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THE CHRISTIAN AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

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The passage to be considered here is Romans 15:4,8-9, set in the context of 15:1-12, "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope...For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promise made to the patriarchs, so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing praises to your name."

In chapters 14 and 15 of Romans Paul is dealing with the relationship of strong and weak Christians and chapter 15 begins with the exhortation to the strong - "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves." To add force to his point, he argues that this is what Christ did and in verse 3 he quotes the Old Testament (Psalm 69:9) to prove his point and show us more of Christ. This leads Paul to digress briefly in verse 4 about the nature and purpose of the Old Testament. In like manner he digresses in verses 8-12. There are 7 things that we may briefly focus on as we link verses 4,8-9.

1. The authority of the Old Testament

When Paul wants to settle a point, like Christ he quotes the Old Testament and says "It is written..." In giving us this wonderful and succinct summary of the nature and purpose of the Old Testament in verses 4,8-9, Paul speaks of that which "was written in the past" or "is written". It was not inspired by men. Paul says it was "God - breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). Likewise Peter states, "no prophecy of Scripture ... had its origin in the will of man, but holy men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:20-21). In this lies the unique authority of the Old Testament. Unlike any other book written by human beings it is from God and carries the authority and trustworthiness of being God's Word.

2. The purpose of the Old Testament

Paul declares to these Roman Christians that, “(what) was written in the past was written to teach us...” (15:4). When God caused the human writers of the Old Testament to write as they did, their words spoke not just to Old Testament believers but the Divine author had in mind the edification, encouragement and challenging of all his people down through the ages (cf. here 2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Greek word that Paul uses here for “teach” does not mean mere intellectual or head knowledge. Rather it means knowledge that is practical, that is applied to effect a change. In short the teaching of the Scriptures has been given to change our lives. As J.A.Bengel said, “Apply yourself wholly to the text, and apply the text wholly to yourself.”¹

3. The inclusiveness of the Old Testament

Note how Paul declares in 15:4 that, “everything that was written in the past was written to teach us.” Thus we cannot say that some parts are too difficult or too obscure. John Calvin was quite adamant on this point in his commentary. “Paul is speaking of the Old Testament ... This notable passage shows us that the oracles of God contain nothing vain or unprofitable ... It would be an insult to the Holy Spirit to imagine that he had taught us anything which is of no advantage to know.”² Of course, we need to know how to take what we read. In Romans 14, for example, Paul has been pointing out that the believer is no longer bound by the ceremonial law. It has been fulfilled and abrogated in Christ and the believer is free to eat all meat and not be bound to observing special days. That does not mean, however, that a study of Leviticus will not benefit the believer today.

4. The focus of the Old Testament

Quite simply the focus of the Old Testament is Christ. In verse 3 Paul quotes Psalm 69:9 to focus our minds on Christ as our example in not pleasing ourselves. Here Paul is doing what Christ himself did in Luke 24:25-27, when he began with Moses (Genesis to Deuteronomy) and all the prophets (“Minor” and “Major”) to explain to the disciples “what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.” We take as an example Psalm 69 which Paul quotes. Thus in Psalm 69:4 we see Christ being slandered by his enemies, in verse 11 Christ being sneered at, in verse 12 Christ being mocked and made the theme of obscene drunken songs. This helps to give added poignancy to Paul’s appeal to the strong believers in Rome not to stand on their rights at the expense of the weaker. Truly the Old Testament Scriptures “testify about [Christ]” (John 5:39).

5. The message of the Old Testament

In Romans 15:8-9 Paul expands on the work of Christ - "Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs, so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written..."

We take the word "confirm" here to mean "show to be reliable, faithful and true, and to realize". But what promises are being referred to here? Paul states that the result of the confirming of these promises will be the Gentiles glorifying God for his mercy. The evidence of the Old Testament quotations Paul then gives shows he had in mind the reiterated promise that through Abraham "all the families of the earth will be blessed." (see Genesis 12:3). The Old Testament, for Paul, envisioned Jew and Gentile glorifying God together for his mercy.

Paul then quotes from the three Jewish divisions of the Old Testament to underline that this is what all of the Old Testament (the "Tanak") envisioned. From the "Torah" (Law) he quotes Deuteronomy 32:43. From the "Nebi'im" (Prophets) he quotes Isaiah 11:10. From the "Kethubim" (Writings) he quotes Psalm 18:49 and 117:1. There is a wonderful progression in the chronological order in which the quotes are given. In Psalm 18:49 David praises God among the Gentiles. In Deuteronomy 32:43 Gentiles are summoned to praise God along with the Jews. In Psalm 117:1 the Gentiles praise God on their own. In Isaiah 11:10 we see why this is so. The Messiah has come and as he stands as a banner for the nations, they rally to him and put their hope in him. Paul's point is that now we see the greatest division in human history, Jew versus Gentile, healed in Christ. The Old Testament message has found fulfilment.

6. The effect of the Old Testament

Chapter 15:4 continues, "...so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures..." John Stott puts the expression like this - "the Scriptures bring us encouragement with a view to endurance."

Two points can be made here. Firstly we need patient endurance in our study, and endurance will come from our study (cf. James 5:7-11). Secondly we need encouragement and this too comes from our study of the Scriptures (cf. Psalm 105: 16-22 for an example of this). Thus "the God who gives endurance and encouragement" (v.5) does so through the Scriptures.

7. The blessing of the Old Testament

Chapter 15:4 ends "... so that... we might have hope." Jeremiah spoke of the LORD as "the hope of Israel and her Saviour in the time of distress" (see

Jeremiah 14:8). The source of hope is in the Scriptures (Psalm 130:5). Paul himself gives us an example of claiming hope through the Scriptures in Romans 8:24-25.

Conclusion

It has been said that Romans 15:4, “gives us a road to hope.”³ Paul is stressing that the believer can have hope and the way to that sure and steadfast hope is through the Scriptures. The Old Testament was written by God and every part of it teaches believers. Its focus is Christ. Its message is that he fulfils the promises made to the patriarchs of the Gentiles being brought into the community of faith. As we persevere in the Word we learn endurance, find encouragement and come to experience the hope we need for living.

Notes

1. Quoted by James R. Edwards in *Romans*, New International Biblical Commentary, (Peabody, Ma.:Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), p.338.
2. John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians*, translated by Ross Mackenzie, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), pp.304-5.
3. James Montgomery Boice, *Romans: An Expository Commentary*, Vol. 4, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995), p.1804

BROWNLOW NORTH: A ZEALOUS PREACHER

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Preachers of the Gospel are dealing with truths which always ought to grip their hearts. They are ministering to people who are of infinite worth. Their purpose is to glorify God. Zeal then is surely essential in every preacher of the Gospel. It was a characteristic of the Saviour Who in His ministry fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, 'He wrapped Himself in zeal as a cloak'.

What then is zeal? The simplest definition is that it is strong feeling, and intense enthusiasm. Throughout the history of the Church it has been seen in many preachers of the Gospel. One such man was the eighteenth century evangelist Brownlow North.

Early life and conversion

Brownlow North was born in Januray, 1810. He was a man with several significant ancestors. His father Charles Augustus had been rector of Alverstoke in Hampshire. His grandfather had been a bishop in the Church of England. He also numbered among his relatives the Prime Minister Lord North, who served under George III.

It is not surprising then that Brownlow North's early life followed the course of a member of the upper class. As a youth he was sent to Eton where he became known as 'Gentleman Jack'. Life was one long round of self-indulgence. He grew up as a constant smoker, a heavy drinker and a notorious gambler and admitted, 'My greatest idea of pleasure was to shoot grouse and catch salmon.'

Physically he was extremely strong and a very able horseman. He was also gifted with enormous levels of stamina and could walk the hills for miles without apparently getting weary. His appearance was striking. Though less than average height, plump and with a deep chest and broad shoulders, he had an aristocratic bearing. However, such were his facial features that one contemporary commented unkindly, following North's conversion, 'If he is to do any good he will require a reformed face as well as reformed life.'

After going on the 'Grand Tour' and experiencing disappointment when

he was denied the title of Earl of Gilford, which it was assumed he would inherit, Brownlow North crossed to Ireland and travelled to Galway on the west coast. There he met Grace Ann Coffey, the daughter of the local rector, Rev Thomas Coffey. They were married while Brownlow North was still only nineteen. The couple subsequently had three sons.

After a foray into Europe where he enlisted in the army of Don Pedro, North returned home and settled in Scotland. It was 1835 and from that time on, with some interludes and a brief time in London, Scotland remained his adopted home. His pattern of life remained the same as it had always been. He threw himself into the life of a country gentleman and adopted as his motto 'every day and all day'.

Conversion

Though Brownlow North's life seemed to be utterly profligate, we must remember that his mother continued to pray for her wayward son. She had taught him from childhood the great truths of the Gospel and occasionally during this period of careless living, he did seem to have serious thoughts and concerns about his spiritual state.

Once he was staying at Huntly for shooting and while there attended a dinner at the home of the godly Duchess of Gordon. She later recounted how, during the meal, North suddenly turned to her and asked, 'Duchess, what should a man do who has often prayed to God and never been answered?' The Duchess recounted her response, 'I lifted my heart to God to teach me what to say, then answered, "You ask and receive not because you ask amiss that ye may consume it on your lusts."'

Not long after that and following the near death of one of his sons, North received a tract from the Duchess. Suddenly he announced that he was going to Oxford to study for the Church. He tried to reform his life, but years afterward was to say, 'The house was swept and garnished but empty.' He did however spend two years in study at Oxford in Magdalen College and had the prospect of a curacy in Buckinghamshire. When the Bishop learned something of the kind of life North had been living before his arrival in Oxford, however, he confronted him with these facts. North had to admit that he was not in fact a suitable candidate for ordination.

By the following year, 1845, he was back in Scotland and back to his old ways - cards, gambling, shooting grouse and fishing. Reform had ended. Religion had apparently been dismissed as an unfortunate interlude in a life of pleasure. In fact he displayed a certain brazenness in his attitude. On occasions he made a point of driving past the church when people were going to worship and was careful to show that he had in his cart a fishing rod and lunch basket. Yet he was kind, generous and gentlemanly in his attitude. It is said that he

wouldn't stay in a room with men whose conversation was marked by infidelity and blasphemy.

In 1854 Brownlow North was on the Dallas Moors in Aberdeenshire. He was almost forty-four. In the second week in November he was sitting in the billiard room after dinner, playing cards and smoking his cigar. Suddenly he was seized with violent pains which were so severe that he was sure he was about to die. 'My first thought then was, Now what will my forty-four years of following the devices of my own heart profit me? In a few minutes I shall be in hell.' In later years he was to say, 'I believe it was a turning point with me. I believe that if I had at that time resisted the Holy Spirit it would have been once too often.' Next day he told his friends that he had given his heart to Christ. The whole direction of his life changed dramatically. He began to attend the Free Church in Elgin where Rev Donald Gordon was minister.

His conversion, however, was followed by great spiritual struggles. One of his greatest struggles was with the temptation to atheism. Even when engaged in prayer he felt as if the devil was at his elbow whispering in his ear, 'There is no God.' At such times North would walk in the garden and say aloud, 'God is , there is a God.' At last he came out of these struggles settled in his faith and convictions. On the first page of the New Testament which he began to use on first January 1855, he wrote, 'Brownlow North, a man whose sins crucified the Son of God'

This is the man who, in God's purpose was to become a great evangelist of nineteenth century Scotland. Perhaps indeed he was the greatest evangelist of that century. Though from the beginning of his Christian life he had a great desire to commend the Saviour to men and women, public preaching was far from his mind. His first efforts were in personal witnessing, though he was concerned that people would eye him suspiciously. After all, in that district of Elgin, they knew the kind of life he had lived. Was it not presumptuous, then, for someone like him to offer Gospel tracts to anyone? He was amazed when his first offer of a tract was accepted, though he still found personal witnessing difficult right to the end of his life.

In the sovereign purpose of God, however, opportunities to speak to groups of people came to him without his seeking them. A young Christian girl on her death bed asked him to pray for her father. The father was later converted and news spread, so that whenever Brownlow North returned to the girl's room, he found that the neighbours had gathered to hear him. Then others asked him to come and speak in their homes. He did not find this easy to do. 'When at first I began to visit and speak for Christ I did not like it. There were nasty smells in people's houses and I hated to go. I thought, "I can't make myself like it but I can make myself do it", and as I went, I grew to like it and now I am as happy as the day is long.' This work was greatly blessed, and numbers coming to hear him speaking grew to fifty, then sixty and then two

hundred, meeting in a granary. Brownlow North was launched into his life's work, a work characterised by true zeal.

True zeal grows from the awareness of the privilege of preaching

Brownlow North was at first a hesitant preacher. He was concerned that if he began to preach he would be trespassing into a sphere which belonged only to those ordained to preach. Indeed after his initial experiences in preaching, he prayed that if he was wrong in what he was doing, then the Lord would close these doors which had unexpectedly opened to him. When in fact numbers increased and more invitations came to him, he concluded that it was the Lord's will that he should continue. One contemporary described his experience. 'He was led on gradually, reluctantly and unexpectedly to become a preacher of the everlasting Gospel in truth and verity.'

He first preached in a church building in Dallas, the area where he had lived so recklessly. The minister had been called away and the people urged North to preach next day, otherwise there would be no service. He only agreed on condition that the service was led by an elder of the congregation who ought to read Scriptures. This consciousness of the great matter of preaching remained with him. It was, he believed, no light thing to enter a pulpit and proclaim the Word of God. On several occasions he addressed congregations in the same way, 'Don't think that I am intruding into the office of the holy ministry. I am not an authorised preacher, but I'll tell you what I am. I am a man who has been to the brink of the bottomless pit and has looked in. I'm here to call you back and warn you of your danger. I am here as the chief of sinners saved by grace and to tell you that the grace which has saved me can surely save you.' In this he resembled the Apostle who testified to the unexpected privilege of being called to preach, 'I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has given me strength that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service.'

Preachers today still need that sense of gratitude. It is so easy to feel the burden and responsibility of preaching that we forget the privilege. Remembering that privilege should make us more zealous.

Brownlow North said to one of his friends who asked him what he intended to do now that he was saved, 'I have done all the harm I could in Scotland and now I intend to remain there and do all the good I can.' He particularly felt himself to be a debtor to his former associates. He could say, 'I am debtor both to Greeks and barbarians, both to wise and unwise. I am ready to preach the Gospel.'

Some observers were initially of the opinion that after his conversion North should have lived in seclusion for a few years. They believed that the biblical injunction to lay hands on no man suddenly applied in his case. Yet

others were in no doubt that he was called of God to preach. They discerned in him the gifts necessary, but perhaps were persuaded more by the obvious blessing which from the beginning rested on his work. Typical of these was Sir George Sinclair, who commented, 'Retaining as I still do my objection to lay preaching in general, what am I that I could withstand God, when in such an exceptional case as that of Mr North, He is pleased to grant such unequivocal and uninterrupted tokens of His countenance and presence?'

Brownlow North saw himself as an unworthy preacher, but was glad to be in this work. To a friend he wrote, 'There is nothing like working for God. He is so good and His property is always to have mercy and forgive.'

His position as evangelist was recognised formally by the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in 1859. An Overture came before the Assembly that year signed by sixty eight ministers and thirty eight elders. The Motion was heartily approved and the Moderator, William Cunningham, concluded, 'The Church must lay herself open to consider exceptional cases, to mark God's hand and to make a fair use and application of what He has been doing.'

True zeal is accompanied by a spirit of humility

Brownlow North was honest with himself. When one of his tracts was printed in the 'Sterling Messenger', he asked, 'Would I rejoice as much if it were somebody else's tract? Oh to be unselfish and single eyed. Pray for me'

Though his preaching was greatly blessed by God, North retained a teachable attitude. One of his friends exhorted him to preach in a more orderly way. He accepted the counsel and tried, but couldn't do it. After five minutes he dried up. He then told the congregation that his train of thought had passed away. 'But one subject has not passed away and that is that many of you are sinners and ready to perish and I know the way you may be saved and it is the true way because it is God's way.'

His humility was apparent too in the delight he had when others were blessed. Moody and Sankey visited the British Isles and great crowds flocked to hear them. For a while their ministry was much more prominent than that of Brownlow North and may have eclipsed his. He, however, commented, 'Their success is a miracle, perfectly superhuman. God is working, I most firmly believe, mightily.'

True zeal is displayed in the earnest manner of preaching

It was this characteristic more than any other which impressed itself on the people who heard North preaching. He has been described as a man thoroughly in earnest. Phrases like, 'an agony of earnestness' and 'red hot

earnestness' were used about him in the secular press. His biographer, Kenneth Moody Stuart, traces the cause of this earnestness to its source: 'For hours before ascending the platform or pulpit he was weighed down with a sense of the greatness of the responsibility of addressing sinners in the Name of the Saviour. No-one can say that in the discharge of his duties he was ever light hearted.'

A newspaper in Stirling wrote, 'The intense earnestness in his manner, indicative of the deepest feeling of compassion for the perishing, was obviously the grand secret of this tremendous moral power. Truths may enter many a startled ear because they are pronounced with burning lips as a message from the majesty of heaven, the reception or rejection of which might there and then decide the eternity of those hearing.'

When he was preaching in Plymouth to a large crowd, someone said, 'You must feel it a great responsibility to address so many.' His answer is telling. 'I feel it,' he said, 'a great responsibility to address half a dozen.'

Sermon applications were pointed and direct, and he called for a response immediately from those who heard. In the sermon 'Wilt Thou go with this Man?' he pleaded with his hearers to receive Christ then as Saviour. 'O will you take Him take Him , take Him ? This may be the last offer you may have of Him. Will you let Him go? Oh don't.'

An Edinburgh journalist wrote after going to hear him preach, 'There is something contagious in a man who is terribly in earnest,' and then commented on 'the strange sight of a godless man of sport and fashion transformed into a fiery weeping messenger of the Cross.' Brownlow North believed that his one talent was to awaken the unconcerned. It was impossible to listen and be indifferent.

True zeal is combined with scriptural faithfulness

Some men can be zealous but at the same time may lack clear biblical content in their preaching. They can be doctrinally imprecise. Brownlow North was not like that. He was a diligent student of Scripture. 'I devote three hours every morning before leaving my room to reading the Bible and to meditation and prayer, and during the day I think of Divine truth as much as possible.' His theology was learned from that study. It was said of him that 'The Bible and the human heart were his theological library.'

North's theological convictions were those of the Reformers. He was a Calvinist, though he had come to his conviction, not through a reading of the works of the Reformers, but through his own study of Scripture. He believed in the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture, a doctrine which was forged in the struggles in his own life. In his six short rules for Christians, number two reads: 'Never neglect daily Bible reading and when you read remember that

God is speaking to you and that you are to believe and act on what He says. I believe that all backsliding begins with neglect of these two rules.'

In preaching he concentrated on the central doctrines of the faith. He stressed constantly the doctrine of God. His own experience had undoubtedly an impact here. In 'The Rich Man and Lazarus' he writes, 'I was without God and felt it and everything was valueless except Him. At last I had Scriptural warrant for believing that though He never would have been found of me if I had not first been found of Him that for Christ's sake He had forgiven my sins and I had got God.'

Brownlow North knew of course that men have an intuitive consciousness of the existence of an almighty and holy God. He preached that blindness to him was both willing and sinful ignorance. 'I believe that Hebrews 11 verse 6 is the first verse in the whole Bible that a man or woman requires to get into the heart.'

He emphasised, too, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. This was timely because in the mid-nineteenth century the theory of annihilation was appearing. North's first tract was 'You are immortal. You have been born and you will have to leave this world but you can never cease to exist. You must live for ever.'

He felt too that the doctrine of justification by faith was in danger in Scotland. Moderatism had diluted it and people were largely ignorant of it. He discerned that people had unknowingly begun to look into themselves for evidences of grace and feelings of devotion as grounds of justification, rather than looking simply at the Cross. 'He led many away from most unhealthy and fruitless introspection to a simple looking to the crucified Saviour.' The observation is surely accurate that 'Brownlow North was a great doctrinal preacher. His power lay in the solemn and forcible statement of doctrine.'

True zeal is evidence of the anointing of the Spirit on the preaching

From the beginning, Brownlow North's work was blessed with conversions. In preaching he used simple, natural and biblical language. He had a good imagination and showed originality in the way he presented the truth. Sermons were carefully studied and prepared, but not written out nor committed to memory. There was evidently an unction on his preaching. Not only were large numbers converted but there was lasting fruit.

Brownlow North was of course preaching during a time of revival, a time when the Spirit was poured out in great power. He preached about fifty times in Ireland in that great revival year 1859, and there were many conversions. An Irish minister at the time gives a flavour of those days. 'It were worth living ten thousand ages in obscurity and reproach to be permitted to creep forth at that time and engage in the glorious work.'

Though not always at the same level, still blessing continued on his preaching right to the end of his life. A colleague wrote, 'We may certainly regard it as a mark of God's kindness to our honoured friend that in 1874-75 he was permitted to reap another harvest of rich blessing before being called to rest.' Brownlow North died in November, 1875. The inscription on his headstone recognises a zealous preacher of the Gospel who remains a challenge to all preachers today: "At the age of forty four years he was turned from an ungodly life to serve the Lord; thereafter he preached the Gospel with singular power and was greatly honoured in winning souls to Jesus."

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FRAMING THE REGULATIVE PRINCIPLE

*A Critique of John Frame's Reformulation of
the Regulative Principle of Worship*

Warren Peel

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Introduction

Professor John Frame of Westminster Theological Seminary (California) opened his public questioning of the traditional understanding and application of the Regulative Principle of Worship (RPW) in 1992, in an article in the *Westminster Theological Journal*, entitled 'Some Questions About the Regulative Principle.'¹ The views set out there in tentative and germinal form evidently established themselves in Frame's mind, for they led to the publication in 1996 of his influential book *Worship in Spirit and Truth: A Refreshing Study of the Principles and Practice of Biblical Worship*. This was followed in 1997 by his book *Contemporary Worship Music*, in which he applied many of the principles worked out in *Worship in Spirit and Truth* (WST). His thinking on worship and his aim in his writing on this subject are summarized in the preface to WST:

In my view, the Westminster Confession is entirely right in its regulative principle—that true worship is limited to what God commands. But the methods used by the Puritans to discover and apply those commands need a theological overhaul. Much of what they said cannot be justified by Scripture." (WST, xii-xiv)

Frame's book is winsomely written and suffused with Scripture. Much of what he says about worship is insightful and helpful. One frustration however, is that the work is so short (it was originally a series of Adult Sabbath School classes) that it runs the danger of presenting a complex argument as more simple than in fact it is, hence the need to supplement WST with a careful reading of Frame's journal articles. It will be useful therefore to summarize the core of Frame's thesis.

Frame's Thesis

How should we worship God? Scripture teaches clearly that God is not pleased with just anything we choose to do in his presence. 'The mighty Lord of heaven and earth demands that our worship - indeed all of life - be governed by his word.' (WST, p.37) The question then becomes, *how* do we use Scripture to regulate worship? Frame believes that the Regulative Principle of Worship (RPW), as formulated by the Westminster Confession of Faith in XXI.1, is an accurate statement of the Biblical principle for governing worship: 'The acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture.'

It is at this point that difficulties arise. Frame is uneasy about the way in which the RPW has been traditionally understood and applied, *viz* that while Scripture prescribes the elements of worship, those areas where Scripture is silent ('circumstances') are left to human judgement.² Frame's chief difficulties with this approach are these:

- 'It is certainly possible to disagree on where this line is to be drawn between elements and circumstances.' ('Some Questions...', p.360)
- Some matters in worship don't fall neatly into either of these categories: '...there seem to be some matters in worship that are not "common to human actions and societies", concerning which we must use our human judgment. For example, Scripture tells us to pray, but it doesn't tell us what precise words to use in our prayers on every occasion... It does not seem right to describe this matter as a mere "circumstance". Prayer is not "common to human actions and societies"'. (WST, p.41)

Frame's proposed solution to these difficulties is a reformulation of the RPW. He emphasizes that he does not consider himself to be contradicting the Confessional position, but merely *supplementing* it. Frame's reformulation extends the jurisdiction of the RPW to all of life. The principle by which our worship is to be regulated is no different from that which regulates everything we do in daily life.

I agree with the confession that there is room for human judgment in matters that are "common to human actions and societies." But I do not believe that that is the only legitimate sphere of human judgment. In my view, the term best suited to describe the sphere of human judgment is not *circumstance*, but *application*. Typically, Scripture tells us what we should do in general and then leaves us to determine the specifics by our own sanctified wisdom, according to the general rules of the Word. Determining the specifics is what I call "application." (WST, p41)

In the same way, Frame argues, to determine from Scripture what we are to do in worship, we simply apply the general principles of the Word to the specifics of worship. The dilemma of deciding what is a circumstance and what is an element in worship is thus resolved because *everything* we do in worship is regulated by God's word in exactly the same way. 'Thus understood, the regulative principle for worship is not different from the principles by which God regulates all of our life. That is to be expected, because, as we have seen, worship *is*, in an important sense, all of life. In both cases, 'whatever is not commanded is forbidden'—everything we do must be done in obedience to God's commands.' (WST, p.42)

We will proceed by examining Frame's problems with the traditional understanding and application of the RPW, before evaluating his proposed solution.

Circumstances versus Application

Frame's problems seem to be created by a reductionist approach to the categories of elements and circumstances in worship—a simple either/or distinction. The distinction is useful, but, as Michael Bushell has observed, 'much unnecessary confusion has resulted from a failure to appreciate the fact that *these two categories are not mutually exclusive*.'³ We do better to think instead of elements and circumstances shading into one another like colours on a spectrum. Some circumstances are more substantial in aspect than others. Consider a number of examples of 'circumstances' in worship: lighting, amplification, the words of prayer, the number of praise songs, the length of the sermon, the time of the service, the use of an OHP. We intuitively sense that not all these circumstances are on the same level. Indeed different aspects of the same action can be more or less circumstantial, as we shall see. Bushell (drawing on Gillespie, Bannerman, and Thornwell) ends up distinguishing *four* categories of circumstances:

- (1) Matters which are *in sacris* because they are *eo ipso* an essential part of worship. They are to be so considered if they are regarded as having religious significance. Bannerman writes, 'So soon as you attach a spiritual meaning, a sacred significance, to anything connected with worship, it becomes *eo ipso* a *part* of worship.'⁴ The Church has no freedom to rule on what may or may not be done with respect to these matters.

Bushell gives a helpful illustration of this point: 'If the electricity went out in our church and we lit candles to provide light, the substance of worship would not have been altered in the least. But if the same candles

were lit as a liturgical or religious act, in remembrance of the dead for example, the *substance* of worship would have been affected. The question of what constitutes a part of worship is as much a matter of religious intent as anything else.’⁵ This is the principle contained in the second Commandment, which deals with our *intent* in worship.

This was the great sin of Israel in making the golden calf. ‘This is your god [or God], O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’ (Exodus 32.4, *author’s translation*) They were attaching religious significance to something of their own devising, and so it became a *substantial* part of worship: the calf was not just a mere circumstance of worship. This is the essence of all idolatry. We see the same principle operating in I Corinthians 10.18-22. Paul is clear that the sacrifices offered to pagan idols are of no significance, in one sense, but that does not mean they are purely circumstantial, because there is religious meaning attached to those sacrifices by others. It is this *perceived* religious meaning which makes them unacceptable. Bushell cites the example of the content of worship song.

We are quite willing to concede that, from *one* point of view at least, the verbal content of worship-song is circumstantial. The content of any verbal utterance is circumstantial to the act itself. But because the words of the songs sung in religious worship necessarily have spiritual and religious significance, they must also be considered to be substantial parts of worship, and do not therefore lie within the realm of the discretionary power of the Church. *The Church may neither prescribe, nor appoint, nor require in religious worship any acts, parts of acts; or circumstances of acts which bear religious or spiritual significance, without a clear warrant from the Word of God.* (p.31)

- (2) Circumstances of public worship which, because they are determinable from Scripture, are substantial parts of worship and not to be left to the determination of the Church. Frame accepts this as a valid way of arriving at Scriptural injunctions (‘I am not skeptical enough to deny that normative content can be derived that way. Indeed this is the way all theology proceeds.’⁶). So, for example, the Reformed Presbyterian Church believes that the content of worship song is not an indifferent circumstance, but one that can be determined from Scripture, from such texts as Ephesians 5.19 and Colossians 3.16.
- (3) Inseparable circumstances which attend actions *as actions*—i.e. without which the actions could not be. The Church has no discretionary powers in regard to these circumstances. Viewed from another aspect the content of worship song fits into this category also since the united singing of praise cannot be done without common words. These words therefore

should not be viewed as a matter of indifference.

- (4) Separable, non-essential circumstances which are not in any way prescribed in Scripture, and which the Church therefore has power to determine at her own discretion. For example, the words of praise songs may be printed on a photocopied order of service, or displayed on OHP, or sung from a book. *Even here* however, the Church may do nothing arbitrarily or thoughtlessly. Even in those areas where she has limited powers of discretion, she is still bound by the general principles of Scripture, which govern all actions of men. Everything is to be done in a loving and orderly way and for the edification of the people of God. Love will determine which way is best. If an OHP makes the words too difficult for older folk to read, then love and the importance of edification will rule that option out.

Frame's discussion of circumstances is too simplistic to be really helpful. The position he is unhappy with is one of his own making. On his presentation of the traditional approach, everything in worship fits into either (1) or (4). There seems to be no good reason to abandon the more precisely stated 'spectrum' approach to circumstances in worship.

The Regulative Principle of Life?

Frame's reformulation of the Regulative Principle is not just as clearly articulated in *WST* as it is in 'Some Questions about the Regulative Principle': 'What I mean to do is to place *all* areas of human life, including "faith and worship", under RP1... [A]ll human actions are ruled by divine commandments. There is no neutral area where God permits us to be our own lawgivers.'⁷ In this article Frame labels the traditional Reformed statement of RPW ('whatever is not commanded is forbidden') RP1, and the non-Reformed expression ('whatever is not forbidden is permitted') RP2.

Frame extends the RPW to regulate not just worship but the whole of life. Or rather, he places worship on the same level as every other activity of life, to be regulated by Scripture in precisely the same way—even down to the act of buying cabbage, the illustration Frames uses in 'Some Questions'. Scripture has general principles, which are to be applied to buying cabbage (e.g. I Corinthians 10.31; Colossians 3.17). More specifically there are biblical commands to guard the health of oneself and others, into which category buying cabbage might fall.

Actions in accord with these biblical principles are right, actions not in accord with them are wrong... it is a matter of keeping the commands of God. In every

action we are either obeying or disobeying a biblical command. Does this mean that God commands me to buy a particular cabbage at the store? No. God commands me to glorify him, etc., and buying the cabbage is a “mode,” a “way” of fulfilling that commandment. I could, perhaps, have fulfilled it in many other ways. Strict as it is, RP1 allows, both in worship (as we have seen) and in the rest of life, some freedom of application. Here again there is no real difference between worship and the rest of life.⁸

To those who earnestly desire to live every part of life in obedience to God’s commands, this is attractive teaching, but the result is that in the worship of God too much liberty is given to human reason. This formulation of the RPW empties of its cogency as a regulative principle of *worship*. What we have, according to Frame, is an array of more or less general principles, which can be applied in a (unlimited?) number of ways, the determining of which is up to us ‘by our own sanctified wisdom, according to the general rules of the Word’ (*WST*, p.41). In applying this principle, God commands us to pray to him (general principle). So we might pray by singing, by silently meditating, or by several members of the congregation leading in turn. Scripture is to be expounded (general principle). How? By preaching. By a dramatic presentation. By an interactive dialogue. None of these possibilities (or others) is ruled out on Frame’s approach.

What can be said by way of response to this? Several lines of biblical argument can be adduced to show that this understanding of the nature of worship is flawed.

Special Worship must be Specially Regulated

All of life is worship. Every part of life is to be dedicated to God’s service. This is not to say, however, that there are no distinctions drawn between the wider sense and the more narrow understanding of worship. Let us take one text, which illustrates this distinction well, Matthew 18.20.

Matthew 18.15-20 is one of the first passages in the NT where the term “church” is used, and it contains the first explicit mention of the local church in the NT. It is clear that this is a description of the formal gathering of the people of God for several reasons:

- The term *ekklesia* is used in v.17 to describe the church. In the LXX *ekklesia* exclusively represents the Hebrew term *qahal*, describing an assembly. It is a term which recalls Israel’s gathering before the Lord at Sinai. God’s assembly includes his ‘holy ones’, angelic hosts as well as earthly saints (Deuteronomy 33.2-3; Psalm 68.17). The writer to the Hebrews makes clear that when the Church today gathers to worship we are doing nothing less than what those Israelites did at Sinai (Hebrews 12.22-24).

- The ‘two or three’ is an advance on the *minyan* (quorum) required to constitute a Jewish synagogue. Ten adult males were needed for a *minyan*, but in the NT church two or three men or women are sufficient to secure God’s special presence. This allusion suggests a formal, structured meeting comparable to the synagogue.
- The meeting is qualified by the phrase ‘in my name.’ It is not any gathering of men, or even any gathering of Christians, which forms the condition of the promise, but the gathering of Christ’s people in their official character as his Church and under his authority (in the context specifically for the exercise of church discipline).

There is then a special, ‘narrow’ worship, which exists when the Church gathers formally in the name of Christ. The puzzling thing is that Frame accepts wholeheartedly this distinction: ‘...it cannot be doubted that in the permanent aspects of New Testament meetings, as well as the temporary extraordinary aspects, God is present in a special way in the Christian meeting’ (*WST*, p.31). He argues convincingly against the popular view in current evangelicalism that because all of life is worship we should not think of meeting together on the Lord’s Day as worship (*WST*, pp.31-34).

What Frame does not want to accept however, is that *special* worship is to be *special* regulated in a way distinct from the rest of life: ‘...it is not wrong to describe the Christian meeting as, in one sense, a worship service. To say this, however, is not to say that there is a sharp distinction between what we do in the meeting and what we do outside of it... The difference between worship in the broad sense and worship in the narrow sense is a difference in degree’ (*WST*, p.34). This is undoubtedly true, so far as it goes—we agree completely with Frame when he says, ‘Our holiness, our priesthood, our incense-prayers, and our obedient hearing of the Holy Book are not restricted to the church meetings.’ (*Ibid.*) The problem is Frame does not go far enough. The solemnity of the people of God gathering in the name of God to corporately and publicly worship God is of such a nature that it demands specific divine direction.

It might appear from *WST*, p.42 that Frame agrees with this: ‘Does this interpretation of the regulative principle imply that we may do anything in a worship service that we may do anywhere else in life? Certainly not... For example, Paul tells the Corinthians that they should not treat the Lord’s Supper as an ordinary meal (I Cor 11.20-34)... Scripture draws distinctions between different situations, and we should observe those distinctions.’ This sounds very similar to what we are arguing above, but Frame’s understanding of *how* Scripture draws distinctions between different situations is too general. He is *not* saying worship in the narrow sense is to be regulated by Scripture in a way that is *qualitatively* different from its regulation of the rest of life. The

compressed nature of his argument could cause us to miss this.

S.E. Waldron helpfully writes:

There is a reality unique to the church and its worship that demands it be specially ordered in the way that the regulative principle assumes. That reality unique to the church is that the church is the place of God's special presence and is, therefore, the house or temple of God. Once we understand the peculiar closeness of the church to God, the special holiness of the church as compared to the rest of human society, we will not be surprised by the fact that it is specially regulated by God.

Waldron supports his case by referring to I Timothy 3.15. Here Paul emphasizes the special relationship of God to the Church—it is described as 'God's household... the church [*ekklesia*] of the living God'—but what is most significant here is that Paul says if he is delayed, Timothy will know 'how people ought to conduct themselves' in the Church. The immediate context is chapters two and three, where Paul sets out the special rules that pertain to the worship (chapter 2) and government (chapter 3) of the Church.

The standards of conduct prescribed are no mere rules of etiquette, they are standards for the house/household that is none other than God's... They provide directions for conduct in his temple, where he dwells by his Spirit, and they provide directions for relationships among his people... The awesomeness and responsibility of this conduct are underscored by the relative clause... The awesomeness is highlighted by restating what the house/household is (*ekklesia theou zontos*) and especially by emphasizing that God is the 'living God.' The responsibility is highlighted by referring again to the architectural metaphor in terms of the components of the 'house' that undergird and uphold 'the truth.'¹⁰

There is a *special* conduct required in the Church, which is distinct from what is required in life in general. Other examples will bear this out. All eating and drinking is done for the glory of God (I Corinthians 10.31), but not all eating and drinking is regulated by the solemn warnings associated with the Lord's supper (I Corinthians 11.27-30)—it is 'a participation in the body of Christ' (I Corinthians 10.16); all washing is to be done for God's glory, but not all washing is imbued with the special symbolism of baptism. Every day to be devoted to God, but the Sabbath is peculiarly his, and special regulations come into play on this day that do not hold for the other days of the week. Consider also I Corinthians 14.34-35. There is a rule, which applies to women in the specific situation of the local church formally gathering for worship (*en tais ekklesiis*), which does not apply at other times, as v.35 explicitly stipulates. It is worth quoting Bushell at some length at this point:

This principle ["whatever is not commanded is forbidden"] simply does not hold for life in general. An individual has a certain discretionary power in the ordering and formulating of his day-to-day activities, subservient to the general rules of

Scripture, which he simply does not have when it comes to self-conscious [*sic*] acts of worship. The Scriptures make it quite clear that within that realm the requirements are far more specific and far more rigorous. For this reason we feel that it is rather misleading to speak of a "regulative principle for life." The principle that "whatsoever is not commanded is forbidden" applies only to matters of faith (i.e. doctrine) and worship. Outside of these two realms, a broader principle, namely, "Whatsoever is not prohibited is permitted," is valid. This is what is in view in XX.2 of the Confession of Faith, which says, "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything, contrary to His Word; or beside it, in matters of faith or worship."¹¹

Special acts of worship, then, are to be specially regulated by God. This is hardly surprising, given the OT background to the Church, where God impressed unmistakably upon his people that they could not act at their own discretion in his worship. There is *continuity* as well as change between the OT and NT churches. The very term *ekklesia*, which recalls, as we have seen, the *qahal* of the People of God, links the two explicitly. Frame himself gives a fairly comprehensive list of terms used of the Christian worship meeting which link it with OT worship.¹² The corporate Church is described as the Temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 3.16-17). Why then should it be surprising that worship in the NT Church should also be regulated zealously by God? Consider Hebrews 12.14-29: the argument here leads us not to the conclusion that OT worship was stricter than that of the NT, but exactly the reverse! (Hebrews 12.18,22-25,28-29)

David Gooding summarizes the message of the writer here as follows: 'You have not come to Mount Sinai with its thunder, fearful as that was; you have come to something far more august, far more awesome. Not to a mountain that can be touched, a tangible thing. You have come to the spiritual realm... Here you have to do with God, not now as the Father of all, but as the Judge of all.'¹³ The New Covenant is in every way better than the Old, but that does not for a moment mean that worship is any less solemn. To be sure, as William Lane comments, 'The scene is marked by joy rather than fear. The accent falls on the accessibility of God rather than on his unapproachability.'¹⁴ Nevertheless the stakes are *raised*, not diminished. Lane again: 'As a result of Jesus' sacrificial death, the people of the new covenant have both greater privilege and greater obligation than Israel under the old covenant.'¹⁵ Of course, the primary purpose of this passage is not to teach us how to conduct worship, but to exhort Jewish Christians not to forsake the gospel; but a striking application is made to worship in the closing two verses. Given the profound glory and solemnity of new covenant reality, how should we respond? By worshipping the God who is a consuming fire acceptably with reverence and awe. There is an acceptable way of worshipping God in the NT and, by implication, there is an unacceptable way of worshipping him.

NT worship then, is both special and to be specially regulated, just as it was in the OT. It might be objected, however, that the NT does not give regulations for worship in the manner that God gave them to Moses in the OT. A number of points can be made in response to this:

- (i) The second Commandment clearly and permanently forbids the worshipping of God in any way apart from divine prescription. This Commandment is as much in force in the NT as it was in the OT.
- (ii) We must interpret Scripture by deducing by good and necessary consequence as well as from explicit commands (WCF I.6). Whatever is rightly implied from Scripture's statements is itself true and equally the word of God. Frame himself accepts this principle ('I am not skeptical enough to deny that normative content can be derived that way. Indeed this is the way all theology proceeds.'¹⁶). So the fact that regulations for worship are not as explicit in the NT as in the OT in itself proves nothing. 'Consistent apostolic example can be as binding as the words spoken to Moses by angels.'¹⁷
- (iii) Deuteronomy 12.32, far from being revoked, is in effect reiterated by Jesus in Matthew 28.19-20. Paul speaks strongly against 'self-imposed worship' in Colossians 2.23—a term that makes no sense unless there is such a thing as 'God-imposed worship' identifiable in Scripture.
- (iv) We should expect that there would be much less about regulations for worship in the NT, not because God wants us to invent elements ourselves, but because the reality, Christ, and the outpouring of the Spirit have come, the shadows are over and worship now consists more of the inward and less of the outward.
- (v) There is nonetheless quite an amount of clear precept and example in the NT—for the reading and preaching of the word, for prayer, for singing God's praise, and for the sacraments.¹⁸
- (vi) We might note also John 4.24. This text is often used to prove a relaxing of the regulative principle in the NT, but the major change anticipated here by Jesus is *geographical*. He is teaching that a time is coming when the issue of *location* will be irrelevant. D.A. Carson says, 'Implicitly, this announces the obsolescence of the temple. Worship will be as geographically extensive as the Spirit, as God himself who is spirit.'¹⁹ 'This does *not* mean a laxer attitude on God's part to how his worship is to be conducted. Quite the reverse is implied by the phrase 'in truth.'

Frame's extension of the Regulative Principle to direct all of life in exactly the same way as it governs worship is scripturally unwarranted. There is a clear distinction between how the Bible regulates worship in the narrow sense and life in general.

Conclusion

Frame set out to argue against the 'liturgical minimalism' introduced by the Puritans and historically characteristic of the Reformed churches. It has, he argues, no basis in Scripture or, for that matter, in the Westminster Confession. His argument has been very simply that biblically the Regulative Principle cannot be restricted to worship in the narrow sense of the word, but must be extended to govern all of life and worship together in precisely the same way. Therefore there is nothing 'circumstantial' in the worship of God because everything is to be justified by a more or less general command of Scripture. The result is a list of 'aspects' of worship, which may be carried out in a diversity of 'ways.' Frame's regulative principle regulates a liturgy, which seems to differ discernibly in no significant way from the liturgies governed by the non-Reformed RPW ('whatever is not prohibited is permitted'). Surely something is wrong if a 'Reformed' understanding of RPW produces a worship service that for the most part looks like an average charismatic meeting? D.G. Hart highlights this fact well in his summary of Frame's application of the regulative principle:

Frame uses the regulative principle to say no scriptural warrant exists for traditional Presbyterian practices. Thus, the Reformed tradition has been wrong about the role of church officers in worship (64), the rejection of holidays (65), exclusive psalmody (123), prohibiting the use of musical instruments (129), and the emphasis on reverence and formality (82-83). In each case, Frame argues that Scripture may not be used to support these practices. But Frame does find scriptural warrant for humor (83), drama (93), musical solos (106), testimonies (122), drums (129), dance (130) and children's church (150). Thus, Frame is to the right of the Puritans (in his understanding) on the regulative principle, but to the left of them when it comes to worship practices.²⁰

We have seen that Frame's problems with the traditional Reformed understanding of the Principle are of his own making, and we have sought to show that Frame's proposed solution—the extension of the Regulative Principle to all of life cannot be biblically justified. Now Frame is perfectly free to adopt this hermeneutical line regarding worship—that is his right and responsibility. To call it the 'regulative principle' however, seems to be devaluing the proper understanding of the term. To call it 'Reformed' is certainly a misnomer. If Frame's 'Questions About the Regulative Principle' lead those who hold to the traditional understanding of worship and its

government to examine again their beliefs against Scripture, that will be all to the good. It seems more likely however, that many who were already restive under the yoke of 'liturgical minimalism' will find in Frame a 'Reformed' passport to introducing practices in worship that cannot in fact be justified by the Regulative Principle of Worship.

Notes

1. 'Some Questions about the Regulative Principle', *Westminster Theological Journal* 54 (1992), pp.357-66.
2. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, I.6: '...There are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed.'
3. Michael Bushell, *Songs of Zion*, (Crown and Covenant Publications, 1980), p.30 (emphasis mine).
4. J.Bannerman, *The Church of Christ*, (Banner of Truth, 1974), Volume 1, p.335, n.2.
5. Bushell, p.179.
6. 'Some Questions', p.359.
7. 'Some Questions', pp.361-2.
8. 'Some Questions', p.362.
9. Samuel E. Waldron, *The Regulative Principle of the Church*, (Wisdom Publications, 1995), p.6.
10. George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, (The New International Greek Text Commentary, Eerdmans/ Paternoster, 1992), p.180.
11. Bushell, p.26.
12. 'Our gifts can be a "fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God" (Phil 4.18; cf. Hb 13.16). Our praises are sacrifices (Hb 13.15; cf. Hos 14.2). Prayers in Scripture are often closely related to the smoke that arose from the altar of incense in the tabernacle and the temple (Ps 141.2; Lk 1.10; Rev 5.8, 8.3-4). Prayer is a lifting up of "holy hands" (I Tim 2.8). The word that we read and preach is "holy" (Rom 7.12; II Tim 3.16; II Pt 2.21, 3.2). In Hb 4.12, that word pierces into our inmost parts: the language is that of sacrifice... We, as the church, are a holy temple (I Cor 3.17; Eph 2.21, 5.27; Rev 21.2,10) and a holy priesthood (I Pt 2.5). In worship we draw near to the heavenly Jerusalem, to God and the angels in joyful assembly (Hb 12.22-24)' (WST, pp.33-34).
13. David Gooding, *An Unshakeable Kingdom: The Letter to the Hebrews for Today*, (IVP, 1989), p.247.
14. William Lane, *Word Biblical Commentary: Hebrews 9-13*, (Word Books, 1991), p.449.
15. *Ibid.*, p.449.
16. 'Some Questions', p.359.
17. Christopher Bennett, 'Worship Among the Puritans-the Regulative Principle' in *Spiritual Worship*, (The 1985 Westminster Conference Papers), p.21.
18. For a good summary of this material see Edmund Clowney, 'Presbyterian Worship', p.117, in *Worship: Adoration and Action*, D.A. Carson (ed.), (Paternoster Press, 1993).
19. D.A. Carson, *For the Love of God*, (IVP, 1998), meditation for March 14.
20. 'It May Be Refreshing, But Is It Reformed?' *Calvin Theological Journal* 32.2 (1997), p.418.

FOUR FRENCH FOREFATHERS IN THE FAITH

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“Every faithful Christian has the calling to be an historian,” writes Pierre Courthial¹. Whether in the Scriptures or throughout the centuries, we should all seek to see the hand of God at work. In this article I want to give an overview of the history of the Church in France, highlighting four characters, Irenaeus, Pierre Waldo, Guillaume Farel and Antoine Court, whose names are inextricably linked with that Church and who have played a vital role in her history. While emphasising the richness and variety of that history, they also, despite remarkable differences in personality, approach and challenges faced, underline the undoubted continuity of the true Church of Christ. Though our topic is centred in France, the characters are not all French and all spent long periods labouring beyond the bounds of modern France. They certainly deserve to be known much further afield.

The topic is important for several reasons, not least being that the Church in France needs to rediscover her roots and glorious past. Moreover there is the danger in considering Church history that we concentrate only on our particular branch of the Church or on the land of our birth, or on the Reformation or the modern missionary era. Though natural and understandable, there is in fact only one Church of Christ, found among every nation and language. The Christian must seek to be aware of what God has done and is doing everywhere.

Scholars disagree as to the origin of the French Church. It may be similar to that of the Church in Rome, as Christians, who had known the gospel elsewhere, came there on business, or it may be that the apostle Paul himself, en route for Spain, made some stopovers in France. Whatever the explanation, from a very early date, along the south coast and up the Rhone valley, little groups of Christians were to be found. The most important of these was near Lyons.

Irenaeus

This is where Irenaeus arrived from Smyrna (in modern Turkey) around 177 AD. Beyond his own writings, little is known about him. Opinions differ as to his date of birth. Some put it as early as 120 and others as late as 140². All

are agreed, though, that his Christian parents placed him under the care of Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, a former disciple of the apostle John, whose influence on him was considerable.

The situation in Lyons, however, was far from easy. Persecution was raging and while Irenaeus was providentially on a journey to Rome, this intensified. Pothinus, the aged bishop, was martyred along with hundreds of other Christians from the city, the most famous being the young slave girl Blandina. On his return to Lyons in 178, he was chosen to be the next bishop. From then until his death in 202, almost certainly also by martyrdom during a period of renewed persecution, his name is associated with Lyons. Through his efforts as an effective missionary preacher and pastor many were gathered into the kingdom. In fact one of his books that has survived is called a *Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching*.

While external dangers from persecution undoubtedly occupied a great deal of his time and attention, they were by no means the chief problem troubling the Church. Gnosticism, which appears in embryo in the New Testament, now over a century later was fully developed and had infiltrated huge sections of the Church. It was a hotchpotch of religious ideas drawn from Judaism, Near Eastern religions, semi-popular philosophy and Christianity. It rejected the Old Testament and reduced Christ to a minor role among a hierarchy of gods. Irenaeus, whether through a special awareness of the spiritual needs around him or through Polycarp's teaching with its echoes of John's First Epistle, attacked their errors and for this the whole Church is greatly indebted to him. As many of today's New Age ideas are really a return to Gnostic heresies, Irenaeus remains therefore very relevant on all these themes.

Five books written by him, available as a single volume *Against all Heresies*, deal with these errors, thereby giving a glimpse into the life of the Church at the end of the 2nd century. The first two books deal almost exclusively with the principal teachers and the contradictory nature of their teaching. The remaining books, while still attacking the errors, explain in a more positive way the Christian faith. Always he countered the heretics, not by using philosophy or speculation, but by relying solely on the Word of God, never claiming any particular originality. Throughout he simply appeals to the testimony of the Scriptures "as preserved by the elders", which he sought to apply and hand on. His method of arranging his material made him the first ever systematic theologian and he still remains a model for twenty-first century theologians.

Space does not permit a detailed summary of his teaching. Its richness and helpfulness can be gleaned from the headings of some of the sections: The unity of the Faith of the Church; The Truth of the Scriptures; One single God, creator of all things; One single Christ, son of God, become son of Man to bring to himself his own creation; One single God, author of the two Testaments, proved by the clear words of Christ; One single God, author of the two

Testaments, proved by the parables of Christ; The resurrection of the body proved by the epistles of Paul.

These subtitles illustrate that Irenaeus was a man of the Word. It is no surprise therefore, that scholars rely heavily upon him for the confirmation of the New Testament canon. One paragraph is particularly significant, underlining the apostolic origin of many of the books (though it does raise some other questions):

“Thus Matthew published among the Jews, in their own tongue, a written form of the Gospel, at the time when Peter and Paul were evangelising Rome and founding the Church there. After their death, Mark the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also gave us a written copy of what Peter preached. As for Luke, Paul’s companion, he recorded in a book the Gospel that the latter was preaching. Then John, the disciple of the Lord, who had even reclined on his breast, also published the Gospel while living in Ephesus, in Asia.”³

In fact Irenaeus quotes from every New Testament book with the exception of Philemon, 3 John and Jude. The omission of Jude is rather surprising as all his writing could be summarised in the words of verse 3: *I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.*

Generally today, evangelical Christians do not have much time for the church fathers. The Roman Catholic Church, however, has claimed them as supporting her position. She quotes them extensively, or rather, often makes them say what she wants them to say. Obviously not every single word of every father, or even every single word of Irenaeus can be defended. Some of the fathers did speculate, others philosophised. Even today the most carefully defined theological term can be given a completely unintended meaning. This is what has largely happened to Irenaeus.

An example is seen in one of his favourite words “tradition”. The Gnostics, he claimed, were not following the tradition either of the apostles or of the Church. He was speaking of course as the spiritual grandson of the apostle John. Just as Polycarp had taught the exact same things as John, he himself as Polycarp’s student was continuing to teach those very same things. Referring to Polycarp, he says,

“We ourselves saw him in our earliest youth - for he lived a long time and it was at a very advanced age that, after having given a glorious and striking testimony, he left this life. Now he always taught the doctrine that he had learned from the apostles, the only true doctrine, which is the same that the Church passes on.”⁴

Concerning the congregation at Rome,⁵ he lists all those who had served as pastors (bishops) there. Linus (2 Timothy 4:21), he says, was the first. The third was Clement.

“He had seen the apostles themselves and had been in contact with them:

their preaching still echoed in his ears and their tradition was ever before him. Moreover he wasn't unique in this respect, for there remained still at that period many who had been taught by the apostles."

Referring to his colleague, the pastor at Rome, Eleutherus, the twelfth since the founding of the church, he says,

"That is the line and succession by which the tradition of the apostles and the preaching of the truth have come right down to us. Here we have a complete proof that this life-giving faith that has been conserved and handed on in the Church, from the time of the apostles until now, is constant and never changing."

Thus in his own case and that of the church in Rome, though he gives a list of all who had held the same office, his emphasis is that they held to the same teaching. The tradition of the Church was therefore the body of belief and practice established by the apostles and not what was added to it afterwards.

It is in this context that Irenaeus describes the universality of the Church. The same Gospel was to be found everywhere in the Church. The contrast with the Gnostics, where different teachers were presenting competing and contradictory ideas, was striking. Thus just as Irenaeus emphasised that the Gospel was the same everywhere, so was the Church. Or to use the word that he first applied to the Church, she was "catholic". In dealing with the diversity of the heretics, this is what he says about the Church,

"The Church, although scattered throughout the whole world, ... having received therefore this preaching and faith, keeps them with care, as if living in a single house: she believes them in an identical manner, as if having only one soul and one heart, and she preaches, teaches and sends forth this faith with one voice, as if having only one mouth. For, though languages differ throughout the world, the content of the tradition is absolutely the same... Just as the sun, God's creation, is absolutely the same throughout the whole world, so this light, which is the preaching of the truth, shines everywhere and gives light to all people who wish to come to a knowledge of the truth."⁶

In the hall of fame of the French Church, while others may be better known or more often quoted today, no one can take away from Irenaeus the honour of being first in a long line of great men. Living at a time of persecution as he did, as evangelist, apologist, writer and pastor, he made a mark upon his time. Every succeeding generation is in his debt. With such an eminent figure right at the beginning of her history, there is an element of surprise, therefore, that the Church in France did not remain conservative and evangelical.

Pierre Waldo

Of our four characters, we know the least about Waldo. As so often in medieval history, much of what we know comes through portraits left by his opponents. Sadly we discover that, 900 years after Irenaeus, Lyons was no

longer a centre of light. Along with the wider Church, it had gradually sunk into Romanism. Whether Waldo, a prosperous merchant for many years, had a long-standing awareness of the wrongs that were being taught around him, we cannot say. We do know, however, how God, in his providence, aroused him to a sense of spiritual need.⁷ One evening after supper, as he sat chatting and drinking with friends, one of the company fell down dead on the floor, to the consternation of the others. This lesson on the uncertainty of life forcibly arrested his attention. The Latin Vulgate Bible, though totally inaccessible to the great majority of people, was the only edition of the Scriptures at that time in Europe. Waldo, as a man of some learning, was able to read the Scriptures in Latin and thereby came to a true knowledge of God and his Son. Keen to make known his new-found happiness, he abandoned his business pursuits, distributed his wealth to the poor as occasion required and began to teach others.

In 1170, surprisingly, he committed his two daughters to the care of a convent, made arrangements for his wife's support and, having given away the rest of his fortune, began to preach in the streets of Lyons. At that time open-air preaching was completely unknown and the ministry of so-called laymen totally forbidden by the Church. Yet certain priests were sympathetic to Waldo and two of them agreed to translate the Gospels and some of the Epistles into the vernacular (probably Provençal). This new treasure both served to strengthen his conviction that Christ's disciples were called to a life of self-denial and exposed a variety of doctrines and ceremonies erroneously introduced into the common religion. His preaching gained new zeal and depth as he expounded the Scriptures to all who would listen. Impressed by his example and evident sincerity, others soon joined him and a movement began.

At first, like many others after him, Waldo had no intention of leaving the Roman Catholic Church. His desire was to inspire reform, not foment rebellion. Though initially having some limited church approval, he was first of all expelled from Lyons in 1176, then excommunicated from the Church by the Pope in 1184. To complete the series of dates, in 1199 the reading and study of the Bible in the language of the people was completely banned and in 1215 the movement was declared to be heretical. From now on, the work of spiritual renewal was going to take place outside of the official Church.

Despite this exclusion, the movement continued to grow in numbers and in commitment to the Word of God. Calling themselves simply "brethren", "the poor of Lyons" or "the poor of Christ," these laymen began to travel in pairs into the surrounding countryside, penniless, simply dressed, but preaching. They did not denounce the Roman Catholic Church as a whole, but objected primarily to its compromise with the world. By the beginning of the 13th century they had spread first into southern France and northern Italy, then into Spain, Switzerland, Austria, Germany and even as far as Bohemia, Hungary

and Poland. When Waldo himself died in Bohemia after some 20 years of ministry in all, no doubt seeds had been planted that later flowered under John Hus.

Although initially having little organisation, with the passage of time a certain structure developed, with pastors and synods. Formal theological instruction was given in wintertime before the students were set apart to their ministry. Among other things, they were required to memorize most of the Gospels and Epistles. Once ordained, they always went forth two by two, a younger and an older man together, supported by the voluntary contributions of the people. This church knew much severe persecution both in its beginning and in the succeeding centuries. In fact some thirty-three wars of extermination, both from the civil and religious powers, were launched against her, which in time reduced her to two small (largely French-speaking) bodies in remote valleys of Italy and Switzerland, known as the Waldensian or Vaudois Church. By what we call Protestant standards, however, they weren't wholly orthodox, largely because their doctrinal understanding was based upon a faulty translation of another faulty translation of the Bible.

Interesting questions arise from a consideration of Waldo and his successors. The time when Waldo began his protest was a period of considerable agitation and upheaval. It was the beginning of the Crusades. Other protest movements were springing up elsewhere in Europe. In France the most notable was the Cathars in the south-west of the country. Despite having some similarities with Waldo, notably their emphasis on an ascetic lifestyle and opposition to the corruption observed in the dominant Church, their beliefs and practices were nevertheless very different. In reality the Cathars were the successors of the Gnostics and often repeated the same heretical ideas as Irenaeus had countered a thousand years earlier.⁸

Waldo and his followers, despite their faults, preached the Christ of the Bible. Despite persecution, crusades and inquisition, the Vaudois were the only protest group to survive all that Rome threw at them. Obviously God's hand was upon them, but their survival was also linked to a factor which we have perhaps difficulty in fully appreciating, viz. the medieval Church was not a huge centralised body that imposed total uniformity everywhere. Communication was not easy and not all bishops were agreed on some of the newer Roman doctrines.

How in fact should we view the whole medieval period? Those centuries are often known as the Dark Ages, thereby putting the emphasis upon the prevailing darkness. While some historians such as Wylie, argue that the Vaudois existed from apostolic times and bore a faithful ongoing witness, in the light of all the evidence, this position is hardly credible. Where then was the true Church at that time? The only possible answer must be that for most of this period, she was found in that body known as the Roman Catholic Church. Just

as some churches in the New Testament, notably those mentioned in Revelation 2-3, were impure, so there was much error in the Roman Church and many so-called Popes had no spiritual light whatsoever. Yet others, like Bernard de Clairvaux and St Dominic, did preach Christ. Surely the real question is at what point did the Roman Church cease to be Church? Was it at the time of Waldo, when a measure of light was being granted to some? Or, just as the Jewish nation ceased to be the people of God when they turned their back upon Christ, was it at the Council of Trent, when the Roman Church unambiguously rejected the fundamental truths relating to salvation, that she also, as a body, ceased to be Church?

Guillaume Farel

Alas, most information about our third spiritual forefather is to be found in asides or footnotes in books on Calvin and the Reformation. The impression is thereby given that he was a secondary figure, whereas his place on the Reformation Monument at Geneva testifies that he was indeed one of the principal actors. Not only the French-speaking world, but the worldwide Church is greatly in his debt. That unfairness with which he has often been treated is found also in the way that he is sometimes described. Atkinson in *The Great Light* is typical of many when he introduces him as the fiery and tempestuous Farel¹⁰. Of his zeal there can be no doubt, but many other adjectives could much more fittingly be applied to him.

He was born into a pious family, in 1489, in the town of Gap, in the heart of the French Alps. From an early age he helped the priest during mass and almost certainly it was intended that he himself should become a priest.¹¹ He went to Paris to study at the comparatively late age of 20. There he met Lefèvre d'Étaples often known as the pioneer of the Reformation in France, another greatly neglected figure.¹² Lefèvre was 55 when he came to an understanding of the doctrines of grace and began to write, teach and preach them. Luther, while still a monk, read his exposition of the Psalms and was greatly influenced. Farel, however, had the immense privilege of listening directly to him and, writing much later about those days, he says, "Lefèvre extracted me from the false opinion of human merits and taught me that everything came from grace, which I believed as soon as it was spoken."

While Farel accepted many things quickly, that doesn't mean that virtually overnight he abandoned the Church of his birth. For someone who had set his heart on the priesthood, some things were particularly difficult. Eventually, along with Lefèvre, he became associated with the work of the Bishop of Meaux. They were "evangelical Catholics", who wished to reform the Church from within and many, including Lefèvre, remained in the Church all their days. Farel began, however, to see that a more radical reform was

necessary.¹³

The University of Paris made no such distinction and condemned all so-called “heretical” ideas. In the resulting persecution they all fled Paris. Farel travelled via Strasbourg and Basle, meeting along the way with various Reformers, before finally taking refuge in 1524, at the age of 35, in the small town of Aigle, not far from Montreux in Switzerland, where he began to teach in a school and also preach. Through his efforts, the very first Reformed Church was begun there. Almost certainly it was also there that he wrote in 1529 his most important book *A summary and brief declaration of the Christian faith*. It contains all that we today call “Calvinism”. Calvin’s better known *Institutes* didn’t appear until 1536 and were of course much longer, but the principal reason behind their differing impact and influence was that Farel wrote in French, while Calvin wrote initially in Latin. The dynamite from the pen of the latter was able therefore to be read immediately in every place of learning, in every city of Europe. The rest is history, as they say.

Farel meanwhile continued his extensive and fruitful ministry in various towns in Switzerland, winning them for the Reformation. One convert under his preaching was Pierre Viret, who became a great Swiss Reformer. Farel gathered around him a group of handpicked men like Viret. He taught them the faith, trained them to preach and sent them forth into the towns and villages. Where churches were established, these men stayed on as pastors. One of their favourite methods was to arrange a public debate. Various propositions were drawn up, which the Reformers and the Roman clergy debated publicly. In many of these Farel, through the power of his oratory, his informed zeal and especially the quality of his arguments from Scripture, clearly won the day.

Before Calvin came on the scene, he was undoubtedly the leading Reformer in the French speaking world. Alongside his preaching, however, he played an important role in two related matters. First of all the Vaudois Church, having become increasingly aware of what was happening elsewhere in Europe, sent a number of men to visit various Reformation centres. As a result, in 1532 an open-air General Assembly of all their churches was convened at Chanforans in Piedmont, at which Farel was the main delegate for the Reformed Churches.¹⁴ Through his ministry there, he helped the Vaudois to a clearer understanding of doctrine. The descendants of Waldo became thoroughly Protestant through the human instrument of Farel. In fact to the end of his days he continued to exercise an itinerant ministry among them.

Shortly before this Assembly, the Vaudois had experienced a brutal period of persecution, which left them almost devoid of Bibles. Farel agreed to be responsible for finding someone who could provide a translation of the whole Bible, accessible to all in the French-speaking Church. He believed that the time had come for a translation from the original languages as Lefèvre’s earlier translations, for all their many good qualities, were based largely on the

Vulgate. Consequently he asked a friend from his student days, Louis Olivier, better known as Olivétan, to undertake the task. He happened to be a cousin of Calvin and had actually encouraged the latter to read the Bible. Olivétan, though having already translated all the Bible from Hebrew and Greek for his own personal edification, was extremely timid and did not at all feel worthy of doing a translation for publication.¹⁵ Farel, however, managed to persuade him, and so three years later, in 1535, the Olivétan Bible appeared. So excellent was the translation, that it remained the standard by which every other translation was compared right up until the twentieth century.¹⁶ What a blessing for the Christians to have the Word of God in their own language! For that, among others, we must thank Farel. He was a man who got things done!

In 1532, the year of his meeting with the Vaudois, Farel began to take an interest in Geneva, where he encountered considerable opposition.¹⁷ Nevertheless, largely through the efforts of one of his assistants, Froment, who began to teach in a school, which was largely an excuse to read and interpret the Scriptures, the breakthrough eventually came. Following a particularly drawn-out public debate lasting several weeks, the city Council voted in 1535 in favour of the Reform. Though largely a political decision, it secured both political and religious independence for the city. Farel saw the immensity of the task that confronted him. He founded schools and hospitals, tried to rekindle moral integrity in the life of the city and, above all, sought to deal with the prevailing spiritual ignorance. He also recognised, moreover, that his personal gifts were not those best suited for such tasks.

It was at this moment, in the providence of God, that Calvin happened to be in Geneva, having also had to flee Paris. It was just after the *Institutes* had appeared, making him overnight the undoubted leader of the Reformers. He had hoped to remain unrecognised as he spent just one night in the city. However Farel, having heard of his presence, immediately went to the inn where he was staying. It was possibly their first time to meet. Farel explained to Calvin why he had come, his vision for the work in that city, the need. The more he spoke, the less inclined Calvin was to accept the proposal being put to him.¹⁸ He was timid by nature, wanting to devote his life to academic study. Aaron Kayayan writes,

“Quite simply that summer evening in August 1536 was taking place one of the most crucial events not only for the reform of the city of Geneva, but also of all history. Two powerful wills were matched in that Genevan inn. The consequences of that meeting were going to fashion Western history for centuries.”¹⁹

As Calvin remained impervious to all his pleas, Farel finally stood up and looking Calvin straight in the eye said,

“May God curse you and your studies, if in such an hour of need you refuse to bring your help to His Church!”

As Calvin himself says in an autobiographical note in the Preface to his commentary on the Psalms, those were the words that God used to lay His hand upon him and enlist him into service in Geneva.

He came to Geneva basically as one of Farel's assistants. Not many of us can imagine the humility demonstrated here by Farel. He was 47 and up to then had outshone all other men in the area, yet he recognised that his gifts were not those needed in the situation and however unorthodox his methods, he called to his side someone 20 years his junior, whom he knew would clearly outstrip him. Not many of us do that! Kayayan says,

"To God alone be the glory. As Frenchmen, we have every reason in the world to be thankful to God for the man, for the men, whom he took into his service and to be rightly proud that they were taken from among us. They accomplished conquests that no Arc de Triomphe will ever celebrate, but whose significance will be revealed in eternity by God, who will grant them their reward."

Not long after the arrival of Calvin in the city, a public debate was held in Lausanne, where the chief Protestant debaters were Farel and Viret. In the course of the proceedings one of the Papal delegates put them under some considerable difficulty through accusing them of neither following the Church Fathers nor being in the true Catholic tradition. The young Calvin came forward and began to quote one Father after another in exact context and show that it was they, the Reformers, who were in the true Catholic tradition.²⁰ It was there in that situation that the roles were reversed. Instead of Farel and Calvin, it became Calvin and Farel. We are of course reminded of another partnership and reversal of roles in the Book of Acts. While by temperament and gifts, Farel was no Barnabas, yet he too had the ability to spot talent and encourage it in every way possible.

Both men were forced to leave Geneva in 1538. Calvin went to Strasbourg and hoped to resume his life of study. Farel went to Neuchâtel in the Jura Mountains where he was based until his death in 1565.²¹ When in 1541 the call from Geneva came to an again unwilling Calvin, Farel was once more among those who urged him to accept. There was no bitterness whatsoever that he himself was not wanted. He simply recognised that Calvin was the right man for the situation. While some suggest that there was a fall-out or a cooling in their relationship over the years, this is greatly exaggerated. The only slight hiccup came late on, when Farel, aged 69, announced that he was getting married to a young girl, the daughter of his own housekeeper, who was already living under the same roof. Calvin refused to marry them, but Farel having given his word to the girl, went ahead with the marriage.

That incident aside, in all of Calvin's many difficulties in Geneva, Farel was always a loyal supporter. He was present when Servetus was burned. In all Calvin's letters to his older colleague, he is at his freest and most uninhibited,

which suggests a depth of relationship and trust that knew no equal. In 1553 Calvin, believing Farel to be on his deathbed, went to visit him. To the surprise of everyone, the robust Farel recovered and outlived Calvin by a year. One of Calvin's last letters was to Farel to express appreciation for his friendship and support. Likewise one of Calvin's last visitors was the aged Farel. In the presence of a giant, everyone else can seem to be small. Calvin tends to have that effect on all his contemporaries, but in comparison with most mortals, Farel was also a spiritual giant.

Antoine Court

Court is perhaps the least known of our quartet and even today in France, outside of those interested in the history of the Reformed Church, his name is scarcely known. From the time of the Reformation, the Church in France knew many trials. Calvin had trained and sent scores of pastors so that through their labours perhaps upwards of a third of the country was won for the Reformation. Nevertheless, towards the end of the 16th century persecution intensified. There was a certain lull when Henry IV passed the Edict of Nantes, giving a measure of freedom to Protestants. Alas it was to be short-lived. A little over 20 years later Protestant towns like La Rochelle were being besieged.

All this, however, was only merely playing at repression. When Louis XIV came to the throne and especially when he personally assumed supreme power in 1661, things stepped up several gears. While the Palace at Versailles and other magnificent monuments, were being built, another much seedier side of national life was going on in parallel.²⁷ The king, enforcing a strict uniformity of religion, began the strangulation of all things Protestant. Church buildings were destroyed, all civil rights were abolished, meetings, marriages, baptisms and funerals were banned, children were forcibly removed from families and baptised as Catholics, pressure of all sorts was put on people to convert, dragoons were billeted in Protestant homes with complete liberty to do what they wished, whole villages were levelled to the ground. If such things were to take place today, it would be called genocide. In 1685, the king, believing that hardly any Protestants still existed in the kingdom, revoked the Edict of Nantes. Those remaining were invited to leave the country. The few remaining pastors either left or were killed. To give accurate figures of those who were killed, chose exile or converted to Catholicism during this period is impossible. Some estimate that of over a million Protestants in the country, a quarter went into exile, a fifth converted, and many others were slaughtered.

It was into this situation where the Church was completely decimated, that Antoine Court was born in 1695 as the eldest of 3 children into a believing home. When he was 5, his father died, but a godly mother instructed him in the faith and took him to all the secret meetings of the Desert Church. It was a time

of great confusion. In the Cevennes in particular, so-called prophets often delivered messages supposedly received from God, including the call to take up arms.

When Court was 18, he began to preach in these secret meetings, but both from his mother's instruction and from what he had observed of the non-fulfilment of most of the prophecies, he spoke powerfully against the latter and expounded the faith as set forth in the Confession of La Rochelle.²³ While to a certain extent the prophets had kept the flame of piety burning, Court knew that theirs was neither the faith of their forefathers nor of the Bible. In speaking against them, he also advocated non-violence, as he saw that the work of God could never be advanced through physical means.

Right from the beginning, God greatly used his preaching to stir up the faith of his brethren and to bring them back to a more faithful position. When he was 20, he called together eight other preachers to meet in a disused quarry and there they organised themselves into a Synod. He was chosen as both Moderator and Clerk. At this stage, he and perhaps all of the others also, had little formal academic training, though Court especially had read much and knew his Bible and the writings of Calvin and the others. Likewise, as none of the group was ordained, one of them, therefore, went to Zurich and on being ordained there, returned to ordain the others.

Humanly speaking these men were used under God to keep the light of the gospel shining in France. At the peril of their lives, they went all over the country, far away from their base in the Cevennes, visiting and preaching. They sought to restore proper discipline and combated the trances, visions and prophecies that had ensnared the Church. Though the word "stress" has entered our modern vocabulary, we can barely imagine the constant tension of being hunted and harried. Taking care of his wife and children, avoiding traps and escaping the pursuer became unbearable. At times Court would organise a preaching camp for a week in a deep gorge and thus a few men were in some way trained to provide pastoral care for the Church.

One by one, however, his companions were either killed or sent to the galleys. His camps couldn't adequately meet the need. Appeals for aid to sister churches or to the French exiles met with no response. Volunteers for martyrdom didn't exist. Thus he increasingly saw the need to provide more formal instruction for the benefit of the whole church, preferably in a place of safety outside of France. He concluded also that he himself would be more useful to the Church elsewhere. Thus at 34, he became director of the new Lausanne Seminary in Switzerland. Teachers from that city dealt with the more academic subjects, while Court dealt with all things administrative and practical. His preaching classes were similar to those in the gorge. Above everything else he sought to inculcate a certain spirit, that of the Desert. In his own words,

“I mean by that, a spirit of mortification, sanctification, prudence, caution, reflection, wisdom and especially of martyrdom, which teaches us to die to ourselves every day, to defeat and overcome our passions and desires, to prepare us to lose our life with courage in torture or on the gallows if providence calls us to it.”

This modest seminary, occupying a few second floor rooms in Lausanne furnished more than 400 pastors to the Desert Church. As the few blunt words on the plaque on that building state, “Many of those men died for their faith.” Kayayan says simply,

“The Lausanne seminary became known by the name “the school of death”, because most of the young men who received their training there to serve the Church in France, sooner or later lost their lives, victims of Roman Catholic persecutions.”²⁴.

Antoine Court died in 1760, when France was just beginning to allow Protestants to practise their faith openly. He himself remained a faithful godly Calvinist all his days. He was the main instrument that God used to guide the Church through one of the most difficult periods in her long history. One would like to be able to say that the Church he left continued to follow his example, hold firmly to the same faith and preach with the same passion. Alas the history of the French Church has been consistently one of a brief time of respite followed by a long period of attack. No sooner had she been granted her freedom, than firstly the Revolution and then secondly and more especially the Enlightenment came and again brought her almost to her knees.

Many lessons could be drawn from the lives of these four faithful servants. Their courage and tenacity is an inspiration. The evil and danger that constantly threaten the Church is highlighted, along with the need for individuals and denominations, in ever changing circumstances, always to have a clear consistent testimony to the historic unchanging faith in Christ. The centrality of the Word of God, its authority over every age, the importance of people everywhere having this living Word faithfully translated and preached in the language of their heart cannot be ignored. Yet above everything else, we should be moved to give thanks to our sovereign God for graciously watching over and preserving his Church and in giving to her the gift of such men. Apart from the few references in Scripture, we can never know with certainty what experiences will befall future generations in the Church. We can, however, read and be encouraged by the providence and faithfulness of God in the past. In an age where much is superficial and fleeting, we need to be reminded of our unchanging God and his unfailing purposes for his Church upon earth.

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ORDAINED MINISTRY WITHIN THE PRESBYTERIAN FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

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Presbyterian understanding of ordained ministry, episcopacy and eldership arises from a form of church government which, in our view, is founded on and agreeable to the Word of God. The Biblical evidence for this form of church government includes firstly, Christ's headship over the Church in giving gifts for its perfecting, secondly, indications of these gifts in the ordering of the Church in the New Testament and, thirdly, and in particular, lists of such gifts and 'offices' as are found in Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11-13.

This evidence presents us with important principles which regulate our view of church government. It would be too sweeping to maintain that office in the New Testament was so fixed as to represent an unalterable pattern. On the other hand, it would hardly give sufficient expression to the New Testament data to deny any structured form whatsoever. What we might attempt is to gauge the tenor of Scripture regarding church polity, that is, the principles underlying the government of the Church in the New Testament.

Extraordinary and ordinary officers

One of these principles which Reformed theologians discerned behind the evidence was a distinction between 'extraordinary' and 'ordinary' officers of the Church. The former comprised apostles, prophets and evangelists; the latter bishops, presbyters (elders), pastors, teachers and deacons. The 'extraordinary' nature of the former was evident both in their temporary character and in their function throughout the entire Church. 'Ordinary' officers continued to function within the Church and normally carried out their work in a particular area or local congregation.

Such a distinction seems to agree with the Biblical presentation of the evidence. The uniqueness of the apostles as being directly appointed by Christ

or God, conscious of their apostolic office, witnesses of Christ's life and resurrection and frequently possessing miraculous powers, needs little comment. It is generally agreed that this office ceased with the death of the apostles. The prophet was unique in being the recipient and communicator of direct revelation. The case of the evangelist is less clear. What little evidence there is suggests an office assisting the work of apostle. What is clear, however, is that reference in the New Testament to presbyters, bishops, pastors, teachers and deacons mark them out as continuing the work of teaching and ordering the Church in local areas with certainly none of the supernatural powers of the apostles or prophets.

Presbyters and deacons

A second principle of Presbyterian Church Government is that the ordinary offices by which the Church continued to be ordered were basically two-fold, that of presbyter and deacon. One contention underlying this principle is that the office of presbyter in the New Testament is the same as that of bishop. This has been urged on a number of grounds:

1. According to Luke's account in Acts, Paul called the 'elders' of Ephesus to Miletus. When they arrived he addressed them as 'bishops' or 'overseers' (Acts 20:17, 28).
2. In Titus 1:5f. Paul remarked on how he had left Titus in Crete to appoint elders in every town. Paul went on to itemise the qualifications of an elder and in the immediate context described the qualities of a bishop. The natural flow of Paul's thought is most easily understood if we regard the office of elder and bishop as synonymous.
3. In Philippians 1:1 Paul addressed the church leaders as 'bishops and deacons'. If elders had constituted a separate order from bishops, it is unlikely that Paul would have omitted them in his opening greetings.
4. In 1 Timothy 3:1f Paul gave the qualifications of a bishop. He immediately followed this with those of a deacon with no intermediate office (3:8f.). Yet Paul knew of elders and addressed them in the same letter. Indeed, the kind of function he ascribed to elders in 5:17 has points of similarity with those describing bishops in 3:1f, where both rule and teaching are stressed. It is on the basis of such reasoning that Presbyterians equate these offices, the title of 'elder' emphasising the dignity of the office, that of 'bishop' underlining its function.

Another supporting feature of this two-fold ministry refers more precisely to the work of the presbyter/bishop. This is evident in the way in which 'pastors and teachers' related to the presbyter/bishop office. To a degree this was already anticipated in 1 Timothy 5:17 where the implication is that all elders ruled but some served in preaching and teaching. 'The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.' The reference to the 'pastors and teachers' in Ephesians 4:11 is also significant. The use of one definite article with two nouns suggests a close relationship between both functions, almost as though they were combined in the one office. The correlation of elders ruling, preaching and teaching, bishops overseeing, pastors shepherding and teachers instructing, and the interchange of function evident with these offices where they are mentioned in the New Testament, gives rise to the contention that presbyter (elder) bishop, pastor and teacher were many-sided aspects of one basic office. So Calvin states, 'In giving the name of bishops, presbyters and pastors indiscriminately to those who govern churches, I have done it on the authority of Scripture, which uses the words as synonymous.' (*Institutes* 4:11.8).

There is some difference of opinion within Presbyterianism as to how the office of elder should be viewed. There are those who maintain that the 'elder' of Presbyterianism represents the 'presbyter' of the New Testament. They hold that while there is a differentiation as regards function within the eldership on the basis of 1 Timothy 5:17 - all presbyter/elders rule, some presbyter/elders preach and teach - there is absolute parity of standing. All elders are equal as regards office. The implication of this is that each Presbyterian elder today might rightly be described as a presbyter or a bishop.

This view has much to commend it. While the word 'presbyter' is used in the New Testament to mean older as opposed to younger men, it is clearly also used of office within the Church. Its use in this more 'official' sense is invariably connected with rule and there is not the slightest hint of hierarchy within the New Testament eldership. Elders exercise government in unison and in a parity with each other. Furthermore, there seems no biblical evidence or warrant restricting presbyter or presbyter/bishop, if the equation be accepted, to the ministry of the Word, since the uniform testimony of the New Testament regarding the presbyter's function is that of rule.

It is only fair to note, however, that both Calvin and *The Form of Presbyterian Church-Government* do not appear to enunciate this clearly. Calvin, having grouped those offices already noted as synonymous, mentioned 'governors', on the basis of Romans 12:8 and 1 Corinthians 12:28, as 'seniors

selected from the people to unite with the bishops in pronouncing censures and exercising disciplines' (*Institutes* 4.111.8). *The Form of Presbyterial Church-Government* lists as ordinary officers of the Church, pastors, teachers, other church governors ('which reformed churches commonly call Elders') and deacons. Of the officers of a particular congregation it advised 'one at the least both to labour in word and doctrine, and to rule' and 'others to join in government'. Hence, some Presbyterians conceive of at least one presbyter/bishop in each congregation assisted by elders in government. This is reflected within modern Presbyterianism in the minister or teaching elder assisted by the elders in Kirk Session ruling the congregation.

This, however, should not obscure the basic premise concerning the first strand of the two-fold office that it is by presbyter/bishops, some of whom are pastors and teachers, assisted by elders if so decided, but that it is rule in parity. The correlation of both office and function of the presbyter/bishop as envisaged in the New Testament requires such parity.

The office of 'deacon' is the second strand in the two-fold ministry of the New Testament. Deacons were addressed in the Church at Philippi (Philippians 1:1), and qualifications for a deacon are given in 1 Timothy 3:8f. Discussion has centred on the origin of the diaconate as to whether this is to be seen in the appointment of the Seven in Acts 6. The data is insufficient to warrant a definite identification, but certainly the method and purpose of the appointment of the Seven may well be significant. Reference to 'service' in Romans 12:7f. has been referred to the diaconate and expounded as care for the poor and the administration connected with this. The qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8f throw little light on the function of the deacon. Generally within Presbyterianism this office has been seen as one dealing with administration and financial matters. In many Presbyterian congregations, just as the Kirk Session represents the work of the presbyter/bishop (and elders), so the Congregational Committee undertakes the functions of deacons.

The Presbyterian understanding of the ordinary office of the Church, then, is basically two-fold - that of presbyter, with correlative associations, and deacon.

A plurality of presbyters

A third principle of Presbyterian church government is that rule is by presbyters and that in plurality. It is beyond dispute that rule in the Church is inextricably bound up with the office of presbyter. This is explicit in 1 Timothy 5:17. It is implicit in the presbyters' function as described by Luke in the

Church at Jerusalem and Ephesus, in their position within the churches to which Paul, Peter and James wrote, to a degree personally in the authority of the writer(s) of 2 and 3 John and in the respect due to presbyters on account of their work. Even where the word 'presbyter' is not used, respect for church leaders in the New Testament is couched in the strongest of terms. The clearest index of presbyters' authority is their association with the apostles in the deliberations and decisions of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15.

A corollary of this within Presbyterian perception is that presbyters exercised this rule in plurality. A number of presbyters were appointed over each congregation. "Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church." (Acts 14:23). Paul had left Titus in Crete to 'appoint elders in every town' (Titus 1:5). While linguistically neither of these expressions requires a plurality of presbyters in each congregation, this is the natural meaning and other considerations support this interpretation. The local 'elders of the congregation' in Judaism created a precedent. Paul wrote to a plurality of bishops at Philippi. He addressed the elders at Ephesus as a plurality. References generally within the New Testament are to elders in numbers, and even if they were appointed over several congregations, it is unlikely that the norm would have been one elder for each local congregation. The instance of a PRESBYTERION (1 Timothy 4:14), in all probability a group or body of elders, involved in Timothy's appointment points in the same direction.

Plurality of rule is in no way detrimental to the authority either of the office of presbyter or of the officer as an individual. Rather it enhances the office and provides a practical check against its abuse. Plurality also accords with the parity of the presbyterate and these two features, the plurality and the parity of the presbyterate, characterise Presbyterianism in its essentials.

Wider jurisdiction

A fourth principle of Presbyterian church government is that the rule of presbyters extends beyond the local congregation to the Church at large. This is suggested on a number of grounds:

1. It is consonant with the image of the Church as the body of Christ. The Church as the body of Christ is a unity over which Christ placed these officers. The terms of their rule, particularly in the absence of apostles and prophets, would naturally be co-extensive with the entire Church.
2. It is exemplified in the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15. Appeal was made by the Church at Antioch to the Church at Jerusalem. This in itself is

significant. The apostles associated with the elders to deliberate, decide and enforce the Jerusalem decree on other Churches.

3. It is probable that both in the church at Jerusalem and in the church at Ephesus there was a number of local congregations. These appear to have been governed as a unity by presbyters.

It is from this principle that the concept within Presbyterianism of government by church courts arises. The Kirk Session consists of the minister and elders of the local congregation exercising authority over it. The Presbytery, comprising a number of congregations, is governed by presbyters, made up of teaching elders (ministers) and ruling elders from each congregation. Other courts at wider and national level with similar representation include Synod and General Assembly.

Recent challenges

This brief overview of Presbyterian church government will hopefully help to explain not only the principles underlying Presbyterian polity, but also Presbyterian reaction to issues discussed within the Tripartite Conversations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. These Conversations took place between three participant denominations: The Church of Ireland, The Presbyterian Church in Ireland and The Methodist Church. This reaction could be exemplified on three levels.

Our response to the agreed statement of 1972 has generally been that the eldership did not receive the importance within that proposed scheme which it deserved. This arises from our view of the eldership. Whether we as Presbyterians equate eldership with New Testament presbyterate or view it as a group of seniors chosen to assist the presbyter/bishop in government, the position given to it in the 1972 statement still remains defective. It fails to reflect an adequate appreciation of the essential and prime function of rule connected with the eldership in the New Testament Church.

Secondly, our reactions to the suggestions made in *The Report of the Anglican-Reformed International Commission 1984* is also hopefully clearer. As Presbyterians, the Report urges us to consider not only the 'collegial' and 'communal' dimensions of EPISKOPE in ministry but also the 'personal' dimension as might be seen, for example, in a moderator of presbytery or synod becoming a bishop-in-presbytery. Many of us would respectfully respond by claiming that our view of EPISKOPE has abundant opportunity for personal expression in our presbyter/bishops and/or elders and that collegiality of

function in no way impairs but rather improves the exercise of oversight.

When the World Council of Churches' document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, (the 'Lima Report', 1982), makes representation to us to consider the advantages of the successive laying on of hands by bishops as a sign to strengthen and deepen the continuity which we share with the Church through other aspects of apostolic tradition, again, we find ourselves in difficulties. This would involve a change of our view as to who are bishops and as to what constitutes their office within the Church.

All this might appear to be stubborn intransigence. It is not. It is simply the conviction of principles which we hold to be founded on and agreeable to God's Word. It may be that the way forward is, to concentrate more on function than on office, on ministry rather than on minister. To some extent we have done this already in isolating 'nurture', 'mission' and 'oversight' and in our investigation of these aspects. But our investigation has brought us back again to the concept of oversight and how practically we are to express it within ordained ministry. It may be that we will have to leave for the present unity of ministry as a structure and concentrate on what the unified substance of that ministry ought to be. This will not solve the problem but our listening with a view to understanding each other's position is a valuable prerequisite to a solution.

BEZA AND THE COVENANT

Andrew Woolsey

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Theodore Beza (1519-1605), 'the gentleman from Vezelay' in Burgundy,¹ was educated at Paris, Orleans and Bourges. He came to Geneva in 1548 after abandoning 'country, family, friends and all in order to follow Christ'.² Beza became rector of the new academy in Geneva, and Calvin recognised in him an obvious successor and prepared him accordingly. Consequently, Calvin came to be esteemed by him as his 'father in that which God has taught me'.³ For forty years after Calvin's death, Beza consolidated the Calvinian reform in Geneva, and earned a wide reputation as a Reformed polemicist and a defender of French Protestantism.

Beza's writings were translated and disseminated with amazing rapidity during his own lifetime,⁴ but were soon neglected, eclipsed by the reputation of his predecessor.⁵ The first major study of Beza's theology only appeared thirty-six years ago.⁶ Since then, increased interest has been shown in Beza's works and several aspects of his theology have been examined more closely,⁷ particularly the doctrines of predestination, the Lord's supper, and ecclesiology.

But Beza has not only suffered neglect; he has also been seriously misrepresented. With the tendency in historical theology to alienate Calvin from the 'Reformed orthodoxy' of his successors, it became imperative to find someone to blame, and increasingly Beza has been singled out as the culprit, 'who most directly and powerfully influenced Reformed Protestantism in this direction'.⁸ The charges range from having 'distorted the balance' of Calvin's doctrine to having modified and altered it so that Beza's 'misunderstanding of Calvin produced a bastardized "Calvinism" rather than the theology of the Reformer himself'.⁹ In contrast to Calvin's warm, humanistic, Christocentric, biblical, and soteriological approach to theology, especially to the doctrine of predestination, Beza, we are told, was cold, theocentric, scholastic, supralapsarian, and rationalistic. Thus he became 'the father of hyper-Calvinism of Reformed orthodoxy',¹⁰ whose theology in key areas substantially diverged from that of Calvin.¹¹ It is further alleged that the theology of Moise Amyraut (Amyraldism) and that of Jacobus Arminius as well as later Federal theology were reactions against this Bezean scholastic

orthodoxy which froze everything in the eternal decree.¹²

One of the fruits of a misguided view of Beza's doctrine of predestination is the claim that he has little or nothing to say about the theology of the covenant. Robert Letham dismissed it as 'negligible...being submerged by predestination'. He furnished but one reference from the *Confessio fidei* with the twofold comment that the covenant was mentioned by Beza only under the mediatorial work of Christ, and that 'Beza's supralapsarian construction of election eclipses the covenant'. He concluded that Beza's 'reflection on the covenant was noticeable by its absence'.¹³ The reason for this assumption that Beza could have no covenantal theology stems from the false assumption that a rigid predestinarianism dominated his theology and determined his methodology.

Now, it is true that the concept of the covenant was not so intensively woven into Beza's theology as it was in Calvin's, but it surfaces significantly in practically every variety of his writings, and in a way that clearly shows that he regarded it as an integral and accepted part of Reformed tradition and theology. Our aim is to demonstrate that this is so in some areas of covenantal thought.

Unity and Continuity

Beza actually structured one of his works, the *Sermons sur le Cantique des Cantiques* (1586), entirely on the covenant idea.¹⁴ This he regarded as the only way in which the message of *Solomon's Song* could be interpreted for the Church. He began by saying that the Holy Spirit pursued this motif because there is not a more sacred, 'strait or firm bond' than that of marriage. Other 'contracts and bargains' which obligate and bind men are too often concerned with material things, and not always reciprocal. In marriage, however, God himself is the 'principal author' who has declared the bond to be indissoluble, and 'the obligation or bond of both parties is so mutual and reciprocal, that neither of the parties is free at his own choice, and both of them become as it were one person by the conjunction of marriage'. This, Beza concluded, was 'the sum and scope of this Canticle', and also the sum and scope of the believer's relationship with God.¹⁵

This was not a manner of speaking which Beza derived solely from the *Canticle*. In *Quaestionum et Responstonum pars altera* and in *The Pope's Canons* he employed the idea of the covenant in the same way, referring to it as 'a covenant of comfort, hope and peace' between Christ and his spouse.¹⁶ Christ was the spiritual bridegroom in covenantal union with his people in the

Church, and by the operation of the Holy Spirit 'is so near and so powerfully joined with us, by the means of faith which apprehends him, that he quickens us to life eternal, working in our understanding and will to repair in us...the image of God'.¹⁷

In the *Sermons sur le Cantique* Beza expounded the unity and continuity of this covenant from the time of Adam down to the New Testament Church. It was a spiritual covenant in which Christ betrothed to himself his Church by the promise made to Adam concerning the seed of the woman. This was 'afterward reconfirmed to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'. It was further foreshadowed in the Levitical priesthood, the ceremonial law, and other types and shadows of the promises of the gospel.¹⁸ This was done in a manner sufficient for the salvation of the ancient fathers, through Christ alone.¹⁹ They too belonged to the one Church. They were looking for Christ, and rejoiced to see his day, though they 'saw him not but far off in the promises and shadows of the Law'.²⁰

This unity of the covenant Beza emphasized again and again. Kendall's claim that Beza stressed the differences between the Testaments rather than the unity finds no support here or elsewhere in Beza's works.²¹ Beza believed that the differences of manifestation in the covenant in the Old and New Testaments warranted the description of old and new covenants, but when he expounded these differences he was extremely careful to safeguard the unity of the covenant. The new differed from the old in respect of a fuller exhibition and declaration of the doctrine of salvation, in the means of communicating the message, in the degree of illumination, and in what Beza called the 'thick wall'. By this he meant that the old covenant was restricted largely to the Jews, whereas in the new the wall was broken down and it was offered to all. Beza distinguished, like Calvin, between what pertained to the covenant outwardly and 'the principal point which was the covenant of salvation'.²² For Beza, the message of both covenants was the same - Jesus Christ. In the old covenant it was Jesus Christ to come, in the new it was Jesus Christ come. These were not two Christs, just as there were not two Gods, two faiths, or two Churches. The difference, Beza concluded, consisted only in 'the diverse dispensing and manifesting of Jesus Christ'.²³

That this was not a convenient one-off exposition of the covenant, due to the nature of the book being dealt with, is evident from the presence of the very same teaching in his other sermons. For example, in a book of *Sermons sur l'histoire de la passion* there are lengthy passages devoted to demonstrating both the unity of substance and the difference of administration in the covenant. One example will suffice:

'The affinity exists in the fact that both are in essence a contract of agreement and appeasement of God towards his church for the salvation of men by the one and only Mediator, our Saviour, Jesus, to lead us to eternal life, both the patriarchs and ourselves being saved by this same Saviour. But the difference exists in the fact that the patriarchs had to be content with the measure of revelation that was given to them in different degrees and accompanied by different shadows and ceremonies under the Levitical administration. But the fullness of time having been completed, the Son of God came visibly and personally in flesh to declare very clearly and very fully all the council of God the Father regarding our salvation'.²⁴

Beza went on to explain that while the substance of the covenant remained the same and the ancient fathers were also saved by Christ, the differences showed 'the tremendous advantage' which those in the New Testament Church had over the ancient people of God. The latter were truly enlightened in the knowledge of Christ but it was '*en obscurité*', whereas the former have the 'great light of the presence of God's own Son'.²⁵

Nor was this emphasis on the unity of the covenant confined to Beza's sermon material. In the *Confessio fidei* he also affirmed that there was only ever one Mediator ordained and promised from Adam onwards, and who 'was published and preached by the Patriarchs and Prophets: was also figured diverse ways under the Law, as it is at large contained in the books of the Old Testament, to the end that man might be saved by faith in Jesus Christ for to come'.²⁶ He continued, 'There was but one covenant of salvation between God and man if we consider the substance thereof, which is Jesus Christ. But in consideration of the circumstances there are two testaments or covenants'. The old, he said, 'set forth Jesus Christ but afar off, and hidden under shadows and figures'.²⁷ It was therefore abolished by the coming of the new, for the simple reason that Christ came 'to fulfil the covenant promised to the ancient fathers and prophesied by the mouth of the prophets'.²⁸

The *New Testament Annotations* carried the same message: 'They are called two covenants, one of the Old Testament, and the other of the New: which were not two indeed, but in respect of the times, and the diversity of the government'.²⁹ The outward things of the Old Testament had respect to the new covenant which was promised, for

'Christ shed his blood also for the Fathers: for he was shadowed by those old ceremonies, otherwise, unless they had served to represent him, they had become nothing at all profitable. Therefore, this Testament is called the latter, not as concerning the virtue of it, (that is to say, remission of sins) but in respect of that time, wherein the thing itself was furnished, that is to say, wherein Christ was indeed exhibited to the world, and fulfilled all things which were necessary to our salvation'.³⁰

(i) *The Sacraments*

The unity of the covenant was again heavily underlined in Beza's discussion of the sacraments. The sacraments, he taught, were ordained by God for the increase of faith. God showed his grace and goodness to Adam by joining it to sacramental sacrifices and figures of Christ to come, and afterwards when he renewed this covenant of grace with Abraham, he joined it to the sacrament of circumcision, and later in the time of Moses to the passover.³¹ These sacraments of the old covenant were ordained only until the coming of Christ, and were then replaced by those of the new, which have the same end, to direct the faithful to Christ. There may be a difference in the signs and ceremonies, and in the number, but they all have the one end in view.³²

Beza used the idea of the covenant repeatedly in this respect during the eucharistic controversy. In a treatise in response to Claude de Saintes, he devoted practically the entire eighth chapter to an exposition of the covenant.³³ The same pattern was followed in discussing the sacraments in part two of the *Quaestionum et Responsionum*.

(ii) *Law and Gospel*

The unity of the covenant continued as a prominent feature of Beza's teaching on the law in relation to the gospel. In this context he naturally emphasised the sovereignty of grace in the covenant. The law when viewed in its totality was not contrary to the gospel. Even before the time of the written law, 'there was the treaty of these fiancailles', that is, those things that pertain to the betrothal of Christ and the church. The time of the law then set forth the Bridegroom in types and shadows, and eventually at Christ's coming 'the contract of the new covenant' was established in its present words. The law properly understood was but one of the degrees in the unfolding of the spiritual covenant, the body and substance of which is our Lord Jesus Christ.³⁴

The reconciling work of Christ was essentially a law work as well as a manifestation of the God's love. As second Adam, and Mediator of the covenant, Christ accomplished all righteousness,³⁵ made a full satisfaction for sins, and paid fully the debt owed to a broken law.³⁶ This is what was involved in fulfilling 'the covenant promised to the ancient fathers and prophesied by the mouth of the prophets'.³⁷ In his offices as the Mediator of the new covenant Christ fulfilled for his people all the requirements of the *foedus legale*.³⁸ Beza rejoiced that 'That fearful hatred of God against every transgression of the law, which could in no wise be appeased but by a most perfect satisfaction', had been turned away in the death of Christ so that 'we are clad with such a

righteousness as the law of God requireth'.³⁹

(iii) *Union with Christ*

Beza's view of the place of the law of God and the work of Christ in the believer's life was far from being 'legalistic'. For him the righteousness of the law could not be separated from the rule of the Spirit. Paul, he said, was not playing the Sophist by urging Christians to walk in the Spirit. Rather, he was urging what the law commanded. The Spirit of Christ was 'the true ruler and guider of life'.⁴⁰ Even the *Summa totius Christianismi* (1555), the work usually referred to by those who wish to describe Beza's theology as purely speculative and scholastic and legalistic, has a very warm pastoral concern, and it is important to note in it the significance of the doctrine of the Spirit. For Beza, faith, the work of the Spirit, and election were inseparable.⁴¹ The place at which the work accomplished by Christ began to be applied was one of the major emphases in Beza's writings, namely the union of the believer with Christ, or his 'engrafting into Christ'.⁴² The eternal decree of God was not only to give the Son of God to believers, but also to give them to the Son, that is, to unite them with Christ. This was explained in terms of the covenant. Where the work of Christ represented the fulfilling of the covenant promised, union with Christ represented the covenant coming to fruition in the life of the believer through the gospel.⁴³

Beza was quite insistent that union with Christ could only be conceived of as covenantal union. When he addressed himself to the question as to what was meant by union with Christ, he replied that it could not be a union of substances, therefore it was a spiritual union in which Christ was given to his people by the benefit of the Father.⁴⁴ In other words, Beza conceived of this union as not merely coming into existence through spiritual regeneration, it was something that reached back into the eternal correspondence between the Father and the Son. Beza did not use the term 'covenant of redemption' but it is significant that he did introduce a pre-temporal dimension in discussing the nature of covenantal union. This union was made effectual in the believer when the Holy Spirit in his regenerating work linked together what was in distance so far apart. This was a great mystery and ultimately beyond human comprehension,⁴⁵ but men could understand something of it from the analogy of human wedlock. 'Therefore', Beza concluded, 'this coupling into one flesh, is not of nature, but of covenant: and so also is our communion with Christ into one Spirit'.⁴⁶

The *Sermons sur le Cantique* were, as already mentioned, basically an exposition of this covenantal union. There, Beza interpreted the entire

Christian life in terms of the union of Christ with his Church, and also extended it to the future state as well. This covenantal bond was the means by which all the benefits and blessings of salvation in this life were to be obtained.⁴⁷ But just as 'the ancient church having the gages and pledges of this spiritual marriage' were enabled to partake of the blessings of the Bridegroom before his first appearing, and were constantly 'beseeching him to approach yet nearer unto her, and in person', so those who 'are fallen unto this happy time' in which the Bridegroom has been manifest in the flesh causing the light of salvation to be more clearly revealed, ought more fervently and earnestly to be seeking and praying for the final consummation of this marriage at his coming again.⁴⁸

Mutuality and Conditionality

Beza remained true to the Reformers' stress on the priority of grace in the establishing of the covenant. God himself was the 'principal author' in the contract of marriage.⁴⁹ Beza's presentation of the doctrine of the covenant however, was by no means one-sided. Like Calvin, he frequently referred to the mutuality of the covenant with its 'reciprocal' (a favourite word) obligations, and the conditionality of the promises of the covenant.

In describing the union of Christ and believers, Beza said, 'The obligation or bond of both parties is so mutual and reciprocal, that neither of the parties is free at his own choice, and both of them become as it were one person by the conjunction of marriage'.⁵⁰ Here is a close parallel to Calvin's view of the covenant in terms of the self-binding of God, and the binding of the believer to God. Beza added that this mutuality served to comfort those in covenant, and stirred and quickened them concerning their duties according to the tenor of the covenant.⁵¹

(i) Faith

Faith was the 'excellent instrument' by which the covenantal 'engrafting' into Christ was effected, and the fruits of this union were communion with Christ and the conforming of the life of the believer to Christ's righteousness in good works.⁵² Both faith and good works were viewed by Beza as covenantal conditions. We need to consider these more fully.

Beza set forth the conditional nature of faith in various writings. True faith was more than mere assent to the history of Christ. Devils could have that. Full saving faith was the proper and peculiar possession of the elect, and stood in this, 'that we apply to ourselves as our own, Christ universally and indifferently offered to all men'. This was what it meant to believe, to take hold

of, or to embrace Christ.⁵³ In the *Summa totius*, Beza depicted God setting before his people the ‘grace and gentleness of the gospel: yet adding this condition: if they believe in Christ, who alone can deliver them, and give the power and right to obtain the heavenly inheritance’.⁵⁴ In the *Confessio fidei*, he said, ‘Faith embraces and appropriates to itself Jesus Christ, and all that is in him for as much as he is given to us on that condition that we believe in him’.⁵⁵ Just as a sick person could not profit from good medicine except he use it, or a hungry man benefit from a full table except he eat of it, so the remedies of Christ against the wrath of God and eternal death will be set before us in vain if we do not use them.⁵⁶

Faith then was an active thing as far as salvation was concerned: ‘Each man must apply the promise of eternal life in Christ peculiarly to himself by believing’.⁵⁷ In the case of parents the conditions of the covenant were applicable not only in relation to themselves, but also to their children. Leaving the question of whether or not the children are elect in the secret judgment of God, Beza went on, ‘we doubt not, but that the faithful parents, do according to the conditions of the covenant, apprehend the promise both to themselves, and also to their children’.⁵⁸ In this context he also spoke of the responsibility to catechise and instruct children in their duties and obligations as they come to the years of discretion.⁵⁹

The quotations above, taken by themselves, may tend to give the impression that for Beza faith was purely bilateral, something that belonged to man by nature and which he must exercise for salvation, but this would be distortion of Beza’s doctrine of faith. All these references were accompanied by strong affirmations that the saving faith of the elect was not their own, nor could they exercise it apart from the enabling grace of the Holy Spirit. In the *Summa totius*, Beza said that the setting forth of the gospel and the condition of believing would be in vain unless joined with the inward power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit caused men to feel their sinful calamity and misery, but it was also he who created faith in them, ‘that they may be able to perform the condition annexed or knit to the preaching of the Gospel’.⁶⁰

Faith, Beza never tired of repeating, was the gift of God’s ‘mere and free grace’, not something men have by nature, but something engrafted into the elect by God himself.⁶¹ Man by nature could have some insights into the history of Christ, but if faith was not gifted by God then the revelation of God would just never be thought of.⁶² This gift of faith was created by the Spirit ordinarily through the Word and sacraments. It had to be God’s work, because it was ‘most necessary, that our salvation should remain in surer hands than our own’.⁶³ The sick person needed to be disposed to using the medicine, and only

the physician who provided it could dispose him to do this.⁶⁴

So Beza, together with the Geneva academy, affirmed

‘this faith to be the mere gift of God, peculiar only to the elect...this faith doth God create, at what time, and in what measure it pleases him, strengthening and increasing the same, by little and little, though never perfecting it while we are here: yet granting so much of it in this life as is needful for the elect to obtain the victory’.⁶⁵

From the foregoing, the twofold stress in Beza’s presentation of the covenant is clearly evident. There were both bilateral and unilateral elements to it. He left the resolution of the apparent tension between them in the distinction between the eternal decree and its execution. A condition annexed to the ordinance, he explained, did not mean that the ordinance depended on the condition.⁶⁶ This was simply another way of saying that such conditions were consequent conditions and not antecedent. ‘The ordinance must needs be distinguished from the execution of it’, he said. It was the execution of the ordinance of election that depended on the faith that takes hold of Christ, but the ordinance of election itself was the cause of faith.⁶⁷ This meant that the cause of salvation from beginning to end was ‘the only mere grace and favour of God who has elected and called to salvation’. God also ordained and appointed the means by which he executed his eternal counsel regarding election and salvation. This alone explained why ‘that faith created in us by grace, apprehends and takes hold of Jesus Christ, and of life in him’.⁶⁸

(ii) *Good Works*

Faith for Beza was central to the issue of assurance. He never ever implied that assurance was based in works or preaching. He stressed that it was not rooted in anything in us, but in faith which fully and perfectly apprehends Christ.⁶⁹ The effects of faith, however, were also important. In times of affliction and doubt ‘we may gather faith’ (*i.e.*, strengthen faith) by a consideration of its effects.⁷⁰ In this way the believer did not ground himself in good works either in part or whole, but they did help to ‘assure more and more of our salvation, not as causes thereof, but as testimonies and effects of the cause, to wit, of our faith’.⁷¹

Consequently, in strengthening faith good works also assisted to ‘assure us of our eternal election, for faith is necessarily joined to election’.⁷² In times of doubt regarding election it was useless to ‘rest in conjectures’ of the human brain, or to try to penetrate to the secret counsel of God. The important thing was to hear the voice of God calling to faith in Christ, the only Mediator. Beza,

therefore, exhorted that attention should be given to the plain truth of God's Word and that a consideration of the effects of faith was where to begin, that is, 'whether you be justified and sanctified...by faith in Christ', because sanctification 'is a certain effect of faith, or rather of Jesus Christ dwelling in us by faith'.⁷³

Nowhere did Beza divorce faith from works or make works rather than faith the basis of assurance. Always he pointed to Christ and to the faith which unites him to his people. Faith as the root of assurance was ordinarily sufficient for the comfort of the believer, but the testimony of the effects of faith could help in times of affliction, temptation, and doubt. But even then it was faith in Christ which was the answer, since it was union with Christ by faith which brought forth such effects and works.⁷⁴ It followed, because of the inseparability of faith and good works, or of justification and sanctification, which was as pronounced in Beza's thinking as it was in Calvin's,⁷⁵ that if faith was regarded as a covenantal condition, good works should be likewise. In view of the centrality of faith and the place of works relative to faith (*i.e.*, the fruit of faith) in Beza's theology, it is difficult to understand the accusations of 'legalism' and 'the brutal demand for good works' made against him in this respect.⁷⁶ Beza continually insisted that there was no worthiness, or merit, or desert whatsoever to be attached to the works of the saints or anyone else. Saving merit could only be found in Christ alone.⁷⁷

When united with Christ, however, the regenerating work of the Spirit begun within the believer was manifested in three ways: in the mortification of natural corruption, in the burying of the old man, and in the resurrection of the new man which was evidenced by the continual exercising of good works and prayer.⁷⁸ Sanctification, like justification, was wholly of the grace of God and proceeded from Christ. Engrafting into Christ, Beza maintained, could never be separated from death to sin and a life of righteousness - 'Sanctification is so joined and knit to our grafting into Christ that it can by no means be separated'. Therefore, any man who was continuing to live in sin and showing no sign of repentance not only lacked sanctification, he had never been made a partaker of Christ by faith. The one was a testimony of the other.⁷⁹

The rule of life for the Christian was still the moral law of God. In his *Lex Dei, Moralis, Ceremonialis, et Civilis* (1577), Beza followed Calvin's *tertius usus legis*. The third use was the rule of life for our sanctification through the Spirit of the gospel.⁸⁰ The will of God was the 'most certain rule' for the believer in following a life of good works, and there could be no better witness of the will of God than his holy law as outlined in the decalogue.⁸¹ The idea of obedience to the will or law of God as a covenantal obligation and duty

was expressed early on by Beza. In his poem, *Abraham sacrificant*, one of the basic lessons was

‘That if God will us anything to do
 We must straightway obedient be thereto’.⁸²
 And this obedience to God’s ‘most perfect pure commandments’ was
 interpreted by the patriarch’s servants as
 ‘for the covenant’s sake
 Which God himself did make,
 Between him and our master dear’.⁸³

This kind of obedience represented for Beza the secret of good government in the Church under the old administration of the covenant, and remained so under the new.⁸⁴ The Holy Spirit, sanctifying the hearts of the elect, made them cheerfully to consecrate themselves to God and to observe his law.⁸⁵ It was failure at this point which brought decline in the Church. The covenant was violated then, and admonishment and restoration were necessary.⁸⁶

It was because none of the regenerate could attain perfectly to keeping God’s rule of righteousness that continual imputation of Christ’s righteousness was necessary for both justification and sanctification, for ‘if the very best works of even the holiest men, should be tried by the rule of God’s will, that is to say by the law: I say they be sins’.⁸⁷ This then raised the question: How could God be pleased with such works or accept them? Beza’s answer reflected Calvin exactly. He said that God loved all righteousness; therefore after a sort he is pleased with that righteousness which he himself has ‘grafted in and sticks in us’. This is not because of any merit or worthiness in the works it produced. They were still polluted by our natural corruption. Yet God delighted in these works, imperfect as they were, out of his own infinite goodness and grace. The works of the believer, as well as his person, were justified through the death of Christ.⁸⁸

This was Beza’s way of saying that the conditions of the covenant were contained, and fulfilled, in the covenant of grace for the elect. In no other way could their works be acceptable to God, ‘For God cannot (not even in covenant) allow any other righteousness as worthy of that name, than such as is fully answerable to the law in all points, except he will be repugnant with himself’.⁸⁹ The good works of the Christian were called good not because they deserved eternal life, but only because they proceeded from a good source - the regenerating work of the Spirit and also because they provided the excellent benefits of being a witness of faith to the believer and a testimony to others.⁹⁰

Good works, then, were seen by Beza as a necessity in the life of the believer, but they were not a 'brutal', 'legalistic' necessity; they were necessary only because they were the fruit of a necessary faith.⁹¹ This explained why Scripture could speak of good works saving men. It was simply because there were no good works outside of faith in Jesus Christ.⁹² The good works were 'the testimony and effects inseparably following of faith, and that faith witnessing before God according to the covenant of the Gospel'.⁹³ Faith was the central issue in Beza's soteriology. He repeatedly stressed that the amount of space which he devoted to dealing with good works was because he was being constantly accused by his Catholic opponents of emphasising faith to the point of disallowing good works altogether.⁹⁴

Summary

When the wider field of Beza's work is taken into consideration, and more attention is given to the content of his theology, rather than to over-concentration on structure and order of loci (which in Beza is very varied, in any case), a significantly different picture of the man and his work emerges from that which has often been painted in the past. The supposed differences between Calvin and Beza, are very difficult to sustain. It is certainly an unwarranted assumption to call in such as the basis for concluding that 'There is little surprise, therefore, when we find Beza devoting little attention to such things as the covenant of grace'.⁹⁵

From the evidence examined it is difficult to fathom how anyone could say this. It is perfectly clear that Beza devoted more than a little attention to the idea of the covenant. There is in his works what amounts to a fairly substantial theology of the covenant. It was of sufficient importance to provide the basic theological structure for one of his publications, and this was a later work from the time when Beza was said to have become more scholastic, speculative, and supralapsarian.⁹⁶

More importantly, the doctrine of the covenant was integrated somewhere into the content of virtually all Beza's theological works. He did not just mention the doctrine of the covenant in relation to one other doctrine, as alleged.⁹⁷ It was related to all the doctrines which are usually considered to be foundational in any valid theology of the covenant, including the law of God, the person and work of Christ, predestination, union with Christ, faith, and good works.

Finally, on the issue of the place of faith and good works in relation to assurance of election and salvation, the thesis of Kendall and others that Beza's

commitment to supralapsarianism led him to separate Christ, faith, and good works, and to base assurance in the latter, takes little cognisance of the full-orbed content and interrelatedness of Beza's thought.⁹⁸ For Beza the question of faith and good works was inseparable from election in Christ and from covenantal union with Christ. Despite Bray's assertion to the contrary, Beza followed the pattern of Calvin here. Christ was 'the ultimate resolution for the question of assurance'.⁹⁹ Good works were the inseparable effects of covenantal union with Christ through faith, and could aid assurance especially in times of weakness, affliction, and temptation by pointing back to their infallible source - the merits of Christ alone.

Beza's treatment of the covenant was obviously not as detailed as that of Calvin. Beza did not have the same opportunity in commentaries and exegetical works to develop this area of thought; witness his complaint about being diverted by controversies from devoting more time to direct teaching of the Scriptures which he saw as the primary task of ministers.¹⁰⁰ In the not insignificant contribution he did make in the area of covenantal thought, however, he followed basically the same lines as his 'father in that which God has taught me'.

Notes

1. J. Raitt, *The Eucharistic Theology of Theodore Beza: Development of the Reformed Doctrine*, (Chambersburg, 1972), 1. The standard work on Beza's life is P-F. Geisendorf, *Théodore de Bèze*, (Geneva, 1949), which superseded H.M. Baird, *Theodore Beza: The Counsellor of the French Reformation*, (London, 1899). Short biographical snatches are to be found in H.E. Dosker, 'Theodore Beza', *PTR*, 4. (1906), 501-512; Raitt, *Shapers of Religious Traditions*, (Yale, 1981), 89-94; J.S. Bray, *Theodore Beza's Doctrine of Predestination*, (Nieuwkoop, 1975), 22-43.
2. Quoted in E.G. Léonard, *A History of Protestantism*, (London, 1967), 2.1-2.
3. T. Beza, *Historie of the Life and Death of Maister John Calvin*, (London, 1564), Aiiiib; cf. *An Exhortation to the Reformation of the Church*, (London, 1561), 35.
4. See STC Nos. 1997-2054. 1.83-84.
5. Compared with Calvin, Beza has been quickly passed over in works of historical and dogmatic theology. Dorner, *History of Protestant Theology* and Harnack, *History of Dogma* ignore him. Cunningham has no more than four references to Beza in his *Historical Theology*, 1.236; 2.543-544, 564, 573, but does more justice to him in *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*. 345-412. Barth rarely mentions him in his *Church Dogmatics*, 34.449; 43.24. J. Pelikan does little better in *The Christian Tradition*, IV.192, 202, 215, 218ff, 255; and Cunliffe-Jones's *History of Christian Doctrine*, 373, has but one passing reference. Even J.T. McNeill's admirable *History and Character of Calvinism* keeps Beza very much in the shade.
6. W. Kickel, *Vernunft und Offenbarung bei Theodor Beza: zum Problem des Verhältnisses von Theologie, Philosophie und Staat*, (Neukirchen, 1967).
7. J. Dantine, 'Die Prädestinationslehre bei Calvin und Beza'. PhD Thesis (Göttingen University, 1965); Raitt, *The Eucharistic Theology*; Bray, *Beza's Doctrine of Predestination*; T. Maruyama, *The Ecclesiology of Theodore Beza*, (Geneva, 1978). There

- are numerous articles, all ably assisted by the ongoing publication of the *Correspondence de Théodore de Bèze*, eds. A. Dufour et al. (Geneva, 1960-).
- 8 Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, (Madison, 1969), 129. For this stream of thought see also: H.E. Weber, *Reformation, Orthodoxie und Rationalismus*, (Gütersloh, 1937-1951), 1.2; E. Bizer, *Frühorthodoxie und Rationalismus*, (Zurich, 1963), 6-15; B. Hall, 'Calvin against the Calvinists', *John Calvin*, ed. G.E. Duffield, (Abingdon, 1966), 19-37; J. Dantine, 'Die Prädestinationslehre'; 'Das christologische Problem in Rahmen der Prädestinationslehre von Theodor Beza', *ZKG*, 77. (1966) 81-96; 'Les Tableaux sur la Doctrine de la Predestination par Théodore de Bèze', *Revue de Theologie et de Philosophie*, 16. (1966), 365-377; P. Toon, *Hyper-Calvinism*, (London, 1967), 13-16; C. Bangs, *Arminius: A Study of the Dutch Reformation*, (Nashville, 1971), 64-80; D. Steinmetz, *Reformers in the Wings*, (Philadelphia, 1971), 162-171; 'The Theology of Calvin and Calvinism', *Reformation Europe: A Guide to Research*, ed. S. Ozment, (St.Louis, 1982), 211-232; J.W. Beardslee III, ed. *Reformed Dogmatics*, (Grand Rapids, 1977), 19-20; R.T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*, (Oxford, 1979), 29-38; M.C. Bell, 'Was Calvin a Calvinist?', *SJT*, 36. (1983), 535-540; A.C.Clifford, *Atonement and Justification*, (Oxford, 1990), 12-13, 69-70, 82, 95.
- 9 Hall, 'Calvin against the Calvinists', 25; L.B. Tipson, 'The Development of a Puritan Understanding of Conversion'. PhD Thesis (Yale University, 1972), 111.
- 10 Steinmetz, *Reformers*, 169.
- 11 Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism*, 38.
- 12 Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, 265. For further discussion of Beza and Reformed scholasticism see A.A. Woolsey, 'Unity and Continuity in Covenantal Thought' PhD Thesis (Glasgow University, 1988), 2.51-61.
- 13 R.W.A. Letham, 'Saving Faith and Assurance in Reformed Theology'. PhD Thesis (Aberdeen University, 1979), 1.143, 148, 153, 277; W.W. McKee, 'The Idea of the Covenant in Early English Puritanism'. PhD Thesis (Yale University, 1948) 19, also concluded that the idea of the covenant was not elaborated or developed in Beza.
- 14 Beza, *Sermons sur les Trois Premiers Chapitres du Cantique des Cantiques de Solomon*, ([Geneva], 1586); trs. J. Harmer, *Maister Bezaes Sermons upon the First Three Chapters of the Canticle of Canticles*, (Oxford, 1587). The sermons were preached during 1584. In them, Beza followed the traditional allegorical interpretation but stressed the historical reality of the type.
- 15 *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:1 (5).
- 16 *The Other Parte of Christian Questions and Answers*, trs. J. Field, (London, 1580), E3a; *The Pope's Canons*, trs. J. S[tocker], (London, 1584), Gijb-Giija.
- 17 *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:1 (7).
- 18 *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:1 (9).
- 19 *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:2 (19).
- 20 *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:4-5 (72, cf. 78-79).
- 21 *Sermons on Canticle*, 2:11-13 (269, 289), 3:11 (433) etc.; Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism*, 36.
- 22 *Sermons on Canticle*, 2:8-10 (249-251).
- 23 *Sermons on Canticle*, 2:15-17 (299).
- 24 *Sermons sur l'Histoire de la Passion et sepulture de nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ*, ([Geneva], 1592), 938; cf. 1051-1052.
- 25 *Sermons sur Passion*, 939-941.
- 26 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe of the Christian Fayth*, trs. R. F[yll], (London, 1585), 14; cf. *Another Briefe Confession of Fayth* (appended to *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*), 330; and *An Answer made ... unto ... the Cardinall of Lorraine*, (Edinburgh, 1562), 86, where Beza cites Augustine including 'Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and the prophets' as members of Christ in the church.
- 27 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 15.
- 28 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 18b (error in pagination).
- 29 *New Testament Annotations*, trs. L. Tomson, (London, 1599), Gal. 4:21-26; cf. Rom. 10:6.
- 30 *N.T. Annotations*, Heb. 9:6.

- 31 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 100.
- 32 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 102-104; cf. 126-128, 130-131; cf. *N.T. Annotations*, Rom. 4:9-11; *An Other Briefe Confession*, 337ff.
- 33 *Responsio ad...P. Claudii de Sanctes*, (Geneva, 1567), in *Tractationes Theologicae*, 3 vols. (Geneva, 1570-1582), 3.17-31; see 10, 16 etc. Cf. also *Responsio ad Francisci Baldvini*, (Geneva, 1563), in *Tractationes Theologicae*, 2.200.
- 34 *Sermons on Canticle*, 3:11 (433); cf. *Propositions and Principles of Divinitie*, trs. [J. Penry] (Edinburgh, 1591), 225-226.
- 35 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 15-16, 18; *Propositions and Principles*, 46. Beza frequently used the concept of the second Adam, e.g. *A Booke of Christian Questions and Answers*, trs. A. Golding, (London, 1572), 44aff; *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:2 (30); *Sermons sur Passion*, 88-92, 185, 790-792; *Sermons sur l'Histoire de la Resurrection de nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ*, ([Geneva], 1593), 41-42, 289.
- 36 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 20-21; *An Other Briefe Confession*, 325-326; *Questions and Answers*, 3b, 7b.
- 37 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 18b (irregular pagination); 37a-43a; *Questions and Answers*, 37a; *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:3 (50).
- 38 *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:7 (116-118); 12-14 (190).
- 39 *Propositions and Principles*, 111-112; *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 44.
- 40 *N.T. Annotations*, Gal.5:22-23.
- 41 *The Treasure of Trueth*, trs. I. Stockwood, (London, 1581), 8b-K3b.
- 42 *N.T. Annotations*, Rom. 6:2-4; 8:9; *Treasure of Trueth*, H8a; cf. Calvin, *Inst.*, II.8.6, 18; III.2.30, 35; III.6.3; III.11.10; III.22.7, 10; III.24.5; IV.15.6, 12; IV.16.17; *Com. on Hos.*, 2:19-20; *Com. on Mal.*, 2:14; *Com. on John*, 15:1ff; *Com. on II Cor.*, 7:1; *Com. on Eph.*, 2:4; 5:29-32; *Com. on Phil.*, 3:12; *Com. on I John*, 3:5, 5:11, 20; *Sermons on Job*, 31:9-15.
- 43 *Treasure of Trueth*, E4a.
- 44 *Questions and Answers*, 33b-35a, 37a; cf. Calvin, *Inst.*, II.10.2; III.14.6; *Com. on Hos.*, 2:19, 23.
- 45 *Questions and Answers*, 35b; cf. Calvin, *Inst.*, IV.17.1, 7.
- 46 *Questions and Answers*, 36b; cf. *The Other Parte*, E3a, where Beza pointed to the use of the idea of a 'covenant of men' and of the marriage covenant as the only suitable illustrations of the union of Christ with his people; cf. Calvin, *Inst.*, II.12.7; III.1.3; IV.19.38; *Com. on Eph.*, 5:28-33; *Sermons on Eph.*, 5:31-33 (614-615).
- 47 *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:2 (21), 2:1-2 (204); *Sermons sur Passion*, 46; *Pope's Canons*, Gijb-Giijb; cf. Calvin, *Inst.*, III.15.5; IV.15.6; IV.17.38.
- 48 *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:2 (21), 2:15-17 (302-303).
- 49 *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:1 (5).
- 50 *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:1 (5).
- 51 *Sermons on Canticle*, 2:15-17 (297); *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 102.
- 52 *Two Very Lerned Sermons*, trs. T.W[ilcocks], (London, 1588), 47; cf. *Questions and Answers*, 38b-39b; *Job Expounded*, (Cambridge, [1589]), 1:2 (C1b).
- 53 *Treasure of Trueth*, F5b; *Questions and Answers*, 23a-b, 39a-b; *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 30; *Propositions and Principles*, 47-48.
- 54 *Treasure of Trueth*, F1a; cf. *A Little Catechism*, (London, 1578), Aiiia.
- 55 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 31.
- 56 *An Other Briefe Confession*, 334-335, 325; cf. 328; *N.T. Annotations*, Rom.3:27-28.
- 57 *Questions and Answers*, 24a; cf. 23a.
- 58 *Propositions and Principles*, 178.
- 59 *The Other Parte*, I2a-b; cf. *Sermons on Canticle*, 3:5-8 (353).
- 60 *Treasure of Trueth*, F1b-F2a, 5b; cf. *Questions and Answers*, 29b-30b.
- 61 *Two Lerned Sermons*, 47; *N.T. Annotations*, Rom.3:3; *A Little Catechism*, Aiiia etc.
- 62 *Questions and Answers*, 23b; *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 26-27, 30-31, 79, 81; cf. also *Job Expounded*, G1a, K3b, H2b; *Sermons sur Passion*, 547; *Sermons sur Resurrection*, 271.
- 63 *Propositions and Principles*, 49-50.
- 64 *An Other Briefe Confession*, 329, 334.
Propositions and Principles, 48-49.

- 66 *Questions and Answers*, 82a.
- 67 *Questions and Answers*, 82a-b. Beza differentiated at this point the case of the reprobate. While the ordinance of election was the efficient cause of faith, so that salvation was entirely of grace, the ordinance of reprobation was not the cause of unbelief. The will of man, while still subject to the ordinance, was the first efficient cause of unbelief. With that, said Beza, we must be content.
- 68 *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:12-14 (190).
- 69 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 76.
- 70 *Treasure of Trueth*, K6a-b.
- 71 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 68.
- 72 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 71.
- 73 *Treasure of Trueth*, I6b, K5b-K6a; *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 71-73.
- 74 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 47ff; cf. *An Other Briefe Confession*, 225.
- 75 *N.T. Annotations*, Rom.6:24, Eph.1:4; *Questions and Answers*, 53b; *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:3 (49-50); *Sermons sur Passion*, 68; *Sermons sur Resurrection*, 25-26.
- 76 Bray, 'The Value of Works', 83. The statement that 'one discovers in Beza's works a bold, almost brutal, demand for good works', is a misrepresentation of Beza's position.
- 77 *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:3 (50); *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 36-43, 44-46.
- 78 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 47-52.
- 79 *N.T. Annotations*, Rom.6:2-4, 8:4, 8:9.
- 80 *Lex Dei, Moralis, Ceremonialis, et Civilis, ex Libris Mosis Excerpta*, (Geneva, 1577), 1.
- 81 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 53-55; *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:2 (37); *Propositions and Principles*, 59-63.
- 82 *A Tragedie of Abraham's Sacrifice*, trs. A. Golding, (London, 1577), 17.
- 83 *Abraham's Sacrifice*, 16.
- 84 *Sermons on Canticle*, 3:9-10 (260ff).
- 85 *An Other Briefe Confession*, 335; cf. *N.T. Annotations*, Rom.6:2-4; 8:15.
- 86 *Pope's Canons*, Giiijb-Gva; *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:2 (32-34); cf. *Propositions and Principles*, 103,104 for a doctrine of repentance in relation to faith and continuing obedience, similar to Calvin. Beza clearly taught that faith was the 'mother' of repentance, yet Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism*, 35, makes the accusation that he 'reverses Calvin's order of faith and repentance'.
- 87 *Questions and Answers*, 50a.
- 88 *Questions and Answers*, 45a, 51b-52a; cf. *Sermons on Canticle*, 2:15-17 (297); *Propositions and Principles*, 61-62.
- 89 *Questions and Answers*, 52a.
- 90 *Questions and Answers*, 57a; *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 66; *A Little Catechism*, Aiiib-Aiiib; *Job Expounded*, 1:1 (B8b); *Propositions and Principles*, 62.
- 91 *Questions and Answers*, 53b.
- 92 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 66-67. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism*, 36, virtually stands this assertion of Beza's on its head when he says that 'from Beza's descriptions we may fear that our good works are the moral virtues of the unregenerate'.
- 93 *Sermons on Canticle*, 1:7 (130).
- 94 *A Briefe and Pithy Summe*, 52, 67.
- 95 Letham, 'Theodore Beza: A Reassessment', *SJT*, 40 (1987), 29.
- 96 Letham, 'Saving Faith', 144, 154; 'Reassessment', 38.
- 97 Letham, 'Saving Faith', 148.
- 98 Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism*, 13-14,34-35; K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 22.335-336; Kickel, *Vernunft und Offenbarung*, 150-153; Bray, 'Value of Works in the Theology of Calvin and Beza', *SCJ*, 4 (1973), 80-86.
- 99 Bray, 'Value of Works', 85.
- 100 Beza, 'An Exhortation to the Reformation', 35a-b.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Holy Spirit & the Bible, Paul E. Brown, Christian Focus Publications, 2002, pbk., 271 pp, £10.99.

Hermeneutics, the process of interpretation, has come to dominate not only biblical studies but theology itself. In so doing it has widened from relatively modest beginnings to embrace the whole philosophy of the communication of understanding. Hermeneutical theory has become complicated and esoteric, implying that interpretation is a formidably difficult enterprise, with the discovery of an objective meaning elusive at best, perhaps even impossible. Meanwhile the people of God continue to read his Word, all too often in rather a hit-or-miss way. The gulf between a narcissistic academy and devout men and women in the pew has become a damaging chasm. Is there a simple, responsible way of interpreting the Bible?

Of course, answers Paul Brown, in this book, sub-titled: 'The Spirit's interpreting role in relation to biblical hermeneutics'. In spite of the mid-twentieth century upsurge of interest in the Holy Spirit, little attention has been paid, since the time of John Owen in fact, to his role in giving understanding to the reader of Scripture. This the author focuses upon by means of a careful examination of the relevant New Testament passages, working his way, in twelve thorough chapters, from the Synoptic Gospels to Revelation.

Human beings, as fallen creatures, are unable to understand, appropriate and respond to spiritual truth, which is why the hermeneutical ministry of the Spirit is so necessary and valuable. While exegetical and historical criticism remain essential for the preacher, and are indeed demanded by the Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity persuades us to lay aside prejudice and let the text speak to us on its own terms and makes us sensitive to genre and purpose and to contemporary applications which the original human author never envisaged. The Spirit enables us to engage empathetically with what Scripture is saying and to appropriate internally its content. He helps to fuse the celebrated 'two horizons', insofar as they exist, for the gap between our world and that of the Bible is not nearly as wide or intimidating as some theorists would have us believe. Scripture was given to the Church and the Spirit helps her to use it in convicting the world of sin and bringing her members to maturity. He opens the meaning of God's Word to the ordinary reader who makes no pretensions at being a 'student'. Understanding the Bible is not a complex or doubtful undertaking, but the birthright of every child of God.

This book bears some marks of its origin as an academic dissertation, with seventy-five pages of references, for example, providing more information than most readers may require, but it is written in a lucid and

straightforward style and will richly repay careful study. Preachers especially will benefit from this material and be enabled to lead their people into a more life-transforming encounter with the Word. In the fifteen pages of his 'Conclusion' Paul Brown has distilled more wisdom, sanity and practical help than this reviewer has found in almost as many weary volumes from the hermeneutical gnostics.

Edward Donnelly

William Grimshaw of Haworth, Faith Cook, Banner of Truth Trust, pbk., 342 pp, £9.50

The village of Haworth in Yorkshire is best known for its association with the Bronte family. There is however an even greater reason why the name of this village should be remembered with gratitude within the Church of Christ. Haworth was the scene of some of the most remarkable blessing which came upon the Church during the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century.

Haworth had been a 'barren wilderness' when William Grimshaw came there as curate. 'In this year (1742),' he wrote, 'our dear Lord was pleased to visit my parish' It was the beginning of the great revival and Faith Cook's biography carefully charts the blessings which came during those years to the wild moors of Yorkshire and into the towns beyond.

Though working in what was a remote part of the country Grimshaw was not isolated. Regular visitors to his home and church included many of the other prominent preachers of the revival. A plaque still in place on one of the walls of his former home at Sowdens announces 'Here stayed: John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, John Newtown and Henry Venn'.

This biography faithfully records not only the bond of fellowship which existed between these men, but also some of the tensions which tested their relationships. There were differences in doctrine and in practice and yet love prevailed among them.

Those who are convinced of the centrality of preaching in the purposes of God will be both confirmed in that conviction and encouraged in that work by the record of God's abundant blessing on the preaching in Haworth. After spending a day there in 1762 John Wesley wrote in his journal, 'What has God wrought in the midst of these rough mountains!'

This biography brings before us one of the lesser known figures of the eighteenth century revival and yet leaves readers wondering why the name of William Grimshaw is not better known. It challenges our lack of expectancy in preaching and will make many ashamed of how little we do. Grimshaw often preached twenty times in the week and frequently had to walk miles in very inclement weather and over difficult terrain to carry out these

engagements.

He took as his life's motto the words of Paul in Philippians chapter one, 'For me to live is Christ and to die is gain' These words were inscribed on the Haworth pulpit, placed on the walls of the church and on the candlestick used to provide light for the building. This is an indication that, as Faith Cook says, 'It was love for Christ which made his physical sufferings and privations seem of little consequence and love for Christ which brought a dimension of spiritual enjoyment into the long hours spent journeying across the barren Pennine moors to some isolated village.'

Knox Hyndman

The Quest for Celtic Christianity, Donald E. Meek, The Handsel Press Ltd., 2000, pbk., 273 pp., £9.95

The importance and value of this book will be evident from the following:

The author is a native Gaelic speaker from the island of Tiree in western Scotland where his father was a Baptist pastor. He holds degrees from Glasgow (Celtic Studies) and Cambridge (Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic). He has taught at Glasgow and Edinburgh, and since 1993 he has been Professor of Celtic at Aberdeen University.

"'Celtic Christianity' enjoys immense popularity. It has generated a torrent of books, videos, cassettes, and even 'Celtic Churches'. This book explores the reasons for such interest, and examines how far the modern version squares with what we know of the original Celtic Christianity. It is written for a variety of questers, casual and more serious, and is crafted to allow readers to 'dip in' according to their interests, ancient or modern. The book will be of special relevance to those encountering 'Celtic Christianity' in the context of Christian life and experience." (Back cover blurb).

"With astute judgement Professor Meek highlights the interplay of historical, social, cultural and religious factors which shape present-day definitions of 'Celtic Christianity'. His thought-provoking analysis should be read by all for whom the words 'Celtic Christianity' have a resonance." (Prof. Maire Herbert, University College Cork).

"The time has come for the production of a volume which offers the discerning reader a critical overview of the movement, and allows contemporary clerics, academics, students and enthusiasts of various kinds to

think through the various issues which are raised by it. It is, however, equally important that a volume which exposes the warps and weaknesses of modern interpretations should point to more reliable ways of perceiving and assessing the real achievements and qualities of the Christian faith in the British Isles in the early Middle Ages. This book attempts to do both."

"The book is therefore constructed in two parts. The first part (Chapters 1-6) deals with, and offers a critique of, 'Celtic Christianity' in its modern form. The second part (Chapters 7-12) tackles (in an accessible and, I trust, readable manner) questions relating to the historical records and representations of the Christian faith in these islands from the early period to the present day. The concluding section (Chapters 13-14) raises issues which need to be considered by those who subscribe to current popular interpretations of 'Celtic Christianity'. The twin-track approach is intended to offer guidance to the reader in a difficult field, in which imagination may all too easily outstrip reality." (page 2).

"His conclusions may be summarised as follows: the early records are much more sparse than modern advocates of Celtic Christianity would have us believe, it is doubtful if there ever existed anything which the early Christians of these islands would have recognised as a 'Celtic Church'...the Christianity of Celts like Columba was much more rigorous than that proposed modern 'Celtic Christianity'" (Review in The Monthly Record).

This book is not light reading but its study should be compulsory for all who claim to have a serious interest in Celtic Christianity, and it is not expensively priced.

A. C. Gregg

The Doctrine of God, John M. Frame, P & R Publishing, (distributed in UK by Evangelical Press), 2002, hdbk., xxiii + 864 pp, £29.95.

In the second volume of his 'A Theology of Lordship' John Frame turns to consider the doctrine of God. He begins by noting that the traditional 'Scholastic' approach to the doctrine of God has been rejected by many, including feminists, Liberation theologians and, more recently, by those advocating 'open theism'. In rejecting what they perceive to be an erroneous philosophy, however, they are in turn substituting other unacceptable philosophical schemes. Frame's answer is to return to the principle of 'Sola Scriptura', and this he seeks to do in the course of his lengthy and detailed study.

Frame argues that the central theme of the Bible is the *Covenantal Lordship* of God, expressed in terms of control, authority and presence. These three elements also serve as unifying themes for the book. It is not necessary to share Frame's enthusiasm for discovering such 'triads' (See Appendix A, 'More Triads') in order to find the scheme helpful.

The book is divided into six parts. Part 1, 'Yahweh the Lord', deals with the fundamental nature of covenant lordship. The very title 'Yahweh' which God chooses to apply to himself speaks of lordship. He is a personal and holy God who brings people into the circle of his holiness. Successive chapters consider the three elements of control, authority and presence, concluding with a chapter contrasting biblical and unbiblical views of the immanence and transcendence of God.

From this starting point Frame's study unfolds. Part 2 deals with 'problem areas' such as human freedom and responsibility and the problem of evil. Somewhat controversially, he disagrees with Reformed theologians such as Calvin and Van Til when they speak of God only as the *remote* and not the *proximate* cause of sin. Part 3, 'A Philosophy of Lordship', tackles issues of ethics, epistemology and metaphysics. In dealing with epistemology, for example, Frame draws a parallel between the three lordship attributes and his threefold perspective on knowledge. Part 4, 'The Acts of the Lord', considers miracle (adopting a 'semi-cessationist' position), providence, creation (leaning towards a literal six-day creation, but not ruling out alternatives entirely), and God's decrees. Part 5 provides a wide-ranging examination of various of the divine attributes, whilst Part 6 considers the triune nature of God. Several appendices deal with intramural Reformed debates and reprint some of Frame's reviews of significant books.

Frame's treatment of the doctrine of God is refreshing and highly stimulating. He engages with the biblical text in detail, rather than producing lists of proof-texts, and so his line of reasoning is clear, whether or not his conclusions are accepted. He does endeavour to treat other views fairly, in their most persuasive form, rather than demolishing straw men. He is contemporary in the best sense, relating Scripture and the Reformed tradition to modern questions, and he is not afraid to plough his own (sometimes minority) furrow. No-one will agree with every position Frame adopts, and a few matters have been noted in the course of this review. Nevertheless this is a major contribution to Reformed thinking on the doctrine of God and essential reading for anyone with a serious interest in theology. Above all it contains a great amount of material which will promote love for and service to the Covenant Lord.

BOOK NOTICES

The Spirit & the Church, John Owen, abridged R.J.K. Law, Banner of Truth, 2002, pbk., 196 pp., £3.75.

This is the latest in Dr Law's excellent abridgements of Owen, retaining the great Puritan's teaching, but in a language and style more accessible to contemporary readers. A companion to the 1998 volume, *The Holy Spirit*, the discourses here abridged concern, in Owen's words, 'the work of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of illumination, of supplication, of consolation and as the immediate author of all spiritual offices and gifts'. No better or more balanced help could be received on how to understand the Bible, to pray and to persevere through difficulties. Here is a feast for both mind and soul.

The Valley of Vision, ed. Arthur Bennett, Banner of Truth, 2002, Leather, 405 pp., £19.95.

Banner of Truth have given us a beautifully produced edition of Arthur Bennett's collection of Puritan prayers and devotions, first published in paperback in 1975. These extracts from a wide range of authors are skilfully chosen and sensitively arranged under ten major headings. This work is not meant to replace our own prayers, but to serve as an aid to meditation, a 'pump primer' for our communion with God. Sluggish spirits can hardly fail to be roused to worship by a prayerful reading of each two-page selection, enough for over six months of daily use. While expensive, this superb presentation volume in bonded leather and gold will prove a welcome life-long companion.

Calvin: An Introduction to His Thought, T.H.L. Parker, Continuum, reissued 2002, pbk., 166 pp., £14.99.

A contribution to the 'Outstanding Christian Thinkers' series (some of the names listed, it has to be said, being distinctly more outstanding than others), this is a comprehensive introduction to the whole range of Calvin's theology, though concentrating on *The Institutes*. Professor Parker, a competent Calvin scholar and biographer, provides us in these pages with an expository summary of the Reformer's greatest work, demonstrating in the process how his teaching continues to be relevant to the situation of the Church today. While no substitute for the original, and absurdly over-priced, this could prove a worthwhile introduction to the Calvin novice.

Edward Donnelly

Kingdom Ethics. Following Jesus in Contemporary Context, Glen H. Stassen and David P. Gushee, InterVarsity Press (USA), 2003, hdbk., 538 pp., \$30.00

Scholarly studies of New Testament ethics from a conservative evangelical perspective are relatively scarce, and so this exposition of the ethical teaching of Jesus is particularly welcome. Baptist theologians Stassen and Gushee structure their study around the Sermon on the Mount, with an emphasis on Christian ethics as a response to Jesus' call to discipleship. Beginning with Jesus' teaching regarding the coming of the reign of God, they consider the virtues that are to characterise "kingdom people" and the holistic nature of ethics. Issues of authority and moral norms are addressed, and the authors then move on to consider a wide range of practical ethical questions such as marriage and divorce, justice, race and the care of creation. Even when the reader disagrees with the authors' conclusions, as this review does on, for example, the issue of women's ministry, the process of following their arguments will be of great value. This will be an important resource for New Testament ethics for years to come.

The Systematic Theology of John Brown of Haddington, Introduced by Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson, Christian Focus Publications and Reformation Heritage Press, 2002, hdbk., 576 pp., £19.99

John Brown of Haddington (1722-1789) was a leading minister of the Associate Synod in Scotland. Born in poverty, teaching himself Greek while working in the fields, he became an outstanding pastor and theologian. A *Compendious View of Natural and Revealed Religion*, reprinted here, covers the whole field of systematic theology from a Reformed and covenantal perspective. It is based on Brown's lectures to theological students and begins with an "Address to Students of Divinity" which is full of sound spiritual advice. Brown's great concern is to support his theology from the Scripture and, to this end, gives over 26,000 proof texts. This does, however, leave the reader to consider the texts and decide if Brown's use of them is correct. We would prefer to have seen more exegesis of specific texts. This is, however, a valuable reprint, enhanced by an outline of the life and writings of Brown by Beeke and Pederson. The nineteenth century typeface of the book is not a major obstacle to the reader, although the addition of an index would have been very helpful.

David McKay

SOFTWARE

The Theological Journal Library, Version 5, by Galaxie Software, 6302 Galaxie Road, Garland, TX 75044, USA. Web site: www.galaxie.com. \$99.95.

This CD contains a vast array of theological journals in an amazingly small space, *250 years* of journals to be exact. The full list is as follows:

- Bibliotheca Sacra Journal (1934-2001).
- Grace Journal (1960-73).
- Grace Theological Journal (1980-91).
- The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society (1966-2001).
- Master's Seminary Journal (1990-1999).
- Trinity Journal (1980-2000).
- Westminster Theological Journal (1960-2000).
- Emmaus Journal (1991-2001).
- Michigan Theological Journal (1990-1994).
- Journal of Christian Apologetics (1997-1998).
- Chafer Theological Seminary Journal (1995-2001).
- Conservative Theological Journal (1995-1998).
- Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society (1988-2000).
- Journal of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (1995-2001).
- KJV and ASV.

The main features of the Theological Journals Library CD are:

- Complete text, footnotes, graphics and book reviews of each journal
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- Greek, Hebrew and Transliteration Fonts included. (You can use the fonts in other applications as well)
- Topics defined so you can search just article titles
- Authors tagged so you can search just for articles written by certain author

It is only in this form that most pastors and students will ever possess such resources. For prolonged reading, only the paper version will do, but for all other tasks, the CD is indispensable, especially for its search facilities.

Future 'versions' will consist only of 'update disks without the contents of Version 5.

David McKay