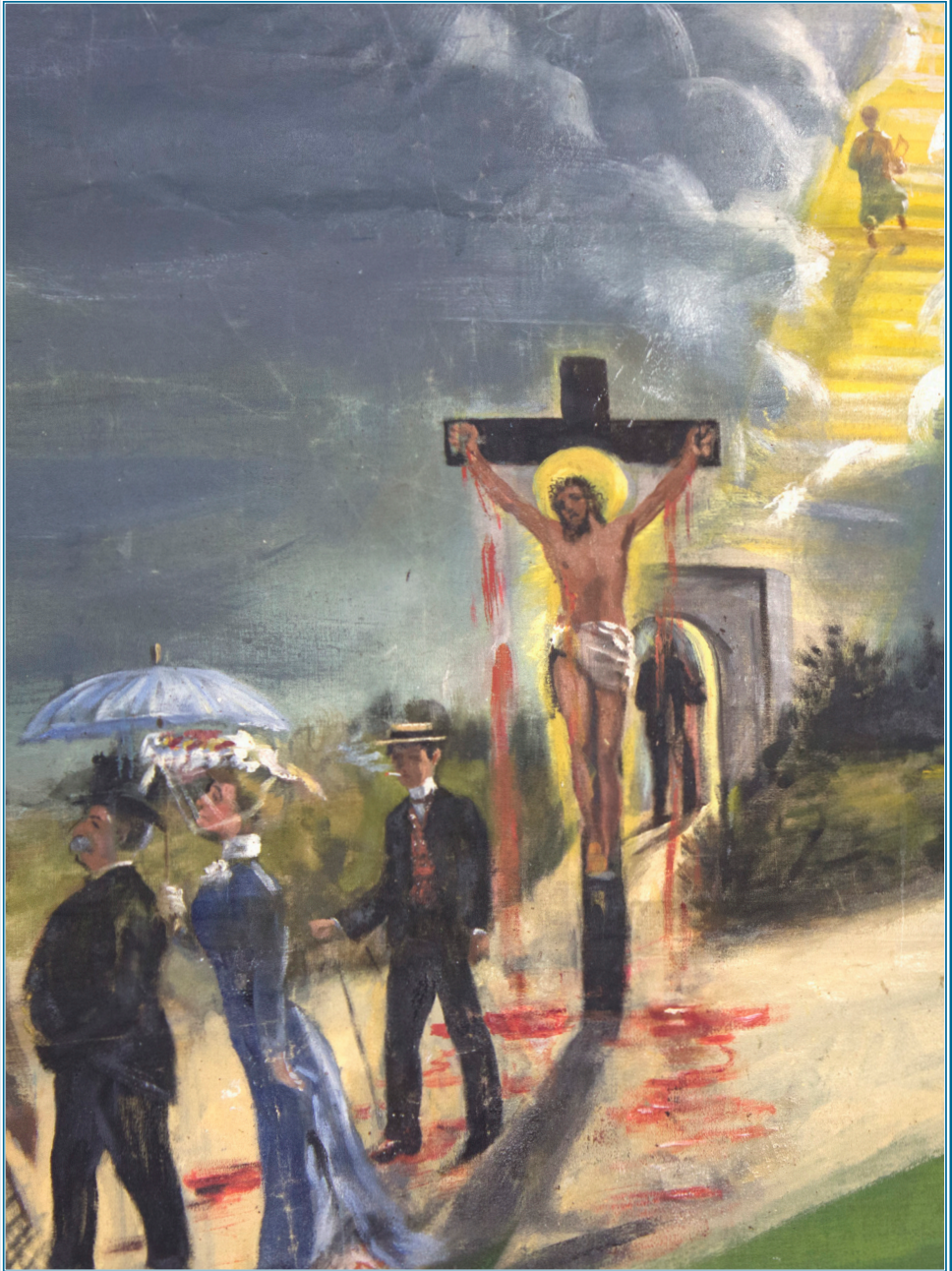


# *The Asbury Journal*

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# The Asbury Journal

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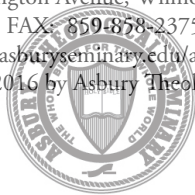
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# *The Asbury Journal*

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The Asbury Journal is a continuation of the Asbury Seminarian (1945-1985, vol. 1-40) and The Asbury Theological Journal (1986-2005, vol. 41-60). Articles in The Asbury Journal are indexed in The Christian Periodical Index and Religion Index One: Periodicals (RIO); book reviews are indexed in Index to Book Reviews in Religion (IBRR). Both RIO and IBRR are published by the American Theological Library Association, 5600 South Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637, and are available online through BRS Information Technologies and DIALOG Information Services. Articles starting with volume 43 are abstracted in Religious and Theological Abstracts and New Testament Abstracts. Volumes in microform of the Asbury Seminarian (vols. 1-40) and the Asbury Theological Journal (vols. 41-60) are available from University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

*The Asbury Journal* publishes scholarly essays and book reviews written from a Wesleyan perspective. The Journal's authors and audience reflect the global reality of the Christian church, the holistic nature of Wesleyan thought, and the importance of both theory and practice in addressing the current issues of the day. Authors include Wesleyan scholars, scholars of Wesleyanism/Methodism, and scholars writing on issues of theological and theological education importance.

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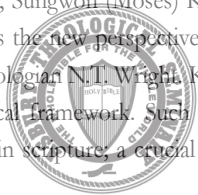
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## *From the Editor*

As *The Asbury Journal* launches into the future by going completely online, it is important that we reflect back and take stock of the heritage from which we come. We are committed to promoting the theological ideas of holiness from our Wesleyan background, along with a strong commitment to biblically based theology and exegesis. In this issue, while we are moving forward technologically, we are emphasizing where we come from and the strengths of our faith tradition. Paul Chilcote starts off this issue with an article about Wesleyan spirituality and the means of grace. These are key components to recognizing Asbury Theological Seminary as an institution and identifying our core spiritual values. Former long-time *Asbury Journal* editor, Laurence Wood, provides two articles on the development of Pentecostal sanctification in the writings of John Wesley, John Fletcher, and other early Methodists. It is this concept of Pentecostal sanctification that really helps connect Asbury's Wesleyan heritage to its involvement in the Holiness Movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Understanding how the Wesleyan-Holiness Movement developed out of this theology takes us to R. Jeff Hiatt's article on the Pentecostal Mission, one early Holiness group that helped form and develop the Church of the Nazarene and its understanding of missions.

Another important feature of Asbury Theological Seminary and its heritage is its commitment to reading and understanding scripture. Rabbi David Zucker's article on reinterpreting the story of Rebekah from both the text and his Jewish heritage presents us with a very new way to see this Jewish matriarch, not as a scheming manipulative mother, but as a devoted wife who works with her husband to perpetuate God's covenant. David B. Schreiner's article from the New Testament examines the use of two Greek verbs that are frequently used together in Matthew, which provides a theme for understanding the nature of Jesus' Messiahship in Matthew, and helps us see interesting parallels in the birth narratives regarding the magi and King Herod. Finally, Sungwon (Moses) Kim, a recent visiting scholar at Asbury from Korea, examines the new perspective of Paul and the theology and methodology of Anglican theologian N.T. Wright. Kim seeks to assess this popular theologian from an Evangelical framework. Such work reminds us of the need to be critical scholars rooted in scripture, a crucial part of the training at Asbury Theological Seminary.

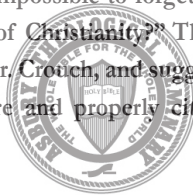


The *From the Archives* essay this issue looks back to the work of another early figure in the Holiness Movement, Arthur Greene. Rev. Greene is an obscure figure in the history of the Holiness Movement and yet he rubbed shoulders with important figures and even preached at camp meetings with Oswald Chambers. While his life has left only limited information, his family's gift of a small collection of papers and an astounding collection of large camp meeting paintings, is a major treasure in our collection. In addition, a special collaborative book review of Asbury Theological Seminary professor, Bill T. Arnold's edited book *Ancient Israel's History*, helps highlight the scholarship that Asbury Theological Seminary values.

Yes, *The Asbury Journal* has gone digital, but it remains committed to the values of its Wesleyan-Holiness heritage, its commitment to strong biblically-based scholarship, and its desire to spread scriptural holiness throughout the world. Going digital is one way to further this historic vision. As I am writing this, *The Asbury Journal* has been downloaded a total of 97,397 times since we first went digital in 2012, and we were downloaded 40,921 times last year alone. We have been downloaded in 109 countries around the world. All of this demonstrates much more impact than our traditional subscription base of around 1,200 print copies. Asbury Theological Seminary enters a globalized and technological world, but we do so firmly entrenched in our theological and historical heritage, seeking to advance the message of Wesleyan-Holiness around the world!

*Robert Danielson Ph.D.*

**Note of correction and apology:** It has been brought to the editor's attention that three paragraphs from page 104-105 of Mark A. Lampport's article *Unintended Outcomes, Curious Inventions & Misshapen Creatures* (63:1, Spring 2008), are substantially identical to material from Andy Crouch's article "Let's Get Personal." *Books & Culture*, January/February 2002, page 12. Mr. Lampport did not previously cite this material in his article. It begins, "Hard to explain, impossible to forget," and continues to, "should we, propose a new version of Christianity?" The editor extends his deepest apologies for this error to Mr. Crouch, and suggests anyone quoting material from this article to be sure and properly cite Mr. Crouch if using this selection.



Paul W. Chilcote

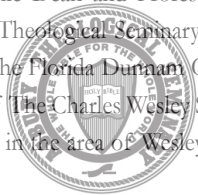
*The Wesleyan Vision: Foundations*

**Abstract**

This article discusses the integral nature of theology and spirituality in the writings and practices of John and Charles Wesley. It describes works of piety and works of mercy as a holistic foundation upon which the Wesleys built their movement of renewal in the Church of England in the eighteenth century. Particular attention is given to the means of grace – prayer, biblical engagement, Christian fellowship, and Eucharist, as well as the connection between the sacrament and mission. This article was the first of two lectures originally delivered at Booth College (Winnipeg) as part of the inaugural Earl Robinson Lectures series.

**Keywords:** Wesleyan spirituality; works of piety, means of grace; Eucharist; Christian revitalization

**Paul W. Chilcote** is Academic Dean and Professor of Historical Theology & Wesleyan Studies at Ashland Theological Seminary in Ohio. Chilcote served as a founding faculty member of the Florida Duggan Campus of Asbury Theological Seminary. Former president of The Charles Wesley Society, he has written or edited more than 20 books primarily in the area of Wesley and Methodist studies as well as countless articles.



The spirituality of John and Charles Wesley shaped their vision of the Christian faith and how Christian disciples live in the world.<sup>1</sup> The integral nature of theology and spirituality – Christian faith and faithful practice – defined the early Methodist movement. The way in which the Wesleys held faith and life together by means of Christian practices made their project of renewal a powerful spiritual force of enduring significance. Over the past several decades, two questions have come to dominate those with a renewed interest in Christian practices in our own time: “What does it mean to live the Christian life faithfully and well?” and “How can we help one another to do so?” (Dykstra 2005:xii-xiv). Contemporary students of ecclesial practices are discovering much about how these activities both shape people and reflect their values and senses of meaning (Bass 1997). Craig Dykstra describes these practices in a way that resonates strongly with the vision of the Wesley brothers:

Christian practices are not activities we do to make something spiritual happen in our lives. Nor are they duties we undertake to be obedient to God. Rather, they are patterns of communal action that create openings in our lives where the grace, mercy, and presence of God may be made known to us. They are places where the power of God is experienced. In the end, these are not ultimately our practices but forms of participation in the practice of God ([http://www.practicingourfaith.org/prct\\_what\\_are\\_practices.html](http://www.practicingourfaith.org/prct_what_are_practices.html)).

The life and ministry of the Wesleys revolved around the same concerns that have fueled the contemporary revival of Christian practices. The driving passion of John and Charles Wesley was to live faithfully in Christ and to establish communities in which others claimed this as their primary vocation as well. They found it impossible to separate their personal experience of God and devotion to Christ from their active role as ambassadors of reconciliation and social transformation in the world. Those practices that exerted the greatest influence on the Wesley brothers reflect their immersion in the Anglican heritage they loved and emulated. It is not too much to say that they apprenticed themselves to the great spiritual masters within their beloved Church of England. Their vision of the Christian life revolved around Anglican practices that have stood the test of time. They practiced a holistic spirituality

The Wesleys oriented the holistic practice of the Christian faith around two primary foci: works of piety and works of mercy. They also used the term “means of grace” to refer to these practices, defined as those outward signs, words, or actions, ordained by God to be the ordinary channels by which



persons in search of life encounter God's grace (Outler 1984:395). John Wesley described prayer (and fasting), Bible study, Christian conference (or fellowship), and participation in the Sacrament of Holy Communion as instituted means of grace, as opposed to prudential means, such as doing all the good you can. The instituted means, in particular, not only nurtured and sustained growth in grace among the early Methodist people, but also provided the energy which fueled the Wesleyan movement as a powerful religious awakening. These activities nurtured and sustained growth in grace and love. As a consequence, the Wesleyan movement was a powerful religious awakening, evangelical in terms of its rediscovery of God's word of grace and Eucharistic in its identification of the sacrament of Holy Communion as a profound place to experience that grace. Wesleyan spirituality also included a profound incarnational dimension. In addition to these works of piety, they strongly advocated active social service, commitment to the poor, and advocacy for the oppressed. Authentic Christianity, they had learned, is mission; sincere engagement in God's mission is true religion (Chilcote 2004:93-104). The primary means by which the early Methodists lived out this holistic understanding of Christian discipleship was through the practice of mercy that paralleled the more interior works of piety. The Wesleyan movement of renewal reveals a missionary vision, therefore, with an evangelistic core.

The Wesleys and the early Methodists engaged in these practices in a context of mutual accountability. Despite the sibling rivalry that characterized the relationship between John and Charles Wesley, it is abundantly clear that they were intentional about being accountable to one another in virtually every aspect of their living. The way in which they "watched over one another in love" modeled a way of life imitated by their followers. Through their practice they inculcated accountable discipleship among their followers and developed structures that affirmed each Christian's need of others to successfully complete the journey of faith. In his hymns, Charles Wesley celebrated the small groups—the bands and classes—in which the early Methodists provided mutual encouragement and genuine care for one another:

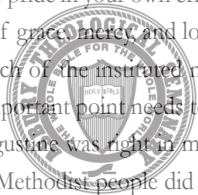
Help us to help each other, Lord,  
Each other's cross to bear;  
Let each his friendly aid afford,  
And feed his brother's care.

Help us to build each other up,  
Our little stock improve;  
Increase our faith, confirm our hope,  
And perfect us in love (Wesley 1742:83).

John Wesley wrote a sermon essay on “The Means of Grace,” later published among his standard sermons (Outler 1984:35-47). He clarifies the difference between the proper use and possible abuse of Christian practices, or means of grace, in faithful discipleship. The sermon was a forceful attack against those who regarded all outward actions as superfluous, or even harmful, to the spiritual life, emphasizing a passive and interior spirituality. These so-called “quietists” were the audience he targeted in the sermon. Wesley’s purpose was to argue both the validity and necessity of the means of grace. He proclaimed an “active faith” over against the passivity of those embroiled in this “Stillness Controversy.” He marshaled a simple line of argument. Christ provided certain outward means in order to offer us his grace. Some began to mistake the means for the end and focused on the outward works rather than the goal of a renewed heart. Because of the abuse of the means of grace, some began to assume that they were dangerous and should not be used. But, in spite of the abusers and the despisers, others correctly held true, inward and authentic, outward religion together. Wesley concluded that whoever really wants to be in a vital relationship with God must “wait” for God by immersing him or herself in the means God has provided. To put it on a more intimate level, a relationship only grows if you put yourself into it. The relationship is a gift, but it also requires discipline.

Wesley demonstrates how three principles, in particular, govern the use of the means of grace. First, the means are never meant to be ends in themselves. They are means to spiritual ends (Knight 1992:50-91). To turn means into ends is a certain trajectory leading to idolatry. Secondly, the means are “ordinary channels” of God’s grace. God is always “above” the means. But while God’s grace and love may be offered freely in extraordinary ways, it would be a mistake to abandon those practices in which God has promised to meet God’s beloved. Thirdly, the means should be viewed as places of divine/human encounter. It is in the means that we meet God anew, but the potency of our communion with God is not dependent upon our ability to find God; rather, the virtue of the means is in the ability of God to find us. Wesley concludes the sermon by offering simple instruction for the proper use of the means. As a general rule, use all of the means. Remember that God is above all means, and apart from God, all means are useless. So seek God alone in the means and take no pride in your own effort or presumed success. Open your heart to God’s promise of grace, mercy, and love.

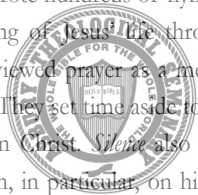
Before exploring each of the instituted means of grace as foundational to the Wesleyan vision, one important point needs to be made somewhat unique to the Wesleyan tradition. If Augustine was right in making the claim that “to sing is to pray twice,” then the early Methodist people did a lot of praying! Singing praise



to God transforms the singer. Sacred song shapes the people of God, and Charles Wesley's hymns not only formed the minds of the people called Methodists, they also tempered the spirit of this unique community of faith. The hymns themselves were a powerful tool in the Spirit's work of revival and affected the spirituality of the Methodist people, perhaps more than any other single force beside the Bible. Charles reminds us all that a singing faith is a contagious faith. Because of the central place of sacred song, therefore, in the Wesleyan heritage, Charles Wesley's hymns will serve to illustrate many of the points central to our theme.

*Prayer.* Prayer is the foundational means of grace in the Wesleyan vision. It would be correct to say that prayer informs all the other means of grace in one way or another; indeed, it is the bedrock of the Christian life. John and Charles Wesley practiced a disciplined devotional life. They learned this lesson in the Epworth Rectory, their childhood home, under the spiritual instruction of their mother, Susanna. Throughout the course of their lives, they began every day with Morning Prayer and ended every day with Evening Prayer from the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*. This practice, in and of itself, may have formed their spirituality more than any other influence. Praying these set forms of prayer daily meant that they recited the entire Psalter on a regular basis. The Psalms became their principal songbook. They engaged scripture daily on the basis of a set schedule of readings – *lectio continua* (continuous reading) – drawn from the full canon of the Bible, including the Apocrypha. A rich collection of so-called “Office Hymns,” mostly drawn from scripture, like the *Magnificat* and the *Sursum Corda*, shaped their vision of the faith.

Four primary concerns shaped their life of prayer. The *seasons and cycles* of the Christian Year framed their lives. The liturgical year they observed drew the attention of the Christian community to the saving work of God in Jesus Christ through an annual cycle of remembrance. Revolving around the major festivals of Christmas and Easter, these seasons involved periods of preparation, celebration, and reflection. The annual anticipation of Christ's coming, the celebration of the nativity of Jesus, the revelation of God's love in his Son, the commemoration of Jesus' death, the glorious celebration of his resurrection, and the remembrance of the Spirit's descent upon the original believers informed the life and witness of the Wesleys. Charles Wesley wrote hundreds of hymns that enabled the Methodist people to ponder the meaning of Jesus' life through this cycle of prayer and reflection. The Wesleys also viewed prayer as a means of *sharing sacred space* with Jesus, of abiding with Christ. They set time aside to be with their Lord, to nurture their relationship with God in Christ. *Silence* also enabled them to discern their way in quiet anticipation. John, in particular, on his many journeys on horseback



across the British Isles spent much time in silence. This provided an opportunity for him to listen and to attune his spirit to the will and way of God. The Wesleys also prayed the *scriptures*. They prayed the Word with intentionality, sometimes following a pattern of meditation developed by Francis deSales. Charles Wesley concludes a poetic exposition of the whole armor of God with this reminder of St. Paul's admonition to the church at Thessalonica that underscores the importance of prayer:

Pray, without ceasing pray  
(Your Captain gives the word),  
His summons cheerfully obey,  
And call upon the Lord;  
To God your every want  
In instant prayer display;  
Pray always; pray, and never faint;  
Pray, without ceasing pray (Wesley 1749:1:238).

*Biblical Engagement.* “I am determined to be a Bible Christian,” John Wesley once claimed, “not almost but altogether” (Outler 1987:93). The Wesleyan revival, like other movements of Christian renewal, was quite simply a rediscovery of the Bible. The early Methodist people believed that “their book” was not simply a compilation of letters and histories, of prayers and biographies, of wise sayings and encouraging words; rather, they realized that these ancient “words” could become the “Living Word” for them as they encountered scripture anew through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They understood the Bible to be the supreme authority in matters of faith and practice. In both preaching and personal study, the scriptural text sprang to new life, forming, informing, and transforming their lives with immediate effect and lasting influence.

The Wesleys understood the power of the Word. It is interesting to ponder the fact that all human interaction is based on spoken words and acted signs: saying and doing. It is little wonder, therefore, that Christian worship includes both word and sacrament. The Wesleys also understood that words shape people and give them their identity. I'll never forget as a youth how my father bade me farewell at the doorway on the evening of a date with those powerful words, “Paul, remember who you are.” Words create identity, enabling us to remember who we are and to whom we belong. In the context of our pilgrimage of faith, the Word quite simply helps us to remember. This concept is captured in the Greek term *anamnesis*. This is the same term used in the New Testament narratives about the Lord's Supper when Jesus says, “Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). Rather than a simple act of memory, the connotation of this form of remembrance entails the idea of experiencing the reality of something remembered in the present

moment. Scripture, therefore, functions to make the realities of God real to us here and now. Through our engagement with the Word, we remember what God has done – how God has acted in human history – experiencing and living into that liberation now.

This rich concept of remembrance finds roots in the ancient synagogue and the survival of the people of Israel in exile. For the Hebrew people, if they had any hope of retaining their identity as the children of Jahweh while embedded in a foreign culture, they had to develop dynamic methods of remembrance. The institution of the synagogue and the development of a body of sacred literature facilitated this “dynamic of living memory.” Four movements constituted this sacred process in the context of synagogue worship. 1) *Reading*. They read the story of God’s action in the sacred narratives they had committed to writing. 2) *Reflecting*. Those to whom they had delegated authority in their community interpreted the story to the community of faith. 3) *Rejoicing*. The community celebrated the story of God’s action on its behalf in song and in prayer. 4) *Renewing*. The whole purpose of this dynamic process was the renewal of their identity as the beloved children of God, the primary consequence of remembering. The Wesleys and the early Methodist people approached scripture in very much the same way and for the same purposes. They not only believed that the Spirit breathed life into the Bible – those who collected, composed, and canonized these sacred texts – but also invigorated the individuals and the communities who engage these texts in the spirit of prayer. Dead words became the “living Word” for countless Methodists who practiced the scriptures.

*Christian Fellowship*. In defense of his expanding network of Methodist Societies, John Wesley identified small groups as the distinguishing mark of the movement. In addition to organizing a network of itinerant preacher/evangelists, he built up a structure to sustain that ministry and in which his followers were encouraged to watch over one another in love. The first Societies developed in Bristol initially as small groups that met weekly for worship, fellowship, prayer, and instruction. Originally inspired by the Anglican religious societies made up predominantly of laity, the classes and bands of early Methodism also owed much to their counterparts among the Pietists (Watson 1989 & 1991). Band meetings developed as intimate groups of four to seven members who voluntarily banded together to encourage one another in the quest for holiness of heart and life. Class meetings, typically larger than bands and consisting of approximately twelve members, encompassed the entire membership of the Society and provided a means for the practice and maintenance of disciplinary standards.

For friendship form'd, her constant heart  
 With pure, intense affection glow'd,  
 She could not give her friend a part,  
 Because she gave the whole to God:  
 Her friend she clasp'd with love intire,  
 Inkindled at the Saviour's throne,  
 A spark of that celestial fire,  
 A ray of that eternal Sun (Wesley 1756-87:44)!

John Wesley developed the *General Rules of the United Societies* in 1743 as a basic “rule of life” for the emerging Methodist groups in Bristol (Davies 1989:67-75). In her best-selling guide to the spiritual life entitled *Soul Feast*, Marjorie Thompson defines a rule of life as “a pattern of spiritual disciplines that provides structure and direction for growth in holiness . . . A rule of life, like a trellis, curbs our tendency to wander and supports our frail efforts to grow spiritually” (1995:138). Wesley’s *Rules* provided a guide to help the Society and its individual members grow in holiness of heart and life. He established only one requirement for any to become a Methodist: “a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins.” He believed that if their desire for salvation were genuine it would be shown by the way they lived their lives. For Wesley, belief and practice were intimately related. In order to remain a Methodist, however, two things were required. The disciple had to participate in an accountability group and provide evidence of their practice of the general rules. The Wesleys’ assumption was that their followers could not maintain a rule of life on their own. When disciples held one another accountable, however, the result was growth in faith and holiness. The general rules, in and of themselves, were profoundly simple: 1) “Do no harm.” Avoid all things that cause separation from God and one another in the Christian life. 2) “Do good.” Do all in your power to actively love others. 3) “Attend upon the ordinances of God.” Practice the instituted means of grace – those spiritual disciplines that have stood the test of time.

*Eucharist.* Among these works of piety, Eucharist held a special place for both Wesley brothers; they described this practice as the chief means of grace. They viewed sacramental grace and evangelical experience as necessary counterparts of an authentically Christian spirituality. In one of his 166 *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, Charles Wesley bears testimony to the importance of the means of grace— those places where God has promised to meet us in our Christian practice— but bears witness to the primacy of the Lord's Table:



The prayer, the fast, the word conveys,  
When mixt with faith, thy life to me,  
In all the channels of thy grace,  
I still have fellowship with thee,  
But chiefly here my soul is fed  
With fullness of immortal bread (1745:39).

Not only does the sacred meal enable the community to remember the past event of the cross and Christ's redemptive work for all, it celebrates the presence of the living Lord in a feast of thanksgiving and orients the community in hope toward the consummation of all things in the great heavenly banquet to come.

First, *the Lord's Supper is a memorial of the passion of Christ* (the past dimension). It reminds us of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on our behalf. The opening hymn of the Wesleys' collection sets the somber tone for the hymns devoted to the Lord's Supper as a memorial of Jesus' passion:

In that sad memorable night,  
When Jesus was for us betray'd,  
He left his death-recording rite (1745:1).

St. Paul reminds the Corinthian community (1 Cor. 11:26) that the Sacrament proclaims "the Lord's death until he comes." This "death imagery" of Charles should be no surprise; the wondrous dynamic memorialized in the sacrament, however, is the fact that the redemptive suffering of Jesus procures eternal life for the believer:

The grace which I to all bequeath  
In this divine memorial take,  
And mindful of your Saviour's death,  
Do this, my followers, for my sake,  
Whose dying love hath left behind  
Eternal life for all mankind (1745:2).

Charles Wesley's masterful use of imagery creates what J. Ernest Rattenbury called a "Protestant Crucifix," poetry that brings the event of the cross to the forefront of our consciousness and into our experience:

Endless scenes of wonder rise  
With that mysterious tree,  
Crucified before our eyes  
Where we our Maker see:  
Jesus, Lord, what hast thou done!  
Publish we the death divine,

Stop, and gaze, and fall, and own  
Was never love like thine!

Never love nor sorrow was  
Like that my Jesus show'd;  
See him stretch'd on yonder cross  
And crush'd beneath our load!  
Now discern the deity,  
Now his heavenly birth declare!  
Faith cries out 'Tis he, 'tis he,  
My God that suffers there (1745:16)!

The most amazing fact about the cross, of course, is that this instrument of death should become the supreme symbol of God's love. It is, after all, the "Lamb of God, whose bleeding love," Charles reminds us, "We thus recall to mind" (1745:15). The *anamnetic* refrain of this hymn, "O remember *Calvary*,/And bid us go in peace," points to God's mighty act of salvation in Jesus Christ and the way in which God's love "bursts our bonds," "sets us free," "seals our pardon," and restores God's very image.

Secondly, *the Eucharist is a celebration of the presence of the living Christ* (the present dimension). To use Wesleyan language, the sacrament is a "sign and means of grace." Without any question, the earliest Eucharistic feasts of the Christian community, at which the disciples of Jesus "ate their food with glad and generous hearts" (Acts 2:46), were characterized by joy and thanksgiving. One of the early terms for the sacrament, drawn directly from the Greek word, *eucharistia*, simply means "thanksgiving." This was the "Thanksgiving Feast" of the early Christians; a celebration of the Resurrection and the presence of the living Lord. Charles captures that primitive Christian spirit:

Jesu, we thus obey  
Thy last and kindest word,  
Here in thine own appointed way  
We come to meet our Lord;  
The way thou hast injoin'd  
Thou wilt therein appear:  
We come with confidence to find  
Thy special presence here.

Our hearts we open wide  
To make thy Saviour room:  
And lo! The Lamb, the crucified,  
The sinner's friend is come!  
His presence makes the feast,  
And now our bosoms feel  
The glory not to be exprest,  
The joy unspeakable (1745:69).

In one of his most powerful hymns, Charles plumbs the depths of this mystery of faith:

O the depth of love divine,  
Th' unfathomable grace!  
Who shall say how bread and wine  
God into man conveys?  
How the bread his flesh imparts,  
How the wine transmits his blood,  
Fills his faithful people's hearts  
With all the life of God!

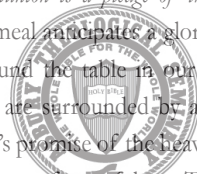
Sure and real is the grace,  
The manner be unknown;  
Only meet us in thy ways  
And perfect us in one,  
Let us taste the heavenly powers,  
Lord, we ask for nothing more;  
Thine to bless, 'tis only ours  
To wonder, and adore (1745:41).

Faith constitutes the key to this present dimension. It is through faith that the outward sign transmits the signified. The grace of God is applied by the means of faith. And the heights to which faith can move us are immeasurable:

The joy is more unspeakable,  
And yields me larger draughts of God,  
'Till nature faints beneath the power,  
And faith fill'd up can hold no more (1745:39).

At the close of a summer course of study, the class I was teaching had responsibility for the concluding worship service. We wanted this to be a joyful celebration of Eucharist and incorporated many African songs to enhance the festive nature of the experience. At the distribution of the elements we invited the participants to dance their way to the exits of the chapel where the bread and wine were to be dispensed. Afterwards, one of the students proclaimed, "Today I experienced joy in the Eucharist for the very first time." The risen Christ was present in the breaking of the bread.

Thirdly, *Holy Communion is a pledge of the Heavenly Banquet to come* (the future dimension). The holy meal anticipates a glorious future feast of the faithful in heaven. As we gather around the table in our experience of worship in this world, we are not alone. We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, and together look forward to God's promise of the heavenly banquet when all of God's children are reunited in one great feast of love. The Wesleys spoke often of the



Sacrament as a foretaste of this banquet, an earnest, or pledge, of things to come. Their rediscovery of “the communion of the saints” in relationship to this Holy Communion was a significant contribution they made to the sacramental theology of their own day. The keynote of this future dimension, of course, is hope and the consummation of all things in Christ.

“By faith and hope already there,” sings Charles, “Ev’n now the marriage-feast we share” (1745:82). This is a “soul-transporting feast,” that “bears us now on eagles’ wings” and seals “our eternal bliss” (1745:82-3). The amazing imagery in Charles’s lyrical theology gathers us into a community of hope:

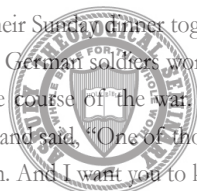
How glorious is the life above  
Which in this ordinance we taste;  
That fulness of celestial love,  
That joy which shall for ever last!

The light of life eternal darts  
Into our souls a dazzling ray,  
A drop of heav’n o’reflows our hearts,  
And deluges the house of clay.

Sure pledge of extacies unknown  
Shall this divine communion be,  
The ray shall rise into a sun,  
The drop shall swell into a sea (1745:87).

You may recognize the name of Jürgen Moltmann, a name synonymous with the “theology of hope.” I first met Professor Moltmann when I was a graduate student at Duke University. During one of his visits to campus, I timidly invited him to lunch and we enjoyed a wonderful meal together. While introducing myself to him more fully, I explained that I was working in my doctoral studies with Frank Baker. “Oh,” he interrupted, “I’d like to share a story with you about Frank and Nellie Baker.”

He said that during the war there was a German prison of war camp on the northeast coast of England. A young pastor and his wife served a small Methodist circuit close by. They were filled with compassion and compelled to do something to reach out to these men. So they went to the commander and asked permission to take a prisoner with them to church each Sunday and then to their home where they would eat their Sunday dinner together. It was agreed. So Sunday after Sunday, a steady flow of German soldiers worshiped and ate with the Bakers in their home throughout the course of the war. This world famous theologian paused, looked at me intently, and said, “One of those soldiers was a young man by the name of Jürgen Moltmann. And I want you to know that the seed of hope was



planted in my heart around Frank and Nellie Baker's dinner table." This meal always fills us with hope.

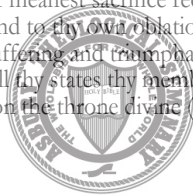
The Wesleys employ these various dimensions in an effort to communicate the depth and breadth of meaning in the sacrament and to enrich the experience of the participants. In this sign-act of love, the past, present, and future—faith, hope, and love—are compressed, as it were, into a timeless, communal act of praise. The community of faith celebrates the fullness of the Christian faith is the mystery of a holy meal; God empowers his people to faithful ministry and service.

*Eucharist and Mission.* Finally, the Wesleys conceived an intimate connection between the sacrament and mission. Eucharistic practice actually constitutes a bridge of sorts between the works of piety and the works of mercy that we will explore in the second address. This emphasis finds its fullest expression in the Wesleys' conception of sacrifice as it relates to the sacrament. In Charles Wesley's sermon on Acts 20:7 we encounter a concept of sacrifice consonant with the view he espouses in his *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* devoted to this theme. Charles views the Lord's Supper as a "re-presentation" of the sacrifice of Christ (Newport 2001:277-86). As Rattenbury (1948:123-47) demonstrated, his stress is persistently on the two-fold oblation of the church in the Sacrament; the body of Christ offered is not merely a sacred symbol of Christ's "once-for-all" act of redemption, but is also the living sacrifice of the people of God.

The sacrificial character of the Christian life, in which the worshiper participates repeatedly at the table of the Lord, and its relationship to the sacrifice of Christ, is clarified in Charles' hymns. In this regard, he adheres very closely to the position articulated in Daniel Brevint's *The Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice*, namely, "The main intention of Christ herein was not the bare *remembrance* of His Passion; but over and above, to invite us to His Sacrifice" (Rattenbury 1948:178).

While faith th' atoning blood applies,  
Ourselves a living sacrifice  
We freely offer up to God:  
And none but those his glory share  
Who crucified with Jesus are,  
And follow where their Saviour trod.

Saviour, to thee our lives we give,  
Our meanest sacrifice receive,  
And to thy own oblation join,  
Our suffering and triumphant head,  
Thro' all thy states thy members lead,  
And seat us on the throne divine (Wesley 1745:110).



As faithful disciples of Jesus repeatedly participate in the Eucharistic actions of taking, and blessing, and breaking, and giving—the constitutive aspects of an authentic, sacrificial life—God conforms them increasingly to the image of Christ. Our lives become truly Eucharistic as faith working by love leads to holiness of heart and life. Through the sacrament God shapes disciples as those who are taken into the hands of God for a divine purpose, blessed to be a blessing, broken so they can share their lives freely, and given, like Jesus, for the life of the world. Inaugurated into and invested in the reign of God, Christ followers immerse themselves in the life of God’s world as ambassadors of peace, joy, reconciliation, and love.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> I was invited to deliver the inaugural Earl Robinson Lectures in Wesleyan Studies at Booth College in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in November 2013 and chose as my theme “The Wesleyan Vision.” I had come to know Commissioners Earl and Benita through our participation in The Salvation Army/World Methodist Council Bilateral Dialogue and came to hold them both in high esteem as we engaged in conversation about our common heritage. I had always appreciated the work of the Army, but the Robinsons and their Salvationist colleagues helped me better understand the larger dimensions of the Army’s work around the world. This address, then, is the first of the two Robinson Lectures. The second lecture was previously published: “The Wesleyan Vision: Gospel-bearers,” *Word and Deed: A Journal of Salvation Army Theology and Ministry* 17, 1 (November 2014): 15-34.

In the preparation of these lectures I borrowed liberally from several of my previously published works, relying primarily on four sources, “Preliminary Explorations of Charles Wesley and Worship,” *Proceedings of the Charles Wesley Society* 9 (2003-2004): 67-82; “Eucharist among the Means of Grace,” *Word and Deed: A Journal of Salvation Army Theology and Ministry* 8, 2 (May 2006), 5-22; *Early Methodist Spirituality: Selected Women’s Writings* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2007); and “Charles Wesley and Christian Practices,” *Proceedings of The Charles Wesley Society* 12 (2008): 35-47. In this first lecture on the Foundation of the Wesleyan vision, I address works of piety more fully, while exploring works of mercy in the second lecture on Gospel-bearing.

All hymn texts are taken from Charles Wesley’s Published Verse, Duke Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition, <https://divinity.duke.edu/initiatives-centers/cswt/wesley-texts>, with grateful acknowledgment.



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Laurence W. Wood

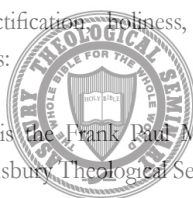
*A Time-Line Narrative of How the Idea of Pentecostal Sanctification  
Developed in John Wesley and John Fletcher<sup>1</sup>*

**Abstract**

This article explores the development of Pentecostal sanctification within the theology of John Wesley and John Fletcher. First, the separation of justifying and sanctifying grace is discussed along with the frequent connecting of sanctifying grace to the event of Pentecost in scripture. Second, John Fletcher's development of this doctrine is explored in more depth. Finally, it is argued that Fletcher and Wesley were in full agreement about the idea of Pentecostal sanctification despite some opinions to the contrary, and this is demonstrated through historical evidence. This paper was the first of two lectures of the Charles Elmer Cowman Lectures given at Seoul Theological Seminary from October 7-9, 2015 in Seoul, South Korea.

**Keywords:** Pentecostal sanctification, holiness, John Wesley, John Fletcher, Methodism, Wesleyan-holiness:

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## Introduction

“That we ‘must be baptized with the Holy Ghost,’ implies this and no more, that we cannot be ‘renewed in righteousness and true holiness’ any otherwise than by being over-shadowed, quickened, and animated by that blessed Spirit.”<sup>2</sup>

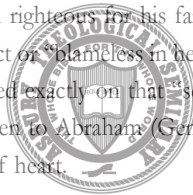
--John Wesley

John Wesley, Charles Wesley, and John Fletcher were the three central leaders of Methodism. When John Wesley was fifty-eight years of age and John Fletcher was thirty-two years of age, he asked Fletcher to take over the leadership of Methodism.<sup>3</sup> On three separate occasions, John Wesley pleaded with Fletcher to be his successor, and Charles Wesley also urged Fletcher to take over the leadership of the Methodists.<sup>4</sup> John Wesley’s preachers also pressed John Wesley to urge Fletcher to take on the leadership of the Methodists.<sup>5</sup> Fletcher declined all such offers because he did not consider himself worthy of this honor and because he felt the Lord wanted him to remain as the vicar of the Church of England at Madeley, Shropshire.

John Wesley listed Fletcher in the conference minutes after he died as “a pattern of all holiness, scarce to be paralleled in a century.” Methodist historian, J. F. Hurst, said that Fletcher’s *Checks to Antinomianism* “constitute the greatest prose contribution to the literature of the Methodist awakening as do Charles Wesley’s hymns to its poetry.”<sup>6</sup> William Larrabee in 1851 explained that each one of this “great triumvirate of Arminian Methodism was peculiarly adapted to the work which Providence assigned him to do—John Wesley to travel and superintend the societies, Charles Wesley to make the hymns, and John Fletcher to perfect the doctrines. Each did well his part. Each deserves, perhaps equally, a ‘place in the memory’ of the great Methodist family.”<sup>7</sup>

## Pentecostal Sanctification Defined<sup>8</sup>

John Wesley and John Fletcher explained the idea of Christian perfection as the purpose of God’s saving history, which culminated in the pouring out of the Holy Spirit of Christ on the day of Pentecost. Charles Wesley said to John Fletcher: “Christian perfection is nothing but the full kingdom in the Holy Ghost.”<sup>9</sup> Here is a brief biblical explanation for this view of Pentecostal sanctification. Fifteen years after Abraham was accounted righteous for his faith in God (Gal. 3:6), the Lord commanded him to be “perfect or ‘blameless in heart’” (Genesis 17:1); and the rite of circumcision was performed exactly on that self-same day” as this command to be perfect in heart was given to Abraham (Genesis 17:26) as a symbol of this blamelessness, or perfection of heart.



The Israelites were taught that the Land of Canaan was “the abode of God” (Ex. 15:17) and hence they were expected to be holy if they were going to live in God’s land. Later, as the Israelites were about to occupy the land of Canaan, Moses warned them (even before they crossed the Jordan River into the Land of Canaan) that they would be driven into captivity again because they would fail to be blameless in heart before the Lord. Moses also prophesied that the day would come when they would be returned to their homeland and they would remain there forever because the Lord would circumcise their hearts, enabling them to love God with all their hearts, mind, and soul (Deut. 30:6). This same theme was later developed and proclaimed by the prophets that God would circumcise their hearts (Jer. 4:4), establishing them forever and securely in the land. This expectation of the coming kingdom is what Peter said occurred on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16), referring to Joel’s prophecy that the Israelites would be restored forever to Judah through the pouring out of the Spirit in order to make them “holy” (Joel 2:38; 3:17, 20).

This expectation that the Spirit would forever establish the kingdom in Israel through the circumcision of their hearts is why both John and Charles Wesley often spoke of Canaan Land as a symbol of perfect love. This is why they spoke of Christian perfection in terms of the “kingdom within” and the “kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” The true kingdom transcended a literal place like Canaan Land, and it was established in the hearts of individual believers who together make up the Church through the indwelling of the Spirit of the risen Christ. This is why Paul said a real Jew is circumcised inwardly (Rom. 2:29).

Peter also explained to the Jerusalem Council that when the Holy Spirit came upon them on the day of Pentecost that their hearts “were cleansed [circumcised] by faith” (Acts 15:8, 9). Paul also said the decisive meaning of Pentecost was that the “love of God was *poured out into hearts* [Pentecost language] by the Holy Spirit *who has been given to us* [Pentecost language]” (Roman 5:5). Circumcision of heart means being cleansed by the Holy Spirit to enable one to love God perfectly with the arrival of the expected kingdom.<sup>10</sup> This is why Wesley defined Christian perfection as being “fully renewed in his image” and the “abiding witness of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>11</sup> This is why he identified Canaan Land with circumcision of heart (perfect love). This is why Wesley said God fixes his abode, not in Canaan, but in the heart of the believer: “He [God] cometh unto’ them with His Son and Blessed Spirit; and fixing his abode in their souls, bringeth them into the ‘rest’ [of perfect love] which ‘remaineth for the people of God.’”<sup>12</sup>

We will now trace how this idea of Pentecostal sanctification was first developed in John Wesley and then further expanded by Fletcher.

## A Time-Line Narrative of John Wesley's Developing Interpretation of Pentecostal Sanctification

The first clear idea of a believer being justified by faith and then subsequently being fully sanctified appeared in 1739 when John and Charles Wesley published a book of "Hymns and Sacred Poems." One of the hymns was entitled, "JUSTIFIED, but not SANCTIFIED."<sup>13</sup> In their preface to "a second volume of Hymns" (1740), the Wesley brothers denied that "full salvation is *at once* given to true believers" because "forgiveness of sins" (justifying faith) comes first, followed later in time by "the abiding witness of the Spirit, and a new, clean heart" (full sanctifying grace).<sup>14</sup>

The following narrative will show that John Wesley distinguished between the justifying faith of the disciples during the earthly life of Jesus *before* Pentecost and the sanctifying descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples *after* Pentecost. This distinction is how John Wesley first developed the idea of "a second blessing".

John Wesley wrote in his journal for February 1, 1738 (on the day of his return to England from Georgia) he had "*a sort of faith*" equivalent to the faith of the disciples of the earthly Jesus who "had not then 'the faith that overcometh the world'." He then described his quest for Christian perfection when he further explained: "The faith I want is, 'a sure trust and confidence in God, ... I want that faith which none can have without knowing that he hath it ... For whosoever hath it is 'freed from sin'; 'the whole body of sin is destroyed' in him. He is freed from fear ... And he is freed from doubt, 'having the love of God shed abroad in his heart through the Holy Ghost which is given unto him'."<sup>15</sup> Here John Wesley distinguishes between "the faith of the disciples of the earthly Jesus" and the full assurance of faith that frees one from all sin "through the Holy Ghost which is given unto him" (Pentecost).

Another hint of how John Wesley was moving in this direction of a temporal distinction between justifying faith and full sanctifying grace is seen in the first standard sermons, "Salvation by Faith" (June 11, 1738). This sermon was preached just two weeks before his Aldersgate conversion. He distinguished between salvation by faith that frees believers "from all their sins: from original and actual," on the one hand, from the faith "which the Apostles themselves had while Christ was yet upon earth," on the other hand. John Fletcher was later to cite this sermon as a basis for his idea of Pentecostal sanctification.<sup>16</sup>

Just a few days before his Aldersgate experience on May 19, 1738, John Wesley listened to a sermon on Pentecost by John Heylyn who, Wesley said, did "preach a truly Christian sermon on 'They were all filled with the Holy Ghost'—and so, said he, may *all you* be."<sup>17</sup> Heylyn was the first rector of St. Mary-le-Strand

(1724–59) and became prebendary (honorary canon) of Westminster Abbey (1743–59). Wesley also noted in his diary that he assisted Heylyn in administering Holy Communion following the sermon. John Wesley had already used Heylyn's devotional writings extensively while he was in Georgia, and he later included them in his recommendations to his preachers. He was also later to use Heylyn's *Theological Lectures* (1749) as a source of his *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* (1755).<sup>18</sup>

This Pentecost sermon is contained in Heylyn's *Theological Lectures* and has had significant influence in the Methodist interpretation of sanctification. It deserves special attention here in this time-line narrative because John Wesley heard it just a few days prior to his Aldersgate experience. This sermon implicitly explained the *inner meaning* of the Anglican rite of confirmation (the laying on of hands to bestow the Holy Spirit). Most in the Wesleyan tradition have heard little about this rite, but it was an ordinance regularly practiced in the Church of England, indeed going back to the earliest days of primitive Christianity. There were two initiation rituals for Anglican Church membership. First, *water baptism* was the first rite for becoming a member of the Church of England. It represented Easter and signified the forgiveness of sins through Jesus' resurrection from the dead. The second rite required for full church membership was called "confirmation" (baptism with the Spirit). This ritual represented (Pentecost), signifying the bestowal of the sanctifying Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, usually for older children who had been catechized and who had been baptized as infants. Fletcher called attention to the parallel between John Wesley's two-stages of justifying and sanctifying faith and the Anglican rites of water baptism and confirmation.<sup>19</sup> Both the Wesleyan tradition and the Church of England relied upon the same passages in the book of Acts (2; 8:14-17; 19:1-3) to show that two distinct stages of salvation are required for becoming a complete Christian, the difference being that Fletcher interpreted those passages evangelically and personally instead of as a ritual.

Interestingly enough, Heylyn did not mention confirmation. Instead, he showed what Pentecost meant personally. He noted, "to enlighten, to purify, and to warm, are the properties of fire. Now if we transfer these to the spiritual world, the light of the soul is truth, the purity of the soul is holiness, the warmth or heat of the soul is an active, vigorous ardour to surmount obstacles."<sup>20</sup> He showed that the Holy Spirit is called "holy" because He is "the hallowing, i.e. e. sanctifying Spirit."<sup>21</sup> He further explained: "When it is said that the Holy Ghost sanctifies Christians, the meaning is, that He infuses this generous motive, extinguishing the narrow principles of covetousness, pride, and sensuality, and exalting our nature to the noble disinterested purpose of glorifying our Maker."<sup>22</sup>



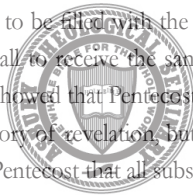
Heylyn then said that a Christian believer is sanctified through the “baptism with the Spirit,” “purging away ... carnal desires,” producing “perfect Purity.” The following citation from Heylyn’s Pentecost sermon is also quoted word-for-word by John Fletcher<sup>23</sup> and Thomas Coke<sup>24</sup> to explain the meaning of Pentecostal sanctification:

To wash, cleanse, baptize, and sanctify, are commonly synonymous in Scripture hence the Phrase of being baptized with the Holy Ghost, which is elsewhere called being baptized with Fire, to signify the universal and intimate Purification of the inmost Springs of Action thereby. With this View the Prophet Malachi [Mal iii.3] compares the Spirit to Refiner of Gold or Silver destroying the Dross, and separating all heterogeneous Particles from those Metals by force of Fire, till they are reduced to perfect Purity. Thus the Spirit sanctifies the Soul by abolishing all sordid Inclinations, by purging away the multiplicity of carnal Desires, and reducing all the Powers of the Mind to one simple constant Pursuit, viz. that of God’s Glory. This renders the Soul holy, i.e. pure, all of kind, center’d in the End of its Creation, even the Glory of its Maker.<sup>25</sup>

If there is any doubt that John Wesley was right when he said the Methodist doctrine of holiness was “the religion of the Church of England,”<sup>26</sup> the above definition of Pentecostal sanctification ought to be convincing. Nothing that ever has been written by John Wesley or John Fletcher more clearly defined it. Heylyn showed how the sanctifying baptism of the Spirit transformed the disciples after Pentecost. This description is similar to the way that John Wesley would later explain the weakness of the disciples prior to Pentecost as being “a plain proof that the sanctifying ‘Spirit was not’ then ‘given,’ because ‘Jesus was not glorified.’”<sup>27</sup>

Heylyn said “to show how the Apostles were thus sanctified” would require him “to relate their history, which is but one continued narrative of their holiness. They were purified from all corrupt principles of action ... They rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to die ... Such was the holiness of the Apostles, was the purity of their hearts, the unity of their desires all meeting in one point, the glory of their Maker.”<sup>28</sup>

John Wesley recorded in his diary that at the end of Heylyn’s sermon he encouraged believers today to be filled with the Holy Spirit. An examination of this sermon shows that this call to receive the sanctifying baptism with the Spirit could not be more direct. He showed that Pentecost was not a single past event that marked a new stage in the history of revelation, but it marked the beginning of the very possibility of a personal Pentecost that all subsequent believers were to expect.



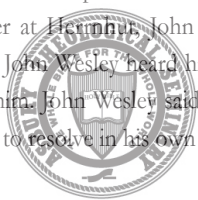
Here is what Heylyn's published sermon on Pentecost said: "The same Holy Spirit, which then descended upon the Apostles, does still descend upon all the living members of Christ, according to his gracious Promise."<sup>29</sup> He then offered these instructions on how to be filled with the Spirit:

It remains only that I add a word or two concerning the disposition by which we must prepare our hearts to receive him: and this, as our Lord teaches us, is earnest and persevering prayer. We have his direction, *Luke xi. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. — If a Son shall ask Bread of any of you that is a Father, will he give him Stone? How much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* The terms you see are very easy, are highly reasonable: if we do not perform them we shall be without excuse. But if by humble, fervent, incessant prayer we seek from our heavenly Father the Gift of his Spirit, we shall infallibly receive it, we shall be enlightened, purified, and confirmed in all goodness, we shall advance from strength to strength, till we *become meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.*<sup>30</sup>

This remarkable sermon on Pentecost contains virtually everything that Wesley and Fletcher had explained about the connection between Pentecost and sanctification, including the idea that the baptism with the Spirit will sanctify and cleanse one from all impurity if one prays and will receive "the Gift of his Spirit." The main difference is that this Anglican idea of Pentecostal sanctification<sup>31</sup> was nuanced by John Wesley to occur suddenly in a moment of faith.

Five days later after hearing this sermon, Wesley experienced his "heart-warming" experience at Aldersgate on May 24, 1738. Being cleansed from all sin and freed from all doubt and fear was John Wesley's idea of Christian perfection. He initially thought he had attained this perfection at the Moravian Aldersgate society meeting, but he downsized his understanding later when he still suffered from fear and doubt, as Richard Heitzenrater has shown.<sup>32</sup> This continuing struggle is why Wesley visited Herrnhut on June 13, 1738, so that "those holy men ... would be a means, under God, of so stablishing my soul."<sup>33</sup> His visit to Herrnhut would become the basis for John Wesley synthesizing his Anglican idea of Pentecost with the German Moravian emphasis on the personal indwelling of the sanctifying Spirit.

So three weeks later at Herrnhut, John Wesley met a lay preacher by the name of Christian David. John Wesley heard him preach four times, and held extended conversations with him. John Wesley said Christian David discussed the exact issues that he was trying to resolve in his own mind about holiness.<sup>34</sup>



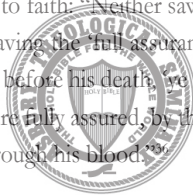
He heard Christian David explain about the varying degrees of assurance. It was consoling to Wesley to hear him say that those “weak in the faith” may still be believers with some measure of assurance, though not full assurance. John particularly liked Christian David’s threefold distinction among (1) those in bondage, (2) those in an intermediate state of faith, and (3) those with the fullness of faith. John reported in his diary:

Thrice he described the state of those who are ‘weak in faith’, who are justified, but have not yet a new, clean heart; who have received forgiveness through the blood of Christ, but have not received the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. This state he explained once ... when he showed at large from various Scriptures that many are children of God and heirs of the promises long before their hearts are softened by holy *mourning*, before they are *comforted* by the abiding witness of the Spirit ... before they are ‘pure in heart’ from all self and sin...

A second time he pointed out this state from those words, ‘Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, Jesus Christ our Lord.’ ‘There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.’ Hence also he at large both proved the existence and showed the nature of that intermediate state which most experience between that bondage which is described in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and the full glorious liberty of the children of God described in the eighth and in many other parts of Scripture.

This he yet again explained from the Scriptures that describe the state the apostles were in from our Lord’s death (and indeed for some time before) till the descent of the Holy Ghost at the day of Pentecost. They were then ‘clean,’ as Christ himself had borne them witness, ‘by the word which he had spoken unto them’. They then *had faith* ... Yet they were not properly *converted*; and they were not *delivered from* the spirit of fear; they had not *new hearts*; neither had they received ‘the gift of the Holy Ghost’.<sup>35</sup>

In a private conversation with John Wesley, Christian David explained that he himself once struggled with feelings of assurance concerning his own salvation, but finally through increasing degrees of assurance he came to experience the full assurance of faith. John Wesley recorded Christian David’s testimony about his struggle moving from fear to faith: “Neither saw I then that the ‘being justified’ is widely different from the having the ‘full assurance of faith’. I remembered not that our Lord told his apostles before his death, ‘we are clean’; whereas it was not till many days after it that they were fully assured, by the Holy Ghost then received, of their reconciliation to God through his blood.”<sup>36</sup>



Christian David says this full assurance of faith comes through “the indwelling of the Spirit.” He said the pre-Pentecost disciples of Jesus lacked this full assurance, although they were justified and forgiven before Pentecost. Because of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, one can, like the disciples, be cleansed from all sin.<sup>37</sup> The disciples’ experience is thus cited as a pattern for all subsequent believers. What is noteworthy is the statement: “The state the apostles were in from our Lord’s death (and indeed for some time before) till the descent of the Holy Ghost at the day of Pentecost” included a degree of faith. Christian David compared “being justified” with the experience of the disciples of the earthly Jesus prior to Pentecost, whereas the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost meant they were “fully assured” and “cleansed from all sin.”<sup>38</sup>

In 1741, after the bishop of London told John Wesley to preach to the world his idea of Christian perfection,<sup>39</sup> he wrote his sermon on “Christian Perfection.” This sermon contained some of the same emphases found in John Heylyn’s Pentecost sermon. It also contained some of the same ideas that he heard from Christian David. John Wesley said the possibility of being cleansed from all sin and made perfect in love became a possibility for the world only *after Jesus was glorified* when *the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost*. Like John Heylyn, John Wesley explained “the wide difference” between a pre-Pentecost and Pentecost experience in terms of sanctifying grace. He writes:

The Holy Ghost was not yet given in his sanctifying graces, as he was after Jesus was glorified ... And ‘when the day of Pentecost was fully come’, *then first it was*<sup>40</sup> [in the history of salvation], that they who ‘waited for the promise of the Father’ were made more than conquerors over sin [a common phrase for Christian perfection] by the Holy Ghost given unto them ... That this great salvation from sin [a common phrase for Christian perfection] was not given till Jesus was glorified, St. Peter also plainly testifies.<sup>41</sup>

Attached to this sermon is the hymn by Charles Wesley, “The Promise of Sanctification,” which highlights the sanctifying work of the Spirit. Here are two verses:

Thy sanctifying Spirit pour,  
To quench my thirst, and wash me clean:  
Now, Father, let the gracious shower  
Descend, and make me pure from sin.

Within me Thy good Spirit place,  
Spirit of health, and love, and power:  
Plant in me Thy victorious grace,  
And sin shall never enter more.<sup>42</sup>

This hymn shows that Charles Wesley, like John Fletcher, linked Pentecost primarily to sanctification.

In John Wesley's conversation with Count Zinzendorf at Gray's Inn Walks in London on Sept 3, 1741 over the question whether or not entire sanctification occurred after justifying faith, John used the same explanation that he had heard from Christian David that "the apostles were justified before Christ's death" and "they were more holy after the day of Pentecost" because "they were 'filled with the Holy Spirit.'" In debating with Zinzendorf over the meaning of entire sanctification, the point that Wesley made here was the disciples before Pentecost were "justified," but after Pentecost they were made "more holy." In contradiction to what he had learned from the Moravians at Herrnhut, Zinzendorf (their main leader) argued that "from the moment of justification he [any believer] ... is also entirely sanctified."<sup>43</sup> Later, John Wesley wrote a letter to the Moravians at Herrnhut reporting that they and their leader Zinzendorf held to different views on salvation and urging them to seek clarification of their own views.<sup>44</sup>

In 1742, John Wesley's critics understood him to link "the indwelling of the Spirit" with full sanctification. In "The Principles of a Methodist" (1742), he answered one of his critics by noting: "I desire not a more consistent account of my principles than he has himself given in the following words" that a justified believer "hath not yet, in the full and proper sense, a *new* and *clean heart*, or the *indwelling* of the Spirit." One who was sanctified was described as one who had attained "the last and highest state of *perfection* in this life. For then are the faithful born again in the full and perfect sense. Then have they the indwelling of the Spirit."<sup>45</sup>

In 1744, Wesley preached a sermon on being filled with the Holy Spirit ("Scriptural Christianity") at St. Mary's Church, Oxford, based on Acts 4:31. We noted above that Wesley had heard Heylyn preach on this text. Like Heylyn, Wesley said nothing about the rite of confirmation. Also like Heylyn, Wesley emphasized that the purpose of the Spirit-filled life was to produce the fruit of the Spirit, not supernatural gifts—"It was therefore for a more excellent purpose than this that 'they were all filled with the Holy Ghost'... It was to give them... 'the mind which was in Christ', those holy 'fruits of the Spirit'... to fill them with 'love, joy, peace... to enable them to 'crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts', its passions and desires; and, in consequence of that *inward change*."<sup>46</sup> He said to the Oxford professors: "Are you filled with the Holy Ghost? With all those 'fruits of the Spirit,' ... Is your heart whole with God? Full of love and zeal to set up His kingdom on earth?" John Fletcher later cited this sermon as a source of his idea of perfection.<sup>47</sup>

It was typical of Wesley to equate being "filled with the Spirit" and Christian perfection. For example in 1745, Wesley wrote: "It was hereby shown

that you were filled with the Holy Ghost and delivered from all unholy tempers; when ye were all 'unblameable and unrebukeable, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such things', a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, showing forth' to all... by your active, patient, spotless love of God and man."<sup>48</sup> One of his correspondents in 1757 mentioned Wesley's equation: "O that you was filled with the Holy Ghost, with all inward and outward Holiness!" and then expressed her feelings that she wished this for herself.<sup>49</sup>

In his essay, "Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," (1745) John Wesley defined "the baptism with the Spirit" as the "inward baptism" which had a deeper meaning than "water baptism." He said: "Would to God that ye would... 'repent and believe the gospel!' Not repent alone, (for then you know only the baptism of John,) but believe, and be 'baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire' ...May the Lord constrain you to cry out, 'How am I straitened till it be accomplished!' even till the love of God inflame your heart, and consume all your vile affections!" Wesley then said the baptism with the Spirit means "that we are all to be taught of God, and to be 'led by his Spirit,' that the Spirit alone reveals all truth, and inspires all holiness; that by his inspiration men attain perfect love."<sup>50</sup> In "An Extract of a Letter to the Reverend Mr. Law" in 1756, Wesley said: "That we 'must be baptized with the Holy Ghost,' implies this and no more, that we cannot be 'renewed in righteousness and true holiness' any otherwise than by being over-shadowed, quickened, and animated by that blessed Spirit."<sup>51</sup> Wesley always connected the language of "the baptism with the Holy Ghost," not to justifying faith or forgiveness of sins, but to holiness, even as he had connected "the indwelling of the Spirit" with perfection, and not justification, in his "Principles of a Methodist" (1742).

Another instance where John and Charles Wesley made a distinction between justifying and sanctifying faith, linking Christian perfection to the meaning of Pentecost, occurs in John Wesley's description of the holiness revival which had spontaneously developed first in London and then spread throughout the British Isles in the early 1760's.<sup>52</sup> John Wesley wrote of this revival (October 28, 1762):

Many years ago my brother [Charles] frequently said, 'Your day of Pentecost is not fully come. But I doubt not it will, and you will then hear of persons sanctified as frequently as you do now of persons justified.' Any unprejudiced reader may observe that it was now fully come. And accordingly we did hear of persons sanctified in London and most other parts of England, and in Dublin and many other parts of Ireland, as frequently as of persons justified, although instances of the latter were far more frequent than they had been for twenty years before.<sup>53</sup>

## A Time-Line of Fletcher's Expansion of John Wesley's Idea of Pentecostal Sanctification

A clear indication that Pentecost was about to become a dominant theme for Fletcher can be seen in a letter to Lady Huntingdon on February 10, 1769. This was only a few months after he had accepted her invitation to serve as the first president of Trevecca, a Methodist Calvinist College, which she had established. Fletcher said to her: "Power from on high is what I want still," he confessed and was hoping for "an abiding day of Pentecost." He admitted that his "unbelief runs ... so high that I doubt whether it will come before my dying day."<sup>54</sup> This theme of "Power from on high" and "Pentecost" constitute a repeated theme in his correspondence with Lady Huntingdon, who had established Trevecca College as a training center for Methodist preachers and appointed Fletcher as its president.

One of Fletcher's assignments to the students at Trevecca College was to "draw a parallel between John's baptism & Christ's, and prove the superiority of the latter over the former." They were also "to draw up an Address to Jesus for the [bestowing of] the Holy Ghost urging the strongest reasons you can think of and feel to engage him to grant it you."<sup>55</sup> Being filled and baptized with the Spirit was Fletcher's primary preaching and teaching theme. In his biography of Fletcher, Benson said that Fletcher insisted, "to be filled with the Holy Ghost was a better qualification for the ministry of the Gospel than any classical learning, (although that too be useful in its place)." He often turned "the school-room" into a chapel service. His addresses emotionally and spiritually moved the students profoundly. At the close of a typical service, he would say to his students: "As many of you as are athirst for this fullness of the Spirit, follow me into my room."<sup>56</sup> Benson reported that "many of us have instantly followed him, and there continued for two or three hours, wrestling, like Jacob, for the blessing, praying for one another."<sup>57</sup>

During the early days of his presidency of Trevecca, Fletcher chose Joseph Benson to be the principal of the college. Benson was a classics scholar and one of the most promising young preachers among Wesley's preachers. Fletcher and Benson were of the opinion that one way of convincing the Calvinist Methodists to accept Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection was to explain that it meant being "baptized with the Spirit," a phrase commonly used by the Countess of Huntingdon to mean power to do ministry and to live the Christian life.<sup>58</sup>

Benson sent a letter (ca. December 15, 1770) to John Wesley explaining his and Fletcher's views on this subject, hoping to get his evaluation and recommendations.<sup>59</sup> John Wesley responded in a letter of December 28, 1770, telling Benson that the phrase, "receiving the Spirit," is not a proper term for full sanctification because all believers have received the Spirit.<sup>60</sup>

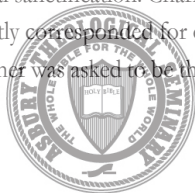
A fragment recently discovered from some of Wesley's personal notes contained comments strongly disagreeing with linking the phrase, "baptized with the Holy Ghost," with full sanctification, noting that the phrase was controversial and used by the Quakers in order to set aside water baptism.<sup>61</sup> There is no indication that these notes were ever sent to Benson, but it is clear that Benson and Fletcher knew that Wesley did not approve it.

In addition to the fact that Benson and Fletcher were unsuccessful in convincing Lady Huntingdon to accept the idea of Pentecostal sanctification, Benson was dismissed from his position and Fletcher resigned. Fletcher unsuccessfully requested Lady Huntingdon to allow him to address the students to explain to them that he was leaving the college because of the lack "of freedom in the College since the grand point to be maintain'd there (the baptism of the Holy Ghost and day of power) hath been given up either in whole or in part."<sup>62</sup>

Benson and Fletcher were even more perplexed by John Wesley's criticism. It seemed to them that John Wesley himself had changed his mind because of his own earlier affirmation of Pentecostal sanctification. Even Wesley's *Plain Account of Christian Perfection* in 1766 restated his earlier sermon on "Christian Perfection" (1741) on Pentecostal sanctification.<sup>63</sup> He also said that "a larger measure of the Spirit" had been given on the day of Pentecost in order to make entire sanctification possible.<sup>64</sup> Now in 1770 Wesley seemed to have abandoned this idea.

Fletcher expressed his true disappointment with John Wesley's negative assessment in a letter to Benson on March 22, 1771. This letter reported to Benson about his final visit to Trevecca, and Fletcher specifically explained how Benson's essay on the baptism with the Holy Ghost had been ridiculed. Then he concluded with these words of advice to Benson: "Now with respect to Mr. Ws [Wesley's] letter to you, I would have you . . . preach the *seal of the Spirit the witness of the Spirit, or as he [John Wesley] properly calls it the Spirit of Adoption: None can have it (for a constancy)* but the *baptiz'd [with the Spirit]*; that you know, whether he assents to it or not." Fletcher requested Benson to keep this part of the letter confidential, except that he would allow Charles to read it.<sup>65</sup>

It is likely that he was willing for Charles to know about their dispute because of their intimate friendship and because Charles' hymns affirmed a post-justification idea of Pentecostal sanctification. Charles was even a closer friend than John Wesley, and they frequently corresponded for over 28 years.<sup>66</sup> As an indication of their close friendship, Fletcher was asked to be the godfather of Charles Wesley's daughter, Sally.<sup>67</sup>



Benson always respected Fletcher's request of confidentiality about this dispute. When Benson quoted this lengthy letter in his biography of Fletcher, he deleted this controversial portion. It has only been discovered in recent years.<sup>68</sup>

John Wesley's idea of "receiving the Spirit" was related to the witness of the Spirit (as seen below in Wesley's criticism of Fletcher's use of it), and "baptism with the Spirit" was controversial because the Quakers used it as a substitute language for water baptism (as noted above). Wesley's objection to this language of receiving and being baptized with the Spirit was not a rejection of Pentecostal sanctification because John Wesley sent another letter to Benson three months later on March 16, 1771, affirming the equation between being "filled with the Spirit" and entire sanctification. Wesley wrote: "A *babe* in Christ (of whom I know thousands) has the witness *sometimes*. A young man (in St. John's sense) has it continually. I believe one that is *perfected in love*, or *filled with the Holy Ghost*, may be properly termed a father. This we must press both babes and young men to aspire after ---- yea, to expect. And why not now?"<sup>69</sup>

We do not know why John Wesley changed his mind, after having embraced the idea of Pentecostal sanctification since 1738. The two people who should have known are Fletcher and Benson, but they were very surprised about it. What is clear is that John Wesley rejected both phrases, "Receiving the Spirit" and "baptism with the Spirit" as language for perfection. Perhaps it was like a temporary blip on the screen, but Fletcher noted that there was an inconsistency in Wesley's theology in a conciliatory letter to the Countess in 1771 following his resignation from Trevecca. Fletcher wrote: "With regard to perfection itself, I believe that when Mr. Wesley is altogether consistent upon that subject, he means absolutely nothing by it but . . . the baptism of the Holy Ghost."<sup>70</sup>

It is understandable that Fletcher would say that he was inconsistent because in previous instances where John Wesley used the language of the baptism with the Spirit it always entailed the meaning of holiness and he had connected "the indwelling of the Spirit" with perfection, and not justification, in his "Principles of a Methodist" (1742), as noted above.

Despite John Wesley's censure, Fletcher continued to develop the link between the baptism with the Spirit and sanctification. Fletcher believed it would enhance the understanding of holiness. He said to Charles Wesley (August 14, 1774) that he believed "the dispensation of the Holy Ghost . . . to be the grand characteristic of Christian perfection" and "that by maintaining . . . the doctrine of Christian perfection, and connected with the . . . accomplishment of the promise of the Father, we can make the doctrine more intelligible to and defensible against all opposing friends."<sup>71</sup>

The controversy at Trevecca marked the decisive moment when the baptism of the Spirit became a focus in Fletcher's theology. We know about this development because of the large number of letters that Fletcher wrote to Charles Wesley. On Dec. 16, 1770, Fletcher sent a letter to Charles mentioning his exploratory ideas about the baptism with the Spirit. He noted that Mrs. Power who lived at Mr. Ireland's home had asked him: "What is that evangelical faith of which you speak that you do not have, and that gift of the Holy Spirit which is the baptism of the true Christian?"<sup>72</sup> Because Mr. Ireland was in a hurry to leave, Fletcher said to Charles: "I do not have time to copy my ideas that I have tossed rapidly onto paper. She will communicate them. I pray you to say to me what you think of them."<sup>73</sup>

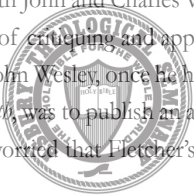
Fletcher then suggested that Charles himself should have another Pentecost as a follow up to his original personal Pentecost on May 21, 1738:

But new baptisms are necessary from time to time. Compare Acts 2 and Acts 4. The more the magnet rubs the needle the more magnetized it becomes. Why did you not follow the Lord for another Baptism, and by his Spirit dwelling within you, when he once gave you an earnest of that happy day of Pentecost that you have not forgotten? Well then, Jonah, sleeper, why do you not cry to your God for the Spirit of Resurrection and of life which must enter again in the witnesses who are dead, or sleeping [an allusion to Charles' sermon, "Awake thou, that Sleepeth"].<sup>74</sup>

Fletcher observed in a letter to Charles that "the difference [between your brother and me] consists, (if there is any) in my thinking, that those who ...baptized and sealed with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost ...were in the state of Christian perfection... As contradistinguished from the faith of ...babes, or carnal believers ...which the apostles had before the day of Pentecost."<sup>75</sup>

Fletcher explained to Charles Wesley that he was writing an *Essay on Truth* to show that there is a difference between the faith of those who like the apostles were "babes, or carnal believers" before Pentecost and the faith of those who are in "the state of Christian perfection" as a result of being "baptized and sealed with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost."<sup>76</sup> This treatise was his first attempt to develop this theme in a focused manner, and it was passed back and forth between John Wesley and Fletcher.<sup>77</sup> Both John and Charles Wesley were very much involved in the pre-publication process of critiquing and approving this work.

The first action of John Wesley, once he had received Fletcher's corrected manuscript on the *Essay on Truth*, was to publish an abridged edition so that it would be more widely read. Wesley worried that Fletcher's tendency to be verbose would



limit his readership.<sup>78</sup> Fletcher also asked Charles Wesley to help him in his writings to be “sententious” and “shorter and full.”<sup>79</sup>

In John Wesley’s special abridged edition of the *Essay on Truth*, he said he had marked the most useful parts of it with an approving asterisk.<sup>80</sup> In the preface, Fletcher stated that he did not intend to “dissent” from the Church of England, but he said that “our church” talked about faith “according to the fullness of the *Christian* dispensation,” but he intended to examine the “*inferior* dispensations” represented by the different degrees of faith as typified in “John the Baptist, Moses, and Noah.” By presenting the progressive order of salvation from the lowest to the highest, he showed that an assurance of faith “was not *fully* opened till Christ opened *his* glorious baptism [of the Spirit] on the day of Pentecost” when “his spiritual kingdom was set up with power in the hearts of his people.” Fletcher said this message was “of late years gloriously revived by Mr. Wesley and the ministers connected with him.” Wesley’s approving asterisk appears in front of this paragraph,<sup>81</sup> and this exposition will only use Wesley’s special abridged edition to show his agreement.

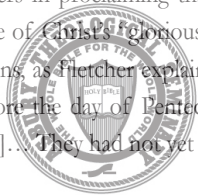
What did Fletcher mean by the idea of a “glorious baptism [of the Spirit] on the day of Pentecost” that the Methodists had “revived”? Fletcher explained it represented the goal of God’s saving history on the day of Pentecost, making it possible for believers to have the full assurance of salvation and to be empowered to love God perfectly. Fletcher explained that the “everlasting gospel” was present from the beginning of humankind and progressively developed in the history of salvation through “four grand dispensations.”<sup>82</sup> (1) The intuitive Faith in God the Father (the Gentile dispensation, Noah) is superseded by (2) the Jewish dispensation (Moses) with its expectation that the Messiah will come. (3) The dispensation of John the Baptist which “was as singular [to himself] as that of Moses,” because just as Moses pointed beyond himself to the leadership of Joshua, so the dispensation of John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus.<sup>83</sup> The dispensation of John the Baptist proclaimed that the “Messiah is come in the flesh” and this pre-Pentecostal stage typifies “*babes in Christ*,”<sup>84</sup> and “imperfect Christians, who like the apostles before the day of Pentecost, are yet strangers to the great outpouring of the Spirit.”<sup>85</sup> (4) The dispensation of the Spirit is that “the Promise of the Father is fulfilled” and believers are “intimately one with Christ,”<sup>86</sup> through being “baptized with the Holy Ghost.”<sup>87</sup> Imperfect Christians are like the “Lord’s disciples before the day of Pentecost” who have not been “fully baptized [with the Spirit].”<sup>88</sup> To be “baptized with the Holy Ghost” means to experience “an uncommon degree of sanctifying grace.”<sup>89</sup> Being perfected in love was the primary purpose of the baptism with the Spirit, while the miraculous gifts were “a *temporary appendage*, and

by no means an *essential part* of Christ's spiritual baptism."<sup>90</sup> Fletcher also interpreted the three thousand converts on the day of Pentecost to have moved quickly from "faith in the Father, to an explicit faith in the Son" to the dispensation of the Spirit when they were "*filled with the Spirit*."<sup>91</sup>

In correspondence with Charles Wesley as he was composing this essay, Fletcher mentioned this analogy of all converts being fully sanctified on the day of Pentecost to suggest that he and Charles should set the example in praying for the baptism for the Spirit. He said: "Undoubtedly the apostles went into the kingdom before the 3000 on the day of Pentecost. If we ... get in, who knows but perhaps 3 scores ... may follow us. This is the only way to retrieve the asperred doctrine of perfection."<sup>92</sup>

If Fletcher's preface to the *Essay on Truth* began with an announcement about the "glorious baptism [of the Spirit] on the day of Pentecost" which had been "revived by Mr. Wesley and the ministers connected with him," Wesley's abridged edition concluded with the explanation of why "Christ opened the dispensation of his Spirit." With Wesley's approving asterisk, Fletcher said the purpose was "that they may be made *perfect in one*" with "gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people,' by their humble, affectionate, angelical behaviour."<sup>93</sup> Fletcher then notes that this promise of the Spirit given on the day of Pentecost was not just for the disciples, but also for all those that believe through their word of testimony. His point was that a day of Pentecost is promised to all future justified believers.

Fletcher also explained his idea of "the glorious baptism [of the Spirit] on the day of Pentecost" in direct reference to Wesley's early sermons on "Salvation by Faith" and "Christian Perfection." Specifically, Fletcher shows that Wesley "clearly distinguishes Christian faith properly so called, or faith in Christ glorified" from "the faith of initial Christianity, i.e., 'the faith which the apostles had while our Lord was upon earth.'"<sup>94</sup> Fletcher then shows that Wesley identified "Christian Perfection" with "the *Christian* dispensation in its fullness" as distinct from the dispensation of the Gentiles, Jews, and John the Baptist.<sup>95</sup> Significantly, John Wesley included this explanation in his special edition of the *Essay on Truth*. Even more significantly, John Wesley promoted with his own approving asterisk Fletcher's idea of the role of his Methodist preachers in proclaiming that the full assurance of "adult Christians" is possible because of Christ's "glorious baptism [of the Spirit] on the day of Pentecost."<sup>96</sup> This means, as Fletcher explained, "imperfect Christians" are like "our Lord's disciples before the day of Pentecost" and hence they were not "fully baptized [with the Spirit]... They had not yet been made *perfect in one*."<sup>97</sup>



John Wesley praised the *Essay on Truth* exuberantly: “Mr. Fletcher has given us a wonderful view of the different dispensations which we are under. I believe that difficult subject was never placed in so clear a light before. It seems God has raised him up for this very thing.”<sup>98</sup> The same month that Fletcher’s *Essay on Truth* was completed, Wesley wrote a letter to one of his prominent class leaders, saying that Fletcher had written with more clear understanding on “pardon and holiness” than “scarcely any one has done before since the Apostles.”<sup>99</sup>

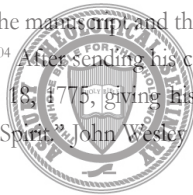
To say that God had “raised him up for this very thing” and no one “since the Apostles” had explained holiness better than Fletcher is the highest recommendation and approval that could have ever been offered to anyone. John Wesley not only said Fletcher’s writings were without parallel among writers since the days of the Apostles, he personally marked specific texts with his approving asterisk, including the language of the baptism of the Spirit for Christian perfection. This exuberance for Fletcher’s order of salvation culminating in the baptism with the Spirit is remarkable considering John Wesley had only a few years earlier seemed to reject the connection of the baptism with the Spirit with perfection.

Fletcher’s concept of perfection is most fully developed and explained in *The Last Check*, which was finished in March 1775, but was begun at least by November 24, 1771, having been interrupted by other pressing matters,<sup>100</sup> although Charles Wesley had encouraged Fletcher to give priority to its completion.<sup>101</sup>

Fletcher had given John Wesley a copy of this manuscript for his approval, and John Wesley returned it to Fletcher on March 22, 1775, noting that “their views were a little different, though not opposite” because Fletcher had used “receiving the Spirit” as a description of entire sanctification, whereas John Wesley insisted that all believers had received the Spirit.<sup>102</sup>

It seems our views of Christian Perfection are a little different, though not opposite. It is certain every babe in Christ has received the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit witnesses with his spirit that he is a child of God. But he has not obtained Christian perfection. Perhaps you have not considered St. John’s threefold distinction of Christian believers: little children, young men, and fathers. All of these had received the Holy Ghost; but only the fathers were perfected in love.<sup>103</sup>

Fletcher corrected the manuscript and then sent it to Charles on May 21, 1775 for his approval as well.<sup>104</sup> After sending his corrections to John Wesley, John Wesley responded on August 18, 1775, giving his approval to Fletcher’s revised wording about “receiving the Spirit.” John Wesley wrote: “I have now received all



your papers, and here and there made some small corrections.” He then said: “I do not perceive... that there is any difference between us.”<sup>105</sup>

Fletcher had prominently featured “the baptism with the Holy Spirit” in this manuscript as the means for being made perfect in love. For example, Fletcher wrote: “O, baptize my soul, and make as full an end of the original sin which I have from Adam ... Give me thine abiding Spirit, that he may continually shed abroad thy love in my soul... Send thy Holy Spirit of promise to fill me therewith, to sanctify me throughout.” On the other hand, Fletcher modified his statement about “receiving the Spirit” to: “Expect to receive . . . a fullness of the sanctifying Spirit.”<sup>106</sup> But he still linked the phrases, “baptize me with the Holy Ghost: fill me with the Spirit!”<sup>107</sup>

John Wesley said nothing against Fletcher’s idea of the baptism with the Holy Spirit and entire sanctification in this manuscript. Not only was John Wesley pleased with Fletcher’s acceptance of his suggested correction about “receiving the Spirit,” but in this same letter he encouraged Fletcher to travel with him, whenever he was not writing, in preparation for the time when Fletcher would become his successor. Further, no one in Methodism knew about any disagreement between Wesley and Fletcher until 1933 when John Telford published these letters.

*The Last Check* contains more references to John’s writings and to Charles’ hymns than any of his previous writings<sup>108</sup> to show that he was in agreement with them. This was important because Christian perfection was the central tenet of Methodism. If John Wesley was particularly concerned to edit Fletcher’s writings to insure that his ideas reinforced his own views, it was equally important that Fletcher receive both John and Charles’ imprimatur. Among John’s many words of commendation about Fletcher’s writings on holiness, he said that Fletcher had written with more clear understanding on the theme of “pardon and holiness” than “scarcely any one has done before since the Apostles.”<sup>109</sup> Charles once said to Fletcher on October 11, 1783: “You had from the beginning my Imprimatur.”<sup>110</sup> Charles Wesley’s caution to Fletcher was that idea of dispensations of salvation might encourage some to remain in a lower stage of faith. Fletcher reassured Charles that he would obviate that possible misunderstanding.<sup>111</sup>

Fletcher cited more than twelve of Charles Wesley’s hymns in his treatise on Christian perfection, *The Last Check*.<sup>112</sup> He believed that Charles’ hymns supported his interpretation of the connection between Pentecost and sanctification. Charles Wesley generously assisted Fletcher through editorial help, theological guidance, and technical assistance in arranging for his manuscripts to be published and in correcting the press copy. Fletcher’s understanding of the role of the Spirit in sanctification was decisively influenced by the hymns of Charles Wesley.

The time involvement of Charles' editorial and technical assistance was huge, but the affection between them was profound and intimate.<sup>113</sup>

Fletcher's *Checks* did not merely repeat Wesley's ideas, but he reshaped them into a larger synthesis. This reshaping is what Fletcher meant by making Wesley "consistent with himself." Many writers in subsequent generations have frequently noted Wesley's inconsistencies.<sup>114</sup> This element of inconsistency was used as an argument at the end of the nineteenth century for allowing theological pluralism in the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>115</sup> Many of Wesley's contemporaries also accused him of inconsistencies. This charge of inconsistency had presented a possible hazard for the Methodist movement. One of Wesley's most formidable critics had said: "I despair to find any consistency" in John Wesley's thinking.<sup>116</sup> One critic accused Fletcher of being given the assignment to resolve the inconsistencies in Wesley.<sup>117</sup> Fletcher never implied that Wesley was logically inconsistent, though he did recognize that John Wesley's thinking did require some explanation in order to resolve apparent inconsistencies.<sup>118</sup>

In the *Last Check*, Fletcher pointed out a verbal difference between himself and John Wesley by acknowledging that he used the phrase, baptism with the Spirit, whereas John Wesley did not use it in his sermon on "The Scripture Way of Salvation" (1765). Fletcher noted that his *Last Check* "exactly coincides with Mr. Wesley's sermon; with this verbal difference only, that what he calls *Faith*, implying a twofold operation of the Spirit... I have called *Faith* apprehending a sanctifying baptism or *Outpouring of the Spirit*." He then remarks: "His mode of expression savours more of the rational Divine, who logically divides the truth, in order to render its several parts conspicuous: and I keep closer to the words of the Scriptures, which, I hope, will frighten no candid Protestant."<sup>119</sup>

### A Consensus between John Wesley and John Fletcher

Did John Wesley approve or merely permit Fletcher's view? It should be remembered that John Wesley's criticism of Fletcher's views were only expressed when his writings were still in manuscript form. Once Fletcher had incorporated John Wesley's corrections, there was never a word of criticism about Fletcher's idea of Pentecostal sanctification, only praise and recommendation. What is apparent is that Wesley himself subsequently embraced Fletcher's Pentecostal interpretation, thus indicating that he had been convinced by Fletcher's own attempt to make his ideas consistent, as it will be shown below.

Here is what Fletcher said to Mary Bosanquet in 1778: "If you ask me what I think to be truth with respect to Christian perfection, I reply my sentiments are exposed to the world in my Essay on 'Christian Perfection' [*The Last Check*] and

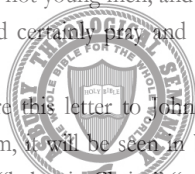
in my Essay on 'Truth' [in the *Equal Check*] where I lay the stress on the doctrine on the great *promise of the Father*, and on the *Christian fullness of the Spirit*." He then says: "You will find my views of this matter in Mr. Wesley's sermons" on Christian Perfection [1741] and on Scriptural Christianity [1744]." Both of these early sermons by Wesley highlighted Pentecost and sanctification.

Fletcher then mentioned to her, "I would distinguish more exactly between the believers baptized with the Pentecostal power of the Holy Ghost, and the believer who, like the Apostles after our Lord's Ascension, is not yet filled with that power." He observed that when he preached this theme at Trevecca, it was called "Mr. Wesley's *whim*," and when "I preached it to our brethren, some have called it Lady Huntingdon's *whim*, and others have looked upon it as a *new thing*." This controversy, Fletcher wrote, "is the strongest proof that this capital Gospel doctrine is as much under a cloud now as the doctrine of justification by faith was at the time of the Reformation."<sup>120</sup>

He then told Mary Bosanquet that he had recently completed an *Essay on the New Birth*,<sup>121</sup> and told her where she could find the manuscript in London. He had written this essay after the *Last Check* had been published and just prior to a four-year visit to his home country in Switzerland in 1777.<sup>122</sup> This essay disclosed that John Wesley agreed with him on the use of the language of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Fletcher reported "that Mr. Wesley rests the perfection of Christianity on the Pentecostal dispensation of the Spirit, and teaches, that, imperfect believers need only '*wait for the promise of the Father*,' till '*the Holy Ghost* is given unto them' according to the fullness of that grand promise." He said: "My friend [Wesley]... chiefly rests the doctrine of Christian perfection on being *baptized and filled with the Spirit*," noting "this is Mr. Wesley's sentiment."<sup>123</sup>

Of course we have Wesley's own statement that there was no longer any disagreement between them after Fletcher had accepted Wesley's suggested correction (as noted above). Do we have any further evidence that Fletcher was genuinely expressing "Mr. Wesley's sentiment"? The answer is, "Yes." After his treatise on perfection (*The Last Check*) was published, John Wesley wrote to John Fletcher on June 1, 1776: "The generality of believers in *our Church* (yea, and in the Church of Corinth, Ephesus, and the rest, even in the Apostolic age) are certainly no more than babes in Christ; not young men, and much less fathers. But we have some [fathers], and we should certainly pray and expect that our Pentecost may fully come."<sup>124</sup>

If one will compare this letter to John Wesley's earlier letter about a slight difference between them, it will be seen in both letters that he referred to three categories of believers—"babes in Christ," "young men" and "fathers"—and

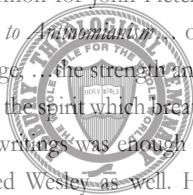


each category of believers had “received the Spirit,” although only “fathers” were perfected in love. If John Wesley reported that there was no difference between them on August 18, 1775 because Fletcher incorporated John Wesley’s correction, here in this latest letter ten months later (June 1, 1776) Wesley specifically mentioned again the categories of “babes in Christ” and “young men,” but this letter showed that Wesley accepted Fletcher’s idea that Pentecost belonged to the category of “fathers” or those who had been perfected in love.

In one of Fletcher’s letters to Charles Wesley in 1776, Fletcher expressed the hope of seeing “an outpouring of the Spirit, inwardly and outwardly” which will establish “a Pentecost Christian Church.” He noted, “if it is not to be seen at this time upon earth, I am willing to go and see that glorious wonder in heaven.”<sup>125</sup> This concept of a Pentecost church was a frequent theme in Fletcher’s writings, but Wesley only had the idea of the one hundred twenty in the Upper Room on the day of Pentecost as being entirely sanctified,<sup>126</sup> but it was Fletcher’s observation that all three thousand hearers experienced a quick transition to perfect love as explained in his *Essay on Truth*, showing that the “glorious baptism [of the Spirit]” was the essence of the message of “Mr. Wesley’s preachers” and that it was leading to another Pentecost-like Church when all believers were made “perfect in one.” This idea of everyone on the day of Pentecost, including the three thousand hearers, were entirely sanctified was a theme John Wesley’s sermons, such as “The Mystery of Iniquity” and “The General Deliverance of the Gospel,” coinciding with Fletcher’s idea that just as on the day of Pentecost when all believers were entirely sanctified, then in the millennium there would be Pentecost-church when “righteousness will cover the earth as waters cover the sea.” Here again is shown the influence of Fletcher’s thought upon John Wesley.

Wesley’s critics in his day believed that Fletcher’s writings were written with John Wesley’s *Imprimatur*. Richard Hill, who was one of Fletcher’s primary controversialists, noted that “Mr. Wesley revised, corrected, and gave his own *imprimatur* to all Mr. Fletcher’s *checks*, throughout which, Mr. John is the *Alpha* and the *Omega*.”<sup>127</sup> Fletcher also believed that Wesley approved the actual wording of his manuscripts unless he changed it.<sup>128</sup> However, it is clear that Fletcher influenced John Wesley’s ideas as well, especially in regard to the idea of Pentecost.

In his memorial sermon for John Fletcher, John Wesley said in regard to Fletcher’s “excellent *Checks to Antinomianism* . . . one knows not which to admire most, the purity of the language, . . . the strength and clearness of the argument, or the mildness and sweetness of the spirit which breathes through the whole.” Wesley noted that reading Fletcher’s writings was enough to be convinced of his ideas.<sup>129</sup> Apparently Fletcher convinced Wesley as well. He also said: “I was intimately



acquainted with him for above thirty years. I conversed with him morning, noon, and night, without the least reserve, during a journey of many hundred miles... One equal to him I have not known... Nor do I expect to find another such on this side of eternity.”<sup>130</sup>

In his biography of Fletcher written soon after his death, Wesley reported that Fletcher’s “favourite subject” in conversations among his friends was being “filled with the Spirit.” When he was able to converse, his favorite subject was, *the promise of the Father, the gift of the Holy Ghost*, including that rich peculiar blessing of union with the Father and the Son, mentioned in that prayer of our Lord, which is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of St. John. Many were the sparks of living fire, which occasionally darted forth from him on this beloved theme. “We must not be content,” said he, “to be only cleansed from sin; we must be filled with the Spirit.” One asking him what was to be experienced in the full accomplishment of the promise? “O,” said he, “what shall I say! All the sweetness of the drawings of the Father; all the love of the Son; all the rich effusions of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; more than ever can be expressed are comprehended here! To attain it the Spirit maketh intercession in the soul, like a God wrestling with a God!”<sup>131</sup>

The point that I am making here is that Fletcher emphasized Pentecost sanctification everywhere he preached without a word of censure from Wesley—whether he was preaching at Wesley’s annual conference or travelling with Wesley. As noted above, Wesley mentioned that he had travelled with Fletcher on occasions. On the day before Fletcher left Madeley with Wesley to go to London in 1776, Fletcher wrote a letter to some Methodist friends at Hull and York on November 12, 1776, where he had been invited to come to preach. He wrote:

If I have any desire to live at any time, God is my witness, that it is principally to be a witness in word and deed, of the dispensation of *power from on high*; and to point out that kingdom which does not consist in word, but in *power*, even in *righteousness, peace, and joy by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of power*. I am writing an Essay upon that important part of the Christian doctrine, and hope that it will be a mite in the treasury of truth, which the Lord has opened for the use of his people.<sup>132</sup>

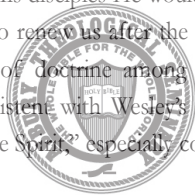
This letter was quoted in *The Methodist Magazine* in 1801, which illustrates that Fletcher’s “favourite subject” continued to receive attention.

Convincing evidence that John Wesley gave his approval to Fletcher’s idea of Pentecostal sanctification is seen in his later sermons. In his “Preface” to *The Arminian Magazine* for January 1781, Wesley says he intended “to write, with God’s assistance, a few more plain, practical Discourses, on those which I judge to

be the most necessary of the subjects I have not yet treated of.” He included one of those sermons in this 1781 issue, entitled, “Sermon on Galat. iv.18,” affirming Pentecostal sanctification. He wrote: “In a Christian Believer, *Love*, sits upon the throne, which is erected in the inmost soul; namely, love of God and man, which fills the whole heart, and reigns without a rival... This is that Religion which our Lord has established upon earth, ever since the descent of the Holy Ghost on day of Pentecost... Love enthroned in the heart.”<sup>133</sup> He preached this sermon on May 6, 1781. Was Wesley only talking about the ideal Church established on the day of Pentecost without intending to suggest that believers today should expect to have their own personal Pentecost? The answer is clearly that Wesley thought this Pentecost reality was to be personalized today, for example, as it will be shown below in the testimonies he published in *The Arminian Magazine*.

Three months later, on June 3, 1781 (Pentecost Sunday), Wesley wrote in his journal: “I preached on, ‘they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,’ and showed in what sense this belongs to us and our children.”<sup>134</sup> The phrase, “to us and our children,” is a paraphrase of Acts 2:39 where Peter says the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit is “to you and your children” We noted above that John Wesley heard John Heylyn preach a sermon on Pentecost based on Acts 2, with Wesley reporting, “And so, said he [Heylyn], may *all you* be.” As we showed, Heylyn’s exposition of Pentecost emphasized “the baptism of the Spirit” as the means of obtaining “perfect purity.” We also noted that both Fletcher and Coke had cited this sermon in support of the Methodist interpretation of entire sanctification. Now Wesley used this same text, using similar words, which he cited from Heylyn, that the invitation is extended to believers in all times and succeeding generations.

Two months after John Wesley had preached this Pentecost sermon, Fletcher preached on the same Pentecost theme at the Leeds Conference at 5:00 in the morning to two thousand people with Wesley’s full commendation.<sup>135</sup> On Wednesday, August 8, 1781, Wesley wrote: “I desired Mr. Fletcher to preach. I do not wonder he should be so popular; not only because he preaches with all his might, but because the power of God attends both his preaching and prayer.”<sup>136</sup> A letter written by one of Wesley’s preachers, John Pescod, to his wife while he was still at the conference reported that Fletcher preached on “the promise of the Holy Ghost, whom our Lord told His disciples He would send after His ascension. The dispensation of the Spirit is to renew us after the image of God.”<sup>137</sup> Considering Wesley’s insistence on unity of doctrine among Methodists, Fletcher’s sermon would surely have been consistent with Wesley’s sermon preached two months earlier on being “filled with the Spirit,” especially considering the fact that Fletcher



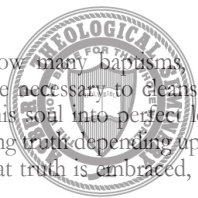
was perceived as one of the leaders of the Methodist movement along with John and Charles Wesley.

In this same 1781 volume of *The Arminian Magazine*, John Wesley published an article by Joseph Benson, “Thoughts on Christian Perfection.” If John Wesley earlier said that he did not agree with the language of the baptism of the Spirit for speaking of Christian perfection when Benson was principal at Trevecca College, this essay shows that he now had come to agree with it. If Fletcher told Benson at Trevecca College that only those who have been baptized with the Spirit have the full sanctifying assurance of faith whether or not John Wesley was willing to “assent to it,” this essay shows that John Wesley now assented to it. We also know that Benson did not change his mind about the language of the baptism with the Holy Spirit since he left Trevecca because Benson reported seven years later in December 4, 1777 that he still held to the same views: “About six years ago, when at Oxford [=time with Fletcher at Trevecca], my convictions, desires, were the same that they are now; and then, as now, I longed for the baptism of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>138</sup>

This essay by Benson and approved for publication by John Wesley is addressed to those who profess entire sanctification. Benson expressed concern about “the many instances of misconduct in the Professors of Christian Perfection” who “have fallen” because of pride, unwatchfulness, lukewarmness and indolence. Christian perfection is “an extirpation of all sin,” but “the whole deliverance from sin, depends on the constant indwelling of the Holy Ghost.” The problem, Benson said, is that while “the Lord hath promised to *circumcize our heart*, so that we shall love him *with all our heart* . . . those who love Him *perfectly*, may love him *more perfectly* still. Thus will the flame of holy Desire be kept alive in their soul.”

Benson then said: “Once more [as a reminder to his readers about how they may be kept from backsliding by always pressing forward]: Allowing, what (I think) neither Reason nor Scripture forbids us to allow, that God *may*, and that he often *does, instantaneously* so baptize a soul with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, as to purify it from all dross, and refine it like gold, so that it is *renewed in love, in pure and perfect love*, as it never was before; yet ought not those who have experienced this, to be repeatedly told, 1. That there is a further, and still further renewal to be experienced *day by day*.”<sup>139</sup> This is reminiscent of what John Fletcher had said six years earlier in his *Last Check*:

Should you ask, how many baptisms, or effusions of the sanctifying Spirit are necessary to cleanse a believer from all sin, and to kindle his soul into perfect love; I reply, that the effect of a sanctifying truth depending upon the ardour of the faith with which that truth is embraced, and upon the power



of the Spirit with which it is applied, I should betray a want of modesty if I brought the operations of the Holy Ghost, and the energy of faith, under a rule which is not expressly laid down in the Scriptures... If one powerful baptism of the Spirit ‘seal you unto the day of redemption, and cleanse you from all [moral] filthiness,’ so much the better. If two or more be necessary, the Lord can repeat them.<sup>140</sup>

Entire sanctification may and often does happen *instantaneously*, but the believer must continue to rely upon “*this* power from on high” for further growth. No matter how holy a believer is, Benson reminds them, there must be continual growth. He concludes with an exhortation for “professors of Christian perfection” to be increasingly “full of zeal.”<sup>141</sup>

Benson’s reference to “full of zeal” is precisely the topic of Wesley’s sermon in this same volume of *The Arminian Magazine* (noted above) in which Wesley had affirmed that “love enthroned in the heart” which “fills the heart” was made possible by the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Benson’s focus on a dynamic understanding of the Spirit-filled life as a lifelong process is why Fletcher had talked about “deeper baptisms,” “daily baptisms,” “many baptisms,” and “fuller baptisms” (phrases also often found in the testimonies recorded in the literature of the early Methodists).

Of course, John Wesley did not believe that God “*often... instantaneously*” justified and fully sanctified an unbeliever at the same moment. In *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Wesley wrote: “Neither dare we affirm, as some have done, that *all this salvation* is given *at once*... We do not know a single instance, in any place, of a person’s receiving, *in one and the same moment*, remission of sins, the abiding witness of the Spirit, and a new, clean heart.”<sup>142</sup> So this essay on “Thought of Christian Perfection” was addressed to those who were already justified to encourage them to be diligent in living a life of holiness.

In the same year of 1781 (June 22) that Benson (and John Wesley) defined the baptism with the Spirit as the means of full sanctification, Fletcher wrote to Thomas Coke’s future wife, Miss Loxdale: “The other Comforter in his fullness, or the *Pentecostal gift of the Holy Ghost*” gives “great grace, and *abundant life*; it destroys self, it fills with *power from on high*, *perfects in one*, it *perfects in love*.”<sup>143</sup>

Two days after writing this letter to Miss Loxdale, Fletcher sent a letter to Wesley giving him a report of her spiritual progress. Wesley published this letter in *The Arminian Magazine* in 1782: “As to Miss Loxdale, I believe her to be a simple, holy follower of the Lord. Nothing throws *unscriptural* Mysticism down like holding out the promise of the Father, and the fullness of the Spirit, to be received *now*, by

faith in the two Promisers, the *Father* and the *Son*. Ah! what is the *penal* fire of the Mystics, to the *burning love of the Spirit*, revealing the glorious power of the *Father* and the *Son*, according to John xiv.26, and filling us with all the fullness of God?"<sup>144</sup>

In the 1782 issue of *The Arminian Magazine*, Wesley quoted a testimony from the diary of Mr. G.C. This Methodist disciple of John Wesley prayed for a personal "descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles" to "rest upon me" that he might be "purified... from inbred sin" and obtain "the fullness of love."<sup>145</sup> Wesley remarked: "I do not remember ever to have met with a more remarkable account than is contained" in this testimony.<sup>146</sup>

In 1783, Wesley preached a sermon on "The Mystery of Iniquity" (May - June 1783), saying, as Heylyn had done in his sermon as noted above, "how exceeding small was the number of those whose souls were healed by the Son of God himself! 'When Peter stood up in the midst of them, the number of names were about a hundred and twenty.' (Acts 1:15.) And even these were but imperfectly healed; the chief of them being a little before so weak in faith that, though they did not, like Peter, forswear their Master, yet 'they all forsook him and fled.'" (Wesley defined "weak" to mean "'Sin remains in them still;—in all weak believers," from *Some Remarks on Mr. Hill's "Review of all the Doctrines Taught by Mr. John Wesley."*) Wesley then explains the reason why the disciples were not perfectly healed by Jesus himself prior to Pentecost was because the Spirit had not yet come to make them holy. Wesley cited this weakness of the disciples prior to Pentecost as "a plain proof that the sanctifying 'Spirit was not' then 'given,' because 'Jesus was not glorified.'"<sup>147</sup>

A year after the Leeds Conference in 1784 when Wesley had given his blessing to the forming of a Methodist denomination in America, he wrote a sermon, entitled "Of the Church," based on Ephesians 4:1-6, "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism." [Sept. 28, 1785]. It was published in *The Arminian Magazine* in 1786.<sup>148</sup> This sermon reflected his agreement with Fletcher's concept of "the baptism with the Holy Spirit," that while the Holy Spirit is given in a lower degree is given to all justified believers, the full baptism with the Holy Spirit is given to believers perfected in love. This is why Wesley says: "Some indeed have been inclined to interpret this ['one baptism'] in a figurative sense, as if it referred to that baptism of the Holy Ghost which the apostles received at the day of Pentecost, and which *in a lower degree* [italics mine] is given to all believers."<sup>149</sup>

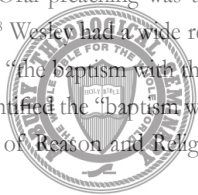
John Wesley's comments agree with Fletcher's statement that the disciples only "received the Holy Spirit" in part "until they were endued with power from on high." Before Pentecost, the disciples "were not *fully baptized* [italics mine]. The comforter, that visited them, did not properly dwell in them."<sup>150</sup> This phrase, "a lower degree," is common in Wesley's writings to define justified believers not

yet perfected in love.<sup>151</sup> It had been ten years since Fletcher's treatise on Christian perfection had been published and promoted by Wesley (*The Last Check*), and the Pentecostal paradigm was already widely accepted. If Wesley were uneasy or rejected Fletcher's interpretation, this sermon would have been an excellent opportunity for him to clarify this issue. Instead, he made a comment that was totally consistent with Fletcher's emphasis. This sermon is also consistent with Wesley's language of the "baptism with the Spirit" in 1745, as noted above.

There are many instances that can be cited to show the normative use of Pentecostal sanctification,<sup>152</sup> but there is a report given by Adam Clarke that shows Wesley himself preached specifically on the text, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 1:5). Maldwyn Edwards says "Adam Clarke was the greatest name in Methodism in the generation which succeeded Wesley." He further believes that Clarke "was not only the greatest scholar in Methodism, but amongst the greatest of his age."<sup>153</sup> Clarke also explicitly affirmed entire sanctification was through the baptism with the Spirit.<sup>154</sup>

Adam Clarke heard John Wesley preach on "the baptism with the Holy Spirit" at the conference at Bristol in 1783. We noted above that Fletcher had preached on the baptism with the Holy Spirit at Wesley's annual conference in 1781 with Wesley's high praise. According to Clarke's autobiography, while he was attending the Bristol conference, early in the morning on August 3, 1783, he heard "Mr. Bradburn preach on Christian perfection, from I John iv.19." Then at 10:00 a.m. he heard John Wesley preach on the text from Acts. 1:5, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." Again later on during the day, he heard Wesley preach on the text, "Let us go on to perfection," (Heb. 6:1).<sup>155</sup> Significantly, the preaching theme of the conference was on perfection. One could gather that Wesley's sermon on the baptism with the Spirit was a sermon on perfection. When Wesley came into his district of Norwich in October 1783, Adam Clarke again heard Wesley preach a sermon on the text, "They were all baptized with the Holy Ghost."<sup>156</sup> Within the space of a few months, Clarke heard Wesley preach two sermons on "the baptism with the Holy Ghost."

We do not have the contents of these sermons that Wesley preached on the baptism with the Holy Spirit, partly because Wesley's "later preaching was primarily extempore."<sup>157</sup> Oral preaching was the norm for him and was for "proclamation and invitation."<sup>158</sup> Wesley had a wide repertory of sermons, which he preached, and this sermon on "the baptism with the Spirit" was one of them. We do know, however, that he identified the "baptism with the Spirit" with perfect love earlier in his "Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion" and in a letter to William



Law as “righteousness and true holiness” (as noted above) which was a phrase consistently used by Wesley for Christian perfection.

Since Adam Clarke often used the phrase, “Baptism with the Holy Ghost,” for entire sanctification, he would have noted in his autobiography if Wesley’s sermon on “the baptism with the Holy Ghost” were nuanced differently from his and Fletcher’s. Considering that Pentecostal sanctification, including the language of “descent of the Spirit,” “filled with the Spirit,” and “baptized with the Spirit, is interlaced with testimonies, letters, and sermons in *The Arminian Magazine*, along with it being a preaching topic in Wesley’s annual conferences and Fletcher’s writings, it can only be concluded that John Wesley’s sermon was consistent with this widespread language of the Spirit.

We also know that Wesley on occasions quoted from Fletcher’s treatise on Christian perfection (*The Last Check*) in his extempore preaching as he travelled about from place to place. One such instance was recorded in a letter from Miss R to Mrs. P, November 5, 1789, which was two years before Wesley’s death: “I often think of an expression of Mr. Wesley’s from the pulpit last winter... ‘If we had more of what Mr. Fletcher calls *perfect faith*, we should have more lively hopes and more active love.’”<sup>159</sup> Fletcher defined “perfect faith” in *The Last Check* to mean Christian perfection” and is attained through being “baptized with the Spirit.” The mutual citing of each other’s writings so favorably would surely create the impression among these early Methodists that John Wesley and Fletcher were in agreement, especially on this primary distinctive belief of Methodism.

When Wesley preached on “the baptism with the Holy Ghost,” it is probable that he would have referred to Fletcher because, as Wesley noted in his biography of Fletcher, being filled with the Spirit was Fletcher’s preferred subject, and Fletcher was highly popular with Methodists who eagerly wanted him to be Wesley’s successor.<sup>160</sup>

If John Fletcher preached with Wesley as they travelled together, Fletcher’s wife Mary also preached<sup>161</sup> with John Wesley at designated locations after her husband’s death.<sup>162</sup> She was the first woman Methodist preacher, and she mentioned in his diaries about her practice of preaching on a “horseblock” in the streets.<sup>163</sup> In one of her messages, perhaps even when she was preaching (“expounding”) with Wesley, she alluded to John Wesley’s later sermon on “The General Spread of the Gospel” (1788).

This sermon by John Wesley was about the initial fulfilment of this Old Testament promise on the day of Pentecost when the disciples were “filled with the Holy Spirit.” Wesley said that their lives were characterized by “gladness and singleness of heart,” and being “all of one heart and of one soul.” Wesley believed

this original day of Pentecost was being extended to a “grand Pentecost” that already had begun during his student days at Oxford with his fellow Methodists. Wesley then predicted this future revival of a “grand Pentecost” would mean that everyone will be “filled with the Spirit” and “righteousness would cover the earth as waters cover the sea.” This “grand Pentecost” would be the fulfilment of the promise that believers would be enabled to love God perfectly with all their heart through spiritual circumcision (Deut. 30:6).<sup>164</sup>

Mary Fletcher’s sermon alluded to Wesley’s prophecy as she encouraged her hearers to be baptized with the Spirit. She said: “We often talk of the time when *righteousness is to overspread the earth*, but this millennium must overspread our own hearts, if we would see the face of God with joy.” She then exhorted her hearers to have a personal Pentecost and to enter into the “spiritual Canaan [of perfect love], that *baptism of the Spirit*, to which every believer is expressly called.”<sup>165</sup>

The rest of this story on how Pentecostal sanctification was developed by John Wesley and John Fletcher will show how Wesley’s preachers and all the succeeding generations of Methodism in Britain and America consistently and commonly used this theme. It will show how this theme was made prominent in the rise of the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition in the mid-nineteenth century in America. It will show how modern-day Pentecostalism with hundreds of millions of believers have their origin in Wesley’s and Fletcher’s preaching on the need for believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to enjoy the fullness of God’s love and presence in their lives. The rest of the story may well conclude with a “grand Pentecost” in the twenty-first century, if, in the words of Mary Fletcher, “this millennium... overspread our own hearts” as “every believer is expressly called” to wait for the Promise of the Father in the Upper Room to receive the “*baptism of the Spirit*.”

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> This presentation will take into consideration the conversations on this topic in recent years.

<sup>2</sup> *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872): 9: 495, “Extract of a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Law (January 6, 1756).”

<sup>3</sup> *Unexampled Labours: Letters of the Revd John Fletcher to leaders in the Evangelical Revival*, edited Peter S. Forsaith (London: Epworth, 2008), p. 134.

<sup>4</sup> A letter of Charles Wesley to Fletcher (June 21, 1784), contained and bound up in a large volume in the John Rylands Library entitled, *Letters Relating to the Wesley Family*. Cf. Patrick Steiff, p. 273.

<sup>5</sup> Henry Moore, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley* (New York: Bangs and Emory, 1826), 2:261.

<sup>6</sup> John Fletcher Hurst, *John Wesley the Methodist* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1903), p. 204-205.

<sup>7</sup> William C. Larrabee, *Wesley and his Collaborers*, edited B. F. Tefft (New York: Carlton and Lanahan, 1851), 2: 258-259.

<sup>8</sup> In *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II and The Instruction on the Liturgy*, N.C.W.C. translation (St. Paul Editions: Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, n.d.) there is a direct connection between “the gift of the Spirit” and “perfection” of the believer’s character. The chapter entitled, “The Universal Call to Holiness in the Church,” can hardly be surpassed as a concise statement on what holiness means. The call to holiness is a call for “individuals who, in their walk of life, tend toward the perfection of charity” (p. 151). Of special significance in these documents is the link between the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit and perfect love: “The Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and Model of all perfection, preached holiness of life to each and everyone of His disciples of every condition. He Himself stands as the author and consumator of this holiness of life: ‘Be you therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect’... Indeed He sent the Holy Spirit upon all men that He might move them inwardly to love God with their whole heart and their whole soul, with all their mind and all their strength and that they might love each other as Christ loves them.” It is further noted: “Thus it is evident to everyone, that all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity” (pp. 151-152). What is significant is that Roman Catholic theology appeals to the same biblical passages as Fletcher does to support the doctrine of holiness, distinguishing between baptized believers and perfect Christians who have been filled with the Holy Spirit in the rite of confirmation. Cf. William J. O’Shea, *Sacraments of Initiation* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965), pp. 54-55.

<sup>9</sup> ‘*Unexampled Labours*’, p. 318, (Letter to Charles Wesley, August 14, 1774).

<sup>10</sup> Albert C. Outler, *Sermons I*, 1: 347, “The Repentance of Believers.” See also, *ibid.*, 2: 121, “Christian Perfection.” Also, *ibid.*, 3: 78, “On Perfection.”

<sup>11</sup> *Plain Account of Christian Perfection, Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises II*, Bicentennial Edition of the *Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985-), 13: 152; *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, from the year 1725 to Year 1777*, (7<sup>th</sup> edition, London: G. Paramore, Printer, 1794), p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (London: Strahan, 1739), p. 151.

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

<sup>15</sup> John Wesley, February 1, 1738, *Journals and Diaries I (1735-38)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard Heitzenrater, *Works of John Wesley*, 18: 215-216.



<sup>16</sup> *The Equal Check, Works of the Rev. John Fletcher*, ed. Joseph Benson (London: Conference Office, 1815), 4: 259, “Essay on Truth.” See also Wesley’s special abridged edition of Fletcher’s *Essay on Truth* in *The First Part of an Equal Check* (Bristol: W. Pine, 1774), p. 168.

<sup>17</sup> Wesley, May 19, 1738, *Journals and Diaries I (1735-38)*, 18: 241.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 18: 241n15.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. L. Wood, *Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2002), p. 337-379.

<sup>20</sup> John Heylyn, “Discourse XV. On Whitsunday,” *Theological Lectures at Westminster-Abbey* (London: Printed for J. and R. Tonson and S. Draper in the Strand, 1749), p. 114.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 116.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>23</sup> See the discussion in Laurence W. Wood, *Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2002), p. 264.

<sup>24</sup> Coke, *A Commentary on the New Testament* (London: G. Whitfield, 1803), 2: 942-957. Coke cites the entire sermon from John Heylyn in his *Commentary* on Acts 2:47 without a single reference to its original source.

<sup>25</sup> Heylyn, *Theological Lectures*, p. 118.

<sup>26</sup> Outler, *Sermons*, 3: 585, “On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel”

<sup>27</sup> Outler, *Sermons*, 2: 454, “The Mystery of Iniquity.”

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p. 119-120.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p. 121.

<sup>31</sup> Pentecostal sanctification is also contained in the writings of Jeremy Taylor, who also profoundly influenced John Wesley. Cf. *Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism*, p. 341-345.

<sup>32</sup> Richard Heitzenrater, *Mirror and Memory* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1989), p. 106-149.

<sup>33</sup> Wesley, June 7, 1738, *Journals and Diaries I (1735-38)*, in *Works of John Wesley*, 18: 254.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 18:270 (August 8, 1738).



<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 18: 270-271 (August 8, 1738). In his biography of John Wesley, Henry Moore took the editorial liberty to qualify the remark of Christian David that though the disciples “had faith” before Pentecost, they had not “[fully] received ‘the gift of the Holy Ghost.’” This qualification comes with the insertion of the word “fully” in brackets, indicating there is a difference between receiving the Spirit in justifying faith and *fully* receiving the Spirit in Christian perfection. Cf. Moore, *The Life of John Wesley*: 1:229].

<sup>36</sup> *Journals and Diaries I (1735-38)*, 18: 274, (August 10, 1738)

<sup>37</sup> Christian David equated “full assurance” and being “cleansed from all sin.” Cf. *Ibid.*, 18: 272, (August 10, 1738).

<sup>38</sup> The Moravians did not all agree about being “cleansed from all sin.” Christian David affirmed this doctrine, but John Wesley learned three years after his Aldersgate experience that Peter Böhler rejected it, as he told John Wesley on May 16, 1741. *Journals and Diaries II (1735-38)*, in *Works*, 19: 195.

<sup>39</sup> John Wesley, “A Plain Account of Christian Perfection,” *Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises II* in *Works*, 13: 146. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (7<sup>th</sup> edition, G. Paramore, Printer, 1794), p. 12.

<sup>40</sup> Italics mine.

<sup>41</sup> Outler, Sermon 40, “Christian Perfection,” § 2, in *Sermons II*, 2: 110.

<sup>42</sup> “Pleading the Promise of Sanctification,” *HSP* 1742, p. 261-262.

<sup>43</sup> *John Wesley, A Library of Protestant Thought*, ed. Albert Outler (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) p. 367ff.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 372.

<sup>45</sup> *John Wesley*, “The Principles of a Methodist” (1742), in *The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design*, ed. Rupert E. Davies, *Wesley, Works*, 9: 64-65.

<sup>46</sup> Outler, *Sermons*, 1: 160, “Scriptural Christianity.”

<sup>47</sup> *The Equal Check, Works of the Rev. John Fletcher*, 4:253, “Essay on Truth.”

<sup>48</sup> John Wesley, *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters*, ed. Gerald R. Cragg, *Works of John Wesley*, 11: 261, “A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part II.”

<sup>49</sup> *Arminian Magazine* (London: J. Paramore, 1782) 5: 214.

<sup>50</sup> Cragg, *Appeals*, 11:253. “A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, Part II.”

<sup>51</sup> *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, Third Edition (Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1984), 9: 495, “An Extract of a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Law.”



<sup>52</sup> Cf. Mary Fletcher's comments about this revival in Moore, *The Life of Mary Fletcher* (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1817), p. 35.

<sup>53</sup> Wesley, October 28, 1762, *Journal and Diaries IV (1755-65)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, in *Works* 21: 392.

<sup>54</sup> 'Unexampled Labours', *Letters of the Revd John Fletcher to leaders in the Evangelical Revival*, edited Peter S. Forsaith (London: Epworth, 2008), p. 235.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>56</sup> Benson, *The Life of the Rev. John W. de la Flechere, Works of the Rev. John Fletcher*, p. 156.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> A letter published for the first time in Tyerman, *Wesley's Designated Successor*, 182-183. Though Fletcher was concerned about the antinomian tendencies of the Calvinist Methodists, he did not think that the Countess herself was guilty of "the charge of Antinomianism." Cf. letter to Mr. Ireland (March 27, 1774) in *The Letters of the Rev. John Fletcher*, ed. Melville Horne (New York: Lane & Scott, 1849), p. 260.

<sup>59</sup> Randy Maddox and Russell Frazier, "Joseph Benson's Initial Letter to John Wesley concerning Spirit Baptism and Christian Perfection," *The Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 48:2 (Fall 2013): 66, 72.

<sup>60</sup> Telford, *Letters* 5:214-215 (to Joseph Benson, December 28, 1770).

<sup>61</sup> This fragment is housed in the Manuscript Department of William R. Perkins, Duke University and transcribed by M. Robert Fraser and Frank Baker. M. Robert Fraser. *Strains in the Understanding of Christian Perfection in Early British Methodism*. Ph. D. Thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1988. Photocopy (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilm. Inc., 1992), 490-492. Cited by permission from M. Robert Fraser.

<sup>62</sup> 'Unexampled, Labours', 271, (March 9, 1771).

<sup>63</sup> *Plain Account of Christian Perfection, Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises II, Works of John Wesley*, 13: 147. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (7<sup>th</sup> edition, G. Paramore, Printer, 1794), p. 13-14.

<sup>64</sup> *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (7<sup>th</sup> edition, London: G. Paramore, 1794), p. 52.

<sup>65</sup> Fraser *Doctoral Dissertation*, 489. John Wesley defined the language, "seal of the Spirit" and "full assurance of hope" with perfection in his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (7<sup>th</sup> edition, G. Paramore, Printer, 1794), 70-71.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. 'Unexampled Labours', *Letters of the Revd John Fletcher to leaders in the Evangelical Revival*, ed., with an introduction by Peter Forsaith, with additional notes by Kenneth Loyer (London: Epworth, 2008).

<sup>67</sup> *Unexampled, Labours*, 88, 252.

<sup>68</sup> The original manuscript is housed in the Manuscript Department of the William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, and it is transcribed by M. Robert Fraser. Cf. *Fraser's Doctoral Dissertation*, 489. Cited with the permission of M. Robert Fraser who discovered this document.

<sup>69</sup> Telford, *Letters*, 5: 228-229 (to Joseph Benson, March 16, 1771).

<sup>70</sup> A letter published for the first time in Tyerman, *Wesley's Designated Successor*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1882), 182-183. Though Fletcher was concerned about the antinomian tendencies of the Calvinist Methodists, he did not think that the Countess herself was guilty of "the charge of Antinomianism." Cf. letter to Mr. Ireland (March 27, 1774) in *The Letters of the Rev. John Fletcher*, ed. Melville Horne (New York: Lane & Scott, 1849), 260.

<sup>71</sup> *Unexampled, Labours*, p. 319.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 320 (August 14, 1774).

<sup>76</sup> *Unexampled Labours*, p. 320.

<sup>77</sup> *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, ed. John Telford (London: Epworth Press, 1931), (to John Fletcher, Feb. 26, 1774), 6: 75. *The Works of John Wesley, Journal and Diaries*, (1765-75), ed. W. Reginald Ward (Journal) and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Diaries), (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 22:400 (March 21, 1774)

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Telford, *Letters*, 6: 175 (a letter to John Fletcher 18, 1775).

<sup>79</sup> *Unexampled Labours*, (Letter to Charles Wesley, May 21, 1775), 321, A Letter from John Fletcher to Charles Wesley, May 21, 1775, contained in the "Fletcher Volume" (51), in Fletcher-Tooth Archival Collection in the John Rylands Library of Manchester University.

<sup>80</sup> Wesley's special abridged edition of John Fletcher, *The First Part of an Equal Check* (Bristol: W. Pine, 1774), vi.

<sup>81</sup> Wesley's special abridged edition of John Fletcher, v.

<sup>82</sup> Wesley's special abridged edition of John Fletcher, p. 112.

<sup>83</sup> *The Works of the Rev. John Fletcher*, ed. Joseph Benson, 6: 182.

<sup>84</sup> Wesley's special abridged edition of John Fletcher, p. 115.

<sup>85</sup> Wesley's special abridged edition of John Fletcher, p. 122.



- <sup>86</sup> Wesley's special abridged edition of John Fletcher, p. 115.
- <sup>87</sup> Wesley's special abridged edition of John Fletcher, p. 179.
- <sup>88</sup> Wesley's special abridged edition of John Fletcher, p. 177n.
- <sup>89</sup> Wesley's special abridged edition of John Fletcher, p. 180.
- <sup>90</sup> Wesley's special abridged edition of John Fletcher, p. 180.
- <sup>91</sup> Wesley's special abridged edition of John Fletcher, p. 180.
- <sup>92</sup> 'Unexampled, Labours', p. 291. (January 1772).
- <sup>93</sup> Wesley's special abridged edition of John Fletcher, p. 181.
- <sup>94</sup> Wesley's special abridged edition of John Fletcher, p. 174.
- <sup>95</sup> Wesley's special abridged edition of John Fletcher, p. 175.
- <sup>96</sup> Wesley's special abridged edition of John Fletcher, v.
- <sup>97</sup> Wesley's special abridged edition of John Fletcher, p. 177.
- <sup>98</sup> Telford, *Letters* 6: 136-137. Letter to Elizabeth Ritchie (January 17, 1775).
- <sup>99</sup> Telford, *Letters*, 6: 79-80. Letter to Mrs. Bennis (May 2, 1774).
- <sup>100</sup> Patrick Streiff, *Reluctant Saint? A Theological Biography of Fletcher of Madeley*, trans. G. W. S. Knowles (London: Epworth Press, 2001), 183.
- <sup>101</sup> Henry Moore, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley* (London: John Kershaw, 1825), 2: 260.
- <sup>102</sup> Telford, *Letters*, 6:146, (to John Fletcher, March 22, 1775). Patrick Streiff points out "Fletcher did not dispute that every person under the dispensation of the Son also stood under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Following a gentle criticism by John Wesley he corrected himself on this point. But he drew a distinction between, on the one hand, pious Jews in the Old Testament and babes in Christ, and, on the other hand, of the Holy Spirit, in the full assurance of faith. They have experienced that baptism, that is, the fullness, of the Spirit... Fletcher urged Christians not to seek to reach perfection through their own works, but through a living faith. They should look forward to perfection in three ways: in faith, just as they are, and always. Fletcher left open the question as to how perfection is attained, whether instantaneously, or gradually. There is a growth in grace and love which both precedes and follows baptism with the Spirit." Patrick Streiff, *Reluctant Saint*, 208.
- <sup>103</sup> Telford, *Letters*, 6: 146, (to John Fletcher, March 22, 1775).
- <sup>104</sup> 'Unexampled, Labours', p. 321.



<sup>105</sup> Telford, *Letters*, 6: 174-175, (to John Fletcher, August 18, 1775).

<sup>106</sup> Fletcher, *The Last Check* in *Works of the Rev. John Fletcher*, 6: 396.

<sup>107</sup> "The Last Check," in *The Works of the Rev. John Fletcher*, 1: 185.

<sup>108</sup> Streiff, 184.

<sup>109</sup> Telford, *Letters*, 6: 79-80. Letter to Mrs. Bennis (May 2, 1774).

<sup>110</sup> A letter loosely contained in and bound up in a large volume (or folio) in John Rylands Library, entitled, *Letters Relating to the Wesley Family*, stored in JRULM MAW F1 Box 18. The immediate context of the approval of Fletcher's writings given by Charles Wesley was related to a pamphlet that Fletcher wrote on "Three National Grievances," but Charles expanded on the extent of approval to include Fletcher's writings from *the beginning*.

<sup>111</sup> Joseph Benson, *The Life of the Rev. John Fletcher* (1804), in Fletcher, *Works of John Fletcher*, 1: 180-181, (a letter to Charles Wesley, January 1775).

<sup>112</sup> *The Last Check*, *The Works of the Rev. John Fletcher*, 6: 117-420.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. 'Unexampled, Labours' 281, 305. Cf. Laurence W. Wood, "Charles Wesley's Influence on John Fletcher, The Role of the Holy Spirit in Sanctification," *Proceedings of the Charles Wesley Society* (September, 2014), 18: 41-58.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. James Mudge, *The Perfect Life*, (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1911), 300-301.

<sup>115</sup> W. F. Tillett, Dean of the Theological Faculty in Vanderbilt University, regarded Wesley as a "great religious leader," but not as a reliable theological guide. He frankly regarded Wesley's theology as "inadequate, inharmonious, unsatisfactory, perplexing, open to criticism." Cited by James Mudge, *The Perfect Life in Experience and Doctrine: A Restatement* (1911), 300.

<sup>116</sup> Davies, *Societies*, 9: 100, "Answer to Mr. Church's Remarks."

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Wesley, *Works* (Jackson) 1: 451, "Some Remarks on Mr. Hill's 'Review of All the Doctrines Taught Mr. John Wesley.'"

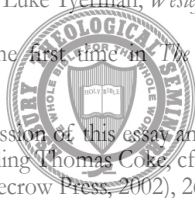
<sup>118</sup> *First Check to Antinomianism*, *The Works of the Rev. John Fletcher*, 2: 250.

<sup>119</sup> *Last Checks*, *Works of the Rev. John Fletcher*, 6: 383-384.

<sup>120</sup> Fletcher's letter to Mary Bosanquet, written from Marseilles, March 7, 1778, cited and transcribed by Luke Tyerman, *Wesley's Designated Successor*, 411-412.

<sup>121</sup> Published for the first time in *The Asbury Theological Journal*. 50.1 (Spring, 1998): 35-56

<sup>122</sup> For a fuller discussion of this essay and its influence with others who had a private copy of it, including Thomas Coke, cf. *The Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 263-264.



<sup>123</sup> *The Doctrine of the New Birth*, p. 46-47.

<sup>124</sup> Telford, *Letters* 6:221 (to John Fletcher, June 1, 1776). Cf. Harold Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification*, 135.

<sup>125</sup> *The Arminian Magazine* 18 (December, 1795): 614-615.

<sup>126</sup> Outler, Sermon 40, “Christian Perfection,” § 2, in *Sermons II*, 2: 110.

<sup>127</sup> Richard Hill, *Logica Wesleyensis, or, The Farrago Double Distilled with an Heroic Poem in Praise of Mr. John Wesley* (London: Printed for E. and C. Dilly, in the Poultry; J. Matthews, near Hungerford-market, in the Strand; and W. Harris, No. 70, in St. Paul’s Church-yard, 1773), 53.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. *Fifth Check*, *Works of John Fletcher*, 3:392.

<sup>129</sup> Outler, *Sermons*, 3: 617, “On the Death of John Fletcher.”

<sup>130</sup> Outler, *Sermons*, 3: 627-268, “On the Death of John Fletcher.”

<sup>131</sup> John Wesley, *A Short Account of the Life and Death of the Rev. John Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley* (New York: Ezekiel Cooper and John Wilson, 1803), 51-52. Cf. Joseph Benson, *The Life of The Rev. John William de la Flechere, Works of John Fletcher*, 214.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. *The Methodist Magazine* (London edition), 24 (January, 1801): 43. Regarding the “Essay” that Fletcher mentioned, see above, footnote 75.

<sup>133</sup> *Arminian Magazine*, p. 467. Volume 4, 1781.

<sup>134</sup> Wesley, June 3, 1781, *Journals and Diaries VI (1776-86)*, in *Works of John Wesley*, 23: 206.

<sup>135</sup> John F. Hurst, *The History of Methodism*, 2: 948.

<sup>136</sup> John Wesley, August 8, 1781, *Journals and Diaries VII (1776-1786)*, 23: 218.

<sup>137</sup> *The Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* 8 (August 1829): 528.

<sup>138</sup> James MacDonald, *Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Benson* (New York: Bangs and T. Mason, for the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1823), 52.

<sup>139</sup> Benson, “Thoughts on Perfection,” *The Arminian Magazine* 4 (January, 1778): 553.

<sup>140</sup> *Last Checks*, *Works of the Rev. John Fletcher*, 6: 360.

<sup>141</sup> “Thoughts on Perfection,” *The Arminian Magazine* 4 (January, 1778): 549-553.

<sup>142</sup> John Wesley, *Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises II*, eds. Paul Wesley Chilcote and Kenneth J. Collins, The Bicentennial Edition of *The Works of John*



*Wesley*, 13:152-153. The only exception to those who might have been fully justified and fully sanctified at the same moment were the three thousand on the day of Pentecost who quickly moved from the dispensations of the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (7<sup>th</sup> edition, London: G. Paramore, Printer, 1794). Cf. Fletcher, *The First Part of an Equal Check*, abridged by John Wesley to enlarge the reading audience (Bristol: W. Pine Printer, 1774), 179-181.

<sup>143</sup> Cited in *The Methodist Magazine, being a continuation of The Arminian Magazine*, volume XXXIV or the eighth volume of the new series (London: Conference Office, City-Road, 1811), 312.

<sup>144</sup> This letter was written to Miss Loxdale on June 24, 1781, and published in *The Arminian Magazine* 5 (January, 1782); 49.

<sup>145</sup> John Wesley, "An Extract from the Journal of Mr. G. C.," *The Arminian Magazine*, 6 (May 1783): 244-245.

<sup>146</sup> John Wesley, "An Extract from Journal of Mr. G.C.," *The Arminian Magazine* 5 (June 1782): 298.

<sup>147</sup> Outler, *Sermons*, 2:454, "The Mystery of Iniquity."

<sup>148</sup> Outler, *Sermons*, 3:45, "Of the Church."

<sup>149</sup> "lower degree" is used frequently by Wesley to indicate a justified believer who is not entirely sanctified. Cf. sermon on Patience, pt.10.

<sup>150</sup> Fletcher, *The First Part of An Equal Check*, Wesley's abridged edition (New York: John Wilson and Daniel Hitt, 1809, Second American Edition), 171. Cf. *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>151</sup> Outler, *Sermons* 3:177, "On Patience."

<sup>152</sup> Cf. *Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism*, 245ff.

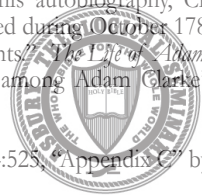
<sup>153</sup> Maldwyn L. Edwards, *Adam Clarke* (London: The Epworth Press, 1942). 45.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. *Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism*, 270-275.

<sup>155</sup> *An Account of the Infancy, Religious, and Literary Life of Adam Clarke* (autobiography), edited J. B. B. Clarke (New York: B. Waugh and T. Mason, 1833), 1:110.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 171. In his autobiography, Clarke said for "most of these sermons" that Wesley preached during October 1783 he had "preserved either the skeletons, or the leading thoughts." *The Life of Adam Clarke* (autobiography), 1:110. This information is missing among Adam Clarke's archival collections at Duke University Library.

<sup>157</sup> Outler, *Sermons* 4:525, "Appendix C" by Richard P. Heitzenrater.



<sup>158</sup> Wesley on oral preaching in Outler, Sermons, in the section 3. The sermon Corpus, first paragraph by Outler.

<sup>159</sup> *The Arminian Magazine*, 20 (January, 1797), 49.

<sup>160</sup> Henry Moore, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, 2:261.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. Henry Moore's comments about "her preaching" in Moore, *The Life of Mrs. Mary Fletcher* (New York: Mason and Lane, 184), 386.

<sup>162</sup> John Wesley, March 8, 10, and 12, 1787, *Journals and Diaries VII (1787–1791)*, ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, vol 24 of The Bicentennial Edition of the *Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 7–8.

<sup>163</sup> *The Life of Mrs. Mary Fletcher*, 115.

<sup>164</sup> Wesley, Sermon 63, "The General Spread of the Gospel," §§ 20–25, in Outler *Sermons II*, *Works of John Wesley*, 494–498.

<sup>165</sup> *Life of Mrs. Mary Fletcher*, 398.



Laurence W. Wood

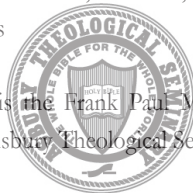
*The Normative Use of Pentecostal Sanctification in British and American Methodism*

**Abstract**

This paper sets out to demonstrate that Pentecostal sanctification is a concept rooted in the theology of John Wesley, and that John Wesley and John Fletcher agreed theologically on this concept, contrary to other scholarly opinions frequently voiced on this subject. The view of Pentecostal sanctification was also held to be normative by early Methodists until the rise of liberal theology in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and this is evidenced by numerous historical references. The view that Pentecostal sanctification arose with either Phoebe Palmer in the Wesleyan-Holiness movement, or perhaps with John Fletcher as an outside voice from mainstream Methodism, is refuted and supporting evidence given. This paper was the second of two lectures of the Charles Elmer Cowman Lectures given at Seoul Theological Seminary from October 7-9, 2015 in Seoul, South Korea.

**Keywords:** Pentecostal sanctification, holiness, John Wesley, John Fletcher, Methodism, Wesleyan-holiness

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## Introduction

“Adhere closely to the ancient landmarks”  
[The Bishops’ Pastoral Address to the General Conference of the Methodist  
Episcopal Church in 1852]<sup>1</sup>

There is a misinformed rumor circulating among some Wesley scholars that Pentecostal sanctification was not a common interpretation in early Methodism, but rather it lay dormant in the writings of John Fletcher and only resurfaced into a full blown theology of the baptism with the Spirit with Phoebe Palmer and the Wesleyan-holiness movement in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Another piece of misinformation is that John Fletcher had no special place of privilege or influence with John Wesley and early Methodism.

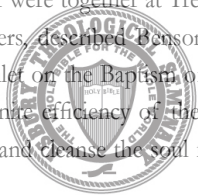
The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate that these rumors are based on inadequate research. Pentecostal sanctification, including the language of “the baptism with the Spirit,” was prominently featured and promoted after it was fully developed in the writings of John Fletcher and approved by John Wesley until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as theological liberalism began to take over Methodism.

It is not surprising that Pentecostal sanctification became a normative interpretation in Methodism considering its emphasis in John Fletcher’s *The Last Check*. In *A Series of Letters Addressed to the Methodist Connection* (1810), Thomas Coke engaged in an extended discussion of Fletcher’s theology, endorsing it and arguing that it “coincides” with Wesley’s view.<sup>2</sup> He particularly noted that Fletcher’s *Checks* were “acknowledged and disseminated by Wesley” and officially “recognized by the [British] Methodist Conference.”<sup>3</sup>

The following discussion contains a small sampling of the historiography of early Methodism, and it will serve as a time-line narrative to show that Pentecostal sanctification was continuously embraced in Methodism without the slightest suggestion that there was any difference between John Wesley and Fletcher.

## Joseph Benson

It is appropriate to start with Joseph Benson who had written a defense of Wesley’s idea of sanctification in an essay entitled, “The Baptism with the Holy Ghost,” when he and Fletcher were together at Trevecca College. Richard Treffry, one of John Wesley’s preachers, described Benson’s essay in this way: “He had previously published a pamphlet on the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, in which he declared his belief in the infinite efficiency of the eternal Spirit to eradicate the principle of innate depravity, and cleanse the soul from the last remains of sin in this life.”<sup>4</sup>



I have heard some critics who dislike the idea of Pentecostal sanctification incorrectly say that Benson dropped the idea of Pentecostal sanctification after Wesley cautioned him against equating “receiving the Spirit” and perfection in 1770. We know Benson never did change his mind because he said so. Benson observed on December 4, 1777:

O let me, like Peter, John, and Stephen, become full of faith and the Holy Ghost, that I may be a faithful steward of thy grace, and minister of thy word. Alas! How little progress I make! About six years ago, when at Oxford [at the same time with Fletcher at Trevecca], my convictions, desires, &c. were the same that they are now; and then, as now, I longed for the baptism of the Holy Ghost.<sup>5</sup>

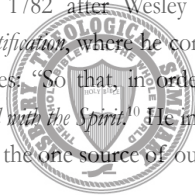
His biographer noted, “this language of humility and desire is that of a soul pressing on to perfection.”<sup>6</sup> In a letter May 21, 1776, Benson said: “But, the principal thing to be thought, talked, and wrote about, is the baptism of the Spirit, or the inward kingdom of God. Oh! my friend, this is but little known among us!”<sup>7</sup>

In a letter to his bride-to-be (Sarah Thompson) on August 11, 1779, Benson wrote:

Permit me to advise & entreat you not to rest satisfied in your present state: you are undoubtedly called to enjoy greater & better things even to live & walk in the Spirit, experiencing his witness & bringing forth his fruits day by day. Now be you fully persuaded of this: settle in your very heart, that you are called to be an habitation of God thro’ the Spirit; & be satisfied also God alone can put you in possession of this blessing... Be instant in prayer for this one thing that he would lift up the light of his countenance upon you & *baptize you with the Spirit* [italics mine] of his grace.<sup>8</sup>

In 1781, Wesley published an essay in *The Arminian Magazine* by Benson on “Thoughts on Perfection,” in which Benson noted that “God *may*, and that he often *does, instantaneously* so baptize a soul with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, as to purify it from all dross, and refine it like gold, so that it is *renewed in love, in pure and perfect love*, as it never was before.”<sup>9</sup>

One year later in 1782 after Wesley published this essay, Benson published *Two Sermons on Sanctification*, where he connects the fullness of the Spirit with perfection. Benson writes: “So that, in order to our, *full, perfect, and entire* Sanctification, we must *be filled with the Spirit*.”<sup>10</sup> He invites his hearers to receive “the fullness of that Spirit which is the one source of our sanctification... The Spirit of



truth, holiness, and comfort will take up his abode in us, and enlighten, sanctify, and save us.”<sup>11</sup> This emphasis on Pentecostal sanctification is in evidence throughout Benson’s “Two Sermons on Sanctification.” These two sermons were written with Wesley’s approval.<sup>12</sup>

Benson also continued to use “receive the Holy Spirit” for entire sanctification in his commentary on Acts 19:2, where Benson explained the question, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” to mean whether or not they had received “the sanctifying graces of the Holy Spirit.” Benson then observes: “Many are deceived in this matter, and think they have received the Holy Ghost, when really they have not... We should therefore strictly examine ourselves on this subject; and inquire whether *we* have received the Holy Ghost since *we* believed?”<sup>13</sup>

In 1787, Benson preached a sermon entitled “The Nature and Design of the Gospel of Christ.”<sup>14</sup> He showed that the gospel of Christ “offers us a free, full, and universal pardon, but “this leads me to speak of another principal blessing... the ministration of the Spirit [=‘dispensation of the Spirit’ in Fletcher].” He explained: “Christ offers to baptize us with the Holy Ghost and with fire, to live in us that we may live also, to quicken us and raise up and make us fit together with himself in heavenly places.” This means “such abundance of spiritual life that we possess that it shall overflow.” This means “the Holy Spirit has stripped sin of its disguise... Holiness is now unmasked and blooming in all its beauty, kindles in our hearts the most fervent love to, and inflames our souls with the warmest desires after, an object so incomparably excellent and worthy of our highest regard... Considering his *great and precious promises*, which are all given to us, that we *may be made partakers of the divine nature*, we rejoice in hope of possessing to our entire and endless satisfaction this holiness so amiable in our eyes.” This “ministration of the Spirit” is “our entire sanctification.”<sup>15</sup>

Benson also showed that the “extraordinary gifts” of the Holy Spirit were given to some but the permanent benefit of the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost is sanctifying grace.<sup>16</sup> In his commentary on Acts 11:24, he defined being “full of the Holy Ghost and faith” meant to be “largely endowed with the sanctifying graces” of the Spirit.<sup>17</sup> Likewise with Paul when he was “filled with the Spirit” in Acts 9:17.<sup>18</sup>

His intimate friendship with Fletcher served as the basis for his being asked by Mary Fletcher and the British Conference in 1801 to write a larger account of the life of John Fletcher than had been given by John Wesley in 1786,<sup>19</sup> which was reprinted seventeen times in America. In 1804 in an appendix, he vigorously defended Fletcher’s idea of the “fullness of the Spirit” and the connection between Pentecost and sanctification, saying that Fletcher “expected a Pentecost” that

entailed the idea of being “sanctified wholly.”<sup>20</sup> This biography showed that Benson never wavered in his loyalty and respect for Fletcher. Benson was not just reporting on past history when he described Fletcher and their relationship together, as if he no longer advocated for Fletcher’s theology. Rather, he says: “The reader will pardon me, if he thinks I exceed. My heart kindles while I write.” Benson thus described Fletcher: “He was revered; he was loved; he was almost adored... Here I saw a descendent of fallen Adam, so fully raised above the ruins of the fall, that though by the body he was tied down to earth, yet was his whole *conversation in heaven*: yet was his *life*, from day to day, *hid with Christ in God*. Prayer, praise, love, and zeal, all ardent, elevated above what one would think attainable in this state of frailty, were the element in which he continually lived... His full heart would not suffer him to be silent. He *must* speak” and the students were soon “all in tears, and every heart caught fire from the flame that burned in his soul.” Benson reported that his addresses at the college would be “generally terminated in this. Being convinced that to be *filled with the Holy Ghost* was a better qualification for the ministry of the Gospel than any classical learning... he used to frequently to say, ‘As many of you as are athirst for this fullness of the Spirit, follow me into my room.’” On this, many of us have instantly followed him.”<sup>21</sup> Reflecting his current state of mind in 1802, Benson said: “I was then much athirst” for “the baptism of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>22</sup>

Partly because Benson’s biography was so widely read throughout Methodism for many years afterwards, Fletcher’s idea of the baptism with the Spirit was to become a widely used description of entire sanctification.

When Benson was the editor of *The Arminian Magazine* (1803-1821), he published a sermon in 1817 by the famous Jesuit preacher Louis Bourdaloue (1632-1704), “Sermon for the Feast of Pentecost.” His text, “They were all filled with the Holy Ghost—Acts ii.4.”<sup>23</sup> Remarkably, this sermon corresponded exactly with Fletcher’s and Benson’s idea about the connection between Pentecost and holiness. This text was a basis for the Roman Catholic rite of confirmation, which symbolized the idea of a personal Pentecost subsequent to one’s water baptism. The rite of water baptism symbolized Jesus’ resurrection from the dead (Easter) and represented one’s new life in Christ. Confirmation symbolized the baptism of the Spirit (Pentecost) and represented one’s appropriation of sanctification. The appropriateness of this sermon being published in *The Arminian Magazine* was that Fletcher had already shown the close connection between Wesley’s doctrine of Christian perfection and the rite of confirmation.<sup>24</sup> The distinction between water baptism signifying forgiveness of sins (Easter) and a subsequent baptism with the Spirit (laying on of hands), signifying sanctification (Pentecost) was an interpretation extending back to the earliest days of the Church and still is practiced

in the Roman Catholic Church, and it has now been incorporated into the baptism liturgy of most Protestant churches.<sup>25</sup> So the idea of two stages of saving grace was not a mere innovation of John Wesley and John Fletcher, but had already been the main interpretation in the history of the Christian church.

Significantly, this Roman Catholic preacher, Bourdaloue, said nothing about the ritual of confirmation, but his emphasis was upon “the interior baptism of the Holy Ghost”<sup>26</sup> and “how to enter into the full meaning of... the baptism of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>27</sup> Citing from the Early Church Father Chrysostom, he shows that “as fire has a power infinitely more active, more penetrating, and more purifying than water; so by the coming of the Holy Ghost, the hearts of men were to be purified in a manner much more perfect than they had been by the first baptism of Jesus Christ.” He further writes:

After the baptism of Jesus Christ, the apostles, though initiated into the faith by that ordinance, still remained very imperfect. According to the report, the gospel makes of them, they were still ambitious, interested, jealous; dissensions were still seen among them, and they fell into weaknesses, from which the elementary baptism of the Son of God, had not preserved them. But scarcely have they received the Holy Ghost, than they become men wholly spiritual, men detached from the world, men superior to every selfish interest; men not only holy, but of a consummate holiness; men empty of themselves, and full of God in one word, men perfect and irreprehensible.”<sup>28</sup>

Bourdaloue says this baptism of the Spirit is not for those who “are carnal,”<sup>29</sup> but rather it is through “the Holy Spirit our hearts are filled with love.”<sup>30</sup> In conclusion, he prays: “Grant, Lord, the same precious gift to my dear auditors. Give thy benediction to my word, or rather, to thy word. Pour out upon all this assembly the plenitude of thy Spirit. And thou, O Spirit of my God, principle of every grace, author of all holiness, come and enlighten and fortify us, and seal thy believing family unto the day of eternal redemption.”<sup>31</sup> Benson’s decision to publish this Jesuit sermon was apparently intended to show the broad ecumenical basis of the Methodist belief in Pentecostal sanctification was not a mere innovation by Wesley and Fletcher.

In a collection of his sermons (1827-1828), Benson maintains that Pentecost is the basis of Christian perfection. Benson says that the gospel “perfects our sanctification... and the Holy Ghost, promised in all his fullness, imparting this great blessing, that is, a purgation from sin,” and “not resting till we [are] ‘an habitation of God through the Spirit; and till we dwell in God, and God in us.’”<sup>32</sup> Benson’s emphasis is: “Perfect holiness is the effect of the fullness of the Spirit.”<sup>33</sup>

Being “full of faith and the Holy Ghost” means to be “perfected in holiness” and “wholly sanctified.”<sup>34</sup>

Another remarkable achievement of Benson was to edit and publish John Fletcher’s complete works in 1806. In the “preface” to this edition, Benson shows the same kind of respect for Fletcher that he had when they were together at Trevecca. In an astonishing way, Benson placed Fletcher’s writings only in second place of importance to the Bible ahead of John Wesley: “No writings that we have known, save those of the Divine Oracles, appear to us more adapted to answer the great ends of Christianity, vis. To bring lost sinners to God, and build them up in faith and holiness.”<sup>35</sup> Benson said the General Conference “ordered the present Edition to be prepared for the press, and offered to the public as soon as convenient.”<sup>36</sup>

Benson wrote a commentary on the various books of the Bible between 1811-1818. In his New Testament commentary on Acts 2, Benson explained that “the incorporation of the Christian Church”<sup>37</sup> occurred on the day of Pentecost when the one hundred twenty believers in the Upper Room were “united in their desire and expectation of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, *the power from on high*, which Christ had promised them; and in praying earnestly and importunately for it whenever they met together.”<sup>38</sup> When they were filled with the Holy Spirit,

this whole company [of one hundred and twenty believers] were abundantly replenished with both the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit... They were filled with the *graces* of the Spirit, and were more than ever under its sanctifying influences; were now holy, and heavenly, and spiritual; more weaned from this world, and better acquainted with the other. They were more filled with the comforts of the Spirit, rejoiced more than ever in the love of Christ, and the hope of heaven, and in it all their griefs and fears were swallowed up.<sup>39</sup>

He defined baptism with water as a symbol of “repentance” and being “justified,”<sup>40</sup> but the baptism with the Spirit denoted sanctifying grace, as a universal benefit of Pentecost, although some (though not everyone) also received “extraordinary gifts of the Spirit” for preaching and spreading the gospel.<sup>41</sup>

Jabez Bunting (president of the British Methodist Conference) said that Benson’s “opinions were the same, on all great doctrinal questions, with those which are well known as characterizing the living ministry and printed works of Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher.”<sup>42</sup> The use of “Mr. Wesley and I” are often found in *The Checks* and reflect John Wesley’s approval.<sup>43</sup> Likewise throughout the history of early Methodism, references to “Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher” are frequent



without the slightest suggestion that Fletcher's view of Pentecostal sanctification was incompatible with John Wesley.

### William Branwell

If the *Memoirs of the Life and Ministry of William Bramwell* is any indication, then the subject of the "baptism of the Spirit" was common among Wesley's ordinary preachers. He became one of Wesley's preachers in 1787, and he often used Pentecostal phrases, such as "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" and being "filled with the Spirit," and he strongly promoted entire sanctification, encouraging his hearers to give public testimony to this experience.<sup>44</sup>

### John Pawson

John Pawson was Wesley's successor at City Road Church, London.<sup>45</sup> Pawson was greatly impressed with Fletcher, and he embraced Fletcher's idea of Pentecostal sanctification. He admired Fletcher's preaching effectiveness, noticing that more people came to hear Fletcher than Wesley. He also noticed that he had read an early draft of Fletcher's *Equal Check* (which contained Fletcher's first fully developed idea of Pentecostal sanctification). He observed: "I think he will set that doctrine [of perfection] in so Scriptural a light, as to stop the mouths of gainsayers."<sup>46</sup>

In *A Serious and Affectionate Address to the Junior Preachers in the Methodist Connection* (September 25, 1798), Pawson asked: "Are we not called of God to preach a full, free, present, and compleat [complete] Salvation... and being filled with the Spirit, we may be blameless and harmless... This appears to me the more necessary, because there are many that believe and preach Justification by faith, who seem little acquainted with the nature of sanctification."<sup>47</sup> Adam Clarke, in his eulogy of Pawson described him, as "a man of irreproachable integrity, of unspotted life" whom "God honoured" with "the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and with such a victory and triumph over sin, death, and the grave, as would have been glorious even in apostolic times."<sup>48</sup>

### Henry Moore and Mary Fletcher

In the same year of 1817 when Benson published the Pentecost sermon by Bourdaloue in *The Arminian Magazine* which linked the "baptism with the Spirit" with "men perfect and irreprehensible" and "filled with love," Henry Moore edited and published the *Life of Mary Fletcher*, which contained the same emphasis. In his preface, he recounts that John Wesley was the founder of Methodism who led a group of Oxford students in search of holiness. He asked, "But did they spend

their strength for naught? Were they disappointed of their hope? Were not a holy people raised up? Let the Life of Mrs. Fletcher speak.”<sup>49</sup> His biography of Mary Fletcher emphasizes that the key to being a holy people is through the baptism with the Spirit. Typical of this idea of Pentecostal sanctification is her diary entry for December 4, 1794: “This is *the baptism of the Spirit* which hath purified my heart from all sin!”<sup>50</sup>

Moore was one of the closest and most trusted friends of Wesley, spending entire days with him as his clerical assistant and traveling with him extensively.<sup>51</sup> No one knew Methodism better than he did, and no one knew John Wesley’s views about his preachers than he did. Moore also said this about her husband, John Fletcher, in his preface: “that great man, *whose praise is in all the Churches*; whose admirable writings will live while piety and learning are honoured in the earth; and which have forced even those who did not know his piety, *or affected to lament that such talents should be so connected, to acknowledge his great superiority.*”<sup>52</sup>

### Henry Moore and Thomas Rutherford

One of Wesley’s well-educated preachers was Thomas Rutherford. He was the brother-in-law of Henry Moore who was commissioned to write the eulogy of Rutherford for the Conference’s *Minutes* after his death in 1806.<sup>53</sup> Rutherford said that he had a desire for a long time to meet Fletcher, but then in August, 1783, he got acquainted with him when he came to Dublin with his wife: “I had an opportunity of being in company with him almost every day, morning, noon, and night; and of hearing him preach five or six times a week for nearly two months; which have ever viewed as a signal instance of the divine condescension and goodness towards an unworthy creature. —At the recollection of those days, (for they were days of the Son of Man!) my heart overflows with gratitude to the Giver of every good and perfect gift.”<sup>54</sup> He reported that Fletcher’s preaching theme was on “Pentecost,” “the promise of the Spirit,” and “the indwelling power and fullness of the Holy Ghost.” He also noted: “He was the most devoted, the most heavenly, the most Christ like man I ever saw.”<sup>55</sup> This high regard for Fletcher was typical of all of Wesley’s preachers, as well as Wesley himself.

Moore reported that Rutherford recorded in his diary (March 15, 1776) of having been baptized with the Spirit, utilizing Wesley’s idea of Canaan land as a symbol of perfect love that was fulfilled with the fullness of the sanctifying Spirit on the day of Pentecost:

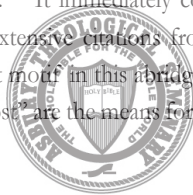


My present state may, I think, properly be called, a panting for a greater fullness of the life and spirit of Jesus. I live in sight of the land of perfect love. It is indeed a good and a pleasant land—a land of light and life, and peace and power; of holy rest, and sweet communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And yet, alas, I cannot enter! How long, O Lord, how long shall I wander to and fro, comparatively in the wilderness? Help me, O help me, to go up and possess it! Bid me wash and be clean. Plunge me in the swelling Jordan of thy most precious blood! Baptise, O baptise me with the fullness of thy sanctifying Spirit!<sup>56</sup>

In a letter addressed to the Methodist preachers who had gathered for their Annual Conference in London in 1806, Rutherford encouraged them “to apply to him in good earnest for power from on high; the baptism and continual anointing of the Holy Ghost. Mr. Wesley justly observes” that “every preacher of the gospel” should recognize that “the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me.” Notice here that Rutherford connected Fletcher’s idea of the baptism with the Spirit with Wesley’s exhortation, confirming that in the minds of the preachers there was no difference between Fletcher and Wesley.<sup>57</sup>

Rutherford is known primarily for his work in abridging Fletcher’s *Last Check*, under the title, *Christian Perfection, An Extract from John Fletcher*. It was published in Philadelphia in 1796, and it was immediately reprinted in the same year. Wesley had once encouraged Fletcher not to make *The Last Check* too long because it would come into “fewer hands,”<sup>58</sup> and it was for this reason that Rutherford abridged it—so that more people would be encouraged to read it.<sup>59</sup> It was also printed as a pocketsize book for convenience. Rutherford’s “preface” indicates that Fletcher was considered to be the unquestioned authority on Wesley’s doctrinal system. He noted that “Christian perfection, according to the account which both Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher have given of it” is what “the Methodists believe and teach.”<sup>60</sup> His reason for making this extract was because Fletcher offered “a clear, distinct, and Scriptural point of view.”

The opening part of this extract defines the meaning of Christian perfection, as “the pure love of God, shed abroad in the heart of established believers by the Holy Ghost, which is abundantly given them under the fullness of the Christian dispensation.”<sup>61</sup> It immediately connects Fletcher’s emphasis on Pentecostal perfection with extensive citations from Wesley’s *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. A dominant motif in this abridged edition is that Pentecost and “the baptism of the Holy Ghost” are the means for attaining Christian perfection.<sup>62</sup>



## Henry Moore

Thomas Rutherford, in a letter to Henry Moore, reminded him of what he had once said to him about too many Christians still living as Pre-Pentecostal believers: “For some years past I have seen much I could not approve of among us as Christians, and brethren, and have thought a hundred times of an expression you mentioned to me of Mr. Fletcher’s that ‘he though the generality of Christians are not in a spiritual state, superior to that of the disciples, before the day of Pentecost.’”<sup>63</sup>

When Henry Moore was near death, he was asked: “How many of your old friends are gone before you into glory?” With “animation,” he replied: “I have known some among the best in the world: the Wesleys, Mr. And Mrs. Fletcher, and many others of the very salt of the earth, but less distinguished in their sphere of usefulness; I shall see them all again, and with power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.”<sup>64</sup> It is typical among the early Methodists to place Fletcher in the same category as the Wesley brothers as one of their leaders and models.

## Adam Clarke and Mary Cooper--A Case Study of the Pentecostal Preaching of the Early Methodists

The consensual understanding of the baptism with the Spirit in early Methodism is succinctly expressed in Adam Clarke’s *Commentary on the Book of Acts*. He writes:

John baptized with water, which was a sign of penitence, in reference to the remission of sin; but Christ baptizes with the Holy Ghost, for the destruction of sin [=entire sanctification]... John’s baptism was *in reference* to the spiritual kingdom; but Christ’s baptism *established and maintained* that kingdom.<sup>65</sup>

In a pastoral letter (Feb. 18, 1814) to a dying member, Clarke reminded him that Jesus had died “to purify you unto himself.” He encouraged him to “be a partaker of his holiness. Claim every promise of God as your own.” He concludes with his exhortation: “May he baptize you with the fullest baptism of his Spirit!”<sup>66</sup>

Clarke edited and published the *Memoirs of the Mrs. Mary Cooper* in 1814. She was the daughter of a wealthy family and “her understanding was sound, her mind carefully cultivated” and her “piety deep and rational,” according to Clarke.<sup>67</sup> Though she was not a preacher, her memoirs were used to promote the message of the Methodists, and they show how a new convert to Methodism soon appropriated

the idea of Pentecostal perfection. In 1809, she began to attend Methodist meetings where the first preachers that she heard were Clarke and Coke, and soon thereafter she heard Henry Moore and Joseph Benson preach.<sup>68</sup> She considered Henry Moore and his wife, Ann Young Moore, to be her “best advisers.”<sup>69</sup> She noted that the sermons of Clarke and Coke “made a deep impression on my mind,” with their emphasis upon “the connection of religion and reason” and “the inhabitation of the Spirit of God.”<sup>70</sup> She was especially attracted to the Methodist doctrine of holiness. She wrote:

My mind is now, I think, made up as to the scriptural nature and holy tendency of the doctrines Mr. Wesley embraced and enforced. I have been happy in the investigation; and am most firmly persuaded that his view of Christian perfection is at once the privilege and the happiness of the Christian... This blessing is only bestowed on those who believe, and who earnestly pray and wait for this full redemption. Although I am not yet the happy possessor of it, I am greatly encouraged by that promise, Psalm cxiv.12. ‘He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him.’<sup>71</sup>

She rediscovered the meaning of Holy Communion by attending a Methodist chapel, and she realized its importance as a means of sanctifying grace and enabling her to love God with all heart.<sup>72</sup> Here in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper she was led to pray for “the gift of the Holy Spirit” to sanctify her: “Do I not ask with importunity for the gift of Thy Spirit to enable me to perform my resolutions, to overcome every sin, and to seek for entire sanctification?”<sup>73</sup> On December 29, 1809, she came to a point of accepting “the indwelling of the Spirit.” She wrote in her diary: “In tender mercy He has heard my prayer: I feel convinced that *sin* must be a strange work to the believer; it is incompatible with the indwelling of the Spirit of God: I long to feel deeper the Spirit’s influence; I want to be filled with that holy love... O may I more fully comprehend the large extent of that salvation Christ came to bestow, even a deliverance from the power of all sin.”<sup>74</sup> The Spirit’s “indwelling” and “baptism” became the focus of her developing spiritual life. On January 24, 1810, she wrote: “I wish more powerfully to feel the necessity of constantly seeking the influence of the Holy Spirit, to renovate my nature, to baptize me afresh... If He has been, and is manifested to my soul, sin will be destroyed.”<sup>75</sup> On April 30, 1811, she prays for “the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit” as the fulfillment of her desire to be united with Christ.<sup>76</sup> She used another popular metaphor in Methodism for holiness when she described this union with Christ in terms of the abiding witness of the Spirit: “This can be found only when the Spirit takes up His abode in the heart.”<sup>77</sup> She further stated:

“When the Comforter takes up His *abode* in my heart, then all will be subdued to my Heavenly King.”<sup>78</sup> Another term that she used for holiness was “happy in God.” This appears on back of an admission ticket that Henry Moore had given her to attend a Methodist society. She wrote: “Happy in God, and in possession of the peace which passeth understanding.”<sup>79</sup>

Though only a newcomer to Methodism, the Pentecostal interpretation of entire sanctification is set forth in her diaries: She wrote On August 24, 1810:

It is His will that, justified freely by His death, we should be sanctified in body, soul and spirit, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, ‘the Gift of the Father,’ which he promised should abundantly descend after His resurrection.<sup>80</sup>

Mary Cooper became ill and depressed shortly before she gave birth to a son. Adam Clarke explained that her depression resulted from her illness, not from spiritual decline. However, she was unable to understand this situation.<sup>81</sup> In this state of confusion, she wrote this prayer in her diary on March 11, 1812:

O Lord, I will renew my dedication to Thy service. Baptize me afresh with Thy Holy Spirit, and sanctify *bodily affliction*. O may it be the *one* desire of my soul, to gain more and more of the Divine image, and to be increasing in holiness and meetness for the eternal world!<sup>82</sup>

She died on June 22, 1812, at the age of 26, from complications arising from childbirth. After less than three years of being a Methodist, her diaries reveal the theology she had learned from these early Methodist preachers, especially Adam Clarke, Thomas Coke, and Henry Moore.

This diary of Mary Cooper shows that it was natural for Methodists to speak of entire sanctification in terms of Pentecostal phraseology.<sup>83</sup> Because Clarke reported that he heard John Wesley preach on “the baptism with the Holy Spirit” on different occasions,<sup>84</sup> one can gather that Wesley is the one who had inclined Clarke to think in these terms, Clarke probably first heard this idea of Pentecostal perfection from Wesley’s own preaching at the 1783 Bristol Conference when he became a member in full connection. And if Mary Cooper interpreted Christian perfection in Pentecostal terms, it was likely from Adam Clarke, Thomas Moore, and Thomas Coke that she first heard this preaching theme.



### Richard Treffry and “the Baptism with the Holy Spirit”

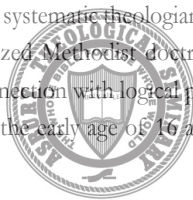
Richard Treffry (1771-1842), who was admitted into full connection in British Methodism the year after Wesley died (1792)<sup>85</sup> was a frequent spokesman for Christian perfection, linking it with the baptism with the Holy Spirit. *The Methodist Magazine* contained a sermon by Richard Treffry on Christian perfection, which referred to Fletcher’s view that even though one may be fully sanctified through a gradual process, “there is a precise moment when the work is completed.”<sup>86</sup> *The Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review* also published another sermon by Treffry, “An Address to the Young Ministers,” which was originally delivered August 6, 1834 at the City Road Chapel, London.<sup>87</sup> He urged them to be “seeking deeper baptisms, and larger effusions, of the Holy Ghost” because otherwise “sin may be pardoned and subdued, but it is not wholly extirpated.”<sup>88</sup> He reminded them of their obligation “to preach the doctrines of Methodism,” which included calling everyone to experience full sanctification. Using Fletcher’s categories, he said:

And, in order to encourage your hearers to come to the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, and to avail themselves of all the benefits of redemption, never forget in all your ministrations the doctrine of a Divine influence; that God will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him; that Christianity is a dispensation of the Spirit; the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost being given to us, and to our children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.<sup>89</sup>

Treffry published the memoirs of his son who died at the age of 33,<sup>90</sup> and these memoirs show that the “baptism of the Spirit” was a common theme. In a letter to his mother on November 28, 1837, his son wrote: “But I want more abundant light, a more copious baptism of the Holy Spirit, and a more perfect conformity to the divine image.”<sup>91</sup> In a letter to Henry Davies on November 30, 1837, Richard Treffry, Jr., writes: “Best of all, my mind is kept calm and happy, waiting for a more perfect manifestation of the love of God before I go hence, and daily crying for a renewed baptism of the Holy Spirit.”

### Richard Watson (1781-1833)

Watson was the first systematic theologian of Methodism. This is because his *Theological Institutes* formalized Methodist doctrine into a textbook of distinct topics and explained their connection with logical precision. He became a preacher at the Conference of 1797 at the early age of 16 and was appointed to a circuit.<sup>92</sup>



Though an Englishman, his writings were influential in America and became part of the conference course of study for ministers until 1876.<sup>93</sup>

In 1830, Richard Watson (the first systematic theologian in Methodism whose writings were required reading for all Methodist preachers) wrote: “The Entire sanctification of the soul from sin is held forth, both as necessary to qualify us for heaven, and as the result of that *baptism of the Spirit* which we receive in answer to prayer, and through faith in Christ.”<sup>94</sup>

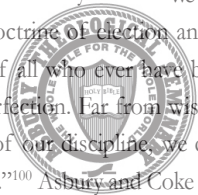
In a letter to his dying father, Watson encouraged him to: “Proceed to obtain the full sanctification of your nature. It is not death, but grace, that must destroy our sin, and make us meet for heaven. Have faith in the promise of the Father to send the Holy Spirit in all the power he exerted in the day of pentecost, to burn up the very root of corruption, and fill you in a moment with all the love and power of God, making you one with Christ, and an entirely new creature.”<sup>95</sup>

In his preaching, Watson called his hearers to experience the “baptism of fire” which effects within the believer “an unquenchable love” and “purity.” He showed that this Pentecostal event was not just for the disciples, but every believer can “now” experience “a constant, though secret, Pentecost.”<sup>96</sup> He exhorted his hearers: “Christ now baptizes with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”<sup>97</sup> This personalized Pentecost today means that one can have “purged from the heart of man all its stains of sin.”<sup>98</sup>

Without the slightest suggestion of any difference between Wesley and Fletcher, Watson expressed the unanimous view among Methodists everywhere that John Wesley and Fletcher were seen as having the same interpretation: “If the doctrine of Christian perfection, as taught by Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher, be true, as we all believe it is, I fear we do not give that prominence to it in our preaching which we ought to do: and that some of us do not seek to realize it in our own experience, as it is our privilege and duty.”<sup>99</sup>

### **The 1784 Christmas Conference at Baltimore and Bishop Francis Asbury**

When the Methodist Episcopal Church was established in America in 1784, Wesley and Fletcher were cited as the joint authorities on Methodist doctrine. In *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, with explanatory notes*, Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury wrote: “We would likewise declare our real sentiments on the scripture doctrine of election and reprobation; on the infallible, unconditional perseverance of all who ever have believed, or ever shall; and on the doctrine of Christian perfection. Far from wishing you to be ignorant of any of our doctrines, or any part of our discipline, we desire you to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the whole.”<sup>100</sup> Asbury and Coke encouraged the preachers not to



try to write further explanations of these doctrines, but to preach what they had learned from Wesley and Fletcher: “A few good writers in one church are quite sufficient, especially in ours, which has already been honored with a Wesley and a Fletcher.”<sup>101</sup>

Bishop Asbury introduced Fletcher’s writings as textbook reading for his preachers,<sup>102</sup> and he was responsible for the first American edition of Fletcher’s works. They remained part of the conference course of study until they were removed in 1880,<sup>103</sup> as theological liberalism swept throughout Methodism. As a young man Bishop Asbury knew and heard Fletcher preach even before he knew John Wesley.<sup>104</sup> In a letter (December 31, 1801) to the Methodist book agent, Ezekiel Cooper, Asbury instructed him to publish the writings of Fletcher and Wesley even placing Fletcher’s name before Wesley’s.<sup>105</sup>

Wesley had begun to publish the complete *Works of John William Fletcher* in 1788, which was not completed until 1795. This 1788-1795 British edition was being published at the same time in America. The first and second volumes of the “First American Edition” of Fletcher’s works were published in 1791 by Joseph Cruikshank in Philadelphia; Cruikshank published the third volume in 1792; Parry Hall published the fourth volume in 1793; and Henry Tuckniss published volume five in 1794 and volume six in 1796. All of these were printed in Philadelphia.<sup>106</sup>

*The Last Check* (Philadelphia, 1796) was reprinted in the same year as Rutherford’s abridged edition entitled *Christian Perfection, An Extract from John Fletcher*, for the Methodist Episcopal Church. Rutherford’s edition had eight reprints for the Methodist Episcopal Church between 1837 and 1875, and was widely cited by Methodist writers throughout the nineteenth century. Interestingly enough, there were thirteen imprints of Fletcher’s various writings in America, including five reprints of his complete *Works*, from 1796 before Wesley’s complete *Works* were first published in 1826.<sup>107</sup> Fletcher’s complete *Checks to Antinomianism* were reprinted for the Methodist Episcopal Church eight different times in the nineteenth century. His complete *Works* were reprinted twenty two times throughout the nineteenth century with the last edition being in 1883.<sup>108</sup>

John Wesley first wrote *The Life of John Fletcher*, and then Joseph Benson rewrote it in 1804 at the request of the British General Conference. It was subsequently published twenty seven times, with the 1898 edition being the last one. Seventeen of those editions were for The Methodist Episcopal Church, and ten editions were for British Methodism.<sup>109</sup> Fletcher’s *The Portrait of St. Paul* was published after his death, and it was reprinted nine times, mostly in New York for the Methodist Episcopal Church. There were at least 174 different printings of Fletcher’s various books in the nineteenth century.<sup>110</sup>



This remarkably large number of reprints of his writings shows that his doctrinal views formed the thinking of Methodism from its inception. Abel Stevens, a nineteenth-century Methodist historian, claimed that Fletcher's writings "control the opinions of the largest and most effective body of evangelical clergymen of the earth... They have been more influential in the denomination than Wesley's own controversial writings on the subject [Antinomianism]."<sup>111</sup> In "An Address of the Editors," published in *The [American] Methodist Magazine* in 1823,<sup>112</sup> Fletcher's writings are referenced as the authoritative doctrinal standard. In 1828, an editorial comment found in *The Christian Advocate* noted: "I consider Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher as standing foremost, perhaps, in the Christian world, as faithful interpreters of the mind and will of God to man, as revealed in the Scriptures of truth" and added a further comment about Fletcher's *Checks*: "Oh what, an invaluable work!" This editorial particularly cited from Fletcher's treatise, *Christian Perfection*, to refute critics.<sup>113</sup>

An extensive review in *The Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review* of Fletcher's *Portrait of St. Paul* was given in 1831. It affirms Fletcher's role in establishing Methodist doctrine: "After the Holy Scriptures, and, in subordination to these, the works of Mr. John Wesley, the writings of John Fletcher are held next in estimation, we believe, by the whole body of Wesleyan Methodists throughout the world."<sup>114</sup> This book represented Fletcher's most mature thoughts, highlighting the baptism with the Holy Spirit, and this emphasis was noted in the review. This review also believed that Fletcher's writings were appreciated throughout Methodism.<sup>115</sup> Typical of this attitude toward Fletcher is an early twentieth century Methodist bishop and author who referred to Fletcher as "the thought of Wesley voiced by Fletcher."<sup>116</sup>

### Some Samplings of Pentecostal Sanctification in British and American Methodist Publications

It would have been clear to any reader of *The Arminian Magazine* that Fletcher's idea of Pentecostal sanctification was official Methodist doctrine with the numerous publications of his letters and writings. When John Wesley was still alive, he included numerous letters and excerpts from Fletcher's writings in *The Arminian Magazine*. These references included Fletcher's use of "baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire"<sup>117</sup> and "fullness of the Spirit"<sup>118</sup> to denote Christian perfection.

Fletcher's life and writings are mentioned in every annual volume of the British edition of *The Arminian Magazine* for one hundred years until 1878 (except for three volumes),<sup>119</sup> including its continuation in *The Methodist Magazine* and *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*. Fletcher also appears in the American edition



of *The Arminian Magazine*, *The Methodist Magazine*, and *The Methodist Quarterly Review* with the same regularity.

In 1790, Francis Asbury published the second volume of the American issue of *The Arminian Magazine* promoting Fletcher as “our almost inimitable friend” and providing an extract from Wesley’s account of his life and death.<sup>120</sup> This extract from John Wesley’s biography began with this biblical quotation from Acts 5:38, 39, as a particular reference to Fletcher: “If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught: But if it be of GOD, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against GOD.”<sup>121</sup> John Wesley offered this personal comment:

No man in England has had so long an acquaintance with Mr. Fletcher as myself. Our acquaintance began almost as soon as his arrival in London, about the year 1752, before he entered into holy orders, or (I believe) had any such intention. And it continued uninterrupted between thirty and forty years, even ‘till it pleased GOD to take him to himself. Nor was ours a slight or ordinary acquaintance; but we were of one heart and of one soul. We had no secrets between us for many years; we did not purposely hide any thing from each other. From time to time he consulted me, and I him, on the most important occasions. And he constantly professed, not only much esteem but (what I valued far more) much affection... I therefore think myself obliged by the strongest ties, to pay this small tribute to his memory.<sup>122</sup>

With Francis Asbury’s promotion of Fletcher as “our almost inimitable friend” and Wesley’s unqualified approval of Fletcher as his intimate friend and associate in ministry, it was only normal that those who read the magazine would consider Fletcher as their guide to doctrinal beliefs. As the reader continued to read Wesley’s biography of Fletcher, Wesley would soon inform them that Fletcher’s “favourite subject was, *The promise of the Father, the gift of the Holy Ghost*... ‘We must not be content,’ said he, ‘to be only cleansed from sin: we must be filled with the Spirit.’”<sup>123</sup>

With John Wesley’s promotion of Fletcher in the British edition and Asbury’s promotion in the American edition, it is thus not surprising to find Pentecostal sanctification as a common understanding from the beginning.

In 1793, *The Arminian Magazine* published a letter of Fletcher addressed to his congregation at Madeley (1777).



If I your poor unworthy shepherd am smitten, be not scattered; but rather be more closely gathered unto Christ, and keep near each other in faith and love, till you all receive our second Comforter and Advocate, in the glory of his fullness. You know I mean the Holy Spirit, the third Person in our Covenant God. *He is with you*, but if you plead *the promise of the Father, which*, says Christ, *you have heard of me, he will be in you*. He will fill your souls with his light, love, and glory, according to that verse which we have so often sung together,

“Refining fire go through my heart,  
Illuminate my soul,  
Scatter thy life through every part,  
And sanctify the whole.”

This indwelling of the Comforter, perfects the mystery of sanctification in the believer’s soul. This is the highest blessing of the Christian Covenant on earth. Rejoicing in God our Creator, in God our Redeemer, let us look for the full comfort of God our Sanctifier. So shall we live and die in the faith, going on from faith to faith, from strength to strength, from comfort to comfort, till Christ is all in all, --to us all.<sup>124</sup>

In 1798, *The Arminian Magazine* published a letter of John Fletcher to his congregation at Madeley, written 1783: “O for a deeper Baptism of the Spirit! I want that promise more fully accomplished, ‘I and my Father will come, and will make our abode with you.’”<sup>125</sup> This particular entry was listed in the index of *The Arminian Magazine* under the category: “From Mr. Fletcher, on the baptism of the Spirit.” This focus of his letter on the baptism with the Spirit was thus the reason for publishing this letter in *The Arminian Magazine*.

*The Arminian Magazine* (1809) published the *Memoirs of Mr. Evans* who recorded in diary for September 2: “I had to baptize almost fifty persons, more than half of whom were advanced above the years of childhood, and two of them every old men. I have cause to believe that many of them were earnestly seeking to be baptized with the Holy Ghost.”<sup>126</sup>

*The Arminian Magazine* (1817) carried the memoirs of Miss Bunting, who “was very conversant with the writings of the Rev. Mr. Wesley, and Mr. Fletcher.”<sup>127</sup> As she was dying, she said to her mother: “O mother, I am going to heaven, I wish you were going with me; but you will not be long after me. I shall see Mr. Wesley. Mr. Fletcher, St. Paul, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets, and Martyrs.” “Yes,” added Mrs. M., “and Jesus the Mediator.”<sup>128</sup>

*The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* gave this report about Mrs. Ludlam on March 24, 1821: “It pleased God to bless her with a peculiar baptism of the Holy

Spirit, and to fill her with joy and love.”<sup>129</sup> In the same issue was a report of Mrs. Lydia who died on July 13, 1821: “From the time of her conversion, she manifested great tenderness of conscience, and anxiously desired the entire sanctification of her nature. She read the works of Wesley, Fletcher, and others, upon that subject, and often conversed respecting it with experienced Christians: and about five years before her death, she obtained a fuller baptism of the Spirit, which enabled her to love the Lord her GOD with all her heart.”<sup>130</sup>

In 1807, Elijah Sabin published two sermons on *Christian Perfection, Displayed and the Objections Obviated*. He was admitted into the Conference in 1801 of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He says Christian perfection, “not only implies a cleansing... but the being *filled* with the pure and perfect love of God.” He cites Acts 2:4, “And they were all *filled* with the Holy Ghost,” along with Acts 4:8, 31, as well as Ephesians 5:18. He said: “A variety of others might be quoted, but these are sufficient to prove, to every unprejudiced mind, that God will so fill the souls of believers with his Holy Spirit as that all sin shall be destroyed.”<sup>131</sup>

*The Methodist Magazine* in 1809 contains the testimony of Peter Haslam: “Yesterday the Lord was very graciously present with us at our Love feast. Many bore a very clear testimony respecting entire sanctification. If I am convicted of evil, it is by that heart piercing law, ‘Thou shall not covet.’ The desire of certain things even now possesses me . . . Nothing less than a glorious baptism of thy Spirit can save me: O let that baptism now descend!”<sup>132</sup>

On August 10, 1818, Wilbur Fisk experienced “perfect love” through the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” through listening to a sermon preached by Timothy Merritt on “Christian perfection” at a campmeeting on Cape Cod.<sup>133</sup> Fisk was of the educational leaders and was the first president of Wesleyan University. Fisk highlighted in his preaching and writing that full sanctification means purification from sin through being filled with the Spirit of God.<sup>134</sup>

We know from the written diary of Joseph Pilmore that he, as one of the first British missionaries to America (along with Richard Boardman), preached on the baptism of the Holy Spirit in 1770. He had been a close friend of John Fletcher with whom he had many conversations when Fletcher regularly traveled from Madeley to Trevecca.<sup>135</sup> On June 3, 1770, Pilmore wrote: “In the evening, I declared to a very large and attentive audience, ‘He shall Baptize you with the holy Ghost and with fire’ (Matt 3:11) and had good reason to believe God fulfilled the promis[e] to many of the hearers by the comforts of his heavenly love.”<sup>136</sup>

Pilmore wrote frequently about the importance of Christian perfection in his diaries, and we know that this theme was prominent in the preaching of his close friend and preaching partner, Captain Webb. Though we do not have many sermons

to indicate to us the details of the preaching of many of John Wesley's preachers, we do have the gist of the way that Captain Webb preached on this subject, thanks to Henry Moore, Wesley's clerical assistant, who in his reminiscences about the older preachers once gave the following report at a social gathering, noting as well that Webb's manner of speaking in metaphors was not always so sophisticated. His preaching showed that it was common to talk about the difference between the disciples' experience of being justified before Pentecost and fully sanctified after Pentecost.

Captain Webb was a red-hot preacher. He took some text about the Holy Ghost out of one of the epistles and went on to this effect: "The words of the text were written by the apostles after the act of justification had passed on them. But you see, my friends, this was not enough for them. They must receive the Holy Ghost after this. So must you. You must be sanctified. But you are not. You are only Christians in part. You have not received the Holy Ghost. I know it. I can feel your spirits hanging about me like so much dead flesh."<sup>137</sup>

Henry Moore also reported that Thomas Coke, after he was ordained priest in the Church of England, "was conscious that he did not possess the peace and joy of the indwelling Spirit" and he sought out one of Wesley's preachers and he was transformed. He read Fletcher's *Checks*,<sup>138</sup> and noted how helpful Fletcher's *Essay on Truth* had been to him.<sup>139</sup> In his commentary on the Book of Acts, Coke affirmed Pentecostal sanctification, affirming that being "baptized with the Spirit" denoted "purity of heart" and that the baptism with the Spirit "sanctifies the soul, by abolishing all sordid inclinations, by purging away the multiplicity of carnal desires."<sup>140</sup>

Nathan Bangs, the first official historian of American Methodism, provided several reports on the early Methodist preachers as being baptized with the Spirit. In his report of this Pentecost emphasis, Bangs noted that in 1799 that the "baptism with the Spirit" was a particular focus of Methodist preachers. Bangs noted, "The doctrine... of *sanctification, or holiness of heart and life*... was pressed upon them as their *present privilege*... It was this *baptism of the Holy Ghost* which fired and filled the hearts of God's ministers at that time."<sup>141</sup> Bangs described a great revival that swept through Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Connecticut, and New Hampshire, and stated "that most of the preachers had received a new baptism of the Holy Spirit—like that which had been showered upon Calvin Wooster, and others in Canada, the preceding year [1799]; and wherever they went they carried the holy fire with them, and God wrought wonders by their instrumentality."<sup>142</sup>

In the first volume of *The Methodist Magazine* (New York), a report of "A Short Account of Cow-Harbour Camp-Meeting" in Long Island, New York

for August 11, 1818, was given, explaining that many were converted and others “were groaning for full redemption in the blood of the Lamb. While engaged in this exercise, some of the preachers were baptized afresh with the *Holy Ghost and fire*; and their cup run over with love to God, and to the souls of men.”<sup>143</sup>

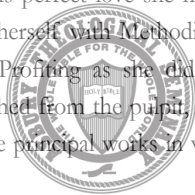
The second volume of the *Methodist Magazine* (1819) in the United States also carried this entry from the “Memoir of Mr. William Appleton”: “Feb. 1, 1812 Sheffield. ‘I am this day waiting for a double baptism of the Holy Spirit... My soul is more than ever dead to the world.’”<sup>144</sup> In this same volume, it was reported, “the Methodist ministers have the greatest encouragement to enter upon this work. They have seen the proof of this doctrine in all the Scriptures, especially through the medium of the incomparable writings of Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher. This doctrine every Methodist minister professes to believe.”<sup>145</sup>

In 1822, Mrs. Law of Yorkshire, England, testified to having “received a richer baptism of the Holy Spirit” and “her dedication to God... was more complete and constant”<sup>146</sup>... She also in her experience realized the truth of the words of the beloved disciple, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear;” and believing it to be her privilege to be cleansed from all unrighteousness... and soon, to her unspeakable joy, that the Spirit of God entirely sanctified her nature.”<sup>147</sup>

*The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* for August 1824 reported the testimony of George Clark who sought “complete deliverance from ‘the carnal mind.’ While he was earnestly pleading with the Lord, he received a deeper baptism of the sanctifying Spirit; and from that time to the closing scene of life, he walked in the full light of God’s countenance.”<sup>148</sup>

In the January issue of 1824 of *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, an extract of a letter, dated April 19, 1824 was included: “Preachers, Class-Leaders, and Members, have received a fresh baptism of heavenly love and zeal; many are athirst for the fullness of his sanctifying grace; and some have received that perfect love which casteth out fear.”<sup>149</sup>

In the *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* (1849), a biographical account was given of Mrs. Brockelsby, noting that “after eighteen years after her conversion... she received a richer baptism of spiritual life and power and was enabled humbly but firmly to testify that Christ had all her heart, and that his precious blood had cleansed her from all sin. This perfect love she never lost: it remained with her though life.” She acquainted herself with Methodist doctrine through consulting both Wesley and Fletcher. “Profiling as she did by what is sometimes called ‘Methodist doctrine,’ as preached from the pulpit, in her hours of retirement she made herself familiar with the principal works in which it is contained. With Mr.



Wesley's Sermons, Notes, Appeals, and Journal, with Mr. Fletcher's works, and with the chief Wesleyan Biographies, she was well acquainted.<sup>150</sup>

In the *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* for 1852, the testimony of James Blackett was published. "Shortly after" he had "obtained the pardoning mercy and love of God," "he saw and felt that there still existed within him the remains of the carnal heart, and that he needed a richer and fuller baptism from on high. He earnestly sought the blessing of perfect love... He was enabled by faith to cast his soul upon Christ for the full salvation... and obtained unutterable rest in God. Sin was all destroyed. His soul was filled with holy love."<sup>151</sup> This occurred on November 10, 1798.

In 1832, a book of sermons "by different ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church" including Wilbur Fisk, Nathan Bangs, and Richard Watson contained a sermon by Aaron Lummus who affirmed that "on the day of Pentecost, the disciples... were *all filled with the Holy Ghost*, Acts ii.4. They were therefore emptied of sin, were wholly sanctified."<sup>152</sup>

The editor (George Peck) of *The Methodist Quarterly Review* in 1841 carried an extensive discussion of the current status of the doctrine of Christian perfection in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He wrote: "The true Methodist ground [of entire sanctification] was so clearly stated, and so ably defended, and the whole subject so thoroughly investigated, by Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher, that but little has been done by subsequent writers of the same views but to repeat what they, in the same language, or in substance, had written."<sup>153</sup> He made the point that "as ministers in the Methodist Episcopal Church, we have fully set our seal to the doctrine of Wesley and Fletcher upon this point."<sup>154</sup> Particular attention is called to the meaning of the baptism with the Spirit. "But it [Christian perfection] is especially indicated as the work of the Holy Spirit by being denominated the *baptism of the Holy Ghost, sanctification of the Spirit &c., &c.* The view of our authors [Wesley and Fletcher] is, that the work is *effected and sustained by the direct agency of the Spirit of God upon the soul*."<sup>155</sup>

Jesse T. Peck, a prominent Methodist minister and author, expresses a worry about the neglect of the doctrine in 1849. He writes: "I fear attention has not been called so distinctly and forcibly to the doctrine of holiness as it should have been. Sermons have too generally stopped short of it."<sup>156</sup> He also noted that some had not heard the doctrine preached for so long that they do not recognize it as Methodist belief. "Why do those charge us faithful advocates with preaching a new and strange doctrine in the church, though it is taught in the very style of the Scriptures--in the very language of Wesley and Fletcher?"<sup>157</sup> Peck defined the message of entire sanctification as "a soul filled with the Holy Ghost."<sup>158</sup>

### Traditional Wesleyan Theology Rejected toward the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

The traditional Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification was uniformly embraced throughout its history since 1775 when Wesley gave his approval to Fletcher's *Last Check*. I have yet to see in the official literature of Methodism where there was supposedly a difference between John Wesley and John Fletcher over the idea of Pentecostal sanctification until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as theological Liberalism began weaving itself into the institutions of higher learning. When D. D. Whedon became the fifth editor of *The Methodist Quarterly Review* (1856 to 1884)<sup>159</sup> he rejected Wesley's idea of Christian perfection and denied the idea of a "second blessing."<sup>160</sup> Other prominent Methodists like James Mudge talked about growth, and denied that one could be free from original sin.<sup>161</sup> Mudge did not believe in the possibility of full sanctification, and he rejected Pentecost as its basis.<sup>162</sup> As a basis for his interpretation, he cited John Wesley's letter of caution to Joseph Benson against defining Christian perfection in terms of "receiving the Spirit."<sup>163</sup> Based on this comment from John Wesley to Benson without considering the larger context of John Wesley's affirmation of Pentecostal sanctification and his approval of Fletcher's *Essay on Truth* and *Last Check*, Mudge wrongly assumed that Wesley linked Pentecost to initial regeneration.

Mudge's revisionism of traditional Wesleyan theology brought Daniel Steele out of retirement after having been a professor of theology of Boston University in order to answer him. Steele was the founding president of Syracuse University and a prolific writer. He was well trained in classical studies and possessed a thorough grasp of the writings of John Wesley and John Fletcher, as well as being knowledgeable of the history of theology in general. Steele's deep lament is summarized in words of great regret.

I am not a pessimist nor a friend of pessimism; I am not a prophet nor the son of a prophet; yet something like the burden of a prophet is laid upon me, constraining me to cry aloud to the [Methodist Episcopal] Church of my father and mother--the Church in which I had my first and my second birth--the Church which nurtured me in her schools, and commissioned me to preach in her pulpits and to teach in her universities--a church to which I owe a debt too large for me to pay. It is exceedingly painful to note in this Church the first and the second indication of spiritual decay. The first has long grieved me; it is the neglect of those vital truths which nourish a stalwart spiritual life. The silence of the pulpit these many years respecting the full heritage of the believer, which is nothing less than is expressed in the words of Dr. McClintock, 'The holiness of the human soul, heart, mind and will,' has been broken at last by the voice of a son of the Church in the open and loud repudiation of that doctrine which is 'the

inmost essence' and 'elemental thought' of Methodism. This is the second token of spiritual decay, the second milestone on the downward road to spiritual death. The fact that this voice sounds out through the very trumpet which was made for the heralding of the glorious evangel of Christian perfection greatly aggravates my sorrow. Yet I am not surprised. The Church that incorporates in itself so large a segment of worldliness will sooner or later reject every doctrine hostile to a love of the world.<sup>164</sup>

Steele's observation about "the silence of the pulpit these many years respecting the full heritage of the believer" was one of the reasons for the rise of the Wesleyan-Holiness movement. The phrase, "the baptism with the Holy Spirit," was nuanced with a strong emphasis on the sudden moment of entire sanctification in the American Holiness Movement at the end of the 19th Century just as the leadership of the Methodist Episcopal Church was embracing theological Liberalism and the distinctive Wesleyan doctrinal beliefs were being marginalized.<sup>165</sup>

The patron saint of the holiness movement was Phoebe Palmer.<sup>166</sup> Her leadership and international influence emerged, as she became the editor of *Guide to Holiness*. Her precursor was James Merritt, a prominent Methodist minister in New England and a staff member of the Methodist Publishing Concern. Merritt started a publication to promote the cause of holiness, entitled, *Guide to Christian Perfection*, in 1839.<sup>167</sup> Stemming from the influence of Merritt and Palmer was the phenomenal growth of the American Holiness Movement that is well-documented and explained in *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century* by Melvin E. Dieter.<sup>168</sup> "Pentecostal sanctification," as Martin Wells Knapp (one of the prominent leaders of the Wesleyan-Holiness movement) particularly termed it,<sup>169</sup> was not only a common interpretation in the Wesleyan-Holiness movement, but it became the preferred mode of speaking of holiness.<sup>170</sup>

Eventually under attack by the leadership of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the holiness movement organized itself against the uprising of theological Liberalism and often separated itself into holiness denominations, although many leaders remained within the Methodist Episcopal Church. Daniel Steele, the first chancellor of Syracuse University and subsequently a professor of theology at Boston University, was the most scholarly and the most representative of the best thinking among holiness advocates. As a child Steele had learned from his mother about instantaneous sanctification through the baptism with the Spirit. In his first publication (*Love Enthroned*, 1875), he defined entire sanctification as being attained through the baptism with the Spirit, and he cited extensively from John Fletcher.<sup>171</sup> In a sermon before the Boston University

School of Theology, May 30, 1871, he defined entire sanctification in reference to Fletcher's concept of the baptism with the Spirit, insisting (unlike Fletcher), "it must be instantaneous."<sup>172</sup> This testimony came six months after his personal experience of holiness.

There is no indication that he ever had any hesitancy about using the language of the baptism with the Spirit, although he recognized that John Wesley did not generally use this specific phrase in his published writings, and he recognized that the fullness of the Spirit may have different meanings, ranging from ecstatic fullness, prophetic fullness, to ethical fullness (Pentecostal sanctification).<sup>173</sup> Everywhere in his writings and from his childhood he linked the Pentecostal baptism and fullness of the Spirit with entire sanctification. He specifically embraced Fletcher's soteriological doctrine of dispensations, while rejecting the eschatological dispensationalism of the Plymouth Brethren and John Darby.<sup>174</sup>

Steele assumed that Wesley and Fletcher were in agreement and were the primary authorities of Methodist beliefs. Steele's father-in-law was Amos Binney, whose widely-read *Theological Compend of Christian Doctrine* also embraced Pentecostal sanctification in 1839.<sup>175</sup> The idea has been suggested that Steele added the theology of Pentecostal sanctification later in his career and changed his language to include "the baptism with the Spirit," but that report is not factual,<sup>176</sup> although prior to his own experience of holiness he preferred the idea of progressive sanctification.

Unlike Fletcher, the organized holiness movement often considered full sanctification "as a terminal point with disappointing results," as one of its prominent leaders, the late Hollis Abbott, admitted.<sup>177</sup> J. Paul Taylor, a deceased bishop of the Free Methodist Church and a prominent spokesperson for the organized holiness movement, also noted that "the church has suffered incalculable loss because so many of her members have regarded the Canaan rest as the terminus of a journey, instead of the opening of a new realm challenging to endless exploration."<sup>178</sup>

A debate began in the 1970's at the Wesleyan Theological Society over the meaning of Pentecost and its relationship to Christian perfection. This was a good sign that the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition was taking seriously its theological responsibility to speak faithfully and scripturally. That is why scholars in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition are now revisiting its classical sources in John Wesley and John Fletcher in order to recover a more authentic meaning of Christian perfection. This essay is intended to be part of that much-needed process of reassessment by understanding exactly the historiography of the Methodist/Wesleyan tradition.

Let me offer a few words about the development of this debate. The claim that Fletcher gave the proper interpretation of Wesley's theology occasioned considerable discussion in the 1970's. This dispute was an extension of the debate

already brewing over the question of whether or not American Pentecostalism was an outgrowth of the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. Don Dayton's classic work on *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* provided the definitive answer to this debate, showing that Pentecostalism took the concept of the baptism with the Spirit from the nineteenth Century Wesleyan-Holiness Movement and modified its meaning to focus primarily on the gifts of the Spirit instead of sanctification. His subsidiary thesis was that Phoebe Palmer was primarily responsible for introducing Pentecostal sanctification into the Wesleyan-Holiness movement, although Dayton acknowledged that its ultimate source was John Fletcher. Dayton wrongly implied that the concept of Pentecostal sanctification was not common in Methodism until Phoebe Palmer made it the primary paradigm. He further said that John Wesley rejected Fletcher's idea of Pentecostal sanctification, and hence, John Wesley is not the theological source of Pentecostalism's emphasis on the baptism with the Spirit. Rather, John Fletcher and then subsequently Phoebe Palmer were allegedly the primary sources of Pentecostalism, not John Wesley.

This debate occurred during part of the time when I was president of the Wesleyan Theological Society (1979-80). I mostly listened to the various conversations rather than taking part in the debate, but it provided the inspiration for me to do further research, which was published in my book, *The Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism* (2002), which to my surprise was awarded the Smith-Wynkoop Book of the Year Award in 2003 by the Wesleyan Theological Society. My research did not contradict Dayton's general conclusions, but it did lead me to nuance two issues differently, largely because Dayton's research was not intended to focus on the theology of John Fletcher and because he did not claim to have thoroughly researched the motif of Pentecostal sanctification in the history of Methodism.

My research has led me to see a greater degree of agreement between John Wesley and John Fletcher and specifically to see that Fletcher actually got his idea about Pentecostal sanctification from John Wesley, which he then expanded and developed into a full-blown doctrine of Pentecostal sanctification. Second, my research has led me to see that Fletcher's doctrine of Pentecostal sanctification was common in early Methodism--both in Britain and America.

The truly shocking feature of this conversation about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, however, was the too eager acceptance by some in the scholarly community to assume that a real contradiction existed between John Wesley and Fletcher based on comments by Wesley taken out of context and that the idea of Pentecostal sanctification was a late introduction mainly by Phoebe Palmer and not



part of the mainstream Methodist/Wesleyan tradition. This paper shows both of these assumptions to be mistaken.

## Conclusion

The historiography of Methodism shows that Wesley's original idea of two moments of salvation—justifying faith and full sanctifying grace—originated out of the distinction between the justified state of the disciples before Pentecost and the fully sanctified disciples after Pentecost. This idea was not an innovation with John Wesley. Fletcher has shown that John Wesley's twofold stage is an evangelical and personal appropriation of the Anglican rite of confirmation, which is the ordinance and ritual of laying on of hands symbolizing the full sanctification of the believer through the descent of, and baptism with, the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. This ritual is subsequent to the rite of water baptism symbolizing forgiveness of sins through Jesus' resurrection from the dead (Easter). Hence being a Christian entails two distinct moments—experiencing a personal Easter and a personal Pentecost. Benson's publication of the sermon by the Jesuit Bourdaloue in *The Arminian Magazine* in 1817 proved this internal meaning of the baptism with the Spirit as subsequent to justifying faith. Fletcher also has shown that the Early Church Father, known as pseudo-Macarius, who linked “the baptism with the Spirit,” “circumcision of heart, “and” perfection of love, affirmed this interpretation of Pentecost.<sup>179</sup>

Similar to the Roman Catholic and Anglican theology of confirmation, the United Methodist Church in 1996 officially approved the laying on of hands in Christian baptism to convey formally the Pentecost gift of the Spirit subsequent to the gesture of water baptism to indicate that the Christian life is shaped by a personal appropriation of the forgiveness of sins signified in Jesus's resurrection from the dead (Easter) and a personal Pentecost-gift of the Spirit to empower one to live out the Christian life in faithfulness. The United Methodist Church also says, “confirmation can and should be repeated whenever a person has made a new, deeper, clearer commitment.”<sup>180</sup> So now the United Methodist Church allows that there can be many “pentecosts” in the life of a believer, similar to what Fletcher had often said about “deeper baptisms with the Spirit.”<sup>181</sup>

It was first John Wesley, followed then by John Fletcher, who are responsible for Pentecostal sanctification becoming a normative doctrine in the Wesleyan tradition. This view was universal in Methodism--until the emergence of Liberal theology at Boston University at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

With a revisionist uprising already evident, the “Bishops’ Pastoral Address to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1852” at Boston,

Massachusetts offered this timely advice: “In speaking or writing of holiness... follow the well-sustained views, and even the phraseology employed in the writings of Wesley and Fletcher, which are not superseded by the more recent writers on this subject. Avoid both new theories, new expressions, and new measures on this subject, and adhere closely to the ancient landmarks.”<sup>182</sup> Amen!

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church Held in Boston, MASS, 1852* (New-York, Carlton & Phillips, 1852), p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Coke, *A Series of Letters Addressed to the Methodist Connection* (London: A. Paris, 1810), pp. 72, 97, 147–157.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Benson*, by Richard Treffry (New York: Carlton and Phillips, 1853), p. 31. His primary biographer, George MacDonald, first published Benson’s *Memoirs*, and was intimately acquainted with him. *Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Benson*, by George MacDonald (Bangs & Mason, 1823), iii.

<sup>5</sup> *Memoirs of the Rev. Joseph Benson*, by James Macdonald (New York: Bangs and T. Mason, 1823), p. 52.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>7</sup> Published in Tyerman, *Wesley’s Designated Successor*, p. 358.

<sup>8</sup> *A Methodist Courtship, Love Letters of Joseph Benson & Sarah Thompson 1779-1780*, ed. Margaret M., p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> “Thoughts on Perfection,” *The Arminian Magazine* 4 (October 1781): p. 553.

<sup>10</sup> Benson, *Two Sermons on Sanctification* (Leeds, 1782), p. 29.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>12</sup> *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley*, (London: Thomas Cordeux, 1813), 16:294-295, Letter to Joseph Benson (February 22, 1782).

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Benson, *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ with Critical, Explanatory, and Practical Notes* (New York: Carlton and Phillips, 1854), p. 805.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Benson, *Two Sermons on the Nature and Design of the Gospel of Christ* (Hull: G. Prince, n.d.), pp. 9–14.

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

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



<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 758.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 743.

<sup>19</sup> *Memoirs of Reverend Joseph Benson*, by James Macdonald, p. 291.

<sup>20</sup> Benson, *The Life of the Rev. John William de la Flechere*, in *Works*, 1:435-436.

<sup>21</sup> Benson, *The Life of the Rev. John William de la Flechere*, in *Works*, 1:155-156.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 1:163, 165.

<sup>23</sup> Louis Bourdaloue, "Sermon for the Feast of Pentecost," trans. John Keeling, *The Methodist Magazine*, a continuation of *The Arminian Magazine* (40), 13 (London, 1817), pp. 409-418, 491-500.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. L. Wood, *Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism*, pp. 337-385, for a full discussion of Fletcher's idea of the connection between confirmation and Christian perfection.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Louis Bourdaloue, *The Arminian Magazine*, p. 495.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 491.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 492.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 496.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 497.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 500.

<sup>32</sup> Benson, *Sermons, and Plans of Sermons* (Baltimore: Armstrong & Plaskitt, 1828), 7:30-31.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 7:82.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 6:135-136.

<sup>35</sup> "Preface," to *The Works of the Rev. John Fletcher*, ed. Joseph Benson (London: Richard Edwards, 1806), v.

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

<sup>37</sup> Joseph Benson, *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, p. 685.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 686.



<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 693.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> *The Methodist Magazine* (New York edition), 5 (July, 1822): 250-251.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism*, pp. 75-79.

<sup>44</sup> James Sigston, *Memoir of the Life and Ministry of William Bramwell* (New York: Phillips & Hunt), pp. 36-44, 102, 120, 235, 287-288.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Ward and Heitzenrater, *Journals and Diaries I*, 18:304. Cf. Mrs. Richard Smith, *The Life of Rev. Henry Moore*, pp. 180-181.

<sup>46</sup> A letter to "My Very Dear Friend," written from Bristol, September 28, 1772. Cited by Tyerman, *Wesley's Designated Successor*, pp. 242-243.

<sup>47</sup> This sermon gives no facts of publication, but it is located in the B. L. Fisher Library Archives of Asbury Theological Seminary.

<sup>48</sup> *The Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 4 (London: The Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872): 88108. Cf. Clarke, *Detached Pieces* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1841), 3:388.

<sup>49</sup> Henry Moore, "Preface," *Life of Mrs. Mary Fletcher*, p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Henry Moore, *Life of Mrs. Mary Fletcher*, p. 125; cf. 176, 235, 251, 270, 280, 293, 317, 355.

<sup>51</sup> Mrs. Richard Smith, *The Life of Henry Moore* (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Company, 1944), p. 82.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>53</sup> Mrs. Richard Smith, *The Life of the Rev. Henry Moore*, p. 82, 144, 216.

<sup>54</sup> *An Account of the Lord's dealings with the Rev. Thomas Rutherford* / the greater part written by himself, the remainder supplied from authentic documents. With the review of his character / by his friend, Henry Moore, Section III (Baltimore, R. J. Matchett, 1801), pp. 161-162. <http://www.wikitree.com/photo.php/a/ab/Rutherford-459-6.pdfby>

<sup>55</sup> The editor's "Preface" to *Christian Perfection, Being an Extract from the Rev. John Fletcher's Treatise on That Subject* (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1937 edition), p. 5.

<sup>56</sup> *An Account of the Lord's dealings with the Rev. Thomas Rutherford*, pp. 139-140.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.



<sup>58</sup> Telford, *Letters*, 6:175 (a letter to John Fletcher, August 18, 1775).

<sup>59</sup> The editor's "Preface" to *Christian Perfection, Being an Extract from the Rev. John Fletcher's Treatise on That Subject*. p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> *Christian Perfection, Being an Extract from the Rev. John Fletcher's Treatise on That Subject*, p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 25 *et passim*.

<sup>63</sup> *Life of Henry Moore*, p. 194.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345.

<sup>65</sup> Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, n.d.), 5:683.

<sup>66</sup> Clarke, *Detached Pieces* 3:470-471.

<sup>67</sup> *Memoirs of the Late Eminent Mrs. Mary Cooper of London*, ed. Adam Clarke (Halifax: Nicholson and Sons, 1814), p. 5.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52ff., 97, 115.

<sup>69</sup> Mrs. Richard Smith, *The Life of Rev. Henry Moore*, p. 244.

<sup>70</sup> *Memoirs of the Late Eminent Mrs. Mary Cooper of London*, p. 53.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* p. 105.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p.178.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192. Italics hers.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 214f.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.



<sup>83</sup> An example of a Methodist woman who defined her full sanctification in terms of the baptism with the Spirit is Mrs. Law who became a Methodist class leader. In 1822-1823, she received the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” and “perfect love.” George Coles, *Heroines of Methodism*, pp. 281-282.

<sup>84</sup> *An Account of the Infancy, Religious, and Literary Life of Adam Clarke* (autobiography), edited J. B. B. Clarke (New York: B. Waugh and T. Mason, 1833), 1:110.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Richard Treffry, *A Treatise on Christian Perfection* (Boston: McDonald, Gill, & Co., 1888), p. 5. Cf. John Fletcher Hurst, *History of Methodism* 3:1325.

<sup>86</sup> *The Methodist Magazine* (New York edition), 5 (April 1822): 125.

<sup>87</sup> *The Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review* 18 (July, 1835): 284ff.

<sup>88</sup> *The Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review* 27 (July, 1835): 287-288, 296.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.

<sup>90</sup> *Memoirs of the Rev. Richard Treffry, Junior*, ed. Richard Treffry, Senior (London: John Mason, 1839), p. 264.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>92</sup> Thomas Jackson, “Memoirs of The Life and Writings of the Rev. Richard Watson,” *The Works of the Rev. Richard Watson*, (London: John Mason, 1857), 1:39.

<sup>93</sup> Chiles, pp. 33-34.

<sup>94</sup> “Conversations for the Young,” *The Works of the Rev. Richard Watson* (London: John Mason, 1857), 6:263. Italics mine.

<sup>95</sup> Thomas Jackson, “Memoirs of The Life and Writings of the Rev. Richard Watson,” *The Works of the Rev. Richard Watson* 1:402.

<sup>96</sup> Watson, “Hope the Anchor of the Soul,” *The Works of the Rev. Richard Watson* (London: John Mason, 1857), 4:327.

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

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> Thomas Jackson, “Memoirs of The Life and Writings of the Rev. Richard Watson,” *The Works of the Rev. Richard Watson* 1:402.

<sup>100</sup> Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America with explanatory notes*, 10th ed. (Philadelphia: Tuckniss, 1798), iv. Original date of publication was Nov. 16, 1792 in Baltimore by Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, p. 59.



<sup>101</sup> Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America*, p. 59.

<sup>102</sup> *Autobiography of Dan Young*, ed. W.P. Strickland (New York: Carlton and Porter, 1860), pp. 213-214, 164-165, 212ff., 14, 35.

<sup>103</sup> Robert E. Chiles, *Theological Transition in American Methodism* (New York: University Press of America, 1983), p. 40.

<sup>104</sup> *Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, ed. J. M. Potter, Elmer T. Clark, and J. S. Payton, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958), 1:124 (July 24, 1774).

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:232

<sup>106</sup> I am indebted to Melvin E. Dieter for this information. He personally owns this "First American Edition."

<sup>107</sup> Cf. *The National Union Catalog, Pre-1956 Imprints*, 175:232-240.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. *The National Union Catalog Pre-1956 Imprints*, 175:232-240.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. *The National Union Catalog Pre-1956 Imprints*, 47:250-253.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. *The National Union Catalog Pre-1956 Imprints*, 175:232-240. There were also other imprints of this work not listed in *The National Union Catalog*, such J. Kingston, *Fletcher's Appeal to Matter of Fact & Common Sense* (Baltimore: J. Robinson, Printer, 1814).

<sup>111</sup> Abel Stevens, *The History of the Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century, Called Methodism* (London: George Watson, 1864) 2:55. Cf. John Fletcher Hurst, *John Wesley the Methodist* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1903), pp. 204-205.

<sup>112</sup> *The Methodist Magazine*, 6 (January - February 1823): pp. 9, 65.

<sup>113</sup> *Christian Advocate and Journal*, 2.29 (New York, July 11, 1828): 73.

<sup>114</sup> *The Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review* 13 (January 1831): 104.

<sup>115</sup> *Asbury Journal*, pp. 110-111.

<sup>116</sup> Neely, *The Doctrinal Standards of Methodism* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1918), p. 86.

<sup>117</sup> *The Arminian Magazine* 14 (January, 1791), p. 49.

<sup>118</sup> *The Arminian Magazine* 5 (January, 1782); pp. 43, 49.

<sup>119</sup> 1778, 1784, 1787 are the only years when Fletcher was not referenced in *The Arminian Magazine*, and most assuredly Fletcher continued to be cited well beyond 1878, although I have not confirmed that fact.

<sup>120</sup> *The Arminian Magazine* 2 (New York, January, 1790), iv.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., pp. 36-37.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 187.

<sup>124</sup> *The Arminian Magazine* 16 (London, June, 1793): 486.

<sup>125</sup> *The Methodist Magazine*, volume 1, a continuation of *The Arminian Magazine*, volume 21, (London edition), (November 1798): p. 597.

<sup>126</sup> "Memoir of Mr. Evans," *The Methodist Magazine Being a Continuation of The Arminian Magazine* 32 (London, 1809), p. 229.

<sup>127</sup> *The Arminian Magazine*, (London, January, 1817), p. 50.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>129</sup> "Obituary," *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 45 (London: March, 1822), p. 202.

<sup>130</sup> "Obituary," *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* (London: March 1822), pp. 203-204.

<sup>131</sup> Elijah R. Sabin, *Christian Perfection Displayed and the Objections Obviated: Being the Substance of Two Discourses delivered at Warwick, Rhode Island, September 13, 1807* (Providence, RI: Jones and Wheeler, 1807), pp. 14-15.

<sup>132</sup> *The Methodist Magazine*, 32 (London, March 1809). p. 97.

<sup>133</sup> Joseph Holdich, *The Life of Wilbur Fisk* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1842), p. 72.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>135</sup> Benson, *The Life of the Rev. John W. de la Flechere*. Eleventh Edition. London: J. Mason, 1838, p. 170.

<sup>136</sup> *The Journal of Joseph Pilmore* (Philadelphia: Message Publishing Co., for the Historical Society of the Philadelphia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, 1969), p. 46.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. J. F. Hurst, *History of Methodism*, 3:1252. (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1902), 3:1252.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. 3:1059.

<sup>139</sup> Copied from the original letter in the Wesleyan Mission House collection, Bishopsgate Street, London, by Luke Tyerman, *Wesley's Designated Successor*, p. 331.

<sup>140</sup> Thomas Coke, *A Commentary on the New Testament* (London: G. Whitfield, 1803), 2:942-957.



<sup>141</sup> Nathan Bangs, *A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: G. Lane and C. B. Tippet, 1845), 2:75.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:101.

<sup>143</sup> *The Methodist Magazine*, 1 (September, New York, 1818), p. 358.

<sup>144</sup> *The Methodist Magazine*, 2 (New York, October, 1819), p. 372.

<sup>145</sup> *The Methodist Magazine*, 2 (New York, September, 1819), p. 344, Signed as “a Preacher” in letter to the editors.

<sup>146</sup> George Coles, *Heroines of Methodism; Pen and Ink Sketches of the Mothers and Daughters of the Church*, (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1883), p. 281.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.

<sup>148</sup> *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 3 (May 1824), p. 566.

<sup>149</sup> *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 3 (January 1824), p. 331.

<sup>150</sup> *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 5 (November 1849), pp. 1121-1122.

<sup>151</sup> *The Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 8 (February, 1852), p. 106.

<sup>152</sup> *Twenty Eight Sermons on Doctrinal and Practical Subjects*, contributed by different ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church (Boston: C. C. Strong, 1832), p. 317.

<sup>153</sup> *The Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review* 23 (January, 1841): 123-124.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>156</sup> *Cf. Guide to Christian Perfection* 15 (June 1849): p. 135.

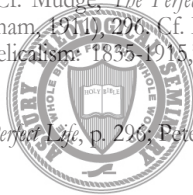
<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>159</sup> *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, ed. Nolan B. Harmon (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1974) 1:1591.

<sup>160</sup> Whedon, “Christian Perfection and the Higher Life,” *Methodist Quarterly Review* (October 1878): 695. Cf. Mudge, *The Perfect Life in Experience and Doctrine* (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1870) 276. Cf. Myung Soo Park, “Concepts of Holiness in American Evangelicalism: 1835-1915,” (Ph. D. Dissertation, Boston University, 1992), p. 91.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. Mudge, *The Perfect Life*, p. 226; Peters, *Christian Perfection and American Methodism*, p. 151.



<sup>162</sup> *Growth in Holiness*, p. 259.

<sup>163</sup> *Growth in Holiness*, pp. 256-257.

<sup>164</sup> Steele, *A Defense of Christian Perfection or A Criticism of Dr. James Mudge's "Growth in Holiness Toward Perfection"* (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1896), pp. 120-121.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. John Leland Peters, *Christian Perfection and American Methodism* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press, 1985). Cf. J. A. Wood, *Perfect Love* (Noblesville, IN: Newby Book Room, 1967), p. 274.

<sup>166</sup> Phoebe Palmer, ed. Thomas Oden (Paulist Press, 1988). Cf. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, p. 87.

<sup>167</sup> Melvin E. Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, second edition (Lanham, MD: 1996), p. 42.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> Wallace Thornton, *When the Fire Fell* (Lexington: Emeth Press, 2014), 44n162.

<sup>170</sup> The term "Pentecostal" was frequently used in titles published by the organized holiness movement. For example, an extract from Fletcher's writings appeared under the title, *Pentecostal Flashlights from the Life of John Fletcher*, ed. W. L. Philipps, (Cincinnati: Published by Mrs. M. W. Knapp of God's Bible School, 1902). On the opposite side of its title page was a list of other recommended booklets on holiness. Out of thirty listed titles, nine of them had the language of Pentecost in their titles. [see Wallace Thornton, *When the Fire Fell*, 60ff.]

<sup>171</sup> *Love Enthroned: Essays on Evangelical Perfection* (New York: Philipps and Hunt, 1875, 1880), especially pp. 94, 141ff.

<sup>172</sup> Daniel Steele, "The Qualities of a Successful Ministry," *Half Hours with St. Paul* (Boston: The Christian Witness Co., 1895), p. 291, 294.

<sup>173</sup> *A Defense of Christian Perfection or A Criticism of Dr. James Mudge's "Growth in Holiness Toward Perfection"* (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1896), Chapter 29.

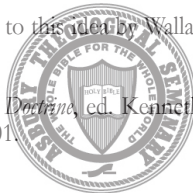
<sup>174</sup> Steele, *Antinomianism Revived, or the Theology of the So-Called Phymouth Brethren* (Boston: McDonald, Gill & co., 1887).

<sup>175</sup> Binney, *A Theological Compend of Christian Doctrine* (Nashville, TN: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1870, c1840), p. 83.

<sup>176</sup> Cf. the reference to this idea by Wallace Thornton, *When the Fire Fell*, 81n84.

<sup>177</sup> *The Word and the Doctrine*, ed. Kenneth E. Geiger (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1965), p. 301.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*



<sup>179</sup> Cf. *Meaning of Pentecost in Early Methodism*, pp. 337-339.

<sup>180</sup> *Follow Me. Handbook for Pastors, Parents, and Congregations*, an official resource for the United Methodist Church prepared by the General Board of Discipleship (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1993), p. 27.

<sup>181</sup> *The Methodist Magazine*, volume 1, a continuation of *The Arminian Magazine*, volume 21, (London edition), (November 1798): 597.

<sup>182</sup> “The Bishops’ Pastoral Address to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1852, *Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church Held in Boston, MASS, 1852* (New-York, Carlton & Phillips, 1852), p. 160



R. Jeffrey Hiatt

*A Historical Account of the Pentecostal Mission and Its Contributions  
to the Church of the Nazarene*

**Abstract**

The Pentecostal Mission impacted the Church of the Nazarene, directly and indirectly, through the many influences of its people, mission policies, evangelistic method, ministries, doctrine, practices, organization, educational institution and pedagogy. The Church of the Nazarene still reflects the marks of those significant contributions in its daily operations today. The following study investigates some of the influences and contributions of the Pentecostal Mission to the Church of the Nazarene during its formative years. The timing of this article is dedicated in honor of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the joining of the Pentecostal Mission with the Church of the Nazarene.

**Keywords:** Pentecostal Mission, Church of the Nazarene, church history, Pentecostalism, Holiness Movement

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## Introduction: The Cultural Milieu of the Pentecostal Mission

### *Religious Climate*

Revivalism spread rapidly across the landscape of the United States of America. The “camp meeting” flourished in the Tennessee-Kentucky frontier in 1800, and rooted itself as a dominant method for religious expression and evangelism. Daily prayer meetings and strong lay involvement and leadership saw thousands of converts brought into the various churches in 1857-1858, as the Holiness Movement was in full swing (Walker 1970:508). The Second Great Awakening had reshaped religious expression throughout the nation. The enthusiasm of the public worship services, were typified by the preaching of lay evangelist D. L. Moody, the music of H. H. Rodeheaver, and the visitation of the Holy Spirit’s presence on the worshippers.

Spiritual excitement was widespread across mostly Protestant denominational boundaries. Rugged individualism that characterized and helped to produce the American frontier also touched the nature of religious expression amid the air of growing Christian religious variety. The “lively experiment” in America was reaping the harvest of splits and schisms in nearly all of the established Christian denominations (i.e., Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Methodists). Suspicion and division in the denominations over questions of ethics, morals, doctrines, congregational structure, and administrative methods and authority foreshadowed the national political divisions within the states, surfacing on the horizon.

Internal disputes over Christian doctrine and practice and the intervention of the Civil War (1861-1865), however, did not stop the revival. Deep convictions and religious experience shone into the very camps of the soldiers. At least one song, “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” even reflects the religious emotions of Christian hearts and minds caught up in the struggle to be faithful to their homeland and yet, be faithful to God (*Worship in Song* 1972:506).

The 1890s glowed with optimism as the movement of God’s Spirit continued to move across the nation. “The Great Century” was rolling into its zenith in an abundance of revivals, people movements, and mission global activity (Latourette 1953:1078).

### *Cultural Factors*

Nashville, Tennessee, was a strategic center of this activity. It was perched like a crown on the Highland Rim overlooking the new South. River access by the Cumberland River provided good navigation, making industrial commerce



advantageous. Intersected by major thoroughfares and railroads with key bridges to cross the river, Nashville drew traffic and trade into the city from all directions.

The Parthenon was built in 1897 to demonstrate the city's love of the arts. With educational opportunities expanding for both African-Americans (Fisk University, 1866) and Anglo citizens (Vanderbilt University, 1873) of the society, Nashville was becoming known as the "Athens of the South." Nashville had gained the attention of many people searching for new beginnings, financial security, business (Benson 1980:3) and religious opportunities. During October 1911, four separate holiness conventions, reported in local newspapers, held meetings simultaneously in Nashville (*Nashville Tennessean* and *The Nashville American*, October 15-20, 1911). Into this bustling, cosmopolitan atmosphere the Holiness Movement made an impact.

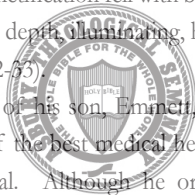
### **J. O. McClurkan: Mission in the Heart**

James Octavius McClurkan was born into a rural middle Tennessee community on November 13, 1861. As the son of an itinerant Cumberland Presbyterian preacher, he early came to appreciate a godly heritage that included Bible reading, intense prayer, and a passion for others (Heath 1947:9-10).

McClurkan needed all of the gentility and meekness available to him. Growing up during the reconstruction period (c. 1865-1880), a Southerner could have easily been influenced by the bitter dregs of the hard times. Instead, J.O. McClurkan developed "a hunger and thirst after righteousness," became an avid reader, and followed in the footsteps of his preacher father. He responded to the call of God and gave himself to preaching the Gospel. Rev. McClurkan married a devout and earnest Christian, Martha Rye. Together with their four children, they brought the Good News to thousands across the country.

This journey led him to pastorates in Texas and California, and evangelistic meetings at all points in between. He was a loved pastor and popular preacher. McClurkan's driving desire to see souls around the world won to the Lord, found many opportunities. The Lord even used him through personal evangelism in the railroad coaches that he rode in to get to his revival meetings. During his ministry in California, the fire of entire sanctification fell with burning on his heart. His already strong ministry took on added depth, illuminating, humbling, and empowering him for more work (Heath 1947:32-33).

In 1896, the illness of his son, Emmett, brought the McClurkans back to Tennessee, to seek some of the best medical help available through Nashville's Vanderbilt University Hospital. Although he originally intended to return to



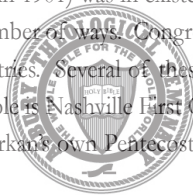
California, a near fatal case of pneumonia left him too weak. Thus, Nashville became his base of operation for the remainder of his life and yielded the most significant fruit of his ministry labors. With the new fire of sanctification in his heart, God's servant was preparing for the next phase of his ministry.

During McClurkan's first two years in Nashville, he conducted revival campaigns throughout the area. As one of the chief proponents of the Holiness Movement, the doctrine of entire sanctification and its attendant social, ethical, and moral responsibilities were a prominent focus of his preaching. The Lord used this to pave the path that led J. O. McClurkan, for a decade and a half, into an influential leadership position of the Holiness Movement in Middle Tennessee and Nashville in particular (*Nashville Tennessean* and *The Nashville American*, September 17, 1914).

### The Beginnings of the Pentecostal Mission

Concerned individuals and representatives from various holiness groups, especially from Middle Tennessee, gathered on July 18-20, 1898, at a holiness convention in the old Tulip Street Methodist Episcopal Church - South (Heath 1947:57). The result of this meeting was the formation of The Pentecostal Alliance to "utilize and perpetuate the work wrought in ... holiness meetings" (Redford 1935:123). John T. Benson, Sr., the newly elected Pentecostal Alliance Secretary, writes, "The Convention was held...for the purpose of organizing the holiness people of Middle Tennessee into some kind of band for the promotion of God's work" (Minutes, July 18, 1898). This first recorded convention accomplished: 1) adopting a name for the uniting holiness movement groups - "The Pentecostal Alliance", 2) began issuing credentials to preachers and Christian workers in the name of the Pentecostal Alliance, 3) formulated initial steps to establish a program for Foreign Missions, 4) created strategies to organize Pentecostal Alliances - prayer bands, mission groups, and circles of believers...to be included in the movement, 5) made plans to write, adopt, and print a set of "Rules and Practices" for the Pentecostal Alliance, and 6) elected an executive committee to carry on the work (Benson 1977:25-26). This convention became the cornerstone of the holiness wave known as the Pentecostal Mission.

During the 17 years that the Pentecostal Alliance (reorganized and renamed Pentecostal Mission in 1901) was in existence, the Lord used his servants to bring in the harvest in a number of ways. Congregations were established, many with "street" and social ministries. Several of these churches continue to operate today. One of the most notable is Nashville First Church of the Nazarene (1898), which originated from McClurkan's own Pentecostal Tabernacle congregation. In



2014, it had a membership of approximately 1,700, and is situated just 100 yards from its original location.

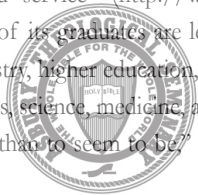
Minister, missionary, and lay ministry Pentecostal Mission Certificates were given to members who evidenced the gifts and graces for holiness ministry. After the Pentecostal Mission joined the Church of the Nazarene denomination, these certificates were recognized as official and valid credentials (Benson 1977:193).

The “Union Gospel Wagon” street and tent meetings were an evangelistic means of going to where the people were to bring them the message that a saving and sanctifying relationship with Christ was available today. The Pentecostal Mission was heavily involved in compassionate ministries, such as the Door of Hope rescue mission for girls (from which they withdrew after March 19, 1901) and founded the “Pentecostal Training Home for Girls” (orphanage and school) to share the love of Jesus through “cups of cold water” (Minutes, March 19, 1901).

From the beginning, it was important to the Pentecostal Mission leaders to get holiness messages and teaching into the hands of the people. The holiness message on the printed page could go to places where a holiness minister could not regularly go. A weekly publication (first *Zion's Outlook*, later succeeded by *Living Water*) was printed and sent out to anyone who asked (Benson 1977:123). These publications contained holiness messages from Rev. McClurkan and other holiness preachers, teachings on holy living, articles from other Pentecostal Mission lay persons, Pentecostal Mission news and ministry information, solicitation of funds for missions, and convention summaries, etc. Other literature and music was also published through the Pentecostal Mission Publishing Company (later known as the John T. Benson Company).

### Emphasis on Mission Work

The Pentecostal Mission placed a high importance on the education of ministers and lay leaders. A school was started for “Bible lessons and Christian training” (Benson 1977:35), emphasizing missions, evangelism, and the pastoral ministry. This school was named Trevecca College (1901). Over the years it expanded to become a liberal arts university with an emphasis on holiness in any chosen vocation. “Trevecca Nazarene University is a Christian community providing education for leadership and service” (<http://www.trevecca.edu/about/about>, accessed 12/1/2015). Many of its graduates are leaders in their fields, especially in the areas of Christian ministry, higher education, holiness writings (publications and books), Nazarene missions, science, medicine, and business. The TNU motto: *esse quam videri*, “To be rather than to seem to be,” points to the holiness message



of entire sanctification as a Christ-centered life through and through that manifests itself in one's daily routines.

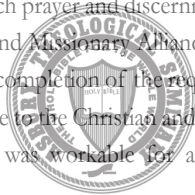
From the beginning, the Pentecostal (Alliance) Mission was burdened for the lost around the world. To serve the Lord in this area, a foreign mission board was appointed, foreign mission policies were formulated, offerings for missions were taken, and potential missionaries were sent as the opportunity arose. Relations were strengthened between A. B. Simpson's Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination in New York, primarily to provide an umbrella for missionary training, placement, and service on foreign soil (Minutes 1899). J.O. McClurkan, himself, had a strong sense of urgency for missions. In his pastorates, prior to the organization of the Pentecostal Alliance, McClurkan was instrumental in seeing that several missionaries were sent to other countries. He had personal plans to preach in several of those countries, but was restricted by his frail health.

The Eleventh Hour Movement, which was adopted by the Christian and Missionary Alliance and popular in Evangelical circles at the time, fueled the flame for strong missions sending programs. The Eleventh Hour Movement consisted of the idea that we are in the eleventh hour, "one hour" before Christ's return. The motivation and underlying theology for mission in the movement, as well as McClurkan's group, is expressed in these words,

The Alliance people [should] give liberally to the evangelization of the world, stating that the promise was that the Gospel message be first proclaimed to every creature and that when this was accomplished Christ would return and establish His millennial kingdom on earth (The *Nashville Banner*, November 19, 1900).

Therefore, the gospel must be spread to all lands as soon as possible. This intense zeal of "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" hastened many a person to the foreign mission field (*Zion's Outlook*, March 7, 1901:1). The race against "time" was on.

For the first four years of the Pentecostal Alliance (1897-1901), missionary candidate "process" was for the persons to first present themselves to the leaders. Sometimes a personal interview occurred, but many times only correspondence letters were written. After much prayer and discernment, selected candidates would first be sent to the Christian and Missionary Alliance missionary training school in Nyack, NY. After satisfactory completion of the required training, they were sent to work in a specific country. Due to the Christian and Missionary Alliance missionary training school, this process was workable for a time, but later developments



necessitated an alternative that resulted in the founding of Trevecca, as mentioned earlier.

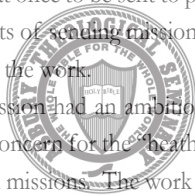
McClurkan dreamed of keeping the Holiness Movement, as he knew it, inclusive. He desired all adherents of the doctrine of entire sanctification to be welcome. With a strong resolve to remain aloof from denominational connections, as well as disagreements over the “tongues” issue, he began to distance the Pentecostal Alliance from the Christian and Missionary Alliance. For example, when the word “alliance” began to equate them too closely with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Pentecostal Alliance effected a name change in October 1901, to the Pentecostal Mission (Minutes October, 1901).

As questions arose over financial support and payment of salaries to Pentecostal Mission personnel serving in the field (China) with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Foreign Executive Committee of the Pentecostal Alliance began talking about and planning for a separation of the work of the two groups. The Christian and Missionary Alliance Mission Council wanted the Pentecostal Alliance to join them in funding all of the missionaries under the Christian and Missionary Alliance umbrella. After prayer, deliberation, and clarification, the Pentecostal Alliance consensus felt that this was not financially feasible, nor true to their chosen “undenominational” purpose.

In the November 4, 1901 Foreign Executive Committee Minutes, some distancing occurred, as a resolution was passed to “discontinue supporting other missionaries than those sent out by the Pentecostal Mission” (Minutes, November 4, 1901). This separation made some people very anxious. The constituents worried over the ability of the Pentecostal Mission to continue its work in the foreign mission fields. The general consensus accepted, “that new fields of missionary work be opened up as the Lord opens the way” (Minutes, November 4, 1901). Some of the missionaries chose to stay in the ranks of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (i.e. W. A. Farmer), but for some like the R. S. Andersons, this was an opportunity for a fresh start in a new field.

Following this decision, the door was now open to new countries. Several people who were called by God to missionary service, but had never before asked to serve under the Pentecostal Mission (i.e. Leona Gardner), began presenting themselves to the Committee at once to be sent to places around the world. Studies were done to ascertain the costs of sending missionaries to those fields, supporting their families, and maintaining the work.

The Pentecostal Mission had an ambitious missionary thrust. The zeal of their leaders and the deep concern for the “heathen” fueled the selfless sacrifices in giving and going for foreign missions. The work progressed rapidly. More fields



were added to the growing roster: Cuba (1902), Guatemala (1903), India (1904), Peru, Bolivia, Belize, and Argentina (1909). The work in China was slow, but still existed (*Living Water*, August 13, 1914:16). By the time they joined the Church of the Nazarene in 1915, there were 33 missionaries in eight countries, holding certificates as Pentecostal Mission ministers and Christian workers, and sent out under the Pentecostal Mission, Incorporated (with a charter granted by the state of Tennessee).

Some of the early missionaries sent out by the Pentecostal Mission, did not stay long, but returned home and needed to be replaced. This short tenure was a point of frustration, especially to the Foreign Executive Committee. Travel was expensive and many of the short-lived projects and personnel did not promote the work well. So, they devised a better screening process, including interview(s), and an application, both of which would serve to answer twenty carefully selected questions (Minutes, October 30, 1902). Following the union with the Nazarenes, and the election of John T. Benson, Sr., first as vice president (1915), then as President (1919) of the General Board of Foreign Missions, this process would be incorporated into the denominational missionary screening procedures (Parker 1988:31).

Formerly, the Nazarenes had allowed the women of the denomination to begin the “Women’s Foreign Missionary Society,” but had not given official action of organization to make it an auxiliary of the denomination. The Pentecostal Mission supported its missionaries and mission work in similar zealous ways. Following the incoming deluge of the missionary minded Pentecostal Mission people; this became a reality at the 1915 General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene (Redford 1934).

The implementation of the organization of the society was left to the work of the General Board of Foreign Missions. On October 18, 1916, the above-mentioned board appointed a three-member committee to put it together, notably Mrs. Eva G. (John T.) Benson was one of the three. Two other Pentecostal Mission names that figure prominently in the leadership and operation of the Nazarene World Missions Society, in the ensuing years, are Miss Fannie Claypool and Mrs. R. G. Coddling (Parker 1988:70-71). Today, it is known as Nazarene Missions International, and has about a million members worldwide (Annual Church Statistical Report of the Church of the Nazarene, 2015, p. 2).

### Expansion of the Early Mission Fields

At the time of the union of the Pentecostal Mission with the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene (April 15, 1915), fourteen of the thirty-three missionaries

agreed to become Nazarenes (*Living Water*, August 13, 1914:16). Each missionary was given the individual opportunity to join the new denomination. It was also agreed that the Nazarene General Missionary Board would “assume financial responsibility for the missionary work of the Pentecostal Mission” (*Herald of Holiness*, Feb. 24, 1915:10). “The work in India with nine missionaries, Cuba with five, and Central America with four”, were transferred, along with all of the missionary work, under the board of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene (Parker 1988:28).

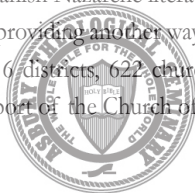
### *India*

The Nazarenes were about to close the work in the “western field” of India, when the Pentecostal Mission united with them. Several missionaries and a growing work in Khardi, Vasind and Duhlia, kept the effort moving ahead. A boys’ school was established in Khardi at the main station, and a girls’ orphanage and school in Duhlia was started (Parker 1988:219). The untimely death of several of the missionaries and the poor health of others hampered the Lord’s work in India. Yet the “comprehensive India mission policy drawn up [and influenced strongly by Reverend R. G. Coddington, the field superintendent from the Pentecostal Mission ministry], was so well prepared, that it became the basis for a missionary policy statement adopted for the entire overseas program for the denomination.” (Parker 1988:220)

The work in India today reflects 14 districts, 1972 churches, and 107,175 full members (Annual Church Statistical Report of the Church of the Nazarene, 2015).

### *Guatemala*

The open door to Guatemala was extended to the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene via the R. S. Andersons (1904-1945), who united with the Nazarenes in 1915, from the Pentecostal Mission. Other missionaries followed to assist with the work, including the Anderson’s daughter and son-in-law, and Mrs. Anderson’s sister (Parker 1988:430). Rev. and Mrs. J. T. Butler, Miss Augie Holland, and Miss Effie Glover brought a printer from the United States, and began the publication of *El Cristiano*, which was a valuable adjunct to the work for 42 years and provided the basis for the now extensive Spanish Nazarene literature ministry (Parker 1988:423). In 1910, a school was started, providing another way to serve the people. The work in Guatemala today reflects 16 districts, 622 churches, and 78,212 full members (Annual Church Statistical Report of the Church of the Nazarene, 2015).



### *Cuba*

Miss Leona Gardner, a dedicated missionary, marched in the Pentecostal Mission ranks before serving with the Nazarenes. She spent 25 years in Cuba (1902-1927), nine of which (1905-1914) were carried on her shoulders alone. She gave another seven years to Guatemala (1927-1934), and pioneered the work in Belize (1934-1938). For three-and-a-half decades, she plowed, planted, and watered in anticipation of the harvest being gathered in these areas today. Presently in the Church of the Nazarene, Cuba has 2 districts, 90 churches, and 7,117 full members. Belize has one district, 58 churches, and 2,821 full members (Annual Church Statistical Report of the Church of the Nazarene, 2015).

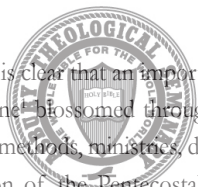
### *Argentina*

Reverend and Mrs. Frank Ferguson started the work in Argentina in 1909, under the banner of the Pentecostal Mission. At the time of the union, the Fergusons chose to continue the work independent of denominational ties, but in 1919, entered into the fellowship of the Nazarenes. The Rev. and Mrs. Ferguson gave 18 more fruitful years to Argentina (1921-1939), and then strengthened the work in Cuba (1919-1920), Peru (1920-1921), and the Mexican Border (1944-1952). Prior to joining the Nazarenes, they served the fields of Cuba (1903-1905), Peru 1906-1907), and Bolivia (1907-1908). (Mrs. Ferguson died in 1944). (Parker 1988:650) At present, Argentina has 12 districts, 236 churches, and 14,073 full members. Mexico has 15 districts, 689 churches, and 53,253 full members (Annual Church Statistical Report of the Church of the Nazarene, 2015).

As a result of the faithfulness of these missionaries, several nationals heard the call of God. Through the church, they received the training needed to go into Christian service, became leaders themselves, and reproduced the fruit of the Spirit into the lives of others. The seeds these early missionaries planted are continuing to bear fruit today. The Church of the Nazarene today has a little over 700 missionaries, serving under its banner of holiness in 159 world areas, through more than 2 million members (<http://nmi.nazarene.org/10149/story.html>, accessed December 1, 2015).

### **Conclusion**

Within this study, it is clear that an important impact in the development of the Church of the Nazarene blossomed through the many contributions and influences of people, policies, methods, ministries, doctrine, practices, organization, and the educational institution of the Pentecostal Mission. Mission work was



started and flourished in several countries. Churches were and are continuing to be planted. Compassionate ministries abound. Trevecca Nazarene University is a thriving educational springboard centered on Christian Holiness. Through the influence of the Pentecostal Mission, “more than 40 evangelists were sent” (*Nashville Tennessean* and *The Nashville American*, September 17, 1914), thousands were saved and sanctified, and the Holy Spirit transformed lives.

Phineas F. Bresee, one of the first Nazarene General Superintendents was known for his quip, “The Church of the Nazarene is in the morning of its existence, and the sun never goes down in the morning.” As the denomination moves past the centennial years of its feeder roots, its heart is still ablaze for the Christian Holiness and mission around the world. It has never been truer, than it is today, that the sun never sets on the Church of the Nazarene, due, in part, to the missional vision and impact of those early Pentecostal Mission leaders.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> “Pentecostal” was dropped by General Assembly action in 1919, because of the term’s association with “tongues” (Redford 1935).

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David J. Zucker

*Cold Case: Restoring Rebekah, Intrigue in Genesis 27*

**Abstract**

Rebekah often is censured and criticized for her part in persuading Jacob (but disguised as Esau) to approach Isaac and to seek to obtain the patriarchal primogeniture blessings that should go to his older fraternal twin. Rebekah undoubtedly is at the center of the plot. She informs Jacob that he must act, and do so quickly. She makes her case and then she literally prepares the food and garments necessary for Jacob to appear as faux Esau. Following the blessing, she strongly advises Jacob to take a leave of absence. Most commentators suggest that Rebekah does this counter to Isaac's wishes, that she betrays her role as his wife. This article suggests that on the contrary, the Isaac-Rebekah relationship was and remains one of love and mutual respect. The "deception" is an Isaac-Rebekah jointly conceived plan; it is Jacob who is unaware, not Isaac. Rebekah's reputation requires restoring.

**Keywords:** Rebekah, Isaac, Jacob, deception, restoration

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## Introduction

Rebekah often is reviled as a calculating and controlling wife and mother who cunningly directs the lives of her husband and sons. She is described as “the Machiavellian matriarch manipulating Jacob to defeat the purpose of her blind and dying husband.”<sup>1</sup> She is said to “usurp [Isaac’s] authority and use it for her own ends;” a woman who is “a manipulating schemer.”<sup>2</sup> These are harsh words; they condemn Rebekah out of hand. Furthermore these descriptions appear to run counter to the Rebekah-Isaac relationship prior to the “deception in the dark;” they likewise run counter to the Rebekah-Isaac relationship following Jacob’s receiving the primogeniture blessing. Certainly there is intrigue going on in Genesis 27, but who really is unaware of the true facts? Is it Isaac, or is it Jacob? Regarding Genesis 27 as a “cold case” that needs reinvestigation, this article seeks to restore Rebekah’s reputation by showing that this husband and wife work as a team. Further, the theft of the blessing is achieved through a conscious plan worked out, not by Rebekah alone, nor solely by a combined mother-son ruse. Instead, a close reread of Genesis 27 suggests that Isaac and Rebekah themselves plan out this scheme of deception. They are the co-conspirators working as a single-minded unit to achieve what they understand to be the greater good for the family, that Jacob becomes the link to the promised future, that the Patriarchs will be Abraham-Isaac-Jacob.

On a surface reading of the text, Rebekah seems to act contrary to Isaac’s intent. Contemporary commentators highlight the issue of favoritism, suggesting that this “family is divided, and the mother and father each pursue their own interests . . . Rebekah exerts all the maternal authority she can” to usurp Isaac’s wishes.<sup>3</sup> “Her plans for the ruse” reflect a “calculated deception;” it is “treachery” on her part.<sup>4</sup> “Rebekah [acts] calmly and without compunction . . . she prepares to wrest the blessings from ‘his son’ so that ‘her son’ might enjoy them.”<sup>5</sup> Noting the “deep rift in the family” Rebekah is described as the “perceptive, domineering mother” and “Isaac, a weak, aging figure whose fatherly desire . . . is thwarted.”<sup>6</sup>

## Other Readings of the Text

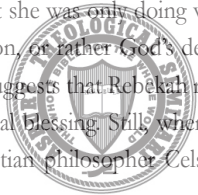
Yet even thousands of years ago, there were those who at the very least suggest that she has good reasons for doing what she does. The Pseudepigraphic work *Jubilees* expands Rebekah’s role. Abraham specifically tells her that Jacob is the favored son, and that God will choose Jacob, that Jacob will be a blessing “in place of me upon the earth and for a blessing in the midst of the sons of men” (Jub. 19.17). He says that he loves Jacob more than all of his own sons. Technically, this



could refer to children by Keturah as well (Gen. 25:1-4), but the inference is that Abraham prefers his grandson Jacob to his own sons, Isaac and Ishmael. Abraham says that Rebekah's hands should be strong and her heart should rejoice in Jacob (Jub. 19.21). In *Jubilees* chapter 25 Rebekah addresses Jacob at length. She tells him that he is to marry within the clan and, more specifically, a woman from her own father's house, for then his children will be a righteous generation and a holy seed (vs.1-3). She includes language reminiscent of God's early blessing to Abraham as well as Isaac's blessing to Jacob, "The one who blesses you will be blessed, and all flesh which curses you falsely will be cursed" (vs. 22, cf. Gen 12:3; 27:29). In *Jubilees* 26.24 Isaac actually mimics those very words when he blesses Jacob as faux Esau. *Jubilees* explains, "Isaac did not know him [Jacob] because the change was from heaven in order to distract his mind" (Jub. 26.18). James C. VanderKam suggests that *Jubilees* approves of Rebekah's "appropriate usurpation of the paternal role in blessing her son—something she could do because she, like Abraham and unlike Isaac, recognized his true character and superiority over his older brother . . . Something simply had to be done to avert his [Isaac's] ill-conceived plan, one that ran contrary to the insights of Abraham and Rebecca into the souls of the two young men."<sup>7</sup> He goes on to write that whereas "in Genesis Rebecca's conniving and Jacob's compliance seem underhanded, in *Jubilees* they appear as commendable efforts by concerned people to thwart a disaster."<sup>8</sup>

In the midrashic writings, the rabbis choose to ignore the fact that on the surface reading of the text, Rebekah acts to thwart Isaac's wishes. Instead they praise Rebekah for her part in securing the blessing for Jacob. They say she convinces reluctant Jacob with two different arguments. First when urging him to fetch two goat kids from the flocks, she explains that, if necessary, he should take them from her dowry gift. Then she adds that two goats would in future time bring blessings to his descendants, referring to the rites for the Day of Atonement found in Lev 16:5, 15–22, 30 (*Genesis Rabbah* 65.14). Another midrashic collection connects Rebekah's relationship to Isaac to the capable wife in Proverbs 31:12. She was good to him, never bad (*Midrash haGadol*, comment on Genesis 24:58).<sup>9</sup>

In like manner, some of the Patristics praise Rebekah, again ignoring what seems to be the surface reading of the text, that what she does foils Isaac's plan to bless Esau. They argue that she was only doing what God wanted. Chrysostom speaks of "a mother's affection, or rather God's designs."<sup>10</sup> Ambrose of Milan in "Jacob and the Happy Life" suggests that Rebekah recognized that Jacob was more suited to receive the patriarchal blessing. Still, when Origen objects to the phrase used by the Greek anti-Christian philosopher Celsus of the "treacheries of the



mothers” he nonetheless chooses a pejorative term for her action. Origen uses the word “contrived.” Celsus “means Rebecca when she contrived that the blessings of Isaac should not come to Esau but to Jacob.”<sup>11</sup>

Alice Ogden Bellis explains that although “Rebekah is often viewed as a positive character from a feminist point of view, she is not well liked by male interpreters.”<sup>12</sup> Yet even feminist writers assume that in the matter of the “theft of the blessing” Rebekah acts autonomously of Isaac. For example Susan Niditch writes, “Rebekah thoroughly controls the action in Genesis 27.” She serves as the “trickster who formulates the plan and succeeds, moving the men around her like chess pieces.”<sup>13</sup>

That this is solely Rebekah’s plan is true even for Adrien Janis Bledstein’s comments. Bledstein suggests that Isaac approves of Rebekah’s actions, but she does not regard him a direct co-conspirator. Bledstein renames the characters by drawing on their etymological roots. Rebekah is Binder (connected to the root letters *resh-bet-quf, rbq*, tying fast), Jacob is Heel (*aqev*, heel, Gen. 25:26), Esau is “Hairy-man” (Gen. 25:25), and Isaac is Trickster (her reading of the word Isaac / *Yitzḥaq*). At the end of the day, Bledstein explains, “Isaac . . . is not deceived.”<sup>14</sup> Isaac, according to Bledstein, has his own reasons for wanting to test Jacob. He wants to be assured of his second son’s “resolve and stamina,” therefore he puts Jacob through a series of trials. When it comes to Jacob drawing near and being smelled, Isaac as “Trickster smells him and may be pleased that even clothing has been considered by Binder [Rebekah] for the deception of both Hairy-man and Heel [Esau and Jacob]. Each time Trickster [Isaac] tests, either Heel’s [Jacob’s] response or Binder’s [Rebekah’s] preparation *permit Trickster to pretend to be deceived* by Heel’s hoax” (emphasis mine).<sup>15</sup>

One source describes Rebekah as a woman who is “gutsy, independent, and resourceful.”<sup>16</sup> Another calls her “a powerful, influential matriarch . . . Her influence over Jacob and Isaac is evident: both seem to do her bidding, with little or no protest. Rebekah appears to be a master of intrigue . . . She is strong and daring and bold.”<sup>17</sup> Undoubtedly Rebekah is resourceful, powerful, and bold. Yet a careful reading of the text of Genesis 27 suggests that the plan to have Jacob deceive Isaac is not Rebekah’s sole idea; it is a concerted plan pre-arranged by Isaac and Rebekah, working in tandem.

### A Couple Committed to Each Other

This couple’s commitment to each other predates their actual meeting. Genesis 24 details the proxy courtship of Rebekah. Towards the end of the negotiations in Aram-naharaim, Rebekah’s family seeks her consent for this



marriage. She says clearly, “I will go” (vs. 58). At the end of that lengthy chapter, Scripture relates that Isaac, once she arrives in Canaan, greets Rebekah. He takes her and brings her to his (now deceased) mother’s tent. She becomes his wife and he loves her. Further, Isaac takes comfort in Rebekah, following the death of his mother Sarah (Gen. 24:67). That the text explains that Isaac loves Rebekah is a rare phenomenon in Genesis, never mind the Bible as a whole. To offer but a few examples: no such statement is found about the Abraham-Sarah relationship; Jacob does love Rachel (Gen 29:18, 30), but has ill feelings toward Leah. Genesis is silent about his regard for his other two wives. Joseph marries Aseneth but nothing is said of their marital relationship. In Exodus Moses weds Zipporah, but there is no description of his love for her. During the early monarchy, Saul’s daughter Michal loves David (1 Sam 18:20), but apparently he does not reciprocate those feelings, and while David lusts for Bathsheba, love does not seem to enter into the matter.

In the event, Isaac and Rebekah appear unable to conceive children. Instead of taking an extra wife to produce heirs, as did Abraham (Hagar: Gen 16), and as will Jacob (first Bilhah, then Zilpah, Gen 30), Isaac pleaded to God on his wife’s behalf (Gen. 25:21). The Hebrew says *Va-ye’tar Yitzḥaq . . . linokhah ‘ishto* --- (*nun-chaf-ḥet*) quite literally in front of his wife, which indicates that she is physically there with him. This is a couple that works in tandem, the inability to become pregnant is their problem, not hers alone. Later when she does conceive and eventually gives birth, together “they name” their son Esau (Gen. 25:25), and she may well be present when Jacob is named.

Quite a few years pass by. Isaac and Rebekah, now presumably in middle age, temporarily are living in Gerar. Isaac falsely asserts that Rebekah is his sister. One day the local ruler looks out a window and sees them together. He sees “Isaac fondling his wife Rebekah!” (Gen 26:8). The verb used here is *metzaḥeq*. That *metzaḥeq* comes from the same root as *Yitzḥaq*/Isaac – literally “he will laugh” (*tzadeh-ḥet-quf*) – gives an additional nuance to that word. The punning on his name is deliberate. Everett Fox translates the phrase as “laughing-and-loving.”<sup>18</sup> This is a couple that has a full sexual relationship.

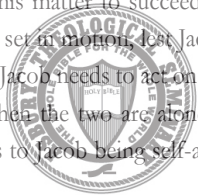
Chapter 26 ends with the information that Esau, at age forty married two Hittite women. “They were a bitterness of spirit to Isaac and Rebekah” (vs. 35). Again, the reference is to both husband and wife; together they share their sense of disappointment and anger with their son and daughters-in-law.

When in Genesis 27 Isaac instructs Esau to go to hunt game prior to the receiving the blessing, Rebekah is close enough to hear Isaac’s words (vs. 5). Presumably she is standing/sitting by him. Isaac wants Rebekah to know that Esau will be away for a few days; he is not secretly sending his son away.

The next time that we see Rebekah and Isaac together comes at the end of chapter 27. The blessing has been given; Esau is understandably upset and has resolved to kill Jacob. Someone tells Rebekah, who then warns Jacob. She urges him to leave home and to go to Haran, the location of Rebekah's brother/Jacob and Esau's uncle, Laban. The chapter then closes on these words: "So Rebekah said to Isaac, 'I abhor my life because of the daughters of the Hittites [i.e. Esau's wives]; if Jacob takes a wife from the daughters of the Hittites – like these from among the daughters of the land – what would my life be worth?'" (Gen. 27:46). In the very next verse, the opening line of chapter 28, Isaac sends Jacob off to uncle Laban's home. Isaac does not consult with Rebekah, asking her, what should we do? Rebekah does not make any overt suggestions to her husband. Isaac on his own initiative does exactly what Rebekah had advised Jacob: leave your home and travel off to visit your uncle. Once again this is a couple that thinks alike, acts alike, and works as a team. When Isaac sends Jacob away, he blesses him and asks God to bless this son as well (Gen. 28:2-3). Indeed, in the next verse Isaac repeats the request that God should bless Jacob. This is hardly the reaction of a man who feels angry or disappointed that he has been duped or deceived in the dark. Isaac displays no animosity toward Jacob, and certainly no hostility toward Rebekah. Isaac agrees with Rebekah's advice to their son and he sends Jacob off with multiple blessings. Clearly he does not feel betrayed by Rebekah, nor does he feel that she has acted counter to his wishes. Isaac knows what Rebekah wants for Jacob, she does not have to spell it out for him. He knows what she wants because it is their plan, not hers alone. If she had acted in such opposition to his desires, why would he mimic her suggestion? If he had felt undercut by her part in helping Jacob, would he not also feel angry with Jacob? Yet nothing in the narrative even hints that Isaac is anything but willing and eager to get their son Jacob to go to Haran, and indeed to marry one of his cousins. Isaac is not ambiguous about this, he tells Jacob to do exactly that (Gen. 28:1-2).

### **The Deception Plan: Coded Language**

Isaac and Rebekah need to come up with a credible strategy that will convince Esau to leave for a while, and which will also give her the time and opportunity to convince Jacob that he can safely achieve his goal of securing the patriarchal blessing. For this matter to succeed, husband and wife cannot be seen together once the plan is set in motion, lest Jacob become suspicious that his parents are manipulating him. Jacob needs to act on his own. He has to believe that he really is deceiving Isaac when the two are alone together; that Isaac is totally unaware of this deception. As to Jacob being self-aware enough that he is not yet



ready to “take up the burden of these blessings, that he is too immature to know how to act and what to do with them,” that Jacob has some “moral unease about what he is going to undertake” is quickly dispelled. His only “fear is – that instead of a blessing he will get a curse.”<sup>19</sup> Jacob needs to take ownership of the scheme so that he will feel within himself that it was through his own actions that he won this primogeniture blessing.

Isaac and Rebekah’s scheme centers on the word YHVH, which is the special name for the deity. When Isaac actually sends Esau away to hunt game, he says to him: “Prepare a dish for me such as I like, and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my innermost blessing before I die” (Gen 27:4). Isaac makes no reference to the deity; it is simply a request from father to son. Yet when Rebekah reports this alleged conversation to Jacob, she deliberately changes the wording, making reference to the deity, and more specifically to the name YHVH. She tells Jacob that Isaac’s statement to Esau was, “Bring me some game and prepare a dish for me to eat, that I may bless you, *with YHVH’s approval before I die*” (Gen. 27:7). The addition of the term YHVH becomes the hidden cipher, the code word, one that will make clear to Isaac that Rebecca has been successful in her undertaking to delude Jacob. There was no way that Rebecca can inform Isaac that she successfully convinced Jacob to play-act the part of Esau. She is fully occupied in cooking the appropriate dishes, dressing Jacob in Esau’s special clothes and fastening the goatskins on his neck and arms. As mentioned above, had she gone to see Isaac, Jacob might be suspicious. Rebecca’s reference to the deity in the context of securing the blessing for her second son also is a way to affirm God’s earlier statement to her, “the older shall serve the younger” (Gen. 25:23).

When Jacob is with Isaac he brings the prepared meal. He then asks his father to give him (faux Esau) the special innermost blessing. Isaac asks what seems to be a logical, if innocent question. “How did you succeed so quickly, my son?” Jacob expects this question. He understands that the primogeniture blessing is directly associated with the patriarchal tradition, one intimately with his father Isaac’s, and grandfather Abraham’s relationship with God. Consequently, in his reply, he consciously refers to the deity’s special name. Jacob replies, “Because YHVH your God granted me success.”

Of course, Isaac’s question was not an innocent one at all. In a matter of nine verses he challenges Jacob many times (vss. 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26). This is Isaac’s way of making sure that Jacob has to *strive* to achieve the blessing; it cannot be too easily achieved. Isaac is fully aware who is before him. Jacob speaks merely one word, “Father” before Isaac replies, “Yes, which of my sons are you?” (vs. 18).



Isaac may be of limited sight, but he still possesses voice recognition. In a short while he speaks the most famous of his lines, “The voice is the voice of Jacob, yet the hands are the hands of Esau” (vs. 22).

Jacob’s earning the blessing, even surreptitiously is the first step in the two-part plan of Isaac and Rebekah. Once he has done this, earning Esau’s rightful wrath, Jacob puts his own life in danger. Esau has a temper. Up to this time Jacob has been a homebody, a man of the tents (Gen. 25:27). He will only leave the parental encampment if he has to do so, if he is less fearful in going than in staying. When both his parents give him the same advice, to leave for the safety of his uncle Laban’s home, he finally does exactly that.

Isaac and Rebekah understand that Jacob is the better choice of their sons when it comes to carrying on the special relationship with God. Esau has married local women, not once, but twice. They are a bitterness to both his parents. When Jacob will arrive in Paddan-aram/Haran he will follow Isaac’s command, he will take a wife, indeed two concurrent primary wives from his mother’s family. He will become fruitful and numerous.

## Conclusion

Isaac, Rebekah, and Jacob each in their own way have roles to play. Jacob needs to feel inwardly that he has taken on a large and difficult task successfully, indeed that he has overcome danger to earn this blessing. When negotiating with Rebekah, Jacob says correctly, if Isaac thinks that Jacob is mocking him, he will curse him (vs. 12). Isaac cannot openly deny Esau the primogeniture blessing, nor does he want to appear to wish him harm. If Isaac appears to be tricked, he can infer that he was innocently deceived. In turn, Rebekah needs to be seen as if she is acting on her own, pursuing her goals, not that of a combined parental strategy. Consequently, in order to have the plan succeed as well as it does, both Isaac and Rebekah need to appear to be in disagreement. Rebekah allows herself to be seen as a schemer and manipulator. She qualifies for both of those terms for she is at the center of this intrigue, but this is not her work alone, it is Isaac and Rebekah’s joint venture. In reopening this “cold case” we see that this is a couple that works in tandem to achieve what needs to be done. The “deception” is an Isaac-Rebekah jointly conceived plan; it is Jacob who is unaware, not Isaac. Rebekah’s reputation requires restoring.



## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*. Vol. 2 of *Word Bible Commentary*. Dallas: Word Books, 1994, 208.

<sup>2</sup> Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, and Hara E. Person. “Central Commentary, *Tol’dot* 25:19–28:9: Shaping Destiny: The Story of Rebekah.” In *The Torah: A Women’s Commentary*, edited by Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Andrea L. Weiss, [133–49]. New York: Women of Reform Judaism, 2008, 142.

<sup>3</sup> Iain Provan, *Discovering Genesis: Content, interpretation, reception*, London: SPCK, 2015, 156.

<sup>4</sup> Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 246.

<sup>5</sup> David W. Cotter, *Genesis, Berit Olam, Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry*, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, Michael Glazier, 2003, 200–201.

<sup>6</sup> John E. Hartley, *Genesis*, New International Biblical Commentary, Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2000, 246, 247.

<sup>7</sup> James C. VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, Guides to the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001, 62.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Eskenazi and Weiss, *The Torah: A Women’s Commentary*, 128.

<sup>10</sup> Saint John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis 46–67*, Translated by Robert C. Hill, Washington, DC, Catholic University of America, 1992, 81. See also *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Old Testament II, Genesis 12–50*, Mark Sheridan, ed., Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 168–169 for comments by Chrysostom and Quodvultdeus. Other Patristics’ views are also presented in this section.

<sup>11</sup> Origen, *Contra Celsum*, Translated by Henry Chadwick, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953, 218.

<sup>12</sup> Alice Ogden Bellis. *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes: Women’s Voices in the Hebrew Bible*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007, 83. Bellis’ division between feminists and male interpreters is overstated. Many males are feminists.

<sup>13</sup> Susan Niditch, “Genesis”, *The Women’s Bible Commentary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, Jacqueline E. Lapsley, ed., London: SPCK, Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2012, 37, 36.

<sup>14</sup> Adrien Janis Bledstein, “Binder, Trickster, Heel and Hairy Man: Rereading Genesis 27 as a Trickster Tale Told by a Woman,” *A Feminist Companion to Genesis*, Vol. 2, Athalya Brenner, ed. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993, 283, 287. [282–295].

<sup>15</sup> Bledstein, “Binder, Trickster,” 289.



<sup>16</sup> Eskenazi and Person, “Central Commentary, Tol’dot”, 136.

<sup>17</sup> Janice Nunnally-Cox, *Foremothers: Women of the Bible*, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981, 15.

<sup>18</sup> Everett Fox, trans. *The Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*. Vol. 1 of *The Schocken Bible*. New York: Schocken, 1995. NRSV translates the verb as “fondling,” as does Speiser, NAB [the New American Bible, a Roman Catholic translation], New Jerusalem Bible [Roman Catholic], the JPS’ *The Contemporary Torah*, and NJPS-TANAKH. NIV and Revised English Bible has “caressing,” and NEB “laughing.”

<sup>19</sup> Cotter, *Genesis*, 202.



David B. Schreiner

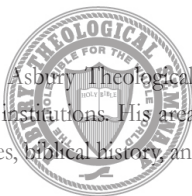
*“So That We May Come and Worship Him”: Foreshadowing the Nature of Jesus’ Messiahship and the Use of προσφέρῶ and προσκυνέῳ in the Gospel of Matthew*

**Abstract**

Beginning with the position that the Gospel of Matthew is biographical, this essay begins with an exegetical commentary on Matt 2:1-12. Structural, syntactical, and semantic observations are presented, but focus also falls upon the contrast developed between the magi and Herod. Furthermore, emphasis is given to προσφέρῶ and προσκυνέῳ as they establish a continuity theme that permeates the rest of the gospel and foreshadows the nature of Jesus’ Messiahship.

**Key Words:** Biography; infancy narrative; προσφέρῶ; προσκυνέῳ; messiahship

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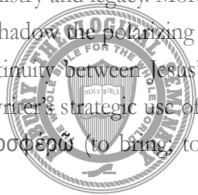


## Genre and the Function of Infancy Narratives

John Barton asserts that genre recognition is at the heart of biblical criticism (Barton 2007:5). By recognizing the kind of text, critics are able to better understand the text's coherence and communicative intention (Barton 2007:24). As for the gospels, much of their genre debate centers on whether they should be classified as ancient biographies. Ulrich Luz admits that the gospel of Matthew is quite similar to an ancient biography, but, in his opinion, specific characteristics prevent an unequivocal classification within that genre (Luz 1989:44-46).<sup>1</sup> Donald Hagner refuses to make any definitive statement, articulating a "multifaced" genre that underscores its function as a "community book" (Hagner 1993:lvii-lix).<sup>2</sup> John Nolland's opinion is similar to Luz's; Matthew "slightly" reassembles an ancient biography, but its kerygmatic material so influences the content of the gospel that he classifies Matthew as an ecumenical text with a didactic purpose (Nolland 2005:19-22).

A point of commonality for these scholars, and many like them, is a focus upon uniquely Christian and/or Jewish nuances as overriding factors to classifying the gospels as ancient biographies, which often includes the form of themes, vocabulary, scripture citations, and other phenomena. In response, Philip Shuler argues that genre possesses a dynamic character, which allows many forms and variables to be present within a certain classification (Schuler 1982:107). Ben Witherington III and Lane McGaughy agree with this proposition (McGaughy 1999:26; Witherington 2001:24). Both scholars suggest that initial focus be given to *general* literary signals and structure, and only subsequently should the unique characteristics be considered.<sup>3</sup> According to McGaughy, "The question of literary genre is particularly a question of form, not of the particularities of content" (1999:25). Thus, both Witherington and McGaughy unequivocally classify the genre of Matthew as an ancient Hellenistic biography.

This essay will assume that the Gospel of Matthew is a biographical work. Yet focus will fall upon the birth narrative of chapter 2. Birth narratives are crucial to an ancient biography, functioning to foreshadow elements of the subject's life (McGaughy 1999:27), and this functional principle is apparent in the Gospel according to Matthew. Within Matthew 2, certain elements surrounding Jesus' birth foreshadow aspects of his ministry and legacy. More specifically, the circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth foreshadow the polarizing and revolutionary character of his Messiahship, and the continuity between Jesus' birth and life and ministry is demonstrated in part by the writer's strategic use of two verbs that initially appear in Matthew in chapter 2: προσφέρω (to bring; to present) and προσκυνέω (to



pay homage; to worship). This thesis will be substantiated in two phases. In the first phase, some interpretive comments with respect to Matthew 2 will be offered. In the second phase, the verbs *προσφέρῶ* and *προσκυνέῶ* will be briefly traced throughout the Gospel of Matthew. According the gospel writer, the nature of Jesus' Messiahship was evident from his birth. It did not necessarily conform to popular assumptions and was destined to be polarizing.

### Interpretive Comments on Matthew 2

The structure of chapter 2 breaks down nicely; each major section opens with a temporal qualification in the form of a genitive absolute: vv. 1-12 and vv. 13-23.<sup>4</sup> Each section also possesses noticeable geographical emphases: Bethlehem versus Jerusalem (vv. 1-12) and Egypt (vv. 13-23) respectively. The first major section can be sub-divided into two subsections: vv. 1-6 and vv. 7-12.<sup>5</sup> So too can the second major section into three subsections: vv. 13-15, vv. 16-18, and vv. 19-23.<sup>6</sup> A binding theme for the entirety of chapter 2 is the response to Jesus' birth. As such, there is a stark contrast between major characters. Both the magi and Herod seek out the newborn Messiah, and both voice a desire to visit him.<sup>7</sup> However, where the magi respond with reverence (2:10-11), Herod responds violently (2:16). The magi bring gifts, but Herod brings death. The magi experience excitement when they meet Jesus, but Herod experiences utter hatred. Thus, Donald Hagner's comment is quite accurate when he states, "Chapter two is therefore a unity consisting of a story of acceptance and rejection" (Hagner 1993:24).

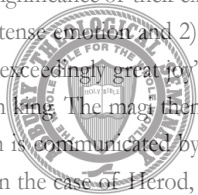
The atmosphere of this story of acceptance and rejection can be described as suspense and mystery informing a climatic contrast.<sup>8</sup> It is mysterious in light of the unnamed, Gentile magi from the east who have interpreted an astrological phenomenon as a sign of a newborn king. It is suspenseful because of certain expectations, which are created through the chapter's narrativial progression and background information that the writer assumes the reader possesses. In v. 1, the text declares that Jesus was born *ἐν ἡμέραις Ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλέως*, "in the days of King Herod." Given that 2:19 speaks of the death of Herod, one can deduce that Jesus' birth occurred toward the end of Herod's life, the phase of his life that was plagued most severely by his paranoia (*Ant* 16.361-94; *JW* 1.538-51).<sup>9</sup> Thus, when the magi approach Jerusalem in search for the newborn "King of the Judeans," the reader fully expects Herod to react with his trademark carnage. Indeed, the text immediately reveals in v. 3 that Herod "heard and was troubled" (*ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἡρώδης ἐτάραχθη*), but the fruition of his rage is not disclosed until 2:16. Therefore, Herod's paranoia lurks behind the scenes of chapter 2, adding to the suspense. Furthermore, the writer's intentional deferral of the

fruition of Herod's rage is intertwined with the contrasting responses to Jesus' birth between Herod and the magi that he seeks to emphasize (see below).

Matthew 2 opens with Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ γεννηθέντος ἐν Βηθλέεμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ἡμέραις Ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλέως. On the one hand, such an introduction echoes Matt 1:18, Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἡ γένεσις οὕτως ἦν, creating an explicit connection between Matt 1:18-23 and the content of chapter 2. Thus, the writer discloses from the beginning that Jesus' Messiahship is one of divine messiahship, particularly as he was conceived by a πνεύματος ἁγίου, "holy spirit." As N. T. Wright has stated, Jewish messianic ideology did not necessarily contain divine or quasi-divine connotations (Wright 1996:477). Equally important to the writer's endeavors is the notation that he was not born nor to be found in Jerusalem. Rather, Jesus was to be found in Bethlehem. This geographic contrast appears straightaway in 2:1, "When Jesus was born *in Bethlehem of Judea*," and is continued throughout the first portion of the chapter. Logically, the magi proceed to the capital in their search for the newborn king. However, finding no resolution in Jerusalem, they are dispatched to Bethlehem (2:8). Whether this contrast alludes to a geographic apologetic (France 2007:45), the gospel writer is at least alluding to the reality that even from his birth Jesus' Messiahship was not to conform to one's logical expectations.

As already mentioned, Matthew 2 is largely driven by a contrast between the responses of the magi and Herod. Both parties voice a desire to pay homage to the newborn king, but upon the conclusion of chapter 2, it is clear that Herod had ulterior motives. Truthful in their desires to pay homage to Jesus, vv. 10-11 divulge that the magi approached Jesus with intense joy and worshiped Jesus through the presentation of gifts. Conversely, Herod's stated desire was deceitful. After consulting the chief priests and scribes as the birthplace of the Messiah (vv. 4-6), he attempts to enlist the help of the magi (vv. 7-8). Whether the magi were initially receptive to Herod's offer is unclear. What is clear is that upon the realization that he had been duped, Herod reacts in accord with his violent reputation, killing all the boys 2 years old and younger in and around Bethlehem (v.16).

Specific syntactical phenomena of vv. 10-11 and 16 demonstrate most clearly this contrast, establishing the magi as a literary foil for Herod. Both the magi and Herod assess (ὁράω) the significance of their experiences and respond. In both cases, they respond with 1) intense emotion and 2) tangible action. In the case of the magi, they respond "with exceedingly great joy" at the realization that the star had lead them to the newborn king. The magi then approach Jesus and Mary and "fall and worship him," which is communicated by a dependant particle followed immediately by a finite verb. In the case of Herod, having perceived that the magi



had spurned him, he responds with incredible rage. He then dispatches his men to kill all the young boys under the age of two. This action is also communicated via a dependant participle followed immediately by a finite verb. Juxtaposed below are vv. 10-11 and 16 with the relevant syntax in bold.

Matt 2:10-11

**ιδόντες** δὲ τὸν ἀστέρα **ἐχάρησαν** **χαρὰν μεγάλην σφόδρα**.<sup>10</sup> καὶ ἐλθόντες εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν εἶδον τὸ παιδίον μετὰ Μαρίας τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ **πεσόντες προσεκύνησαν**<sup>11</sup> αὐτῷ καὶ ἀνοίξαντες τοὺς θησαυμοὺς αὐτῶν προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δῶρα, χρυσὸν καὶ λίβανον καὶ σμύρναν.

“When they **saw** the star, they **rejoiced with exceedingly great joy**. When they came to the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and **they knelt down and they worshipped him**. Opening their boxes, they presented gifts to him, gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

Matt 2:16

Τότε Ἡρώδης **ιδὼν** ὅτι ἐνεπαίχθη ὑπὸ τῶν μάγων **έθυμώθη λίαν**, καὶ **ἀποστείλας ἀνείλεν**<sup>12</sup> πάντας τοὺς παῖδας ἐν Βηθλέεμ καὶ ἐν ταῖς τοῖς ὁρίοις αὐτῆς ἀπὸ διετοῦς καὶ κατωτέρω, κατὰ τὸν χρόνον ὃν ἠκρίβωσεν παρὰ τῶν μάγων.

“At that time when Herod **saw** that he had been deceived by the magi **he was extremely furious**. He sent out and killed all the children in Bethlehem and in its vicinity from two years old and under, according to the time which he determined from the magi.”

This contrast also manifests a deeper connotation. From a sociological viewpoint, Herod can be described as a “dominant character” and the magi as “marginal characters,”<sup>13</sup> suggesting that the responses of Herod and the magi symbolize and foreshadow the societal implications of Jesus’ Messiahship. More specifically, that Herod feels threatened by Jesus’ birth and violently rejects him and that the Gentile magi are receptive to Jesus’ hints at the reality that Jesus’ Messiahship will confront societal norms and expectations. This is substantiated by reality that the sociological implications of Jesus’ Messiahship crop up periodically throughout the remainder of the gospel in part through the use of the verbs *προσφέρω* and *προσκυνέω*, both of which initially appear in chapter 2. The verb *προσφέρω*, which occurs 15 times throughout Matthew, first appears in v. 11; the magi opened their repositories and “presented gifts to him [Jesus], gold frankincense, and myrrh.”<sup>14</sup>

The verb **προσκυνέω**, occurring 11 times, is more pervasive in chapter 2, appearing 3 times.<sup>15</sup> In v. 2, the magi divulge that they have come “to pay homage” to the newborn king. In v. 8 Herod informs the magi that he too desires to pay homage to the child. Verse 11 informs the reader that the magi worshipped the child upon their arrival. These verbs, which will be discussed below, are used strategically throughout the remainder of the gospel, providing continuity between Jesus’ ministry and birth. In fact, one could say that the use of these verbs is the chief vehicle through which the writer of Matthew demonstrates continuity between Jesus’ birth and ministry. Just as people brought things to him and worshiped him at his birth, so too did others throughout his ministry.

In sum, Matthew 2 establishes the foundation for the nature of Jesus’ Messiahship, and it begins with the opening clause. By linking Jesus’ Davidic pedigree with his divinity and instituting a Jerusalem/Bethlehem contrast, the writer is quickly alluding to the fact that Jesus’ Messiahship will not conform to every expectation. This revolutionary quality is furthered not only by the incorporation of Gentile magi as central characters but also by the reality that they were drawn to Jesus and received his birth positively. The gospel writer also demonstrates, through the contrasting responses of the magi and Herod, that Jesus’ Messiahship was 1) destined to be polarizing and 2) would confront societal norms. At the heart of the writer’s rhetoric are the verbs **προσφέρω** and **προσκυνέω**, both of which appear initially in chapter 2 and periodically throughout the subsequent narrative. It is to a discussion of these occurrences this essay now turns.

### **The Use of **προσφέρω** and **προσκυνέω** in the Gospel of Matthew**

In what follows is a brief survey of the relevant occurrences of the verbs **προσφέρω** and **προσκυνέω** in the Gospel of Matthew.<sup>16</sup>

#### **προσκυνέω**

- Descending from the mountain upon which he delivered his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is surrounded by a great multitude. In the midst of this swarm, a leper bowed before Jesus that he might be healed (8:2). Jesus obliged his request, going so far as to *touch* him, and then exhorts the newly healed leper to offer a gift in the temple as a witness to the temple establishment (8:4). Thus, Jesus demonstrates that his Messiahship confronts social and religious norms in order to restore people within the community (Malina and Rohrbaugh 1992:70-72).

- In 9:18, a public official (ἄρχων) interrupts a conversation between Jesus and his disciples (9:14-17), bowing before him with the bold hope that he would resurrect his recently deceased daughter.<sup>17</sup> After being delayed by a woman with a chronic illness (19:20-22), Jesus ultimately resurrects the girl from the dead in spite of the crowd's mocking (19:24-25).
- Matthew 14:22-36 is the writer's account of Jesus walking on water. After startling his disciples, Jesus encourages his followers not to be afraid (14:26-27). Peter attempts to mimic the feat, but he ultimately fails because of his lack of faith (14:28-31). Jesus saves Peter and enters the boat with the other disciples, who respond to this experience by worshipping him and confessing that he is the Son of God.
- While in the region of Tyre and Sidon, a Canaanite woman boisterously approaches Jesus so that he might heal her demon-possessed daughter (15:23-27). In the process of her pleading, the writer of Matthew informs the reader that the woman bowed before Jesus (15:25). Initially shrugged off, the woman's persistence ultimately pays off, and Jesus pronounces the healing of her daughter.
- As Jesus approached Jerusalem in order to celebrate the Passover, the mother of the sons of Zebedee kneels before Jesus (20:20) as she petitioned for a place of high honor for her sons. To this, Jesus responds with a couple of questions that encourage serious reflection about the nature of God's Kingdom. It is not a kingdom that operates with popular and familiar principles. Rather, it is a kingdom that values service and humility (20:25-28).
- The final two occurrences of προσκυνέω appear in chapter 28. In v. 9, Mary and Mary Magdalene meet the resurrected Jesus on their way to inform the disciples of the empty tomb. Their response is one of pure emotion, grabbing his feet and worshipping him. In v. 17, the 11 disciples meet Jesus upon the Mount of Ascension. There, the writer informs the reader that his disciples worshiped him, but he adds the subtle comment that some doubted. Ostensibly even within the ranks of the disciples, skepticism festered.



Consequently, the use of προσκυνέω throughout Matthew provides continuity between Jesus' birth and his ministry. Just as the magi bowed to worship him, so too did many others throughout his life. Furthermore, those people came from all points on the sociological spectrum. They were of high social stature, of low social stature, of Jewish descent, and of non-Jewish descent. In addition, the writer discloses the nature of Jesus Messiahship and his kingdom by this verb. It is a kingdom that values humility and servitude, and its lord governs supernatural forces. However, the writer also discloses that Jesus did not garner universal and total acceptance, even from those within his inner-circle.

### προσφέρω

There are 14 occurrences of the verb προσφέρω outside of Matthew 2, 9 that are relevant.

- Six of these occurrences are similar in the sense that the sick and/or demon possessed were brought to Jesus for healing. According to Matthew 4:23-25, because of Jesus' fame the sick from all over were brought to Jesus. After healing Peter's mother-in-law, many sick and demon possessed were brought to Jesus (8:16). People brought a paralytic to Jesus (9:2), as well as a mute demoniac (9:32; 12:22). In the land of Gennersaret, the region's sick were brought to Jesus (14:35).
- In Matt 19:13-15 children are brought to Jesus in order that he would offer a blessing upon them. Rebuking the disciples for their attempts at curbing such efforts, Jesus pronounces that the Kingdom of God belong to similar people. Given that children were some of the most vulnerable in antiquity, Jesus is proclaiming that the kingdom functions on behalf of society's vulnerable (Malina and Rohrbach 1992, 117).
- Attempting to trap Jesus in his words, the Pharisees and the Herodians press Jesus on the issue of taxes (22:15-22). Before Jesus responds, he requests a denarius as a visual aide. His inquisitors oblige his request, bringing him a coin (22:19). "Give to Caesar the things of Caesar, and to God the things of God," Jesus responds. According to N. T. Wright, Jesus is subtly coding a cry of Messiahship, formulated from the last words of Mattathias Maccabee (1997:502-07). Yet, the beauty of Jesus' words exists in their ambiguity. Wright proceeds to advocate an implicit call to worship, deriving from Pss. 29:2 and 96:7-10. Therefore, this exchange leads to what Wright refers to as a "protest against Jewish compromise with

paganism," wherein the pre-conceived notions of messianic revolution are classified (1997:506). "Jesus saw himself as the true Messiah, leading to the true kingdom-movement; Israel's true response to Yhwh would be to acknowledge him and follow his kingdom-agenda" (Wright 1997:506-07).

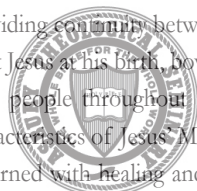
- Matthew 17:16 is also worth noting, albeit as an indirect reference. A man with a son suffering from debilitating seizures initially brought him to Jesus' disciples, but to no avail. Jesus casts out the demon and uses the opportunity to teach his disciples about the role of faith.

The verb προσφέρῶ therefore is used throughout the gospel as a strategic vehicle through which the writer discusses the nature of the Kingdom of God and Jesus' Messiahship. That the sick and vulnerable of society repeatedly are brought to Jesus communicates that Jesus' Messiahship was partially concerned with and defined by such encounters. The verb is also used in one particular context that discusses the expectations of the Kingdom's agenda.

## Conclusion

Assuming that the Gospel of Matthew should be classified as a biographical work, this essay has examined particular elements of the Matthean birth narratives. In particular, this essay has argued that the foundation for communicating the revolutionary and polarizing character of his Messiahship is established in chapter 2. Recognizing Jesus' Davidic and divine pedigree in vs. 1, the writer contrasts the responses of the magi with that of Herod. Whereas the magi joyfully seek out the newborn king to pay him homage, Herod maliciously seeks him out to murder him so that his political security would be ensured. Yet, this contrast also exhibits a sociological connotation. Jesus threatens Herod, who represents the dominant of society, but the Gentile magi, who represent the marginalized, are drawn to Jesus.

In the midst of this, the verbs προσφέρῶ and προσκυνέῶ are used. In fact, the contrasting responses of Herod and magi pivot on the use of προσκυνέῶ. Important is the reality that these verbs are used strategically throughout the remainder of the gospel, providing continuity between Jesus' birth and his life and ministry. Just as people sought Jesus at his birth, bowing before him and presenting him with objects, so too did people throughout his life. In these episodes, the writer divulges particular characteristics of Jesus' Messiahship and the Kingdom of God, being particularly concerned with healing and restoring the sick and demon



possessed into the community and caring for the vulnerable of society. In certain instances, Jesus confronts the religious customs and establishment, demonstrating that his Messiahship aims to reform its dysfunctional elements. Thus, the sociological dimension of the Herod/magi contrast is carried forward as well.

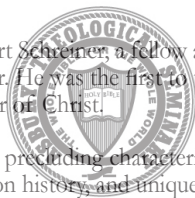
It must be noted that Matthew's use of the verbs προσφέρῶ and προσκυνέῳ is distinct from the other gospel accounts. With respect to προσκυνέῳ, there is no continuity between gospel accounts. As for προσφέρῶ, the situation is virtually similar.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, Matthew's use seems intentional. However, perhaps the most fascinating characteristic of the writer's employment of these verbs is how he concludes his usage, which is to emphasize that the effects of Jesus' ministry produced skeptics and doubters (Matt 28:17). Thus, the thread that permeates the Gospel of Matthew comes full circle. What began with revolutionary implications and with polarizing responses ended in the same way.

Assuming these conclusions, there are a few implications that arise. If the writer of Matthew is communicating that on one level Jesus' Messiahship is revolutionary and polarizing, missional or ecclesial models should be constructed with a proper mentality. Indeed, Paul instructs Christians that "there is neither Jew nor Greek" (Gal 3:28), and Jesus commanded his disciples to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:18). Yet, the writer of Matthew is making it known that the Kingdom and Jesus' Messiahship will be undesirable to some. The nature of the gospel is so drastic and revolutionary that some will shun it. The implication is clear enough: the Gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be compromised, even under the guise of a particular mode of evangelism. Missional or ecclesial models therefore must strike a balance between a global and universal focus while accepting the reality that the very nature of Jesus and his Messiahship will hinder universal acceptance. Thus, the Church should not be surprised when its efforts are met by rejection, even hostile rejection at that. Rather, the Church should concern itself with the faithful embodiment of the principles of the Kingdom of God on this earth while it awaits the final redemption of the cosmos. As for the manifestation of the principle offered here, that is another discussion for another time.

## End Notes

This is dedicated to Rev. Robert Schreiner, a fellow alumnus of Asbury Theological Seminary (1982) and my father. He was the first to teach and show me how to be a lover of Scripture and follower of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Examples of such preceding characteristics include scriptural citation, Jewish themes, such as salvation history, and unique Matthean discourse material.



<sup>2</sup> Hagner discusses seven options that factor into his genre debate: gospel, midrash, lectionary, catechetical manual, church corrective, missionary propaganda, and polemic against rabbis (1993:lvii-lix).

<sup>3</sup> Witherington lists seven general characteristics of an ancient biography. While some characteristics mention content, it is important to realize that these are not focused upon uniquely Christian and/or Jewish content (2001:22-24).

<sup>4</sup> 2:1 reads Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ γεννηθέντος ἐν Βηθλέεμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ἡμέραις Ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλέως, "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod," and 2:13 reads Ἀναχωρῶντων δὲ αὐτῶν, "When they left."

<sup>5</sup> On the one hand, the division of this section hinges upon the particle τότε. The content of this chapter supports this division. Verses 1-6 focus upon the Bethlehem/ Jerusalem juxtaposition, as well as Herod and his efforts to interpret the meaning of this event. Verses 7-12 shift focus to the magi, particularly the rest of their journey and their response manifested upon their arrival.

<sup>6</sup> The division of these subsections is again syntactical. Verses 13 and 19 open with a genitive absolute, and v. 16 opens with τότε.

<sup>7</sup> The magi state, ἤλθομεν προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ, "We have come to pay him homage" (2:2) and so does Herod, ὅπως καὶ γὰρ ἐλθὼν προσκυνήσω αὐτῷ, "so that I too will come to pay him homage" (2:8).

<sup>8</sup> On atmosphere, see David R. Bauer and Robert A. Traina, (2011:212).

<sup>9</sup> *Ant* 16.361-94; *JW* 1.538-51.

<sup>10</sup> The feelings are intense, hence the cognate accusative doubly modified.

<sup>11</sup> More specifically, πεσόντες is an attendant circumstance participle (Wallace 1996:640).

<sup>12</sup> ἀποστείλας can also be understood as a temporal participle (Wallace 1996:623-24). Regardless, the syntactical connection is preserved, as πεσόντες and ἀποστείλας are unequivocally dependent participles.

<sup>13</sup> I am invoking the terms "dominant" and "marginal," in the vein of James L. Resseguie (2005:137-38; 154).

<sup>14</sup> Generally speaking, προσφέρω suggests bringing or presenting someone or something to someone else (*BDAG*:886). Yet, it can possess a cultic connotation (K. Weiss, *TDNT*, 9:65-68; *BDAG*, 886:2.a).

<sup>15</sup> προσκυνῶ possesses a significant semantic range, including ideas of physical prostration in light of social realities, respectful welcome, reverence, and worship (*BDAG*:882-83).

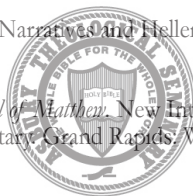
<sup>16</sup> This essay syntactically limits its investigation to those occurrences where Jesus is object of the action. Thus, the occurrences of the verb προσφέρω in 5:23-24; 8:4; 17:16; 18:24; 25:20 will not factor into this discussion.

<sup>17</sup> Note that the man comes to Jesus immediately after his child's death (ἡ θυγάτηρ μου ἄρτι ἐτελεύτησεν; "My daughter just now died") and that the man voices his desires through an imperative-future verbal sequence (ἀλλὰ ἐλθὼν ἐπίθες τὴν χεῖρά σου ἐπ' αὐτήν καὶ ζήσεται; "but come lay your hand upon her and she will live"). Jesus' reputation as a master healer precedes him.

<sup>18</sup> Only in the account of the children being brought to Jesus is there continuity across gospel accounts.

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Sungwon (Moses) Kim

*N.T. Wright's Theological Perspective and Methodology— An Evangelical Analysis and Evaluation'*

**Abstract**

This article is the result of a research year spent at Asbury Theological Seminary in 2015. In this paper, the theological perspective and the methodology of N. T. Wright is analyzed and evaluated from an Evangelical perspective. Wright singularly focuses on the covenant status of Israel and God's faithfulness to His covenant with Israel. For Wright this single focus becomes the superlative theological and hermeneutical perspective in expounding Pauline theology and the entire Bible. He justifies this single-perspectival approach by appealing to the authority of the Bible itself and the historical scholarship on 1st century Judaism.

This author finds his methodology has some serious flaws. On the one hand, faithful biblical exegesis is often overridden and distorted by his preoccupied theological reading of the passages. On the other hand, Wright's appeal to the historical-critical method subjects his whole theological project to uncertainty and criticism, which demands his further clarification and modification. In addition, he fails to remain loyal to the Evangelical principle of *sola scriptura* by prioritizing the background knowledge of 1st century Judaism.

**Keywords:** N. T. Wright, Methodology, Evangelical Theology, Romans, New Perspective on Paul

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## Korean Abstract 논문 요약

N. T. 라이트는 보기 드문 탁월한 신학자이자 학문과 교회사역에 균형을 갖춘 기독교인이다. 그는 다양한 분야에서 기독교와 복음주의 신학에 기여해 왔다. 그러나 그의 관점과 신학은 또한 복음주의 신학계에서 논쟁의 대상이 되어 왔다.

이 논문은 그의 신학적 관점을 파악하고 그의 신학방법론을 분석하고자 한다. 더 나아가서 이 논문은 그의 관점과 신학방법론에 대해 복음주의 관점에서 비평하고자 시도한다. 이 논문은 문헌연구를 주로 한다. 라이트의 신학관점의 정확한 분석을 위해서 그의 관점의 발전과정을 나타내고 있는 인터뷰, 전기, 자서전적 기록들과, 그의 신학적 관점을 잘 나타내는 그의 논문들, 그리고 그의 신학적 성경해석을 잘 보여주는 로마서 주석을 참조하였다.

이 논문이 밝혀낸 것은 라이트의 신학적 관점이 이스라엘의 언약적 위상과 하나님의 신실하심에 일관되게 집중하고 있다는 것이다. 이 주제는 라이트가 로마서와 성경전체를 읽어내는 중심적 관점이 되고 있으며, 또한 그의 구원론 신학의 원리가 되고 있다. 이 논문은 또한 그의 신학방법론을 분석한다. 그가 종교개혁자들의 “신학적 성서해석”을 비판하면서도, 그 자신의 “신학적 성경읽기”를 옹호하는 배경에는 그의 두 가지 신학방법론이 자리잡고 있다. 첫째는 성서 자체의 메시지를 통해서 자신의 신학적 주제를 드러내는 성서주석적 방법이다. 그는 이 방법에 있어서 종교개혁자들과 동일하다고 주장한다. 둘째는 1세기 유대교에 대한 역사적 연구성과를 바탕으로 사도바울의 신학적 주제를 포착하는 역사적 비평적 방법이다. 이 방법의 적용에 있어서 라이트는 “바울에 관한 새관점” 학자들의 도움을 받고 있다.

그러나, 라이트의 방법론은 심각한 문제를 안고 있다. 첫째로, 그의 성서주석적 방법은 그의 단일 관점에 의거한 신학적, 주제적 성경읽기로 인해서 종종 무효화되거나 왜곡되는 문제점을 드러내고 있다. 둘째로, 그 자신의 신학적 성경읽기를 보증하는 역사적 방법론은 과거에 대한 역사연구 자체가 안고 있는 다양한 인식론적, 해석학적 문제들로 인해서 불확실성과 비평에 직면하게 된다. 또한, 그가 성경배경지식을 더욱 중요한 신학적 방법론으로 제시하면서 자신이 따르고 있다고 주장하는 sola scriptura의 원리에서 벗어나고 있다.



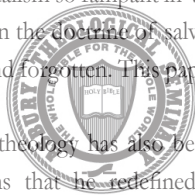
## Introduction

N. T. Wright is a remarkable theologian. Richard Hays, New Testament professor at Duke Divinity School, calls him a genius who even surpasses the renowned scholar, Rudolf Bultmann.<sup>2</sup> This commendation does not seem an exaggeration. Wright, a prolific writer, has published about 30 theological books in addition to his New Testament commentary series and his innumerable academic papers. He is a creative and bold thinker who challenges the whole history of Biblical scholarship and Christian doctrinal traditions, driving them into a new direction. Like Bultmann he leads a new school of thought, which he himself named “the new perspective on Paul.” He is also an amazingly coherent and systematic thinker. For example, the theological perspective he held decades ago<sup>3</sup> is sustained in his most recent work today. He is also an influential scholar. His “Paul for Everyone” commentary series have been widely read. Thus, *Expository Times* commended the series by noting it to be “probably most exciting thing to have happened in Christian education in Britain for many years.”<sup>4</sup>

Wright’s greatness does not rest only in the academic realm. For one thing, he deeply commits himself to church ministry. Until lately he has served the Anglican Church in various positions including as bishop of Durham. As a result, even the people who criticize his theology appreciate his well-rounded balance. For example, John Piper writes: “He [Wright] is a remarkable blend of weighty academic scholarship, ecclesiastical leadership, ecumenical involvement, prophetic social engagement, popular Christian advocacy, musical talent, and family commitment.”<sup>5</sup>

Also worth noting is Wright’s contribution to Evangelical theology. Wright has advocated the positions of Evangelical Christianity on various topics. He has been an adamant defender of some of the Evangelical doctrines about Jesus such as the virgin birth, the physical resurrection, and the deity of Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup> His open criticism of homosexuality also seems to mark him firmly within the conservative Evangelical circle.<sup>7</sup> Wright freshly reaffirms the Evangelical principle of *sola scriptura* by appealing to the authority of the Scripture itself on doctrinal matters. He suggested several theological prescriptions to remedy common Evangelical misconceptions. For example, he emphasizes the communal nature of the church against the individualism so rampant in Western churches today.<sup>8</sup> Finally, Wright stirs up new interests in the doctrine of salvation or Soteriology, which has long been taken for granted and forgotten. This paper is indebted to Wright on this account.

However, Wright’s theology has also been controversial in Evangelical circles, leading to accusations that he redefined important theological terms,



reinterpreted some of the central doctrines of salvation and challenged Reformation and Evangelical theology. What makes his challenge more serious is that Wright draws his theology from the Scripture itself. In other words, he claims to operate on the same Evangelical principle; Scripture has the final authority for theology.<sup>9</sup>

This paper has two goals. First, it attempts to articulate Wright's theological perspective and methodology. Accurate understanding of a theologian's perspective and methodology is a shortcut to understand the whole of his/her theology. Second, this paper also presents a critical evaluation of Wright's perspective and theological methods from an Evangelical and doctrinal perspective, which is the author's own perspective. In fact, this doctrinal and Evangelical perspective is congenial to Wright himself for two reasons. First, Wright is a doctrinal theologian as much as a Biblical scholar;<sup>10</sup> he articulates doctrinal implications from his Biblical scholarship, openly challenges existing doctrines and suggests alternative ways to understand them. He even puts a glossary at the end of his commentary that provides his own definitions of several doctrinal concepts.<sup>11</sup> Second, Wright understands his own doctrines as Evangelical: "And let us be clear. No other 'New Perspective' writer, I think, has said anything like what I just said. This version of the 'New Perspective' gives you everything you could possibly have got from the 'old perspective.' But it gives it to you in its biblical context."<sup>12</sup> Wright here answers the Evangelical critics, defending his theology as fully relevant to Evangelical theology. Here "old perspective" represents the Reformation-Evangelical perspective.

A brief introduction to the main resources for the discussion in this paper may be in order. I have consulted Wright's biographies and interviews to discover Wright's theological perspective and its development. I also find that Wright's 2011 article, "Justification: Yesterday, Today and Forever" succinctly and clearly shows his perspective and methods. His introductory writings and commentaries on the Epistle to Romans are also excellent resources to pick up Wright's theological schemes. Finally, Wright's book, *Scripture and the Authority of God-How to Read the Bible Today*, is a direct source on his own methods, and we will discuss it towards the end of this paper.

## N. T. Wright's Theological Perspective

Wright's perspective begins to emerge with his reading of Romans during his graduate studies. At first, he read Romans in light of Reformed theology.<sup>13</sup> Focusing on the topic of sin, he tried to "sort out" the doctrine of predestination from Romans. He also attempted to find a pre-millennial eschatological answer concerning the destination of Israel in Romans.

However, his view gradually changed. Recalling the moment of change, he writes: “I walked round Cambridge in the snow thinking it through. Yes, Christians still struggle with sin. Yes, the sinless perfectionists are wrong. But no, that’s not what Paul is talking about. He is talking about Israel (not ‘humans in general’, as the mainline German view suggests) under the Torah.”<sup>14</sup> Thus, Israel became for Wright a dominant theme in reading Romans. As his theological concern was fixed on Israel, other topics of Romans were illumined by the central topic. For example, Jesus’ role must be related to the destiny of Israel as well. He writes: “Around the same time I became convinced that I should explore Davidic ‘representative’ Messiahship as a fundamental clue to Paul.”<sup>15</sup>

This new focus on Israel and Jesus’ Jewish messiahship as a fundamental clue to understanding Paul led Wright to read the whole book of Romans in a new light. It began with Romans 10:3:

I had begun to read Rom 10:3 very differently from the traditional reading, indicating that Paul’s critique of his fellow Jews was not that they were legalists trying to earn merit but that they were nationalists trying to keep God’s blessing for themselves instead of being the conduit for that blessing to flow to the Gentiles.<sup>16</sup>

Elsewhere Wright adds:

... before there was such a thing as a “new perspective,” that I came out with this reading of Romans 10:3 which is really the fulcrum for me around which everything else moved: “Being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own.” In other words, what we have here is a covenant status which is for Jews and Jews only. I have a vivid memory of going home that night, sitting up in bed, reading Galatians through in Greek and thinking, “It works. It really works. This whole thing is going to fly.” And then all sorts of things just followed on from that.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, Wright reached a pivotal perspective for reading Romans and all of the Pauline epistles. He now focuses on the theme of Israel, and particularly on Israel’s covenant relationship with God.

In the introductory article to Romans he wrote in 2005 for *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, Wright clearly expounds the vantage point he has found out for reading Romans. There he begins with the importance of finding a central theme for the book of Romans:



In fact to see how the different parts of the letter [Romans] hang together and to understand why Paul wanted to say just this at just this moment to these people, the most important thing to do is to grasp the main theme of the letter and to see why it was important to first-century Jews in general, to Paul in particular, and to him in this setting most specifically... It is not difficult to discover the main theme of the letter: "God's gospel unveils God's righteousness..."<sup>18</sup>

Wright asks the readers of Romans to find and adopt a main theme, and that is God's righteousness.

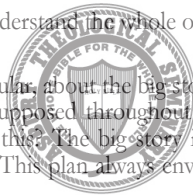
However, why God's righteousness? How is it related to Israel? The newly found theme of Israel led Wright to ask a series of new questions in Romans. What was the message of Romans to Israel? What was the meaning of the Gospel to Israel? How did God respond to Israel when they failed to obey the law and forfeited the covenant? Who was Jesus to Israel?

God's faithfulness was the answer to those new questions. In spite of the failure of Israel before God, God was faithful to the covenant promise He had given to Israel. In fact, God has opened up a new way to restore Israel to their original covenant status, and this new way was Jesus Christ. Through the faithful obedience of Jesus - the true Israelite - God removed the failure of Israel and fulfilled his covenant with Israel. Now all the Jews who believe in Jesus Christ are the people of God. This is the meaning of Jesus' accomplishment. This is why Wright suggests God's faithfulness as the main theme of the letter. God's faithfulness is the message of Romans to Israel. Therefore Wright asks all interpreters of Romans to read the book from the perspective of Israel's concern for their covenant status with God and God's faithfulness as the answer to Israel's concern.

Here we should note that, for Wright, God's righteousness primarily means God's faithfulness to his promise to Israel. Wright writes, "The phrase 'the righteousness of God'... summed up sharply and conveniently, for a first-century Jew such as Paul, the expectation that the God of Israel... would be faithful to the promises made to the patriarchs."<sup>19</sup> Thus, Romans should be read in light of God's righteousness to Israel and the restoration of Israel to original covenant status by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Further, Wright claims that this perspective should be the one proper perspective from which we understand the whole of the Bible:

One word, in particular, about the big story of Scripture—the story which is presupposed throughout the NT. How much clearer can I make this? The big story is about the creator's plan for the world. This plan always envisaged humans being



God's agents in that plan. Humans sin; that's their problem, but God's problem is bigger, namely that his plan for the world is thwarted. So God calls Abraham to be the means of rescuing humankind. Then Israel rebels; that's their problem, but God's problem is bigger, namely that his plan to rescue humans and thereby the world is thwarted. So God sends Israel-in-person, Jesus the Messiah, to rescue Israel, to perform Israel's task on behalf of Adam, and Adam's on behalf of the whole world. He announces God's kingdom, and is crucified; and this turns out to be God's answer to the multiple layers of problems, as in the resurrection it appears that death itself has been overcome. It all fits—and it all shows that the point of the covenant is organically and intimately related at every point to the particular concern of sinful, guilty humankind. *The point of the covenant with Israel, in the whole of Scripture, is that it is the means by which God is rescuing the children of Adam and so restoring the world.*<sup>20</sup>

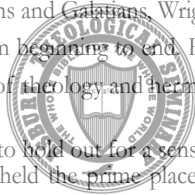
Thus, according to Wright, the Bible is the big story in which the faithful God rescues the world through the covenant that God has given to Abraham and restored through Jesus Christ.

For Wright, this new perspective in reading the Bible becomes the dominant doctrinal perspective as well. “Within this larger theme, there is still all the room required for that which other readings have traditionally seen as the major subject – namely, the justification and salvation of individual human beings. But in this letter at least... these vital and highly important topics are held within a larger discussion.”<sup>21</sup> In other words, the central topic of Israel and God's faithfulness to them encompasses all other topics including the crucial, Evangelical doctrinal topics.

### N. T. Wright's Methodology

How, then, does Wright justify his perspective? What makes his new perspective more proper than other ones such as the Evangelical perspective he criticizes? This question demands us to look into his methodology, which we find to be two-fold. First, Wright always appeals to the biblical text itself for the correctness of his interpretations. In other words, his perspective comes from his reading of the Bible. In his reading of Romans and Galatians, Wright has found that Paul wrestles with the destiny of Israel from beginning to end. He confirms that this exegetical process is indeed his method of theology and hermeneutics:

I, naturally, wanted to hold out for a sense of “word of God” in which Scripture held the prime place and was allowed to



question tradition and magisterium alike. That, I take it, is the historic Protestant position. Now I discover that some from what I had thought were Protestant quarters are accusing me of something called “biblicism.” I’m not sure what that is, exactly. What I am sure of is what I learned forty years ago from Luther and Calvin: that the primary task of a teacher of the church is to search Scripture ever more deeply and to critique all human traditions in the light of that, not to assemble a magisterium on a platform and tell the worried faithful what the tradition says and hence how they are to understand Scripture.<sup>22</sup>

Here Wright affirms that his biblical, exegetical method is congenial to that of the Reformers who professed sola scriptura, and that he will be ever faithful to this principle.

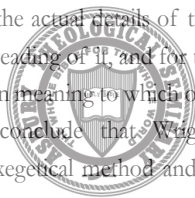
Wright also finds strong support for his way of reading Romans and the whole Bible in the historical study of 1st century Judaism. Contemporary historical research regarding Second Temple Judaism<sup>23</sup> pioneered by E. P. Sanders<sup>24</sup> provides Wright with a renewed knowledge of the Judaism at the time of the apostle Paul, revealing the Apostle Paul’s theological background. In other words, Paul operated within this theological framework. This means, in turn, that Paul had to harmonize the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the Judaism of his day in the book of Romans and other epistles he wrote. Thus, Wright naturally brings the outcome of historical research on 1st century Judaism into the biblical exegesis.<sup>25</sup>

Wright’s dependence on historical scholarship is not contingent nor occasional, but essential and systematic in his biblical theology, making it his second, major theological and hermeneutic method. For example, he writes,

It is therefore vital that we pay close and strict attention to the actual detail of what the NT says rather than assuming that we have the right to abstract bits and pieces and make them fit quite different scenarios *and then be absolutized in their new form*. Of course what Paul said in his context needs to be applied in different contexts. That is what Luther and Calvin and the others did, while being very clear that *historical* exegesis, not allegorical or typological, was the rock bottom of meaning to which appeal had to be made.<sup>26</sup>

Wright advocates for finding the actual details of the Bible’s teaching over against an allegorical and typological reading of it, and for that purpose, we need historical exegesis. That is the foundation meaning to which our interpretation should appeal.

As a result, we conclude that Wright employs two theological-hermeneutical methods: an exegetical method and a historical-critical method. It

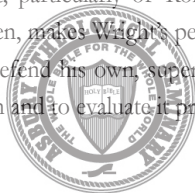


is due to his dominant exegetical method that he consistently suggests to reading the text of the Bible without any preoccupation with doctrinal correctness.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, Wright also employs a historical-critical method and follows the consensus of contemporary historical scholarship on 1st century Judaism. Another example of his fully functional historical method is that his work on Jesus and Paul mainly focuses on those biblical books of which authorship is historically established.<sup>28</sup>

### **An Evangelical Evaluation of Wright's Theological Perspective**

On the one hand, Wright's perspective focusing on Israel's covenant with God and God's faithfulness to Israel is a fresh viewpoint for reading Romans and the whole of the Bible. This perspective opens our eyes to the words and topics in Romans and the Bible that most Evangelical readers have ignored: Israel, Abraham, Covenant, etc. Those topics did not mean much to typical Evangelical readers who tend to focus on the salvation and justification of an individual believer. However, Wright suggests to them a new way to read Romans through the eyes of a Jew. We now realize that the book of Romans was written not only for Gentiles, but also for the Jews. At least we can admit that a few chapters of Romans are devoted to the destiny of the Jewish people.

However, our question here is whether this fresh new perspective is the only truthful perspective there is. Does this new perspective invalidate the traditional, "Gentile" perspective of Reformation-Evangelical theology that focuses on individual salvation? This question is important, for there is always the temptation and danger of applying a single, universal theological perspective to the reading of the Bible. If the Evangelical perspective was problematic, wasn't it because it was a single, dominant theological perspective dictating itself on Biblical exposition? If Martin Luther was singularly preoccupied with his theme of justification by faith so as to do injustice to some other Biblical texts including the book of James, why would Wright commit the same error by applying another single perspective? Can his perspective be mutually compatible with other major perspectives? However, Wright's answer is "No." For instance, he writes: "... knowing that, out of sheer loyalty to the God-given text, particularly of Romans, I couldn't go back to a Lutheran reading."<sup>29</sup> What, then, makes Wright's perspective essentially better than Luther's? How does Wright defend his own superior theological perspective? To find an answer to this question and to evaluate it properly, we need to look into his methods.



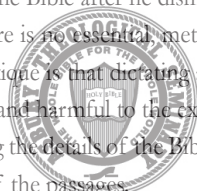
## An Evangelical Evaluation of Wright's Methodology

Earlier in our section on Wright's methodology, I have analyzed his methodology as both exegetical and historical. He appeals to the Biblical text itself for the propriety of his reading. On this ground he claims that his method is congenial to that of the Reformers themselves.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, He also follows and appeals to the historical scholarship for proper reading of the Bible. Historical knowledge — specifically the knowledge of 1st century Judaism - is “the rock bottom of meaning to which appeal had to be made.”<sup>31</sup>

However, both of his methods show problems. First, his biblical-exegetical method has the problem of being dominated by a theological, thematic reading of the Bible. As we have previously pointed out in our discussion of Wright's perspective, Wright reads the whole of Romans from the single perspective of the covenant of Israel and God's faithfulness to it. The problem is that this single theological theme is so dominant in the reading of the Bible that it often overrides or contradicts the true meaning of the Biblical passages. As such, his reading becomes not true “exe-ge-sis,” but “eise-ge-sis”.

For example, throughout his commentaries on Romans, there are numerous examples of overriding the faithful exegesis of the passages by his theological perspective. For example, Wright constantly introduces “covenant” in his exposition of Romans. The matter of fact is that there are only two occurrences of “covenant” in the whole book of Romans: in 9:4 and 11:27. Yet, Wright consistently and repeatedly explains the passages of Romans in terms of “covenants.” He even introduces “covenant” into his own Bible translations. He translates “righteousness from God (NIV)” into “God's covenant justice” in Romans 1:17 and other verses.<sup>32</sup>

In fact, we may not need any more examples of this single perspectival reading of the Bible by Wright if we look into its outcome - soteriological construction. In the glossary to his commentary on Romans, most theological concepts are explained in support of the specific theme of the covenant of Israel and God's faithfulness to Israel.<sup>33</sup> Certainly he demonstrates logical consistency in his reading, but at the expense of a faithful exegesis of the Bible, failing to expound the abundant meanings of the passages. It is strange to see that Wright commits the same error in reading of the Bible after he dismisses the Reformers' reading as a “typological” reading.<sup>34</sup> There is no essential methodological difference between the two. The point of our critique is that dictating any single perspective upon the biblical exegesis is dangerous and harmful to the exegesis of the Bible. Doing such inevitably demands abstracting the details of the Biblical passages and does injustice to their abundant meanings of the passages.



Wright's answer to this critique is that his single perspective is different from other "types" or perspectives because it is "historically" correct. Let us quote his statements on his historical method once again:

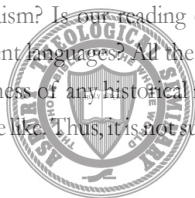
It is therefore vital that we pay close and strict attention to the actual detail of what the NT says rather than assuming that we have the right to abstract bits and pieces and make them fit quite different scenarios *and then be absolutized in their new form*. Of course what Paul said in his context needs to be applied in different contexts. That is what Luther and Calvin and the others did, while being very clear that historical exegesis, not allegorical or typological, was the rock bottom of meaning to which appeal had to be made.<sup>35</sup>

Here Wright defends his single perspective by appealing to historical scholarship. Thus we need to closely examine his second method.

This second method of Wright, namely the historical method, specifically means that his single perspective – the faithfulness of God to the original covenant with Israel – is relevant to Judaism of the 1st century, and thereby relevant to the perspective of Paul himself. He claims that he "knows" Paul's perspective through the historical studies on 1st century Judaism, and it is Israel's concern for their covenant status with God and God's faithfulness to the covenant.

For example, he once wrote, "The fact that the Messiah represents his people, so that what is true of him is true of them, and vice versa is one of the secret springs of all Paul's thinking."<sup>36</sup> How does Wright know about Paul's secret spring of thought? Obviously he found it in the historical scholarship on Paul's contemporary Judaism. Thus, his theology draws heavily from the works of "the New Perspective on Paul" scholars on the Judaism of the 1st century.

However, the method of historical exegesis has an inherent problem. The huge historical gap between the Biblical era – in this case, the 1st century AD – and the 21st century causes insoluble problems epistemologically and hermeneutically to the researchers. There are issues of source, linguistics, and our own hermeneutic pre-understanding. In spite of these inherent problems, can we truly know what Judaism was at the time? Was there one Judaism, or several Judaisms at the time? Which Judaism was Paul's own Judaism? Is it justifiable to trace back to Paul's time through later sources on Judaism? Is our reading of the sources faithful to their original meanings of the ancient languages? All these are parts of the fundamental problems defining the limitedness of any historical inquiry regarding the "historical Jesus," "historical Paul" and the like. Thus, it is not surprising that several biblical and



historical scholars have pointed out these problems within “the New Perspective on Paul.”<sup>37</sup>

One symbolic example regarding the problem of the historical method is Rudolf Bultmann. Bultmann, the renowned German Biblical historical scholar, gave up the historical inquiry for this very reason: the inherent limitation of the historical method. Apart from the legitimacy of Bultmann’s alternative solution to this problem - turning to the ahistorical Existentialist interpretation of the Bible, Bultmann’s scholarly distrust of “historiography” was for an honest and valid reason. Nevertheless, N. T. Wright criticizes Bultmann and re-endorses the historical inquiry into 1st century Christianity and Judaism. In so doing there is a question he has to answer: “what makes your historical inquiry any better than Bultmann’s?”

Wright’s own defense to this critique is that his historical method is different from the “modernistic” historical inquiry that Bultmann and other modernists performed. In a book on his theological methodology, Wright points out several problems of the modernistic historical method. For example, modern historical research operated within the realm of human reason, and as such, human reason was “the arbiter of which religious and theological claims could be sustained.”<sup>38</sup> In historical biblical scholarship, this attitude resulted in “manifold reductive and skeptical readings which scorned the previously central beliefs of Christians as ‘out of date,’ ‘pre-modern’, etc. – a scorn still often expressed in both popular and scholarly circles, despite the attacks that have increasingly been mounted against the whole Enlightenment project...”<sup>39</sup> Thus, Wright criticizes the rationalistic bias of modern historical scholarship.

Wright mentions another problem of modern historical scholarship: it suggests themes and visions that are not fully biblical. For example, being driven by the “progressive” worldview of modernity, modern historical scholarship offered an optimistic eschatology and a dominantly intellectual solution to the problem of evil in the world. In this theological perspective, the role of Jesus Christ became reduced to a rational, moral instructor.<sup>40</sup> This is an unacceptable reading of the Bible to Wright.

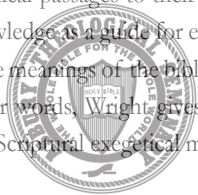
In contrast to modern historical scholarship, Wright suggests a dialogical model of historical scholarship. He observes that any serious reading of the Bible always assumes a certain scholarship background whether implicitly or explicitly. Wright then claims that such scholarship needs to be supplemented by newer scholarship: “Today’s and tomorrow’s will be just the same, of course, but this does not absolve us from constantly trying to do better, from the never-ending attempts



to understand scripture more fully.”<sup>41</sup> Here Wright suggests that the exegesis of the Bible should be constantly refreshed and supplemented by historical scholarship. He makes it clear that his “new” historical scholarship does not share the modernistic aim for absolute certainty. One section-title in his book shows this modesty clearly: “Historical Exegesis: Still Basic, but No Guarantee of Modernism’s ‘Assured Results’.”<sup>42</sup> Thus, Wright defends his “new” historical method by separating it from the rationalism and universal validity of modern historical scholarship.

Is Wright successful in distinguishing his own historical method from modern historical scholarship, thereby defending it as a legitimate method for biblical exegesis? The answer is “No,” for we still find a problem. The “dialogical” nature of his own method does not allow him to justify his single perspective over the Scriptural exegesis. Wright envisions a mutually supplementing relationship between biblical exegesis and historical scholarship. However, in fact, his biblical exegesis is dominated by his theological perspective, and that perspective is drawn from and driven by the historical scholarship on 1st Century Judaism. This makes his historical and theological method no different than modernistic methods. He may be different in his methodological intention, but in its outcome, he is similar to modern historical scholarship. Even though he says he does not believe in “historical reconstruction,” Wright indeed aims to and claims to have succeeded in reconstructing the theological mind of the Apostle Paul through historical scholarship.

Another critique on Wright’s methodology from a Reformation theological perspective is that his appeal to historical scholarship seems to have lost the essential methodological balance. Of course, it is desirable and beneficial that our reading of the Bible draws from all kinds of sources including historical and critical scholarship. Any sound Evangelical theology would not exclude them in the study of the Bible. However, there is an important question of prioritizing various theological methods. The position of Evangelical theology is that the authority of Scripture supersedes any other authorities such as the church *magisterium*, human reason, religious experience and, of course, tradition. Wright’s methodology begins from Scriptural authority, but then goes behind Scripture, heading for the authority of reason and tradition. He tends to begin with the exegesis of the biblical text, but then goes behind the Biblical passages to their background histories. He then brings in the background knowledge as a guide for exegesis of the biblical passages, often overriding the immediate meanings of the biblical passages by the “imported” historical perspective. In other words, Wright gives equal or more priority to the historical method than to the Scriptural exegetical method.



One simple example that demonstrates Wright's methodological priority is the fact that he always calls Romans "Paul's" writing. This reveals his assumption that, if one can understand Paul's mind-set, one can fully comprehend the true messages of the Bible. However, that is not true for most Evangelicals: even if we may possibly access the "back of Paul's mind," this does not mean that we can fully comprehend the true messages of the Bible. That is because Evangelical theology holds the Bible as the inspired Word of God through the human writers. The primary author of the Bible is the Spirit of God, and this fact demands Bible readers and researchers to have different attitudes and methods than simply appealing to certain scholarship for a final approval. This is the profession and priority of the Reformers and most Evangelicals. In conclusion, in spite of Wright's insistence that he remains loyal to the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura*, his method is clearly different from that of the Reformers.

In this section, we have discussed the methodology of Wright and criticized the problems of his twofold methods. In spite of the novelty and the amazing consistency of their applications, Wright's methods have major problems that not only locate the methods outside the Evangelical methodology, but also subject them to serious questions and critiques. On the one hand, his thematic and theological reading of the Bible from a single perspective seriously mars and overrides faithful exposition of the Bible. On the other hand, his commitment to the historical-critical method begs the question regarding the validity of the historical inquiries into the origin of Christianity and the *de-facto* resemblance between his universal, single perspective with that of modernistic historical scholarship.

## Conclusion

In this paper we have analyzed the theological perspective and the methodology of N. T. Wright and evaluated them from an Evangelical perspective. Wright singularly focuses on the covenant status of Israel and God's faithfulness to His covenant with Israel. For Wright this single focus becomes the superlative theological and hermeneutical perspective in expounding Pauline theology and the entire Bible. He justifies this single-perspectival approach by appealing to the authority of the Bible itself and the historical scholarship on 1st century Judaism.

However, his methodology has some serious flaws. On the one hand, faithful biblical exegesis is often overridden and distorted by his preoccupied theological reading of the passages. On the other hand, Wright's appeal to the historical-critical method subjects his whole theological project to uncertainty and criticism, which demands his further clarification and modification. In addition, he

fails to remain loyal to the Evangelical principle of sola scriptura by prioritizing the background knowledge of 1st century Judaism.

Therefore, it is the author's suggestion that Wright's historical and theological perspective be fully appreciated and accepted as a guide to read the Scriptures without making itself an exclusive perspective. This is what his non-modernistic position calls for, and how we remain truly open to the abundant messages of the Scriptures.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> This article was made possible through a generous grant from Seoul Theological University during my research year at Asbury Theological Seminary in 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Jason Byassee, "Interview with N. T. Wright" for *Christianity Today*, April 8, 2014. Also available at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2014/april/surprised-by-n-t-wright.html>

<sup>3</sup> See his 1980 article, "Justification: The Biblical Basis and its Relevance for Contemporary Evangelicalism," *Pauline Perspectives: Essays on Paul*, 1978-2013 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 21-41.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.amazon.com/Paul-Everyone-Ephesians-Philippians-Colossians/dp/0664227880>. Accessed on September 25, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> John Piper, *The Future of Justification* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 15.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Wright criticizes that Christianity has become too subjective and individualistic by the influences of Existentialism and Romanticism. *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009) 131.

<sup>9</sup> N. T. Wright, "Justification: Yesterday, Today and Forever," *JETS* 54.1 (March 2011) 49-63. 51.

<sup>10</sup> In fact, Wright once served as canon theologian at Westminster Abbey between 200-2003.

<sup>11</sup> For example, see the Glossary in N. T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone Romans: Part One* (Louisville: WJK, 2004), 145-161.

<sup>12</sup> N. T. Wright, "Justification: Yesterday, Today and Forever," *JETS* 54.1 (March 2011) 49-63. 53.

<sup>13</sup> N. T. Wright, "My Pilgrimage in Theology," *Themelios* 18.2 (January 1993) 35. N. T. Wright, "Justification: Yesterday, Today and Forever," *JETS* 54.1 (March 2011) 49-63. 53.



<sup>14</sup> Ibid. Parenthesized words are original.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> N. T. Wright, "Justification: Yesterday, Today and Forever," *JETS* 54.1 (March 2011) 49–63. 53.

<sup>17</sup> Travis Tamerius, "N. T. WRIGHT Interview," *Reformation & Revival Journal* 11:1, 2 (2003). Also at <http://www.hornes.org/theologia/travis-tamerius/interview-with-n-t-wright>

<sup>18</sup> N. T. Wright, "The Letter to Romans," *The New Interpreters' Bible: New Testament Survey*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 160. Parenthesized word is added.

<sup>19</sup> N. T. Wright, "The Letter to Romans," *The New Interpreters' Bible: New Testament Survey*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 160.

<sup>20</sup> N. T. Wright, "Justification: Yesterday, Today, and Forever," *JETS* 54.1 (March 2011) 49–63. 52. Italics are original.

<sup>21</sup> N. T. Wright, "The Letter to Romans," *The New Interpreters' Bible: New Testament Survey*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 163-164.

<sup>22</sup> N. T. Wright, "Justification: Yesterday, Today, and Forever," *JETS* 54.1 (March 2011) 49–63. 51.

<sup>23</sup> The Second Temple Judaism means Judaism from the time of the Rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple at the end of the Jewish Exile to the destruction of the Temple of Herod in 70 AD. Kent L. Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011), 6.

<sup>24</sup> Especially E. P. Sanders' pioneering book, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism-A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977).

<sup>25</sup> Wright clarifies that he has reached this perspective in his own in his reading of Romans and other Pauline gospels. Then he found a similar conclusion in the work of E. P. Sanders and others. Thus, Wright does not mind being called a member of the "New Perspective on Paul" school, but also maintains his own perspective within this school.

<sup>26</sup> N. T. Wright, "Justification: Yesterday, Today, and Forever," *JETS* 54.1 (March 2011) 49–63. 52. Italics are original.

<sup>27</sup> When he was a student, he read the Bible in the doctrinal frame of reference. He published a book with other students titled *The Grace of God in the Gospel*. In the book, he tried to present biblical reference to the five points of Calvinism. However, he gave up this method afterwards. Alastair Roberts, "N.T. Wright: A Biography," accessed September 20, 2015. <http://alastair.adversaria.co.uk/?p=371>

<sup>28</sup> Alastair Roberts, "N.T. Wright: A Biography," accessed September 20, 2015. <http://alastair.adversaria.co.uk/?p=371>

<sup>29</sup> N. T. Wright, "The Shape of Justification," *Bible Review*, (April 2001)  
Also available at  
<http://www.thepaulpage.com/the-shape-of-justification/> Accessed on September 19, 2015.

<sup>30</sup> N. T. Wright, "Justification: Yesterday, Today, and Forever," *JETS* 54.1 (March 2011) 49–63. 51.

<sup>31</sup> N. T. Wright, "Justification: Yesterday, Today, and Forever," *JETS* 54.1 (March 2011) 49–63. 52.

<sup>32</sup> N. T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone Romans: Part One* (Louisville: WJK, 2004), 9.

<sup>33</sup> N. T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone Romans: Part One* (Louisville: WJK, 2004), 145-161.

<sup>34</sup> N. T. Wright, "Justification: Yesterday, Today, and Forever," *JETS* 54.1 (March 2011) 49–63. 52.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> N. T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone Romans: Part One* (Louisville: WJK, 2004), 54.

<sup>37</sup> For example, there are two books that collect several scholarly articles addressing these issues and other problems of the historical research on the 1st century Judaism by the same editors: D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien and Mark A. Seifried ed. *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2004); *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Paradoxes of Paul* (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2004).

<sup>38</sup> *Scripture and the Authority of God* (San Francisco: Harper One, 2011), 84. In fact, Wright distances his position from both modernism and postmodernism.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 87.

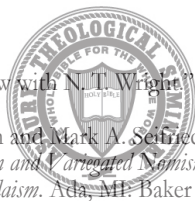
<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 89.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. 92.

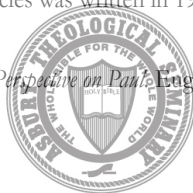
<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 94.

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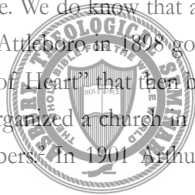
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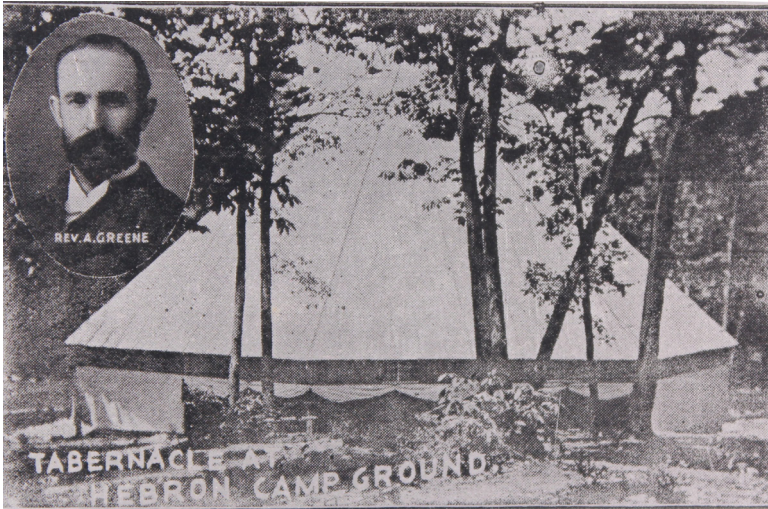
## *From the Archives: Arthur Greene: Pioneering Pentecostal Evangelist*

Sometimes in the archives, you just stumble on treasure without even knowing it was there.<sup>1</sup> This happened recently while we were inventorying the archives and stumbled on an incredible set of painted images on heavy muslin used for early Holiness camp meetings. In an attempt to figure out the context for these paintings, we found one small box of additional documents from the family of Rev. Arthur Greene connected to these paintings. Then began a fascinating task of researching to find out more about this very small and obscure, but interesting collection.

Arthur Greene was born December 21, 1865 in Cranston, Rhode Island and died October 15, 1946 in Tisbury, Massachusetts, on the island of Martha's Vineyard. He married Harriet Lena Greene on December 31, 1885 in Cranston, and they ultimately had five sons. But once we get past the basic genealogical information, things become much more obscure. One of the first references to Arthur Greene comes as a pastor attending Seth Rees's Portsmouth Holiness camp meeting (Portsmouth is around 25 miles from Cranston) in 1898, where he appears as a pastor or evangelist attending the camp meeting from Auburn, Rhode Island, when he would have been 33 years old. About this time, it is highly likely that he fell under the influence of Seth C. Rees, the dynamic Holiness evangelist who emerged out of his Quaker background to become a major figure in Rhode Island as the leader of the independent Emmanuel Church in Providence, Rhode Island from 1894-1896 (Providence is about four miles north of Cranston). Around 1899, Arthur Greene was made the pastor of First Emmanuel Church in Attleboro (or Attleborough), Massachusetts, but nothing seems to indicate what kind of church this was (perhaps it was connected to Rees' Emmanuel Church in Providence), and it is no longer in existence. We do know that a small group of converts from a Salvation Army meeting in Attleboro in 1898 got together and formed a group called, "Believers in Holiness of Heart" that then became the "Attleboro Christian Crusader Band" and finally organized a church in 1899 called "The People's Free Church" with fourteen members. In 1901 Arthur Greene became their pastor,



although he also continued to serve First Emmanuel. So by 1898-1899, Arthur Greene was actively involved with the early Pentecostal-Holiness Movement. In this same year, Camp Hebron, the local camp meeting area in Attleboro, was sold to Rev. William J. Hutchinson<sup>3</sup>, and a small pamphlet on this camp in the collection notes, “During the ownership of Mr. Hutchinson, the Holiness people under Rev. Arthur Greene held meetings and built the present tabernacle.”<sup>4</sup> The Tabernacle was apparently built in 1902.<sup>5</sup>



**Engraving on a small tin tray in the collection, showing Arthur Greene and the Tabernacle at the Hebron Campground in Attleboro, Massachusetts.**

Kostlevy notes, “The two most important leaders of the radical holiness work in New England were Arthur Greene, pastor of the work in North Attleboro, Massachusetts, and eastern representative of the *Revivalist*, and Frank Messenger, manager of a North Grosvenordale, Connecticut, cotton mill and one of the most important lay leaders of the Holiness Movement in New England.”<sup>6</sup> Most likely due to his ties with Seth C. Rees, Greene became involved with Martin Wells Knapp and God’s Bible School, based in Cincinnati, Ohio, which Knapp opened in 1900, and it was most likely through these ties that he became the eastern representative of the *Revivalist*, which Knapp had begun publishing in 1888.

It was also very likely that through the ties with Knapp, Seth Cook Rees (who followed Knapp as the superintendent of the International Apostolic Holiness Union), and George B. Kulp (who followed Rees), that Arthur Greene became connected with a young Oswald Chambers (the author of *My Utmost for His Highest*, and an early Holiness evangelist) on his first trip to America in 1906. In that year, Chambers travelled to America with Japanese Holiness evangelist Juji Nakada (sometimes called the “Dwight L. Moody of Japan”), and spent some of his first days in the U.S. preaching and speaking in New England and along the Atlantic Coast. One letter in the archives from H. J. Olsen relates to Arthur Greene’s son that, “The committee that ordained me was Geo. B. Kulp, Oswald Chambers, Arthur Greene, Juji Nakada, and A. E. Blann (Blaine). That was in Sept. of 1906.”<sup>77</sup> Olsen notes in another letter commenting on Greene’s death, “He was one of seven ministers who ordained me as a Gospel minister back in 1906. For many years we worked together along with Capt. Potter and Oswald Chambers.” David McCasland, in his biography of Chambers, notes,

Chambers enjoyed the bold, uninhibited personalities of men like Arthur Greene of Massachusetts. One day, while walking together on a main street in downtown Cincinnati, Greene shouted at the top of his voice, “I hate the devil!” Chambers yelled after him, “So do I!” Immediately after, “A man came up to us with tears in his eyes and asked us the way of salvation,” Oswald wrote to his brother Ernest. “We pointed him to the Lord. Oh, these delightful unconventional ways suit me down to the ground...”<sup>78</sup>

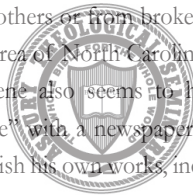




**Photo of Old Orchard, Maine camp meeting, July 1910. In the back role from left to right are Capt. Charles T. Potter, Rev. Arthur Greene, Rev. Oswald Chambers, Mr. William Richardson, and Rev. H. J. Olsen. Seated to the right are Biddy Chambers and Mrs. William Richardson. (Courtesy of Discovery House)**

Arthur Greene was active in camp meetings along the East Coast through the early 1900's, from Maine down to Maryland. One local note records for 1908, "The Annual Pentecostal Campmeeting will be held in Klinefelter's Grove, one-half mile from Chestertown, MD, August 21<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>. Rev. Arthur Greene of North Attleboro, Mass., with a number of spirit-filled evangelists and singers, will have charge."<sup>9</sup> Along the way, he seems to have adapted Martin Knapp's use of visual aids in his speaking, with the use of large painted canvases to illustrate his messages. In October 1906, Arthur Greene was also one of the incorporators of The Eliada Home and Faith Cottage in Asheville, NC, along with Lucius B. Compton, S. E. Compton, Rose Fairless of Ashville, NC and Charles B. Donle of Providence, Rhode Island.<sup>10</sup> This was a rescue home established for prostitutes, their children, and the children of unwed mothers or from broken homes, and the Eliada Home was a unique ministry in this area of North Carolina and the adjoining states.

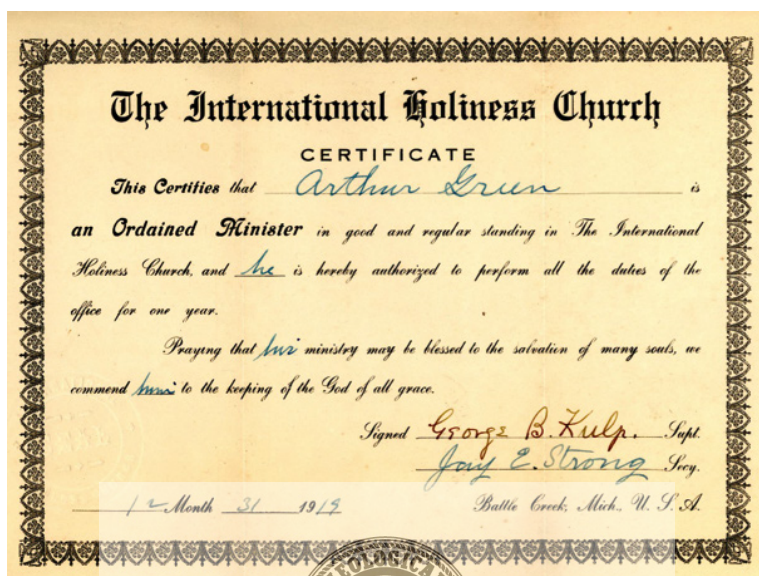
By 1909 Rev. Greene also seems to have begun a small publishing endeavor called "Pillar of Fire" with a newspaper by the same name.<sup>11</sup> It mostly appears to have served to publish his own works, including a book, *Scriptural Themes*,



and a number of tracts including: *God's Time Now*, *Two Works*, *The Church, Peace, Forever Lost*, *A Holy Life*, *A Reply to an Opposer of Holiness*, and others. In the same year, Arthur Greene refers to himself in the introduction to one of his books as president of The Bible Home and Foreign Missionary Society, an early effort at Holiness foreign mission work. On June 18, 1913, Rev. Arthur Greene along with Ruric Lawrence bought Camp Hebron and continued to hold Holiness camp meetings there. In 1915 Rev. Greene resigned from The People's Free Church, which in 1916 officially joined the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination.

One account from the *Evening News* of Providence, Rhode Island in 1912 notes,

The Hebron camp meeting opened Friday, and is in charge of Rev. Arthur Greene, pastor of the First Emmanuel Church of North Attleboro, and the series will continue until July 7. The list of workers as given out includes H.J. Olsen of Baltimore, Capt. Charles Potter of Norwich, Rev. Francis Thomas of New Jersey, who will lecture on the "Book of Daniel," and Evangelist Elwood Blaine of Northville, N.Y. who will preach each day. The Emmanuel brass band will furnish music, and accommodations will be provided for a large number of persons.<sup>12</sup>



Arthur Greene's Ordination Certificate for The International Holiness Church on December 31, 1919, signed by George B. Kulp. Notice that gender is a blank to be filled out, recognizing the value of women within the holiness tradition.

In December of 1919, Arthur Greene was ordained in The International Holiness Church by George B. Kulp. This church began as the International Holiness Union and Prayer League in 1898 with Seth Rees as President and Martin Wells Knapp as Vice-President. In 1900, the name changed to the International Apostolic Holiness Union, and it became more involved in foreign mission work. By 1905 it became the International Apostolic Holiness Union and Churches to provide a home for new Holiness churches emerging from the movement. By 1913 it became the International Apostolic Holiness Church. Becoming the International Holiness Church, it joined the Pentecostal Rescue Mission in 1922, and then the Pilgrim Church of California later that year to become the Pilgrim Holiness Church. The archives do not show if Arthur Greene was involved in the earlier movements (although given his ties with Rees and Knapp, he most likely was), but his name does not appear in material from the Pilgrim Holiness Church, like that of his fellow camp meeting speaker, H. J. Olsen.

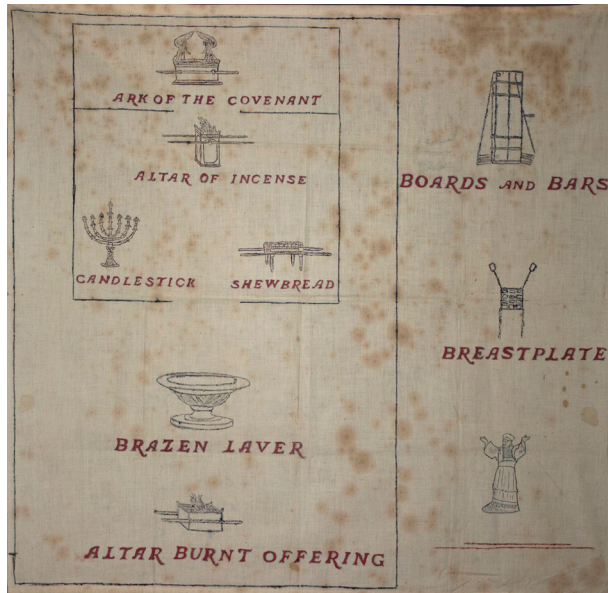


One of the large paintings from the Greene Collection, showing well-dressed and poor people alike cheerfully walking to hell and bypassing Christ and the narrow path to heaven.



In the early 1920's Arthur Greene disappears from the Holiness Movement. By 1918<sup>13</sup>, Arthur Greene is living on Martha's Vineyard, and by the 1920 census, he is listed as living there with his youngest son Louis, and his son's wife, Zelma. Arthur is curiously listed as a farmer on this census and subsequent census forms from 1930 and 1940 continue to list him as a farmer. His wife Harriet (or Lena as she is often called) is listed in the 1920 and 1930 census as still living in North Attleboro, and she is listed as the head of household. In 1920 she is living with two of her sons, Jesse and Paul, who work in a printing shop, and in 1930 she is living with her son, Paul and two elderly single female lodgers. Clearly some important issue split the family and caused Arthur to leave his very active roles of ministry. While there is no definite reason given in any archival material, one possibility might be found in the 1930 census record for Arthur Greene, where he is recorded as a farmer in West Tisbury, Massachusetts at age 64 living with his fifteen-year-old daughter, Phoebe Greene, and a housekeeper named Isabelle Andrews.<sup>14</sup> Since Phoebe is not listed as one of Harriet's children and would have been born about 1915 at the height of Arthur's ministry (and the same year as his resignation from the People's Free Church in Attleboro), one can assume she might be a source of the tension. In the 1940 census, a Phoebe Sharples<sup>15</sup> is listed as the wife of Lewis L. Sharples in Oak Bluffs, Mass. (also on Martha's Vineyard island). They are listed as living with Isabelle Andrews, who is listed as Lewis Sharples' mother-in-law. I have been unable to locate a birth record for Phoebe, or other vital records that might help explain the situation further. Arthur Greene died in 1946 in Tisbury, Massachusetts at the age of 81, while living with his son Louis, daughter-in-law, Zelma, and their daughters. His contributions to the Radical Holiness Movement have been unfortunately lost to time, but some can be recovered through determined research efforts in archives and special collections.





One of the smaller wall hangings from the Greene Collection showing elements of the Old Testament tabernacle and the Priesthood used for teaching.

The Arthur Greene material at the B.L. Fisher Library contains six paintings or drawings done on heavy muslin, which were for use in early camp meetings as visual aids. Some of the more dramatic images are a large version of Martin Wells Knapp's famous "River of Death" illustration, along with smaller charts illustrating the Old Testament articles in the temple, and a long Premillennial Dispensationalist chart. Other vivid images show the journey of life as people choose to follow Christ or enter eternal torment, and images of the sanctified and the unrepentant heart. One final image appears to be a sermon illustration of some kind, but it is not labeled and so its context is unknown. It depicts a number of strange birds within a tree, with each bird or groupings of birds numbered one to fourteen.





**An enigmatic sermon illustration painted on heavy muslin used by Arthur Greene in his evangelistic Holiness camp meeting work (circa 1900-1910).**

While I have not located a specific sermon to go with this illustration, this illustration or one similar to it, may be alluded to in a sermon at the Portsmouth, Rhode Island Camp meeting of 1897. This Camp meeting was founded by Rees and was very close to where Greene was born and ministered, so it is likely to have been a major influence in his ministry in New England. In a sermon by Rev. Beverly Carradine on Saturday, August 7, 1897, he speaks on the idea that the Holiness Movement was splitting the Methodist Church in a brief aside,

They say we are splitting the church, but we are not. The truth never splits the true church. God says the kingdom of heaven is like unto a mustard seed. *Colonel Buzzard and Judge Crow and Sister Woodpecker, President of the Ladies Aid Society, are the "fowls of the air" who are in the branches, no doubt the double-barreled shot-gun of a full salvation minister will disturb them, but it will not hurt the tree.*<sup>16</sup>

The archives of the B.L. Fisher library are open to researchers and works to promote research in the history of Methodism and the Wesleyan-Holiness movement. Images, such as these, provide one vital way to bring history to life. Preservation of such material is often time consuming and costly, but are essential to helping fulfill Asbury Theological Seminary's mission. If you are interested in donating items of historic significance to the archives of the B.L. Fisher Library, or in donating funds to help purchase or process significant collections, please contact the archivist at [archives@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:archives@asburyseminary.edu).

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> All images used courtesy of the Archives of the B.L. Fisher Library of Asbury Theological Seminary who own all copyrights to these digital images, unless otherwise noted. Please contact them directly if interested in obtaining permission to reuse these images.

<sup>2</sup> This is the background to the Faith Alliance Church (Christian Missionary Alliance) currently in Attleborough, MA, from the website: [www.faithall.org/church-history](http://www.faithall.org/church-history).

<sup>3</sup> Previously the camp had been set up in 1869 by the American Millennial Association of Boston, a group committed to the teaching of the premillennial advent of Christ. (This group ceased to exist in 1920.) In 1887 the Methodists would rent the campgrounds for one week each year, and at one time there were more than 60 cottages on the campground.

<sup>4</sup> Grace Glover Mawney, *The Early History of Camp Hebron*, 1931, page 10.

<sup>5</sup> From what I can gather, this campground passed into the hands of the Christian and Missionary Alliance on February 23, 1917, but seems to have closed and been sold sometime in the 1970's.

<sup>6</sup> *Holy Jumpers: Evangelicals and Radicals in Progressive Era America*, by William Kostlevy, Oxford University Press, New York 2010, p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> Most likely this event was not in September, but later in November, since Chambers and Nakada arrived by boat on November 15, 1906 in New York Harbor. Cf. *Oswald Chambers, Abandoned to God* by David McCasland, Discover House Publishers, Nashville, TN 1993, p.101.

<sup>8</sup> *Oswald Chambers, Abandoned to God* by David McCasland, Discover House Publishers, Nashville, TN 1993, p.113.

<sup>9</sup> *Kent News* from Chestertown, Maryland for Saturday July 4, 1908, page 5.

<sup>10</sup> From section 8, page 8 of the National Register of Historic Places for the Eliada Home in Ashville, NC.

<sup>11</sup> This does not appear to be associated with Pillar of Fire, International, an Holiness denomination founded by Alma Bridwell White in 1902 and headquartered at Zarephath, New Jersey.

<sup>12</sup> “North Attleboro,” *Evening News*, Providence Rhode Island, Friday, June 28, 1912, page 3.

<sup>13</sup> This is based on his son Paul Wilbur’s draft card registration of 1918 that lists Arthur as his closest relative and gives Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts as his address.

<sup>14</sup> The census record is a little confused here, giving Isabelle Andrews age as 15 years old, which must be incorrect. The same census record also records she was a widow who was 38 at the time of her first marriage.

<sup>15</sup> The Phoebe Sharples is listed as being born February 23, 1915, and having died December 27, 1991.

<sup>16</sup> *Hallelujahs from Portsmouth, or, A Report of Portsmouth Campmeeting held at Portsmouth, R.I. July 23 to August 8, 1897*, Christian Unity Publishing Co., Springfield, MA, 1897, page 151.



## *Special Book Review Essay*

### **Ancient Israel's History: An Introduction to Issues and Sources**

Edited by Bill T. Arnold and Richard S. Hess

Grand Rapids: Baker Academic

2014, 560pp., hardcover, \$44.99

ISBN: 978-0-8010-3930-0

*Reviewed by Kevin Burr, Alison Hawanchak, Esteban Hidalgo, Drew Holland, Joseph Hwang, Danielle Li, Joachim Mbela, Dustin Mills, Brian Shockey, Benjamin Wiggershaus, and Jim Wilson*

### **Introduction**

In the opening pages Richard Hess exhorts his readers to value the study of history in the way that the ancients did because of what the study of ancient Israel's history could offer to the reader, e.g. influencing faith, recognizing commonalities with ancient peoples, entering into a different worldview, thinking critically, and understanding the basis for a significant part of the socio-religious culture of the last two millennia (1-3). Having established a need for the historiography of ancient Israel, Hess surveys the history of interpretive methods that have been applied to the Hebrew Bible, which leads ultimately to the comparative method used in this book (5-12). The comparative method approaches the Hebrew Bible as "an ancient source that should be weighed and critically evaluated along with other ancient sources" (10). Particularly important is the assertion of V. Philips Long that the Hebrew Bible (and most ancient Near Eastern historical sources) may be understood in theological, literary, and historical dimensions so that each dimension complements the others (10). In other words, a text is not necessarily ahistorical because it is theological. This legitimates the authors' use of the Hebrew Bible as a valid source for their historiography.

The present review essay includes contributions from several PhD students at Asbury Theological Seminary. Each of us has reviewed one or two chapters of the book as a collaborative effort to critique the contents of each chapter in light of the purpose of the book as a whole. As Hess states, the book is intended to function as an introductory level text which seeks “to introduce the interested reader to the study of ancient Israel by examining the story as traditionally told, the most important sources for interpretation, the major critical issues and problems with our understanding of the sources, and how they might best be synthesized” (19). Thus, our critical comments will focus upon the accessibility of the chapters as introductory level texts and the extent to which the chapters align with the goals of the book just stated. A brief comment on the layout of the book is appropriate. The first three chapters focus on the Pentateuch, comparative literature, and the value of the Pentateuch as historiography. Chapters 4-7 and 9-14 follow the history of Israel chronologically from the beginning of the Iron Age to the end of the Hellenistic Period. Chapter 8 considers the historiographical value of the Hebrew Bible prophetic texts. The following reviews will summarize the contents of each chapter and provide some critical feedback where appropriate.

*Jim Wilson*

### **The Genesis Narratives – Bill T. Arnold**

In this first chapter Bill Arnold discusses whether the book of Genesis can be examined from the perspective of history and historiography. Arnold begins with some of the challenges posed by Genesis: a dramatically different social location, a unique literary style, and a dearth of archaeological evidence. In spite of these challenges Arnold argues the book of Genesis still contains historical value. Although, as he demonstrates, the historical conclusions reached through the study of Genesis will only fall into the categories of “possible, plausible, and most likely,” rather than the category of “proven fact” (25). Against modern skeptics, Arnold is clear in his stance that the book of Genesis is “capable of preserving reliable historical information,” though the modern connotation of historiography should be disregarded (30).

Arnold discusses Gen 1–11 as “mytho-historical” literature due to its form of historical narrative and its parallel themes found in mythological literature of the ancient Near East. He focuses upon the genealogies and their functions, which although not intended to be a historical record may still contain historical value (33). In the section on Gen 13–36 Arnold focuses upon the issue of the emergence of Israel in Syria-Palestine as it relates to the archaeological evidence of population increase. He also notes records in the Mari archives about various

ancient tribes, which may be connected to ancient Israel. An assessment of Israel's tribal and religious history as described in the book of Genesis concludes it is improbable that later authors fabricated the accounts (41). Based on the literary features of the Joseph narrative in Gen 37–50, Arnold identifies it as an ancient novel, though he asserts that this does not preclude it from containing historical information. Therefore, Arnold suggests it should be thought of as a historical novel (43). Arnold uses the “Report of Bedouin” from the time of Pharaoh Merneptah in particular to demonstrate that the Joseph narrative is compatible with Egypt's history (45).

One piece missing from the discussion of Gen 13–36 is the nature of the literary genre, which Arnold describes as “traditional epic” (43). Arnold describes this as the literary “type,” but does not elaborate on its features as he does for the genres of Gen 1–11 and 37–50. This leaves the reader wondering what specific features Gen 13–36 shares with other ancient Near Eastern epic literature and how these epic features contribute to or diminish its historical value. Overall Arnold has clearly introduced and discussed the various issues surrounding the historical study of the book of Genesis. Although much of modern scholarship has approached Genesis with skepticism, Arnold presents a strong argument for the study of Genesis within the context of ancient literature; whether mytho-historical, traditional epic, or novel. He also clearly demonstrates that within its literary context Genesis still contains reliable historical information.

*Alison Hawanchak*

### **The Exodus and Wilderness Narratives – James K. Hoffmeier**

Although the Hebrew Bible refers to the Exodus and wilderness narratives explicitly and implicitly as foundational for explaining Israel's origins many scholars operating with a hermeneutic of suspicion question the authenticity of these narratives (47). James K. Hoffmeier calls for a reconsideration of the Hebrew Bible as a valid historical source given its internal claims to provide multiple witnesses, and he appeals to indirect archaeological and textual evidence to support its historicity.

Hoffmeier contends that requiring biblical historical claims to be substantiated by external sources is “a serious methodological flaw” (48). Wellhausen's “traditional synthesis” views the Pentateuch as a collection of sources (J, E, P and D), thus “multiple voices” from across the OT, including the earliest writings (Exo 15, Judg 5, Hos, etc.) make a case for the historical value of the Exodus and wilderness traditions (49). In particular, the Sinaitic covenant was viewed in prophetic literature as “marriage” between the Lord and Israel, and the

“foundation for religious and social life” (Deut 4:9-10; Jer 2:2; Hosea 12:9). *Bērit*, denoting “treaty” or “alliance,” enjoyed widespread Near Eastern usage since the second millennium BCE, refuting Wellhausen’s claim for the late development of covenants (84). Israel’s kings were assessed and Israel and Judah indicted by covenant; it follows that the Sinai event was not fictional but historical reality (84-85).

Hoffmeier shows that between 2106 and 1200 BCE, the Nile Valley was a refuge for pastoral tribes and flocks during dry periods in the eastern Mediterranean (50), as attested in numerous Egyptian texts (50-53). Remains at sites such as *Tell El-Mashhuta* and *Tell el-Dab’a* confirm that some Semitic pastoralists remained in the land (54), and Egyptian records give evidence of huge construction projects using forced labor (e.g. tomb of the vizier of Pharaoh Thutmose III, major mud-brick structures at *Tell El-Dab’a*) and attest to the servitude of Semitic speaking slaves; the Bible also preserved this memory (59). Correlation is also found between Hebrew toponyms and thirteenth century BCE Egyptian terms and cities mentioned in Exodus and Egyptian texts, e.g. Rameses (1275 BCE to eleventh century) and Pithom, called Retabeth (62-65).

Hoffmeier further evaluates the exodus and wilderness geography. The “the way of Philistine” taken by the Israelites is confirmed in Egyptian documents as is the shorter but more precarious “way of Horus” (68). Although specific identification of Mount Sinai is not possible, Hoffmeier speculates that it is in the mountains of the southern Sinai Peninsula, e.g. Gebel Musa and Gebel Serbal (85). Hoffmeier also demonstrates Egyptian parallels to the tabernacle tent and materials, and asserts that their origin can be traced to the Sinai wilderness. This calls into question the Wellhausenian assertion that the tabernacle was a retrojection of the Solomonic Temple by the Priestly writer (86-87).

Although the Hebrew Bible must be handled with caution due to the way in which Biblical writers included historical details, often only to serve their religious purposes, Hoffmeier calls for fairness in evaluating the Bible’s historical claims. Hoffmeier demonstrates that the exodus and wilderness traditions were not human inventions, but historical realities verifiable by archaeological and textual evidence. His creative argument and exhaustive handling of external evidence are challenging and raise important questions about the implications of Wellhausen’s documentary theory.



*Joachim Mbela*

## **Covenant and Treaty in the Hebrew Bible and in the Ancient Near East – Samuel Greengus**

Samuel Greengus surveys biblical treaties and covenants and highlights relevant comparative sources to clarify their meaning and purpose. Greengus divides his survey based on the various types of covenants, drawing distinctions between those involving divine figures and those that are purely secular. Within each of these sections he further categorizes covenants based on the size of each party (individual to individual vs. individual to group) and the type of relationship represented (parity vs suzerain/vassal). This arrangement of material is particularly helpful when comparing the biblical data to internal and external sources and guards against misapplication of the evidence. Not all covenants are the same nor do they bear the same value for comparison.

Greengus begins his study looking primarily at secular covenants and seeks to illustrate the function of these covenants in normal environments before applying that understanding to similar divine covenants. Marriage covenants, simple covenants of friendship, political covenants, and treaties are each examined in turn, interspersed with examples and insights from ancient texts. An extensive list of primary sources is presented in the footnotes for readers interested in examining the ancient Near Eastern evidence firsthand. Considerable attention is given to the perpetuity of covenants in the ancient Near East, particularly the expectation that the covenant would continue beyond the life of the participants.

The “group” covenants between the nation of Israel and their God (first at Sinai and then in Deuteronomy) are the focus of the second half of the chapter. Greengus notes the unique emphasis of biblical divine covenants on “rules of worship, moral conduct, and law” (108) as well as their excessive length compared to other ANE treaties. Accompanying covenant rituals are also discussed, although he notes that in many places the biblical evidence is unclear and must be interpreted or implied from the cultural background.

Despite efforts by other scholars to use comparative study to date the biblical sources, Greengus focuses mainly on how the covenant structure informs the meaning of the text. In his discussion of Deuteronomy, for example, he highlights the relationship of the covenant to the prior Sinai covenant, rather than focusing primarily on its similarity to Hittite or Assyrian treaties. Greengus does include a brief discussion of the parallel curses between Esarhaddon’s Succession Treaty and Deuteronomy 28, but downplays the connection and surprisingly omits the ordering of the curses, which is one of the more significant aspects of the broader scholarly discussion. This seems to be an intentional choice to keep the focus of the discussion on the content of the biblical text. Despite the quantity of

material involved, Greengus' survey is comprehensive and accessible, offering the reader an excellent introduction to the topic and providing ample resources for the reader to pursue further study.

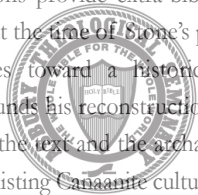
*Brian Shockey*

### **Early Israel and Its Appearance in Canaan – Lawson G. Stone**

Stone begins his discussion of the biblical material by discounting redaction critical attempts to determine the historical scope of the book of Joshua as overly complex due to their presentation of the history of Joshua from the perspective of its numerous authors (133). Taking seriously the internal chronology of the Bible and the Egyptian evidence, Stone places Israel's entry into Canaan around 1240–1175 BCE. He rightly acknowledges the dearth of evidence necessary to arrive at a definite conclusion, but believes this reconstruction yields “a chronological structure firm enough to be testable but not sufficiently exact to justify dogmatism” (137).

Stone proceeds to the lengthier section of his paper, the archaeological witness. First, he offers an extensive treatment of the collapse of Near Eastern civilization during the Late Bronze Age to Iron Age I transition. He notes not only political and technological shifts, but also the migrations of several people groups (141). Second, he introduces three significant Egyptian inscriptions that support his proposed dating: the Merneptah Stele, the fragmentary victory stele from the time of Ramses II, and captive lists from the column bases of the Soleb temple of Amenhotep III, which date Egyptian recognition of Israel to the late thirteenth century BCE. Third, Stone evaluates the archaeological evidence of the conquered cities in Joshua in light of the declining status of cities like Jericho, Ai, and Hazor during the Late Bronze Age. Contrary to the traditional biblical interpretation, we ought to understand these cities as places where the structure and infrastructure fell victim to the Late Bronze Age collapse, facilitating their capture by novice, roaming warriors. Fourth, Stone speculates the possibility of Israelite presence in Canaan based on the material culture of the central hill country during this period. Especially noteworthy are excavations of the distinctively Israelite worship centers at Shiloh and Shechem, and the increase of settlements in the central highlands around 1200 BCE. All of these observations provide extra-biblical support to undergird the presence of Israel in Canaan at the time of Stone's proposed chronology.

Next, Stone moves toward a historical reconstruction of Israel's migration into Canaan. He founds his reconstruction on the following factors that show the coherence between the text and the archaeological evidence: Israel both reflected and diverged from existing Canaanite cultural norms; the earliest stages of



Israel's movement into Canaan in the land allotted to Manasseh; and the historical background of the Late Bronze Age dictates that some warlike violence must have occurred. Stone then argues that the relationship between text and trowel is further reinforced by reexamining the biblical witness. That is, we must view the hyperbole of military victory in Joshua as part and parcel of the ancient military argot; we must also align our focus on the destruction of the Canaanite kings, rather than the cities themselves; and we must retract our vision of "conquest."

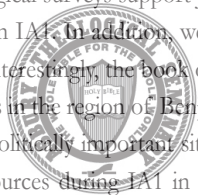
In sum, Stone has offered a compelling reconstruction that remains faithful to both the biblical witness and archaeological evidence. He has presented with efficient execution an issue that has long been the subject of intense scholarly debate. While there are doubtless biblical scholars and archaeologists who will argue against him in the self-admitted gaps in evidence and hypothetical nature of his historical reconstruction, the evidence he provides offers a likely proposal for the scholar who wishes to reconcile the biblical account and the claims of archaeology.

*Drew Holland*

### **The Judges and the Early Iron Age – Robert D. Miller II**

Robert D. Miller II provides foundational information on the book of Judges situating the history of Israel in the Early Iron Age (IA I: 1200-1000 BCE). Miller focuses on the Israelite clans who lived in the hill country in IA1 to show how distinct they were from their surrounding neighbors such as the Canaanites and the Philistines. He introduces a broad outline of the book of Judges and covers the modern history of scholarship to explain why the biblical text and archaeology are both necessary for reconstructing the history of Israel in IA1.

In the next section Miller evaluates archaeological sources. First, he delimits the geographic range of his archaeological discussion to highlight how distinct and unique the highland settlement was (a densely populated north-central hill country area between Jerusalem and the Jezreel Valley), compared to its bordering regions and the LB II (1400-1200 BCE). The maps (Figs 5.2 - 5.3) aid the visualization of this geographic scope. The book of Judges shows geographically that "the real 'Israel' of IA1 was the northern hill country" (173). The archaeological surveys of the Israelite highlands provide the "greatest insights into the history of IA1 Israel" (173). For example, archaeological surveys support Judges 1 in identifying most of the cities as being Canaanite in IA1. In addition, we learn of six distinct zones of settlement in the highlands. Interestingly, the book of Judges mentions some cities like Shiloh, Shechem, and sites in the region of Benjamin, which were important in IA1, but it does not include politically important sites such as Dothan and Tirzah. The scarcity of epigraphic sources during IA1 in the highlands is another point



of contrast to the surrounding regions and eras. Although Miller's analysis is brief, it still provides pertinent information for further research. As a minor point of critique, Miller's use of modern day highway names (55, 60, and 505), which the reader may not be familiar with, would have been aided by a modern map.

The latter half of the chapter is Miller's "synthesis of the archaeological and biblical evidence about the economies, lifestyles, and religion" (181). In the sections on gender and religion, one cannot help but wonder about the religious role women like Deborah had in the period of Judges and how that compares (if at all) to the Canaanites or Egyptians in IA1. The final section deals with the historical significance of the Philistines. In sum, students will certainly benefit from Miller's analysis. Anyone unfamiliar with the historical background that leads up to IA1 should first read chapter four "Early Israel and Its Appearance in Canaan," since it provides a smooth segue into the present chapter.

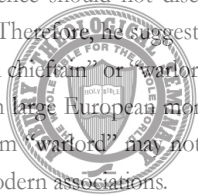
*Joseph Y. Hwang*

### **The Story of Samuel, Saul, and David – Daniel Bodi**

In this chapter, Daniel Bodi conducts a comparative analysis between the stories of Samuel, Saul, and David and ancient Near Eastern culture, focusing particularly on several Mari texts. His goal is to demonstrate how 1–2 Samuel contains an authentic historical presentation of Israel.

After an overview of the biblical account, Bodi discusses the contributions made by a historical-critical study of the text. Traditionally 1–2 Samuel has been viewed as two narratives: "David's Rise to Power" and the "Throne Succession Narrative". Bodi notes the development and flaws in this view and suggests reading the narrative as "The House of Saul Pitted against the House of David" (201). One reason Bodi prefers this model is for its historical connection with two Mari texts, which depict the power struggle between two clans and contains themes similar to those in the Saul and David narrative: divine retribution triggered by a sacrilegious action, acts of hubris leading to demise, and the importance of a tribal leader's ethnic background (205-207).

The archaeological evidence from the eleventh and tenth centuries BCE suggests that the monarchies of Saul and David are not as extensive as once thought. Although archaeological evidence should not discount the biblical record, Bodi believes it should be heeded. Therefore, he suggests the reigns of Saul and David should be referred to as "tribal chieftain" or "warlord" rather than "monarchy" due to its modern association with large European monarchies (211). However, based upon his logic, I think the term "warlord" may not be an appropriate term either due to its strongly negative modern associations.



Bodi establishes multiple connections between the Mari texts and the narratives of Saul and David, including the symbolism of donkeys and anointing with oil. For Saul in particular, the Mari texts depict his actions in 1 Samuel 11:5-7 as a standard method of recruiting individuals for a military campaign. As for David, three Mari texts contain accounts similar to his rise to power and portray 'apiru leaders analogous to David (219).

Overall Bodi presents an extensive comparison resulting in strong historical connections with the surrounding culture. Due to his reliance upon the Mari texts, Bodi's chapter could benefit from a longer discussion of their significance. He briefly mentions their importance due to the wide spectrum of tribes they present and their reliance upon West Semitic loanwords similar to those found in Hebrew (208). However, he does not adequately discuss how these eighteenth century BCE texts relate to narratives dated conservatively to the eleventh and tenth centuries BCE. Although connections between the Mari texts and the Saul and David narratives exist, a discussion of how these connections are relevant in spite of their temporal gap is necessary. Bodi concludes that despite the legendary claims of some scholars the narratives of Samuel, Saul, and David do present authentic historical information concerning this period of Israel's history; a claim that his research clearly supports.

*Alison Hamanchak*

### **United Monarchy: Archaeology and Literary Sources – Steven M. Ortiz**

Steven M. Ortiz authors an insightful chapter overviewing the period of the United Monarchy (tenth century BCE, Iron IIA). He begins by providing a synopsis of the biblical portraits of David and Solomon, describing David's formidability as military leader and politician and Solomon's savvy in domestic and foreign policy. Ortiz's textual analysis of David and Solomon is important; the nature of the biblical text is at the very heart of scholarly contention of this period (235-37). Some scholars, later identified as the Copenhagen School, view the text as nothing more than hyperbolic, theological constructions, theorizing that David and Solomon were not historical figures, but mere legends.

Opposing such perspectives, Ortiz candidly offers his position. He first warns the reader not to assume that the authors of the biblical narrative intended to write a systematic history void of theological insight (235). He then posits that one of the pressing questions scholars face is, "What was the nature of the united monarchy," not "Has archaeology proven that David and Solomon existed?" (240). The former implies a positive answer to the latter. Ortiz uses his remaining space to present significant evidence that stands to contradict the Copenhagen case.

The section titled “The United Monarchy: A Synopsis of Research,” features anthropological models and archaeological data that convincingly buttress a high view of the biblical record. For instance, the geopolitical context of the Iron Age I-II transition—namely, the weakened reach of Egypt and Mesopotamia—allowed for smaller polities to arise (241-43). According to Ortiz, leading scholars believe Solomon gained wealth via access to the four major Levantine trade routes (256), while excavations at Lachish and Megiddo reveal a network of chariot cities, both biblical features of Solomon’s rule (257). Ortiz concludes this section with data that is presumably unique to tenth-century Israel: the four-room house and Hebrew inscriptions (260-61).

Ortiz must be commended for this chapter, which presents the “maximalist” position of the United Monarchy. Not only does he provide a survey of important archaeological data relating to the tenth century, but he also wrestles with multiple arguments from silence lobbed by the Copenhagen camp. While the author does provide the current state of research and his own point of view thereof, he seems to forget the target audience of the editors. *Ancient Israel’s History: An Introduction to Issues and Sources* is an introductory book. Ortiz’s survey of the issues and sources may cater to the developing biblical scholar, but his use of jargon does not. Evoking terminology, such as “ceramic stratigraphy,” “red-slip burnished,” or “Khirbet Qeiyafa Ostrakon,” may cause problems for a reader unfamiliar with the data. The contributor further strays from this volume’s objectives by not creating space for his opposition. He admits the impact of Israel Finkelstein’s Low Chronology, but does not discuss the evidence in favor of this paradigm. He instead footnotes refutations of the Low Chronology with no detail (238).

Ortiz provides a valuable addition to this volume. This chapter does indeed present much of the research into and the primary debate regarding the historicity of the United Monarchy. While he does not always keep his target audience in mind nor fully divulge his opposition’s perspective, he succeeds in presenting a bird’s-eye-view of the issues and sources pertaining to the period of David and Solomon.

*Benjamin Wiggershaus*

### **The Biblical Prophets in Historiography - James K. Mead**

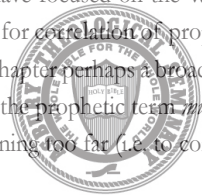
J. K. Mead argues via comparative study that prophetic messages in the Hebrew Bible provide us historical pictures of prophets and their works, which may contribute to a reconstruction of Israel’s history. First, Mead analyzes Hebrew Bible



prophetic literature with great detail according to prophetic titles and development of prophetic ministry (262-270). Mead discusses the four prophetic titles “seer” (*rō’eb* and *bōzēb*), “man of God” (*īš hā’ēlōhīm*), and prophet (*nābī’*). “Prophet” (*nābī’*) occurs most frequently and its root relates to “divine calling” (261). It is the all-embracing term for coordinating all biblical prophetic messages.

Mead illustrates the development of prophecy throughout most of the first millennium BCE thriving especially during the divided kingdom (266). During this time the audience of biblical prophecy transitioned from the kings, to the people; and the content of prophecy shifted from God’s judgment to “oracles of hope and salvation” (270). Mead compares this picture with the similar prophetic phenomena in the ancient Near East, specifically the Mari letters, Neo-Assyrian Prophecies, West Semitic texts and other materials. He observes: (1) that most of the prophetic messages from Mari are concerned with cultic and political/military matters (274), (2) that Neo-Assyrian Prophecies are mainly concerned with the security of the king’s sovereignty, (3) that the terms, “seer of gods” (*hazh lln*) and divine “assembly” (*mm’d*) in *Deir ‘Allā* substantiate the historical plausibility of the biblical prophetic terms (277), and (4) that whereas Neo-Assyrian prophecies evince an editing process, Mari prophecies do not (280). For Mead the comparative data supports the plausible historicity of the biblical prophets based on the Bible’s presentation of prophets, their behavior and their message (283). Against the argument that the prophets were written in the Persian era, Mead cites the “antiquity of prophetic phenomena,” “subtle [archaic] linguistic features,” the progression of prophetic ministry alongside the history of the Old Testament (284), and the appropriate context of the late monarchy as the setting of prophetic ideology (e.g. criticism of idolatry and unfaithful leadership) (285).

Although Mead utilizes a number of resources to substantiate his claims, his argument shows some vulnerability. First, Mead does not define well the term “historical plausibility of the biblical prophets.” Although his data supports the historicity of the biblical prophets, it is insufficient for information about the prophetic eras. Secondly, Mead utilizes too broad of categories to support his claims, lessening the strength of his argument for the historical probability of the biblical prophets (e.g. rather than discussing four broad categories of ancient Near Eastern prophecy, he could have focused on the West Semitic inscriptions, which alone provide ample evidence for correlation of prophetic terms). However, for the pedagogical purposes of the chapter perhaps a broad approach is appropriate, albeit less convincing. Also, though the prophetic term *zabhum* in Mari means “ecstatic,” it is difficult to press this meaning too far (i.e. to connect biblical and ancient Near



Eastern ecstasy) (280-281). Despite these points of criticism, Mead has provided a helpful paper for students who study biblical prophecy.

*Danielle Li*

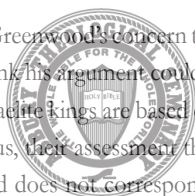
### **Late Tenth- and Ninth-Century Issues: Ahab Underplayed? Jehoshaphat Overplayed? – Kyle Greenwood**

In his chapter on Israel and Judah in the ninth and tenth centuries, Kyle Greenwood reviews the major sources and evaluates critical issues involved in an historical reconstruction of the two kingdoms. He surveys the relevant material in Kings and Chronicles (288-95) as well as the extra-biblical sources, including the Tel Dan inscription, the Mesha Stela, the royal inscriptions of Shalmaneser III, among other epigraphs, and archaeological evidence (295-305). He points out discrepancies between the biblical and extra-biblical sources and familiarizes the reader with the current scholarship on such issues as the dating of Israel's campaigns against Aram-Damascus (308-12), the details of an attack on Moab (313-15), the identity of Jehu and the reasons for his revolt (315-16), and the Bible's portrayal of the strength of each kingdom (316-18).

Greenwood's chapter is a worthy introduction for students of Israel's history. For each issue, he allows readers to judge between a number of scholarly theories. He is careful to present the perspectives of those historians who view Kings and Chronicles with suspicion, while he also offers alternative positions, encouraging readers to value the biblical sources more highly.

At the same time, however, Greenwood recognizes the limitations of the two books. One of his major arguments concerns whether Ahab and Jehoshaphat are portrayed accurately in the biblical sources. Kings and Chronicles "underplay" Ahab by making exclusively negative comments about his reign; they "overplay" Jehoshaphat in their positive portrayal of him (317). Greenwood contrasts these portrayals with the extra-biblical evidence, in which Ahab is more prominent and influential than Jehoshaphat. His construction projects were more extensive, his dynasty led campaigns against their neighbors, and he formed alliances with Phoenicia, Judah, and Damascus (317-18). In contrast, Jehoshaphat is not mentioned in any extra-biblical source. The Davidic dynasty during the 9<sup>th</sup> century simply does not appear as strong as Israel.

While I appreciate Greenwood's concern to show the historical limitations of Kings and Chronicles, I think his argument could be more nuanced. The biblical authors' evaluations of the Israelite kings are based on the ruler's loyalty to YHWH, not his political influence. Thus, their assessment that a king did what was right or wrong in the eyes of the Lord does not correspond with the king's achievements



on the throne. Greenwood acknowledges that the evaluations are theological (316-17), but he still contrasts them with evidence of Ahab's political power. Instead, one must compare the biblical descriptions of Ahab's and Jehoshaphat's power and influence with the extra-biblical evidence. In this regard, the book of Kings portrays the two kings' reigns more appropriately than the Chronicler does. Apart from the need to better nuance this argument, Greenwood's chapter is a great addition to a work aimed at representing the biblical text as a legitimate source for the study of Israel's history.

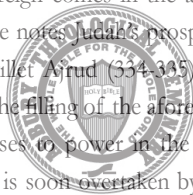
*Dustin Mills*

### **Eighth-Century Issues: The World of Jeroboam II, the Fall of Samaria, and the Reign of Hezekiah – Sandra Richter**

Sandra Richter's analysis of the eighth century BCE in Israel and Judah interweaves archaeological evidence and biblical data to provide a convincing narrative of this era's history. For her, this century is best viewed as divided between two distinct periods: a period of wealth and prosperity (800-745 BCE), and a period of decline due to the rise of Assyria as a world power (745-700 BCE) (321).

The earlier period is characterized by economic success and relative unity between the two kingdoms. Not coincidentally for Richter, this is due in large part to a power vacuum in the ancient Near East during this period (322). The first significant archaeological find revealing the prosperity of this time is a collection of ostraca found in Jeroboam II's capitol of Samaria, which reveal the unprecedented wealth of Jeroboam II's kingdom (324). The ostraca also indicate that Israel's kinship- and agrarian-based society may have been transforming into a socioeconomically stratified urban one (325). Furthermore, the perception of the kingdom's wealth has been bolstered by the discovery of ivories etched in styles akin to those found in foreign nations at this time, thus revealing that the Northern Kingdom was likely involved in trade with other nations (324-325). The wealth and international flavor of the kingdom is also substantiated by the biblical text.

Although Richter gives less detail about the archaeological findings in the Southern Kingdom of Judah and heavily relies on textual data, she surmises that prosperity in this period extended to that kingdom as well. The primary evidence for the strength of Uzziah's reign comes in the advancement of war machinery (333, 336), and secondarily she notes Judah's prosperity in an aside describing the ancient trading post of Kuntilet Ajrud (334, 335). The later of the two eighth-century periods is marked by the filling of the aforementioned Near Eastern power vacuum. Tiglath-Pileser III rises to power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire, and he soon subjugates Israel, which is soon overtaken by later Neo-Assyrian kings with



many of its inhabitants sent into exile. Richter confirms the biblical details of this period's events with Neo-Assyrian documents paralleling the narrative (338-340). In Judah, Hezekiah succeeds Ahaz, who had submitted the Southern Kingdom to Assyrian vassalage (340-341). Hezekiah proceeds to rebel against Assyria, leading to an invasion of Judea. Archaeological evidence supports and adds to the scant biblical narrative of this invasion, including the Broad Wall, Hezekiah's Tunnel, and excavations at the city of Lachish (344-346).

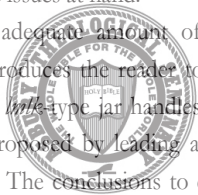
In sum, I find Richter's chapter informative of the evidence available for the historical context of eighth-century BCE Israel and Judah. Moreover, she clearly relates the evidence to the biblical account. My only critique is an editorial one. The eighth century is an arbitrary parameter for study, as enumerated by Richter's own division of this century into two separate periods. Perhaps the scope of this essay would be better served as a more detailed study of one of these periods, especially since more could be said about each. However, given the guidelines that Richter was given, her essay is instructive for the introductory student who wishes to dive deeper into historical study of this period.

*Drew Holland*

### **Judah in the Seventh Century: From the Aftermath of Sennacherib's Invasion to the Beginning of Jehoiakim's Rebellion – Brad E. Kelle**

Brad E. Kelle's thorough examination of seventh-century Judah is an excellent addition to *Ancient Israel's History*. His overview focuses on the reigns of Manasseh (697/696–643/642 BCE), Josiah (641/640–609 BCE), and the early years of Jehoiakim (609–600 BCE)—the span between Sennacherib's invasion of Judah and Jehoiakim's rebellion against Babylon. Kelle describes each reign in a consistent manner, beginning with the biblical presentation of the Judahite king under consideration, drawing from Kings, Chronicles, and some from the Major and Minor Prophets. He then presents "primary questions" regarding each reign, usually centering on one of two topics: (1) the state of the Judean Kingdom in its Syria-Palestinian political context during each reign and (2) specific events that the Bible attributes without detail to each reign (353, 370, 379). The bulk of each section reflects the main purpose of the work, namely to present the primary sources and scholarly activity related to the issues at hand.

Kelle presents an adequate amount of primary data without overwhelming the reader. He introduces the reader to crucial material culture, such as Judean pillar figurines and *imf*-type jar handles. After providing this data, he discusses essential theories proposed by leading and current scholars while not labeling any one as definitive. The conclusions to each section are as identical as



they are intriguing; Kelle ultimately declares these primary questions unresolved. The reader is then left still wondering about the state of seventh-century Judah. Perhaps this is Kelle's way of rousing him or her to further study.

Staying true to the first aim of this work, Kelle does not openly endorse nor deny the validity of the biblical source material. He does, however, warn the reader against being "essentially skeptical" and against "overinterpreting the text as though it were a historical account" (352). Kelle further stays on course by candidly explaining issues up for debate. As noted above, he includes primary questions for each reign discussed. He then presents data and theories proposed by members of the academic community relevant to those questions. Kelle, though given license by his editors, does not divulge his personal stances, but lets the reader evaluate the survey of evidence he offers. By forgoing this prerogative, Kelle has made sure that the major contributors to the discussion are represented equally for consideration. Perhaps most important, Kelle's presentation of the evidence is accessible to the emerging biblical scholar. The information he presents is targeted for his audience; he limits his use of technical terms (e.g. he is careful to provide short, parenthetical definitions for specialized words such as ostraca and Shephelah); and his chapter is well structured with helpful headings. One of the better chapters of this volume, Kelle's contribution achieves the goals set before it. His presentation of the historiographical challenges that scholars face when dealing with seventh century Judah is precise, fair, and accessible.

*Benjamin Wiggershaus*

### **Sixth-Century Issues: The Fall of Jerusalem, the Exile, and the Return – Peter van der Veen**

The chapter opens with a historical overview of important sixth century events and developments in Jewish life (383-87). While only the elite of Jerusalem (about 10-13% of the population) was exiled to Babylon, the administration of Judea shifted to Mizpah and many Jews relocated to Lower Egypt (e.g. Elephantine) and other regions in the eastern Mediterranean (384). In the next section van der Veen introduces the "Myth of the Empty Land" theory, which holds that during the exile the land of Judea was abandoned and essentially "empty" (387). This issue has engendered a lively scholarly debate, for which the reader is referred to Oded Lipschits "Shedding New Light" (2011) for a fuller treatment. Van der Veen, following Hans Barstad and others, rejects the theory based on archaeological evidence. The most noteworthy of the archaeological observations for Iron Age III Judea include: (1) a population shift to the territory of Benjamin (389), (2) a boon in development at Mizpah attesting to an administrative shift (390), (3) widespread

abandonment of Jerusalem (391-92), (4) continued occupation of other sites in the region (i.e. Ramat Rahel and Rephaim Valley) (393-96), and (5) ongoing conflicts with Edom (396-98). Epigraphic evidence for Gedaliah, the pro-Babylonian governor of Mizpah, is also highlighted (398-401).

Next the focus shifts to the return of exiles. Contrary to the population reports of Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 a number of Jews who had settled elsewhere, e.g. at al-Yahudu near Babylon and Borsippa, did not necessarily return to Jerusalem (cf. Murashu archives) (401-403). Archaeological data further attests to the low population of Yehud until the late Persian period. Van der Veen also discusses the debate over the historicity of the Persian period biblical books (esp. Ezra 1–6) and includes a brief excursus on Aramaic as the lingua franca of the Persian period (405).

Throughout the chapter van der Veen excellently surveys his topic. The strongest section is probably the archaeology of sixth century BCE Palestine, which is supported by a thorough bibliography. Overall he treats the issues fairly and when necessary directs his reader toward more exhaustive resources. However, in the opinion of the reviewer there is one place where van der Veen could have more helpfully aided his reader. In his discussion of Nabonidus (386-87) it would have been helpful to cite Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus, King of Babylon 556-539 B.C.* (Yale University Press, 1989), who has questioned the traditional scholarly assumption that Nabonidus was promoting the moon god Sin over the patron god Marduk. Besides this minor suggestion for improvement, the chapter accurately fits the method and objectives of the larger book, and presents the introductory reader with a wealth of resources for further study.

*Jim Wilson*

### **Fifth- and Fourth-Century Issues: Governorship and Priesthood in Jerusalem – André Lemaire**

The renowned French epigraphist, André Lemaire, has published multiple inscriptions that shed light onto the history of Israel during the Achaemenid period, which he discusses in concert with current scholarship to present some issues surrounding the political situation in Palestine during the fifth- and fourth-century BCE. This broad critical overview of how epigraphic evidence connects to the biblical tradition of Ezra-Nehemiah is complementary to his Schweich Lectures on Biblical Archaeology (2013), published as *Levantine Epigraphy and History in the Achaemenid Period* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

With little of a clear guiding thesis outside of the title and lack of an introductory outline, Lemaire pushes forward in lecturing style to discuss in five

parts the issues concerning: (1) Yehud in the 5<sup>th</sup> century; (2) epigraphic evidence, late 5<sup>th</sup> century; (3) Diaspora in the 5<sup>th</sup> century; (4) the mission of Ezra; and (5) the southern Levant in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. By way of expert engagement with primary sources, he makes critical inferences between archaeology and the biblical or historical record (e.g., 409, 411, and 416). The article is copiously illustrated with a map of Yehud in the 5<sup>th</sup> century (408), images of the al-Yahudu tablet (415) and a Yehud coin (419), in addition to text boxes with key inscriptional evidence, including the Papyrus Cowley 30 (407 BCE) where Bagohi the governor of Judah, Yehohanan the High Priest and the sons of Sanballet governor of Samaria are named (423), and a portion from the Samaria Papyrus from Wadi ed-Daliyeh (335 BCE) where a number of Yahwistic names form “by far the dominant group” (424). Lemaire does more than bring up the issues of governorship and priesthood in Yehud. As his subtitle indicates, he also comments on how the inscriptional evidence sheds light into the socio-religious and economic situation of the Diaspora in the Elephantine community (412-13), among the Judean refugees in Babylonia (414-16), and the cultural composition of the local population in Idumea, Judea and Samaria during the Achaemenid period. Lemaire concludes that the importance of the revival commenced by Nehemiah, which successfully reestablished Jerusalem as the capital of Yehud, and Ezra, which synthesized “the Israelite traditions... from the eastern Diaspora,” outweighed the shift in political power from governor to priest attributed to the Grecian conquest (425).

Students seeking to be introduced to this period in Israelite history as well as scholars discerning the author’s position on certain issues will be rewarded with a broad discussion of a variety of subjects, including the controversial reworking of a final redaction of Neh 13 (410), the historical reinterpretation of Ezra’s mission, here argued to have begun “*after* Nehemiah in the seventh year of Artaxerxes II”, instead of the traditional 457/458 BCE (416-18), and the debated reconstruction of the list of administrators for Judea and Samaria before the Greek conquest (419-22). One is reminded however that a single article of this length cannot include every significant issue surrounding this period. Another article by Efraín Velázquez II, “The Persian Period and the Origins of Israel: Beyond the ‘Myths’” (in *Critical Issues in Early Israelite History*, Eisenbrauns, 2008), covers a different range of similarly important issues.

Esteban Hildalgo



### **The Hellenistic Period – David A. deSilva**

In this chapter David deSilva thoroughly summarizes the approximately 300 years that elapsed from Alexander the Great's conquest of Palestine to the end of Hasmonean independence.

Throughout the sections on history deSilva deftly and fairly treats primary, secondary, archaeological and even some numismatic sources. This is especially helpful when the available evidence is partial (see 437 on how Jason built up his army), conflicting (see 443 on differences between 1 Macc. 2–9 and 2 Macc. 8–15), or of uncertain historicity (443–44 on the diplomatic letters preserved in 1 Macc.). The historical period deSilva covers is certainly familiar material, but he capably shows the complexities of the issues by detailing the various social and political factors of Antiochus IV's Hellenizing efforts which often present Antiochus as a static, bloodthirsty tyrant fixated on eradicating Judaism. The reality which deSilva portrays is much more dynamic.

This chapter provides not only a fitting conclusion to ancient Israel's history but also a helpful introduction to certain persons and groups relevant to New Testament studies. DeSilva provides a concise excursus entitled "The Rise of Apocalyptic Literature" (441), which naturally refers to the book of Revelation as well as certain apocryphal works. A brief definition of apocalypse introduces this topic and is followed by two paragraphs in which deSilva places the earliest forms of apocalypse in their historical contexts (e.g., Daniel 7–12 and 1 Enoch 6–16). The references to secondary literature in this section are noticeably slim compared with the robust notes elsewhere in the chapter. This may leave the reader wanting more resources relating to apocalyptic literature than the standard introductory resources, which deSilva provides. Later in the chapter deSilva includes a section devoted to "Partisan Judaism in the Hellenistic Period" (449–55). Without taking a position he helpfully explains various theories for the rise of the sects of the Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes and Qumran community, and others. Near the chapter's end he introduces Herod the Great, and explains how Roman interference effectively ended the Hasmonean dynasty and Jewish independence – the loss of which undergirded Jewish hope for a messianic deliverer who would restore Israel once again.

DeSilva's work is methodical, detailed, and focused – all important attributes for an introductory essay in a volume like this. This chapter should provide any student with an accurate and helpful framework for directing further study in ancient Near Eastern history, second temple Judaism, and even NT studies as well.

*Kevin Burr*

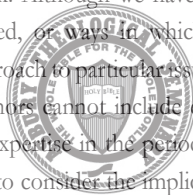


## Summary

To summarize our chapter-based reviews it is appropriate to comment on the unity, organization, and content of the whole book. Although it includes essays from several biblical scholars, *Ancient Israel's History* is unified in its presentation. Besides differences arising from each author's unique style, the goal "to introduce the interested reader to the study of ancient Israel by examining the story as traditionally told, the most important sources for interpretation, the major critical issues and problems with our understanding of the sources, and how they might best be synthesized," guides each chapter (19). Some of our reviewers have observed some deviation from this structure (see the chapter seven review above), but overall the contributors have adhered to it. As a result, although it contains the voices of many authors the text is a unity.

The organization of the book might seem a little odd. First, one might assert that the major events in Israel's history do not fit the neat chronology imposed by most of the book's chapter divisions. Second, one might inquire "Why in a book about Israel's history do we find chapters on covenants, prophets, or even Genesis since these chapters seem to address portions of the Hebrew Bible that contain so little of the kind of history we observe in the majority of the book?" Indeed, either criticism "might" be appropriate if one neglected the introduction. The authors are well aware of the differences between the historiographical import of, e.g. Genesis compared to Kings. This is why Hess has explained the differences between relative and absolute chronology (19–22). Relative chronology (or historiography) relates to chapters 1–3 and 8, whereas absolute chronology relates to the other chapters. The book is a model for the types of chronology and historiography we find in the Hebrew Bible. It is also necessary to include chapters on prophets and covenants; the prophets because although spread over a large period of history they form a large corpus of material with historiographical value; and the covenants likewise because of their historiographical value and because the comparative literature covers from ca. 2,000 BCE to 625 BCE (96–97). The organization of the text as a whole is appropriate to its goals and method, which are clearly stated in the introduction.

Finally, the content (and prose) of the book is appropriate for an introductory level textbook. Although we have noted places where additional resources might be considered, or ways in which certain chapters might have provided a more balanced approach to particular issues, the whole book is otherwise incredibly thorough. The authors cannot include everything, and what they have included demonstrates their expertise in the period on which they write. It could be argued that the book fails to consider the implications of different methods or



theories for interpreting the Hebrew Bible, or that the authors are too assenting of the use of the Hebrew Bible for historiography, but again we refer the reader to the introduction where these concerns are addressed (4–19). To conclude, *Ancient Israel's History* functions quite well as *An Introduction to Issues and Sources*.

*Jim Wilson*



## *Book Reviews*

### **Methodism in Australia, A History**

Glen O'Brien and Hilary M. Carey, eds.

Ashgate Methodist Studies Series

Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

2015, xix, 308 pp., hardback, \$124.95

ISBN: 978-1-4724-2948-3

*Reviewed by David Bundy*

The presence of the Methodist traditions in Australia was vital to the development of the nation but, as for all of the uniting churches, the Methodist component in the Uniting Church of Australia has sometimes been increasingly difficult to discern as time goes by. This tome makes a major contribution to removing that difficulty with regard to Australia. It provides an introduction to Methodism in Australia from the Class Meeting organized by Edward Eagar in 1811, the arrival of the first minister from England, Samuel Leigh (1815), up to 2014. It traces the growth of Methodism in most of the states into a robust religious and social presence, discusses efforts at church union among Methodists and notes the Methodist enthusiasm for forming the Uniting Church (1977). This is followed by a discussion of Methodist issues and identity as they have evolved from 1977 to 2014. The volume demonstrates the importance of Methodism in Australian history and its impact on spirituality, social welfare, education and other fields.

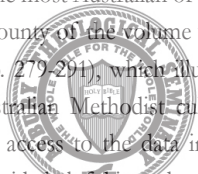
The volume is remarkable both for its coherence as an edited volume and for the process that produced it. The volume was conceived by the editors who recognized a lacuna in research and publication. A series of seminars were held to develop a team of committed scholars and a plan for the volume. Then in an additional series of seminars, drafts were presented and debated. The work of eighteen the scholars taking part in the seminars was published in this work. The

process of the development of the book was discussed in the “Preface,” (pp. xv-xviii) by Glen O’Brien and Hilary M. Carey. Reading this preface would be advisable for anyone contemplating a collaborative project.

The introduction, “Methodism in the Southern World” by editors Glen O’Brien and Hilary M. Carey frames the volume. The work is divided into two parts, the first being to “historical studies.” The essays in this section are: Glen O’Brien, “Methodism in the Australian Colonies, 1811-1855” (pp. 15-27); Malcolm Prentis, “Methodism in New South Wales, 1855-1902” (pp. 29-44); Renate Howe, “Methodism in Victoria and Tasmania, 1855-1902,” (pp. 45-58); David Hilliard, “Methodism in South Australia, 1855-1902” (pp. 59-74); John Harrison, “Queensland Methodism until 1902,” (pp. 75-89); Alison Longworth, “Methodism in Western Australia, 1829-1977” (pp. 91-105); Troy Duncan, “Methodism and Empire” (pp. 107-118); Ian Breward, “Methodist Reunion in Australia” (pp. 119-131); Samantha Frappel, “Methodism and the Crisis of Nationhood, 1903-1955” (pp. 133-147); and Jennifer Clark, “Methodism and the Challenge of the Sixties” (pp. 149-164). One wishes for a chapter examining the discussion between the denominations and the debate within the Methodist Church leading to the Methodists joining the others in the Uniting Church (1977). The editors also lamented that the Northern parts of Australia received no chapter and minimal attention.

The second part of the volume develops selected themes. The essays in this section are: Glen O’Brien, “Australian Methodist Religious Experience” (pp. 167-179); D’Arcy Wood, “Worship and Music in Australian Methodism” (pp. 181-196); David Andrew Roberts and Margaret Reeson, “Wesleyan Methodist Mission to Australia and the Pacific” (pp. 197-210); Anne O’Brien, “Australian Methodist Women” (pp. 211-224); Garry W. Trompf, “Australian Methodist Scholars” (pp. 225-241); Hilary M. Carey, “Australian Methodist Historiography” (pp. 243-256); as well as William Emilsen and Glen O’Brien, “The Continuing Methodist Legacy, 1977-2014” (pp. 257-272). Each of these provides important access to developments in the Methodist Churches, Methodist culture and the interaction of the Methodists with others through mission and scholarship. While there are the occasional hints, a chapter devoted to Methodists in political areas would have been helpful.

Glen O’Brien, provided the “Conclusion,” (pp. 273-278), an optimistic reflection on the impact of “the most Australian of churches,” and an apology that due to space limitations the bounty of the volume was not more bountiful! There is a valuable bibliography (pp. 279-291), which illustrates the vitality of ongoing research into aspects of Australian Methodist culture during the past decades. The indexes are essential for access to the data in the volume. The “Notes on Contributors” (pp. xix-xii) provide helpful introductions to the Australian scholars.



Readers of the *Asbury Journal* will be particularly interested in the last chapter that discusses some of the Holiness Churches in Australia, which continue to promote Methodist theological and social themes. It is also important to note that the development of holiness ideals, social activism, fundamentalism, liberalism and other theological perspectives were worked out differently in Australia. There were fewer of the ideological divides that in North America pitted people and movements against each other that might profitably have worked together.

This book is an important contribution to the study of global Methodism, a model collaborative, and a model scholarly enterprise. Both the editors and publisher are to be congratulated on their achievement. The book will hopefully encourage new generations of Australian historians, theologians and pastors to draw on the intellectual and spiritual sources of Methodism.

### **The Story Luke Tells: Luke's Unique Witness to the Gospel**

Justo L. Gonzalez

Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K., William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

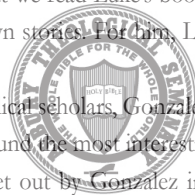
2015, 141 pp., paperback, \$14.00

ISBN: 978-0-8028-7200-5

*Reviewed by Moe Moe Nyunt*

Justo L. Gonzalez, a prominent historical theologian and Cuban American Methodist, writes *The Story Luke Tells*. *The Story Luke Tells* uncovers many insightful messages and theologies that are hidden in today's Protestantism. Gonzalez, a historian, does a biblical exegesis on the two books written by Luke—the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. He detects the thought and interests of Luke himself and, in chapter one, says that the history Luke portrays is a matter of present as well as future, although its focus is on the past. Gonzalez firmly believes that Luke is a historian and suggests that we read Luke's books as a guide, an invitation, and a call for the living of our own stories. For him, Luke's history is “the context of all of life” (1).

Similar to other biblical scholars, Gonzalez notices Luke's unique interest in dating the events. I have found the most interesting and insightful interpretation of Luke's dating of events set out by Gonzalez in chapter two. He discerns the

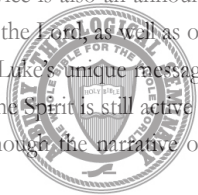


historical record of the Gentile rulers and great figures such as Augustus Caesar in Luke's records and says that they are not only a way of dating events, but also a reminder that the history of Israel takes place within the context of the history of all humanity. To this extent, Gonzalez highlights the point that "Jesus is not only the culmination of the history of Israel but also "the high point of all human history" (26-27).

In chapter three, Gonzalez draws our attention to Luke's distinctive records of religiously and socially upside-down events in history. He understands that Jesus' character in Luke's work is "a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity" (44) who pays more attention to the outsiders such as the Gentiles, the poor, and the sick. For him, the story of Luke's Jesus is the great reversal since the King's life begins, in the Gospel of Luke, in the manger outside the inn and ends, in Acts, at the right hand of God. Gonzalez also points out, in chapter four, that Luke pays, among the Four Evangelists, the most attention to women and their place in the story of Jesus.

Additionally, in chapter five, Gonzalez shows that referring to Jesus as "our Savior" is typical Lukan and Pauline terminology since "both the title of "Savior" and the word "salvation" appear repeatedly in the Gospel of Luke and in Acts" (61). He also recognizes that the healing power of God and the biblical vision of an integral salvation that includes both the soul and the body, both matter and the spirit, both the individual and the community, are theologies found in Luke's two books. Gonzalez believes that Luke's vision is the vision of Christians. Gonzalez underscores Luke's theology of food and drink in chapter six and says that meals are "occasions to speak both of the great reversal and of the hope of salvation" (91). Gonzalez sees that, unlike the other Evangelists, Luke uses banquets and other references to food to clarify the nature of the final, great banquet, the coming of God's reign. He also sees the connection between feasts and theology of worship.

In chapter seven, Gonzalez discusses the theology of worship, paying particular attention on the two most important feasts: the Lord's Supper and the breaking of bread in Emmaus in Luke's history. Gonzalez enlightens us to see that worship and the breaking of bread in the church building are not only a remembrance of the past but also to help us believe in the presence of Jesus in the church. The Communion service is also an announcement to the entire world of the death and resurrection of the Lord, as well as of his coming reign. In the final chapter, Gonzalez highlights Luke's unique messages concerning the Holy Spirit. The most crucial one is that the Spirit is still active and the acts of Jesus are going on through the Spirit even though the narrative of Jesus ends in Lukan history.



*The Story Luke Tells* is a great book that gives many life application messages and practical theologies for daily Christian living.

### **Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Framework for Hearing God in Scripture**

Craig G. Bartholomew

Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic

2015, 640 pp., hardcover, \$44.99

ISBN: 978-0801039775

*Reviewed by Brian Shockey*

Craig Bartholomew's recent volume on Biblical Hermeneutics offers a comprehensive look at the development of Biblical interpretation throughout history. Bartholomew argues that interpretation should begin and end with listening - emphasizing the importance of the text and its reception by the church. He adheres to a "Trinitarian" hermeneutic which recognizes the authority of the Scripture, the unity of the canon, and the importance of both the church and the academy - all the while focusing on the goal of biblical interpretation: to move closer to God through hearing and obeying His word.

Bartholomew divides his work into five major sections. The first, *Approaching Biblical Interpretation*, lays the groundwork for his interpretation of Scripture and includes an introduction to the practice of *lectio divina*, which he relies upon throughout. The middle sections (*Biblical Interpretation and Biblical Theology*, *The Story of Biblical Interpretation*, and *Biblical Interpretation and the Academic Disciplines*) form the bulk of the book as Bartholomew develops his argument through an examination of the history and methods of biblical interpretation. For each topic he presents a wealth of information, highlighting important figures and demonstrating changes in perspectives over time. Bartholomew's expertise shines in these chapters as he effectively introduces the reader to a vast amount of material in a clear and concise manner. For readers interested in further study, he also includes detailed discussions of key topics (marked by a smaller font size) and a healthy list of secondary resources in the footnotes. Although these middle sections are excellent summaries, one drawback of the book is that it is not always

clear how each chapter is related to the Trinitarian hermeneutic outlined in part one. The final section of the book, *The Goal of Biblical Interpretation*, provides Bartholomew a platform to explore the implications of the hermeneutic he has developed. This is accomplished through a brief study of Hebrews with attention to both the *hearing* of the text and also the more traditional methods of study. He then concludes with a chapter on preaching the text, once again emphasizing the mutual relationship between hearing and interpretation. The book ends rather abruptly, leaving the reader without a true conclusion tying together the various topics examined in sections two through five.

Overall, the book is a strong introduction to the study of Hermeneutics and, as Bartholomew himself notes, one of the few to address the relationship between the church and the academy in the modern world. Beginning students will find everything they need here to start their study of biblical interpretation and will gain an appreciation for the development of biblical interpretation through history. Within these pages they will also encounter Bartholomew's gentle corrective to modern interpreters – the study of Scripture is both a spiritual and an academic pursuit.

## Ruth

James McKeown

The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary

Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

2015, 162 pp., paper, \$22.00

ISBN: 978-0802863850

*Reviewed by Michael Tavey*

In this commentary, James McKeown analyzes the book of Ruth holistically, with both a keen awareness of the book's internal content and its external relationship with the Old Testament corpus. Most prominent is his ability to explain how Ruth relates to the books of Genesis and Samuel. He reveals how Ruth builds upon the book of Genesis, which continues and expounds upon such themes as "providence," "seed," "land," "caring for the poor," and "redemption." He reveals how Ruth provides a wonderful segway into the book of Samuel. God,

although “hidden” in the book of Ruth, sovereignly directed the course of Israelite history by providing Ruth a child...a child that would eventually sire the future King David. By exploring Ruth’s relationship with Genesis and Samuel, McKeown correctly points out how this short book informs the reader about the manner in which God continued to fulfil His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Moreover, McKeown also provides insightful understanding of Ruth’s internal content. He discusses the historical context of the book, and helps one understand the significance of its contextual setting (i.e. within the “time of Judges”). In fact, McKeown details how Ruth stands contrastively to the book of Judges, reminding us that even in times where people did “what was right in their own eyes,” and in a time where women were horribly mistreated, there is still glimmers of God’s hope and redemption. Furthermore, McKeown wields an impressive understanding of the Hebrew language, which he uses to translate and interpret difficult passages. He also uses this knowledge to explain the significance of certain passages and names, such as Bethlehem being “the house of bread,” and the next of kin in Chapter four being “so-and-so.” His knowledge in Hebrew is especially helpful for properly understanding the ceremony in Chapter four. What exactly does it mean that the “next of kin” took his sandal off and presented it to Boaz? Is this in reference to a Levirate marital ceremony, or something else? McKeown addresses these questions, and answers them with profound insight.

Lastly, McKeown addresses both Ruth’s theological significance and its application. First, he explains that there are no special revelations or visions in Ruth. God is “hidden.” Yet, this “hidden” God still providentially cares for Naomi and Ruth. Based on that observation, McKeown encourages his readers to stay hopeful, even when God is “hidden.” Second, he shows how God remained faithful and loving toward Naomi, even when Naomi lost hope, trust, and faith in Him. Such an understanding reveals how God’s love and care is not conditioned upon our response to Him. Third, he discusses Ruth’s contribution to the theological concept of Universalism, to Christian feminism, and to Christian Missiology. Fourth, and finally, he explains how there is rich theological significance in some of the text’s ambiguity. One will greatly appreciate this sensitivity to the text.

McKeown’s commentary will provide teachers, students, pastors, non-pastors, and others with an insightful understanding of the book of Ruth, which will enable them to embody its Godly principles and apply its message for everyday living.



## **The Thiselton Companion to Christian Theology**

Anthony Thiselton

Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

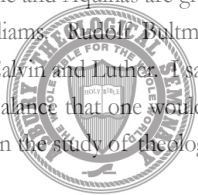
2015, 883 pp., hardcover, \$75.00

ISBN: 978-0-8028-7232-6

*Reviewed by Zachariah S. Motts*

Most of us do not get the chance to sit down with our favorite scholar and spend hours picking her or his brain on whatever topic comes to mind. Reading *The Thiselton Companion to Christian Theology*, though, is very similar to such an experience. The renowned professor of Christian theology, Anthony Thiselton, has given students of theology the ability to interact with his thoughts on an astonishingly wide variety of topics. These 860 pages of articles are not merely edited by Thiselton; he has written them in their entirety. This feat alone is worthy of notice, but it also must be noted that this book is not limited to one area of Christian theology. Thiselton draws from all of Christian theology to offer a wealth of insights on a wide array of themes, philosophers, councils, theologians, movements, heresies, and more.

One of my first concerns when I realized that Thiselton was the author, not the editor, of this work was how even or comprehensive this work could possibly be as a whole when it is written by one man and attempting to cover the entire scope of Christian theology. However, the title of this book is appropriate. It is not an encyclopedia, though encyclopedic. This book is a companion to Christian theology, and it accomplishes that well. Thiselton has balanced the articles toward his specialties. So, there are the predictable large articles on Trinity, Christology, and the Holy Spirit, which account for over one hundred pages, and there are medium-length articles on perennial topics like atonement, election, justification, and sanctification: what one expects to be covered usually is. However, it is in modern theology and hermeneutics that this *Companion* shines. The reader should not be surprised to find that Augustine and Aquinas are given articles of similar length to Paul Ricoeur and Rowan Williams. Rudolf Bultmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg are given longer entries than Calvin and Luther. I say that the reader should not be surprised because this is the balance that one would expect if one chose Anthony Thiselton to be a companion in the study of theology.



This does not mean, in any way, that Thiselton is deficient in his ability to draw on pre-modern theological insights. There are times that he is following a particular theme in theology where he is almost dizzying in his ability to trace developments in that theme back and forth through time. In one paragraph in “Anthropology,” he is able to follow the theme of human relationality through Barth, Brunner, Buber, Lactantius, Tribble, Migliore, Pannenberg, Grenz, Moltmann, and Ricoeur in rapid succession (23). There are few theologians with the mastery and stamina to create a work of this depth and thoroughness.

Most of us will not get the chance to ask Thiselton his thoughts on the impassibility of God or sinless perfection in person, but Thiselton has given us a way to explore theology together with one of the most respected and prolific theologians of our time. This is an excellent and accessible reference tool for the student of theology. *The Thiselton Companion to Christian Theology* is one book that accomplishes well the promise of its title.

### **Tolkien Among the Moderns**

Ralph C. Wood, ed.

Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press

2015, 312 pp., paperback, \$32.00

ISBN: 978-0-268-01973-0

*Reviewed by Zachariah S. Mottis*

*Tolkien Among the Moderns* is a book for a very specific audience. This collection of essays originates in a seminar held at Baylor University entitled “Reading Tolkien and Living the Virtues.” Given its origin, one should not be surprised to find that the overall thrust of the collection is an exploration of the morality at work within the narratives of J.R.R. Tolkien. The title, *Among the Moderns*, is quite fitting though, because most of the essays involve literary comparisons of Tolkien with his modern contemporaries or aspects of modernity. To this end, Tolkien’s works are placed alongside the works of writers such as James Joyce, Iris Murdoch, Emmanuel Levinas, and Friedrich Nietzsche.

This is not a book for someone whose only acquaintance with Tolkien is through watching the recent movie adaptations. To appreciate this collection,

the reader should be well acquainted with *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy*, and *The Silmarillion*. For the reader with this background and also an interest in the themes and figures of modernity, this is a very enjoyable book. The essayists all exhibit careful, insightful familiarity with Tolkien's masterworks and often illuminate new and surprising perspectives on the text. One might think that a collection of literary comparisons between Tolkien and modern figures would end up seeming contrived and forced, but this is seldom the case, mostly because the authors have done such thorough and respectful study of Tolkien's works.

To give just a couple examples of new insights gained, Helen Freeh's essay, "On Fate, Providence, and Free Will in *The Silmarillion*" grapples with the large topic of whether there is evidence in Tolkien's narratives that he succumbed to a deterministic worldview. She carefully pieces apart the fatalistic elvish narrator and seemingly foreordained events within *The Silmarillion* to find the delicate dance of dooms, providence, and free choices expressed in the text. The conclusions at which she arrives are skillfully nuanced. Phillip Donnelly's "A Portrait of the Poet as an Old Hobbit" follows the development of the poetry of Bilbo Baggins over the course of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* as a contrast with James Joyce and the modern idea that the true artist is a person who rejects tradition in order to create something totally original. Donnelly shows that the poetry of Bilbo Baggins progresses through stages where greater poetic skill is gained through greater exposure to and connection with others, not by idealizing absolute independence.

For those curious about the moral world implicit within Tolkien's writings and the way that moral world compares to the modern milieu in which Tolkien lived and wrote, I would highly recommend this book. For those who have immersed themselves in Tolkien's world, essay after essay breathes fresh life into that world as they connect Tolkien's narratives to the narratives that shape the world we live in today. Personally, I found this collection of essays to be fascinating, morally bracing, and hearty food for thought. I, however, fit well within the specific target-audience of this book.



## Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission

Michael J. Gorman

Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

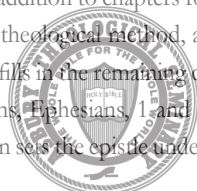
2015, 342 pp., paper, \$28.00

ISBN-978-0-8028-6884-8

*Reviewed by Ryan K. Giffin*

In *Becoming the Gospel* (hereafter *BTG*) Michael J. Gorman offers what he refers to as “a theological interpretation of Paul’s letters within a missional framework” (14). The work is the third and final one by Gorman in a trilogy of monographs exploring Paul’s theology and spirituality, following up the work begun in *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) and continued in *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul’s Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009). *BTG*, intended “to be both for scholars and for pastors and other church leaders” (10), contributes to the recent interest in missional hermeneutics in biblical studies as Gorman proposes “that the guiding question in a Pauline missional hermeneutic is, ‘How do we read Paul for what he says about the *missio Dei* and about our participation in it?’” (12). Gorman’s goal is not primarily historical in nature (although his readings of Pauline texts are historically sensitive), but “theological and indeed missional” (61), noting that “the burden of this book, is that those of us who read Paul’s letters as Christian Scripture need also to participate in the advance of the gospel by becoming the gospel, in word, in deed, and—if we are faithful and it becomes necessary—in suffering” (61).

The explicit claim of *BTG* “is that already in the first Christian century the apostle Paul wanted the communities he addressed not merely to *believe* the gospel but to *become* the gospel, and in so doing to participate in the very life and mission of God” (2). This claim is put to work in an introduction in which an overview of the book is provided, followed by eight chapters and a conclusion comprising Gorman’s final reflections. In addition to chapters focusing on Paul’s understanding of the *missio Dei*, the author’s theological method, and the importance of peace in the writings of Paul, Gorman fills in the remaining chapters with missional readings of 1 Thessalonians, Philippians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans. In each of these chapters Gorman sets the epistle under study in its historical situation,



provides a synthetic missional reading of the epistle, and concludes with reflections on the implications of each reading for contemporary Christian communities.

Scholars, pastors, and church leaders interested in reading Scripture within a missional framework will be hard pressed to find a finer work than *BTG*. Gorman is wholly successful in accomplishing his aim of reading Paul for what Paul says about the nature and mission of the church. Two aspects of the monograph are especially noteworthy. First, while not all scholars will agree with Gorman's conclusion about the thorny, long debated issue of whether Paul intended his communities to actively evangelize, all should appreciate the appropriate caution and nuance he brings to the discussion. Gorman's contention that Paul intended his churches to evangelize is carefully sketched in chapter 1, and anyone aiming to address this issue will find Gorman's discussion here helpful. Second, the "five key questions" Gorman provides for those wishing to interpret Paul using a missional hermeneutic (56) will serve as a useful entry point into the missional hermeneutics discussion for the uninitiated.

With *BTG* Michael Gorman continues to establish himself as a leading voice in the theological interpretation of Scripture. This work will serve as an important contribution to the field of missional hermeneutics for years to come, and as an indispensable resource for church leaders interested in leading communities shaped by Paul's missional vision.

### **The Pietist Vision of Christian Higher Education: Forming Whole and Holy Persons**

Christopher Gehrz, ed.

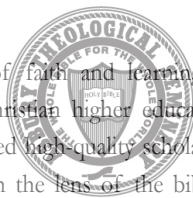
Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic

2015, 240 pp. Paper, \$26.00

ISBN: 978-0830840717

*Reviewed by Benjamin D. Espinoza*

"The integration of faith and learning" has come to serve as the overarching paradigm for Christian higher education. This idea, rooted in the Reformed tradition, has yielded high-quality scholarship that seeks to understand the observable world through the lens of the biblical narrative. However, such



an approach, while beneficial to the propagation of God's Kingdom, often de-emphasizes the need to inculcate within students the virtues of love, holiness, and service. Sensing this lacuna, Christopher Gehrz, a history professor at Bethel University, offers an alternative approach to Christian higher education, one grounded in the theological movement called Pietism. While some accuse Pietism as neglecting intellectual pursuits in favor of a "religion of the heart," Gehrz and others contend that Pietism offers Christian higher education "a useable past" which can form persons who are both whole and holy, over against the intellectually-driven Reformed model. The book emerges from a workshop facilitated by Gehrz entitled, "The Pietist Idea of the Christian College" in 2013. The contributors to this volume participated in this workshop, and represent the broad spectrum of academic disciplines.

Part I explores how teaching, scholarship, and community fit into the ecology of the Pietist university. David Williams argues for the pietistic emphasis on the new birth (or, *Wiedergeburt*) and in education and a conventicle-style approach that mends the bifurcation between student affairs and academics. Jenell Paris astutely argues that the goal of the Christian scholar is not so much intellectual achievement as it is to love others through scholarship. Roger Olson effectively argues for a pietistic approach to Christian higher education that favors transformation over information while encouraging critical thinking and reflection. Katherine Nevins argues that Pietism necessitates that students and professors come together in pursuit of truth, while Phyllis Alsdurf compares the educational vision of *Christianity Today* founder and intellectual heavyweight Carl F.H. Henry with Carl Lundquist, a former president of Bethel University.

Part two reflects on how pietistic institutions can best engage society beyond the college context. Dale Durie seeks to recover the pietistic notion of the common priesthood that actively seeks the good of the neighbor. Christian Collins Winn argues for a pietistic, irenic approach to civil discourse, arguing that "[Philipp] Spener's own hope was that through the practical art of loving the neighbor, with whom one might intensely disagree, God would act to bring about some measure of *shalom* that will someday renovate the cosmos itself" (p. 130). Marion H. Larson and Sara L. H. Shady argue that engaging pluralism and dialoguing with other religions is an act of love that shapes students into responsible citizens.

In part three, two professors from the natural and health sciences, Richard Peterson and Nancy Olen, engage how Pietism shapes their approaches to teaching in their respective professions. In particular, they embrace the pietistic emphasis on loving one's neighbor, forming whole persons, and educating students to seek the good of the other and glorify God in everything. Part four introduces

and engages some of the challenges to this pietistic vision, such as de-emphasizing the pursuit of objective truth, a potential lack of organizational coherency, the curation of resources, neoliberal economic policies. These chapters are fair-minded but optimistic that Pietism can overcome these obstacles. Gehrz closes the book by recasting the vision for a pietistic approach to Christian higher education.

The tone of the book is pietistic; Gehrz mentions in the introduction that he does not intend to book to read like a sermon but rather as a conversation, emphasizing the pietistic commitment to learning and growing in community. The contributors are almost universally critical of the Kuyparian approach to faith-learning integration but critique in a constructive and kind-hearted manner. I would argue that while the perspective put forth in this book is spot-on, it sometimes reads as an overreaction to the excesses of the Reformed model. My question would be, “who would disagree with the proposal that should seek the glory of God and the good of neighbor through acts of love and civil discourse in the context of the university?” While Reformed thinkers may tend to dwell on the intellectual aspects of faith and learning, many do recognize the importance of spirituality and love in the educational process (a fine example would be James K.A. Smith’s *Desiring the Kingdom*, Baker Academic, 2009). Pietist and Reformed educational approaches need not be exclusive; the two traditions have much to learn from each other, which the book argues well.

Pietism has always been an invigorating force in the life of the church. When Phillip Spener offered *Pia Desideria* as a correction to the cold Lutheran orthodoxy of his day, he initiated a prophetic movement that would spark new ways of thinking about and practicing faith. In an educational landscape that prizes intellectual orthodoxy and a biblical worldview, the prospect of embracing pietistic orientations is refreshing. Gehrz and contributors recognize the potential power that Pietism possesses for the university, and I would encourage scholars and leaders in Christian higher education to take note and engage in this conversation seriously.



## **Koine Greek Grammar: A Beginning-Intermediate Greek Exegetical and Pragmatic Handbook**

Fred Long

Wilmore, KY: GlossaHouse

2015, 630 pp., paper, \$27.00

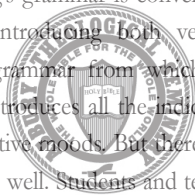
ISBN: 978-1942697008

*Reviewed by Kevin Burr*

Fred Long's *Koine Greek Grammar* is a tour de force among grammars of this type. It is unmatched in its thoroughness and depth. The grammar and accompanying workbook provides a valuable resource for students and teachers alike, with introductions to basic grammar (English and Greek), numerous references and practice sentences from Scripture, and citations from leading lexicons, Greek grammars, and other resources devoted to Koine Greek for students who wish to further their studies.

The *Handbook* comprises 27 chapters, making it ideal for a two semester Greek course if the teacher/professor desires. A real strength of the *Handbook* is that the chapters are interspersed with pictures and illustrations of realia from the Greco-Roman world, which subtly introduces students to the cultural context from which the New Testament comes. The accompanying workbook is as detailed as the grammar. The exercises include naming and listing grammatical concepts, vocabulary crossword puzzles, conjugation and declension charts for the students to fill in, and practice sentences and paragraphs from the Septuagint and Greek New Testament. Since this also serves as an intermediate grammar, beginning students have the advantage of being exposed to terms and concepts that they will certainly encounter elsewhere in standard reference grammars, which otherwise the students may not have known. Each chapter concludes with a meaningful Case In Point where Long uses a topic from that chapter to draw an exegetical lesson from the New Testament passage.

In some ways Long's grammar is conventional. The *Handbook* employs a traditional approach by introducing both verbs and nouns early (unlike another popular beginning grammar from which Long draws), in chapters 3 and 4 respectively. He also introduces all the indicative moods before discussing participles and the non-indicative moods. But there are non-traditional aspects of the grammar's arrangement as well. Students and teachers may be surprised to see



discussions about the definite article integrated in the chapters referring to First and Second Declension nouns (chapters 4 and 5 respectively) rather than being devoted to their own chapter. These early chapters may be so robust that they unintentionally intimidate students. In fact, one of the few drawbacks of this grammar may be the density of the chapters which average approximately twenty pages each. Granted, several chapters include material for intermediate and advanced Greek students and can be skipped by beginning students, but not all chapters include these sections. Finally, Due to Long's (rightfully) high expectation for Greek learners this grammar may also seem intimidating for beginning students. They may find the three different diagramming methods somewhat taxing and they may be better suited for an appendix; however, these methods are undeniably helpful as students progress from beginning to intermediate proficiency.

Since Long is among the cutting edge of grammar authors and as such his *Handbook* uses more current terminology than he and other Greek instructors were trained with. For example, he eschews the traditional category of "deponent" and favors "middle-formed" for certain types of verbs. Instructors accustomed to the traditional categorization should not find this and other updates insurmountable.

Ultimately, this is an especially worthwhile resource that will benefit any Greek student or professor. Teachers using the *Handbook* may find that they need to summarize and interpret various parts of this grammar to their students more often than if they were using another beginning grammar, but teachers and students who are up to the challenge will be greatly benefitted.

### **Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament: Studies in Tools, Methods, and Practice**

Stanley E. Porter

Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic

2015, 432 pp., paper, \$40.00

ISBN: 978-0801049989

*Reviewed by Benson Goh*



Situated in and through his extensive studies in Greek language and linguistics (GLL hereafter), Stanley Porter presents a series of twenty-one

essays organized into three main parts, namely, the texts and tools, the ways and approaches, and the practice of linguistic analysis of the Greek New Testament (GNT). Advanced and intermediate learners of Greek alike would appreciate the immense value of this volume in enriching their knowledge of and working with NT Greek.

Porter introduces the volume by systematically laying out the scope of his research in the GNT over the past 25 years (1–14). Porter's first major monograph on the Greek verbal aspect theory led him to venture into general linguistic studies and then the application of the verbal aspect theory in the NT, which branches further into studies in tense-mood-aspect, history and development of the Greek language, sociolinguistics, the language of Jesus, and discourse analysis. His research also includes NT lexicography and translation studies, among a variety of other topics. The list of bibliographical information provided for each of these areas in the footnote is a great help for further searching and reading.

In Part 1 of this volume, Porter discusses the texts and tools for linguistic analysis of the GNT available today. He questions the ownership of the modern GNT against the backdrop of copyright laws in the US versus those in Europe (17–28), and explores the use of computer-based resources in the study of the GNT (29–46). Probably of greater interest to most practitioners could be his discussions on the strengths and shortcomings of the Louw-Nida lexicon (47–59) and the latest edition of BDAG as a traditional lexicon (61–80). In addition to these well-known lexicons, Porter calls for the development of new lexicons that will be useful for linguistic and lexical semantic studies of the GNT.

In Part 2, Porter explores ways and approaches in analyzing the GNT. He advocates for the use of the systemic functional linguistics (SFL) framework as a sociolinguistic theory and responds to criticisms regarding his approach to verbal aspect. He introduces the advancements of modern linguistics in morphology and syntax, semantics and lexicography, and discourse analysis as a benefit to biblical interpretation (83–92). Using Philippians 2:6–11, Porter demonstrates the multidisciplinary nature of the SFL framework as an exegetical method that works at the levels of discourse, context of situation, and context of culture (93–112). He then discusses broadly the relation between sociolinguistics and NT study (113–31). He also surveys the concepts of discourse analysis in the next chapter (133–43) but the brevity of it and his ending confession that it is inadequate cause this reviewer to question his purpose for including it. This is followed by a discussion of ideational metafunction and register, its four major dimensions of subject matter, semantic domains, participants/actors and transitivity network, including its strengths and limitations (145–58). Porter proceeds to respond to what he believes to be Kenneth

McKay's misrepresentation of his views of time and aspect in his verbal aspect theory, and McKay's inconsistencies of argument in the process (159–74). Porter next replies to Buist Fanning's charges regarding three key issues of aspect and temporality, namely "the augment as a past time indicator," "the imperfect in relation to the present" tense-form, and the use of "performative or 'instantaneous' presents" (175–94). He concludes this section by arguing for the perfect tense-form as a stative aspect (195–215).

Part 3 consists of nine essays in which Porter demonstrates the application of "linguistically informed biblical analysis" which he presented earlier upon select biblical passages like Mark 13:5-37 (219–36), Matthew 28:19-20 (237–53) and 1 Timothy 2:8 (339–46), and on a book or corpus like the Synoptic gospels (255–76), John's gospel (277–306), and the Pauline letters (307–38). Finally, Porter concludes with essays related to the Greek word order (347–62), proper nouns in the NT (363–76), and hyponymy and the Trinity (377–84). While some contain substantial discussions of the Greek, others more broadly advances fresh analyses and results that could be gained. All of these worthily present the usefulness of GLL and which the serious researcher would want to engage in their academic studies. With high acclaims from other renowned scholars for it, Porter again establishes himself at the forefront of the study of Greek grammar and linguistics and expands the boundary of linguistic studies of the GNT for the next generation of NT scholars.

### **The Unexpected Christian Century: The Reversal and Transformation of Global Christianity, 1900-2000**

Scott W. Sunquist

Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic

2015, xxiv, 213pp., paper, \$22.99

ISBN: 978-0801097461

*Reviewed by Shivraj K. Mabendra*

The story of the development of Christianity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is a narrative of unearthing the unexpected. This narrative can be encountered as a fresh and interactive story in the present assessment and reinterpretation of Scott



W. Sunquist. The author of *Understanding Christian Mission*, and other significant books, Sunquist is the Dean of the School of Intercultural Studies and professor of World Christianity at Fuller Theological Seminary. In *The Unexpected Christian Century* he offers a carefully chosen thematic brief history of world Christianity. This is truly a fascinating summary of Christianity's most unexpected and adventurous century.

In a herculean attempt to describe the entire Christian story in his fingertips, Sunquist makes an expert utilization of five dynamic perspectives or lenses. These perspectives have also been meticulously incorporated so as to represent the scholarly themes they reflect upon. However, there are two exceptions to this format of perspectival or thematic approach. The first exception is the *Introduction* that presents the reader with a bird's eye view on the history of Christianity from the time of the Lord Jesus Christ to the end of the Christendom era. Within these fourteen pages, Sunquist quite convincingly offers us with key themes of the entire period, namely, the emergence of Christianity as a missionary religion, Christian monasticism, division of Christianity, and the rejuvenation of Christian world missions. The second exception to a thematic approach is the first chapter where the appearance of global Christianity during 1870s to 1920s has been analyzed. Dealing with the issues of colonialism, globalization, war, and the East-West quandaries of Christianities, this chapter paints a picture of Christianity as a movement towards the unexpected.

The first thematic perspective, presented in the second chapter, is fully biographical in its nature and content. Here an effort has been made to capture short stories of 25 prominent Christian individuals from across the globe that stand tall as representative followers of Christ. While the selection is impressive, the chapter redefines Christianness or Christian identity by including persons such as Mahatma Gandhi (who was not a Christian in the traditional sense of the term) from India for the impact he has on Christians. It is interesting to note that Sunquist does not begin the Indian Christian biographical note with prominent missionaries of the era such as E. Stanley Jones, or J. Waskom Pickett. Thankfully he didn't miss Sadhu Sundar Singh and Mother Teresa. Of course it was not an easy choice to make but Sunquist makes a convincing case for his selection of lives and their impacts.

The second perspective is a political lens that finds its platform in the third chapter with the issue of persecution as the central concern. The key question raised here is in what specific way has the world political phenomena shaped or affected global Christianity? Sunquist provides a statistical survey of twentieth century experiences of Christianities across the globe. Reflecting on the themes of war, communism, decolonization, and Israeli-Palestinian situation he concludes that persecution had a twofold impact on Christianity. On the one hand it has



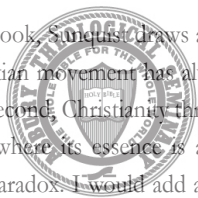
caused great decline of certain branches of Christianity and on the other hand it has triggered great growth for other branches.

Confessional or denominational perspective is the third significant perspective that Sunquist employs (in Chapter 4) to look at the status of Christianities in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He divides the entire Christian world into four confessional families: Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Spiritual (Independent and Pentecostal). The agenda is to explore the transformations that Christian denominations have witnessed within their lives in the period under focus. Highlighting the continuities and changes in each confessional body, the chapter reflects on the strength of the Orthodox theology of marriage and family, the Roman Catholics after Vatican II, the Protestants and their journey with various international councils (IMC, WCC, Lausanne, etc.), and the Spiritual families with an extraordinary growth, especially in Lafriasia (Africa, Asia and Latin America).

The fourth perspective in the Sunquistine study of global Christianity is the conspicuous theme of migration. Migration and Christianity is the subject matter of the fifth chapter. Several causes of global migration include urbanization, economics, politics, war, and of course, religion. In a careful observation and analysis of the patterns of migration the chapter argues that whereas the USA has become more Christian by migration, Europe has become more de-Christianized by it. It is quite interesting to note that Sunquist gives greater credit to the fact of migration than the missionary works for the unexpected reality of the shifting centers of world Christianity. This case may not possibly go unquestioned.

The fifth and final perspective, articulated in the sixth and last chapter, is distinctly the perspective of world religions. Christianity's encounter or proximity with other faiths and vice versa and the resultant consequences, form the content of this crucial chapter. The otherwise unimagined mutation of world religions in the new cultural contexts, now promoted by the arbitration of globalization and migrations, has been seen as fertile grounds giving births to new religious movements. Sunquist deals extensively with interreligious interactions, religious wars, and issues of conversions and their effects. He also highlights the fact that the West has become increasingly pluralistic whereas the East has become increasingly evangelistic and missionary. It is acknowledged that Christianity became truly global in 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In concluding the book, Sunquist draws at least four significant lessons: First, the power of the Christian movement has always come from the weak, the margins, and the oppressed. Second, Christianity thrives on borderlands – in mixed cultures. Third, almost everywhere its essence is apostolic in nature. Final, that the unexpected century is a paradox. I would add a fifth one: the confidence that



the author of Christian history is the God of mission. What is unexpected and unknown for us is totally under His control.

To sum up, Sunquist has successfully and convincingly painted a picture of the development of Christianity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the brilliant use of five unique colors that he calls the vantage points. Each point of view is meticulously sketched and illustrated. The concept of shifting centers of Christianity has been dominant throughout his analysis and reflection. That is, every theme is perceived from the angle of Christianity as a dynamic movement. One may not fully agree with his selection of themes and lenses, but one cannot fail to praise his effort in reinterpreting Christian history with a fresh approach and passion. Undoubtedly, *The Unexpected Christian Century* is a welcome tool providing a thoughtful thematic survey for all – promising church historians, curious common readers and established scholars in the field of Christian or religious history.

### **Acts: An Exegetical Commentary: 24:1—28:31**

Craig S. Keener

(vol. 4 of 4), Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic

2015, 1152 pp., hardcover, \$69.99

ISBN: 978-0801048395

*Reviewed by Timothy J. Christian*

World renowned New Testament scholar Craig S. Keener has released his fourth and final volume of his crowning scholarly achievement on the book of Acts, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary: 24:1—28:31*. This volume concludes his 4,459-page commentary on Acts, and continues and finishes Part 6 (To Rome via Jerusalem: Acts 20:1—28:31) beginning in 24:1 until the end of Acts in 28:31 (3349-3780 [432 pages]). The three major sections of commentary include *Paul's Defense before Authorities* (24:1-26:32), *Voyage to Rome* (27:1-28:15), and *Continuing Ministry in Rome* (28:16-31), followed by a brief postscript (3777-3780). Keener then proceeds with nearly 700 pages worth of Works Cited (3781-4082 [302 pages in three columns per page]) and Indices (4083-4459 [377 pages]). The indices include three major categories: select subjects (4083-4097 [5 pages with three columns]), authors and select names (4089-4203 [115 pages with three columns]), and other

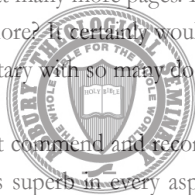
ancient sources (4205-4459 [255 pages with five columns]) such as OT Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus, Philo, Targums, Mishnah, Talmud, Rabbinic sources, Apostolic Fathers, Patristics, other early Christian documents, Nag Hammadi, NT Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, other Greek and Latin sources (4304-4445 [143 pages of citation]), other ancient and medieval sources, papyri, inscriptions, and fragmentary collections. All this makes up nearly two thirds of this 1,111-page volume, and its content is identical to the pdf files on the included CD. Keener's bibliography and indices are the evidence of the most meticulous, widely read scholar on the book of Acts that the world has ever seen. Not only so, but this volume demonstrates that Keener's commentary holds the record for not only the most secondary sources cited by a Bible commentary, but also the most primary sources (Greek and Roman sources especially) cited in comparison to the Bible.

As such, the primary and unique focus of Keener's commentary is the Greco-Roman and Jewish backgrounds of Acts. He employs, then, an interpretive method of social and rhetorical history as has been famously modeled in the socio-rhetorical commentary series produced by Eerdmans. As is obvious from his indices, Keener's citation and comparison of Acts with Greco-Roman and Jewish ancient sources is truly exhaustive.

Unlike previous volumes, Keener does not provide any excurses on pertinent background information in volume 4. His most significant insights are rhetorical ones due to the many forensic speeches that Paul gives in these final chapters of Acts. Keener, thus, cites a plethora of ancient rhetorical sources, both ancient rhetorical handbooks (rhetorical theory) and Greco-Roman speeches (rhetorical practice) in his footnotes. This fourth volume, then, continues Keener's constant drumbeat throughout all four volumes for scholars to turn to the Greco-Roman and Jewish primary sources for the interpretation of the Bible, Acts in particular.

Just as his socio-rhetorical commentary on Matthew (Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009]), so Keener does not provide a translation of Acts in this commentary. This is unfortunate, not only because it is standard for Bible commentaries, but because Keener would undoubtedly have provided another superb translation of Acts. Also, it would not have taken up that many more pages. If the publishers were willing to go 4,459 pages, why not 50 more? It certainly would have aided readers well amid such a mansion of a commentary with so many doors and rooms for one easily to get lost in.

Regardless, I cannot commend and recommend this fourth volume and the whole series enough! It is superb in every aspect, and particularly suited for



scholars and academic students of Acts. Scholars will be mining its depths for centuries to come.

### **Rediscovering Jesus: An Introduction to Biblical, Religious and Cultural Perspectives on Christ**

David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves and E. Randolph Richards

Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic

2015, 272 pp., hardcover, \$30.00

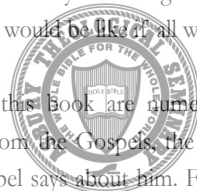
ISBN: 978-0830824724

*Reviewed by Jeremy B. Griffin*

In this book, the three authors explore who Jesus is in the New Testament, and they examine views of Jesus outside the New Testament. The book is scholarly, evangelical, well informed and the biblical theology is strong. It is written by three different scholars from three separate theological institutions. The authors previous wrote together the book *Rediscovering Paul: An Introduction to His World, Letters and Theology*.

The book is divided into two sections, and the first section is about Jesus in the New Testament. The authors examine Jesus in each Gospel, and then they look at Jesus through Paul, Hebrews, the General Epistles and Revelation. The second section of the book examines views of Jesus outside of the New Testament: The Gnostic Jesus, the Muslim Jesus, the Jesus of the Enlightenment, the Mormon Jesus, the American Jesus, and the Jesus of film. Every chapter answers three questions. First, who does Mark, or Luke, or the American Jesus, etc. (depending on the chapter) say that I am? Second, how is this Jesus different? The authors look at what differences the picture of Jesus being surveyed presents. Third, what if this were our only Jesus? The authors then examine what it would be like if the picture of Jesus being surveyed was the only knowledge we had of Jesus. It was thought provoking to consider what it would be like if all we knew about Jesus was derived from one source.

The strengths of this book are numerous. Instead of presenting a harmonious view of Jesus from the Gospels, the authors let each Gospel speak specifically to what that Gospel says about him. For instance, the chapter on the



book of Mark brings to light specific aspects about Jesus that other parts of the New Testament do not mention about him. Another noteworthy part of the book is their overall presentation of Jesus outside the New Testament. These different presentations of Jesus enable readers to see how different non New Testament versions of Jesus are. The highlight of the book for me was the end of each chapter where the authors talk about what it would be like if we only had the Jesus from Paul, or Matthew, or from Muslims, or the American Jesus.

I would highly recommend this book for undergrads in a New Testament introduction course or for a course on the theology of Jesus Christ. The book could even be used in a hermeneutics class because the book brings to light faulty Western preconceived views of Jesus. I would recommend it to those who want to rethink their understandings of Jesus and revisit New Testament views of him.

### **Effective Discipleship in Muslim Communities**

Don Little

Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic

2015, 349 pp., paper, \$32.00

ISBN: 978-0830824700

*Reviewed by Samuel Sidjabat*

This inspiring book comes out of Don Little's research for his doctoral dissertation. It consists of two paramount parts. Part one describes the biblical, theological, historical, and missiological foundations of discipleship with implications for believers from Muslim backgrounds (BMBs). Part two explains Don's field research in Arab communities on obstacles to discipleship, the aim of discipleship, issues of persecution, dealing with the demonic, financial assistance, family building, and roles of the expatriate in discipleship.

Don considers a genuine conversion to Christ, followed by baptism, as foundational in discipleship (30-37). He maintains that the dynamic of spiritual growth based on the book of Galatians and especially the need for believers led by the Spirit is very important (43-49). BMBs should also be brought to live a Christ-centered life as revealed by the book of Philippians (49-55). Based on his

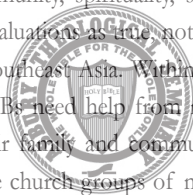
exploration of the books of Luke and Acts, Don emphasizes that discipleship is a process of leading BMBs to love Jesus Christ and to follow his steps in facing rejection and life difficulties (59-71).

The concepts of discipleship by a number of Christian leaders in the West are portrayed by Don Little as to delineate many approaches in discipleship. Chapter four deals with understanding of Allen Hadidian (1979), Le Roy Eims (1978), Allan Coppedge (1989), Ken Boa (2001), Eugene Peterson (1993), Richard Foster (1978), Gordon Smith (1989), Douglas Rumford (1996), Donald Withney (1991) and Dallas Wilard (1984, 1988, 2002, 2006). Discipleship makers among BMBs may find the works of these well-known writers helpful, only if they know that the contexts of the authors are different.

After explaining spiritual formation in the Eastern orthodox traditions including the Anglican (105-108), Don also points out important elements in discipleship namely: right practice, community relational experience, and corporate prayer, scripture reading and worship (109). Don reminds his readers to be critical of contextualization movements in evangelism and discipleship that emphasizes maintenance of a person's Muslim identity in their context of everyday life. He critiques such contextualization movements for not encouraging converts to reveal their new identity as followers of Christ. The issue of using the name of Isa, and the use of the Holy Quran in discipleship, which are often part of such contextualization movements are not touched on in this book.

In the eighth chapter Don describes his core concept of discipleship (152-165). He affirms that through discipleship BMBs are guided to live for Christ inside their family and community. For this reason, mentors need to teach them to live dependently under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The BMBs are to be trained to develop personal intimacy with God through Scripture reading, studying and prayer. They also need to grow spiritually in a community through worship and corporate prayer and a ministry of encouragement. They need to be motivated to share their new faith to their family members and neighbors as their witness for Christ.

Realizing that discipleship of BMBs is not an easy task among the Muslim community, Don helps readers to understand different areas of obstacles that include family and community, spirituality, sociopolitical and psychological aspects (169-188). I see his evaluations as true, not only in Arab communities, but also in Muslim contexts in Southeast Asia. Within such situations Don finds out that through discipleship BMBs need help from mentors in how to reveal their new identity in Christ to their family and community. It is interesting to notice Don's finding that BMBs love church groups of mostly BMBs (198-208). Hence,



formation and development of a homogenous church is foundational in their discipleship.

Other issues that are crucial in the discipleship of BMBs are facing persecution, handling demonic oppression and attack, and dealing with money. They are also true in the context where I live and serve the Lord. Don's advice in helping BMBs in facing persecution and oppression sounds encouraging. He points out the importance of teaching a theology of persecution and suffering from the New Testament, and the enhancement of fellowship, advocacy and prayer (208-223). Demons and evil spirits need to be considered from the teaching of Scripture. Don suggests practical ways to help BMBs handle spiritual warfare and to understand their unique identity and roles in Christ Jesus. On this particular point Don draws many insights from Neil Anderson (229-244). In regards to giving money to BMBs, Don explains a more important aspect that is to teach about using money in the light of Scripture. He proposes that financial help needs to be provided by national bodies and churches rather than by individual mentors. It is recommended that BMBs be trained for relevant and better work (245-262). Don further suggests the importance of Christian family discipleship so that they become models for the BMBs (263-280).

The book is valuable for Christian leaders and ministers not only in Arab communities, but also in South and Southeast Asian countries where Muslims are dominant. Don's work can help students in pastoral and mission studies, to further explore Biblical and theological principles of discipleship. His field studies can inspire Christian leaders who may develop similar and further research in relation to evangelism and discipleship among Muslim communities. As an Indonesian church leader and theological educator, I find Don's research integrated with his discipleship experience are useful for many training programs.



## The Kingdom according to Luke and Acts

Karl Allen Kuhn

Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic

2015, 336 pp., paper, \$30.00

ISBN: 978-0801048876

*Reviewed by Rachel L. Coleman*

With *The Kingdom according to Luke and Acts*, K. A. Kuhn has both enriched his growing corpus of work on Luke-Acts and distilled into easily accessible chapters the conclusions of some of his previous monographs. Kuhn approaches Luke's two-volume work as primarily a "kingdom story" with three "kingdom cadences" that are typically Lukan: (1) The kingdom offers paradigm-shattering ways of interpreting reality; (2) it integrates the categories of "religion" and "politics" in a way that is unfamiliar to post-Enlightenment, Western readers; and (3) its proclamation provokes passionate responses (xiv).

Kuhn's analysis of the Lukan kingdom portrait is divided into three sections. The first, "Luke and His World" (chap 1–3), sets the background by providing a brief but solid introduction to socio-economic realities in the Roman Empire (chap 1) and to the complexities of first-century Jewish concepts concerning the kingdom of God (chap 2). In chapter 3 (a synthesis of *Luke the Elite Evangelist*, 2010), Kuhn assesses Luke's own social location: the Third Evangelist was a member of the Israelite elite, whose calls for reversal reflect abandonment of his own elite status and values in order to embrace God's kingdom and the lordship of Jesus (63).

The heart of Kuhn's analysis is Part 2, "Luke's Narrative Artistry." Chapter 4 sets out multiple examples from both Lukan volumes of the evangelist's typical narrative techniques. Kuhn discerns that these literary strategies are employed towards a central goal: to persuade readers, at both intellectual and emotional levels, to leave behind allegiance to empire in order to embrace the kingdom (102). Kuhn then expounds on three particular Lukan narrative devices that are employed toward this kingdom goal: parallelism (chap 5), speech and theme (chap 6 and 7), and pathos (chap 8). According to Kuhn, pathos is a neglected aspect of Lukan studies (see his 2009 *The Heart of Biblical Narrative*).

In Part 3, Kuhn explores two of the large-scale implications of "Luke's Kingdom Story." Chapter 9 returns to the theme of Christians' primary allegiance to King Yahweh, while Chapter 10 deals with how kingdom living spills over into

blessing and transformation for the entire created order. The concluding chapter, “Discerning Luke’s Purposes,” skims lightly over the broader conversation about this topic, touches on the contested issue of Luke’s level of accommodation or resistance vis-à-vis Rome, addresses the issue of Israel’s tragic faithlessness, and makes a brief but tantalizing foray into “the function of the ‘good’ elite in Luke’s rhetoric” (267–70).

*The Kingdom according to Luke and Acts* is a useful introductory text for those wishing to join the ongoing conversation about the relationship between Christianity and empire. There is good interaction with the larger conversation on Luke-Acts from a variety of perspectives: historical, literary, sociological. Footnotes are kept to the minimum, but the bibliography is extensive and reflects a wide range of voices. Kuhn’s writing is uncluttered and accessible, although more mid-chapter summaries would have helped the reader keep the flow of the argument clearly in mind.

### **Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism**

Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts

Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

2015, 202 pp., paper, \$22.00

ISBN: 978-0802872241

*Reviewed by Isaiah Allen*

Misunderstanding the objectives and implications of textual criticism may compromise the validity of *otherwise* competent exegesis of the Greek New Testament (GNT). Every exegete needs to understand the discipline at some level, not least on this 500th anniversary of Erasmus’ “*Textus Receptus*.”

Porter and Pitts have three aims 1) Provide an introductory text that is neither too advanced nor too basic. Its 202 pages will not overwhelm students. The ideal reader will be conversant with Greek, perhaps through its complimentary volume *Fundamentals of New Testament Greek* (Eerdmans, 2010), also by Stanley Porter, with Jeffrey Reed. 2) Incorporate recent and pertinent developments regarding the methods and aims of textual criticism. They discuss up-to-date tools and materials and abbreviate or omit the more arcane. 3) Include the issues of



canon formation and translational philosophy in the introductory discussion. The succinct presentations of these issues are relevant to textual criticism's broader space of inquiry.

Thirteen succinct chapters are arranged as follows (titles abbreviated):

1. "What is textual criticism?" – A clearly written critical overview, benefitting from generations of hindsight on the development of major approaches – from text criticism as reconstruction to socio-historical interpretation. The authors argue that the primary aim of textual criticism is reconstruction. An established text is basic to both exegesis and to discerning variations.

2. "Canon" – A general discussion of canon formation, unencumbered with detail, placing textual criticism within historical context. The authors demonstrate the importance of text criticism for canon studies and vice versa. They argue that the canon formation process was sped, but not initiated, by second-century heresies.

3. "Materials and Methods" – Chapter 2 portrays the sacred and liturgical context of NT Manuscripts (MSS), this one presents their literary-cultural context. The authors challenge the "unfounded...disjunction between orality and literacy," arguing that writing materials were less expensive than generally assumed and that a robust book culture engendered different levels and kinds of literacy (35). They briefly describe the main materials (papyrus, codex, parchment, uncial, etc.) with monochrome photos.

4. "The Major Witnesses" – A concise catalog of manuscript kinds (e.g., papyri, uncials, versions), charting, listing, or describing significant witnesses (e.g., P52, Sinaiticus, Tatian's *Diatessaron*) under each category.

5. "Text Types" – Succinct descriptions of the four major textual traditions in terms of their history and key MSS. The authors argue their relative value, expanding discussion of the Byzantine type to refute the KJV-only assumption of its superiority.

6. "What Is a Textual Variant?" – The authors explain why variations in MSS are not evaluated in isolation but correlated to clusters of variants and text types. They promote the use of discourse analysis in marking variant unit boundaries – the "linguistically based approach" (86).

Four chapters on method follow, arranged according to their relative weight for establishing a text: 7. "Modern Methodologies;" 8. "Weighing External Evidence;" 9. "Transcriptional Probabilities;" and 10. "Intrinsic Probabilities." Each helpfully outlines concrete steps and rules. Though the actual dialectic process of textual criticism may not unfold in the linear sequence the presentation implies, their step-by-step process invites students to engage actively, gaining both knowledge

and practical skill. The authors consciously present methods and corresponding assumptions objectively, relegating criticisms to the footnotes. Occasionally, they model these methods and suggest their exegetical import.

Discussing internal evidence, Porter and Pitts focus on author tendencies, admitting these are secondary and controversial sources of evidence. Here, the authors raise the issue of doctrinal alterations in sustained critical dialogue with Bart Ehrman, concluding that such were rare.

11. “Modern Critical Editions” – A brief, appreciative history of major milestones toward the latest generation of eclectic editions, summarizing the circumstances, motivations, and approaches behind Ximenes, Von Soden, Westcott and Hort, and others.

12. “A Guide to *UBSGNT*<sup>4/5</sup> and *NA*<sup>27/28\*</sup>” – The authors give both description and critique. Their explanations of the major features of the apparatuses are very concise and straightforward; they refer readers to the respective introductions for fuller detail. Some of their critiques: They convey ambivalence about the partial revision, involving the Catholic letters, which introduced inconsistencies into the *NA*<sup>28</sup> and *UBS*<sup>5</sup>. They disapprove of bracketing uncertain readings in *NA*<sup>28</sup>. In their opinion, no such confusion need appear in the text, because readers have less evidence and expertise to make decisions than editorial committees; the apparatus should explain any difficulties. They alert readers to the relativity of *UBS*’s rating system.

13. Text and Translation – Not conventionally discussed in connection with textual criticism, translation is an important outcome. Every GNT reader is a translator at some level. Further, an eclectic GNT is a foundational tool for vocational as well as exegetical translators.

Each chapter includes a succinct summary, a list of “key terminology” (undefined), and a categorized topical bibliography. Commendably, the authors present contrasting views in sympathetic, succinct, and unbiased language. They state which views they favor, and their reasons are clearly argued.

An Appendix provides an up-to-date, annotated tool guide, including websites for viewing important manuscripts. The listing of other resources is somewhat limited. It has indices of modern authors and of Bible and ancient sources. A subject index or glossary could enhance the book as a reference.

Additional comments: Porter and Pitts abbreviate discussions concerning any edition aside from *UBSGNT* and *NA* (e.g., Von Soden, Tischendorf), limiting exposure to and understanding of the context of current editions. They do not describe in detail the technical aspects of the textual trade. They seemed unusually interested in arguing against KJV-only Majority Text advocates (106, 141, 182-183).

Conclusion: This concise book is suited for teaching introduction to textual criticism at undergraduate or graduate levels. It is not overly technical. Specific strengths: 1) incorporating recent, pertinent developments; 2) bypassing arcane topics, making it a more practical introduction, realistic about what tools today's students use; and 3) advancing the consideration of historical and cultural contexts for textual criticism.

**Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory: Rethinking the Things That Matter Most: A Protestant View of the Cosmic Drama**

Jerry L. Walls

Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press

2015, 240 pp., paper, \$19.99

ISBN: 978-1587433566

*Reviewed by Timothy J. Christian*

In his 2015 Brazos Press publication *Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory: Rethinking the Things That Matter Most: A Protestant View of the Cosmic Drama*, theologian Jerry L. Walls argues that the Christian doctrines of heaven, hell, and purgatory are rationally and emotionally satisfying in our cynical, disappointed, suspicious, post-Nietzsche, postmodern world. He discusses difficult questions such as, “Is heaven too good to be true?” “If God is love, why is there Hell?” “If we are saved by grace, why do we need purgatory?” “How are our personal identities preserved in the afterlife?” and “Can people repent after they die?” Although no one will agree with all his conclusions, there are still multiple reasons to read Walls’ work. First, he offers a logically sound, philosophically astute, and theologically piercing critique of the modern and postmodern critiques of the Christian doctrines of the afterlife, which will benefit Christians regardless of theological tradition. Second, it is evident that Walls has thought deeply about these most important matters and his writing forces readers to do the same. Third, Walls is open to other perspectives outside of his Protestant tradition (namely, purgatory), which demonstrates an attempt towards objectivity. Fourth, he has incorporated physical, future resurrection on the renewed earth and heavens into his understanding of “heaven” proper. Lastly,

he gives an alternative Protestant perspective to the oft overly harsh Calvinist and Reformed views of the afterlife.

Nevertheless, Walls is not beyond criticism. My strongest critique concerns his subtitle's claim to be a Protestant view. First, whenever one discusses Protestant theology, Scripture must be at the center of discussion. *Sola Scriptura* is the longstanding heart cry of the Protestant tradition, yet Walls cites and discusses so little Scripture in this volume that a separate Scripture index could not have been produced. Of course, this is not entirely Walls' fault because in fact heaven, hell, and especially purgatory do not occur all that often in the Bible. In other words, Scripture provides little data for forming *full-fledged* doctrines of the afterlife. Of course he does discuss some Scripture, but a problem arises concerning his argument for purgatory, as he provides no scriptural *support* for it. He does rebut those who say certain passages rule out purgatory. However, he then equates this as a demonstration that Scripture in fact supports purgatory because it does not rule it out, but this is the informal fallacy *argumentum ad ignorantiam* – because it has not been proven false, therefore it is true. Walls has more work to do regarding Scripture and these doctrines if his book is to be truly Protestant.

Second, purgatory is not a Protestant view, rather Catholic. He rightly points out that a small minority of Protestants has held this view (himself, C. S. Lewis, and others), but that does not make it Protestant. If anything, it means that a very small minority of Protestants has adopted a Catholic view, but this does not therefore make it Protestant. Now I appreciate his understanding of purgatory as primarily sanctification and hope (not merely as satisfying the punishment of God), yet this too has problems, not the least of which because Scripture teaches that sanctification is for this life in the here and now, and nowhere espouses that sanctification will be an ongoing process in a postmortem, interim place of purging. Another problem has to do with his so-called “optimal grace” which purports that *many* can and will repent...after death! At least two problems exist with such a claim from a scriptural standpoint. Firstly, Scripture affirms that repentance is for the here and now; just refresh your memory of John the Baptist's preaching against the scribes and Pharisees. Secondly, Jesus states (perhaps prophesies) in the Sermon on the Mount that *many* take the road to destruction and only a *few* take the narrow road leading to life (Matt 7:13-14). Indeed, God desires all people to be saved, but this does not mean that all or even many will choose his gift of eternal love, and perhaps here Jesus shares some foreknowledge with us.

Third, his view of Hell being locked from the inside is not a scriptural perspective, but based solely upon C. S. Lewis. In Rev 1:18, Jesus says, “I have the keys of Death and Hades” (NRSV). Although Hell (*gehenna*) is distinct from these,

this still suggests that God (the Son) has authority over the afterlife. Moreover, later in Rev 19-20, God is depicted as throwing people into the lake of fire (euphemism for Hell): the beast and false prophet (19:20), the dragon/devil (20:1-10), and all whose names were not in the book of life (20:15). In Revelation at least, God is the just Judge who condemns the unrighteous to Hell, locking the door from the outside.

These critiques, however, should not discourage readers. Walls has shared with us his world-class expertise on the Christian afterlife, and everyone - laity, students, pastors, scholars and all - will learn and be challenged anew by what he has to offer.

### **Systematic Theology**

Anthony Thiselton

Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

2015, 467 pp., hardcover, \$40.00

ISBN: 978-0-8028-7272-2

*Reviewed by Zachariah S. Motts*

Systematic theologies are full of choices, choices that make each one unique and imprinted by the interests of the author. Perhaps short systematic theologies are especially so. Anthony Thiselton has once again invited us to take a walk with him through theology in an accessible, frequently insightful, one-volume systematic theology. This brief foray is marked by Thiselton's broad mastery of theology, philosophy, and Biblical scholarship, as well as his pastoral concern for contemporary issues.

The book is structured for use in a university setting. There are fifteen chapters to match a fifteen-week semester. Of course, among these chapters are the requisite chapters that one expects in every systematic theology on Trinity, creation, Christology, theories of atonement, pneumatology, and eschatology. However, many of these topics are approached from surprising angles. The standard chapter on theories of atonement is entitled, "Why Consider Historical Theologies of the Atonement?" The second chapter on the Holy Spirit, which covers historical pneumatology, actually begins with an exploration of the contemporary Pentecostal

movement before moving to pneumatology before Nicaea. There is a concern within the structure of the book to start with questions and topics that will create an entry-point for the student into the dialogue with tradition.

Thiselton is also surprising and refreshing in the perhaps non-requisite chapters that he includes. A short systematic theology is full of choices and Thiselton often apologizes for not being able to expand certain discussions further within the 389-page body of this text. The conversations that are developed, then, are deliberate. For Thiselton, the rise of atheism must be discussed and is given an entire chapter where he explores Feuerbach, Freud, Nietzsche, and Marx entitled “The Challenge of Atheism: Lessons for Christians.” In a chapter on nonhuman creation, a discussion on the status of animals is given significant space within the text. This ecological conversation is carried on with Calvin, Singer, Origin, Linzey, Pannenberg, and many others. One can tell that the topics discussed are reflective of a long and listening interaction with students and the live questions of today. Of course, all of this occurs within the matrix of Thiselton’s brand of careful Bible exegesis, easy familiarity with historical theology, and hermeneutical insight.

For professors and students of systematic theology, Thiselton’s work is worth consideration. Because of the large amount of quotation from a wide range of theologians, coupling this book with *The Thiselton Companion to Christian Theology* would be helpful for the student starting out in theology. The *Companion* provides biographical background for many of those quoted in *Systematic Theology*. This would help orient the student to the theological conversation. Both of these books are geared for the classroom. With *Systematic Theology*, Anthony Thiselton has created another helpful, accessible tool for the student of theology.



### **The Sacrifice of Africa**

Emmanuel Katangole

Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

2011, 224 pp., paper, \$16.00

ISBN: 978-0802862686

*Reviewed by Babatunde Oladimeji*

The book is divided into three parts; sacrificing Africa, daring to invent the future and the sacrifice of Africa.

Christianity is growing in Africa at an unprecedented level. However, there is also the growth of the realities of poverty, violence and civil war. Africa is therefore in between the churches and the coffins (31).

Emmanuel Katangole opines that the Christian social ethics in Africa has always focused on the issues of strategizing for better institutions so that the nation-state can function properly. His thesis however is that attention must be paid to how and why the institution works the way it works, and so he investigates the impact the Christian story can make on the existing politics of Africa. He affirms that politics is about stories and imaginations. Getting a viable alternative story will impact the values, aims, goals and possibilities in Africa. He asserts that there is an interconnection of story, politics, violence and the challenge that Christianity faces in Africa, as he highlights the five most critical challenges facing Christian social ethics in Africa.

The real problem therefore was not the inability of the nation-state to provide basic services like infrastructure, healthcare, food and so on. The real problem is the destruction or downgrading of the African's own institutions and cultures (82). The nation state is framing the lives of Africans within the "telos of nothing good here" and through this hopelessness shapes an expectation of mere survival (83). This denial of purpose makes human life not be saved and so human lives in Africa is made cheap and disposable. This is seen everywhere on the continent. A recent one is the menace of the Boko Haram terrorist group with the bombings and kidnapping of women and children.

The fight for the spot in politics has driven the elites in Africa to make the masses a prey that can be recruited into whatever they want them to be involved, such as tribalism, warfare, or terrorism for the selfish interest of the political class.

Furthermore, Katangole analyzes the attempts of the church to reverse the situation of African social history. Three major paradigms are presented. *The deeper Evangelization*, which is a spiritual paradigm; *development and relief*, which is a political paradigm; *mediation, advocacy and reconciliation*, which is a political paradigm. He affirms that the church in Africa has not been able to fully engage social issues because of the Western dichotomy and dualism that separates religion from politics.

The character that depicts the society formed by the definitions of power are domination and invincibility, and when societies are built on this concept, then the violence in which the weak are sacrificed and the very strong get consumed in their own violence is inevitable (126). It is a culture that that exalts warrior virtues and fears the show of affection because affection is seen as a sign of weakness. Power is seen as domination and invincibility.

The author strongly opines that if the church in Africa remains grounded with seeing power as domination and invincibility, then it will be difficult to correct the continue violence and alienation which has become a major character of post-colonial Africa (131).

Katangole's work has a very strong practical approach and gives examples of how Africans can begin to take responsibility in building their own destinies. He also avoided a lot of jargon thereby making his work more assessable. It tells the African story in a very pragmatic way.

I also like his strong emphasis on the role of the Eucharist as we derive our strength and the spirituality we need to do the work. Using the Eucharist is a rallying point, Katangole affirms that the Eucharist is "not just an internal spirituality; it is a social praxis"(187). It covers every area of our lives.

The stories at the end of the book are very touching and helpful as the author leaves the realm of mere theories and paints the picture in a very vivid way using the world of reality.

This book is very accessible to everyone, especially undergraduate students in African and Peace studies. It will also be valuable to postgraduate students and researchers working on African Christianity, with special emphasis on those doing development work. The book reveals the incredible power of stories.



## **The Gospel and Pluralism Today: Reassessing Lesslie Newbigin in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Scott Sunquist and Amos Young, eds.

Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

2015, 240 pp., paperback, \$28.00

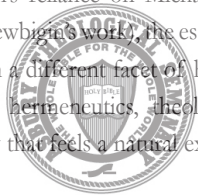
ISBN: 978-0-8308-5094-5

*Reviewed by Zachariah S. Motts*

Within missiology, there are many seminal voices, which are buried under the popular and faddish publications that glut the market. I fear Lesslie Newbigin may have become one of those voices. As a bishop, missionary, and pastor who worked to heal the fragmentation of the church and find ways to engage the modern, secular West, there is much that Newbigin still has to teach us today. Happily, Scott Sunquist and Amos Young have given us an opportunity to sit at the feet of Bishop Newbigin once again through a collection of ten essays. *The Gospel and Pluralism Today*, as a careful and creative review of Newbigin's thought, is a chance to hold a buried gem to the sun and watch it catch fire once again.

This collection of essays is primarily interacting with Newbigin's *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. This was a book published in 1989 during the last decade of Newbigin's life. However, Newbigin shows no signs of fading in his mental powers as he struggles with the way the church has become domesticated and marginalized by Western culture. He brings together a winsome theology with a philosophical rigor willing to engage all comers in his quest to show that Christianity must take its place in the public square and not be relegated to the realm of private values. Newbigin lays out a prescient vision for the church today, which is navigating a globalized, semi-secularized, pluralist world.

As the essayists of *The Gospel and Pluralism Today* begin to unpack Newbigin's masterwork once again, it quickly becomes apparent how much depth there remains to be sounded within Newbigin's thought. Although there is much repeated talk about Newbigin's reliance on Michael Polanyi (who provided the philosophical backbone for Newbigin's work), the essays are well chosen in that each approaches Newbigin through a different facet of his overall project: ecclesiology, epistemology, pneumatology, hermeneutics, theology. The essays unfold the thought of Newbigin in a way that feels a natural extension of Newbigin's original



journey. Newbigin's work is not just a jumping-off point for scholarly musings, but a respected dialogue partner given a chance to speak to us once again.

This respect creates fertile ground for many illuminating insights. Growing out of Newbigin's experienced and nuanced stance toward the world and the church are many needful discussions for the pastor and missionary today. It has been more than twenty-five years since the publishing of *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, but I, as a missionary, find myself reading both Newbigin and this collection of essays with pen in hand, wishing that I had encountered more wisdom like this much earlier in life. This book has done a service to the Christian community by giving us a chance to explore Newbigin and humbly ask in the 21<sup>st</sup> century what we may have missed and what we must still learn. Even here in the twilight of modernism, Lesslie Newbigin continues to call Christianity forward to encounter the world in the public square with a bold and humble spirit.

### **Ubuntu, Migration and Ministry. Being Human in a Johannesburg Church**

Elina Hankela

Studies in Systematic Theology, 15

Leiden, Boston: Brill

2014, xii, 421 pp., paper, \$53.35

ISBN: 987-90-04-27186-9

*Reviewed by David Bundy*

The inner city Central Methodist Mission (CMM) tradition began with the CMM Liverpool (1875) and more famously the Sydney CMM in 1884. These were conceived as efforts to revitalize a congregation by intentionally engaging with the surrounding culture more nimbly and with more extensive services than a traditional congregation could normally muster. Johannesburg is one of the several cities of the world that followed the examples of Liverpool and Sydney. The Central Methodist Mission (CMM) in Johannesburg under the leadership of the Reverend Peter Storey, was a key component of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa.

Today there is another struggle. In the huge six-story building houses between three and six thousand immigrants and homeless persons struggling to survive are offered hospitality and services by the congregation and church staff.

The situation is not easy for the congregation, which still worships there and seeks to minister or for those whose sleeping forms fill nearly every space each night. Elina Hankela, a Finnish scholar, spent 2009 at the CMM as a participant observer. The resulting book is a result of that year of graduate work, a sort of snapshot of the work of the CMM from about 2000 to about 2009, based primarily on ethnographic fieldwork done in 2009. As such it is a contribution to understanding the ongoing ministry of Methodists and of the Central Mission tradition within Methodism. However it is much more than that!

Hankela's work is an empirical case study in social ethics. The Nguni term *Ubuntu* (being human in community; "a person is a person through other persons") serves as an organizing focus for the book which is divided into three parts. In the first section (pp. 13-136), Hankela describes the Johannesburg CMM as well as the methodology, theoretical framework, and social context of her research. The second section (pp. 137-244) explores the church's vision of *Ubuntu*, as articulated by the leadership of the CMM, identifying issues of context, power, and management that prevent the fulfillment of that vision. Special attention is given to Bishop Verryn.

The third section (pp. 245-398) focuses on the local church members, refugees (primarily Zimbabwean) and homeless persons who must live daily lives in structures that would deprive them of *Ubuntu* because of xenophobia (nationalism, ethnocentrism), and economics. It is not that all interactions are negative or xenophobic; more positive exchanges are also reported. Hankela argues that, while the structures of the situation generally work against development of *Ubuntu*, the intentional but limited encounters between church members and youth provide the best opportunity for *Ubuntu*.

The result is a powerful narrative of the intense engagement of Christians through the CMM, both migrant and non-migrant, in their efforts to minister and survive in a modern urban situation. It provides a carefully nuanced introduction to this South African urban ministry and its context, treating migrants and non-migrants as actors, not passive recipients of mission aid. The book is a model of scholarly reporting and analysis. It is to be hoped that other studies of ministry endeavors throughout the world will receive such careful attention. Before doctoral students and other researchers begin their work, they would do well to read the work of Elina Hankela.



## *Books Received*

The following books were received by the editor's office since the last issue of *The Asbury Journal*. The editor is seeking people interested in writing book reviews on these or other relevant books for publication in future issues of *The Asbury Journal*. Please contact the editor ([Robert.danielson@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:Robert.danielson@asburyseminary.edu)) if you are interested in reviewing a particular title. Reviews will be assigned on a first come basis.

Anizor, Uche and Hank Voss

2016 *Representing Christ: A Vision for the Priesthood of All Believers*.  
Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.  
ISBN: 978-0-8308-5128-7. Price: \$20.00.

Bass, Dorothy C., Kathleen A. Cahalan, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, James R. Nieman, and Christian B. Scharen

2016 *Christian Practical Wisdom: What it is and Why it Matters*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.  
ISBN: 978-0-8028-6873-2. Price: \$30.00.

Boda, Mark J.

2016 *The Book of Zechariah*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans.  
ISBN: 978-0-8028-2375-5. Price: \$58.00.

Boers, Arthur

2015 *Servants and Fools: A Biblical Theology of Leadership*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. ISBN: 978-1-4267-9978-5.  
Price: \$19.99.

Bray, Gerald

2016 *The Church: A Theological and Historical Account*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8010-3086-4.  
Price: \$24.99.

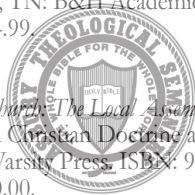
Carson, D. A., ed.

2016 *The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6576-2.  
Price: \$65.00.

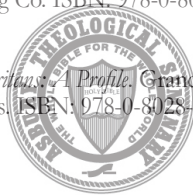
- Cooper, Derek  
2016 *Introduction to World Christian History*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. ISBN: 978-0-8308-4088-5. Price: \$18.00.
- Danker, Ryan Nicholas  
2016 *Wesley and the Anglicans: Political Division in Early Evangelicalism*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. ISBN: 978-0-8308-5122-5. Price: \$26.00.
- Downs, David J.  
2016 *The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7313-2. Price: \$35.00.
- Flett, John G.  
2016 *Apostolicity: The Ecumenical Question in World Christian Perspective*. Missiological Engagements. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. ISBN: 978-0-8308-5095-2. Price: \$40.00.
- Fortson, S. Donald, III and Rollin G. Grams  
2016 *Unchanging Witness: The Consistent Christian Teaching on Homosexuality in Scripture and Tradition*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic. ISBN: 978-1-4336-8792-1. Price: \$34.99.
- González, Justo L.  
2015 *Creation: The Apple of God's Eye*. Belief Matters. William H. Willimon, general editor. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. ISBN: 978-1-4267-8595-5. Price: \$13.99.
- Green, Joel  
2015 *Conversion in Luke-Acts: Divine Action, Human Cognition, and the People of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8010-9760-7. Price: \$25.00.
- Hart, Addison Hodges  
2016 *The Woman, The Hour, and The Garden: A Study of Imagery in the Gospel of John*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7339-2. Price: \$15.00.
- Hauerwas, Stanley and William H. Willimon  
2015 *The Holy Spirit*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. ISBN: 978-1-4267-7863-6. Price: \$13.99.
- Henriksen, Jan-Olav and Karl Olav Sandnes  
2016 *Jesus as Healer: A Gospel for the Body*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7331-6. Price: \$35.00.



- Jamieson, Bobby  
2016 *Understanding Baptism*. Church Basics. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group. ISBN: 978-1-4336-8887-4. Price: \$7.99.
- Jamieson, Philip D.  
2016 *The Face of Forgiveness: A Pastoral Theology of Shame and Redemption*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. ISBN: 978-0-8308-4099-1. Price: \$18.00.
- Jones, Beth Felker and Jeffrey W. Barbeau, eds.  
2016 *The Image of God in an Image Driven Age: Explorations in Theological Anthropology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. ISBN: 978-0-8308-5120-1. Price: \$28.00.
- Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti  
2016 *Spirit and Salvation*. A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World, volume 4. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6856-5. Price: \$40.00.
- Keener, Craig S.  
2016 *The Mind of the Spirit: Paul's Approach to Transformed Thinking*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8010-9776-8. Price: \$32.99.
- Kinghorn, Kevin  
2016 *A Framework For The Good*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press. ISBN: 978-0-268-03330-9. Price: \$45.00.
- Köstenberger, Andreas J., Benjamin L. Merkle, and Robert L. Plummer  
2016 *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek: An Intermediate Study of the Grammar and Syntax of the New Testament*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic. ISBN: 978-1-4336-7908-7. Price: \$19.99.
- Kreglinger, Gisela H.  
2016 *The Spirituality of Wine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6789-6. Price: \$24.00.
- Leeman, Jonathan  
2016 *Understanding the Congregation's Authority*. Church Basics. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group. ISBN: 978-1-4336-8893-5. Price: \$7.99.
- Leeman, Jonathan  
2016 *Don't Fire Your Church Members: The Case for Congregationalism*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic. ISBN: 978-1-4336-8623-8. Price: \$24.99.
- Leeman, Jonathan  
2016 *Political Church: The Local Assembly as Embassy of Christ's Rule*. Studies in Christian Doctrine and Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. ISBN: 978-0-8308-4880-5. Price: \$40.00.



- Lewis, Robert Brian  
2016 *Paul's 'Spirit of Adoption' In Its Roman Imperial Context.* Library of New Testament Studies. New York, NY: Bloomsbury T&T Clark. ISBN: 978-0-567-66388-7. Price: \$112.00.
- Longenecker, Richard N.  
2016 *The Epistle to the Romans.* The New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-2448-6. Price: \$80.00.
- Maag, Karin  
2016 *Lifting Hearts to the Lord: Worship with John Calvin in Sixteenth-Century Geneva.* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7147-3. Price: \$28.00.
- McKnight, Scot and Joseph B. Modica, eds.  
2016 *The Apostle Paul and the Christian Life: Ethical and Missional Implications of the New Perspective.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8010-4976-7. Price: \$22.99.
- McPherson, Joseph D.  
2016 *Just as New as Christianity: An Early Methodist Critique of Modern Holiness Teaching.* Evansville, IN: Fundamental Wesleyan Publishers. ISBN: 978-1-4343-2981-3. Price: \$20.00.
- Morales, L. Michael  
2016 *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus.* New Studies in Biblical Theology. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. ISBN: 978-0-8308-2638-4. Price: \$27.00.
- Offutt, Stephen, F. David Bronkema, Krisanne Vaillancourt Murphy, Robb Davis, Gregg Okesson  
2016 *Advocating for Justice: An Evangelical Vision for Transforming Systems and Structures.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. ISBN: 978-0-8010-9765-2. Price: \$22.99.
- Papandrea, James L.  
2016 *The Earliest Christologies: Five Images of Christ in the Postapostolic Age.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. ISBN: 978-0-8308-5127-0. Price: \$18.00.
- Provan, Iain  
2016 *Discovering Genesis: Content, Interpretation, Reception.* Discovering Biblical Texts. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7237-1. Price: \$22.00.
- Pummer, Reinhard  
2016 *The Samaritans: A Profile.* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6768-1. Price: \$30.00.



Root, Jerry and Mark Neal

2015 *The Surprising Imagination of C.S. Lewis: An Introduction.*  
Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.  
ISBN: 978-1-4267-9510-7. Price: \$34.99.

Smith, David I. and Susan M. Felch

2016 *Teaching and Christian Imagination.* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7323-1. Price: \$22.00.

Thiselton, Anthony C.

2016 *A Shorter Guide to the Holy Spirit: Bible, Doctrine, Experience.*  
Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.  
ISBN: 978-0-8028-7349-1. Price: \$24.00.

Thomas, John Christopher and Frank D. Macchia

2016 *Revelation.* The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary.  
Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans.  
ISBN: 978-0-8028-2554-4. Price: \$36.00.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J.

2016 *Pictures at a Theological Exhibition: Scenes of the Church's Worship, Witness and Wisdom.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.  
ISBN: 978-0-8308-3959-9. Price: \$20.00.

Wellum, Stephen J. and Brent E. Parker, eds.

2016 *Progressive Covenantalism.* Nashville, TN: B&H Academic.  
ISBN: 978-1-4336-8402-9. Price: \$32.99.

Wilde, Alexander, ed.

2016 *Religious Responses to Violence: Human Rights in Latin America Past and Present.* Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press. ISBN: 978-0-268-04431-2. Price: \$49.00.

Wright, N. T.

2016 *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. ISBN: 978-0-8308-5139-3. Price: \$22.00.

Yarnell, Malcom B., III

2016 *God The Trinity: Biblical Portraits.* Nashville, TN: B&H Academic. ISBN: 978-1-4336-8074-8. Price: \$29.99.

Ziolkowski, Theodore

2016 *Uses and Abuses of Moses: Literary Representations Since the Enlightenment.* Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press. ISBN: 978-0-268-04502-9. Price: \$60.00.





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