Reformed Theological Journal

Volume 34
NOVEMBER 2018

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

Edited for the faculty of the

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

Editorial address:

Articles, books for review and correspondence should be sent to the Reformed Theological Journal, 37 Old Holywood Road, Belfast, BT4 2HJ, Northern Ireland. E-mail address: rtj@rpc.org

The Journal is produced only in digital format which is available free of charge in multiple formats (PDF, Epub, etc) at

http://rtj.rpc.org

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ISSN 0268 – 4772

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
FOUNDED 1854

Theological Seminary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland
37 Knockbracken Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT8 6SE

Vol. 34 **NOVEMBER 2018**

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THE 'I AM SAYINGS' IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

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The Greek phrase *ego eimi* ('I am') in the Fourth Gospel is both distinctive and unremarkable. The phrase is unremarkable insofar as it is quite simply the usual Greek way of saying 'It is I' . It is thus used by the blind man healed by Jesus in John 9:9: *ekeinos elegen hoti Ego eimi* ('he said "I am he"'). This serves as a warning to us not to read theological significance into every occurrence of the phrase. As ever, context and usage must dictate the meaning.

And yet often there *is* something very distinctively Johannine in the use of the phrase in the Fourth Gospel. This is clear even from statistics: *ego eimi* is used 48 times in the New Testament, and exactly half of its occurrences are in John's Gospel. After John it is employed most frequently by Luke in Acts, but only seven times. John is obviously doing something with the formula.

In order to assess what exactly it is that John is doing with this phrase, it is helpful to distinguish between its different usages in John. As we have already seen it does not always carry theological weight. Johannine usage may be summarised thus:

- Instances of little or no theological significance (4:26, 6:20[1], 8:18, 9:9, 18:8)
- The absolute use with no predicate (8:24, 28, 58; 13:19). To these we shall add 18:5-6 (although a predicate can be implied from the context).
- In combination with a nominalized predicate. This is the form of the seven famous 'I am' sayings of John (6:35, 8:12, 10:7, 10:11, 11:25-6, 14:6, 15:1).

The second and third uses of the formula do seem to be particularly significant. Both are of a revelatory nature, and both are unusual applications of the phrase. We need first to ascertain the general background to Jesus' use of the formula in these instances. Is this an original way of using *ego eimi*, or can we find parallels in other places which will give us some indication of the meaning of the formula here in John?

1. The General Background of the *ego eimi* Formula

'The question of the background of the Johannine *ego eimi* is but a small facet of the larger question of influences on the religious thought of the Fourth Gospel'[2]. Since the end of the nineteenth century the trend in Johannine scholarship has been to see the Fourth Gospel as the product of Hellenistic influences. Many scholars, especially C. H. Dodd, have seen the Hermetic writings as the background to John's Gospel, because of the predominance of

[1]We should qualify this, however, by noting the possibility that John intends us to hear some revelatory overtones in the words *ego eimi* in 6.20 where Christ stills the storm. It is hard to believe that the disciples did not hear any divine implication in *ego eimi*, especially given the circumstances in which the words were spoken. For in the Old Testament it is God who controls the sea—a symbol of chaos and disorder (Job 38:8-11; Psalm 107:23-30).

[2]R.E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII*, (Yale: Yale University Press, 1995), p.535.

common themes such as light, life, the word, salvation by knowledge as well as regeneration or new birth. However, as Carson points out[3], these words and concepts are found in almost any religion. And Ladd observes that 'many of the most distinctive *theological* terms in the Hermetica, such as *gnosis, mysterion, athanasia, demiourgos* and *nous* are lacking in John.'[4] Interestingly, Dodd himself, when he examines the *ego eimi* formula, begins not with the Hermetica but with the Jewish treatment of the Divine name.[5]

Other scholars have turned to Mandaism to explain the character of the Fourth Gospel. In 1939 Eduard Schweizer collected texts from India to Egypt and found that this *ego eimi* formula was a feature of Mandaism (a peculiar form of Gnosticism). He then concluded that Mandaism was the background to the Fourth Gospel. Bultmann was also a strong supporter of Mandean influence on the Fourth Gospel. Again Ladd:

> While this gnostic theology can be found in second-century-AD gnosticism as a Christian aberration, the theory that it was a pre-Christian syncretistic movement that helped mold Christian, especially Johannine, Christology is a critical reconstruction based upon post-Christian texts.[6]

In more recent scholarship there has been a general reaction against theories of Hellenistic influence on the Fourth Gospel, largely due to the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library and the Dead Sea scrolls in 1947. The focus has shifted more to connecting the Fourth Gospel with various Palestinian movements. 'It is virtually undisputed that both John and these movements drew their primary inspiration from what we today call the Old Testament Scriptures.'[7] This would seem self-evident when one considers the vast number of references in John's Gospel, either explicit or implicit, to the OT. The allusions to e.g. the tabernacle, Jacob's ladder, Jacob's well, manna, the bronze serpent, the Sabbath, various feasts, etc., are so casual that John is obviously writing to people very familiar with the Old Testament.

Having said this, it is surely true that John is taking on board certain categories of thought and expression which he knew to be common in the world of his day, and so giving his work an apologetic edge by clothing it in some of the philosophical dress of the pagan culture. He could not have been ignorant, for example, of how the word *logos* was understood by Greeks in the first century, and so his message had an added impact for them. Yet he was not using the term as the philosophers used it. This was doubtless what John was doing with the *ego eimi* formula. He would have certainly known that it was a phrase common in pagan religious settings - in the Isis magical formulae, in the Hermetic corpus and the Mithraic liturgy - and yet he did not hesitate to employ it in his Gospel. He was doing as any good preacher seeks to do - to make use of contemporary thought patterns to illustrate and drive home his message. The key point, however, is that if we want to understand what the phrase means as it is used in the Fourth Gospel we must look not to the Hellenistic world but to the world of the Old Testament.

[3]D.A. Carson, D.J. Moo & L. Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Leicester: Apollos, 1993), p.160.
[4]G.E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1987), p.218.
[5]C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p.93ff.
[6]Ibid., p.218.
[7]Carson, Moo & Morris, p.159.

H. Zimmermann was among the first to conduct a study of the formula in the light of the OT background. He pointed out how difficult it was to find any pagan parallel to John's absolute use of the phrase (which he regarded the key to understanding the formula in the Fourth Gospel). The Old Testament offers excellent parallels of the phrase as it is generally used in John's Gospel, and the only good examples there are of the absolute use of the formula.

2. The Particular Meaning of *ego eimi* in John

In order to assess the meaning of the phrase, it will be convenient to examine the absolute use and the form with a metaphor separately, since there would seem to be a different force in each case. Since the absolute use is the more unusual, the bulk of the discussion will centre on it.

2.1. The absolute use of ego eimi

As we have noted, the keys texts in John where *ego eimi* is used absolutely are 8:24,28,58, 13:19 and 18:5-6. Zimmermann's method for ascertaining their meaning is sound. He begins with the phrase in the OT 'I am Yahweh' (*'ani YHWH*), or 'I am God' (*'ani elohe*), of which the absolute 'I am he' (*'ani hu'*) is a variant. He then distinguishes the various uses of the phrase throughout the OT. He finds four main applications:

- *To reveal God's nature* in the strict sense - telling man who and what he is.[8] These instances are normally intended to reassure man.
- *To confirm and reinforce a divine saying*.[9]
- More closely *associated with revelation* is the phrase 'You will know that I am Yahweh'; this knowledge of Yahweh is gained through what he *does*.[10]
- *To emphasise the uniqueness and exclusivity of Yahweh*. This is the most important use of the phrase in the Old Testament. It is particularly common in Isaiah[11], being used six times, and also in Hosea (13:14) and Joel (2:27). In this use, which stresses the uniqueness of Yahweh, a Hebrew alternative for *'ani YHWH* is *'ani hu'* ('I am he'). This latter expression is always translated in the LXX as *ego eimi*, and is found chiefly in Is 40-55.[12]

We are probably justified in hearing echoes at least of the first three aspects outlined here by Zimmermann, but it is obviously the fourth which is especially important. We must now proceed by examining the individual texts where the absolute *ego eimi* is found, in order to ascertain their contextual sense.

2.1.1 John 8.24, 28

What is John doing in chapter 8? Chapters 2-11 comprise Jesus' *public* self-revelations and discourses about himself and his purpose in coming into the world. In these chapters he is revealing himself to the world, through seven signs and seven discourses. In chapter 8 John continues to deal with several themes which have been running through his Gospel:

[8]Gen 28:13,15; Ex 3:14; Ps 81:10.
[9]Ex 6:6, 20:1,5; Lev 17-26.
[10]Ex 6:7, 7:5.
[11]Is 45:5,6,18:21,22, 46:9 (In 45:18 *'ani hu'* is translated simply *ego eimi*).
[12]Especially 41:4, 43:10,13,25, 46:4, 48:12. It is also found in Dt 32:39.

- Opposition to Jesus from the Pharisees and Jews. John signalled this from the beginning (1:5,11), and it becomes a refrain that pervades the Gospel, building up to a climax in 10:31-39 and 11:53-54, and eventually to the coming of Christ's hour at the crucifixion.
- One of the issues in which this opposition crystallises is the question of Jesus' *testimony* about himself. The idea of witness is central in John, and particularly that of Jesus as a witness.[13] It has caused trouble in 5:31-47; 6:41-42 and 7:25-29. Now it comes up again in chapter 8 when the Pharisees question Jesus' validity as a witness (8:13).
- Tied to the matter of Jesus' testimony about himself are the themes of where he comes from, where he is going, who the Father is, and who Jesus is. All of these are introduced in 8:12-20 and are developed throughout the rest of the chapter.

It is in the context of this debate about Jesus' *witness* therefore that the *ego eimi* statements of vv24 and 28 appear, and it is to this that they answer. The Pharisees claim Jesus' witness about himself is not valid (8:13). Jesus' answer is that if they knew who he was (i.e. his identity, where he came from and the One who sent him), they would not question his testimony, but would realise its impeccable validity. In the absolute use of *ego eimi* in vv24 and 28 Jesus is making a most profound statement about his identity to those who have ears to hear (v30).

In v23 Jesus again shows why his testimony is valid: in contrast to his hearers he is from above, he is not of this world. Therefore their only hope is to believe. But to believe what? His testimony? Not exactly: *ean gar me pisteusete hoti ego eimi, apothaneisthe en tais hamartiais humon* ('for if you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins'). To believe the testimony of Jesus is to believe all that he says about himself (for his testimony is about himself (*peri seautou*: v13, cf. vv14, 8). This *ego eimi* is densely packed with meaning about who Jesus is, where he came from, who sent him and what it was he came to do - precisely the issues that Jesus has been dealing with in chapter 8, indeed, in the whole of the Fourth Gospel. The majority of English versions' gloss suggest a possible predicate is not wrong but unhelpful, for although it captures the general sense of what Jesus is saying, it seems to lessen the force of the absolute *ego eimi*. We may not want to go as far as Lindars and Bultmann, who say the phrase should be taken 'in the most inclusive possible way'[14], 'to include everything Jesus has said about himself',[15] but we should take it in the widest sense possible *within the parameters of the OT context to which Jesus is consciously alluding in the phrase*.

[13]Of the 76 occurrences of *martureo* in the NT, John uses the word 33 times in his gospel. (Matthew and Mark use it only once each.) *marturia* is used 14 times in the Fourth Gospel out of a total of 37 instances in the NT. It is surely significant that there are seven types of witness in John's gospel (John the Baptist, other human witnesses, the Father, Jesus himself, Christ's *semeia*, the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit). The witness in John points overwhelmingly to Jesus: 'of the 30 instances of *marturia* in the Johannine corpus, 27 deal specifically with the essential nature and meaning of Jesus Christ; with only a few exceptions of neutral word sense, the forms of the verb allude exclusively to Christ's person or to the meaning of his coming as the object. For this reason the meaning of Christ's person and the significance of his testimony are determinative for the Johannine conception of the Christian witness.' (J.M. Boice, *Witness and Revelation in the Gospel of John* (Attic Press, 1970), p.28.

[14] B. Lindars, *The New Century Bible Commentary: The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1983), p.321.

[15] R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of St. John: A Commentary* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1971), *ad loc.*

As Zimmermann's study has shown, and as most scholars now agree, the key Old Testament text for this absolute use of *ego eimi* is Isaiah 40-55, and in particular 43:8-13. (It is unlikely to be a reference to Exodus 3.14 primarily because, as Carson points out,[16] we would expect to find *ho on* rather than *ego eimi* in that case.) If this is the primary background to this use of the formula, then it is important that we understand the context of Isaiah 40-55.

'In Isaiah 40-55, Yahweh is the one who has created all things, who has raised up Cyrus to conquer Babylon and so deliver his people. All his power is concentrated in this one fact, that he is the one who saves his people.'[17] This salvation for God's people is to be complete. His people will be released from physical bondage by means of a 'servant' who turns out to be Cyrus; but even greater than this will be the *spiritual* deliverance which will be made possible by a substitutionary death, also to be carried out by a wonderful 'servant' of Yahweh. Who is the One who provides this salvation? In Isaiah 40-55 the answer is striking and simple: Yahweh says, 'I am He' (*ego eimi*).

- Who is the Sovereign One who raises up Cyrus to deliver Israel? '*ego eimi*' (Is 41:4)
- Who is the sole provider of *national* deliverance for Israel? '*ego eimi*' (Is 43:10,13)
- Who is it who provides *spiritual* salvation for a sinful people? '*ego eimi*' (Is 43:25)
- Who alone is God, in contrast to the impotent gods of Babylon - the One who controls the whole world he has created? '*ego eimi*' (Is 46:4, 48:12)

The person of Yahweh is the very heartbeat of this section of Isaiah. In commenting on these chapters, Van Groningen writes: '…the theme of Yahweh is by far the most dominant.' He is the holy One, the everlasting One, the glorious One, the righteous One, the almighty One, the sovereign One; he it is who created the universe and all that is in it; he upholds the creation as he reigns over all; he is the Redeemer and Saviour of his people, the covenant Lord who has not forgotten his covenant and its promises; he assures his people that his purposes will stand - whatever the future destiny of his people he will be their tender Shepherd and uphold and protect them throughout all circumstances because of his love for them.[18]

It is immensely significant therefore that Jesus takes on his lips the very phrase that Yahweh himself uses to identify himself here in Isaiah. We can grasp only dimly the moment of what Jesus is claiming for himself in John 8:24. Indeed it seems that Jesus' original hearers did not understand the implication of his words (8:25); as so often in John's Gospel Jesus speaks on a level that is misunderstood in its immediate context.[19] But how much of Isaiah 40-55 are we to see in John 8:24?

It seems quite legitimate to see in the phrase *all* that is said of Yahweh in Isaiah 40-55 - all those characteristics we briefly noted above. There is certainly no theological contradiction in ascribing to Jesus all that is said of the Father there, for he and the Father are one (John 10:30). And we can say with certainty that John has the whole of Isaiah 40-55 in mind, but it must surely be the absolute occurrences of *'ani hu'* and their immediate contexts that John is thinking of primarily (i.e. 41:4, 43:10,13,25, 46:4, 48:12). As we have observed above, these references are chiefly *soteriological* in their meaning. They describe the Lord as the One who delivers his people completely from slavery and from sin. And it is clearly this which most fully informs the meaning of Jesus' use of *ego eimi* in John 8:24: unless his hearers

[16]D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), p.343.
[17]Lindars, p320.
[18]G. Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker), p.577-8.
[19]e.g. 3:4, 4:14,33, 11:23.

believe *hoti ego eimi*, they will die *in their sins*. They must turn to Jesus as the great Saving God who provides complete deliverance for his people - he and no other, for the *ego eimi* of Isaiah refers to *the only source of salvation.*

This interpretation fits well with the second absolute use of the phrase in 8:28. Again Jesus is using it in a soteriological context: *hotan hypsete ton huion tou anthropou tou tote gnosesthe hoti ego eimi*[.][20] ('when you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am'). This time the crucifixion - the climactic event which accomplishes the salvation Jesus has come to provide - is designated as the proof of Jesus as the *ego eimi* (the One who purposes and imparts salvation). As Carson says, 'One of the functions of the cross is to reveal who Jesus is. That is when the Jews will know the truth.'[21]

John 8 and Isaiah 43:10: The theme of 'witness'

Of all the allusions to Isaiah 40-55 inherent in this absolute use of *ego eimi*, perhaps the closest to the context of John 8:12ff is Isaiah 43:10. We have already noticed the predominance of the idea of 'witness' in John's Gospel generally, and especially in chapter 8. Is it merely coincidental therefore, that this absolute use of *ego eimi* in 8:24 and 28 should have its most obvious Old Testament referent in a passage which also speaks about the theme of witness? Let us briefly examine Isaiah 43:10 and ask whether this is a significant element of the *ego eimi* of John 8:24 and 28.

Isaiah 43:8-13 is a courtroom scene. The case to be decided is whether the heathen gods are able to sovereignly bring about their will (v9), as Yahweh is able to do, specifically in *salvation* (vv11-12). As it is a courtroom, the Lord calls in his witnesses to testify concerning his great salvation. But in the event 'he witnesses on his own behalf, for his chosen servant and witness is blind and deaf (v8)!'[22] Motyer also comments (on 43:10):

> [The Lord's] contention covers his being (10) and his work (11)…The Lord proceeds from none and is succeeded by none, existing from the beginning, without superior or inferior, one only God. Not only so but (11) he is the only *saviour*.

What are we to make of this? The prophet is saying that because of the failure of Israel to fulfil their duties as servant (namely to witness to God), the Lord will *himself* undertake *his own* witness. He will witness to his own person and his own work of salvation. Why? '…so that you may know and believe me and understand that *ego eimi*' (43:10). This is remarkably similar to John 8:24 and 28. But *how* will the Lord witness to himself? He will raise up for himself *another* servant. A servant who will witness faithfully to him, who will not be like the unfaithful Israelites. Calvin says of the word 'servant' in this verse:

> In making use of the singular number, there can be no doubt that [God] looked chiefly to Christ, in whom all the prophecies are contained and accomplished…It is also certain that by him chiefly, as the highest witness, all men are convinced.

[20]As Carson notes, it is best to read a full stop at this point.
[21]Carson, Op. cit., p.345.
[22]J.A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Leicester: IVP, 1991), p.333.

How perfectly this accords with what Jesus has been saying about his witness in John 8! God, who is the *ego eimi* of Isaiah 43:10, will bear witness to himself. Jesus, who is the *ego eimi* of John 8, is bearing witness to himself (v18: perhaps it is wrong to dismiss completely any notion of significance from the *ego eimi* of this verse?).

And yet, as Carson notes on 8:24, in using *ego eimi* to refer to himself, Jesus is not identifying himself with God so exactly that there is no remainder. After the *ego eimi* of v28 Jesus immediately makes a distinction between himself and the Father in v29, as he does in many places in John's Gospel.[23] Jesus is not the Father, nor is the Father Jesus, even though they are one. And, significantly, this same tension exists in Isaiah 40-55. The servant seems to be identified with the Lord (50:1-3), but also distinguished from him (50:4ff). They are not identical, and yet the language used constantly implies the closest of relationships (42:1-6; cf. the term '*My* servant').

To summarise then, the absolute use of *ego eimi* in John 8:24 and 28 shows that Jesus is Yahweh, witnessing on his own behalf, and yet we see that it is Yahweh's *servant* who witnesses, and so must be distinct from Yahweh in some sense. This is confirmed in John 8, where it is clear that although Jesus is intimately related to his Father, he is not to be identified with him.

The *content* of this witness is then filled out by our earlier discussion of the meaning of the *ego eimi* in John 8:24, 28: Jesus comes to witness to the soteriological work of the Father accomplished in sending the Son into the world to die on the cross as the substitute of the elect, and to the person of the Father who in his grace and love conceived of the idea of salvation from eternity. Only belief in this Jesus can save us from the just penalty of our sins.

2.1.2. John 8:58

This is the clearest example in John's Gospel of an absolute occurrence of the *ego eimi* formula. No predicate can be implied or understood by the context. We simply read *prin Abraam genesthai ego eimi* ('before Abraham was I am'). The name of Abraham has come up several times throughout this chapter. In v33 the Jews respond to Jesus' implication that they are slaves by declaring: 'We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone.' Jesus then argues that if they were really Abraham's descendants they would accept him; as it is they are rejecting him and so show that they are not truly descendants of Abraham (vv39-40). (To use the language of Paul in Romans 2:28 they are merely Jews outwardly.) Jesus' method is a kind of *a fortiori* argument - if they accept Abraham as their father, how much more should they accept Jesus, who is greater than Abraham, for he is the Son who has come from the Father (vv35, 38).

The nature of the relationship between Jesus and Abraham crystallises in the question of the Jews in v53: 'Are you greater than our father Abraham?' The question is a rhetorical one, expecting the answer 'No', but it is exactly to the point. For Jesus *is* greater than Abraham, and, as he has been arguing from v36, this is precisely why they ought to accept him. This debate about the status of Jesus as regards Abraham reaches its climax in v58. Here Jesus makes this great Christological statement which encapsulates all he has been saying since v31: 'before Abraham was I am'.

[23]e.g. 1:1,18, 5:19-30.

What is the force of this absolute *ego eimi*? Again it has the same general implications which we noted from Isaiah 40-55. But the emphasis here in v58 is slightly different. It would appear not to be so specifically soteriological in this instance as it was in the context of vv24, 28. Here the stress seems to be on the *eternity* of the divine Jesus. Most obviously this is because of the stark juxtaposition of the aorist and the present tenses. If Jesus had been saying no more than that he existed before Abraham (in chronological terms) then he would have said: *prin Abraam genesthai ego en*. The meaning too of *ginomai* ('to become') contrasted with *eimi* ('to be') underlines the timelessness of the latter. The total absence of any kind of implied predicate (no gloss is suggested even tentatively by the EVV) confirms the meaning as timeless - there is nothing this existence can be tied to. Here then is the definitive answer to the impertinent question of v53 - Jesus is certainly greater than Abraham, for he is the eternal God.

The texts which are most relevant to this use of the *ego eimi* formula here are Isaiah 41:4, 43:13 and 48:12. Motyer describes the Hebrew idiom as 'expressing the changelessness and self-consistency of the Lord.' Keil and Delitzsch comment on these verses that they describe the Being ever the same in his Deity. The full meaning of YHWH is unfolded here because God is called 'Yahweh' as the absolute 'I', the absolutely free being pervading all history, yet above all history as he who is Lord of his own absolute being, in revealing which he is purely self-determined. Here is his unconditionally free and unchangeably eternal personality.

This is a high point indeed of the Christology of the Fourth Gospel. Stauffer sees in John 8:58 'the most authentic, most audacious and most profound affirmation of Jesus of who he was.'[24] We may feel this is overstating the case a little - after all, as Ladd says, the Christological climax of John's Gospel is in 20:28 - but nevertheless this is one of the highest points John's Christology reaches. 'Christ claimed here that in his life the historical epiphany of God was taking place.'[25]

Most commentators are reluctant to see a reference to Exodus 3:14 in this verse. Bultmann thought that to see the divine name here would be merely an elliptical way of saying 'I am the I AM'. While this is true, and although the main source of the phrase here is the Isaiah references we have mentioned, surely we ought to hear definite echoes of the Divine Name nonetheless. As Keil and Delitzsch point out they are certainly present in Isaiah, but most significant of all is the reaction of the Jews in v59. They did not react this way in 8:24, 28, where the connotations of the aseity and eternity of God were not the main focus; but here there is no hesitation. It was also the reaction of the Jews after Jesus' claim to be one with the Father in 10:30. There they specifically state the charge to be blasphemy; presumably then they are thinking of Leviticus 24:16 where the penalty of stoning is prescribed for blasphemy of the *name* of the Lord. Of course, as Carson points out, 'such stoning was meant to be the result of a calm judicial decision, not the fruit of mob violence.' This was no ordinary case of judgement. Nevertheless the point remains that theses Jews evidently heard in this *ego eimi* an echo of the divine Name that they did not hear in 8:24, 28. Jesus is very definitely using the phrase here to reveal his deity and greatness. He is greater than Abraham because he is Yahweh - the eternal God of the universe. His claims about himself are therefore fully justified.

[24]Cited by Ladd, Op. cit., p.251.
[25]Ladd, Op. cit., p.251.

2.1.3. John 13:19

In the second half of John's gospel, Jesus is revealing himself solely to his disciples. He is preparing them for the crucifixion, for he knows that his hour has now come: 11:54,12:23-36, 13:1,3. Carson comments: 'In the event, the disciples found it desperately difficult to come to terms with the cross; they would have found it impossible without this preparation.[26] In 13:18-30 Jesus is preparing the disciples for Judas's betrayal. His purpose in giving this depressing prophecy is not to discourage his disciples, but rather so that when it happens they will believe *oti ego eimi* ('that I am'). He has been repeatedly warning that one of the Twelve was not what he seemed (6:71, 12:4, 13:2,10-11). He now spends vv18-30 dealing with this subject at greater length to reinforce what he has been saying all along - that the choice of Judas was not a mistake or defect of Jesus' judgement; thus their faith will be strengthened rather than weakened when the blow comes.

In this *ego eimi* we have all the elements of deity comprehended in Isaiah 40-55. Jesus is God. Only thus could he have known in advance of Judas' betrayal. Not one of the disciples for a moment entertained the possibility that Judas would be the one to betray Jesus (Matthew 26:22). Yet Jesus knew, and this revelation would later confirm the disciples in their belief that Jesus was indeed the *ego eimi* - the Living and True God. Moreover, as Jesus identifies himself with the speaker of Psalm 41:9 quoted in 13:18, we hear echoes again of the sense of John 8:58 (this time: 'before *David* was I am') - Jesus is the eternal One. His purposes were designed in eternity, they have been foretold and they are now coming to pass. Only the eternal, sovereign God himself could have such insights into the counsels of eternity. And once again we see some of the themes we noticed in John 8 and Isaiah 43 - the veracity and confirmation of Jesus' witness about himself (v19), the matter of where Jesus came from (v20b) and the mission of the Servant, which is to be continued by *his* servants (v20a).

2.1.4. John 18:5-6

Here the primary sense of the phrase would appear to be a simple self-identification by Jesus to the soldiers. However the reaction of the soldiers leads us to legitimately see theological significance in this use of the phrase, and that certainly seems to be John's point in 18:6, where he explicitly links the soldiers' action with the words *ego eimi*. The effect of Jesus' words in general on arresting soldiers has been noted by John in 7:46, and so in the circumstances of this arrest it is not surprising that Christ's words should carry the force of divine self-revelation with which they are often laden. Yet none of the instances of Jesus using this phrase that John records produce the effect they do here. Hatred and confusion yes, but not the terror we see in these hardened Roman soldiers. Some have seen here a divine theophany, but as Carson observes the elements of theophany do not appear to be present on this occasion. Nor is it likely that they would have gone on to arrest him if that had been their experience (cf. 7:45-7). This terror does seem to have been momentary, and they are recalled to their wits by Jesus himself in v7.

The point of the episode would seem to be to underscore the fact that Jesus, as the eternal God incarnate, does not have his life taken from him but rather gives it up freely of his own will (18:4, 15:13). This has been something John has stressed throughout his Gospel - men have been plotting to take his life repeatedly but could not because it was not Jesus' hour. Only in God's own time would Jesus freely lay down his life. In 18:5-6 we see that even now

[26]Carson, Op. cit., p.471.

Jesus is taken only because he allows himself to be taken. For he is the eternal God who has come from the Father to bring life to his people by laying down his own life.

2.2. The use of ego eimi *with a metaphor*

The combination of such a significant formula as *ego eimi* with metaphors drawn from the Old Testament which are all laden with Messianic significance makes these seven 'I am' sayings doubly forceful as self-revelations in the mouth of Jesus. Although all the images in these sayings are drawn from the Old Testament, they are not found in this very definite formal structure that John gives them. Both Zimmermann and Brown suggest several possible parallels,[27] but none of them are really exact enough. Schnackenburg points out, for example, that one feature missing is the sharpness and exclusiveness given to the Johannine metaphors by the definite article.[28]

This seems to be a distinctively 'Johannine' creation therefore, by which he is emphasising the element of self-revelation and also the exclusiveness of Jesus as *the* bread, *the* light, *the* truth, etc., (in contrast to any other kind). That is not to say that the OT texts suggested by Zimmermann and Brown do not contain either of these elements - they manifestly do in their contexts. It is simply that John is giving them a unique formal structure that emphasises them. Schweizer, in his comparative study of Mandaism, saw in John a polemical purpose: the reason for the seven 'I am' sayings was, in his view, to counter *false* claims to be the light, the bread etc. This seems to overstate the case however, when we consider that John's purpose is positive - to engender belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (20:31). An *aspect* of this may be to show the falsehood of trusting in pseudo-saviours, whether they be Moses, false shepherds or proto-gnostics[29], but to claim that that is all John is about is to distort his message. His emphasis seems rather to be positive - on Jesus as the exclusive, full revealer and bringer of life. All of these sayings are unpacking the overarching promise of life found in 3:15-16. Moreover these 'I am' sayings appear to internalise an abstract and objective faith in the person of Jesus. Life is to be found *in him*, not in some external reality. *He* is the reality in which we are to trust (8:24) - he *is* the bread of life, he *is* the resurrection and the life.

To fully appreciate the force of these sayings would require an examination of the Old Testament background of each of these images which space does not permit here, but in general we may say that each of them employs a variety of images used in the Old Testament to describe future salvation.[30] Schnackenburg comments helpfully:

> When the OT revelation formula is transferred to Christ, it is enriched with eschatological and Messianic themes and sayings in which *ego eimi* is combined with imagery to indicate that these expectations have been fulfilled in Christ.

[27]Zimmermann: Is 27:3, 44:6, 48:12; Hos 13:4; Gen 15:1; Ezk 15:26. Brown: Ps 35:5; Ex 25:6.
[28]R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John, vol. I* (Crossroad Publishing Co, 1980). Cf. F. Blass, A. Debrunner, R.W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p.143 (section 273): 'The predicated noun is presented as something familiar or the only object entitled to the designation.'
[29]Perhaps this may have guided John's selection of images—choosing culturally relevant concepts; we know he certainly did this in other parts of his gospel to form an apologetical bridge between Christianity and Hellenism.
[30]E.g. Streams of living water (Ex 17:6; Is 35:6, 43:19); bread (Ex 16:4; Is 36:17, 51:14); fruitful vineyard (Ps 80:8; Is 5:7; Hos 14:7); light of God's glory (Ex 13:21; Is 42:16, 60:1); good and faithful shepherd (Ezk 34:11-12, 23; Is 40:11, 44:28).

That is perhaps as good a summary as any of the revelatory force of the use of *ego eimi* with a metaphor.

Conclusion

John then is taking the *ego eimi* formula, not from contemporary pagan writings, but from the Old Testament. He is drawing on the ideas of God's deity, aseity and soteriological purposes found in particular in Isaiah 40-55, although overtones of the revelation of the Divine Name in Exodus 3:14 should not be discounted. This formula is used absolutely, when its general meaning may be taken very widely to convey echoes of all that we learn of Yahweh in Isaiah 40-55, although it especially embraces God's saving character as brought to climactic expression in the person and witness of his Son and Servant Jesus Christ. It is also used in conjunction with a metaphor, to convey the same saving purposes of the Lord, but in this case the focus lies more on the particular image attached to the *ego eimi*. It is a key facet of the Christology of John's Gospel, which may have had a secondary polemical purpose in combating the false 'I ams' of John's day, but its main purpose is that we may come to believe in the One to whom it refers. It is written *'that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.'*

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TO KNEEL OR NOT TO KNEEL?

The Presbyterian Reaction to the Five Articles of Perth

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The reaction of the Presbyterians in Scotland to the Five Articles of Perth is a subject worthy of attention, given that 2018 is the four hundredth anniversary of their endorsement by a General Assembly of the Church of Scotland which met in the town of Perth. The full text of the Five Articles can be found in the Appendix, a necessary inclusion given that their full wording is not that easily accessible; many popular accounts only set them forth in a summary form. As can be seen in the Appendix, the First Article required kneeling at communion and because this was the issue that aroused the greatest controversy, 'To kneel or not to kneel?' is a fitting title for this paper. The other Articles had to do with private communion, private baptism, confirmation and the observance of 'holy days' such as Easter and Christmas. Consideration will be given to the wider historical context of the Articles, the immediate context in which they were passed, the nature of the resistance to them, the manner in which they were enforced, their repeal in 1638, and finally the relevance of the controversy to the church today.

The Wider Context

How were the Five Articles related to the unfolding of the Reformation in Scotland? What important events preceded them and what important events came after them?

Having been endorsed in 1618, it is evident that they appeared on the scene almost sixty years after the time when the Reformation had become a national reality in Scotland, 1560 being a decisive year in that regard. In the intervening period, however, there had been an intense and ongoing struggle on the part of the Presbyterians to keep Erastianism and Episcopalism at bay. There was, for example, a great setback in this regard in the passing of the Black Acts in 1584. Just over a decade later, in 1596, Andrew Melville had to make his famously defiant speech in the face of attempts by King James VI to advance royal control over the Scottish church.

On the other hand, to take a forward glance, it was twenty years after the passing of the Perth Articles that the National Covenant was signed, and it was in that same year of 1638 that the General Assembly annulled the Articles. As will be seen, there is no doubt about the role which the Articles played in heightening the tension between royal authority (in the persons of King James VI and Charles I) and the Presbyterians of Scotland. Hence some attention needs to be given to the crucial role that King James VI and I (he became James I on his accession to the English throne in 1603) played in this whole controversy. It is quite clear that his accession to the throne of England, and the influences that he came under as a result, only intensified his desire to extend royal control over the church in Scotland and to bring its government and worship into line with the church in England. There is much debate among historians about his precise motivation, but there is no doubt at all that the Articles of Perth

must be understood in the light of King James's determination to bring these two things about.

The Immediate Context

In relation to the King's agenda, a key development took place in 1615 with the appointment of the famous (or infamous, if you prefer) John Spottiswoode to the archbishopric of St Andrews. He was to play a key role in the subsequent implementation of the Five Articles. The previous year, King James had revealed his hand by ordaining via royal decree that Good Friday should be observed as a religious festival, a sign of more to come along these lines when the 5th Article of Perth emerged three years later. However, when James sought to advance his agenda further in 1616-17, including via a royal visit to Scotland in the latter year, he was faced with considerable opposition and protest on the part of the committed Presbyterians. Some objectors were disciplined for their defiance, including the notable case of David Calderwood who was banished for his outspokenness. When one church assembly failed to endorse the king's plans for change he insisted that another one be called to meet in Perth in August of 1618.

At this Perth Assembly, Spottiswoode presided and he set the tone for the proceedings with the sermon he preached of some two hours in duration. He took as his text 1 Corinthians 11:16, 'But if any man seem contentious, we have no other custom, neither the churches of God' and devoted a good deal of his exposition to commending the character and intentions of the king. Calderwood later commented rather acerbically that 'his text was very pertinent but he ran quicklie from it.'[1] An analysis of the sermon reveals that Calderwood's comment wasn't that unfair! Some idea of the tone of it can be gleaned from the following extract:

> I must tell you that the evil of novation, especially in matters of rite and conscience is nothing so great as the evil of disobedience. That which is new this day, with a little use, will become familiar and old. Ye know the proverb, A wonder lasts but nine nights in a town. But how far disobedience may go, what evils it may produce, God knows. As the apostle speaks here of contention, so I say of disobedience, we have no such custom, nor the churches of God... Away with fruitless and contentious disputing.

Later on in the sermon, Spottiswoode would appear to make a passing reference to Calderwood whom he denounces in the following terms:

> Even now that Mischant, sometime one of your number, and unworthy to be named, doth vomit forth his spite and unnatural malice against the whole nation. [2]

Despite an undoubted use of intimidation and an unprincipled manipulation of the Assembly by the royal emissaries, 45 of the delegates voted against the Articles as opposed to 86 who voted for them. The historian Laura Stewart, in her perceptive essay 'The Political Repercussions of the Five Articles of Perth', comments as follows:

[1] David Calderwood, *Perth Assembly*, (Leiden, 1619), p.2.

[2] See 'The Sermon preached by the right reverend father in God the Archbishop of St Andrews to the General Assembly, holden at Perth, the 25th of August,1618' in *The Spottiswoode Miscellany* Vol 1 (1844).

> A combination of the government's ruthless use of intimidation, fears for the future survival of assemblies, and the genuine hope that the Articles would never be enforced anyway won the day at Perth on the 27 August 1618. [3]

One might add that when the Articles are read in their entirety, as opposed to a summarised form of them, it can be seen that they were carefully worded in an attempt to avoid the accusation that the introduction of such practices as kneeling at communion and the renewed observance of festival days were intended as a return to medieval superstition.[4] However, as we shall now see, their endorsement by the Assembly, and the careful wording of them, did not reassure a large section of the Presbyterian community, and widespread resistance soon came to the surface.

The Resistance to the Articles

The most detailed theological critique of the articles emanated from the pen of David Calderwood. His treatise of 1619, which unsurprisingly had to be printed in Holland, was entitled *Perth Assembly* and its tone can be detected from the two verses of Scripture that he put on the front cover of it. They were Exodus 20:7, the command not to take the name of the LORD in vain, and Colossians 2:8, referring to the dangers posed by vain philosophy and the traditions of men. There can be no doubt that his denunciation of the articles was very sharp and his arguments against them very detailed. The following outline of his arguments against the fifth Article relating to the observance of Festival Days will serve as an illustration of this point:

1. Six days shalt thou labour.
2. It is the privilege of God's power to appoint a day of rest and to sanctify it to his honour.
3. From privilege to fact- none did appoint holy days under the law but God.
4. The observation of anniversary days pertains to the ceremonial law which has been abolished.
5. The prerogative belonging to God in the Old Testament was transferred to Christ and his apostles in the New Testament.
6. If it had been the will of God that the several acts of Christ should have been celebrated, the Holy Spirit would have made known to us the day of his nativity, etc.
7. Things indifferent, when they are abused and polluted with superstition ought to be abolished.
8. That which lawfully has been abolished by civil and ecclesiastical laws, and by the constant and uniform practice in the country without interruption, and beyond the prescription of time allowed to things moveable, and hath been borne down by sermons of all the most revered preachers since the Reformation, corrected with censures and abjured by public oaths of preachers and professors, cannot lawfully be received and put into practice again.[5]

[3] Laura A. M. Stewart, 'The Political Repercussions of the Five Articles of Perth: A Reassessment of James VI and I's Religious Policies in Scotland' in *Sixteenth Century Journal* XXXVIII/4 (2007), p.1023.

[4] For an example of the care taken with the wording see the opening lines of the fifth Article in the Appendix, 'As we abhor the superstitious observation of Festival Days by the Papists, detest all licentious and profane abuse thereof by the common sort of professors...'

[5] Calderwood, *Perth Assembly,* pp.63-86.

Calderwood's treatise was not the only one directed against the Five Articles and there were also attacks upon them in the form of dialogues which were aimed at having a more popular appeal. One of these appeared in 1620, the author of which is thought to have been David Murray, and it was entitled, *A Dialogue between Cosmophilus and Theophilus anent the urging of new ceremonies upon the Kirke of Scotland."* [6] Given Murray's viewpoint, there are no prizes for guessing which party he intended to be represented by *Cosmophilus* (a lover of the world) and which by *Theophilus* (a lover of God)! This dialogue was certainly easy to read but it is hard to establish the extent of its circulation and hence the degree of its influence upon public opinion.

The theological objections of the committed Presbyterians to the Five Articles are ably summarised by the essay upon them in the *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, as follows:

> Resistance to the articles reflected a series of Reformed convictions; a rejection of worship forms not commanded in Scripture; kneeling at communion presupposes the RC adoration of the host in the mass; the sacraments are not to be separated from the preaching of the Word in the congregation; the baptism of dying infants and the reception of the host at death are not necessary for salvation; confirmation implies that baptism is defective without the bishop; and religious festivals, as revivals of the Old Testament ceremonial law, superseded by the work of Christ, diminish respect for God's appointment of the Christian Sabbath.[7]

To place the objections to the First Article in a wider context, it would be worth consulting a superb historical survey by B. B. Warfield of the practice in Presbyterian churches throughout the world in relation to the receiving of communion, entitled, *The Posture of the Recipients at the Lord's Supper.* [8] Warfield discusses the variation in posture as between kneeling, sitting and standing for the reception of the elements as it evolved over the centuries in Presbyterian churches. His survey reveals the considerable diversity in practice over time, but kneeling was definitely a rarity.

In fairness to those who conformed to the Articles, it must be acknowledged that there were godly and principled men in their ranks. One of these was Robert Baillie, who later became a firm supporter of the Second Reformation in Scotland, but who believed that posture at Communion was a matter of indifference. He took the view therefore that the injunction to kneel could be obeyed. He set forth a sophisticated defence of his views in tracts addressed to David Dickson between 1634 and1636. [9] Therefore, although many were evidently influenced by self-interest or pusillanimity to submit to the Articles, it would be unfair to tar all the conformists with the same brush.

Moving from the level of theological critique to protest on the ground, there is evidence of a widespread holding of conventicles in private homes in Edinburgh and elsewhere by those

[6] John Murray, *A Dialogue Betwixt Cosmophilus and Theophilus anent the urging of new ceremonies upon the Kirke of Scotland*, (Amsterdam 1620).
[7] 'Perth, Five Articles of' in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Downers Grove, Illinois, 1993), pp.654-5.
[8] B. B. Warfield, 'The Posture of Recipients at the Lord's Supper; A footnote to the history of Reformed Usages' in *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* 11 (1922), pp.217-34.
[9] Alexander D. Campbell, *The Life and Works of Robert Baillie* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2017), pp.148-151.

who did not want to kneel at Communion. There were others in large numbers who attended churches outside of Edinburgh where they did not have to kneel. To give just one example of the form that determined resistance could take, a traveller to Ayr in 1634-5 named Sir William Brereton, observed that:

> Upon Easter Day last, as soon as he (i.e. the minister) went to the communion table, the people all left the church and departed, not one stayed, only the pastor alone. [10]

One scholar sums this protest up well by stating that the people 'voted with their feet.' [11] However, it would be incorrect to regard resistance to the Articles as having been anywhere near universal or to think of it as having been at a uniform level throughout the country. The level of non-conformity varied from region to region. A scholar who carried out a detailed survey of the level of resistance concluded, albeit tentatively given the paucity of the source material available to him, that the area of greatest conformity was towards the north from Perth to Aberdeen. He identified the area of greatest contention between conformists and the non-conformists as being in the diocese of St Andrews and in Edinburgh. The evidence pointed to the area of highest non-conformity as being in the south especially in the Ayrshire, Lanarkshire and surrounding regions. [12]

As with the resistance, there was also considerable variation in the degree to which the Articles were enforced, an issue to which we must next turn our attention.

The Enforcement of the Articles

Archbishop Spottiswoode undoubtedly made a determined effort to enforce the Articles in his own diocese as the following letter of February 1619 shows:

> Loving brethren, I have understood that notwithstanding of the intimation made to you of the acts of the late General Assembly, and the desire that ye should have conformed yourselves in preaching all this last Christmas in your kirks of the matter pertinent to that day, that divers have disobeyed, and not only have forborne to practice as ye were commended, but also in your sermons and exercises sought to condemn the proceedings of the assembly, which in a kirk well constituted is intolerable; the evils thereof and our care to prevent them, have brought us in this last meeting which we have keeped in Edinburgh, to appoint that warning should be given to every bishop to the exercise within his diocese for the precise keeping of these acts in time coming especially for giving communion upon Easter Day in the norm prescribed of kneeling, and the observation of the Passion Day, Easter itself, Ascension Day and Pentecost Day by a thankful commemoration of the benefits of the Lord our God vouchsafed us thereon in Christ Jesus. According to the whilk ordinance I have thought meet to take warning unto you that none should pretend excuse or deceive himself by a conceit of forbearing of oversight though he transgress, seeing beside the danger of schism in this dis-conformity, we are commanded by his Majesty to suffer that none may brook the ministry that do not obey the practice of the same.[13]

[10] John Hill Burton, *The History of Scotland from Agricola's mission to the Extinction of the Jacobite Insurrection* Vol.7 (New York, 1876), p.108.
[11] 'Political Repercussions....' Op.cit., p.1024.
[12] P. H. R. MacKay, 'The Reception Given to the Five Articles of Perth' in *RSCHS* 19 (1975-7), p198-99.
[13] Ibid., pp.195-6.

While Spottiswoode's enthusiasm for the Articles may not have been matched by the majority of his colleagues in the Episcopal ranks, the King sought to ensure their greater acceptance by having them passed by the Scottish Parliament, which met in Edinburgh in 1621. There was a heavy thunderstorm in Edinburgh as the Articles were being voted upon and Spottiswoode later commented upon the differing interpretations of the significance of this extreme weather:

> At the closing of the Parliament, such abundance of rain, with such thundering and lightnings did fall...which the factious sort did interpret to be a visible sign of God's anger for ratifying the Acts of Perth; others in derision of their folly said that it was to be taken for an approbation from heaven, likening the same to the thundering and lightnings at the giving of the law to Moses.[14]

In the immediate aftermath of the parliamentary approval, King James issued the following letter to the prelates, which reveals how keen he was to have the Articles enforced:

> The sword is now put into your hands; go on therefore to use it; and let it roust no longer till ye have perfited the service trusted to you, or otherwise we must use it against you and them. If any or all of you be faint-hearted, we are able enough (thanks to God) to put others in your places who both can and will make things possible which ye think so difficult. [15]

There were of course some notable names who were subjected to a variety of sanctions as a result their determined opposition to the Articles. Amongst these were: David Dickson (best known to us perhaps as author of a commentary on the Psalms); Robert Blair, who eventually moved to Ulster to have greater freedom in his ministry; John Livingstone, who also spent a good amount of time in Ulster but ministered to people in Scotland as well despite official disapproval; Samuel Rutherford who famously said about the 1st of the Perth articles, 'I think I see idolatry in kneeling, which is sufficient to scare me from it' and Alexander Henderson, who was so prominent at the time of the Second Reformation.[16]

Space does not permit giving details of the individual cases but suffice it to say that the punishments varied from deposition from office, confinement or warding to a certain location, imprisonment, and even banishment as in Calderwood's case. In all, 48 ministers are recorded as having been cited before the High Commission (the highest disciplinary body), for non-conformity to the Articles.[17]

Enforcement of the Articles continued with the accession to the throne of Charles I in 1625. Initially, there were some signs of concession and compromise. For instance, in July 1625 a set of instructions was sent to the Bishop of Ross wherein it was stated that all ministers who had been admitted to office before the passing of the Perth Articles would not be pursued provided they preached 'no doctrine publicly against our authority, the church government, nor the canons thereof.' But as early as 1628 a request by the ministers of Edinburgh to revert to the old form of receiving the communion was met with the demand 'to go on in the

[14] John Spottiswoode, *The History of the Church of Scotland* Vol.3 (Edinburgh, 1851), p.262.
[15] David Calderwood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland* Vol.7 (Edinburgh, 1845), p.508.
[16] Campbell, *The Life and Works of Robert Baillie*, p.149.
[17] Stewart, 'Political Repercussions...' Op.cit., p.1021.

administration of the communion according to the order prescribed' and to take notes on 'such persons of their congregation who shall refuse the same.'[18] And, of course, in the following decade, Charles, by his introduction of the Book of Canons and new Liturgy, added fuel to the fire. He thereby ignited the reaction which led to the National Covenant of 1638 and the meeting of the General Assembly that same year at which the opponents of the Five Articles had their say in no uncertain terms.

The Repeal of the Articles

Two aspects of what happened at the General Assembly in 1638 should be noted. Firstly, the Perth Assembly itself was declared to be null and void. Ten reasons were given for 'annulling the pretended Assembly holden at Perth, 1618'. Many of those reasons were in line with the critique made by Calderwood some twenty years earlier. Let it suffice here to refer to the 9th reason:

> In all lawful assemblies, the grounds of proceeding were, and used to be, the Word of God, the Confession of Faith, and acts of former general assemblies. But in this pretended assembly, the ground of their proceeding in voicing was the King's commandment only...[19]

Secondly, then, theological reasons were given for abjuring the Article. These were stated in a very thorough fashion. To give a flavour of them, the following is a part of the reasoning why the Article on Festival Days was adjudged unlawful:

> In the ninth head of the First Book of Discipline, the reason is set down against the Easter Communion, your honours are not ignorant of how superstitiously the people run to that action at Pascheven; as if the time gave virtue to the sacrament, and how the rest of the whole year they are careless and negligent, as if it appertained not to them, but at that time only. And for this reason other times were appointed by that book for that holy action. In the Assembly holden 1596, begun in March 1595, at which time the covenant was renewed, superstition and idolatry breaking forth in observing festival days, setting out of bonfires, singing carols, are reckoned amongst the corruptions which are to be amended; and the pulpits did sound from time to time against all shew of observing any festival day whatsoever, except the Lord's Day. [20]

So having looked at the broader and immediate context in which the Perth Articles were set, having considered opposition to the articles, the attempted enforcement of the articles, and their ultimate repeal in 1638, let us conclude with some thoughts on the contemporary relevance of the controversy for the church nowadays.

The relevance of the Articles for today

Consideration of this controversy should remind us of how careful we should be in relation to the proper observance of the Lord's Supper. The Presbyterians of 17th century Scotland strove to ensure that it was observed in line with biblical truth and so must we. Kneeling is

[18] Ibid., p.1033.
[19] http://www.british-history-ac.uk./church-scotland-records-proceedings/1560-1618/pp.1143-1167
[20] Ibid., pp.1143-1167.

not an issue nowadays, but how careful are we concerning, for example, the right of admission to the Lord's Table?

The reaction of our 17th century brethren to the 5th Article on the observance of festival days should at least cause us to reflect on our current practices, to assess the implications of the regulative principle of worship and to keep the observance of the Lord's Day at the very heart of our church life. Is it not a pity that there would appear to be so much enthusiasm for Christmas in our ranks and perhaps so little enthusiasm for the privilege of the weekly Sabbath?

The resistance of the godly Scottish Presbyterians to state encroachment upon the liberties of the church, which underlay the whole controversy about the Articles, is of increasing relevance to us in these days. One thinks particularly of the whole area of sexual ethics and the fear that the day may well come when the State will legislate in ways which could undermine our freedom to proclaim the wholesome doctrine of human sexuality found in the Word of God. Men like Calderwood and Blair were willing to suffer for the sake of their biblical convictions. Are we prepared to endure sanctions by the State should faithfulness to the Word of God require that?

Even if our Presbyterian forefathers were mistaken in some of their arguments (e.g. in relation to the total prohibition on home communion, a practice that is facilitated under certain conditions in many of our churches), we should not undervalue their zeal for the purity of the gospel. In the light particularly of later developments in the reign of Charles I, there is no doubt but that they had to deal with a developing sacramentalism which posed a real threat to the gospel of grace. Their zealous opposition to the Articles was in line with the exhortation 'to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints (Jude 3)'.

Whilst the Five Articles in and of themselves may not have posed an immediate threat to the authentic gospel, they were part of a worrying trend of royal intrusion upon the liberties of the church that gave a justifiable cause for concern. So then, a review of the controversy about the Five Articles should lead us to conclude that the Presbyterians of 17th century Scotland were right to take a firm stand and to refuse to kneel despite all the pressures that were imposed upon them.

APPENDIX

THE FIVE ARTICLES OF PERTH

1. Seeing we are commanded by God himself, that when we come to worship him, we fall down and kneel before the Lord our Maker, and considering withal, that there is no part of divine worship more heavenly and spiritual, than is the holy receiving of the blessed body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; like as the most humble and reverend gesture of the body, in our meditation and lifting up of our hearts, best becometh so divine and sacred an action: Therefore, notwithstanding that our Kirk hath used, since the Reformation of Religion, to celebrate the holy Communion to the people sitting, by reason of the great abuse of kneeling used in the idolatrous worship of the sacraments by the Papists: yet now seeing all memory of bypast superstition is past; in reverence of God, and in due regard of so divine a mystery, and in remembrance of so mystical an union as we are made partakers of, the

Assembly thinketh good, that the blessed Sacrament be celebrated hereafter meekly and reverently upon their knees.

2. If any good Christian visited with long sickness, and known to the Pastor, by reason of his present infirmity, unable to resort to the Kirk for receiving of the holy Communion; or being sick shall declare to the Pastor upon his conscience, that he thinks his sickness to be deadly, and shall earnestly desire to receive the same in his house, the Minister shall not deny to him so great a comfort, lawful warning being given to him the night before; and that there be three or four of good religion and conversation, free of lawful impediments, present with the sick person, to communicate with him; who must also provide a convenient place in his house, and all things necessary for the reverend administration thereof, according to the order prescribed in the Kirk.

3. The Minister shall often admonish the people, that they defer not the baptizing of infants any longer than the next Lords Day after the child be born, unless upon a great and reasonable cause declared to the Minister, and by him approved: as also they shall warn them, that without great cause they procure not their children to be baptized at home in their houses. But when great need shall compel them to baptize in private houses, (in which case the Minister shall not refuse to do it, upon the knowledge of the great need, and being timely required thereto,) the baptism shall be ministered after the same form, as it should have been in the congregation; and the Minister shall the next Lords Day after any such private baptism, declare in the Kirk, that the infant was baptized, and therefore ought to be received as one of the true flock of Christ's fold.

4. For as much as one of the special means for staying the increase of Popery, and settling of true Religion in the hearts of the people is, that a special care be taken of the trial of young children their education, and how they are catechized; which in time of the Primitive Kirk was most carefully attended, as being most profitable to cause young children, in their tender years, drink in the knowledge of God and his religion; but is now altogether neglected, in respect of the great abuse and errors which crept into the Popish Kirk, by making therefore a Sacrament of Confirmation: Therefore that all superstitions builded thereupon may be rescinded, and that the matter itself being most necessary for the education of the youth, may be reduced to the primitive integrity, it is thought good, that the Minister in every parish shall catechize all young children of eight years of age, and see that they have the knowledge, and be able to make rehearsal of the Lords Prayer, the Belief, and ten Commandments, with answer to the questions of the small Catechism used in our Kirk: and that every Bishop in his visitation shall censure the Minister, who shall be found remiss therein; and said Bishops shall cause the same children to be presented before them, and bless them with prayer for increase of their knowledge, and continuance of God's heavenly graces with every one of them.

5. As we abhor the superstitious observation of Festival days by the Papists, detest all licentious and profane abuse thereof by the common sort of professors; so we think, that the inestimable benefits received from God by our Lord Jesus Christ, his Birth, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Sending down of the Holy Ghost, were commendably and godly remembered at certain particular days and times, by the whole Kirk of the world, and may be also now: Therefore the Assembly ordains, that

every Minister shall upon these days have the commemoration of the foresaid inestimable benefits; and make choice of several and pertinent texts of Scripture, and frame their doctrine and exhortation thereto; and rebuke all superstitious observation and licentious profanation thereof.

REV. PROFESSOR JAMES DICK (1842-1916)

The 'ideal of what a Covenanting minister should be'?

Trevor McCavery

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It is surely noteworthy that between 1875 and 1879 a father and three of his sons were simultaneously serving as ministers in the Reformed Presbyterian Churches in Scotland and Ireland. These men ministered in a total of nine congregations. The father, James Dick Sr., was ordained in 1826, while the youngest of his three clerical sons, William Dick, retired in 1919, so there was almost a century of ministry. The focus of this article, however, will be on the middle clerical son in the Dick family, James, namesake for his father.

James Dick Sr. was born in Strabane in 1799, the son of Alexander Dick, a ruling elder in the Bready congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. James Sr. was ordained and installed in the congregation of Kellswater in 1826.[1] When one digs a little deeper, we discover that the Dick family were part of a larger clerical dynasty. James Sr.'s wife, Jane Wallace, was a sister of the wife of Rev. Thomas Houston, the minister of Knockbracken. As well as being brothers-in-law, both ministers were the closest of friends and each called his eldest son after his friend – Thomas Houston Dick and James Dick Houston! Both these sons became ministers in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

The Reformed Presbyterian Churches of Ireland and Scotland had developed from Scottish Presbyterianism which had been established by the First and Second Scottish Reformations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Second Reformation had produced the National Covenant (1638) and the Solemn League and Covenant (1643), which were sworn by the monarch, parliaments and people. When the monarchy was restored in 1660 and took control of the governments in England, Scotland and Ireland, these Covenants were repudiated and those who upheld them were brutally persecuted. The Presbyterian churches in Scotland and Ireland gradually came to settle their differences with the government by accepting Indulgences and finally reaching agreement with the Williamite government in the Revolution Settlement in 1689-90.

Small groups of Presbyterians in south-west Scotland, however, and in areas settled by Scots in the Ulster Plantation, refused to reach an accommodation because it meant abandoning the Covenants. These groups, later to evolve into the Reformed Presbyterian Churches, maintained a common identity, called 'Society People' (because they met in local societies for fellowship and exhortation) or 'Covenanters' because they insisted on the descending obligations upon the governments of England, Scotland and Ireland to fulfil the commitments formerly undertaken. The Covenanters maintained their witness even during long periods when they had no minister. 'Tenacity – in terriers and churches alike – is often inversely proportional to size and this has certainly been reflected in the distinctive testimony of the continuing church of the Covenanters'.[2] By the time James Dick was born, in 1842,

[1] 'Memoir of the Rev James Dick, M.A., D.D.' in *The Covenanter* (July 1880), pp.215-6, 218.
[2] Gordon Keddie, 'The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the Disruption of 1863: I. Disruption and Recovery' in *The Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* Vol. 11, No.1 (Summer 1993), p.31.

Reformed Presbyterians in Ireland were well established as a growing denomination, with the number of congregations doubling since 1800 to twenty-seven - although eight of them had separated in a schism in 1840. [3]

The subject of this study, James Dick Jr., was born in his father's manse in Ballymena on 22 March, 1842, the fourth of six sons. When he was sixteen weeks old, the family moved to a farm at Ballylesson, midway between Ballymena and Kellswater, where his father was the minister. James was educated at a private school and afterwards at the school of Rev. John Beatty of Ballymena before finishing his schooling at Belfast Academical Institution.

It was about this time, when James was around 12 years old, that he was knocked down and trampled by a horse out of the control of its drunken owner. His injuries required thirteen stitches in his face which left some scarring and his photographs show a drooping left eyelid. This trauma did not impede his development. Indeed, he was described as 'athletic and supple in body, mind and soul'. [4] Professor Adam Loughridge described him as 'a fine athlete and cricketer' [5] and he also excelled academically. He entered Queen's College, Belfast, in 1861, receiving the Drennan Exhibition Prize for the top 'Inst' pupil entering Queen's, and he came second in the list of all the Literary Scholarships awarded by Queen's that year. In his second and third years he won further Literary Scholarships from the University and he also won a scholarship in Ancient Classics from Queen's College, Galway. Latin and Greek were his subjects and he graduated B.A. (with Honours) in Ancient Classics in 1864 and M.A. (with honours) together with an Exhibition prize in 1866. James Dick was thus recognised as one of the most academically able young men of his generation.

In 1865, while studying for his M.A., he entered the Theological Hall of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. We do not know what influenced James to consider the Gospel ministry. By this stage, his father had been in the ministry for almost forty years and along with his uncle, Rev Thomas Houston, the two were the first Professors appointed in the Hall, which was established in 1854. James's older brother, Thomas Houston Dick, was ordained five years earlier at Ballymacashon and his cousin, James Dick Houston, two years earlier in Ballyclabber. Was he just doing what was expected of him? Surely not. Three of his brothers did not enter the ministry and, given James's outstanding abilities, other vocations might have beckoned. As we come to further examine his life and ministry we obtain a better understanding of what motivated the man.

James was licensed by the Northern Presbytery on 3 February, 1869, and received calls to the Wishaw congregation in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland and to Newry in the Irish Church. He chose Wishaw.[6] It is likely that he chose the Scottish Church because at that time that Church was in a dramatically weakened state, only seven years after the 'Disruption', or schism, of 1863.

Before the 'Disruption', the Scottish RP Church was numerically healthy. It consisted of forty-six congregations in six Presbyteries, comprising a church of almost 7,000 communicant members, together with a proportional number of children and adherents.

[3] R.W.L McCollum, 'John Paul and his shaping of Irish Presbyterianism in the nineteenth century' M.Th. thesis The Queen's University of Belfast (1992).
[4] John Ramsey, 'Memoir of the Rev. James Dick M.A., D.D.' in *The Covenanter* (September 1916), p.323.
[5] *The Covenanters in Ireland: a history of the congregations* (Armagh, 2010), p.91.
[6] Ramsey, 'Memoir', Op.cit., p.322.

Numbers had remained steady since the days of the Societies in the 1680s.[7] For several decades before 1863 the Scottish RP Church had adhered rather loosely to its distinctive Covenanter principle of asserting the Mediatorial Kingship of Christ over the nation and, because of the national sin of denying Christ his crown rights in the constitution, government and legislation, the consequent principle of political dissent. The latter principle, of political dissent, involved a principled refusal to vote in parliamentary elections and to take the Oath of Allegiance to assume military or political positions. The Scottish Church maintained, in theory, this principle of political dissent but became uncertain that discipline should follow any infringement. Matters came to a head in the 1863 Synod, when a majority, after having consulted the membership, voted that discipline for voting or taking the Oath of Allegiance should cease. Unable to overturn this decision, a small number had no option but to secede and immediately formed a Minority Synod. It comprised only eight congregations consisting of less than a thousand members.[8]

It was to this remnant that James Dick went in 1870. Within twelve years, the Majority Synod of the Scottish RP Church had abandoned other Covenanter distinctive principles and was assimilated into the Free Church of Scotland.[9] Witnessing these developments, Dick's attachment to the distinctive Covenanting principles of asserting the Mediatorial Kingship of Christ in the nation and preaching against the national sin for failure to assert the crown rights of Jesus Christ in the state was to remain throughout his life. He was to become one of the Irish church's most determined advocates of these principles.

He was ordained in Wishaw on 19 May, 1870. At the *soiree* which followed the service, the congregation took the unusual step of presenting their new minister with forty volumes of theological works. James ministered for fourteen years in Wishaw.[10] In his first year of ministry, twenty were added to the roll of membership.[11] The following explains why:

> He at once made his mark as a preacher. The soundness and maturity of his views and the vigour, moral earnestness and clearness which he brought to their exposition gave him a distinct place and popularity in the district. He was "mighty in the Scriptures" and had a wide and accurate knowledge and grasp of Calvinistic theology. His discourses, clustering round the cross, unfolded the doctrines of God's grace. I have heard him say that he never preached without at some point in the sermon endeavouring to make plain and simple the way of return to God for the guilty and lost. [12]

While preaching never ceased to be a priority, other qualities were soon revealed. In January 1871, just seven months into his ministry, the magazine of the Scottish RP Church, *The Reformed Presbyterian Witness*, began publication of a series of articles, written by Dick, entitled 'Social Hindrances to Vital Religion'. These he identified as Intemperance, Sabbath-breaking, Ignorance, Indifference and Broad-churchism. Within a year of his installation in Wishaw, he published a pamphlet on the Headship of Christ, the final sermon in a series of

[7] Keddie, 'The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland', p.33; James A. Dickson, *Ministers and Congregations of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, 1688-2016* (Kilsyth, 2016), XV.
[8] Keddie, 'The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland', p. 44.
[9] Ibid., p.43.
[10] Ramsey, 'Memoir', Op.cit., pp.320-322.
[11] *Reformed Presbyterian Witness* (July, 1870) , p.415; (July, 1871), p.177.
[12] J.T. Potts, 'Memoir of Professor Dick', reprinted in *The Covenanter* (October, 1916), p.362.

Sabbath evening sermons.[13] The Editor of *The Covenanter*, the magazine of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, himself an author and considered a 'keen and discriminating critic' said of this debut publication from the fledgling, twenty-nine year old minister:

> The subject is one that has been much discussed, but this is no mere commonplace treatment of it. The style is lucid and eloquent, as befits the lofty theme. The argument is exceedingly close and forcible and the general principle is followed out in application with unswerving fidelity…we wish our readers to procure and read the whole. Those who do will, we are sure, agree with us in saying that have seldom had the opportunity of anything so good in the same compass.[14]

The Editor of the Scottish *Reformed Presbyterian Witness* said that, although he did not generally approve of publishing sermons because they were originally intended to be preached and heard, and were ephemeral, he made an exception with this sermon. Its subject was of the utmost importance because the Headship of Christ has such a bearing on the glory of Christ.[15]

> The manner in which it is handled in this sermon, which is really a treatise on the subject, is scriptural, lucid and argumentative [meaning well-argued]; whilst throughout it is imbued with an unction and earnestness which cannot but impress the heart.

This publication, and others which followed, led to his appointment by the Scottish Synod in 1875 as successor to the Rev. Robert Wallace, who was his brother-in-law, as Editor of *The Reformed Presbyterian Witness*.[16] Almost every issue contained at least one article written by him. He contributed to other journals and newspapers.

In 1875, after five years as a bachelor ministering in Wishaw, and at the age of 33 he married Georgina Hamilton from Glasgow, then aged 20, and together they had one son and six daughters.[17]

In 1884 James Dick received two calls – from Ballylaggan and Kilraughts, both in the Irish RP Church. In the end he accepted the call from the congregation of Kilraughts. He chose to return to Ireland, 'having felt that in view of the dearth of ministers and consequent difficulties of the church in Ireland he had a providential call to return to his native land'. [18] He was rewarded with a stipend of £140 per annum, one of the largest of the Synod. He was installed there on 11 March, 1884. Aware of his gifts, the Synod of the Irish Church in 1887 unanimously appointed him Professor of Hebrew, Biblical Criticism, Exegesis and Church History in the Reformed Theological Hall.

James Dick remained at Kilraughts for twelve years. He immersed himself in the community life of the town and neighbourhood of Ballymoney. As well as preaching in several churches

[13] J. Dick, *The Headship of Christ: a discourse on Rev 19:12: 'On His head were many crowns'*, (Glasgow, 1871).
[14] Ramsey, 'Memoir', p.323. The Editor was Rev. Robert Nevin, minister of Clarendon Street, Londonderry, Clerk of the Western Presbytery and of the R.P. Synod of Ireland.
[15] *RP Witness* vol. IV, no. vi, Nov 1871, p.274.
[16] *RP Witness* vol. VI, no. iv, July 1875, p.177.
[17] 'Fasti' published in *The Covenanters in Ireland: a history of the congregations* (Armagh, 2010) ; information supplied to the author by Susan McCune, great-granddaughter of James Dick.
[18] *RP Witness* vol. X, no ix, May 1884, p.429.

in the area, he taught classes at Ballymoney Intermediate School (later called Dalriada) and acted as the school's Headmaster.[19] He was Chairman of the Board of Directors of The Route Temperance Establishment which ran stabling accommodation and a café. He was Vice-President of the Young Men's Christian Association where his lectures were considered to be 'full of deep thought and sound teaching.' He was keen to be associated with the young men in outdoor sports, even though by this stage he was his forties and fifties, and there he exercised a wholesome influence: 'Your presence in the field has always been a restraint to any tendency to rudeness or ungentlemanly conduct of any kind and your conduct in our game has been a model of honour and true sportsmanship.' It was said that he carried with him 'even into sport, the spirit of your Master'.[20]

On 21 June 1888, after four years in Kilraughts, his wife, Georgina, then aged 32, died in childbirth while giving birth to her daughter Agnes. James Dick was left a widower, aged 46, with seven children.[21]

In 1894 and 1895 he became embroiled in a controversy which surrounded the election of a successor to Rev. Professor Josiah Chancellor in the College Street South congregation in Belfast (later called Grosvenor Road). Chancellor, possibly not quite ready to retire but, at seventy years of age, with a congregation of 400 members, was finding the work to be a burden. He wanted a younger man to work alongside him for a while and eventually succeed him. For this unusual arrangement he obtained Presbytery's approval. He did not, however, have the full support of the congregation when it came to the identity of his assistant/successor. While Chancellor favoured Rev. Samuel Guiler Kennedy, minister of Wishaw, a large minority wanted James Dick. Dick, at the age of fifty-two, with almost twenty-five years' experience in the ministry, and a fellow Professor in the Hall, certainly did not match the profile that Chancellor wanted for this role.

On the evening of 12 December 1894, at a congregational meeting, Kennedy received 162 votes - a majority of only six over Dick. In the aftermath of this meeting there was considerable dissension within the congregation.[22] Matters came to a head at the morning service on 23 December when Chancellor declared from his pulpit that the minority were duty bound to sign the call. He was correct - but only up to a point, because *The Code* added, 'unless they have such reason for refusing to do so as they are prepared to sustain before the Court to which the call is to be submitted [i.e., the Presbytery]'.

Consequently, a Petition was laid before Presbytery, meeting on 26 December, 1894, signed by six elders, five deacons and two members representing the large minority. The petition claimed that Chancellor had exercised 'undue and unjust influence' to prevent members voting for James Dick. The petitioners claimed that Chancellor had canvassed a number of the members of the congregation, whom, they alleged, he had not visited pastorally for years, made 'injurious' and 'slanderous' remarks against James Dick and his late father. It was

[19] F.S. Leahy, *A School of the Prophets: a history of the Reformed Theological College,* (Belfast, 2004), p.32-33. The website of Dalriada School does not list him as a former Headmaster so we might conclude that he held this post in a temporary, acting capacity.
[20] 'Address and Presentation to Rev. Professor James Dick from Dr S.B. Boyd *et al*, and Reply', November 1896, supplied to the author by Susan McCune, great-granddaughter of James Dick.
[21] Information supplied to the author by Susan McCune.
[22] The facts are contained in various papers relative to this case were brought together as a printed document for members of Synod, dated 24 May 1895 and entitled 'Extracts and Correspondence re. College Street South Congregation, Belfast'.

claimed Chancellor's interference caused several members to change their vote or abstain. The petitioners asked Presbytery to declare that James Dick ought to be elected.

The case was discussed at two Presbytery meetings, on 26 and 31 December 1894. At the first, evidence was heard from a number of members of College Street South on Chancellor's conduct in the weeks leading up to the election. A letter was read at which it was claimed 'Dr Chancellor went up the Shankill and down the Crumlin and, with a few exceptions, carried all before him.' It was alleged that Chancellor said that Dick was too old, that he was 'not a visitor', that his father had not been a visitor either and that Dick attended football matches and cricket matches at which there was betting. Chancellor was present at Presbytery and was given the opportunity of defending himself. He denied that he made any reference to football matches but insisted that Dick did take part in cricket matches 'and that it was to be supposed that at these there was betting by outsiders.' (He later clarified that he did not suggest that Dick countenanced betting.) He said that he had been told by a member of the late Dr Dick's Kellswater congregation of a case where he had neglected his duty of visitation. Chancellor also confirmed that when one of his accusers had stated that 'five years of Prof. Dick's preaching would be better than the service of any other man' he had replied that 'there were other things necessary besides preaching to build up a congregation in Belfast'.

The Eastern Presbytery was as divided as the congregation. A majority of Presbytery recommended that Presbytery refuse to sustain both the protest and the call to Kennedy. This was carried. Others, however, had wanted to go further and state Presbytery's 'strong disapproval of Dr Chancellor's course of action' and that a 'new congregation be formed out of Professor Dick's supporters' and that financial provisions should be made for acquiring a church building for this congregation.

The petitioners were unhappy and appealed to Synod. At a meeting of Presbytery on 27 March, 1895, a compromise ruling was proposed and carried: that the Presbytery could find no facts that proved that Professor Chancellor had influenced the election; that Chancellor withdraw, and express regret for, the injurious remarks against Professor Dick and his father; that given the impact on Chancellor's health, the petitioners withdraw their charges. Again, a minority in Presbytery wanted the petitioners supported and Chancellor censured. Presbytery met again on 30 April, 1895, and heard evidence from several College Street South members that Chancellor had made no attempt to influence them and had remained strictly neutral. The petitioners refused to attend this meeting of Presbytery and answer questions since they had already appealed to Synod. The Eastern Presbytery decided to refer the whole business to Synod.

It must be said that Chancellor had significant support from the College Street South congregation. A Memorial prepared for Synod, with 128 signatures from among the elders, deacons and members of College Street South, accused those elders among the petitioners of banding together and meeting apart from the Session to organise a systematic and deliberate canvass of the congregation for Professor Dick and that by their appeal they had prolonged the divisions in the congregation. The memorialists claimed that it was the petitioners that had been guilty of libel – against Chancellor - and that the petitioners had met with Chancellor on the afternoon of 30 December and proposed that, if he would have the call made out for Professor Dick, they would withdraw their petition and stop all proceedings.

The memorialists refused to recognise the authority of the elders among the petitioners.[23]

Meanwhile, a bitter correspondence ensued between Chancellor and Dick in the period 30 March to 9 April, 1895. Dick tried to accept Chancellor's apology but found that he could not. Was Dick being uncharitable and unreasonable? Dick's position can be found in Scripture: 'If your brother sins, rebuke him, **and if he repents**, forgive him.' (Luke 17:3) [emphasis added]. His stance can be better understood when the following is considered.

Chancellor said his criticism of Dick's father 'came out in the spur of the moment and he never expected it would be repeated.' Dick said this was an inadequate apology and, besides, the criticism was untrue. Chancellor's apology for his criticism of Dick himself was half-hearted: he was merely 'very sorry if he said anything unfair or hurtful'. Chancellor then diluted his apology further by adding 'all he said he believed to be commonly known and talked of.' The last straw was Chancellor's assertion that the only canvassing he was aware of was the 'most systematic, open and persistent' canvassing by Dick's supporters for Dick and he, Chancellor, would not have made any reference to Dick had not Dick's 'exclusive claims been unduly obtruded upon his attention so that the congregation was left without any proper freedom of choice.' Dick must have concluded that Chancellor had not shown true repentance and he must therefore 'tell it to the church' (Matthew 18:17). By mutual agreement their correspondence was published and the whole matter brought before Synod on 27 May, 1895. Josias Chancellor died the day before this meeting.

On 29 November, 1895, the majority in College Street South issued a unanimous call to Rev. Kennedy and he was installed there on 5 February, 1896. Meanwhile, the supporters of Dick, who had seceded from College Street South, petitioned the Eastern Presbytery to form a new congregation. Presbytery agreed and reported to Synod, 'After considering the circumstances which led to the secession and the petitioners' prospects of maintaining a stated ministry, and having regard to the peace and prosperity of the Church', Presbytery, on 21 January, 1896, organised the petitioners into a congregation – five elders, four deacons and seventy-six members. At this time, the Antrim Road Baptist Church vacated their premises on the corner of Trinity Street and Regent Street in north Belfast. These were purchased for £1000. It is no surprise that the new congregation issued a call to James Dick on 18 February, which he accepted. He was installed in the newly organised congregation, called Trinity Street Reformed Presbyterian Church, on 19 May, 1896. [24] By 1900 the membership numbered 178 with a Sabbath School enrolment of 150. Trinity Street was James Dick's final charge.

A year after he moved to Trinity Street, James married Sara McMullan from Ballycastle, who has been described as a 'governess' or 'house-keeper' for him and his seven children. In 1897, with Sara, and at the age of 55, he started a second family and with her had three sons and two daughters which meant he had twelve children, though one of his sons, from this second marriage, John Owen Dick, pre-deceased him. [25]

[23] So committed was Chancellor's supporters to him that, following his death, the congregation re-named itself 'Chancellor Memorial'. For this the congregation was rebuked by Presbytery and directed to return to the former name 'College Street South'. Presbytery ruled that, 'It cannot but have been displeasing to Him [Christ] and incurred His displeasure as the designation implies that the congregation exists for perpetuating the memory of the man and implies that the congregation did not exist before the pastorate of Dr Chancellor.' *The Covenanter* (1896), p.398.

[24] Minutes of Synod, 1896, p.53.

[25] Information supplied by James Dick's granddaughter, Margaret Dick, and his great-granddaughter, Susan McCune.

So far in this outline of his life we have touched on a number of themes. We turn now to develop some of these, and consider others, as we examine his ministry as a pastor, professor, polemicist and presbyter.

1. Pastor

Mention has been made already of James Dick's impressive pulpit ministry. John Ramsay said of his preaching,

> The doctrines of grace enthralled him, as all his pulpit work evidenced. His outlook was broad and he sought to bring home the whole of God's truth to his hearers' hearts and lives. His denunciations of sin were powerful and pointed. His aim was to uplift the Saviour and make Him known as Prophet, Priest and King.[26]

Another declared,

> As a preacher he searched deep in the Scriptures and profoundly meditated therein, and so fed his people with strong food, spiritual meat, or, as one said, "the finest of wheat". He never sent them away with chaff, unsatisfied nor presented them with his own imaginings but ever declared the pure Gospel. He gave them wholesome nourishment, sound doctrine and delighted to show forth the beauties of Christ: He [Christ] was the central theme of all his discourses.[27]

The qualities demonstrated in his preaching remained until the end of his long ministry. The Session of the Trinity Street congregation said in its minute on his death: 'His pulpit ministry was marked by depth and clearness of thought in the faithful presentation of the gospel.'[28] Synod's record, in its minute on his death, showed that he possessed those important human qualities required for an effective preaching ministry:

> His mind was pre-eminently logical, his reading wide and varied, his powers of analysis extraordinarily keen, his diction faultless, his voice full and musical, his delivery free from affectations and mannerisms. He expressed himself clearly and without ambiguity."[29]

Of the merits of his preaching there was no doubt. With regard to his pastoral work, there was more uncertainty. Some wondered how he could have succeeded in this part of the ministry, given his personality, which was said by some to have given 'an impression of coldness, or haughtiness or even severity…the display of personal emotion was repressed.' Even his friends admitted that he 'was reserved, not allowing every passer-by to enter the inner sanctuary of his thoughts…His friendship was a precious thing, something to cherish.' [30] One of the criticisms, it will be recalled, allegedly levelled at Dick by Josias Chancellor was 'he was not a visitor'. When Chancellor was before Presbytery, although he did deny other things that he was alleged to have said, remained silent about this particular criticism.

[26] Ramsay, 'Memoir', Op.cit, p.325.
[27] May L. Dunlop, 'An Appreciation: a tribute to the memory of the late Rev. Professor James Dick M.A., D.D.' in *The Covenanter* Vol. XXVI No. 10 October 1916, p.366.
[28] 'Minute on the death of the Rev Professor James Dick, M.A., D.D. of the Trinity Street, Belfast, Congregation' in *The Covenanter* (1916), p.399.
[29] 'Minute on the Death of Rev Professor James Dick, M.A., D.D' in *Minutes of Synod* (1917), 23-24.
[30] Potts, 'Memoir', p.361.

In his attempt at an apology, mentioned above, 'all he said, he believed to be commonly known and talked of.'

On looking at further evidence, however, it would seem that such conclusions were unfair. No doubt, admitted one admirer, 'his moral and spiritual tone was high. Profanity and obscenity dare not suggest themselves in his presence'.[31] In fact, however, 'he was humorous rather than witty with a gentle humour, a pure humour, which was never debased to vulgarity.' Those who knew him best could declare that behind his dignified, serene exterior, 'warm emotion and sympathy were kindling and pulsing within…never was there a more affectionate, constant or generous friend than he.' Indeed, 'he had many friends – those who recognised his sterling worth – men of his own mould.'

But could it be said that his friendship was an exclusive commodity, withheld from most and only selectively offered? It seems not. 'His amiability and winsome personality drew many to him. He was easily approached and those who came to him seeking knowledge he was ever glad to enlighten."'[32] The Trinity Street Session went further and emphasised that he was 'large-hearted and generous, he endeared himself to many by his kindly and practical sympathy, especially in the case of the poor and the sick.' This is echoed in Synod's minute: 'Of remarkably generous instincts, he loved much. The widow, the orphan, the weak, the poor, the fallen and all in distress of mind or body or soul shared in his boundless sympathy.'[33]

One aspect of his ministry, with which some ministers struggle, might serve as a litmus test:

> Professor Dick loved little children and they in turn felt a wonderful attraction to him. He had the tenderness of a father in large measure, not only towards his own family, [he had twelve children] but towards all young people. It is a good testimony to a man's character when little ones are fond of him. Their instinct is never at fault and they are invariably attracted to the good.[34]

Certainly, his flock had no complaints. One member said, 'Professor Dick is my ideal of what a Covenanting minister should be'.[35] Perhaps a vital ingredient in James Dick's effective pastoral ministry was that

> in prayer he seemed overawed with a sense of the Divine presence, a realisation of human need and an assurance of all necessary help in Jesus Christ. He had the gift of bringing those who joined with him very close to a Covenant God.'[36]

2. Professor

As we have seen, in 1887, the Synod of the Irish Church unanimously appointed him Professor of Hebrew, Biblical Criticism, Exegesis and Church History in the Reformed Theological Hall. It has been claimed that his experience in school teaching and administration benefited his work at the Hall.

[31] Ramsey, 'Memoir', Op.cit., p.325.
[32] Dunlop, 'An Appreciation', Op.cit., p.367, 369.
[33] See n.22 and n.23.
[34] Dunlop, 'An Appreciation', Op.cit., p.370.
[35] Ibid., p.368.
[36] Ramsey, 'Memoir', Op.cit., p.325.

The controversy at College Street South took a heavy toll on Rev. Chancellor and, upon his death in 1895, James Dick was left as the only Professor. Synod asked him 'to charge himself with the entire tuition of the students'. Fortunately, he did not have to bear this burden too long as his cousin, Rev J. D. Houston, was appointed Professor of Church History and Pastoral Theology and Professor Dick, at his own request, was transferred to the Chair of Systematic Theology, vacated by Professor Chancellor's death.[37]

Professor Dick worked his students hard. 'He did not regard theology as a science that could be mastered with little study; to him it was the one thing above all others which required deep thinking and constant study.' But he also showed empathy.

> The students gave him not only admiration and respect, the tribute due to his mental endowments and culture, but also the homage of love from hearts refreshed by streams of sympathy that sprang from the deep fountain of his nature.'[38]

One of his former students said, 'I spent the last year of my theological course with Professor Dick and learned more from him than from anyone else during the whole of my collegiate and divinity training.' Summing up, James Dick as Professor it was said, 'Surely he was well qualified to impart divinity who so closely studied the Divine.' [39]

3. Polemicist

James Dick was often described by his contemporaries as a 'controversialist' – 'a born controversialist and thoroughly equipped.' [40] This was not intended to be derogatory. What was meant was that he did not shirk from embracing controversial subjects and advancing his views with vigour. He expressed himself confidently, both in person and in print.

'As a platform debater he was unrivalled.' This was evident first in Wishaw, where he debated in public with the Plymouth Brethren; he contended in public for exclusive Psalmody in Ballymoney; and in public meetings at Ballyclare he tackled Seventh Day Adventism. [41] In the winter of 1899-1900 Dick gave a series of lectures in Cregagh Street School, in east Belfast, on the history and distinctive principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Such was the impact of these addresses that a number who heard them asked the Eastern Presbytery to establish mission work in the locality. On 22 November, 1900, Dick's brother, William, was installed as the congregation's first minister. [42]

He revealed himself as a polemicist in print very early in his career. In May, 1872, on just the second anniversary of his ordination, he wrote a letter to his denomination's magazine, the *RP Witness*, challenging the views of its editor. The editor was his brother-in-law! This was at a time when he was contributing a series of articles to the magazine. The editor had criticised the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America because the covenant, which it had recently publicly entered into, did not specifically mention the Scottish National

[37] Ramsey, 'Memoir', Op.cit., p.322.
[38] Poots ,'Memoir', Op.cit., p.365.
[39] Dunlop, 'An Appreciation', p.367.
[40] Poots, 'Memoir', Op.cit., p.361.
[41] Ramsey, Memoir', Op.cit., p.324.
[42] *The Covenanters in Ireland: a history of the congregations* (Armagh, 2010), p.186-187.

Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant and it did not condemn prelacy.[43] Dick condemned the editor's criticisms, defending the American Covenanters, asserting,

> The[ir] Covenant has the distinguished merit of being adapted to the present time and to the circumstances of the Church in America, while it carefully conserves all the principles of the Second Reformation. [44]

Much of his published work treated subjects that one might expect from the pen of a minister with Reformed convictions. Following his first publication in 1871, mentioned above, came *Saving Faith: the Scripture doctrine stated in opposition to Plymouthism and other doctrines* (1875), *Thoughts on self-examination for 'converts' and church members* (1875*), Christ bearing witness to the Truth: a sermon* (1880) and *Regeneration; the work of Sovereign Grace alone.*

But he was better known for work which advanced the distinctive principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Churches. 'Much of his published work was controversial.' [45] His best-known work, perhaps, was *The Hymnary discussions in the General Assembly of the Irish Presbyterian Church* (1899) which attacked the sanctioning of a hymnary for use in the congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Dick's pamphlet extended to seventy-three pages and was described by a contemporary as 'one of the finest pieces of controversial writing in existence.' [46] Another ventured to say that

> if those in favour of using uninspired hymns in worshipping God could read and study it, this would dispel all doubts in their minds as to the sinfulness of offering God 'strange fire' that which He has not commanded. [47]

More often, Dick contended for the principle of the Mediatorial Kingship of Christ in the nation. He was probably influenced by his father who had stood shoulder to shoulder with Rev. Thomas Houston for the traditional Covenanter position in relation to the State and he was probably affected by witnessing, at first hand, living in Scotland, the disappearance of the Majority Synod of the Scottish RP Church into the Free Church in 1876. *Christian Fidelity in its relation to National Sin* was published about 1880. *Civil Rulers serving the Lord, or, the scriptural doctrine of National Religion* followed in 1882. This was a sermon preached at the opening of the RP Synod of Scotland in 1882.

In Ireland a "perfect storm" was brewing which was to test the Church's commitment to its historic Covenanting principles of asserting the kingship of Christ in the nation, condemning national sin and, consequently, refusing to exercise the franchise in such circumstances. Dick's contribution was to steady the ship. The Church had consistently taught that in a constitution that honoured Christ's Headship, his enemies were disqualified from holding office. By enemies it was meant all those who opposed the rule and teaching of Christ as expressed in Reformed doctrine and detailed in the Covenants.
'Catholic Emancipation' in 1829 had allowed Catholics into parliament and access to all but a handful of public offices. But as long as the franchise was restricted, there was a barrier to the advancement in power of those who practised Roman Catholicism. The vote was given,

[43] *RP Witness* Vol IV, No V Sept 1871, p.199-207.
[44]. *RP Witness* Vol IV No IX May 1872, p.394-396.
[45] Poots 'Memoir', Op.cit., p.363.
[46] Poots, Memoir', Op cit., p.363.
[47] Dunlop, 'An Appreciation', Op.cit., p.367.

however, to more and more throughout the United Kingdom by legislation between 1832 and 1884. By 1884, thirty percent of adult males in Ireland had the vote. Most of these were Roman Catholics - but as long as power resided in Westminster, in the UK Parliament, a further barrier existed.

This situation was undermined in 1885 when Gladstone, the leader of the British Liberal party, announced his commitment to the creation of a parliament in Dublin which could legislate on a wide range of devolved matters – Home Rule. Now that Catholics could sit in parliament and so many of them could vote, such a parliament would be dominated by a Catholics. 'Home Rule means Rome Rule' was universally acknowledged by all contemporary Protestants. Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill failed to pass the British House of Commons in 1886 and Gladstone was forced out of office. The Liberals, however, won the General Election of 1892. Once re-appointed prime minister in August 1892 Gladstone committed himself once again to introducing Home Rule for Ireland.

Surely, argued Protestants in Ireland, now was the time for their Covenanter neighbour to abandon his principle of political dissent, exercise his vote and keep out a Home Rule candidate to help prevent Gladstone's legislation?

At this critical moment, in July 1892, Dick joined with Revs Robert Nevin and J. D. Houston in writing and publishing in *The Covenanter* 'Pastoral address in reference to the impending General Election' which urged members not to vote despite their strong feelings about Home Rule.[48]

This was followed in September 1892 by another article in *The Covenanter*. [49] It was a reply to an article which had appeared in August in *The Christian Banner,* a periodical which, according Dick, usually provided 'good service to the cause of sound doctrine and pure worship in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.' [50] Dick's article was a detailed response to criticism that by choosing not to vote in the recent General Election, Covenanters had made Meroz a model for their actions: 'Curse Meroz', says the angel of the LORD, 'curse its inhabitants thoroughly, because they did not come to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty' (Judges 5:23).

Dick argued that the writer knew fine well that the Covenanting Church existed as a separate church for the maintenance of the principle of the universal dominion of Jesus Christ and that Covenanters would be betraying that principle and prove traitors to Christ their King if they participated politically in a society that excluded him from being King. Covenanters refrained, Dick maintained, from voting because they actually wished to 'come to the help of the Lord'. Covenanters, argued Dick, were in fact the Lord's political party because

> they are the only party in this nation that contend specifically and practically for His rights as head of the nation. Christ's rights were not so much as spoken of, or thought of, by any one of the great political parties that were recently in hot conflict at the polls. … No candidate even professed the intention of making Christ's law supreme in

[48] The stance taken by the Reformed Presbyterian Church towards the State, national education, the franchise and the Home Rule question is discussed in detail in T.C Donachie, *Irish Covenanters: politics and society in the 19th century* (Belfast, 2016). This address is cited on p.121.
[49] J Dick, *'The Christian Banner* on Covenanters and the General Election' in *The Covenanter* vol II No.9 (September 1892,) cited and discussed in Donachie, *Irish Covenanters,* 173-176.
[50] This article was cited in T C Donachie, *Irish Covenanters,* p.173.

> politics and no vote was given by any elector throughout the United Kingdom to secure to Christ His rights as the nation's Lord, by having his national society constituted according to His will and His enemies excluded from places of power and trust in the state.

This latter point – the enemies of Christ being in places of power – was an important point. 'The fear of God and submission to His Son are essential qualifications for power or office.' Dick maintained that

> It was an immutable ordinance of God the Father that the nations should be obedient to His Son, that their whole action should be guided by His Word, and that those who are disaffected to His government should have no vote or power in the State.

Dick took the view, as held forth in the Covenants, that the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church were opposed to the teachings of Christ and that Roman Catholics should never have been allowed to enter Parliament and occupy offices of State. If the recent General Election had been about this then Covenanters could have understood an appeal being made 'to come to the help of the Lord' . But this battle had been lost over sixty years ago when Protestants conceded Catholic Emancipation and now Unionists accepted Roman Catholics in Parliament and in official positions. Indeed, they would vote side by side with them provided they voted against Home Rule. Dick continued:

> The logical consequence of "Catholic Emancipation" is now looming in the near future. Protestants who were indifferent enough to Christ's interests are getting alarmed now when their own interests are imperilled. It is felt that the Romish majority in Ireland cannot be trusted with Protestant liberties and Protestant property. Hence the present earnest opposition to "Home Rule", or "Rome Rule"…To keep the Popish members at Westminster is to go against the Lord quite as much as to set up a Popish parliament in Dublin.

The writer of the article in the *Christian Banner* argued that

> if all who feel aggrieved by unscriptural ways of successive governments were to hold aloof when senators are being chosen to amend or make our laws when would matters alter for the better? What is right for our Covenanting friends is surely right for any other Christian. Is it a Bible duty to leave all legislation to the refuse of society? Is it brotherly of our friends to withdraw the shoulder and leave the burden to their brethren?

Dick questioned just how many people there were who had objections about the 'unscriptural ways of successive governments'. He asserted that Covenanters are not just concerned about unscriptural ways but 'the whole anti-Christian constitution…which excludes Christ the King.' Covenanters would not begin to 'amend or make laws on an anti-Christian basis'. Those Protestants who criticised Covenanters had never begun to address these matters. Sooner or later, Christians will see the errors of allowing an anti-Christian constitution. 'Home Rule will probably come in God's retributive justice as a punishment on the apathetic Protestantism of this country for making it possible by giving Christ's enemies the right to vote.'

As well as this article in *The Covenanter*, Dick published a similar work entitled *The Authority of Christ over the individual, the Church and the nation* (1893). Copies were sent to members of the House of Lords, all Irish Presbyterian ministers and various religious periodicals in the United Kingdom for notice and review.[51] Contemporaries also valued his *The descending obligation of the British Covenants* (1900).[52]

4. Presbyter

Inevitably Professor Dick's concerns found their way into discussions and debates at Presbytery and Synod and his interventions proved decisive. Such interventions began early in his ministry. In 1875 the Irish Synod set up a Committee to explore re-unification with the Eastern RP Synod. The Committee reported in favour of re-unification in 1876 and were urged to continue and bring about reunification. A basis for union was presented in 1878 and was accepted by Synod despite a motion from Rev. Professor Thomas Houston that the plan for union be suspended. The way seemed to be open for union.

Then, in October 1878, came an intervention from Dick in Wishaw. Dick published his views in the magazine of the Irish RP Church, *The Covenanter*. He pointed out that if both Synods reunited they would have to agree on everything in a shared Testimony. This included their views on the exercise of franchise and the discipline on members who voted. Clearly thinking about the Scottish RP Church, he affirmed, 'There might indeed be Union but the moment that the Reformed Presbyterian Church unites with a Church that exercises no discipline for the offences above referred to, that moment the Church ceases to be Reformed Presbyterian.' Houston on his own had been unable to stop the drift towards reunion, but by 1880 the Committee reported to Synod and pointed out that the two Synods, while agreed on most issues, could not agree on the franchise and the exercise of discipline for voting. Synod then accepted a motion from Rev J. D. Houston, Dick's cousin, to dismiss the Committee and suspend negotiations. [53]

When Dick joined the Irish Synod upon his installation in Kilraughts in 1884 he quickly became a force for the principle of Covenanting. At the Synod of 1886 he proposed that a committee be established to consider whether there should be another act of covenant renovation by the Church. [54]

He had a large part in revising the section of *The Code* dealing with discipline and he was Convenor of the Committee that revised the Doctrinal Testimony. Rev. John Ramsey provides an attractive, winsome insight into the work of this Committee under Dick's leadership:

> The members of that Committee scarcely knew which most to admire – his wonderfully broad outlook over the realm of truth, his ability to express, with clearness and precision, doctrine regarding most profound mysteries, his good-natured tolerance and kindly encouragement and helpfulness of the younger brethren, his inexhaustible fund of anecdote and humour. The meetings of that Committee will live

[51] Minutes of Synod (1894), p.52.
[52] James A Dickson, *Ministers and Congregations of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, 1688-2016* (Kilsyth, 2016), pp.189-190.
[53] *Minutes of Synod*, 1876,1877,1888 and 1890; *Covenanter* xi October 1878, 332, quoted in Donachie, *Irish Covenanters*, pp.113-115.
[54] Minutes of Synod 1886, cited in Donachie, *Irish Covenanters*, p.97.

> always as bright spots in the memories of those who took part in them. They will be valued as the most brotherly, harmonious, entertaining and educational gatherings we were privileged to have on earth.[55]

In Presbytery he showed himself again to be a staunch defender of the Church's distinctive principle of political dissent. Rev. Dr Isaac Thomson, minister of Drimbolg, had addressed a meeting to promote the cause of a candidate seeking election to Parliament in the 1892 General Election. When asked by the Northern Presbytery to express regret for having done so, Dr Thomson complied; but two weeks later he wrote in the *Presbyterian Witness* that he only expressed regret if his conduct had 'wounded any weak conscience.' Dick raised the matter again at a meeting of the Northern Presbytery and a rebuke was administered. Dr Thomson refused to accept this discipline and left the Church.[56]

At the meeting of Synod in May 1893, speaking on behalf of a Committee appointed with regard to the 'present political crisis' [the passage of the Second Home Rule Bill], Professor Dick proposed seven resolutions to Synod for its acceptance. In the preamble Dick re-stated the Church's teaching that civil government is an ordinance of God and has been put in subjection to Jesus Christ and is to be regulated by his revealed will for the promotion of righteousness, true liberty and peace. Parliament and people had bound themselves to the acceptance and maintenance of these principles by swearing the Covenants, thereby making Scriptural principles the rule of national life and excluding the enemies of Christ from all legislative and administrative functions in the State. The Reformed Presbyterian Church maintained the perpetual obligations of the Covenants and testified against all violation of these Scriptural principles and therefore resolved the following:

First, The Home Rule Bill is an example of 'concessions to Romish intrigues against the Protestantism and liberties of this nation and … proposes to put additional power into the hands of an overwhelming Romish or priest-elected majority.'

Second, this Bill will lead to an 'actual establishment of Romish ascendancy, i.e., of anti-Christian ascendancy under which it is inevitable that anti-Christian purposes should be served and all Christian interests damaged.' Not only would it be disastrous for trade and commerce, but also for education, religion and the kingdom of Christ.

Third, the Bill was unscriptural and altogether hostile to the law and claims of Jesus Christ as King of Nations.

Fourth, Synod also condemned the Prelatic ascendancy [Anglican landlord class] which has provoked the agitation in relation to the land question.

Fifth, Synod had no confidence in the Unionist party because it operated on an anti-Christian basis by permitting Romanists and other enemies of Christ to have rule in the nation.

Sixth, Synod regarded the present crisis as the voice of Divine judgement on national rebellion against Christ and called on all political parties to repent and turn to Christ.

Seventh, the Synod

[55] Ramsey, 'Memoir', Op.cit., p.24.
[56] This case is discussed in Donachie, *Irish Covenanters*, pp.115 -116.

> counsels all the members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in this crisis to possess their soul in patience and to look trustfully to Christ alone for direction and deliverance and enjoins upon them not to suffer themselves to be drawn into the vortex of political agitation by the base bribe on the one hand of some supposed worldly advantage to be gained by supporting 'Home Rule' and so breaking their solemn Covenant against popery; or by passionate appeals, on the other hand, to join the 'Unionist party' and so to come down from their high and safe ground of fidelity to Christ and His claims, to stand and work with those who are but contending for their own supposed rights and interests without a thought of bringing the nation back to Christ.

The adoption of these resolutions was moved by Rev. Prof. Chancellor, seconded by Rev. J. D. Houston and carried unanimously. It was agreed that 2,000 copies of Dick's speech be produced for distribution throughout the congregations of the Church.[57] and copies were sent to every member of the Houses of Lords and Commons and to the Editors of all the daily newspapers in the United Kingdom.[58]

This settled the matter of voting for some time to come. While a good number of men had provided leadership on the issue, there is no doubt that Dick had played a major role. In his obituary in the Scottish *RP Witness* Rev. Joseph Potts said,

> Our Church owes much to him for his advocacy and defence of Reformed Presbyterian tenets. These are frequently controverted and members of the Church are grateful when a leader stands up to speak with the enemies in the gate, when he puts into articulate and accessible form answers to the obvious and oft-repeated objections urged against our position and makes the landmarks of truth more distinct. In Professor Dick's writings the Church is furnished with an arsenal of weapons ready to hand for the guarding of our Scriptural principles. Our church in America recognised his scholarship and his services by conferring upon him the degree of D.D. of Geneva College.

5. Personal life and Passing

By 1915 Professor Dick was ill. In December he underwent surgery but, upon return to ministry, fainted in the pulpit, hurting his head and back. In 1916 he was unable to preach but met with students at the Hall when it was his turn to teach.[59] Continued and growing weakness throughout 1916 meant that James Dick missed the 1916 meeting of Synod.[60] His death took place at his residence, Easton Lodge, Cliftonville Road, Belfast, on Sabbath, 6 August, 1916, at aged 74**.** He died of a gastric ulcer and heart failure. **[61]** Contemporaries remarked that just at the time when the members of the Trinity Street congregation were going home after the Evening Worship Service, their minister was called to his eternal home.

[57] Minutes of Synod, 1893, p.36-38.
[58] Minutes of Synod 1894, p.52
[59] James Dick to his daughter, Mrs Maggie Russell, 9 March, 1916. Letter in the possession of Susan McCune and shown to the author.
[60] May L. Dunlop, 'An Appreciation: a tribute to the memory of the late Rev. Professor Dick, M.A., D.D.' in *The Covenanter* October 1916, p.368.
[61] Information supplied to the author by Susan McCune.

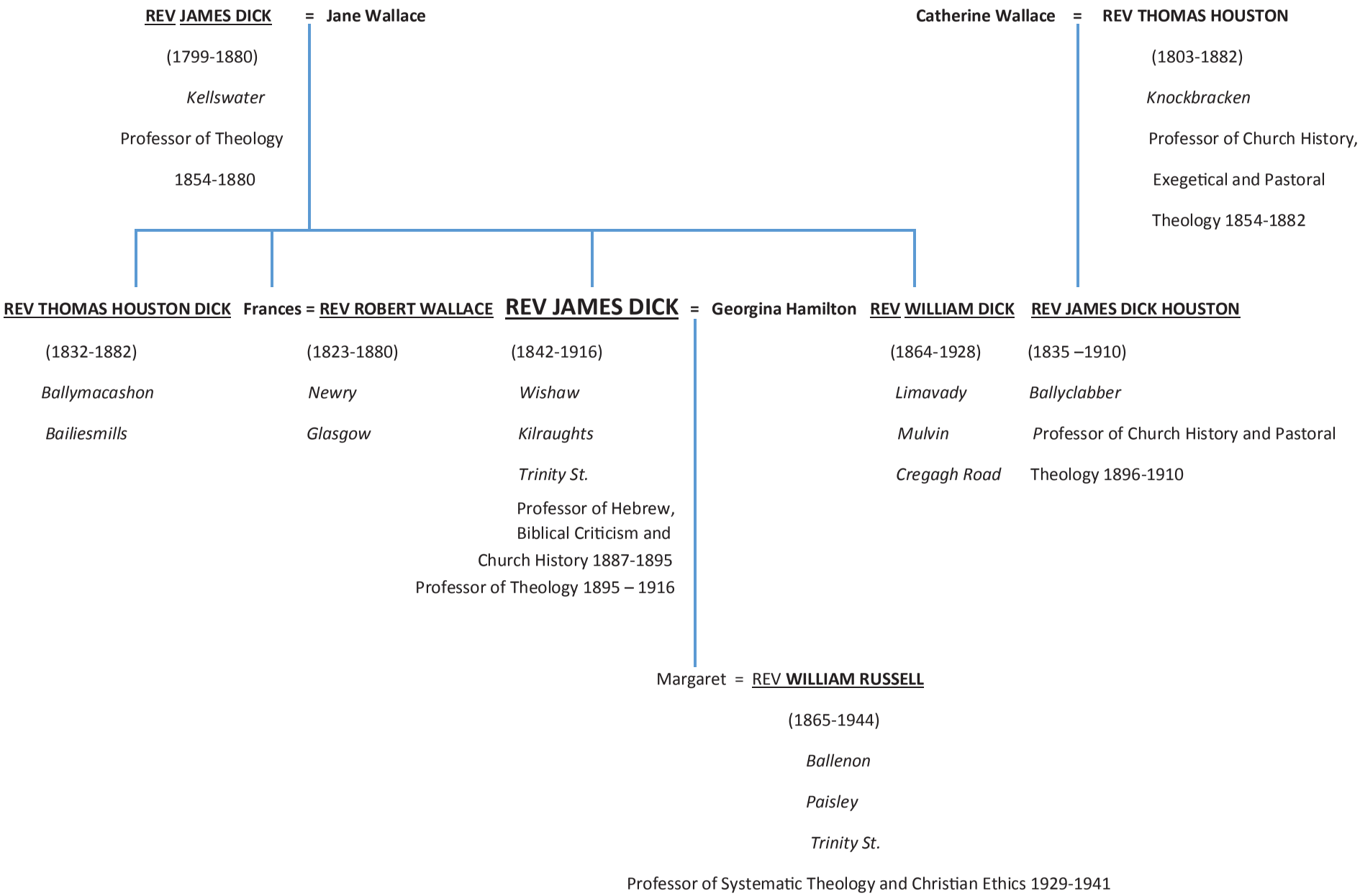
6. Conclusion

A casual reading of his pamphlets, speeches at Synod and articles in the Churches' magazines might lead the reader to believe that James Dick was a sectarian bigot in his condemnation of Roman Catholics. But it must be remembered that most Protestants in the late nineteenth century asserted that 'Home Rule was Rome Rule'. Looking more closely at Dick's output we should see, first, that his condemnation was not against Roman Catholics as individual persons but against a system of belief and doctrine, which was diametrically opposed to the Reformed religion. The Reformed religion had, in the Covenants of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, been accepted as the teachings of Christ and should be observed by a nation which submitted to Christ as its King. The monarch, parliaments and people of the British Isles had sworn to establish such a religion. Adherents to a religion diametrically opposed to the Reformed religion were now permitted to participate in the state. Also, Dick condemned all Protestants who had been complicit in such a departure from what had been sworn in the Covenants.

Then we must consider Dick's insistence that the Covenanting Churches should discipline its members when they voted in parliamentary and local government elections or swore the Oath of Allegiance to take office. This was a logical development from the doctrine of the **Mediatorial Dominion of Christ**, as King and Head of the State, and that his teaching, as documented in the Reformed religion and expressed in the Covenants, should be promoted and established by those in office, scripturally and morally qualified to do so. The failure to have such persons in office followed by the failure to implement the Reformed religion in the state was a **national sin** which should be noticed by Covenanters by their refusal to participate in the Constitution, known as **political dissent**. Those who refused to adhere to political dissent should be disciplined. It seems that Dick nay have viewed the discipline as a glue, or cement, which held these doctrines together.

Later Synods of the Reformed Presbyterian Churches of Ireland and Scotland have seen fit to remove the coercive or disciplinary element from this set of Covenanter beliefs. The removal of discipline has not resulted, as Dick feared, in the collapse of the Covenanters' teaching on the headship of Christ in the nation. Dick witnessed at first hand that once the Majority Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod of Scotland removed discipline, in 1863, it shed its Covenanting principles within twelve years when it was assimilated into the Free Church of Scotland in 1875. The breakaway Eastern Reformed Presbyterian Synod went into decline when it refused to discipline. Perhaps the matter of discipline was not as crucial as he thought and it was more the case that members of these two Synods were never truly committed to the doctrines of a covenanted reformation which would promote the Mediatorial Dominion of Christ in the state.

A CLERICAL DYNASTY



CARING FOR THE PASTORS

Andrew J. Lucas

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Nearing the end of his earthly life, the apostle Paul, with calmness and confidence, was able to make this assessment of his ministry in 2 Timothy 4:6-8: 'For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.'[1]

It is, surely, the earnest desire of every minister of the gospel that when the time for our own departure comes, we will be able to make a similar assessment of our own ministry. We do not wish simply to finish the race and to stagger over the finish line. We desire both to run well and to finish well, and we do so because, above all else, we love Christ. He has saved us. He has called us. He sustains us. He is at the heart of our ministry. Any fruit that we bear is his. He is our only hope in the face of death, and he is the one that we long to see. He is everything. In our eyes, he is 'altogether lovely'[2] and it is the deepest desire of our hearts, that we might serve him and his people well.

In this paper we will consider the subject of 'Caring for the Pastors.' First, we will consider why such care is necessary. Second, we will reflect upon the example of Paul and his care for his young friend Timothy. Finally, we will consider who should provide pastoral care for ministers and how this might be done.

Why Pastoral Care is Necessary

Writing about the pastoral office in 1877, Thomas Murphy wrote,

> it may be safely said that it is not possible to over-estimate the grandeur of this calling. It is an office that may be little thought of among men, but it is highly esteemed by God and by angels, and its results extend away into everlasting brightness. It is the highest and grandest office in the world.[3]

Few of us would disagree with this assessment of the ministry, and we never cease to be amazed at the remarkable privilege God has bestowed upon us in making us ministers of the gospel. But this high calling is not without its difficulties, as a visit to our local Christian bookshop will confirm. Browsing the relevant section, certain titles immediately catch our eye: *Zeal without Burnout,*[4] *Leaders Who Last,*[5] *Pastors Under Pressure,*[6] *Resilient*

[1] Unless otherwise stated, Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Standard Version Bible, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation.
[2] Song of Solomon 5:16, The Revised Version 1885 by Oxford University Press.
[3] Thomas Murphy, *Pastoral Theology* (Old Paths Publications - 2001) p. 27.
[4] Christopher Ash (The Good Book Company - 2016).

Ministry,[7] *How To Survive And Thrive As A Church Leader,*[8] *Honourably Wounded: Stress among Christian Workers,*[9] *Serving Without Sinking,*[10] *Going the Distance: How to Stay Fit for a Lifetime of Ministry,*[11] and *A Dangerous Calling.*[12]

These titles only confirm what we have already learned by experience. Ministry is difficult. In part, that difficulty arises from the shear scope of our ministry. It has been observed that, 'variety is one of the joys of ministry, and yet also one of the difficulties.'[13] First and foremost, there is the heavy responsibility of preaching the 'unsearchable riches of Christ'[14] week in week out to the same people, often three times a week, whilst seeking to remain fresh and relevant. The pressure of this responsibility remains constant regardless of other demands upon our time and irrespective of our own spiritual condition. There is the regular visitation of the flock, the importance of which we recognise, but due to the busy lives of our people, is increasingly difficult to organise. Then when we do visit our people, and move beyond pleasantries, we can encounter any number of difficult pastoral situations that will demand much of our time and energy. There is the attendance at and chairing of meetings and committees, both at the local level and in the wider church.

Then there are the emergencies. We may have made copious notes during the Pastoral Theology lectures at college, but nothing can fully prepare us for the situations we encounter during the course of ministry. Entering a home devastated by the sudden death of a loved one. Seeking to comfort a husband or wife who has just discovered that their spouse of many years, has been unfaithful. Visiting that church officer who seemed to be living an exemplary life, and yet has now fallen foul of the law. Seeking to calm someone in the midst of a psychotic episode. Then there is that church member who exploded upon hearing the decision of the Deacons' Board to move from cut to dried flowers on the communion table. Again and again we find ourselves in situations which we did not foresee and which leave us feeling utterly out of our depth.

Added to these difficulties is the realisation that 'our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.'[15] We are engaged in a spiritual battle, and as Richard Baxter warns us,

> Take heed therefore, brethren, for the enemy hath a special eye upon you. You shall have his most subtle insinuations, and incessant solicitations, and violent assaults. As wise and learned as you are, take heed to yourselves, lest he outwit you. The devil is a greater scholar than you, and a nimbler disputant; he can transform himself into an angel of light to deceive; he will get within you, and trip up your heels before you are aware; he will play the juggler with you undiscerned, and cheat you of your faith or

[5] Dave Kraft (Crossway - 2010).
[6] James Taylor (DayOne - 2004).
[7] Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman and Donald C. Guthrie (IVP - 2013).
[8] Nick Cuthbert (Monarch - 2006).
[9] Marjorie Foyle (Monarch - 2001).
[10] John Hindley (The Good Book Company - 2013).
[11] Peter Brain (Matthias Media - 2004).
[12] Paul Tripp (Crossway - 2012).
[13] Derek Prime & Alister Begg, *'On Being A Paster'* (Moody - 2004) p. 272.
[14] Ephesians 3:8, The Revised Version by Oxford University Press 1885.
[15] Ephesian 6:12.

> innocence, and you shall not know that you have lost it; nay, he will make you believe it is multiplied or increased, when it is lost.[16]

Now of course, the devil wages war against every believer, but we must realise that he has a particular interest in ministers of the gospel. John Erskine notes,

> The devil assaults the shepherd, that he may make easier prey of the sheep; and he has many faithful agents, who enter fully into his malicious views, and lay snares for ministers.[17]

So the demands of the work are great and the opposition from the devil fierce. This would be enough for any man, but there are also those dangers arising from indwelling corruption. Although we handle holy things and spend much of our time in the Word, how easily can our own devotional lives begin to wane. We read the Scriptures, but no longer for our own benefit, but merely for the next Sunday's sermons. Prayer can become cold, formal and sparse. As we gain competence in sermon preparation, we can become lazy and self-reliant. If we experience any degree of success, we can become proud. If there is an absence of success, we can become bitter and jealous towards those who are more successful than ourselves. The very nature of our work means we become emotionally involved with people, and there is the temptation to cross the line with members of the opposite sex. In addition to these things, we struggle to be attentive sons to aged parents, as well as loving husbands and fathers. We have to cope with criticism, battle with loneliness, fight depression, and much more.

When we left theological college, we did so with great optimism. We were fully prepared, or so we thought, and were eager to get to work. But it is surely true to say, that,

> Few if any of us anticipated beforehand how great the difficulties of ministry were going to be. 'The ministry of the gospel,' John Newton wrote, 'like the book which the Apostle John ate, is bitter sweet; but the sweetness is tasted first, the bitterness is usually known afterwards, when we are so far engaged that there is no going back.'[18]

And these difficulties take their toll over time. It has been estimated that in the region of 1500 people leave pastoral ministry every month in the United States due to burnout, conflict or moral failure.[19] One survey of 300 ministers showed that the majority of them experienced periods of self-doubt and loneliness.[20] It is also been suggested that, of those church leaders who remain in ministry to the end of their careers, only 30% finish well.[21] These sobering statistics are further confirmed by our own experience. Most of us will be able to think of men who have left ministry either because the work became too much for them or because of moral failure. Even giants of the faith have struggled. Think of Jonathan Edwards' battles with exhaustion and depression.[22] Robert Murray McCheyne's health was never good, but in

[16] Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (American Tract Society - 1829) p. 118.
[17] John Erskine, *The Christian Pastor's Manual* edited by John Brown (Soli Deo Gloria Publications - 1991), p. 188.
[18] Derek Prime & Alister Begg, Op.cit, p. 279.
[19] Christopher Ash, Op.cit., p. 16.
[20] Derek Prime & Alistair Begg, Op.cit., p. 281.
[21] Dave Kraft, Op.cit., p. 19.
[22] George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (Yale University Press - 2003) p. 102-113.

the winter of 1835-36 he suffered a complete breakdown, which seems to have been caused by both physical and emotional weakness.[23] Even the prince of preachers, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, experienced repeated bouts of ill-health and depression.[24]

Now none of these difficulties detract from the glories of the pastoral office. It remains 'the highest and grandest office in the world'[25] and we should always rejoice in the service of Christ. But ministers are only flesh and blood and we need pastoral care, and the example of the apostle Paul's care of Timothy can help us.

Learning from Paul and Timothy

Patrick Fairbairn makes the following observation regarding the relationship that existed between the great apostle and his young friend,

> We have no other instance of such a near, unbroken, and prolonged fellowship in the history of apostolic times, as that which appears to have subsisted between Paul and this youth disciple; the more remarkable, considering the disparity of their ages. From the period that Timothy entered upon his ministerial discipleship, he seems rarely to have been absent for any length of time from the apostle; and even when not expressly mentioned among his companions, some turn in the affairs, or incidental expression, reveals the presence of the beloved disciple.[26]

Whilst not everyone is agreed,[27] yet is seems most likely that this remarkable relationship began with the conversion of Timothy through the ministry of the apostle whilst in Lystra during his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-23).[28]

Whether this is the case or not, it is certainly true that when Paul returned to Lystra, he met Timothy, and was so impressed with this young man, that the apostle took him along with him (Acts 16:1-3). Thus 'Timothy began his ministry under the apostle's tutelage'[29] and with it, a warm, affectionate, and much valued relationship began, that was to last for the rest of the apostle's life. As F. W. Farrar writes,

> What Melancthon was to Luther, whom Luther felt that he could not spare, and for whose life when all seemed over he stormed heaven with passionate and victorious supplication, that and more than that was this comparatively youthful Timothy to the more tried and lonely Paul.[30]

As one reads through Paul's letters it is clear that he took a keen interest in Timothy's wellbeing. This interest, which was wide ranging and lasted for over a decade, is helpful in the area of pastoral care for ministers of the gospel. We will consider three areas of concern.

[23] David Robertson, *Awakening: The Life of Robert Murray McCheyne* (Christian Focus - 2004) p. 69.
[24] Tom Nettles, *Living By Revealed Truth* (Mentor - 2013) p. 595-631.
[25] Thomas Murphy, Op.cit., p. 27.
[26] Patrick Fairbairn, *1&2 Timothy and Titus* (Banner of Truth - 2002) p. 32.
[27] Philip H. Towner, *The Letters To Timothy and Titus* (Eerdmans - 2006) p. 99.
[28] John MacArthur, *1 Timothy* (Moody Publishers - 1995) p. 7.
[29] Philip Graham Ryken, *1 Timothy* (P&R Publishing Company - 2007) p. 5.
[30] F. W. Farrar, *The Life & Work of St. Paul* (Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co - 1879) Vol. 2,p. 544-545.

For example, Paul is concerned about Timothy's progress in godliness. Having left his young disciple in Ephesus in order to deal with various matters, Paul subsequently writes to Timothy. He exposes the blatant worldliness of Timothy's opponents,[31] and then exhorts him in this way, 'But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.'[32] Timothy is busy. He has a lot on his plate. There is doctrinal error that needs to be opposed, dominant women that need to be instructed, church appointments need to be made, and yet in the midst of all this busyness, Timothy is to take heed to himself. He is not to lose sight of the priority of progress in personal godliness. Whatever the pressures, he is to guard his own heart and nurture his relationship with his Lord. We find something similar in Paul's second letter, 'Now flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.'[33] William B. Barcley writes,

> As in 1 Timothy, Timothy's responsibility in regard to false teachers means first of all a concern for his own spiritual health and godliness. Then it means combating the false teachers in a godly way. This is important for two reasons. First, personal holiness in life is essential for purity in doctrine. Secondly, a godly response to our enemies is impossible without proper training in personal holiness.[34]

Another concern Paul has is Timothy's personal development. He writes, 'Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, and teaching. Do neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.'[35] Timothy is to be single-minded and relentless. He is to go on developing and fine-tuning his gifts, which will help him as a preacher, and in turn, will benefit those who hear him. Towner writes,

> Paul regards Timothy's development in the things he has set out as crucial not only to the missions's credibility in the apostle's absence but also to the growth of the congregation.[36]

Again, Paul strikes the same note in his second letter, where he states, 'For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through laying on of hands.'[37] Stott says of Timothy,

> His mother and grandmother could teach him out of the Scriptures and lead him towards conversion. Paul could actually bring him to Christ, befriend him, pray for him, write to him, train and exhort him. And God could give him a special gift at his

[31] 1 Timothy 6:3-10.
[32] 1 Timothy 6:11&13.
[33] 2 Timothy 2:22.
[34] William B. Barcley, *1&2 Timothy* (Evangelical Press - 2005) p. 261.
[35] 1 Timothy 4:13-16.
[36] Towner. Op.cit., p. 327.
[37] 2 Timothy 1:6.

> ordination. But still Timothy must himself stir up the divine gift within him. He must add his own self-discipline to God's gifts.[38]

Finally, Paul is concerned about Timothy's physical and emotional wellbeing. He writes, 'No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.'[39] Whilst the precise relationship between this verse and the immediate context is debated and may never be satisfactorily answered,[40] yet it seems clear, that, amongst other things, Timothy suffers from digestive ailments for which Paul prescribes a little wine, which was a recognised treatment in the ancient world.[41] Some have suggested that this may be an indication that Timothy has been neglecting himself.[42] Whether this is the case or not, it is clear that the apostle is not simply concerned about Timothy's spiritual wellbeing, but also his physical health. It is also safe to assume that Paul is concerned about the impact Timothy's health problems will have upon his ability to carry out his ministerial duties in Ephesus. The apostle believes that it is essential that Timothy takes care of himself. Patrick Fairbairn draws this conclusion,

> The principle involved, then, in this prudential advice to Timothy, is in its most natural and obvious sense capable of the fullest vindication; it is, indeed, of practical moment for all times; the laborious pastor or evangelist, if he is wise, will never neglect it: for his work's sake, as well as for his personal comfort and advantage, he will endeavour to keep his bodily frame in a sound and healthful condition.[43]

This concern for his young friend's physical wellbeing is paralleled by Paul's concern about Timothy's emotional wellbeing. There are strong indications that Timothy was temperamentally timid,[44] which may have been related, in part, to his health issues.[45] When writing to the church in Corinth, Paul feels it necessary to say, 'Now if Timothy come, see that he be with you without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do: let no man therefore despise him.'[46] And again and again in his letters the apostle needs to encourage and exhort his young friend who seems in danger of being overwhelmed by the work and the difficulties he faces.

From what we have considered, it is clear that Paul took a loving and wide-ranging interest in Timothy's wellbeing. It should also be noted that, if the apostle visited Lystra for the second time about AD 51-52 and wrote to Timothy about AD 62-63, then this means that Timothy was continuing to receive pastoral support from Paul even after a decade in ministry. It is true that Timothy was relatively young (probably less than forty),[47] but he was not inexperienced, yet still needed to be cared for pastorally.

[38] John Stott, *The Message of 2 Timothy* (Inter-Varsity Press - 2012) p. 31.
[39] 1 Timothy 5:23.
[40] Henry Alford, *The New Testament For English Readers* (Rivingtons - 1865) Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 545.
[41] Towner, Op.cit., p. 376.
[42] John Stott, *1 Timothy & Titus* (Inter- Varsity Press - 2011) p. 140.
[43] Fairbairn, Op.cit., p. 226-227.
[44] John Stott, 2 Timothy, p. 19-20.
[45] Patrick Fairbairn, The Imperial Bible-Dictionary (Blaikie & Son - 1885) Vol. 5-6, p. 283.
[46] 1 Corinthians 16:10-11 The Revised Version 1885 by Oxford University Press.
[47] Towner, Op.cit., p. 314.

Providing Pastoral Care For Ministers

Having examined the need for pastoral care and the example of Paul's care of Timothy, we must now consider the provision of pastoral care for ministers of the gospel. We will consider four areas:

1. Our Shepherd. Any consideration of pastoral care for ministers must begin with the acknowledgement that ministers are themselves sheep. Our calling may be to shepherd the flock,[48] but we are only ever under-shepherds. The Chief Shepherd is the Lord Jesus Christ,[49] and just as he pastors the flock at large,[50] so he pastors us. We must listen to his voice as he speaks to us through his Word, and we must follow him wherever he leads. Our wellbeing and our fruitfulness both as private and public persons, depends upon our abiding in Christ.[51] We must stay close to the Saviour. Richard Baxter writes,

> O, brethren, watch therefore over your own hearts: keep out lusts and passions and worldly inclinations; keep up the life of faith and love and zeal; be much at home, and be much with God. If it be not your daily business to study your own hearts, and to subdue corruption, and to walk with God - if you make not this a work to which you constantly attend, all will go wrong, and you will starve your hearers; or, if you have an affected fervency, you cannot expect a blessing to attend it from on high. Above all, be much in secret prayer and meditation. Thence you must fetch the heavenly fire that must kindle your sacrifices: remember, you cannot decline and neglect your duty to your own hurt alone; many will be losers by it as well as you. For your people's sakes, therefore, look to your hearts.[52]

2. Our Brothers. Another key element in providing pastoral care for ministers is the role played by fellow ministers. A helpful example of this can be found in the life of Robert Murray McCheyne. While at high school and then theological college, a group of friends gathered around McCheyne, including Alexander Somerville and Andrew Bonar. These men met to study, to discuss, to sing, and above all else, to pray.[53] And whilst the core group remained the same, even after college, yet the group grew over time as they encountered other like-minded men. The ties that bound these men together were deep and loving. No one individual dominated the group, but as David Robertson has observed, 'they were bound together in Christ and each of them had a common passion and desire for the work of the gospel.'[54] Very early on, they started praying for each other on Saturday evenings, that the Lord's blessing might rest upon their Sabbath labours.[55] They remained in regular communication by letter. Whenever they could, they visited each other, and prayed together. They exchanged pulpits, assisted each other at communion seasons, encouraged each other, and even engaged in constructive criticism of each other's sermons.[56] It is not surprising

[48] 1 Peter 5:1-2.
[49] 1 Peter 5:4.
[50] Psalm 23; Isaiah 40:11; Ezekial 34:11-16; John 10:11-16; Rev. 7:17.
[51] John 15:4&5.
[52] Richard Baxter,Op.cit., p. 101.
[53] L. J. Van Valen, Constrained by his Love (Christian Focus - 2002) p. 89.
[54] David Robertson,Op.cit., p. 140.
[55] Andrew Bonar, Memoir & Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne (Banner of Truth - 2009) p. 52.
[56] David Robertson, p. 140-141.

then, when one considers these ties, that this band of brothers exercised a considerable 'influence on the spiritual life of the Church of Scotland at the time.'[57]

From the example of McCheyne we see the real benefits of developing strong ties with fellow ministers. The simple fact is that, as ministers of the gospel, we need one another. So how can such meaningful and fruitful relationships be initiated and developed? One possibility is through the fraternal, where ministers in a particular locality get together on a regular basis to be instructed, to share, and to pray. William G. Blaickie says this about fraternals,

> The more formal gatherings of ministers ought to conduce to the increase both of personal devotedness and of professional activity. Some plan should be fallen upon whereby iron may sharpen iron, and the servant of the Lord may leave the society of his brethren not only with a heart refreshed by pleasant intercourse, but with all his activities quickened - with more earnest desire to labour heartily in his work, and with a more clear perception of the way in which he should do so.[58]

Blaickie goes on to say that the value of such meetings 'can hardly be over-estimated.'[59]

Another possibility, which is really a modern take on an old theme, are the 'Companies of Pastors' organised by the 'Gospel Reformation Network'[60] in conjunction with the 'Twin Lakes Fellowship'[61] within the Presbyterian Church in America. The goal is to bring together small companies of like-minded men for friendship, support, accountability, teaching, and encouragement. Amongst other things, those belonging to these companies undertake to conference-call once a month, meet annually at their General Assembly, and attend the Twin Lakes Fellowship fraternal. Whilst this is an American model, yet it could be easily adapted to the European context.

No doubt there are other ways of organising such gatherings, but however we formulate them, if we learn anything from the example of McCheyne and his friends, we will appreciate just how important they are. Obviously attending a fraternal requires us to set aside time, and we might be tempted to think that this is time that we can little spare, but this is surely a false economy. As the isolation, discouragements, and difficulties of ministry take their toll, we need brothers in arms around us. And as Blaickie notes, in the absence of any form of episcopal superintendence within Presbyterianism, we need to find ways of looking after one another, and the fraternal is one such possibility.[62]

[57] L. J. Van Valen, Op.cit., p. 230.
[58] William G. Blaickie, *The Work of the Ministry: A Manual of Homiletical and Pastoral theology* (Solid Ground Christian Books - 2005) p. 231.
[59] William G. Blaickie, Ibid., p. 231.
[60] The *'Gospel Reformation Network'* is an organisation the purpose of which is *'to cultivate healthy Reformed churches in the Presbyterian Church in American.'* See www.gospelreformation.net.
[61] The 'Twin Lakes Fellowship' is 'a ministerial fraternal devoted to the encouragement of Gospel ministry and ministers, and to the promotion of healthy biblical church planting. The Twin Lakes Fellowship is a ministry of the Session of the historic First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS.' See www.twinlakesfellowship.com.
[62] William G. Blaickie, p. 231.

3. Our Sessions. A third element to providing pastoral care for ministers of the gospel is the role played by the Session. Our Lord Jesus Christ has so ordered his church that as ministers we do not labour on our own, but have the support of ruling elders. Whilst these men are primarily responsible for oversight of the wider congregation, yet they are perfectly placed to provide support for ministers. At the most basic level, ruling elders should faithfully carry out their own duties, thus allowing ministers of the Word to devote themselves to their own calling without unnecessary distraction.[63]

Ruling elders should also be earnestly praying for and offering emotional support for their ministers, as well as encouraging and advising them.[64] J. W. Alexander once said, 'The preacher who is constantly pouring out, and seldom pouring in, can pour but a little while,[65] and again, the elders are perfectly placed to encourage ministers to spend time in the study, attend fraternals and conferences, accept pulpit exchanges, and, where possible, to take advantage of study leave and sabbaticals. To quote Alexander again,

> And it will be your duty to impress on your people the truth, that you are as really serving them when you are in your study, as when you are in their homes.[66]

Ruling elders need to be aware of this, and, where necessary, explain to the congregation why it is so important that their minister seeks opportunities to feed his own soul. Ruling elders also need to encourage their ministers to take their day off and make full use of their holiday leave.

4. Our Denominations. The final element to providing pastoral care for ministers is the wider church, particularly, the courts of the church. Whilst there will be differences between denominations, yet the courts of the church need to ensure the material wellbeing of ministers by setting/advising general terms and conditions of employment.[67] The courts of the church will also surely wish to encourage the ongoing development of ministers by making provision for study leave and sabbaticals. The courts of the church may also give direction and training to Sessions regarding their responsibilities, including their responsibilities towards their minister.[68] The courts of the church will also have in place arrangements to visit congregations, and to meet with the minister, elders and deacons.[69]

Whilst all of the above is helpful, yet the courts of the church may have an additional role to play in the provision of pastoral care for ministers. Returning to the example of Paul's care for Timothy, could it be, that, not only do we have areas of pastoral concern that are of

[63] Thomas Smyth, *An Ecclesiastical Catechism of the Presbyterian Church* (Boston, Crocker & Brewster - 1841) p. 56&57.
[64] A Manual For Elder (Edited and published by the Home Section of the Mission Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland - 2006) p. 17&18.
[65] J. W. Alexander, Thoughts on Preaching (Banner of Truth - 1975) p. 127.
[66] J. W. Alexander, Ibid., p. 134.
[67] The PCA have produced a helpful guide for the churches in this area, *'PCA Call Package Guidelines'* (2013). Within English Independency the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches have produced a guide entitled *'Caring For Your Pastor: A Code of Practice for Churches'* (2017).
[68] A helpful example is *'A Manual for Elders'* produced by the Home Section of the Mission Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland.
[69] For example within the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland this is supposed to happen at least once every seven years, see The Code of the EPC FSO2.1. Within the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland this is to happen at least once in ten years, see The Code of the RPC 10.03 (2014).

ongoing relevance, but also a model for exercising pastoral care that can be applied in our own day? Does this example not give us warrant for utilising, say, the gifts of retired ministers with a lifetime's experience, who could befriend and encourage younger men? Obviously care would need to be taken, and younger men would need to be open to the idea, but would it not be wise and could it not be helpful?

Conclusion

We commenced this paper by noting the Apostle Paul's assessment of his ministry in 2 Timothy 4:6-8. After years of ministry, he was able to say, 'For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.' May this be true of us, and to that end, may we seek to support and care for one another, that we might all finish well, and bring glory to the Saviour we love. Amen.

PASTORAL CARE AND CHURCH DISCIPLINE

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There are many different denominations in the UK and in the world today. Which are true churches of Christ? In Old Testament times and initially in the New Testament age there was only one true church. Later separations occurred. For example there was a division between the Eastern and Western church (the Great Schism 1054). The sixteenth century Reformation led to a major break with the Roman Catholic Church. With the rediscovery, translation and printing of the Bible many divisions occurred. The Reformers emphasised the priesthood of all believers, the right of private judgment and the duty of all to search the Scriptures for themselves. It was not for the church and Pope to claim the sole right to interpret the Bible. First, there were three groupings: the followers of Luther (the Lutherans), the followers of Zwingli and Calvin (the Reformed) and also the Anabaptists. As the Reformation spread there were different churches in the different countries with their own independent leaders and special distinctives. Over time in the different national churches there were further divisions and so many more denominations began. Which denominations should we recognise as true churches of Jesus Christ?

Protestantism generally has regarded the visible church of Christ as having three distinctive marks: the preaching of the Word, the right administration of the sacraments and church discipline. For example the Belgic Confession states:

> The marks by which the true Church is known are these: If the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if it maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin; in short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of the Church. Hereby the true Church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself' (Article 29).

So, traditionally, discipline has been an important distinguishing mark of the true church.

Albert Mohler calls church discipline the missing mark of the church today. He writes:

> The decline of church discipline is perhaps the most visible failure of the contemporary church. No longer concerned with maintaining purity of confession or lifestyle, the contemporary church sees itself as a voluntary association of autonomous members, with minimal moral accountability to God, much less to each other. The absence of church discipline is no longer remarkable - it is generally not even noticed. Regulative and restorative church discipline is, to many church members, no longer a meaningful category, or even a memory. The present generation of both ministers and church members is virtually without experience of biblical church discipline. (www.the-highway.com).

That is a terrible indictment of modern churches and sadly it has affected many of the Reformed churches too.

Discipline is increasingly absent in society in general, for example, in the family. There is at present a move in Scotland to ban parents from smacking their children – to make smacking a criminal offence. Modern society rejects God's creation of the world and of man but, even more so, rejects the biblical teaching of the Fall of man. The whole idea of original sin and the total depravity is scorned. Society at large believes that children are born good and only learn evil from their environment. Sadly what society believes soon affects many of the churches. Biblical teaching is clear. 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked' (Jeremiah 19:9).

David says, 'I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me' (Psalm 51:5). Because of this, Scripture states that parents who do not discipline their children, do not love them: 'He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes' (Proverbs 13:24). In Hebrews we are told: 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?' (Hebrews 12:6-7). Every loving family will be one where there is strict and loving discipline. Otherwise children grow up spoilt. God sees discipline as very important in his family too. No normal parent enjoys disciplining their children neither do church officers enjoy this part of their duty. Nevertheless it is essential for the glory of God, the good of the church and the salvation of the individual member.

Institution of discipline

Christ is the King and Head of the church and he alone has the right to set up the ordinances in his church. At Caesaria Philippi he asked his disciples, 'But whom say ye that I am?' Peter replies with the great confession, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God' (Matthew 16:16). Jesus responds, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven' (vv17-19). The rock on which he builds his church cannot of course be Peter, because he was a fallible, sinful man who in verse 23 has to be rebuked, 'Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men'. Christ himself, the One whom Peter confessed to be the Son of the living God, is the sure and solid foundation on which the church is built and on which it will stand forever. The many attacks of Satan and the wisdom of the gates of hell cannot possibly overcome a church which is built on Christ.

Jesus then refers to the keys of the kingdom which are given to Peter as a representative of the rest of the disciples and the future leadership of the church. Those whom he binds on earth will be regarded as bound by heaven and those whom he looses on earth will be regarded as loosed by God. Here Christ is clearly instituting church discipline. Peter, as a representative of the rest of the apostles, is given the power of the keys, that is the authority to exercise church discipline. The church leaders are expected to bind and loose, to excommunicate and to lift excommunication, in accord with the directions of Christ in his Word.

Just prior to his ascension the Lord gives a similar injunction to all the disciples: 'Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained' (John 20:21-23). Here he clearly indicates that all the apostles, as the church leaders at that time, have this authority to bind and loose.

Aim of church discipline

The ultimate aim of church discipline is of course the glory of God. Everything the church does, or which the officers of the church do, must be to glorify God. However, the particular aims of church discipline are the following:

1. The first aim of church discipline is the holiness and purity of the church before God. He is looking for a holy church to worship him. In Old Testament times holiness and cleanness and purity were greatly stressed. For example there were clean and unclean foods. Illnesses could render one unclean, for example leprosy or an issue of blood. The temple was a holy place, Jerusalem a holy city and Israel a holy people. The basic idea in holiness is separation from sin unto God. This holy God has not changed. The writer to the Hebrews exhorts, **'**Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord' (Hebrews 12:14). The Church in Thyatira tolerated immorality but Christ writes to her: 'I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works' (Revelation 2:21-23).

These stern words show how God demands purity in his church. The Corinthian church was one where discipline badly needed to be exercised. It is fascinating to notice how Paul addresses them in beginning his epistle to them: 'Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours' (1 Corinthians 1:2). There is a huge emphasis on the fact that they have been sanctified and are called to be saints. He states his great aim with regard to the Corinthians in his Second Epistle, 'For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ' (2 Corinthians 11:2). They must be pure.

2. *The Practice of the Free Church of Scotland* states that with regard to the discipline of the individual,

> The aim is evangelical, redemptive and restorative. In loyalty to Christ and in the spirit of love, effort is made to win the erring to repentance and to restore to the fellowship of the church. So assurance of the continuing love of God is conveyed to the penitent, for there is no security in love which is morally indifferent, and there is no security in love which does not desire and seek the purifying of those to whom it is directed. (*The Practice of the Free Church of Scotland*, 1995, p.88).

It seeks the recovery of the sinner.

3. Discipline provides a warning to others who may be tempted to similar sin. It has a deterrent effect. It would be unjust to discipline simply in order to deter, but deterrence is a beneficial side effect. Paul writes to Timothy, 'Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear' (1Timothy 5:20).

4. Discipline also preserves the good name of the church. The church cannot keep all its members from ever sinning but if it deals appropriately with scandals and misdemeanours then the offence caused is reduced. Excusing or covering up public scandal leads to greater harm as has happened in recent times with the Roman Catholic Church. The church is to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14) and in a very real sense the world has no light but the church and if church members are doing the works of darkness it becomes a synagogue of Satan.

For what sins is discipline to be administered?

We are all sinners and sin constantly in thought, word and deed. As individuals we must daily pray, 'Forgive us our trespasses'. Church discipline, however, takes to do only with such sins as are scandalous and flagrant breaches of God's Word.

1. Such open sins as drunkenness, adultery, fornication, perjury, Sabbath breaking, fighting and stealing demand church discipline.

2. Another category requiring discipline is heresy, the teaching serious error, e.g. denying the Trinity, the atonement, justification by faith, the authority and infallibility of the Scriptures or eternal punishment. 'A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself' (Titus 3:10-11). The one who teaches false doctrine causes division. John writes, 'If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds' (2 John 10-11).

3. A third category is backsliding, for example when a member becomes cold or worldly, drifting away from the church and failing to attend regularly the means of grace. 'Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching' (Hebrews 10:25). Paul tells Titus, 'Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith' (Titus 1:13).

How is it to be administered?

1. Private rebuke. The aim is to restore and get the individual concerned to repent. If done timely, kindly and prayerfully, this often is all that is required.

Jesus gives very important teaching to the disciples on the subject of discipline: 'Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth

as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Matthew 18:15-20).

Notice that in the first instance this refers to a brother sinning against you. It is referring to a personal offence. This is often forgotten. Spurgeon, in the Downgrade Controversy, stated that folk complained against him for not going and speaking privately to those he was accusing of heresy. But he responded that the heretics were not acting in ignorance. They knew his views and were actively rejecting them. Further, they were publishing their heresies, so these things couldn't be kept in a corner. Their sin had become public and required a public response. We could add that when Paul required the disciplining of the immoral man in 1 Corinthians 5, the Corinthian church rightly did not respond by saying, 'But have you spoken to the man who was guilty of fornication, privately first?' The action of the man was public. Everyone knew about it. It could not be kept secret. Christ in Matthew 18:15-20 is not referring to a public and scandalous sin. He is dealing with your response to someone who has sinned against you and hurt you, for example, by slandering you, or stealing from you.

However, we can also extrapolate from this to other private sins, i.e. those which only you and very few others know about, or false teachings which are beginning to emerge, or the start of backsliding. In this situation every effort is to be made to show the sinner his sin privately and bring him or her to repentance. If success is achieved, this is a matter of great rejoicing. James writes, 'Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins' (James 5:19-20).

2. If unsuccessful initially in privately pleading with the sinning individual Jesus advises taking another Christian or two with you to plead with the backslider. Two or three witnesses can sometimes be more effective.

3. If private admonition does not have the desired result, tell it 'to the church'. By the church here the local eldership or leadership in the church is meant. They must then give serious consideration to the problem and the individual should be brought before them. If the person admits his or her fault and if it is of a minor and private nature, then he or she is to be rebuked and admonished.

4. If the person denies the accusation it is the duty of the eldership to investigate and if there is evidence which proves the guilt of the person, then the individual must be dealt with according to the fault.

5. In the case of more serious faults and scandalous sins the individual should be suspended from membership, either for a set time if the person shows penitence, or indefinitely till the individual acknowledges his or her sin and gives evidence of repentance. Sometimes the individual is hardened in their sin and will not respond to the citation to appear before the eldership. Such a person must be suspended from membership for contumacy, i.e. an unwillingness to submit to the authority of the church.

6. In more extreme cases where no repentance is shown, e.g. a person persisting in adultery or teaching serious heresy, the person is to be excommunicated, i.e. delivered to Satan, as Paul did to Hymenaeus and Alexander: 'Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander;

whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme' (1Timothy 1:20). This would involve reading out a statement to the assembled congregation stating the sin of the individual and the discipline imposed. There should be a cutting off of the individual from the fellowship of the church, making plain the seriousness of the offence, and the impossibility of continuing the friendly relationship as before. There should be no harshness in this, but a firm informing of the person that our hearts desire would be to receive him or her back, but as long as he or she persists in sin this is impossible.

7. As in all the actions of the church, but particularly here, it cannot be sufficiently stressed that prayer is vital. Pray that the church officers will have wisdom and the right words to speak and pray for grace to carry out the discipline in a loving and God-glorifying way and pray that the individual disciplined will be given grace to repent and so be restored.

Misuse of Discipline

1. Heavy shepherding takes place in some churches where there is interference in the day-to-day lives of members of the congregation. Some pastors tell people where to live, what to study, what jobs to do, who to marry, etc. This is wrong and there is no basis for it in Scripture. People must be given freedom to live their own lives and make their own choices. Discipline should not be used to micromanage people's lives or to interfere in the private concerns of individuals or families.

2. Disciplining on the basis of man-made laws or human traditions is obviously wrong and yet sometimes practised. In New Testament times the Jews put people out of the synagogue for associating with Jesus. One could imagine them also disciplining folk for healing on the Sabbath or plucking grains of wheat that day. They did not seem to have any concept of works of necessity or mercy which are appropriate and legitimate on the Sabbath day. I have heard of one church disciplining members for taking public transport to church on Sunday. It is wrong, for example, to make a disciplinary issue out of styles of hair or fashions of clothes.

3. Inquisitorial searching of the private lives of individual members is also wrong. Spying on people or setting traps for them is contrary to the Scriptural injunction to love one's neighbour and think more highly of others than of oneself.

4. Cases must be thoroughly investigated and the individual given every opportunity to explain and defend themselves. People are not to be presumed guilty, or condemned on the evidence of one witness. Sometimes one hears of cases where a minister or pastor pronounces discipline without careful consideration of the evidence or consulting of others. Patience must be exercised even when the pastor feels exasperated and outraged. The individual must be given an opportunity to defend themselves.

5. A harsh, bitter and hateful spirit in church officers involved in discipline is wrong. The aim must never be to get rid of someone. It should always be administered in love, with grief and with tears. The church is a body and if one member suffers, all suffer. We are to grieve over the fallen brother or sister and show them that we care deeply for them.

6. Sometimes there is a failure to restore the individual when they have repented. Paul writes in his second letter to the Corinthians asking that the immoral man whose discipline he demanded in the first epistle be restored: 'Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which

was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him' (2 Corinthians 2:6-8). It is not always possible to restore the person to office in the church, but all should be restored to membership following repentance. Elders must be 'blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach…Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil' (1Timothy 3:2, 7). A person may fall in such a way as that his reputation in the world has been damaged and people will naturally have difficulty in trusting him. Such a person cannot be restored to the pastorate.

7. Sometimes there is a failure to continue care for the individual after suspension and excommunication. There ceases to be a concern to see the person restored. This is obviously wrong because one of the great aims of discipline is the recovery of the one who has fallen.

A biblical example: 1 Corinthians 5

In order to understand the principles and guidelines for church discipline it will be useful to look at one case given in Scripture. In the Corinthian church there was a man involved in immorality with his step-mother. This troubled Paul deeply and was one of the major reasons for his writing the first letter to the Corinthians.

Verse 1 'It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife'. Paul had heard the rumours and knew it was not just rumour. Everyone was talking about it. It needed to be dealt with. Even the outside world, the heathen, were scandalised. The unbelievers regarded it as reprehensible. The witness of the church in the eyes of the world had been compromised. This is very serious. The church has to be a light to the world.

Verse 2 'And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you'. The Corinthians seemed to justify the way they were handling this case. No doubt they were quoting such words as that they are 'not under the law, but under grace' (Rom.6:14). They are not legalists. They were emphasising liberty, boasting indeed of their tolerance. We can imagine them speaking of grace and love as over against law and legalism. But God requires holiness. If we are regenerated we are to be new creatures. How can we say that we are born again if we live in the old lusts?

Verse 3 'For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed'. Paul, though absent, was judging, and it was right of him to judge. Sometimes people say that you shouldn't judge others. But when Jesus says, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged' (Matthew 7:1) he is not referring to the work of elders, but rather the hypocrisy of private individuals who criticised others for doing what they themselves also did, secretly. They were using a different, harsher standard for judging others than for themselves. Jesus states, 'For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again' (Matthew 7:2). Elders have a duty to judge, just like Paul.

Verse 4 -5 'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus'. This sin

was so serious and scandalous that the individual must be immediately excommunicated. Paul was hopeful that such action would lead to the restoration of the man concerned. Though seemingly harsh treatment, it was excellent advice in this situation. As we saw, 2 Corinthians 2:6-8 implies that the man did repent and was therefore to be restored. So the discipline was wonderfully effective.

Verse 6 'Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?' If scandalous sin is tolerated in the church it will spread like yeast in dough. Sadly the yeast of sin is spreading in the church today through failure to take action. There is a fear of seeming unloving and harsh. Discipline is unpleasant, so folk sweep the problem under the carpet and hope that it will go away and meanwhile the yeast is spreading. It does not take much leaven in the beginning to cause eventually a major problem

Verses 7-8 'Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth'. Before partaking of the Passover meal every Jewish home had to be carefully cleaned and swept to remove all yeast. In the same way the church is to remove this offending member. Only when there is a thorough purging will their worship be acceptable to the Lord. God is seeing the sin which we are tolerating and is grieved. Why are we not seeing revival and blessing? He tells us, 'Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear' (Isaiah 59:1-2).

Verse 9 'I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators'. The church of Christ is to be a holy gathering. Corinth was notorious for its immorality. Many of the church members had previously been fornicators, adulterers, homosexuals, lesbians, thieves, drunkards and idolators. 'But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God' (1 Corinthians 6:11). Be different, dead to sin and alive to God. Church members are called to be separate from the world.

Verse 10 'Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world'. The church, because it is in the world, will always have some association with the immoral. We are constantly mingling with sinners in day-to-day life, and cannot escape that. We are not to become hermits or to enter a monastery. We are to live in the world.

Verse 11 'But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat'. Paul's concern here is not with the outsider, but with the one who professes to be a brother. If such a one is clearly guilty of these sins and will not repent then he is to be cut off from the fellowship and there is to be no eating with him. How often is this practised today?

Verse 12 'For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?' Our business is not to be judging the outsiders, but rather demanding consistent holy lives of ourselves and from those who are members of the church.

Verse 13 ‘But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person’. The scandalous sinner who will not repent is to be put out of the fellowship.

Conclusion

Discipline is a mark of a true church. Where there is no discipline the world takes over the church and the church is mixed up unhealthily with the world. The loving, prayerful practice of church discipline is a means of grace and a blessing to the whole fellowship. The backslider is restored, the heretic is corrected and the immoral person is brought to repentance. Believers who are tempted, fear to sin. The world sees the church tackling problem members and has to acknowledge that right and consistent procedures have been followed.

Do we practise church discipline in our church? It is a means of grace? Are we seeing sinners and backsliders repenting? Are we proper caring New Testament churches?

BOOK REVIEWS

Between Wittenberg and Geneva. Lutheran and Reformed Theology in Conversation, Robert Kolb and Carl R. Trueman, Baker Academic, 2017, pbk., 250 pages, $26.99.

The origins of this volume are set out by Carl Trueman in the Preface. Both he and Kolb had noticed in conversations with seminary students two related phenomena, the first being a failure to understand the difference between being confessional and being Evangelical, and the second being a similar failure to understand the difference between being Lutheran and being Reformed.

These failures he explains by the fact that neither Lutheran nor Reformed traditions are really part of the broader movement of Evangelicalism which has its roots in the revivals and the revivalism of the eighteenth century. As a result matters which play a major role in the confessional traditions of Lutheran and Reformed churches are often regarded as of little importance in Evangelical circles. This is compounded by the lack of confessional catechizing received by students from both traditions, which leaves them vulnerable to more Evangelical varieties of Protestantism. Both confessional traditions as a result become seriously weakened. Thus, to take but one example, Evangelicals tend to be baffled by the vigorous debates on sacramental issues found in the two confessional traditions, as for instance at the Marburg Colloquy (1529).

The goal of this volume by Lutheran scholar Robert Kolb and Reformed scholar Carl Trueman is, as they express it, 'to produce a book outlining Lutheran and Reformed positions on various doctrines in a manner that would help students to see what is at stake both in the confessional disagreements between our two traditions and in the differences between the confessional Protestantism that finds its origin in the Reformation and the Evangelicalism that originates in the revivalism of the eighteenth century' (p.x). Both authors also wish to combine faithfulness to their particular tradition with a gracious spirit that reflects their respect and affection for each other. The tone of the material they present certainly manifests that spirit and is a good pattern for others to follow in theological debate.

The book consists of eight chapters, each being a pair of contributions from the two authors. The contributions are not written in response to each other and so in that sense do not directly interact. They are designed rather to offer starting points for dialogue in other contexts, such as seminaries and local churches. The method followed by each author is also distinctive, reflecting the different traditions from which they come. Although fully committed to the Lutheran Book of Concord (1580), Kolb believes that it is the writings of Luther himself that present the best 'Lutheran' perspective for theological dialogue and so his contributions major on Luther's writings, with some notice taken of later Lutheran authors. Trueman, on the other hand, approaches the Reformed tradition more from the point of view of the great Calvinist confessions, above all the Westminster Confession and Catechisms. As a result Trueman's contributions interact more with Reformed confessions and less with particular theologians, even Calvin himself. He argues, indeed, that numerous theologians have shaped the Reformed tradition and that Calvin, for all his undoubted brilliance, is in truth the first among equals.

The eight chapters cover in turn Scripture and Its Interpretation, Law and Gospel, The Person and Work of Christ, Election and the Bondage of the Will, Justification and Sanctification,

Baptism, The Lord's Supper and Worship. Both men are thoroughly at home in their own traditions, yet are not afraid to bring them to the bar of Scripture to be tested by the one infallible standard. Thus Trueman, for example, argues that the detailed prescriptions of the Larger Catechism regarding the observance of the Lord's Day in some points go beyond what Scripture requires (p.58). There is much too that differs from the outlook of many contemporary Evangelicals, especially in the high view of the sacraments characteristic of both confessional traditions.

The resulting volume is a very helpful resource for understanding both traditions. Few will fail to have their understanding of their own tradition clarified and may well learn some new things. They may perhaps find one or two things to disagree with too, since neither author claims to offer the definitive version of his own tradition. All will profit from engagement with the 'other' tradition, whether Lutheran or Reformed, with new insights provided and caricatures exposed. Those who stand outside both traditions will learn much to their profit and it is to be hoped that some of the riches of confessional theology, both Lutheran and Reformed, will filter into contemporary Evangelicalism, where such theological strengthening is much needed.

David McKay

*Preaching made Practical***,** O. Palmer Robertson, Evangelical Press, 2015, pbk, 220 pages, £12.77.

One of the crystal clear commands of Scripture was given by the apostle Paul to Timothy, when he was pastor of the church in Ephesus – 'Preach the Word' (2 Timothy 4:2). *Preaching made Practical* recognizes the absolute importance of obedience to this imperative if the Christian church is to grow and mature in the 21st century, in a way that glorifies Christ. Robertson develops, in seven well-constructed chapters, not only what it means to preach the Word, but also how men should properly prepare to be effective communicators of God's truth.

The author of this publication makes no assumptions of his readers. He begins by defining some very basic subjects, like the 'nature of a sermon'. Preaching, he defines, is a message based on the Word of God written, a message which reveals Christ and a message that is proclaimed to the church and the world.

Robertson helpfully and accurately defines a sermon as:

the official, ministerial, public proclamation, explanation, illustration and application of the Word of God written as it reveals Christ to the church and to the world.

This definition, he argues, contains the essential elements of preaching. He helpfully develops each element for the benefit of preachers, and particularly for students in the early stages of training for the gospel ministry.

In the evangelical church there is currently a debate about whether the pastoral office is open to women. Palmer Robertson enters into this debate thoughtfully, sensitively and with careful exegesis of the relevant Scriptural texts, concluding that this office is not open to women.

While women have many roles in the life of the church the authoritative proclamation of God's Word is not one.

Many conscientious Christian young men wrestle with the question as to whether they are 'called' to the ministry. The author recognizes this and provides a supplement entitled 'Knowing God's Will for Your Life'. He distinguishes between what he calls 'God's Will of Decree', which is the secret will of God, and 'God's Will of Precept', which is the will of God revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Robertson stresses the importance of every Christian being obedient to 'God's Will of Precept', and in doing so they can be confident of God revealing, in his grace, 'His Will of Decree' in the process of time (Psalm 25:12, 14). In relation to vocation, Robertson provides seven practical steps which distil biblical wisdom with respect to guidance. This list includes such matters as prayer, motives, gifts, advice, providence, etc.

The major part of the book is taken up with the task of preaching. Helpfully the author compares and contrasts the form sermons legitimately take – textual, consecutive expository and topical. He points out that all three of these sermon forms have their strengths and weaknesses and that each, at appropriate times, should have a place in a preacher's regular ministry.

The most valuable section of this publication is that which deals with the parts of a sermon, the procedure for composing a sermon and the preparation needed for the effective delivery of a sermon. Every sermon, the author stipulates, should consist of 8 parts – theme, outline, body, transition, illustration, application, conclusion, introduction. Robertson gives helpful guidance on the importance and preparation of each part, giving particular emphasis to the need for a coherent outline. This will not only help the preacher in his delivery of the sermon, but also the listeners to follow and assimilate the message.

When it comes to composing the sermon, Robertson gives priority to prayer. He writes:

The process of preparing a sermon must be saturated with prayer from beginning to end, and all through the middle.

In relation to exegesis, a knowledge of the original languages is emphasized. Guidance is also given to the resources available to help the preacher come to an accurate understanding of the text in its context and how to arrive at an appropriate and relevant application.

This reviewer highly recommends this book. It will act as a refresher course to preachers who have been in the ministry for many years. It will most certainly be an invaluable guide to students in training for the ministry and should be found on the required reading list of every Theological College.

Robert L W McCollum

How to Understand and Apply the New Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology, Andrew David Naselli, P&R, 2017, hbk, 384 pages, £34.99.

This is an excellent book for all serious students of the New Testament, whether at seminary or in the pastorate. Andrew Naselli, who worked for nine years as a research assistant to D.A. Carson and now teaches New Testament and Theology at Bethlehem College and Seminary in Minneapolis, has given us a book that walks us through the process of understanding and interpreting the New Testament. He sets out twelve steps that are involved, to a greater or lesser extent, in responsibly exegeting and applying the Scriptures. He acknowledges that it is 'somewhat artificial to break down exegesis and theology into twelve steps' (p.4): '…these twelve steps are "steps" only in theory. They are interrelated' (p.4). Nevertheless, he recognises the value of separating out the process logically for the sake of clarity. This is certainly helpful for those who are new to exegesis, but it is also useful for pastors who have been doing it for years and who may have allowed sloppy habits and imprecise thinking to creep into their preparation.

One of the most valuable features of this book is the way Naselli explains and illustrates the interrelation of exegesis and theology. His first eight steps lay out the components of exegesis (genre, textual criticism, translation, Greek grammar, argument diagram, historical-cultural context, literary context and word studies), but then he goes on to show how these relate to Biblical Theology, Historical Theology, Systematic Theology and Practical Theology (and how all these disciplines relate to one another). He thus provides a holistic approach to sermon preparation which is incredibly useful for preachers and those training to be preachers. 'The job of a Bible interpreter doesn't stop with steps 1-8 [exegesis]. It's certainly not *less* than that. But your interpretation is incomplete if you don't move from exegesis to theology' (p.231).

Naselli is passionate about Biblical Theology and delights to show how the whole Bible 'progresses, integrates and climaxes in Christ' (p.231). After expanding on his definition of Biblical Theology, he illustrates this with four examples of biblical-theological themes that are found in the New Testament: holiness, temple, mystery and work. These help the reader to see how to go about applying the fruits of exegesis to Biblical Theology.

The author is an elder in Bethlehem Baptist church and his pastor's heart comes out clearly throughout this book, but especially in the chapter on Practical Theology in which he deals with how to apply the text of the New Testament to oneself, the church and the world.

Naselli provides annotated bibliographies at the end of each chapter, giving the student plenty of useful and trustworthy resources for further study on each topic. This is helpful because although Naselli writes concisely and packs a great deal into these 342 pages of text, a work that covers so much ground will inevitably tend to be summary in nature. Naselli does often unpack his principles for exegesis with good illustrations from the text, but one weakness is that in places he gives us lists of guidelines that would benefit from being fleshed out further. These bibliographies with their comments are almost worth the price of the book itself. Many of these resources are books and monographs that the average pastor or theological student may not come across, and so needs to be directed to. As a first-rate scholar, the author has not only read the associated literature in this field but has also assessed it. His evaluation of each book gives the distillation of that assessment. A good example is his discussion of the revision of the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* by Moises Silva (p.228).

Naselli writes in an extremely clear style which is simple without being simplistic. Some knowledge of Greek is necessary for the chapter on Greek grammar and an advantage when reading the chapters on textual criticism and translation, but a reader with no Greek can profit from the other chapters. He illustrates lavishly; perhaps in places he is a little carried away by his enthusiasm for the Harry Potter novels, but there is no question that this is a highly readable book. He also includes two helpful appendices, one on why and how to organise your personal theological library and one on how to memorise an entire New Testament book, which highlights his desire to bring readers to a deep and meditative study of the words of the New Testament itself. Highly recommended.

Warren Peel

A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament. The Gospel Promised, edited by Miles V. Van Pelt, Crossway, 2016, hbk., 601 pages, $50.00.

This book will be a welcome addition to the bookshelves of all ministers, students, elders and Bible class teachers, as well as those church members with a keen interest in getting to know the Scriptures better. This is the first volume of a two-part work (covering Testaments Old and New) by an assembled group of faithful, godly, scholars and lecturers from the Reformed Theological Seminary. It represents the fruit of many decades of conservative, Reformed, study, reflection, research and teaching on the Tanak. Clearly frustrated by the critical, cut-and-paste, scholarship of the past, the editor set out to produce a book that dealt with the message of the entire Bible as a canonical whole. Key emphases throughout are scriptural authority, biblical theology and Christocentric meaning. This is a book that self-consciously promotes itself as a tool to help the church preach Christ, as our Saviour did on the Road to Emmaus, from all parts of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.

The opening two essays by Currid on Genesis and Exodus are, as we might expect, reliable, instructive and helpful, if perhaps a little threadbare. McKelvey's chapter on Leviticus is excellent and clear, and provides much sane counsel in navigating this now-obscure book. An outstanding chapter on Kings is provided by Fullilove – this will really aid expositors getting a handle on how Elijah and Elisha fit into the comings and goings of the monarchs of Israel and Judah. Reading the sections written by Yeo on Ruth will give young preachers starting out a lot of what they need to make sense of the basic material (though I would have liked a little more on the theme of Kinsman-Redeemer). The editor's own pick is a stimulating piece on the vexed question of the Song of Songs: it is great the way he lays out his argument so clearly for Solomonic authorship. With freshness and precision he sets out his stall for the '3rd Party-Shepherd' view; while this has a certain attractiveness about it, given the present challenges to marriage, and the extreme 'intimate relations' view of some notable evangelicals, most will prefer a 'typological interpretation'.

There are a few places where I would take issue with some of the entries. In the introduction, Van Pelt makes a strong case for accepting as authoritative the canonical order of the Hebrew Bible. If I would fault him it would be on two grounds – firstly, the case, in fact, is a little more complex than he suggests in some individual books, as Yeo makes clear in Ruth; secondly, he seems to put an undue stress on the message of the book being related to this Hebrew canonical ordering – there is, in fact, in Ruth, as the 'in the days of the judges'

opening shows, reason for the ordering that we find in the English Bible. The other chief concern is a chapter by Futato which is generally lucid and informative - he even goes so far as to say that all Psalms are *ultimately* messianic - but also refrains from accepting that any are *initially* messianic. On good biblical authority, from the lips of the apostles and the mouth of the Saviour himself, at very least Psalm 110, from the very outset, was emphatically only and always messianic. With these two caveats, I heartily recommend this book – it is a joy and delight to sit at the feet of godly Old Testament teachers with a transparent heart for Christ. If you love Genesis to Malachi (or 2 Chronicles), then I think you will take delight in Van Pelt!

Andrew Kerr

Retrieving History: Memory and Identity Formation in the Early Church, Stefana Dan Laing, Baker Academic, 2017, pbk., 216 pages, $24.99.

This important book, from the pen of Stefana Dan Laing, is part of the *Evangelical Ressourcement Series*, the aim of which is to assist Christians to draw upon the thought and life of the early church and thereby to equip us to respond to the challenges facing today's church. Laing succeeds admirably in fulfilling that remit in this erudite work examining how early Christian memories were gathered and marshalled as polemical arguments in support of the gospel. Her engaging study provides a sense of the meaningful collective Christian identity possessed by the early church and is thereby an antidote to modernity's radical individualism.

Her introductory chapter sets forth the value of church history for the life of the church. She makes a good case for the contention 'that before we can responsibly go into the future, we must go back'. She shows how some of the theological issues of the fourth century have unexpected parallels in our own era. For example, the tenets of Manichaeism – a religion that Augustine wrestled with for almost a decade – have close affinities with New Age teachings which are so popular nowadays.

The topics covered in the rest of the book include apologetics, martyrdom, hagiography and ecclesiastical history, including some insightful comments on the writing of Eusebius. Her concluding chapter provides a good overview of the legacy bequeathed to us by the ancient church. She applauds the apologists, such as Irenaeus and Augustine, for showing that the church held to a truthful and reasonable faith, one that is grounded on historical facts and not on mythical fables. The following comments on Augustine's historical apologetic are of great relevance:

> 'he warns strongly against equating any earthly, worldly institution with the kingdom of God. Through his historical analysis he demonstrates that just because tragedy befalls a nation, that is not a certain indication of God's abandonment. Conversely, just because a nation grows into a prosperous empire, that is not a certain indication of its moral superiority or of divine sanction.'

In relation to the experiences of the martyrs, Laing asserts that their biographies confront us with our worldliness and the ease of our Christianity. This is a timely perspective in an age when the 'prosperity gospel' has such an influence. Laing also affirms that their self-denying

attitude, while not requiring that we follow the monastic route, will help us 'to rid ourselves of the idols that easily creep into our hearts and divert us from our true loyalty to Jesus.' She is careful however to keep us from hero-worship by concluding the book on this note:

> 'As we remember our forebears, we ought always to look to their God, the God of history, of whom they bore witness, our great God who has accomplished his work through women and men in every era to build up the church.'

While one might be able to detect, at times, too idealistic a view of the early church on Laing's part, she has undoubtedly made a good case for the study of patristics - and a timely corrective for any of us who tend to think that there is nothing much of value to be found prior to the Reformation era.

Raymond Blair

BOOK NOTICES

Lectures on the Book of Job with Practical Observations, James Durham, edited by Chris Coldwell, A New Edition Corrected and Revised, Naphtali Press and Reformation Heritage Books, 2018, hbk., 200 pages, $30.00.

Although James Durham (1622-1658) served only ten years in the gospel ministry, his writings have exercised a strong influence in Scotland and further afield. His *Lectures on the Book of Job* will continue to edify God's people some three centuries later. This volume is a critically revised version of the editions published by Naphtali Press in 1995 and 2003. The text is as far as possible that of the 1759 edition, with editorial changes made to reflect contemporary spelling, punctuation and usage. Some old Scottish words (a list is provided) have also been changed to enhance readability. Durham does not spend time on the introductory issues usual in modern commentaries but moves immediately into the text of Job, noting that this is a true story, not a parable, and has its origins in the work of the Holy Spirit. One lecture of around five pages is devoted to each chapter of the book, making this a very concise exposition of Job. Durham seeks to explain the text and then in his 'Observations' to apply the lessons of the chapter in view. The goal is edification and obedience and in this Durham succeeds admirably. Preachers will of course need to consult more recent studies of Job, but all will profit from a valuable exposition from an able gospel preacher of the seventeenth century.

Reformation Worship. Liturgies from the Past for the Present, edited by Jonathan Gibson and Mark Earngey, New Growth Press, 2018, hbk., 688 pages, $69.99 (£41.59 from 10ofThose).

Whilst many of us would deny that our worship services are shaped by a 'liturgy', the fact is that almost all of them follow a fairly set pattern, even if that pattern is far from clearly thought out. Unless worship is to descend into chaos, structure is necessary. In considering how to shape worship services, great help is to be found in the work of our Reformed forefathers who devoted considerable attention to worship. This substantial volume from New Growth Press brings together translations of liturgies –orders of service, if you will – drawn from the sixteenth century Reformers, designed for regular worship services and also for the observance of the Lord's Supper. Here are to be found liturgies drafted by, for example, Luther, Oecolampadius, Zwingli, Farel, Bullinger, Coverdale, Bucer, Calvin, Cranmer, Knox, and others. In addition to providing templates for services, these documents offer profound insights into the Reformers' views on worship. The editors have done a thorough job in providing translations in contemporary language as well as helpful explanations of terminology and parallel column comparisons of different liturgies. As Sinclair Ferguson points out in his Foreword, these liturgies are not to be woodenly imitated and our greatest need in worship is the enabling of the Spirit. Nevertheless 'the liturgies here should stimulate us to careful thought, and cause us to ask how we can apply their principles today in a way that echoes their Trinitarian, Christ-centered, biblically informed content, so that our worship, in our place and time, will echo the gospel content and rhythm they exhibit' (p.xix). Wisely used, this will be an excellent resource.

Some Pastors and Teachers. Reflecting a biblical vision of what every minister is called to be, Sinclair B. Ferguson, The Banner of Truth Trust, 2017, hbk., 802 pages, £18.00.

This may be a weighty volume, but that should not deter any reader. Sinclair Ferguson's style is always clear and accessible, a pleasure to read, and these chapters are no exception. The book brings together 39 pieces written by Ferguson in a variety of contexts, some dating from the 1980s, all related to the work of the gospel ministry. They are divided into five sections. The first (3 chapters) considers 'Three Johns' – Calvin, Owen and Murray. The second (6 chapters) considers various aspects of Calvin's ministry as a pastor-teacher, including his views on the incarnation, the Holy Spirit and the Lord's Supper. The third (9 chapters) turns our attention to the Puritans, chiefly, but not exclusively, John Owen, and includes thoughts on reading the works of Owen. The fourth (13 chapters) is devoted to a wide variety of topics relating to the pastor and teaching, whilst the fifth (8 chapters) deals with the pastor and preaching. This volume is a treasure trove of biblical wisdom and insight relating to gospel ministry, all practically applied. It will be profitable reading not only for ministers, but also for congregations seeking to understand and encourage their pastor. The age of some of these pieces is irrelevant – they are as helpful as when first produced. Ferguson encourages pastors to accept speaking and preaching engagements so that they will be stretched and strengthened by the preparation. That is the source of many of these chapters and they are a testimony to what can be achieved in the midst of the business of congregational ministry. It is a book which can be heartily recommended.

From Zwingli to Amyraut. Exploring the Growth of European Reformed Traditions, edited by Jon Balserak and Jim West, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2017, hbk., 181 pages, €85.00.

The attention that was directed in 2017 to Martin Luther's reforming activity on the 500th anniversary of his posting the 95 Theses, whilst necessary and valuable, did tend to suggest at times that Luther was the single key to the Reformation. This volume of essays seeks to harness the enthusiasm for considering the Reformation generated by the Luther anniversary in order to expand the reader's awareness of the many other aspects of reformation that need to be considered. A range of studies is offered by an international team of scholars which will shed new light on familiar figures and will also draw attention to other, relatively obscure, contributors to reformation in the sixteenth century. Included are Luther's futile appeal to imperial authority in pursuit of reform, Zwingli's 'covenantal turn' in his thought on the Lord's Supper, Bullinger's perspective on the same sacrament, Giovanni Diodati the translator of the Bible into Italian, Reformed Scholastic approaches to Christology, and the soteriology of Amyraut. There is much here to stimulate thought and, in such a controverted field, disagreement. To take one example, Alan Clifford's views of Amyraut's fidelity to Calvin in contrast to Beza's distortion of the Reformer's thought is very familiar and still does not convince. For those with a serious interest in the Reformation this is a worthwhile collection of studies that will repay careful evaluation.

The Greek New Testament, produced at Tyndale House Cambridge, edited by Dirk Jongkind, Crossway, 2017, hbk., 526 pages, $39.99.

Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th Revised Edition, edited by the Institute for New Testament Textual Research, Münster/Westphalia, Deutsche Bibel Gesellschaft and Hendrickson Publishers (Distributed in the UK by Alban Books), 2017, hbk., 890 pages, £62.99.

The new edition of the Greek New Testament produced at Tyndale House represents a thorough revision of the Tregelles edition which underlies the 1881 Westcott and Hort edition. The focus is on early manuscript sources and the goal is 'to present in an easily readable format the best approximation to the words written by the New Testament authors' (p.505). A subsequent volume will provide the rationale for editorial decisions, which will no doubt occasion scholarly debate. One unusual feature of this edition is the placing of the Catholic Epistles between Acts and the Pauline corpus, a reflection of the order often adopted in the manuscript sources. The result of the editors' labours is a clear, uncluttered text printed in a readable and attractive font, with a limited number of textual witnesses cited at the foot of each page. The volume is attractively produced, even coming with its own slipcase. It deserves a wide readership.

The 28th Edition of Nestle-Aland scarcely requires introduction since this has become the standard scholarly edition of the Greek New Testament. The significant changes from earlier editions lie in the critical apparatus which continues to cite a vast range of manuscript sources. Marginal references are also provided to improve understanding of the text, including NT parallels, OT quotations and allusions and also references to OT, NT and early Jewish material which can profitably be compared with the text. Copious introductory material is provided regarding manuscripts, sources and editorial methods. For scholars and pastors seriously engaging with the Greek text, this continues to be an indispensable resource. This edition also offers wide margins for personal notes (and is reflected in the cost).

Those called to devote a lifetime of study to the biblical text for teaching and preaching have in these volumes the necessary tools for God-honouring work in the NT part of 'God-breathed' Scripture.

A Documentary History of Religion in America, edited by Edwin S. Gaustad, Mark A. Noll and Heath W. Carter, Fourth Edition, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2018, hbk., 768 pages, $60.00.

This is the fourth edition of a work (originally in two volumes) that has become a standard source-book for students of American church history. Noll and Carter have edited the late Edwin Gaustad's work to provide an accessible and comprehensive selection of original documents relating to the whole span of the history of the church in the United States ('America'). The selection begins with the Colonial era, continues through the 'Americanization' of religion during and after the Revolution, examines the differing attitudes held by churches and individual Christians to slavery, traces the development of church life in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries and comes right up to date with 'The Age of Obama and Beyond' which includes the 2016 presidential election. All the great movements which shaped American religion are considered, including revivalism and millennialism, the role of Judaism, Mormonism and other religions finds a place and current questions relating to religious freedom, abortion and human rights are examined. The voices of Native Americans, African Americans, women and other groups which are often absent

from studies of church history are all represented. Numerous photographs of key figures add to the reader's appreciation of the sources. This is a rich resource which can be dipped into or read at length. For anyone who wishes to understand the development of religion in what has become a vastly influential nation this volume, read alongside the standard histories, will provide ample enlightenment and instruction.

Heretics and Believers. A History of the English Reformation, Peter Marshall, Yale University Press, 2017, pbk., 652 pages, £16.99.

In this new history of the English reformation Peter Marshall, Professor of History at the University of Warwick, offers a panoramic overview of a turbulent and endlessly fascinating period of English history. It arises out of profound scholarship and comprehensive familiarity with the original sources, yet the narrative is fluent and highly readable, with the necessary documentation relegated to the comprehensive footnotes. It is an exciting story well told. Marshall argues that England in the early sixteenth century was not, in general, hungry for religious change, yet was in some respects open to the kind of changes advocated by 'reformers' of various kinds. He does not fall into the trap which some historians have not avoided, of explaining the events of the English Reformation (and indeed of the different manifestations of 'Reformation') in purely sociological or political terms. These factors were undoubtedly important, but Marshall recognises that this was a fundamentally religious movement and that 'religion' was profoundly important to all sides. Whilst Henry VIII wanted order and uniformity at all times, his contribution to reform truly opened a Pandora's box of diversity and conflict. Marshall nevertheless succeeds in producing a clear and engaging narrative which brings together a wide range of voices from a diversity of social and spiritual perspectives. The nature of the English Reformation has provoked vigorous debate and significant disagreement among scholars, whether 'revisionist' or more traditional, and Marshall is fully aware of the issues. These, however, do not impede the narrative, and all the necessary documentation is provided for those who wish to delve deeper. This is an instructive and also enjoyable introduction to a vital period in the religious history of England.

Reformation Divided. Catholics, Protestants and the Conversion of England, Eamon Duffy, Bloomsbury, 2017, hbk., 441 pages, £30.00.

Eamon Duffy, Emeritus Professor of Christian History at the University of Cambridge, is one of the foremost proponents of a 'revisionist' view of the English Reformation. Older approaches depicted medieval Catholicism as moribund and many of its adherents ripe for a living faith. Duffy and others have argued that in fact, despite weaknesses, there was much more life in Catholicism and a strong commitment among the 'people in the pew'. Something of this perspective is reflected in Duffy's latest publication on the English Reformation. The book is divided into three sections. The first, entitled 'Thomas More and Heresy', considers how the great English humanist Thomas More could abandon his tolerant humanism to become a most bitter opponent of Protestantism and the man responsible for numerous executions of reformers. In particular Duffy examines More's answers to the writings of William Tyndale. The second section, entitled 'Counter-Reformation England', looks at the ways in which English Roman Catholics adapted to their new position as a

religious minority, sometimes suffering persecution in England, yet bound up with reforming movements within Catholicism on the Continent. Duffy considers, for example, the careers of Cardinal Reginald Pole, who served as Archbishop of Canterbury under Queen Mary, and Gregory Martin, an Elizabethan Catholic exile who taught at Douay College. The third section, entitled 'The Godly and the Conversion of England', looks at the work of radical reformers who sought to transform the conventional Protestantism of post-Reformation England into something (in their view) much more ardent and committed. Richard Baxter and George Fox are among the significant figures considered. Duffy draws on a wide range of sources, not least the detailed studies of local religious activity that have been produced in recent years. The picture of religious life in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century is undoubtedly complex and generalisations difficult. The temptation on all sides has often been to over-simplify in favour of one's own view. Duffy approaches his material from a direction very different from that of many readers of this journal – having sympathy for More in opposition to Tyndale, for example – and this can often serve to provoke deeper consideration of the issues at stake. Duffy may not finally convince, and on many issues he will not, yet interacting seriously with his work is an illuminating and challenging exercise. For those with a previous grounding in English Reformation history, this will prove to be a fruitful set of studies.

David McKay