

REFORMATION TODAY

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- ▶ Martin Luther and the Age of the Printing Press
- ▶ William Tyndale
- ▶ Divine Intent: 16th Century Protestant Biblical Interpretation
- ▶ Help! I can't Forgive (part 4)

The Reformation: 500th Anniversary



Editorial

The Lord has promised to be with his church to the end of the age (Matt 28:20). Our Lord will also achieve all his purposes, as we read in Ephesians 1:11 that he works all things according to the counsel of his will (see also Is 46:10). We can see the truth of these statements in the history of the church, of which the Reformation is a major example.

This is why the study of the history of the Reformation is so profoundly instructive and encouraging. I would therefore like to express our gratitude to Dr Michael Haykin for assembling the series of articles for this special issue of *Reformation Today* celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

These articles illustrate the truths mentioned above. The providence of the Lord shines through the events and circumstances of making the Scriptures available in the language of ordinary people, as the history of William Tyndale shows (see article by Joseph Carmichael). The printing of the Scriptures and other ground-breaking Reformation literature was greatly facilitated through the invention of the printing press, as we can read in Jeff Straub's illuminating article. At a time when the teaching and preaching became obscured by false man-made ideas, God in his grace provided the means to make the Scriptures widely available so that people 'could examine if these things were so' (Acts 17:11).

Although certainly a wonderful privilege, it is also a major responsibility as we need to think about how we read and how we interpret what we read. This brings us to the topic of hermeneutics, a topic which is again of utmost importance in our current culture. People nowadays express all kinds of doubts about our ability in this regard. That is why it is all the more important that we get clear, biblical guidelines about this. Although perhaps a more demanding read than other articles, the paper by Andrew Ballitch is worth the effort and will help us to obtain a clear view on the way to read and interpret the Scriptures.

The Lord's providential rule over the history of the world and the church did not end with the Reformation, but continues to this day. I am hugely encouraged by the developments in Germany. This is the country where the Reformation began, but where so much of it has been lost. Now the Lord has raised up people to proclaim the gospel of God's free grace and the biblical doctrines of the Reformation again. I am especially referring to the work of Evangelium 21, which started less than ten years ago. The story is another example of God's providence. Evangelium 21 has held several conferences and published an impressive amount of material (newly written and/or translated). Their most recent conference in April in Hamburg focused on the Reformation with a number of speakers from Germany and the USA. Please be instructed and encouraged by the report written by Ryan Hoselton and Ron Kubsch, for which we are most grateful. ■

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MARTIN LUTHER and the AGE OF THE PRINTING PRESS

Seeing the Hand of God in History

Introduction

History is the story of God's movement in humanity. God is not in history but history is in God. Sometimes God, by the good hand of his providence, brings together two seemingly detached events, the confluence of which alters the flow of history in radical ways. Of course, 'alters' is the wrong word if one believes in divine providence. The one with a high view of Scripture recognises that God governs history. Nothing just happens. God is sovereignly in control. However, some events arise at unique times in history that might have had a lesser impact on history had they not occurred.

To illustrate this from our recent lifetime, consider the so-called Arab Spring, a movement of protest and government change, from late 2010 through to mid-2012, that saw the downfall of Tunisia's president, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Libya's Muammar Gaddafi and Egypt's president Hosni Mubarak. Social unrest ripped across North Africa as Arabs clamoured for freedom of speech and a forum for civil engagement. More than a dozen countries stretching from Morocco in the west to Oman in the east felt the effects of the uprising, some more so than others.

What is currently a matter of debate is the effect that social media (eg Facebook and Twitter) played in the formation and spread of the protest movements. Did social media foster the uprisings or did they merely alert the world to their presence? It is not our purpose to answer that question here, only to illustrate how timing is everything.

A similar observation could be made regarding the Protestant Reformation, this year celebrating its 500th anniversary. God brought into this world a German monk, Martin Luther (1483–1546), in a relatively obscure town in Saxony, whose writings would radically reshape Christianity. A little earlier, God raised up, in another town not far away, an inventor, Johannes Gutenberg (c1398–1468), whose modern marvel, the moveable-type press, would not long thereafter enable both the rapid reproduction and widespread dissemination of Martin Luther's writings. It's true that their lives didn't overlap, hence they



never met. But, in the providence of God, Gutenberg's invention became the mechanism that brought Luther's ideas into the public eye.

Martin Luther certainly wasn't the first to protest the irregularities of the Church of Rome. Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498) had said similar things a generation before Luther, Jan Huss (1369–1415) did the same a generation before Savonarola and John Wycliffe (c1325–1384), still earlier cried out against ecclesiastical abuses. What makes the Luther story a fascinating event is the role that the printing press had in disseminating Luther's views. None of his predecessors had such a tool. They came and went with only minor notice, relatively speaking.

I am not suggesting that Luther deliberately used the press to further his agenda, at least not at first. As with the influence of social media on the Arab Spring, there is considerable debate on the role that printing played in the Protestant Reformation. However, from the studies that have been done recently in academic circles, it seems pretty apparent that Martin Luther was the first person to use the printing press as a propagandist. Luther became a cause célèbre, in no small part, due to modern printing and publishing. At the same time, Luther himself, whether directly or indirectly, helped to shape the use and role that printing would have in the future of the world. In his providence, God raised Luther up at the point in human history where his ideas could receive a wider

dissemination than would have been possible in the previous fifteen centuries.

God's Providence

This essay is an attempt to summarise the confluence of printing and the Reformation so that the providential hand of God might be acknowledged. I am aware of C S Lewis's critique of historicism in 1950, on the danger of attributing causation, especially divine causation, to historical events. However, as a believer with a commitment to the five solas, which include sola Scriptura, I am unable

to avoid altogether recognising the hand of God in history, at least providentially. I cannot with certainty say that God caused event 'a' to produce situation 'b'. Short of divine revelation, none of us can say this. Many remember the infamous statement of American Baptist pastor Jerry Falwell who stated emphatically that 9/11 happened because of America's wickedness. Perhaps it did, but I am not sure how Jerry would know that. Nevertheless, as

I look at the flow of history, I am struck with remarkable coincidences that seem to point to a divine plan being at work. Shouldn't I expect to see some of this in history? So, with fear and trepidation, let's consider Luther and the printing press and the providence of God.

Luther's 95 Theses

When Martin Luther produced his 95 Theses, his intent was hardly radical. The document was written in Latin and directed at a small academic community as a formal invitation to a discussion on one small aspect of Roman Catholic

What makes the Luther story a fascinating event is the role that the printing press had in disseminating Luther's views.

ecclesiastical life – the sale of plenary indulgences. Another monk, a Dominican by the name of Tetzel, was selling the promise of a full pardon of leftover sins that the dead needed to have satisfied in Purgatory. It was a pretty attractive offer. For the payment of money, someone could buy off God for himself or someone else.

The circumstances of Tetzel's business are well known. He was assisting Albrecht of Brandenburg to pay off his rather substantial debt to the banking house of the Fuggars who had loaned him the money to purchase his ecclesiastical office. In order to conduct the sale, the Pope, Leo IX, saw an opportunity to refill the rather depleted Roman coffers as he was in the midst of rebuilding a magnificent new church (church is hardly the word to use for St Peter's Basilica in Rome). Leo and Albrecht split the revenues minus Tetzel's commission. It seemed to be a win-win proposition for everyone, everyone except the poor Saxon Germans who were being fleeced by the church.

Luther protested to his elector, Frederick the Wise, who revoked Tetzel's licence to do business in Saxony, only for Tetzel to set up shop just beyond its borders, enabling Saxons to purchase their indulgences from Tetzel anyway. Enter Martin Luther. He wanted to hold a civil discourse on the whole affair. It seemed to him that the Pope, being the charitable man that he was, would want to grant a plenary indulgence to all believers if he had the opportunity. Moreover, the notion was absurd that the Pope had the

power to grant forgiveness of sins that were committed against God. Surely, he could only forgive infractions committed against himself; he had no power to cancel divine debt. The Pope wouldn't support Tetzel's chicanery, would he?

Luther wanted a discussion. What he got was a war. Rather than Luther's *Theses* only being passed around to the rather small audience they were intended for, a copy made its way into Albrecht's hands who had it translated into German and then printed and circulated, ostensibly to

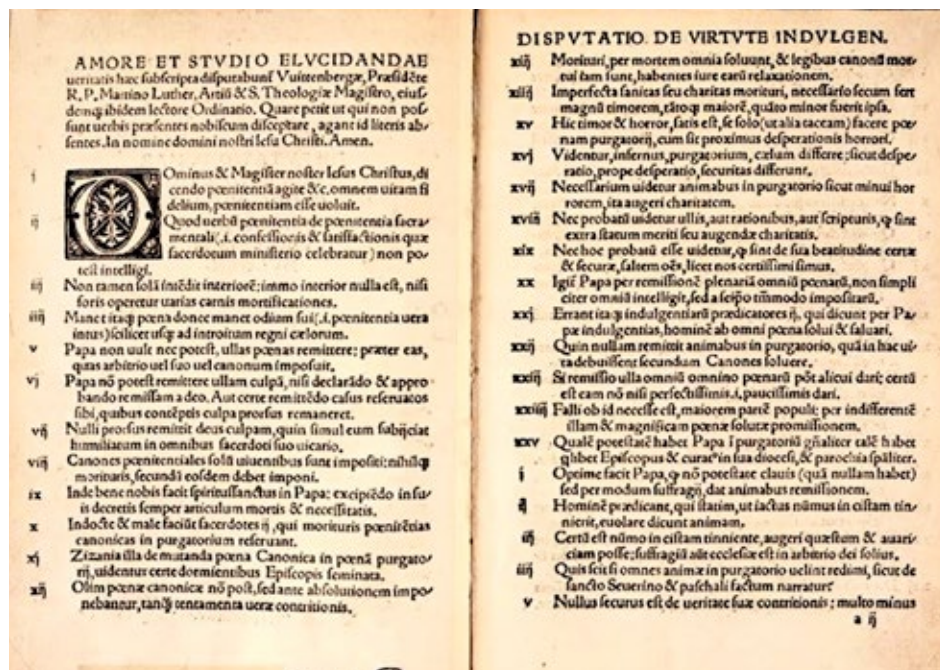
show the wanton disregard of the German monk for Catholic sentiments. A copy made its way all the way to Rome and into the hands of the Pope who eventually would declare Luther 'a wild boar in the Lord's vineyard' for this and other assaults on the church.

Rapid Dissemination

Because of the novelty of printing and the proliferation of printing presses in various European cities (estimates put the number of European cities with presses at two hundred), printers, who were in business to turn a profit, were clamouring for things that would sell. Without having to worry about such modern-day conventions as copyright laws, they readily reprinted things they deemed profitable. Luther's *Theses* fitted the bill. Soon, copies of Luther's objections were available all over Europe. The Church began to seethe.

Luther now had a problem. He would be called upon to defend what he had written. He defended himself in two

SOON, COPIES OF LUTHER'S OBJECTIONS WERE AVAILABLE ALL OVER EUROPE



95 theses (part of a printed version)

ways, in person at such events as the Heidelberg Disputation of 1518 where he was examined before his Augustinian brothers, as well as on several other noteworthy occasions, and by writing more essays, essays that were subsequently put into print and began to circulate in ever increasing ways as had the *Theses*. By the end of 1520, just three short years after the whole controversy erupted, Luther had penned what scholars consider his three most important essays: *Address to the German Nobility* (July 1520), *the Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (October 1520) and *A Treatise on Christian Liberty* (November 1520). Luther had been forced into a corner, as it were, and offered these treatises as his defences of his antagonism toward the Catholic Church. Because Luther was now controversial, printers were only too

willing to print Luther's materials because there was a ready market for their sale. Luther was profitable.

Enter the Catholic defenders. Confronted now with the widespread dissemination of Luther's views, certain individuals on the Catholic side of things took up their pens to respond to the 'wild boar', defending Pope and system: such men as Johannes Cochläus and John Eck. But they had a problem. Their ideas weren't new and they weren't controversial, hence, there was no motivation for printers to publish them from a financial point of view. So Luther's respondents had to pay the production costs by themselves or with the help of patrons. Moreover, their materials weren't particularly popular, so that even if they made it into print, they weren't as widely

disseminated as Luther's materials. Moreover, they often didn't agree with each other as to what Luther's most significant points were. In effect, there wasn't much of a united front against Luther.

On the Protestant side of things, most of the material in print was by Luther himself. It is true that other reformers issued their own treatises but Luther owned the field for the first two decades of the Reformation. John Calvin, twenty-six years younger, didn't publish *The Institutes* until 1536. Because the printed material was predominantly Luther's works, there was unity of purpose between the documents. Lutheranism developed a Lutheran approach to the Bible and the Church. The presses clamoured for anything by Luther and readily published his material at their own expense because they knew it would sell.

The number of separate printings of the various pamphlets during this time is pretty interesting. Current estimates of Luther's materials to 1530 were around 2200 printings with a lifetime estimate approaching 3200, mostly in German, with only one sixth in Latin. His antagonists' literary contribution in the aggregate is less than ten per cent of Luther's total literary output with reprints, about 247 separate publications! Bear in mind for both Luther and his opponents, we are talking about printed editions of material, not separate new publications. Many of Luther's individual pamphlets were reprinted many times. For the antagonists, this was hardly ever the case.

An Unfortunate Downside

There is an unfortunate downside to Luther's popularity with the publishing industry. They published his materials without respect to their merit. If it was Luther, it would sell. Whether it was worthy of publication was beside the point. The public could decide with their pocketbook. Hence, in 1543, when Luther wrote *On the Jews and Their Detestable Lies*, it found its way into publication. As did *Of the Unknowable Name and the Generations of Christ* the same year. These publications have led to Luther being castigated for his alleged 'antisemitism' in both pieces (antisemitism is a term coined in 1879 by Wilhelm Marr to categorise anti-Jewish sentiments in 19th-century Europe). Luther is said to have been an ideological contributor to the Holocaust that raged in Europe four hundred years later.

Would Luther have sanctioned what took place in his homeland during the days of Adolf Hitler? There is no indication that he would. Despite the fact that numerous scholars argue that his views played a role in what took place nearly four centuries after his death, Luther has to be understood in context. He rejected the Jews because they rejected the gospel, not because they were an inferior race that needed to be wiped off the globe. On a recent visit to the Jewish Museum of Berlin, a museum dedicated to charting the history of Jews in Europe, and especially Germany, I was particularly interested to see what role, if any, would have been attributed to Martin Luther in the Nazi atrocities. In speaking with the staff, I

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discovered that there is nothing of Luther mentioned in the entire exhibit. The exhibit did speak of the Crusaders and their attacks on the Jews several hundred years before Luther. But there was no mention of Luther in any cause of the Holocaust, much less as a significant factor in its rise.

Does all this exonerate Luther from the charge of antisemitism? Does this mean that we don't wish he had said things differently? Stephen Nichols and W Robert Godfrey pointed out at the recent Ligonier Conference celebrating the Reformation that Luther treated the Jews as he treated the Papists and the Anabaptists. His rhetoric was harsh, too harsh. But it is doubtful that he was antisemitic in the modern sense of the term. Did others take Luther's rhetoric in a direction he never intended? This is a complex question that cannot be answered here. However, among Luther's publications, because of his immense saleability, some of the things that were published would have been better left not printed.

Summary

In summary, what may be said of the life of Martin Luther and the age of printing? The two were made for each other. Luther needed a mechanism for his voice to be heard and the press needed things to print that were profitable. It was a win-win situation. As Luther's material rolled off the presses, it was made available to ever wider audiences of the better educated who now had access to his ideas. Rather than a handful of religious clerics with knowledge of Latin being the exclusive participants in the discussion, a greater number of non-clerics and a new rising middle class who

could read, read Luther and understood him for themselves.

Much of what Luther wrote, he wrote in German. Arguably Luther's magnum opus was the *September Bible*, the New Testament translated into German in 1522 that he produced when he was a 'guest' of Frederick at the Wartburg. It gave Germans God's Word in the vernacular and helped to standardise the language. Again, it was Gutenberg's press, or one just like it, that gave, at the same time, the doctrine of sola Scriptura to the German people. At last, many could read the Scriptures for themselves in a language they could understand.

In some ways, the printing press created Luther. It elevated him from the life of relative obscurity into an international figure. Even the English were reading him, a fact that permitted Henry VIII to enter into the debate, initially on the side of Rome, when he wrote *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum* or *Defence of the Seven Sacraments* (1521). He received the title 'Defender of the Faith' from the Pope, only to break with the church a decade later over his determination to end his marriage to Catherine. Luther's schedule kept him fairly close to Wittenberg most of the time. But his writings travelled far and wide. Copies were carried from city to city and, when supplies ran low, a printer in the next town ran some more on the local press to keep Luther before the public. The confluence of Luther and the printing press seems to have occurred in the good providence of God. ■

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JOSEPH V CARMICHAEL



**WILLIAM
TYNDALE**

1494-1536

Early life

William Tyndale (1494-1536) dedicated his life to the translation of the Bible into English. It was the pioneering efforts of Bible translators like Tyndale, along with the martyr-fires of those such as Ridley and Latimer and Anne Askew, that helped transform England into a Protestant nation.

Born into an important family in the west of Gloucestershire, Tyndale studied at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge between 1510 and 1521. As Cambridge was teeming with Lutheran ideas at the time, Tyndale may have then adopted his Protestant convictions. He later complained that the universities taught heathen studies while neglecting serious study of Scripture until most had lost their appetite to understand such spiritual truth. After his time at university Tyndale was ordained at some point.

Bible Translator

Fluent in seven languages and a scholar of Hebrew and Greek, Tyndale observed that most English clergy knew little more of the Bible than what was listed in their Missal (Mass Book). This astonishing state of affairs served to direct Tyndale towards his own divine vocation. In his disappointment he once quipped to a cleric, 'If God spare my life, ere many years pass, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know

more of the Scriptures than thou dost.' Tyndale perceived that lay people needed the Scripture in their own plain language that 'they might see the process, order, and meaning of the text.' Only clergy and Latin scholars, however, could read the Scriptures, for by royal edict they could not be translated into or even read in the 'vulgar tongue'. John Wycliffe (c1325-1384) had translated the Latin Vulgate into English and his followers the Lollards had clandestinely distributed handwritten copies. This was not the accurate translation Tyndale desired. Further, this Lollard threat had led to laws against any unauthorised English translation.

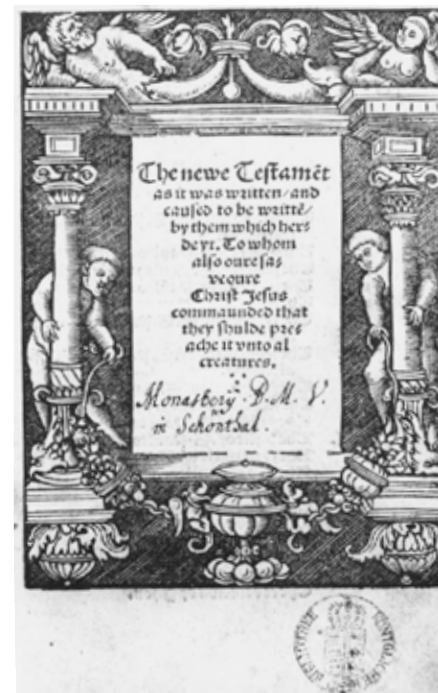
Tyndale sought to translate the Scriptures from the original languages rather than the Latin Vulgate, thus improving on the work of his faithful predecessor Wycliffe. And so began a mission upon which Tyndale would spend the rest of his life at great cost to himself. He first sought the support of the scholarly Cuthbert Tunstall,

📷 *Cross where Latimer and Ridley were burned in Oxford*



the Bishop of London and a friend of Erasmus. Tunstall was unfortunately more concerned with fighting Lutheran ideas than publishing the Bible. Failing to gain ecclesiastical support, Tyndale realised that there was no safe venue in all of England from which to carry out his vision. With the hope of completing a translation of the New Testament he went into exile in Germany in 1524. He would never return to England. It appears he went first to Wittenberg for a time of study. In 1522 Martin Luther had published a German translation of the New Testament from the original language and later an Old Testament in 1534. Tyndale desired the same for English speakers.

With some dependence upon Luther's German translation, Tyndale completed the New Testament in English by 1525 and sought to have it printed in Cologne. A raid on the printing press, however, stymied these first efforts, but Tyndale escaped with the pages he had printed. By the next year, 1526, Tyndale fulfilled his promise to that biblically illiterate clergyman. Tyndale had moved to Worms, where five years previously Luther had made his famous declaration, 'My conscience is held captive to the Word of God.' It was there that under the direction of Peter Schoeffer the first ever mechanically printed New Testaments in English rolled off the press and were smuggled into England among bales of merchandise. This first run produced either 3000 or 6000 copies. Only two have survived! Why? Unfortunately, the Church committed every copy it could find to the flames. It could not, however, extinguish the spiritual fire that was lit by the Word of God in the hands and on the hearts of England's people.



📷 *Tyndale New Testament title page*

Exiled

An outlaw in England, Tyndale continued in exile, moving to Antwerp, a centre of the printing trade. From there he worked on his translation of the Old Testament and also wrote biblical expositions as well as theological and ecclesiastical treatises. Sadly, Tyndale was hunted, betrayed to authorities, captured, and imprisoned in the castle of Vilvoorde in Belgium in 1535. In August 1536 he was tried, condemned as a heretic, excommunicated, and defrocked. A letter from his time in prison sheds light on the piety of this man of faith. It is reminiscent of the Apostle Paul's final words to Timothy written from prison. More than a year in confinement, Tyndale weathered a winter in his cell. He first humbly asks for warmer clothes, then

he writes, 'But above all, I entreat and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the Procureur that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar, and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may spend my time with that study.' He closes with a word of contentment with God's will and a petition for the grace of Jesus upon the heart of the Governor of the prison. Tyndale desired to complete his translation of the Old Testament. It was not to be.

His death

On 6 March 1536 he was strangled and burned at the stake. His final words were a prayer and petition, 'Lord, open the King of England's eyes.' Though unintended as an answer to Tyndale's dying prayer, the very king that prosecuted Tyndale, Henry VIII, in 1538 decreed that a copy of the Scriptures in an English translation be placed in every parish church in his domain. Ironically, these translations would be heavily dependent upon Tyndale's own translation. The king said further that the churches were to be left open at all convenient hours of the day so that people might have access to the Bible. Thus, the heritage of one of England's worthiest sons only grew after his execution. It is estimated that 90 per cent of the Authorised Version and 75 per cent of the Revised Standard Version were the words of William Tyndale, 'the father of the English Bible'. ■

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DIVINE INTENT

16TH CENTURY PROTESTANT BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

How are we supposed to interpret the Bible? Is there a single method? Who gets to determine the approach? Can we ever really know we have rightly understood an individual passage? Hermeneutics may be a recent discipline, but questions about accessing the meaning of Scripture are anything but new. They were certainly not first raised during the Reformation, but this era did offer some helpful answers. The Reformation's character as a catholic and developing phenomenon is observable through the theme of Protestant interpretation of the Bible. Sixteenth-century expositors, from the first-generation Reformers to the Puritans, offer insights rooted in the Christian tradition, insights that the church five hundred years later ought to revisit.

The Reformers

The Reformers did not come to the task of biblical interpretation as blank slates. In fact, they were not even the first to call for a singular sense of Scripture. Moreover, Protestant exegesis in general neither had a monopoly on the literal sense nor entirely discontinued the logic and intentions of the quadriga, the medieval categorisation of four scriptural senses: literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical, namely, the plain meaning and then what one ought to believe, do, and hope for (eg 'Jerusalem' in the Old Testament could mean the actual city, the church, the individual soul, and heaven. So 'dwelling in Jerusalem' might be understood as staying in the ancient city, abiding in the church, obeying God's commands, and

eternal life). Rather, the Reformers stood in a long and broadening line of biblical interpreters who took the natural meaning of Scripture's words seriously while also wrestling with the implications of divine inspiration, which included both the reality of the Bible's figures and types and its address to the church throughout the ages. Put simply, the sixteenth century was populated by pre-critical interpreters, those who came before the enlightenment and knew nothing of higher criticism of the Bible. Their approach to Scripture has more in common with patristic and medieval exegesis than what is characteristic of the modern period.

This claim is not new. Richard Muller observes a 'fundamental continuity of

exegetical interest that remained the property of pre-critical exegesis as it passed from the medieval fourfold model into other models that, in one way or another, emphasised the concentration of meaning in the literal sense of the text'. Such continuity manifests itself in the big three. James Preus demonstrates that Luther led a kind of theological recovery of the Old Testament in the Protestant Reformation and, in the process, outdid tradition in his Christological interpretations. W P Stephens explains that while Zwingli emphasised the literal sense, the moral sense always followed and the allegorical and anagogical senses, Zwingli often highlighted from its symbolism. Muller shows that Calvin's literal interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies of the kingdom include the

reestablishment of Israel post exile and establishment in Christ's redemptive work, reform of the church, and final victory of the kingdom in Christ's second coming. Here we see faith, love and hope. What ought to be believed, done, and expected are all three present. This looks a lot like the four senses of Scripture, despite a hermeneutic far more grammatical, philological, and focused on the literal meaning.

Even this humanist emphasis on philological and textual examination of Scripture, the Renaissance shift adapted by the Reformers, had medieval precedence. For instance, Nicholas of Lyra learned Hebrew in the fourteenth century and focused first and foremost on the literal sense. The presuppositions of divine inspiration and the canon's authority over tradition were no more inventions of the Reformers than the drive towards the letter of the text and its grammatical meaning. The transition, as will become apparent, was from the spiritual senses beyond the literal sense to spiritual meaning entirely in the literal sense.

None of the Reformers wanted to lose the flexibility of reference afforded to the three spiritual, or non-literal, senses. The biblical text must be allowed to speak to the church. Calvin, the heralded champion of historical and grammatical exegesis, would indeed only allow an extremely limited use of allegory, yet as David Steinmetz argues, he 'wanted to find, if possible, the rich range of spiritual meanings inside the letter of the text

rather than behind or beyond it'. He commonly accomplished this in two ways. First, through analogies rooted in common humanity and a common covenant in both Testaments, parallels could be made between people in Scripture and people in the present, especially in application. For example, in Psalm 137, Israel under Babylon represents the church under the papacy. Second, Calvin makes generous use of typology in order to see Christ in the Old Testament. Steinmetz powerfully proclaims that 'the literal sense was for Calvin what the allegorical sense had been for Origen, a *sensus plenior*, a generous, big-bellied letter filled with spiritual significance and unfailingly edifying. It was never reducible to a bare narrative of events.' The idea that Calvin was a modern interpreter, playing strictly by the rules of historical-grammatical method is untenable.

When it came to spiritual readings, Calvin was certainly more reserved than traditional interpreters, even among his contemporaries. But he simply did not unconditionally reject them. Calvin used Scripture to interpret itself by carefully reading it in context, a context that included the whole canon.

The English Scene

As I draw our attention to the English-speaking world, allow me to note a few conclusions about the exegesis of the Puritans as they stand within both the Reformed tradition and the history of literal biblical interpretation stretching as far back as the Middle Ages and the patristic era. In the Puritan mind, the disciplinary or ecclesiastical means

of understanding Scripture were both traditional and humanistic exegetical techniques. These means operated within the bounds of certain pre-critical presuppositions, namely, the coherent and consistent message of Scripture and its contemporary relevance. The Puritans strove for mastery of the original languages and laboured to get Scripture's grammar and syntax right. They were sensitive to context, both historical and literary, and accounted for genre and rhetorical devices. But even as they approached each text like this – an approach many would consider narrow – we must not presume their affinity with modern exegetes. While the Puritans sought the scope of the text – its author's focus, design, target, and intention – this was determined by biblical context rather than historical situation. They did give attention to historical situations, using language of 'occasion' and 'circumstance', but these still found their explanation in the context of what comes before and after in the text. Meaning was located in the text for the Puritans, not behind it.

The Puritans' pre-critical presuppositions are clearer still in their analogies of faith and Scripture. The analogy of faith, when given explicit content, usually included the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Decalogue, all robustly interpreted but also limited the possible meanings the exegete could consider. That God cannot lie or contradict himself, that Scripture is divine, and that the core of Christian doctrine flows faithfully from the Bible are undergirding suppositions. The analogy of Scripture operates on a similar idea. Because of its divine author, Scripture cannot contradict itself. Therefore,

Scripture is the best interpreter of itself. This legitimises the process of bringing clarity to a text by comparing it with other portions of Scripture, both similar and dissimilar. In fact, the broader scope of the Bible – including the biblical covenants and Christ as the substance of the whole – theologically ensures its unity. For most Puritans, federal theology offered a framework for understanding the sweep of biblical history. The old and new covenants represented by the two testaments are one in substance and differ only in their administration. The Christological focus of the whole Bible is demanded by this covenant theology. Christ is the scope of Scripture, and everything points to him. This broad scope of Scripture makes Puritan exegesis more open to allegorical and typological interpretation.

Typology cannot be neatly separated from allegory, but it clearly differs in degree. The former is intrinsic to the literal sense, while the latter is extrinsic to it, even as both depend on single divine authorship. One scholar of Puritan exegesis, Brian Knapp, defines typology this way: 'a method of interpretation where one explains Old Testament events, persons, and practices, as prefiguring the coming person and ministry of the Messiah and his covenant people'. In other words, types presuppose reliable history. For example, Jonah really did spend three days in the belly of a great fish. Types also deal with the comparison of facts, which means they cannot be applied indiscriminately. Even if the Puritans often explicitly reject multiple senses, they are keen to press a fuller sense with multiple layers of meaning and applications. Protestant allegory became a specialised type of the literal sense, and the moral

Calvin used Scripture to interpret itself by carefully reading it in context, a context that included the whole canon.

and anagogical senses were often applied forms of the same meaning. Even the most vehement opponents of the quadriga could not get away from figurative language in the text. Further, no one wanted to forfeit the text's direct address to their contemporary situation. The elucidation of Scripture for the sake of piety, declaring doctrine, and formulating theology was the enterprise of the medieval church and both the early generations of the Reformers and the Protestant Orthodox.



William Perkins

The Case of William Perkins

William Perkins's *The Art of Prophesying* was not revolutionary in its presentation of interpretive method, not even in England. Though his preaching

manual addressed the preparation and delivery of sermons, which included sustained attention to proper exegetical method, his contributions to homiletics and biblical interpretation were not new. Rather, Perkins remained consistently in the tradition outlined above. That said, what his work lacked in originality, it made up for with clarity, concision, and accessibility. He offered a usable, understandable, and repeatable summary of a Reformed method of interpretation, a kind of capstone to sixteenth-century biblical interpretation, which deserves our attention. Perkins's renowned preaching ministry in Elizabethan Cambridge and his international stature as a leading Reformed theologian helped give *The Art of Prophesying* traction. Following that, its widespread use ensured an enduring influence, especially among

nonconformists and dissenters in the seventeenth century and beyond. According to Perkins, interpretation is 'the opening of the words and sentences of the Scripture, that one entire and natural sense may appear'. After describing the quadriga of the Church of Rome, he concludes that 'her device of the four-fold meaning of the Scripture must be exploded and rejected'. Perkins goes on: 'There is only one sense, and the same is the literal. An allegory is only a certain manner of uttering the same sense. The anagogy and tropology are ways whereby the sense may be applied.'

Two things need to be highlighted at this point. First, while Perkins strongly dismisses the quadriga, the three spiritual senses do not disappear in his determination of meaning. Second, Perkins uses the language of 'natural sense' in his definition of interpretation, then moves to 'literal sense' in his response to the exegesis he equates with the Church of Rome. Therefore, the 'literal' and 'natural' senses are used interchangeably, the former being an inherited designation and the latter being more helpful for our purposes. 'Natural sense' allows for the necessary flexibility when accounting for rhetorical devices and figures. It distances us from the historical-critical method, rigidity of language, and fixation on human authorial intent – three missteps often implicitly implied in the modern use of the term 'literal'. For Perkins, interpretation requires arriving at the natural sense of the words on the page, words in the case of Scripture that were authored by God the Holy Spirit and are addressed to the church throughout the ages.

Perkins transitions to how one arrives at this singular sense of Scripture. Two related concepts are that 'the principal interpreter of Scripture, is the Holy Ghost' and 'the supreme and absolute means of interpretation, is the Scripture itself'. These are interrelated because Perkins has already expressed the necessity of reliance on the Spirit and the fact that the Word of God is limited to canonical Scripture. Beyond this, the fact that the Spirit is the divine author of Scripture makes him the best interpreter of it. Perkins proposes a three-fold method for interpreting Scripture according to Scripture: 'The analogy of faith, the circumstances of the place propounded, and the comparing of places together' (by 'place' Perkins refers to a specific text). He goes on to define each of the three tools.

First, the analogy of faith, which we have already briefly looked at, 'is a certain abridgement or sum of the Scriptures, collected out of the most manifest and familiar places'. This includes the Apostles' Creed, a clear statement of belief, and the Ten Commandments, a distillation of love. It does not entail a reductionist understanding of the Creed and Decalogue, but rather a robust interpretation. Perkins expounds both the Creed and the Decalogue at length. Therefore, the analogy of faith as Perkins implements it is akin to systematic theology. Muller defines the analogy of faith as 'the use of a general sense of the meaning of Scripture, constructed from the clear or unambiguous loci, as the basis for interpreting unclear or ambiguous texts'.

This accurately reflects Perkins's belief. It is distinguished from the more basic analogy of Scripture, which is 'the interpretation of unclear, difficult, or ambiguous passages of Scripture by comparison with clear and unambiguous passages that refer to the same teaching or event'. In summary, the analogy of faith is a distillation of the meaning of Scripture, while the analogy of Scripture speaks to the unity of the Bible. The analogy of Scripture allows for the

comparing of places, but before getting to collation, Perkins defines his second tool: context.

The circumstances of place propounded are 'who? to whom? upon what occasion? at what time? in what place? for what end? what goes before? what follows?' Interrogating a text with this series of questions forces consideration of historical context, grammar, and immediate context – indeed, the words of

the text itself.

Third, 'collation or comparing of places together, is that whereby places are set like parallels one beside another, that the meaning of them may more evidently appear.' Perkins goes on to describe collation in a number of ways. It may include comparing the place with other places where the verse(s) is cited, perhaps verbatim or with alteration. Collation includes the comparing of places that are either like or unlike. This exercise presupposes the analogy of Scripture, which itself depends on divine inspiration, inspiration that makes Scripture utterly authoritative and therefore the standard for its own interpretation.

Two related concepts are that 'the principal interpreter of Scripture, is the Holy Ghost' and 'the supreme and absolute means of interpretation, is the Scripture itself'.

Perkins's method of biblical interpretation uses Scripture to interpret itself through the analogy of faith, context, and collation. This order is significant and whenever summarising his method, Perkins remains true to it. The analogy of faith does not so much determine the meaning of a text as it rules out aberrant interpretations. It places the boundaries within which accurate interpretation can take place. For example, when Christ institutes the Lord's Supper with the words 'this is my body,' the interpretive options are limited by the fact that Christ ascended into heaven and remains at the right hand of the Father. Therefore, any reading that suggests Jesus' body is anywhere but heaven is out of bounds.

Circumstances of place – or context – are where the heavy lifting of exegesis happens, including grammatical, rhetorical, historical, and literary analysis. All contextual exegesis persists on an intense awareness that the meanings of words are largely determined by their surroundings. To again use the institution of the Lord's Supper as an example, Christ's words are a metonymy of the subject for the adjunct; the bread is a sign of Jesus' body. This is fitting in this instance because the narrative says he broke the bread. He certainly did not break his own body with his hands, but the breaking of the bread was a symbol. Jesus says it is given for the disciples. Again, the bread cannot be said to be given for them, but rather it symbolised Jesus' giving of himself. Christ ate the bread, but did not of course eat part of his own body. Again, the bread was a symbol. The meal is to be continued in remembrance of Jesus

until he returns, which implies he is not corporally present.

Collation then verifies or qualifies a given interpretation by comparison with similar and dissimilar passages. That the bread of the Lord's Supper is a sign of Jesus' body accords with other texts of Scripture. For instance, Genesis 17:10 teaches that circumcision is a sign of the covenant. Acts 22:16 asserts that baptism symbolises the washing away of sins. In John 6:35, Jesus himself uses the 'bread of life' as a representative symbol.

We may conclude that at its most basic level, Perkins's method of biblical interpretation is that Scripture must interpret itself. This method is based on the authority of Scripture derived from its nature as the Word of God. Right interpretation for Perkins leads the reader and exegete to the single, natural sense of the words on the sacred page. Scripture interprets itself through the analogy of faith, context, and collation. None of these three rise above Scripture, for even the analogy of faith is an extension of clear biblical teaching and is only authoritative insofar as it remains consistent with Scripture. The tools are to be used individually or in tandem based on the demands of the biblical text. The analogy of faith, a robust interpretation of the Creed and Decalogue, operates as a theological system and sets the boundaries of interpretation. Context is usually the determiner of meaning. Attention to the circumstances of place must account for a complex landscape of figures, as well as grammatical and rhetorical forms. Collation, made possible by the unity of biblical teaching articulated in the analogy

of Scripture, verifies and nuances the interpretation. Via this method, Perkins interprets scripture with scripture.

Conclusion

In sum, insights and approaches of the first and second generation Reformers were refined and systematised by their Protestant descendants. This is clearly seen with the work of William Perkins at the close of the sixteenth century. The development took place in fundamental continuity with biblical interpretation from the early church through the Middle Ages. The paradigm of four distinct senses of Scripture shifted to the natural sense enveloping the spiritual senses. This demanded that interpretation be more controlled by the text, whose author was of course God himself. And so sixteenth-century exegesis retained the emphases required by divine authorship, that of typology and direct address to the church, most often accessed through Christological interpretation and application, both of which imply a deeper meaning than the natural sense. But this deeper meaning was not located behind the text to be retrieved from the intent of the human author alone or by historical criticism. The seeds of these endeavours were laid by the Enlightenment and bloomed into modern exegesis. Rather, Reformation era interpretation found meaning in the inspired text as received, which by definition was without error or contradiction and possessed the characteristics of authority, perspicuity, and sufficiency. Scripture, therefore, interpreted rightly, interprets itself.

How sixteenth-century interpreters answered questions about the meaning

of Scripture is worthy of our attention today. The Bible means first what the human author intended, the natural sense, accessed through a careful reading of the text in its historical and literary context. However, given that God is also the author, one needs to account for divine intention as well. Inspiration does more than ensure the Bible's purity and invest it with authority. While divine intent is never less than or contradictory to human authorial intent, it is indeed more. So, for instance, it is legitimate to see Christ typologically in the Old Testament, even if it was not part of the prophet Jonah's intention, for example. Further, this divine intention is the foundation of Paul's assertion in 2 Timothy 3:16 that all of Scripture is applicable to the Christian in any location in time or on earth. The faithful interpreter arrives at this meaning beyond the natural sense by understanding individual texts of Scripture as part of the whole, directly addressed to the church. The Holy Spirit is author of it all, so one can confidently shed light on a particular passage with the rest of the Bible within the systematic grid composed of the clearest scriptural teaching. In this way, interpretation is controlled by Scripture itself and proclamation is freed to be faithfully Christian and eminently applicable. ■

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The Best and Godliest Meditation

— REFLECTING ON THE PIETY OF KATHERINE PARR

‘To behold Christ crucified upon the cross is the best and godliest meditation that can be.’¹ I did not expect that the writings of Katherine Parr (c1512–1548), the final wife of Henry VIII and a godly Evangelical, would result in a reorientation of reality for me, but they have. Her prayerful contemplation of sin, humanity and God opened my eyes to personal spiritual blindness, encouraged my walk with

God, and gave me a new sense of vibrant theological direction. Parr writes on each of the three aforementioned subjects: sin, humanity and God, in a way that was foreign to my modern mind and that was absent from my heart.

Pondering sin

What struck me as significant in the essays of Parr was that meditating on

God demanded first a meditation on sin and sin’s nature. The marred state of humanity is a key motif in Parr’s meditation. If this were not so, then her books would be dramatically condensed, and her meditations on God would not seem half as delightful; meaning that she complements her focus on sin by later focusing on God as the healer of and redeemer from sin. This emphasis brings delight and honour to and inspires affection towards God throughout her writings.

Her realistic vision of our human nature makes it immediately apparent how later advocates of her perspective earned the name ‘Puritan’ and how a secular audience might claim this type of writing is mentally harmful to the human psyche. Human virtue is absent in Parr’s writings apart from Christ. Christ is the healing that soothes weary, injured bones. She does not seek to hide from or minimise the stain of human sin, but to spread the light of God’s mercy. Our only hope is that his Son would bleach the filth of sin from our souls. This attitude is foreign and hated by the world (John 3:20).

But in many ways this attitude is foreign in the church as well. There is a reason that books like Sarah Young’s *Jesus Calling* are sold by the wagon-load while Katherine Parr must be assigned by seminary professors. The former gives

an encouraging, positive appeal to man from God in less time than it takes to microwave your tea. Jesus has entered the microwave generation to speak to your deepest insecurities in thirty seconds or less. This was an important part of my processing as I read Parr. The sins that were important to her, that she took time to pray about and confess, have never been important to me.² The issues that concerned her have rarely concerned me. She prays against vanity, unprofitable cares, vainglory, superfluous cares, evil affections, presumption, and stateliness of heart. I had never once prayed that God would preserve me from vanity. I had never once prayed that God would deliver me from superfluous cares (at least not using the word superfluous). But now I have and continue to do so. I feel as if I am feasting on a banquet of the finest foods. It was strange, but I know that it was good. The result was that although the actual words and ideas were foreign to me, my soul sensed a great safety and gratitude to step into Parr’s prayer life and pray with her.

Understanding human frailty

This is where the book is useful. It describes – horrifyingly – the emptying of doctrine from supposedly Protestant churches in pursuit of success. It describes, sadly, how many are seeking – not necessarily deliberately? – to build what is not in fact the church of Christ but the

¹ Katherine Parr; from Brandon Withrow (ed.), *Katherine Parr: A Guided Tour of the Life and Thought of a Reformation Queen* (P&R Publications, 2009), p102.

² Similar to using historical hymns, reading historical meditations is immensely helpful for the purpose of recognising ‘cultural additions’ and sin. Paul Westermeyer uses the term ‘cultural additions’ to summarise the virtue of a historical hymnal, ‘A hymnal represents a theological and ethical check on the church at any current moment because it continually keeps in play what speaks most prophetically to the culture yet transcends its time and place. . . The [hymns] that are kept over time embody the faith, not cultural additions.’ (‘A Hymnal’s Theological Significance,’ *Dialog* 48.4 (2009): 318). Reading a devotional such as that of Katherine Parr serves this exact purpose, which I sensed deeply in my own heart. There were many sin issues dealt with by Parr, ‘cultural additions’ I would argue, with which I had never been confronted before.

church of men. They have gone astray in the realms of truth, the doctrine of God, of Christ and of the self and of the church.

Conclusion

Parr's awareness and confession of sin was a blessing, but so was her understanding of humanity. One of my journal entries, quoted largely from Parr, was this: 'That I would receive all things from God's hand as perfect and from him. That I would understand that I am a creature of God, to be done to as he pleases. That I might be a bondservant to the one true God, ready to do all God commands, "for I desire not to live to myself, but to thee".' This entry is a summary of the richest fruit I plucked from the prayer life of Parr. The complete abandonment of self to Christ was everywhere in Parr. It was both thrilling and liberating.

From the opening pages of the book, she confesses that she is a creation of God. 'Thy creature I am, and in thy hands, lead and turn me where thou wilt.'³ She is a creature, God is the Creator. As such, God has the right to freely do whatever he wills with her life.

This was an inspiring teaching. It is so rare that I stop to think that every breath I breathe is a gift, much less the time I have in a day. My life itself is the gift of the Creator, and to claim rights over my life, apart from the Creator, is to do violence to who I am as a creature. I have the sense that we do not take much time in our modern era to meditate on this reality, but it seems to be the primary source from which Parr's understanding

of God and man flow. In an age when incredible claims are being made about transcending our humanity through the aid of technology, Christians must be quick to reaffirm our status as creatures, not Creator, to rightly understand themselves and God.

This understanding of the Creator leads to her theology of suffering, which was deeply encouraging to my soul. Early on she prays, 'Lord, give me grace gladly to suffer whatsoever thou wilt shall fall upon me, and patiently to take at thy hand good and bad, bitter and sweet, joy and sorrow, and for all things that shall befall unto me, heartily to thank thee.'⁴ She can pray something like this with confidence, because of her high view of the providence of God. She prays that every temptation and tribulation, when it comes, would all 'turn to my spiritual comfort' and that she could always bless God's name in these things.⁵ This was a mark of Reformation thinking and faith towards God at this time. All tribulations and suffering are redeemable to these men and women because God knows what is best for his children and has ordained that all things would serve their salvation and, through faith, bring them spiritual comfort.

The 'Heavenly Doctor'

God is 'the heavenly surgeon of man's soul'. Such a God is to be loved, treasured, and trusted to the fullest degree. Reading page after page and praying paragraph after paragraph with Parr began to change my thinking towards God. The first day after reading Parr, I began to see

📷 Katherine Parr

KATHARINE PARRE



more clearly that God was orchestrating everything in my day that I might seek him, humble myself, and live more fully to him. While I have long considered myself a Calvinist, submitting to this prayerful mentoring by Katherine Parr began to change the devotional quality of my affection towards God's sovereignty. God's sovereignty is now becoming something that I love, cherish and am encouraged by every minute, not just when talking about theology. Parr even writes that 'it is the work of a perfect man never to sequester his mind from thee, and among many worldly cares to go without care'.⁶ Meditation on God's providence, and complete trust in it for each day, is the means to grow in the Christian life.

Now, this should not lead to idleness, but rather a heavenly mindedness that fixes our trust and affections on Christ and not in this world. In this way, we should go without anxiety 'among many worldly cares'. ■

This short essay was part of the requirements of a course taught on the Reformation in January 2017 in Phoenix Seminary by Prof Michael Haykin, who edited this text for publication.

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³ Parr, Katherine Parr, p62.

⁴ Parr, Katherine Parr, p63.

⁵ Parr, Katherine Parr, p69.

⁶ Parr, Katherine Parr, p68.

500

Reformation
500
Together
for the
Gospel

Together for the Gospel and Evangelium 21

Commemorate 500 years of Reformation

RYAN HOSELTON and RON KUBSCH

Didn't make it to Hamburg, Germany for the 500 Years Reformation Conference co-hosted by *Together for the Gospel* and *Evangelium 21*? Too bad, it was outstanding. About 1,400 believers from all over Europe gathered for three days to hear and sing biblical truths recovered by the Protestant Reformers five centuries ago.

Fortunately for you, the talks are already available online. The talks by Albert Mohler, Ligon Duncan, David Platt and Mark Dever are in English and translated into German; the rest are only in German. Here's a digest of some key takeaways from the main sessions for your convenience and edification.

'I am not ashamed of the gospel'

The gospel must be boldly proclaimed again in Germany. On this weighty note, Christian Wegert, pastor of Arche Gemeinde in Hamburg, got the conference underway. Just like 500 years ago, the clear proclamation of the gospel of Jesus

Christ faces tremendous challenges today. Then the rituals, ceremonies, and dogmas of the Roman Catholic church interfered with the central truths of the gospel; today the main pressures (among many others) stem from humanist thinking and an excessive rationalism. Evangelical churches today are not immune to these dangers. 'Biblically faithful Christians are constantly tempted to be ashamed of the gospel and conform their witness to satisfy the impulses of our age,' Wegert asserted. Believers must stand firm on declaring faith in Christ as the only way to experience God's grace and true transformation. Without this grace no one can stand before God: 'We need a bold and unshrinking return to the substance of the gospel – and through this to Christ himself.'

Trusting God's Word

Albert Mohler, President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, addressed the reliability of Scripture. He underlined how the

Protestant Reformers rediscovered the gospel in Scripture. 'Martin Luther recognised the Scriptures as God's Word, and he trusted in them,' Mohler stated. The Reformer saw an authority in Scripture that surpassed tradition, reason, and experience – it gave him a reliable guide. Looking to the example of the Reformers, Mohler urged the attendees to trust the verbal inspiration of Scripture. In practice, this means to instinctively turn to God and his Word for answers in every circumstance.

Why martyrs die

David Platt, President of the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, likewise summoned Christians to confess their faith with greater boldness. He pointed to the numerous martyrs in the wake of the Reformation who were killed for their faith. 'These men and women didn't simply die because they believed the gospel,' Platt explained, 'but because they openly proclaimed it.' These martyrs cherished the liberating message of justification by grace alone through faith in Christ alone so much that they were willing to die for it. So should we.

Personal reformation

Michael Martens, pastor in Syke near Bremen, Germany, urged the importance of not merely reforming our doctrine but also our lives into the likeness of Jesus Christ. This process is completely dependent on the grace of God. 'God began the work of our salvation and will bring it to completion. He lays his hand on us to sharpen us, build us up, and to change us into the image of Christ,' Martens said. He called the attendees to pray for personal reformation for themselves and others. We

must pray for growth in the knowledge and love of God, which leads to love and service to others.

The key to spiritual renewal

In his second talk, Albert Mohler exhorted Evangelicals to devote more time, energy, and seriousness to preserving and nourishing their beliefs. Drawing from the recent history of the conservative turnaround in his own denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, Mohler offered ten timeless lessons of doctrinal and spiritual renewal. Biblically faithful

churches can so easily and quickly waver from their foundations if sound doctrine and practice are not nurtured, he warned. This had happened to many Southern Baptist churches in the mid-twentieth century, and it almost split the denomination. As liberal theology gained a foothold in the Southern Baptist Churches' theological seminaries, some of the denomination's most influential church leaders began questioning the authority of the Bible. However, by the grace of God, courageous men and women successfully laboured to recover the denomination's

doctrinal foundations, giving rise to one of the greatest spiritual renewals in recent history.

God's Word is our foundation

With a kindred passion for spiritual vitality, biblical faithfulness, and prayerful trust in God, churches in Europe can likewise experience deep and lasting renewal, Mohler maintained. However, he warned, this renewal can't be achieved by resorting to isolationism or an overreliance on personal piety and experience. Neither path will protect churches from

📷 Mark Dever preaching with Matthias Lohmann translating



the influences of liberalism – our only firm foundation is God's Word. Without firm convictions grounded in the Word, personal piety has no content and will inevitably decay. Thus, Christians must engage their culture and resuscitate their churches through the clear proclamation of Scripture. Moreover, pastors and teachers must call their churches and denominations to return to the biblical foundations of their doctrinal confessions.

Christians must expect suffering

Mark Dever, Pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, DC, also underscored the importance of personal Bible reading: 'The Holy Spirit speaks to us through the Scriptures; we should not seek God's truth anywhere else!' He urged the attendees to internalise God's Word and trust it completely. At the same time, however, he warned against a myopic and therapeutic reading of Scripture that cultivates a close personal relationship with God while ignoring the reality of suffering and trial in the Christian life. Jesus constantly told his disciples that they would endure affliction and persecution, and nothing's different for his disciples today: 'Martin Luther was banished from the Catholic church; missionaries over the years have been gruesomely killed; in the twentieth century Christians worldwide have been persecuted as never before. Why should we expect to be spared from suffering?' The Christian life follows the model set by Christ: suffering first, then glory. Keeping our eyes on this future glory that we'll share in Christ gives us the motivation to endure trials with a lasting joy that isn't contingent on our fleeting life circumstances.

Salvation by grace alone

Salvation depends not on our works but on God's works alone, stressed Ligon Duncan, Chancellor of Reformed Theological Seminary, in his exposition of Ephesians 2. Sinful persons are dead, unable, and unwilling to seek after God. 'We need the mediation of Jesus Christ, who saves us from the righteous wrath of a holy God and restores us to our original creation in his image,' Duncan asserted. The grace of God alone brings about this salvation; we can't contribute anything to it. Even our faith in the Son of God – which is a precondition of our salvation – is a gift from God which we receive only through his mercy. Duncan elaborated: 'God declares us righteous on the basis of his Son's atoning sacrifice – not the cooperation of sinners. God completed the work of our salvation even before our conversion, he leads us to repentance and he transforms our lives to bring forth the good works which he has already prepared for us.' Finally, salvation by grace gives us a real assurance of salvation, as God himself is the one who brings it about and sustains it rather than the uncertain works of finite creatures.

Returning to God's Word

On the last day of the conference, Matthias Lohmann, co-founder and Chairman of Evangelium 21, made a clarion call for churches in Germany to recover their biblical roots. Many state and free churches have abandoned their Reformation heritage. 'The average knowledge of Scripture is at a historic low,' he claimed, 'coupled with an astounding lack of interest in theology and a pervasive moral disorientation.' He urged the 1,400 attendees to not view this situation with contempt but rather pray for change:

'Reformation is God's work; we are powerless to bring it about ourselves.' Nothing is more urgent for churches in Germany than our prayers for renewal. This begins in the heart of every believer. Lohmann confessed, 'I wish for myself, that my heart would burn anew for Christ!'

Learning from the church fathers

The Protestant Reformers, Ligon Duncan explained, recovered sound doctrine and practice because they made Scripture their primary foundation. However, they faced a challenge from Catholic Church leaders who dismissed their reforms as new inventions. The Reformers turned this challenge on its head by showing the striking continuities between their views and those of the early church fathers. They found a model in patriarchs of the faith like Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius and Augustine, who exposed the errors of false teachers in their time by turning to the Scriptures. 'The church fathers understood that the Scriptures interpret the Scriptures,' Duncan stated. The Reformers followed this principle, ascribing an authority to Scripture that it deserves as God's Word.

A call to missions for the glory of God

God calls every Christian to glorify him through the work of missions. Not every believer is called to go to a foreign land, but everyone should be engaged in the mission to spread the gospel in the world: 'Without saving faith in Jesus Christ, every person is forever lost.' As 2.8 billion people worldwide still have no access to the gospel, the Great Commission is all the more urgent. He reminded the attendees of their responsibility: God saves lost

sinners only through the proclamation of the gospel. Through these means, God makes his glory known in all the world. 'World missions are not a programme or a special branch of a church administration, but rather the meaning and purpose of our lives,' he exhorted.

Always reforming

While Rome took pride in its claim to never change, the Protestant Reformers believed their task was to always reform the church according to the Word of God. This is exactly what Martin Luther wished to do at the Heidelberg Disputation (26 April 1518). Here he argued that we're accepted by God not on the basis of our goodness but on the basis of God's love and grace. This idea stood at the heart of the Reformation. In fact, Jesus declared this truth in his Sermon on the Mount to a group of Jews who thought that God loves us because we are good. And many continue to believe this today! We're prone to fabricate errors and idols. This is why, Dever said, 'we need the Word of God to constantly be teaching us the truth' and reforming our thinking. ■

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HELP! I CAN'T FORGIVE



A SERIES OF STUDIES ON FORGIVENESS

THIS IS THE FOURTH PART IN THIS SERIES; SEE RT275 FOR PART 1 / SECTIONS 1-3, AND RT276 FOR PART 2 / SECTIONS 4-5, AND RT277 FOR PART 3 / SECTIONS 6-7

8. I can't forget – forgiveness and grudges!

A woman once went to her pastor for advice on improving her marriage. When the pastor asked her what her greatest complaint was, she replied, 'Every time we get into a fight, my husband gets hysterical.' When her pastor said, 'You must mean hysterical,' she responded, 'I mean exactly what I said; he keeps a mental record of everything I've done wrong, and whenever he's mad, I get a history lesson' (Ken Sande).

What is a grudge? In Leviticus 19:18, the word used means to keep, to maintain; to reserve something, and is thus the opposite of releasing, which is essential to true forgiveness.

He will not always strive with us, nor will he keep his anger for ever (Ps 103:9).

Will he remain angry for ever? Will he keep it to the end? (Jer 3:5a).

'Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: "Return, backsliding Israel," says the LORD; "I will not cause my anger to fall on you. For I am merciful," says the LORD; "I will not remain angry for ever"' (Jer 3:12).

God is jealous, and the LORD avenges; the LORD avenges and is furious.

The LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserves wrath for his enemies (Nah 1:2).

In James 5:9 the word used indicates a groan or a sigh arising from a burden borne. In 2 Corinthians 9:7 the word used means heaviness, mourning, grieving; annoyance or sorrow. In 1 Peter 4:9 the word is murmuring (cf Acts 6:1; Phil 2:14).

What is it for God to forgive?

It is to remember no more.

'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days,' says the Lord: 'I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,' Then he adds, 'Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more' (Heb 10:16-17; cf Jer 31:33-34).

'In those days and in that time,' says the LORD, 'The iniquity of Israel shall be sought, but there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, but they shall not be found; for I will pardon those whom I preserve' (Jer 50:20; cf Num 23:21).

Our sin is purged (Ps 65:3); blotted out (Isa 43:25; 44:22; Acts 3:19); cast into the depths of the sea (Mic 7:19); separated from us as east is from west (Ps 103:12) and taken away (Rom 11:27). What was once red as crimson is now white as snow (Is 1:18). Such a condition is truly blessed (Rom 4:6-8; Ps 32:2).

When God forgets our sins, it is that he never recalls them to mind. Consider the psalmist's prayer:

Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Your mercy remember me, for Your goodness' sake, O LORD (Ps 25:7).

Forgiving is not a feeling, it is an act of the will. Forgiveness is not forgetting. Forgetting is a passive process in which a matter fades from memory merely with the passing of time. Forgiving is an active process; it involves a conscious choice

and a deliberate course of action. To put it another way, when God says that he 'remembers our sins no more' (Is 43:25), he is not saying he cannot remember our sins. Rather, he is promising that he will not remember them. When he forgives us, he chooses not to mention, recount, or think about our sins ever again.

What happens when we remember and why do we remember?

We remember because we bear a grudge. Though our actions speak of forgiveness, our heart has failed to release the offender. Forgiveness is releasing a person, taking the burden from them.

WHEN GOD FORGETS OUR SINS, IT IS THAT HE NEVER RECALLS THEM TO MIND.

We retain the grudge as we are unsatisfied with the alternatives, sustaining the supposed loss in the belief that the person will 'get away with it' if we do not act. In order to understand what is happening we need to consider our thought-life. Our thoughts are a 'world' governed or misgoverned by us. It is a 'world' created by us which produces our true character; as a man thinks, so he is (Prov 23:7). Our thoughts are a truer measure than our actions. There are many things we would be ashamed to do, but we think them. God is the sole witness to those thoughts. Only religious motives can truly influence our thought life. To have kind thoughts of others as a result of supernatural motives and not merely from an easy-going disposition is a sign of grace. Kind thoughts imply a great deal of thinking about others. This is rare. To think of others a lot and not with judgment or criticism of their conduct, is rarer still. Kind thoughts imply nearness to God. Consider God's attitude towards us and the number of times it is said he thinks of us. God mixes boundless charity with his judgments.

To rid ourselves of evil thoughts concerning others takes great efforts. We need to be as diligent in suspecting good motives as we have been to find fault. Is it not often true that our judgments of evil motives are proved wrong? Have we not often erred on the side of hardness? Mastering our thoughts will lead to mastery of our tongue and of our outward actions.

Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit

bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned (Matt 12:33-37)

How can we budge the grudge?

D A Carson has said: 'Love keeps no record of wrongs, a private file of personal grievances that can be consulted and nursed whenever there is possibility of some new slight. Its stance in the presence of genuine evil precludes such accounting; for at a very deep level, love cannot bear to be censorious or hypercritical: love "does not delight in evil" (1 Cor 13:6), like the fake self-righteousness that feigns moral indignation in the face of salaciousness but secretly revels in the crudeness and vulgarity. It does not enjoy endless discussions about what is wrong with the churches and institutions we serve, and takes on such subjects only when competing demands of righteousness require it. If there is any report of something right or truthful going on, love will quickly rejoice over it, or, if the compound verb that is used is not merely intensive, love will join with others in rejoicing over the truth.'¹

Bearing and maintaining a grudge shows a very diligent clerical ability. Files are

regularly taken out and re-read, case histories examined, new insights entered. This, to the flesh, is comforting and even enjoyable. We indulge ourselves with a grudge. We imagine what we would like to do to the person who has wronged us. 'Charity, instead of entering evil as a debt in its account book, voluntarily passes the sponge over what it endures. Finally, it feels no criminal joy on seeing the faults which may be committed by men of an opposite party. Rather than eagerly turn to account the wrong which an adversary thus does to himself, it mourns on account of it. This last proposition is the transition to the first of the five positive qualities which are afterwards mentioned' (Godet on 1 Cor 13:5).

Don't meditate on wrongs done. Learn to discipline your mind. Do not rehearse offences and your response in your mind; this only drives the grievance deeper. Do not discuss or repeat the issue to others except where to do so tends towards solving the matter. All this takes self-discipline. The battle is won at the first rising of the thought. Replace one thought with another. As someone has wisely said, it is difficult to think about nothing, hence the counsel of Paul to the Philippians:

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever

things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things (Phil 4:8).

Dealing with grudges is resolving never to bring up the sin again. This does not mean that we are naïvely leaving ourselves

open to further abuse, but rather that we do not harbour bitterness towards the person. We are aware of the conduct of that person, especially where we are dealing with someone who is unrepentant, but we seek to approach them believing the best, given the information we have. We wisely guard ourselves but not with bitterness and hatred. Consider our Lord:

Who, when he was reviled, did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but committed himself to him who judges righteously (1 Peter 2:23).

Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' And they divided his garments and cast lots (Luke 23:34).

If we allow grudges to fester then we shall find that sooner or later actions will follow and some form of vengeance will be taken. Where genuine repentance has been shown and reconciliation achieved, then the matter should not be raised again. To maintain a grudge in such circumstances is to retain the sin and not release the offender.

DEALING
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SIN AGAIN

¹ D A Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, pp. 62-63.

9. Can't I ignore those who have wronged me? Forgiveness and reconciliation

So far we have considered the negative side of forgiveness – not avenging ourselves and not bearing a grudge – but forgiveness involves the positive – loving our neighbour as ourselves. Too often it is thought acceptable that we simply ignore those who have wronged us. This may mean that a form of peace reigns but it will fall far short of biblical forgiveness and will almost certainly reveal that ill-will is harboured towards the offender.

You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD (Lev 19:18).

The preceding two verses are significant in giving us an understanding of what this love involves:

You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbour: I am the LORD. You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbour, and not bear sin because of him.

Clearly here love involves, among other things, rebuking our neighbour when he sins and not ignoring sin to his hurt. We see the same teaching from our Lord:

'Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven

times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, "I repent," you shall forgive him' (Luke 17:3-4).

'Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that "by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector' (Matt 18:15-17).

Before we proceed to look at these verses concerning how we are to respond to someone sinning against us, we need to ask whether it is always appropriate to respond. The verse I have in mind is found in 1 Peter 4:8:

And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins.'

The teaching here reflects that elsewhere:

Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins (Prov 10:12).

A fool's wrath is known at once, but a prudent man covers shame (Prov 12:16).

He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends (Prov 17:9).

He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him (Prov 18:13).

Love ... bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (1 Cor 13:7).

We need to ask whether what has offended us was a sin or merely an oversight or a mistake; or whether in fact we have misunderstood. Too often it is our pride that has been injured, and that not by any sin on the part of others. Ask yourself therefore, Is it a sin, merely a mistake, or an oversight? Is it my pride that has been hurt or have we been truly wronged?

'Fervent charity prevents a man from giving any occasion for offence. There is always a want of love in the offending brother; the offence proves this; but had there been more love in the offended brother, and had that love been more plainly manifested, the offence might never have existed' (John Brown on 1 Peter).

Even where it is a sin, love will often require that we overlook it. We do not take needless offence. As Albert Barnes says:

'(1) True love to another makes us kind to his imperfections, charitable towards his faults, and often blind even to the existence of faults. We would not see the imperfections of those whom we love; and our attachment for what we esteem their real excellencies makes us insensible to their errors.

(2) If we love them we are ready to cover over their faults, even those which we may see in them. Of love the Christian poet says:

"Tis gentle, delicate, and kind. To faults compassionate or blind."

We all offend, says James:

For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body (James 3:2).

We must therefore give allowance and reckon on meeting with defects and weaknesses in all this side of heaven. Robert Leighton, the Puritan commentator, says:

'1. Take me the best action that can be named, pride and malice shall find a way to disgrace it, and put a hard visage upon it. Again, if it is not undeniably evil, love will turn to all the ways of viewing it, till it find the best and most favourable.

2. Where the thing is so plainly a sin, that this way of covering it can have no place, yet then will love consider what may lessen it most; whether a surprise, or strength of temptation, or ignorance, as our Saviour, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,' (Luke 23:34), or natural complexion; or at least will still take in human frailty, to turn all the bitterness of passion into sweet compassion.'

The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression (Prov 19:11).

If there is a failure in love, who is at fault? Maybe it is our lack of love that

has resulted in offence being taken. Love covers a multitude of sins but not all, and it is to the other cases that we now turn. The conduct demanded by love, where a sin is not to be covered is, at least, twofold.

1. Rebuke!

We do not wait for the offender to come to us.

'The one with the sore toes goes as he's the one who always knows' (Jay E Adams)

Why? Because the one offended against is always aware of the supposed offence, whereas the offender may be completely unaware. Love demands that we confront for the sake of the offender (Lev 19:17). There are things which it is not love to cover and ignore. We are not to ignore the offender, which is too often the way we act – this is a form of exacting revenge by 'sending them to Coventry' or 'giving them the cold shoulder'. We avoid confrontation out of an undue concern for ourselves (we don't want to get hurt), an unwillingness to forgive (desiring that they should suffer for what they have done) and a lack of love for the offender (not wishing to see them brought to repentance and fellowship restored).

We are to go to them in private thus continuing to fulfil the principle in 1 Peter. Our going is motivated not by bitterness as a way of exacting revenge but out of love:

1) love for God against whom ultimately the sin is committed; and 2) love for our

neighbour who needs to repent and be forgiven, not only by us, but by God.

Whilst sin remains unconfessed, they (in the case of a brother) will suffer loss of fellowship, and (in the case of an unbeliever) they are in danger of judgment.

How we approach a person to rebuke them is vital. The word used is the weaker of two alternatives. Jay E Adams terms it 'rebuke tentatively' where we entertain doubts as to the facts. We may have completely mistaken the act, misunderstood the motives, and had the individual misrepresented to us. We await an explanation upon the facts being presented. Again, Leighton is excellent:

'There is a great deal of spiritual art and skill in dealing with another's sin: and it requires much spirituality of mind, and much prudence, and much love, especially a mind clear from passion, for that blinds the eye, and makes the hand rough; so that a man neither rightly sees nor handles the sore he goes about to cure. And many are lost through the ignorance and neglect of that due temper to be brought to this work.'

Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching (2 Tim 4:2b).

And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth (2 Tim 2:24-25).

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted (Gal 6:1).

2. Forgive!

If they are repentant, then we are commanded to forgive and be reconciled. How often? Repeatedly.

'Rules of arithmetic cannot measure a mother's love' (Van Doren).

This is not a matter of reading their heart to ascertain their sincerity.

Love believes all things (1 Cor 13:7).

The bare acknowledgement of sorrow over and expression of turning away from that sin is to be received. The disciples' response was that this takes great faith – it leaves us vulnerable to further abuse! But the Lord assures us that it is not an issue of great faith but one of obedience, not one governed by feeling, as the subsequent context reveals. The slave obeys his master, not according to his feelings but because it is his duty. We are duty-bound to forgive, not to do so is sin. See Matthew 18:21ff.

3. Go with others (Matthew 18:15ff)

If, however, the offender is not reconciled through repentance, then the matter is shared with one or two others who are to act as witnesses so that the facts can be established. Again, the principle of

covering sin is present as the offence is not broadcast but retained within a small circle. Only if this fails is the matter to be brought before the church. The matter then proceeds to church discipline if necessary.

FORGIVENESS
IS NOT
AT THE
EXPENSE OF
JUSTICE

In this fuller sense of forgiveness you 'retain' the matter and proceed to act (but not on your own authority). There is a sense then that you have handed it over to others and are not retaining it. The same principle applies to an offence committed in the civil realm. The government is established by God to be a terror to evil-doers and to

uphold justice. Love for the offender and others in society demands that we act on occasions. It is not in the best interests of the society that evil-doers go unrestrained and unpunished nor is it in their own best interests. Being held to account by God's ordained authorities may be used by God to bring them to recognise the seriousness of their conduct and lead to them seeking him for forgiveness. Once again, forgiveness is not at the expense of justice. What is absent, however, is personal animosity and revenge on the part of the believer. Rather, there is sorrow that such is necessary, and pray for the offender. ■

(to be continued in the next issue of RT)

Phil Roberts is pastor of Hartshill Bible Church, Stoke-on-Trent, UK.

Kenya

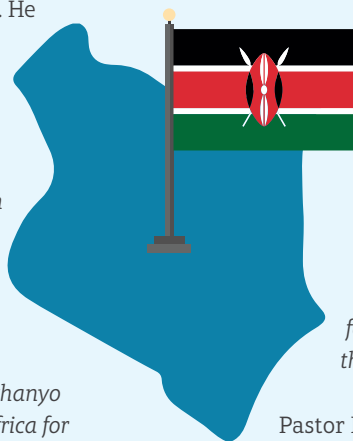
The following is an extract from a recent report by Pastor Eric Ngala from Bumala, Kenya, regarding his work of training pastors using material from the Mukhanyo Theological College in South Africa. This report gives a strong argument of the need for theological training. He writes:

We thank the Lord Jesus for so far he has helped us and we say that he is Ebenezer (1 Sam 7:12) and we are certain that it is not the end but the beginning. We have 17 students doing the Diploma in Theology course here.

We also thank God for the Mukhanyo Theological College in South Africa for providing us with the transcripts for the courses already covered and graded. This has encouraged the pastors because the Government here is keen to have only trained people to serve as pastors, so the group here have evidence to show to the authorities that they are undergoing theological education should they be asked to show proof.

Pray with us that the Lord will provide for the resources to purchase the modules remaining so that the students may graduate by or in December 2017.

Also pray for the numerous pastors on the waiting list who want to join the college but are not able due to the financial costs that the modules involve.



The library of the Distance College here has grown very well; we therefore thank God for our brother Andries Hendrikse in Holland for this ministry as he collects books for Theology. We also appreciate Pastor Training International for providing us with good theological books.

Pastor Ngala is also helping to teach on farming. He writes:

One of the reasons we teach 'Farming God's Way' is because people die from hunger while some pastors preach the prosperity gospel because of hunger. Again the Lord is the major concern here without neglecting the physical food too.

Pastor Ngala also refers to farmers benefiting especially from material supplied by the University of Wageningen in Holland. ■



UK: Caring for Life Thirty Years of Sharing the Love of Jesus

Caring for Life is a Christian charity, established thirty years ago, with the motto 'Sharing the love of Jesus', and with the specific purpose of: 'Promoting the evangelical Christian faith in bringing the love and compassion of Christ Jesus to mankind through the relief in need of persons who are poor, have a disability or are otherwise in need' (please see RT 261 for more details).

In February this year they celebrated their thirtieth anniversary with a thanksgiving service. The monthly bulletin speaks about the sense of wonder and gratitude for the way the Lord has blessed beyond all measure what was initially a tiny fledgling work, which seemed so fragile in human terms.

Peter Parkinson (co-founder together with Esther Smith) wrote in the monthly bulletin referring to Psalm 115:1 'I would have to say that in spite of our sins, unworthiness and shortcomings, the Lord has glorified himself through the ministry of CFL. To him be ALL the glory.'

CFL has been used to care for hundreds of poor, vulnerable and abused people in and around Leeds.

Jonathan Parkinson, currently the executive director of CFL wrote: 'I, along with all the other staff members and volunteers, we who are so privileged to be serving our Heavenly Father here at Caring for Life, stand in complete awe and wonder at the way the Lord has enabled us to share his love with so many people, and for the way we have seen so many souls snatched from Satan's wicked grasp and brought into the Kingdom of light, and into the safety of his love.' But he adds: 'The overwhelming feeling for me today is gratitude, but also a deep sense of the thought that we have only just begun. We do face a task unfinished and we know that task will only end when our Lord Jesus returns.' And later: 'We believe we are literally fighting against the forces of evil; we are literally fighting for the souls and the salvation of some incredibly damaged people.'

Needless to say, their request is first of all for the continued prayers of the Lord's people, and in addition for continued financial support.

May our Lord continue to bless this wonderful and remarkable ministry! ■

Reformation Today website: new important articles

These articles are warmly recommended, and can all be found on the RT website in the menu under 'Resources/Articles'.



Series of articles on the Reformation

We are very grateful to Dr Sharon James for a series of articles on the history and doctrinal development of the Reformation with the title: 'Rediscovering the Power of the Gospel.' Sharon presented these as four addresses at the recent Word Alive conference.

Westminster paper by Geoff Thomas

Readers have appreciated the article by Dr Geoff Thomas on 'Evangelicalism in England and Wales 1945-2015'. This article was only part of the paper Geoff presented at the last Westminster Conference. The full article is now available on our website.

London Seminary

Dr Robert Strivens has announced his decision to resign as Principal of London Seminary this summer in order to return to pastoral ministry. He wrote in his latest newsletter:

It has been a great privilege for me to serve the Seminary for these past ten years, watching men, many with wives and families, give up a great deal in order to prepare themselves thoroughly for a lifetime of pastoral ministry. It is a privilege to see

their thinking develop, and sometimes change quite radically, as they study and listen to lectures rooted in those great Reformation truths. Please continue to pray for the work of the Seminary and particularly for the Board as they pursue the search for the next principal.

I would like to add that we can all thank and praise the Lord for the leadership Robert has given to London Seminary over these last ten years, and join to pray

for him in this new phase of his ministry to the church of Christ.

In the meantime the following announcement has been made on the London Seminary website regarding Robert's successor:

London Seminary is delighted to announce that Bill James has been appointed the next Principal of the Seminary, following Robert Strivens who steps down from the post at the end of July.

Bill has served as pastor of Emmanuel Church, Leamington Spa since 1991. He trained for ministry at Toronto Baptist Seminary (MDiv), and for many years has been involved in training men for ministry in a variety of settings, both in the UK and overseas. Prior to entering ministry, Bill graduated from Cambridge University (Chemical Engineering) and worked for five years for Glaxo Pharmaceuticals (now GSK).

Bill currently teaches Pastoral Theology at the Seminary. He serves on the

 **Bill James**



Trust Board of the FIEC, and organises the programme for the annual Carey Conference for church leaders. Bill is married to Sharon, and they have two grown-up children.

Spencer Cunnah, Chairman of the Board of the Seminary, said, 'This new appointment is of strategic importance in training men for gospel ministry. We look to the Lord with anticipation as the work develops under Bill's direction with exciting new initiatives.'

Bill James said, 'The great need of our churches is godly, spiritual leaders who are thoroughly equipped both academically and practically for the work of ministry. Having served on the Board and taught at the Seminary for a number of years, I am enthusiastic about its focus on training pastors and preachers for free-church ministry. My prayer is that the Lord will use the Seminary in a mighty way for the blessing of the church in this country and beyond.'

Bill will take up his role as Principal on 1st January 2018. David Green, currently Vice-Principal, will be Acting Principal in the meantime. ■



Update on Recent Conferences

More than 100,000 books have been distributed since the start!

Following the recent conferences in Zimbabwe in April 2017, the total number of books distributed since the start of APC in 2006 has passed to over 100,000 and now stands at 102,085. This represents a major milestone!

Just imagine what is behind this number: so many books have gone into the hands of pastors who thus far have had relatively little training! The aim is that, together with what they learned at the conferences, they will be able to apply this in their ministry in their local churches in many countries in Africa. Please join us in praying that these pastors will be better equipped to preach the gospel of free grace in the power of the Holy Spirit.

What started as a relatively small enterprise in South

COUNTRY	LOCATION	DELEGATES	BOOKS Sold & Free
Zimbabwe	Bulawayo	73	771
Zimbabwe	Kwekwe	27	281
Zimbabwe	Mutare	35	308
Zimbabwe	Harare	72	1079
South Africa	Hazyview	25	176
South Africa	Komatipoort	18	207
South Africa	Barberton	46	435
Swaziland	Manzini	21	405



A Recent Conference in Gaborone, Botswana

Africa alone has now developed into a massive operation still carried out by only a small number of people. We realise that the Lord has blessed this work so far and to him be all the glory. Please also pray

for the people bearing the day-to-day responsibility for this work.

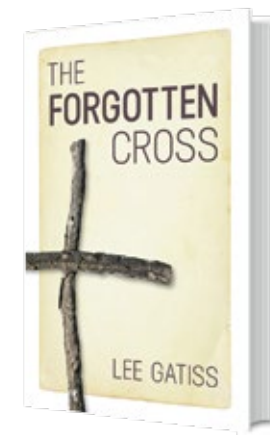
The table above gives an overview of conferences held in Zimbabwe in April 2017. ■

JOHN PALMER

Book Reviews

The Forgotten Cross

Author: Lee Gatiss
 Publisher: Darlington: EP Books, 2014
 Pages: 109
 ISBN: 978-1-78397-070-4



The historical fact of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross is of the utmost significance, so much so that the apostle Paul said, 'Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world' (Gal 6:14).

The most important desire for a Christian is to know Christ and all he has done to save us, and especially his death on the cross. This is the key to the glorious message of the gospel, and shows God's love for us in Christ. The significance of the cross is expressed in many ways in the New Testament. The heart of it is that Jesus by his death took the wrath of God, the punishment for our sins and the curse of the law upon himself for us. Not so long ago, this truth, also known as penal substitution, was being criticised even by

some who called themselves evangelical. This challenge has been effectively refuted in several publications but a side effect may be that we have forgotten other biblical and crucially important aspects of the cross of Christ.

Lee Gatiss has, therefore, set out to proclaim some of these other aspects in this small book. It contains six expositions of passages from the New Testament that shed light on these other aspects of the death of Christ on the cross. The topics and texts of these expositions are: 1. The Cross and Success (1 Cor 1); 2. The Cross and Service (Mark 10:32-45); 3. The Cross and Suffering (1 Peter 2:12-25); 4. The Cross and Separation (Eph 2:11-22); 5. The Cross and Sanctification (Titus 2:1-15) and 6. The Cross and Supremacy (Col 2:6-23).

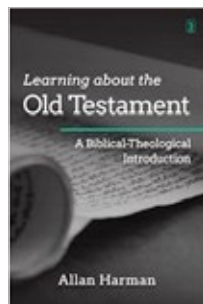
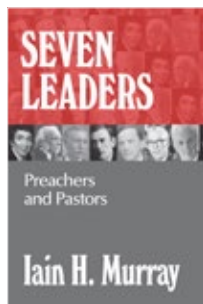


These chapters contain clear expositions of these texts, and speak to our minds and hearts about the great things of the gospel. In every message, penal substitution is shown to be the heart of the message of the cross. The author then shows how this truth works out in the different topics of these chapters and applies these to our lives.

These expositions are also good models on how to preach these great texts and the vitally important truths they proclaim. It is essential to keep our ministry firmly focused on Christ and the message of the cross to the glory of our Saviour! This small book is most warmly recommended. ■

New Books

The following books have been published recently and are recommended for your attention:



- Iain H Murray,
Seven Leaders: Preachers and Pastors
(Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2017),
296pp. ISBN 9781848717398.

- Allan M Harman,
Learning About the Old Testament. A Biblical-Theological Introduction
(Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2017),
144pp, ISBN 9781848717435

- John Piper,
Introducing William Tyndale
(Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2017),
110pp, ISBN 9781848717558

- D A Carson, J Robinson Sr,
Coming Home. Essays on the New Heaven and New Earth
(Wheaton: Crossway, 2017)
176pp, ISBN 9781433553974

Please note that we are unable to supply these books; please contact your local bookshop.



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Please make any cheques out to 'Reformation Today'.

Donations to APC: These should be sent to Phil Roberts, 121 Hartshill Road, Hartshill, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 7LU. Cheques should be made out to 'African Pastors' Conferences'. Could UK donors please let Phil Roberts know if they intend to use gift aid.



Further Details

Further details about individual APC conferences are available from
Phil Roberts (phil@tentmaker.org.uk) or
Frederick Hodgson (frederick.hodgson@gmail.com)



📷 Evangelium 21 Conference in Germany celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation; speakers (from left to right): David Platt, Ligon Duncan, Mark Dever, Albert Mohler, Matthias Lohmann (see inside for report)

Next Issue

- ▶ What is the Transgender Agenda, and how should Christians respond?
- ▶ The Witness of Jane Grey: An Evangelical Queen