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## THE JOURNAL OF BAPTIST STUDIES

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**Editorial**  
**By Anthony Chute**

We are pleased to present a number of fine articles and book reviews in this edition of the *Journal of Baptist Studies*. William Brackney and Malcolm Yarnell provide helpful analyses of Baptist views on the Reformation. While much scholarly attention in 2017 was given to the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Martin Luther's *95 Theses*, Brackney focuses on the work of a German/American Baptist, Walter Rauschenbusch, in interpreting the Reformation. Though he was the son of a Lutheran minister and heavily influenced by German theological and historical method, Rauschenbusch came to appreciate the Anabaptist contention that the gospel freed both soul and body, thus leading to their insistence on a believer's church distinct from the state. Yarnell's article pays tribute to the extensive work of Barrington (Barrie) Raymond White, whose influential writings on the early relationship between Anabaptists and English Separatists continue to offer insight on the question of Baptist origins and influences. Yarnell extracts two important historiographical principles from White's corpus and offers them as guidelines for current and future historians to practice empathetic honesty and epistemic humility.

Steve Weaver moves us past the Reformation to consider how Baptist ecclesiology is often influenced by personal biography. His study on the debates over communion and church membership between John Bunyan and William Kiffin sheds light on how beliefs that are shared in one area (believer's baptism) do not always lead to agreement in other areas common to Baptist life (open/close communion/membership). While each claimed to adhere to the regulative principle of worship, Weaver observes that the differing conclusions were predictably similar to their individual experiences. Andrew Ballitch provides a corrective to the charge that Hanserd Knollys was antinomian by comparing his positions on preparationism and sanctification with that of William Perkins, the Puritan stalwart whose orthodoxy on these matters was unquestioned. Taylor Murray concludes our list of articles with an extensive bibliography of Canadian Baptist resources. His contribution in this regard provides a compelling argument against historical amnesia and offers significant opportunities for further research following the renaissance of Atlantic Canadian religious history.

Each of these articles reminds us of the important work historians provide by introducing us to the past for the purpose of understanding the present and preparing for the future. We trust you will benefit from the articles and book reviews in this issue of the *Journal of Baptist Studies*.

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**INTERPRETING THE REFORMATION FROM WITHIN  
GERMAN/AMERICAN DISSENT: THE CONTRIBUTION OF WALTER  
RAUSCHENBUSCH**

**By William H. Brackney**

Among Baptist interpreters of the Reformation, Walter Rauschenbusch stands out as an informed student and teacher of that historical period. In this essay, I will summarize Rauschenbusch's development as a Baptist thinker and church historian and will consider his approach to interpreting the Reformation. Walter Rauschenbusch and his father, August (1816–1899), who greatly influenced him, provide a window from the German/American dissenting community on the meaning and values of the Reformation.

**Rauschenbusch's Background<sup>1</sup>**

August Rauschenbusch was heir to a long line of Lutheran pastors in Germany. He was a graduate of the University of Berlin and a protégé of the famous German historical theologian Johann August Neander, an experiential, pietistic thinker. Neander had intellectual debts to Friedrich Schleiermacher's experientialism that caught the attention of August in Berlin. August Rauschenbusch also imbibed Neander's critique of church creeds and dogmas. Among August's student friends was Philip Schaff, who also emigrated to the United States and enabled the development of church history as a formal discipline. Later, upon his arrival as a teacher at Rochester Theological Seminary, August Rauschenbusch

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<sup>1</sup> Details of Rauschenbusch's life are found in William H. Brackney, "Historical Introduction," in Walter Rauschenbusch, *The Published Works and Select Writings in Three Volumes*, vol. 1 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2018), ix–xxii; cf. Dores Robinson Sharpe, *Walter Rauschenbusch* (New York: Macmillan, 1942); Paul M. Minus, *Walter Rauschenbusch: American Reformer* (New York: Macmillan, 1988); and Christopher H. Evans, *The Kingdom Is Always but Coming* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004).

facilitated the reception of Neander's personal library of over 4,600 volumes into the Rochester Seminary collection, greatly strengthening its German language and theological content and creating the strongest library among Baptist theological schools in North America.

Walter Rauschenbusch was born in Rochester, New York, in 1861. Reared in the famous "Burned-Over District" of upstate New York,<sup>2</sup> Walter was educated at Rochester Free Academy, the *Evangelische Gymnasium zu Gütersloh* in Germany, the University of Rochester, and Rochester Theological Seminary. He was among the best-educated Baptist clergy of his era in North America.

Rauschenbusch underwent a conversion experience in his youth and was baptized at Andrews Street Baptist Church in Rochester, a congregation affiliated with the German Baptist Conference and the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Early in life Rauschenbusch sensed a call to the Christian ministry and was mentored by his father. August was quite pleased that his son imitated the role of a clergyman at a very young age.

Following his father's direction, Rauschenbusch took the basic course at the Gymnasium in Westphalia, a tradition-oriented Lutheran institution, essentially completing the equivalent of an American college diploma. Returning to the United States, he enrolled concurrently in the baccalaureate program of the University of Rochester and the theological program of Rochester Theological Seminary, both Baptist-related schools.<sup>3</sup> In

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<sup>2</sup> The "Burned-Over District" was a revival-drenched region that stretched from Syracuse west to the Canadian border, made famous by evangelist Charles G. Finney in the 1830s. Rochester was its epicenter. See the classic Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800–1850* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1950); and Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Religion in Rochester, New York, 1815–1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978).

<sup>3</sup> The Rochester schools were an outgrowth of the two parent institutions in Hamilton, New York: Madison University, later Colgate University, and its theological department. The theological schools merged in 1928 as Colgate Rochester Divinity School, with the universities remaining separate.

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seminary, Walter studied under Augustus H. Strong and Howard Osgood, leading evangelicals of the era, and in the university under Martin Brewer Anderson and Harrison Webster. Anderson was president of the university, while Webster was Rauschenbusch's science professor, with an interest in geology.

Turning aside an opportunity to serve as a Baptist missionary in India, Rauschenbusch accepted a call as pastor of Second Baptist Church in New York City in 1886. He was ordained there, having been examined by the regular Baptist association in the city. In 1897 Walter returned to Rochester to take up his father's faculty position in the German department of Rochester Seminary, teaching Bible, English and American literature, and the various sciences. Upon invitation from President Strong, in 1902 Walter Rauschenbusch was named to the Pettengill chair in church history in the English language program of the seminary, where he remained until his death in 1918.<sup>4</sup>

During his pastoral years and throughout his teaching career, Rauschenbusch was a prolific author. He averaged three pieces of editorial or short essays per month and authored eight major books. He traveled extensively in New York state and in the Great Lakes region, preaching and speaking at association meetings. Beyond, he was active in the Baptist Congress, the Baptist World Alliance, and the Evangelical Alliance. He delivered prestigious lectures at Ohio Wesleyan University, Pacific Theological Seminary, and Yale Divinity School. His close circle of correspondents included Jacob Riis, Theodore Roosevelt, Theodore Dreiser, William Newton Clarke, Nathaniel Schmidt, Henry Peabody, and Vida Scudder.

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<sup>4</sup> Rochester was unique among Baptist seminaries in having endowed, named chairs in the major disciplines as early as the 1890s, imitating Harvard, Yale, and Chicago. Church historians at Rochester included A. H. Newman, Benjamin O. True, and Walter Rauschenbusch. The Pettengill chair was established by James O. Pettengill, one of the founders of the seminary.

## **Influences<sup>5</sup>**

Rauschenbusch was a lifelong evangelical. His conversion experience was palpable, owned on his deathbed. He preached with conviction a biblical understanding of the gospel and called people to a response. He wrote and translated gospel hymns, influenced by Ira Sankey. He was a keen student of the Scriptures, often offering novel approaches, such as his engagement of social Christianity. He was obsessively christological and much affected by the Holiness and early Pentecostal movements. He greatly valued the evangelistic efforts and conversion experiences in the contexts of his upbringing and pastoral ministry. His opinion was sought by leading evangelicals and closely scrutinized by emerging fundamentalists. In contemporary evangelical reading lists over the past four decades, Rauschenbusch is reappearing.

Walter Rauschenbusch was indebted to German theology and historical method. His father, August, who had been trained in orthodox Lutheranism before his conversion to Baptist principles, schooled his son in theological discourse. The Rochester theological faculty were frequent guests at the table of the Rauschenbuschs. Among the variety of scholars in Germany to whom Walter was drawn in his readings and travels were Albrecht Ritschl, Adolf von Harnack, Ignaz von Döllinger, Joachim Neander, Isaak Dorner, Ludwig Keller, Leopold von Ranke, and Hermann Lotze. But no German thinker was more influential to Walter than his own father, August.<sup>6</sup> What Walter derived from German

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<sup>5</sup> See William H. Brackney, "Theological Introduction," in *Walter Rauschenbusch: Published Works and Select Writings in Three Volumes*, vol. 3 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2018), iii–l.

<sup>6</sup> Walter's appreciation for his father as a scholar is seen in his biography of August, *Leben und Werken von August Rauschenbusch, Professor am theologischen Seminar zu Rochester in Nordamerika angefangen von ihm selbst, vollendet und herausgegeben von seinem Sohn Walter Rauschenbusch* (Cassel: Kommissionsverlag von J. G. Oncken, Nachfolger [GmbH]). 1901.

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thinking was an appreciation for historical method (presuming that recorded data and context really matter), a new method of preferring historical over systematic theology, and an appreciation for the role of the prophets in the Old Testament and for the historical development of the New Testament. His personal library was replete with German scholarship.

As his career developed, Rauschenbusch became interested in the so-called new theology in the United States.<sup>7</sup> Here he found new insights into biblical literature and especially the history of doctrine and American religious experience. Not always aware of what he had latched onto, Rauschenbusch was freed from systematic theology as a methodology, casting off a dogmatic approach. He was much drawn to Jesus's life experience and teachings about the coming kingdom of God. He enthusiastically joined anyone who elevated the kingdom, notably Francis Peabody, Richard Ely, Shailer Mathews, and his friends in the Brotherhood of the Kingdom.

Lastly, Rauschenbusch came to appreciate the emerging methods of social scientists, notably sociologists, psychologists, and political analysts. Here he learned to place theological ideas in context, pushing him to new, radical ideas of the application of primitive Christianity to contemporary circumstances. His participation in the Brotherhood of the Kingdom and his contributions to the newspapers *For the Right* and *The Kingdom* brought him into dialogue with Giuseppe Mazzini, Albert Schäffle, the Scottish Owenites, Fabian socialists such as Sidney and Beatrice Webb, English social Christians such as F.

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<sup>7</sup> The best discussion of the "new theology," spawned by Theodore Munger, is found in William R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 76–110.

D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley, and American Christian socialists such as George D. Herron and William Arthur.

### **Rauschenbusch and the Reformation**

Rauschenbusch first read of the Reformation under the tutelage of his father. He soon realized that the great event of his Teutonic ancestral background was the Reformation. As a young post-secondary student at the Gütersloh Gymnasium, Rauschenbusch looked closely at Lutheranism and chose to move away from the concept of a national church and the heavy liturgical style of Lutheran worship. Later, under church history professor Benjamin O. True at Rochester Seminary, Rauschenbusch openly embraced the Anabaptist tradition. From True he learned that the Anabaptists had manifested a distinctive vision of the kingdom of God.<sup>8</sup>

A quick word needs to be said of Rauschenbusch's contemporary Baptist scholar-colleagues. As a teacher of church history, Rauschenbusch was joined in the North American Baptist family by Henry C. Vedder at Crozer, W. J. McGlothlin and E. Y. Mullins at Southern, Shailer Mathews at Chicago, Jesse B. Thomas at Newton, A. H. Newman at McMaster and Southwestern, and H. Wheeler Robinson at Regent's Park, London.<sup>9</sup> These scholar-teachers constantly interacted in editorials and at conferences. Rauschenbusch wrote to most of them regularly, and some critiqued his manuscripts.

Three sources reveal Rauschenbusch's Anabaptist orientation: his extensive surviving lecture notes, his published works, and his correspondence with international

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<sup>8</sup> Evans, *The Kingdom Is Always but Coming*, 35.

<sup>9</sup> Vedder was an Anabaptist specialist, Mullins a systematic theologian of Baptist principles, Shailer Mathews a progressive activist ethicist, Newman a Baptist and anti-paedobaptist historian, and Robinson an Old Testament teacher with an interest in Baptist principles.

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scholars.<sup>10</sup> Rauschenbusch's preserved lectures, neatly arranged and sometimes printed for distribution, covered courses specifically on Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and, in a general course he called "The Reformatory Movements," Hus, Wycliffe, Grosseteste, Valentinus, and others. Following Adolf Harnack's analysis, Rauschenbusch's treatment of Luther was thorough; Rauschenbusch's conclusions were that the Reformation was not the work of any one man (anticipating our own contemporaries Carter Lindberg in *The European Reformations* and Steven Ozment in *The Age of Reform*); that Luther reaffirmed the christological element in religion; and that Luther's defining moment was the publication of the papal bull in 1520. From reading Leopold von Ranke, Rauschenbusch agreed that the primary difference between Luther and the Anabaptists was Luther's belief that the gospel freed the soul and not the body, while the Anabaptists held that it freed both.<sup>11</sup>

Rauschenbusch's least-favored Reformation figure was Huldrych Zwingli. As in his other lectures, Rauschenbusch carefully traced Zwingli's biography. He saw the Zurich Reformer as having no profound religious struggles himself, being essentially a rationalist who continued to hold to many Catholic doctrines. Troubling for Walter was Zwingli's symbolic interpretation of the sacraments, in his mind exhibiting no clean break with scholasticism.

The third Reformer to whom Rauschenbusch lent himself seriously was John Calvin. Rauschenbusch was impressed with what Calvin did ethically and pedagogically in Geneva, and even more so with the theological influence of Calvinism in English-

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<sup>10</sup> On Rauschenbusch and historical method and evaluations of his work as a church historian, see Walter Rauschenbusch, "Introduction to the Study of Church History," Rochester Theological Seminary Publications, Spring 1906; "The Value and Use of History," repr., *Foundations* 12.3 (July–Sept. 1969): 263–72; Henry Warner Bowden, "Walter Rauschenbusch and American Church History," *Foundations* 9 (1966): 234–50; and Sherman B. Barnes, "Walter Rauschenbusch and Church History," *Foundations* 12.3 (July–Sept. 1969): 254–62.

<sup>11</sup> Minus, *Walter Rauschenbusch: American Reformer*, 82.

speaking Christianity. Questioning Calvin's eucharistic ideas concerning a spiritual presence, Rauschenbusch recognized Calvin's large influence on the political and ethical life of the Christian community. In his most important work, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, Rauschenbusch wrote, "Calvinism had a far wider sphere of influence and a far deeper effect on the life of nations than Lutheranism because it continued to fuse religious faith with the demand for political liberty and social justice."<sup>12</sup> According to his analysis, "the Lutheran and Calvinistic Reformation succeeded because they enlisted classes which were sufficiently strong politically and economically to defend the cause of Reformed Religion."<sup>13</sup>

In his second great work, devoted to social reformation, Rauschenbusch held the great Reformers accountable. In his opinion, neither Luther nor Calvin was by nature or conviction a democrat. His own great theological rediscovery, the kingdom of God, was entirely lacking in Luther, Melancthon, or Calvin. Melancthon, to Rauschenbusch's chagrin, interpreted the kingdom as "spiritual and internal." A keen student of original Reformation writings, Rauschenbusch pointed out that "the great theologians of the Lutheran and Calvinistic churches shied away from the Apocalypse of John and left it severely alone."<sup>14</sup> He found little solace for his program in the magisterial Reformers.

For Rauschenbusch, the Anabaptists were the truest of the Reformers, contrasting sharply with what he called the "Reformatory Protestants." Relying heavily upon Josef von Beck's *Geschichtbücher der Wiedertäufer* (1883), Henry Vedder's *Short History of the Baptists* (1907), Champlin Burrage on the Swiss Anabaptists (1912), A. H. Newman's

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<sup>12</sup> Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (New York: Macmillan, 1907), 234.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 402.

<sup>14</sup> Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianizing the Social Order* (New York: Macmillan, 1912), 86.

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*Antipaedobaptism* (1897), Rufus Jones's *Studies in Mystical Religion* (1909), and especially Richard Heath's *Anabaptism* (1895) and *The Captive City of God* (1904), Rauschenbusch assembled the known data and reached seven important points affirming the values of the Anabaptists.

A student of European history and himself a traveler, Rauschenbusch first noted the widespread extent of the Anabaptists in central Europe, a fact not much realized until the late nineteenth century. He linked the Anabaptists with the Waldensians, Lollards, and Taborites in a stream of the initial stirrings of Christian democracy, expressions of lay religion and working-class ethics.<sup>15</sup> Visiting Munster in 1891, Rauschenbusch heard the famous historian Ludwig Keller declare that “Anabaptists contained more of the future than the Reformers.”<sup>16</sup> The underlying argument asked, “How could a group become so proliferated and escape the attention of serious Reformation historians?” Next, Rauschenbusch noted the inadequate treatment of the Anabaptists in standard church histories. He found them mostly a caricature of a fanatical sect. He turned to the historical predominance of infant baptism from the third and fourth centuries and observed that it was inevitable that the practice should be called into question; in this regard, the Anabaptists were ahead of their age, he concluded.

Rauschenbusch's analysis of the Anabaptists concluded that, across several types and regions, they held common convictions that produced a group life—a true church, in Rauschenbusch's reckoning. Importantly, as he saw it, the Anabaptists alone held a commitment to the restoration of the apostolic life, regardless of the circumstances. He agreed with the Anabaptists that society had become corrupt (the doctrine of the fall) and

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Minus, *Walter Rauschenbusch: American Reformer*, 82.

that all true Christians should lead a sanctified life.<sup>17</sup> In this regard, he likened their courage to the third- and fourth-century Donatist movement.<sup>18</sup> Rauschenbusch also concurred with his Anabaptist forebears that the primary means to social change was nonviolence.<sup>19</sup> In a 1905 article in the *American Journal of Theology*, Rauschenbusch argued that in the way he saw history working, the Anabaptists had bequeathed the virtues of individual freedom, personal religious experience, and opposition to illusory ritual and vestments and utensils. In his interpretation, this experience of the sixteenth century set the stage for later full realization of those same ideals.<sup>20</sup> The Anabaptists were the real Reformation of Germany and the real Reformation of England in the Commonwealth, he argued.<sup>21</sup>

In a surge of democratic nationalism affirming his American self, Rauschenbusch declared the Anabaptists to be the beginnings of a new type of Christianity, distinct from Luther and Calvin, already in control of “our country” (i.e., the United States). He agreed with his father’s assessment: the Anabaptists were both the closest incarnation of the primitive church and also the direct forerunners of modern-day Baptists.<sup>22</sup> Here he drew upon popular phraseology from his eminent contemporary Josiah Strong, who himself was the head of an American religious democratic nationalist movement. As Rauschenbusch put it, “God had reserved for America a special mission to the world and at the center of that mission was the realization of the kingdom of God.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See Franklin H. Littell, *The Anabaptist View of the Church: A Study in the Origin of Sectarian Protestantism* (Boston, MA: Starr King, 1958; repr., 1984), 57–61.

<sup>18</sup> Evans, *The Kingdom Is Always but Coming*, 37, 78.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>20</sup> Walter Rauschenbusch, “Critical Note: The Zurich Anabaptists and Thomas Muntzer,” *American Journal of Theology* (January 1905): 106.

<sup>21</sup> Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, 402.

<sup>22</sup> Evans, *The Kingdom Is Always but Coming*, 12, 15.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 90.

## *Interpreting the Reformation*

Yet Walter Rauschenbusch was not uncritical of the Anabaptists. As Gary Dorrien has pointed out, Rauschenbusch was haunted by the German class struggle during the Reformation era. He thought the Anabaptist reputation earned at Munster had kept their witness muted, even though their cause was noble and just. He actually exclaimed that the moral truths of the Anabaptist martyrs constituted a glorious, but socially wasted, virtue. It was, to use his words, a “disembodied ideal because their fruitless martyrdoms produced little impact overall in the Churches.” To their discredit, “they died a useless and despised death.”<sup>24</sup> And finally, in his generation and for his cause, social Christianity, Anabaptists did not express solidarity with the oppressed. (This may be a bit of an exaggeration via contemporary liberal interpreters of Rauschenbusch.)

### **Summary**

Essentially we may characterize Walter Rauschenbusch’s orientation to the Reformation as one seeking continuity yet seeing discontinuity. Rauschenbusch joined the popular school of late nineteenth-century Baptist thinkers who clearly saw ideological and theological connections between the sixteenth-century Anabaptists and the seventeenth-century English and American Baptists. His discontinuity was reflected in his belief that Anabaptists represented collectively a radical disconnect with old Catholic Christianity but, in the end, an ineffective reforming effort overall. He applauded their courage and martyrdom but did not claim to be a modern-day Anabaptist. There is no known evidence of his connection with Mennonites, Brethren, or smaller Anabaptist groups in Europe or North America. Instead he was an American Baptist with close ties to the contemporary German Baptist movement.

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<sup>24</sup> Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, 402.

Part of Walter Rauschenbusch's legacy with respect to the Reformation was his teaching work. As a German-speaking scholar with German ancestry, following the work of his father, he brought to Rochester an appreciation for the age of reform. He collected books in German, added to the seminary library, and quoted from a wide variety of German theologians and historians. He also introduced students to a set of required courses and electives in the Reformation era. Somewhat lacking in professional self-esteem as a church historian, Rauschenbusch overcompensated in his scholastic rigor and bibliography. He was a careful worker in several languages. It would appear from reading his biography of his father, August, that he originally desired to research and write a definitive work on the Anabaptists in the Reformation era, thus realizing a paternal dream.<sup>25</sup> Lastly, his students were well versed in the application of his Reformation values in their contemporary lives and ministry.

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<sup>25</sup> This had not yet been accomplished among the various contemporary Anabaptist groups in English. Only the Crozer historian Henry Vedder and the Englishman Richard Heath took strong account of the Anabaptist contribution to the Reformation in English publications.

**THE REFORMATION AND BAPTIST ORIGINS: THE UNREFUTED  
CONCLUSION OF B. R. WHITE**

**By Malcolm B. Yarnell III**

In November 2016, Barrington Raymond White passed away at the age of 82. White was minister of Andover Baptist Church from 1959 to 1963, church history tutor at Regent's Park College from 1963 to 1972, and principal of the Oxford University Permanent Private Hall from 1972 to 1989. After his retirement, White remained vigorous in spirit and fluent in Baptist history and theology, even as his short-term memory suffered following a severe epileptic episode in 1990.<sup>1</sup> It was a personal pleasure and privilege to get to know White when I was a research student in Oxford between 1996 and 2000. Barrie always had a helpful word for my research, even as he met me anew each time and profusely apologized, unprompted, for not remembering me. His sharpness of mind in historical thought, his wry humor, and his gentle demeanor will always stick in my mind and heart as part of what it takes to be a good scholar.

Without doubt, White was the world's premier scholar during the late twentieth century in the field of English Separatist and Early Baptist history. Regarding our assigned topic, while the Reformation and its influence upon Baptist origins was not his only concern, he both began and ended his career as a historian with influential statements about the Reformation and its influence upon Baptists. To understand his ideas on this subject, we must consider four of his works, including his two most important monographs, regarding what they have to say regarding Baptists and the Reformation. Three aspects of this subject must be addressed: propriety in historical method, the role of the

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah White, "The Revd Dr Barrington [Barrie] Raymond White: 1934–2016," *The Baptist Times*, November 2016, [https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/484902/The\\_Revdr\\_Dr.aspx](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/484902/The_Revdr_Dr.aspx).

denominational historian, and the origins of the English Baptist movement. We shall treat these in reverse order.

White's most important monographs were published in 1971 and 1983, respectively, with the second monograph undergoing further revision in 1996. He dwelled on the subject of Baptists and their place in the Reformation at both the beginning and the end of both monographs. We might say that the issue of the Reformation and Baptist origins bookended both bookends of his significant career. Of course, these multiple bookends were not his only, nor even his primary, concern, for he had much to contribute to the academy regarding the history of the Separatists and the Baptists and much to say about the ongoing life of the churches both within the Baptist Union of Great Britain and also ecumenically. We turn now to the significant records of his legacy.

### **The Origins of the Baptist Movement**

#### **The English Separatist Tradition: From the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1971)**

In his first monograph White was concerned primarily with the Separatists, while in his second he was concerned primarily with seventeenth-century English Baptists. At both the beginning and the end of *The English Separatist Tradition*, White firmly denied the presence of any evidence of causation between the Separatists and the Anabaptists. He was bold enough to correct even such an outstanding historian as Patrick Collinson, whom White presciently admitted was the “author of what will certainly be for many years the

most authoritative study of English Puritanism,”<sup>2</sup> even though Collinson had glibly compared the Anabaptists with the Puritans.

In his career-long effort to restate history truthfully, White developed a nuanced case. On the one hand, he wrote, “It is . . . rather difficult to demonstrate any direct debt to the continental Anabaptists, except in the case of John Smyth, and even in his case it may seem, upon closer examination, somewhat insubstantial.” On the other hand, he conceded that the “similarities between the forms of English Puritanism and continental Anabaptism seem to derive more from a similar type of appeal to the norm of the Church in apostolic times than to any observable sixteenth-century cross-fertilization.”<sup>3</sup>

Thus, in his characteristic carefulness as a theological historian, White distinguished between correlation and causation, affirming the former while denying the latter in regard to the Anabaptists and the Separatists. Again, on the one hand, “It may be claimed that somewhat parallel developments did take place,” but, on the other hand, “such developments need not imply, and without clear evidence ought not to be taken to imply, any direct borrowing.”<sup>4</sup> White appealed to the case of Jean Morély, the French Reformed congregationalist, for an example of a theologian in the same time period who moved from Reformed ecclesiology to an ecclesiology correlatively yet non-causally of a third phenomenon similar to that of the separate developments of the Anabaptists and the Separatists.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> B. R. White, *The English Separatist Tradition: From the Marian Martyrs to the Pilgrim Fathers* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1971), xii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

In his chapter on John Smyth, which is worth every theologian's read in light of the subtle case he makes for a Baptist covenant theology, White demonstrates that Smyth's primary theological influence came historically from the English Separatists. Smyth himself admitted his debt to the Separatists in at least three significant ways in his search for the "true constitution of the Church."<sup>6</sup> White traces a path through the various stages in Smyth's theological development, employing a method later extended and perfected in Jason Lee's theological biography of John Smyth.<sup>7</sup> White's method leaves little doubt that Smyth came to his Baptist conclusions through Separatist logic.

Moreover, White reminds us that Smyth definitively did not go to the Anabaptists for baptism, even though the Separatist pastor and his congregation were residents of a Mennonite-owned building during the crucial time in which they adopted believer's baptism. White surmises that the reason Smyth did not seek out Anabaptist baptism was because of their celestial flesh christology.<sup>8</sup> It was only later that Smyth sought union with the Mennonites; his reasoning then was based on love and orderliness. Thomas Helwys, as we know, disagreed and led a rump of Smyth's congregation from Amsterdam to London, planting the first English Baptist congregation on English soil.<sup>9</sup>

At the conclusion of *The English Separatist Tradition*, White again turns to the vexed question of influence upon Baptist origins. However, he does so not by addressing the Baptists but by focusing on the Separatists. And again he recognizes that "parallels in the thinking of the English Separatists and the European Baptists" are "striking and indicate

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>7</sup> Jason K. Lee, *The Theology of John Smyth: Puritan, Separatist, Baptist, Mennonite* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, 132–34.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 138–41.

an *a priori* likelihood of close links between the two.”<sup>10</sup> However, White then demonstrates that all of the available evidence indicates that while Anabaptists had a “sporadic” presence in England during the reigns of Mary I, Edward VI, and Elizabeth I, “there seems to be no evidence extant of any direct influence they may have exerted over either individual Separatists or their teaching.”<sup>11</sup> With John Smyth removed from the equation, White can even assert that the evidence of “anything approaching direct influence” is “completely lacking.”<sup>12</sup>

While the Anabaptists and Separatists “shared a desire,” the line of influence comes more clearly through Puritanism itself. If there was continental influence on the development of Separatism toward a more ruled ecclesiology, it came most likely through Martin Bucer.<sup>13</sup> This line of thought has subsequently been developed more fully,<sup>14</sup> and I am inclined to think that White’s supposition is more apt to be correct than the theory of Anabaptist influence on English developments advocated by Irvin Horst.<sup>15</sup>

On the next page, White returns to correlations between the Separatists and the Anabaptists. He affirms that they have “much in common” and that the “Separatist position arose from an appeal to the same Biblical authority and in somewhat similar circumstances to that of the early Anabaptists.” He even brings himself to agree with his Anabaptist-leaning predecessor at Regent’s Park College, Ernest A. Payne, that the two groups were

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> See J. William Black, “From Martin Bucer to Richard Baxter: Discipline and Reformation in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England,” *Church History* 70 (2001): 644–73.

<sup>15</sup> Irvin Buckwalter Horst, *The Radical Brethren: Anabaptism and the English Reformation to 1558*, Bibliotheca Humanistica & Reformatica (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1972).

somewhat alike because they were “treading a path similar,” “came to similar conclusions,” and “viewed the Bible in a similar way,” all “in the context of a similar situation.”<sup>16</sup>

However, in spite of the considerable respect White had for Payne, the young scholar could only conclude that “it is next to impossible to measure the impact of Anabaptist ideas” in a case where “there is not the least explicit testimony.”<sup>17</sup> White recognized that the social conditions would have precluded such, for the Anabaptists were too radioactive to touch. White came to the opinion that the “onus of proof lies on those who would affirm that the European Anabaptists had any measurable influence upon the shaping of English Separatism.”<sup>18</sup> This set the bar high indeed. But the question that arises is whether the “onus of proof” criterion may be misused to substantiate a negative claim rather than merely disallow a positive claim. More about this below.

**The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 1983; revised 1996)**

White’s research into Separatist origins, which came from a revision of his 1961 Oxford University DPhil thesis, was performed at the beginning of his career as an academic historian. Toward the end of that career, White again addressed the issue of origins, more specifically that of the early English Baptists. In *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, White also both began and ended with the question of whether the Anabaptists influenced the earliest Baptists.

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<sup>16</sup> White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, 163; cf. Ernest A. Payne, *The Anabaptists of the 16th Century and their Influence in the Modern World* (London: Carey Kingsgate, 1949).

<sup>17</sup> White, *The English Separatist Tradition*, 163.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

Now providing more information with regard to both the General Baptists and the Particular Baptists, he arrives at substantially the same conclusion as he did two decades before: “It is certainly more plausible to argue for the likelihood of influence from some Anabaptists upon seventeenth-century English beginnings than it is upon the earlier Separatists.” Referring to the research of Lonnie Kliever and Glen Stassen, White concludes, “No significant influence could be decisively proved.”<sup>19</sup>

White, moreover, details various “complicating factors” as to why the issue remains “virtually insoluble.” First, both the Anabaptists and the Baptists were not as concerned with the issue of historical succession as we have since become. Rather, “They both shared the frequent protestant tendency to appeal to the Bible as providing the one unchanging pattern or blueprint for the faith.”<sup>20</sup>

The second complicating factor is that the Separatists and the Baptists were “highly unlikely” to admit Anabaptist influence, for good cultural reasons: they wanted to promote their views as being derived from Scripture, and to admit that they had garnered them from the Anabaptists would have been a “certain way” to close the minds of a seventeenth-century English audience.<sup>21</sup> Earlier, White had spelled out the reasons the early English Baptists disliked the term *anabaptist*.<sup>22</sup> These matters should be kept in mind when historians read early modern references to the Anabaptists in England from either foe or friend of the Baptists. Foes would call the Baptists “Anabaptist” in order to condemn them,

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<sup>19</sup> B. R. White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 17; cf. Lonnie D. Kliever, “General Baptist Origins: The Question of Anabaptist Influence,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 36 (1962): 291–321; Glen Harold Stassen, “Anabaptist Influence in the Origin of the Particular Baptists,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 36 (1962): 322–48.

<sup>20</sup> White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, 16.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 8–9.

while friends would deny they were “Anabaptists” in order to defend them.<sup>23</sup> The misleading affiliation of all Anabaptists with Münster, which White identified as a “myth,” was never far from anybody’s mind then (or now), and the correlation could be “particularly damaging.”<sup>24</sup>

The third complicating factor is that there remains a “plausible explanation of the development of their views which does not require the introduction of ‘Anabaptist’ influence.”<sup>25</sup> By this, White means that the Baptists developed from the English Separatists. White soon after admits that the example of the Mennonites in Amsterdam may have touched upon Smyth’s thinking, but the Separatist disdain for the rags of the Church of England’s popery and the importance of biblical precedent were probably more decisive in their minds.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, toward the end of his last monograph, in his review of previous historiography of the Baptists, White summarily considers the contextual pressures upon early and influential historians such as Thomas Crosby to dissociate the Anabaptists from the development of Baptists.<sup>27</sup> To the role of the denominational historian, of which Crosby was an important example, we must now turn our attention.

### **The Task of the Denominational Historian**

At the beginning of White’s academic career, our new tutor of church history spelled out his understanding of what a Baptist historian should do.<sup>28</sup> There is a great deal of wisdom

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 25, 29, 58, 68, 99, 101.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>28</sup> B. R. White, “The Task of a Baptist Historian,” *Baptist Quarterly* 22 (1968): 398–408.

here that could help those of us who today function either entirely or in part as denominational historians.

***Wisdom Is Necessary for the Denominational Historian***

Before all else, if ecclesiastical historians are to work with integrity, they must hold to the same high standards as does the secular historian. The Baptist historian properly “shares the same standards of objectivity, uses the same methods and is bound to ask many of the same questions as do others.” Baptist historians must, moreover, seek to avoid “their own personal and partisan enthusiasms.”<sup>29</sup>

After this call to intellectual sobriety, White summarizes the terms by which good Baptist historians have traditionally conceived their task: “First, to tell a plain tale plainly; secondly, to defend and explain the Baptist case; thirdly, to mold the thinking, even the policy, of their denomination.”<sup>30</sup> White sees no problem with Baptist historians’ seeking to exercise theological influence through historical reporting, if they do so with clarity in language, honesty to the tradition, and integrity in presentation. Like the historians who came before them, contemporary Baptists should make their history known so as to preserve it.<sup>31</sup>

However, “certain problems” arise when using Baptist history. Among the first such problems are those relating to the canon of Baptist history: What resources exactly should count as being indicative of Baptist views? Baptists have rarely spoken with one voice. Moreover, their canon is not entirely known by any historian. And the majority voice

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 398.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 399.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 399–402.

of the Baptist canon may be mistaken. For these reasons, “confident pronouncements” about what all Baptists have believed or should believe must be chastened.<sup>32</sup>

Second are problems related to the nature of tradition: “tradition may err,” as may the “record of the tradition.” For these reasons, Baptist historians must constantly dig into their entire history in more depth. A third problem arises when the historian notices a difference between what tradition properly provides to the historian’s contemporaries and what God is now leading contemporary Baptists to do.<sup>33</sup>

White argues that the Baptist historian’s reporting task increases in difficulty due to the human tendency to read a preferred position into the evidence: “He must beware of accepting *a priori* judgments.” White continues by arguing that the historian must discern between that which is central and that which is tangential. The historian must also reconstruct not only what was accomplished in the churches but also *how* it was accomplished. And, “perhaps most importantly,” the historian must avoid providing a static picture when the truth is much more dynamic or “three dimensional” than often presented. Putting it vividly, White warns, “Baptist historiography is always in danger of domination by a spirit of historical fundamentalism according to which the past becomes a chunk of dead rock from which anachronistic but superficially relevant prooftexts are chiseled to the required shape.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 402.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 403. For similar reasons, this is why I often pray publicly during my own history classes: “Lord, we thank you for the witness of our forefathers. Help us to retain where they were faithful to you. And help us to reject where they were not.”

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 404.

***Evaluating Theories of Baptist Origins in the Reformation***

At this point, White addresses the three theories of Baptist origination through or from the Reformation. He dismisses the “successionist” theory as a distortion of Roman ideas. He dismisses the “Anabaptist spiritual kinship” theory as essentially having nothing to say about Baptist origins. He concludes that the third theory, the “English Separatist descent” theory, is the “only one capable of clear historical demonstration and proof.”<sup>35</sup> It really is best, White believed, to use such terms as “origin,” “influence,” and “spiritual descendants” with care, if at all.<sup>36</sup>

***Humility Is Necessary for the Denominational Historian***

White concludes his important essay on method with a judgment about what a Baptist historian should *not* do and what he or she *should* do. First, negatively,

It is not the denominational historian’s task to be a partisan, he must always be aware of the greater army marching the same way to the left and right of him; he must resist the temptation to rub the rough edges off history in the interests of a later respectability and he dare not forget that whilst Baptists have often been brave they have even more often been bigoted. It is not the Church historian’s task to whitewash anyone, least of all his own side.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, White puts forward the primary principle of objective history, one that a Leopold von Ranke or Herbert Butterfield would recognize and approve: “People in Church history must be studied as they were, warts and all, in relation to the society in which they lived.”<sup>38</sup> This principle helped keep White anchored in objective historical writing throughout his entire life.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 406.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 407.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 408.

Toward the end of his active academic career, White was compelled to respond to the claims of three scholars who interacted with his work. Stephen Brachlow's dissertation had recently and properly extended White's objective research by providing affirmation and nuance.<sup>39</sup> But Douglas Shantz and James Coggins both challenged White substantively.<sup>40</sup> Shantz argued that the doctrine of covenant was not as important to Smyth as White had deemed. But Shantz's claim regarding the centrality of the risen Christ was easily and convincingly parried by White, who demonstrated that Shantz had corrected him for a claim he had never made. This rebuttal afforded White the opportunity to provide clarification regarding how the unilateral and mutual covenants were ambiguously deployed in Puritan thought.<sup>41</sup>

As for Coggins, White first dismissed the effort to bring the Anabaptist influence thesis to the fore as "somewhat sterile," indicating that he believed Coggins had still not demonstrated decisive influence. One biting quote shows how White considered it necessary for the historian to practice his craft with care for the original sources and with humility regarding his conclusions. That he delivered it with his subtle British humor makes his critique that much more devastating:

Nevertheless, I gladly confess how much I enjoyed Professor Coggins's lusty progress through the thickets of his subject, handing out slaps and (more occasionally) sweets to his predecessors with the apparent omniscience of a children's nannie from the days before Vatican II when omniscience was more in fashion. My chief regret is that he apparently chose to reflect on my work through the blurred image provided by Professor Shantz's spectacles.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. Stephen Brachlow, *The Communion of Saints: Radical Puritan and Separatist Ecclesiology* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1989); idem, "Puritan Theology and General Baptist Origins," *Baptist Quarterly* 31 (1985): 179–94.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Douglas H. Shantz, "The Place of the Resurrected Christ in the Writings of John Smyth," *Baptist Quarterly* 30 (1984): 199–203; James R. Coggins, "The Theological Positions of John Smyth," *Baptist Quarterly* 30 (1984): 247–64.

<sup>41</sup> B. R. White, "The English Separatists and John Smyth Revisited," *Baptist Quarterly* 30 (1984): 344–47.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.

This nugget reminds us that an historian is one who must pursue his craft with honest reference to the sources and a measure of humility regarding party opinions. There is a proper way to approach history and an improper way. Empathetic honesty with the primary and secondary sources is absolutely necessary. And epistemic humility goes a long way toward making sure we claim no more than the evidence allows.

### **Baptists and the Reformation according to Historiographical Principle**

On the basis of White's pristine efforts to report history as it really was, we return to the issue of Anabaptist influence. If we could restate White's argument regarding the question of origins as an historiographical principle, we would do so in this way: *The historical fallacy of equating correlation with causation must be avoided in the face of the lack of evidence.* Yes, there is a correlation between the way the Anabaptists and the Baptists read Scripture and discerned both soteriological and ecclesiological patterns. But presence of a correlation does not itself demonstrate causation. White correctly reminds denominational historians that they should be careful about asserting something on the basis of *prima facie* evidence alone.

Now, however, we must also apply White's principle to the conclusions of neophyte historians who might believe there to be no definitive influence of the Anabaptists upon the Baptists because there exists only *prima facie* evidence of such influence. All serious Baptist historians will admit at least minimal influence, for we have literary evidence of interchanges between the Dutch Mennonites and both the General Baptists and

the Particular Baptists.<sup>43</sup> The question is whether that influence is at the level of definitive causation.

In response, let us place the two directions of White's historiographical principle in sequence. While White emphasized the first direction in response to overwrought claims for Anabaptist influence, the second direction should not be overlooked:

1. Evidence of correlation may not be used to argue definitive causation when there is a lack of evidence of definitive causation.
2. Neither may the lack of evidence of definitive causation be used to argue a conclusive lack of definitive causation.

On the one hand, even those of us who honor the Anabaptists must agree with White that one must have proof before one may argue definitely for Anabaptist influence upon the early Separatists, including Smyth and Helwys. On the other hand, we must caution those determined detractors of the Anabaptists who would take White's legitimate claim one step backward and conclude that Baptists must, therefore, deny any Anabaptist influence. The best the historian can say, without any verifiable evidence to the contrary, is that we simply do not know whether or not Anabaptists influenced the earliest Baptists. To build either a negative or a positive case for significant Anabaptist influence on later Baptists requires the denominational historian to proceed one step beyond the available evidence.

In conclusion, regarding whether the continental Anabaptists exercised influence on the origins of the English Baptists, we should remain agnostic on the disputed question until new historical evidence one way or the other arises. Bringing together several of Barrie White's already cited statements, we are compelled to reaffirm his studied opinion

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<sup>43</sup> Malcolm B. Yarnell III, *The Formation of Christian Doctrine* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2007), 7–9, 18–19.

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that the necessary “onus of proof,” which will likely not be forthcoming because of “complicating factors,” means the controverted question remains “virtually insoluble.” That position was good enough for the best English Separatist and early English Baptist historian that Baptists have ever had. Denominational historians still lack any legitimate intellectual evidence to refute him today.

**WHEN BIOGRAPHY SHAPES ECCLESIOLOGY:  
BUNYAN, KIFFIN, AND THE OPEN-COMMUNION DEBATE**

**By Steve Weaver**

We are all shaped by our experiences. Individuals from church history are no different: they too were shaped by their historical contexts. Recognizing this fact does not indicate whether their positions are right or wrong, but it does allow us to understand how they came to their positions and why they had certain emphases. In this article, I wish to consider the ways in which the respective backgrounds of John Bunyan and William Kiffin may have impacted their approach to the topic of open communion. I will then survey the debate before finally considering the legacy of the debate for Baptists today.

**John Bunyan's Background**

John Bunyan (1628–1688) was converted as an adult. He was first brought under conviction through reading Puritan books given to him as part of his wife's dowry when they married. Later he was convicted further by hearing several women discussing the joys of the new birth. After his conversion, Bunyan was baptized by immersion by John Gifford, the pastor of a congregation in Bedford. For the sake of space, only details of Bunyan's biography impacting his view of communion will be explored.<sup>1</sup>

One likely early influence upon Bunyan was William Dell (d. 1664), rector of Yelden, a neighboring village to Bedford. Bunyan could well have come into contact with Dell in his role as parliamentary army chaplain while Bunyan served in Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army during the English Civil War. Over a decade later, Bunyan would be

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<sup>1</sup> The definitive treatment of Bunyan's life and thought is Richard L. Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory: John Bunyan and English Dissent* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

invited by Dell to preach in the Yelden pulpit on Christmas Day 1659.<sup>2</sup> Dell was forced to resign from Yelden in May 1660, due in part to his having allowed Bunyan to preach there.<sup>3</sup> In his 1648 work *Doctrine of Baptisms*, Dell argued that Christ's baptism, in contrast to John's water baptism, was only spiritual.<sup>4</sup> The full title of the work was *Βαπτισμῶν Διδαχή: Or, The Doctrine of Baptismes, Reduced from its Ancient and Moderne Corruptions: and Restored to its Primitive Soundnesse and Integrity, According to the Word of Truth, the Substance of Faith, and the Nature of Christ's Kingdome*. Most impressive is the fact that Dell was able to accomplish all of this in the compass of only twenty-six pages. According to Dell, "water Baptisme" was John's baptism, and it "belonged onely to that *middle Ministry*, betwixt the *Prophets* and *Christ*." Christ's baptism, by contrast, "is *spirit* or *fire* Baptisme; and this is the *one* and *onely* Baptisme of the *New Testament*."<sup>5</sup> Bunyan will argue quite similarly to Dell that "the *Doctrine* of Baptisme is not the Practice of it, nor the outward act, but the thing signified; and that every Believer hath that."<sup>6</sup>

A second influence upon Bunyan was his beloved pastor who baptized him. Although Gifford immersed Bunyan as a believer, he had led the Bedford church (which he founded) to be an open-membership and open-communion congregation. This meant that baptism was no issue in determining whether someone was eligible for church membership or the Lord's Supper. In his ministry, Gifford deemphasized the importance of any external act of worship that tended toward division in the body of Christ. In a letter

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>3</sup> Anne Dunan-Page, *Grace Overwhelming: John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress and the Extremes of the Baptist Mind* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2006), 49n6.

<sup>4</sup> William Dell, *Βαπτισμῶν Διδαχή: Or, The Doctrine of Baptismes, Reduced from its Ancient and Moderne Corruptions: and Restored to its Primitive Soundnesse and Integrity, According to the Word of Truth, the Substance of Faith, and the Nature of Christ's Kingdome* (London, Giles Calvert, 1648).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 17. Original spelling, italicization, and capitalization has been preserved throughout this article.

<sup>6</sup> John Bunyan, *Differences in Judgment About Water-Baptism, No Bar to Communion* (London: John Wilkins, 1673), 39.

to his church written near the end of his life and preserved in the church record book, Gifford urged the congregation and his successors in ministry not to be engaged in disputes about controversial matters, which would have included baptism: “In your assemblies avoid all disputes which gender to strifes, as questions about externals, and all doubtful disputations. If any come among you who will be contentious in these things, let it be declared that you have no such order, nor any of the churches of God.”

Elsewhere he specifically lists baptism, among other external acts, over which division in the body is a “great evil”:

Concerning separation from the church about baptism, laying on of hands, anointing with oil, psalms, or any externals, I charge every one of you respectively, as you will give an account for it to our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge both quick and dead at his coming, that none of you be found guilty of this great evil; which, while some have committed, and that through a zeal for God, yet not according to knowledge, they have erred from the law of the love of Christ, and have made a rent from the true church, which is but one.

Regarding the admission of members to the church, Gifford left these instructions:

Now, concerning your admission of members, I shall leave you to the Lord for counsel, who hath hitherto been with you; only thus much I think expedient to stir up your remembrance in; that after you are satisfied in the work of grace in the party you are to join with, the said party do solemnly declare (before some of the church at least), that Union with Christ is the foundation of all saints’ communion, and not any ordinances of Christ, or any judgment or opinion about externals; and the said party ought to declare, whether a brother or a sister, that through grace they will walk in love with the church, though there should happen any difference in judgment about other things.

Remarkably, Gifford recommends requiring prospective members, after their conversion is examined, to make an additional statement not to divide over any view of the ordinances or any opinion on anything considered to be an external.

After Gifford's death, John Burton became pastor of the Bedford congregation. Bunyan would be ordained as an elder several years later. Both men led the church on the same trajectory as its founding pastor. In his autobiography, Bunyan expresses his own sentiments on controversial matters that sometimes divide Christians:

I never cared to meddle with things that were controverted, and in dispute amongst the saints, especially things of the lowest nature; yet it pleased me much to contend with great earnestness for the word of faith and the remission of sins by the death and sufferings of Jesus; but I say, as to other things, I should let them alone, because I saw they engendered strife, and because that they neither, in doing nor in leaving undone, did commend us to God to be his. Besides, I saw my work before me did run in another channel, even to carry an awakening word; to that therefore did I stick and adhere.<sup>7</sup>

This commitment to peace and unity drove Bunyan's approach to the communion question. Ironically, and perhaps inevitably, the cost of Bunyan's adherence to this principle of peace and unity within the Bedford congregation would lead him into increasing controversy with the wider Baptist community.

### **William Kiffin's Background**

As with Bunyan, this essay will not go into great detail regarding Kiffin's biography. However, a quick summary of his journey to embrace the immersion of believers is warranted. Kiffin came to his Baptist convictions not by accident but through careful study and examination.<sup>8</sup> He was brought under conviction of sin and confidence in the saving work of Christ through hearing Puritan preachers. In the 1630s Kiffin became a member of an independent congregation connected with the Jacobs-Lathrop-Jessey church in London, from which the Particular Baptist movement emerged. Kiffin was intimately

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<sup>7</sup> John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (New York: Penguin, 1987), 71.

<sup>8</sup> For an analysis of Kiffin's journey to Baptist convictions, see B. R. White, "How Did William Kiffin Join the Baptists?" *Baptist Quarterly* 23.5 (1970): 201-7.

involved in his church's move to embrace believers' baptism by immersion in the late 1630s and early 1640s. As such, Kiffin had seriously wrestled with the implications of believing that the New Testament teaches the immersion of believers as a valid baptism. He had come to embrace believers' baptism because he was convinced that this is what Scripture teaches.

Thus these early Baptists who moved to embrace baptism did so based on the regulative principle of worship. The regulative principle states that God regulates his worship by his Word. The early Baptists believed that baptism is a part of the public worship of the church, that divine worship is mandated and sanctioned by God's Word, that the only mode of baptism discernable in the New Testament is immersion, and that the only obvious recipients of baptism in the New Testament are believers, and thus they felt compelled to reject anything but the immersion of a believer as baptism. They believed that the immersion of believers was a divine mandate and could not be altered without incurring the possibility of divine wrath like that visited upon Nadab and Abihu for offering strange fire on the altar of the Lord (Leviticus 10).

It is not difficult to see how a person whose convictions are forged in the fires of such controversy would have trouble accepting a view that deemphasizes the meaning and importance of the ordinance of baptism. In his preface to *A Sober Discourse*, Kiffin points to his own experience of coming to Baptist convictions as formative in shaping his perspective on the issue of open communion:

When it pleased God of his free Grace to cause me to make a serious inquiry after Jesus Christ, and to give me some taste of his pardoning Love, the sense of which did engage my heart with desires to be obedient to his will in all things. I used all endeavors both by converse with such as were able, and also by diligently searching the Scriptures, with earnest desires of God, that I might be directed in a right way of worship; and after some time

concluded that the safest way was to follow the Foot-steps of the Flock (namely) that order laid down by Christ and his apostles, and practiced by the Primitive Christians in their times, which I found to be; that after conversion they were Baptized, and added to the Church, and continued in the Apostles Doctrine, Fellowship, breaking of Bread, and Prayer; according to which I thought myself bound to be conformable, and having continued in the profession of the same for these forty years, although through many weaknesses, and fears, temptations, and sufferings, yet not without some witness from God of his gracious acceptance and strength to this very day.<sup>9</sup>

The whole reason Kiffin and his contemporaries became Baptists was because they accepted as authoritative the order outlined in Acts 2:41–47, as well as in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19–20. This same commitment will be the grounds of Kiffin’s opposition to Bunyan.

### **Bunyan’s *A Confession of my Faith, And a Reason of my Practice***

In 1672 Bunyan felt compelled to defend the practice of the Bedford church with the publication of *A Confession of my Faith, And A Reason of my Practice: Or, With who, and who not, I can hold Church-fellowship, or the Communion of Saints*.<sup>10</sup> This was the first work Bunyan published after being appointed to the eldership of the Bedford church on December 21, 1671. The first third of the book features Bunyan’s personal confession of faith and presents a “relatively straightforward articulation of Calvinist principles” of the infralapsarian variety.<sup>11</sup> The rest of the book defends the practice of the Bedford church of admitting all visible saints, irrespective of the mode, or even existence, of their baptism, to both church membership and the Lord’s Table. The rest of the title previews Bunyan’s

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<sup>9</sup> William Kiffin, “To the Christian Reader,” in *A Sober Discourse of Right to Church-Communion* (London: George Larkin, 1681).

<sup>10</sup> John Bunyan, *A Confession of My Faith, And a Reason of My Practice: Or, With Who, and Who not, I Can Hold Church-fellowship, or the Communion of Saints* (London: Francis Smith, 1672).

<sup>11</sup> Greaves, *Glimpses of Glory*, 272.

argument in making this case: *Shewing, By diverse Arguments, that though I dare not Communicate with the open Prophane, yet I can with those visible Saints that differ about Water-Baptism. Whereing Is also discoursed whether that be the entring Ordinance into Fellowship, or no.*

Bunyan begins his defense of his practice by declaring with whom he “dare not hold communion.”<sup>12</sup> He first defines what he means by the word *communion*. By this term he refers to “fellowship *in the things of the Kingdom of Christ*, or that which is commonly called Church communion, the Communion of Saints.”<sup>13</sup> Bunyan believes there should be no distinction between fellowship with a believer, church membership, or participation together at the Lord’s Table. Anyone with whom Bunyan can have fellowship with as a brother or sister in Christ will be admitted to church membership and/or the Lord’s Supper. Those with whom Bunyan will not have this fellowship are those “*that profess not faith and holiness.*”<sup>14</sup>

Bunyan goes at great lengths to distance himself from what he calls “mixed communion,” or communion with unbelievers.<sup>15</sup> Bunyan is not advocating what might be called today “wide open” communion, i.e., communion given to any and all regardless of profession of faith. For Bunyan, those to be received are only those “*who are discovered to the Church to be visible Saints; and willing to be gathered into their body and fellowship.*”<sup>16</sup> They were to be examined in regard to “their Faith, experience, and conversation.”<sup>17</sup> Bunyan explains who would be admitted to the Lord’s Supper upon

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<sup>12</sup> Bunyan, *Confession of My Faith*, 48.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 49–65.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

examination: “He then that serveth Christ, according to the royal Law, from faith and love going before, he is a fit person for Church-communion; God accepteth him, Men approve him.”<sup>18</sup> This is the individual of whom Bunyan uses the common Puritan term “visible Saint” to identify:<sup>19</sup> “I onely exclude,” he writes, “him that is not a visible Saint; for he that is a visible Saint must profess faith, and repentance, and consequently holiness of life: And with none else dare I communicate.”<sup>20</sup>

Having seen that Bunyan would restrict membership and the Table from the unconverted while welcoming every “visible saint,” we shall now turn to consider his reasons for permitting the unbaptized to join the membership of, or take the Lord’s Supper with, his congregation. Bunyan argues that all “visible Saints” should be allowed to take communion “because God hath communion with them.”<sup>21</sup> If God has received such believers, Bunyan argues that Romans 15:7 commands others to follow his example: “Receive you one another as Christ Jesus hath received you, saith Paul, to the glory of God.”<sup>22</sup> Later Bunyan asserts, “Now him that God receiveth and holdeth communion with, him you should receive and hold communion with. Will any say we cannot believe that God hath received any but such as are Baptized? I will not suppose a Brother so stupified; and therefore to that I will not answer.”<sup>23</sup>

Bunyan further argues that that the substance of the matter is found in the spiritual meaning of baptism. Outward conformity is not what really matters. Here Bunyan is partially following the argument of William Dell, who argued that only spirit baptism is

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

taught in the New Testament epistles. Bunyan emphasizes that spirit baptism is what is essential. Water baptism, which physically symbolizes spirit baptism, is not as important. Bunyan cites as one of the reasons he may have communion with the unbaptized the fact that they “have the doctrin of Baptisms”:

I say the doctrins of them; For here you must note, I distinguish between the doctrine and practice of Water-baptism; The Doctrin being that which by the outward sign is presented to us, or which by the outward circumstance of the act is preached to the believer: *viz. The death of Christ; My death with Christ; also his resurrection from the Dead, and mine with him to newness of life.* This is the doctrin which Baptism preacheth, or that which by the outward action is signified to the believing receiver. Now I say, he that believeth in Jesus Christ; that richer and better then that, *viz.* is dead to sin, and that lives to God by him, he hath the heart, power and doctrine of Baptism: all then that he wanteth, is but the sign, the shadow, or the outward circumstance thereof; Nor yet is that despised, but forborne for want of light: The best of Baptisms he hath; he is Baptized by that one spirit; he hath the heart of Water baptism, he wanteth only the outward shew, which if he had would not prove him a truly visible Saint; it would not tell me he had grace in his heart.<sup>24</sup>

Elsewhere, Bunyan more succinctly states it thus: “A failure in such a circumstance as Water doth not unchristian us.”<sup>25</sup> This settled the issue for Bunyan, since he believed that all “visible Saints” or Christians should be invited to the Lord’s Supper. If the absence of water cannot “unchristian” a believer, it should not be a reason for denying the Lord’s Supper to a visible saint.

Bunyan also asserts that water baptism is not an entering or initiating ordinance of the church. “Herein lyes the mistake,” Bunyan says, “to think that because in time past, Baptism was administred upon conversion, *that therefore it is the initiating, and entring ordinance* into Church-communion: when by the word no such thing is testified of it.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 87–88.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

*The Open-Communion Debate*

Bunyan argues that in the New Testament, baptism does not give the “person baptized, a being of membership, with this or that Church, by whose members he hath been baptized.”<sup>27</sup> He cites John’s baptism and the fact that John “gathered no particular Church.” Also, “*Phillip* baptized the *Eunuch*; but made him, by that, no member of any particular Church.” “Neither was *Cornelius* made a member of the Church at *Jerusalem*, by his being baptized at Peters commandment at *Caesarea*.” Bunyan summarizes, “*Baptism makes thee no member of the Church, neither particular nor universall: neither doth it make thee a visible Saint: It therefore gives thee neither right to, nor being of membership at all.*”<sup>28</sup> Later in the book, Bunyan grants that “water-baptism hath formerly gone first.” However, he refuses to acknowledge “that it ought of necessity so to do.”<sup>29</sup>

Bunyan also argues that forbidding the Lord’s Supper to the unbaptized is nowhere commanded in Scripture, whereas love and unity are commanded. The unbaptized person, Bunyan says, is “prejudiced, for want of light in those things about which he is dark; as of Baptism or the like; but seeing that is not the initiating ordinance, or the visible character of a Saint; . . . why should his friends, while he keeps the Law, dishonor God by breaking of the same?”<sup>30</sup> Bunyan here has in mind James 4:11, which he cites as follows, “*Speak not evil one of another brethren; he that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother; speak evil of the Law and judgeth the Law: But if thou judge the Law thou art not a doer of the Law, but a judge.*” Bunyan’s argument is that those visible saints who give every indication of regeneration, but lack water baptism, ought to be received for communion, lest we be guilty of judging.

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 73–74.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 74–76.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

Further still, Bunyan argues that all credible professing believers should be admitted, “because the edification of Souls in the Faith and holiness of the Gospell, is of greater concernment, then an agreement in outward things.”<sup>31</sup> In addition, Bunyan declares love to be that “which above all things we are commanded to put on,” and it “is of much more worth then to break about Baptism”:<sup>32</sup>

It is Love that is the undoubted character of our interest in, and sonship with God: I mean when we Love as Saints, and desire communion with others, because they have fellowship one with another, in their fellowship with God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ. *1 Joh. 1. 2.* And now though the truth and sincerity of our Love to God, be then discovered when we keep his commandments, in Love to his name; yet we should remember again, that the two head and chief Commandments, are Faith in Jesus, and Love to the brethren: *1 Joh. 3. 23.*<sup>33</sup>

Bunyan concludes his discussion on love by asking,

When we attempt to force our Brother beyond his light, or to break his heart with grief, to thrust him beyond his Faith, or to bar him from his priviledge: how can we say, I love? What shall I say? To have fellowship one with another for the sake of an outward circumstance, or to make that the door to fellowship which God hath not; yea to make that the including, excluding charter: The bounds, bar, and rule of Communion, when by the word of the everlasting testament there is no warrant for it (to speak charitably): If it be not for want of Love, it is for want of knowledge in the mysteries of the Kingdom of Christ. Strange! Take two Christians equal in all points but this, nay let one go beyond the other far, for grace and holyness; yet this circumstance of Water shall drown and sweep away all his excellencies, not counting him worthy of that reception, that with hand and heart shall be given a novice in religion, because he consents to Water.<sup>34</sup>

Here Bunyan seems to be his most passionate. His desire for love and unity in the body of Christ drives him to resist anything that might threaten that bond of brotherly affection and communion. Because he does not understand baptism to be clearly commanded in the New

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 102–3.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 107–8.

Testament nor an entering ordinance of the church, Bunyan considers it to be only a matter of individual conscience and therefore one that should not divide brothers in Christ. The closing appeal of his treatise further demonstrates that Bunyan's primary concern is unity: "Those that are visible Saints by Calling, that stand at a distance one from another, upon the accounts before specified: Brethren: Close; Close; Be one as the Father and Christ is one."<sup>35</sup> He concludes his book by listing ten benefits that will be received if this unity is achieved.

### **Initial Responses to Bunyan**

The publication of Bunyan's views on the proper recipients of the Lord's Supper and church membership invited a flurry of responses from those who Bunyan would call the "brethren of the baptized way." In total, six responses were printed against Bunyan, with Bunyan himself contributing two rejoinders to the respondents. Among the respondents were the General Baptist John Denne (*fl.* 1645–1699) and the Particular Baptists Thomas Paul (*fl.* 1673–1674), William Kiffin (1616–1701), and Henry Danvers (c. 1622–1687).<sup>36</sup> The most well-known of the respondents was Kiffin, who wrote a prefatory letter to the reader in Thomas Paul's *Some Serious Reflections On that Part of Mr. Bunion's Confession of Faith: Touching Church Communion with Unbaptized Persons*, which was published in 1673, the year following Bunyan's *Confession of my Faith*.<sup>37</sup> In 1681, Kiffin would publish the definitive response to Bunyan's position (although without directly naming Bunyan): *A Sober Discourse of the Right to Church-Communion*.

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>36</sup> T. L. Underwood, "'It Pleased Me Much to Contend': John Bunyan as Controversialist," in *Church History* (December 1988): 460.

<sup>37</sup> William Kiffin, "To the Reader," in Thomas Paul, *Some Serious Reflections on that Part of Mr. Bunion's Confession of Faith: Touching Communion with Unbaptized Persons* (London: Francis Smith, 1673).

**Kiffin's *A Sober Discourse***

The only time Kiffin specifically addresses John Bunyan by name in the debate is in his "Letter to the Reader" that introduces Thomas Paul's *Some Serious Reflections*. This work by Paul has been called by Bunyan scholar T. L. Underwood the "least articulate" of Bunyan's respondents in the communion controversy. In Bunyan's response to Paul in *Differences in Judgment about Water-Baptism, No Bar to Communion*, it is clear that he did not take well to Paul's manner of addressing him. He considered Paul's rhetoric to be inflammatory. One example of Paul's language will suffice:

As for your Eighteen Inferences, on Absurdities drawn for our Principle and Practice, they are in themselves so ridiculous, so topful of ignorance, or prejudice; and are in themselves such a heap of unheard of reproaches, that deserve no other answer then contempt; they carrying their self contradiction in their own bowels.<sup>38</sup>

In an introductory letter to the readers, Bunyan expresses his displeasure with the inflammatory language of his opponents:

*I will not make Reflections upon those unhandsom brands that my Brethren have laid upon me for this, as that I am a Machivilian, a man devilish, proud, insolent, presumptuous, and the like; neither will I say as they, The Lord rebuke thee; words fitter to be spoke to the Devil, than a Brother.*<sup>39</sup>

Notably, however, Bunyan specifically singles out William Kiffin and absolves him for his involvement: "What Mr. Kiffin hath done in the matter I forgive, and love him never the worse, but must stand by my Principles because they are peaceable, godly, profitable, and such as tend to the Edification of my Brother, and as I believe will be justified in the day of Judgment."<sup>40</sup> No doubt Bunyan's response toward Kiffin was tempered by the latter's

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<sup>38</sup> Paul, *Some Serious Reflections*, 41–42.

<sup>39</sup> John Bunyan, *Differences in Judgment about Water-Baptism, No Bar to Communion: Or, To Communicate with Saints, as Saints, Proved Lawful* (London: John Wilkins, 1673), 3–4.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

irenic tone in acknowledging the importance of unity in the body of Christ, a topic dear to Bunyan's heart:

Communion with all Saints, in all things, is a desireable thing, and not the least part of that Glory which will forever be enjoyed in Heaven, and it would be a blessed thing, if while Christians differ in their light, the best knowing but in part, it might be maid up by an increase of love, this would convince the World they were Christ's Disciples indeed.<sup>41</sup>

This excerpt demonstrates that Kiffin had read, understood, and sympathized with Bunyan's motivation of Christian unity. This seemingly earned Bunyan's respect. Kiffin, however, like Bunyan, stood by his principles. He followed his stated desire for unity by cautioning against disregarding the prescribed order given in Scripture for the sake of unity: "But care must be had in the first place, to observe the Rules given by our great Lord, and to walk according to them, and not for Communion sake to leap over the Order Jesus Christ hath Prescribed in his Word."<sup>42</sup> This, as we shall see, is the key issue for Kiffin and the vast majority of seventeenth-century English Baptists. If Christ has prescribed a particular practice and order in his Word, we are bound to follow that practice and to admit no other. After naming Bunyan's work in his prefatory letter, Kiffin summarizes Bunyan's argument:

Wherein that Author declareth his Faith concerning Church Fellowship, and the way of entrance therein: Endeavouring, after his manner, to prove that Men and Women that believe in Jesus Christ, although not Baptized with water, may be Members of any perticular Church of Christ and ought to be admitted to the Lord's Supper, and all other Church Ordinances;<sup>43</sup>

Kiffin rightly understands Bunyan as arguing that unbaptized believers may be members of churches and should be allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper. Although Bunyan

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<sup>41</sup> Kiffin, "To the Reader."

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

insists that when he talks about the unbaptized, he “chiefly” intends “those that are not SO baptized as my Brethren judge right, according to the first pattern,”<sup>44</sup> he does not rule out the possibility of admission to membership or the Table of one unbaptized by anyone’s definition.

In the introductory letter, Kiffin states in embryonic form the argument he would eventually develop in more detail in *A Sober Discourse of Right to Church-Communion* eight years later. Bunyan’s view of allowing the unbaptized to take communion and/or become church members is

a Doctrine not known or practised in the first Gospel Churches, or by any others of what perswasion so ever, that have professed the Christian Faith, since that time to this very age: as for the practice of the Churches in the Primative times, the Scripture is in no one thing plainer then in this, that all Persons before they were added to the Church, were Baptized with Water, which appeareth both by the Commission given by Jesus Christ, Mat. 28.19. and the Practice of the Apostles, Acts 2.38, 39.<sup>45</sup>

The argument is two-fold. First, Kiffin argues that no Christian group in the history of Christianity has held that unbaptized people may take communion or be church members. Kiffin calls this “collateral evidence.” Second, and more important, he argues that the pattern found in Scripture is that baptism comes first, then membership. Kiffin summarizes these two arguments in the preface to *A Sober Discourse* by stating (and reversing the order this time) that “we are not willing to be Censorious, nor arrogate that wisdom to our selves, as to think that we are wiser than others, yet in all Modesty we may be bold to affirm, that in the point here handled, We have the Scriptures, and the concurrence of all Christians from the beginning, to this Age, on our side.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Bunyan, *Differences in Judgment about Water-Baptism*, 99.

<sup>45</sup> Kiffin, “To the Reader.”

<sup>46</sup> Idem, *A Sober Discourse*, preface.

***We Have the Scriptures***

First, Kiffin argues, “We have the Scriptures . . . on our side.” This dogged adherence to the authority of Scripture is the Reformation and Puritan regulative principle of worship, which, as Michael A. G. Haykin and C. Jeffrey Robinson have noted in their study of the open-communion controversy, “gave shape to much of [Kiffin’s] argument in the *Sober Discourse*.”<sup>47</sup> Bunyan had sought to get away from this issue, as Matthew Ward has noted in his *Pure Worship: The Early English Baptist Distinctive*, by shifting baptism from the corporate worship of the church to an “act of individual worship.”<sup>48</sup> Kiffin, however, would not allow any such shift. He asserted that, although “Knowledge of the Truth, and Obedience to it in outward performances, will as little save a mans soul as the Covenant of Works,” nevertheless, “every man that hath an interest in Christ, is bound by the Word of God to be obedient to all his Commands.”<sup>49</sup> Kiffin further insisted that Bunyan’s position will, intentionally or not, “weaken, if not make void that great Ordinance of Baptism.”<sup>50</sup>

Kiffin states his own intention quite simply:

I have no other design, but the preserving the Ordinances of Christ, in their purity and Order as they are left unto us in the holy Scriptures of Truth; and to warn the Churches To keep close to the Rule, least they being found not to Worship the Lord according to his prescrib’d Order he make a Breach amongst them.<sup>51</sup>

For Kiffin, this debate is all about God’s authority to govern his worship.

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<sup>47</sup> Michael A. G. Haykin and C. Jeffrey Robinson, “Particular Baptist Debates about Communion and Hymn-Singing,” in *Drawn into Controversie: Reformed Theological Diversity and Debates Within Seventeenth-Century British Puritanism*, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin and Mark Jones (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 293.

<sup>48</sup> Matthew Ward, *Pure Worship: The Early English Baptist Distinctive* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014), 102.

<sup>49</sup> Kiffin, “To the Christian Reader.”

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

The regulative principle of worship was first articulated by the Genevan Reformer John Calvin in a treatise presented to the imperial diet at Speyer in 1544.<sup>52</sup> In his tract on “The Necessity of Reforming the Church,” Calvin writes, “God disapproves of all modes of worship not expressly sanctioned by His Word.”<sup>53</sup> Later in the same essay, Calvin draws the appropriate conclusion that “it ought to be sufficient for the rejection of any mode of worship, that it is not sanctioned by the command of God.”<sup>54</sup> By this standard, Calvin and the other Reformers rejected much of the accretions in the worship and practice of the Roman church from the medieval period.

But whatever forms of “fictitious worship” Calvin had in mind when he penned those words, they apparently did not include infant baptism, which was retained in the Reformed church of Geneva. Likewise, when the Puritan Jeremiah Burroughs (1599–1646)<sup>55</sup> offered the definitive treatment of the regulative principle in his posthumously published *Gospel Worship*,<sup>56</sup> the practice of believers’ baptism by immersion seems to have been the furthest thing from his mind.<sup>57</sup> In the 1730s, however, the English Baptist historian Thomas Crosby used this paedobaptist’s own words to argue for just that in his

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<sup>52</sup> For the historical context of Calvin’s writing of the tract, see Bruce Gordon, *Calvin* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 163–64.

<sup>53</sup> John Calvin, “The Necessity of Reforming the Church,” in *Tracts Related to the Reformation*, vol. 1, trans. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh, UK: Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 128.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>55</sup> For a recent biographical study of Burroughs, see Phillip L. Simpson, *A Life of Gospel Peace: A Biography of Jeremiah Burroughs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage, 2011).

<sup>56</sup> Jeremiah Burroughs, *Gospel-worship: Or, The Right Manner of Sanctifying the Name of God in General* (London: Peter Cole and R. W., 1647). This first edition was published the year after Burroughs’s death by a group of friends (Thomas Goodwin, William Greenhill, William Bridge, Sidrach Simpson, and Philip Nye), who contributed an epistle to the reader confirming that the work was indeed written by Burroughs. For an edited version of this work in modern English, see Jeremiah Burroughs, *Gospel Worship*, ed. Don Kistler (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1990).

<sup>57</sup> One example of Burroughs’s statement of the regulative principle is as follows: “I say that all things in God’s worship must have a warrant out of God’s Word. It must be commanded; it’s not enough that it is not forbidden.” Burroughs, *Gospel Worship*, 11.

preface to the first volume of his *The History of the English Baptists*.<sup>58</sup> In so doing, Crosby, who was himself the son-in-law of prominent seventeenth-century Particular Baptist pastor Benjamin Keach, was merely following the pattern of seventeenth-century Baptists in arguing for believers' baptism by immersion using this Puritan principle.<sup>59</sup> Kiffin also quotes at length from Burroughs's classic work:

All things in God's Worship must have a warrant out of God's Word, must be commanded; it's not enough that 'tis not Forbidden, and what hurt is there in? But it must be commanded. --- When we come to matters of Religion and the Worship of God, we must either have a command, or somewhat out of God's Word, by some consequence drawn from some command, wherein God manifests his will; either a direct command, or by comparing one thing with another, or drawing consequences, plainly from the words, we must have a warrant for the worship of God, &c.<sup>60</sup>

Just as the seventeenth-century Baptists had pointed out possible inconsistencies in their Puritan contemporaries' application of the regulative principle, Kiffin will point out Bunyan's potential inconsistency in this regard. If the scriptural command and pattern are enough to cause Bunyan to embrace believers' baptism personally, Kiffin argues, then the scriptural command and pattern should be sufficient for him to withhold communion and church membership from the unbaptized. Bunyan's argument is that since such practice is not expressly forbidden, it should be allowed. Kiffin uses the Reformed principle to say that this is not how it works.

In his preface, Kiffin stresses the arrogance of man's sinful tendency to meddle with "things beyond his Commission": "It is a superlative and desperate piece of audacity

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<sup>58</sup> Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists* (London, 1738), 1:xi–xiii.

<sup>59</sup> For examples of how the regulative principle was utilized by seventeenth-century Baptists, see G. Stephen Weaver Jr, "The Puritan Argument for the Immersion of Believers: How Seventeenth-Century Baptists Utilized the Regulative Principle of Worship," in *Recovering a Covenantal Heritage: Essays in Baptist Covenant Theology* (Palmdale, CA: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2014), 109–25.

<sup>60</sup> Kiffin, *A Sober Discourse*, 49.

for men to presume to mend any thing in the Worship of God; for it supposes the All-wise Law giver capable of error, and the attempter wiser than his Maker.”<sup>61</sup> To alter divine worship is a serious matter and will be a cause for divine judgment:

When that question shall be askt, *Who hath required this at your hands?* I doubt it will be no sufficient plea to say, That if we have erred in any Punctilio’s of Divine Truth, it was for Peace and Unions sake, &c. For, *No motions of Peace are to be made or received with the loss of Truth:* Nor may the Laws, Orders, and Prescriptions of Christ be altered, or varied, in any tittle, upon any pretence whatsoever, God having never given any such Prerogative to mankind, as to be Arbitrators how he may be best and most decently Worshiped.<sup>62</sup>

Kiffin assumes and asserts that all Protestants will affirm this principle. It is the very basis of Protestantism without which the Reformation would not have occurred.

That being so, only one question remains:

Now this being (as it must be) granted, *viz.* That no part of Gods Law, or Worship, whether we respect the *Manner* or *Form*, or the *Matter* and *Substance* thereof, is to be altered without the express Order and Direction of GOD Himself; it will lead us to a Sober Enquiry, *Whether the Opinion here examined, be grounded upon the Law and Word of God.*<sup>63</sup>

What does the Scripture teach? Does it say anything about who is to be admitted as a member and to the Lord’s Supper? Kiffin argues that it does, and that Christians have always believed this:

All sound and Orthodox writers with one mind agree (and mere reason teaches it) that where a rule and express law is prescribed to men, that very prescription, is an express prohibition of the contrary: Here we have the order of Gospel administration, not only commanded, but practiced. Acts 2:38-42. First they preached; and such as were converted, were Baptized; such as were Baptized, walked in Church-Fellowship, &c. Breaking of Bread and Prayers; which being so express, what necessity is there to be wise above what is written, and to clamor for precept or example, to prove that Baptism is a bar to communion, since we read every where, (where Gospel order is set down,) that all such as were received, were first

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<sup>61</sup> Kiffin, *A Sober Discourse*, preface.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

Baptized; and not one instance in the whole Bible, that any were received without it. Nor is it rational to think that any were admitted to Church-Fellowship any other way, unless we will say that these positive precepts were calculated for some only, and not for all Christians, which is not only absurd, but against the very letter of the Scripture, Matt. 28:19. Teach all nations Baptizing them, that is every individual that gladly receives the Word in every Nation.<sup>64</sup>

This leads naturally into Kiffin's secondary, supplemental argument: the concurrence of all Christians.

### ***The Concurrence of All Christians***

Kiffin also argues from the universal witness of the church on this issue. Bunyan explained that he wrote his *Differences in Judgment about Water-Baptism, No Bar to Communion* because he was for "Union, Concord, and Communion with Saints, as Saints."<sup>65</sup> Kiffin, however, stresses a different unity of the saints: the united testimony of all Christians of all time, or, as he put it, "We have . . . the concurrence of all Christians from the beginning, to this Age, on our side." Kiffin makes it clear that his dispute is not with the Roman Catholics, the Church of England, the Presbyterians, or the Independents. None of these "admit any as a Church-Member without Baptism."<sup>66</sup> His quarrel is instead with anyone who, like Bunyan, would state, "I own Water-baptism to be God's Ordinance," yet refuses to require it for membership or the Lord's Supper.<sup>67</sup> These are the only examples in the history of Christianity of believers who support the ordinances yet reason this way.

In chapter 4, Kiffin discusses Christians through the centuries, from the patristic era down to his present day. He begins with examples from the biblical book of Acts, then moves to

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 28–30.

<sup>65</sup> Bunyan, *Differences in Judgment About Water-Baptism*, 99.

<sup>66</sup> Kiffin, *A Sober Discourse*, 2–3.

<sup>67</sup> Bunyan, *Differences in Judgment about Water-Baptism*, 99.

the Patristic era (citing Justin Martyr, Basil, and Augustine) and the Reformation era before passing to his present day (citing Thomas Manton, John Owen, and the Westminster Confession, the Savoy Declaration, and the First London Baptist Confession), all of which have declared that baptism is a prerequisite to church membership and the Lord's Supper:

Yea all the Reformers, whether Lutherans, Calvinists, or other Foreigners, The Church of England, and all the Dissenting Congregations that own Ordinances (ex- a few Persons of the Baptized way and that lately too) have owned, and do own, That Baptism is an Ordinance of Christ; yea, the very first, or initiating Ordinance into Church-Fellowship, without which, no man may be regularly admitted to the Supper. So that this Opinion [open communion] is not only against us [the Particular Baptist community], but contradictory to the Judgment and Practice of all other Christians, Ancient and Modern.<sup>68</sup>

This is only supplementary evidence for Kiffin, but it is clearly intended to overwhelm the reader with the preponderance of the witnesses to the baptismal prerequisite.

It is in this chapter that Kiffin cites Richard Baxter at length, although not by name. Baxter is called a “very noted and learned author now living.”<sup>69</sup> Kiffin omits Baxter's name likely because Baxter himself was no friend to Baptists and, elsewhere in the work Kiffin cites, spends three pages accusing Baptists of baptizing in the nude, a charge for which contemporary Baptist Henry Danvers called for a public recantation, since it was such an “abominable” and “shameful” slander that Baxter “cannot but be convinced that the thing is most *notoriously false*.”<sup>70</sup> Kiffin cites Baxter, however, because he was a well-known and widely read theologian. It is likely that Kiffin knew that people would recognize the source of his citations. Despite his misgivings over Baxter's integrity, Henry Danvers had also quoted this section and cited the specific reference in *Plain Scripture Proof of Infants*

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<sup>68</sup> Kiffin, *A Sober Discourse*, 87.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>70</sup> Henry Danvers, *A Treatise of Baptism: Wherein, that of Believers, and that of Infants, is examined by the Scriptures* (London: Fran. Smith, 1674), 119–20.

*Church-membership and Baptism.* Baxter was cited by these Baptists because he made the very case they were trying to make, namely, that baptism must precede church membership:

If we have neither precept nor example in Scripture since Christ ordained baptism, of any other way of admitting visibly members, but only by baptism, then all that must be admitted visible members, must be ordinarily baptized: But since baptism was instituted (or established we have no precept or example of admitting visible members any other way (but constant precept and example of admitting this way:) therefore all that must be admitted visible members, must be baptized.

I know not what in any show of reason can be said to this by those that renounce not Scripture, For what man dare go in a way which hath neither precept nor example to warrant it, from a way that hath a full current of both? Yet they that will admit members into the visible Church without baptism, do so.<sup>71</sup>

That is why Kiffin quotes Baxter on this subject. The point is that Baptists were being no more restrictive on the question of who may be a church member or take the Lord's Supper than any other group in church history had been. Baptists like Kiffin were in complete agreement with the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Anglicans, and Roman Catholics at this point.

### **Legacy of the Debate**

When the first assembly of Particular Baptists was held in London in September 1689, the confession of faith they adopted, known today as the Second London Confession of Faith, was famously silent on the issue of the proper recipients for the Lord's Supper. That silence is quite remarkable given the debate that had raged over this very issue in their recent history. Not only was the confession silent, the assembly of pastors and other church

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<sup>71</sup> Kiffin, *A Sober Discourse*, 89.

leaders issued a statement agreeing not to make a church's position on this issue a matter of division among the churches:

That in those things wherein one Church differs from another Church in their Principles or Practices, in point of Communion, that we cannot, shall not, impose upon any particular Church therein, but leave every Church to their own liberty, to walk together as they have received from the Lord. That in those things wherein one Church differs from another Church in their Principles or Practices, in point of Communion, that we cannot, shall not, impose upon any particular Church therein, but leave every Church to their own liberty, to walk together as they have received from the Lord.<sup>72</sup>

Although Bunyan had died the previous year, this likely indicates that there were at least some congregations represented at the assembly who would have held to a similar view as Bunyan's regarding the proper recipients of the Lord's Supper, although not in permitting the unbaptized in any mode to partake.

Whatever the case may be, Bunyan's view did not become dominant in Baptist life in the near future. Virtually no one practiced open membership. If they did, their churches did not remain Baptist for long. John Gill, Abraham Booth, and Andrew Fuller, the major theologians of Baptist life in the eighteenth century, all argued for the Lord's Supper to be restricted to baptized believers. This view continued to dominate in English Baptist life until the early nineteenth century.

In the United States, Kiffin's view remained dominant well into the twentieth century. The New Hampshire Confession of Faith of 1833, in its article on baptism and the Lord's Supper, states that baptism, which it defines as the "immersion in water of a believer," "is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation, and to the Lord's Supper."<sup>73</sup> The Baptist Faith and Message 1925 uses the exact same language. The 1963 BFM slightly

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<sup>72</sup> *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the General Assembly* (London, 1689), 10.

<sup>73</sup> New Hampshire Confession of Faith, chapter XIV.

## *The Open-Communion Debate*

tweaks the language by stating that baptism is “prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord’s Supper.” The 2000 version actually strengthens the wording by adding the phrase “being a church ordinance” before “it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord’s Supper.” This addition provides some of the rationale for why baptism is not considered merely a matter of personal preference.

However, according to a 2012 LifeWay Research survey of pastors of churches in the world’s largest body of Baptists, the Southern Baptist Convention, over half (52%) of the 1,066 SBC pastors polled indicated that “anyone who has put faith in Christ” may participate in the Lord’s Supper at their church. This choice was in contrast to the more narrow option of “anyone baptized as a believer,” which was selected by only 35% of those surveyed. Nine percent said either that they “have no specifications” or that “anyone who wants” may take the Lord’s Supper. Four percent said that “only members of the local church” may take communion. Were Kiffin alive today, he would have great cause to be concerned that, if such a trend continues, intentionally or not, it will “weaken, if not make void, that great Ordinance of Baptism.”<sup>74</sup>

Notwithstanding the confessional tradition, most Baptists no longer seem capable of thinking in terms of the regulative principle of worship. Few are even asking the question of whether a particular practice or element of worship is mandated by Scripture. As a result, most Baptists lack the theological categories and vocabulary to be able to resist the call for love and unity that are much more understandable in our postmodern society. Perhaps there is a need to ask ourselves how our biographies might be influencing our understanding of this issue.

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<sup>74</sup> Kiffin, “To the Christian Reader.”

**A DEFENSE OF HANSERD KNOLLYS AGAINST THE CHARGES OF  
ANTINOMIANISM**

**By Andrew Ballitch**

Hanserd Knollys (1598–1691) made an ecclesiological journey from the Church of England to the Particular Baptist communion, resting briefly in the Puritan and Separatist camps along the way. He was educated at Cambridge, where he experienced great conviction under the Puritan preaching there. He became a parish minister in the Church of England in 1629 but served only three years because he was persuaded that the surplice, the sign of the cross, and the participation of the wicked at communion was wrong.<sup>1</sup> He preached itinerantly until 1636, at which time he renounced his episcopal ordination, received a warrant for his arrest, and fled to New England, where he pastored for almost five years—still not without controversy, however. He returned to England in 1641 and led a Baptist congregation out of Henry Jessey’s Separatist church in 1644.<sup>2</sup> Knollys enjoyed a successful and influential Baptist ministry, but, as Benjamin Brook summarizes, the “life of this good man was one continued scene of trouble and vexation.”<sup>3</sup> One such lifelong vexation was the charge of antinomianism lodged against him.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael A. G. Haykin, *Kiffin, Knollys and Keach: Rediscovering Our English Baptist Heritage* (Leeds, UK: Reformation Today, 1996), 54.

<sup>2</sup> Tom J. Nettles, *The Baptists: Key People Involved in Forming a Baptist Identity*, 3 vols. (Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 1:149–51.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Brook, *The Lives of the Puritans: Containing a Biographical Account of Those Divines Who Distinguished Themselves in the Cause of Religious Liberty, from the Reformation under Queen Elizabeth, to the Act of Uniformity in 1662*, 3 vols. (Pittsburgh, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1994), 3:496. Despite his great influence on Baptist beginnings, Knollys has been neglected in historiography. See Dennis Bustin, *Paradox and Perseverance: Hanserd Knollys, Particular Baptist Pioneer in Seventeenth-Century England* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2006), 16–22.

### **The Charge of Antinomianism**

Contemporaries accused Knollys of Anabaptism, hyper-Calvinism, and Fifth Monarchism, but antinomianism was the greatest allegation against Knollys's orthodoxy.<sup>4</sup> He moved to New England in 1638, arriving one month after Anne Hutchinson was excommunicated. The almost immediate accusation of antinomianism against him was probably due to his association with John Wheelwright. He was close to Wheelwright in England, being converted under his influence.<sup>5</sup> Further, he was associated with the then-governor of New Hampshire, John Underhill. In the 1640s, several committees from the Westminster Assembly investigated Knollys. In 1647 he appeared before the Parliamentary Examinations Committee because of supposed antinomianism. It was in this period that Thomas Edwards pegged him as an antinomian in *Gangraena*.<sup>6</sup> He was accused of antinomianism again at the end of his life for signing the 1690 edition of Tobias Crisp's sermons. Although it was actually an authentication certificate that Knollys signed, the act was held against him. While other signatories revoked their signatures, Knollys died before directly addressing the issue himself.<sup>7</sup>

So, before he became a Baptist, as he was helping the fledgling Particular Baptist movement off the ground, and at the very end of his long life, Knollys was plagued by accusations of antinomianism. Recent scholarship has picked up such accusations and repeated them as well. Philip Gura has claimed that Knollys in 1640s England "continued

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<sup>4</sup> Bustin, *Paradox and Perseverance*, 250.

<sup>5</sup> Barry H. Howson, *Erroneous and Schismatical Opinions: The Questions of Orthodoxy Regarding the Theology of Hanserd Knollys (c. 1599–1691)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 81; Bustin, *Paradox and Perseverance*, 41.

<sup>6</sup> Howson, *Erroneous and Schismatical Opinions*, 83; Bustin, *Paradox and Perseverance*, 91.

<sup>7</sup> Howson, *Erroneous and Schismatical Opinions*, 83; Bustin, *Paradox and Perseverance*, 313.

to be attacked for his antinomian views, which in his case he genuinely held.”<sup>8</sup> William McLoughlin asserts that Knollys was among the antinomians who were driven from Boston and who settled in New Hampshire, which they thought to be a haven.<sup>9</sup> Ultimately, these positions have been assumed and not substantively defended.

Barry Howson provides the most extensive defense of Knollys’s orthodoxy in light of the charge of antinomianism. He helpfully describes the seven tenants of antinomianism, drawn from emphases in both England and New England, as

1. A prime evidence of justification is the testimony of the Holy Spirit and not sanctification.
2. Faith is not a condition of justification but a consequence.
3. The sinner cannot prepare for salvation by good works, etc. No conditions prepare the way.
4. Increased grace—Christ does not simply renew the created human faculties in conversion but he overrides them so that all is of Christ.
5. God does not see any sin in his justified children.
6. Christians can live in sin.
7. The law of God is not necessary in leading to conversion, nor for living after conversion.<sup>10</sup>

Howson compares Knollys’s theology to each of these points, concluding, “Except on the subject of assurance Knollys does not hold any of the other Antinomian tenets.” Howson goes on to qualify this statement: “Even on the subject of assurance Knollys did not espouse the Spirit’s witness apart from the promise or Word . . . and he believed, along with the orthodox, that the primary evidence of assurance throughout the believer’s life is sanctification.”<sup>11</sup>

Howson makes another interesting concession when defending Knollys on the point of preparationism. Howson understands Knollys to sit somewhere between the orthodox

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<sup>8</sup> Philip Gura, *A Glimpse of Zion’s Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England, 1620–1660* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1984), 67.

<sup>9</sup> William McLoughlin, *New England Dissent, 1630–1833: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 2:834.

<sup>10</sup> Howson, *Erroneous and Schismatical Opinions*, 114.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

and antinomian positions on this issue, showing that Knollys viewed salvation as a simple act of believing, which could not be required from God through humiliation and duties, while at the same time maintaining that individuals ought to use means to bring about their conversion.<sup>12</sup> This study will show not only that charges against Knollys of antinomianism are false but also that he was neither partly antinomian in his view of preparation nor antinomian on the issue of sanctification and its role in assurance.

### **Thesis and Argument**

Knollys was not an antinomian; rather, he stood within the orthodox Puritan tradition. This is clear from his understandings of preparation for salvation and of sanctification, with its role in assurance. One would expect divergence at precisely these points if the antinomian suspicions were warranted, as both are tied to the law. Part of preparation is conviction under the law—the law articulates what sanctification is.<sup>13</sup> When compared to Puritan orthodoxy, as represented by William Perkins, one of its earliest and most significant proponents, Knollys’s position on these doctrines fits comfortably within this heritage. I will demonstrate this first by showing that Knollys shared Perkins’s understanding of preparation, even if he did not formulate the steps as systematically. Second, I will contend that Knollys and Perkins held a common conception of sanctification and its importance for assurance. Both men emphasized the importance of holiness in the Christian life. Both

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 119–21. Further, Howson argues, “Knollys held his own morphology of salvation by teaching that a sinner comes to salvation first through conviction, then through spiritual illumination in the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and finally, following conversion, through sanctification” (122).

<sup>13</sup> Further, Christ obeyed the law on the Christian’s behalf (justification) and fuels sanctification because the follower of Jesus is to share Christ’s view of and attitude toward the law. Guilt for not keeping the law, which demands one recognize that it is good, and cordial assent to keep the law cannot be divorced without compromising theological consistency.

afforded similar weight to sanctification as an avenue for assurance. No one would accuse Perkins of antinomianism; neither should anyone so charge Knollys.

### **Preparation**

Knollys shared Perkins's understanding of preparation, though he did not formulate the doctrine as systematically as did Perkins. Perry Miller claimed that the issue of preparation was fundamental to the antinomian controversy in New England and that, according to John Cotton and his antinomian followers, works of creation needed no preparation.<sup>14</sup> The narrative then follows that the Puritan establishment, comprising the followers of Perkins, such as Thomas Hooker and Thomas Shepard, asserted that one had to be prepared, perhaps even to prepare oneself, for salvation.<sup>15</sup> A close comparison of Perkins and Knollys on this important subject will reveal that the difference was not so stark.

### **Perkins on Preparation**

Perkins explicitly articulates his doctrine of preparation in his *Cases of Conscience*.<sup>16</sup> The format of this work is classic Puritan casuistry, a catalogue of questions and answers. Perkins walks through the steps of salvation in his initial question: "What must a man do, that he may come into God's favor, and be saved?"<sup>17</sup> He answers by considering how and

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<sup>14</sup> Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* (Cambridge, UK: Harvard University Press, 1953), 60.

<sup>15</sup> For a current proponent of this narrative, see Janice Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge, UK: Harvard University Press, 1994).

<sup>16</sup> Here Perkins articulates clearly and concisely the themes of his popular *A Golden Chaine*, in which he explains his understanding of the *ordo salutis* at great length.

<sup>17</sup> William Perkins, *The Workes of That Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the Universitie of Cambridge, Mr. William Perkins*, 3 vols. (Printed at London [and Cambridge]: By Iohn Legatt printer to the Universitie of Cambridge, 1616), 2:12. When quoting Perkins I have modernized the letters and the spelling. Grammar, punctuation, and capitalization is consistent with the original.

by what observable means God saves people, arguing for ten divine actions in God's ordinary operation of grace. First, God provides outward means of salvation—the preached word and suffering—which make stubborn human nature pliable to his will. Second, God brings the law to bear on the mind, causing an awareness of sin. Third, God makes one aware of one's particular sins. Fourth, he “smites the heart with a legal fear, whereby when man seeth his sin, he makes him to fear punishment and hell, and to despair of salvation, in regard of any thing in himself.”

Fifth, God causes the individual to consider the promise of salvation. This promise is proclaimed and made explicit in the gospel, which, for Perkins, is propounded primarily in the ministry of preaching. Sixth, God provides the will and desire to believe. Perkins calls this a kindling of the sparks of faith, the point at which God justifies the sinner. Seventh, as faith infiltrates the heart, a war ensues against doubting and despair, in which faith manifests itself in fervent, perpetual, and passionate requests for pardon. Eighth, God quiets and settles the conscience, assuring the believer through the promise of eternal life. Ninth, God stirs the heart unto evangelical sorrow or “grief for sin, because it is sin, and because God is offended.” It is at this point that God works repentance, which, though near the end of the order of conversion, manifests itself first. Perkins illustrates this with the image of a candle brought into a dark room. The light is seen first, before the candle, yet the candle must exist and be lit before light is possible. In the tenth and final action, God grants new obedience by providing the repentant believer with grace to follow his commands. It is by these ten “degrees” that God grants the grace of salvation.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:12.

Perkins divides these ten actions of God in salvation between steps four and five. The first four are “no fruits of grace, for a Reprobate may go thus far; but they are only *works of preparation*, going before grace.” Actions five and following are the “effects of grace.”<sup>19</sup> Perkins does not claim that the works of preparation are human efforts to prepare oneself for salvation. Instead, he makes a distinction between the general and special grace of God. Only the elect cross the threshold of step five, but it is still only by God’s grace that anyone, elect or reprobate, moves through the preparatory steps.

Perkins understands God to be the primary actor in all of these actions, while the human agent secondarily cooperates. He affirms this as he moves to the second ground for the answer to the question at hand: “What must a person do to be saved?” After considering observable experience, he now turns to the Bible itself for the second ground. Drawing from a number of passages, Perkins narrows the requirements for salvation to four: one must humble oneself before God, believe, repent, and obey. For Perkins, faith is the first step in salvation, and it is wrought by God. Further, from humiliation to obedience, all of salvation is the effectual work of the Spirit, with whom the elect necessarily cooperate.<sup>20</sup>

### **Knollys on Preparation**

Knollys speaks to the issue of preparation in his 1646 collection of sermons titled *Christ Exalted*. This collection was published in the midst of the most substantive charges of antinomianism. In fact, one of Knollys’s appearances before the Westminster committees was on account of his sermons preached in Suffolk, which are compiled in this volume.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, emphasis his.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:14–18.

<sup>21</sup> His understanding of preparation and conversion outlined here follows his own personal experience; cf. Hanserd Knollys, *The Life and Death of That Old Disciple of Jesus Christ and Eminent*

*Defense of Hanserd Knollys*

In his exposition of Luke 19:10, Knollys understands Christ to seek sinners through conviction, enlightenment, and conversion. Conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment are by the Spirit and the Word. The conviction of sin is not general but rather personal; the effect is usually troubling of the conscience, fear of hell, and apprehension over the wrath of God. The conviction of righteousness includes the recognition that one's own righteousness is worthless, that only Christ is the end of the law, and that his righteousness must be imputed. This results not in the forsaking of duties but in the forsaking of resting in them.

Christ's seeking also includes the enlightening of the mind. This enlightenment includes three realities: there is a savior, he came to save sinners, and whoever believes in him will be saved. Yet, at this point one still cannot believe, for it is as impossible as keeping the law. Then Christ converts. The convert is changed into the image of Christ, the object of faith, through the Spirit, allowing him to accept and assent to what is propounded in the Word.<sup>22</sup> So we see a paradox between means of salvation and the supernatural work of conversion.

In a sermon on Colossians 3:11 from the same collection, Knollys exhorts unbelievers to seek Christ. He does tell those "who will not believe, unless you could see yourselves so holy, so humble; except you can first have such a sin subdued, you will not

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*Minister of the Gospel Mr. Hanserd Knollys Who Dyed in the Ninety Third Year of His Age Written with His Own Hand to the Year 1672; and Continued in General in an Epistle by Mr. William Kiffin, ed. William Kiffin (London: Printed for John Harris, 1692), 11–14.*

<sup>22</sup> Hanserd Knollys, *Christ Exalted: A Lost Sinner Sought, and Saved by Christ: God's People Are an Holy People. Being the Summe of Divers Sermons Preached in Suffolk;/by Hanserd Knollys. Who for This Doctrine Had the Meeting-House Doores Shut against Him, and Was Stoned out of the Pulpit (as He Was Preaching) by a Rude Multitude; Who Were Gathered Together, and Set on by a Malignant High-Constable. Which Hath Been Proved by Divers Witnesses of Good Reputation, before the Honourable Committee of Examination at London* (London: Printed by Jane Coe, 1646), 17–20. When quoting Knollys I have modernized the letters and the spelling. Grammar, punctuation, and capitalization is consistent with the original.

believe any of your sins are pardoned, until you find and feel in yourselves a soft heart, a broken heart, a praying spirit, a mourning spirit, you cry out you are not justified,” to consider that “Christ is all; and in all in the justification of sinners.”<sup>23</sup> This could be construed as a denial of preparation, but Knollys had much more to say on the subject. He went on to assert that no “man in his natural condition can of himself come to Christ, desire him, or seek to enjoy him, for none can come to Christ except the Father draw him.” Nonetheless, Knollys urges people to come to Christ. This is not a contradiction for Knollys, because “God requiring poor sinners to use means, he hath appointed, is pleased to make that means, effectual for their conversion and salvation.”

So, if God has purposed to show mercy to an individual, he will cause that person to seek him. Although he will sometimes work without the sinner, “God’s gracious and free promises do not exclude the means he hath appointed to attain the mercies therein promised.”<sup>24</sup> Further, Knollys pleads, “You ought to wait on God in the diligent use of means.”<sup>25</sup> The ordinary means God has ordained for conversion is the preaching of the Word, particularly God’s offer of Christ on three gospel terms: Christ is the only means of salvation, salvation is free, and those who do receive Christ are required to depart from iniquity.

That Knollys continued in his orthodox convictions throughout his career is clear from his later writings. In his 1681 *The World that Now Is; and the World that Is to Come*, Knollys argues that salvation consists of the stages of conviction and illumination before conversion. The four phases of conviction Knollys proposes include preparation. In the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 13.

first phase, the sinner is convicted of his sinful nature, original corruption, and actual transgressions. In the second, he fears death, damnation, and the wrath of God. The third phase consists of the sinner's effort at self-reformation and the performance of religious duties. Lastly, he esteems himself an unbeliever, acknowledging that belief is the only way to salvation and that he is incapable of it.<sup>26</sup> Knollys powerfully concludes, "The want of a thorough work of Conviction, is the cause of the want of a sound and saving work of Conversion."<sup>27</sup> Preparatory conviction is essential in Knollys's thinking, even though the degree may vary from case to case. The next piece of preparation is the Spirit's illumination by the Word, as the understanding is enlightened to the beauty and excellency of Christ, the worth of Christ, and the sinner's need of him.<sup>28</sup>

In *The Parable of the Kingdom of Heaven Expounded*, Knollys explains how a sinner buys the oil needed for salvation. Such a purchase requires three things. First, a "sense of want and need of it." Second, an "attending upon the Ministry of the Word and Administrations of the Gospel to obtain it, or to get some of this Oil, having their heart and hand open and willing to receive it." And third, a "willingness to have it upon Christ's own terms of free grace, without money and without price."<sup>29</sup> The works of conviction and illumination both prepare the sinner for conversion.

Knollys's most definitive statement on preparation, as it is both precise in wording and written late in life, is found in the *Second London Confession 1677/89*. As its first

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<sup>26</sup> Hanserd Knollys, *The World That Now Is; and the World That Is to Come: Or The First and Second Coming of Jesus Christ Wherein Several Prophecies Not yet Fulfilled Are Expounded*. By Han. Knollys, a Servant of Jesus Christ. Rev. I. 19. (London: Printed by Tho. Snowden, 1681), 11–22.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 26–30.

<sup>29</sup> Hanserd Knollys, *The Parable of the Kingdom of Heaven Expounded, Or, An Exposition of the First Thirteen Verses of the Twenty Fifth Chapter of Matthew by Han. Knollis* (London: Printed for Benjamin Harris, 1674), 108–9.

signatory, Knollys affirms that saving faith is the work of the Spirit “ordinarily wrought by the Ministry of the Word.”<sup>30</sup> Knollys does not separate the Spirit’s work from the Word, and, ordinarily, hearts are prepared for salvation through the preaching of it. Though this confession does not provide a systematic presentation of preparation, it articulates nothing contrary to the concept.

### **Analysis**

Knollys did not deny preparation on the part of God nor as the responsibility of people, but he did formulate these doctrines differently than did Perkins. Perkins clearly demarcates preparation from salvation itself in his understanding of the ordinary steps of conversion. However, he explicitly affirms that preparation is the work of God. When speaking of the biblical requirements of salvation, he claims that they consist of humiliation, belief, repentance, and obedience, all of which are works of God in cooperation with the human agent. Knollys similarly sees salvation as requiring conviction, illumination, conversion, and sanctification. This is different in vocabulary but identical in concept. Knollys understands conviction and illumination to precede one’s crossing of the threshold of salvation.

To Knollys this is also a preparation enacted by God. Knollys is less confident than Perkins in enumerating the steps of preparation and conversion in time. He devotes less space to articulating the doctrine of preparation or explaining its implications. But Knollys

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<sup>30</sup> *1677/89 Confession*, XIV. 1. The *1644/46 Confession* states, “The tenders of the Gospel to the conversion of sinners, is absolutely free, no way requiring, as absolutely necessary, any qualifications, preparations, terrors of the Law, or preceding Ministry of the Law” (XXV). The key phrase is “absolutely necessary.” This qualifier makes the statement tolerable to an orthodox understanding, for even notorious Puritan proponents of preparationism emphasized it not as essential but as the normal process of salvation in their context. All confession quotes come from William Latane Lumpkin and Bill Leonard, eds., *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 2nd rev. ed. (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 2011).

clearly understands that God prepares for salvation through preaching repentance, gospel promises, requirements, and the threat of judgment. Both Perkins and Knollys see God at work in preparing the individual for salvation. Both understand the promise as conditional, with God effectually bringing the elect into compliance with those conditions. These men do not argue God's sovereignty or the role of man in salvation to the exclusion of the other. Rather, their thought in both cases is comfortably within the Reformed orthodoxy of Puritan theology.

### **Sanctification and Assurance**

The Puritans were a precise group who endeavored to commit all of life to God. Their high expectation of holiness, together with a doctrine of God's inscrutable decree of election, made assurance a frontline issue. That the Puritans emphasized the role of sanctification in assurance is easily demonstrable, and antinomianism is by definition antithetical to this emphasis. Knollys was and is accused of antinomianism, or at least of leaning in that direction. But a look at what Perkins and Knollys actually said on this topic proves they were not articulating two different things but instead emphasizing different nuances of a shared theological system.

### **Perkins on Assurance**

Perkins wrote extensively on the subject of assurance, and sanctification played a major role in these writings. In *Cases of Conscience*, the second question Perkins answers is, "How may a man be in conscience assured of his own salvation?"<sup>31</sup> The main ground, upon

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<sup>31</sup> Perkins, *Workes*, 2:18. Perkins's formulation of sanctification and assurance here in *Cases of Conscience* is the same as in his impressive number of works devoted to the topic. These include *A Treatise*

which Perkins's answer is founded, is that election, vocation, faith, adoption, justification, sanctification, and glorification are never separated in salvation. The presence of one infallibly indicates the presence of the rest, even if they are unobservable—and some elements of this “chain of many links” are by definition unobservable in this life.<sup>32</sup> This means, for instance, that faith, which unites a person to Christ, is an indicator of both election and future glorification just as the middle link of a chain holds together the extremes at either end.

Perkins turns to Romans 8:16 to answer the question of how one may gain assurance. This verse proposes that the two testimonies of adoption are the Spirit of God and the human being's spirit, with God's Spirit taking primacy of order and importance. The Spirit, indwelling the individual, gives witness but does not provide extraordinary revelations. The Spirit, in and by the Word, applies the promises of the gospel particularly to the heart. These promises include the remission of sins and everlasting life by Christ. Perkins is careful at this point to distinguish between the testimony of the Spirit and presumption. One way to tell the difference is the means by which it is accomplished. Preaching, reading, and meditating on the Word of God, prayer, and the sacraments (properly used) ordinarily produce true testimony. Presumptuous testimony, on the other hand, is conjured in the heart and mind of the individual, often when participating in the same means of grace, but without the blessing of God. Another way to distinguish between the testimony of the Spirit and presumption is their effects. Only the Spirit's witness incites

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*Tending Unto a Declaration, Whether a Man Be in the Estate of Damnation, or in the Estate of Grace; A Case of Conscience; A Discourse of Conscience; A Graine of a Mustard Seed.*

<sup>32</sup> Perkins, *Workes*, 2:18.

the heart to earnest prayer to God, with a sense of one's own misery. Perkins understands this to be the sighs and groans that cannot be uttered.<sup>33</sup>

The individual's spirit witnesses to salvation secondarily, according to Romans 8:16. The conscience, sanctified and renewed by God, is what testifies to salvation in this case. Perkins discerns salvation by three evidences: grief over offending God, endeavoring to obey God in all things, and performing the works of the Spirit with joy. According to Perkins, in the absence of the Spirit of God's testimony, the testimony of the individual's spirit suffices for assurance. Perkins sees the heat of fire as illustrating this fact: heat is an indicator that a flame is real even if it cannot be seen. In fact, Perkins sees the sincere effort at sanctification as evidence of the fact of sanctification, for one piece of fruit is sufficient indication that a tree is alive.<sup>34</sup>

Perkins deals with how one may regain assurance of salvation after it is lost in his third main question, which addresses how a man being in distress of mind, may be comforted and relieved."<sup>35</sup> Covenant membership is based on three grounds: faith, repentance, and the true love of God. Perkins articulates the beginnings of these grounds in order to make them identifiable in the distressed. First, God accepts a desire to repent and believe as repentance and faith, receiving the will for the deed. Second, a godly sorrow over one's sin as sin indicates the beginning of repentance. Perkins even considers grief over the hardness of one's heart and lack of capacity for sorrow over sin to be the beginning of repentance. Third, a settled purpose and willingness to forsake sin and turn to God mark

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:18–19.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:22.

the beginning of true conversion, even in the temporary absence of outward evidence. Fourth, a love for people because they are Christians is the indication of true love for God.<sup>36</sup>

When such grounds are constant and settled, even in their beginning stages, they may give assurance to the child of God through what Perkins called “the practical syllogism.” Assuming that one of the grounds outlined above could be identified in the distressed individual, the promise of everlasting life was properly applied by the following reasoning: the major premise came from Scripture, the minor came from the testimony of the afflicted conscience, and the conclusion was the application of the promise. For example: “He that hath an unfeigned desire to repent and believe, hath remission of sins, and life everlasting: But thou hast an earnest desire to repent and believe in Christ. Therefore remission of sins, and life everlasting is thine.”<sup>37</sup> This practical syllogism appears throughout Perkins’s writings in various forms.<sup>38</sup>

### **Knollys on Assurance**

Knollys articulated the importance of holiness and its role in assurance in his sermons collected as *Christ Exalted*. He dedicated the work to the examination committee under which he was being evaluated for antinomianism at the time of its publication. He claimed that his purpose in preaching the sermons was to “exalt Christ and to press my hearers to sanctification of heart and life.”<sup>39</sup> He kept to his purpose in all three sermons gathered in the work. His exposition of Ephesians 1:4 is even entitled “That We Should Be Holy.” He

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 2:22–25.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 2:25.

<sup>38</sup> For more on the practical syllogism, see Joel R. Beeke, *Assurance of Faith: Calvin, English Puritanism, and the Dutch Second Reformation* (New York: P. Lang, 1991), 113–14.

<sup>39</sup> Knollys, *Christ Exalted*, dedication.

asserts that the necessity of holiness is a “truth so generally assented to by all professors.”<sup>40</sup> God “doeth not only forgive them all their sins, and so leave them ungodly, to go on in their wicked ways.”<sup>41</sup>

All five of Knollys’s applications in this sermon are significant for a discussion of the importance of sanctification and its role in assurance. First he describes the “what” and “how” of holiness. Here Knollys concisely defines holiness or sanctification as a “real change of the whole man, from the pollution of sin, to the purity of the Image of Christ.”<sup>42</sup> Specifically, this manifests itself as the fruit of the Spirit and is accomplished in the life of the believer by the Word and Spirit together.

The next application is to discover who are the people of God and who are not. Knollys asserts,

Those people, that are ungodly, un sanctified, are not the people of God, such may boast of their justification, but they deceive themselves, for God hath not justified un sanctified people, 1 Cor. 6. 9,10,11. They may talk of the free grace of God manifested to them, and bringing them Salvation, but they are deluded; for the grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, teacheth us to deny ungodliness, and to live godly.<sup>43</sup>

Knollys distinguishes between three kinds of professors: legal, formal, and carnal. Professors are those “who would be esteemed the people of God, and yet are not sanctified by the holy Spirit, they are not holy, and therefore are not the Lords people in Covenant.” Legal professors are convinced of sin by Word and Spirit, but they go on to establish their own righteousness. Formal professors are those who only seem to be religious. Of them Knollys says, “Here was the Word convincing, and wounding, and comforting but no Christ,

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 33.

to quicken, renew, and sanctify.” Carnal professors are “servants of corruptions” who “take liberty to live in sin.” Knollys seems to be going after antinomians when he says, “As for sin, they make a mock of it; some of them say God takes no knowledge of their sins, he sees no iniquity in them”; others say “they have no sin, they are born of God, and they cannot sin”; and the boldest claim that “they are justified persons, and therefore all their words and actions are alike acceptable to God, and well-pleasing in his sight.”<sup>44</sup> But these professors are known not to be the people of God because they are not holy.

Knollys exhorts true believers in his final three applications. Ephesians 1:4 provides an occasion for humiliation and godly sorrow over sin in God’s people. Knollys does not see perfection as a possibility, and therefore repentance must be characteristic of the believer. The truth of this verse is also a great consolation to God’s people; those who groan under the bondage of any corruption and strive against any sin should take comfort in the fact that God will make his people holy.<sup>45</sup> The sermon’s application is simply an exhortation to holiness. Knollys asserts, “God will have his people holy at all times, in all relations, and in every condition.”<sup>46</sup> There is no excuse for sin, and no relenting of God’s expectation of true holiness, in Knollys’s estimation.

The two other sermons are evidence as well of Knollys’s orthodox understanding of assurance. After exalting Christ and highlighting the ways he *is* all and is *in* all in the new man, Knollys moves to application in his exposition of Colossians 3:11. He exhorts his listeners to examine whether or not Christ is indeed in the hearer, explaining how one may do so. Foundationally, one must examine oneself to determine whether or not one has

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 33–34.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 35–36.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 37.

experienced regeneration. For Knollys, regeneration is being made a new man, being given a new heart, which includes a new will, affections, and spirit, and walking in newness of life. This is part of the new covenant, in which God sends his Spirit to cause his people to walk according to his statutes.

Thus holiness is the primary indicator of this new birth. Knollys claims, “Such of you as have not put off the old man, but still have your old hearts, and your old sins, and walk in your old ways, and fulfill the old lusts of your sinful natures, are not a new creature, you are not in Christ, nor Christ in you.” This is a forceful affirmation of the necessity of sanctification and the reality that there is no assurance apart from it. To those who take comfort in relative progress in holiness, whether compared to others or their former selves, Knollys says,

Although your condition be not so desperate as others, who have lived long under the ordinary means of grace, and yet are not at all wrought upon, I must tell you, Professors may (through strong Convictions, horrors of conscience, and fears of hell) leave the Acts of some sins, and may customarily perform some religious duties, and yet be not regenerated.<sup>47</sup>

This is said not to add sorrow to the afflicted or to break the bruised but to convict those who rely upon self-righteousness.

Knollys describes how Christ seeks sinners in his exposition of Luke 19:10. While describing conviction of righteousness, that one’s righteousness is worthless, necessitating Christ’s imputed righteousness, Knollys is careful to say, “He is not taken quite off from duties, but from resting in them and trusting upon them.” But further, he notes that one cannot “conclude his assurance of eternal life from his duties done, because he knows not whether Christ be his or no, and whether or no he performs those duties from the spirit of

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 8.

life in Christ.”<sup>48</sup> At this point, it is important to note that Knollys is discussing Christ’s pre-conversion preparatory work of conviction, not how a believer might arrive at assurance of salvation.

Knollys then describes what such sinners are saved from. Sinners are delivered from the filth or pollution of sin: they are clothed in the righteousness of Christ and therefore entirely sanctified in God’s sight. Christ frees sinners from the power or dominion of sin. Here Knollys proposes that Romans 7 describes Paul as a believer, but he concludes that those who are saved are not servants of sin. Sin is no longer their lord. Lastly, Christ frees sinners from the curse or punishment of sin. This is accomplished by his death and resurrection, but it does not free the sinner from obligatory obedience. The difference between the law and Christ, in Knollys estimation, is that Christ grants power to do the moral duties required by the law and forbear the same evils prohibited by it.<sup>49</sup> He concludes, “The grace of God which hath appeared, bringing us this salvation teacheth us to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and Godly in this present world” (cf. Tit. 2:11–12).<sup>50</sup> This is far from a de-emphasis on the importance of holiness.

It is clear from Knollys’s later writings that he continued in this understanding of the necessity of sanctification and its role in assurance. In *The Parable of the Kingdom of Heaven Expounded* (1674), he offers consolation to the wise virgins, writing, “Art thou an Israelite indeed? Dost thou worship God in Spirit and in Truth? Hast thou both the form and power of Godliness? Then be of good comfort.” For “Christ is thine, and all is thine . . . God is thy Father, Grace thy portion, and Heaven thine Inheritance, Holiness is thy way,

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 21–24.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 25.

and Happiness will be thine end.”<sup>51</sup> Clearly, Knollys understands one’s life to be a powerful testimony of salvation. Later, Knollys gives three evidences for the power of godliness in one’s life. One is the “Victory they have obtained over the World, Satan, and their own sins.” Second, the “lively Acts and constant exercise of Grace.” Third, “their holy Conversation in the World.”<sup>52</sup> Knollys thus continues in his conviction that sanctification is a legitimate ground of assurance.

Knollys again pushes the necessity of holiness in *The World that Now Is; and the World that Is to Come*. He powerfully exhorts from the example of Noah that the “End of our *natural* life is *to us* the End of this World: And that we may be prepared, we ought to die daily to sin, to self, and to this *evil* world; And we must live to God”<sup>53</sup> He also asserts that mortification is the effect of true faith in Christ. He sees it as both powerful and universal:

This part of God’s *Workmanship* called *Mortification*, is begun in *Evangelical* Repentance, and godly sorrow for sin; whereby a sanctified Believer is made to loath, abhor and hate his sins *2 Cor. 7. 9,10.* and by the Grace of God to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts: And to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this evil world, *Tit. 2. 11,12.* Now his heart being out of love with sin, the *Young* Convert doth by the Assistance of the holy Spirit, and Grace of God, labour and endeavour the mortification of every corruption; and the power of the *indwelling* Spirit in every *sanctified* Believer opposeth and subdueth the power of *indwelling* sin, that remains in him after *Regeneration*, *Gal. 5. 17.*<sup>54</sup>

Holiness was nonnegotiable for Knollys. He consistently affirmed sanctification as a necessary part of the true believer’s experience.

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<sup>51</sup> Knollys, *Parable of the Kingdom of Heaven*, 46.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 51–52.

<sup>53</sup> Knollys, *The World That Now Is; and the World That Is to Come*, 104, emphasis his.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 51–52.

Knollys's most definitive statement on the subject of sanctification and its role in assurance is found in the *Second London Confession 1677/89*. In this document he and the other signatories affirm the possibility of assurance. While they affirm that assurance is infallible, founded upon the sacrifice of Christ and the inner testimony of the Spirit, they go on to say that "this infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith."<sup>55</sup> This assurance of faith may be attained "without extraordinary revelation in the right use of means."<sup>56</sup> The confession is not antinomian but orthodox and includes many passages outside the context of assurance that teach that the believer's life is to be marked by holiness.<sup>57</sup>

### **Synthesis**

Knollys may differ slightly in emphasis from Perkins in his formulation of the importance of sanctification and its role in assurance, but not in kind. Perkins acknowledges that the testimony of the Holy Spirit is primary, but he quickly stresses the importance of holiness. His application of the "practical syllogism" is founded on the desire to repent and believe, which comes from God, rather than on outward conformity to the moral law. Perkins puts great confidence in the ability of secondary grounds for assurance to bring true consolation, but he does so after acknowledging that these are derivative of the primary ground, even if it is seemingly absent. Knollys emphasizes the Spirit's testimony at times, but not to the exclusion of sanctification. Christians are expected to act a certain way, even if this action does not save. And they may gain assurance by looking to their preparation and continual

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<sup>55</sup> *1677/89 Confession*, XVIII. 2–3. Personal assurance is connected to the essence of faith objectively but must be worked out subjectively, or experientially.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, XVIII. 3.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, XI. 2; XV. 4–5; XVI. 1–7; XXI. 3; and XXVI. 2, 5–6. See also *1644/46 Confession*, XXIX.

repentance, namely, their sanctification, even if these realities are wrought by God. Perkins is comfortable with these concepts, though he himself develops them further.

### **Conclusion**

Knollys remained faithful to the orthodox Puritan tradition and was therefore far from an antinomian. His differences are in emphasis only. Knollys affirmed Perkins's understanding of preparation as an act of God in cooperation with man prior to salvation. He also formulated the doctrines of sanctification and assurance and their relationship to one another in a way similar to Perkins. It is at these points that divergence would be most expected if the antinomian charge were to be true. However, the charge is unfounded, and the differences between the two theologians are negligible.

This leads to the question of why Knollys was repeatedly charged with antinomianism. Such charges were likely owing to his associations, unfounded accusations, and misappropriation. The polemically charged context of the first century of English Dissent was dangerous for religious leaders of all stripes, but especially for those who identified with such radical groups as the Baptists. It is reasonable to conclude that adversaries of the Baptists in general and of Knollys specifically were too quick to point fingers at him, given his relationship with Wheelright. Further, when his evangelical preaching stirred up mobs in Suffolk, the charge of heresy was a way to remove him unto examination by the Parliamentary bureaucracy. Finally, a signature on a certificate of authenticity for the republication of Crisp's sermons was a pretext for sullyng the reputation of one of the most distinguished Baptists at a time of unity and consolidation. Whatever the reasons for the charges may be, they are unfounded in the life and writings of Hanserd Knollys.

**AGAINST “HISTORICAL AMNESIA”: A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF  
BAPTISTS IN CANADA, 1990–2017**

**By Taylor Murray**

In the mid-to-late twentieth century, Atlantic Canadian Baptist history broke into the mainstream of scholarly discourse and cemented itself in the region’s historiography.<sup>200</sup> So impressive and consistent was the output that during that time one contributor called it the “most active and exciting field of historical scholarship today.”<sup>201</sup> This sentiment became so widely shared that those involved began to refer to the period between the 1970s and the late 1990s as the “renaissance” of Atlantic Canadian religious history.<sup>202</sup> At perhaps the peak of this excitement in 1989, historians Philip Griffin-Allwood, George Rawlyk, and Jarold Zeman curated a bibliography of English sources relating to Baptists in Canada, ranging from 1760 to 1990.<sup>203</sup> This volume was the tenth in the prolific Baptist Heritage in Atlantic Canada series. The editors of this original project—all three of whom are now deceased—wrote that their purpose for compiling this bibliography was to “encourage further this noteworthy creative outburst.”<sup>204</sup>

While not stated explicitly in the volume, their intention was deeper than this: they sought to encourage subsequent Canadian Baptist generations to preserve their Baptist heritage. As Zeman warned in the preface to the first edition of the Baptist Heritage series:

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<sup>200</sup> In Canadian geography, the term “Atlantic” refers to New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. The term “Maritime” refers only to the first three of these provinces.

<sup>201</sup> David Bell, “All Things New: The Transformation of Maritime Baptist Historiography,” *Nova Scotia Historical Review* 4.2 (1984): 70

<sup>202</sup> E.g., Daniel C. Goodwin, review of *Biographical Directory of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Free Baptist Ministers and Preachers*, by Frederick C. Burnett, in *Social History* 31.62 (1998): 341.

<sup>203</sup> Philip Griffin-Allwood, George A. Rawlyk, and Jarold K. Zeman, eds., *Baptists in Canada, 1760–1990: A Bibliography of Selected Printed Resources in English*, Baptist Heritage in Atlantic Canada 10 (Hantsport, NS: Lancelot, 1989).

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii.

“A church without the knowledge of its history is like a man who has lost his memory. Historical amnesia is a dangerous disease which afflicts much of the contemporary church life.”<sup>205</sup> On a later occasion, Zeman similarly noted, “All . . . future Baptist leaders, whether lay persons or ordained ministers, should be familiar with the Baptist heritage. Without such awareness, the identity of many Baptist churches will be in jeopardy.”<sup>206</sup> In the age of the nondenominational church, Zeman’s words remain timely.

Although historical output has decreased since the recent “renaissance,” a reasonably steady stream of solid historical and theological analysis remains. The Baptist Heritage in Atlantic Canada series has released eight volumes since the publication of the original bibliography. Additionally, more recently the Acadia Centre for Baptist and Anabaptist Studies has launched a booklet series on Atlantic Baptist history, and the Canadian Baptist Historical Society has endeavored to bring a national conversation to the Baptist community with its aptly named Canadian Baptist Historical Society Series. With these and other resources in mind, this bibliography functions as an update to the earlier repository and, like the original project, thereby seeks to encourage further research on Baptists in Canada.

This bibliography of available Canadian Baptist resources serves also to broadcast recent trends and to bring attention to holes within the historiography. Unsurprisingly, regional studies remain most prominent. Within this collection, historians have afforded much attention to higher education (secularization and devolution, general histories, etc.) and Baptist responses to social issues (temperance, immigration, abortion, etc.). Closely

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<sup>205</sup> Jarold Zeman, “General Editor’s Preface,” in *The Diary of Joseph Dimock*, ed. George Levy, Baptist Heritage in Atlantic Canada 1 (Hantsport, NS: Lancelot, 1979): vii.

<sup>206</sup> Jarold Zeman, “Building a Future on the Past,” in *Memory and Hope: Strands of Canadian Baptist History*, ed. David T. Priestley (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996), 17.

related to these topics has been a consistent output relating to the often-turbulent courtship between Baptists in Canada and fundamentalism. In particular these have focused largely on individuals such as T. T. Shields in Ontario, William “Bible Bill” Aberhart in Alberta, and J. J. Sidey in Nova Scotia. There is significant space to expand this narrative, as several important fundamentalist figures have received only peripheral treatment.<sup>207</sup> With this growing body of work, however, is an obvious opportunity for a national study on Baptist fundamentalism in Canada.<sup>208</sup>

Since 1990, another recent tendency has been toward equal representation, with an increasing number of historians addressing gender issues and focusing on female contributions within various Baptist groups. The recent volume from the Canadian Baptist Historical Society series titled *Canadian Baptist Women* has helped to expand this conversation.<sup>209</sup> Certainly there is much left to explore; however, this recent trend has served to capture a more holistic portrayal of the Baptist story in Canada.

Notably absent from the Baptist historical landscape are extended discussions on (1) regions with smaller Baptist populations and (2) smaller Baptist denominations. Among the most glaring omissions are on the Canadian Territories (Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Yukon) and on Newfoundland and Labrador. Similarly, Baptists in Quebec (and French Baptists in New Brunswick) have received little attention. Although Baptist populations are indeed much smaller in these regions, they contain a necessary piece of the

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<sup>207</sup> Among the most significant is Howard C. Slade, who served as T. T. Shields’ successor at Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto. Presently, no biographical work exists on Slade, despite his prominence in the Canadian Protestant League and his efforts to further Shields’ fundamentalist campaign after his mentor’s death. For a representative sample of his work, see H. C. Slade, *“Christ is All” and Other Sermons* (Toronto: Gospel Witness, 1975).

<sup>208</sup> Cf. Kevin Bauder and Robert Delnay, *One in Hope and Doctrine: Origins of Baptist Fundamentalism, 1870–1950* (Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Books, 2014).

<sup>209</sup> Sharon M. Bowler, ed., *Canadian Baptist Women*, Canadian Baptist Historical Society 3 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016).

Canadian Baptist story. Additionally, Baptist scholars would do well to explore the various interactions with the indigenous peoples across Canada. While some work has been done in this field in recent years,<sup>210</sup> much remains to be explored. There is also an obvious need for deeper analysis of smaller Baptist sects, including Primitive Baptists (now Free Will Baptists in the Maritimes), Free Baptists, Baptist General Conference, and independent Baptists—among many others. Hopefully, future historians will afford these regions and groups the attention they require.

In addition to these recent developments and paucities, it seems clear that Canadian Baptist historiography would benefit greatly from a new volume that covers the national Baptist story. Similar high-quality volumes have addressed the American context in recent years,<sup>211</sup> but a solid Canadian equivalent is needed. To date, two national Canadian Baptist histories have been published: *The Baptists of Canada: A History of their Progress and Achievements*, by E. R. Fitch (1911),<sup>212</sup> and *Heritage and Horizon: The Baptist Story in Canada*, by Harry Renfree (1988).<sup>213</sup> While Fitch's work is clearly dated, Renfree's text fails to incorporate much of the literature produced in the contemporary "renaissance," leading one reviewer to conclude that it too was dated the minute it was published.<sup>214</sup> Moreover, these works limit their focus largely to the "mainline" Baptist churches that

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<sup>210</sup> E.g., Dorothy May Lovesey, *To Be a Pilgrim: A Biography of Silas Tertius Rand, 1810–1889*, Baptist Heritage in Atlantic Canada 13 (Hantsport, NS: Lancelot, 1992); and David Elliot, "Canadian Baptists and Native Ministry in the Nineteenth Century," *Historical Papers of the Canadian Society of Church History* (2000): 145–64. See bibliography below for further examples.

<sup>211</sup> E.g., Barry Hankins and Thomas S. Kidd, *Baptists in America: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>212</sup> E. R. Fitch, *The Baptists of Canada: A History of their Progress and Achievements* (Toronto: Baptist Young People's Union of Ontario and Quebec, 1911).

<sup>213</sup> Harry Renfree, *Heritage and Horizon: The Baptist Story in Canada* (Mississauga, ON: Canadian Baptist Federation, 1988).

<sup>214</sup> Philip Griffin-Allwood, review of *Heritage and Horizon*, by Harry Renfree, in *Baptist History and Heritage* 24.3 (1989): 60–61.

today fall under the umbrella of the Canadian Baptist Ministries (CBM, originally the Canadian Baptist Federation).<sup>215</sup> In the process, these works ultimately downplayed the significance of other groups throughout the country. While this regionalism has characterized the Baptist experience in the past, as we move further into the twenty-first century the time may be ripe for a more comprehensive and inclusive study. Indeed, as historian Robert Wilson has observed, “It is remarkable, after a century of discussion and division, how close the various [Baptist] groups are to each other by the end of the twentieth century.”<sup>216</sup>

This present study follows many of the editorial choices of its predecessor and as a result is more a selective rather than an exhaustive bibliography.<sup>217</sup> For example, I have omitted encyclopedia entries and local church histories and have limited the discussion to available English sources. Admittedly, this limits the scope and depth of the project, but nevertheless the bibliography functions as a suitable starting point for interested researchers. Like the original bibliography, the first section includes general studies on Baptists in Canada, followed by studies on the Atlantic, Central, and Western Baptists (associate members of the CBM). Following this is the Free Baptists (including the Christian Connexion), Black Baptists, Fellowship Baptists (with reference to its “Shields” heritage), Ethnic Baptists, Canadian Southern Baptists, Independent Baptists, and other Baptist traditions. The second section focuses on various biographies written since 1990. Finally, the third section assesses various themes within the writings and divides them

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<sup>215</sup> In 1995, the Canadian Baptist Federation amalgamated with the Canadian Baptist International Ministries to form the Canadian Baptist Ministries.

<sup>216</sup> Robert S. Wilson, “Patterns of Canadian Baptist Life in the Twentieth Century,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 36.1–2 (2001): 29.

<sup>217</sup> Undoubtedly, several items have been omitted unintentionally.

accordingly. As the reader will note, none of the entries below have been duplicated; however, I have attempted to cross-reference applicable studies.

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**BOOK REVIEWS**

**Matthew R. Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Theology of Scripture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 290 + xi pages.**

It is difficult to overstate the contribution Matthew R. Crawford has made with his recent book on Cyril of Alexandria. Cogent in argument, fluid in prose, and exhaustive in its handling primary and secondary sources, *Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Theology of Scripture* is a must-read not only for Cyril scholars but for anyone interested in biblical interpretation in the early church, historical theology, theology proper, the debates regarding social and classic Trinitarianism, bibliology, or theological method.

Crawford's aim is to contribute to the current conversation regarding the theological assumptions that provided the foundation for Patristic exegesis, and to demonstrate Cyril's hermeneutical presuppositions. Particularly, Crawford seeks to articulate Cyril's view of Scripture itself, and in doing so to show how his bibliology informs his exegetical approach and methods. This twofold aim, to explain what Cyril believes about Scripture's essence and therefore what he believes about how to interpret Scripture, also forms the structure of the book. After the introduction, Crawford proceeds in chapters 2–4 to explicate Cyril's theology of Scripture. He begins by tying a well-known piece of Cyrillian scholarship, Cyril's Trinitarian axiom (all divine actions are "from the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit"), to his bibliology. Like creation and redemption, so too the inspiration of Scripture is Trinitarian, in that it is from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit.

In chapter 3, Crawford articulates further Cyril's views regarding the latter phrase, "in the Spirit." According to Crawford, Cyril views inspiration as the Holy Spirit's giving

a vision of what to write to human authors, not as a passion-induced, conscious-less prophetic ejaculation, as in the Greco-Roman tradition, but as the divine person of the Spirit working through the human author to write down the very words of the Father. This inspired Word is the Spirit's means of passing down, through the prophets and apostles, the mystagogy of the Christian faith.

This section of the book concludes in chapter 4, where Crawford places another well-known piece of Cyrillian scholarship, his christological focus, in the context of his bibliology. Because the Spirit's work in the act of revelation is to testify to the Son, and because the Son is the means by which human beings know the Father, Scripture is necessarily christocentric. This means that Scripture, as the Spirit-inspired Word of God, is spoken through and about the Son, who is the means by which the Father is revealed.

This Trinitarian schema for understanding Scripture—as God's Word from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit—leads Crawford to explore the other half of the equation, namely, how Christians ought then to read Scripture as a Trinitarian book. This is addressed in chapters 5–6 of the book. According to Crawford, Cyril views Scripture as a covenant document given to God's people for the purpose of knowing him. Because the Father is made known through the Son in the Spirit, those who wish to understand Scripture and know the Father must read the Bible in the Spirit (that is, as baptized believers) and in order to see the Son, by whom they will see the Father. And because the Son is the ultimate, unmediated revelation of the Father, the Gospels retain the central position in the biblical canon. With respect to how and why Christians read Scripture, biblical exegesis is a vitalizing act, in that it, like baptism and the Lord's Supper, is a means of grace, a way of

communing with the Triune God through material elements. Crawford concludes the book by tying together these chapters into a coherent theology of Scripture according to Cyril.

Again, it is difficult to overstate my recommendation of this book. Of course, as with any book there are some lacunae; for instance, I continued to hope that Crawford would tease out more explicitly the relationship between Cyril's theology of revelation and inspiration and his ecclesiology, but this never came to fruition. In spite of any very minor criticisms or questions I might have, though, Crawford has made a highly significant contribution with this book. He does all of the tedious tasks of research and writing right: he is clearly adept in multiple original languages, exhibits a vast knowledge of primary and secondary sources, and is able to engage critically with the tradition and with contemporary research. He also is able not only to synthesize Cyril's own work into a coherent theology of Scripture but also to compare Cyril's bibliology and even finer exegetical points with the previous tradition. But as admirable as these characteristics are, Crawford's two most important contributions lie in his ability to offer a substantive challenge to fashionable conclusions concerning Patristic theology and exegesis. Contrary to what was almost a mantra in the twentieth century, Patristic interpretation is not haphazard or dominated by Greco-Roman philosophy but is based on its own coherent, theologically grounded logic.

Further, as Crawford demonstrates, these theological foundations are not plucked out of the philosophical air but are firmly rooted in Scripture itself. For Cyril and other pro-Nicene theologians (as well as earlier Christian writers), Scripture comes from the Triune God and reveals the Triune God. It is given from the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit. These are not "theological" claims as opposed to "biblical" ones; rather, as Crawford demonstrates, these claims about who God is and what he has given to his people in the

Bible are taken from the Bible itself. Crawford also shows the exegetical logic and care of Cyril and others through a number of forays into Cyril's interpretive conclusions, thus also continuing to overturn the notion that Patristic exegesis is illogical or fanciful or just bad allegory. As for evangelicals, it seems that we have lost a sense of the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity and its relationship to all of God's acts, including his act of revelation. Crawford's book is a welcome reminder of those foundational truths. To put it in another way: I had to keep putting this book down, not because it was boring but because it is meaty. Rather than the milk of much contemporary theology, this monograph is for those who wish to sit down to a thought-provoking feast of a book.

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**Aaron Chalmers, *Interpreting the Prophets: Reading, Understanding and Preaching from the Worlds of the Prophets* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015), 173 + xiii pages.**

Gospel-centered preaching requires whole-Bible preaching. Such a view of homiletics necessitates reading, understanding, interpreting, and preaching from the "worlds of the prophets," and Aaron Chalmers's latest work, *Interpreting the Prophets*, aims to give its readers the tools to properly do so (2). In this work, Chalmers (Head of the School of Ministry, Theology and Culture at Tabor Adelaide in Adelaide, Australia) seeks to provide his readers with a "basic conceptual 'framework'" for understanding these oft-neglected and sometimes confusing OT books (1).

The concept of a plurality of prophetic "worlds" is important for Chalmers's project in highlighting the unique *Sitz im Leben* from which each respective OT prophet writes.

Moreover, the “majority” of *Interpreting the Prophets* is “devoted to the three key ‘worlds’ (or contexts) which we need to consider to interpret these books well”: the historical, theological, and rhetorical worlds (2).

Chalmers’s volume comprises a rather brief introduction (three pages), six chapters, a select bibliography (five pages), and useful Scripture and subject indices. In his introduction, Chalmers sets forth his goal, his methodology, and an overview of each chapter.

Chapter 1 answers the question “What is a prophet?” and Chalmers clears up many misconceptions regarding this topic. He sees five main traits as surrounding the role of “prophet” in the Old Testament: a prophet was a member of the divine council, called by God, a communicator of the word of the Lord, an intercessor, and a sentinel (12–21).

In chapters 2–4, Chalmers unpacks his three prophetic “worlds”—the historical, theological, and rhetorical. He moves from prophecy to apocalyptic literature in chapter 5 and issues five guidelines for preaching through the prophets in chapter 6. Chalmers argues for a “paradigmatic approach to preaching the prophets” more akin to Walter Brueggemann and Elizabeth Achtemeier than to John Piper or D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (146–47).

Numerous strengths mark Chalmers’s work. First, it is well-written, concise, and easily accessible to pastors, students, and informed laity. Second, the numerous photographs and illustrations throughout this work help to bring the “worlds” of the OT prophets to life. Third, “Going deeper” and “Have you considered?” sidebars encourage readers to explore further, with a select bibliography provided at the end of each chapter to facilitate such study. Finally, Chalmers rightly recognizes that the telos of biblical hermeneutics is sermon delivery—hence the subtitle of his book. Chalmers’s unique

wedding of the descriptive (“reading and understanding”) and the prescriptive (“preaching”) seems to be this book’s main contribution to scholarship.

However, I do have some quibbles with this book. First, while preaching is one of the three main foci of Chalmers’s volume, it receives relatively short shrift. This important chapter (ch. 6) seems rushed and shallow compared to the preceding chapters. Second, and more systemic, this work seems to undermine the value of expository preaching. For example, Chalmers makes the rather pejorative comparison of expository preaching to “spoon-feeding” the congregation (147). This is rather ironic, as Chalmers laments that the prophets are often “misunderstood and misapplied” (if treated at all!) (1). But expository preaching through the whole Bible virtually guarantees that all of the prophets will be taught.

Lastly, Chalmers introduces some rather controversial topics without sufficient explanation or detail, which would give his readers a more full-orbed understanding of the issues involved. Two such examples are a tripartite compositional structure of Isaiah and the supposed parallels between the OT and other ANE literature such as the Akkadian *Enuma Eliš* (28, 31, 36, 57, 77). Regarding the unity of Isaiah, Chalmers concedes that not all scholars agree with this tripartite theory (31, 57n11), yet he refers to Proto- and Deutero-Isaiah as if the matter were closed (36). As to ANE literature, the dating of these documents has not been settled, and no dogmatic assertions should be made regarding the supposed sources underlying the OT corpus or any “parallels” between these various documents. Samuel Sandmel’s important Society of Biblical Literature address (1961) issued a clarion call in warning against the pervasive problems of “parallelomania” (*JBL* 81.1 [1962]: 1–

13), and perhaps it would have been better to omit these sections since they do little to support Chalmers's thesis, and no further explanation is given.

In sum, Chalmers's text fills an important lacuna in many homiletical handbooks that do not deal with preaching the prophets faithfully and responsibly, and for this Chalmers is to be commended. Informed pastors and students alike will benefit from Chalmers's numerous keen insights into the worlds of the prophets. However, this volume cannot be recommended without reservation due to Chalmers's rather lopsided portrayal of controversial issues.

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**Duane Litfin, *Paul's Theology of Preaching: The Apostle's Challenge to the Art of Persuasion in Ancient Corinth* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 400 pages.**

Duane Litfin (DPhil, University of Oxford; PhD, Purdue University) is president emeritus of Wheaton College. In this volume, *Paul's Theology of Preaching*, Litfin updates and expands his earlier work on the same subject, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation* (1994). Both of these works had their beginnings in Litfin's dissertation, and Paul's theology of preaching has been a subject of Litfin's focus throughout his career. Litfin admits this current volume under review is the "final" one, the one "envisioned from the outset" (12). Readers are helped immensely by the preface, in which Litfin unpacks the development of his thesis and work on Paul.

Litfin begins by urging readers to consider the importance of 1 Corinthians 1–4 in discovering Paul's theology of preaching. Litfin believes these crucial chapters expose

Paul's strategy in defending the form of his gospel declarations and proclamations against Corinthian rebuke. Paul's opponents levied their criticisms based on a commitment to Greco-Roman rhetoric (137–60). Thus Litfin understands Paul's rejection of "words of eloquent wisdom" (1 Cor. 1:17) to be his rebuttal to Greco-Roman rhetoric and not some form of Gnostic challenge, as some Pauline interpreters have posited. Dividing his book into three parts and offering five appendices, Litfin provides a substantive analysis of Paul's theology of preaching Christ crucified.

Throughout part 1, Litfin provides readers with a helpful summary of ancient rhetoric. His approach avoids burdening readers with the various technicalities of rhetoric and instead focuses on rhetorical features and their prominence in Greco-Roman society. For example, persuasion was the ultimate goal of ancient oratory, and, to be successful, speakers had to use all possible techniques of persuasion to "create or produce belief in their listeners" (73). As a result, the ability to sway an audience gained skilled orators a powerful platform in Greco-Roman society. Because these oratory methods were so widespread, audiences understood and honored speakers who displayed certain rhetorical characteristics when presenting an argument.

In part 2, Litfin focuses on 1 Corinthians 1–4. The thrust of his argument rests on Paul's use of non-rhetorical language (184). Instead of using the language of one skilled in rhetoric, Litfin believes Paul employed the language of a herald. The juxtaposition between the two, for Litfin, proves critical. While orators generated an argument for the purpose of swaying an audience, a herald's task was to convey with uncompromising faithfulness the "already constituted message of another" (185). Paul's theology of preaching exhibited this distinction. The apostle's heraldic form was an overflow and extension of the content he

proclaimed. Paul sought to establish his hearer's faith in the sovereign work of God's Spirit and not the inherent wisdom or rhetorical excellence of the speaker.

In part 3, Litfin offers readers suggestions for appropriating his analysis of Paul's methodology. If Paul "disavowed the task of inducing belief in his listeners" (263) because that is the rightful work of the Holy Spirit, then one must consider Paul's own attempts to employ persuasion in his writings. If the ultimate goal of rhetoric was persuasion, how can Paul's own letters not contain some forms of rhetoric in his appeals that seek to persuade his audience? Litfin's response to this objection is twofold. First, Paul does not claim to reject every form of rhetoric, for then he could not communicate effectively, especially as a preacher. Second, and more importantly, Paul's rejection of rhetorical skills resulted from his shifting the swaying power of his speech away from his own craftiness and to the sovereign work of the Spirit. Thus, to adapt Paul's model, preachers must commit to the task of the herald in announcing the good news of the gospel. Litfin concludes with five brief but helpful appendices that discuss Paul in relation to Apollos and to Philo, the book of Acts, Paul's epistemology, and further ministry implications.

Litfin's work exhibits considerable strengths. Scholars should wrestle with Litfin's analysis when researching Paul's theology of preaching, interpreting Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 1-4, and studying the use of rhetoric. Readers desiring an academic, comprehensive survey of ancient rhetoric will be helped immensely by Litfin's clear analysis. In addition, this work challenges readers to grapple with the cultural and exegetical challenges presented in 1 Corinthians 1-4. Finally, Litfin's description of a faithful herald of the gospel offers significant pastoral wisdom. Litfin applies his analysis of Paul's approach to contemporary consumer models of preaching, which are results

driven. His helpful critique seems a reasonable corrective spanning the relationship between faithful biblical preaching and modern church growth techniques.

Weaknesses in this work center around the depth and breadth of Litfin's analysis. He acknowledges that his work requires "tolerant readers" (29), and some pastors untrained in exegesis or with limited working knowledge of Greek will find aspects of this book to be burdensome. However, scholars and thoughtful pastors will find this work illuminating and challenging. Adding such a rich and engaging analysis furthers needed discussions within studies of Paul and the theology of preaching.

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**Paul M. Hoskins, *The Book of Revelation: A Theological and Exegetical Commentary* (North Charleston, SC: ChristoDoulos Publications, 2017), 491 pages.**

Introductory matters are important; in the New Testament canon, Luke's preface and John's prologue certainly attest to this. In his own preface and introduction to this commentary, Paul Hoskins signals his own goals and approach in the interpretation of the Apocalypse.

The wide-sweeping canvas of the biblical story depicts a "conflict between two kingdoms that predates the coming of Jesus," stretching from the fall in Genesis to the cross; thus "the biblical account of this conflict is more important background for most of the book of Revelation than the historical particularities of John's day" (13). Therefore, while Hoskins is inclined to accept Irenaeus's claim that Revelation was written in the 90s AD, "nothing in the commentary below hinges on the choice of a later versus an earlier

date” (24). Placing the origin of the Apocalypse within the broader context of biblical narrative both heightens the critical importance for appreciating the Old Testament backstory for Revelation and also opens the message of Revelation to faithful Christian discipleship in any generation.

A succinct review of the traditional approaches to Revelation (preterist, historicist, idealist, futurist) provides the backdrop for Hoskins’s favoring a historic premillennial position as the one affording the least number of problems. At the same time, exemplary of the fair-mindedness he displays is his recognition of helpful emphases and limitations of each interpretive method. And indicative of a trend in the past few decades toward a more eclectic attitude are these remarks: “A historic premillennial interpreter will have much in common with an amillennial interpreter, like [G. K.] Beale” (34). Further, “the idealist approach is a helpful challenge to interpreters. It challenges them to bring out the relevance of the book’s message for the Christian life and worldview” (31). (An alert: In keeping with Hoskins’ desire—or obligation?—for a writer to disclose his interpretive preferences, it may be useful to state my own affinity with an amillennial, partially preterist, strongly idealist approach. A rare breed indeed would be the reader who comes to Revelation with *no* prior influences!)

Two corresponding areas mark the chief contribution Hoskins wishes to bring to his interpretation of Revelation: 1) recognition of numerous Old Testament allusions in Revelation, ranging beyond well-travelled connections (e.g., Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah) to additional texts from Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, 1–2 Kings, Jeremiah, Joel, and others; and 2) most particularly, the use of typology in Revelation, to which Hoskins finds sparse attention given in most commentaries. Hoskins regards typology as a mid-

category between allusions and biblical prophecy, providing an important vehicle for understanding many Old Testament allusions in Revelation (41) and contributing to the larger realm of biblical prophecy (306).

Hoskins's emphasis on typology was spurred by studies that led to two previous publications focusing on typology in the Gospel of John: *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (2006) and *That Scripture Might be Fulfilled: Typology and the Death of Christ* (2009). On the matter of authorship of Revelation, Hoskins finds John the apostle to be the "most plausible candidate" (21) and favorably quotes E. Stauffer's assertion of John the apostle as the common author of all five Johannine writings.

Three basic considerations are given for the use of typology in Revelation: 1) God's sovereign direction of history toward an ultimate goal: the *consummation* of salvation-history (seen in Revelation 19–22); 2) the apex of that ultimate goal in the work of Jesus, the *climax* of salvation-history; and 3) God's use of prefiguring "prior steps" in Old Testament persons, events, institutions—i.e., typology (40). (Hoskins credits the influence of G. E. Ladd for the terminology of *climax* and *consummation* of salvation-history [40n89].)

As a corollary, it is appropriate to note a significant biblical tension Hoskins proposes to maintain: "I intend to provide an interpretation that emphasizes the already (realized eschatology) and the not yet (consummated eschatology) aspects of the book of Revelation" (35). Each of these is present in the Gospel of John and in Revelation, though the latter is obviously more prominent in Revelation.

The following comments relate to the literary structure of two major sections in Revelation.

*Structure of the Seven Letters*

Hoskins finds a chiastic format in these letters, with an increasing intensity of Christ's reprimands of the churches, except for the absence of rebuke toward Smyrna and Philadelphia. (Figure 2 provides a diagram of this structuring [120].) Notably, Thyatira occupies the center position and is the longest of the letters. The significance of this placement is found in the letter's connection with Revelation's thematically prominent issue of idolatry (worship of the beast) versus faithfulness to the worship of God alone.

*Structure of the Twenty-one Plagues (Seals, Trumpets, Bowls)*

These are viewed as progressing in time and intensity, from the cross to Jesus' return, with three interludes fashioning an interlocking arrangement—reserving the seventh seal, trumpet, and bowl to be aligned with the second coming of Christ. (Figure 1 gives a table of this structuring and an accompanying acknowledgement of the interpretive influence of Grant Osborne, with whom Hoskins studied [25].)

Hoskins's pattern of presentation is to end each chapter (of his book, not the chapters of Revelation) with a concluding synthesis. Although some of these might have been more expansive in content, it might be worthwhile to read the synthesis for each of Hoskins' chapters first, as a prologue for each chapter (and then a second time, after reading the chapter). Also interspersed among the chapters are three excursuses. Of particular note is the second excursus: "The 21 Judgments and Typology." I recommend that the reader move to this brief discussion immediately after reading Hoskins' primer on biblical

allusions and typology in his introduction (36–42). “In the case of the 21 judgments, their relationship to the Exodus plagues is *significant enough to justify saying* that the Exodus plagues provide a type or pattern for them. This is important. It means that God’s dealings with Pharaoh and the Egyptians provide a type for his judgment upon the Beast and the people of the Beast. . . . Throughout the book of Revelation, we see multiple examples of Old Testament events that provide types for events in the book of Revelation” (306; italics are mine, suggesting this statement as a key to Hoskins’ interest, support, and application of typology).

While several Old Testament texts and stories are given attention, an exodus typology occupies center stage in Hoskins’ commentary. For example, in Revelation 12 he finds a typological relationship between Pharaoh and the great red dragon; the threatened woman “giving birth to a male child” as a typological allusion to Moses (215); and a suggestive parallel between the earth’s swallowing of the river spewed forth by the dragon and Pharaoh’s armies being swallowed by the Red Sea—both by God’s intervention (224).

To trace some elements of biblical allusion and typology in *The Book of Revelation*, consider the following samplings of Hoskins’ interpretation:

*Sealing of the Saints (Rev. 7:1–3)*

In Ezekiel 9, an angel marks God’s people in order to protect them from God’s judgment at the fall of Jerusalem (148); repetitive notations in the exodus narrative distinguish the sparing of Israel from the plagues; and in Revelation, God’s people are purchased with the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 5:9), who is the antitypical fulfillment of the Passover lamb (149).

## *Book Reviews*

### *The Beasts from the Sea and Land (Revelation 13)*

The stories of the boastful and blasphemous king of Assyria (2 Kings 18–19) “provide instructive parallels to Revelation 13:6” (237), and the second beast (false prophet) and the calling of fire from heaven is analogous to the confrontation (1 Kings 18) between Elijah and the prophets of Baal (245). And particularly, “Revelation 13:8 is a critically important verse for Revelation’s theology of the two kingdoms and for Revelation’s teaching on idolatry,” which allows for no compromise (239).

### *God’s Devoted Servants, His Firstfruits (Rev. 14:4–5)*

Jeremiah’s comments about Israel following the exodus (Jer. 2:2–3) warn that anyone “devouring” God’s people will suffer God’s judgment. “One can see that this line of thinking fits quite well with the plot and theology of Revelation” (268).

### *The Fall of Babylon, the Great Harlot (Revelation 18)*

This chapter is replete with “judgment language” drawn from Old Testament allusions related to the fall of historical Babylon (338). “More than any other chapter . . . Revelation 18 stresses Babylon’s use of wealth to tempt the nations . . . to follow her in her sins” (339). The connection between Revelation 18:7 and Isaiah 47:8 regarding boastful claims of indulgent “security” “provides another clear instance of Babylon typology” (345). Revelation 19:2 further points to a “Jezebel typology” in Revelation: “[Jezebel’s] foremost act of harlotry involves leading Israel to worship other gods. . . . As was the case with Jezebel, God will eventually avenge the blood of his servants. The Great Harlot will perish. The Beast and his ten kings will eat her flesh, just as the dogs ate Jezebel (Rev. 17:16)” (360). In light of Hoskins’ emphasis on the Thyatira letter, the “Jezebel” in that letter seems

to be a prefiguring of the Jezebel typology of Revelation 18. (Revelation “contains several examples of foreshadowing where a verse or passage anticipates a fuller description that will come later” [26]. This “foreshadowing” element is reminiscent of the same characteristic in the Fourth Gospel.)

Among the book-cover recommendations, Paul Hoskins’ work is described as a “mid-level commentary.” In the context of that summarizing phrase, I offer several concluding observations and an analogy.

### *Observations*

Hoskins comes to the ever-daunting task of interpreting the Apocalypse with an attitude of humility and a persistent dedication to the pursuit of further insights from within the give-and-take testing ground of teaching: “I have not mastered the book of Revelation and do not expect to do so. I am, however, at a point where I regularly teach on Revelation in my seminary classes and in church” (9). These features are coupled with a conversational style of writing that will be welcome to the reader who might be put off by excessive technical jargon. For the student not familiar with the Greek text, details of Greek grammar are largely limited to the footnotes.

Hoskins acknowledges a limitation of interaction with other interpretive views, mostly found in footnotes (10), and adds a qualified disclaimer: “I have not been able to defend each allusion that I mention with equal attention to detail, but I think that I have offered more help to the reader than most other Revelation commentaries” (38n81).

One of the most salutary aspects of Hoskins’ commentary is his steady attention to the theologically based challenge of two combating kingdoms, with a persistent ultimatum running throughout the narrative of Revelation: who *alone* is worthy of worship?

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Regarding the beast of Revelation 13, “one can see in the world that the ferocious Beast’s paradigm for exercising power provides the paradigm for many rulers in the world both in John’s day and our own. Part of that paradigm involves the persecution of the people of God” (255–56). And yet, “the number 666 proclaims that the Beast and the unholy trinity fall short of God and will never be his equal” (256). (Given my own bias of interpretation, Hoskins’ treatment of Revelation 13 would be quite amenable with an idealist approach, among other points in his commentary. Perhaps Hoskins is more of an “idealist” than he lays formal claim to!)

The use of typology has ever been subject to extremes, of either unwarranted over-application or a reactionary minimizing of its value for biblical interpretation. I am making no charge of the former for Hoskins, but, since typology occupies such a prominent place in his commentary, I recommend that a reader consult a balanced text on biblical interpretation that would equip the reader for following Hoskins’ proposals of Old Testament allusions and typologies.

### *My Analogy*

Multiple translations and paraphrases of Scripture are continually offered to successive generations in an attempt to bear witness to the message of God’s Word with clarity and fidelity, as is appropriate. At the same time, readers do well to compare such contemporary renderings with previous translations. In a similar manner, Hoskins has provided a highly readable study of Revelation, introducing major themes and theological emphases in an accessible manner. For those unacquainted with the scope of earlier and recent commentaries and studies on Revelation, and whose interest has been whetted by Hoskins’ study, he guides the reader via useful footnotes and a nine-page bibliography

(representative, not exhaustive) to more expanded and detailed sources (notably the commentaries of David Aune, G. K. Beale, and Grant Osborne). It is simply my own preference, but I would have appreciated indexes to be included—both of Scripture texts and of authors cited.

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**Thomas C. Oden, *A Change of Heart: A Personal and Theological Memoir* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 384 pages.**

Thomas Oden passed away in December 2016. Prior to passing into glory, he left the church one final piece of literature that reflects upon a variety of theological and biographical ideas. This work is a story of how he went from Bultmann to Athanasius and there found his truer identity in classical Christian theology. In *A Change of Heart*, Oden smoothly and elegantly brings the reader through his own journey to a deeper love for antiquity and the ancient traditions.

The structure of the book builds on the eight decades of Oden's life and academic career. Three primary themes coalesce in the work. First, Oden documents his early years and his PhD studies and early teaching career (chs. 1–4). He then documents his “change of heart,” in which he discovered the voices of antiquity that forever changed his writing and academic career (chs. 5–6). The final section moves his narrative to a close and to the close of his career in academia (chs. 7–9).

It is rather difficult to offer criticism or evaluations of a memoir, so I will instead point to a few personal highlights of Oden's story. The first event that stands out is Oden's conversion to classical Christianity and the fallout of his subsequent theological evolution.

Oden was previously a Bultmannian, influenced by Richard Niebuhr and Pannenberg, and a Marxist idealist. While at Drew University, conversations with the Jewish scholar Will Herberg propelled his discovery of the classic Christian tradition. He recalls the irony of this event: “Herberg became a Jew by listening to a Christian; I became a Christian by listening to a Jew” (134). Oden listened to lectures on Old Testament atonement and was compelled to consider the Christian classics. Herberg exhorted him, “You will remain theologically uneducated until you study carefully Athanasius, Augustine and Aquinas” (136). So, through these encounters and exhortations, Oden sat down at the feet of these ancients to discover his truest identity.

Beyond this conversion reflection, Oden describes the fallout of his previous social and theological paradigms. He recalls, “My life story has had two phases: going away from home as far as I could go, not knowing what I might find in an odyssey of preparation, and then at last inhabiting anew my own original home of classic Christian wisdom” (140). For a number of years, Oden attempted to make general restitution and experienced feelings of regret over his previous social life and public theology. He expresses remorse over the lack of social defense of the unborn, his approval of a sexually permissive lifestyle that led to a generation of fatherless children, and more (145–48). These are helpful reminders that private theology and social change are linked at some level.

Another watershed moment for Oden occurred in 1988, when he personally met Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. Oden recalls the preoccupation of writing his *Systematic Theology*: “I did not know how to begin to build the bridge between systematic theology and the history of exegesis” (211). For Oden, a passion for systematic theology and for the history of exegesis lacked a robust methodology to grasp patristic doctrine. This encounter

with Joseph Ratzinger would affect the rest of his life and his writing career. It was here that “I began to consider the deliberate study of the history of patristic exegesis as a paramount personal vocation” (212).

Related to meeting Ratzinger, the story behind the creation of the Ancient Christian Commentary Series is riveting. Engaging with Ratzinger at the time in Oden’s thinking about classic Christianity divinely bore fruit for the creation of the ACCS. Four years after their first interaction, Oden was searching for ways to make this project viable (238). As one who is invested in Patristic theology, Patristic hermeneutics, and early Christian formation of theology, this reviewer has found the ACCS to be an invaluable asset. As Oden peeled back the curtain just a bit, I could not read fast enough to see how the narrative unfolded.

A fourth element that stands out is how Oden processed and grieved the death of his wife. Throughout the narrative of Oden’s life, he comments upon their sweet and tender relationship. At every turn of his life, even in his academic pursuits, he comments on her involvement and presence. But she passed, and he grieved deeply (325–28). His deepest spiritual renewal, according to Oden, persisted after her death. He withdrew from engagement, embraced grief and sorrow, and experienced healing and new spiritual energy (325). Born from these experiences was *In Search of Solitude*, in which he reflected upon the voices and prayers of figures in classical Christianity. These prayers and times of meditations mended a sorrowful heart.

It is with joy and deep regret that I have finished Oden’s story, but I highly doubt his voice in literature or his vision to recover classical Christian theology for the modern era will diminish. *A Change of Heart* is an exhilarating story of providence, a story of

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recovery, a story of hope, a story that exhorts the modern era to reconsider its use of antiquity. I would encourage pastors and ministers interested in the contours of history and theology, aspiring doctoral students, the discouraged scholar, and those interested in retrieval practices to pick up and read this work.

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