Journal for BAPTIST THEOLOGY & MINISTRY

Fall 2023 • Vol. 20, No. 2

The Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

The Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry is a research institute of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. The seminary is located at 3939 Gentilly Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70126.

BCTM exists to provide theological and ministerial resources to enrich and energize ministry in Baptist churches. Our goal is to bring together professor and practitioner to produce and apply these resources to Baptist life, polity, and ministry. The mission of the BCTM is to develop, preserve, and communicate the distinctive theological identity of Baptists.

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Table of Contents

Editorial Introduction

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In this issue of *JBTM*, scholars, pastors, and students explore the relation of Baptist life to the Great Tradition of Christianity. Historically, the *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* has focused on [Southern] *Baptist* perspectives, and this issue is no different. Our contributors in this issue, though, helpfully offer unique looks at how Baptists share common beliefs, practices, and conversations with other traditions. Further, this issue presents the opportunity for readers to see authors engage in and apply theological studies for the church. It is my hope that readers wrestle with the arguments offered herein — especially evidence or positions which are new to them — and see the breadth of vital theological exploration present in Baptist life and beyond. May the Lord bless these offerings as another issue focused primarily on "Baptists and the Christian Tradition."

This issue begins with a written interview on the nature and benefit of Analytic Theology. Christopher Woznicki offers background, material arguments, and concrete examples demonstrating the role that Analytic Theology could play for theological inquiry. As one who has benefited personally from the analytic tradition (while not considering myself a professional philosopher proper), I am grateful for Woznicki's encouragement that much can be gained by considering AT's tools, questions, and strategies in systematic theology. My interview questions press him on the ability of Baptists to practice AT as well as some common points of concern from those wary of "new" methods and movements. A largely academic enterprise, AT can come across as rigid, rationalistic, or resistant to confessional foundations. As he shows throughout his exposition, though, Baptists need not trade in lively evangelicalism to participate in or learn from AT. In fact, there may be doctrinal topics and ecclesial practices, including prayer, where we would benefit from more analytic or philosophic input. The greatest fruit from Woznicki's

interview is the multitude of footnotes and recommended resources he provides for readers to begin or dig deeper in this growing theological discipline.

Our issue contains six standard articles, the first three of which land directly on our issue theme. First, David Wenkel analyzes the two editions of the First London Baptist Confession (1644/1646) for their attention to the doctrine of Scripture. Wenkel highlights explicit and implicit treatments of Scripture throughout the distinct iterations, including specific references to how God has revealed himself and used Scripture in the church as well as the role of proof-texting for doctrinal support. Questions about early Baptists' view of the biblical canon help inform their position in the Great Tradition, while their description and theological use of Scripture demonstrates their firm commitment to the Bible's authority as God's Word.

Second and third, John Carpenter and Kirk MacGregor compare Baptist beliefs and practices with other movements. Carpenter argues that Baptist polity was inherited from Congregationalist practice, citing emphases like regenerate church membership, church covenanting, and local church autonomy together with associationalism. This connection makes sense of a common heritage in English Separatism, despite Baptist life and American Congregationalism developing distinctly across different settings.[1] Carpenter's evidence from later American Congregationalists and Baptists, though, shows the uncanny family resemblance on these ecclesiological foundations. While Baptists and Congregationalists clearly clashed on many occasions, this article points to the irony of some overlapping church practices. Carpenter's comparison provokes a revisiting of the likeness between these two movements while perhaps also setting the stage for a new explanation for the proclivity of a contemporary retrieval of Puritan and Congregationalist emphases in Baptist life. MacGregor examines the theological likeness of some contemporary Baptists on the issue of human fallenness

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[1] B. R. White is often credited with demonstrating the lineage of the earliest Baptists from English Separatism. White's work shows some overlap in doctrinal and social concerns between Baptists and Congregationalists among English Dissenters in line with Carpenter's argument in this issue, but White also demonstrates the sharp distinction between those camps (and Dutch Anabaptists) once they began to establish themselves and interact. B. R. White, *The English Separatist Tradition: From the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers* (Oxford: University Press, 1971).

shared with Anabaptist examples. Whereas historians have debated the precise material influence Dutch Anabaptists had on English Separatists who became Baptist, MacGregor's article demonstrates the diversity of doctrinal detail among both sixteenth-century Anabaptists and twenty-first century Baptists. Analyzing eight Anabaptists' views of the effects of human fallenness, MacGregor shows precedence for Classical Arminian, Traditional Baptist, and other mediating ideas among contemporary Baptists.[2]

The next three articles of this issue provide readers with more practical handles from a variety of disciplines. First, Charlie Ray III introduces the concept of speech act theory as a method through which to prepare sermons honoring the intertextual use of the Old Testament in the New. Ray argues convincingly that interpreting and preaching the New Testament requires the preacher to understand how the New Testament uses the Old and to convey God's revelation through both. Second, Micah Chung explores the theological tool of metaphor and derives a metaphor for the Bible *from* the Bible: food. Chung's article offers theologians, Bible teachers, and preachers a lens through which to engage Scripture, hungry for the routine ingestion of and fellowship with the Word of God. Third, Benjamin Kelly and Jonathan Corrado critique the use of Romans 1:18–20 to support evidentialism. Their article has implications for apologetics but also provides biblical, theological, and philosophical understandings of human individuals' intuitive knowledge of God and the implications of that knowledge for culpability.

The final article included in this issue reprises the theme of "Baptists and the Christian Tradition" by narrating the life and impact of American Baptist John Clarke. Clarke's life and ministry set the stage for one of the Baptist tradition's greatest contributions to the Great Tradition: supporting legal protection for religious liberty. Rex Butler provides this biographical essay, introducing to our readers a treasure trove of stories, quotations, and sources. I hope to provide historical, theological, and biblical introductions such as this one to readers in each issue, and I am grateful that my mentor and ministry partner could contribute the first such resource.

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[2] For an explanation of the moniker and thought of "Traditional Baptists," see previous issues of the *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 9 no. 2 (Fall 2012) and 10 no. 1 (Spring 2013), edited by Adam Harwood, David Allen, and Eric Hankins.

Rounding out our issue, as usual, are a number of book reviews from scholars, ministry leaders, and PhD students. Like our articles, these book reviews span various disciplines and subject matters. As this issue is released, I pray that God bring more and more thinkers and church leaders to use resources like *JBTM* to show them their place in the Great Tradition, to encourage them to continue exploring theological and biblical studies, and to bolster their ministry.

Analytic Theology & Jonathan Edwards in a Baptist Context: An Interview with Christopher Woznicki

Christopher Woznicki (PhD, Fuller Theological Seminary) is Research Fellow at the Jonathan Edwards Center, Gateway Seminary, California.

What is Analytic Theology? Do you view Analytic Theology as a method for doing systematic theology or an approach which transcends systematic theology, or is it even a definable discipline?

Not all that goes by the name "analytic theology" is systematic theology, in fact not all analytic "theology" is even theology! Though, to be honest, I'm probably getting a bit ahead of myself with that sort of answer! One relatively simple definition of "analytic theology" is that "analytic theology is just the activity of approaching theological topics with the ambitions of an analytic philosopher in a style that conforms to the prescriptions that are distinctive of analytical philosophical discourse."[1] To put it even more simply it's just theology that engages with analytic philosophical literature and is done in the style of analytic philosophy.

Often, you'll see people engaged in the analytic project find "puzzles" which they then analyze, break down into constituent parts, and then they aim to solve that puzzle. So let's engage in a little analysis. We can break the term "analytic theology" into its two parts. First you have "analytic," then you have "theology." Simple enough! The analytic project has a certain "style." The style is pretty easy to identify. You sort of know it when you see it. If you've read Richard Swinburne, Alvin Plantinga, Paul Helm, or other analytic philosophers you'll probably notice a common style. It's a style is characterized by logical rigor, clarity, and parsimony of expression. Mike Rea talks about writing philosophical positions and conclusions in sentences that can be formalized and logically manipulated.[2] Personally, I don't think that necessarily characterizes analytic theology, though I'd say that in principle much—though not

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[1] Michael C. Rea, "Introduction," in *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology* (New York: OUP, 2009), 7.

[2] Rea, "Introduction," 5-6.

all—of the content of an analytic theological work should be able to be characterized in such a way.

The "style" side of things is probably the easiest aspect of "analytic" to identify. The other side of "analytic" refers to its engagement with analytic philosophical literature and the intellectual culture that has formed specifically around analytic philosophy.[3] Here things start to get a bit more complicated. Analytic philosophy has a history that hasn't been too friendly towards theology. What we know today as "analytic philosophy" really gained steam through the writings of a group of early 20th century philosophers and scientists labeled the "Vienna Circle." They were most well known for an idea called "logical positivism." On logical positivism, theological claims were not only false, they were actually meaningless. You can see how this is antithetical to theology! Eventually logical positivism collapsed and philosophers started to engage more and more with metaphysics and religious topics. Philosophers like Alvin Plantinga, William Alston, and Brian Leftow made significant contributions to their fields of philosophy (e.g., epistemology and metaphysics) and to Christian thinking about philosophical questions. These—among other—philosophers paved the way for the mainstreaming of Christians doing philosophical theology. So now we had a generation of Christians who were not only okay with, but enthusiastic about engaging with analytic philosophy. It was a small leap from that to the point where we began to see philosophers engage with questions specific to Christian theology and theologians engage with philosophical literature.

Now by my lights the "theology" side of analytic theology is even more tricky. Of course, we can talk about theology as "God-talk," but that is a bit too simplistic. What are theologians doing and what makes what they're doing different than what philosophers of religion are doing? After all, both are addressing questions about God and are thus engaged in God-talk! That's a question that has generated a lot of conversation among analytic theologians like Andrew Torrance, Jonathan Rutledge, and Max Baker-Hytch, just to name a few. I take it that Andrew Chignell is on to something when he writes that philosophy of religion typically constructs arguments

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[3] William Wood has argued, most convincingly, that it is best to think of the "analytic" aspect of this phrase as referring to an intellectual culture. See, *Analytic Theology and the Academic Study of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).

in ways that anyone will be able to feel their force on the basis of reason alone but that theology appeals to sources and topics that go beyond merely human cognitive faculties. Theology engages with revelation and shared religious traditions.[4] In other words, philosophy engages with topics that can be thought about using common human resources like reason and experience. Theology engages with sources of reflection that go beyond what is common to all human beings. Still, merely talking about sources of authority doesn't get us far enough because we don't just define theology based upon sources. Theology, is in part, defined by what it seeks to do and what its object of study is. Notice William Ames's definition:

> Theology is the doctrine or teaching of living to God… It is called doctrine, not to separate it from understanding, knowledge, wisdom, art, or prudence—for these go with every exact discipline, and most of all theology—but to mark it as a discipline which derives not from nature and human inquiry like others, but from divine revelation and appointment.[5]

Theology, on Ames's account helps us live toward God. It has as specific end, it's not characterized by mere intellectual curiosity. I know that some analytic theologians will disagree with my understanding of sources and the ends of theology, but by my lights, when analytic theology is functioning as Christian analytic "theology" as opposed to mere analytic theology—or philosophy of religion—it will draw upon the sources of divine revelation and Christian tradition and it will keep in mind the end of theology which is to live toward God.

There's one last thing that I would add to my understanding of analytic theology: to truly be analytic theology it must make God the object of its study. Theology, in my opinion, is not merely the study of what humans have written about God. That is a valuable academic discipline, but it's not theology. Theology has God as its proper object of study. Tom McCall hits the nail on the head when he says that "the task of the theologian is not merely to say things

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[4] Andrew Chginell, "'As Kant has Shown…': Analytic Theology and the Critical Philosophy," in *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology* (New York: OUP, 2009), 119.

[5] William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, trans. John Dykstra Eusden (Durham: Labyrinth, 1968), 77.

about God (or God-and-everything)—it is to speak truly of God (so far as we can) and to do so in a way that celebrates the glory of God's being and actions."[6] This is what John Webster called "theological theology" and T. F. Torrance called "scientific theology."

All this to say, I would characterize analytic theology as follows:

Christian analytic theology is a way of doing systematic theology—which is a disciple that 1) engages with divine revelation and Christian tradition, 2) is directed toward the end of living with and for God, 3) and takes the Triune God and all things in relation to God, as its proper object of study—that utilizes the tools and methods of analytic philosophy.

I know that the distinctions I've made about "theology" in analytic theology, will be controversial for some analytic theologians, but as I've already said, in my opinion, if analytic theology will truly be "theological theology" and not something else, it will bear those features. Of course, others will have different understandings of what theology is, so that will change how they understand analytic theology. You could have Jewish conceptions of theology, Muslim conceptions of theology, neo-pagan conceptions of theology, etc. They might define theology differently, as such they would define analytic theology differently. What would be common to all, however, is how they understand the "analytic" portion of "analytic theology."

Why is Analytic Theology important?

Let me tell you two reasons why it's important. First, I think it's important for the mission of the church. Christian theologians are called to serve the church. Given its commitment to rigor, clarity, and precision, analytic theology is positioned really well to help the church think through how it articulates doctrine in a coherent way. It can bring clarity to theological teaching by helping the church to become clearer, more precise, and more rigorous about how it articulates the great things of the gospel. Not only that but I think analytic theology is poised to speak to audiences that might have been put off by certain ways of doing theology. For example, some approaches to theology can come off as too esoteric or intentionally reveling in ambiguity. Such approaches will put off audiences who

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[6] Thomas H. McCall, *An Invitation to Analytic Christian Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015), 170.

value precision and coherence. They might dismiss theology as mere religious gobbledygook. Analytic theology might help those audiences see that theology can be rigorous, precise, and coherent.

Second, we might speak of its importance as an academic discipline. In my opinion, analytic theology is an approach to theology that is here to stay. The term "analytic theology" was coined back in 2009 by Michael Rea and Oliver Crisp in their book, *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*. The impact of the book—and the project of Analytic Theology—has been substantial. It has played a key role in the spanning of a number of journals, monograph series, and research projects taken on by universities and seminaries, as well as voluminous numbers of essays in philosophy and theology journals. Consider for example journals like *The Journal of Analytic Theology* and *Theolgica;* or monograph series like the Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology, the Routledge Studies in Analytic and Systematic Theology, or Analyzing Theology. We could even name the Analytic Theology for Theological Formation Project which took place at Fuller Seminary or the Logos institute for Analytic and Exegetical Theology at the University of St. Andrews. More recently, within the Southern Baptist context, we can point to the Carolina Analytic Theology Workshop, spearheaded by Southeastern Seminary and Anderson University. All that to say, Analytic Theology has been going strong for over 10 years and there are no signs that it is slowing down.

Can Baptists engage in Analytic Theology? A few concerns may be worth considering. First, how would you answer those who are wary of a method which cedes too much authority to reason or philosophical [read, non-biblical] presuppositions?

When I was an undergrad in college, I went on a mission trip to Uganda. I had sent some fundraising letters out with some life updates. One of those was that I had switched majors from physiological science to philosophy. One of my high school math teachers—I went to a Baptist high school—replied with a nice note (and thankfully a donation!) and signed it off with his name and "Colossians 2:8" under it. I can't even recount how many times people have brought up "Colossians 2:8" to me: "Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elements of the world, rather than Christ." Nowadays, among lay Christians and even some formally

trained theologians, there seems to be a wariness of philosophy and philosophical reasoning. This, however, goes against the grain of how Christians have thought for centuries! We need to recognize that while the relationship between theology and philosophy has always been complex, there has always been a relationship.

First of all, Christians have always employed philosophical reasoning procedurally. What I mean by that is that when we do theology, we're always using the procedural elements that lie at the core of philosophical thinking. We assume the law of non-contradiction, we assume the laws of logic like modus ponents and modus tollens, we think carefully about how conclusions follow from premises, we engage in conceptual analysis, we examine our presuppositions, etc.[7] So in this sense we shouldn't be wary of the fact that theology is drawing from philosophical resources! Yet, philosophy is more than procedure. There is some substantive content that comes with it. Here I think it's important to remember that there's a venerable tradition of Christian theologians who have seen philosophy as a valuable tool for theological inquiry. One of the ways that it serves as a tool is that it helps us to articulate core Christian truths. Think about the doctrine of the Trinity for a minute. We use terms like "persons" and "essence." Or think about Christology. "Nature" is a key term that can't be avoided when talking about the person of Christ! The early church couldn't help but use philosophical language to articulate the truths of the Trinity and Christology as they are found in Scripture. As David Briones says, "We all are necessarily shaped by the social, historical, political, religious, and philosophical factors at work in every day life."[8] That means that philosophical concepts will necessarily work their way into our theological language. Because we're human beings living in a historical context we won't be able to avoid that. So we ought to examine those philosophical assumptions to make sure that they cohere with our theological convictions.

Second, we can feel free to use philosophical content—in our case analytic philosophy—in our quest to systematically think about theology. Augustine famously wrote,

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[7] Mark Foreman wrote a wonderful introduction to philosophy exploring this idea. See, Mark Foreman, *Prelude to Philosophy: A Prelude for Christians* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013).

[8] David Briones, "An Introduction" in *Paul and the Giants of Philosophy*, ed. Joseph Dodson and David Briones (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019), 1.

The Egyptians possessed idols and heavy burdens, which the children of Israel hated and from which they fled; however, they also possessed vessels of gold and silver and clothes which our forebearers, in leaving Egypt took for themselves in secret, intending to use them in a better way… In the same way, pagan learning is not entirely made up of false teachings and superstitions… It contains some excellent teachings, well suited to be used by truth, and excellent moral values… The Christian therefore, can separate these truths from their unfortunate associations, take them away, and put them to their proper use for the proclamation of the gospel. (Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, II.xl.60-1.)

In a lot of ways Analytic Theology is just engaged in Augustine's project of "plundering the Egyptians." Yes, we are doing "theological theology" but we are picking and choosing which vessels of gold and silver we might use fruitfully. Most people don't have a problem when theologians do that in other fields. Think about how theologians talk about the image of God. We draw from Ancient Near Eastern studies about the meaning of *tselem* and *demut*. Then we think about what this might mean for how we speak of the image of God. Analytic theologians do something similar. Let's say they adopt a substantial account of the image of God where what it means to be the image of God is to be a rational creature. What does it mean to be a rational creature? Scripture doesn't say much about that specific question. But analytic philosophy has tons to say about what rationality is! Or think about the doctrine of atonement. Penal Substitutionary Atonement relies on a concept of retributive justice and corporate responsibility. What is retributive justice? What is corporate responsibility? Scripture points us to these concepts but it doesn't flesh them out. Analytic theologians draw from the best of analytic philosophy to articulate theological truths.

Next, what are the roles of creeds and confessions in Analytic Theology? How can the Bible play an authoritative role in our theology if it is boiled down to analytic definitions or propositions?

If you ask five different analytic theologians about how creeds and confessions relate to theology, you'll get five different answers! That's because theologians in general will disagree about the role of creeds and confessions in theology in general. Analytic theology, in

itself, does not commit a theologian to a particular understanding of how to treat these sources. Let me give you two examples of how different analytic theologians can be on these matters. On the one hand you have someone like Timothy Pawl. Timothy has written significantly on what he calls "Conciliar Christology." As a Roman Catholic, he feels he is bound to the teachings of his church's councils, not only the seven ecumenical councils, but all of what he understands to be ecumenical councils. Because of that, he writes analytic Christology in a way that prioritizes his ecclesial councils, creeds, and confessions. On the other hand you have William Lane Craig, who does not feel bound in the same way to the teachings of the seven ecumenical councils, and thus rejects dyothelitism. When I do theology, be it analytic or otherwise, I take scripture as the norming norm. All other norms, whether they be creeds, confessional documents, ecclesial traditions, or the writings of especially authoritative theologians, ultimately stand subordinate to Scripture. Personally, I think there are tiers of authority when we think about creeds and confessions. Scripture, and scripture alone, is the norming norm. It is the first tier of theological authority. Subordinate to Scripture are the creeds of the ecumenical councils, that's followed by the confessional statements of my own—Baptist—ecclesial location. Finally, teachers that are especially revered in my own tradition have some theological authority. In my case that would include the church Fathers, certain Reformers, and Baptist luminaries. All that to say, the role that creeds and confessions play in analytic theology depends on the theologian who is doing analytic theology.

One final concern: Does doing theology analytically result in a cold, detached confession of God? How can theologians maintain worship and application when thinking analytically?

Does doing theology analytically result in a cold, detached confession of God? I sure hope not! Still I see how the way that some people have engaged in Analytic Theology might make it seem that way. When analytic theology treats "God-talk" as the object of study—that is, what others have said about God—as the proper object of theology rather than God himself, that can easily turn theology into a cold, rational, but detached academic discipline. That's because it turns theology into the study of a concept rather than a person. But in my opinion, the best analytic theology doesn't

operate in that way. The best analytic theology is "theological theology," it makes the Living God its object of study. When T.F. Torrance talks about "scientific theology,"—which in a lot of ways is similar to Webster's "theological theology,"—he writes that any science examines its object in accordance with its nature. So, he goes on to say, "personal beings require from us, therefore personal modes of knowledge and behavior, that is the kind of knowledge that comes through a rapprochement or communion of minds characterized by mutual respect, trust, and love. It cannot be otherwise with our knowledge of God."[9] To do theology, theologically, means that we need to be rightly related to God. That means we will approach theology with a posture of love, reverence, worship, and awe. It means we will situate ourselves in a context that can form us to be the right kind of people to know God: we will be part of a local church that encourages us to pray, to worship, and to pursue holiness.[10]

I guess that my response to this question boils down to how we see theology in general and analytic theology more specifically. Analytic theology, by my lights, is just a way to do theology. I have certain convictions about the nature and purpose of theology that make it impossible for it to be cold, detached, and irrelevant for the life of the church. Theology has the Triune God as the object of study and it is directed toward the end of living with and for God. Remembering the purpose and object of theology will help analytic theologians keep the glory of God and the needs of the church at the forefront of their minds.

How might Baptists learn from analytic theologians from other Christian traditions, or how might Baptists use Analytic Theology to learn about their place in the Great Tradition?

While his position might appear controversial to some, I tend to agree with Stephen Holmes that regarding many, if not most, theological topics, Baptist theology is not distinctive, though the theology of individual Baptists certainly may be![11] You can see this when

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[9] T.F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ,* 2nd *edition* (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howards, 1992), 25.

[10] See Christopher Woznicki, "The Awe of the Lord is the Beginning of Knowledge: The Significance of Awe for Theological Epistemology" in *Expository Times* 131 (2020): 153–159.

[11] Stephen R. Holmes, *Baptist Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 69.

you look at the Second London Confession. It doesn't slavishly follow Savoy or Westminster—it makes changes and improvements—but its purpose was to demonstrate unity on central doctrinal matters. Baptists weren't some strange sect to be feared, they received the catholic faith just like Presbyterians and Congregationalists. That means that on the subjects of catholic doctrine we can we can receive the faith that has been passed down. Just as the Reformers thought they could lay claim to the Biblical teachings of the church fathers, Baptists can lay claim the Biblical teachings of the church fathers, the Reformers, and the entire Great Tradition. What does that mean in terms of Analytic Theology? It means that we can lay claim to a wide variety of analytic theologians and their work. For the most part Baptists have received the broadly evangelical, Protestant, positions on core doctrines like the Trinity, incarnation, creation, sin, atonement. These are common topics amongst analytic theologians. Baptists can turn to these works and engage in current conversations that are occurring in the theological academy. In fact, it's part of my vision that Baptists would engage with the Great Tradition and with contemporary Analytic (and non-Analytic) theologians who write on these topics. Much like the situation of the London Baptists I think that there's this perception among contemporary theologians that Baptists are a strange group who likes to do things on their own. There's some truth to that. Baptists, especially us Southern Baptists, can sometimes get siloed off from what is going on in the larger theological space. That shouldn't be the case. We have just as much to say about these essential theological topics as the Reformed, Lutherans, Orthodox, or Roman Catholics do. But the larger church won't see that until Baptists—and more specifically, Southern Baptists—begin to contribute to those spaces while unashamedly maintaining their Baptist identity.

So, again I think Holmes is right when he says that "It is not that Baptists have failed to address these concepts; but their…contributions have not as far as I can see given any indication that there might be a distinctively Baptist position."[12] Nevertheless, he also argues that on the topic of ecclesiology (as well as the importance of covenant and the individual's relationship with God), there is much to think about that is distinctively Baptist. Fortunately for us there has been some really fascinating Analytic Ecclesiology written as of late. I'll mention two interesting works. The first is by Joshua

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[12] Holmes, *Baptist Theology*, 70.

Cockayne, who is an Anglican pastor-theologian. He recently penned a monograph titled, *Explorations in Analytic Ecclesiology: That they May Be One*.[13] There you'll find interesting discussions about topics like the individual's relationship to the group and what constitutes membership in a group. It draws upon recent analytic literature on groups and social dynamics and applies it to a theological context. Of course, he is Anglican so he'll have a different understanding of what constitutes a church/local church but there's plenty of food for thought in his book. I'd also point to an article written by Jordan Steffaniak titled, "Multi–Church? Analytic Reflections on the Metaphysics of Multi–Site and Multi–Service Ecclesiology." He also draws upon analytic philosophical literature on groups, social structures, and agency to think through a theological topic that is becoming increasingly relevant: the existence of multi-site churches.[14] As Baptists, who prioritize the centrality of the local congregation as one of our core distinctives, thinking through the nature of multi-site churches would seem like an important task.[15] What makes a church a church? Does a multi-site church fit that definition? Analysis of concepts and definitions is one strength of analytic theology. I think analytic theology could make significant contributions to questions around the status of multi-site churches.

Another distinctively Baptist ecclesiological topic is baptism. There is plenty that has been written by analytic philosophers—and theologians too—about what religious rites and rituals do. Speech-act theory helps us to understand what the words used during these rites do. For example, what does baptizing someone in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit do to a person? Thinking about the act itself, we might ask other questions. What obligations does a congregation take on when being a witness to a baptism? What happens to those obligations when a baptism is done outside of a congregational context? What if someone gets baptized at a summer camp? Or on a trip to Israel? What happens to those obligations? What role does that sort of baptism play as a religious rite? Is it the same as baptizing someone in front of a church? Does the location of a rite change its significance? Again, these are the kind of analysis

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[13] Joshua Cockayne, *Explorations in Analytic Ecclesiology: That they May Be One* (Oxford: OUP, 2022);

[14] Jordan Steffaniak, "Multi–Church? Analytic Reflections on the Metaphysics of Multi–Site and Multi–Service Ecclesiology," *Theologica* 4 (2020): 107–133.

[15] "All Baptists, however, are committed to both the independence, and the primacy of the local church." Holmes, *Baptist Theology*, 96.

that analytic theologians specialize in. Analytic theologians are good at analyzing concepts and definitions, ensuring consistency across theological convictions, breaking down puzzles into constituent parts, etc. I'd love to see more Baptist analytic theologians address the topic of baptism.

Finally, part of Baptist ecclesiology is our commitment to mission. Missiology is a vastly underdeveloped topic in analytic theology. I've ventured a bit here and there and others have written analytically on topics that are related to mission but it's still extremely difficult to find analytic theologians who have devoted themselves entirely to missiology as their main area of research.[16] Topics like conversion, evangelization, pluralism, and motivation for mission could easily draw from contemporary analytic philosophical literature. Analytic theologians could also contribute by writing on topics that would directly benefit missionaries. The doctrine of the Trinity is especially important in Islamic contexts. Writings on witchcraft, paganism, and the demonic would be especially relevant in contexts where folk religion plays a major role. Dealing with religious pluralism would be highly relevant in multi-cultural societies. Work on science and religion would be helpful for missionaries in secular-university type contexts.

How would you advise a pastor-theologian to broach the subject of Analytic Theology, especially if they do not have formal training in philosophy or theology? Are there any entry-level works or authors to begin with?

I should probably mention that I don't think that it is, strictly speaking, *necessary* for a pastor-theologian to be versed in Analytic Theology! As I mentioned before, Analytic Theology is one way of doing theology. It's one way, which I think, contributes a lot to our current theological discourse. It's one way, that I think brings a lot to the table when it comes to thinking about some key doctrines. As long as that is clear—it's not "my way or the highway" when it comes to Analytic Theology—then we can start to think about what Analytic Theology brings to the pastoral context.

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[16] Christopher Woznicki, "T. F. Torrance's Theology of Mission and Analytic Theology's Contribution to Missiology," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 18.1 (Forthcoming, 2024); Harold Netland, *Religious Experience and the Knowledge of God: The Evidential Force of Divine Encounters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022).

A while ago I had the opportunity to do some work alongside of Bryan Fergus, who completed a DMin at Phoenix Seminary. His work was titled "The Intersection of Analytic Theology and Catechesis." He was actually a guest lecturer at an event we hosted at Fuller: The Analytic Theology Pastors Colloquium. Although a few of us on the Fuller team were involved in pastoral ministry, Bryan was a vocational minister. So he brought a different perspective to it. He was also able to speak to the other pastors in the room in a way that we—professional academics—might not have been able to! What he said, though, was spot on. He said that analytic theologians are clear about their assumptions and the reasons for making certain theological moves. They aim at simplicity and parsimony when making a case for something. They carefully choose the words they use. They consider potential objections to their ideas. They also break down complex theological puzzles into manageable sizes and aren't afraid to us illustrations to make their points!

As someone sits and hears all those things, they might think, "Wow it would be really good if pastors communicated to their congregants in that way!" And in fact, some of the best preachers do! One of my favorite preachers to listen to was the late Tim Keller. Obviously not everyone should preach like Tim Keller, but if you consider his audience—a secularized New York—you'd come to realize that the virtues just described would be really helpful for preaching in that context. And he demonstrated many of those virtues even outside of his preaching! His classic, *The Reason For God*, demonstrates the analytic theological virtue of stating potential objections in a charitable way, and addressing them. It demonstrates clarity about assumptions. It demonstrates the practice of breaking down puzzles into smaller parts. Now if you look at that list of virtues again, you might think, "It would be great if my congregation embodied some of these virtues too!" We live in a time where there's a lot of skepticism and cynicism about family life, culture, politics, the church. A lot of that is based on a failure to think critically. That might seem like a contradiction, but I think people tend to just feel things and run with it without stopping to reflect on what they're thinking. They say they are "thinking critically" but quite often they are "thinking" out of un-reflected-upon emotional impulses. That mindset pervades our cultural moment. What if we started to demonstrate the virtues of analytic theology in our preaching and teaching? What if we charitably represented our opponents? What if we laid out our own assumptions and convictions

on the table? What if we presented what we believed in a clear, easy to understand, manner instead of hiding it behind rhetorical flourish? And what if our congregations saw that and it shaped the way they thought and communicated with others around them? That would be great for our witness in the midst of a fractured culture.

All that to say, I think its worth it for pastor-theologians to think about Analytic Theology and how it might affect their pastoral work. So where should they get started? A colleague of mine, Dr. Jesse Gentile, has done a lot of work on this topic. During that same Pastors Colloquium I mentioned, Dr. Gentile presented a helpful way for pastors to make the leap into Analytic Theology. He broke the path down into three stages…

Stage One: Watch someone engage in Analytic Theology. I'll mention four books that would make a great start. The first is *Forsaken: The Trinity & the Cross & Why it Matters*, by Thomas McCall. This book does an amazing job of thinking through ways that some theologians and pastors have communicated what happened on the cross and how some of those ways might actually be unhelpful. For example, it's sometimes said that the Father forsook the Son, or that the Trinity was broken, or something else like that. Understanding what happens within intra-trinitarian relations on Good Friday is a crucially important topic! It's one that demands clarity and precision or else we end up saying things about the Trinity that we shouldn't dare affirm! This book was written especially with pastors in mind. Another book is Oliver Crisp's, *Retrieving Doctrine: Essays in Reformed Theology*. In this book Crisp demonstrates how Analytic Theology can be put to use when thinking about how historical figures articulated doctrinal positions. For example, he treats Calvin on Providence and Edwards on Communion. More recently, a collection of essays on "unlimited atonement" was published by Michael Bird and Scott Harrower. Although the book as a whole isn't written from the perspective of analytic theology, there you'll see a number of analytic theologians at work on the topic of the extent of atonement. It includes essays by analytic theologians like Oliver Crisp, Ryan Mullins, Jonathan Rutledge, James Arcadi, Joshua Farris, and myself. I think the book is an excellent example of how analytic theology can get into the mix with non-analytic versions of theology while sharing the same end. Finally, it should go without mentioning, Thomas McCall's *An Invitation to Analytic Christian Theology* is the best entry point into Analytic Theology. It really is written at an introductory level. Not only does it introduce Analytic Theology, it

also engages in doing analytic theology. McCall covers theological puzzles like freedom of will and Christology as test cases for the usefulness of Analytic Theology. Finally, I should mention another way that pastors can get introduced to AT. I know that pastors are extremely busy so they don't always have time to read outside of what they're currently teaching on. For pastors in that situation I'd recommend the *London Lyceum* podcast. It's the only Baptist, analytic, and confessional podcast that I know of! The podcast often hosts analytic theologians as guests. It's a great way to get a snapshot of what analytic theologians are up to.

Stage 2: Pick Up a Few Skills of Your Own. There's the classic book by Diogenes Allen, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology.* Although it's broader than analytic philosophy, it provides a fine intellectual foundation for thinking about the philosophical assumptions that underlie so much of modern theology. Written (significantly) more recently is a book by Jamie Dew and Paul Gould. Their book, *Philosophy a Christian Introduction*, is a one stop shop for an introduction to the major topics in philosophy. And it's written primarily in conversation with analytic philosophy to boot! It introduces readers to the basic issues in epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and philosophy of religion. I'd also add Dolores Morris's book, *Believing Philosophy: A Guide to Becoming a Christian Philosopher* to the list. This book, especially the first half, will help readers understand what it means to be a Christian who thinks philosophically. Yes, she provides some helpful examples of Christian philosophy at work, but the greatest value comes in her discussion of the Christian virtues of a philosopher. Finally, they might want to add *The Philosopher's Toolkit: A Compendium of Philosophical Concepts and Methods* by Julian Baggini and Peter Fosl, to their list. What is an inductive argument? What is the difference between validity and soundness? What is the law of non-contradiction? Should we use intuition pumps? When is an argument truly circular and is that always a problem? What's the difference between a paradox and a contradiction? What's the *de re/de dicto* distinction and why does it matter? What about the difference between necessity and contingency? This reference book will help aspiring analytic theologians understand the terms that so often come up an analytic literature.

Stage Three: Circle Back to Specific Topics that Interest You. The Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology produces some of the best analytic theological monographs. If you are looking for more on the Trinity you'll find William Hasker's *Metaphysics & the Tri-Personal*

God. If you're looking for Christology, you can turn to Timothy Pawl's *In Defense of Conciliar Christology* and *In Defense of Extended Conciliar Christology*. If Theological Ethics is more of your thing you might take a look at Cristian F. Mihut's, *Gracious Forgiveness* or Michael Austin's, *Humility and Human Flourishing.* All those books are within the same series. There's also some interesting work being done on the topic of atonement. For example, Jonathan Rutledge's *Forgiveness and Atonement: Christ's Restorative Sacrifice,* Eleonore Stump's *Atonement*, William Lane Craig's *Atonement and the Death of Christ,* as well as Oliver Crisp's *Participation and Atonement.* I've also written quite a few articles on atonement in general and some defending penal substitution more specifically. All that to say, if there is some topic that interests you I can pretty much guarantee some analytic theologian has written about it!

What are some major theological topics which have received attention in Analytic Theology? Do you foresee any other subjects where further work is needed?

Like I mentioned above, all the major loci of theology have received attention from Analytic Theologians. On the Trinity, names like Michael Rea, Stephen Davis, Brian Leftow, and Adonis Vidu stand out. On Christology, I already mentioned Timothy Pawl but also Oliver Crisp has written some important books on the topic. Andrew Loke, JC Beall, and Tom Morris have all written important works proposing models for understanding the incarnation. Morris's, i.e. two-minds Christology, has been especially influential. One of the areas that has attracted the most attention has been human composition (e.g. physicalism, substance dualism, emergent dualism, hylomorphism, etc.) To list all the philosophers and theologians who have written on the topic would take ages! There's not shortage of thought on that topic. I guess, that's all to say, that almost any standard doctrinal loci has received significant attention.[17]

However, there are some other subjects that are starting to garner more attention. They also happen to be subjects that haven't received a ton of attention in most systematic theologies. I think of, for example, prayer. Charles Hodge's three-volume systematic

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[17] Jesse Gentile, "A Comprehensive Categorized Bibliography of Analytic Theology" in *T&T Clark Handbook of Analytic Theology*, eds. James M. Arcadi and James T. Turner (London: T&T Clark, 2021), 499–520.

theology dedicates less than 20 pages to the topic. Only six pages in the third edition of Millard Erickson's *Christian Theology* covers prayer. Michael Horton only allots nine pages to it, across various sections. I think you would be hard pressed to find a robust treatment of prayer in many systematic theologies—though I should note that Calvin's Institutes addresses it in a whopping 70 pages! Prayer, and its relation to human freedom, providence, classical theism, and moral responsibility are ripe for analytic treatments of the practice. One starting point for diving into the topic is Scott Davison's, *Petitionary Prayer: A Philosophical Examination*. I've also written quite a bit trying to recover Reformation era understandings of petitionary prayer.[18]

Really, anything related to spiritual practices and disciplines could benefit from more robust examination. There's increasing attention being paid to liturgical practices. James Arcadi, Terrence Cuneo, and Nicholas Wolterstroff stand out to be as important contributors to these discussions. Angels, Demons, and Satan seem like speculative topics but more and more analytic theologians are thinking about these beings and the nature of spiritual warfare. There's also an increase in the literature on theological topics with social implications like race, diversity, gender, and disability. What topics get worked on in the future will really depend on how theologians understand the task of theology. Personally, Matthew 13:52—"Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old"—has set the direction for how I think about theology. Theological retrieval for the sake of contemporary discipleship has been my approach. But others might understand their task differently. I think that is why some people focus on dogmatic topics of perennial interest, e.g., the doctrine of incarnation or the Trinity, and others focus on theological topics that are especially pressing on the church in our cultural moment, e.g., gender and race. A theologian's personal interests and their

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[18] Christopher Woznicki, "What are we Doing When We Pray? Rekindling a Reformation Theology of Petitionary Prayer," *Calvin Theological Journal* 53 (2018): 319–343; Christopher Woznicki, "Peter Martyr Vermigli's Account of Petitionary Prayer: A Reformation Alternative to Contemporary Two-Way Contingency Accounts" *Philosophia Christi* 20 (2018): 119–137; Christopher Woznicki, "Is Prayer Redundant? Calvin and the Early Reformers on the Problem of Petitionary Prayer," *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 60 (2017): 333–348.

understanding of what the church needs will drive so much of what they dedicate their time, study, prayer, and writing to.

One of your research interests is Jonathan Edwards. What sort of questions have you asked, and how have you approached his thought? How has your research has differed from mere historical study.

I have the privilege as serving as a Research Fellow at The Jonathan Edwards Center at Gateway Seminary. It's been a wonderful opportunity because it has allowed me to dedicate even more time to the study of Edwards's ideas. The field of Edwardsean studies is vast. It includes historians (and many subfields of history), literary critics, philosophers, systematic theologians, psychologists, and spiritual theologians, just to name a few subfields! It should be no surprise that the majority of my own work on Edwards has fallen into the categories of philosophy and analytic theology. Obviously Analytic Theology didn't exist during Edwards's day, but he's actually very amenable to the analytic approach to theology. You might even call him a Proto-Analytic Theologian! In his theologian treaties, and even his sermons, you see the analytic virtues of logical rigor, clarity, and parsimony of expression. And just like Analytic Theologians he loves definitions! Just think of his introduction to *The End for Which God Created the World*.[19] He opens this work by saying:

> To avoid all confusion in our inquiries and reasonings concerning the end for which God created the world, a distinction should be observed between the chief end for which an agent or efficient exerts any act and performs any work, and the ultimate end. These two phrases are not always precisely of the same signification; and though the chief end be always an ultimate end, yet every ultimate end is not always a chief end.

That sounds a lot like what you'd find in a contemporary piece of analytic theology! After analyzing different types of ends he goes on to analyze various ends for which God might have created the world. He presents a view, gives some objection, considers counter-objections and then lands on a position. Then he does this for various views before finally arguing for his own. Again, entertaining

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[19] Jonathan Edwards, *Ethical Writings*, ed. Paul Ramsey (New Haven: Yale, 1989), 405.

positions, considering objections and refutations, is part and parcel of what analytic theologians do. So Edwards really lends himself to being engaged with by analytic theologians. In fact some of the earliest analytic theology—the sort of work that was done before the approach was dubbed "Analytic Theology"—focused on Edwards. Alving Plantinga, Paul Helm, Jonathan Kvanvig, William Wainwright, and Philip Quinn—all philosophers of religion specializing in a variety of topics not directly related to Edwards—also spent time examining Edwards's contributions. It was actually through Oliver Crisp, who was working on the philosophical theology of Edwards before "Analytic Theology" was named in 2009, that I came into the study of Edwards using the analytic approach.

Where has Edwards proved most amenable to engagement through Analytic Theology? Definitely metaphysics. Topics that Edwards wrote about like identity, contingency/necessity of creation, and persistence of beings over time lend themselves to engagement by Analytic Theologians precisely because there is a vast analytic philosophical literature on these topics already. Edwards, therefore, becomes part of contemporary philosophical conversations. The contemporary literature can be used to analyze Edwards's positions. For example, Edwards doesn't make a distinction between endurance, perdurance, or exdurance. But these are terms used by analytic philosophers. The analytic theologian can analyze Edwards's writings on persistence in *Original Sin* using these contemporary categories. But the contributions aren't just a one way street. It's not just that contemporary philosophical literature sheds light on Edwards, the flow of ideas can go in the other direction too. Edwards has much to contribute to contemporary philosophy too. I'll share just one example; within Edwards's writings there are the seeds for a unique way of articulating the traditional doctrine of hell, one which avoids the problem of not being an "issuant account." My writing on this Edwardsean view of hell, not necessarily Edwards's own view but one developed using Edwards's convictions, demonstrates the ongoing relevance of Edwards for contemporary philosophical conversations.

I find Edwards to be relevant on a variety of topics that interest analytic theologians. Most recently I've written about the contribution that Edwardsean metaphysics can make on our doctrine of original sin, our understanding of penal substitution, spiritual

formation, ecclesiology, and resurrection.[20] I've also ventured into the subject of Edwarsean Spirit-Christology and his doctrine of creation. Some of my earliest work on Edwards, however, was in the more traditional historical vein and less analytic in nature.[21] That doesn't mean, however, that my own analytic theological writing on Edwards is ahistorical! A good analytic theologian or philosopher will always pay careful attention not to be anachronistic in their philosophical analysis of historical figures. Because of that they will always endeavor to study historical works on their own terms. Some analytic theologians will even make their own significant contributions to the field of history when doing analytic theology. I think of Oliver Crisp's book, *Jonathan Edwards on God and Creation*, which played a significant role in changing how Edwardsean scholars read Edwards. Unrelated to Edwards, we could point to the work of Richard Cross. His work on Reformation Christologies and on Duns Scotus is considered top-notch among historians and philosophers. Of course, Eleonore Stump is also an excellent model of an analytic theologian contributing to the historical side of her field. Her interpretation of Aquinas has been very influential. All that to say, in my own work on Edwards, while I don't think of myself as a historian, I am sensitive to historical considerations (my secondary concentration during my PhD was on historical theology) and the practices of good historiography. I also hope that some of my own work—especially around the doctrine of creation and identity—will help historians read Edwards more carefully. I hope it does that by helping historians see the philosophical moves Edwards makes that someone not well versed in philosophy might miss.

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[20] For some examples see: Woznicki, "Regeneration and Identity in Jonathan Edwards's Personal Narrative" in *Regeneration, Revival, and Creation,* eds. Chris Chun and Kyle Strobel (Eugene: Pickwick, 2020); Woznicki, "The Coherence of Penal Substitution: An Edwardsean Defense," *Tyndale Bulletin* 70 (2019): 95–115; Woznicki, "'Thus Saith the Lord': Edwardsean Anti-Criterialism and the Physicalist Problem of Resurrection Identity," *TheoLogica* 2 (2018): 115–135.

[21] See for example: Woznicki, "To Hell with the Enlightenment: Jonathan Edwards and the Doctrine of Hell," in *Jonathan Edwards within the Enlightenment: Controversy, Experience, and Thought*, eds. Daniel N. Gullota and John T. Lowe (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 299–315 and Woznicki, "Bad Books and The Glorious Trinity: Jonathan Edwards on the Sexual Holiness of the Church" in *McMaster Journal of Theology and Ministry* 16 (2015) 151–176.

In general, how could Baptists learn from the life and thought of Jonathan Edwards even though he served in a different theological tradition?

To really understand how Baptists—Southern Baptists and others—could learn from Edwards I think it's important to understand the influence that Edwards has had upon this group. There's a bunch written by some fantastic Baptist historians and theologians including Michael Haykin, Chris Chun, Stephen Holmes, Nathan Finn. Their work is a way for Baptists to begin thinking about how Edwards's work might be used to serve our tradition. I'd also point to the work of Obbie Tyler Todd who has, at least by my lights, written the most comprehensive account of Edwardsean influence on Southern Baptists. His book, *Southern Edwardseans*, identifies four ways that Edwards makes his way into Baptist life and thought. The first is direct Edwardsean influence. Think of Baptists who read Edwards's texts like *Religious Affections*, *Freedom of the Will*, or *The Life of David Brainerd*. You might even point to some contemporary Baptists, like John Piper, whose very ministry has been shaped by Edwards's theology. The second is through the New Divinity movement—this is the work of theologians who followed Edwards like Samuel Hopkins, Joseph Bellamy, and Jonathan Edwards Jr. The third is the Fullerite influence, which is probably where most historians have focused on. Edwards, as it is well known, wielded much influence on Andrew Fuller's understanding of evangelism and mission. Southern Baptists have paid careful attention to this influence. Just think of the Andrew Fuller Center at Southern Seminary or Chris Chun's book, *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in the Theology of Andrew Fuller*. So much our missionary impulse as a tradition, looks back to Fuller and subsequently, Jonathan Edwards because of him. Finally, Todd mentions implicit influence. This, as the name implies, goes back to the influence that Edwards had upon American theology in general, that has made its way into Baptist thought and life. We shouldn't think the Edwardsean influence is just a one way street thought! Edwards, we know, was familiar with the work of John Gill and actually thought pretty highly of Gill's work. He would have known Gill as "an eminent dissenting minister of the Baptist denomination."[22] He cites Gill in his *Blank Bible* and *Freedom*

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[22] Peter J. Thuesen, "Editor's Introduction," in Jonathan Edwards, *Catalogues of Books*, ed. Peter J. Thuesen (New Haven: Yale, 2008), 45.

of the Will.[23] Of course he registers disagreement with Gill's writing on infant baptism.[24] But Edwards is generally appreciative of Gill's writings.

Once you have a decent grasp on how influential Edwards was upon Baptists I think it's appropriate to begin retrieving him for contemporary theology. Of course we can turn to Edwards for his understanding of revival, conversion, religious affections—all important aspects of Baptist spirituality. We can also turn to him as a model for ministry that is committed to heart-felt study of God's word. Douglas Sweeny's book, *Jonathan Edwards and the Ministry of the Word: A Model of Faith and Thought* would be a great place for pastors to start as they think about how Edwards's thought might shape their ministry. Pastors might also be interested in George Marsden—the preeminent authority on Edwards's life—latest book, *An Infinite Fountain of Light: Jonathan Edwards for the Twenty-First Century.*

To be frank though, I think that, apart from the historical influence outlined above, Edwards's greatest influence won't be on Baptist-specific issues. I think his influence on Baptist life and thought will come mostly in areas where Baptists find themselves in the Protestant-Evangelical stream. Like I said earlier, apart from ecclesiology and certain emphases like covenant or the importance of the individual, the majority of Baptist theological contributions will come within the sphere of the catholic faith, and more specifically Protestantism and evangelicalism. Baptists are Protestants who swim within the stream of the Great Tradition. Most Baptists swim within the specifically evangelical part of that stream. I think it's okay to just own that. That's who we are, that's our history. Because that's our history we can look to others who swim within the same parts of that larger river. Edwards is one of those theologians. Yes he's not a Baptist, but he's part of our tradition. This goes back, again, to what I've said before. There's a number of Baptists who have made a concerted effort to help us see that us Baptists are card-carrying members of the Great Tradition. Because of that we have the privilege of being able to look back at theologians like

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[23] John Gill, *Cause of God and Truth (London, 1735); John Gill, The Cause of God and Truth, Being a Confutation of the Arguments from Reason Used by the Arminians; and Particularly by Dr. Whitby, in His Discourse on the Five Points*, (London, 1737).

[24] John Gill, The Argument from Apostolic Tradition, in Favour of Infant-Baptism… Consider'd (London, 1751)

Edwards—or Athanasius, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Julian of Norwich, or Calvin—and say, "These voices belong to us too, lets look back at them and see what we can learn" "Let's look back at them and see how they can help us become better 'Great Tradition Christians.'" But also, we can say, "lets look back at them to see how they can help us be better Baptists."

The Doctrine of Scripture in the First London Baptist Confessions of 1644/1646

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This study uses a social-scientific approach to describe the implicit and explicit doctrine of scripture as found in the First London Baptist Confession of 1644 and 1646.[1] The First London Baptist Confession of Faith came out in two editions, one in 1644 and the other in 1646 (hereafter referred to as LBC 1644 and 1646).[2] The Second London Baptist Confession of 1689 drew largely from the Westminster Confession of 1647 and gained even wider popularity. These were an expression of the post-1570 era of Protestant confessionalization.[3] Surprisingly, the two editions of the First London Baptist Confession have few references that explicitly address the doctrine of scripture. The articles that do address the doctrine of scripture are focused on how scripture should be used in the church, how it binds the conscience, and how it should be used to determine what is required for the worship of God. The First London Baptist Confession of 1644 has two articles dedicated to the topic of scripture and worship (7 and 8). But these two articles were combined in the 1646 edition in article 8.

These articles demonstrate that the First London Baptist Confession focused on *how* to use the scriptures but did not identify *what*

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[1] Special thanks to Bernhard U. Hermes for offering insightful corrections and comments on this paper.

[2] This study draws its data from the copies of the Angus Library and Archive at Regent's Park College, University of Oxford: "The Confession of Faith, of those Churches which are Commonly (though falsly) called Anabaptists," (London: 1644) and "A Confession of Faith of Seven Congregations or Churches of Christ in London, Which are Commonly (but unjustly) Called Anabaptists: The Second Impression Corrected and Enlarged," (London: Matthew Simmons, 1646).

[3] For introductory comments on the era of confessionalization within the context of the Reformation see Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation* (New York: Penguin, 2003), xxiv.

scriptures are. The reference to the "Canonicall Scriptures" in article 7 in the 1644 was left out of the 1646, which never explicitly mentions the "canon," but only refers to it in concept when referencing "the holy Scriptures." But what is the canon and what is its extent? Does the canon include the apocrypha? The salient point is that the doctrine of scripture is not so much stated in one single article as it is woven throughout, requiring a comprehensive analysis that draws all of the information together. This study focuses on internal data, rather than comparisons with external sources in order to offer a comprehensive analysis.

The social-scientific method utilized in this study uses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the doctrine of scripture throughout the First London Baptist Confession.[4] Using this method moves between the objectification of human action and the freedom that is inherently unique to human expression. There is a sense in which these confessions of faith have their own voice in distinction from individuals or other groups.[5] They reflect the united voices of local churches who have sought to reflect their agreement about certain doctrines. There is a role for qualitative humanities-like interpretation as well as quantitative analysis. According to the perspective of this study, confessional documents are greater than the sum of their parts, yet they exist as objects that can be subject to mathematical analysis.

This study proceeds in three major sections, each providing propositions that describe the doctrine of scripture. The first section sketches out the relevant confessional context of the First London Baptist Confession. The second section considers explicit statements on the doctrine of scripture and the third section draws together implicit data before offering a final summary in the conclusion.

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[4] The dataset I created utilizes a field called a "unit of reference," which refers to a contiguous range of scripture, whether one verse or a whole chapter. References that are non-contiguous and separated by ampersands, commas, or other markers were counted as distinct units of reference (e.g. Romans 5:6-8, 14, 17 counts as three distinct units of reference).

[5] On confessions having a voice in their own right see David H. Wenkel, "The Doctrine of the Extent of the Atonement Among the Early English Particular Baptists," *Harvard Theological Review* 112.3 (2019): 360.

The Doctrine of Scripture in Confessional Context

The London Baptist Confession of 1644 was the result of inter-action between seven Particular Baptist churches. The content and structure of this document shows that they likely drew from various documents and resources.[6] The structure of their confession drew heavily from the non-Baptist Separatist Confession (also called "A True Confession") of 1596, and possibly from the Aberdeen Con-fession (1616). It is noteworthy that the Separatist Confession of 1596 does not dedicate an article to the doctrine of scripture. How-ever, the Aberdeen Confession includes a section on the extent of the canon and its exclusivity vis-à-vis the apocrypha, the divine in-spiration of scripture, and the necessity of interpreting scripture with scripture.[7] This may point to the conclusion that the "True Confession" from Baptists in Amsterdam was mostly influential.[8] Additionally, the conjecture that the Calvinistic "theology of Dort" (1618-1619) was "most dominate for the writers of the London Confession" can be taken a step further.[9] The First London Con-fession, like the Canons of Dort, is focused on addressing the topics that made the English Particular Baptists subject to ridicule from

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[6] For a discussion of influences on the LBC of 1646 see James Leo Garrett, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009), 58; James M. Renihan, "An Examination of the Possible Influence of Menno Simons' *Foundation Book* upon the Particular Baptist Confession of 1644," *American Baptist Quarterly* 15.3 (1996): 190-207 and Gordon L. Belyea, "Origins of the Particular Baptists," *Themelios* 32.3 (2007): 40-67. Beth Allison Barr also draws attention to the connection between the LBC of 1646 and the Separatist Confes-sion of 1596 (*The Acts of the Apostles: Four Centuries of Baptist Interpretation* [Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009], 379.

[7] For a discussion of Aberdeen Confession on scripture see Charles Greig McCrie, *The Confessions of the Church of Scotland: Their Evolution in History* (Edinburgh: Macniven & Wallace, 1907), 31. A copy of the Aberdeen Confession can be found in David Calderwood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland: Volume 7* (Edin-burgh: The Wodrow Society, 1845), 233-242.

[8] For the view in which it is argued that The True Confession provided all the unique emphases of the LBC of 1644 rather than the 1616 Aberdeen Con-fession see Glen H. Stassen, "Anabaptist Influence in the Origin of the Particular Baptists," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 36.4 (1962), 339 n48.

[9] Stanley A. Nelson states, "It was, however, the theology of Dort that was most dominate for the writers of the London Confession" in "Reflecting on Bap-tist Origins: The London Confession of Faith of 1644," *Baptist History and Heritage* 29 (1994), 34.

pulpits and the press.[10] This polemically aimed structure *broadly* resembles the Canons of Dort's focus on engaging the polemical issues of the moment.

For comparison's sake it is helpful to consider several contemporary Protestant confessions from the pan-European area around the same timeframe, even if there is no evidence that they had any influence over the LBC of 1644 or 1646. The following three examples demonstrate that Protestant confessions from within a hundred years prior reflected a range of confessional interest devoted to the doctrine of scripture. First, The Scots Confession of 1560 article 19 on the doctrine of scripture is one of its shortest and briefly addresses its sufficiency and authority.[11] Second, The French Confession of Faith (1559) contains four articles on the doctrine of scripture, defining the canon, its extent and authority.[12] Third, The Belgic Confession of 1561 goes to even greater lengths to define a Protestant doctrine of scripture and dedicates six distinct articles to the topic. To summarize, the amount of attention given to the doctrine of scripture in Reformed confessions was somewhat dependent upon the historical impetus for the confession.

The structure and content of the First London Baptist Confession reflects its polemical context. The compression of the doctrine of scripture in the First London Baptist Confession from two articles in the 1644 to one article in the 1646 highlights the intensely contextual nature of the document and the driving forces behind its creation. Broadly speaking, although the earliest Particular Baptists advocated separatism from the Church of England, and although they sought to vigorously distinguish themselves from the Anabaptists and paedobaptists, their confession was largely an intra-Protestant matter. In fact, the First London Baptist Confession may have been a response to the Westminster Assembly's request that all Baptist dissenters explain themselves in writing.[13] The preface of the 1644 indicates that the confession was a response to mischaracterizations and false charges in "both in Pulpit and Print." The

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[10] For example, Daniel Featley, The Dippers Dipt, or, The Anabaptists duck'd and plung'd over head and eares, at a Disputation in Southwark (London: N.B. and Richard Royston, 1647).

[11] Arthur C. Cochrane, *Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 166.

[12] Cochrane, *Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century*, 144.

[13] Matthew C. Bingham, "English Baptists and the Struggle for Theological Authority, 1642-1646," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 68.3 (2017), 567.

apologetic purpose is indicated by the extended title on the cover of both the 1644 and 1646 editions and the "unjust" conclusion that they were "called Anabaptists."

These seven Baptist churches in London would have shared the doctrine of scripture with the Anglicans and Presbyterians as it pertained to the extent of the canon. It was the focus on polemical issues within the Protestant sphere of London (and its surroundings) that shaped the First London Confession and directed its content, meaning that there was little need for establishing articles on the doctrine of scripture beyond how it should be used. The doctrine of scripture was simply not a matter of contention between the Protestants. Rather, like the Canons of Dort, which was also polemically focused, the internal data evidences a robust doctrine of scripture woven into its warp and woof.

Explicit Data on the Doctrine of Scripture

This section describes the implicit doctrine of scripture in the First London Baptist Confession by considering the internal data from both editions. The internal data in the LBC of 1644 and 1646 comes from words, phrases, and the biblical references in the footnotes. There are strong elements of continuity between the two editions, but the data points for each are kept separate. As a whole, the 1644 edition has a total of 53 articles while 1646 edition has a total of 52 articles plus an additional special article on Christ's divinity appearing after article 16, also for a total of 53 articles. There are discontinuities and developments between the 1644 and the 1646 editions, but their doctrine of scripture remains unchanged, as demonstrated by the following seven propositions.

First, both editions explicitly delimit the concept of canonicity with reference to the Old and New Testaments. In the LBC of 1644, there are references to the "New Testament" in articles 36 and 39. In the LBC of 1646, article 49 refers to the centrality of "the truth of the Old and New Testament." A reference to the "New Testament" is also found in article 39 of the LBC of 1646 in the article describing baptism. Likewise, a reference to the "Old Testament" is found in the preface of the 1646 edition. Thus, the OT and the NT together constitute "the truth" which the church must confess as she goes on in obedience to Christ. While the list of canonical books is never explicitly defined, the confessions (especially article 7 in the 1644) leave no possibility for the "word of God" to exist outside of what was understood to be the Protestant canon. Article 7 of the LBC of

1644 captures this doctrine as it states: "The rule of this knowledge, faith, and obedience, concerning the worship and service of God, and all other Christian duties, is not mans inventions, opinions, devices, laws, constitutions, or traditions unwritten whatsoever, but only the word of God contained in the Canonical Scriptures (John 5:39; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Col 21:18, 23; Matt 15:9)."

Second, both editions use interchangeable language for the concept of canonicity. The 1644 edition has an explicit statement about the "canon" of Scripture while the 1646 has an implicit doctrine of canonicity. The explicit statement in the 1644 edition is found in Article 7 (as quoted above) while article 8 identifies the "Canonicall Scriptures" as the "written Word" in which God has revealed Christ and his promises. The 1646 article 8 largely retains the wording from the 1644's article 7. However, the 1646 drops the terminology of "the word of God contained in the Canonicall Scriptures" and replaces it with "the Word of God contained in the holy Scriptures" (article 8). The phrase "canonical scriptures" in the 1644 was changed to the "holy Scriptures" in the 1646. This change may reflect at attempt to popularize the confession by using terminology more common among the laity. The combination of articles 7 and 8 in the 1644 into article 8 in the 1646 also broadens the scope from the knowledge of Christ to the knowledge of all things related to the worship of God.

Third, both editions identify the divine authority of the scriptures. The authority of the scriptures is based on their unique characteristic of being the very word of God.[14] In both editions, the rule and locus of authority that directs the life worship of God's people is the canon of scripture alone. In articles 7 and 8 from the 1644 and article 8 from the 1646, the concept of inspiration is strongly present, even if the word is not. Despite the significant development in these articles, both editions utilize some reference to 2 Tim 3:15-17 with its reference to "all scripture being breathed out by God."[15] Both editions of the confession explicitly reject other sources of authority

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[14] Broadly speaking of Reformed confessions, Yuzo Adhinarta states: "Scripture is identified as the Word of God simply because the Reformed confessions believe and teach Scripture as God's speech" in *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Major Reformed Confessions and Catechisms of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Langham Monographs; Carlisle: Langham Partnership, 2012), 33.

[15] See the reference to 2 Tim 3:15 in articles 1, 7, 8 of the 1644 edition and article 8 in the 1646 edition.

concerning the worship and service of God which might bind the conscience, whether written as laws or unwritten as traditions.

Fourth, both editions identify faith as a necessary component for understanding the scriptures. In article 22 of both editions, faith is identified as providing the epistemological basis for understanding the scriptures. Article 22 in the 1646 states: "Faith is the gift of God wrought in the hearts of the elect by the Spirit of God: by which faith they come to know and believe the truth of the Scriptures, and the excellence of them above all other writings." Faith begets faith. But this circularity is not a "vicious circularity" because, as article 22 explains, there must be several broad movements or aspects to this faith as it knows, believes, beholds glory, understands attributes, and sees the excellencies of Christ.[16]

Fifth, both editions identify the Spirit of God as providing the power to submit to the scriptures. Again, article 22 in both editions is most helpful here, explaining that faith is given as a "gift of God" and by "the Spirit of God." This clarifies the role of faith by explaining that intellectual understanding of the scriptures is not based on one's internal abilities alone, it is based on God's grace. The Spirit of God gives people the ability to believe the scriptures through "power and fulness of the Spirit in its working and operations" (article 22 in both editions). The result of this is that the elect person is "enabled to case their souls upon this truth thus believed" (article 22 in both editions). Submitting to God's word (or "casting one's self upon it") is not mere intellectual assent but the work of one's entire being responding through the power of the Spirit.

Sixth, both editions urge the centrality of preaching the scriptures. The act of "prophesying" is defined internally in article 45 (1644) and article 44 (1646) as publicly teaching the word of God. The act of preaching the word of God in the congregational setting of worship provides "edification, exhortation, and comfort of the Church" (both editions). The concept of public worship is not merely a lecture or intellectual endeavor. This explanation of preaching, together with article 22, anticipates public worship as a spiritual event in which the Spirit of God is working in "power and fulness" (article 22) to enable people to understand it, submit to it, and act upon it in faith.

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[16] For an explanation of "vicious circularity" and inner testimony of the Holy Spirit see David H. Wenkel, "The Logic and Exegesis behind Calvin's Doctrine of the Internal Witness of the Holy Spirit to the Authority of Scripture," *Puritan Reformed Journal* 3.2 (2011): 100.

Seventh, both editions teach the sufficiency of scripture. The content of articles 7 and 8 (1644) and article in 8 (1646) teach that the scriptures provide "whatsoever is needfull for us to know, beleeve, and practice." This is the doctrine of the sufficiency of scripture–the teaching that the Bible already provides everything that the disciple of Jesus might need for holiness and godliness. This doctrine also means that there is no need for additional revelation from God. This covers the "whole duty" of a person's life. This doctrine also applies to the needs of the congregation and questions about how it should worship God corporately. The introduction of the 1646 edition identifies Jesus Christ as their "head and lawgiver" directing emphasis to the New Testament.

Implicit Data on the Doctrine of Scripture

This section describes the implicit doctrine of scripture in the First London Baptist Confession by considering the internal data from both editions. Besides the explicit references, there are more implicit dimensions to the doctrine of scripture that must be teased out by considering the data of the texts themselves.

First, both editions limit the extent of the canon by not using the apocrypha or extra-canonical sources. The definition of canonicity according to this confession is admittedly tautological: the canon is the Scriptures is the Word of God. While the extent of the canon is never defined, several points are clear from the internal data. Both editions include the Old Testament and New Testament in the canon of scripture. Neither confession draws from any apocryphal book or extra-canonical source such as the Psalms of Solomon, Sirach, 1-4 Maccabees, etc. This is an admittedly weak argument from silence, but the sheer weight of the data is remarkable: the 1644 has a total of 502 units of reference and the 1646 has a total of 444 units of reference. This means that out of over nine-hundred units of reference used to support doctrine, none of them includes a disputed source within Protestantism. This fact combined with the delimiting phrases about the word of God only being in the scriptures indicates that the apocrypha was excluded from the canon.

Second, both editions limit the extent of the canon to the traditional Protestant list. Out of the sixty-six books in the Protestant canon, the 1644 used a total of thirty-six biblical books and the 1646 used a total of thirty-eight books. Both confessions used the same number of New Testament books, excepting only the books of Philemon, 2 John, and 3 John. The two additions in the 1646 were 1 Samuel

and Numbers, both found in article 3 on the topic of God's decrees. With respect to the Old Testament, both confessions highly favor the Pentateuch, the wisdom books, and the major prophets of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. The only minor prophet cited by both confessions is Malachi and the only historical book of the Old Testament cited is 1 Samuel (by the 1646).

Third, both editions imply a doctrine of the theological unity of scripture through proof-texting. The joining of certain passages together by using "with" indicates that the confessions reflect an intention to interpret scripture with scripture (*Scriptura sui interpres*). It is important to observe that the very practice of proof-texting implies a certain warrant or source of authority.[17] For all of the challenges leveled at footnotes in theological treatises, it is a symbol that communicates the coinherence of "exegetical reasoning" and "dogmatic reasoning."[18] In practice, the proof-texting includes directives to read one biblical text alongside another by including the word "with." In both editions, there are eight prooftexts that use "with" to join different units of reference and four of these relate an Old Testament passage to a New Testament passage.[19] The Old Testament and the New Testament are understood to be theologically united in their testimony to Christ and in certain instances they can be read together. The use of "with" implies that different biblical books by different authors would harmoniously support the same doctrine.

Fourth, both editions imply a doctrine of the perspicuity of scripture though proof-texting of entire chapters of scripture. The practice of citing entire chapters from biblical books is found in both the 1644 and the 1646 edition. With the exception of books of the Bible that have only one chapter, such as Jude, the 1644 cites an entire chapter of the Bible in seven different articles, covering both the Old Testament (Genesis and Job) and the New Testament (John, 1 Corinthians, 1 Timothy, 2 Peter, Revelation).[20] On two occasions there are two

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[17] Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain, *Reformed Catholicity: The Promise of Retrieval for Theology and Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015), 117.

[18] Allen and Swain, *Reformed Catholicity*, 130.

[19] In one particularly interesting example from article 14 (1646), the prooftexts include an Old Testament passage about the coming "prophet like Moses" (Deut 18:15) connected "with" a New Testament passage that quotes it (Acts 3:22, 23). This indicates that the "with" indicator in proof-texts was sometimes used for Old Testament citations in the New Testament.

[20] In the 1644 edition, see John 14 in article 1, Genesis 1 in article 4, Job 1 and 2 in article 19.a and 2 Peter 2 in 19b, and 1 Timothy 3 in article 36.

entire chapters cited in one unit of reference (Job 1 & 2 and Revelation 2 & 3). Additionally, there is one instance in article 35 that refers to a large section of a chapter by proof-texting in early copies as "1 Cor 12:12 to the end." In this last citation from 1 Corinthians 12, the section on the body and its members, from verse 12 to 31, constitutes about sixty percent of the chapter by verse count. Most of these chapter proof-texts in the 1644 were removed in the revision process of the 1646 edition, but the 1646 continues this practice of citing entire chapters of scripture. The 1646 cites an entire chapter of Bible in five different articles, also covering both the Old Testament (Psalms and Ezekiel) and the New Testament (Romans and Revelation).[21] The proof-texting of entire chapters implies some doctrine of clarity of scripture because the citation of an entire chapter assumes that the reader is reasonably able to correlate the doctrine being supported with a rather expansive range of scripture. In other words, when an entire chapter is cited, some of the interpretative work is left to the reader as to how the scripture connects to the doctrine being established. Such work can only be done with texts that are sufficiently clear to the reader.

Fifth, both editions reflect an implicit doctrine of New Testament priority. Both confessions point to the presupposition that the Old Testament was best understood through the clarity of the New Testament. The prominence of this implicit doctrine in the LBC of 1644 and 1646 is striking when one considers the data. Out of the 502 units of reference to scripture in the 1644, only 71 or 14% are supported by the Old Testament. In the 1646 edition, only 80 out of 444 units of reference, or 18% of proof-texts are drawn from the Old Testament. This means that most of the time, the writers of the confession looked to the New Testament to support their doctrine. This emphasis finds more explicit teaching in the article 25 (both editions) against preparationism by the Law of Moses.[22] This may explain the source of the charges of denying the Old Testament, as alluded to in the introduction of the 1646 edition. However, the introduction to the 1646 edition makes it clear that they contested

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[21] In the 1646 edition, see Psalm 144 in article 3, Romans 3, 7, and 10 in article 34, Ezekiel 37 in article 35, Revelation 2 and 3 in article 46 and Revelation 21 in article 47.

[22] For the conclusion that the First London Baptist Confession holds to a soft or chastened preparationism see David H. Wenkel, "Only and Alone the Naked Soul: The Anti-Preparation Doctrine of the London Baptist Confessions of 1644/1646." *Baptist Quarterly* 50.1 (2019): 19-29.

the charge that they denied the Old Testament. This hermeneutical principle of New Testament priority shares continuity with the later Second London Baptist Confession of 1689, which states in article 1.7, "All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all."[23] While the gospel remains clear, the New Testament is given priority when it comes to interpreting that which is difficult, especially the Old Testament. This principle worked concurrently with the aforementioned point: that the scriptures should interpret the scriptures.

Conclusion

This study offers a social-scientific description of the doctrine of scripture in the First London Baptist Confession, considering both explicit and implicit characteristics in eleven propositions. This study offers an important advancement in this area by using internal data and treating the two editions of the confession as an artifact of the humanities with quantifiable data. As a whole, the doctrine of scripture in the First London Baptist Confession occupies a space between the Canons of Dort, with its doctrine of scripture woven through, and the hearty treatment of the matter in six articles as found in the Belgic Confession of 1561. Some aspects of scripture are clearly and explicitly addressed, and some are not. As the first Calvinistic Baptist confession was edited, the topic of scripture contracted rather than expanded as articles 7 and 8 from the 1644 were compressed into article 8 in the 1646. Both of these early editions of the First London Baptist Confession celebrate the truthfulness and excellence of Scripture. Even where explicit references to inspiration are not found, the *concept* of the inspiration of Scripture is certainly woven through. This analysis of internal data such as keywords, proof-texts, and phrases point to the way in which the New Testament was given priority for doctrinal justification because of its clarity and the nature of progressive revelation.

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[23] Nehemiah Coxe, likely one of the co-editors of the LBC of 1689, also articulated this perspective when he wrote, "the best interpreter of the Old Testament is the Holy Spirit speaking to us in the new" in Nehemiah Coxe and John Owen, *Covenant Theology from Adam to Christ*, ed. Ronald D. Miller, James M. Renihan, and Fransisco Orozco (Palmdale, CA: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2005), 36.

Baptist Polity Inherited from Congregationalism

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The fact that Baptist polity – known as (small-c) congregationalism – is inherited from Congregationalism has been obscured by several bizarre historical anomalies.[1] One is that New England Congregationalism, once so dominant that early American Baptists feared persecution from it, seems to have disappeared into the thin air of history. Congregationalism has so diminished as a movement, we Baptists sometimes have to be reminded that the term applies to a denomination as well as a polity. They have no large, living institution faithfully preserving their theology and traditions today. (Harvard, sadly, doesn't count.) The result is that we have few latter-day Congregationalists reminding Baptists of their family resemblance. Westminster Seminary, J. Gresham Machen, and R. C. Sproul remind Presbyterians of their heritage. Few have done so for orthodox Congregationalists and made the connection to modern Baptists. Yet, as Stanley Grenz (1950-2005) wrote, "One crucial and lasting product of the Puritan movement of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries [-- which was largely Congregationalism in America --] is the existence of a worldwide Baptist denomination".[2] But Baptists typically see Puritans – and thus Congregationalists (who in early America were virtually synonymous) – as people they are contrasted to rather than favorably compared with. The result of the fog around Baptist origins is that modern Baptists typically

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[1] For example, Carol Crawford Holcomb, in "Doing Church Baptist Style: Congregationalism," *Baptist History and Heritage* (2001), tells the story of Baptist origins and polity without any reference to Congregationalism (the movement). http://www.centerforbaptiststudies.org/pamphlets/style/congregationalism.htm, accessed July 18, 2023.

[2] Stanley Grenz, *Isaac Backus — Puritan and Baptist: His Place in History, His Thought, and Their Implications for Modern Baptist Theology* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983), 1.

do not see their connection to Congregationalism. But any fair-minded Baptist historian would admit that we can trace Baptists, both General and Particular, arising from Congregationalism, both in England, where Congregationalists and Baptists were thoroughly intermingled, and in America where Congregationalism was the seed-bed from which Baptists sprung. Congregationalism was a significant minority of the Puritan movement in England and almost the unanimous polity of Puritans in New England. Thomas Edwards (1599–1647) said Baptists were "the highest form of Independency," thus identifying Baptists as a type of Congregationalist.[3] As such, Baptists inherited all the major – and many of the minor – features of their polity.

Regenerate Church Membership

Congregationalists are unique in the Reformed movement for seeking to preserve regenerate church membership along with infant baptism. As Mark Dever pointed out, prior to Reformed theology, all Christians believed in regenerate church membership.[4] However, they believed in it on the basis of baptismal regeneration, usually applied to infants. That is, they held that infants were regenerated when baptized and were thus members of the church. The Reformed movement rightly saw that as not only lacking Biblical support but a threat to the gospel, making salvation dependent on a rite.[5] Therefore, they rejected baptismal regeneration.[6] However, they clung to infant baptism on the basis that it was a "sign of the covenant" and thus baptized infants were in a covenant with God and thus members of the church, even though they were, admittedly,

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[3] Michael Watts, *The Dissenters* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1978), 97-98; according to James M. Renihan, *Edification and Beauty: The Practical Ecclesiology of the English Particular Baptists 1675-1705* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2008) 13.

[4] 9 Marks at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary conference, September 23-24, 2022. Video from R. Scott Clark, "Did The Reformation Corrupt The Gospel By Baptizing Babies?," July 8, 2023. https://heidelblog.net/2023/07/did-the-reformation-corrupt-the-gospel-by-baptizing-babies/.

[5] "Regeneration is a sovereign work of God the Holy Spirit." R. C. Sproul, What would you say in response to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration?," Ligonier, undated, https://www.ligonier.org/learn/qas/response-to-baptismal-regeneration, accessed July 17, 2023.

[6] "The Reformed churches rejected the doctrine of baptismal regeneration . . . They consciously rejected the late patristic, medieval, and Byzantine position on baptismal regeneration." (Clark, "Did The Reformation Corrupt The Gospel By Baptizing Babies?," July 8, 2023.)

unregenerate. They claim, "Baptism is the rite of initiation into the visible church, which consists of all those who possess faith in Christ, along with their children."[7] The covenant theology that taught that baptism replaces circumcision and therefore the children of church members can be baptized implies that unregenerate people are admitted, through baptism, into the church. Thus, the doctrine of regenerate church membership was sacrificed.

However, Congregationalists, though Reformed in every other aspect and following the theology of covenant baptism, sought to preserve regenerate church membership.[8] They appear to have achieved this by a two-tiered system of membership. First, baptized infants were accepted as church members, even "if not regenerate," as a kind of half-way member, until they owned the covenant and were recognized as one of the visible saints. As such, they were still under "church watch," and so subject to church discipline, and were promised "a more hopeful way of attaining regenerating grace."[9] These second-class, baptized members, however, were not allowed to take the Lord's Supper or (originally in New England) have their children baptized. In order to get access to the Lord's Supper and the privilege of having their children baptized (prior to the 1662 Half-way synod), they had to become full-members by showing signs of regeneration, usually give a public testimony of regeneration to the church, and so "own the covenant." Thus, Congregationalism strove to preserve the doctrine of regenerate church membership, even if imperfectly.

Baptists sometimes speak of regenerate church membership as if it were an exclusive doctrine of their own, or perhaps shared with the Anabaptists. J. D. Freeman declared, in 1905, "This principle of a regenerate Church membership, more than anything else, marks our distinctiveness in the Christian world today."[10] John Hammett calls regenerate church membership "the Baptist mark of the

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[7] Kevin Gardner, "What Is the Presbyterian and Reformed View of Baptism?," *Ligonier*, June 20, 2022, https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/ presbyterian-reformed-view-baptism, accessed July 17, 2023.

[8] The Cambridge Platform calls baptism "the seal" of the covenant. The Cambridge Platform, Chapter XII, paragraph 7b. http://quintapress.web-mate.me/PDF_Books/John_Cotton/The_Cambridge_Platform_v1.pdf, accessed July 21, 2023.

[9] The Cambridge Platform, Chapter XII, paragraph 7b.

[10] Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches*, 82.

church. . . a historic distinctive of Baptists."[11] If by "distinctive," Freeman and Hammett mean something unique to Baptists that sets them off from all other movements, these claims are untrue. In 2013, Jonathan Leeman wrote, "The point of the doctrine [of re-generate church membership], historically at least, is to correct the error of paedobaptism."[12] Perhaps that was how the doctrine has been used in some Baptist polemics against paedobaptism, but the statement that the doctrine historically arose for that purpose is false. As Dever observed, regenerate church membership was the universal Christian doctrine until Reformed theology. It is also false because Puritan Congregationalists, while clinging to paedobaptism, also held to regenerate church membership. Indeed, they pioneered many of the practices developed to safeguard it.

In 1572, an early Puritan, John Field (1545–1588), defined a church as "a company or congregation of the faithful called and gathered out of the world by the preaching of the gospel."[13] In 1645, across the Atlantic in New England, two Puritan pastors defined the church similarly. Thomas Hooker (1586 – 1647), wrote "visible saints are the only true and meet matter whereof a visible Church should be gathered."[14] John Cotton (1585 –1652) wrote,

> The church which Christ in his Gospel hath instituted, and to which he hath committed the keys of his kingdom, the powers of binding and loosing, the table and seals of the Covenant, the Officers and Censures of his Church, the admin-istration of all public Worship and Ordinances, is, *Caetus fidelium*, a Communion of Saints, a combination of faithful godly men, meeting for that end, by common and joint

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[11] John S. Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2005), 17, 81, 98.

[12] Matthew Barrett, "Regenerate Membership and a True Politic (Jonathan Leeman)," *Credo*, August 12, 2013, https://credomag.com/2013/08/regener-ate-membership-and-a-true-politic-jonathan-leeman/, accessed July 19, 2023.

[13] According to Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (New York: New York University Press, 1963), 14.

[14] Thomas Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline* (1645); according to Horton Davies, *Worship of the American Puritans* (Soli Deo Gloria Publications), 180.

consent, into one congregation; which is commonly called a particular visible church.[15]

Three years later, in 1648, the New England Congregationalists met and agreed upon the Cambridge Platform which defined the local church as "a part of the militant visible church, consisting of a company of saints by calling, united into one body by a holy covenant, for the public worship of God, and the mutual edification of one another in the fellowship of the Lord Jesus."[16]

Notice, the local church consists of "saints by [God's] calling." While they admit that despite their best efforts at guarding the front door of the church, "some or more of them be unsound and hypocrites inwardly," it is their intention of striving for true regenerate church membership.[17] In 1665, the "grandfather of the modern missionary movement" and New England Puritan pastor John Eliot (1604 –1690), defined a true church as the "company of visible saints."[18] "Visible Saints" were professed believers who showed signs of regeneration. They were the only proper members of a Congregational church. This doctrine of the local church was essential to Congregationalism and was inherited by the Baptists who sprung from them.

The First London Baptist Confession (1644) described the local church as "a company of visible Saints, called and separated from the world, by the word and Spirit of God, to the visible profession of the faith of the Gospel."[19] The General Baptists were even more explicit in their belief in regenerate church membership in their 1660 Confession, declaring that "the new Testament way of bringing in Members into the Church [is] by regeneration."[20] Similarly, the Second London Baptist Confession (1689), defined the church:

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[15] John Cotton, *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New-England, Measured by the Golden Reed of the Sanctuary* (London: Matthew Simmons, 1645), republished Shropshire, England: Quinta Press, 2008, 5.

[16] *The Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline, Adopted in 1648 and The Confession of Faith, Adopted in 1680* (Boston: Perkins & Whipple, 1850); Chapter II, 6, p. 51.

[17] The Cambridge Platform, Chapter III, paragraph 1.

[18] John B. Carpenter, "New England Puritans: The Grandparents of Modern Protestant Missions," *Missiology*, 30:4 (October 2002), 519-532. Eliot, *Communion of Churches* (Cambridge, MA.: Marmaduke Johnson, 1665), 1.

[19] First London Baptist Confession, Article XXXIII, 1644, https://www.reformedreader.org/ccc/h.htm, accessed July 17, 2023.

[20] General Baptist Statements of Faith, XI, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, https://www.nobts.edu/baptist-center-theology/ confessions/General_Baptist_Statements_of_Faith.pdf, accessed July 20, 2023.

"The members of these churches are saints by calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing (in and by their profession and walking) their obedience unto that call of Christ."[21] Pastor Nathan Rose is correct: "Since our beginning, Baptists have believed that church membership should be limited to those who have experienced regeneration."[22]

Testified Regenerate Membership

In New England, where Congregationalism dominated, the churches adopted the requirement of a "testified regenerate membership."[23] Soon after John Cotton's arrival in 1633, a revival ensued among the new colonists and public testimonies were common. So, they soon required these public testimonies for admission to church membership. "For the first time in Christendom," claims Sydney Ahlstrom, "a state church with vigorous conceptions of enforced uniformity in belief and practice was requiring an internal, experiential test of church membership."[24]

Richard Mather (1596-1669) explained the practice. Prospective members were asked first to "speake concerning the Gift and Grace of Justifying Faith in their soules, and the manner of Gods dealing with them in working it in their hearts." Then, "Secondly, we heare them speake what they do believe concerning the Doctrine of Faith."[25] The Cambridge Platform explained that only those who "in charitable discretion . . . may be accounted saints by calling" are to be admitted as members, the "charitable discretion" being that of the members.[26] It allowed for prospective members with "excessive fear or other infirmity" to avoid a public testimony but it

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[21] Second London Baptist Confession, Chapter 26, Paragraph 6, 1689, https://www.the1689confession.com/1689/chapter-26, accessed July 17, 2023.

[22] Nathan Rose, "Being Baptist in the 21st Century: Regenerate Church Membership," Baptist 21, 2020. https://baptist21.com/sbc/2020/being-baptist-in-the-21st-century-regenerate-church-membership/, accessed July 20, 2023.

[23] Robert G. Pope, *The Half-Way Covenant: Church Membership in Puritan New England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 73-74, 200, 224, 227.

[24] Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 146.

[25] Richard Mather, *Church-Government and Church-Covenant Discussed* (London: R. O. and G. D., 1643), 23.

[26] The Cambridge Platform, Chapter III, paragraph 2.

encouraged as "most expedient" that prospective members "make their *relations and confessions* personally with their own mouth."[27]

This practice of expecting prospective members to be able to express an experience of God's regenerative work further emphasized the commitment of the Congregational church to be an assembly of visible saints. It was a way of safeguarding entry into the church so that it continues to be made up only of the regenerate. By 1700, Richard's son, Increase Mather (1639-1723) defended the practice. Applicants to church membership should be examined by the congregation because "church members ought to be believers, saints, regenerate persons. And therefore the Church should put the persons who desire admission into their holy communion to declare and show whether it be thus with them, whether they have truly repented of their sins, and whether they truly believe on Christ."[28]

Thus, explained Geoffrey Nuttall (1911 –2007), Congregational minister and church historian, "the demand that candidates for church membership shall not only possess a personal and conscious Christian experience but be both able and willing [to put] it in words . . . was . . . a *sine qua non* of any sharing in 'church-state,' as the Congregationalists men understood this."[29] That is, Congregationalists developed a tradition intent on guarding regenerate church membership.

"Testified regenerate membership" was retained by the new Baptist churches in America and preserved for generations.[30] Benjamin Keach (1640-1704) wrote that an applicant for church membership "must give an account of his Faith; and of the Word of Grace upon his Soul before the Church; and also strict Enquiry must be made about his Life and Conversation."[31] Benjamin Griffith (1688-1768), pastor of Montgomery Baptist Church (Bucks County, Pennsylvania), described the meeting of the church and the general questions the pastor should put to the prospective member,

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[27] The Cambridge Platform, Chapter XII, paragraph 4.

[28] Increase Mather, *The Order of the Gospel* (Boston: B. Green and J. Allen, 1700), 19.

[29] Geoffrey Nuttall, *Visible Saints: The Congregational Way, 1640-1660* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell), 111.

[30] Robert G. Pope, *The Half-Way Covenant: Church Membership in Puritan New England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 73-74, 200, 224, 227.

[31] Benjamin Keach, "The Glory of a True Church and Its Discipline Display'd," *Polity: Biblical Arguments on How to Conduct Church Life,* Editor Mark Dever (Washington, DC: Center for Church Reform, 2001), 70.

firstly "the ground and reason of his hope," then his knowledge of "the principal doctrines of faith and order, and, finally, "whether such a person's life is answerable to such a profession." Then the church votes whether to accept the applicant.[32] During the American Revolution, Deborah Sampson (1760-1827) of Middleborough, Massachusetts became a member of Third Baptist Church, giving a testimony of conversion.[33] She later became renown for disguising herself as a man to join the Continental Army. Testifying to a conversion experience was required for membership in Baptist churches as they spread south and west.[34] Over a generation later in 1836, Baptist missionary Isaac McCoy, advised Native American Pastor John Davis to bar from membership those who "could not give satisfactory evidence of their conversion."[35]

Letters of Dismission

Despite their convictions about the priesthood of all believers, church autonomy, and non-creedalism, all of which sound very familiar to modern Baptists, the New England Congregationalists were not modern individualists. The Cambridge Platform looked scornfully on the kind of church hopping that is now regrettably common in our culture.

Church members may not *remove* or *depart* from the Church, and so one from another as they please, nor without just and weighty cause, but ought to live and dwell together, for as much as they are commanded not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. Such *departure* tends to the dissolution and ruin of the body: as the pulling of stones and pieces of timber from the building, and of members from the natural body, tend to the destruction of the whole.[36]

Church members were, then, at least in theory, prohibited from transferring membership to another local church without the permission of their former church. However, if a church member moved, he or she could transfer membership by letter. The

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[32] Benjamin Griffith, "A Short Treatise" (1743), *Polity*, ed. Dever, 99-101.

[33] Thomas Kidd and Barry Hankin, *Baptists in America: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 54.

[34] Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 11.

[35] Kidd and Hankins, *Baptists in America,* 108.

[36] The Cambridge Platform, Chapter XIII, paragraph 1. Original emphasis.

Cambridge Platform declared, "Order requires that a member thus removing, have letters testimonial, and of dismission from the church whereof he yet is, unto the Church whereof he desires to be joined . . .". The purpose of this was that the receiving church "not be corrupted in receiving deceivers and false brethren," again to uphold regenerate church membership. [37] In a Congregational church, the only two means of entry into membership were by a testimony of regeneration or by a letter from a prior church. The prior church had either borne witness to such a testimony or received a letter from another church, eventually back to one that had originally accepted the member on testimony of regeneration.

When John Farnum sought to transfer membership from the local Baptist church to Increase Mather's (1639-1723) North Church, Mather asked the Baptists if they had any objection, thus participating with the Baptists as if with another Congregational church.[38] Baptists participated in this practice. Benjamin Keach, in England in 1697, wrote that the "lawful dismission of a member to another church" is "a Letter Testimonial, or Recommendation of the Person."[39] In America, The Charlestown Association in 1774 wrote, "When a member removes his residence nearer to another church of the same faith and order, he is bound in duty to procure a letter of dismission from the church to which he belongs."[40] William B. Johnson (1782-1862) described the practice at his time: a Baptist church member moving to a new location will "ask a letter of commendation, as to character and standing, from the church he leaves. This he will take to the church near which he goes to reside, and presenting it, ask admission into its membership."[41] These letters were accepted by the receiving church because it has, according to Joseph S. Baker (1798-1877), "full confidence in the piety, the purity, and the good order of the former" church.[42]

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[37] The Cambridge Platform, Chapter XIII, paragraph 7.

[38] Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570-1700* (Chapel Hill: The University of Carolina Press, 1991), 199.

[39] Keach, "The Glory of a True Church and Its Discipline Display'd," *Polity*, 80.

[40] Charlestown Association, "A Summary of Church Discipline" (1774), *Polity*, 124.

[41] W. B. Johnson, "The Gospel Developed" (1846), *Polity*, 188.

[42] Joseph S. Baker, "Queries Considered" (1847), *Polity*, 286.

There are only two proper ways into membership in a Baptist church: either baptism or a letter of transfer (assuming the previous church still exists, is orthodox, or is willing to send a letter; if either of these cases don't exist, then acceptance by statement of faith of a baptized person is acceptable.)[43] Allowing members to join without a letter of dismission or commendation may undermine the discipline of a prior church, defeats the purpose of accountability church membership exists for, and may allow people who are "unsound and hypocrites inwardly" to be admitted into the church.[44] The Baptist practice was inherited from the Congregationalists, except that baptism, following the pattern in the New Testament, was combined with the profession of faith, as marking entrance to the church. That is, Baptists simplified the Congregational practice by no longer detaching baptism from full-membership, thus actually returning to the universal (i.e. "catholic") Christian practice of having baptism as the entrance to the church. Otherwise, they kept Congregational practices safeguarding regenerate church membership.

In my youth, these practices were still enforced, having moved several times and our membership received by Southern Baptist Churches "by letter." In one church I pastored, I saw old forms that had been mass printed to answer another church's request for a letter, with boxes to check for whether the member's request to transfer membership was approved or denied. The practice of transferring membership by letter from one church to another was so common, churches sought printers to mass produce the forms. While I am sure some churches still practice it, in my experience of about 20 years pastoring, I've only once seen it properly done.

Church Covenanting

Church covenants arose from Congregationalism's doctrine of the church. The Separatist Confession of Faith of 1596 stated that the church consists only of those who "willingly join together in Christian communion and orderly covenant."[45] Robert Browne

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[43] Timothy Fish, "How to Join a Baptist Church," Bethlehem Baptist Church, January 22, 2005, http://bethlehembaptistchurch.info/how-to-join-a-baptist-church/, accessed July 20, 2023.

[44] The Cambridge Platform, Chapter III, paragraph 1.

[45] Separatist Confession of Faith of 1596, Paragraph 33, https://www.reformedreader.org/ccc/atf.htm, accessed March 17, 2023.

(1540–1630) identified the church as a company of the covenanted. Browne held that a voluntary covenant bound church members together and to God. He, along with Henry Jacob (1563–1624), are the fathers of English congregationalism. The Cambridge Platform (1648) explained that "the form of the visible church" was

> the visible covenant, agreement; or consent, whereby they give up themselves unto the Lord, to the observing of the ordinances of Christ together in the same society, which is usually called the "church covenant" for we see not otherwise how members can have church power over one another mutually.[46]

In contrast to the parish church with its boundaries that included the unconverted, what held a congregational church together was a commitment of the individual members to God and each other. That commitment was expressed in a covenant. Champlin Burrage stated, "In congregational polity the covenant was fundamental."[47] Charles Deweese defines a church covenant as "a series of written pledges based on the Bible which members voluntarily make to God and to one another regarding their basic moral and spiritual commitments and the practice of their faith."[48] The church covenant was the local church's description of how a visible saint lived.

Early English Baptists inherited and carried on the Congregational idea "of a church covenant as a solemn agreement voluntarily entered into by a particular congregation of believers."[49] The First London Baptist Confession (1644) defined a church, in part, as "joined to . . . each other by mutual agreement."[50] Henry Jacob left the Church of England in 1616. He planted a semi-separatist church which became a fount for Baptists, although itself Congregational.[51] At the founding, Jacob had the members join hands and stand "ringwise" (i.e. in a circle) covenanting to walk together in God's

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[46] The Cambridge Platform, Chapter IV, paragraph 3.

[47] Champlin Burrage, *The Church Covenant Idea: Its Origin and Its Development* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1904), 98.

[48] Charles W. Deweese, *Baptist Church Covenants* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990), 81.

[49] Timothy and Denise George (ed.), *Baptist Confessions, Covenants, and Catechisms* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 14.

[50] Paragraph 33. George and George (ed.), *Baptist Confessions,* 45.

[51] Anthony L. Chute, Nathan A. Finn, Michael A. G. Haykin, *The Baptist Story: From English Sect to Global Movement* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Academic, 2015), 20.

ways.[52] William Bartlet (c. 1615-1682) of Devon explained that the purpose of these covenants was to show "how and in what manner the godly are to embody" (i.e. to incarnate the Christian life.) "They are to voluntarily to give up themselves to the Lord and one another, as those of Macedonia did, 2 Cor. 8:15 (sic), to walk together in all the ordinances of Christ, . . . in a mutual consent, covenant, or agreement . . . Jer. 50:5."[53]

In England, church covenants sometimes held together particular churches whose members practiced paedobaptism and exclusive credobaptism. That is, some Congregational churches, like John Bunyan's church in Bedford, England, were a mixture of infant baptizing and believers-only baptizing. New Road Church, Oxford, England declared, "Some of us do verily believe that the sprinkling of the infant children of believing parents is true Christian baptism."[54] The covenant declared the commitment of Congregationalists of disparate convictions about baptism, some of whom, today, we call "Baptists." Matthew Bingham claims the term "Baptist" obscures the close relation of the Particular Baptists with Congregationalists. So, he prefers to call them "baptistic congregationalists."[55]

Baptistic congregationalists depended on Congregationalism for the doctrine and the text of church covenants.[56] Charles Deweese admitted, "Baptist churches often inherited the church covenant directly from their Congregational roots," although he mistakenly classifies Congregationalists as "another religious tradition."[57]

Across the Atlantic, in New England, Congregationalists and Baptists were nearly universal in practicing church covenanting.[58] The Cambridge Platform (1648), as quoted earlier, stated, "A Congregational church is . . .   united into one body, by a holy

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[52] Horton Davies, *The Worship of the English Puritans,* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1997), 94, 275.

[53] William Bartlet, p. 106 (referring to 2 Cor. 8:5); according to Nuttall, *Visible Saints*, 75.

[54] Deweese, *Baptist Church Covenants*, 34.

[55] Matthew C. Bingham, *Orthodox Radicals: Baptist Identity in the English Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 4, 18, 23.

[56] Burrage, *The Church Covenant Idea*, 182.

[57] Deweese, *Baptist Church Covenants*, 36.

[58] W. T. Whitley, "Church Covenants," *The Baptist Quarterly* VII (1934-35), 227.

covenant."[59] It declared, "Saints by calling must have a visible political union among themselves, or else they are not yet a particular church." That is, until a gathering had agreed upon a covenant, they were not properly a church.[60] In early New England, new churches were planted when the inhabitants of an area accepted each other's conversion, on their testimony, and entered into a covenant to "give up themselves unto the Lord, to the observing of the ordinances of Christ together in the same society."[61] Church covenants grew to be so vital to New England Congregationalism that three prominent Congregational pastors, Richard Mather (1596 – 1669), Hugh Peters (1598-1660), and John Davenport (1597-1670), joined to propagate covenanting. They insisted that covenants were not only for "Brownists" (i.e. separatists, like the Plymouth colony) but for all Congregationalists.[62]

The normativeness of covenanting was no less among American Baptists. In Kittery, Maine, William Screven (c. 1629 – 1713) planted a Baptist church with a covenant.[63] That church sent Screven and at least ten other members to Charlestown, South Carolina, transplanting what became the first Baptist church in the South. They took the original covenant with them. Later under Pastor Richard Furman (1755-1825), that church, adopted a new covenant in 1791. It was revised in 1852 and remains their covenant to this day.[64] Meanwhile, the association which grew out of the First Baptist Church of Charlestown, the Charlestown Baptist Association, published a *Summary of Church Discipline* (1774). It required new church members to subscribe to their church's covenant.[65]

The influential New Hampshire Baptist Confession (1833) was issued with a covenant. It served, practically, as a first draft for John Newton Brown's covenant (1853). That covenant became standard.

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[59] *The Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline, Adopted in 1648 and The Confession of Faith, Adopted in 1680*, Boston: Perkins & Whipple, 1850; Chapter II, 6, p. 51.

[60] The Cambridge Platform, Chapter 4, paragraph 1.

[61] Williston Walker, *A History of the Congregational Churches in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1894), 217-218.

[62] Richard Mather, Hugh Peters, John Davenport, *An Apologie of The Churches in New-England for Church-Covenant* (London: Printed by T.P. and M.S. for Benjamin Allen, 1643), 41.

[63] Deweese, *Baptist Church Covenants*, 41.

[64] Lori Putnam, First Baptist Church of Charlestown, email correspondence, March 10, 2023.

[65] Greg Wills, "The Church: Baptists and Their Churches in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Polity*, 37.

It is still often found pasted in hymnals or displayed prominently on church walls. Southern Baptists so widely accepted it that they included it in the 1956 Baptist Hymnal.[66] Both the Baptist Faith and Messages of 1963 and 2000 declare that "A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ" consists of "baptized believers who are associated by covenant." That was originally a literal reference to specific, local church covenants. Mark Dever claims, "When persons joined a Baptist church, they subscribed to its covenant."[67] John Hammett notes that church covenants were "constitutive for Baptist churches in North America."[68] Deweese noted that original Baptists "viewed covenants, along with believer's baptism and church discipline, as means of nurturing and safeguarding the New Testament emphasis on a regenerate church membership."[69]

Priesthood of All Believers

Congregationalism, according to Andrew M. Fairbairn (1838-1912), "was the complete negation of . . . sacerdotalism . . . . It will allow no official person to stand between the soul and God; they two must meet each other face to face."[70] That is, because all believers were priests, no subset of believers in the church are priests between the rest of the church and God. The priesthood of all believers means that "every member of the covenant has direct, immediate access to God in Christ." According to Cyril Eastwood (1908-1987), the "doctrine of the priesthood of all believers became a central issue early in the history of Independency" (i.e. Congregationalism.) Indeed, Eastwood claims, "It has been more frequently enunciated and at the same time more frequently misunderstood in the Independent tradition than any other."[71] John Hammett notes

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[66] Capitol Hill Baptist Church, "History of our Church Covenant," https://www.capitolhillbaptist.org/history-of-our-church-covenant/, accessed March 31, 2022.

[67] Mark Dever, "The Noble Task: The Pastor as Preacher and Practitioner of the Marks of the Church," *Polity*, 23.

[68] John Hammett, "The Why and Who of Church Membership," *Baptist Foundations*, 178.

[69] Deweese, *Baptist Church Covenants*, v.

[70] A. M. Fairbairn, *Studies in Religion and Theology: The Church: In Idea and History* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), 227.

[71] Cyril Eastwood, *The Priesthood of All Believers: An Examination of the Doctrine from the Reformation to the Present Day* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962), 164.

that the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers "formed part of the basis for congregational government."[72] That doctrine, stated by John Smyth (1554-1612), is central in Baptist theology, as in Congregationalism.[73]

While the priesthood of all believers doesn't mean that all believers are equally gifted for leadership or ministry, it does mean, according to Stephen and Kirk Wellum, "the entire congregation should be involved in the governance of the church."[74] The Congregational ideals of the Priesthood of all Believers meant that each member has a role and a responsibility to participate in the governing of the church.[75] Indeed, Eastwood, quoting K. L. Carrick Smith, notes that the Priesthood of All Believers places a responsibility on all Christians to maintain Christ's authority in the church. "This makes the church meeting among Congregationalists and Baptists take a far more important place than it holds in the life of other churches. The underlying principle is not democratic but theocratic, for the meeting is the means whereby the members find *God's* will *together*."[76]

Local Church Autonomy

In Congregationalism, "the ultimate authority in the church lay with the members themselves."[77] The assembly of believers, in the local church, submitted to no ecclesiastical authority outside of scripture. Congregationalist Elizabeth Mauro notes, "They claimed that the authority of Christ was exercised only through covenanted members gathered together as the church."[78] Therefore, the members decided who could join, whether and how to discipline errant members, and whether and how to recognize pastors. The

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[72] John Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches: A Contemporary Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2005), 46.

[73] Eastwood, *The Priesthood of All Believers*, 160.

[74] Wellum and Wellum, "The Biblical and Theological Case for Congregationalism," 66.

[75] Mauro, *The Art and Practice of the Congregational Way*, 29.

[76] K. L. Carrick Smith, *The Church and the Churches* (London: SCM Press, 1948), 297; according to Eastwood, *The Priesthood of All Believers,* 165. Original emphasis.

[77] William B. Selbie, *Congregationalism* (George H. Doran Company: London, 1927), 65.

[78] D. Elizabeth Mauro, *The Art and Practice of the Congregational Way: A Church Guide* (undated), 26. https://www.naccc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/the_art_and_practice_of_the_congregational_way_v8.2_booklet.pdf

membership, when following Jesus, reflect "binding and loosing" already done in heaven (Matthew 18:18.) Thus, holding the "keys," every local church was held to be sufficient to govern itself. A congregational church may seek aid from other churches, but it is not bound to do so. It can decide who to ordain, what authority to delegate to pastors, deacons or committees, what property to purchase, etc. Members are the ultimate earthly authority of a congregational church. If this all sounds very familiar to a Baptist, it should. They inherited it all from the Congregationalists.

For the New England Congregationalists, the authority of the congregation was total. For example, pastors seeking to move to another church had to get the dismissal from their current church. As noted above, in The Cambridge Declaration, the congregation had the authority to dismiss members. These theological principles were recognized by the government, granting local Congregational churches the "free liberty of election and ordination of all her Officers" and the "free liberty of admission, recommendation, dismission & expulsion or deposal of their Officers and members upon due cause."[79] Hence, the church had the final authority to dismiss a member, including the pastor. That is, theoretically, a member, including the pastor, was not allowed to leave the church without the church's permission. In 1667, John Davenport, pastor of the church in New Haven, at about 70 years of age sought release from his position there to take up the pastorate at Boston's first church. They narrowly let him go. Some churches barred their pastors from preaching on some subjects. Jonathan Edwards was initially prohibited from teaching the church who could have entrance to the Lord's Supper.

Baptist churches too originally believed that local church autonomy over-shadowed individual autonomy. Benjamin Keach insisted that "all Congregational Divines" agreed "that no person hath power to dismember himself: i.e. He cannot without great Sin, translate himself from one Church to another."[80] The Baptist Association in Charlestown insisted, "As consent is necessary to a person's coming into the church, so none can go out of it without its

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[79] "The Lawes and Liberties Concerning the Inhabitants of the Massachusetts," #3, 4, 1647.

[80] Benjamin Keach, "The Glory of a True Church," *Polity*, 79.

consent."[81] While Baptists have inherited the belief in the congregational authority from the Congregationalists, hopefully they have learned to avoid micromanaging.

Associationalism

Although Congregationalists held that their churches were autonomous, and "in all ecclesiastical matters equal," they also believed their churches should formally associate. "From the beginning Congregational churches have held not only to freedom but to fellowship as fundamental to the Congregational system."[82] They believed they needed venues for local churches to council each other.[83] Though a "father of congregationalism" and thus of local church autonomy, Robert Browne, according to Williston Walker, "saw that not only individuals within a local church, but the local churches as separate bodies had duties one to another."[84] He recognized the propriety of "synodes" or councils, "meetings of sundry churches: which are when the weaker churches seek help of the stronger, for deciding or redressing of matters or else the stronger look to them for redresse"[85] This is associationalism. Associationalism was affirmed by Thomas Hooker in 1645.[86] The following year, The Cambridge Platform stated:

> Although churches be distinct and therefore may not be confounded one with another, and equal, and therefore have no dominion over one another; yet all the churches ought to preserve *Church-communion* one with another because they are all united unto Christ, not only as mystical but a political head; whence is derived a *communion* suitable thereto.[87]

This communion of churches resulted in calling together local churches for advice. The Cambridge Platform saw precedent for

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[81] "A Summary of Church Discipline," (Baptist Association in Charlestown, South Carolina, 1774); *Polity*, 129.

[82] William E. Barton, *The Law of Congregational Usage* (Chicago: Advance Publishing Co., 1916), 258.

[83] D. Elizabeth Mauro, *The Art and Practice of the Congregational Way: A Church Guide* (undated), 42-48.

[84] Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism* (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1893), 14.

[85] Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*, 14.

[86] Thomas Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline* (1645).

[87] *The Cambridge Platform*, Chapter XV, (Shopshire, England: Quinta Press, 2017), 23. Original emphasis.

associating in scripture, particularly in Acts 15. "When any church wanteth light or peace among themselves, it is a way of communion of the Churches (according to the word) to meet together by their elders and other messengers in a Synod to consider and argue the points of doubt or difference."[88] These gatherings were called "Ecclesiastical Councils of the Vicinage" (of the churches in the vicinity). William Barton (1861-1930) explained that "among Congregational Churches. . . councils are called to organize or recognize churches, to ordain or install or recognize ministers, and to give advice in matters of church life and administration. . . [and] to determine the wisdom of organizing an Association."[89]

They believed heeding advice from other churches and "Synods" did not compromise their autonomy as a church.[90] Such councils had only the authority to advise and persuade. William Selbie notes, "They had no power of compulsion in the things of God."[91] This inclination toward church-communion took the practical form of associations. For example, Solomon Stoddard (1643-1729), grandfather of Jonathan Edwards, formed the Hampshire Association in 1714, in the central Massachusetts, as an attempt to organize churches for mutual oversight. Other associations proliferated where Congregationalism was common.[92]

Even some of the unique terminology of associationalism is owed to the Congregationalists. As in the quote above from The Cambridge Platform, Congregationalists called local church members sent to a meeting of churches "messengers."[93] John Eliot (1604–1690), organizer of multiple "Red Puritan" churches, noted that councils consist of "messengers" not presbyters, elders, delegates,

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[88] *The Cambridge Platform*, Chapter XV, 23.

[89] William E. Barton, *The Law of Congregational Usage* (Chicago: Advance Publishing Co., 1916), 258-259.

[90] Mauo, *The Art and Practice of the Congregational Way*, 46.

[91] Selbie, *Congregationalism*, 65.

[92] For example, The Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers (1692-1694), The General Association of Connecticut (1709), The Marlborough Association (1725), The Essex Middle Association (1761), The Berkshire Association (1763). "Series 3: Conference and Association Records," Congregational Library and Archives, undated, https://www.congregationallibrary.org/nehh/series3, accessed July 31, 2023.

[93] Lechford, *Plaine Dealing: Or, Newes from Newe England, 3. Cotton, The Way of the Churches of Christ in New-England*, 114.

or representatives.[94] Baptist inherited the term.[95] It remains among Baptists to this day.

Baptists faithfully carried on associationalism. Benjamin Griffith wrote, after emphasizing the sufficiency and autonomy of the local church, that such independent churches "may and ought to maintain communion together in many duties, which may tend to the mutual benefit and edification of the whole."[96] The Charlestown Association advised, "In order the more amply to obtain this blessing of communion, there ought to be a coalescing or uniting of several churches into one body," which it calls "the association."[97] J. L. Reynolds (1812-1877) wrote, "Although the churches of Jesus Christ are independent bodies . . . it is their duty to maintain friendly intercourse and fellowship with each other."[98]

The Ministry

"Congregationalists believe that the gifts of ministry and the orders and offices in the church are given not to individuals to exercise in the church but to the church to be exercised by individuals."[99] That is, as in Ephesians 4:11, the gifts of ministry are given to the church. Hence, in a congregational church, because of the priesthood of all believers, the sacraments (or "ordinances") belong to the church. So, for example, in the Lord's Supper, the entire congregation, not just the minister, is the "celebrant." Therefore, baptism and the Lord's Supper could be administered by any member, as the church (not the individual) authorizes, although care should be taken as to the character and repute of whoever is tasked to lead in administering the ordinances. Preaching, too, is a task for the whole church, although the main distinguishing function of the minister is the preaching of the Word. However, he does so as a

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[94] Eliot, *Communion of Churches* (Cambridge, MA.: Marmaduke Johnson, 1665), 4. John Carpenter, "New England Puritans: The Grandparents of Modern Protestant Missions," *Missiology* 30:4 (October 2002), 519-532.

[95] Benjamin Griffith (p. 112), Samuel Jones (p. 157), W. B. Johnson (p. 174, 221), J.L. Reynolds (p. 343), *Polity*.

[96] Benjamin Griffith, "A Short Treatise" (1743), *Polity*, 111.

[97] The Charlestown Association, "A Summary of Church Discipline (1774), *Polity*, 132.

[98] J. L. Reynolds, "Church Polity or the Kingdom of Christ" (1849), *Polity*, 392.

[99] J. Marsh, *Ways of Worship Report* (1951), 156; according to Eastwood, *The Priesthood of All Believers*, 166.

member of the church, authorized by the local church.[100] The church has been given pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:11) who preach for the church. Thus, preaching is the church declaring the Word.[101] That results in elevating, rather than denigrating, the minister. He is the one doing the church's main task. So, instead of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers destroying the ministry, in Congregational churches, it enhanced it. In Congregational New England the pastors were "a speaking aristocracy before a silent democracy."[102] Baptists share these convictions and this culture.[103]

Conclusion

Congregationalists are not "another religious tradition," as even some well-reputed Baptist church historians have classified them.[104] They are our tradition. We are a kind of congregationalist, the baptistic kind. As such, we've inherited nearly all of our traditional polity from them, before the nineteenth-century and the rise of sole-elder (the pastor) and deacon-led Baptist polity and, in the last generation, on the one-hand, the rise of elder-ruled baptistic churches – what I called "presbyterialism" elsewhere – and a pastor-as-CEO model, on the other.[105] Amidst all the fog about Baptist origins and the confusion within modern ideas about polity, some Baptists, like those with 9Marks, have been trying to call us back to the wisdom of our Congregational founders. In order to understand congregationalism, Baptists need to understand Congregationalism. May this essay help them.

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[100] Eastwood, *The Priesthood of All Believers*, 166.

[101] Eastwood, *The Priesthood of All Believers*, 169.

[102] Grasso, Christopher. *A Speaking Aristocracy: Transforming Public Discourse In Eighteenth Century Connecticut*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

[103] For example, F. Townley Lord, president of the Baptist World Alliance from 1950-1955, equated the Congregational and Baptist attitudes toward the Lord's Supper (according to Eastwood, *The Priesthood of All Believers*, 160.)

[104] Deweese, *Baptist Church Covenants*, 36.

[105] John Carpenter, "The Rise and Danger of Presbyterialism," *Theopolis*, April 11, 2023. https://theopolisinstitute.com/the-rise-and-dangers-of-presbyterialism/, accessed July 28, 2023.

Fallen Humanity and Its Redemption: Mainstream Sixteenth-Century Anabaptist Views vis-à-vis Arminian Baptist and Traditional Baptist Positions

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Part of the contemporary debate between Arminian Baptists and Traditional Baptists concerns the effects of the Fall on human nature and the possibility of a need for prevenient grace prior to the Holy Spirit's work via the Gospel. For the purposes of this article, let me define exactly how I am using the descriptors Arminian Baptists and Traditional Baptists.[1] By Arminian Baptists I mean those Baptists who affirm total depravity as a result of the Fall, believe that prevenient grace is needed to remedy the effects of total depravity on human free will, affirm the doctrine of unlimited atonement, and are possibly but not necessarily skeptical toward eternal security.[2] The doctrine of total depravity entails, in philosophical terms, the Fall's rendering powerless the mental faculty by which humans could freely believe the Gospel.[3] Adherents to prevenient grace hold that at least part of such grace is the Holy Spirit's supernatural restoration of this mental faculty.[4] By Traditional Baptists I mean those Baptists who deny total inability and thus deny that prevenient — by which I simply mean preparatory — grace is needed to remedy its effects on human free will, believe that the Holy Spirit's work via the Gospel does not need to be described as

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[1] Let me express my profound gratitude to the outstanding suggestions made by two anonymous reviewers on an earlier draft of this article, suggestions which serve to greatly enhance the present version.

[2] Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 17, 33–36, 187. It should be noted that whether total depravity is ever experienced by people today depends on the timing and availability of prevenient grace. This article will not take up the question of whether Arminius thought prevenient grace was universally available.

[3] Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 17; see also pp. 27, 33, 55, 57–58, 82, 137, 142, 145, 151.

[4] Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 33–34; W. Brian Shelton, *Prevenient Grace: God's Provision for Fallen Humanity* (Anderson, IN: Warner, 2014), 2–3.

prevenient grace, and affirm eternal security. Traditional Baptists hold that the Fall did not effectuate "the incapacitation of any person's free will," such that no supernatural restoration of free will is needed before fallen humans can make "a free response to the Holy Spirit's drawing through the Gospel" (TS Art. 2).[5] The points of divergence between these two Baptist groups on which I shall focus here regard fallen humanity and its redemption, leaving aside the question of eternal security. For any Southern Baptist, whether Arminian Baptist or Traditional Baptist, should affirm the doctrine of eternal security (BFM 2000 Art. 5).[6]

At this juncture a further question arises: for Arminian Baptists, when does prevenient grace restore the free willing faculty? Is it at birth and thus prior to the hearing of the Gospel, or is it when the Gospel is heard?[7] Jacob Arminius himself believed that prevenient grace's restoration of this faculty accompanies the preaching of the Gospel:

> I say, then, that it is very plain, from the Scriptures, that repentance and faith can not be exercised except by the gift of God. But the same Scripture and the nature of both gifts very clearly teach that this bestowment is by the mode of persuasion. This is effected by the word of God. But persuasion is effected, externally by the preaching of the word, internally by the operation, or rather the co-operation, of the Holy Spirit, tending to this result, that the word may be understood and apprehended in true faith.[8]

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[5] TS stands for Eric Hankins, "A Statement of the Traditional Southern Baptist Understanding of God's Plan of Salvation," *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 9.2 (2012): 14–18. The quotations from Article 2 can be found on p. 16.

[6] BFM 2000 stands for the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/ (accessed July 12, 2023).

[7] I am indebted to AndrewH (author prefers to keep name anonymous) ("Prevenient Grace: An Introduction," *Society of Evangelical Arminians* (2016), http://evangelicalarminians.org/prevenient-grace-an-introduction/ [accessed July 17, 2023]) for my forthcoming assessment of the differences between Arminius and Wesley on prevenient grace and for calling my attention to quotations from Arminius and Wesley (embedded in quotations from Robert Picirilli and Robert Coleman) that I was subsequently able to track down.

[8] *The Writings of James Arminius*, 3 vols., trans. James Nichols and W. R. Bagnall (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 3:334; AndrewH, "Prevenient Grace"; Robert E. Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, Free Will—Contrasting Views of Salvation: Calvinism and Arminianism* (Nashville: Randall House, 2002), 158.

By contrast, John Wesley implied that prevenient grace restores the free willing faculty at birth:

> For allowing that all the souls of men are dead in sin by nature, this excuses none, seeing there is no man that is in a state of mere nature; there is no man, unless he has quenched the Spirit, that is wholly void of the grace of God. No man living is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called natural conscience. But this is not natural: It is more properly termed preventing grace. Every man has a greater or less measure of this, which waiteth not for the call of man…Everyone has some measure of that light, some faint glimmering ray, which, sooner or later, more or less, enlightens every man that cometh into the world.[9]

It should be noted that Arminians who primarily follow the thought of Arminius are known as Classical or Reformed Arminians, while Arminians who primarily follow the thought of Wesley are known as Wesleyan Arminians. The differences between and within these perspectives is wide-ranging, encompassing issues of atonement theory, imputation of Christ's righteousness, and the nature of sanctification.[10] These issues do not concern us here. I will, however, note that Classical or Reformed Arminians usually but not always believe with Arminius that prevenient grace begins its work with the preaching of the Gospel, while Wesleyan Arminians usually but not always believe with Wesley that prevenient grace begins its work at birth.[11] However, an Arminian Baptist could hold to either Arminius's or Wesley's view of prevenient grace without being a

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[9] John Wesley, "Sermon 85: On Working out our own Salvation," https://ccel.org/ccel/wesley/sermons/sermons.vi.xxxii.html#vi.xxxii-p0.3 (accessed July 12, 2023); AndrewH, "Prevenient Grace"; Robert E. Coleman, *The Heart of the Gospel: The Theology behind the Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 145, 282. This article's presentation of the difference between Arminius's view and Wesley's view of prevenient grace seems confirmed by Olson ("Arminian Theology: Prevenient Grace and Total Depravity (Including a Review of a New Book about Prevenient Grace)," *My Evangelical Arminian Theological Musings* [October 28, 2014], https://www.patheos.com/blogs/rogereolson/2014/10/arminian-theology-prevenient-grace-and-total-depravity-including-a-review-of-a-new-book-about-prevenient-grace/#ixzz3S2FFCen4 [accessed July 12, 2023]).

[10] Jeff Robinson and Matt Pinson, "Meet a Reformed Arminian," *The Gospel Coalition* (August 25, 2016), https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/meet-a-reformed-arminian/ (accessed July 12, 2023).

[11] AndrewH, "Prevenient Grace."

Classical/Reformed or Wesleyan Arminian. So for the purposes of this article, I will simply distinguish between Arminian Baptists holding Arminius's view of prevenient grace from Arminian Baptists holding Wesley's view of prevenient grace.

Baptist scholars have long seen a relationship between sixteenth-century Anabaptism and the genesis of the Baptist movement in early seventeenth-century Netherlands and England, thus making the possible impact of Anabaptism on today's Baptist theology and praxis an important area of study.[12] Indeed, I regard sixteenth-century Anabaptists as theological ancestors to Baptists, and it is historically important to know how one's ancestors viewed and may have partially contributed to different sides of an issue holding contemporary significance.[13] This furnishes sufficient rationale for comparing Anabaptists to contemporary Baptist descriptors. In view of these matters, a new and instructive question arises: how did mainstream sixteenth-century Anabaptists (a term by which I exempt the revolutionary Anabaptists who brought about the 1534–35 Münster debacle and stood in contrast to the rest of the movement) view the Fall's effect on free will and the issue of whether persons need a prior work of prevenient grace before the grace accompanying the Gospel in order to affirmatively respond to the Gospel? Answering that question constitutes the purpose of this article. To answer the question, I will examine in chronological order of writing rather than logical order (because I view historical theology as best done diachronically rather than synchronically) the only eight mainstream sixteenth-century Anabaptist writers who, to my knowledge, addressed the matters at hand. These eight writers reflect Swiss, German, Austrian, Bohemian, and Dutch Anabaptism and so furnish a fairly representative sample of sixteenth-century Anabaptist thought. Indeed, mainstream sixteenth-century Anabaptists serve as ideal conversation partners for evaluating differences between Arminian Baptists and Traditional Baptists precisely because Anabaptists, by definition, only practiced believers'

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[12] The most recent contribution to this area of study is Malcolm B. Yarnell III, ed., *The Anabaptists and Contemporary Baptists* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013).

[13] See William R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism*, 3rd rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 270–303. In this piece I will not address the question of whether Anabaptists did in fact make such a causal contribution, as that would involve lengthy study of the precise effects Anabaptists and their writings made on Baptists through the centuries.

baptism and because no mainstream sixteenth-century Anabaptist, according to George Huntston Williams, concurred with the Calvinist position on fallen humanity and its redemption.[14] In this article I will demonstrate that support for both the Arminian Baptist and Traditional Baptist positions can be found in mainstream sixteenth-century Anabaptism. Concerning Arminian Baptist positions, mainstream sixteenth-century Anabaptist anticipation exists for Arminius's view of prevenient grace, Wesley's view of prevenient grace, and a mediating view between the two.

Balthasar Hubmaier (1480–1528)

The first Anabaptist leader to give detailed attention to anthropological and soteriological matters was Balthasar Hubmaier, the only sixteenth-century Anabaptist to have earned a *doctor theologiae* (from the University of Ingolstadt in 1512).[15] Hubmaier labored in Waldshut (southwestern Germany) from 1521 to 1525, during which latter year he received believers' baptism. After being forced out of Waldshut by Catholic imperial authorities and, soon after, suffering imprisonment and torture in Zurich on the orders of Ulrich Zwingli, Hubmaier labored in Nikolsburg (today Mikulov in the Czech Republic) from 1526 until his martyrdom in 1528.[16] Affirming the doctrine of total depravity, Hubmaier claimed that the human soul

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[14] George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 3rd rev. ed., Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies 15 (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2000), 1270–71. On p. 1269 Williams extends this point to "most of the Radical Reformation" in general. On this score I think the Anabaptists teach us a valuable lesson: God's omnibenevolence and distributive justice demand, in the words of David Hankins, that "every person is savable" ("Commentary on Article 1: The Gospel," *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 9.2 [2012]: 19), whether by virtue of prevenient grace prior to the Gospel or by virtue of the grace offered in the Gospel alone.

[15] Many of the texts from Hubmaier I will henceforth examine have been quoted/cited and discussed in my "Constructing a Bernard-Hubmaier Trinitarian Model of Prevenient Grace," *Pro Ecclesia* 29.1 (2020): 68–88.

[16] For an accessible overview of Hubmaier's career in Waldshut see my "Waldshut and South German Reforms," in *T&T Clark Handbook of Anabaptism*, ed. Brian C. Brewer (London: T&T Clark, 2022), 65–73; for an accessible overview of Hubmaier's career from his fleeing Waldshut to his execution see my "Hubmaier's Death and the Threat of a Free State Church," *Church History and Religious Culture* 91.3–4 (2011): 336–38.

> has through this disobedience of Adam been wounded in the
> will in such a way and become sick unto death so that it can
> on its own choose nothing good. Nor can it refuse evil since
> it has lost the knowledge of good and evil, Gen. 2; 3. There
> is nothing left to it but to sin and to die. Yes, as far as doing
> good goes, the soul has become entirely powerless and inef-
> fective, Rom. 7.[17]

Consequently, Hubmaier asserted that "the human being…lost his
freedom through the Fall of Adam," "he became a child of sin,
wrath, and death," and "without a special and new grace of God he
cannot keep the commandments nor be saved."[18] The restorative
work of Christ stands as the source of this grace. As a result of this
grace, "the soul again knows what is good and evil. Now it has again
obtained its lost freedom. It can now freely and willingly be obedi-
ent to the spirit, can will and choose good, as well as it was able in
Paradise. It can also reject evil and flee it."[19] Regarding the impact
of the Fall on human nature and the need for divine restoration of
the mental faculty to choose spiritual good, then, Hubmaier antici-
pated the Arminian Baptist view.

Regarding the nature of this "special and new grace of God,"
Hubmaier clearly subscribed to a doctrine of prevenient grace, if we
take "prevenient" literally to mean grace that "comes before" any
free decision of the human will to believe the Gospel. Elsewhere I
have articulated at length Hubmaier's rather sophisticated under-
standing of prevenient grace, in which all three persons of the Trin-
ity play prominent roles.[20] Significantly, Hubmaier insisted that pre-
venient grace always comes alongside and through the Word of
God—it works simultaneously with and via the Word rather than
before it or by effectuating restoration of the willing faculty at birth.
For Hubmaier, prevenient grace never functions apart from the
Word.[21] Hubmaier explicitly equated the drawing of prevenient
grace with God's drawing through the Word:

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[17] *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, trans. and ed. H. Wayne Pipkin
and John H. Yoder, Classics of the Radical Reformation 5 (Scottdale, PA: Herald,
1989), 435; MacGregor, "Bernard-Hubmaier Trinitarian Model," 72.

[18] *Hubmaier*, 455; MacGregor, "Bernard-Hubmaier Trinitarian Model," 74.

[19] *Hubmaier*, 439; MacGregor, "Bernard-Hubmaier Trinitarian Model," 74.

[20] See my "Bernard-Hubmaier Trinitarian Model." A good summary state-
ment can be found on *Hubmaier*, 439.

[21] This conclusion is not undermined by Hubmaier's claim that "as the eye of
the human being has the ability to see the light and yet cannot see unless the light

> Therefore this recognition and power of knowledge, willing, and working must happen and be attained by a new grace and drawing of the heavenly Father, who now looks at humanity anew by the merit of Jesus Christ our Lord, blesses and draws him with the life-giving Word which he speaks into the heart of a person…Through it God gives power and authority to all people insofar as they want to come; the free choice is left to them.[22]

Thus Hubmaier rejected the notion of fallen humans needing "a special, unusual, and miraculous drawing of God…as if the sending of his holy Word were not enough to draw and summon them."[23] Because, in God's omniscience, Jesus was the lamb slain from before the foundation of the world (Rev 13:18), the restorative power of Jesus retroactively accompanies every proclamation of the divine Word, including God's exhortations in the Old Testament before those exhortations contained an explicit proclamation of the Gospel.[24] For God's Word implicitly contained the Gospel from the time of the *protoevangelium* (Gen 3:15), such that people in the Old Testament could be saved:

> Yet, it should be exactly and well noted here that everything which we possess in this time of grace from the gospel through the given Christ, the same had the patriarchs and fathers of the old marriage possessed from the prophecies— through the promised Christ in this case, 1 Cor. 10:1ff. For as the Christian church of the New Testament has received the eternal Son of God as her own spouse and husband through his holy and bodily incarnation, so also was Jesus

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enters beforehand into the eye, so does the human being have the ability to see the light of faith through the Word of God, which he cannot see unless the light enters beforehand into his soul by heavenly illumination" (*Hubmaier*, 466; MacGregor, "Bernard-Hubmaier Trinitarian Model," 82). This is because, for Hubmaier, God's provision of the light of faith, which he dubbed the "inward drawing" (*Hubmaier*, 362; MacGregor, "Bernard-Hubmaier Trinitarian Model," 83), accompanies the preaching of the Gospel, which he dubbed the "outward drawing" (*Hubmaier*, 362). I am indebted to Adam Harwood (*Christian Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Systematic* [Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2022], 636–37) for this observation and the "outward drawing" citation from Hubmaier.

[22] *Hubmaier*, 444; MacGregor, "Bernard-Hubmaier Trinitarian Model," 76–77.

[23] *Hubmaier*, 447. I am indebted to Harwood (*Christian Theology*, 637) for this point and quotation from Hubmaier.

[24] MacGregor, "Bernard-Hubmaier Trinitarian Model," 75.

> Christ, Son of the living God, espoused, promised, and assured to the church of the Old Testament for a future spouse and bridegroom by God himself in the book of creation and through the holy prophets again and again, Gen. 3:15; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14.[25]

Thus Hubmaier quoted Genesis 4:5–7, Deuteronomy 11:26–28, Deuteronomy 30:11–20, Psalm 34:13, Isaiah 1:19, Jeremiah 18:8, 10, and Jeremiah 21:8 to show that people in the Old Testament, on the power of God's Word, had the ability to love God maximally and obey his commandments.[26] Since the notion of the implicit preaching of the Gospel in the Old Testament goes beyond but does not contradict the writings of Arminius, we may say that Hubmaier's view of prevenient grace is consistent with Arminius' understanding.

Hans Denck (c. 1500–1527) and Michael Sattler (c. 1490–1527)

"The pope of the Anabaptists," in Martin Bucer's words, was the South German Anabaptist Hans Denck, who likely received believers' baptism from Hubmaier in 1526 and ministered in Augsburg, Strasbourg, Worms, Nürnberg, and Ulm before succumbing to the plague.[27] Denck's position on total depravity and prevenient grace is virtually identical to that of Arminian Baptists who take Wesley's position on prevenient grace. Denck maintained that the freedom to do good was obliterated by the Fall, bringing about

> this inborn sickness or poverty of spirit…Compare this to an evil tree whose nature does not become better but rather worse the more one pampers and tends to it. There can be no change unless one gets to its roots and pulls them out completely. If you would like to come into some money, yet have none at all, one may claim to have one thousand gold pieces as long as you please to no avail. Since you have none

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[25] *Hubmaier*, 454.

[26] *Hubmaier*, 457–60; MacGregor, "Bernard-Hubmaier Trinitarian Model," 75–76.

[27] Estep, *Anabaptist Story*, 112–15, with the Bucer quotation at p. 115. Estep furnishes an accessible overview of Denck's career on pp. 109–17.

at all, you should not claim that you have any, lest you greatly mislead people, fooling yourself most of all.[28]

However, Denck taught that "the light which is the invisible Word of God," operative apart from and prior to the Gospel, "shines into the hearts of all men who are born into the world. For God has been in the world from the beginning and He gives everyone who will accept it free choice to become a child of God and to inherit the kingdom of the Father [Jn. 1:12]."[29] This directly anticipates Wesley's understanding of prevenient grace. It is only after receiving the light of this grace that people can accept, in Denck's words, the "faith which comes through the hearing of the Gospel."[30] Also resonant with Arminian Baptists who take Wesley's position on prevenient grace was Michael Sattler, the Swiss Brethren leader who served as principal author of the *Schleitheim Confession*, or foundational statement of Anabaptist faith, and who was soon afterward burned at the stake in Rattenberg.[31] Sattler taught that what people "really can do in the power of faith," which includes repenting and embracing Christ in the Gospel, "thereby are not man's works but God's, since the willing and the ability to turn to God are not of man but the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord."[32] This portrayal presupposes a work of prevenient grace grounded in Christ's work prior to receiving the Gospel.

Hans Hut (c. 1490–1527)

Hans Hut was, in the description of Daniel Liechty, "undoubtedly the most significant early Anabaptist leader in South Germany

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[28] *Selected Writings of Hans Denck*, trans. and ed. Edward J. Furcha with Ford Lewis Battles, Pittsburgh Original Texts and Translation Series 1 (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1976), 14; see also p. 50. Hence I disagree with Thomas N. Finger (*A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology: Biblical, Historical, Constructive* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004], 476) when he claims that Denck opposed the doctrine of "the bound will." The texts that Finger cites from Denck to support his contention, which state that humans after the Fall could easily "follow the Word" (p. 476), presuppose that prevenient grace has already taken effect.

[29] *Denck*, 78–79; see also p. 89.

[30] *Denck*, 78–79, 30 (quotation found on p. 30).

[31] Estep (*Anabaptist Story*, 57–73) provides an accessible overview of Sattler's career.

[32] *Anabaptism in Outline: Selected Primary Sources*, ed. Walter Klaassen, Classics of the Radical Reformation 3 (Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1981), 56–57 (quotations found on p. 57).

and Austria."[33] As Thomas Finger points out, Hut implied that, in the Fall, the human will "apparently remained intact,"[34] as affirmed by the Traditional Statement (TS, Art. 2).[35] Hut argued that "it is impossible for a carnal person to comprehend or to grasp the judgments of God in truth, when they are not all parts placed into a proper order," which occurs "through the gospel of all creatures."[36] This seems to be the same point, *mutatis mutandis*, made in the Traditional Statement that "no sinner is remotely capable of achieving salvation through his own effort" (TS, Art. 2).[37] Hut maintained that the Gospel "is nothing else…than a power of God which saves all who believe in it."[38] This is reminiscent of Traditional Baptist Leighton Flowers's quotation of Romans 1:16 describing the gospel as the "power of God unto salvation" and his remark that "the gospel is inspired, written, carried, proclaimed and preserved by the direct activity of the Holy Spirit Himself. What more must He personally do to enable the lost who hear it to respond to it?"[39] Regarding fallen humanity and its redemption, then, Hut's view is virtually identical to the Traditional Baptist position.

Leonhard Schiemer (c. 1500–1528)

A view anticipatory of Arminian Baptists which uniquely mediates between the positions of Arminius and Wesley on prevenient grace is offered by the Austrian Anabaptist Leonhard Schiemer, who received believers' baptism from Oswald Glaidt in early 1527 and preached in Upper Austria until his capture and beheading in Rattenberg.[40] Due to the effects of the Fall, Schiemer claimed that "the flesh strives toward all that is evil" and is "the darkness."[41]

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[33] Daniel Liechty, in *Early Anabaptist Spirituality: Selected Writings*, trans. and ed. Daniel Liechty, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist, 1994), 63.

[34] Finger, *Contemporary Anabaptist Theology*, 474.

[35] Hankins, "Statement," 16.

[36] *Early Anabaptist Spirituality*, 66, 67.

[37] Hankins, "Statement," 16.

[38] *Anabaptism in Outline*, 50.

[39] Leighton Flowers, "Prevenient Grace: An Arminian Error," https://soteriology101.com/2018/12/12/prevenient-grace-an-arminian-error/ (accessed on June 22, 2023).

[40] Liechty, in *Early Anabaptist Spirituality*, 82.

[41] *Early Anabaptist Spirituality*, 87. I am indebted to Finger (*Contemporary Anabaptist Theology*, 474–75) for this (p. 474) and almost all subsequent observations and citations from Schiemer.

Were it not for the first work of God's grace, the soul would have no choice but to follow the flesh, a point with which Arminian Baptists agree. This first work of grace is the Johannine light (John 1:1–5), "a light to all people who come into this world" and therefore a "light or word" that "dwells in us internally."[42] While present from birth, this light does not shine in children "until they know the difference between good and evil," such that—despite their following the flesh—"they remain innocent and will enter into the promised land" of "the heavenly Jerusalem" if they die before obtaining moral knowledge through the light, or, in Baptist terms, before they reach an age of accountability.[43] Once the inner light begins shining, people are spiritually alive, with their souls free to choose between the light, which "strives toward the good," and the flesh.[44] Thus far, Schiemer resembles for the most part Wesley's view of prevenient grace. Nonetheless, Schiemer maintained that every such person, save Jesus, freely chooses to follow the flesh rather than the light and at this point suffers spiritual death for a second time.[45] Thus every person, prior to hearing the Gospel, is "dead of soul" notwithstanding the work of prevenient grace.[46] Neither Arminius nor Wesley would align with Schiemer here. But when the Gospel is proclaimed, the power Jesus invested in it enables the spiritually dead person to be able to choose whether to receive it: "Christ is the doctor who brings us back to life through his word. Through the power of his word we have health."[47] For everyone who hears the Gospel—the second work of grace—the Holy Spirit restores the free willing faculty to the soul.[48] This resonates with Arminius' view of prevenient grace.

Pilgram Marpeck (1495–1556)

Pilgram Marpeck was the leader of the Anabaptists in Strasbourg and, in William Estep's words, "the most influential theologian among the south German Anabaptists."[49] Remarkably, Marpeck

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[42] *Early Anabaptist Spirituality*, 85; Finger, *Contemporary Anabaptist Theology*, 474.
[43] *Early Anabaptist Spirituality*, 87.
[44] *Early Anabaptist Spirituality*, 87; Finger, *Contemporary Anabaptist Theology*, 474.
[45] *Early Anabaptist Spirituality*, 87–88; Finger, *Contemporary Anabaptist Theology*, 474.
[46] *Early Anabaptist Spirituality*, 88; Finger, *Contemporary Anabaptist Theology*, 474.
[47] *Early Anabaptist Spirituality*, 88; Finger, *Contemporary Anabaptist Theology*, 475.
[48] *Early Anabaptist Spirituality*, 90.
[49] Estep, *Anabaptist Story*, 122, 125 (quotation found on p. 125).

held the position of city engineer in Strasbourg from 1545 until his death by natural causes in 1556, despite the complaints to and reprimands from the city council for his Anabaptist convictions.[50] Marpeck believed that after the Fall, humans, while enslaved to sin, retain the free will to recognize their depravity and its eternal consequences, thus terrifying them to hopefully seek help from God:

> If a man carefully searches himself, he immediately finds contrariness in him, namely, that he does not accomplish either the least or the most; he acts contrarily and, instead of the good, he accomplishes only evil. He is too corrupt to do the good; he sees and knows that he has deserved and incurred eternal death and damnation, for the good is not in him, neither is comfort nor life. Nor is any help available for him. Thus, he looks around and falls into lamentation, grief, and brokenness of heart, and seeks to flee and look for help everywhere. Why? He is condemned to death, a fact which drives a man either to God, that He may have mercy on him, or to his own resources, comfort, and apostasy according to the fabrication of his own heart and mind, the source of all apostasy even today.[51]

The way God shows mercy to such people is through the Gospel. So as not to be misunderstood, Marpeck emphasized that employing this ability to freely seek God out of fear, rooted in the *imago Dei*, does not accomplish salvation, such that no one could redeem themselves: "Some, however, have attributed too much to this image of man's godlikeness, as they do, for instance, when, before the redemption of Christ, they attribute all power and ability to man's free will. But such a tribute to man's ability blasphemes the glory of God just as much as those who do not wish to see man changed through the incarnation of Christ."[52] Thus "the faith of Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and all others did not receive nor experience the power of free godliness and remission," such that "those who kept the Mosaic commandments did so improperly based on fear rather than love."[53]

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[50] Estep, *Anabaptist Story*, 124–25.

[51] *The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck*, trans. and ed. William Klassen and Walter Klaassen, Classics of the Radical Reformation 2 (Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1978), 134–35.

[52] *Marpeck*, 79.

[53] *Marpeck*, 108, 109.

Marpeck clarified his stance by condemning those "who say that one is able to believe in the Son of God…without being drawn by the Father."[54] Hence we see that, on Marpeck's analysis, fallen humans are free to seek God in a general way out of fear but not free to place their faith in Christ out of love apart from supernatural drawing. However, Marpeck castigated those who claim that God the Father and Holy Spirit draw people through any work of grace prior to or apart from the Gospel: "Down with those prophets who say that the drawing of the Father and the unknown hidden Spirit of God have been manifested and recognized without the revelation and knowledge of Christ (Mt. 11:25; Lk. 10:21; Jn. 14:17)."[55] The Spirit's drawing, which occurs only through hearing Jesus' voice in the Gospel, liberates a person to believe in Jesus, whereby their soul is freed from sin:

> This breath or Spirit of God would have remained an eternal secret without the humanity and the physical voice of Christ. Where this physical voice of Christ—which Christ even today channels through men and the Scriptures, which are preserved for us and are still a witness to Him—is believed sincerely our spirit is free and the drawing of the Father revealed…I defy those false teachers who teach that a really good work of faith can occur apart from the working of the Holy Spirit.[56]

For these reasons, Marpeck agreed with all essentials of and may be considered a forerunner of the Traditional Baptist position.

Menno Simons (c. 1496–1561)

The most famous and influential of all the sixteenth-century Anabaptists was Menno Simons, who led the Dutch and north German Anabaptist movement from his believers' baptism in 1536 until his death by natural causes at Wüstenfelde.[57] Simons endorsed a thoroughgoing account of total depravity, whereby the human will can only display hostility toward God:

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[54] *Marpeck*, 76.

[55] *Marpeck*, 76.

[56] *Marpeck*, 76–77; see also pp. 63, 109.

[57] Estep (*Anabaptist Story*, 160–174) furnishes an accessible survey of Simons's career.

> That which is born of flesh…all its thoughts, feelings, and desires are directed toward earthly, temporal, or visible things…and is carnally minded, because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be. Therefore, those who are carnal cannot please God. For they are altogether deaf, blind, and ignorant in divine things…for his nature is not thus, but to the contrary his mind is adverse and hostile to God…for he is by nature a child of the devil and not spiritually minded…by nature he is hostile and a stranger to God; has nothing of the divine nature dwelling in him, has nothing in common with God, but is much rather possessed of a contrary nature…Thus are all men by nature, tendency, and spirit according to their first birth and origin after the flesh.[58]

This stands in line with the Arminian Baptist position.

Not surprisingly, Simons declared that we need to have our free willing faculty restored by grace: "By grace it is given us to believe."[59] But Simons immediately defined this grace as coming through the Gospel and therefore "preached grace."[60] Accordingly, "we cannot obtain salvation, grace, reconciliation, nor peace of the Father otherwise than through Christ Jesus…preached by the Gospel."[61] Simons summarized his view of grace in the following account of his conversion:

> Although I resisted in former times Thy precious Word and Thy holy will with all my powers, and with full understanding contended against Thy manifest truth…nevertheless Thy fatherly grace did not forsake me, a miserable sinner, but in love received me, converted me to another mind, led me with the right hand, and taught me by the Holy Spirit *until of my own choice* I declared war upon the world, the flesh, and the devil…and willingly submitted to the heavy cross of my Lord Jesus Christ.[62]

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[58] *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, trans. Leonard Verduin and ed. J. C. Wenger (Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1984), 54–55. On p. 818 Simons explicitly states that fallen humanity is "so entirely corrupted."

[59] *Simons*, 507.

[60] *Simons*, 507.

[61] *Simons*, 507.

[62] *Simons*, 69; emphasis added.

Notice from the phrase "until of my own choice" that the grace given through the Gospel was necessary for Simons to freely surrender his life to Jesus. That the Spirit's grace through the Gospel, and not any prior work of grace, is sufficient for persons to freely receive salvation is consonant with Arminius's position on prevenient grace. Hence Simons's view proves quite reminiscent of Hubmaier's view.

Dirk Philips (1504–1568)

Similarly, Dirk Philips, Simons's associate and successor in leading the Dutch Anabaptists (who became known as Mennonites after Menno Simons), offered a view resembling those of Arminian Baptists who concur with Arminius' understanding of prevenient grace. Going above and beyond any Arminian position, Philips maintained that not only did Adam and Eve lose their mental faculty to freely respond to God in the Fall, but they also lost the *imago Dei*: "after man had sinned…thereby the image of God, in which he had been created, was destroyed (Gen. 3:6)…man did not remain in his first estate, but by his disobedience lost the image of God."[63] However, the free willing faculty is restored "by the power and enlightening influence of the Holy Ghost" only when the Gospel is proclaimed, which has occurred, *à la* Hubmaier, since the *protoevangelium*: "the promise of the coming seed (Gen. 3:16), which should bruise the serpent's head…was the first preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.[64] Anyone who freely accepts "the gracious promise of the gospel in true faith" by the Spirit's power, of whom the first to do so were Adam and Eve, is "again restored and again receive[s] the image of God which they had lost (John 3:36; 1 Tim. 2:4-6)."[65] Philips identified a person's recreation in the *imago Dei* as their regeneration.[66]

Conclusion

We have surveyed the eight sixteenth-century mainstream Anabaptist thinkers who wrote on the subject of fallen humanity and its redemption and compared their views to Arminian Baptist and

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[63] Dietrich Philip, *Enchiridion*, trans. A. B. Kolb (Elkhart, IN: Mennonite Publishing Company, 1910), 327–28.
[64] Philip, *Enchiridion*, 371.
[65] Philip, *Enchiridion*, 371.
[66] Philip, *Enchiridion*, 371.

Traditional Baptist positions. Two of these Anabaptists, Hut and Marpeck, proffered views approximating the Traditional Baptist position. They denied total depravity (in the sense of inability) and affirmed that fallen humans retain the freedom to respond to the Spirit's grace through the Gospel. Three others, Hubmaier, Schiemer, and Philips, proffered views approximating Arminian Baptists who hold Arminius's position on prevenient grace. They affirmed total depravity—including loss of freedom—and maintained that God's grace communicated through the Gospel alone restores the human free willing faculty so that anyone may respond to the Gospel. Two others, Denck and Sattler, proffered views approximating Arminian Baptists who hold Wesley's position on prevenient grace. They affirmed total depravity and the consequent loss of human freedom to respond to divine initiatives but maintained that God restores such freedom through prevenient grace prior to the presentation of the Gospel. The remaining Anabaptist, Schiemer, proffered a view which resembles that of Arminian Baptists but furnishes what would amount to a halfway house between Arminius's and Wesley's positions on prevenient grace. He affirmed total depravity and the consequent loss of human freedom to respond to divine initiatives but maintained that God restores such freedom through prevenient grace given at birth and experienced at the age of accountability. However, he claimed this freedom is again lost when each accountable person chooses to sin. But he argued that God restores this freedom for a second time by the Spirit's work via the Gospel. To close this article on a personal note, it is my hope that Arminian Baptists and Traditional Baptists will be strengthened in their views through knowledge of their Anabaptist predecessors.

Preaching the Old Testament in the New Testament: An Intertextual Method

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Introduction

"I feel the need, the need for speed." "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." "I see dead people." Quotes have a powerful ability to evoke emotions and to call to mind larger stories with just a few words, but the intended force of a quotation is not always apparent to every reader. Interpreters must consider at least two factors when discerning the force of a quotation. First, the use of a quotation requires shared knowledge. The force of the first quote above will be felt most by those who watched *Top Gun* while dreaming of flying F-14s. Any dread inspired by the phrase "I see dead people" is dependent on the reader having been spooked by the movie *The Sixth Sense*. Second, quotes can be used for the sake of humor, satire, irony, or a host of other rhetorical effects. The proper interpretation of a quote depends both on knowing the source of the quote and discerning the author's intention in using the quote.

These principles apply to quotations from and allusions to the Old Testament in the New Testament. The exegete and preacher should want to know not only if and when a New Testament author referred to the Old Testament, but he should also want to know why. The argument presented in this article is that discerning the force behind an Old Testament quotation or allusion can help the preacher both to understand and apply the New Testament text. When the New Testament authors referred to the Old Testament, they were doing so for a reason. Often, there was a story behind the Old Testament quotation or allusion, and the author was referring to that whole story by briefly alluding to part of it. For readers without an understanding of this backstory, the reference often won't make sense or the force of the reference will be lost. To properly interpret a New Testament full of quotations, allusions, echoes, and imagery from the Old Testament, faithful preaching of the New

Testament requires some method for interpreting these intertextual references. Using the concepts of speech act theory, narrative dynamics, and metalepsis, this paper will present a method for interpreting Old Testament references in the New Testament that will help both the exegete and the preacher more faithfully interpret and proclaim God's Word.

Speech Act Theory, Metalepsis, and Narrative Dynamics

In their third edition of *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard argued that human communication is composed of speech acts. These speech acts are communicative acts in which the author uses words "to convey the energy and content to accomplish the desired purpose, that is, to produce the intended effect on the readers, whether to persuade, promise, inform, warn, guide, exhort, etc."[1] In *Scripture as Communication* Jeannine K. Brown, said of speech act theory, "The theory contends that verbal utterances don't just say things; they also do things." According to Brown, in

> speech-act theory, there are three actions associated with communication: the speaker's saying (that is, the locution), the speaker's verbal action (that is the illocution or the force of the saying), and the hearer's response (the perlocution) to the verbal action.[2]

The goal of speech act theory as applied to biblical texts is not only to study the words of the text but to discern both the communicative energy of the text and the desired effect of the text. Authors tend to write for specific reasons and with desired effects in mind. So while evangelical authors have been arguing for the use of speech act theory in hermeneutics,[3] this theory also can usefully be brought to bear on intertextual references. If the New Testament authors were writing for a desired purpose and effect, the same also could be said of their references to the Old Testament. For example,

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[1] William Klein, Craig Blomberg, Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 3rd. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2017), 244.

[2] Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 32-34. Speech act theorists may focus either on the actual response of the hearers or the desired response of the author/speaker.

[3] Rhyne R. Putman, *When Doctrine Divides the People of God: An Evangelical Approach to Theological Diversity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 47-49.

when Paul quoted from the Old Testament, he was doing so for some intended effect and with some intended response from his readers in mind.

The goal of this article is to apply speech act theory to the New Testament's use of the Old Testament for the sake of better preaching. The first step in this process is to consider the locution of intertextual references. Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard say of the locution of a text, "This refers to what is spoken or written: the words, sentences, a given statement or discourse."[4] For most of the Bible, identifying the words of the locution is simple enough, textual criticism issues aside, since the locution is the actual words of the written text. But the locution of an intertextual reference is more complicated. For several reasons, the locution of a quotation from the Old Testament might be more than the actual words quoted. Two concepts, metalepsis and narrative dynamics, can help clarify the locution of an intertextual reference.

Metalepsis involves the crossing of two literary worlds. For the purposes of this paper, these two worlds are the world of the Old Testament and the world of the New Testament. Richard Hays defined metalepsis as "when a literary echo links the text in which it occurs to an earlier text, the figurative effect of the echo can lie in the unstated or suppressed (transumed) points of resonance between the two texts."[5] Hays's point was that when New Testament authors referred to the Old Testament, the thrust of their references was not always found only in the exact words they cited. The point of their reference was often found in unstated but implied points of resonance that the references called to mind.

If the emphasis of New Testament references to the Old Testament is not always to be found in the exact words quoted, where can the emphasis be found? The point of a reference is often found in the story or narrative substructure that the reference calls to mind. This narrative substructure "is not 'behind' the text, detachable from it, but 'underneath' the text, undergirding it, supporting it,

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[4] Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, 46. The locution of a text can refer to more than simply the words of the text, but it can include the meaning of the text as well. Here, the point being made is simply that with an echo or allusion to the Old Testament, the locution of the reference can extend far beyond the actual words found in the New Testament.

[5] Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 20.

animating it, and giving it coherence, while also constraining its discursive options."[6] Hays said of Paul's use of the gospel story,

> Paul does not, of course, simply retell the gospel story, although he alludes to it constantly. He assumes that his readers know the gospel story, and his pervasive concern is to draw out the implications of this story for shaping the belief and practice of his infant churches.[7]

This same principle applies to New Testament references to the Old Testament. Often the New Testament authors assumed a narrative substructure to their Old Testament references. They assumed their readers would draw these stories to mind and consider how the Old Testament stories applied to their day.[8]

So the locution of a New Testament reference to the Old Testament is not as simple as interpreting the exact words of a quotation or the specific image of an allusion. A simple example will demonstrate this point. When Jude compared false teachers in his day to those who "were destroyed in Korah's rebellion" (11), this brief phrase was intended to call to mind a specific story from the Old Testament (Numbers 16). With just five Greek words, Jude recalled an entire story and brought that story to bear on his readers. The reader of Jude who is ignorant of Numbers 16 can understand the grammar of Jude 11, but he cannot know the communicative intent of Jude 11. So the locution of the intertextual reference in Jude is found not in the specific words used in the Jude 11, but the locution is found in the assumed or implied narrative drawn to mind by those words.

Once the locution of an intertextual reference has been identified, the other two elements of speech act theory can be applied. The illocution then refers to the communicative intent of the New Testament in referring to the Old Testament. To state the matter bluntly, the New Testament author referred to the Old Testament

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[6] Bruce W. Longenecker, "Narrative Interest in the Study of Paul" in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 6.

[7] Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1—4:11*, 2d. ed., The Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 6.

[8] For an example of this type of approach, see Rikk E. Watts, "Immanuel: Virgin Birth Proof Text or Programmatic Warning of Things to Come (Isa 7:14 in Matt 1:23)?" *in From Prophecy to Testament: The Function of the Old Testament in the New* (ed. Craig A. Evans; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 92-113.

instead of not referring to the Old Testament. He did so for a reason, and exegetes and preachers will want to know not only what part of the Old Testament was referenced, but why. Finally, the perlocution of an intertextual reference implies that the New Testament author intended his audience to do something based on this intertextual reference.

To return to the example of Jude, the reference to the rebellion of Korah was intended to serve as a warning to Jude's audience.[9] Informed readers of Jude will know that God brought a plague on the people as a result of the rebellion of Korah, a plague that killed 147,000 people (Num. 16:49). Jude's readers were being warned that judgment still awaits people like Korah and people like the false teachers in Jude's day. But the warning was not the end of the communicative act. Jude desired for his readers to act by rejecting these false teachers and by standing firm in the truth.

To summarize, when New Testament authors referred to the Old Testament, they were often operating with a narrative framework in mind, a framework they assumed was shared by their audience. By referring to the Old Testament, whether with a name, an image, or a verse, the New Testament authors expected their audience to call to mind an Old Testament story and to bring that story to bear on the New Testament context. With this framework in mind, we see that when the New Testament authors referred to the Old Testament, they were doing so for a reason. They were expecting their readers to understand the Old Testament reference, and they were expecting their readers to think and act in certain ways based on the references to the Old Testament.[10]

A Three-step Method for Studying
the Old Testament in the New

The approach to Old Testament references in the New Testament presented here naturally leads to a three-step method for

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[9] For a discussion of Jude 11 as a prophetic warning from Jude to his readers concerning false teachers, see Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of Second Peter and Jude*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 64-68.

[10] Hebrews 11 serves as an example of how this process works. The chapter begins with specific examples of the faith of Old Testament saints. But by the end of the chapter, the author simply named names and alluded to events with the expectation that his audience would supply the stories of the faith of Gideon, David, and others.

studying intertextual references, which in turn will lead to implications for preaching these New Testament texts.

Locution- What did the New Testament author intend to call to mind with this reference to the Old Testament?

Passages like Matt. 2:23 demonstrate that a necessary first step in studying intertextual references is to determine the source of a quotation or allusion to the Old Testament. Matthew claimed that Jesus would be called a Nazarene, but scholars are divided over whether Matthew was referring to the branch of Isa. 11:1 or to the Nazarite vow of Samson in Judg. 13:5-7. But determining the locution of an intertextual allusion extends far beyond simply deciding which verses Matthew had in mind. The more significant interpretative question is, what could Matthew have reasonably expected to draw to the mind of his audience through this reference to the Old Testament.

This step of determining the locution of an intertextual reference is the most extensive of the three, but it is also the most important both for exegesis and for preaching. In fact, the proper application of the illocution (communicative intent) and perlocution (desired effect) are dependent on the answer to this first question. Four steps will help the exegete and pastor determine the locution of an intertextual reference.

First, the source of the reference must be determined. Our exegesis might be affected by whether Matthew intended to refer to Isaiah 11 or Judges 13. Second, the pastor must study the context of the Old Testament reference. If the New Testament author intended to draw to mind more than the exact words of a quotation, then the pastor must study the context in the Old Testament in order to determine the broader locution of the Old Testament reference. Third, the pastor must study the development of the concept throughout Scripture. Fourth, the pastor must summarize the previous three steps by describing the locution of the intertextual reference. In other words, he must describe what exactly the New Testament author intended to draw to mind with this reference to the Old Testament.

Illocution- What was the intended communicative effect of this reference to the Old Testament?

Once the locution has been determined, the exegete can proceed to the communicative intent of the reference to the Old Testament.

Again, instead of not referring to the Old Testament, the New Testament author did refer to the Old Testament. Why did he do so? What was his intended effect? First, the exegete should compare the locution of the Old Testament reference to its New Testament context. Does the quotation supply new information to the reader, or does it reinforce the argument already made by the New Testament author? What does the locution of the Old Testament reference add to its New Testament context? Second, the exegete must determine the energy or force that this Old Testament reference brings to the New Testament text. How does the quotation or allusion strengthen or support the argument being made by the New Testament author? What effect would removing the quotation have on the New Testament text? All of these questions must be answered by considering the Old Testament reference in light of its context in the New Testament. The supposed illocution or force of the intertextual reference must fit with the overall purpose of the New Testament passage.

Perlocution- What did the New Testament author expect his audience to do based on this reference to the Old Testament?

Finally, the exegete will want to know what the New Testament author expected his audience to do based on this reference to the Old Testament. Some speech act theorists talk about the actual effect on the audience instead of the intended effect on the audience. In other words, not what did the author intend the audience to do, but what did the audience actually do. In the case of many New Testament documents, we will not have access to the actual result of the speech act, though occasionally the result will be found in other New Testament documents. We can, however, at least consider how the author intended the audience to respond. What specific actions did he expect them to take? What beliefs did he expect them to hold? This step includes studying the New Testament context of the Old Testament reference in order to determine, as nearly as possible, exactly what the New Testament author intended for his audience to do based on his reference to the Old Testament.

Preaching the Old Testament in the New: An Intertextual Method		
Locution	What did the New Testament author intend to call to mind with this reference to the Old Testament?	
		1. Determine the source of the Old Testament reference
		2. Study the context of the Old Testament reference
		3. Study the development of this concept throughout Scripture
		4. Summarize the locution of the intertextual reference
Illocution	What did the New Testament author intend to do with this reference?	
		1. Compare the locution of the Old Testament reference to its New Testament context.
		2. Determine communicative effect, or the energy or force this reference brings to the New Testament text.
Perlocu-tion	What did the New Testament author expect his audience to do based on this reference to the Old Testament?	
		Describe the response the New Testament author expected of his audience (including actions to take, truths to believe, etc.).

THE METHOD APPLIED: 1 COR. 5:13

This brief explanation of a proposed method can best be supplemented by a specific example from the New Testament. 1 Corinthians 5 contains multiple references to the Old Testament. A full understanding of this passage would include tracing concepts like the Day of the Lord and Passover through the Old and New Testaments, but Paul concluded this chapter with a quote from the book of Deuteronomy, "Remove the evil person from among you" (1 Cor. 5:13). Readers of 1 Corinthians unfamiliar with the book of Deuteronomy might miss the impact of this quotation, but if the assertions made so far are correct, a closer examination of this quotation will enhance the preaching of 1 Corinthians 5.

Locution

To arrive at the locution of "Remove the evil person from among you" in 1 Cor. 5:13, we must first consider the source of the quotation.[11] This phrase, or very similar phrases, occurs eleven times in the book of Deuteronomy, and commentators are divided as to which passage Paul quoted. Some have argued that the quote comes from Deut. 17:7.[12] But since Deuteronomy 17 deals with the topic of idolatry and not sexual immorality, Paul may have been quoting from Deut. 22:24, which like 1 Corinthians 5 deals with sexual immorality. Others have suggested that Paul was not referring to a particular passage in Deuteronomy but that he was quoting a "recurring expression" from the book of Deuteronomy.[13]

This last option seems most likely. To fully understand Paul's intent in quoting these words, modern readers must have some understanding of the idea of the purging of the wicked in Deuteronomy. In the context of Deuteronomy, this purging referred to stoning to death those guilty of various sins, including the sins of leading others into idolatry (13:5), idolatry (17:7), refusal to listen to the

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[11] Certain parallels between Deuteronomy and 1 Cor. 5:13 might not show up in all English translations. For example, the NIV uses expulsion language in 1 Cor. 5:13 but consistently uses purging language in Deuteronomy. Thus the parallel language between Deuteronomy and 1 Corinthians is harder to discern in the NIV.

[12] See for example Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 417.

[13] Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 220.

priest (17:12), murder (19:13), attempted murder through perjury (19:19), potential murder (21:9), stubborn and rebellious sons (21:21), sexual immorality (22:22-24), and man-stealing (24:7). Brian Rosner argued that this Old Testament quotation

> is one of the most impressive examples of the crucial nature of Old Testament context in the study of the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament. There is good evidence that the contexts of all six appearances of the Deuteronomic expression formula in their original contexts have exerted an influence on Paul's instructions across the chapter.[14]

In other words, Paul was not simply quoting from one Old Testament passage, but he was drawing to mind the concept of capital punishment in Deuteronomy. This purging through capital punishment in Deuteronomy should have served to incite fear among God's people so that others would not commit such grievous sins (13:11), and it also removed the anger of God from the rest of the people who had not sinned in this way (13:17). So in stoning those who had committed such sins, the people were maintaining the holiness of Israel, discouraging others from engaging in such sins, and protecting the people as a whole from the outpouring of God's anger.

As Paul carried this idea of expulsion into the New Testament, he clearly did not mean that the sinful man in 1 Corinthians 5 should have been stoned to death. Instead, the Corinthians were to "hand such a person over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit might be saved on the day of the Lord" (5:5), and the church was not to associate or even eat with this unrepentant sinner (5:12). This man's expulsion meant that he was to be removed from the fellowship of the church. Further, this man's discipline was to occur in front of the whole assembly of the church (5:4) so that the church might both affirm what was happening and be warned about engaging in this type of sin themselves.

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[14] Brian S. Rosner, "Deuteronomy in 1 and 2 Corinthians," in *Deuteronomy in the New Testament: New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel* (ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken; New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2008), 122. Rosner mentions 6 uses of this language in Deuteronomy instead of 11 due to the difference in exact parallels versus close parallels. For example, Deuteronomy 17:12 refers to expelling the evil from Israel instead of from among the people, and Deuteronomy 21:9 refers to purging the guilt over the shedding of innocent blood.

1 Corinthians 5 clearly demonstrates that capital punishment in the Old Testament finds its most direct application in excommunication from the church in the New Testament. So just as this sexual sinner was to be handed over to Satan, so too Hymenaeus and Alexander were to be handed over to Satan for what was a capital sin in the Old Testament, blasphemy (1 Tim. 1:20). Just as unrepentant sins would lead to professing Christians being treated like unbelievers (Matt. 18:15-17), Paul's quotation from Deuteronomy in 1 Cor. 5:13 is some of the clearest evidence that the capital commands of the Old Testament have not been forgotten, but they have been reapplied in the New Testament.

Before attempting to summarize the locution of the quotation in 1 Cor. 5:13, we can summarize the first three steps suggested for determining the locution. What was the source of the quotation? We cannot know if Paul had a specific verse in mind, but instead, he was probably quoting a recurring phrase from Deuteronomy. What does the study of the context in Deuteronomy teach us? This expulsion in Deuteronomy was to be carried out by stoning those who committed various egregious sins for the sake of maintaining the purity of God's people, striking fear into others who might commit these same sins, and removing the wrath of God from the rest of the people. How was this idea developed throughout the rest of Scripture? No longer are Christians to engage in stoning those who commit these types of sins, but Christians should disfellowship from those who commit these types of sins.

The final step is to summarize the locution of the Old Testament quotation found in 1 Cor. 5:13. To what do these words refer? Or perhaps more clearly, what could Paul have reasonably expected to come to the minds of the Corinthians based on these six Greek words taken from Deuteronomy? When Paul said "Remove the evil person from among you" (1 Cor. 5:13), he was drawing to mind the commands from Deuteronomy to stone certain sinners to death for the sake of the holiness of the people of God.

Illocution

Here we are looking for the communicative intent of this Old Testament reference. What does this reference to Deuteronomy do? Three effects of this quotation seem most prominent: Paul used the quote to heighten the seriousness of the issue addressed in 1 Corinthians 5, to tie the Corinthian church to the people of God in the

Old Testament, and to evoke zeal among the Corinthians for the holiness of God's people.

First, the quotation heightens the seriousness of the issue addressed in 1 Corinthians 5. Paul had already rebuked the Corinthians for feeling pride instead of grief over the presence of this sinful man in their church (5:2). This quotation from Deuteronomy, a clear reference to capital punishment in the Old Testament for sins just like the sin embraced by the Corinthian church, should have caused the Corinthians to see the seriousness of the issue they had left unaddressed. As such, the quotation from Deuteronomy serves as a final rhetorical flourish to drive home the point that failure to address this problem was to stand against the commands of God.

Second, the quotation from Deuteronomy tied the Corinthian church to the people of God in the Old Testament. The Corinthians were reminded that God has always cared about the holiness of his people, so for Paul to demand the expulsion of this man from the church was in line with the nature and character of God from the beginning. For the Corinthian church to disfellowship this man was to place them in continuity with God's people in the Old Testament, who were also to remove such sinful people from their midst.

Third, Paul's quotation from Deuteronomy brings an energy to the text that should have motivated the Corinthians toward a zeal for the holiness of God's people. Instead of being proud of the supposed freedom they had to engage in these types of sins, they should have cared enough about the holiness of the church to do something about this unrepentant sinner. Paul made clear in 1 Cor. 5:9-10 that the Corinthians cared more about sin outside the church than sin in the church. Consequently, they had become hypocrites who neglected the holiness of the church while judging outsiders. Just as Deuteronomy called God's people to be zealous in guarding their holiness, Paul's quotation from Deuteronomy should have instilled in the Corinthians a zeal for the holiness of the church.

Perlocution

In this case, the intended effect of Paul's quotation is clear: expel the person from the church. Here we see that the quote from Deuteronomy does not introduce a new idea to the text of 1 Corinthians. If Paul had not included this quote, the Corinthians still should have known to expel this man. Paul used the quotation from Deuteronomy to support a claim that he had already made, that this

unrepentant sinner had to be dealt with, just as those who committed such flagrant sins in the Old Testament had to be addressed. While the quote does not add a new application to the text of 1 Corinthians 5, it certainly adds weight and force to the intended effect on the Corinthians.

Implications for Preaching

With the method described and applied, we can now return to the original claim that this method of approaching intertextual references matters for the preaching of New Testament texts. Two implications for preaching are most relevant: New Testament passages will be preached with a clearer biblical theology, and application will be made both with more specificity and more force.

First, this method will help pastors preach the New Testament using sound biblical theology. To approach 1 Cor. 5:13 and assume that the quote only refers to excommunication is to miss the important biblical themes and significant ties between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In a day when some are claiming that the Old Testament law is irrelevant for the church today,[15] 1 Cor. 5:13 reminds us that Paul specifically appealed to the law to instruct the New Testament church. He expected the Corinthians to see that the law applied to them, even if not in the same way it applied to the people of Israel in Deuteronomy. Hopefully this paper has demonstrated that a study of Paul's quotation from Deuteronomy has implications for how Christians understand the Old Testament law and its relevance for the church today. These implications can be missed if the pastor does not take the time to examine the intent and force of Paul's quotation.

Second, this method will enable pastors to preach with more specific and forceful application. One of the pressing questions of 1 Corinthians 5 is what sins qualify as legitimate applications of Paul's command in this passage. Paul's use of the quote from Deuteronomy opens up application for this text to include every other sin listed in the parallel passages in Deuteronomy. We have already seen that the purging language of Deuteronomy was applied to

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[15] For a popular example of this kind of thinking, see Andy Stanley, "Why Do Christians Want to Post the 10 Commandments and Not the Sermon on the Mount?" Relevant, January 7, 2019, https://relevantmagazine.com /faith/why-do-christians-want-to-post-the-10-commandments-and-not-the-sermon-on-the-mount.

numerous sins including idolatry, murder, stubborn and rebellious children, and man-stealing. This method of approaching the text helps the pastor see other areas of application for the preaching of 1 Corinthians 5. The principles of 1 Corinthians 5 apply not only to sexual immorality, but they likely apply to other capital sins in the Old Testament. So while 1 Corinthians 5 should not be brought to bear on every sin that might occur in the church, the chapter does have implications that extend beyond sexual immorality.[16]

Conclusion

The goal of this article has been both to propose a method for studying Old Testament references in the New Testament and to demonstrate the importance of this method for preaching the New Testament. The aim of this article has been not just better exegesis, but more faithful preaching. Hopefully, the application of this method will enable pastors to preach both with sound biblical theology and with forceful, specific application, both of which are based on the author's originally intended force and application of these Old Testament references.

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[16] For further development of this argument, see Charlie Ray III, "Purge the Evil from among You: A Biblical Theology of Excommunication," *Presbyterion* 49, no. 1 (Spring 2023): 131-43.

The Bible Is Food: Metaphors, Models, and Method for Theological Interpretation of Scripture

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Introduction

Ask scholars today, "What is a text?" and their answer will likely come in a metaphor. Theologians especially love their metaphors for describing the text of Scripture. Scripture is a mirror, a theatrical script, a musical score, a cathedral, a rule book, a user's manual, a lamp, a love letter. But how did metaphor, which in the eighteenth century was seen as a deceptive rhetorical trick, become such a prominent tool for speaking of Scripture? In this paper, I explore the theological use of metaphor to describe the nature and interpretation of Scripture. I first trace a brief history of metaphor–from Aristotle's *Poetics* to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By*–to show how metaphors become system-shaping models for understanding the nature and interpretation of texts like the Bible. I then survey two current models for the Bible–Kevin Vanhoozer's "The Bible Is a Theo-Dramatic Script" and Anthony Thiselton's "The Bible Is a Musical Score"–and evaluate them based on their faithfulness to Scripture and fittingness to the current culture. I then query the biblical text to propose a model for Scripture drawn from Scripture itself, that of "Scripture Is Food," and from this food model, I outline some methodological implications for interpreting Scripture.

Metaphor: A Brief History

What is a metaphor? The first known analysis comes from Aristotle in his *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* (c. 330 BCE).[1] He defines the Greek word *metaphora* as "giving a thing a name that belongs to something else."[2] This name transference enhances speech with liveliness,

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[1] Cf. Janet M. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1985), 1.

[2] Aristotle, *Poetics* 1457b6.

beauty, clarity, persuasiveness, and extension of knowledge. Given these benefits, Aristotle calls metaphor "a sign of genius" that cannot be taught, so that "the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor."[3]

Fascinatingly, "this first theorization of metaphor does not consider it as a mere ornament of discourse but assigns it a cognitive function."[4] In other words, metaphors do something to the mind: They cause the mind to reach "beyond" the metaphor's naming function to see new meanings, new horizons, new ways of understanding the world. For example, Aristotle observes that pirates like to refer to themselves as "purveyors," a positive term borrowed from the mercantile realm.[5] By calling themselves "purveyors," pirates thus insinuate "that the plunderer and the merchant share a characteristic in common, since both of them facilitate the transfer of goods from a source to the consumer,"[6] subtly encouraging their society "to reconsider the role of the pirate in the economy of the Mediterranean."[7] Metaphors thus suggest new attitudes, new mindsets, new ways of seeing reality.

Despite Aristotle's high regard, metaphor remains an almost entirely neglected topic in philosophy from Aristotle's time to the eighteenth century. Even then, philosophers prefer the literal language of math and science. Thomas Hobbes and John Locke write disparagingly of metaphor, with Locke calling its use a "fault" and an "abuse of language."[8] The British empiricists despise metaphor as that which stirs the emotions toward illusion, and the Romantics reinforce the dichotomy between rational truth and imaginative art by embracing subjectivism.[9] Metaphor thus comes to be regarded as a mere ornament of style, "a sort of happy extra trick with

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[3] Aristotle, *Poetics* 1459a6.

[4] Umberto Eco, *From the Tree to the Labyrinth: Historical Studies on the Sign and Interpretation*, trans. Anthony Oldcorn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 62.

[5] Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1405a20-33.

[6] Eco, *From the Tree*, 63.

[7] Eco, *From the Tree*, 63.

[8] John Locke, An Essay *Concerning Human Understanding* (London: T. Tegg and Son, 1836), 372; cf. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1886), 29.

[9] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 192.

words,"[10] while the literal propositions of math and science come to be seen as the only true descriptors of reality.[11] To call a statement "simply metaphorical" comes to mean that the statement is at best not really true, and at worst, deliberately deceptive.[12] Such negative attitudes toward metaphor endure to this day.

However, a turning point comes in 1936 with I. A. Richards' *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, which moves away from the perception of metaphors as "mere language" and begins to retrieve their "conceptual nature, their contribution to understanding, [and] their function in cultural reality."[13] Taking issue with Aristotle's notion that metaphor is unteachable and reserved only for geniuses, Richards sets out to explain how to understand and use metaphor. He defines metaphor as the union of two halves: a "tenor" and a "vehicle."[14] The tenor is the "underlying idea or principal subject," and the vehicle is "an image or object" from which attributes are borrowed to describe the tenor.[15] For example, in the metaphor, "man is a wolf," "man" is the tenor (the principal subject) and "wolf" is the vehicle from which attributes are borrowed to describe "man." By defining metaphor in this way, Richards recognizes it as much more than merely "a verbal matter, a shifting and displacement of words."[16] Rather, metaphor is an "intercourse of *thoughts*, a transaction between contexts."[17] Richards exposes what Aristotle only hints at: that metaphors serve a cognitive function. They do something to the mind; they provoke the mind to make new thought connections based on the interaction of tenor and vehicle. As the tenor and vehicle interact, they change the way we think of both. Just as "man is a wolf" sees man as more wolflike, it also sees wolves as more manlike.

Richards argues further that metaphor constitutes the very principle of thought and language: "*Thought* is metaphoric, and proceeds by comparison, and the metaphors of language derive therefrom."[18]

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[10] I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 90.

[11] Soskice, *Metaphor*, 12-13.

[12] Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 190.

[13] Richards, *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 159.

[14] Cf. Richards, *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 96.

[15] Ibid., 96.

[16] Richards, *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 94.

[17] Richards, *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 94.

[18] Richards, *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 95.

Thus, metaphors describe not only what the mind thinks about but even how the mind thinks. Richards challenges philosophers to observe how they "cannot get through three sentences of ordinary fluid discourse without [using metaphor] . . . Even in the rigid language of the settled sciences we do not eliminate or prevent it without great difficulty."[19] In short, metaphors describe reality, even reality in the sciences.

Metaphors even define a cultural system. For example, the metaphor "argument is war" promotes "a systematic way of talking about the battling aspects of arguing,"[20] influencing a culture to conceive of argument in this way. For example, a culture that believes that "argument is war" will use aggressive terms like "attack a position," "indefensible," "strategy," "line of attack," "win," "gain ground," etc., which affects how people systematically conceive of and engage in argument. A different metaphor would yield different results. Instead of "argument is war," consider "argument is dance," wherein "the participants are seen as performers, and the goal is to perform in a balanced and aesthetically pleasing way. In such a culture, people would view arguments differently."[21] Metaphor thus does more than pass on information; it "conveys an atmosphere."[22] Consider another culture-shaping metaphor: "Time is money." This too goes beyond mere wordplay; it encourages people within a culture to "*conceive of* time that way. Thus we understand time as the kind of thing that can be spent, wasted, budgeted, invested wisely or poorly, saved, or squandered."[23] Notice too that "time is money" is not "a necessary way for human beings to conceptualize time; it is tied to our culture."[24] So metaphor is no trick of rhetoric; it is a descriptor of reality that shapes how entire cultures think and behave.

From Metaphors to Models

This brief foray into the culture-shaping power of metaphor suggests that metaphor is not only "constitutive of our cognitive efforts

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[19] Ibid., 92.
[20] Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 7.
[21] Ibid., 5.
[22] Boersma, *Violence*, 102.
[23] Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 8.
[24] Ibid., 9.

but, indeed, of our whole [social] being."[25] Metaphor harnesses the power of language to shape the world we live in, and some metaphors not only shape systems but *become* new systems, or models, for experiencing the world. A model, as defined by Sallie McFague, is simply "a dominant metaphor, a metaphor with staying power . . . [as when] some metaphors gain wide appeal and become major ways of structuring and ordering experience."[26] These models become the way we interpret the world and reality, each model claiming "to be the most comprehensive description of the phenomena under investigation,"[27] influencing "not only what sort of answers we get, but what kind of questions we ask."[28]

Examples of such system-shaping models abound. Science often operates based on models such as "'the world-is-a-machine' or 'the world-is-an-organism.' Many contemporary scientists . . . assume that 'the world-is-mathematical.'"[29] Models like "the brain is a computer" currently pervade neuroscience. As for theological models, McFague gives the example "God is Father," which suggests

> a comprehensive, ordering structure with impressive interpretive potential . . . [A]n entire theology can be worked out from this model. Thus, if God is understood on the model of 'father,' human beings are understood as 'children,' sin is rebellion against the 'father,' redemption is sacrifice by the 'elder son' on behalf of his 'brothers and sisters' for the guilt against the 'father' and so on.[30]

So models structure entire systems of thought.

However, models also come with dangers. Unlike other metaphors, models tend to "lock in" meaning in one direction and exclude other models, thus excluding "other ways of thinking and talking, and in so doing [a model] can easily become . . . identified as *the* one and only way of understanding a subject."[31] For example, McFague laments that the model "God the Father" tends to militate against a model like "God the Mother."[32] This tendency of models

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25 Fiumara, *Metaphoric*, 6.
26 McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 23.
27 MacCormac, *Metaphor*, 141.
28 Soskice, *Metaphor*, 63.
29 Ibid.
30 McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 23.
31 McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 24.
32 McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 24.

to oppose one another "is probably the single greatest risk in their use,"[33] which hints at a disturbing truth about models: they not only reveal but also *conceal* aspects of reality by blinding their adherents to insights that other models might offer. Nevertheless, models remain unavoidable and necessary since humans inevitably think through metaphor and thus through models. The human mind cannot help but make models "as comprehensive ways of envisioning reality."[34]

Models for the Bible

As "comprehensive ways of envisioning reality," models carry weighty implications when applied to Scripture. Christians have developed models to "think critically, self-consciously, and creatively about what sort of thing Scripture is–in their own assumptions and in the history and practices of their communities," and models for Scripture include a rule book, a blueprint, an owner's manual, or a "sacred space."[35] More recently, two models have gained prominence in evangelical circles: Anthony Thiselton's "Scripture Is a Musical Score" and Kevin Vanhoozer's "Scripture Is a Theo-Dramatic Script."[36] Both are "performance metaphors" drawing from the insights of Hans-Georg Gadamer in *Truth and Method*,[37] and each invites us to "perform our construal–by participating in its vision."[38]

The Bible Is a Musical Score

Anthony Thiselton envisions the Bible as a musical score, which captures how biblical interpretation can remain faithful to the original composition but allow freedom for improvisation and creativity. A musical score has a set structure, melody, and notation that

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[33] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 24.

[34] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 25.

[35] Martin, *Pedagogy of the Bible*, 80.

[36] Cf. Anthony C. Thiselton, "Knowledge, Myth, and Corporate Memory," in *Believing in the Church: The Corporate Nature of Faith* (Wilton, CT: The Central Board of Finance of the Church of England, 1982), 74; and Kevin Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 115-242.

[37] Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. G. Barden and J. Cumming (London: Sheed & Ward, 1975), 106-107, 130.

[38] Fiumara, *Metaphoric*, 133.

"'controls,' or sets limits to the scope of, the present performance."[39] As a result, every performance of a piece of music must correlate with its score, or else the performance would not be a faithful representation of that piece of music. However, each performance of that piece is unique and gives space to the performer to express creative imagination; however, such creative expression always occurs within the clear limits set by the score. In the same way, the Bible's set structure and text put clear limits on theological interpretation so that interpretation must stay faithful to those established boundaries. Yet the Bible allows for creative performances and fresh interpretations of its original text, "new performances of the same work, sometimes with different tempos, additional improvisation, different performers, or slightly modified arrangements."[40] Such room for newness and diversity also suggests that interpreting Scripture has a corporate dimension that takes into account the "breadth and range of successive layers of corporate memory, belief and knowledge, gained by a community, or by a community of communities."[41] So the church community, past and present, helps safeguard faithful interpretation and performance of the text.

The Bible Is a Theo-Dramatic Script

Kevin Vanhoozer views the Bible as "a script that calls for faithful yet creative performance."[42] As a script, the Bible "calls not only for responsive reading but for responsive action and embodiment. *The script demands to be played out.*"[43] According to Vanhoozer, this model re-envisions the church's doctrine of *sola scriptura* as "not only a principle but a *practice.*"[44] He wants to push for participation in the world created by the biblical text. Human beings become "walk on" actors on God's stage, God becomes the playwright and director, and the script becomes the directions and lines for the actors to play out.[45] The Bible is thus seen as much more than a history book but as directions for today's speech and action. Scripture

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[39] Thiselton, "Knowledge," 74.

[40] Anthony Thiselton, *The Two Horizons* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1980), 245-46.

[41] Thiselton, "Knowledge," 74.

[42] Vanhoozer, *Drama of Doctrine*, 31.

[43] Ibid., 115.

[44] Ibid., 32.

[45] Ibid., 212, 177, 237.

both witnesses to what God has done and "*summons the reader rightly to participate*,"[46] thus addressing both God's agency and man's response.

Evaluating the Models

How should one go about evaluating these models of Scripture? Rhyne Putman suggests two helpful criteria for assessing metaphorical models: faithfulness to Scripture and fittingness to the contemporary context.[47] In terms of faithfulness to Scripture, both Thiselton's and Vanhoozer's models do well in encapsulating the Bible's consistency, complexity, and command. The Bible's consistency reflects in the fixed notes of a musical score and the uniform lines of a script. Both a musical score and theatrical script also illustrate "the interrelated complexities of reading and living the Holy Scriptures."[48] As for command and authority, a musical score certainly requires adherence to its notes and structures in order to remain faithful in its performance, and the same goes for the written directions and dialogue in a script.

In terms of fittingness to the contemporary context, both models appropriately describe the conduct, creativity, and community necessary to respond to the Bible in our current context. In addressing conduct, both a musical score and a theatrical script call for performance. After all, a "drama exists only when it is played. Music is experienced not simply in reading the composer's score privately, but in the actual event of the concert."[49] In the same way, Scripture's words demand the "performance" of obedient conduct and faith, not just mental assent. A score and script also capture the Bible's call for creative interpretation since interpreting the signs on the page "is not a mechanical reproduction of the past in the present, but a creative event in its own right."[50] With regard to community, a score and a script reflect "the self-preserving qualities of Christian corporate memory" required to interpret the Bible today.[51] Interpretation is a corporate event drawing from corporate traditions.

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[46] Ibid., 181, emphasis his.
[47] Putman, *In Defense of Doctrine*, 305.
[48] Peterson, *Eat This Book*, 76.
[49] Anthony Thiselton, *The Two Horizons*, 298.
[50] Ibid., 299; cf. Peterson, *Eat This Book*, 76-77.
[51] Putman, *In Defense of Doctrine*, 245.

However, models conceal as well as reveal, so interpreters should ask what these models might be concealing. Though they both show evidence of being faithful to Scripture and fitting to context, what might they be missing that another model might help bring to light? I find at least two possible weaknesses: their source and their scope.

Questioning Source

Questioning the source of a model for Scripture proves especially important to evangelicals because they treat Scripture as their authority and hold to *sola scriptura*. Thus Scripture, rather than human experience or utility, should play the defining role in the model we adopt, especially our model for Scripture itself. In other words, the Bible should be our main source for model-making, as it is for doctrine-forming. If the Bible itself should be our main source and "ultimate norm" in the creation of our theological models, this gives us grounds to question why the Bible itself does not describe itself in terms of a musical score or a theatrical script. Rather than relying on the Bible's own self-designations, these two models of "The-Bible-as-Score" and "The-Bible-as-Script" instead seem to rely more on Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method* as their source, which may dangerously imply that the real authority behind these models is Gadamer's book rather than the Bible. This is not to say that these models are unhelpful, only to suggest that these models be supplemented with models from within the Bible.

Questioning Scope

Another danger of models like "The-Bible-as-Score" and "The-Bible-as-Script," concerns the cultural scope of these models. Consider again how metaphors can shape culture and influence how people think and behave. This begs the question, "How are these models for Scripture influencing the way we think about Scripture, and what kind of culture are these models promoting?" A possible problem arises from the fact that both of these models come from the context of the arts and entertainment. Of course, there is nothing wrong with the arts or entertainment, but given our current cultural context–in which schools tend to devalue the arts and scale back arts programs–one wonders whether such models might inadvertently influence those in our culture to devalue and scale back use of the Bible.

Moreover, one might question whether the theatrical (and in to-day's culture, cinematic) model of "The-Bible-as-Script" places the Bible too much in the context of entertainment, which in our culture may influence people to consider approaching the Bible as an escape from reality rather than an engagement with reality. David Buschart and Kent Eilers have mentioned how church buildings are now being modeled after theaters or cinemas, a phenomenon that may reflect how entertainment contexts are influencing even the physical space of church culture.[52]

The theatrical model in particular might also have the troubling effect of limiting the Bible's scope to only the highly educated. Aristotle says that a good metaphor must be clear and *immediately* accessible to its audience, but the theatrical model requires its audience first to understand the context of theater and its technical terms, such as "auctor," "mise en scène," "Performance I and II," "raconteur," and "provocateur."[53] These terms create a steeper learning curve for its audience rather than immediate clarity, and they require that an audience be educated in theatrical terminology to grasp the metaphor (and thus the Bible). Such selective terminology might thus discourage those with lesser education from approaching the Bible because of the faulty assumption that the Bible is too complicated or highbrow, which would be a greatly lamentable repercussion. Once again, I am not calling the models of score and script unhelpful, but we must evaluate our models carefully to ensure that they promote the right cultural customs (those taught in the Bible) and point to the right source (the Bible as God's written word). Models should also allow room for insights from other models.

The Bible's Model for the Bible: Food

Does the Bible offer models for itself within its pages? Yes; in fact, it offers a number of them.[54] One promising model is that of food. Jesus says in Matthew 4:4: "Man shall not live on bread alone,

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[52] Cf. W. David Buschart and Kent Eilers, *Theology as Retrieval: Receiving the Past, Renewing the Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 142.

[53] Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine*, 177, 173, 176, 237.

[54] Other models include a lamp (Ps 119:105), fire (Jer 23:29a), hammer (Jer 23:29b), sword (Heb 4:12-13), mirror (Jas 1:23), milk (1 Pet 2:2), and seed (1 Pet 1:23).

but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."[55] Here, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3, echoing the consistent witness of the Old and the New Testaments that "eating" God's word is not trivial but a matter of life and death. Coupling Jesus' statement in Matthew 4:4 with 2 Timothy 3:16 ("All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable"), we can see Scripture as part of that "word that proceeds out of the mouth of God," which makes the "eating" of Scripture essential for human life. Thus the intake of Scripture becomes inextricably linked to "the first and most urgent activity of all animal and human life: We are only because we eat."[56] Just as people survive by eating, they survive by receiving God's words in Scripture.

This model figures prominently in the prophets and psalms. When God's people face impending judgment, God gives Jeremiah His words to eat: "Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart" (Jer 15:16). While God's people languish in exile, God commands Ezekiel to open his mouth and eat the scroll of God's word (Ezek 2:8-3:3). Both prophets find God's word to be sweet food during bitter days of struggle, food that they would assimilate and then serve to God's people to sustain their very lives. The Psalms refer to God's word as sweet food: "How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Ps 119:103; cf. Ps 19:10). Conversely, God bitterly judges His people with "[n]ot a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of the Lord. People will stagger from sea to sea and from the north even to the east. They will go to and fro to seek the word of the Lord. But they will not find it" (Amos 8:11b-12). Without God's word, people die. By God's word, people live.

In the New Testament, John eats the book of God's words, and they taste sweet but then give him "a severe case of indigestion" (Rev 10:9-10).[57] In 1 Timothy 4:6, Paul exhorts Timothy to be "constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following." A fascinating reference comes in Luke 10:38-42. Mary and Martha invite Jesus over for a meal, and while Martha is busy preparing, she gets upset that Mary

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[55] All Bible quotations come from the New American Standard translation.

[56] Leon Kass, *The Hungry Soul: Eating and the Perfecting of Our Nature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 2.

[57] Peterson, *Eat This Book*, 64.

is merely "seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word" (Luke 10:39). As Martha complains to Jesus, He curiously replies, "[B]ut only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part (*tein agathein merida*), which shall not be taken away from her." What is this "good part," or portion? John Nolland points out that the Septuagint uses *meris* (part), "for portions in a meal (Gen 43:34; 1 Sam 1:4-5; 9:23; Neh 8:10, 12; Esth 9:19, 22)."[58] So the fact "that Mary has chosen to listen to the word of Jesus may be viewed metaphorically as the choice of the best meal (cf. 4:4), or it could be that *necessity* is seen from a double aspect; for a meal a few things will do; for one's salvation receiving the word of God is the necessary thing."[59] Either way, the passage suggests this model of food to describe God's word.

The biblical data is clear: Scripture is food. The Bible, as God's written word, is life-giving; its words are "intended, whether confrontationally or obliquely, to get inside us, to deal with our souls, to form a life that is congruent with the world that God has created, the salvation that he has enacted, and the community that he has gathered."[60]

Methodological Implications for Interpreting the Bible

It remains now to ask, "If we adopt this model, what methodological implications follow for interpreting the Bible?" Based on the food model, here are eight implications:

1. Surrender to the Universal Necessity of the Bible (Matt. 4:4; Psa. 119:103)

Not everyone likes music (surprisingly), and not everyone goes to the theater. But everybody *must* eat. As our stomachs need food to live, so our souls need God's word to live. The word is not an optional add-on to one's day but "the fundamental source of life itself . . . God's commandments are God's enablements."[61] While theatrical scripts and musical scores need people to keep them alive, food keeps the people alive in the first place. In the same way, Scripture as food requires of us "complete dependence on the word of

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[58] Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34*, 604.

[59] Ibid., 604-605.

[60] Peterson, *Eat This Book*, 4.

[61] Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1-21:9*, rev. ed., Word Biblical Commentary 6A (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 174.

God and God's ability and faithfulness to provide our essential needs."[62] Daily and repeatedly, we must satisfy not only our physical hunger with eating food but our spiritual hunger with listening to, meditating on, and living out the Bible. At the same time, this "gut-level necessity"[63] of listening to God's word is a duty of delight. It is a joy to hear from God, to engage with God, to taste the sweetness of His Scripture. The "Scripture is food" model captures the joy of access to God's salvation but also the grave significance for those both inside and outside the church, because those who will not eat of it (listen to and believe it) will not live eternally but rather die eternally. Thus in the model of food, we truly behold "the kindness and severity of God" (Rom 11:22).

2. Grow in the Milk and Meat of the Bible (1 Pet. 2:2; 1 Cor 3:2)

The food model helps us to explain how both child and adult can approach the word with confidence that God will speak to them. As milk, Scripture can be understood by a child. As meat, Scripture will never be exhausted by adults, no matter how advanced their biblical and theological training. May the church never scare her children away from reading the Bible because of overcomplicated hermeneutical rules or methods. Instead, like the children to St. Augustine, let her always encourage whoever will to "Pick up and read! Pick up and read!"[64] We should encourage our congregations to do and then decipher, to listen constantly to the Bible and then grow in skill in interpreting it over time.

Also, make sure to take in the "less palatable," "negative," or "boring" parts of the Bible. Physically, we cannot live on bread alone but also on vegetables, fruits, and proteins to have a healthy, balanced diet. In a similar vein, the Bible is chock-full of different genres necessary to provide for the spiritual health of God's church. The church should make sure its diet of Scripture includes ingredients from all these to foster the full health of its members. Not everybody likes every food group; many children do not like broccoli or brussel sprouts, but their parents make them eat it because of its nutritional value. In the same way, not every genre or structure

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[62] Ibid., 175.

[63] Peterson, *Eat This Book*, 21.

[64] Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 152.

in the Bible is fun to eat, such as genealogies, law codes, and judgments, but they are good for us to read, even though their spiritual value may not be readily apparent. So eat a balanced diet, the whole Bible, not just the parts you tend to like. Do not get caught up in the spectacularism of our age; eating sometimes proves mundane or boring, but always necessary. Not everything in the Bible is exciting, but all of it is profitable and necessary for us to take in.

3. Embrace the Bible's Mysterious Agency (Isa 55:10–11; Luke 10:42; 1 Thess. 2:13)

As spiritual food, Scripture is the *source* of our theological energy, not just the *space* in which to create our own formulations or the blind *stuff* we use to build whatever systems we want. Rather, God's word has agency. Jesus likens the word to seed sown on different soils (Matt 13:3-23); the word acts within us in ways beyond our control. It implants itself in our hearts and saves us (Jas 1:21), just as ingested food sustains our life. Like food, Scripture effects the health of the mind, body, and soul. At the same time, we must choose to eat. We must appropriate those kernels of energy. To do us good, the word must not stay external or theoretical to us; instead, we must open our mouths wide, that God may fill them (cf. Ps 81:10). In other words, we must actually make the time to open our Bibles. We must actually create the space to eat a spiritual meal of listening carefully to God's words. We must assimilate those words into our being, that we may live and participate in God's salvific agency throughout the world. This means, in Peterson's words, "letting Another have a say in everything we are saying and doing. It is as easy as that. And as hard."[65] Thus the Bible will not remain merely informational but become "'incardiate,' transform[ing] the one taking it to heart."[66] We can study food all we want, but if we do not eat, we die. In the same way, Scripture can and should be studied with historical-critical, grammatical, literary, and theological methods, but such study must not stay theoretical but become personal because if we do not eat God's word, we die. So we, as the church, must become interested not just "in knowing more but in becoming more."[67] We must beware that it is entirely possible "to come to the Bible in total sincerity, responding to the intellectual

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[65] Peterson, *Eat This Book*, xii.
[66] Dharamraj, "On the Doctrine of Scripture," 56.
[67] Ibid., 59.

challenge it gives, or for the moral guidance it offers, or for the spiritual uplift it provides, and not in any way deal with a personally revealing God who has personal designs on you."[68] The Bible can be approached as a rewarding science, but our interest in the Bible must not stop there lest we spiritually starve to death. We must each personally ingest the Bible as our spiritual food, as it discloses the "personally revealing God who has personal designs" on our lives.

4. Balance Intake with Exercise of the Bible (Jas. 1:22)

Food carries an inherent balance between intake with expense, or the eater becomes unhealthy, either anorexic or obese. James 1:22 makes clear we are to be "doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves." To be spiritually healthy, we must exercise the word and not just hear it. I suggest that there is such thing as spiritual anorexia and spiritual obesity. Spiritual anorexia happens when we do not take in the word at all, and spiritual obesity happens when we take in the word but do not obey it or put it to action. Just as diet must go with exercise to be physically healthy, hearing the word must go with doing it to be spiritually healthy.

5. Listen to How Christians in Other Cultures Metabolize the Bible (Rev 7:9)

Bread is a ubiquitous food found in every culture, but not every culture bakes bread the same way. The Jews have challah, the French have baguettes, the Ethiopians have injera, the Italians have focaccia, and the Chinese have shaobing. There is diversity in how bakeries in different cultures prepare their carbohydrates, yet this diversity does not at all render the bread ineffective. Similarly, "Scripture is food" carries implications for how biblical truth stays stable across all cultures yet is expressed legitimately across different cultures spanning diverse times, locations, and even denominational divides. The food model captures the unchanging universality of God's truth while encouraging creative and fresh expressions of that truth within distinct Christian communities. So "it is imperative that we listen carefully to interpretations of Scripture by Christians in contexts different from our own. We must remain open to the freedom of the Spirit who sheds new light on Scripture . . .

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[68] Ibid., 30.

Unfamiliar voices can challenge and enrich scriptural interpretation."[69] Since no one culture holds the exhaustive interpretation of God's word, Christians in all cultures should be open to such interpretive deepening and correction.

6. Receive the True Bread of the Bible (John 5:39-40)

In John 5:39-40, Jesus rebukes the Jewish leaders, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life." Ultimately, the Bible does not call attention to itself but invites to the main meal; it "affects transformation by pointing to Jesus as the only means by which fellowship with God becomes available to anyone, and beyond that, by calling into being that fellowship."[70] To put it bluntly, "not everyone who gets interested in the Bible and even gets excited about the Bible wants to get involved with God,"[71] but to "eat" the Bible rightly, we must move beyond the propositions of Scripture to embrace the Person of Christ revealed in Scripture. So the Bible is not an end in itself; it is food that points to the true Bread of Life (John 6:35), which entails that right understanding of Scripture requires moment-by-moment dependence on Christ through prayer, dependence emphasized by our need for food.

7. Share in the Covenant Community of the Bible (Rev 19:9)

Nothing invites community like food, and nothing brings together the church community like the Bible. The Bible itself includes numerous covenant meals in which parties become bound to one another through food. So as the church gathers, she partakes of the covenant meal of God's word to submit to her Lord's leadership, receive His good will, and be satisfied by His presence. The model of "Scripture-as-Food" encompasses this participation, satisfaction, and surrender to Christ, being bound to Him, and sharing Him in covenant community. Since Christ remains the Host of His banquet, the congregation must submit to His house rules, His intentions. At the same time, food naturally fosters community as it invites many to share in the meal. In the same way, the spiritual

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[69] Daniel Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2014), 63.

[70] Dharamraj, "On the Doctrine of Scripture," 57.

[71] Peterson, *Eat This Book,* 30.

food of Scripture draws together a listening community that recognizes its need to "eat" (listen to, interpret, and obey) the Bible together, and this call goes out to all the world, to whoever would like to join, and with the urgency that food requires.

8. Accept No Substitutes (1 Tim. 4:1–6)

When it comes to food, harmful substitutes abound: Fast food, junk food, even poison. In fact, one might view heresy as trans-fats, manmade substitutes that taste great but will kill you. Some people's spiritual diet consists only of books and sermons on theology or Christian living that rarely, if ever, refer to the Bible, and some so-called "spiritual" books are what Paul would call "doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1). Food also stresses the need for holiness since the smallest bit of poison taints the purity of otherwise good food and makes a healthy meal fatal, in the same way that a little heresy can entirely ruin otherwise good doctrine. So a healthy spiritual diet will accept no substitutes but return repeatedly and primarily to eat from the God-given source of spiritual health: the Bible, the written Word of God. As Charles Spurgeon says, "Visit many good books, but live in the Bible."[72] I heartily agree, but I would only add, "Live *on* the Bible" as our necessary, life-giving food.

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[72] "Live in the Bible," Reasonable Theology, https://reasonabletheology.org/live-bible/ (accessed November 7, 2019).

A Rejection of Classical Evidentialism and an Argument for Complementary Theories of Knowledge of God in Romans 1:18–20

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Introduction

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse" (Romans 1:18–20).[1]

The last century has seen a revival of debates over the use of natural theology within the context of Christian apologetics and dogmatics. Much of this debate centers on the use of Romans 1:18–20 and whether this text provides a theological precedent for natural theology using an evidentialist epistemology. Evidentialism is an epistemology, or theory of knowledge, that deems evidence as necessary to justify knowledge of God. The theological and epistemological elements present in Romans 1:18–20 demonstrate fallen humanity's culpability before a righteous God due to a natural revelation of God through nature. However, Romans 1:18–20 does not lead to a positive case for evidentialism, as the knowledge of God presented in these verses is described initially as intuitive knowledge of God, followed by knowledge of God to be gathered by observation from nature. The paper argues Romans 1:18–20 does not

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the English Standard Version.

support a classical evidentialist epistemology, because it identifies a knowledge of God that is intuitive and divinely implanted into humans by God.

First, this paper describes evidentialism as a theory of knowledge and how it has been connected to theories of natural theology used in interpreting Romans 1:18–20. Then, it demonstrates that Romans 1:18–20 does not present an evidentialist epistemology in which knowledge of God is based on observable evidence. Rather, intuitive knowledge of God will be presented as a more appropriate alternative explanation of the knowledge of God described in this passage. Intuitive knowledge logically precedes any kind of knowledge that could come through observable data. Lastly, the intuitive knowledge of God described in Romans 1:18-20 will be explored further, to pair it with better theological and epistemological explanations that do not necessitate an evidentialist view. These findings have significant implications for such issues as natural theology.

Classical Evidentialism

Classical evidentialism[2] is the opinion that one is justified in holding certain beliefs (e.g., regarding the existence of God) only if one has sufficient evidence.[3] Evidence means good reasons or grounds that imply that the propositional content of a belief is true.[4] From the evidentialist point of view, belief in God is not properly basic, but contingent upon supporting evidence that supplies good reasons to hold this belief.[5] A properly basic belief is one that is non-inferential in nature,[6] or one that a person is justified in believing without any prior belief or evidence. In relation to natural theology, evidentialism demands that for theism to be justified, it must present sufficient evidence;[7] therefore, a believer in God must have good reasons to hold this belief based on sufficient evidence. Good reasons for inferentially justifying belief are derived from observable data that serve as evidence.

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[2] Henceforth, we will refer to this view simply as evidentialism.

[3] John M. DePoe, "Classic Evidentialism," in *Debating Christian Religious Epistemology: An Introduction to Five Views on the Knowledge of God*, ed. John M. DePoe and Tyler Dalton McNabb (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 16.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 21.

The key underlying assumption or presupposition of the evidentialist position is that belief in God is not properly basic. Evidentialists maintain that belief in God is inferential and must be justified with prior evidence. Therefore, for the evidentialist to establish belief in God (i.e., to do natural theology), he is required to provide evidence for that non-basic belief. This consideration will be important with regard to the context of Romans 1:18–20. Evidentialism has been presupposed within these verses because many theologians believe that Romans 1:18–20 serves as a positive reference for natural theology.[8]

Natural Theology

Natural theology is the practice of developing a theology of God apart from God's special revelation. It seeks to gain some true knowledge about God from three main loci: nature, history, or human personality.[9] The data about God that are built into a theological system of natural theology have been generally described by theologians as God's "general revelation,"[10] or how God has revealed himself through his creation. General revelation is understood in distinction from God's special (or particular) revelation, in which God manifests himself to certain peoples in particular times and places so as to enter a redemptive relationship with those peoples.[11] In short, natural theology is developed from the knowledge humans gain by means of God generally revealing himself in the created order.

In natural theology, true knowledge of God is concerned with establishing the existence and attributes of God by using human reasoning.[12] In fact, the central concern of natural theology is to prove the existence of God.[13] The knowledge required to prove

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[8] If one embraces an Evidentialist Epistemology, then one must rely on (or emphasize) Natural Theology. Evidentialist Epistemology is sufficient to require Natural Theology, but not vice versa. One can embrace Natural Theology but not Evidentialist Epistemology; Natural Theology is not sufficient to require Evidentialist Epistemology.

[9] Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 129.

[10] Ibid., 123.

[11] Ibid., 145.

[12] Neil Ormerod, *A Public God: Natural Theology Reconsidered* (Minneapolis. MN: Fortress, 2015), 1.

[13] Ibid., 27.

God's existence is purely based on human activity: "Natural knowledge is gained through natural human power of cognition, and is arrived at through human observations of the universe of the sensible beings and human reasoning about these observations."[14] This means that in the process of doing natural theology, the power of human cognition gathering observable data about the external world is the main driver in one's acquisition of knowledge of God's existence and attributes. In this view, natural theology entails classic proofs of or arguments for the existence of God, based on observable data that serve as evidence of God's existence.[15]

This paper's goal here is not to argue against epistemologies that hold evidence in high regard, but to establish the close, undeniable relationship between evidentialism and natural theology. Ronald Nash notes:

> Whether done intentionally or not, natural theology has usually involved a major concession to the evidentialist-foundationalist model of rationality. If Christian theism is to be rational on this view, it *must* be supported with arguments or proofs; and those arguments must eventually be linked to beliefs that narrow foundationalists regard as properly basic.[16]

This apparent connection between evidentialism and natural theology begs the question of whether portions of the Bible that have historically been used to defend natural theology also entail an evidentialist perspective on knowledge. Does Romans 1:18–20 support an evidentialist epistemology? It may seem initially that Paul is promoting natural theology. If so, and if natural theology is carried out by means of an evidentialist epistemology, then Paul is also promoting an evidentialist epistemology. Conversely, if one can present textual evidence demonstrating that these verses are not speaking about natural theology, then the claim that evidentialism is the preferred epistemology behind Romans 1:18–20 will be dealt a severe blow.

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[14] David Haines, *Natural Theology: A Biblical and Historical Introduction and Defense* (Landrum, SC: Davenant Press, 2021), 17.

[15] John M. DePoe and Tyler Dalton McNabb, "Introduction to Religious Epistemology," in *Debating Christian Religious Epistemology: An Introduction to Five Views on the Knowledge of God,* ed. John M. DePoe and Tyler Dalton McNabb (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 9.

[16] Ronald H. Nash, *Faith and Reason: Searching for a Rational Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 93-94.

The next section shows why Romans 1:18–20 does not support an evidentialist epistemology, based on an evaluation of the actual epistemology underlying the passage. This discovery will motivate a search for an alternative epistemology that aligns better with the context of Paul's argument.

The Context of Romans 1:18–20

To determine whether Romans 1:18–20 provides a biblical warrant for evidentialism, it is necessary to explore the context of this passage. Paul discusses God's saving righteousness in the preceding verse. This righteousness is revealed from heaven as the gospel message. Contrasted with the gospel message of righteousness is the wrath of God (verse 18), which is revealed in those who suppress the truth of God. The main idea in verses 18–20 is that unrighteous humans are destined for the wrath of God except for the intervening grace of God brought to them through the gospel message. These verses establish unrighteous humans as culpable before a righteous God, against the backdrop of the righteousness of God revealed through the gospel message.[17] As a result, humanity is without excuse for denying the knowledge of God that is available to them. Paul was affirming that humans were not ignorant, nor could they feign ignorance, as they were responsible for this suppression of truth.[18] For Paul, humans who deny the knowledge of God have no way to escape culpability.

The suppression apparent in these verses is a volitional act, indicating that humans do not fail to attain knowledge about God but that in fact they already possess a kind of knowledge of God and ignore it.[19] The suppression of truth is not a failure to have the right beliefs. One is not judged on how well he or she gathers evidence about God but on pre-existing knowledge. Humanity is culpable for the suppression of truth not because they failed to gain the right ideas of God from the data available to them, but because they have spurned some other type of knowledge that was revealed to them. Humanity did not suppress only the data that were supposed to

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[17] See Aaron Sherwood, *Romans: A Structural, Thematic, and Exegetical Commentary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 99; Craig Keener, *Romans: A New Covenant Commentary* (Cambridge, UK: Lutterwork Press, 2009), 56.

[18] C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (London, UK: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 1979), 116.

[19] Sherwood, *Romans*, 102.

provide evidence for God; humanity suppressed direct knowledge of God. These verses present a knowledge that was already present and was then volitionally rejected due to sinful rebellion. If this is not the case, and if the knowledge of God being described is meant to be gained through observable data, then Paul's argument completely falters, as wrath would then be targeted at those who are incapable of gathering sufficient evidence for belief of God. If this is the case, the classical evidentialist must explain how humans are culpable for not gathering evidence, as such a line of thinking presents many difficulties related to one's cognitive ability to gather evidence.

As noted above, God's wrath in verse 18 is presented in juxtaposition to the righteousness of God being revealed in verses 16 and 17. The word "for" in English (Greek *gar*) translations at the beginning of verse 18 indicates an antithesis relative to the righteousness of God revealed earlier.[20] It marks a transition or conjunction in an argument that intends to give a reason for a previous point. Wrath in this context is the result of irreligion and immorality among those who suppress the self-disclosure of God.[21] Wrath is for those who suppress the revelation of the shamefulness of their own hearts.[22] Humans who suppress the truth of God are culpable for this act of suppression, because God has supplied the knowledge that has been suppressed.[23] God's act in supplying knowledge of himself allows for human culpability and the resulting wrath as a logical consequence in these verses.

The fact that God has supplied the knowledge that makes humans culpable for their rejection of God is not up for debate. Just as the gospel of righteousness is revealed by God in the previous verses, wrath is also revealed. The revelatory act does not come about by human investigation but is the work of God himself. Whereas the revelation described in verses 16 and 17 comes from heaven and points to the gospel message through God's Word, the revelation of God's wrath in the present sense of handing persons over to the consequences of their own sin fits into the previously

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[20] Ibid.

[21] John Reuman, *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible: Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2021), 41.

[22] Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 150.

[23] Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 79.

discussed idea of God's general revelation in history.[24] Commentators believe that the wrath of God has both immediate and eternal aspects to it. The immediate aspects include God's handing over of sinful humanity to the present consequences of sin.[25] At the same time, there is an eschatological sense in which the present wrath that is being revealed demonstrates the eternal destination of those who oppose God's reign.[26] These immediate and eternal aspects of God's wrath fit with how God is generally revealing himself in history. The commentators surveyed for this study agree that God is generally revealed through this historical wrath.

The purpose of Paul's argument in these verses is not to demonstrate a positive case of natural theology that implies an evidentialist epistemology. Rather, the surrounding context demonstrates the wrath of God revealed in reaction to the sinful suppression of knowledge of God, not the suppression of evidence of God that is available through the created order. More detailed analysis of these verses makes it clear that the theme of Paul's argument is that human culpability deserves God's wrath.

Textual Analysis of Romans 1:18–20

What type of knowledge of God is Paul implying in Romans 1:18–20? To demonstrate that the knowledge discussed in Romans 1:18–20 is not built upon gathering evidence, one must investigate the text thoroughly. Doing so discovers that the knowledge of God apparent in these verses is in some way divinely implanted knowledge that is intuitive to human experience. Yet the text also indicates a human perception of God through the natural order. This perception must be paired with the intuitive knowledge of God that acts as the reason for human culpability to deserve God's wrath. God acts as the agent who makes himself known, rather than a reverse process in which human agents come to a knowledge of God through evidence. The logical procession of these verses implies that evidentialism should not be read into the text. Romans 1 argues for an intuitive knowledge of God present in humans rather than an evidential knowledge based upon observation of the natural order. The availability of intuitive knowledge preserves human

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[24] Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 123.
[25] Keener, *Romans*, 56.
[26] Sherwood, *Romans*, 101.

culpability before God and makes the wrath of God an acceptable consequence for those who suppress the truth.[27]

The Wrath of God

In verse 18, God's wrath is revealed from heaven against those who suppress the truth of God. Wrath is the logical consequence for those who have suppressed the truth of God in ungodliness and unrighteousness.[28] It is the antithesis of the righteousness of God previously described in verse 17. This is the primary truth that Paul wishes to describe:[29] the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel, but the wrath of God is revealed through those who suppress the truth of God. The truth of God is made known by the knowledge God has made available.

In verse 18, Paul describes humans as the agents of suppressing knowledge that they already possess; for this reason, the wrath of God is being revealed against them.[30] Suppression of truth, in this context, does not indicate a failure to have right beliefs, understand right beliefs, or even exemplify a reluctance to gather evidence leading to right beliefs. The knowledge of God mentioned in verse 18 is enough to correspond to a righteous way of life, but the unrighteous do not live in this way.[31] This begs the question: if Romans 1:18–20 truly presents an evidentialist epistemology, then why are the human agents who hypothetically carry out the action of gathering evidence (according to evidentialism) actively involved in suppressing that same evidence? An evidentialist epistemology would imply that the unrighteous in these verses could gather enough evidence for belief in God so as to lead them toward a righteous way of life. This account also entails that the unrighteous then suppress that knowledge born out of the evidence gathered. This adds an extra layer to Paul's argument that is simply not present. If this line of thinking was Paul's intent, then he has argued badly. The text in no way indicates that Paul is condemning people to God's wrath

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[27] For the argument for "intuitive" knowledge in Rom 1:18 see the section "Theological Explanation of Intuitive Knowledge" below.

[28] Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 109.

[29] See Keener, *Romans,* 57; Sherwood, *Romans*, 101; Jewett, *Romans*, 150; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 79; and Schreiner, *Romans*, 109.

[30] See Keener, *Romans*, 57; Sherwood, *Romans*, 99; Hughes, *Romans*, 32; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 83; and Schreiner, *Romans*, 113.

[31] Sherwood, *Romans,* 102.

because of their failure to gather enough evidence or their failure to properly believe the evidence they have gathered. To divert Romans 1:18–20 into questions of evidentialism and natural theology misses the entire point of Paul's argument because it equates the suppression of truth with the failure to gather sufficient evidence and form right beliefs. This is not the argument Paul is making.

There may be some skepticism regarding a view that posits intuitive knowledge of God, because Paul clearly indicates that the natural order points to the divine attributes of God. However, this kind of suspicion misses the context of these verses. Paul is not attempting to establish that the natural world presents any kind of data that would lead inferentially to the conclusion of God's existence as an exclusive means of gaining knowledge of God. It is indisputable that Paul presents God as in some way perceived through the natural order, but this is not the main thrust of his argument. Rather, the context of Paul's argument centers around human culpability because of suppressing the knowledge of God that God has given to people. In this context, a perception of God's attributes clearly attests to the already present intuitive knowledge of God that humans have suppressed.

There is a theological ordering of the knowledge of God described in these verses. Humans are culpable for rejecting the intuitive knowledge of God, which is then bolstered by what can be perceived in the natural order. In a sense, perception of God in the natural order acts as more evidence for the logical priority of intuitive knowledge in Paul's argument. Perception of God in the natural order, following intuitive knowledge, adds to the indictment that Paul lays out for humans who suppress the knowledge of God. Not only is there an intuitive knowledge of God, which has been given by God and then suppressed by humans, but moreover the natural order assists humans in the perception of God, which is also suppressed. Not only are humans culpable for denying the intuitive knowledge of God, but they are also culpable for ignoring the natural order that provides evidence for this intuitive knowledge.

This assistance that the natural order provides to the already established intuitive knowledge of God is a far different scenario from the evidentialist claim that knowledge of God is gained through observing the natural order. From the evidentialist perspective, knowledge is built on observation of the natural order, but Paul's argument implies that knowledge of God is already present. This is not to say that knowledge or perception of God through the natural

order is absent from Paul's argument. However, the primary means by which humans know God, according to Paul, is not perception through the natural order. Something else is happening in these verses.

Knowledge in Verse 19

Verse 19 further explains Paul's argument by describing the nature of the knowledge of God that is suppressed and the process that God uses to share the true knowledge described in the previous verse. Paul states that what can be known about God is plain to those identified in verse 18: the unrighteous and ungodly who suppress the truth. This means that the knowledge of God mentioned here, whatever kind of knowledge it is, is accessible and easy to comprehend. It has a degree of approachability that is not always apparent from an evidentialist perspective. This is one reason why the bond discussed above between evidentialism and natural theology is important. The ability to gather evidence and interpret data that lead to a belief in God is considered a cognitively ambitious task by those who do not read natural theology into these verses. In fact, a common criticism of natural theology is that the ability to gather evidence and make inductive inferences based on that evidence is a cognitive task beyond the capabilities of many humans.[32] In contrast, Romans 1:19 does not present an advanced cognitive task that requires logical inference. Rather, it declares that what can be known about God is made plain to those who suppress the truth of God.

This assertion does not imply that there is no place in Christian theology and practice for observing the natural order as a way to affirm God's existence. There are Christian apologists and philosophers who reject an evidentialist epistemology but who at the same time find it beneficial to practice natural theology, based on evidence offered through creation. Some of the resulting benefits are the edification of Christians, a means to challenge competing worldviews such as naturalism, and giving non-believing persons psychological and rational permission to explore religious ideas. Stating that Paul is not advocating an evidentialist epistemology or an inferential natural theology in Romans 1 does not force one to agree with Karl Barth's declaration that there is no such thing as

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[32] Nash, *Faith and Reason*, 93–97.

natural theology.[33] Barth's position is not the central focus of this paper, though this paper agrees with those who view it as untenable. The central concern is whether Paul intended to advocate an evidentialist type of knowledge grounded in natural theology. Paul's description of knowledge in these verses indicates something different from natural theology, which weakens the case for evidentialism in these verses.

Referring to knowledge as "plain" suggests that it is apparent, manifest, self-evident, or readily recognizable by all people. A claim can be made that knowledge according to the perspective of evidentialism is not plainly recognized by all. Given the earlier definition of classical evidentialism, according to which evidential knowledge is based on inferences from foundational beliefs, and since the knowledge of verse 19 is plainly recognized by all, the burden of proof directly lies on the evidentialist to prove his epistemology from the raw grammatical data of these verses. Knowledge that is plainly recognized by all is not evidential knowledge. The text of verse 19 does not support the view that this knowledge is built on inferential relationships related to foundational knowledge. The evidentialist explanation goes beyond anything that is plain to all people about God.

This point is further proved in the second half of verse 19, where Paul states that the knowledge of verse 19a has been shown to those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Paul does not indicate that humans are the active agents in knowing God through the process of gathering evidence, but that God is active in revealing himself or making himself known to humans. The process sketched here indicates a level of divine intentionality on God's part, such that some knowledge of God is innately known. Verse 19 contains no sign that humans are active in this process; rather, humans are passive except for their rejection of knowledge. Their innate knowledge of God is a result of God's self-disclosure.[34] This idea of innate knowledge is applied to help in establishing God's justice and human culpability in verse 20 and is the best explanation of Paul's overall argument.

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[33] See Karl Barth, "No! Answer to Emil Brunner," in *Natural Theology: Comprising "Nature and Grace: by Professor Dr. Emil Brunner and the Reply "No!" by Dr. Karl Barth,* trans. Peter Fraenkel (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), 65–128.

[34] Jewett, *Romans*, 154.

Culpability in Verse 20

Given the innate knowledge he references in verse 19, Paul can state in verse 20 that those who suppress the knowledge of God are culpable for their suppression of truth. Culpability is not established through inability to gather or understand evidence. Rather, our innate knowledge of God increases our moral responsibility before God.[35] The responsibility placed on man in these verses cannot be established on something he lacks or has failed to obtain. Culpability can be established only if God is the active agent directly supplying knowledge and that knowledge is then sinfully rejected. To add the gathering of evidence to the process by which humans obtain knowledge of God would add an extra step that Paul does not disclose, and it would hold people culpable for not having sufficient evidence or for not interpreting the evidence correctly. This is not Paul's argument.

Culpability provides a reason why God can establish his eschatological judgment through his own wrath meant for those who are unrighteous. Wrath is revealed from heaven because humans have actively rejected the divinely manifested knowledge of God that was made plain to them—specifically, knowledge of God's invisible attributes—which leaves the unrighteous without excuse. Without culpability on the part of the unrighteous, God would have no just grounds to appropriately punish those who have rejected him in unrighteousness. The wrath of God arises a result of their rejection of God's grace through suppressing the truth after God has revealed a sufficient knowledge of himself so as to indicate how people ought to live their lives. This knowledge is not a salvific knowledge but a knowledge that would allow people to live with a guiding awareness of God.[36] Rejection of this knowledge is God's basis for giving the unrighteous over to their sensual way of life (Romans 1:24). Paul's intent here is not to establish a natural theology built upon an evidentialist epistemology. Instead, Paul is developing the idea that humans are culpable before a righteous God because of their suppression of knowledge.

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[35] Keener, *Romans*, 57.
[36] Sherwood, *Romans*, 102–3.

Invisible Attributes, Existence, and Natural Theology

Some argue that Romans 1:18–20 makes a case for natural theology.[37] But in view of the relationship between natural theology and evidentialism and the fact that evidentialism is not remotely apparent in verse 19, the argument for both in Romans 1 is severely diminished. This becomes more apparent through a consideration of what Paul intends by invisible attributes and how the existence of God, as a theological category to be explored in the practice of natural theology, has been erroneously wedged into Paul's intentions in Romans 1.

Natural theology is concerned mainly with examining the existence and attributes of God by means of human reasoning.[38] However, it is not clear that the existence of God, as it is typically understood through natural theology—especially by exploring metaphysical abstractions of God—is a primary concern of Paul in these verses. Those who find natural theology in these verses seek to justify belief in God through evidence so that Christian belief can be rationally warranted. However, this is typically an epistemological obligation imposed by non-believers and is not of Christian origin.[39] One can even question whether this epistemological obligation is apparent in Scripture. Given Paul's description of intuitive knowledge in verse 19, there is little theological reason for him to develop rationally warranted beliefs for the existence of God. He is not calling his readers to engage in any such activity. God's existence as a theological category is not what Paul concern in verse 20; rather, he is highlighting attributes of God. He already assumes that we are aware of God's existence through intuitive knowledge. Nevertheless, theologians often posit the question of God's existence as a category of natural theology and read this category into Romans 1 rather than drawing it from the text. The question of confirming God's existence is forced upon Paul's letter; it is not an issue for Paul.

This addition of the existence of God as a theological topic is a common but questionable extension of Paul's true theological intentions. David Haines adds the existence of God to the invisible

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[37] See James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* World Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 56–58; Haines, *Natural Theology*, 37.

[38] Ormerod, *A Public God*, 1.

[39] Andrew Moore, "Should Christians Do Natural Theology?" *Scottish Journal of Theology* 63, no. 2 (2010): 127.

attributes Paul discusses in verse 20.[40] James D. G. Dunn argues that Paul is using a bold apologetic strategy in not asking readers to adopt a Jewish worldview but rather arguing from a point of common assent where all rational people recognize the existence of God.[41] However, nothing in verse 20 indicates that Paul is talking about the existence of God as it is understood by those advocating natural theology. Paul asserts that God's divine nature and eternal power are clearly perceived as part of the knowledge that the unrighteous suppress, but nowhere is the existence of God presented as part of this suppressed knowledge. Yes, existence is implied in a being that has a nature and attributes, but to imply that Paul is trying to prove God's existence would be to take him in a direction that he has already established. It would be working backward instead of moving forward. Furthermore, adding this theological category is precisely the step that gives license for apologists and philosophers to erroneously read evidentialism into these verses. Conversely, if the existence of God is not a theological concern for Paul, then the basis for evidentialism in these verses is not established.

Paul assumes that his readers already perceive God's existence; he does not present God's existence as part of a set of theological knowledge that must be gained. This fact further points to his recognition of intuitive knowledge of God, which results in human culpability for rejecting that knowledge, because in rejecting knowledge of God's divine nature and eternal power, the unrighteous also implicitly deny the existence of God. The existence of God is assumed by Paul as a general reality for his readers, not presented as a theological proposition that must be justified for warranted belief, as evidentialists and some proponents of natural theology claim. Paul is not making an argument for the use of natural theology, nor is he implying that the existence of God is a matter of theological debate that must be dealt with. To add these elements into Paul's thinking is to take the text beyond its original intentions.

The Nature of Knowledge in Verse 19

This assertion that God supplies the knowledge of himself that is made plain to all people, but which is then willfully suppressed by the unrighteous so as to lead to their culpability, inevitably raises questions about the nature or type of knowledge involved in verse

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[40] Haines, *Natural Theology*, 37.
[41] Dunn, *Romans*, 58.

19. If God is supplying the knowledge described in verse 19, and if this knowledge is not gained through human observation as an evidentialist would argue, then the next logical question is exactly how God supplies this knowledge. Although many theologians agree that God has placed intuitive knowledge in man, there is little agreement on just what this knowledge is. Furthermore, how this knowledge is mediated is difficult to determine simply from the grammatical phrasing of verse 19.[42]

Some theologians have argued that the knowledge supplied in these verses is God's revelation of himself through the creation of human beings, who are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27).[43] From this perspective, God supplies knowledge of Himself to all people via the evidence of nature that is intuitively known by all. They have a sense of God that allows them to see creation as pointing toward God. This view would justify the theological explanation in verse 20, where Paul states that God's invisible attributes have been clearly perceived, without necessitating evidentialism. It is possible that the created order attests to the knowledge of God that is already internally available to all humans by virtue of their creation in the image of God.

The ordering of verse 20 points to this realization as well. To understand what Paul means by clearly perceived attributes of God, one must determine why Paul sought to qualify this truth by stating that the divine attributes have been perceived since the creation of the world. Does Paul mean that humans have been able to gather evidence of God's existence from the created order since the creation of the world? Or does he intend to say that the attributes of God have been perceived by humanity because God has given knowledge of himself, and that this knowledge is supported through creation? One may be inclined to read evidentialism into verse 20 because it appears that God has supplied evidence of himself in nature and that humans then perceive God's existence and attributes through the created order. However, a severe blow has been dealt to evidentialism in verse 19, since God is the agent who actively supplies knowledge of himself to human recipients. If God is actively supplying the knowledge of himself in verse 19, then it is impossible to read verse 20 as arguing that humans perceive the attributes and existence of God through their own intellectual

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42 Jewett, *Romans*, 153.
43 Keener, *Romans*, 57.

undertaking. Instead, it appears from Paul's text that the knowledge of God that has been rejected and that makes humans culpable and deserving of the wrath of God is first and foremost an intuitive knowledge supplied by God through creating humans in the image of God. Subsequently, the natural order of creation attests to this already intuited knowledge of God by allowing humans to perceive God's power and divinity through observable knowledge. This confirmation of God through human perception of the natural order does not mean that humans inferentially arrive at the existence of God through evidence gathered from nature. That would be a misreading of the text. Obviously, some type of knowledge is available in the created order, according to verse 20, but this knowledge must be understood in conjunction with the knowledge presented in verse 19. What Paul has argued through verse 19, indicates a logical ordering of the knowledge of God, but it does not necessitate evidentialism. In fact, the emphasis on intuitive knowledge of God negates any reading of evidentialism as the primary epistemology underlying these verses. Paul does state that some attributes of God are perceived through the natural order, which indicates a different type of knowledge from the intuitive knowledge of verse 19. But this perception of God through the natural order must be synthesized with intuitive knowledge to make Paul's argument cohesive.

Knowledge in Verse 20

Undoubtedly, some will object to the claim of intuitive knowledge in verse 19 because Paul clearly states in verse 20 that the invisible attributes of God have been perceived in the created order. However, to use the perception of God in the natural order as the primary epistemology underlying Paul's argument would ignore the textual evidence offered thus far. It would be irresponsible to read evidential knowledge exclusively into Paul's argument, given that Paul has already presented a knowledge of God that is plain to all people. How, then, does this perception of God in verse 20 fit with knowledge being made plain by God?

There must be a synthesized view of knowledge that does not completely negate either the plain intuitive knowledge provided in verse 19 or the perception of God through the natural order discussed in verse 20. Therefore, a claim that the knowledge of God is completely intuitive, excluding any kind of knowledge gained through the natural order, would be just as much a misreading of Romans 1:18–20 as the evidentialist claim that belief must be

warranted through the gathering of evidence. This tendency to elevate intuitive knowledge to the extent of completely denying perception of God through the natural order is quite rare and is a completely different issue that cannot be covered here. Rather, the important point to establish is that evidentialism is not the sole epistemology being read into these verses. This claim does not ignore the reality that some knowledge of God can be gained through nature, but it guards against the idea that *all* justified knowledge of God is gained through evidence.

It is impossible to read Romans 1:20 without recognizing that some knowledge of God is gained through observation of the natural order. Paul says plainly that the divine attributes of God can be perceived in creation. But the evidence supplied through creation, which speaks to the divine attributes and not to the existence of God, is not the focus of Paul's argument in verse 20. Granted, Paul agrees that some knowledge of God's attributes can be gained through observation of the natural order, but his purpose is not to warrant belief in the existence of God; rather, he wishes to call attention to the culpability of humans who rebelliously reject their knowledge of God.

Paul ends verse 20 by stating again that humans are without excuse. Since knowledge of God's attributes can be gained through the created order, which indicates that people can know something about the character of God by observing creation, people are further without excuse and deserving of God's just wrath. Not only have people sinfully rejected the intuitive knowledge of God described in verse 19, but they are also denying the observable data of God's character made available in creation. Paul is further demonstrating the culpability of humans before a righteous God, not making a case for evidentialism or natural theology. Again, to misread an evidentialist epistemology into Paul's argument completely misses his point regarding God's wrath toward an unrighteous and culpable humanity. Understanding the perception of God as coupled with the intuitive knowledge presented in verse 19 offers a better explanation of Paul's overall argument for human culpability. These two forms of knowledge are related, and intuitive knowledge precedes observational knowledge in logical order and importance. Intuitive knowledge is what God has divinely given to humanity and the rejection of which makes them culpable and subject to God's wrath; observational knowledge acts like a witness to intuitive knowledge and adds to the guilt of rebellious humanity.

A Theological Explanation of Intuitive Knowledge

Bruce Demarest's Intuitive Knowledge

If intuitive knowledge is to be claimed as the driving force enabling humanity's recognition of God in Romans 1:19, then a cogent explanation of how this knowledge is ordered is needed. Bruce Demarest argues that man, being created in the image of God and universally illumined by the Logos of God, effably intuits the reality of God as a first truth.[44] He describes intuition as an aspect of human reason, like the eye of the soul that perceives first principles with immediacy.[45] Demarest states, "Upon reflection before the self, the mind enabled by general illumination intuits eternal, changeless truths, including the reality of God, from the first moment of mental and moral self-consciousness."[46] Demarest adds that the mind does not learn from observation or experience when in this intuitive, self-conscious state.

This intuitive knowledge as the ground for first principles of humanity's logical ordering of the world is a necessary starting point for knowing God, Demarest argues. Otherwise, without intuitive knowledge, all other knowledge of God cannot be ordered properly:

> Thus against the classical empirical tradition, we assert that the mind is not a *tabula rasa*. Apart from observation and sense experience, the human mind, abetted by general illumination, effably intuits timeless truths, including the first truth, God. Indeed, the mind's intuitive consciousness of God logically precedes and grounds all reasoning about God from the observable world. For unless the term *God* is invested with meaning through the religious *a priori*, all God-talk is not only meaningless, but impossible. Unless man acknowledges God in and of Himself in his mind, all predication about God on the basis of causation or order lacks signification.[47]

This description of intuitive knowledge elaborates on the assertion in Romans 1 as to how humanity can know God prior to observing God's creation. Intuitive consciousness of God is a necessary prior step preceding observable knowledge of God, because without

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[44] Bruce A. Demarest, *General Revelation: Historical Views and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), 228.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid., 229.

such God-consciousness, the observable data would be utterly meaningless.

Demarest points to Romans 1:19 as evidence for intuitive knowledge of God prior to any acquired knowledge of God derived from the natural order, which is a secondary type of knowledge that many theologians and philosophers identify in Romans 1:20. The idea that what can be known about God is plain to the Gentiles means that this is a perspicuous knowledge of God disclosed apart from supernatural revelation, therefore leaving the Gentiles without excuse because they too have knowledge of God.[48] This claim does not discount an inferential or evidential knowledge of God grasped through observation of the natural order, but it places observational knowledge in a logical order that logically requires intuitive knowledge preceding it. Demarest cites numerous theologians who argue for a logical ordering of an intuited knowledge of God that allows human minds to subsequently make sense of inferential knowledge of God acquired through creation.[49] If this is true, as Romans 1 bears witness, then the model of knowledge proposed by classical evidentialism is completely inaccurate with regard to a theological understanding of humanity's knowledge of God and, by extension, humans' justification of that knowledge. Classical evidentialism states that belief in God is not properly basic and must be inferred from other basic beliefs gathered through observation of evidence. But it has been shown that Paul's words in Romans 1 point to a knowledge of God that is intuitive and logically prior to all other knowledge of God. This is a reasonable explanation of the relationship between intuitive knowledge and the knowledge of God that is available to humans through the created order.

For completeness, the difference between Demarest's notion of "general illumination" and the traditional notion of "general revelation" requires some discussion. Demarest's notion of general illumination is not really Demarest's at all but can be traced back to Augustine. Demarest writes, according to Augustine, that man's moral depravity affects every part of man's nature to the point where man is not able to comprehend God's presentation of himself to the human soul. In fact, man willfully suppresses any such presentation due to his moral depravity.[50] Demarest further writes

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[48] Ibid., 230.
[49] Ibid., 230–31.
[50] Demarest, *General Revelation*, 27.

according to Augustine, "general illumination from God overcomes man's depravity in relation to eternal things. Through the benefits of God's common grace, the powers of the intellect are partially restored. As a result, man made in the image of God is enabled to intuit eternal, changeless principles of mathematics, logic, ethics, and truths about God."[51] This general illumination is a major component of Demarest's intuitional knowledge of God. Demarest writes, "Upon reflection before the self, the mind enabled by general illumination intuits eternal, changeless truths, including the reality of God, from the first moment of mental and moral self-consciousness…This and other first principles are acquired spontaneously and independently of the will by the mind abetted by general light from God."[52] Thus, Demarest's idea of general illumination, and intuitional knowledge that flows from it, acts as an *a priori* knowledge illumined in the human mind by God. Due to man's moral inability to know God, it is God who must place this knowledge in, or illumine, the human mind as an act of grace.[53]

This idea of general illumination differs from notions of general revelation. General revelation is commonly understood to be God's self-manifestation through the created order. This self-manifestation is most prominently seen in nature, history, and the constitution of humans.[54] These different variations of God's self-manifestation can evidence God in the created order, but it has been long debated as to whether the unregenerate or morally depraved soul can recognize God within this type of revelation.[55] Demarest and theologians like him, seeing the problem of depravity, seek to provide a path of natural knowledge of God that is able to overcome the problem of man's moral depravity while still leaving the unregenerate without excuse, as Paul write in Romans 1:20. General illumination, therefore, allows interpreters of Romans 1 to approach

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid., 228.

[53] It should be noted that Demarest's view of Intuitional Knowledge is not an entire epistemological model or theory but rather a theological answer between the problem of God's general revelation and human knowledge. There are numerous epistemological models that might employ Demarest's view of intuitional knowledge at some level, such as Alvin Plantinga's Aquinas/Calvin Model, but due to the specific focus of this paper, such a relationship would be better evaluated in future research.

[54] Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 122-124.

[55] Ibid., 129-134.

this passage accepting general revelation while rejecting explanations that involve Evidentialism.

Calvin's Divine Sense

John Calvin appears to have given a name to the intuited knowledge of God that Demarest has described, although Demarest does not claim this connection himself. Calvin called this intuited knowledge of God the *sensus divinitatis*, or sense of divinity or deity. Calvin stated that there exists in the human mind and by natural instinct a sense of deity that is beyond dispute.[56] Calvin explained that for men not to pretend ignorance, and to establish culpability, God has placed this divine sense in humans. All persons are culpable for ignoring their divine sense and can be condemned to the wrath of God due to this direct rejection of the knowledge of God. Although Calvin did not directly refer to Romans 1:18–20 in this discussion, his description of a divine sense providing intuitive knowledge closely resembles what Paul is describing in Romans 1 and what Demarest attributed to Paul. Further, Calvin argued that all people of sound judgment will agree that this divine sense is engraved on human hearts, as even the wicked cannot extricate themselves from the fear of God.[57] This concept aligns with the suppression of the knowledge of God that Paul details in Romans 1:18 and adds evidence that Calvin had Romans 1 in mind when describing his *sensus divinitatis*.

Calvin's *sensus divinitatis* can be plausibly interpreted as a non-inferential and spontaneous conviction of the existence of God.[58] Since this conviction is non-inferential, it is firmly opposed to the classical evidentialist explanation of justified belief as attained through inferential relations gathered through the accumulation of evidence and their relation to foundational beliefs. In Calvin's proposal of the *sensus divinitatis*, there is no room for classical evidentialism as the primary epistemology, if Romans 1 is to be taken seriously. Evidentialism cannot explain the culpability and suppression of truth that Paul depicts in Romans 1. Only positing an intuitive knowledge, or the *sensus divinitatis*, provides a cogent explanation of Paul's words.

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[56] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.3.1.

[57] Ibid., 1.3.3.

[58] Michael Sudduth, "Revisiting the Reformed Objection to Natural Theology," *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 1, no. 2 (2009): 42.

The Complementarity of Intuitive
and Evidential Knowledges

Previous sections of this paper have demonstrated that Romans 1:19 describes intuitive knowledge whereby humans know God through a divinely implanted intuition or remembrance of God, which may be present through being created in the image of God. This knowledge has been labeled the *sensus divinitatis*. Many commentators and theologians, such as John Calvin,[59] Edward Carnell,[60] and Bruce Demarest,[61] have expressed the view that all humans possess this intuitive knowledge. However, Romans 1:20 indicates that knowledge of God can also be gained through observation of the external world. The passage thus presents two types of knowledge: (1) intuitive and (2) evidential or observational. Both types of knowledge must be seen as working in harmony so as not to force any theological presupposition upon the text.

The presence of intuitive knowledge in Romans 1:19 is not at odds with the use of evidence and inferential reasoning to posit the existence of God (natural theology) as suggested by Romans 1:20. In fact, it could be argued that Paul makes room for both types of knowledge in these verses, a stance that seems to fit well with other portions of Scripture.[62] Nevertheless, classical evidentialism as a theory of knowledge cannot be embraced based on these verses, because of the presence of an intuitive knowledge that does not have to be justified as the evidentialist would claim. This is a fine line to walk, because evidentialism as an epistemological theory is denied even though it is clear that some knowledge of God can be gained through evidence. The problem is that many theologians and philosophers advance a position or model derived from one epistemology to the exclusion of others, without giving proper theological consideration to other forms of knowledge. This should not be done. Different types of knowledge can coherently be brought together in a biblical understanding. These types of knowledge are not mutually exclusive unless one forces an epistemology such as

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[59] See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I. iii. 2

[60] See Edward J. Carnell, *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 150.

[61] See Demarest, *General Revelation*, 228-233.

[62] Although the effectiveness of and need for natural theology have been widely debated, Psalm 19 and Acts 17:22-34 are commonly seen as biblical sources of natural theology.

evidentialism or (conversely) exclusive reliance on intuitive knowledge onto the text. There is a way to read Romans 1:18–20 that combines intuitive knowledge with that gained through observation of evidence.

For example, C. S. Lewis, a well-known advocate of inferential apologetics, proposed an intuited moral knowledge present among humans as the basis for his most powerful argument for God's existence.[63] For Lewis, moral knowledge is not gained through a process of gathering evidence to justify moral beliefs. Evidence may be used to explain the truthfulness of one's position, but it is not used to justify the existence of the innate moral knowledge he believed to be present in humans. Lewis did not rely strictly on evidence to justify his position regarding moral knowledge; rather, he used reason and inference to arrive at his conclusions. Moral knowledge, he contended, is self-evident and needs no justification but can also clearly be demonstrated through observable evidence. This example is not much different from believing that knowledge of God is self-evident and needs no justification while God's attributes are also clearly evidenced in creation. An intuitive knowledge of God that is logically prior to evidential knowledge best explains this stance. The existence of God is not justified through gathered data but is self-evident through intuitive knowledge. Evidence gathered through the created order that implies the existence of God further substantiates belief, but it does not ultimately justify belief.

Among recent efforts to integrate intuitive and evidentialist epistemologies, Blake McAllister and Trent Dougherty have proposed a modified understanding of the *sensus divinitatis* that is more favorable to evidentialist epistemologies and projects of natural theology.[64] McAllister and Dougherty seek to maintain a form of the *sensus divinitatis* that functions as a faculty or mechanism of human cognitive abilities, produces theistic seemings, and provides evidence for theistic belief.[65] Although explaining the technical differences between these models is beyond the scope of this paper, McAllister and Dougherty's model differs from that of Alvin Plantinga to justify belief in God.[66] Central to both models is the *sensus divinitatis*

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[63] C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000), 3–8.

[64] Blake McAllister and Trent Dougherty, "Reforming Reformed Epistemology: A New Take on the *Sensus Divinitatis*," *Religious Studies* 55, no. 4 (2019): 537.

[65] Ibid., 544–50.

[66] Ibid., 539.

working as a mechanism to provide knowledge of God. At a different level, though not describing the *sensus divinitatis*, Bruce Demarest previously saw the need for this complementarity of different knowledges, as he posited intuitive knowledge in Romans 1:19 and observational knowledge in Romans 1:20.[67]

In summary, although several models of the *sensus divinitatis* have been proposed, considerable work has been promoted the complementarity of different knowledges, which has expositional application to Romans 1. The text clearly indicates that one overriding theory of knowledge cannot be applied to the verses in question. Therefore, classical evidentialism as a theory of knowledge cannot be applied to Romans 1 in a strict sense; rather, complementary theories and models of knowledge are needed to better explain the biblical text.

What of Natural Theology?

One might think that the strong rejection of evidentialism presented here also entails a rejection of natural theology. This is not necessarily the case. Classical evidentialism is clearly not a suitable epistemological model for explaining Romans 1. This fact has been thoroughly demonstrated through Paul's use of an intuited knowledge of God in verse 19 as well as a theological explanation of Calvin's *sensus divinitatis* as the mechanism for intuited knowledge. Does this mean that theologians must abandon natural theology, given the close relationship that can exist between classical evidentialism and natural theology? Certainly not. Many Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians are working to reconfigure or reimagine natural theology to include forms of knowledge that do not rely solely on evidentialist and observational data.

Two Roman Catholic theologians have recently attempted to reconfigure natural theology away from an evidentialist lens. Mats Walhberg sees problems with developing knowledge of God strictly through observable data, which casts serious doubt on evidentialism. Walhberg has sought to develop an understanding of God's revelation that relies more strongly on testimony as a justifiable source of knowledge of God.[68] Wahlberg wants to avoid the pitfall

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[67] Demarest, *General Revelation*, 232–33.
[68] See Wahlberg's discussion of "The Problem of Knowledge of God," in Mats Walhberg, *Revelation as Testimony: A Philosophical-Theological Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 42–51.

of basing warranted propositional truth claims on evidence alone. His specific goal is to develop a theory of propositional knowledge in God's revelation based on the testimony of the Word of God, over against other models of non-propositional revelation that had been dominant throughout the twentieth century. Even though Wahlberg is primarily concerned with revealed knowledge, his theory is important in establishing the assertion that a theory of knowledge of God cannot be based purely on observable data.

Neil Ormerod has argued that the contextual nature of natural theology plays a larger role than many critics of its usefulness realize. For Ormerod, it is not necessarily beneficial to develop natural theology based on empirical evidence if the prevailing epistemology of the cultural context is not empirical in nature.[69] The context in which a theologian does natural theology has historically had much to do with how the natural theologian attempts to justify truth claims about God. Ormerod illustrates this relationship by considering metaphysical explanations of the existence of God. Since Western culture has largely abandoned metaphysics, it is not surprising that a natural theology that focuses on metaphysics is no longer relevant or applicable in the contemporary cultural context.[70]

The work of Wahlberg and Ormerod takes the practice of natural theology out of a singular context of understanding knowledge of God from a purely evidentialist point of view. Instead, they offer ways in which natural theology can be used separately from a strong emphasis on evidentialism. Their work indicates a paradigm shift in how theologians are thinking about and applying the natural knowledge of God available through the created order.

There has been a consistent challenge to natural theology throughout the twentieth century, and into the twenty-first century, predominantly within Reformed Protestant circles. This challenge is distinct from Karl Barth's outright denial of the theological category. Whereas Barth denied the existence of natural theology as a logical consequence of his doctrine of revelation, which saw only the person of Christ as the revelation of God,[71] some Reformed Protestants have claimed either that their predecessors dating back

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[69] Ormerod, *A Public God*, 5–6.

[70] In his argument, Ormerod has Thomistic metaphysical conceptions of God in mind.

[71] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics,* vol. 1, part 2: *The Doctrine of the Word of God: Prolegomena to Church Dogmatics,* ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. G. T. Thomson and Harold Knight (New York: T&T Clark, 1956), 10.

to the Reformation have rejected natural theology or that the acceptance of natural theology represents a move away from Reformed theology.[72] Michael Sudduth has argued that this "Reformed objection to natural theology" is actually targeted at certain types of natural theology and therefore requires a recontextualization of natural theology.[73] According to Sudduth, natural theology should not be understood through a strict evidentialist lens where the knowledge of God is built through observing data and inferential reasoning. One of Sudduth's critics, Andrew Moore, who is also a general critic of natural theology, characterizes it as seeking to arrive at a knowledge of God through the accumulation of evidence from the natural world, coupled with rational argument.[74] However, if natural theology is seen only within the bounds of evidentialism, as Moore sees it, his rejection of the concept is understandable. Theologians such as Wahlberg, Ormerod, and Sudduth who seek to preserve natural theology also reject the narrower definition of it that implies evidentialism.

Sudduth agrees with critics such as Moore that the knowledge of God is immediate and not the product of inference or argument but involves theistic beliefs that are properly basic.[75] This view stands in contrast to the claim that the knowledge of God is acquired through inference or reasoning solely from observational data. Sudduth argues that the Reformed Scholastics understood this differentiation between ways of attaining knowledge of God since they believed in *cognitio dei insita*, or a naturally implanted innate knowledge of God, in contrast to knowledge of God gained through observation and inference.[76] This is in line with both Demarest's explanation of intuitive knowledge paired with observational knowledge and Calvin's *sensus divinitatis*. Placing natural theology in this context constitutes a rejection of evidentialism as an epistemology but not a rejection of natural theology.[77] The biblical evidence explored in this paper bears witness to that distinction. Classical evidentialism as an explanatory epistemology of Romans

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[72] Michael Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology* (Surrey, UK: Routledge, 2009), 3.

[73] Sudduth, "Revisiting the Reformed Objection," 38.

[74] Moore, "Should Christians," 128.

[75] Sudduth, "Revisiting the Reformed Objection," 44.

[76] Ibid., 42.

[77] Ibid., 44.

1:18–20 must be denied, but this denial does not negate the practice of a different, recontextualized natural theology.

Conclusion

In Romans 1:18–20, Paul argued that the wrath of God is being revealed against unrighteous humanity who suppresses the truth of God, leaving humanity culpable and without excuse before a righteous God. Moreover, he stated, the natural order of creation attests to this intuitive knowledge of God and works in conjunction with it. Paul's exposition of how humans have a divine sense of God is such that classical evidentialism, or the view that knowledge is inferred through a process of gathering evidence and justifies such beliefs as the existence of God, cannot stand as an explanatory epistemology for this text. Romans 1:18–20 describes a type of intuitive knowledge available to humanity that precedes knowledge accumulated through observation and inference but is also distinct from God's special revelation. This knowledge is divinely supplied and, from a theological perspective, explains Romans 1 better than classical evidentialism does. In particular, positing intuitive knowledge explains human culpability for suppressed knowledge better than evidentialism. This intuitive knowledge does not discount or nullify the practice or usefulness of natural theology based on knowledge gained by observation; on the contrary, Paul clearly recognizes knowledge of God that is available through the natural order. This stance necessitates a reimagining of natural theology that does not rely on an evidentialist epistemology, which would treat natural theology as a process of gathering evidence to prove the existence of God. Romans 1:18–20 clearly advocates for an intuitive rather than an evidential knowledge of God, and evidentialism is a presupposition forced on this text rather than the result of careful study of the text.

John Clarke:
His Contributions to His Church and State

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Introduction

In 1638, John Clarke led a group of religious dissenters to settle in the colony of Rhode Island. A few years later, he constituted the church which he pastored as a Baptist church, one of the earliest in America. He wrote an influential defense of the Baptist doctrines, believers' baptism and religious freedom. Among his many public services was the negotiation of a charter which procured liberal prerogatives for Rhode Island citizens and inspired American founding fathers. History, however, has paid him scant attention, partly because in each of these accomplishments he was preceded by another, Roger Williams.

Roger Williams arrived in Rhode Island two years prior to Clarke. He founded a Baptist church five years earlier than Clarke, although he left the Baptist faith, never to return, only a few months later. Williams' *The Bloudy Tenet of Persecution* was published in 1644, attacking religious persecution but omitting baptismal doctrine. In 1643, he won Rhode Island's first charter, but it lasted only twenty years whereas Clarke's charter lasted for more than a hundred years of colonial life and even beyond.

In short, Williams preceded Clarke, while Clarke endured beyond Williams. Nonetheless, historians have focused on Williams to the neglect of Clarke. In a 1989 journal article, Edwin S. Gaustad bemoaned Clarke's fated obscurity in twentieth-century histories.[1] To be sure, earlier historians, Wilbur Nelson and Thomas Bicknell,

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[1] After several comparisons between Williams' coverage and Clarke's, Gaustad concluded, "Even in Newport, . . . it is possible for the Chamber of Commerce to publish a brochure on the 'Churches of Newport' without including a single allusion to John Clarke." Edwin S. Gaustad, "John Clarke: 'Good Newes from Rhode Island,'" *Baptist History and Heritage* 24 (October 1989): 20.

wrote eulogistic biographies in praise of Clarke, and Baptist succes-sionist, J. R. Graves edited an apologetic for Clarke's priority over Williams. A critical monograph of Clarke's accomplishments, how-ever, did not appear until 1999 with the publication of Sydney V. James' *John Clarke and His Legacies*, edited by Theodore Dwight Bo-zeman after James' death. James utilized primary sources to present a thorough, balanced critique of Clarke's life and accomplishments.

This research project draws heavily on James' work, the only re-cent monograph on Clarke, but also uses classic histories and jour-nal articles. The goal is to survey Clarke's life and work, focusing primarily on his contributions to the Baptist faith, the royal charter of 1663, and the struggle for religious freedom.

Early Life from Suffolk to Newport

The Geneva Bible of the Clarke family records the genealogical data of the children born to Thomas and Rose Kerrich Clarke. The use of a Geneva Bible, the translation preferred by Puritans, inti-mates that John was raised in a Puritan family and church. Born on 8 October 1609, in Suffolk, England, John was the fifth of seven children. When his parents died in 1627, he became the head of the family, and all but one brother followed him to New England.[2]

Little information from his early life has survived. The variety of his life's work indicates a broad education in law, medicine, and theology, but nothing certain of the source of that education is known. A general catalog of the University of Leyden in Holland posts the name "Johannes Clarq" under the date 17 July 1635. The name "John Clarke" appears on also on the rolls of both Cambridge and Oxford during this era.[3] Such entries lead to speculation but nothing definitive about Clarke's education.

Equally obscure are details about his marriage to Elizabeth Harges in 1634. She was the daughter of an English lord and re-mained loyal to him during the trials of relocation to New England, theological dissension, economic disappointment, and childlessness. After thirty years of marriage, Elizabeth died. Clarke remarried in

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[2] Sydney V. James, *John Clarke and His Legacies: Religion and Law in Colonial Rhode Island 1638–1750*, ed. Theodore Dwight Bozeman (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 3–4. See also Wilbur Nelson, *The Hero of Aquidneck: A Life of Dr. John Clarke* (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell Com-pany, 1938), 15–16.

[3] Nelson, *The Hero of Aquidneck*, 16; James, *John Clarke and His Legacies*, 168n3.

1670, but his second wife, Jane Fletcher, died in childbirth. A few years thereafter he married his third wife, Sarah Davis, a Quaker widow, who brought children into the Clarke household.[4]

In November 1637, Clarke, along with Elizabeth and his siblings, joined thousands of Puritans who fled the persecution of England and disappointment of the unreformed Anglican Church for a fresh start in New England.[5] In the very month of his arrival in Boston, Clarke became involved in Anne Hutchinson's trial for Antinomian views. Fourteen years later, he recorded the incident: "I was no sooner on shore, but there appeared to me differences among them touching the Covenants, and in point of evidencing a mans good estate, some prest hard for the Covenant of works, and for sanctification to be the first and chief evidence, others prest as hard for the Covenant of grace that was established upon better promises, and for the evidence of the Spirit, as that which is a more certain, constant, and satisfactory witness."[6]

In 1634, Anne and her husband William followed the Nonconformist Rev. John Cotton from England to Boston. Soon she established weekly meetings, which began as women's discussions of sermons but led to mixed colloquies of varied subjects. Her disputed views centered around the evidences of predestination. She taught that an inward light, not moral works of law, was the sure witness of divine grace. Thus, she rejected Old Testament law for New Testament grace, teaching that holiness consisted in a state of the heart, not in good works.[7]

Hutchinson made her attack personal when she denounced all Puritan ministers in Boston except John Cotton and John Wheelwright, her brother-in-law. The clergy, including Cotton, rose up in opposition to her views, which they labeled antinomian, and in defense of their own doctrine. They also advocated salvation by faith alone but insisted in addition upon the visible evidence of election through moral behavior. For these clergy and the magistrates, who supported them, the promotion of such godliness contributed to

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[4] James, *John Clarke and His Legacies*, 4, 96–97.

[5] Gaustad, "John Clarke," 20–21.

[6] John Clarke, Ill Newes from New England: Or a Narrative of New-England's Persecution, Wherein Is Declared that while old England is becoming new, New-England is become Old, in Colonial Baptists: Massachusetts and Rhode Island, The Baptist Tradition, ed. Edwin S. Gaustad (New York, NY: Arno Press, 1980; reprint, Boston, MA: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1854), 23.

[7] Nelson, *The Hero of Aquidneck*, 22.

ecclesiastical and civil well-being whereas Hutchinson's antinomi-
anism threatened social stability by advocating individualistic no-
tions of proper behavior.[8]

In his report of the debate, Clarke's language indicated his sup-
port for Hutchinson. None of the Puritans professed works, such
as good conduct, religious duties, and observance of God's law, as
the means of salvation. Hutchinson and her followers, however, ac-
cused her opponents of such legalism. By characterizing
Hutchinson's opponents as pressing for the "Covenant of works"
and her followers as pressing for the "Covenant of grace," Clarke
revealed his affiliation with the Antinomians.[9] At the same time,
Clarke's moderate disposition reacted in surprise to the vehemence
of the dispute: "I thought it not strange to see men differ about
matters of Heaven, for I expect no less upon Earth: But to see that
they were not able so to bear with other in their different under-
standings and consciences, as in those utmost parts of the World to
live peaceably together."[10]

Clarke, however, omitted points of disputation that fueled the
acrimony of the trial. First, Hutchinson revealed at her trial that she
received direct revelation from the Holy Spirit. The magistrates
feared that such confidence in divine inspiration would lead to dis-
regard of moral law.[11] Second, this antinomianism reminded the
magistrates of the Anabaptists of Münster. A century earlier, John
of Leyden, guided by divine visions, led the Anabaptists to over-
throw the government, disregard property rights, and murder their
enemies. Consequently, not only was Hutchinson convicted and
banished but also her followers, possibly including Clarke, were dis-
armed.[12]

At this point, Clarke assumed a leadership role among the Anti-
nomians. He suggested reconnaissance for a new location, "for as
much as the land was before us and wide enough, with the profer
of Abraham to Lot, and for peace sake, to turn aside to the right
hand, or to the left: The motion was readily accepted, and I was

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[8] James, *John Clarke and His Legacies*, 6–7; Nelson, *The Hero of Aquidneck*, 22–23.

[9] James, *John Clarke and His Legacies*, 6.

[10] Clarke, *Ill Newes from New England*, 23–24.

[11] John Winthrop, "A Short Story of the Rise, Reign and Ruin of the Antino-
mians," in *Winthrop's Journal: "History of New England,"* ed. James Kendall Hosmer,
vol. 1 (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 246.

[12] James, *John Clarke and His Legacies*, 8–9.

requested [with] some others to seek out a place, which accordingly I was ready to do."[13] Because of the previous summer heat, Clarke and his party first went north, where they encountered the opposite extreme in the winter cold of New Hampshire.[14] Turning south, they traveled to Narragansett Bay where they met Roger Williams. He advised them of two suitable places, Sowams and Aquidneck. Of the two, only the latter was unclaimed by patent, so the committee, through Williams' agency, purchased the land rights from the Indians. Thus began the Antinomian migration from Massachusetts to Rhode Island.

Before leaving Boston, on 7 March 1638, twenty-three Antinomian leaders signed the Portsmouth Compact, composed by Clarke, establishing a theocracy for the new community. "We, whose names are underwritten, do hereby in the presence of Jehovah incorporate ourselves into a Bodie Politick and, as He shall help, will submit our persons, lives, and estates unto our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and to all those perfect and most absolute laws of His given in the Holy Word of Truth, to be guided and judged thereby."[15] The "Bodie Politick" did not remain in Portsmouth, however, nor did it remain a theocracy. The next year several prominent Antinomians moved to the southern tip of Aquidneck to found Newport. In another year, they declared their government a democracy, or government by the people, although in practice only a few had voting privileges. The change signaled a

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[13] Clarke, *Ill Newes from New England*, 24. Other document portrayed William Coddington, who preferred exile to prosecution, as the principal organizer of the Antinomians' migration and placed John Clarke in a subsidiary role. Clarke had strong reasons for a different representation of events: he wrote *Ill-Newes* while in England seeking a revocation of Coddington's rights as governor of the new settlement. James, *John Clarke and His Legacies*, 10.

[14] Clarke may have gone north to find John Wheelwright, who settled in Exeter, New Hampshire. If he hoped to recruit him as pastor for the new community, he was disappointed. Not only did Wheelwright remain in New Hampshire, he returned to Puritan orthodoxy. James, *John Clarke and His Legacies*, 169 n. 16. See also Sydney V. James, *Colonial Rhode Island: A History*, A History of the American Colonies in Thirteen Volumes, ed. Milton M. Klein and Jacob E. Cooke (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), 25.

[15] Clarke, *Postmouth Compact*, cited by James O. Combs, "John Clarke: Father of Baptists in America," *Fundamentalist Journal* 7 (March 1988): 43. See also Nelson, *The Hero of Aquidneck*, 29.

departure from a society regulated by divine law, and soon Clarke advocated separation of church and state.[16]

Contribution to Baptist Development in America

In Newport, Clarke assumed pastoral leadership of the community although he was never ordained nor accepted a salary. He shared with Roger Williams the sentiment that a paid minister was a hireling, and none of the Newport elders were paid by the church.[17] Clarke supported himself as a physician; hence, on the title page of *Ill Newes from New-England*, he identified himself as "John Clark Physician of Rode Island in America."

The church which he founded eventually rejected infant baptism but did not insist on re-baptism, paralleling in time and practice the early Particular Baptist congregations of England.[18] When and where Clarke adopted Baptist convictions are questions that have not been answered after much speculation.[19] Presupposing Clarke's education in Holland, Thomas Bicknell assumed that he communed with the Baptists of Holland.[20] J. R. Graves posited Clarke's baptism in Elder Stillwell's church in London.[21] Because Clarke's views evinced no changes after arriving in New England, C. E. Barrows contended that he was a Baptist refugee when he left England for Boston.[22] Robert Baker and Robert Torbet suggested that Clarke

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[16] James, *John Clarke*, 14–15. See also George Selement, "John Clarke and the Struggle for Separation of Church and State," *Foundations* 15 (April 1972): 113.

[17] Edwin S. Gaustad, ed., introduction to *Baptist Piety: The Last Will and Testimony of Obadiah Holmes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian University Press, 1978; reprint, Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1994), 43 (page references are to reprint edition).

[18] Roger Williams, "The Hireling Ministry None of Christs, or A Discourse Touching the Propagating the Gospel of Christ Jesus," in *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams*, vol. 7, ed. Perry Miller (New York, NY: Russell and Russell, 1963). See also James, *John Clarke*, 21–25.

[19] Young Min Pee, "Concepts of the Church Maintained by Particular Baptist Leaders of Rhode Island in the Seventeenth Century" (PhD diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1991; pub. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1992), 94.

[20] Thomas W. Bicknell, *The Story of Dr. John Clarke*. 3rd ed. (Providence, RI: Thomas W. Bicknell, 1915), 74.

[21] J. R. Graves, *The Trilemma; or Death by Three Horns* (Memphis, TN: J. R. Graves and Son, 1890), 121.

[22] C. E. Barrows, *History of the First Baptist Church in Newport, R. I.* (Newport, RI: John P. Sanborn and Co., 1876), 12. See also Nelson, *The Hero of Aquidneck*, 71.

adopted Baptist views through discussions with Roger Williams.[23] Seeing no evidence that Clarke was a Baptist before leaving England, Thomas Armitage believed that he embraced Baptist principles between 1640 and 1644.[24] Sydney James concurred, observing that during these years, Clarke came under the influence of two Baptists, Robert Lenthall and Mark Lucar.[25]

Robert Lenthall's service in Newport marked the first clear appearance there of Baptist beliefs.[26] He came from Weymouth, Massachusetts, where he attempted to establish a Baptist church but was prevented by the magistracy.[27] In Newport, he taught a public school, the first in the country, and assisted Clarke in the ministry of the church.[28] Possibly Clarke's assumption of Lenthall's Baptist convictions touched off the schism of 1641 led by William Coddington and others.[29]

If Lenthall introduced Clarke to the teaching of believers' baptism, after Lenthall's departure, Mark Lucar continued this indoctrination. Lucar, who became a Baptist in England, moved to Newport in the early 1640s and became an active member of Clarke's church. In 1644, at Lucar's instigation, Clarke reconstituted the church into a Particular Baptist congregation, which administered believers' baptism by immersion.[30]

In 1651, Clarke published *Ill Newes from New-England*, the first apologetic for believers' baptism written by a New England

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[23] Robert A. Baker and Robert G. Torbet, "The Baptists and the Making of the American Colonies," in *A Way Home: The Baptists Tell Their Story*, ed. James Saxon Childers (Atlanta, GA: Tupper and Love, 1964), 20.

[24] Thomas Armitage, *A History of the Baptists* (New York, NY: Bryan, Taylor and Co., 1889), 671.

[25] James, *John Clarke*, 26, 32.

[26] Ibid., 26.

[27] Winthrop, *Winthrop's Journal*, 292–93.

[28] Barrows, *History of the First Baptist Church in Newport, R. I.*, 12–13.

[29] The opposition of the schismatics toward antipedobaptism stemmed from their patrician disdain for the socially disreputable, continental Anabaptists. Coddington reconciled with Massachusetts orthodoxy but eventually adopted Quaker views. James, *John Clarke*, 26.

[30] Ibid., 32; Pee, "Concepts of the Church," 94–95. See also John Callender, *An Historical Discourse on the Civil and Religious Affairs of the Colony of Rhode Island*, 3rd ed. (N.p: n.p., 1843; reprint, Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 117.

Baptist.[31] He testified to two truths: "that Baptism or dipping in water is one of the commands of this Lord Jesus Christ" and "that a visible believer or disciple of Christ Jesus (that is, one that manifesteth repentance towards God, and faith in Jesus Christ) is the onely person that is to be baptized with that visible baptism or dipping of Jesus Christ in water."[32] Concerning the first proposition, Clarke presented nine defenses of baptizing by "dipping . . . drowning, overwhelming, or burying in water, and not by sprinkling with water." First, the Greek word for baptism in Christ's "Last Will and Testament," or Great Commission, may not be rendered "sprinkling" but only "dipping." Second, even in English, the word signifies plunging under water as if to drown but safely, as in the instance of Naaman (2 Kgs 5:14). Third, the preposition that accompanies the verb is generally "in," which suggest dipping, not "with," which would suggest sprinkling. Fourth, the Old Testament typology, such as the Israelites passing under the cloud or through the Red Sea (1 Cor 10:1–2), pictured immersion. Fifth, when Philip baptized the Eunuch (Acts 8:38–39), they went into the water and came up out of the water, as did Jesus (Mt 3:16). Sixth, John the Baptist baptized where there was plenty of water (Jn 3:23). Seventh through ninth, only immersion represents: death with Christ, unto sin, Satan, the law, and the curse (Gal 3:27; Rom 8); burial with Christ (Rom 6:4, 6; Col 2:12); and resurrection with Christ (Rom 6, 8; Acts 8; 1 Cor 15:29).[33]

Clarke defended the second proposition concerning believers' baptism with three arguments. First, in the Great Commission, Christ ordained baptism for disciples and believers only. Second, the apostles, those first commissioned, baptized only believers, never infants. Third, faith always precedes baptism in the Scriptures (Mk 16:16; Mt 28:19; Hb 6:1–2; Eph 4:5).

Furthermore, Clarke refuted the covenant theology of the New England Congregationalists. Covenant theologians, citing Acts 2:39, claimed that the promise "for you and your children" justified infant baptism. Clarke contended against this assertion with three arguments. First, this promise referred not to the covenant of grace

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[31] William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent 1630–1833: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 27.

[32] Clarke, *Ill Newes*, 82, 85.

[33] Clarke, *Ill Newes*, 82–85. See also Pee, "Concepts of the Church," 104–5.

by which the soul enters salvation but to the assurance that salvation would follow after faith, repentance, and obedience. Second, Peter issued his invitation, not to "believers, and their infants of daies," but to the generations of unbelieving Jews in his audience. Third, the next line of Acts 2:39 explains that the invitation is "for all whom the Lord our God will call." Clarke further pointed to apostolic examples where the baptismal formulas and candidates conformed to the expectation that baptism was for believers and not infants.[34]

Thomas Cobbet, teacher of the church in Lynn, Massachusetts, responded to Clarke's *Ill Newes*. He dismissed briefly, however, Clarke's conclusions regarding believers' baptism by immersion, finding nothing new which Cobbet had not already refuted.[35] Certainly Clarke claimed no originality, and probably his doctrines came from English Baptists *via* Mark Lucar.[36]

Other claims for originality have been made for Clarke and his Baptist church in Newport. S. Adlam, a nineteenth century pastor of First Baptist Church, Newport, and J. R. Graves contended that Clarke founded the first Baptist church in America, not Roger Williams. Graves based this claim upon the assumptions that the Newport church was established in 1638 and the Providence church, 1639.[37] He failed to take into account the probability that the

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[34] New Testament examples included Philip's baptisms in Samaria; his baptism of the eunuch, and the baptismal formulas used with the households of Cornelius, the Philippian jailer, Stephanus, and Lydia. Clarke, *Ill Newes*, 87–89.

[35] Thomas Cobbet, The Civil Magistrates Power in Matters of Religion Modestly Debated, Impartially Stated According to the Bounds and Grounds of Scripture, and Answer Returned to Those Objections Against the Same Which Seem to Have Any Weight in Them, Together with a Brief Answer to a Certain Slanderous Pamphlet Called Ill News from New England; or, a Narrative of New-England's Persecution, by John Clark of Road-Iland, Physician (London: W. Wilson for Philemon Stephens, 1653, microfilm), 2.

[36] Pee, "Concepts of the Church," 106–7.

[37] S. Adlam, *The First Baptist Church in America*, ed. with introduction by J. R. Graves (Memphis, TN: Southern Baptist Book House, 1890), 15–17. The title page, headed "Historical Facts versus Historical Fiction," reads: "The First Baptist Church in America, not founded or pastored by Roger Williams, and his invalid baptism never transmitted to any Baptist church; but Dr. John Clarke was the founder and pastor of the First Baptist Church in America, at Newport, R. I., and the author and procurer of the First Charter that secured free and full religious liberty for Baptists and all denominations." Graves, an advocate of organic, baptismal succession from the time of Christ, posited that Williams baptized himself and disdained such a se-baptism as invalid and Williams as no Baptist at all.

Newport church began as a Separatist Congregational church and did not convert to Baptist doctrine until 1644.[38]

The evidence indicates that Williams and Clarke traveled similar paths: through Puritanism, passion for religious liberty, hatred of the intolerance of Massachusetts Bay Colony, and into full Baptist faith.[39] Williams' baptism and the foundation of the Providence church, however, transpired in March, 1639, preceding the constitution of the Newport congregation as a Baptist church by five years.[40] On the other hand, Williams adherence to Baptist doctrine was short-lived, and he left the Baptist church only four months later.[41] Therefore, Clarke and the First Baptist Church of Newport, though second chronologically, had first place in influence on Baptist development in America.[42]

As an early Baptist advocate, Clarke conducted two missionary journeys into nearby territories which stirred Puritan opposition. The first excursion took Clarke and Lucar into the settlement of Seekonk, also called Rehoboth, located in Plymouth Colony. Among the dissidents was Obadiah Holmes, who had a history of pugnacity that belied a deepening piety. The Newport missionaries welcomed this congregation to the Baptist faith and baptized them by total immersion.[43]

Roger Williams reported on this incident, which happened only ten miles east of Providence: "At Seekonk a great many have lately concurred with Mr. John Clarke and our Providence men about the point of a new Baptism, and the many by dipping: and Mr. John Clarke hath been there late (and Mr. Lucar) and hath dipped them. I believe their practice comes nearer the first practice of our great Founder Christ Jesus, then other practices of religion do." The less

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Ibid., 11, 36. For Graves's successionist views, see H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 59–60.

[38] McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 11.

[39] Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, 671.

[40] Without recourse to baptismal succession, Williams received baptism from Ezekiel Holliman and then baptized Holliman and ten others in the Providence spring. Baker and Torbet, "The Baptists and the Making of the American Colonies," 18–19. See also McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 10.

[41] McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 10.

[42] Williams came to doubt the validity of his baptism, which lacked succession, and he adopted Seekerism, awaiting a new apostolic age. Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, 660; Baker and Torbet, "The Baptists and the Making of the American Colonies," 19–20.

[43] James, *John Clarke*, 43–44.

enthusiastic Puritans of Massachusetts Bay, on the other hand, "have lately decreed to prosecute such, and hath writ to Plymouth to prosecute at Seekonk, with overtures that if Plymouth do not, &c [Massachusetts will]."[44]

From his closer vantage point, Obadiah Holmes concurred with Williams, concerning both the scriptural nature of immersion and also the Puritan reaction:

> [F]inding that it was his [Christ's] last will (to which none is to add, and from which none is to detract) that they which had faith in his death for life, should yeeld up themselves to hold forth a lively consimilitude, or likenesse unto his death, buriall, and resurrection by the Ordinance of Baptisme; I readily yeelded thereto being by love constrained to follow that Lamb (that takes away the sins of the World) whither soever he goes; I had no sooner separated from their assemblies, and from Communion with them in their worship of God and thus visibly put on Christ, being resolved alone to attend upon him, and to submit to his will, but immediately the adversary cast out a flood against us, and stirred up the spirits of men to present my self and two more to Plymouth Court, where we met with 4 Petitions against our whole company to take some speedy course to suppress us.[45]

This fourfold petition, signed by thirty-five Seekonk citizens, all except two of the Plymouth ministers, a neighboring church in Taunton, and the Boston Court, was leveled at Holmes and his party in June 1650. Arraigned before the Plymouth Court, Holmes and his colleagues were ordered to desist from baptizing, congregating on Sundays, and ordaining officers.[46] Four months later, the Seekonk Baptists were in the Plymouth Court again, for continuing in the forbidden faith. Following this confrontation, Holmes left Seekonk for Newport, where there was land and freedom of conscience.[47]

In the following year, in July 1651, Holmes accompanied Clarke and John Crandall on the second missionary journey into Puritan

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[44] Roger Williams, "Letter for Mr. John Winthrop, Jr. [10 Dec. 1649]," *Letters of Roger Williams 1632–1682*, in *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams*, vol. 6, ed. John Russell Bartlett (New York, NY: Russell and Russell, 1963), 186.

[45] Obadiah Holmes, "Letter to John Spilsbury and William Kiffin," in Clarke, *Ill-Newes*, 46.

[46] Ibid., 46–47.

[47] Gaustad, *Baptist Piety*, 20–21.

territory. The ostensible goal of this excursion into Lynn, Massachusetts was to visit William Witter, an elderly, blind Baptist, described as "a brother in the church, who, by reason of his advanced age, could not undertake so great a journey as to visit the church" in Newport.[48] The exact date of his immersion as a believer is not known, but as early as February 1643, he was arraigned "for entertaining that baptism of infants was sinful" and that the ordinance was "a badge of the whore."[49] Two years later, he was accused of saying that to baptize an infant was "to take ye name of ye Father, Sonne, & Holy Gost in vayne, [and] broake ye Saboath" and that "yt they who stayed whiles a child is baptized doe wor[shi]pp ye divell."[50] When Witter requested the Newport church to send some brethren for purposes of fellowship and proselytizing prospective converts in Lynn, Clarke and his colleagues made the trip despite the inherent dangers of confronting the Puritan authorities.[51]

Arriving in Lynn on a Saturday, the trio considered disrupting the church service the next day but received no clear direction from God for such a confrontation. Instead, Clarke preached to the inhabitants of Witter's house plus four or five unexpected visitors, presumably interested in Baptist faith. Word of the Baptist invasion brought two constables to arrest the missionaries before the impromptu service ended. The warrant commanded arraignment early Monday morning, so Clarke requested permission to finish his sermon in the constables' presence if their consciences allowed. The constables, however, insisted on immediate arrest and took the prisoners to an inn for dinner.

After the meal, the constables invited the prisoners to the afternoon worship service. Clarke acquiesced but warned the constables that, once there, they would declare their Baptist convictions. Indeed, following the service led by Thomas Cobbet, Clarke requested the opportunity to address the congregation and, receiving guarded permission, asserted that the Lynn congregation was not conducted according to the order of the Lord. The magistrate,

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[48] Newport church papers, cited by Isaac Backus, *A History of New England with Particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians Called Baptists*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Newton, MA: Backus Historical Society, 1871), 178.

[49] McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 18.

[50] Nathanial B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, 5 vols. (Boston, MA: William White, 1853–1854), 3.67, cited by James, *John Clarke*, 45.

[51] McLoughlin, 19; James, *John Clarke*, 45; Gaustad, *Baptist Piety*, 23.

Robert Bridges, who had signed the warrant for the missionaries' arrest, ordered them to be held prisoner overnight at the inn.[52]

The next day, after arraignment but before imprisonment in Boston, Clarke and his companions managed to return to Witter's house where Clarke preached and administered communion and Holmes baptized three persons.[53] Later in the week, the Boston Court convicted the three missionaries of conducting unlawful religious meetings on the Lord's day, acting disrespectfully at a lawful church service, condemning the institution and ordinances of the Massachusetts churches, and administering ordinances unlawfully. The sentences pronounced that the offenders be "well whipt" or pay fines: Clarke, twenty pounds; Holmes, thirty pounds; and Crandall, five pounds. Holmes' fine was steepest due to his excommunication from Seekonk and his administration of baptism in Lynn. Clarke had conducted communion, which prompted his fine, but Crandall had done nothing ceremonial to offend the establishment.[54]

During the trial, Clarke protested that Massachusetts had no law that defined their activities as crimes. In heated response, the judge, Governor John Endicott, seemed to challenge Clarke to a disputation, which Clarke eagerly desired. While languishing in jail, Clarke prepared four points for debate: first, Jesus was the anointed prophet, priest, and king; second, believers' baptism by immersion was commanded in the Great Commission; third, every believer should improve his talent and prophesy for the edification of the congregation; and fourth, no Christian had authority to coerce the conscience of another. The authorities vacillated concerning the disputation until Clarke's friends, disregarding his wishes, paid his fine and he was released. Thus, no public debate took place.[55]

After Crandall's jailer agreed to be his surety, Crandall posted bail and returned to Newport. The summons to return, however, never reached Crandall, so the jailer lost his money and Crandall, his credibility. Too late, Crandall returned to Boston again to protest his innocence and the injustice of his sentence. But the

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[52] Clarke, *Ill Newes*, 27–30. See also James, *John Clarke*, 45–46; McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 19; and Gaustad, *Baptist Piety*, 23–25.

[53] James, *John Clarke*, 47.

[54] Clarke, *Ill Newes*, 31–32. See also James, *John Clarke*, 47.

[55] Clarke, *Ill Newes*, 36–38. See also James, *John Clarke*, 47.

magistrates, eager for an end to the situation, refused him audience, and Crandall gave up his appeal.[56]

Holmes, who successfully refused to have his fine paid,[57] found himself alone in the Boston jail, "deprived of my two loving Friends."[58] Finally, the court determined in September that Holmes should receive thirty lashes with a three-corded whip as payment for his offense. Although the executioner struck with all his strength, "spitting on his hand three times" for a good grip, Holmes later testified, "[F]or in truth, as the stroaks fell upon me, I had such a spirituall manifestation of Gods presence, as the lie thereunto I never had, nor felt, nor can with fleshly tongue expresse, and the outward pain was so removed from me, that indeed I am not able to declare it to you, it was so easie to me, that I could well bear it." Indeed, his retort to the magistrates was: "[Y]ou have struck me as with Roses."[59] In fact, however, Holmes was so brutally injured that he was unable to leave Boston for several weeks, during that time only able to rest while crouched on elbows and knees. For the rest of his life, his back was a mass of scars.[60]

The severe whipping did not achieve the result desired by the Boston magistracy, drawing attention to the faith they wanted to suppress. Reaction came swiftly from Roger Williams, who wrote to Governor Endicott even before Holmes' whipping. Drawing upon Paul's Damascus road experience, Williams said to Endicott, "It is a dismal battle for poor naked feet to kick against the Pricks; It is a dreadful voice from the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords: Endicot, Endicot, why huntest thou me? Why imprisonest thou me?

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[56] Clark, *Ill Newes*, 42–43. See also James, *John Clarke*, 49; Gaustad, *Baptist Piety*, 27.

[57] Clarke also refused to allow his friends to pay his fine, but the Boston Court accepted payment and released him. Furthermore, the Court released Crandall without payment. The Court's obviously partial treatment of the three prisoners perhaps can be explained thus: the Court devoutly wished to be free of the threat of a disputation with Clarke; the Court had no real grievance with Crandall; the Court, nonetheless, desired to make an example of one transgressor, and Holmes, with his previous record of dissension, was the best candidate. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 20 n. 26.

[58] Holmes, "Letter to John Spilsbury and William Kiffin," 47. Holmes' fine of thirty pounds was sizable in New England of the 1650s, equivalent to his entire estate apart from land and livestock. Gaustad, *Baptist Piety*, 142, n. 14. See also Holmes' Last Will and Inventory in Gaustad, *Baptist Piety*, 128–32.

[59] Holmes, "Letter to John Spilsbury and William Kiffin," 50–51.

[60] McBeth, *Baptist Heritage*, 140.

Why finest, why so bloodily whippest, why wouldest thou (did not I hold thy bloody hands) hang and burn me?"[61] Williams warned Endicott that, by fighting consciences, he was persecuting Jesus. Furthermore, Endicott should not sleep until he first fixed his thoughts on moderation toward those consciences who opposed him religiously and spiritually and second resolved to inquire into "what the holy pleasure, and the holy mysteries of the most Holy are."[62]

Williams' letter, however, did not receive the attention that Clarke's writings earned. The next year, in London, Clarke published *Ill Newes from New-England: or a Narrative of New-Englands Persecution, Wherein Is Declared That while old England is becoming new, New-England is become Old*, a work which utilized the incident to win favor for Baptists, Rhode Island, and religious liberty.[63]

Contribution to the Royal Charter of 1663

Clarke went to London with Williams to secure a new charter for Rhode Island.[64] On the way, he learned about publicity from a master. Williams, in 1643, went to England for Rhode Island's first charter and wrote *A Key into the Language of America*, advertising his contribution to the conversion of Indians as opposed to the failure of Massachusetts. Just as Williams' treatise achieved roundabout success, so did Clarke's *Ill Newes*. The Massachusetts magistracy, alarmed at the circulation of this incidence of persecution, urged

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[61] Williams, "Letter to Major Endicot, Governor of the Massachusetts [August 1651]," *Letters of Roger Williams 1632–1682*, in *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams*, vol. 6, ed. John Russell Bartlett (New York, NY: Russell and Russell, 1963), 225.

[62] Ibid., 227–28.

[63] Clarke's title spoofed a previous publication by Edward Winslow, governor of Plymouth, entitled Good Newes from New-England: Or, A true Relation of things very remarkable at the Plantation of Plimouth in New-England. Gaustad, *Baptist Piety*, 142 n. 14.

[64] After the execution of Charles I, William Coddington secretly sailed to England to obtain a commission as governor for life of Aquidneck and Conanicut islands. The island towns, Portsmouth and Newport, sent Clarke to procure a repeal of Coddington's commission, and the mainland towns, Providence and Warick, engaged Williams to negotiate a new charter to supersede Coddington's. Roger Williams, "Letter to John Winthrop, Jr. [6 October 1651]," *Letters of Roger Williams 1632–1682*, in *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams*, vol. 6, ed. John Russell Bartlett (New York, NY: Russell and Russell, 1963, 228–30. See also Bicknell, *The Story of Dr. John Clarke*, 185; James, *John Clarke*, 49.

Thomas Cobbet, pastor at Lynn, to write a rebuttal. Cobbet's book, *The Civil Magistrates Power in Matters of Religion Modestly Debated*, published in 1653, presented a vigorous defense of using force to preserve religious uniformity. During the interregnum, however, Oliver Cromwell repudiated not only governmental enforcement of religious uniformity but especially persecution of Baptists, who had supported in his revolution and manned his army. Cobbet's apologetic, therefore, placed Massachusetts in an indefensible position.[65]

Clarke and Williams managed the annulment of Coddington's commission in 1652. Williams, however, failed to achieve a new charter and so returned to Providence. Clarke, with his wife, remained in England for twelve years,[66] during which time he became entangled with the Fifth Monarchists and the opposition to Cromwell's reign as king.[67] Interestingly, this latter political position established his loyalty to Charles II, important in his negotiation for the royal charter in 1663.[68]

After the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Rhode Island officials worried that the charter of 1643/44, procured by Williams from the Parliament during the Civil War, would be challenged. In 1661, therefore, they authorized Clarke as their agent to negotiate a charter which would protect their borders from encroachment by neighboring colonies, particularly Massachusetts and Connecticut.[69]

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[65] James, *John Clarke*, 49–50. See also Gaustad, *Baptist Piety*, 33.

[66] Fresh from his persecution, Obadiah Holmes returned to Newport in time to pastor the church during the long interim. Following Clarke's return, Holmes continued to serve in an associate position until Clarke's death in 1676, after which he resumed the pastorate until his own death in 1682. Nelson, *The Hero of Aquidneck*, 85.

[67] In *Ill Newes*, Clarke averred that Jesus shall have a time for his kingly office: "[A]s the dream of Nebuchadnezzar hath been found certain, and the interpretation of Daniel sure, concerning those four Monarchies or Kingdoms of men which should come to pass in the Earth, so certain and sure it is, that the day is approaching that the God of Heaven will set up his Kingdom by that despised yet Corner-stone that was cut out without hands, Dan. 2.44, 45." Clarke, *Ill Newes*, 79. Probably, Clarke joined the Fifth Monarchists, was arrested along with others opposed to Cromwell's assumption of kingship, was released and arrested again for complicity with Thomas Venner's uprising in 1661, and finally denounced the Fifth Monarchists who rebelled against Charles II. W. T. Whitley, "The English Career of John Clarke, Rhode Island," *Baptist Quarterly* 1 (1922): 368–71. See also James, *John Clarke*, 53.

[68] James, *John Clarke*, 57.

[69] The Narragansett Indians, from whom Williams bought the land for Rhode Island, had to sell more lands to raise money for defense against the encroaching

He operated under several obstacles, chief being the lack of funds from Rhode Island and competition from John Winthrop, Jr., agent of Connecticut.[70]

Clarke needed funding to obtain legal advice, to file petitions, to persuade officials to aid his campaign, and, if successful, to issue the charter. In Rhode Island, however, efforts to raise the money from voluntary contributions were woefully inadequate, and taxation was slow and ineffective.[71] In the meantime, Winthrop, well supplied by his Connecticut constituents, quickly managed a charter which pushed Connecticut eastern boundaries to Narragansett Bay. Clarke's prompt appeal to Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, recalled the Connecticut charter for arbitration, but even after six months he failed to win a hearing before the Privy Council. Only Winthrop's own troubles with John Scott, who was agitating for the territories of Long Island and New Haven, hastened a settlement, which established Rhode Island's border at the Pawcatuck River, which included Narragansett country.[72]

Besides dealing with issues of boundaries, the charter[73] designed a democratic form of government, provided the colony with protection from its neighbors, assured the citizens of rights as Englishmen, and added the extraordinary royal permission for freedom of conscience in matters of religion.[74] This declaration of religious freedom applied in Rhode Island as the declaration of toleration, issued by Charles II at Breda on the eve of restoration but denied to English citizens: "We do declare a Liberty to tender consciences: and that no Man shall be disquieted, or called in question, for differences of opinion in matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom; and that we shall be ready to consent to such

colonies. Soon, proprietors from Massachusetts and Connecticut snatched up the Narragansett country, challenging Rhode Island for jurisdiction guaranteed in the charter of 1644. James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 66.

[70] James, *John Clarke*, 61. See also James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 67.

[71] James, *John Clarke*, 61.

[72] However, the boundaries remained in dispute for decades. Not until 1741–47, when boundaries were drawn and surveyed by the Privy Council, was the issue settled. James, *Colonial Rhode Island*, 67–68.

[73] The charter was issued in the name of "The Governor and company of the English Colony of Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations, in New-England, in America." "The Charter granted by King Charles II, July 8, 1663," in Callender, *An Historical Discourse*, 245.

[74] James, *John Clarke*, 61. See also Bryant R. Nobles, Jr., "John Clarke's Political Theory," *Foundations* 13 (July 1970): 223–24.

an act of Parliament, as, upon mature deliberation, shall be offered to us, for the full granting that indulgence."[75]

The novelty of this concept was declared in the prologue to the charter: "And whereas, in their humble address, they have freely declared, that it is much on their hearts (if they may be permitted) to hold forth a lively experiment, that a most flourishing civil state may stand and best be maintained, and that among our English subjects, with a full liberty in religious concernments."[76] The charter, drawing upon language from the Declaration of Breda, recognized that loyalty to the king did not equate conformity to the Church of England and, therefore, awarded pardon and freedom, not to licentiousness or civil disturbance, but to exercise individual religious judgment and conscience.[77]

After the completion of the charter, Clarke forwarded it to Rhode Island while he remained in England for a few more months. Meanwhile Rhode Island citizens received the charter with rejoicing, gathering in Newport from all over the colony to hear it read. Written thanks were sent to Charles II, the Earl of Clarendon, and John Clarke.[78] The latter, however, looked for payment of services rendered as well as reimbursement of expenses along with his gratuitous letter. Unfortunately, none was forthcoming, nor did full payment come before his death.[79] Slow to pay for the charter, the magistracy nonetheless was quick to enact it, calling for elections in the spring of 1664. The charter, which introduced democracy and religious freedom to America earned praise from contemporaries and later founding fathers.[80]

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[75] Charles II, "Declaration of Breda: Liberty to Tender Consciences [4–14 April 1660]," in Bicknell, *The Story of Dr. John Clarke*, 182–83.

[76] "The Charter granted by King Charles II, July 8, 1663," in Callender, *An Historical Discourse*, 243.

[77] Ibid., 243–44.

[78] Nelson, *The Hero of Aquidneck*, 62.

[79] James, *John Clarke*, 86. Nor was lack of payment his only disappointment in the last years of his life. He endured painful controversies and schisms at his Newport church. During his absence, in 1656, the controversy over laying on of hands led twenty-one Six-Principle General Baptists to split from a congregation of less than fifty, which remained faithful to the Particular Baptist tradition. Fifteen years later, the Sabbatarian controversy took five more members. In 1673, five more lapsed into Quakerism. Gaustad, *Baptist Piety*, 44–45, 59–60.

[80] Both Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, framers of the Declaration of Independence, were familiar with Clarke's charter. Franklin encountered Clarke's ideology through his brother, James, who owned the Newport Gazette.

Conclusion: Contribution to the American Heritage
of Religious Freedom

Clarke's commitment to religious freedom derived from the forces at work throughout his life. A liberal approach to religion characterized the Separatists of Holland, with whom he probably associated early in his life, and, upon his arrival in Boston, he threw in his lot with Anne Hutchinson's liberal group. The personal persecution he endured as a Baptist along with Holmes and Crandall reinforced his antipathy toward the use of force against individual conscience. He had opportunity in *Ill Newes* to relate, along with the narrative of his persecution, his testimony concerning freedom of conscience:

> I Testifie that no such believer, or Servant of Christ Jesus hath any liberty, much less authority, from his Lord, to smite his fellow servant, nor yet with outward force, or arme of flesh, to constrain, or restrain his Conscience, no nor yet his outward man for Conscience sake, or worship of his God, where injury is not offered to the person, name or estate of others, every man being such as shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and must give an account of himself to God, and therefore ought to be fully perswaded in his own mind, for what he undertakes, because he that doubteth is damned if he eat, and so also if he act, because he doth not eat or act in Faith, and what is not of Faith is Sin.[81]

During Clarke's sojourn, he and Williams did not consider each other competitors but colleagues. From their first meeting in 1638, they contributed to each other's welfare: Williams assisted in the purchase of Aquidneck; he defended Clarke to Governor Endicott; they traveled together to England; Clarke consummated the charter which Williams sought at that time. Nonetheless, they did not always agree: Williams forsook the Baptist faith, which Clarke steadfastly maintained; Clarke rebuked those that followed Seekers' ways.[82] The fact remains that these two Baptists worked together to

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Jefferson, who corresponded with Samuel Hopkins of Rhode Island, acknowledged his use of the charter in drafting the Declaration. Nobles, "John Clarke's Political Theory," 229–30. See also Nelson, *The Hero of Aquidneck*, 61–62; Bicknell, *The Story of Dr. John Clarke*, 191–98.

[81] Clarke, *Ill Newes*, 37.

[82] "God forbid that thou shouldst be as one that wilt turn aside by the flocks of his companions, . . . in no visible way of worship, or order at all, . . .

shape the history of Rhode Island, New England, and, eventually, the United States of America.[83] The competition between their reputations has been manufactured by historians, but such debate is futile. Clarke's name need not be magnified at the expense of Williams'.[84] Rather, he should be remembered for his own contributions to the Baptist church in America, the cause of democracy, and the struggle for religious freedom.

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pretending . . . that the Church of Christ is now in the wilderness, and the time of its recovery is not yet." Clarke, *Ill Newes*, 19–20.

[83] Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, 672.

[84] James, *John Clarke*, 2.

Book Reviews

Women Leading Well: Stewarding the Gift of Ministry Leadership. By Emily
  Dean. Brentwood: B&H Academic, 2023. 143 pages. Paper-
  back, $17.26.

Women in ministry leadership serve faithfully yet often lack ac-
cess to mentors. Professors and denominational leaders need re-
search-based academic resources to train women to serve the
Church and train new leaders. In *Women Leading Well: Stewarding the
Gift of Ministry Leaders*, Emily Dean effectively integrates Scripture,
research, and practical wisdom to guide women to embrace ministry
leadership and maintain harmony in the Christian life.

Writing a textbook to guide women in ministry leadership is a
challenging task. Resources on women in ministry leadership often
focus on the debate of female roles and titles and evoke strong,
opposing views. While these resources are important, they fail to
help female leaders chart a path to serving well. Dean writes to meet
women where they are and encourage them to recognize their gifts
and steward them well. This resource fills a prevalent gap. Some
women fall into leadership roles while serving in the local church.
They transition quickly from service to leadership without formal,
or even informal, training. Others feel a distinct calling from God
to serve and pursue training but struggle to articulate their call to
lead. Too often, women arrive in leadership roles, lacking guidance
on organizing their lives to serve well and thrive.

In part 1, Dean provides a biblical foundation of leadership by
citing examples of female leaders from Old and New Testament
Scripture. She addresses challenges to understanding women's lead-
ership in ministry by explaining the neutrality of leadership princi-
ples and highlighting ways women serve through influencing others.
Dean begins with Mt 28:19-20 as the general call for all believers to
lead. She quickly moves to a specific vocational ministry calling. She
affirms the value of female ministry service and equips women by
providing important markers that should be present in the lifestyle
of Christian leaders.

In part 2, "Steward Influence Well," Dean reminds women to
care for their physical, mental, and spiritual health. She also

encourages leaders to take a posture of humility and integrity. Dean makes the right call to include chapter 9: "Leading Others." Sometimes women become so consumed with navigating their leadership journey that they forget the responsibility to lead others well. She admonishes women to avoid serving in isolation by seeking out a mentor and mentoring others. She masterfully tempers empowered leadership with the call to manage conflict and respect others while serving.

Dean makes effective use of questions throughout the book. She poses questions within the chapters that engage readers with the content. Each chapter closes with questions that serve as an excellent resource on multiple levels. Peers can discuss the questions in "iron sharpening iron" conversations. Mentors and professors can use the questions to engage mentees and students in meaningful dialogue that leads to growth. Women who lack support in ministry can gain affirmation and engage in self-reflection to chart a path to healthy ministry service.

This book is not only for women. As women prepare for vocational ministry service, men need to prepare to serve alongside women and provide female leaders with growth opportunities. Intentional development is imperative for men in predominantly male leadership environments seeking to integrate women into the team. It is also essential for male leaders to continually improve their ability to steward women's gifts in ministry well. In the afterword, "A Word for Male Leaders," Dean dispels destructive myths of women in ministry leadership and invites men to lean in and support women to build the entire body of Christ. Men reading this book will learn from Dean's reflections in ministry. They can also use the book to equip them with prompts to support conversations with female leaders.

Experienced and seminary-trained leaders may already have a handle on several topics covered in this book. For these readers, the citations invite deeper study, and the questions provide opportunities to engage in reflection to develop themselves as leaders. Additionally, seasoned leaders can utilize this text to train emerging leaders.

At first glance, this book may appear to have a limited audience, but readers should challenge themselves to consider the importance of this topic in the life of the corporate and local church. How would training and developing half the church body for leadership and effective ministry benefit the Church? Consider how churches

are strengthened when one female leader develops five additional leaders, and each of them identifies five more leaders. As women find themselves caught between public debate and ministry calling, this book serves as a foundational text that puts men and women on the same page from which the Church can grow.

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Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis. By R.B. Jamieson and Tyler R. Wittman. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022. 289 pages. Paperback, $29.99.

R. B. Jamieson and Tyler R. Wittman's recent work, *Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis,* is a toolbox of timeless principles and rules of exegesis organized and applied in a progressive manner toward the Trinity and the incarnate Christ. The authors' purpose is to demonstrate that better exegesis produces a better vision of God (xvii), which is ultimately the culmination of the Christian life (238). The main ideas driving exegesis in the book are not new, as the heavy reliance on the likes of Augustine, Aquinas, and Gregory of Nazianzus demonstrate, but Jamieson and Wittman bring vibrant color to some of the most thrilling tenants of the faith in their exposé on key aspects of God. Readers will find a logical and easy to follow structure of principles and rules of application, followed by stirring exegetical demonstrations. The application of the principles of each chapter is a striking feature of the book as the authors demonstrate how their exegetical rules tackle some of the more complicated passages of Scripture (John 5:17-30, 14:28; 1 Cor. 15:24, 28).

The introduction and chapters 7-10 by R. B. Jamieson and chapters 1-6 and conclusion by Tyler Wittman deliver a seamless collaboration. Biblical reasoning is described as a dialectic structure of exegetical and dogmatic reasoning. Exegetical reasoning works at the passage level while dogmatic reasoning works at the canonical level (235). The goal of biblical reasoning is to enable us to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord (63; cf. Ps. 27:4). The introduction provides the roadmap and ancillary elements of biblical reasoning and then gives advice on how to read the book. The hope of the book is to encourage biblical scholars to employ more theology in

their exegesis and theologians to employ more exegesis in their theology (xxv).

Chapter 1 deals with divine teaching toward a beatific vision, or the vision of Christ's glory (3-4). Here the authors lean on Aquinas in the assertion that all knowledge imparted by faith revolves around the Trinity and the Humanity of Christ, such that a deep understanding of Christ leads us to a knowledge of the triune God. A vision of God comes through the knowing of Christ (8). Chapter 2, "The School of Christ," asserts that the divine pedagogy of God's teaching economy is found at the feet of Jesus. God is the unique teacher of his people (27). God hides his glory in the inglorious, and his wisdom and power in guise of foolishness and weakness, such that one must learn about God from God. Chapter 3 is a focus on "The Curriculum of Christ," which is Scripture. The groundwork being laid, Jamieson and Wittman then state that theology and exegesis are mutually informing, and this reciprocal but asymmetrical dialectic is what biblical reasoning is all about (42).

The ten rules of the book proceed from the seven principles. In essence the principles are (from the Appendix), 1) readers seeking Christ's glory are the ideal readers of Scripture, 2) all Scripture is part of God's pedagogy, 3) Scripture is the inspired textual form of Christ's teaching, 4) God's creation work (ex-nihilo) means that God is qualitatively distinct from the Creation, 5) the one true living God is eternally triune in nature, single in substance, but distinct in their relationship to one to another, 6) Christ exists as one person with two natures, without division, and 7) within the unity and equality of the Trinity three persons exist in relations of origin. The rules that accompany these principles become the guidelines of faithful reading and sound exegesis of the text.

The ideas of the book are synthesized brilliantly. The most intriguing aspect, though, is how the authors manage to guide the reader to a sense of awe of the divine wisdom of God through the application of their methodology to the texts regarding the Trinity and the incarnate Christ. The glory of God unfolds with the explanation of his divine intricacies. Their plan is successful in an informative and self-validating way as each passage analysis yields simple and satisfying exegetical results. Regardless of one's adoption of the methodologies, the book is a rich source of clear yet profound explanations on the relationship of the Trinity and the oneness of Christ's humanity and deity.

Chapter 5 sets the stage for partitive exegesis in Chapters 7 and 8 by explaining what is common to the divine persons (shared by all) and what is proper (specific to) to each person. The authors claim this is the key to comprehension of trinitarian grammar in Scripture (102). Chapters 7 and 8 explain partitive exegesis (155) and a pattern of speech called the communication of idioms (135). These concepts help untie exegetical knots between actions attributed to the man Jesus in the power of God and vice versa. The authors lay out the design for ascending and descending paradoxical passages and how to read them within the rule of the unity of Christ (136). With these tools and more, the authors achieve their goal of giving the reader of Scripture a proper category for everything Scripture says about Christ (179). I would conclude that this is also a standalone and comprehensive examination of the Trinity and incarnation worthy of a place in any serious student's library.

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Divine Love Theory: How the Trinity Is the Source and Foundation of Morality. By Adam Lloyd Johnson. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2023. 241 pages. Paperback, $22.99.

A large number of contemporary atheist philosophers affirm the existence of objective moral values and duties, a position known as moral realism. Unquestionably, the strongest case for atheistic moral realism is made by Erik Wielenberg in his 2014 book *Robust Ethics*.[1] Wielenberg's case builds and significantly improves upon the work of fellow atheistic moral realists "Colin McGinn, Russ Shafer-Landau, Michael Huemer, William FitzPatrick, David Enoch, and Derek Parfit" (18). Refreshingly, in *Divine Love Theory* Alan Lloyd Johnson formulates and defends a distinctively Christian—as opposed to a generically theistic—model of objective moral values and duties ontologically rooted in the doctrine of the Trinity. The divine multipersonality offered by the Trinity makes loving relationships part of the very fabric of ultimate reality, such that each Trinitarian person, by fully loving the other Trinitarian persons, exemplifies the two greatest commandments to love God

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[1] Erik Wielenberg, *Robust Ethics: The Metaphysics and Epistemology of Godless Normative Realism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

maximally and to love one's neighbor as oneself (42–43, 52–53, 61, 152–55).

Engaging scholar and layperson alike, this book is highly reada-ble and is structured in four parts. Part I comprises the first three chapters. In chapter 1, Johnson clearly identifies the audience to-ward which the book is directed: atheists and theists who are moral realists. Consequently, Johnson can legitimately presuppose the ex-istence of objective moral values and duties (8–9). Chapter 2 deline-ates Wielenberg's ethical model of "godless normative realism" (19), correctly focusing on its three significant traits, i.e., "its brute ethical facts, its making relationship, and its nonnaturalism" (20). In chapter 3, Johnson explains how his divine love theory builds and hopes to significantly improve upon the moral theory of Robert Adams (33), a hope which he proceeds to admirably fulfill. He lays out his first goal for the book: proving that divine love theory is explanatorily superior to godless normative realism (32). The rest of the book brilliantly meets this goal and goes beyond it in proving that a divinely multipersonal model is also explanatorily superior to rival theistic models of moral realism. This is no small feat, and one for which Johnson deserves high commendation.

In Part II, comprising chapters 4–7, Johnson spells out his di-vine love theory, argues for its truth, and successfully defends it from atheistic and theistic objections, refining his model in the pro-cess. Chapter 4—in my judgment the book's most important chap-ter—shows how God's multipersonality grounds objective morality. Objective moral values are grounded in the eternal self-giving love which the Trinity reveals to be essential to the nature of God, such that God's triunity is the Good (42–52). Objective moral duties are grounded in "the necessary truth that God," as the supreme good, "should be loved" coupled with the fact that loving God is equiva-lent to obeying the instructions God has disclosed to humanity (63). Chapter 5 makes the very helpful point that God discloses his in-structions not merely through Scripture but also through con-science, moral intuition, and reason, such that God's instructions are truly universally accessible (78–81). Parts III (chapters 8–10) and IV (chapters 11–15) effectively argue that Wielenberg's model suffers from a "bloated ontology" (126) and falls prey to the objec-tion that, by "lucky coincidence" (165), humans evolved such that their contingent moral beliefs concur with necessary moral truths. By contrast, trinitarian theism, notwithstanding Wielenberg's pro-testations to the contrary, falls prey to neither of these major defects.

This book suffers from one crucial shortcoming. Johnson states as a second goal for the book the defense of premise 2 in the following argument for God as Trinity: "1. There are objective moral truths. 2. A trinitarian God provides the best explanation for objective moral truths. 3. Therefore, a trinitarian God exists" (35). However, Johnson fails to prove premise 2 but instead proves the following premise: "A multipersonal God provides the best explanation for objective moral truths." Apart from Johnson's presupposing the truth of the Bible, I could find no statement or argument about ethics endorsed in this book that could not be equally endorsed if God were two persons or four or more persons. Now Johnson does refer, in his engagement with classical theists, to the claim of Augustine, echoed by Anselm and Aquinas, that the Father is lover, the Son is beloved, and the Holy Spirit is love itself (74, 209). But Johnson does not endorse this claim and, in my judgment, nor could he, because it would turn the Holy Spirit into a relation rather than a person. Hence the conclusion that legitimately follows from the book is that a multipersonal God exists.

This, while highly laudable, is somewhat disappointing from both an academic and a pastoral perspective. Academically, philosophers and theologians seem to be waiting still for a good argument that God is precisely three persons which does not presuppose the truth of Scripture. While Richard Swinburne attempted to give such an argument, Swinburne's argument features the Father eternally producing the Son and the Father and Son eternally producing the Holy Spirit, such that only the Father is ontologically necessary while the Son and the Spirit are merely metaphysically necessary.[2] This proposal seems clearly unacceptable, thus rendering the argument unsound. But if Swinburne's argument is unsound, with what is Johnson going to replace it? Based on the subtitle of the book and premise 2 of his argument, the reader deserves an answer.

Pastorally, there are many lay Christians who, in point of fact, are either binitarians or quaternarians. Frequently lay evangelicals refer to the Holy Spirit as an "it" rather than a "he" and speak of the Spirit as God's power or presence, which just is to affirm binitarianism. On multiple occasions I have heard these sentiments from evangelical pulpits. Frequently lay Catholics, despite protestations from the Teaching Magisterium, elevate Mary in their prayer and devotional lives to the status of deity, which just is to affirm

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[2] Richard Swinburne, *The Christian God* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 170–91.

quaternarianism. So if this book is to maximize its pastoral significance, it cannot overlook binitarianism and quaternarianism, both of which, for many, would be in the pool of live options for the best explanation of objective morality. To my astonishment I found no argument in this book that would be disagreeable to a lay Christian binitarian or quaternarian, much less to convince such a person to change their view to trinitarianism.

Notwithstanding this shortcoming, the book is simply outstanding. It furnishes the premier refutation of atheistic moral realism in its strongest form. Anyone reading this book should conclude that they cannot consistently believe in both atheism and objective moral values and duties. Moreover, it definitively shows that a unitarian God, as affirmed by Jews and Muslims, or a generic though not specifically multipersonal God, as affirmed by deists and a large proportion of Americans, will not suffice to ground objective moral values and duties. Accordingly, this book deserves the widest possible readership.

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Controverting Kierkegaard. By K. E. Løgstrup. Translated by Hans Fink and Kees Van Kotten Niekerk. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023. 156 pages. Hardcover, $80.00.

In *Controverting Kierkegaard*, K. E. Løgstrup (1905–1981) seeks to "settle a score" with Danish theologian and philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (xix). The book starts with a needed historical introduction by Bjørn Rabjerg, where he explicates the "score" Løgstrup sought to settle. Particularly, Løgstrup disagreed with the "contemporary Kierkegaardianism" of his day (xx). Rabjerg informs us that during the early 20th century there was "a wider Danish theological youth uprising against idealism, and piety in general, which came to be known under the name of the journal at its centre, *Tidehverv*" (xxii). By "piety," Rabjerg means the Protestant liberalism which had a tight grip on late 19th and early 20th century theology in mainland Europe. A lasting influence on the Tidehverv movement was none other than Swiss theologian Karl's Barth's seminal *Epistle to the Romans*. In the preface to the second edition of *Epistle*, Barth explicitly cites Kierkegaard as the inspiration of his method of

interpretation.[3] Barth's bombshell brought Kierkegaard into the minds of several theologians, and in Kierkegaard's native Denmark his works resurfaced through Tidehverv. While Løgstrup at first heartily joined the movement, he later distanced himself from what he considered "a radical fideistic and nihilistic Kierkegaardianism" (xxxii). *Controverting Kierkegaard* is Løgstrup's most defined and robust attack on the Tidehverv movement.

Løgstrup organizes his work into four parts. Part I, "Christianity without the Historical Jesus," expresses Løgstrup's disdain that Kierkegaard views "the content of the Christian message [derived] solely from what is paradoxical, namely, that God became human" (1). If the root of all knowledge of Jesus is paradoxical, then the historical Jesus does not matter: "The occasion for faith can consist, accordingly, only in Jesus's saying of himself that he is the Son of God" (4). Such "saying" has no real connection to history, to anything objective. In Part II, "The Sacrifice," Løgstrup calls Kierkegaard to task for his focus on suffering, sacrifice, and martyrdom, chiding Kierkegaard for propagating suffering as something that "[can]not [be] understood" rationally (30). Furthermore, Kierkegaard endorses a radical vision of Christian living: "Everything that takes place in this life is indifferent, except suffering and death, because they are the entrance to the kingdom of God" (36). Part III, "The Movement of Infinity," addresses infinite resignation and faith. For Kierkegaard, we must give up everything we love—everything we know—to have faith. Løgstrup explains, "Faith is to be able to lose one's reason, and with it the entire finite world—and win back the same finite world by virtue of the absurd." (49). Kierkegaard, argues Løgstrup, divorces human existence from the real world, only envisioning humanity in relation to an abstract god outside of our temporal existence. Conversely, Løgstrup argues for "the sovereign expressions of life," the idea that humans realize who they are by examining their surroundings and relationships with one another (71). The final chapter, "Nothingness," centers on Kierkegaard's view of the self. Løgstrup claims Kierkegaard bases his understanding of "self" on the dynamics of the "imagination"— common in transcendental philosophy—which via personal reflection creates the self. If the self is not something static, argues Løgstrup, then all we have is a unity of "nihilism and high morality"....

[3] Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns, 6th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 10.

but philosophically the combination of nothingness and ethics is nevertheless an illusion" (128).

There are numerous positives to Løgstrup's *Controverting Kierkegaard*. First, we must commend Oxford University Press for commissioning a translation of K. E. Løgstrup's works into English. Løgstrup's thought has been isolated from non-Danish speakers, and the translation makes the popular Danish philosopher/theologian accessible to a wider audience. Second, the work is important for Kierkegaard studies, particularly in how Kierkegaard was revived, interpreted, and critiqued in his native Denmark in the early 20th century. Lastly, Løgstrup's focus on grounding theology in the here-and-now rather than some abstract "nothingness", "absurdity", or "hiddenness" is admirable.

Unfortunately, the negatives far outweigh the positives. Løgstrup claims he settles accounts with Kierkegaard, but in reality he settles accounts with the Kierkegaardians of Tidehverv—highly influenced by Barth's dialectical theology and popular existential philosophy. Rabjerg, in the historical introduction, warns of such: "It was mainly [*Tidehverv's*] reading [Løgstrup] attacked" (xxxii). Løgstrup never differentiates Kierkegaard from his later followers. In fact, he conflates much of the popular existential philosophy of the early 20th century with the thought of Søren Kierkegaard.[4] The work should be titled *Controverting Tidehverv*. Equating the views purported in *Controverting Kierkegaard* with Kierkegaard himself is like critiquing John Calvin based on the acronym TULIP.

Let us investigate a few errors of interpretation in *Controverting Kierkegaard*. First, Løgstrup never makes an attempt to understand Kierkegaard's method. Kierkegaard wrote many works under various pseudonyms, and like any character in a story, we cannot immediately assume the voice of a character is the voice of the author himself. The "author" of *Fear and Trembling*—an examination of Abraham offering his son Issac to God—is Johannes de Silentio, who openly declares he does not have faith: "Therefore, although Abraham arouses my admiration, he also appalls me."[5] Kierkegaard

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[4] For example, he connects Kierkegaard to Sartre (61-78), Heidegger (130), and transcendental philosophy (117–119).

[5] Søren Kierkegaard, *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*, vols. 1–28, vols. K1–K28, ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Joakim Garff, Jette Knudsen, Johnny Kondrup, Alastair McKinnon, and Finn Hauberg Mortensen (Copenhagen: Gads Forlag 1997–2013) (hereafter, *SKS*); *Fear and Trembling*, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna

implements what he calls "indirect communication" with an explicitly Christian purpose: "I am and was a religious author, that my whole authorship pertains to Christianity, to the issue: becoming a Christian."[6] In order to awaken his fellow countrymen from their stupor Kierkegaard wrote from different perspectives to illuminate what he saw as the cultural rot of his day. To equate Kierkegaard with one of his pseudonyms belies the true Kierkegaard, and Løgstrup consistently makes this error throughout the work.[7]

We return to Johannes de Silentio to illustrate a second oversight of Løgstrup. De Silentio claims to be an outsider to Christianity, and for someone who is not a Christian, Abraham *appears* absurd. Why would anyone go beyond the ethical—that is, the established set of rights and wrongs stemming from one's culture—to directly listen to God? This is the exact issue Løgstrup has with Kierkegaard: "Kierkegaard is responsible for a claim which is often advocated in theology nowadays, namely that the radical ethical demand is without content" (81). Løgstrup fails to recognize the referent of the term "ethical" as de Silentio uses it. De Silentio does *not* mean "that which is morally right" when he uses "ethical," but rather he refers to the Hegelian concept of *Sittlichkeit*, that absolute *Geist* (Spirit) manifests its will *in the development of human culture*. According to Hegel we discover what *Geist* wants of us by examining the world around us.[8] If "Spirit [*Geist*] in its formation matures slowly and quietly into its new shape," then we come to know *Geist* through our logical analysis of its actions in history.[9] To someone who buys into

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H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) (hereafter, *FT*), *SKS* 4, 153 / *FT*, 60.

[6] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Point of View*, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) (hereafter *PV*); *SKS* 16, 28 / *PV*, 23.

[7] For Løgstrup's mischaracterization, see 2, 27, 52, and 56 as a few examples. For those interested in how to read Kierkegaard, I have discussed several methods elsewhere. I believe that we *can* read Kierkegaard in a uniform way, but we have to take into account the "stage" of the pseudonym in question. For more, see Michael Nathan Steinmetz, *The Severed Self: The Doctrine of Sin in the Works of Søren Kierkegaard*, Kierkegaard Studies Monograph Series 38 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2021), 13–18, 181.

[8] G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. S. W. Dyde (New York: Prometheus, 1996), 162.

[9] G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 6.

Hegel, it is absurd to think that we go beyond this world to relate to God in a personal way.

Abraham's actions perplex de Silentio because they leave him with two options: Either de Silentio is right in his understanding of God (Hegel's *Geist*), and Abraham is a murderer; or Abraham is indeed the knight of faith, and de Silentio is utterly mistaken in his understanding of God. De Silentio is too reticent to make a decision—he waffles back and forth but never commits. Løgstrup neglects Kierkegaard's historical context of Hegelian thought encroaching on the Danish Lutheran Church in Kierkegaard's epoch, and he thus misinterprets the significance of the "absurd", "resignation", and "faith" in *Fear and Trembling*. In fact, Kierkegaard states that "Hegelian philosophy has no ethics" because it is always in a state of flux, waiting for the next development of culture, which is *Geist* manifesting itself in the world.[10] Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel applies to Løgstrup's "sovereign expressions of life." If we determine who we are based on these expressions, then how do we know that these expressions—as we encounter them—are correct interpretations oh how we ought to live? Kierkegaard grounds ethics neither in an abstract, absurd god nor the cultural values of his day; he grounds them in the loving, caring, and holy God of orthodox Christianity.[11]

Although Kierkegaard uses terms like "absurd," "paradox," "subjectivity," and "leap to faith," he neither denies the reality of the world nor states that Christian faith is irrational. Faith may *appear* irrational to someone who buys into Hegelian dialectical mediation. God *is* other, absolutely different from us—as Barth points out—but God's otherness is known in the historical man Jesus. Kierkegaard never denies the historicity of Christ, but he points out a key issue: mere mental assent to a fact of history is *not* biblical faith. The Pharisees "believed" in Jesus in the sense that he existed and was crucified, but they did not believe in him as the Messiah. Kierkegaard calls the former type of knowing "objective" knowledge. The latter he calls "subjective" knowledge, the knowledge of inward appropriation, of *belief* that Jesus was who he

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[10] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Book on Adler*, Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) (hereafter, *BA*), *SKS* 15, 128 / *BA*, 129.

[11] For more on Kierkegaard's orthodoxy, see Mark A. Tietjen, *Kierkegaard: A Christian Missionary to Christians* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016), 25–54.

said he was. As Johannes Climacus says in *Concluding Unscientific Post-script*, "I observe nature in order to find God, and I do indeed see omnipotence and wisdom, but I also see much that troubles and disturbs. The *summa summarum* [sum total] is an objective uncertainty, but the inwardness is so very great, precisely because it grasps this objective uncertainty with all the passion of the infinite."[12] We have to *do something* with the facts, that is, we must repent and believe on Jesus. Kierkegaard never says that we create ourselves through our own imagination.[13] He never says that Christianity is nonsense.[14] Yet, Kierkegaard is easy to misread in such ways if we do not take into account his mode of authorship and his historical setting—two things both Løgstrup and Tidehverv failed to do.

I could say more about the consistent misreading of Kierkegaard by Løgstrup, but these examples suffice. I recommend this work for those interested in the history of interpretation of Kierkegaard; for those who want to know more about the existentialism popular in the early 20th century and its effect on theology; or for those examining the thought of K. E. Løgstrup. *I do not recommend this work for the person who wants to have an accurate portrayal of Kierkegaard's thought*. Løgstrup, in his conflation of Tidehverv with the thought of Kierkegaard, takes the leap to misunderstanding.

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[12] Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript,* vol. 1, trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) (hereafter *CUP1*), *SKS* 7, 186–187 / *CUP1*, 203–204.

[13] Kierkegaard *always* ties the true self to being grounded in God. As an example, see Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980) (hereafter, *SUD*) *SKS* 11, 130 / *SUD*, 14.

[14] Kierkegaard uses the word "paradox", not "nonsense" or "absurd." He stresses the otherness of God because of the Hegelianism of his time which "pantheistically abolished" God (*SKS* 11, 230 / *SUD*, 117). The paradox is that the eternal becomes the temporal in Jesus Christ. Johannes de Silentio does use "absurd" often, but he is someone who does not have faith. Johannes Climacus, who is on the verge of faith, even says that it is proper to investigate a paradox, but humans are unable to know God without his aid. See SKS 7, 202 / *CUP1*, 221 and Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985) (hereafter, PF), *SKS* 4, 224 / *PF*, 15.

A Classical Response to Relational Theism: A Reformed Evangelical Critique of Thomas Jay Oord's Evangelical Process Theology. Brian J. Orr. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2022, 228 pp. Paperback, $32.00.

Brian J. Orr is the founder and managing editor of the *Journal of Classical Theology* and serves as an elder of Sovereign Way Christian Church in Hesperia, California. Under the supervision of Professors Tony Lane and Paul Helm, Orr earned a PhD in theology from the London School of Theology. Orr's research and writing has primarily focused upon a faithful presentation of the classical orthodox doctrine of God and this book is the only of its kind to offer a response to Thomas J. Oord's relational theism.

A Classical Response to Relational Theism is exactly what the title suggests that it is. This book makes a much-needed contribution to the ongoing debate between the classical theists that view God as the One who *is*, versus contemporary open and process theologians who view God as the One who is *becoming*. Orr's stated aim of this book is "to evaluate a system of doctrine that epitomizes a framework of a proposed model of Christian theism that substitutes classical metaphysics with another while attempting to retain foundational doctrines that the now cast out philosophy aided to develop" (24). Stated another way, Oord argues that process philosophy can better account for the orthodox doctrines of Christian theism than the classical metaphysic they were constructed with (25). On the contrary, Orr handily shows that Oord's model "is unsuccessful because process philosophy governs his theological decision making, functioning as the 'handler' of instead of a 'handmaiden to his theology" (25).

Orr begins his introductory chapter by briefly summarizing *open theology* and *process theology*. Orr suggests that both theological models are a result of a growing dissatisfaction with a perceived lack of "human-divine relationality in traditional theology," as well as a rejection of the doctrines of impassibility and divine foreknowledge as traditionally formulated within the classical theists tradition (3). Orr argues that this "relational turn" in contemporary Evangelical theology is resultant of the philosophical shift away from the "substance metaphysics" of the Patristics and the Scholastics, towards a "relational metaphysic" (6).

In chapter 2, Orr discusses Thomas J. Oord's theology and his dependence upon the process philosophy of Charles Hartshorne and Alfred North Whitehead (32). While recognizing that process

philosophy is not without problems, Oord has suggested that it is "more consonant with the broad biblical witness" than classical theism (34). Chapter 3 surveys Oord's "biblical theology of love." Oord defines love as acting "intentionally in sympathetic/empathetic response to God and others, to promote overall well-being" (82). Oord is vehemently opposed to the idea that God would coerce his free creatures to act and instead argues that God persuades his creatures to act by love. Against Oord's claims, Orr argues that Oord's definition of love is arbitrary and lacks a "contextual biblical basis" that considers the many facets of love in the Bible (128). In chapter 4, Orr analyzes and critiques Oord's use of Scripture and process metaphysics in the development of his theology to show that "many of his interpretative conclusions are inconsistent with Scripture and the historical Christian tradition" (110).

In chapter 5, Orr evaluates the merits of Oord's "essential kenosis model" on exegetical, philosophical, and theological grounds and shows that this model lies at the heart of Oord's evangelical process theology. Orr suggests that because Oord's God is essentially kenotic or self-giving, then God is not free not to love (135). Oord's essential kenosis model makes God the whipping boy of his creation in that God must necessarily extend love and grace to his creatures while the creatures are free to respond in whatever manner they desire. As mentioned previously, Oord is ardently opposed to determinism and demands that any infringement upon man's free will by God would be unloving. Recognizing this, Orr argues that because Oord's view of God's nature necessitates that he loves his creation and because Oord's God is not free to do otherwise, "determinism, then, is part of Oord's theology" (139).

One of the greatest contributions that this book makes to the debate between classical and relational theism is that it shows the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of formulating a classical orthodox doctrine of God apart from similar metaphysical presuppositions as those held by the Church fathers. Oord claims that process thought is the best philosophical resource because it is "more consonant with the broad biblical witness" than classical theism, and he suggests that his "arguments, hypotheses, and theories rest primarily . . . on the witness of Scripture," while allegedly limiting philosophy to be a helper to theology (34). Orr repeatedly shows throughout this study that "Oord's process metaphysic has primacy in his Evangelical process theology, which results in an un-evangelical model" (124). Furthermore, Orr argues that "Oord's attempt at

developing a model that fits into an Evangelical mold cannot hold its form because a process philosophy guides its shaping" (128).

For example, classical theists understand God to be the eternal, uncreated creator of all things and one that possesses life in himself. Because Oord explicitly uses process thought, which establishes relationality on the metaphysical level, he concludes that because God is love, he must express his love to all things, thus making God's relation with creation not only logically necessary but ontologically essential (32). If God's relation to creation is essential to his nature, then creation necessarily exists, which is obviously contrary to the classical notion the creature distinction and divine aseity.

In conclusion, Orr shows that he has a masterful grasp of both classical and process theologies, and goes to great lengths to understand and present the views of Thomas Oord in the best possible light. Orr's footnotes repeatedly show where he contacted Oord personally to clarify possible misunderstandings he may have had with Oord's work, which is refreshing and commendable. Orr reminds the reader that "the intention of my study was not to evaluate or involve work in an intramural discussion of these issues within classical theology nor use classical theology as a filter to screen or test Oord's theology" (183). Instead, Orr understands his task as being to show the inevitable inconstancies that arise when one attempts to maintain foundational doctrines of the Christian faith while substituting the philosophical and metaphysical assumptions that aided in these doctrines' development. Orr does this successfully and has presented his research in such a way that will benefit any Christian seeking to understand where the problem really lies between classical theism and contemporary process theology.

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The Trinity and the Bible: On Theological Interpretation. By Scott R. Swain. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021. 131 pages. Hardcover, $19.99.

As the title, *The Trinity and the Bible,* suggests, Scott Swain, in this book, exegetes passages and provides theological interpretation of passages that exhibits trinitarian doctrine, which he calls "Trinitarian biblical exegesis" (2). Swain finds hope in the renewal of a trinitarian discussion which engages with biblical studies. He credits a

list of theologians. Michael Allen, Matthew Bates, and Bobby Jamieson, to name a few, have consciously drawn the connection between New Testament Christology and Old Testament monotheism to aptly defend against the charges that the discipline of theology is marred with later Hellenistic philosophies (2-3). Following this suit, Swain compiled a collection of essays that he previously presented and published in different academic settings. The common denominators of these essays are ontological dimensions of biblical monotheism, "relation" as a category to identify the persons of the Trinity, and Swain's critiques on the divide between historical biblical criticism and the history of biblical interpretation and on distinguishing immanent and economic Trinity are the common elements of these essays (3).

In the first essay, "*The Bible and the Trinity in Recent Thought*," Swain looks for evidence of the Trinity in the Bible and how recent scholars dealt with the question. One can find a merge of recent theologians' and Bible scholars' attempts to argue the presence of the Trinity in the Bible. Two examples are that the grammar of the language of the Bible is trinitarian (Hays) and that the Trinity is in an undeveloped form (Witherington and Fee). At the outset, Swain flips the statement "the Trinity is in the Bible" to "the Bible is in the Trinity," to emphasize the ontology of the Bible that exhibits trinitarian aspects in different ways (9). In agreement with Richard Hays's view, Swain defends the presence of the Trinity in the Bible. For him, Trinity is not implicit in the Bible but clearly visible in God's self-naming in Scripture (16). Further, Swain argues that this naming has monotheistic, relational, and metaphysical patterns, which can be realized in 1 Cor 8:6. Swain demonstrated the monotheistic naming of God from the phrase "for there is one God . . . and one Lord." Despite the absence of the Holy Spirit in the verse, he demonstrated the relation between the Father and Son. Swain argues that the metaphysical pattern of naming in 1 Cor 8:6 supports divine transcendence.

The next chapter assesses B. B. Warfield's revision to the traditional view on the Trinity (34).[15] In this revision, Warfield amended his previous omission of the distinct personal properties of each person of the Trinity. To defend the three persons' divine equality,

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[15]The traditional doctrine of the Trinity states that the Father, Son, and Spirit possess distinct personal properties of paternity, filiation, and spiration, respectively.

Warfield rejected the notion that ordered relations between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit characterize their internal relation for two reasons. Warfield cited the multiplicity of diverse [divine] names in the Scriptures and the absence of order in these names (38). Swain retorts that such a defense is unwarranted since it only downplays the internal perfection of God. Rather he appeals to Herman Bavinck's view of "intra-Trinitarian fecundity," that God is generative in his nature, to recover to the significance of diving naming of the three persons based on their personal properties.

In chapter 4, Swain demonstrated a "distinguished" and "exalted title" of the Son in Mark 12:35-37 to argue for Markan trinitarian Christology. However, the preceding section, "On Theological Commentary," does a disservice to the exegetically mindful theology that Swain endorsed in the first chapter. Swain cites isolated sources without following a methodology to provide a rationale for theological commentary. Further, if the Gospels present Christology "indirectly" and not directly, how is that the Bible contains "well-formed Trinitarian discourse?" (cf. 15–16 and 63).

In chapters five and six, Swain analyzed the grammar of divine naming to argue that the Bible fully develops trinitarian doctrine. In chapter five, Swain argues for a trinitarian theology in Gal 4:4–7 and explains what it implies by paying attention to the grammar of "divine agency" in the passage. He demonstrated the difference between God's "immediate" and "intermediary" actions and "the twofold mission" of the Son and his Spirit in Gal 4:4–7. Creation, consummation, and saving act pertains to God's immediate actions and are not delegated to external agents. The twofold mission indicates a "distinction within God's own immediate, natural agency," namely, the three persons that are irreducible in relation to each other (93–94). Swain's exegesis of the passage and engagement with Second Temple literature on the divine agency to derive trinitarian implications from the passage in this essay is commendable.

In chapter 6, Swain discussed John's use of divine names in Revelation 4–5. He argued that the three persons of the Trinity are named in various ways to demonstrate the worth and activities of the transcendent being (104-05). Swain clearly located Father and Son's names and activities in the passage. However, one of the challenges Swain encountered was identifying the (names of the) Holy Spirit in the passage. Specifically, his treatment of "God's seven spirits" (5:6) as the Spirit is exegetically inaccurate. The "sevenfold spirits" alluded from Zechariah 4 suggest that they are intermediate

agents, not God himself, who are sent to all the earth. Swain seems to force the presence of all three persons of the Trinity by discounting the obvious ambiguity (or absence) in the passage. Acknowledging ambiguity (to an extent) is acknowledging God's transcendentness, not a negation of the Trinity; if not, why a need for Ecclesiastical Trinitarianism? Swain concludes the book by providing seven axioms on the trinitarian reading of the Bible. These axioms reflect Swains' defense of the Trinity against the notion that it is a "late development in the evolution of doctrine" (121).

Swain provided noteworthy analyses of the passages that demonstrated the presence of Trinitarian doctrine. Swain's contributions in the book are his emphasis on the grammar of divine names, his appreciation of the functions of each person of the Trinity, and the distinction between "intermediary" and "divine" agencies. By focusing on the divine names of the persons of the Trinity in the Scripture, Swain defends the orthodox view of the Trinity. However, Swain's reference to "classical Reformed theology" in discussing the Trinity is unnecessary (99). One finds no specific or exclusive view of the Reformed position on the doctrine of the Trinity. Further, the view that "the Trinity precedes the Bible" needs clarification and exegetical support.

One can read the essays independently since there is no explicit connection between them, although all the essays are about "the Trinity and the Bible." Readers will likely be confused when Swain says the 'first chapter' instead of the 'first essay' because the first essay is the book's second chapter (3). This book does not have a bibliography. Overall, *The Trinity and the Bible* will inform, challenge, and evoke an appreciation of the presence of the Trinitarian doctrine in the Bible to the readers.

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A Christian Theology of Science: Reimagining A Theological Vision of Natural Knowledge. By Paul Tyson. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022. 224 pages. Paperback, $24.99.

Author Paul Tyson is a Senior Research Fellow at Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, in The University of Queensland, Australia. His book, *A Christian Theology of Science*, tries to recover and reimage a theology of science.

In chapter 1, Tyson gives a definition of Christian theology with a commitment to the Nicene Creed about Jesus Christ which includes the miraculous claims. He also defines modern science as knowledge of the natural world which is based on empiricism, rationalism, and physical reductionism. Chapter 2 discusses Christian theology through the lens of science. After examining Christian theology through the validity criteria of empirical, rational, and physically reductionism, Tyson concludes that the methods of the modern science should not be Western culture's first truth discourse.

Chapter 3 explains how theology can be used as a first truth discourse. Christian theology must presuppose theocentric ontological foundationalism, placing God as the locus of the intelligible cosmos and the ground of valid human knowledge. Tyson discusses science through the lens of Christian theology in chapter 4. He describes the history of the progress of modern science and concludes that science with its modern metaphysic methodology is incompatible with the revealed truth and results in serious defects and societal problems.

Before giving prescription about how to discover Christian theological epistemology of science in chapter 7, Tyson delves deeply into the Western culture history to explain the remarkable reversal happened in the eighteenth century. Chapter 5 begins with the founding of the Royal Society in London when the majority of early scientists were Christians. Tyson explains the influences of modern scientific historiography and social science on the relationship between science and religion. He describes theology's three current approaches to deal with the reversal of the central role of theology in the human knowledge: functional demarcation, autonomous overlap, and integration, and concludes they are unsatisfactory because they have surrendered to the reversal, using reductionist-materialist science as their first truth. Chapter 6 describes history after 1870, when naturalistic scientific methodology became the truth

criterion for all human knowledge, when human beings began thinking "after" science, but not "after" Christian theology.

Tyson, in chapter 7, proposes a Christian theological epistemology which can include the scientific knowledge and remain to be theocentric. He follows Plato, Augustine, and Aquinas to distinguish and integrate natural light and divine light. He puts God at the top as the source of all illumination. Underneath are four categories of human knowledge: two under divine light (Understanding II and Knowledge II) and two under natural light (Understanding I and Knowledge I). Understanding II is wisdom and has true meaning. Knowledge II is mathematics and logic and is rational and reliable. Understanding I is belief and includes theory, myth, and poetry. Knowledge I is based on perception and is empirical and reliable. Tyson emphasizes that we need to accept all four categories as true knowledge. A true Christian theology of science should be built on this epistemology.

Tyson provides his understanding of the fall of Adam in chapter 8. He uses the term "myth" to talk about the fall. He defines myth as "a narrative conveying essential and eternal meaning, often in richly analogical and archetypal categories." Myths "are integrated into historical time, as God is seen as breaking into time and events in revelations and actions that are later transmitted in Scripture by inspired writers" (188). Regarding the evidence for the fall, he claims to be agnostic, "a faith-based skeptic as regards contemporary historical and scientific knowledge concerning the fall" (150). But "a real fall is inescapable to creedal orthodoxy. So while I do not know about the natural history of Adam and Eve … I believe in the Edenic fall" (151).

In chapter 9, "Recovering an Integrative Zone," Tyson first acknowledges that on the Knowledge I and II levels, science is and should be entirely autonomous from Christian theology. However, for true knowledge, theology's contribution in Understanding I and II should be appreciated. In the current scene, science as the first cause discourse approach has produced many societal problems. We need the contribution from Christian theology and the integration of theology and science. In the Epilogue, Tyson recaps the whole book and emphasizes a renew interest in the Christian theology of science is needed. Christian theology should be confident of its own truth to refute the claim of science as the first truth discourse.

Overall, this book describes the modern intellectual history of the Western world very well and explains the stages that Christian theology was replaced by science as the base of the first truth discourse. Tyson makes a reasonable proposal about how to correct the course. However, what can be accomplished by his proposal remains to be seen. For sincere individual Christians doing scientific research, they have integrated their belief into their research. How large an impact Tyson's proposal can achieve is depended on the workout of solutions based on his approach, which will be the Christian contributions to the contemporary ethical problems. This book has a very useful Glossary of special terms, a Bibliography, and an Index. It can be used as a supplementary material in a course on science and Christianity, or Christianity and culture history, and should be consulted by students and researchers in these areas.

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Interpreting Paul: Essays on the Apostle and His Letters. By N. T. Wright. Collected Essays of N. T. Wright. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020. 224 pages. Hardcover, $44.99.

N. T. Wright is one of the most prolific and influential New Testament scholars of his generation, a leading voice in the movement known as the New Perspective on Paul (NPP). Wright serves as Senior Research Fellow at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, and Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. *Interpreting Paul* consists of twelve essays that Wright wrote on an array of subjects in Pauline theology from the years 2014 to 2018 to display the fruit of his insights and even "changes" in his thinking on certain subjects (ix).

In essay 1 (i.e., chapter 1), Wright contends that New Testament scholar Ernst Käsemann, in his later writings, understood *dikaiosynē theou* to mean the "covenant faithfulness" of God to his people Israel, even while overlooking the organic connection between God's covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15) and its worldwide implications (8, 16). Essay 2 features Wright's argument that justification forms a central theme in the book of Romans starting with its emergence in 2:13 all the way to its culmination in 8:33, such that Romans 1–4 cannot be siphoned off from Romans 5–8. In his third essay, Wright maintains that even while Jesus founded Christianity,

the apostle Paul formulated "Christian theology" as the prayerful and scriptural thought-implementation of Jesus's work (36, 46). Wright contends in essay 4 that Paul uses elements of both Hellenism and Judaism to present a "Messianic reshaping" of the themes of new creation, resurrection, and God's return. Essay 5 argues that Paul's missionary strategy was to proclaim the Messianic kingship of Jesus in influential centers of the Roman Empire, even to Spain, "the end of *Caesar's* 'earth'" (67–68). Rounding out the first half of the collection, Wright's sixth essay views Jesus's ascension and Spirit-outpouring (Acts 1–2; Rom 8:9–11) as the historical fulfillment of the biblical themes of new exodus and new Temple (86–87).

In the second half of the book, essay 7 expresses Wright's desire to root systematic theology in the details of the biblical text and its first-century Jewish context, providing "twenty-first-century answers to first-century questions" (98). Essay 8 makes a case for the church being Paul's "Messianically missional" community in its characteristics of unity and holiness. Wright's ninth essay asserts that the proper background of Romans 3:24–26 is the Day of Atonement, and thus, the cross is where God pushes aside sin but does not punish it in Jesus (138). In essay 10, Wright highlights the poetry of Paul (Philippians 2; Colossians 1), making the case that both theology *and* art, formulation *and* form, were important to the apostle. Essay 11 contends that brotherhood in Pauline theology is most evident in table fellowship (168–69). In his final essay, Wright argues that the Pauline doctrine of justification provides ample opportunity for those in historically disparate traditions such as Protestantism and Eastern Orthodoxy to join one another in mission.

Wright is an engaging writer, and there are a number of points propounded in the pages of this book to which the present reviewer assents. The author's affirmation of an inseparable connection between Jesus and Paul is commendable (36) along with his desire for theology to be rooted in detailed exegesis of the biblical text (89). Wright correctly draws out a consistent theme found in the ethical portions of Paul's letters, namely, the reality that the church of Jesus Christ is called to be "one" and "holy," a model of unity-in-diversity and purity-amid-paganism (81, 111–12, 178–79). Nevertheless, Wright's collection of essays should cause concern for the careful reader in at least three areas: the sufficiency of Scripture, the nature of justification, and the nature of Christ's sacrifice on the cross

(penal substitutionary atonement). Each area will be explored, briefly, in turn.

First, Wright's desire to go beyond the stated *words* of Paul to find his unstated *motivations* in a Second Temple-derived "worldview" undermines the sufficiency of Scripture. Attempts to find Paul's "underlying motivation" (56, 69–70) and "the unseen lens" through which Paul saw the first-century world (95) are precarious for the interpreter of the New Testament since the text is all that is overtly accessible. In accordance with Paul's own guiding principle for the Corinthians, the responsible interpreter of Paul should not go beyond what is written (1 Cor 4:6). Striving to go beyond the page to discover the apostle's inner impulse is an exercise in psychology, not biblical interpretation. How exactly does Wright know that the ideas of Sirach 24 and Wisdom of Solomon 7–9 are what influenced Paul in Colossians 1 (156) but that 4 Maccabees 17:22 is *not* what informed Paul's thought in Romans 3:24–26 (140)? Wright becomes the arbiter not simply of what Saint Paul really said, but of what Saint Paul really *thought*, and such a method forces Wright into the unenviable position of becoming a mind-reader.

Second, Wright's characterization of the nature of justification as God's declaration—not that one has "become a Christian" but that one *already is* a Christian (168, see also 184–85)—cannot be squared with Paul's own words. In his longest extended discourse on justification, Romans 3:21–5:21, Paul states that God justifies the "ungodly" (Rom 4:5). Justification is God's pronouncement that the sinner, not the Christian, now has "peace with God" (Rom 5:1). Wright is so concerned to focus on the horizontal, man-to-man effects of justification that he misses Paul's central emphasis— the vertical relationship of man to God. Although Wright sees the major import of justification in its recipients enjoying a seat at the table with one another (178), the apostle's chief concern is that those recipients now have a seat at the table of God himself.

Third, Wright's characterization of Christ's death in Romans 3:24–26 as pushing aside sin, but not bearing God's punishment, minimizes the wrath-bearing dimension of Christ's atoning work (128, 138). Wright gives lip service to some form of "penal substitution" (26, 127, 141), but he redefines the phrase from its historic meaning in Protestant orthodoxy. Although acknowledging Isaiah 53 as a necessary background text for a proper interpretation of Christ's atonement (137), Wright ignores verse 4 entirely: "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed

him stricken, smitten *by God*, and afflicted" (ESV). It is God the Father who is the subject and Christ the Son who is the object of the penal and punitive actions in Isaiah 53:4—even while both Father and Son act in perfect accord with the one divine plan of salvation. Wright's admittedly new slant (124n3) is not a move for the better—in his reappraisal of Paul, he begins to destabilize the very core of Christ's accomplishment.

   N. T. Wright's pen is skillful, his mind is brilliant, and his literary output is astounding, but whether he has truly captured the theology of Paul is up for serious debate. Perhaps it is not Second Temple writings that comprise Paul's primary influence and chief background, but rather, *First Temple* writings, the Old Testament Scriptures—as interpreted through the lens of the crucified and risen Messiah.

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