hard things, including failure, bereavement, sickness, and death. Though the human conscience has been damaged, it still functions, since the divine law is written on the heart of every person (Romans 2:15). As a result, although many would not admit it, we have an awareness that we are not living the good lives we should live. The problem is sin, rooted in our hearts.

In the light of all that has been said about the plight of human beings, it is clear that nothing less than the grace and power of God can save anyone. No amount of moral effort can be sufficient. In considering the restoration of humanity, the focus must be on God. Nowhere else can the hope of spiritual transformation be grounded.

⁷ Total depravity and total inability are discussed in detail by Joel R. Beeke and Paul M. Smalley in *Reformed Systematic Theology. Volume 2 Man and Christ* (Wheaton IL: Crossway, 2020), cpt.19-21.

(i) Christ our Representative

The heart of salvation is Christ, in respect of both his person and his work. To save human beings he had to be **fully human**, since only a man could atone for the sins of the human race. As Hebrews 2:17 states it: ‘Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.’ In order for his atoning sacrifice to have the value to save a vast number of human beings he had to be **fully God**. He was both⁸ and so was perfectly equipped to be Saviour of his people.

The New Testament makes it clear that salvation was planned and prepared for in eternity. Ephesians 1:4 states that the Father ‘chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him’. The Gospel records also show that Christ was profoundly conscious of having a mission to fulfil on behalf of those whom he describes in prayer to his Father as ‘the people whom you gave me out of the world’ (John 17:6, and also v24). Redemption is often described by Reformed theologians in terms of the eternal **Covenant of Redemption**, established within God’s Triune being, by which Father, Son and Holy Spirit make full provision for the salvation of ‘a great multitude that no one could number’ (Revelation 7:9). The people of God were on his heart before creation, and he loved them before time began. Although some Reformed theologians reject the idea of the Covenant of Redemption, it does justice to the biblical description of salvation through the work of the incarnate Son of God. Guy Richard sums up the importance of this covenant in these terms:

First, the covenant of redemption guarantees the salvation of the elect and makes it absolutely certain...Second, the covenant of redemption guarantees that all the conditions of our salvation have already been met in full...Third, the covenant of redemption reveals the incredible love that God has shown to the elect.⁹

This gracious provision of the Triune God works out in human history as the **Covenant of Grace**, the loving bond into which God graciously brings his people. Christ represents his people in the covenant, so that what he does affects every one of them. He is ‘Adam in reverse’, as Sinclair Ferguson puts it¹⁰, undoing the damage Adam did. Believers benefit from every aspect of the work of Christ. It is well stated by Lane Tipton:

Union with Christ is a soteric replication in the structure of the believer’s life-experience of what happened antecedently in the life experience of Christ, namely death and resurrection.¹¹

⁸ This is given classic expression in the Chalcedonian Definition of AD 451: ‘our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in Manhood; truly God and truly man...consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood’. See *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, edited by Philip Schaff, revised by David S. Schaff, Sixth Edition, 1931 (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1983), Vol.2, p.62.

⁹ Guy M Richard, ‘The Covenant of Redemption’ in *Covenant Theology. Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives*, edited by Guy Prentiss Waters, J. Nicholas Reid and John R. Muether (Wheaton IL: Crossway, 2020), p.61-62.

¹⁰ Sinclair B Ferguson, *The Christian Life. A Doctrinal Introduction*, (London, 1981), p.95.

¹¹ Lane G Tipton, ‘Union with Christ and Justification’ in *Justified in Christ. God’s plan for us in Justification*, edited by K Scott Oliphint (Fearn, 2007), p.25.

As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:22, ‘in Christ shall all be made alive’. This is not a statement of universal salvation, but an assertion of what awaits all who are ‘in Christ’. Believers are united to Christ in death and resurrection, as described in Romans 6:1ff. All he does is for benefit of his people. He has taken the full burden of their sin and they receive the benefit of the perfect life he lived, which they have not lived, the benefit of his atoning death, which they have not died, and the benefit of his triumphant resurrection, which they have not yet experienced.¹²

(ii) Redemption accomplished

There are two elements in the sinner’s plight which must be addressed if he is to be saved. On the one hand there is his lack of righteousness with which man was created. On the other hand, there is the guilt incurred by his disobedience and rebellion. In order to be saved we therefore need two things:

- **Payment** for the sins we have committed, which entails dealing with the holy wrath of God that each one deserves.
- **Keeping** God’s law in every detail, the obedience that all owe to God, but which no fallen human being has rendered nor can render.

Both are supplied by the redeeming work of Christ our Representative in the Covenant of Grace. The redemptive work of Christ is rich and comprehensive, and many words are used in the Bible to describe aspects of it, words such as sacrifice, atonement, reconciliation, and propitiation. All of these elements are drawn together when we see his work fundamentally in terms of obedience. All that Christ does is designed to fulfil the mission which his Father gave him. In the prophetic words of Psalm 40:8 we hear the resolve of the Saviour – ‘I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.’ In his earthly ministry he fulfilled that will perfectly and so with his last breath proclaimed victory - ‘It has been finished’ (John 19:30, bringing out the significance of the Greek perfect tense in the verb *tetelestai*).

Our need for salvation is met by 2 aspects of Christ’s obedience.

- **Passive obedience.** This expression is not suggesting that in any aspect of his work Christ was a helpless victim, enduring that which was outside his control. ‘Passive’ is a term that has its root in the Latin verb meaning ‘to suffer’. ‘Passive obedience’ is ‘suffering obedience’ and refers to Christ’s bearing the full penalty due to his people, his suffering all through his life which culminated with death on the cross. Sin deserves death (Romans 6:23) – thus the Saviour must die. ‘For our sake [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God’ (2 Corinthians 5:21). The whole burden of our sin was laid on Christ our Substitute in his suffering and death.¹³
- **Active obedience.** Although sometimes overlooked, his active obedience is essential to his redeeming work. Christ kept the divine law perfectly, in contrast to sinners’ constant law-breaking. His goal was to fulfil ‘all righteousness’ (Matthew 3:15). By his joyful and perfect keeping of the law he supplied the righteousness that we lack, but which God in grace imputes to believers, counting it as belonging to them.

¹² The theme of union with Christ is helpfully discussed by Robert Letham in *Union with Christ In Scripture, History, and Theology* (Phillipsburg NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011).

¹³ This aspect of the work of Christ is dealt with in some detail by Wayne Grudem in *Systematic Theology. An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), p.571-577.

It is in this way we are to understand Romans 5:12-21: Christ's death satisfies God's justice, and his keeping of God's law provides the righteousness we do not have. The result is that 'by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous' (v19). What we could not do, Christ did for us. Every aspect of our need is met in him.

(iii) Redemption applied¹⁴

God has blessed us in Christ with 'every spiritual blessing' (Ephesians 1:3). It is the Holy Spirit who brings sinners to repentance and faith. We are brought to enjoy 'life...abundantly (John 10:10) – life in fellowship with God, the life of the Covenant of Grace, the life for which human beings were created.

As Romans 6 tells us we are united spiritually to Christ in his death and resurrection. It is as if we lived his life, died his death and shared his resurrection. This results in the great blessings of salvation, 'all things that pertain to life and godliness' (2 Peter 1:3). The greatest blessings are:

- **Justification.** This is God's declaration that those who are united to Christ have his righteousness counted as theirs and are therefore accounted righteous in his sight. As Jesus was vindicated at his resurrection, believers are declared righteous as his righteousness is imputed to them when they are raised to spiritual life by the Holy Spirit.
- **Adoption.** Believers are adopted into the family of God on the basis of Christ's work on their behalf. Children of wrath become children of God. Christ was 'declared to be the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead' (Romans 1:4), and united to Christ in that resurrection, we receive full rights as God's children (Galatians 4:5). Adoption will reach its completion when believers receive resurrection bodies at the return of Christ, and thus 'we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies' (Romans 8:23). Adoption is often treated as an element of justification, but it ought to be treated as a separate, though profoundly related, blessing. As John Murray puts it,

It is adoption into the family as sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty that accords to the people of God the apex of blessing and privilege...Union with Christ reaches its zenith in adoption and adoption has its orbit in union with Christ.¹⁵

- **Sanctification.** As Christ died to sin, so those united to him are dead to sin. That entails, first, that our bondage to sin is broken once for all. That is what Paul is expressing when he says that 'sin will have no dominion over you' (Romans 6:14). This we can term '**Definitive Sanctification**', and it is a truth full of encouragement for God's children when they struggle with sin and temptation. From this foundation they must then live a life of increasing holiness as the Holy Spirit blesses their use of means of grace, such as the Word, prayer, worship and the sacraments. They are thus 'beholding the glory of the Lord [and] are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another' (2 Corinthians 3:18). This second aspect of sanctification we can term '**Progressive Sanctification**'. Both are vital aspects of salvation in Christ, both are effected by the grace of God, but the latter also requires

¹⁴ A classic modern survey is provided by John Murray in *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), Part II.

¹⁵ John Murray *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, p.170.

diligent effort on the part of believers, as indicated in Hebrews 12:14 ‘Strive for...the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.’.

(iv) Final glory¹⁶

For God’s people the best is still to come. Already the Kingdom of God is present (Luke 11:20 ‘the kingdom of God has come upon you’), but it has not yet come in its glorious fulness. Sin remains and Satan is not fully subdued. The Lord has yet to fulfil the promise that ‘This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven’ (Acts 1:11). That day will certainly come, the day when Christ returns in glory, the salvation of his people will be completed, and righteous judgment will be executed on the unrepentant. This is the wonderful prospect that lies ahead for the people of God.

Note 1 John 3:2 ‘we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.’ The same idea is found in Colossians 3:4, where Paul says, ‘When Christ who is your life appears, you also will appear with him in glory.’ At that time the work of sanctification will be complete and the people of God will be as like the Saviour as it is possible for finite creatures to be. Even temptation will be no more.

At his return Christ will raise his people from the dead, reuniting their spirits with new resurrection bodies. He ‘will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself’ (Philippians 3:21). As Romans 8:18-23 indicates, this will mark the final stage of adoption.

Glorified humans will dwell in the new creation, new heavens and a new earth (2 Peter 3:13), an environment perfectly suited to their new constitution, body and spirit, in unbroken covenant fellowship with the Triune God¹⁷. Redeemed sinners will at last be all that God created them to be, bearing his image perfectly, rejoicing in the identity that in love and grace he has given them. Spiritually they will have journeyed from the garden to glory, and all to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the Beloved’ (Ephesians 1:6).

¹⁶ This is dealt with more fully in *Last Things. Preparing for the Future in the Present* by David McKay (Edinburgh & Carlisle PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2023), cpt.13.

¹⁷ See *The Bible and the Future* by A. A. Hoekema (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1979), cpt.20.

4. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

(i) It is vital to maintain the historicity of the opening chapters of Genesis. These lay the essential foundations for an accurate view of human nature. Christ treated Genesis as history (e.g. regarding marriage, Matthew 19:4ff) and we must follow his example.

(ii) In a culture that demands the right to ‘self-identify’ in any way one chooses, we need to assert that God defines identity. We have freedom only within bounds set by the Creator. Violating the boundaries he sets is always damaging, individually and corporately.

(iii) We need a biblical understanding of the reality of sin. Our culture generally trivialises sin, making it source of humour. Sin is often redefined as what thwarts a person’s self-expression. Some limits remain, for example regarding the treatment of children, and some push-back, for example regarding transgenderism, is increasingly evident.

(iv) We must maintain the dignity of human beings as bearers of God’s image, even though that image is distorted and damaged by sin. Christians are often perceived and defined by what we are against, so we need to stress that biblical principles promote human flourishing.

(v) Our society needs the hope of the gospel. In the good news of God’s redeeming grace in Christ we have the one thing our society needs above all else. Christians are people of hope, and not just for this life. Rather than ‘circling the wagons’ defensively, becoming angry and aggressive towards those among whom we live, we need to be graciously and lovingly taking the word of life (Philippians 2:16) to a dark and lost world.

THE PSALTER AND WORLD MISSION

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Many Christian people associate ‘mission’ with the Acts of the Apostles. It is true that in ‘the Acts’ we see the Christian church, with great momentum, reaching out with the gospel to the Jew, and to the Samaritan and to the Gentiles. We need, however, to reach further back into redemptive history to discover the source of Christian mission. It finds its source in God.

When Adam sinned, the whole human race was plunged into the abyss of unbelief with the sentence of eternal death written across the forehead of every human being. ‘Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned’ (Romans 5:12). George Peters comments on the consequence of Adam’s sin:

Because of this organic unity of the race in Adam, the whole race fell into sin, guilt, moral pollution, separation from God and social disintegration.¹

Immediately after the Fall, Adam and Eve and all their descendants would have been left with no hope. But immediately after the Fall, God, in his grace and mercy, addressed the serpent (Satan) making an astonishing declaration known as the ‘protevangelium’ – the first gospel proclamation. ‘I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel’ (Genesis 3:15). With reference to this marvellous text, Martin Luther the German Reformer, heaped high praise. He declared, ‘This text embraces and comprehends within itself everything noble and glorious that is to be found anywhere in the Scriptures.’² Matthew Henry comments,

A gracious promise is here made of Christ, as the deliverer of fallen man from the power of Satan. Though what was said was addressed to the serpent, yet it was said in the hearing of our first parents, who doubtless, took the hints of grace here given them, and saw a door of hope opened to them....Here was the dawning of the gospel day. No sooner was the wound given than the remedy was provided and revealed.³

Of course, this was not a promise for Adam and Eve alone, but for the entire human race. As George W Peters has written, ‘This promise holds as much hope for China, India, the Negro or the American Indian as it holds for Israel or present-day Europe.’⁴

With God’s call to Abram a new epoch in the history of salvation is unfurled. Up to that point there had been moral and spiritual decay among the peoples of the world, culminating in the building of the tower of Babel. In extending grace to Abram (Genesis 12:1-3) God was not merely thinking of one man and his family but the family of nations. The great promises extended to Abram, at his call,

¹ Martin Luther, quoted by H. C. Leupold, *‘of Genesis*, (Evangelical Press, 1972), p.163.

² Matthew Henry *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, (Hendrickson, 1991), p.14.

³ George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, p.85.

⁴ George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, p 116.

climax in the awesome words at the end of Genesis 12:3. ‘and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ It is legitimate for us to think of this as salvation blessing for the apostle Paul, when writing to the Galatians about the inclusion of the Gentiles into the number of the redeemed, quotes verse 3 of Genesis 12 to clinch his argument. ‘Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed”’ (Galatians 3:7, 8). The global dimension of the covenant promise given to Abraham was later renewed and confirmed to his son Isaac: ‘And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed’ (Genesis 26:4). It was also later renewed and confirmed to his grandson Jacob: ‘and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed’ (Genesis 28:14).

When the years of wilderness wanderings for the Israelites were nearing an end, Moses challenged them with the sermons of Deuteronomy. He concluded his discourse with a song (Deuteronomy 32). In verse 43 of this song he calls on surrounding peoples to ‘Rejoice, O nations, with his people’ (NIV). It is noteworthy that the apostle Paul, when writing to the Romans about Christ being the ‘hope of Jews and Gentiles’ should quote this verse: ‘And again it is said, “Rejoice O Gentiles, with his people”’ (Romans 15:9). The global dimension of God’s kingdom was therefore before God’s covenant people when Moses was their leader.

During the time of Joshua, and in the period of the Judges, the realization of God’s covenant mercy to the nations is found in individuals from the Gentile world who professed faith in the God of Israel as the one true and living God. When Joshua was leader of the Israelites we have the example of Rahab, a Canaanite from Jericho, who through faith was saved from the destruction of that city along with her family. When the Judges ruled, we have the example of Ruth the Moabitess who came to trust in the God of Israel as her God. Boaz, who later became her husband, said of her, with reference to the LORD: ‘under whose wings you have come to take refuge’ (Ruth 2:12).

This introduction provides the background to the central focus of this article, ‘the Psalter and World Mission’. The concept of God reaching out in love and mercy was not something new, instigated by David and the other Psalmists, but rather a development of what was central in the Covenant of Grace first announced in the Garden of Eden. When we think of the Psalms, we must recognize that leading the human authors, guiding them and prompting them, was the Holy Spirit. David, of course, recognized this fact, when among his last words he said, ‘The Spirit of the Lord speaks by me; his word is on my tongue’ (2 Samuel 23:2). Paul, writing to Timothy, confirms this fact when he pointed out to his young colleague and to us, ‘All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work’ (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

Most of the Psalms were written in the time of David, about 1000 BC. The remainder were written either before that period or later. For example, Psalm 90 was written by Moses prior to the time of David. Subsequent to his reign Psalm 137 was written during the Exile. Psalm 126 is an example of a post exilic song. There is no evidence of any of the Psalms being composed after 500 BC.

When we reflect on when the Psalms were written it is surprising to discover such an emphasis on ‘mission’ at a time in Israel’s history when ‘mission’ was clearly not a priority. Nevertheless, without question, prominence is given to ‘mission’ in this inspired Book of Songs in the Old Testament. George Peters, in *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, makes the point:

Missionary preaching is supported in the Psalms by more than 175 references of a universalistic note relating to the nations of the world. Many of them bring hope of

salvation to the nations. Indeed, the Psalter is one of the greatest missionary books in the world, though seldom seen from that point of view.⁵

Peters then goes on to assert, 'Not only are the Psalms permeated with references of universal connotation, but whole Psalms are missionary messages and challenges.'⁶

For the remainder of this article we will focus on three Psalms where their emphasis on world mission is clearly demonstrated.

PSALM 67

We cannot read Psalm 67 without recognising that it has as its primary focus the Abrahamic promise (Genesis chapter 12:1-3). Derek Kidner has observed, 'If a Psalm was ever written around the promises to Abraham, that he would be both blessed and made a blessing, it could well have been such as Psalm 67.'⁷ This Psalm begins with a prayer that God would bless his people. 'May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us.' The language of this prayer bears a marked similarity to the Aaronic benediction: 'The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace' (Numbers 6:24-26). Notice that the Psalmist takes this Aaronic benediction and alters it ever so slightly. Aaron was to say to the people, 'The LORD bless you'. Now the Psalmist prays, 'May God be gracious to us and bless us'. The Psalmist turns the promise of blessing into a prayer that God would fulfil his promise and bless his covenant people.

King Solomon, shortly after he was enthroned as Israel's king, asked the Lord for blessing, and God graciously answered his prayer (1 Kings 3:10-14). The blessing enjoyed by Solomon and his kingdom made an impact on the Queen of Sheba. She was overwhelmed by what she saw and heard at the Court of Solomon; and it brought glory to the Lord. Her response is summed up in the words of 1 Kings 10:9 'Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness.'

What does the blessing of God look like in our day? We will answer that question with particular reference to the church. The blessing of God on the life and ministry of the church will result in:

- A surge of men, suitably gifted and equipped to serve Christ in ministry and mission.
- The faithful exposition and application of Scripture.
- A growing commitment to earnest, prevailing prayer.
- Christian families being a beacon of light and a godly example in their neighbourhoods.
- Christian men and women, prompted by the Holy Spirit, bearing witness to the love and mercy of Jesus Christ to friends and neighbours.

Such blessing of God is described historically as 'revival'. When the church knows and experiences revival, consequences will, with the blessing of God, soon become apparent. During and after the Six Mile Water Revival in the district of Antrim in 1625, not only were thousands converted, but whole

⁵ George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, p 116.

⁶ George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, p 116.

⁷ Derek Kidner, *An Introduction and Commentary on Books I and II of the Psalms*, (IVP, 1973), p.236.

neighbourhoods were transformed. The same was true of the 1859 'revival' in the North of Ireland. Night after night, multitudes crowded into meeting houses to hear the Word of God. Open air meetings were attended by thousands. It needs to be remembered that prior to the '1859 revival' Christians were meeting in small groups for prayer. They were asking God for blessing. And God did bless. And as a consequence, God's way became increasingly known in the cities, towns, villages and countryside. Jesus Christ's 'saving power' was also experienced in many nations, as young Christians enlisted to be sent out by the Church to distant lands as missionaries.

The ultimate objective of asking God to 'bless us' is found in verse 3 of this Psalm and repeated in verse 5: 'Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!' When people praise God, they are in effect glorifying him, which of course is man's chief purpose. 'Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever.'⁸ At the very heart and centre of this missionary Psalm is a call to the nations to 'be glad and sing for joy'. The reason for this exuberance is because they have come to know the God who judges (who governs) them with equity (with justice) and who guides them through his Word, unerringly. 'Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth.' (verse 4)

The fact that we have had in the UK seven Prime Ministers in ten years, indicates how quickly people become disappointed and disillusioned with earthly rulers. But when people recognise the Lord as the 'governor', the ultimate Prime Minister (for, as Psalm 22:28 indicates, kingship belongs to the Lord who rules over the nations), then they will be glad and sing for joy.

The final verses of this Psalm (verses 6, 7) are a response to verses 1 and 2. In verse 1, blessing has been sought. Now that prayer has been answered: 'The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!' This is the answer in agricultural language. 'The earth has yielded its increase.' But it also relates to the spiritual. The church globally has known increase as men, women and children, from north, south, east and west, have been born again and added to the gospel church. And the assurance of future blessing is promised in the closing words of the Psalm: 'God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!' The last line of the Psalm is better translated 'that' as in NASV instead of 'let', as in the ESV. 'God shall bless us; that all the ends of the earth fear him!'

In relation to this Psalm Kaiser remarks,

the sentiment of Psalm 67 is this: May God be gracious and bless us fellow Israelites. May he increase our families, making them large and spiritually prosperous? May our crops increase and produce bountifully and our flocks show marked enlargement. May all of this and more happen so that the nations may look on us and say that what Aaron prayed for, by way of God's blessing, has indeed occurred. The very bounty of God demonstrates that God has blessed us. Accordingly, may the rest of God's purpose come to pass as well, that in the blessing of Israel all the nations of the earth might be drawn to receive the message of God's salvation as well?⁹

⁸ Shorter Catechism, Question 1

⁹ Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations*, (Baker, 2000), p 31

PSALM 96

Psalm 96 is another of the great missionary Psalms in the Psalter. The inspired author calls on the Hebrew worshipper not only to sing to the Lord, but to ‘tell of his salvation from day to day’ (v.2). They were not only to ‘bless his name’ but also to ‘Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!’ (v.3). To tell of his (the Lord’s) salvation is to declare the Good News. Through the seed of the woman salvation would be the experience of all who looked forward in faith to Christ’s coming into the world. They were called to emulate their ancestor Abraham, who ‘rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad’ (John 8:56,). The extent of their proclamation was not left for them to determine. They were to declare this great salvation of the Lord ‘among the nations’, ‘among all the peoples’. The word translated ‘tell’ in verse 2 of this Psalm is the Hebrew equivalent to the Greek word *euangelizomai*, to bring good news, to announce glad tidings. Consistently this word is applied in the New Testament to the finished work of Christ on the cross. Here in Psalm 96 it is clearly to tell, to make known, to proclaim to all peoples the good news of a Saviour coming into the world who would ‘save his people from their sins’ (Matthew 1:21). This Jesus would do by becoming their substitute and bearing on his own body and soul the punishment due to them for sin. Later the prophet Isaiah would make this crystal clear: ‘But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed...and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all’ (Isaiah 53: 5, 6).

On these opening verses of Psalm 96 Kaiser comments, ‘The context demands that God’s character (‘glory’) and his conduct (‘deeds’) be ‘declared’ universally, internationally (v.3). The Psalm goes on to address all the ‘families of nations’ (v.7) and instructs them to ‘ascribe glory to the Lord’ and to bring sacrifices and worship into his courts. This is not an exclusively Israelite privilege: ‘all the earth’ is to ‘tremble before him (v.9).¹⁰

This Psalm expects a response when the Gentiles hear the good news of the gospel from faithful Jews. Collectively, believing Jews and Gentile converts are to keep spreading the good news. ‘Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns!” Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity’ (Psalm 96:10).

This word ‘say’ at the beginning of verse 10 is translated from the Hebrew word *amar* and can bear the meaning ‘preach’. For example, it is used in Isaiah 40:9 ‘say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!”’ This universal proclamation of the gospel is the commission of the church until the end of time as Christ taught his disciples. ‘And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come’ (Matthew 24:19).

PSALM 117

In this Psalm we have the shortest chapter in the Bible. Its brevity does not detract in the slightest from its explicit missionary challenge. Like Psalm 96 it calls on ‘all nations’ and ‘all peoples’ to praise and extol the great name of the LORD. The imperatives in verse 1 exclude not one person who has lived, or who is living or who will live on planet earth. ‘Praise the LORD, all nations! Extol him, all peoples!’

¹⁰ Shorter Catechism, Question 1

The Psalmist in verse 2 identifies two specific aspects of God's character which should motivate 'the nations' (all peoples) to worship the Lord. He refers firstly to God's steadfast love: 'For great is his *steadfast love* toward us.' 'Steadfast love' is the Hebrew word *hesed*, which is equivalent to the New Testament Greek word *charis* (grace). The Psalmist then identifies 'faithfulness' as a chief characteristic of Yahweh: 'and the *faithfulness* of the LORD endures forever.' 'Faithfulness' is the Hebrew word *emeth* which is often translated 'truth'.

The question is asked by Moses in the song he sang after the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, 'Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?' (Exodus 15:11). This is a question expecting the answer 'no one'. The LORD is distinguished, among all the gods of human imagination, as the God of steadfast love and faithfulness. This God is worthy of the worship of all mankind, of all nations and of all peoples.

In relation to this Walter Kaiser asks the pertinent question, 'How will they be able to respond to the requirement laid on them in this, the briefest of all the Psalms, unless Israel has fulfilled her task of sharing the Good News with them?'¹¹ Only to a very limited extent did Israel fulfil her divine mandate to be 'a light to the nations'. Jonah went to Nineveh and preached his God-given message and witnessed the population in that pagan city turn to the Lord. The light of divine truth shone from Daniel's life and lips in Babylon and he saw the mighty king Nebuchadnezzar brought to acknowledge the Lord as the true and living God.

It was only after the life, death, resurrection ascension and glorification of Jesus Christ that the 'Good News' was proclaimed among the nations to any great extent. After 2000 years of Christianity the divine mandate found in Psalm 113:3 'From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised!' is still universally to be fulfilled.

What has been demonstrated in Psalms 67, 96 and 117, in relation to the Psalter and World Mission could also be shown from many other Psalms. Responsibility is still placed on the Church to make Christ known. The following texts, from a variety of Psalms, illustrate this.

Psalm 2:8	'Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.'
Psalm 33:8	'Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!'
Psalm 66: 1, 2, 8	'Shout for joy to God, all the earth; sing the glory of his name, give to him glorious praise! Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard,'
Psalm 72: 11, 17	'May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him! May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun...May people be blessed in him, all nations call him blessed!'
Psalm 98: 2, 3	'The LORD has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations. He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.'

¹¹ Derek Kidner, *An Introduction and Commentary on Books I and II of the Psalms*, p.34.

Psalm 100: 1, 2 ‘Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!’

Psalm 145: 10-12, 21 All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendour of your kingdom. My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.’

The faithful Israelites would sing these Psalms in Temple worship and later in their synagogues. This would lead them to anticipate the fulfilment of these prophetic utterances. In relation to how Jesus Christ builds his Church from all nations, the prophetic statement in Psalm 102:15, 16 is most relevant. The metrical version (stanzas 13, 14) reads:

So will the Gentile nations all
the LORD’s great name revere,
and all the kings upon the earth
will your great glory fear.

Because the LORD himself indeed
will Zion build aright,
and then he will appear to all
clothed in his glory bright.¹²

At the end of history all these prophetic references will have been fulfilled through the preaching of the gospel to all nations so that heaven will be comprised of ‘a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”’ (Revelation 7:9, 10).

¹² *The Psalms for Singing – A 21st Century Edition*, (RPCI, 2004), p.241.

SOME NOTES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT'S USE OF DEUTERONOMY

Keeping and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ

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There is some debate about which Old Testament book is cited most frequently in the New Testament. While Isaiah or the Psalms most likely top the list, Deuteronomy is in the top five.¹ Deuteronomy is a pivotal biblical book. It possesses not only an extensive influence on the Old Testament - by both culminating the Pentateuch and casting its shadow over the remainder of the Old Testament - but also the New Testament as evidenced by the plethora of quotations, allusions and echoes. So much so that DeRouchie argues, 'Perhaps no other book has influenced biblical thought like Deuteronomy.'² With respect to the New Testament's use of Deuteronomy, DeRouchie suggests it is employed in at least four ways: 1) Direct prophetic fulfilment (e.g., Deut. 30:12–14 in Rom. 10:6–8); 2) Typological fulfilment (e.g., Deut. 18:15–19 in Acts 3:22–26; 7:37, 52); 3) Analogical use (e.g., Deut. 25:4 in 1 Cor. 9:9–10); 4) Continued abiding authority (e.g., Deut. 5:16 in Eph. 6:2–3).³ Rather than exploring each of these types of use in detail, the following notes on the New Testament's use of Deuteronomy will explore only some of the references in their New Testament context.

These notes on the New Testament's use of Deuteronomy reveal that the centrality of keeping and sharing YHWH's word is one influence exerted by the Pentateuch's capstone on the New Testament, or, in language more congruent with the New Testament, keeping and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Various portions of Deuteronomy are employed in Matthew, Acts, Galatians, Hebrews, and the Pastoral Epistles for the purpose of elucidating who Jesus is, what Jesus did, and the eternal judgement that follows our response to Jesus's person and work.

Deuteronomy offers both categories and context for appreciating not only the fulness of the gospel but also our responsibility in light of the gospel. As such, these notes will suggest the New Testament's use of Deuteronomy identifies Jesus of Nazareth as the true Son of God and faithful prophet of YHWH who was cursed to bring others blessing and so Christ's people must guard and share this gospel.

¹ Tremper Longman III and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Second Edition (Apollos, 2007), p.118, place it fourth but offer no evidence nor name the other books. Jason S. DeRouchie, 'Deuteronomy', in *Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale et al. (Baker Academic, 2023), p.192, places it fifth after Isaiah, Psalms, Exodus, and Genesis.

² DeRouchie, 'Deuteronomy', p.188.

³ DeRouchie, 'Deuteronomy', p.192.

THE TRUE SON OF GOD IN MATTHEW 4:1–11 (LUKE 4:1–13)

Menken suggests that a firm consensus can be found for fifteen quotations of Deuteronomy in Matthew's Gospel.⁴

Matthew 4:4 But he answered, 'It is written, " Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. "'	Deuteronomy 8:3 And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.
Matthew 4:7 Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, " You shall not put the Lord your God to the test. "'	Deuteronomy 6:16 ' You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah.'
Matthew 4:10 Then Jesus said to him, 'Be gone, Satan! For it is written, " You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve. "'	Deuteronomy 6:13; 10:20 It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear.... You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear.
Matthew 5:21 'You have heard that it was said to those of old, " You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment."	Deuteronomy 5:17 (LXX 5:18) ⁵ " You shall not murder. "
Matthew 5:27 'You have heard that it was said, " You shall not commit adultery. "'	Deuteronomy 5:18 (LXX 5:17) ⁶ " And you shall not commit adultery. "
Matthew 5:31 'It was also said, "Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce. "'	Deuteronomy 24:1, 3 'When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house,...and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife.'
Matthew 5:33 'Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, " You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn."	Deuteronomy 5:11, 20; 23:22 (free rendering) 'You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain..."And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor..."But if you refrain from vowing, you will not be guilty of sin.'

⁴ Maarten J. J. Menken, 'Deuteronomy in Matthew's Gospel', in *Deuteronomy in the New Testament: The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken, Library of New Testament Studies 358 (T&T Clark, 2007), p.42, <https://www.perlego.com/book/803082/deuteronomy-in-the-new-testament-the-new-testament-and-the-scriptures-of-israel>. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations come from ESV.

⁵ Also, Exodus 20:13 (LXX 20:15).

⁶ Also, Exodus 20:14 (LXX 20:13).

Matthew 5:38 ‘You have heard that it was said, “ An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. ”’	Deuteronomy 19:21 ⁷ Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth , hand for hand, foot for foot.
Matthew 5:43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. ’”	Deuteronomy 7:2; 20:16; 23:4 (free rendering) ‘and when the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them... But in the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes... because they did not meet you with bread and with water on the way, when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.
Matthew 15:4 For God commanded, ‘ Honor your father and your mother, ’ and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’	Deuteronomy 5:16 ⁸ ‘ Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.’
Matthew 18:16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.	Deuteronomy 19:15 ‘A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. ’
Matthew 19:7 They said to him, ‘Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?’	Deuteronomy 24:1, 3 ‘When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house,...and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife,’
Matthew 19:18–19 He said to him, ‘Which ones? And Jesus said, ‘ You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’	Deuteronomy 5:17–20, 16 ⁹ ‘ You shall not murder. ’ ‘ And you shall not commit adultery. ’ ‘ And you shall not steal. ’ ‘ And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor’... ‘ Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.’

⁷ Also, Exodus 21:24 and Leviticus 24:20.

⁸ Also, Exodus 20:12.

⁹ Also, Exodus 20:13–16, 12.

Matthew 22:24 ‘Teacher, Moses said, “If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.” ’	Deuteronomy 25:5 ‘If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son , the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband’s brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her. ’
Matthew 22:37 And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’	Deuteronomy 6:5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Quotations and allusions to Deuteronomy in Matthew appear to be concentrated in the wilderness temptation, the Sermon on the Mount, and controversy debates. Its use in the Sermon on the Mount and controversy debates is restricted primarily to quoting the Mosaic law and Jesus’s reinterpretation and reapplication of it in a new salvific era. This new salvific era has arrived, however, because Jesus is the true Son of God, as Matthew makes clear in the temptation narrative. In considering Matthew’s use of Deuteronomy in the temptation passage (and Luke’s parallel), Menken concludes: ‘To Matthew, then, the three quotations from Deuteronomy in the temptation narrative are essential in showing what type of ‘Son of God’ Jesus has to be: one who is obedient to his heavenly Father.’¹⁰ Clearly, for Jesus, Deuteronomy bears canonical authority. Therefore, he submits himself to it because ‘it is written’. Moreover, Jesus thus stands as the antitype of Adam and Israel, obeying where both failed.¹¹ He is the obedient Son of God who fulfils the Law and the Prophets (Matt. 5:17), and therefore carries the authority to further define all that this requires of those who desire to love the LORD with all their heart, soul, strength, and mind (Matt. 22:37; Deut. 6:5).¹² In being so, Jesus is also the true and better Israel.¹³ The use of Deuteronomy in Matthew, particularly 4:1-11, demonstrates Jesus to be the true Son of God.

THE PROPHET OF YHWH IN ACTS 3:22 AND 7:37

Deuteronomy creates expectation for a future prophet like Moses. In 18:15-22 there is the promise that YHWH will raise up a prophet like Moses from among the Israelites who will speak the word of YHWH accurately and faithfully. In 34:10 there is the assertion that a prophet like Moses had not yet arisen. The logical conclusion is that the people must continue to look for such a prophet. The New Testament asserts that Jesus is this prophet.

¹⁰ Menken, ‘Deuteronomy in Matthew’, p.50.

¹¹ DeRouchie, ‘Deuteronomy’, p.193; Craig L. Blomberg, ‘Matthew’, in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Apollos, 2007), p.15, writes: ‘Jesus relives the experience of the Israelites, but he succeeds where they failed.’; G. K. Beale and Benjamin L. Gladd, *Connecting Scripture New Testament: A Study Bible of Biblical Allusions and Quotations* (Holman, 2025), p.8, note: ‘At every point Jesus is faithful.’

¹² Menken, ‘Deuteronomy in Matthew’, p.62, offers a broader conclusion regarding all of Matthew’s uses of Deuteronomy by writing: ‘Both aspects together, Matthew’s Jesus as a radical interpreter and as an exemplary doer of the Torah, show Matthew to firmly belong to a community of Christian Jews in conflict with other Jews over the significance of Jesus’ interpretation of the Torah in word and deed.’

¹³ Beale and Gladd, *Connecting Scripture*, p.9: ‘Jesus proved himself to be the true Son of God and the victorious, faithful, and true Israel.’

In Acts 3:22 Peter quotes Deuteronomy 18:15, 18–19.

Acts 3:22 Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people. ’	Deuteronomy 18:15, 18–19 ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers - it is to him you shall listen...I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. ’
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In this context Peter is charging the Jewish leaders with ignoring the prophets that YHWH had sent throughout the ages; including, most recently, Jesus. By quoting Deuteronomy ‘Peter identifies Jesus as the direct verbal fulfilment of Moses’s prophecy.’¹⁴ Peter is clearly asserting that Jesus is the prophet of YHWH, long-awaited and sadly rejected. In Acts 7:37 Stephen also references Deuteronomy 18, asserting (albeit implicitly) that Jesus is this long-expected prophet.

Acts 7:37 This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, ‘God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers.’	Deuteronomy 18:15 The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers.’
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Stephen does not directly name Jesus at this point in his sermon. The trajectory of the sermon, however, is arced towards the conclusion that his hearers have resisted the Spirit by rejecting the promised Righteous One (vv. 51–52).

Thus, we can conclude that both ‘Peter and Stephen would leave no doubt in anyone’s mind that Jesus was the prophet like Moses.’¹⁵ Interestingly, Hebrews 3:1–6 makes a similar argument with respect to Moses’s prophetic work and Jesus as the greater prophet. As a potential example of a sermon from the ear of the early church this is instructive. Rusam therefore summarises the argument in Acts:

Luke takes over many normative passages, but makes clear in Acts 3.22 and 7.37, that also in the book of Deuteronomy Jesus is referred to as the Christ in a prophetic way, just as the story of the rejection of the prophets can be used as an illustration of the history of Jesus.¹⁶

The reading of these references proffered here therefore aligns with the source of the quotations.¹⁷ Deuteronomy itself anticipates a prophet like Moses, Peter and Stephen’s sermons in Acts merely confirm the identity of this prophet: Jesus. Hence, Jesus is not only the True Son of God but also the foretold, faithful prophet of YHWH. In his life, identity and office Jesus carries authority, according to the New Testament’s use of Deuteronomy.

¹⁴ Beale and Gladd, *Connecting Scripture*, p.221.

¹⁵ Longman III and Dillard, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p.119.

¹⁶ Dietrich Rusam, ‘Deuteronomy in Luke-Acts’, in *Deuteronomy in the New Testament: The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken, Library of New Testament Studies 358 (T&T Clark, 2007), p.81, <https://www.perlego.com/book/803082/deuteronomy-in-the-new-testament-the-new-testament-and-the-scriptures-of-israel>.

¹⁷ J. Gordon McConville, *Deuteronomy*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary 5 (Apollos, 2002), p.49.

CURSED FOR US IN GALATIANS 3:13

According to Ciampa there are two explicit quotations of Deuteronomy in Galatians and two echoes.¹⁸

Galatians 1:8–9 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.	Deuteronomy 13:12–16 If you hear in one of your cities, which the LORD your God is giving you to dwell there, that certain worthless fellows have gone out among you and have drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’ which you have not known, then you shall inquire and make search and ask diligently. And behold, if it be true and certain that such an abomination has been done among you, you shall surely put the inhabitants of that city to the sword, devoting it to destruction, all who are in it and its cattle, with the edge of the sword. You shall gather all its spoil into the midst of its open square and burn the city and all its spoil with fire, as a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God. It shall be a heap forever. It shall not be built again.
Galatians 2:6 And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; <i>God shows no partiality</i>) - those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me.	Deuteronomy 10:17 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome <i>God, who is not partial</i> and takes no bribe.
Galatians 3:10 For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘ Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them. ’	Deuteronomy 27:26 ‘ Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them. ’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’
Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us - for it is written, ‘ Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree. ’	Deuteronomy 21:23 his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.

Intriguingly, each reference refers to the theme of curse - which is prominent in Deuteronomy - and thus ‘Paul uses Deuteronomy in Galatians to explain how people fall under the curse of the Law and how they can find redemption from it through Jesus Christ.’¹⁹

The argument that Christ redeems us from the curse by becoming a curse for us, à la Deuteronomy, is most explicitly stated in Galatians 3:13 (quoting Deuteronomy 21:23). It does not seem that Paul is claiming this verse as a prophecy of Christ’s crucifixion. Rather, Paul is applying the principle of curse to the event of Christ’s crucifixion. Paul therefore appears to read Deuteronomy fulfilled in Jesus Christ and argues that this ‘has brought about significant implications for understanding how the realities of curse and blessing, death and life, disobedience and obedience, sin and righteousness are

¹⁸ Echoes: Gal. 1:8–9=Deut. 13:12–16; Gal. 2:6=Deut. 10:17; Quotations: Gal. 3:10; Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:13; Deut. 21:23.

¹⁹ Roy E. Ciampa, ‘Deuteronomy in Galatians and Romans’, in *Deuteronomy in the New Testament: The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken, Library of New Testament Studies 358 (T&T Clark, 2007), p.99, <https://www.perlego.com/book/803082/deuteronomy-in-the-new-testament-the-new-testament-and-the-scriptures-of-israel>. The echo in 2:6 does not, at first glance, appear to relate to the theme of cursing. Nor does the source text in Deuteronomy. Both places, however, depict the positive way of life that leads to blessing as opposed to cursing and are therefore tangentially connected to the theme.

conceived in light of the good news of Christ's achievement.²⁰ Paul's use of Deuteronomy 21:23 in Galatians 3:13 apparently confirms that in his crucifixion Jesus Christ bore the curse of the law for the sake of his people.²¹ Jesus Christ, who is the true Son of God and faithful prophet of YHWH, was cursed for us. This is the good news of the gospel, the content of which concerns both who Jesus is and what Jesus did—both his person and work.

JUDGED BY GOD IN HEBREWS 10:30

Hebrews arguably presents a greater challenge to reading Deuteronomy in the New Testament given 'all of the (suggested) Deuteronomy quotations in Hebrews are short and fragmentary.'²² Steyn therefore identifies nine *possible* quotations.²³

Hebrews 1:6 And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, ' Let all God's angels worship him. '	Deuteronomy 32:43 Rejoice with him, O heavens; bow down to him, all gods , for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people's land.
Hebrews 10:28 Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses.	Deuteronomy 17:6 On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death ; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.
Hebrews 10:30 For we know him who said, ' Vengeance is mine; I will repay. ' And again, ' The Lord will judge his people. '	Deuteronomy 32:35–36 ' Vengeance is mine , and recompense , for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly.' For the Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free.
Hebrews 12:3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.	Deuteronomy 20:3 and shall say to them, 'Hear, O Israel, today you are drawing near for battle against your enemies: let not your heart faint. Do not fear or panic or be in dread of them.
Hebrews 12:15 See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no ' root of bitterness ' springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;	Deuteronomy 29:18 Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit.

²⁰ Ciampa, 'Deuteronomy in Galatians and Romans', p.117.

²¹ Beale and Gladd, *Connecting Scripture*, p. 355.

²² Gert J. Steyn, 'Deuteronomy in Hebrews', in *Deuteronomy in the New Testament: The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken, Library of New Testament Studies 358 (T&T Clark, 2007), p.152, <https://www.perlego.com/book/803082/deuteronomy-in-the-new-testament-the-new-testament-and-the-scriptures-of-israel>.

²³ Steyn, 'Deuteronomy in Hebrews', p.153.

Hebrews 12:18–19 For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them.	Deuteronomy 4:11–12 And you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, while the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven, wrapped in darkness, cloud, and gloom. Then the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only a voice.
Hebrews 12:21 Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, ‘I tremble with fear.’	Deuteronomy 9:19 For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure that the LORD bore against you, so that he was ready to destroy you. But the LORD listened to me that time also.
Hebrews 12:29 for our God is a consuming fire.	Deuteronomy 4:24; 9:3 For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God...Know therefore today that he who goes over before you as a consuming fire is the LORD your God. He will destroy them and subdue them before you. So you shall drive them out and make them perish quickly, as the Lord has promised you.
Hebrews 13:5 Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’	Deuteronomy 31:6 Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.

Hebrews 10:30 arguably offers the clearest quotation of Deuteronomy in Hebrews, quoting twice from the Song of Moses.²⁴ Both brief quotations are clearly employed to serve as reminders of divine judgement for those who ‘go on sinning’ (Heb. 10:26).²⁵ It therefore seems that the author to the Hebrews ‘applied his knowledge from Deuteronomy in an informative and a normative manner in the light of the exalted Son and the implications for the Christian community.’²⁶ He is not directly applying the text - that is, the song of Moses - but drawing implications from its theology in relation to the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the second person of the Trinity.

Bringing Deuteronomy’s use in Hebrews 10:30 into dialogue with what has thus far been observed, it is clear that if Jesus of Nazareth is in fact the true Son of God and faithful prophet of YHWH who was cursed for us, YHWH demands an appropriate response. Thus, those who reject the blessing offered through Christ’s cursing face the judgement of God - which is a fearful thing (Heb. 10:31). Equally, however, those who have responded appropriately through repentance and faith have confidence because we have been judged righteous (Heb. 10:19–22). Indeed, vindicated because of YHWH’s compassion (Deut. 32:36). Across the New Testament canon Deuteronomy is employed to keep the gospel clear; guarding the gospel’s content.

²⁴ Beale and Gladd, *Connecting Scripture*, p.443.

²⁵ George H. Guthrie, ‘Hebrews’, in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Apollos, 2007), p.981; Steyn, ‘Deuteronomy in Hebrews’, p.159.

²⁶ Steyn, ‘Deuteronomy in Hebrews’, 168.

ALLUSIONS AND INFLUENCE IN ADDITION TO QUOTATIONS

One element of the discussion concerning the New Testament use of the Old Testament is an awareness of a spectrum. Thus, not only does the New Testament employ the Old Testament in a variety of distinct ways, as noted in the introduction, but its actual repetition of the Old Testament may likewise vary. The above examples have been primarily quotations (i.e., repetition of the exact wording). However, the New Testament may also allude to the Old Testament (i.e., not repetition of the exact wording but of similar wording or themes). Moreover, the New Testament may also merely be influenced by the Old Testament (i.e., no verbatim or near verbatim repetition, but evidence of influence).

One example of this influence of the Old Testament on the New Testament is observed by Keesling in his argument that Deuteronomy shapes the language of guarding the good deposit in the Pastoral Epistles.²⁷ He argues that both Deuteronomy and 2 Timothy present the testimonies of God as heard (Deut. 6:4-6; cf. 4:1; 5:1; 9:1; 20:3; 27:9; 2 Tim. 1:13; 3:14-17), kept with zeal (Deut. 4:45; 5:32; 6:17; 2 Tim. 1:12, 14), passed on from generation to generation (Deut. 4:9; 6:7; 11:19; 32:46; 2 Tim. 1:2, 5), and entrusted to future faithful leaders (Deut. 1:9-18; 31:23; 33:10; 2 Tim. 2:2). A careful reading of the texts cited - which lies beyond the scope of this article - confirms the plausibility of Keesling's argument. Keesling thus concludes:

The Torah was to be heard by all, guarded diligently, passed on from generation to generation, and entrusted to future, faithful leaders. This array of instruction from God through Moses evidences itself not just in Deuteronomy, but later through the writing of Paul to Timothy as well. Paul recontextualizes Deuteronomy's instruction not by altering it but by bringing it into context for Timothy's situation. Timothy was to be encouraged, after hearing the words of Paul and growing up in the Scriptures, to guard the gospel message and entrust it to others.²⁸

The New Testament then does not only quote and allude to Deuteronomy in calling Christ's people to keep the gospel but is also influenced by the shape of Old Testament documents, such as Deuteronomy, to call Christ's people to share the gospel.

The influence of Deuteronomy on the New Testament is therefore more pervasive than mere quotation. The very warp and woof of the argument in Deuteronomy moulds the shape of the New Testament authors' thinking and writing, resulting in arguments such as guarding the good deposit in 2 Timothy being extrapolated from the Deuteronomic framework of hearing and keeping YHWH's word in order to pass on and perpetuate the teaching of YHWH's word.

²⁷ Kyle J. Keesling Jr, 'A Mosaic of Mosaic Influence: Deuteronomy and Guarding the Good Deposit in 2 Timothy', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 68, no. 2 (2025): 299–316.

²⁸ Keesling Jr, 'A Mosaic of Mosaic Influence', 315.

SUMMARY

Regarding the use of Deuteronomy in the New Testament, Longman and Dillard conclude:

The early church saw in itself the recreation of an ideal Israel. Just as Israel was portrayed in Deuteronomy as a unity having one God, one people, one land, one sanctuary, and one law, so the church is exhorted to a similar unity, for there is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all (Eph. 4:4–5).²⁹

Such unity is achieved only because Jesus is the true Son of God and faithful prophet of YHWH who was cursed for us. Rejecting this reality leads only to eternal judgement. We are therefore compelled to hear and obey the inspired word through repentance and faith, while also training others to pass it on. These unadorned notes on the New Testament's use of Deuteronomy help demonstrate that the principle of keeping and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ originates not during the era of the early church recorded in Acts, but long before as articulated in Deuteronomy.

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SCANDALOUS AND MALIGNANT PRIESTS

Clerical accusation and ecclesiastical conflict in the English Civil war

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In every generation of the church, ministers fall into scandal. Some cases involve obvious moral failure. Others are less clear-cut, entangled with theological controversy, personality clashes, institutional politics, or competing narratives about what really happened. In recent years, churches in Britain and Ireland have again had to grapple with such questions. Allegations spread rapidly. Factions form quickly. Some demand immediate action; others warn against haste or partiality. In such moments, Christians can easily begin to think that the church is facing uniquely modern pressures.

Church history offers a useful corrective to that instinct. It reminds us that previous generations also wrestled with corruption among the clergy, with public accusation, with ecclesiastical faction, and with the difficulty of distinguishing genuine scandal from partisan attack. The seventeenth century provides a particularly vivid example. In November 1643, in the midst of the English Civil War, John White published *The First Century of Scandalous, Malignant Priests*, a prosopographical pamphlet cataloguing one hundred ministers accused of offences ranging from drunkenness and sexual immorality to ceremonial innovations, suppression of preaching, and political ‘malignancy’ against Parliament.¹ There had been scathing official attacks on the monasteries in the 1530s and biting satirical discourse in the Martin Marprelate tracts and official responses to them in the 1580s, but a 1605 ruling against even truthful denunciations of church leaders put a stop to such open print warfare for a while. White’s pamphlet was, however, what Samuel Fullerton calls ‘an officially licensed and publicly coordinated libellous press campaign - one of the first in English history.’²

White’s 57-page pamphlet presents itself as a record of ministers sequestered for genuine misconduct. In some cases, the accusations are specific and plausible. Some of the clergy described in its pages almost certainly were unworthy ministers. Yet the work is also deeply polemical because White was not a neutral observer or independent investigator. His categories of accusation reflect the theological and political conflicts of the 1640s, and the pamphlet repeatedly blurs distinctions between moral delinquency, liturgical practice, pastoral method, and political allegiance. A minister who rails the communion table, suppresses lectureships, or supports episcopacy can quickly appear to be in the same moral category as one guilty of adultery or habitual drunkenness.

That combination of moral seriousness and factional polemic makes the *First Century* historically revealing and pastorally instructive. It illustrates the ease with which ecclesiastical conflict can become personalised, and the speed with which allegations can acquire a life of their own once

¹ John White, *The First Century of Scandalous, Malignant Priests, Made and admitted into Benefices by the Prelates, in whose hands the Ordination of Ministers and government of the Church hath been. Or, a Narration of the Causes for which the Parliament hath ordered the sequestration of the Benefices of severall Ministers* (London, 1643).

² Samuel Fullerton, ‘Licensing libel in seventeenth-century England: John White’s *First Century of Scandalous, Malignant Priests* in context/s’ in *Historical Research* 96 (2023), p.335.

circulated through print and public discussion. It also reminds us that no theological movement is immune from corruption. White's pamphlet encourages the reader to identify scandal chiefly with 'the other side', yet the wider history of the seventeenth century makes clear that Puritans and Parliamentarians proved no less capable of factionalism, ambition, coercion, and moral failure than their opponents.

This article will examine White's pamphlet in its historical setting, considering the kinds of accusations it contains, the rhetorical strategies it employs, and the wider process of clerical sequestration during the Civil War. It will then reflect on some of the continuing lessons such material may hold for churches today as they seek to respond faithfully and wisely to scandal among ministers.

CLEANSING THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

The author of this official exposé was John White (1590-1645), a lawyer and MP for Southwark (and the great-grandfather of John and Charles Wesley).³ He was also one of the Feoffees for the Purchase of Improvements who had sought to acquire patronage rights in the Church of England in order to place trustworthy Puritan men into benefices, particularly in the 'dark corners of the land.'⁴ As Richard Sibbes (1577-1635), another of the Feoffees, preached,

If it were possible, it were to be wished that there were set up some lights in all the dark corners of this Kingdome, that might shine to those people that sit in darknesse, and in the shadow of death.⁵

As Chairman of the Parliamentary Grand Committee to Inquire into Clergy Immorality, John White sought to prove that much of the darkness was caused by the existing clergy, and he led the way in trying to expose and replace such men. The *First Century* was not the first attempt to accomplish and justify this; the campaign against John Squire (1587-1653), the Vicar of St Leonard's Shoreditch, for example predated it.⁶ However, White's pamphlet was the most notorious and effective instrument in this campaign, as committees to expose scandalous ministers all over the country would be set up in its wake throughout the 1640s.⁷ It echoed all the concerns expressed in the petitions presented to Parliament between 1640-1643,⁸ and kick-started a wave of sequestrations across the counties of

³ John Wesley's grandfather, Samuel Annesley, was married to John White's daughter Mary. See Newton E. Key, 'Annesley, Samuel (bap. 1620, d. 1696)', in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)*. White was a 'long-term critic of Arminianism' according to Jacqueline Eales, 'White, John (1590-1645)', in *ODNB*. He should be distinguished from the older John White of Dorchester (1575-1648), a member of the Westminster Assembly who was instrumental in obtaining charters for the New England Company and the Massachusetts Bay Company, and was appointed Warden of New College, Oxford a few months before his death.

⁴ See Lee Gatiss, 'The Grand Nursery of Puritanism: St. Antholin's as a Strategic Centre for Gospel Ministry' in Gatiss (ed.), *Preachers, Pastors, and Ambassadors: Puritan Wisdom for Today's Church* (Latimer Trust, 2011) for more on the Feoffees and their attempt to redeem the patronage system for Puritan ends. Cf. See J. E. C. Hill, 'Puritans and "the Dark Corners of the Land"', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 13 (1963).

⁵ R. Sibbes, *The Saints Cordials: As they were Delivered in Sundry Sermons upon Speciall Occasions* (London, 1629), p.83.

⁶ See *The Articles and Charge of High Crimes and Misdemeanors Exhibited in Parliament against Mr. John Squire* (1641) and *The Answer of John Squire* (1642).

⁷ See for example, Clive Holmes (ed.), *The Suffolk Committees for Scandalous Ministers, 1644-1646* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2014), Graham Hart (ed.), *The Cambridgeshire Committee for Scandalous Ministers, 1644-1645* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2013), and Graham Hart (ed.), *Proceedings against the 'Scandalous Ministers' of Essex, 1644-1645* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2024).

⁸ These have been summarised and tabulated by Fiona McCall, *Baal's Priests: The Loyalist Clergy and the English Revolution* (London: Routledge, 2020), p.71-94.

England, the removal of ministers and the confiscation of their ecclesiastical assets, and the replacement of ‘unsound’ men by more ‘godly’ ministers. One beneficiary of this was John Owen (1616-1683), the famous Puritan theologian, who became pastor of Fordham in Essex when its incumbent John Alsop (a chaplain to Archbishop Laud, who fled to France after the Archbishop’s execution) was sequestered in 1643.⁹

White’s preface ‘To the Reader’ laid out his motives and general approach. The purpose of the pamphlet was first,

To open thine eyes and clearely convince and satisfie thee, that the Parliament had good, and very great cause from hence, among many other things, to declare and resolve, that the present Church Government by Arch-bishops, Bishops, their Chancellours, Commissaries, Deanes, Arch-deacons, and other Ecclesiasticall Officers, depending on the Hierarchie, is evill and justly Offensive and burdensome to the Kingdome.¹⁰

This precisely echoes the language of the Solemn League and Covenant of September 1643 (taken by the House of Commons two months beforehand) about the extirpation of ‘prelacy’.¹¹ The prelates had failed in their duty to supply ministers who would preach and pray for the good of the people’s souls, and instead given them ‘illiterate and insufficient, dumbe doggs’ (alluding to Isaiah 56:10), whose ‘wickednesse being so great, as that they are condemned by Heathens.’ This was ‘the Gall and Wormewood of the Episcopall Governement’ which required a thorough reformation. So this was not simply about removing scandalously poor ministers, but demonstrating the inadequacies of episcopacy, and taking in hand what the bishops had neglected. As James Rigney puts it, this was a feature of the Long Parliament’s attack on the church, ‘harnessing popular anticlericalism to its antiepiscopal proceedings.’¹² White had indeed made two published speeches against episcopacy in 1641.

The second stated purpose of the pamphlet was to help readers ‘see what manner of persons those Cleargie-men be, that favour the present course of his Majestie against his Parliament and people.’ Thus it aimed to cast a shadow over any clergy who supported the King in the civil wars, by implicating them all in the abuses of the worst. This gave the pamphlet an explicit military-political purpose and would even enable the ejection of upright, puritan-sympathising ministers if they took sides with the monarch. John Gere (1601-1649), for example, who wrote *The Character of an Old English Puritane, or Non-Conformist*, presenting the old English Puritan as an ideal of Christian discipleship, was later removed because of his Royalist convictions.¹³

Third, White wanted readers to know the ‘cause of the generall ignorance and debauchery of the Gentry and people of this Kingdome’. His motto here was ‘Like Priest, like people’ (echoing Hosea 4:9). The reason the country was in a moral mess, was that the clergy were a moral mess.

⁹ See A. G. Matthews, *Walker Revised: Being a Revision of John Walker’s Sufferings of the Clergy during the Grand Rebellion 1642-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), p.145.

¹⁰ White, *First Century*, A2.

¹¹ See ‘The Solemn League and Covenant’ in Samuel Rawson Gardiner (ed.), *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p.268-269.

¹² James Rigney, ‘Anticlerical slander in the English Civil War: John White’s *First Century of Scandalous and Malignant Priests*’, in Dermot Cavanagh and Tim Kirk (eds.), *Subversion and Scurrility: Popular Discourse in Europe from 1500 to the Present* (London: Routledge, 2016), p.105.

¹³ See J. I. Packer, *The Heritage of Anglican Theology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2023), p.72, 89.

So, fourth, by reading of the scandalous behaviour and teaching of the episcopally-appointed clergy, readers of this pamphlet would ‘Behold with admiration, and acknowledge with love and thankfulness the transcendent mercie of the Lord’, who had stirred up ‘a spirit of zeale and judgement in the Parliament to deliver the people from the mouthes of these Shepheards.’¹⁴

Fifth, this would give people comfort and ‘assured expectation of good from Heaven’, that God graciously intended ‘to reforme his Church in this Land’ with pure doctrine and discipline. What he calls ‘These Priests of Baal, of Bacchus, of Priapus’ are being ‘removed as filthy rubbish’ for their gross sins and many ‘absurdities and barbarismes in Divinity’. So, finally, if readers have read the many criticisms made about the sequestrations in other pamphlets, ‘thou mayest by a serious perusall of this Booke, cleerely see what Divines the Authours and publishers of the said Pamphlets doe so reverence and esteeme’. If they will defend these scandalous ministers, what must they themselves be like? We must not be fooled by the great learning of some of the malignant ministers into thinking that they were worthy: Arius, Pelagius, and Arminius were all learned too, but did great mischief in the church, says White. The fact that some of the scandalous ministers were styled D.D. (Doctor of Divinity) was thereby an aggravating factor for White: they should have known better. His agenda is not anti-intellectual and the problem is not simply elitism; the purpose of including such well-trained men in his catalogue of offenders was to show how deep the rot of depravity and delinquency was, when those with the highest theological responsibility had become the chief agents of corruption.

White compares the Parliamentary campaign to replace scandalous ministers with the dissolution of the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII. They had no other aim than ‘divine glory, the Churches reformation, and the Kingdomes safety.’ His prayer was for ‘the perfect cleansing of the house of the Lord.’ And so his mini-biographies of 100 of the worst offenders amongst the clergy would serve to advance this cause. It was not intended merely as salacious gossip, but as factional propaganda for the Parliamentary campaign to reform the Church of England of the many abuses which had come as a result of negligent episcopal discipline of the clergy, in the midst of a civil war where the government of both the church and the nation were being fought for on the battlefield. Some of the original petitions against the clergy named in the *First Century* are still extant, and although White may be accused of editorialising, exaggerating, and perhaps distorting things a little, his allegations are based in reality and he did not brazenly invent the facts he recounts.¹⁵ However, his work has been accused of illustrating ‘the witch-hunt that was conducted against any clergyman who accepted the altar policy and its associated church decorations in the 1630s or who had royalist leanings.’¹⁶

SCANDALOUS PRIESTS

The various categories of scandal in White’s pamphlet relate to the overall purpose of White and his committee. They boil down to moral misconduct, ministerial negligence, un-Reformed doctrinal positions, Romanising liturgical practices, and Royalist political sympathies. We can disentangle these in turn, but the effect within the pamphlet itself is cumulative: White is piling up egregious example after egregious example in order to convey the impression that the sequestered ministers are a distinct party of monstrously debauched and terribly ungodly Cavalier-supporting, Laudian innovators.

¹⁴ White, *First Century*, A3.

¹⁵ See Fullerton, ‘Licensing libel’, p.338. I. M. Green, ‘The Persecution of ‘Scandalous’ and ‘Malignant’ Parish Clergy’ in *English Historical Review* 94 (1979), p.507 - 31. McCall, *Baal’s Priests*, p.70.

¹⁶ Jacqueline Eales, ‘A Road to Revolution: The Continuity of Puritanism, 1559-1642’ in Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (eds.), *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), p.206.

Moral misconduct

The moral failings of the clergy indicted by White's pamphlet include sexual misdemeanours, drunkenness, swearing, gaming and hunting, and general disorderliness. White deliberately bookends his work with two of the most notorious and vivid examples in John Wilson of Arlington in Sussex and Ambrose Westrop of Much-Totham in Essex, to draw in casual readers and to start them off with the most disgusted taste in their mouths, thus perhaps prejudicing them in advance of reading the remainder.¹⁷

John Wilson was sequestered 'for that he in most beastly manner, divers times attempted to commit buggery with Nathaniel Browne, Samuel Andrewes and Robert Williams his Parishioners, and by perswasions and violence, laboured to draw them to that abominable crime.' In italics we are supposedly presented with Wilson's own reported words that '*they might make up his number eightene*' (i.e. he had slept with fifteen other men previously) and that, '*he made choice to commit that act with man-kind rather than with women, to avoide the shame and danger that oft ensueth in begetting Bastards.*' As White based his work on many hours of committee hearings, the italics throughout the pamphlet are an implicit claim to eye-witness testimony of self-condemnation from the accused.¹⁸ Wilson had also 'attempted to commit Buggery with a Mare' and 'hath openly affirmed, *that Buggery is no sinne.*'¹⁹ This was not his only crime: he also said that Christ himself was a bastard (when he was baptising an illegitimate child in the church one day); that baptism takes away original sin, and sin after baptism is only by imitation not natural corruption; that images ought to be used for edification in churches; that beads or rosaries should be used in prayer; that Parliament were rebels and the King should be obeyed whatever he commanded. So he is indicted as deviant in sexuality, Romanising in doctrine and practice, and Royalist in political sympathies. He is the perfect exemplar of the kind of clergyman the Puritan Parliament were trying to get rid of and prime candidate for Scandalous Minister Number 1.²⁰

At the other end of the booklet is Ambrose Westrop, an example of a different kind of carnality. White says he is sequestered 'for that he doth commonly prophane the ordinance of preaching, by venting in the Pulpit, matters concerning the secrets of Women, to stir up his auditory to laughter.' He goes on to relate how, 'divers modest women absenting from Church, because of such uncivill passages, he affirmed, *That all that were then absent from Church were whores.*' There are various other examples of his indiscreet and inappropriate asides in sermons, including this story:

¹⁷ This was pointed out by White's detractors, including John Walker (on whom, more later). Fullerton, 'Licensing libel', p.341 says this editorial strategy 'preconditioned any reader to assume the worst about the rest of the pamphlet's targets.' Cf. McCall, *Baal's Priests*, p.71.

¹⁸ Rigney, 'Anticlerical slander', calls it 'the searching-out, appropriation and textualising of the transgressive discourse of slander', although White himself claims in a marginal note to his preface that 'the gossest faults stand proved by many witnesses, seldome less than six.'

¹⁹ White, *First Century*, 1. See Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), p.388 on the word to 'bugger' which he says is derived from 'Bulgarian' and reflects the common misconception (he calls it a canard of mainstream Christians) that 'heresy by its unnatural character leads to deviant sexuality.'

²⁰ On sodomy in the imagination, propaganda, and sexual consciousness of this period, see James Knowles, 'To "scourge the arse / Jove's marrow so had wasted": scurrility and the subversion of sodomy' in Cavanagh and Kirk (eds.), *Subversion and Scurrility*, p.92-104, particularly on how it was politicised as 'a barometer of the moral health of the nation', which seems to be why White would start with an example of it in his pamphlet.

And at another time [he] told a story in the Pulpit of two severall women, that in their husbands absence had familiars, and said, *that when it was night they went up into the chamber together with a candle, and put out the candle, and there is sport, heavenly sport, such sport as never was in little Heaven.*²¹

When a woman refused his advances he ‘did for five or six weekes after, utter little or nothing else in the Pulpit, but invectives against Women.’ His inappropriate behaviour towards women in the parish and over-sexualised speech was most unbecoming in a clergyman and least of all in the pulpit. Westrop is not accused of political or doctrinal aberrations, but two pages of this scandalous behaviour (more than any other entry) would certainly have attracted the attention of anyone flicking idly through White’s pamphlet.²²

But it is not only at the beginning and end of the booklet that such behaviour is catalogued. Paul Clapham had lived in adultery with several women, had ‘divers bastards’, and charged the parish with their upkeep, while John Amnes had “attempted the chastity of divers women, and used unchast behaviour towards them’, and Robert Shepard ‘had divers maid-servants depart from his house great with child.’²³ William Fairefax D.D., of St Peter’s Cornhill

usually seeketh and haunteth the company of women, notoriously suspected of incontinency, and intrudes himself into their company, and into the company of other women, walking alone in the streetes in the darke and twi-light, and tempteth them to uncleannesse, leading them into darke places.²⁴

Edward Alston ‘hath attempted the chastity of some women, and hath used very unchast demeanours towards other women’ (which White elaborates on but which I won’t).²⁵ Anthony Hugget was ‘greatly suspected of Incontinency, and hath had the French-pox’, and at one time hit his pregnant wife such that she delivered a dead child.²⁶ Peter Allen had three illegitimate children by three different women.²⁷

Sexual deviancy and incontinency (in the sense of a failure to restrain sexual appetites) is one thing, but despite its prominent placement in White’s work it is not the primary focus of his moral exposé. There are plenty of other examples of anti-Puritan worldliness too. Number 2, for example, is John Aymes of Lowis in Kent, ‘a common drunkard, a common haunter of Ale-houses, and a common swearer.’ He was sequestered on the evidence of 4 witnesses and imprisoned in the Fleet Prison.²⁸ Charles Forbench also ‘is a common swearer, oftentimes breaking forth into fearfull Oathes and Imprecations, and very careless of his pastorall function.’ John Denn, Vicar of Dartford was ‘a common Ale-house and Taverne haunter, and commonly drunke, and on Sabbath dayes, useth to sit

²¹ ‘Familiars’ here may be a circumlocution for intimate (sexual) relations, or possibly a reference to familiar spirits or demons (which is how the word could be used at the time), though the former seems most likely in the context. If the reference were to familiar spirits known as incubi or succubi, the reference would still be undoubtedly sexual in its connotations.

²² White, *First Century*, p.50-51.

²³ White, *First Century*, p.46, 47.

²⁴ White, *First Century*, p.7.

²⁵ White, *First Century*, p.22.

²⁶ White, *First Century*, p.31-32.

²⁷ White, *First Century*, p.45. Charges of adultery against Allen dated back to 1633; McCall, *Baal’s Priests*, p.78.

²⁸ White, *First Century*, 2. Cf. Matthews (ed.), *Walker Revised*, 210. Ministers with previous presentments for drunkenness in ecclesiastical courts (as well as in the *First Century*) include Francis Wright, Vincent Clement, and Timothy Heard; see McCall, *Baal’s Priests*, p.78.

till twelve of the clock at night, sending for bottles of Wine, and clubbing.’²⁹ A previous complaint from his parishioners to Parliament about him in 1641 charged him with increasing fees and tithes and that he ‘was of such a proud hautie spirit that there is no honest man able to live by him.’³⁰ John Manby D.D. of Cottenham in Cambridgeshire (the son-in-law of the Bishop of Ely) was a common swearer and curser too (quoted as saying he had ‘*out-sworne a great swearer*’), but also ‘a frequent Gamester [gambler], even upon the Lords dayes.’³¹ Despite his educational advantages, Daniel Horsemanden D.D. was no better, ‘very often exceeding drunke’.³² Thomas Darnell was also a drunk, a curser, and a gamester, but had also ‘been convicted of incontineny and adultery’,³³ whereas John Wood was ‘notoriously infamous for sundry adulteries’ and had been punished for it.³⁴ Most famously perhaps, Lawrence Washington, the grandfather of George Washington, was ‘a common frequenter of Ale-houses, not only himselfe sitting daily tippling there, but also incouraging others in that beastly vice, and hath been oft drunke.’ He was also no supporter of the rebellious Parliament, whom he labelled ‘Traitors’ to the King.³⁵

Ministerial negligence

A number of the immoral, swearing, drunken priests were accused of neglecting their pastoral duties in favour ‘good fellowship’, meaning intoxicated entertainment.³⁶ White notes a number who were drunk in church, but also that many had simply left their parishes for long periods. This is sometimes because they have deserted and gone to join the King’s army. Nicholas Wright D.D., for example, had not preached more than 2 or 3 times a year to his parishioners and yet had presented many of them in ecclesiastical courts ‘for going to heare Sermons in other Churches when they had none at home.’ He permitted the profanation of the Lord’s Day ‘by Foot-ball playing and other ungodly practises’ and had deserted his parish since Palm Sunday and joined the Cavalier Army. He also employed ‘a drunken, lewd and scandalous person’ as his curate.³⁷ John Reynolds had also abandoned his parish for four months and Paul Clapham had done the same for even longer.³⁸ Instead of preaching, Reynolds had read Canon Law to his congregation, so it is unlikely that he was missed.

Nicholas Andrewes D.D. of Guildford and Godalming (a pluralist with more than one benefice) was ‘not only negligent in preaching himselfe, but hath also expressed himselfe to be an enemy to frequent preaching, inveighing in his Sermons against long Sermons.’ He is quoted as saying ‘*the surfet of the Word is of all most dangerous, and that the silliest creatures have longest eares, and that preaching was the worst part of Gods worship, and that if he left out any thing, he would leave out that.*’ He refused to allow his congregation to employ a Lecturer to preach to them instead, and presented those who went elsewhere to hear sermons to the ecclesiastical court (along with the churchwardens and

²⁹ White, *First Century*, p.21. This use of ‘clubbing’ to mean partying, predates the first instance given in the *Oxford English Dictionary* by a couple of years.

³⁰ Matthews (ed.), *Walker Revised*, p.215.

³¹ White, *First Century*, p.19-20. Cf. Matthews (ed.), *Walker Revised*, p.83.

³² White, *First Century*, p.37.

³³ White, *First Century*, p.29-30.

³⁴ White, *First Century*, p.30.

³⁵ White, *First Century*, p.4. His political stance is ironic, given his grandson’s leading role in the illegal colonial rebellion of 1776.

³⁶ ‘Good fellowship’ is almost a technical term. Cuthbert Dale is said to have maintained in a sermon that ‘*men might drinke one pot for necessity, a second for recreation, and a third for good-fellowship*’; while William Grant (whose post had been procured for him by Archbishop Laud himself (see Matthews (ed.), *Walker Revised*, p.260) complained ‘*that all good fellowship was laid aside in his Parish, but he would bring it in againe and maintaine it*, and invited and entertained all he could procure, to come to his house on Sundayes after prayers, to sit there with him and consume their time in drinking and tipling.’ White, *First Century*, p.26-27, 16-17.

³⁷ White, *First Century*, p.19.

³⁸ White, *First Century*, p.23, 46.

sidesmen who refused to do that themselves).³⁹ He had already been complained of in Parliament in 1640, for being ‘of a very proud presumptuous imperious and tyrannical caryage and disposition encroching upon the rights and pryviledgs of the Parishioners.’⁴⁰

Richard Duxon DD of St Clement Danes without Temple-barre in London is cited for neglecting to preach on Christmas Day. He turned up in church to find that ‘a very great congregation’ had met to hear Mr Evans, their Lecturer, preach instead. This led to an unseemly scene, where Duxon:

kept the Pulpit and deske himselfe, with a strong hand, refusing to let the Lecturer preach, and openly protested to the congregation, that they should have no Sermon then, and in the pulpit read a few collects to them, and then charged the Church-wardens to drive the congregation out, or to shut them in, and so inforced the congregation to depart without any Sermon in great discontent.⁴¹

Archbishop Laud had said, in a rather condescending way, that the lecturers as a class were ‘the people’s creatures.’⁴² He struggled to get control over them, and for him it was axiomatic that the altar (*sic*) was greater than the pulpit; as he put it,

For *there*’ tis *Hoc est Corpus meum*, This is my Body. But in the *Pulpit*, tis at most, but; *Hoc est Verbum meum*, This is my Word. And a *greater Reverence* (no doubt) is *due* to the *Body*, then to the *Word* of our *Lord*.⁴³

But for White, as for the Puritans as a whole, preaching was the very essence of Christian religion, and employing Lecturers was their method of choice for satisfying people’s appetite for the Bible.⁴⁴ As John Owen later expressed this, because preaching was

the application of the word of God unto our souls, by virtue of his command...there is the same reverence due to God in the word as preached, as in the word as written; and a peculiar advantage attends it beyond reading of the word, because God hath himself ordained it for our benefit.⁴⁵

Sadly, however, ‘it is scarcely imaginable,’ observed Owen, ‘with what rage and perversity of spirit, with what scornful Expressions this whole Work is traduced, and exposed to contempt.’⁴⁶ That was certainly the case in 1643 according to White’s account. To add just one more example, William Fairefax at St Peter’s Cornhill had ‘refused to let his Parish have a Lecturer on the Lords day in the

³⁹ White, *First Century*, p.8-9

⁴⁰ Matthews (ed.), *Walker Revised*, p.349.

⁴¹ White, *First Century*, p.40-41.

⁴² See John Rushworth, *Historical Collections* (London, 1682), Part 2, 7 in Laud’s proposal to Charles I, ‘Considerations for the Better Settling of the Church-Government’ (1629).

⁴³ William Laud, *A Speech Delivered in the Star Chamber, Concerning Pretended Innovations in the Church* (14 June 1637), p.47. James Bliss (eds), *The Works of Archbishop Laud* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1858), 6:57. See Anthony Milton, ‘Unsettled Reformations, 1603-1662’ in Anthony Milton (ed.), *The Oxford History of Anglicanism. Volume 1: Reformation and Identity, c.1520-1662* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p.70-71 on the Laudian de-emphasis on preaching and consequent prioritising of the ‘altar’. By 1640, claims Milton, ‘the majority of parish communion tables had been converted into east-end altars and railed in’ (p.74).

⁴⁴ See Lee Gatiss, ‘To Satisfy People’s Hunger for the Word: St Antholin’s as the Prototype Puritan Lectureship’ in Gatiss (ed.), *Pilgrims, Warriors, and Servants: Puritan Wisdom for Today’s Church* (London: Latimer Trust, 2010).

⁴⁵ John Owen, *Exercitations on the Epistle to the Hebrews... with a Continuation of the Exposition on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Chapters* (London, 1674), p.398 (on Hebrews 5:11).

⁴⁶ John Owen, *Πνευματολογία: or A Discourse Concerning The Holy Spirit* (London: 1674), p.189.

after-noon, except he might have 50^{lb} [£50] given unto him for the same: And for the space of eight yeares, refused to let his Parishioners have a Lecturer on a weeke day' (despite this having been provided for in a will).⁴⁷ Many would have agreed with Henry Osbalston that it was never a merry world since there was so much preaching.⁴⁸

Un-Reformed doctrine

Not only were many of these scandalous ministers negligent, they were also errant in their doctrine, though this is less commonly remarked upon. For example, John Clarke, Rector of St Ethelburrough (Ethelburga) within Bishopsgate, London was sequestered because 'he hath endeavoured to corrupt his auditory with the leaven of Popish doctrine' (especially regarding Mary and the doctrine of transubstantiation).⁴⁹ Emmanuel Uty D.D. of Chigwell in Essex also said '*that he loved the Pope with all his heart*', but also '*That the Command of the Arch-bishop of Canterbury was to be equally obeyed with the Word of God*.'⁵⁰ Many considered themselves to have the absolute power to forgive sins, or maintained that original sin is washed away in baptism, such as Edward Cherry, who is reported as saying '*Baptisme washeth away originall sinne, and that all men may be saved if they will, and have free-will thereunto*.'⁵¹ As well as this, Robert Cotesford D.D. in Suffolk (Archbishop Laud's nephew) also often preached for auricular confession of sins.⁵² John Mountford D.D. had installed a crucifix and an image of Mary along with 'the Jesuits Badge' on the carpet and 'hath endeavoured to leaven his people with the doctrines of *Arminianisme*.'⁵³ Edward Marten D.D. prayed openly for saints and people departed '*that they may be eased and freed of their paines in Purgatory*',⁵⁴ while James Buck preached that the Pope was the head of the church, and the doctrine of transubstantiation, and invocation of the saints, and auricular confession, as well as 'universal grace'.⁵⁵ That being said, doctrinal concerns as such were not uppermost in White's mind throughout the book, although it is clear there was a strong streak of Laudianism and even Romanism in these scandalous clergy (often the ones with D. D. after their names), quite at odds with the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion* to which they had had to subscribe.⁵⁶

Romanising liturgical practices

More significant than merely doctrinal concerns for White are the Romanising liturgical practices of his subjects. These were beloved of the Laudian faction within the church: moving the Communion table to the east end of the church, 'altar-wise', railing it in, compelling people to kneel to receive Communion, bowing at the name of Jesus, and a sacrament-oriented piety which saw the 'altar' as the place of God's special presence rather than a word-centred piety which prioritised the preaching of the

⁴⁷ White, *First Century*, p.7.

⁴⁸ White, *First Century*, p.37. Osbalston was another who encouraged football on Sundays (like Clement Vincent who allowed it on his own grounds and was himself a spectator), and also asserted that '*once hearing Common-prayer, is better then 10. Sermons*.' Cf. Matthews (ed.), *Walker Revised*, p.260 on William Grant/Graunt (#34 in White's list) who had 21 articles against him presented to Parliament in 1641 for ejecting the lecturer in his parish in order 'to root out Puritans'; the lecturer himself replaced Graunt as minister in 1647.

⁴⁹ White, *First Century*, p.25.

⁵⁰ White, *First Century*, p.2-3.

⁵¹ White, *First Century*, p.3.

⁵² White, *First Century*, p.8. See Matthews (ed.), *Walker Revised*, p.331-332.

⁵³ White, *First Century*, p.13. The repeated word 'leaven' is meant to conjure up the connection to what Jesus called 'the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees' in Matthew 16:11-12, i.e. their false teaching.

⁵⁴ White, *First Century*, p.41-42.

⁵⁵ White, *First Century*, p.42-43. According to Matthews (ed.), *Walker Revised*, 330, Buck was closely associated with Matthew Wren (the Laudian Master of Peterhouse and Bishop of Ely, who was imprisoned in the Tower of London at this point).

⁵⁶ The leaven of the Pharisees in Luke 12:1 is also called hypocrisy.

Bible.⁵⁷ White, in common with many Puritans, saw these as ‘innovations’ introduced by Archbishop Laud, and the cause of the disruption which had stirred up civil war. The Laudians argued that they were restoring ancient order, beauty, and reverence to the church, not innovating, but White considered these ceremonial practices as self-evidently illegitimate departures from the established Reformed character of the Church of England. Liturgical disagreement thereby became in his mind theological corruption.

Richard Taylor of Buntingford, Westmill, and Aspden in Hertfordshire was an egregious example. According to White, he

hath not only used frequent bowing to the Communion-Table set Altar-wise, but affirmed, *That there was a more peculiar presence of God there then in the Church*, and hath compelled his people to come up to the railes to receive the Sacrament, refusing to administer to such as scrupled to doe it.

He bowed to the cross set up near the font and urged the congregation to make auricular confession to him because ‘*he could forgive them*’. Though he boasted of being able to preach with only half an hour’s study, he refused to do so on Sunday afternoons, or to allow others to do so, and he prosecuted those who went elsewhere to hear a sermon.⁵⁸ Samuel Scrivener also affirmed ‘*That there was an inherent holiness in that place*’ (the Communion table), which White mentions even before Scrivener’s alleged adultery with another man’s wife.⁵⁹ John Manby of Cottenham bowed to the table (which he considered *sanctum sanctorum*, the holy of holies) ‘eight or nine times’, claiming ‘*That God was there more peculiarly present, than in any other place of the Church.*’⁶⁰ This was just one example of what White terms ‘the late illegal superstitious Innovations.’⁶¹

Royalist political sympathies

Alongside ‘viciousness of life’, errors in doctrine, and superstitious innovations, the most devastating criticism White has of any minister is that they ‘hath expressed great malignancy against the Parliament.’⁶² This is a constant, almost liturgical refrain throughout the pamphlet, closing out a huge number of the charge sheets.⁶³ These men called into question the authority of Parliament to make any laws regarding the church, and the actions of Parliament in what White calls ‘this present defensive war’⁶⁴ or ‘this unnaturall warre against the Parliament and Kingdome.’⁶⁵ John Man said that ‘*the Parliament-men were not Gentlemen of quality*’, while John Clarke asserted that ‘*the Parliament could not meddle or settle the businesse of the Church, they being not schollers, but Mechanick men.*’⁶⁶ Thomas Vaughan of Chatham called them ‘a company of logger headed fellows’.⁶⁷ Those who supported or gave supplies to Parliament were ‘*accursed*’ according to William Evans,⁶⁸ while Edward

⁵⁷ On the Laudian reformation and propaganda wars around these subjects that preceded this, see Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c.1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), chapters 4-6.

⁵⁸ White, *First Century*, p.38-39.

⁵⁹ White, *First Century*, p.49-50.

⁶⁰ White, *First Century*, p.20.

⁶¹ White, *First Century*, p.43.

⁶² E.g. White, *First Century*, p.21.

⁶³ E.g. White, *First Century*, p.2, 4, 6, 8, 15, 16, 18, 19, 25 etc.

⁶⁴ White, *First Century*, p.50.

⁶⁵ White, *First Century*, p.42.

⁶⁶ White, *First Century*, p.24-25.

⁶⁷ White, *First Century*, p.44. The Lecturer in Vaughan’s church in 1642 was Samuel Annesley (see Matthews (ed.), *Walker Revised*, p.227). As Annesley was John White’s son-in-law, he perhaps gave White direct evidence of this himself.

⁶⁸ White, *First Century*, p.24.

Marten had himself lent and given money to the King.⁶⁹ Others such as Richard Tanton ‘hath stirred up his Parishioners to joyne with the Kings forces’⁷⁰, but even merely refusing to contribute to the Parliamentary cause was worthy of censure in some.⁷¹ Several ministers are accused of having deserted their cures and specifically gone over to join the Royalist army,⁷² and while Robert Senior expressed ‘great affection to the Cavaleeres, and Army raised against the Parliament, as more suitable to his spirit’⁷³, Nicholas Wright had ‘betaken himself to the Army of the Cavaleeres, and is in actual War against the Parliament and Kingdome.’⁷⁴

The cumulative effect

These various categories of malignancy and scandal do not emerge in discrete ways within White’s pamphlet but are often piled up together within the space of a single brief biography. Very few of the sequestered ministers are charged with only one of these offences. John Gorsuch D.D. of Walkerne in Hertfordshire for example is accused of being ‘a common haunter of Ale-houses’ and ‘often drunke’. He ‘sitteth gaming whole nights together’ and is ‘seldome in the Pulpit, preaching scarce once a quarter.’ He denied the sacrament to parishioners who would not come to the rails to receive it, and sometimes without any cause, as well as hiring someone to ride a horse for Prince Rupert’s army and publishing a wicked libel against Parliament.⁷⁵ Peter Dausem of Camberwell in Surrey was also a common drunkard, inebriated even at baptisms and funerals, has ‘debauched conversation’ (commonly swearing and cursing) and has not preached for 12 years. He hid a Roman Catholic priest in his house, extorted unreasonable fees from his parishioners (spending even the alms money on sack, to drink in church), and read in church the King’s declaration against Parliament.⁷⁶

The cumulative effect of all this is not merely to make the reader despair that there are so many bad ministers. It is not merely a catalogue of a few examples of the clerical abuse of power, but a collective biography, a prosopography. White is conveying the impression that there exists a broad, coherent, recognisable culture of clerical corruption, bound up with Laudianism, anti-Puritanism, and opposition to Parliament. He overwhelms the reader through accumulation - one hundred ministers, one after another, all apparently displaying variations of the same underlying and systemic villainy. This is not simply one rogue priest or a handful of scoundrels, but an entire clerical culture gone rotten. The different categories begin to merge psychologically; after enough repetition, the reader instinctively associates ceremonialism, anti-preaching, moral looseness, and royalism, as though they naturally belong together. That is one of White’s most important rhetorical achievements. He does not need to argue explicitly that Laudianism leads to immorality or political malignancy; the structure of the pamphlet implies it through constant juxtaposition. The cause for godly reform is self-evident by the end, as the sheer volume of accusations creates a sense that Parliament’s reforms are not merely politically expedient but morally necessary, and to support the King would be to join forces with these indefensible enemies of godliness. As A. G. Matthews comments,

The pulpit was then the readiest and most effective channel for diffusing propaganda...To leave this sounding-bound in the possession of an enemy, or even a neutral it might be, was more than could be expected of any party in any civil war.⁷⁷

⁶⁹ White, *First Century*, p.42. Walter Mattock had lent his own arms, page 36.

⁷⁰ White, *First Century*, p.21.

⁷¹ e.g. White, *First Century*, p.20.

⁷² White, *First Century*, p.32, 41, 46

⁷³ White, *First Century*, p.35.

⁷⁴ White, *First Century*, p.19.

⁷⁵ White, *First Century*, p.5.

⁷⁶ White, *First Century*, p.12. Sack was a dry white wine imported from Spain.

⁷⁷ Matthews (ed.), *Walker Revised*, p.xxiv.

AFTERLIFE

Matthews estimates that around 2,425 benefices were sequestered by Parliament between 1643 and 1660.⁷⁸ Several of those named in the *First Century* endured prison sentences,⁷⁹ and many died during the interregnum. Richard Baxter thought that half of the clergy who were left after all the sequestrations were not especially worthy either, ‘for their sleepy preaching did but little good.’⁸⁰ Some of those indicted by White actually found ministerial positions elsewhere after being sequestered in 1643,⁸¹ and with the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, quite a few of the scandalous and malignant ministers were actually restored to their livings.⁸² Thomas Baily (or Bayly) went on to be Dean of Down, Archdeacon of Dromore, then Bishop of Killala in County Mayo in Ireland (1664-1670).⁸³

Charles II returned to England surrounded by Laudians who were thirsting for revenge, and they were soon able to eject a great many Puritans in return for all they had suffered during the 1640s and 1650s. Matthews, the soundest authority on the numbers, determined that at least 936 ministers were deprived of their livings by the Act of Uniformity in 1662. With a further 129 deprived at an uncertain date (between 1660-1663) and with the ejections of 1660 as a result of the restoration of many sequestered ministers, a total of 1760 ministers (about 20% of the whole) were thrust out of the Church of England, silenced from preaching or teaching by law and thus deprived of livelihood.⁸⁴

White’s book had an apparent influence on Thomas Edwards’s 1645 classic *Gangraena*, which catalogued the many heresies being propagated at that time.⁸⁵ It was also cited by William Prynne in his case against Archbishop Laud at his trial.⁸⁶ But it cast a longer literary shadow into the eighteenth century. In 1702, Edmund Calamy (1671-1732) published a book of biographical snippets about the Puritans ejected in 1660-1662.⁸⁷

⁷⁸ Matthews (ed.), *Walker Revised*, p.xv.

⁷⁹ E.g. Samuel Withers, Joseph Soane, William Fairefax, Nicholas Andrewes, Ephraim Udall, John Manby, Francis Wright, Daniel Horsmonden, Joseph Daves/Draper, Robert Shepherd (for assault), and James Buck (who was imprisoned in Ipswich but cured of his gout by the diet of bread and water, according to Matthews (ed.), *Walker Revised*, p.330).

⁸⁰ Richard Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (London, 1696), 1.95.

⁸¹ E.g. John Aymes, John Man, Thomas Darnell, Joseph Daves or Draper, Thomas Vaughan (later sequestered again), Henry Hannington, Samuel Sowthen, Samuel Scrivener, and Samuel Alsop (the brother of the man that John Owen replaced in Fordham), though he was sequestered again later.

⁸² Those restored include John Aymes, Charles Forbench, Emmanuel Uty, Edward Cherry, Joseph Soane, Edward Brewster, Joseph Plumm, William Gaunt, Henry Hancocks, Nicholas Wright, John Manby, Thomas King, Edward Alston, Christopher Webb, John Reynolds, William Evans, John Clarke, Richard Nicholson, Francis Wright, Cuthbertson Dale, John Wells, Robert Senior, Richard Duxon, James Buck, John Amnes, and Robert Shepherd.

⁸³ According to Matthews (ed.), *Walker Revised*, p.211. The sees of Killala and Achonry were united in 1622, so he was Bishop of Achonry in Sligo as well.

⁸⁴ See Lee Gatiss, *The Tragedy of 1662: The Ejection and Persecution of the Puritans* (London: Latimer Trust, 2007). A. G. Matthews (ed.), *Calamy Revised: Being a Revision of Edmund Calamy’s Account of the Ministers and Others Ejected and Silenced, 1660-2* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), p.xiii.

⁸⁵ See Rigney, ‘Anticlerical slander’. See Thomas Edwards, *Gangraena* (London, 1646) and Ann Hughes, *Gangraena and the Struggle for the English Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁸⁶ William Prynne, *Canterburies Doom* (1646), p.360.

⁸⁷ Edmund Calamy, *An Abridgment of Mr. Baxter’s History of His Life and Times. With an ACCOUNT of many others of those Worthy Ministers who were Ejected after the Restauration of King CHARLES the Second* (London, 1702). Calamy (page 21) was not a fan of White’s book, as he felt the abominable particularities of it should have been concealed.

White's book was also reissued under a different name in 1712, in an attempt to undermine 'high church' morale.⁸⁸ In response (or perhaps, retaliation), John Walker (1674-1747) published his defensive book on the sufferings of the clergy during the 'Grand Rebellion' in 1714.⁸⁹ Walker has entries for each of the men named and shamed in White's *First Century*, and attempts to defend many of them. He valiantly attempts to defend John Wilson (White's #1, accused of buggery) by saying that 'his not being *Hanged*, instead of *Sequestered*, is one *Inducement* to make me think, that the *Two worst Accusations* mentioned in the Articles against him, were altogether *Forgeries*.'⁹⁰ However, even he has to confess that 'I am *in general* Informed from this County, that he was a Man of a *very scandalous Life*.'⁹¹

Of Ambrose Westrop (White's #100), Walker says that he was

a Man of a Warm, not to say Unsettled, Brain; in plain words, a Talkative, Maggoty Person; who, as he made the Subject of Marriage his *Chief Topick*; so he would make himself more Merry with *That* (whatever he might do with *Other* matters) and talk of it with more *Levity*, than did possibly become his Function.⁹²

This is stretching his powers as a sort of historical defence attorney to the limit, but I am not sure how many juries would be convinced by his attempt. He also has to confess that John Peckham was indeed also 'a very Scandalous Fellow', that Francis Wright was truly a man of bad repute, and Robert Senior was, as White alleged, of no good character.⁹³ The main character reference Walker can conjure up to defend Robert Cotesford from allegations of 'attempting the chastity of his maidservant' is from an 83-year-old man who remembered Cotseford more positively and had not heard of any such behaviour (though he was 17 at the time).⁹⁴

There was a fear that Calamy, Walker, and others might continue an endless to-and-fro of vitriolic exchanges for a while. But as Fullerton concludes, 'he fear that nakedly defamatory language might lead the kingdom into a death spiral of mutual recrimination, and from there into internecine bloodshed, appears to have profoundly disincentivized partisan muckraking.'⁹⁵ They seemed to

⁸⁸ *A New Year's Gift for the High-Church Clergy* (London, 1712), which replaced White's preface with its own, and deliberately preempted (and mocked) the publication of Walker's book which had been publicly proposed. It stripped White's accounts of some political and theological details. Fullerton, 'Licensing Libel', p.350 accuses it of merely capitalising on 'a contemporary appetite for smut'.

⁸⁹ John Walker, *An Attempt towards recovering an Account of the Numbers and Sufferings of the Clergy of the Church of England, Heads of Colleges, Fellows, Scholars, &c. who were Sequester'd. Harass'd, &c. In the late Times of the Grand Rebellion* (London, 1714). Robert Chestlin, *Persecutio Undecima. The Churches Eleventh Persecution* (1648) had earlier also attacked the clerical purge of 1643.

⁹⁰ Walker, *An Attempt*, Part 2, p.406. This seems to echo back the preface to *A New Year's Gift*, which said that on strict enquiry it would be found that some of White's scandalous ministers 'merited a Gibbet, or an House of Correction, with greater Equity than a bare Exclusion from their Livings.'

⁹¹ Fullerton, 'Licensing libel', p.341, says that 'Wilson's alleged crimes were loosely rooted in reality. Family papers reveal that lurid stories about his sodomitical activities were first disseminated locally almost a decade before the *Century*'s appearance.' Though it seems his enemies had 'bribed, begged and threatened' parishioners to spread lies about his 'debauched appetites'. But Wilson was written out of his family's history, according to McCall, *Baal's Priests*, p.71, 77.

⁹² Walker, *An Attempt*, Part 2, p.396. Maggoty means full of whims and foolish fancies, freakish (*OED*).

⁹³ See Matthews (ed), *Walker Revised*, p.360, 170, 162.

⁹⁴ See McCall, *Baal's Priests*, p.77.

⁹⁵ Fullerton, 'Licensing libel', p.352.

conclude, as King Charles I had concluded when he was asked about answering the *First Century* in kind, that ‘*recrimination is no purgation*’.⁹⁶

LESSONS FOR TODAY

The value of studying a work such as White’s *First Century* lies not merely in reconstructing the controversies of the 1640s. It also lies in the perspective that such history can give to the present. Christians are often tempted to assume that the difficulties facing the contemporary church are unprecedented: polarisation, public accusation, ministerial misconduct, factional suspicion, and institutional mistrust. Yet the seventeenth century reminds us that the church has navigated such problems before, often under far greater pressure and with far fewer safeguards than exist today.

That does not make the scandals of the present age less serious. White’s pamphlet itself reminds us that ministers genuinely do fall into disgrace. Some of the clergy described in its pages appear to have been morally compromised men whose conduct brought shame upon their office. The New Testament nowhere encourages naïveté about the ministry. The Pastoral Epistles repeatedly warn about false teachers, greed, sexual immorality, and the misuse of authority.⁹⁷ The strictures of Ezekiel 34 against the shepherds of Israel who preyed upon their sheep remind us of the victims of such abuse. Churches that refuse to confront genuine corruption and safeguard their congregations from predatory or doctrinal deviance do not display spiritual maturity but negligence.

At the same time, the *First Century* also exposes another danger: the temptation to collapse all kinds of disagreement into a single category of corruption. Throughout the pamphlet, moral vice, ceremonial practice, political allegiance, and theological dispute are repeatedly drawn together. The result is a picture in which ‘the other side’ appears comprehensively rotten. Such habits of thought are not confined to the seventeenth century. Theological parties today remain just as capable of treating opponents not merely as mistaken, but as fundamentally compromised, and of tarring whole theological outlooks as a result of the failings of some of their advocates.

One of the more sobering lessons of church history is that every movement eventually discovers scoundrels and rogues within its own ranks. The Puritans, for all their concern for preaching and holiness, were not immune from factionalism, harshness, ambition, or scandal. A Puritan minister in Northamptonshire was executed for adultery and infanticide in 1637, for example,⁹⁸ and even John White himself was accused of marital infidelities, and of being motivated to write the *First Century* and prosecute his opponents because of the fall of the Feoffees scheme in which he was involved.⁹⁹ And it is no doubt true that political considerations and local point-scoring often played a significant

⁹⁶ Thomas Fuller, *The Church-History of Britain* (London, 1656), 9.208. Charles also declined to consent to a reply in kind on the Parliamentary leaders because the main beneficiaries of mutual recrimination here would be the real enemies of Protestantism, the Roman Catholics.

⁹⁷ See Lee Gatiss, *Fight Valiantly: Contending for the Faith against False Teaching in the Church* (London: Church Society, 2022) and Lee Gatiss, *Fulfil Your Ministry: 2 Timothy and Titus and the Challenges of Serving the Gospel* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2024) for more on this aspect of the Pastorals.

⁹⁸ See McCall, *Baal’s Priests*, p.83.

⁹⁹ Anthony a Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses: an exact history of all the writers and bishops who have had their education in the University of Oxford* (New Edition edited by Philip Bliss; London, 1817), 3.145-146 accuses White of being motivated by revenge, and also says, ‘But those of the loyal party say, that tho he had two wives, yet he frequented those of his neighbours in the White Fryers, making his then wife jealous of him. Another of the same party tells us, that he was the most malicious, bold, obscene speaker of any of the chairmen’.

role in sequestrations.¹⁰⁰ All theological groupings have to recruit their members from the same fallen human race, and as Article 9 of the *Thirty-nine Articles* reminds us of original sin, ‘this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated.’ The same remains true today. Conservatives may speak readily about the doctrinal failures of liberals; liberals may speak readily about the moral failures of conservatives. Yet no party in the church possesses sinless perfection. Ecclesiastical conflict has a way of exposing the weaknesses of all involved.

That recognition should produce neither cynicism nor passivity. The answer to factionalism is not indifference to truth, and the answer to false accusation is not the refusal to discipline real sin. Rather, church history encourages humility, patience, and careful judgment. Allegations must be taken seriously, especially against those entrusted with spiritual authority. Yet accusations must also be tested, weighed, and distinguished. Robert Chestlin, who hyperbolically compared the sequestrations to the persecutions of the church in the centuries before Constantine, complained in 1648 concerning those accused by White that ‘not any one person in that Century hath had any legall tryall at all.’¹⁰¹ Due process is biblical (see 1 Timothy 5:19-21) and better than trial by media. Not every error is equally serious. Not every disagreement is evidence of corruption. Not every scandal should become a weapon in a wider ecclesiastical struggle.

The enduring wisdom of the Pastoral Epistles lies partly in their refusal to separate moral seriousness from procedural fairness. Paul insists both that elders must be above reproach and that accusations against them must not be entertained lightly. The church is called to maintain holiness without descending into suspicion, and to exercise discipline without surrendering to factional rage. White’s pamphlet and its aftermath remain a vivid reminder of how difficult that balance can be to maintain once controversy intensifies. For that reason alone, it deserves to be read with care. One of White’s malicious ministers ‘had three wicked and scandalous Libells against the Parliament found in his Study, and did sing one of them in an Ale-house.’¹⁰² But White’s book has also been labelled a libel, and is said to be responsible for making public defamation a routine and mundane part of public discourse.¹⁰³ As Samuel Fullerton warns us,

This, then, might be considered the final, paradoxical legacy of White’s infamous pamphlet: to educate later polemicists about precisely the wrong way to manage the intractable controversies that continued to rage around Britain’s ‘reformation without end’.¹⁰⁴

Although the name of the book (and an enigmatic marginal note) seemed to promise a sequel, White never published a *Second Century*. Some say he was too ashamed to make another, or that his friends dissuaded him from doing so because it would implicate the whole body of the clergy and ruin the reputation of the whole profession.¹⁰⁵ But perhaps he did not need to, because local committees went about the work with zeal after 1643, and the sequestrations were devastatingly effective. A. G. Matthews’s says of John Walker that ‘His prejudices were violent and so also was the language he used to express them. Both were in keeping with days when the politics of hate were at their liveliest.’¹⁰⁶ But what, one wonders, would John White have done with a blog, a social media account, or a modern

¹⁰⁰ Fiona McCall, ‘Scandalous and Malignant? Settling Scores Against the Leicestershire Clergy After the First Civil War’ in *Midland History* 40 (2015), p.220-242.

¹⁰¹ Chestlin, *Persecutio Undecima*, p.27.

¹⁰² White, *First Century*, p.26.

¹⁰³ Fullerton, ‘Licensing libel’, p.331–352.

¹⁰⁴ Fullerton, ‘Licensing libel’, p.352.

¹⁰⁵ See Wood, *Athenae Oxoniensis*, 3.145.

¹⁰⁶ Matthews (ed.), *Walker Revised*, p.xi.

tabloid media connection in an age which still occasionally revels in salacious stories of clerical misdemeanours?¹⁰⁷ What do *we* do in these polarised days of hate-speech and ecclesiastical warfare? Whether we share White's prejudices or Walker's, that is a question we need to consider very carefully.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. social media, and Matthew Parris, *The Great Unfrosted: Two Thousand Years of Church Scandal* (London: Robson Books, 1998).

BOOK REVIEWS

Meet the Puritans. A Guide to their Lives and Books. Revised and Expanded Edition, Joel R. Beeke, Randall J. Pederson and Fraser E. Jones, Reformation Heritage Books, 2025, hbk., 1185 pages, \$70.00.

Many Christian readers are aware of the significance of the ministries and writings of the seventeenth century English Puritans, along with like-minded men in Scotland and in Europe, and would like to know more. How and where to start? The amount of material produced by Puritan writers is overwhelming and the style of some is dense and difficult. Help is needed for those new to the Puritans, and even for those with some acquaintance with them. Such help is provided in abundance by this radically expanded edition of a book first published in 2006 by three expert lovers of the Puritan writers, Joel Beeke, Randall Pederson and Fraser Jones. *Meet the Puritans* offers a treasure house of helpful background material that will encourage and enrich study of the Puritans, the Covenanters and the Dutch writers of the Further Reformation (*Nadere Reformatie*).

The opening chapter, ‘How Should I Use This Book?’ is crucial and lays the foundation for all that follows. It is helpful to see that the book has in view three main audiences (p.xxxv), namely the pew (laypeople), the pulpit (pastors) and the podium (scholars). The authors address a word to each audience regarding the use that may be made of the material on offer subsequently. Noting that the book is made up of three components, the authors deal in turn with the purpose of each.

The first component of the book is **introductory material**. This section begins with an essay by Beeke on ‘Where and How to Begin Reading the Puritans’ which offers practical suggestions for those new to the writings of these English, Scottish and Dutch authors. Each author then provides a brief selection of favourite Puritan authors. The book then considers the English Puritans, with useful essays on the nature and history of Puritanism. A sketch of the world of the English Puritans, and finally a chronological listing of the authors considered. All of this is essential background to the entries on each author to be considered. The two sections on the Scottish Presbyterians and on the Dutch Further Reformation Divines also begin with (brief) introductory historical notes and also lists of the authors in chronological order. Taken together these offer a solid framework for understanding the work of these writers, setting them in their proper historical context, rather than treating them as isolated providers of spiritual nourishment, divorced from their time and place in church history.

The second component is **biographical material**. As the authors state, ‘The biographical material is at the heart of the book’ (p.xxiv). For the English Puritans, the period covered runs from William Perkins (1558-1602) to Jonathan Edwards ((1703-1758). Edwards is generally considered the last of the Puritans, although he is an eighteenth-century figure, and would have thought of himself as English rather than American. The entries range from Thomas Adams to Samuel Willard, with some very famous names, such as John Bunyan, John Owen and Thomas Watson, and many about whom most readers will know nothing. Inevitably some entries are much longer than others, reflecting the abundance of information on some of the leading Puritans, and the paucity of information on others. On many of these figures there is valuable work still to be done. The Scottish Presbyterians, fifteen in number, include Thomas Boston, Robert Bruce, George Gillespie and Samuel Rutherford, along with other significant writers. The Dutch Further reformation Divines include eighteen writers, such as Wilhelmus à Brakel and Herman Witsius, along with others who will be largely (and undeservedly) unknown to British and American readers. Where possible, these biographies give some sense of the men behind the writings and enrich our understanding of their contribution to church life and to theology.

The third component is **bibliographical material**. The abundance of modern reprints of Puritan works is one of the motivations for the publication of this expanded edition of *Meet the Puritans*. Fuelled by the publishing work of the Banner of Truth Trust begun in 1957, interest in the Puritans, both from a historical perspective and also from a theological and devotional perspective, has grown rapidly, and numerous publishers either include Puritan works in their catalogues or put their main focus on them. Reformation Heritage Books, the publisher of *Meet the Puritans*, has become a major force in this movement. Each entry for a Puritan author is accompanied by a list of modern reprints of his works (or *her* works, in the case of the poet Anne Bradstreet, the sole woman listed) together with a brief summary of the contents of each. These are tremendously helpful in deciding which works to read and how best to invest one's (inevitably limited) resources. The supply of titles is almost endless, and no one life long enough to absorb even a small proportion of what is available.

The usefulness of *Meet the Puritans* is enhanced by a glossary of obscure, technical or historically significant terms, along with a 'Select Puritan Bibliography' and a 'Select Bibliography of Secondary Sources', and an index of authors and titles.

This volume provides just about everything needed for a fruitful study of the writings of these great figures of the seventeenth century. The danger to be avoided is substituting reading *about* the Puritans for actually reading them. The goal of these English, Scottish and Dutch writers was the edification of the people of God, for the glory of God, and the goal of Beeke, Pederson and Jones is exactly the same. The Puritans are to be read for the nourishment of our souls. Nothing less will do. Filling bookshelves with splendid sets of Puritan writings that are rarely, if ever, opened, is a contradiction of all that the Puritans stood for. We must 'take up and read'.

David McKay

Faith: A Theology of James, Robert L. Plummer, Crossway, 2026. pbk, 108 pages, \$19.99.

Typically, a New Testament Theology spends just a few pages on the dominant theological themes of James - hardly a thorough treatment of the main ideas of the book. At the other extreme there are lengthy monographs and journal articles treating one particular idea, usually in isolation. The New Testament Theology series by Crossway aims to provide a 'readable book-length treatment of the distinctive teaching of each New Testament book or collection of books... from the perspective of biblical theology... [focusing mainly] on presenting the teaching of particular New Testament books about God and his relations to the world on their own terms...' (p.ix). Robert Plummer's contribution to the series on the Letter of James fulfils this goal and follows this method admirably. As Professor of Biblical Studies at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and an expert in New Testament Greek, Plummer is an able guide to James.

He sees the author of the letter as James the half-brother of Jesus, writing before 62 AD to Jewish believers scattered outside Judea, possibly because of the persecution referred to in Acts 8.1. He is not dogmatic about the structure of the letter, advising the reader to recognize clear discourse units that focus on particular theological or ethical motifs. He compares the letter to a pastoral blog - a series of reflections on practical Christian living. In six short chapters he goes on to deal with what he regards as the main theological themes in the letter, prioritizing the first two as more dominant and pervasive (Christology and the relationship between faith and works) and taking the other four in no particular order (trials and temptations, poverty and riches, speech and anger and prayer). In chapter two he states, rather than argues, that perhaps the dominant theme of James is the necessity of true believers

to have a living faith - one that evidences itself with observable acts of obedience and love. This is the picture of a genuine, mature, wholly formed follower of Jesus' (p.20.) He follows the same approach to each subject: expounding and summarizing James's teaching on the various themes before showing how James's teaching fits with the teaching of the rest of Scripture.

Plummer has a good grasp of the secondary literature, though he interacts with it sparingly. Where necessary to support his argument, he uses his exegetical skills to expound the meaning of particular verses and phrases without getting bogged down. This is emphatically not a commentary (though Plummer would be well qualified to write one), but should be essential preliminary reading, to get a clear sense of the wood before focusing on individual trees. It will serve as an excellent complement to commentaries, monographs and journal articles. Plummer handles the text well and writes in an engaging way. As one would hope in dealing with a book like James, there is plenty of practical application to the life of the individual and the church.

One of the frustrations of reading (and no doubt writing) a book like this is the brevity imposed by the series. As noted, the expressed goal of the series is to 'provide a readable book-length treatment of the distinctive teaching of each New Testament book' (p.ix), but at 87 pages of the main text this is only just book-length. Its conciseness is no doubt its intended virtue, and a book of this length can provide a reasonable overview for a short letter like James. Yet even so it sometimes feels like too much of a summary. This is especially noticeable in the closing section of each chapter where the author shows how the theological theme under discussion harmonizes with the rest of Scripture. Just over two pages are given to the rest of the Bible's teaching on prayer in chapter six - almost too cursory to be of any real use. Perhaps those pages could have been used to go into a little more detail on James's teaching on prayer - especially since Plummer's treatment of the prayer for healing in James 5.13-18 has no discussion on the meaning of anointing with oil. It seems to this reviewer that this series may be trying to do too much in too little space, and that Crossway might easily have doubled the length of the book while still providing a 'readable book-length treatment of the distinctive teaching' of James.

This book will be a very useful introduction to the theological ideas of James for pastors and any thoughtful Christian who wants to understand the Letter of James more clearly.

Warren Peel

Old Testament Introduction, Back to Basics, Michael P.V. Barrett, Reformation Heritage Books, 2025, hbk., 715 pages, \$65.00

This is the most recent Old Testament introduction to appear and is an important book. Michael Barrett has been teaching Old Testament for fifty years in the US, latterly at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids. His book will be compared with earlier examples, like those by E.J. Young (1949, 1958); Roland K. Harrison (1969); Gleason Archer (1964, 1974, 1994, 2007); and Ray Dillard and Tremper Longman III (1995). Barrett adds the words 'Back to Basics', revealing he intends a less complicated but also a more radical work. There is a comforting solidity, yet also an immediate newness here. Barrett is more contemporary than Young; more readable than either Harrison or Archer; and more reliable than Dillard and Longman.

Barrett provides a full introduction, which might better serve as the first chapter. From the off he tells us he is an old-school conservative. In Jesus's words, 'The old is better' (Luke 5:39). In biblical studies each writer is biased either for or against God. Barrett states his aim as 'to generate interest in, love for, and confidence in the Old Testament' (p.xv). As for his governing presupposition, 'it will be

the unwavering conviction...that the Bible is the word of God' (p.xvi). He will not ignore problems in the text, but will rather seek to resolve them, if he can. He highlights the vital place of faith in coming to the Old Testament; underlines, from Reformed Confessions, the role of the Holy Spirit in understanding the Scriptures; and alerts us to the existence of Bible scholars who work by reason, not faith. This means he will respond to critical theories as necessary.

The work divides into two sections, General and Special Introduction. The first occupies some 70 pages and is worth careful attention. He takes standard Reformed positions here, in his own words. He says the Bible is both the measuring rod (the 'canon') for faith and practice, and also contains a canon of books. Since the books of the Old Testament were breathed out by God – inspired – they are immediately canonical upon being composed. No council of men confers their biblical status. God's inspiration separates biblical books from the rest. As Barrett says, 'Doctrinal and factual errors in the Apocryphal books prove that they were not inspired' (p.5, fn.2). Faith is the essential factor in knowing we possess God's word, but Barrett does provide ample reason and evidence too. He analyses the disciplines of source, form and redaction criticism, showing how these are shot through with unbelieving presuppositions. He is not afraid to assert that what these theories require often contradicts what the Bible says about itself. A long chapter examines the words of the Bible and declares that, although there are mistakes of different kinds (albeit trivial) in every manuscript we have, the original autographs were without error. It is the work of text criticism to come as close as possible to that original pristine text, to give confidence to those who preach. Barrett himself has done doctoral work on the text of the Greek Old Testament (*LXX*). The fact that there are so many witnesses to the Old Testament, even in different ancient languages, and so much accuracy, shows 'that God has preserved His words' (p.54). Barrett is predisposed to short dates and points out flaws in some dating methods. His proper bias is to state that the only perfectly accurate history is the Bible. In his final chapter he takes up the value and limitations of archaeology. It can illuminate and confirm the background, history, and language of the Bible, but it cannot disprove the Bible's doctrine. It is refreshing to read such clear convictions on the supremacy and uniqueness of biblical authority.

Barrett chooses his own pattern throughout the longer Special Introduction section. He kindly provides an overview of the four main divisions of the Old Testament for English readers. In short order he deals with core facts on the name, authorship, date, theme, and purpose of each individual book. His dates are conservative and defensible. He outlines each book and deals with its setting in the world and in the canon. The final and most rewarding sections treat the book's contribution to redemptive revelation and discuss problems of interpretation. Let us consider Genesis and Exodus as examples.

Genesis is about 'God's sovereignty over all creation and His faithfulness to His covenant promises' (p.88). Genesis is objective history from the very first verse. It's not shaped poetically like myth or legend. Other creation and flood accounts vaguely reflect some of the truths of Genesis. Contra even some evangelical commentators, Barrett asserts there was no chaos in the original creation – that category has leaked in from extra-biblical creation myths. He settles for an early date for the exodus and works back from there to situate the patriarchs, who themselves have a connection with Egypt. Moses, as the author of Genesis, is writing hundreds of years after the events he describes. If he were to have written Leviticus first, readers could have been tempted to seek salvation by obeying sacrificial ritual. Barrett states:

This is why the contribution of Genesis to redemptive history is so important. Because the first gospel word in Genesis 3:15 identified the Curse Reverser as the Seed of the woman, it had to govern every subsequent revelation. It was clear from the beginning that salvation would come through a man and not some kind of animal (p.97).

Through his discussion of Genesis Barrett roots the rest of the Old Testament in solid ground. God is powerful, personal and saving (we could say ‘covenantal’). Man is like the animals, but also distinct. Sin, or misery, as Barrett calls it, proliferates in the book, but God will send a Saviour to come through the Semitic peoples. Death comes as the result of Adam’s sin, which eliminates the long catalogue of death required by evolution. Barrett deals briefly with interpretations of Genesis 1 that allow for an old earth, but rejects them on grammatical and historical grounds, and on the clarity of the obvious meaning, which many seek to escape today. As Noel Weeks asks, ‘If Genesis 1 was not meant to be taken as a literal account, why was it written that way?’ (*The Sufficiency of Scripture*, Banner of Truth, 1988, p.115). Equally, the flood was a worldwide judgment by God, explaining the vast majority of fossils in the world. Barrett is quite happy to interpret the Bible just as it appears.

We see the Dutch influence in Barrett’s summary of Exodus, ‘Exodus is a paradigm of salvation progressing from the misery of bondage to deliverance from bondage to gratitude in liberty’ (the underlined words form the three divisions of the Heidelberg Catechism). ‘The exodus narrative [which provides the language for what Jesus is about to accomplish, Lk.9:31] is more than history; it is the message of the everlasting gospel’ (p.121). The Passover, instituted in Exodus, is most often mentioned in the New Testament Passion narratives. Barrett shows how each piece of tabernacle furniture points unerringly to Jesus. ‘All that the ancient box [the ark of the covenant] pictured [majesty, holiness, grace, righteousness, and hope], Jesus Christ is’ (p.129). He shows in practical terms how the mother promise in Genesis 3:15 plays subtly into God’s power over literal serpents in the presence of Pharaoh and his magicians. This indicates that Pharaoh, whose crown figured an asp, has no power over Yahweh. The latter’s people will go free. Barrett also treats all the major questions most will ask of Exodus – the identification of the Pharaoh; the meaning of the plagues; the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart; and the route of the exodus. God gave Pharaoh numerous chances to repent, but when he remained obdurate God judicially abandoned him to his own desires (cf. Rom.1:26).

Throughout the work Barrett continues to trace this mother promise of salvation, which holds Genesis, and the whole Old Testament, together. The ‘seed’ is relational, Messianic language, enfolding the lives of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, and stretching to David in 2 Samuel 7 as the covenant is enriched. Barrett tells us that the fulfilling of predictive prophecy is at the very core of that first promise, and brings glory to God. The Assyrians of Nahum’s day and the Babylonians in Habakkuk’s, as well as the Sanballats and Tobiahs of Ezra and Nehemiah, picture the hostility which confronts God’s deliverer and his people back in Genesis 3:15. This is not quite biblical theology, but a fertile and exciting unfolding of God working his purposes and keeping his promises in history.

The rest of the book is equally expected but yet engaging. An excursus on the divine name tells us the slaves of Egypt will know God as a covenant-keeping Saviour more fully than any earlier generation. Barrett does not shrink away from difficult issues. He justifies God’s command to remove the Canaanites on the grounds of his infinite justice, in order to protect the Israelites, and to teach them about spiritual death (pp.230-232). He argues for the less extreme view of Jephthah’s vow, seeing it fulfilled in his daughter’s dedication to perpetual virginity (pp.257-9). He seeks to show the unity of the Song of Solomon and favours Solomon as the writer, preferring what he calls a typological reading of the text, supported, he believes, from Christ and the church (Eph.5; Rev.19) (p.425). On the authorship of Isaiah, where Dillard and Longman appear sheepish (Apollos, 1995, p.275), he believes that one Isaiah has written the whole. He sees the point of separation as either the affirmation, or denial, of ‘the supernatural prophecy of future events’ (p.498). If Isaiah cannot see Cyrus some 100-150 years ahead in chapters 44-45, what are we ever to make of chapter 52:13-53:12, which the Holy Spirit in the New Testament authors uniformly attributes to Jesus? Regarding the Psalms, a fertile subject for Reformed Presbyterians, Barrett observes that Moses was the first psalmist and that the last psalmists (the writers of Pss.137, 147) handle post-exilic themes, so that ‘psalm composition was

concurrent with the entire period of Old Testament revelation' (p.364). That is entirely appropriate for a songbook that sums up the whole of biblical experience! He rehearses the comparison between the five books of the Psalter and the Pentateuch (pp.365-366) – a judicious use of Palmer Robertson's *The Flow of the Psalms* (P&R, 2015) could have developed this point felicitously. His excursus on Messianic psalms (pp.379-382) fills in some of the gaps, but a consulting of David Murray's *Jesus on Every Page* (Thomas Nelson, 2013) does offer a fuller presence of Jesus in the Psalms.

There is something fresh here on every page. We may not agree with every judgment call, but we honour Barrett's unreserved desire to let God speak always and everywhere through His Word. He could helpfully have added an author index. He humbly recognises his limits in certain areas, depending on the expertise of others. He wants us to read the Old Testament as a book that shows us Jesus. Even though he has to bring us through some critical sloughs of despond, he is always directing us to the celestial city, where glory dwells. Highly recommended!

Stephen Neilly

Behold My Servant: Sermons on Isaiah 52:13-53:12, John Calvin, Translated from the French by Robert White, The Banner of Truth Trust, 2025, hbk, 135 pages, £15.00.

The seven sermons printed in this book were preached in St. Peter's (Geneva) by John Calvin, the Genevan Reformer, during the summer of 1558. In fact, existing records enable us to ascertain accurately the dates when these sermons were first delivered. The first sermon was preached on Saturday 18th June, the remaining six between Monday 27th June and Saturday 2nd July 1558, exactly 468 years ago.

Robert White has demonstrated his skill as a linguist in translating 1558 French into 21st Century English. This means that the sermons are very readable and, with Calvin's exegetical skill and logical train of thought, easy to understand.

While reading these sermons I imagined myself sitting in St. Peter's, 468 years ago, as part of the congregation listening to these excellent sermons preached by the magisterial reformer, John Calvin - most of them being preached on weekdays. I could also imagine sitting next to me was John Knox, the Scot who had fled from England during the Marian persecution (1553-1558). The following Spring Knox would return to Scotland and along with others proclaim the gospel, the great truths rediscovered at the Reformation. This of course led, under God, to the Scottish Reformation in 1560. In this book review I will make a comment on each sermon since each exposition is a unit.

Sermon 1 The Servant of the Lord (Isaiah 52:13-15)

Calvin in this sermon concentrates on the title ascribed to the Messiah, 'Servant of the Lord'. In being called God's Servant Jesus Christ did not shrink from becoming our servant, which, says Calvin, 'is an even greater thing'. In the course of this sermon the listeners (or readers) are taken to Philippians 2:6-8 where Paul articulates what Christ became for our sake: 'who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant.' By way of challenge, Calvin in applying the words 'his appearance was so marred beyond human semblance', says, 'We ought to thrill with awe when we see that God's Son, he who was the express image of God his Father (Heb.1:3), did not shrink from appearing as one marred, all in order to restore God's image in us.'

Sermon 2 A Rock of Offence (Isaiah 53:1-4)

The main thrust of this sermon is the rejection the Messiah would experience when he took up residency among humanity. Jesus Christ would be ‘despised and rejected by men’. Calvin makes the point, ‘If this had not been foretold, we would most probably have been shaken in our faith’. We still witness these words being perfectly fulfilled in the hostility shown to Christ and his gospel.

Sermon 3 Stricken for our Iniquities (Isaiah 53:4-6)

We are confronted in this sermon with the great biblical doctrine of ‘substitutionary atonement’. Christ, in taking the place of the elect, Calvin stated, ‘Our Lord was therefore burdened with all our offences and iniquities – not that he himself was guilty, but God chose to impute everything to him, to hold him accountable and to require him to pay the price.’ We revel in the fact that for all who believe there is full and free forgiveness. Calvin, informed his congregation that – ‘forgiveness was, not however free, so far as Jesus Christ was concerned: it cost him most dear.’

Sermon 4 Lamb to the Slaughter (Isaiah 53:7-8)

In this sermon Calvin places great emphasis on the fact that Christ willingly and lovingly offered up himself as a sacrifice. In commenting on the phrase ‘he opened not his mouth’ (v 7) Calvin points out that our Saviour ‘made no protest; instead knowing that he had been appointed for this very thing... was obedient even unto death.’ In making application to his hearers Calvin makes the challenge, ‘When God, I say, is pleased to chasten us, and when we feel his hand so rough upon us that we fear we will be pressed too hard, we must nevertheless be silent and acknowledge that God is just and fair. Let no complaint be heard from our lips: rather let us glorify God by our very silence, for we are sinners who stand condemned for our misdeeds, and who have nothing to say by way of reply.’

Sermon 5 Seed for many Generations (Isaiah 53:9-10)

Calvin, in preaching from these verses makes a careful exposition of all they contain. I draw your attention to his comment on the phrase ‘there was no deceit in his mouth’. The Reformer takes us to James 3:2, where we read that it is only the perfect man from whom no vile word ever escaped his lips. Jesus Christ was that perfect man in whom no deceit was found, proving as Calvin declares – ‘that he was the mirror of holiness in all that he said and did.’

With reference to the Suffering Servant seeing his offspring (v 10), Calvin links this with our adoption into the family of God, becoming ‘children of God’ through the atoning work of Christ.

Sermon 6 The Travail of his Soul (Isaiah 53:11)

In this sermon Calvin draws attention to the fact that Christ, not only suffered in his body, but also in his soul. He makes us see ‘how careful and how zealous our Lord Jesus Christ was for our salvation, since he did not spare himself, and since he not only answered in his body to make atonement for our sins but underwent the terrors of one destined to feel God’s judgement.’ In other words, Christ suffered in both body and soul.

Calvin has a very positive way of looking at the death of the believer. To the members of his pastoral charge in St. Peter’s he argued that, ‘while death is common to us all, it is not, strictly speaking, deadly for those who trust in Jesus Christ: they merely pass out of this world in order to live for God. In dying, therefore, we have reason to be comforted, knowing that God will be favourable to us and will turn evil into good, causing death, which before was a mortal wound, to serve as medicine.’ What a comforting analogy!

Sermon 7 **Our Advocate and Intercessor (Isaiah 53:12)**

Calvin, in preaching from this verse on Saturday 2nd July 1558, made particular reference to Jesus Christ's mediatorial work of intercession - 'And makes intercession for the transgressors.' In this sermon Calvin takes issue with Roman Catholicism which regards Mary, the mother of our Lord, as their advocate. He imagines how horrified Mary would be at being regarded as such. Calvin does not mince his words, the members of his congregation hearing him say, 'The Virgin Mary herself must cry vengeance against them, for they have made a hateful idol of her. They have stolen from Jesus Christ the dignity of his priesthood, which God ratified by a solemn oath, and they have set out to falsify all of holy Scripture.'

These seven sermons by John Calvin, preached from this much loved and familiar passage of Scripture, are sure to warm the heart and edify the mind of every reader. What a privilege to sit at the feet of Calvin and learn from this devoted servant of Christ. I cannot recommend this short series of sermons too highly, written in a style accessible to all. We owe a great debt to Calvin's stenographer Denis Raguenier, and to Robert White who took Raguenier's 1558 French transcripts and rendered them into such attractive English.

Robert L. W. McCollum

The Pentateuch: Life in the Presence of God, J. Daniel Hays, B&H Academic, 2024, pbk., 256 pages, \$29.99.

J. Daniel Hays's *The Pentateuch: Life in the Presence of God* is the first of a six-volume series of textbooks edited by Gary Edward Schnittjer and Mark L. Strauss. The series covers the Pentateuch, the Old Testament narrative books, the Old Testament prophetic writing, Old Testament wisdom literature and poetry, the four Gospels, and Acts and the letters of Paul. The series is designed for use in Bible colleges, and each volume is deliberately kept relatively short - the main body of Hays's volume on the Pentateuch runs to 217 pages - in order to allow room for students to engage in additional targeted reading.

The Pentateuch comprises seven sections: a general introduction to the Five Books of Moses, followed by individual chapters for each of the five books, and an appendix on 'How to Interpret and Apply the Old Testament Law.' The five chapters on the five books of the Pentateuch follow the same plan: an outline of the book; consideration of author, date, and message; an interpretive overview; an exploration of connections between the book and the wider biblical corpus; an exploration of connections between the book and the gospel in particular; an exploration of connections between the book and the Christian life; a set of ten questions to stimulate further study; and recommended reading resources. The book is very nicely presented - it is easy to hold, read, and annotate. The main text is broken up by the occasional 'side-bar' or insert article, dealing with a matter of secondary interest, e.g., 'Moses, the Alphabet, and Writing in Ancient Egypt,' or a word study on 'Good' (*TOV*) and 'Evil/Bad' (*RA'*) in Genesis 1-3 and in Biblical Context.' This breaking up of the text is good for maintaining the attention and interest of students, and is an effective way of adding colour to the presentation of the material.

The book has been written from a conservative and evangelical point of view. The Documentary Hypothesis is discussed briefly, and rejected. Moses is taken to be the principal human author of the Pentateuch, though it is accepted that there is evidence of the work of later editing and additions. Divine authorship is acknowledged throughout. As an introductory guide to the Five Books of Moses, Hays is a safe pair of hands, and I would have no difficulty recommending *The Pentateuch* for use in,

for example, an adult Bible class whose members are keen to grow in their understanding of how to read, interpret, and apply the first five books of the Bible.

However, the book is not without its flaws. It is evident from quite early in the book that Hays does not read Scripture through the filter of covenant theology. Thus, for example, he writes that the failure of Israel ‘to be faithful to God and keep the terms of Deuteronomy...underscored the need for a new covenant, one based on grace’ (p.8). We would beg to differ - the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai and renewed on the plains of Moab was an administration of the covenant of grace. Similarly, in a short insert article on ‘How were People in the Old Testament Saved and Forgiven of their Sins?’ Hays sees the Levitical sacrifices as nothing more than ‘a shadow that pointed to the later reality of Jesus Christ’; and yet the faith of the worshippers was, he writes, not in Christ-to-come but ‘in the revelation that God had given them at Mount Sinai as part of their covenant relationship with him’ (p.132). But if the sacrifices pointed to Christ, then (a) the covenant of which the sacrifices were a core element was a gracious covenant, (b) the faith of the worshippers was directed to Christ-to-come, and (c) Christ communicated his grace, i.e., true forgiveness of sins, to the faithful worshippers.

I was disappointed by the appendix on ‘How to Interpret and Apply the Old Testament Law.’ Hays dismisses the tradition tripartite division of the law into moral, civic, and ceremonial. In its place he proposes a five-step process for identifying and applying universal principles from the Mosaic law. This process makes no reference to the moral law as summarised in the Ten Commandments. The weakness of this appears when Hays applies the process to the regulation about ceremonial uncleanness in Leviticus 5:2, and brings the reader to Jesus’ teaching about food laws in Mark 7:15–23. He ends up saying that ‘Jesus is redefining for the new covenant people what makes people unclean. We are not made unclean by touching dead animals. We become unclean through our unclean thoughts, unclean speech, or sinful actions’ (p.217). Does he mean that until Jesus ‘redefined’ what clean/unclean means, it was not a matter of the heart? Hays’s application of Leviticus 5:2 interpreted through the lens of Mark 7 is ‘Stay away from sinful actions and impure thoughts because the holy God lives within you’ (p.217). But in Mark 7, sinful actions and impure thoughts are the epiphenomena of an evil heart. Surely the application is to be horrified and broken-hearted because of the filth of sin that resides deep within us and that issues forth in unclean thoughts, words, and deeds - ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me’ (Ps. 51:10).

Two other issues are worth noting briefly. First, Hays discusses various positions on Genesis 1, but does not state his own clearly. I infer from this that he does not believe in a recent, six-day creation. Secondly, Hays’s useful word study on the word *bārak*, ‘he blessed,’ (pp.143-4), is marred by an error. He claims that the final use of this verb in the Pentateuch is in Deuteronomy 33:29. There is indeed a cluster of five uses of *bārak* in Deuteronomy 33, but the Hebrew word with which Deuteronomy 33:29 opens is *’ašrēkā*, ‘how happy are you!’

Despite these flaws and disappointments, I believe that, in the hands of a wise instructor, this book could be a good and valuable tool for the introduction of students to the Five Books of Moses.

John Watterson

Preaching: A God Centred Vision by Michael Reeves, 2024, Union Publishing, pbk., 70 pages, £8.99.

This short book, just 70 pages, is written by Michael Reeves, President and Professor of Theology at Union School of Theology, author of numerous books and popular conference speaker. The author makes clear his aim in writing this book is not to provide a homiletic textbook, but rather to create a framework of the nature of preaching within which the sermon is to be composed and delivered. His aim is driven by the conviction that there is currently much fuzziness about what preaching is.

The framework for understanding the nature of preaching offered by Reeves consists of a trilogy of elements. He identifies the elements when he writes, 'I want to cast a vision for preaching that is nourished by the very being of God, the glory of his Word and the power of the gospel'. The book, without clearly identifying the three segments, unpacks these elements of the nature of preaching.

Chapters 1 and 2 consider the being of God. The author argues that God is an eternal Preacher who is so full of light and good news that he must share them. Preaching then shares in the life of God. Further, preaching and the being of God are linked by God choosing to create the church through his Word; 'no Word, no church'.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 explore the second element of the glory of the Word of God. The Scriptures are light which prove themselves, Reeves claims, and just need to be held up by preachers to be seen. Since they are full of Christ throughout, preachers must combine impeccable exegesis with the proclamation of Christ. Using skilful hermeneutics to identify Christ in every text must be subservient to the aim of listeners encountering the living Christ. Preachers are not just to tell congregants that Jesus is good, but are to show them he is good. In preaching, the intellect and heart of congregants are to be addressed, with the intent of them worshipping the Lord.

Chapters 6 and 7 address the third element of the framework, the power of the gospel. Change in people must come from the inside, Reeves argues. Only the gospel will effect such change. Law therefore must be preached in a context of grace. The desire to repent of sin and obey the Law only arises from the gospel. So there can be no sharp distinction made between evangelistic preaching and preaching for discipleship. Without the gospel believers will 'crawl away from God in guilt and dread'.

Having established this framework for preaching, Reeves concludes his book with a chapter on Preaching like Christ. The aspect of Jesus preaching he highlights is love. Love for God and people. Love for the glory of God, he argues, will enable the preacher to find his own voice, combine authority and humility and crush insincerity. Loving his listeners involves a preacher being accessible to them, serving them and showing them compassion.

The book is firmly rooted in the Reformed tradition, drawing on the wisdom of Puritans and Reformers throughout. Applications are constantly made to preachers, some lengthy quotes are included and illustrations to illuminate truths or applications are effectively used.

The length of the book is the main criticism of this well written contribution to homiletics. In numerous places ideas and applications are left undeveloped. Good correctives are identified but the 'how to' is not supplied. For example, encountering Jesus and not just finding Jesus in every passage, and preaching Law in a frame of grace, both need further direction to establish these practices. The idea of reading theological works to sustain love for God is good, but which texts are to be read? Sinclair Ferguson mentions that readers will be surprised by the short length of the book, but will want to read it again. However, an expanded version of this most helpful book would be more useful. Some reviewers rightly claim 'there is much in little' in this book. However, it is too little. The importance

of the themes identified and discussed by Reeves demand fuller treatment. This important complimentary volume to substantial homiletic texts should be more substantial.

The book assumes some knowledge of homiletics. Thus, for theological students it is not to be a substitute book for the homiletic texts of Chapell, Robinson or Vines and Shaddix, but a complimentary book to these texts. For pastors in ministry who have established their own homiletical style, this book is an essential read to confirm good methods, correct flawed ones and promote a proper understanding of the nature of preaching.

David Sutherland

Christians and Slavery, Ian F. Shaw, DayOne Publications, 2025, pbk., 400 pages, £15.00.

There is much controversy nowadays about issues relating to the slave trade, with loud protests being held, and memorials to those associated with the slave trade even been torn down in British and American cities. Therefore, the issue of slavery and biblical teaching about the subject is one which we cannot afford to overlook. Hence this book by Ian Shaw, Professor Emeritus at the University of York, is a timely as well as a substantial analysis of the relationship between evangelical Christians and the transatlantic slave trade.

The book falls into two parts. The first part is primarily historical in its focus, detailing the Christian response to slavery over a period of 250 years. On the one hand, Shaw describes the courageous opposition on the part of many Christians to the evils of the slave trade. It should be noted that this includes interesting detail about the stance taken by the Covenanters in America against this moral evil. On the other hand, the author doesn't shy away from the tragic complicity of many Christians, including some eminent theologians, in regard to this matter. This provides a timely warning against the dangers of uncritically accepting, or remaining sinfully silent about, the moral evils of our day and age.

In the second part of the book, which is primarily theological and ethical in its focus, Shaw attempts to draw lessons from the Christian engagement with the slave trade that can be applied to contemporary issues of injustice. He deals with such questions as what we are to think about reparations and restorative justice, and whether or not we are called to national repentance. Not everyone may agree with his conclusions, but they will help readers to think carefully about such issues of injustice and to be ready to speak out about them with courage and clarity.

A notable feature of the book is the extensive quotation from contemporary sources, very useful for the purpose of research, but which could perhaps have been accompanied by a greater level of critical analysis. When it comes to the issue of slavery, one obvious limitation is the confinement of the analysis to the Anglo-American world. While Shaw's book can be profitably read by the general reader, the extensive annotations and bibliography provide useful guidance for those wishing to explore the issues in a more scholarly manner.

Raymond Blair

BOOK NOTICES

Psalms for All Seasons, O. Palmer Robertson, The Banner of Truth Trust, 2025, pbk., 364 pages, £9.00

There are many good resources available for the study of the psalms, yet these songs are an inexhaustible well of refreshment and instruction for the people of God, and so another book on the psalms is welcome when it comes from such an able expositor as Palmer Robertson. The author has produced a number of scholarly volumes on the Psalms, including helpful studies of the structure of the Psalter, and in this volume he draws on that work to provide expositions of twenty-five psalms under the general theme of ‘Rediscovering the Riches of Their Original Design’, as the subtitle states it. Robertson provides his own translations of the psalms which have been chosen to represent the range of topics covered in the Psalter, such as specifically messianic psalms, praise psalms, psalms involving confession of sin, didactic psalms, psalms of trust, psalms of thanksgiving, and psalms of historical recollection. Robertson aims to include material that represents the breadth of experience of God’s people. Careful study of each psalm is bound up with helpful pastoral application of the text, with the desire, as Robertson puts it, ‘to enrich the life of faith for God’s people’ (p.4). The author wears his scholarship lightly and provides studies that will be accessible to a wide range of readers. He sees the psalms not as purely individual songs, but, rightly, as songs for congregational use in worship. This is reflected in the way in which his translations are set out, the lines being distributed among several speakers, some individual, others corporate, designed for congregational reading. Some divisions are indicated by the original text, whilst others are supplied by the author. Not all congregations will respond positively to this approach to using the psalms in worship, but for some it will, no doubt, be helpful. These are studies which can be highly recommended and should prove valuable for the spiritual health of God’s people.

A Study Commentary on Philippians, Peter Barnes, Evangelical Press, 2025, pbk., 253 pages, £16.99

One of the Scriptures to which the Lord’s people ought to turn when they are downcast or discouraged is Paul’s Letter to the Philippians. As Martyn Lloyd-Jones put it, Philippians is ‘the happiest letter which the Apostle ever wrote’. It has been termed, rightly, the epistle of joy. In this study commentary from Australian pastor and teacher, Peter Barnes, the point is well made that there were problems in the congregation at Philippi, including the conflict between Euodia and Syntyche, yet the predominant notes in Paul’s letter are joy and encouragement. As he shows, this is a joy which rejoices not in circumstances, but in the knowledge of God’s favour. Barnes divides the letter into six sections: 1. Prayer for spiritual growth (1:1-11); 2. Seeing God’s sovereignty at work (1:12-18); 3. Focused on Christ (1:19-30); 4. Humility in imitation (2:1-30); 5. Knowing Christ, growing in Christ (3:1-4:1); 6. Practical living (4:2-23). He then works through the text with careful exposition and helpful application, pitched at the level of preachers and Bible teachers, though accessible to many other Christian readers. Barnes’ scholarship is evident, though not at all intrusive, as 16 pages of bibliography and 22 pages of notes testify. This volume will be a valuable supplement to the standard commentaries that preachers will use, and will feed their own souls as they work through this joyful letter.

Written on the Heart, Stephen Steele, Grassmarket Press, 2026, pbk., 181 pages, \$11.00.

The place of God's law in the Christian life has been a matter of debate in the church down through the centuries. In the latest addition to the Grassmarket Press series of introductory studies entitled 'Bedrock', Stephen Steele, pastor of Stranraer RP Church in Scotland, provides a remarkably full overview of the main issues in the debate and stresses the biblical case for the abiding validity of the moral law of God expressed in the Ten Commandments. This is the historic position of Reformed theologians. He begins in his Introduction by offering eight reasons why this subject cannot be ignored, including the threats posed by legalism and antinomianism, the questions raised by theonomy, and the need to be clear on the relationship of law and gospel. The first chapter, entitled 'Road Map', provides an overview of the law of God throughout the Bible, from Eden to the New Creation. Chapter 2 deals with right and wrong uses of the law, and the key issue of the traditional threefold division of the law (moral, ceremonial and civil) is examined in some detail in chapters 3 and 4. Steele rightly concludes that this threefold division reflects the teaching of Scripture. Chapter 5 provides eight principles for the correct interpretation of the Ten Commandments, demonstrating the breadth and depth of their significance. The compatibility of law and gospel, denied by many Christians, is defended clearly in chapter 6 ('Sweetly Complying'). Two chapters are then devoted to a thorough rebuttal of two positions regarding the law that have exercised a pernicious influence in some Reformed circles in recent years, namely New Covenant Theology and Progressive Covenantalism, found among some Baptist theologians and rooted in an alleged dichotomy between the OT law and 'the law of Christ' (Galatians 6:2). The falsity of such approaches is well exposed. The true nature of 'legalism' in its various forms is examined in chapter 9 and the book concludes with a treatment of the Lord's Day as a test case for the view of the law that has been defended thus far. In an area of theology where there is much confusion, this is a clear voice for biblical truth and should encourage a humble and grace-empowered keeping of the law of God as his appointed guide for the lives of his people.

Understanding Evangelism. Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues, J. D. Payne, Baker Academic, 2025, pbk., 324 pages, \$32.99.

J. D. Payne, who teaches ministry at Sanford University, Alabama, has extensive experience as pastor, missionary, evangelist and teacher of evangelism, and so is well qualified to write this comprehensive text. The book consists of five sections. Part 1 'Introductory Issues' considers basics such as defining evangelism, together with contemporary definitions of evangelism, the one gospel for a multicultural world, and motives and ethics in evangelism. Payne keeps the focus of evangelism firmly on the presentation of the gospel throughout. Part 2 'Biblical and Theological Foundations' examines biblical material from Old and New Testaments, together with study of vital themes such as God's sovereignty and election, atonement, grace, repentance, faith and conversion. Part 3 offers a concise overview in four chapters of the church's theory and practice of evangelism from AD100 to the present day. Inevitably the treatment of each period and its significant figures is brief, but this section does serve to give some useful historical perspective to the subject of evangelism. Part 4 'Culture and Communication' consists of two chapters, on 'Crossing Cultural Gaps', and on 'Apologetics and worldview, which presents a balanced evaluation of the role and limitations of apologetics. Part 5 'Contemporary Issues' considers a range of issues, including the role of personal testimony in evangelism, the 'sinner's prayer', pastoral leadership and reaching children. Inserted into each chapter are several sidebars containing quotations from various authors along with questions to stimulate critical thinking about the quotations. The wide range of topics covered, along with the firm base in Scripture and the awareness of current thinking in this area, make *Understanding Evangelism* a most helpful textbook, repaying careful study, not least when the reader's views diverge from those of the author.

Theoretical-Practical Theology. Volume 5 The Application of Redemption and the Church, Petrus Van Mastricht, translated by Todd M. Rester, edited by Joel R. Beeke, Reformation Heritage Books, 2025, hbk., 659 pages, \$55.00.

Until the production of the first volume of the translation of his *Theoretical-Practical Theology* in 2018, few non-specialists will have heard of Petrus Van Mastricht, but he is a theologian worth getting to know. Van Mastricht (1630-1706) was born in Cologne to parents who were refugees from the Dutch Revolt. They hailed from Maastricht and Petrus' father changed his name to Van Mastricht when he arrived in Cologne. Petrus began studies at the University of Utrecht in 1637, studying under such eminent teachers as Hoornbeck and Voetius. After several pastorates he served as Professor of Hebrew and Theology at the University of Duisburg (1670-77) and then at the University of Utrecht (1677-1700). In his final years, due to ill health, he taught in his own home. His significance as a theologian is strikingly expressed by the great Jonathan Edwards when he recommended, 'But take Mastricht for divinity in general, doctrine, practice and controversy, or as an universal system of divinity; and it is much better than Turretin or any other book in the world, excepting the Bible, in my opinion.' High praise indeed!

Theoretical-Practical Theology, which will be translated in a projected seven volumes, running to some 4000 pages, covers the whole spectrum of theology, ethics and 'piety'. As Todd Rester, the translator, puts it, 'The overriding concern of the work is a high regard for God, preaching, Scripture, doctrinal orthodoxy, and personal godliness' (p.xvii). Van Mastricht is 'a pastor writing to train pastors'. His aim throughout is to treat each element of theology according to a fourfold approach: exegetical, dogmatic, elenctic (answering opponents) and practical. The structure is characteristic of seventeenth century scholastic method, dividing the treatment of each subject into carefully ordered sections and sub-sections. As Van Mastricht expresses it, 'Theology is the doctrine of living for God through Christ' (1.1.1.xxxvi). In biblical language it is the doctrine that is according to godliness (1 Timothy 6:3), the knowledge of the truth that is according to godliness (Titus 1:1).

Volume 5 covers two 'books' of Van Mastricht's work. Book 6 deals with 'The Application of Redemption' and covers a wide range of matters. First, he considers the nature of this applicatory work, including its objects and means. Subsequent chapters cover calling, regeneration, conversion, union with Christ, justification, adoption, sanctification and finally glorification, with careful refutation of false views and also points of practical application. Book 7 turns to 'The Church and Church Matters'. Following a consideration of the nature of the church, Van Mastricht goes on to deal with the ministers of the church, the sacraments in general, then specific study of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and finally church discipline and church government. All the main elements of Reformed theology are given concise yet thorough treatment, with their biblical foundations clearly set out.

The translation by Todd Rester, a historian of early modern theology and philosophy, formerly in the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics at Queen's University, Belfast, and now an associate professor of church history at Westminster Theological Seminary, has produced a careful and readable translation with copious footnotes. We are in Rester's debt for his monumental labours which are making available to the Church another fruitful source of theology which for most was previously unknown. This is truth not only to be studied, but also lived, just as Van Mastricht believed it should be.

David McKay