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Essays in recognition of the retirement of Rev Dr Timothy Meadowcroft

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INTRODUCTION FROM THE EDITORS

It is a privilege to bring this collection of articles together to honour Tim Meadowcroft on his retirement from Laidlaw College. Before pursuing theological studies and ordination in the Anglican Church, Tim was an English high school teacher and had completed an MA in English literature. He combined his literary interests with theological studies as he undertook his PhD in the early 1990s at the University of Edinburgh, comparing the narrative techniques of the Aramaic and Greek texts of Daniel 2–7. His thesis was published as a widely respected monograph, *Aramaic Daniel and Greek Daniel: A Literary Comparison*. Immediately after completing his PhD, Tim was employed by Laidlaw College (then Bible College of NZ) in 1994, where he has taught until his retirement at the end of 2018. As well as being a popular teacher of Old and New Testament courses, Greek and Hebrew, and hermeneutics, Tim has supervised a number of doctoral and masters theses. He has developed his own research interests, particularly Hermeneutics, Theological Interpretation of Scripture, Contextualisation, Wisdom literature, Apocalyptic literature, Literary readings of the text of Scripture, and Scripture and Science.

The articles below presented in honour of Tim reflect something of the variety of his interests and demonstrate his academic engagement with and support of colleagues, former students, and friends. The first two particularly engage with issues of contemporary contextualisation. Phil Church, a long-time colleague of Tim's at Laidlaw, was encouraged by him to attend a conference in Bethlehem a few years ago. This gave the impetus for his piece on Hebrews and the Christian meaning of pilgrimage to Zion ("You [Jewish Christ-Followers in Rome] Have Come to Mount Zion...'" (Heb 12:22): Pilgrimage to Zion and the Book of Hebrews"), in contrast to views (based on Isa 2:2–4 and similar), which frame such pilgrimage in the context of Jews returning to the land of Israel. Mark Brett, a colleague from Whitley College, Melbourne, produces a piece arising out of Tim's and his mutual interest and conversations relating to their regional contexts ("Whakawhiti kōrero: Theology and Social Vocation"). He addresses the social-theological implications of the Treaty of Waitangi and sees in it an expression of social vocation in which multiple groups can covenant with each other while retaining their own identity. The next article links in with Tim's interest in theological interpretations of Scripture and with his work on apocalyptic, especially Daniel. James Harding, another colleague at the University of Otago, enters into a discussion of Luke 24:44–49 ("Scripture on the Road to Emmaus"), a well-known text in the theological interpretation of Scripture, which relate the opening of the disciples' eyes/heart as they walk with the resurrected Jesus. James reflects on what it means to do faithful theological exegesis and traces the thought patterns in the text to Jewish apocalyptic and prayer. The last three articles address a variety of hermeneutical considerations on reception history, translation work, and interpreting rituals, respectively. Don Moffat, a former PhD student and now colleague of Tim's at the College of St John the Evangelist, reflects on recent trends in biblical interpretation, particularly, reception history ("Reception History: Signalling Change in Biblical Studies"). He discusses the contextual nature of interpretation and the multivalence of texts as evidenced by reception history, which highlight some of

the cracks in the basic assumptions of historical-criticism in seeking to locate one original text and one original meaning. John de Jong, a former PhD student and now colleague of Tim's at Laidlaw, who lived for twelve years in Yangon, Myanmar, compares two editions of Adoniram Judson's Burmese translation of the NT and their relationship with the Textus Receptus ("Textual Criticism, the Textus Receptus, and Adoniram Judson's Burmese New Testaments"). He particularly comments on how Judson's context (his scholarship and Christian faith) affects his translation decisions and interpretations. Csilla Saysell, a more recent colleague from Carey Baptist College, discusses the function and meaning of the sin offering ("The Blood Manipulation of the Sin Offering and the Logic of Defilement"), a piece which partly arose out of an informal discussion among OT scholars headed up by Tim earlier this year. She reflects on issues relating to the hermeneutics of ritual and argues that daubing blood on the horns of the altar is an appeal for God's mercy that echoes altar asylum. All of these articles are, in one way or another, a tribute to Tim's wide array of interests and involvement in his field.

Tim is a founding member of the Aotearoa-New Zealand Association for Biblical Studies (ANZABS), has been a regular contributor at the Society of Biblical Literature's Annual Meeting, and has a large portfolio of published monographs, edited books, book chapters, and journal articles, along with many popular publications. As well as his scholarly work, Tim has always maintained a commitment to the church—his local Anglican church, the church of Aotearoa-New Zealand, and the global church. As he retires from Laidlaw College, Tim is one of New Zealand's senior biblical scholars and we are pleased that he has every intention of continuing his research and contribution to the field after he finishes full time teaching.

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“YOU [JEWISH CHRIST-FOLLOWERS IN ROME] HAVE COME TO MOUNT ZION...” (HEB 12:22): PILGRIMAGE TO ZION AND THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

Philip Church

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In 2009, after a period of study leave in Palestine, Tim Meadowcroft encouraged me to attend the 2010 “Christ at the Checkpoint” conference in Bethlehem. Spending ten days in the West Bank was an experience that has shaped my thinking in the years since and will continue to do so. I am grateful to Tim for his encouragement to attend and I count it a privilege to write this essay in his honour.

Among the experiences that stand out in my memory is a visit to the Jewish Settlement of Efrat.¹ We sat in the synagogue and listened to a Jewish man with a New York accent talk about his long standing attachment to the land of Israel from when he lived in the USA, and he explained that if everybody was like “us” there would be peace. He closed his talk by quoting Isa 2:2–4 referring to that peace,

2 In days to come the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. 3 Many peoples shall come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.²

He explained how the *Aliyah* was the fulfilment of that text, notwithstanding that it refers to “all the nations” streaming to Zion rather than people of Jewish ethnicity. The following day a presenter at the conference read from the same text, and interpreted it in the same way, claiming that he suspected that “all the nations ... includes Israel.”³ It seems to me that, while the text envisages the post-exilic restoration of Zion and Jerusalem, which would no doubt involve the return of the exiles, that is not the main concern. The text anticipates an eschatological pilgrimage of gentiles to Zion to be instructed by and learn *halakha* from YHWH,⁴ followed by universal peace.

¹ For Efrat, see Mic 5:1. Jewish settlements frequently take on biblical place names.

² I have cited the NRSV. I do not recall what translation the man used.

³ See Darrell Bock, “The Land in the Light of the Reconciliation in Christ: A Dispensationalist View,” in *Christ at the Checkpoint: Theology in the Service of Justice and Peace*, ed. Paul Alexander (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012), 117–18.

⁴ Marvin A. Sweeney, “The Book of Isaiah as Prophetic Torah,” in *New Visions of Isaiah*, ed. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 50 considers that Isa 2:2–4 “is not simply a vision for the nations ... [rather, Isa 2:5 invites] ‘Israel’ or ‘the house of Jacob’ ... to join the nations on Zion to walk in the light of YHWH.” H. G. M. Williamson, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 1–27. Volume 1: Commentary on Isaiah 1–5*, 3 vols., ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 187 sees v. 5 as a redactional addition to encourage “the

In this paper I am ultimately interested in understanding Heb 12:22–24, which begins, “you have come to Mount Zion, even the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem ...”⁵ While the circumstances surrounding Hebrews are shrouded in mystery, it seems clear to me that it is a letter intended to be read to a group of followers of Jesus who were ethnic Jews.⁶ They are probably located in Rome while the author is located elsewhere, perhaps in Jerusalem, although this is by no means certain. The temple is still standing, but the author can see its destruction looming on the horizon. The recipients seem to be attracted to certain ritual synagogue meals that other Jews, not (yet) followers of Jesus, are participating in, meals that “drew some of their significance from their dependency upon the Temple.”⁷ The author writes to warn them that if they go down that road there is no way back and they risk losing their salvation.⁸

ZION AND JERUSALEM IN THE OT

The terms “Zion” and “Jerusalem” are relatively common in the OT to refer to where YHWH dwelt in the temple, to where he was to be worshipped, and from where he addressed his people, who were to listen to his voice.⁹ This precise vocabulary is not always present, and as Isa 2:2–4 and Mic 1:1–4 demonstrate, there were a variety of designations for the location. That YHWH selected Zion/Jerusalem for his dwelling place is clear from Ps 2:6 where it is described as my holy hill; from Ps 9:11 where YHWH is said to be “seated” (*yashab*) in Zion;¹⁰ and from Ps 74:2, where Mount Zion is where YHWH “dwells” (*shakan*). That it is where YHWH is worshipped is clear from Ps 100:1–5 where all the people of the world are called upon to enter the presence of YHWH, further described as his gates and his courts, that is the gates and courts of the temple.

One Psalm where the combination of worshipping and listening to YHWH is clear is Ps 95, partially quoted in Hebrews 3 and the subject of a *midrash* in Heb 3–4.¹¹ The first part of the Psalm (vv. 1–7a) is a dual call to worship and the second part (vv. 7b–11) a prophetic announcement addressed to

readers of what follows to live as worthy examples of the principles which have been introduced in vv. 2–4.” I (a gentile) had the opportunity to visit Jerusalem one day during the conference, but thanks to Tim’s prior arrangements, I spent the day in the Library at the École Biblique rather than “streaming to Zion” (the old city).

⁵ Unless otherwise indicated all translations are my own.

⁶ Several scholars argue from Heb 6:1–4 that the recipients are gentiles, but the text seems not to be definitive on this point. See Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 163–64; Kenneth L. Schenck, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Hebrews: The Settings of the Sacrifice*, SNTSMS 143 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 193–94. Elsewhere in Hebrews there is more persuasive evidence to suggest that the recipients are of Jewish ethnicity. On this see Peter W. L. Walker, “Jerusalem in Hebrews 13:9–14 and the Dating of the Epistle,” *TynBul* 45 (1994): passim.

⁷ Walker, “Jerusalem,” 40.

⁸ For argumentation supporting this paragraph see Philip Church, *Hebrews and the Temple: Attitudes to the Temple in Second Temple Judaism and in Hebrews*, NovTSup 171 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 12–18, 358–65.

⁹ See H. A. Thomas, “Zion,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, ed. Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012), 907. Zion appears 154 times in the Hebrew Bible, and Jerusalem 643 times.

¹⁰ The verb *yashab* has a wide semantic range, and includes the notion “sitting” as well as “dwelling”, with “sitting” in this case probably including the idea of enthronement. See D. J. A. Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, 8 vols. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993–2011), 4: 318.

¹¹ An earlier version of the following paragraphs appears in Church, *Hebrews and the Temple*, 320.

the gathering worshippers. The dual call to worship (95:1–2, 6) is followed by two reasons why YHWH should be worshipped (95:3–5, 7a).¹² The exhortations to come before his presence (v. 2) and to kneel before YHWH (v. 6) make it likely this Psalm is part of a temple liturgy. The prophetic announcement (vv. 7b–11, quoted in Heb 3) is an urgent call to the gathered worshippers to listen to the voice of YHWH “today,” and not to harden their hearts as did the wilderness generation at Massah and Meribah.¹³ YHWH loathed that generation for forty years and swore that they would not enter his “rest” (*menukhab*). For the wilderness generation, the “rest” (*menukhab*) is the promised land (Deut 12:9–10), for the gathering worshippers implied in the psalm it is the temple itself (2 Chron 6:41),¹⁴ for the implied readers of Hebrews, and later readers eavesdropping on the conversation between the author and his readers, it is their (and our) eschatological goal (Heb 4:1–11).

YHWH’s selection of Zion as his dwelling place led to the belief that Zion was inviolable,¹⁵ something that is clear in Jeremiah’s famous temple sermon (Jeremiah 7), where, in a way that is reminiscent of Ps 95, Jeremiah stands at the gate of the temple and accosts the gathering worshippers, announcing YHWH’s judgement and the exile unless they amend their ways (Jer 7:4–7). At the end of the sermon YHWH announces that he would destroy the “place” (*maqom*), just as he had destroyed his “place” (*maqom*) at Shiloh (Jer 7:12–14).¹⁶ Soon after, with the exile of the southern kingdom, Jerusalem was sacked by Nebuchadnezzar’s army and destroyed (2 Kings 25:8–21).¹⁷

This was not the end, however, for Jerusalem and Zion, for Zion plays a prominent part in Israel’s future in the prophetic literature.¹⁸ The prophets predicted that the city would be cleansed, the temple rebuilt and the people regathered. Moreover, as the text quoted by both the man in the Efrat Synagogue and by Bock at the Christ at the Checkpoint Conference shows, not only would Israel be regathered to Zion, but the nations would also come to Zion to learn the ways of YHWH.

What is remarkable, however, is that Jerusalem and Zion are almost entirely absent from the NT. Apart from Heb 12:22 and Rev 14:1, Zion only appears five times, all OT quotations.¹⁹ As for Jerusalem, while there are numerous geographical references as the backdrop for events described in the Gospels and Acts, and in discussions of Paul’s collection in Romans and 1 Corinthians, it only appears in Gal 4:24–26 where it is displaced by the “Jerusalem above”, in Heb 12:22 where it is the “heavenly Jerusalem” and three times in Revelation, where it is the “new Jerusalem” that comes down from

¹² John Goldingay, *Psalms Volume 3: Psalms 90–150*, BCOTWP (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 88–89.

¹³ The reference to the forty-year period in Ps 95:10 indicates that Massah and Meribah together probably refer to the entire wilderness journey. They occur together in Exod 17:7 (early in the wilderness period) and Deut 33:8 (near the end).

¹⁴ The Psalms Targum at Ps 95:11 reads “the rest of my temple”. In this context *menukhab* is a place of rest rather than a state of rest.

¹⁵ Thomas, “Zion,” 907–8.

¹⁶ That *maqom* can refer to the temple is clear from a comparison of Ps 96:6 with the equivalent line in the poem in 1 Chron 16:27. See William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, vol. 1, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 237.

¹⁷ Holladay (Ibid., 240) dates the sermon in the late summer or early autumn of 609 BCE.

¹⁸ Carey C. Newman, “Jerusalem, Zion, Holy City,” in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove: IVP, 1997), 561–62.

¹⁹ Matt 21:5; John 12:15; Rom 9:33; 11:26; 1 Pet 2:6.

heaven.²⁰ And in Heb 13:12–14, rather than moving towards Jerusalem, the followers of Jesus are called to leave the city, following Jesus to where he was executed, bearing the abuse he bore.²¹

In what follows I briefly examine Isa 2:2–4 along with the parallel text in Micah 4:1–4. I follow this with a glance in the direction of Isaiah 35, the subject of an allusion in Heb 12:12, and since Jeremiah plays a significant part in Hebrews,²² I will also look at some texts from Jeremiah that discuss the return of the exiles. I follow this with a study of Heb 12:22–24 in the light of these OT texts.

ISAIAH 2:2–4 AND MICAH 4:1–4

While the idea of an eschatological pilgrimage of the nations to Zion is found in a variety of places in the OT, I expect that Isa 2:2–4 and its parallel in Mic 4:1–4 are foundational for any discussion of the idea. Isaiah 2:2–4 is strategically located at the start of the book, perhaps heading up the collection of oracles about Judah and Jerusalem that encompass chapters 2–12.²³ The pericope also appears with minor differences in Mic 4:1–4, where it immediately follows an announcement of the devastation of Zion, Jerusalem and “the mountain of the house” because of the sins of the leaders of the people.²⁴ Both texts begin with an announcement that what will happen will happen “in the future”,²⁵ but while the Micah text announces a reversal of the judgements of Micah 3, the Isaiah text seems to be setting out a programme for the book.²⁶

Prominent in both Isaiah 2 and Micah 4 are the words “nations” (*goyim*) and “peoples” (*ammim*) with the nations and the peoples streaming up the mountain that has been exalted as the highest of the

²⁰ Rev 3:12; 21:2, 10.

²¹ For this reading of Heb 13:12–14 see Church, *Hebrews and the Temple*, 363–65. In the NT there is movement towards Jerusalem with Paul and his collection for the Jerusalem church (Rom 15:25–29; 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8–9). On the gentile pilgrimage to Zion in Paul, see Christopher Zoccali, *Reading Philippians after Supersessionism: Jews, Gentiles and Covenant Identity*, Kindle ed., New Testament after Supersessionism (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2017), loc. 834–1009.

²² NA²⁸ (pp. 862–63) lists eleven citations of and allusions to Jeremiah in Hebrews, including Jer 31:31–34 in Heb 8. This is the longest OT citation in the NT, treated at length in Heb 9:1–10:18.

²³ James Limburg, “Swords to Ploughshares: Text and Contexts,” in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition*, ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 280.

²⁴ It would be a diversion to enter into the debate as to whether Isaiah borrowed from Micah or vice-versa, or whether both used a pre-existing oracle, which seems likely. See the discussion in Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12*, A Continental Commentary (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 85–87, and Williamson, *Isaiah 1–5*, 166–79.

²⁵ Williamson, *Isaiah 1–5*, 179–81 argues that on its own this expression is not strictly eschatological, although the LXX probably reads it that way with “in the last days” in Isa 2:2 and “at the end of days” in Mic 4:1. Cf. Heb 1:1, “in these last days,” an eschatological formula referring to the new era brought about by the exaltation of Christ. Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 29 reads the text as thoroughly eschatological, “It speaks of God’s time, different in kind from ordinary time, and it signals immediately that there is no simple linear continuity between Israel’s historical existence and the entrance of God’s kingdom. Rather, into the old breaks the radical new.”

²⁶ Williamson, *Isaiah 1–5*, 172. The idea of the pilgrimage of the nations to Jerusalem pervades Isaiah and becomes more and more detailed as the book progresses. Scholars routinely relate later texts back to this programmatic statement, see e.g. M. A. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 498; Williamson, *Isaiah 1–5*, 177–78 and John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, Rev. ed., WBC 24 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 46–48. For the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion in Isaiah see 11:10; 24:21–25:10; 45:14–17; 54:1–8; 56:1–8; 60:1–22; 66:18–24. See also Hag 2:6–9; Zech 2:10–14 (MT 2:14–17); 8:20–23; 14:16–19.

mountains.²⁷ The location to which they are to ascend is variously named as “the mountain of the house of YHWH” (Isa 2:2, Mic 4:1), the “mountain of YHWH” (Isa 2:3, Mic 4:2), the “house of the God of Jacob” (Isa 2:3, Mic 4:2), “Zion” (Isa 2:3, Mic 4:2) and “Jerusalem” (Isa 2:3, Mic 4:2).²⁸ They encourage one another to go there so that YHWH, the God of Jacob can teach them his ways, and they can walk in his paths. As Williamson notes, “[t]he nations, therefore, express a desire to be taught the right way to live by God, and they demonstrate their sincerity by declaring in advance their intention to follow that out in practice.”²⁹ This is reflected in the immediately following motive clause in both Isaiah and Micah, “For from Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of YHWH from Jerusalem.”³⁰ And each pericope concludes with a vision of peace among the nations.

Isaiah and Micah diverge at this point. Micah explains that the people will live securely under their own vines and fig trees, with none to make them afraid, “for the mouth of YHWH of hosts has spoken these things” (Mic 4:4), and in Isa 2:5 the people exhort one another to walk in the light of YHWH.

These parallel texts envisage the nations streaming to Zion and Jerusalem to learn the ways of YHWH, with the ultimate result being the cessation of conflict between the nations. It is not concerned with the return of the exiles of Israel and Judah, which is the way the *Aliyah* is normally understood.

OTHER POSSIBLE TEXTS BEHIND HEB 12:22–24

While Isa 2:2–4 and Mic 1:1–4 deal with the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion, as I suggested above, the implied readers of Hebrews are most likely ethnic Jews. There are numerous texts that refer to the return of the (Jewish) exiles to Zion, and I need to be selective in my choice of texts for consideration. Given the allusion to Isa 35:3 in Heb 12:12, and the conclusion of that chapter with the joyful return of the exiles to Zion, and given the number of motifs in Isa 34–35 that are reflected in Hebrews,³¹ Isaiah 35

²⁷ Limburg, “Swords to Ploughshares,” 281, notes that this description “should not be understood in terms of geological phenomena ... but rather as an image illustrating the significance of the mountain and Jerusalem for the future community of ‘all the nations’ and ‘many peoples’.” See also Williamson, *Isaiah 1–5*, 181–82, and Moshe Weinfeld, “Zion and Jerusalem as Religious and Political Capital: Ideology and Utopia,” in *The Poet and the Historian: Essays in Literary and Historical Biblical Criticism*, ed. Richard Elliott Friedman, HSS (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 108.

²⁸ The LXX makes a second destination in Isa 2:2, reading “the mountain of the Lord and the house of God” and also inserts a copula (*kai*) in Isa 2:3 between “the mountain of the Lord” and (*kai*) “the house of the God of Jacob,” which David A. Baer, *When we all Go Home: Translation and Theology in Isaiah 56–66*, JSOTSup 318 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 267–69 also reads as two destinations. The copula is present in both the MT and the LXX of Mic 4:2, and the destination is not expanded in Mic 4:1. 1QIsa^a simply reads “the house of the God of Jacob” in Isa 2:3 (1QIsa^a II 10), omitting any reference to the mountain of YHWH.

²⁹ Williamson, *Isaiah 1–5*, 184.

³⁰ John T. Willis, “Isaiah 2:2–5 and the Psalms of Zion,” in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition*, ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 296 sees this clause as the centre of the pericope on which the chiastic structure swings. Jonathan Magonet, “Isaiah’s Mountain or the Shape of Things to Come,” *Prooftexts* 11 (1991): 178 finds the central affirmation in “and he will teach us his ways and we will walk in his paths.” For *torah* as “instruction”, see Sweeney, “Prophetic Torah,” 50–51.

³¹ Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 658. Ellingworth lists the “glory” (Isa 35:2; Heb 1:3) of God; the “majesty” (Isa 35:2, cf. Heb 1:3; 7:26) of God; “encouragement” (Isa 35:4;

warrants a brief examination. Then, I briefly examine three texts in Jeremiah that are concerned with the return of the exiles.

Isaiah 34–35 is a separate section of Isaiah, connecting chapters 28–33 and 36–39 respectively, and probably bound together with the claim that YHWH is coming to take “vengeance” and to “vindicate the cause of Zion” (34:8; 35:4).³² In 35:4–5 the returning exiles are encouraged to strengthen their weak hands and “wobbly knees”,³³ a text cited from the LXX in Heb 12:12, with minor differences. They are encouraged to do this because YHWH is coming to “help” them. Then in 35:10 the exiles whom YHWH has redeemed enter Zion with great rejoicing, and “grief” (cf. Heb 12:11) and suffering come to an end.

Holladay judges Jeremiah 3:16–18b to be a prose addition to Jeremiah, dated in the fifth century, during the time of Nehemiah.³⁴ Be that as it may, it now sits alongside Jer 3:12–14 where YHWH calls upon faithless Israel to return, and announces that he will restore individuals from among the exiles and bring them to Zion and place faithful leaders over them. This announcement is followed by three oracles with an eschatological orientation,³⁵ concerning things that will take place “in those days” (vv. 16, 18) and “at that time” (v. 17).³⁶ The population will increase, the ark of the covenant will be forgotten, having become redundant,³⁷ and YHWH will be enthroned in Jerusalem (rather than between the cherubim).³⁸ “All the nations” will be gathered to Jerusalem to the name of YHWH and will no longer obey the inclinations of their stubborn hearts,³⁹ and the northern and southern kingdoms will be reunited. Thus there will be a spiritual transformation, not only of the exiles from both kingdoms, but also of the nations.

Jeremiah 30–31 comprise Jeremiah’s so-called “Book of Consolation.”⁴⁰ Here YHWH promises to restore his people after the exile. Jerusalem is apparently addressed in 30:12–17, with several verbs with feminine singular suffixes, and in v. 17 YHWH promises to restore and heal Zion. In chapter 31 YHWH promises to restore the exiles, culminating in the new covenant promise of 31:31–34 and the

Heb 3:13; 10:25; 13:19, 22); “cosmic disturbance” (Isa 34:4; cf. Heb 1:10–12; 12:25–29), and “judgement” (Isa 34:8; 35:4, cf. Heb 10:30; 12:26).

³² Christopher R. Seitz, “The Book of Isaiah: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections,” in *New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1994), 6: 273; Childs, *Isaiah*, 255–56;

³³ Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, A Continental Commentary (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 340.

³⁴ Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 1, 81. Peter C. Craigie, Paige H. Kelley, and Joel F. Drinkard Jr., *Jeremiah 1–25*, WBC 26 (Dallas, TX: Word, 1994), 60, ascribe vv. 16–17 to Jeremiah, with an early date, following Moshe Weinfeld, “Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel,” *ZAW* 88 (1976): 21–24, who dates it in the time of Josiah. William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah*, vol. 1, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 77 is ambivalent, but seems to think the verses are exilic.

³⁵ Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 1, 77; cf. Weinfeld, “Spiritual Metamorphosis,” 23–26.

³⁶ J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 203 suggests that vv. 16, 17 and 18 could be separate oracles because of these temporal expressions.

³⁷ McKane, *Jeremiah*, 1, 74. Cf. Leslie C. Allen, *Jeremiah: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 58, “Yahweh’s ark-linked presence was released to pervade the city.”

³⁸ McKane, *Jeremiah*, 1, 74. On p. 77 McKane sees this enthronement in Jerusalem as enthronement “in its common life.”

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 75–76 refers to Rudolph, who apparently wanted to change “all the nations” to “from all the aliens”, seemingly a reference to diaspora Jews “coming up to Jerusalem as pilgrims for the festivals of the temple.” Rudolph was apparently convinced that Jeremiah did not entertain the idea of the nations streaming to Jerusalem.

⁴⁰ Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26–52*, WBC 27 (Dallas, TX: Word, 1995), 82–84.

promise of the rebuilt city. In 31:6 they encourage one another to go up to Zion to YHWH their God, and in 31:10–14 the word of YHWH is announced to the nations, that YHWH has redeemed them and that they will come and sing for joy “on the heights of Zion” (*bimron Zion*, LXX, *en tō orei Zīon* “on Mount Zion”) and there rejoice in the goodness of YHWH, explicated in terms of agricultural bounty.

Finally, I refer to Jer 50:4–5.⁴¹ Verses 1–3 of this chapter announce the fall of Babylon at the hands of a nation from the north. “In those days and at that time” the exiles from the north and the south will come with tears of repentance to seek God. They will ask the way to Zion and turn their faces toward it and bind themselves to YHWH in an “everlasting covenant” that will not be forgotten. The everlasting covenant is another way of describing the new covenant of 31:31–34,⁴² although the agent of the passive verb “will [not] be forgotten” is unstated. While Allen suggests that the people will not forget the covenant,⁴³ Holladay suggests that YHWH will not forget it.⁴⁴ If this is the case, then it is a promise that the rupture of exile will not happen again.⁴⁵ Once again the people are reunited, and together seek Zion, acknowledging that this is the place of true worship.

HEBREWS 12:18–24

I turn now to Heb 12:18–24, which has been called the “grand finale” of Hebrews.⁴⁶ It is part of the fifth warning passage of Hebrews, extending from 12:14–29.⁴⁷ The warning begins with a positive call to pursue peace and holiness and to be on guard against any apostasy arising in the community.⁴⁸ The readers are also warned against emulating Esau, who sold his rights as a firstborn for a single meal, and later found no place for repentance. Immediately following these warnings, and logically connected to them in some way with the causal particle *gar* (“for”) is Heb 12:18–24, which comprises two contrasting sentences, the first beginning with the expression “you have not come”, and the second beginning with “but you have come”. Tying both sentences together is the notion of God speaking: speaking words in v. 19 that the hearers could not bear, and speaking better things than Abel in v. 24.⁴⁹ These verses are in

⁴¹ NA²⁸ notes an allusion to Jer 50:5 in Heb 13:20.

⁴² Keown, Scalise, and Smothers, *Jeremiah* 26–52, 365. For the everlasting covenant see also 32:40.

⁴³ Allen, *Jeremiah*, 512.

⁴⁴ William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah* 2, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 416.

⁴⁵ Walter Brueggemann, *To Build and to Plant: A Commentary on Jeremiah 26–52*, ITC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 261.

⁴⁶ Barnabas Lindars, “The Rhetorical Structure of Hebrews,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 402. See also George H. Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis*, NovTSup 73 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 143; Kiwoong Son, *Zion Symbolism in Hebrews: Hebrews 12:18–24 as a Hermeneutical Key to the Epistle*, PBM (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005), 78. An earlier version of what follows appears in Church, *Hebrews and the Temple*, 343–52.

⁴⁷ Herbert W. Bateman IV, “Introducing the Warning Passages in Hebrews: A Contextual Orientation,” in *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews*, ed. Herbert W. Bateman IV (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 83; Scot McKnight, “The Warning Passages of Hebrews: A Formal Analysis and Theological Conclusions,” *TrinJ* 13 (1992): 22–23, note 3, includes the whole of Heb 12 in this warning passage.

⁴⁸ Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 477.

⁴⁹ For this reading see Gene R. Smillie, “‘The One who is Speaking’ in Heb 12:25,” *TynBul* 55 (2004): 278–83.

turn followed by a warning not to disregard the one speaking (God),⁵⁰ who warned from the earth at Sinai, and is now warning from heaven, with much more serious consequences.⁵¹

While no mountain is named as the place to which the readers have not come, it is clear from the allusions to Deut 4:11, where the same verb is used to describe the approach of the people to Horeb, that Sinai is in view. The text describes “the physical phenomena accompanying the giving of the law,”⁵² followed by the reaction of the people and of Moses who trembled with fear. The overriding emotion that surfaces is terror at the presence of God.

The approach to Sinai is contrasted with the clause *alla proseleluthata Zīōn orei* (“but you have come to Mount Zion”). The perfect tense indicates that the readers are to recognise that as followers of Jesus,⁵³ they have come to and are now present at Mount Zion.⁵⁴ The two sentences contrast two covenants. The former was mediated by Moses (implied, but not stated in the first sentence) and the new covenant is mediated by Jesus (8:6; 9:15; 12:24).⁵⁵

Apart from the reference to a “festal gathering” (*panēguris*) in v. 22, the positive emotions associated with Zion in Heb 12:22–24 are not explicated. The conjunction *kai* appears seven times, with the eight descriptors falling into four pairs.⁵⁶ “Mount Zion” is the destination, with the first descriptor identifying Zion as the “city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.”⁵⁷ Given that this is the only reference to Zion in Hebrews, the readers may have inferred that the author was referring to the earthly Zion, the temple mount over against Sinai. However, the two additional epithets clarify that the earthly

⁵⁰ Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 683–84; Smillie, “The One who is Speaking,” 283–87.

⁵¹ There is a logical connection here with the second warning passage, Hebrews, 3:7–4:13 which deals with Ps 95, mentioned above. Both are concerned with listening to God speaking, and both encourage the people to be alert, using the second person plural imperative of *blepō* (*blepete*, “see to it”), the only instances of this form in Hebrews (3:12; 12:25).

⁵² Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 326.

⁵³ Several scholars use the term “conversion” in this context. See C. K. Barrett, “The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology*, ed. W. D. Davies and D. Daube (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 376; David G. Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection: An Examination of the Concept of Perfection in “The Epistle to the Hebrews”*, SNTSMS 47 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 160; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 255. This term is anachronistic in the context since “Jew” is an ethnic identifier and “Christ-follower” transcends ethnicity. These people remained Jews, and would not have considered themselves to have “converted” from Judaism to Christianity. Nevertheless, the notion of conversion does preserve an element of truth, since it is Christ-following Jews who have come to Mount Zion, over against those who were not yet Christ-followers. For a plea to set aside the term “conversion” in discussion of Christian origins see Paula Fredriksen, “Mandatory Retirement: Ideas in the Study of Christian Origins Whose Time Has Come to Go,” *JR* 35 (2006): 232–37, and for the use of the term to refer to non-Jewish individuals and communities becoming Jews, see Seth Schwartz, “How Many Judaism Were There? A Critique of Neusner and Smith on Definition and Mason and Boyarin on Categorization,” *JAJ* 2 (2011): 232–37.

⁵⁴ Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*, 160; Attridge, *Hebrews*, 372; William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, WBC 47B (Dallas: Word, 1991), 440–41 (note w).

⁵⁵ G. Fohrer and E. Lohse, “σιών, κ.τ.λ.,” in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich (1971), 337; Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*, 160–66; Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 461.

⁵⁶ Attridge, *Hebrews*, 374; Son, *Zion Symbolism*, 87–89.

⁵⁷ All these expressions are anarthrous in Greek. I have supplied a definite article in English where appropriate. Johnson, *Hebrews*, 327 translates “a city of the living God, a heavenly Jerusalem,” as though there were more than one of each. He also translates the *kai* in the expression *Zīōn orei kai polei theou zōntos* with “and,” reading “Mount Zion, and a city ...” But surely this *kai* is explicative, identifying Zion with the city and Jerusalem, see Ceslas Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (Paris: Gabalda, 1952), 2: 405; Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 441 (note gg); Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 677.

Zion is not in view.⁵⁸ The “city” (*polis*) recalls the city with foundations (11:10), that God had prepared for Abraham and the patriarchs (11:16),⁵⁹ that is, the heavenly Jerusalem.⁶⁰ The author has taken the well-known imagery of Zion/Jerusalem as the place where God is worshipped and from where God speaks, and, by means of the adjective “heavenly”, applied it as a metaphor for access to God under the new covenant.⁶¹

As elsewhere in Hebrews, “heavenly” refers to what is to come, now come into the present,⁶² so that Mount Zion describes the eschatological dwelling of God with his people.⁶³ Thus, temple imagery is pressed into service to symbolise the relationship between God and his people under the new covenant. The figurative language used elsewhere in Hebrews for this dwelling: “the world to come” (2:5); “God’s rest” (4:1–11); “the true tent” (8:2); “within the curtain” (6:19–20; 10:19–25); “the city built by God” (11:10); “the heavenly homeland” (11:16); “the unshakeable kingdom” (12:28); and “the city to come” (13:14), is now extended to include the heavenly Jerusalem.

The next pair of descriptors refers to the inhabitants of Mount Zion, the “myriads of angels in a festal gathering” (*uriasin angelōn panēgurei*),⁶⁴ and the “assembly of the firstborn, inscribed in heaven” (*ekklēsia prōtotokōn apogreggamenōn en ouranois*). The presence of angels in a festal gathering is to be read in the context of the numerous references to angels in the Second Temple literature. The Qumran community seems to have envisaged that angels were present in their worship, either on earth in the life of the community, or in the heavenly temple.⁶⁵ Apocalyptic texts include the notion of a journey to heaven, that is absent from Hebrews. Here, the community is pictured as having come to Mount Zion

⁵⁸ Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 36 (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 550; Son, *Zion Symbolism*, 89; O’Brien, *Hebrews*, 483.

⁵⁹ Johnson, *Hebrews*, 331; Lois K. Fuller Dow, *Images of Zion: Biblical Antecedents for the New Jerusalem*, New Testament Monographs 26 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010), 173–74.

⁶⁰ Attridge, *Hebrews*, 374. G. W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, AB 36 (New York: Doubleday, 1972), 222 thinks it is a reference to the restored earthly city of Jerusalem, called “heavenly” because of its divine origin. But this is to misread the eschatological orientation of Hebrews. See Robert P. Gordon, *Hebrews*, 2nd ed., Readings: A New Biblical Commentary (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2008), 43–44.

⁶¹ David A. DeSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle ‘to the Hebrews’* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 466.

⁶² Heb 3:1; 6:4; 8:5; 9:23; 11:16.

⁶³ Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 465; Koester, *Hebrews*, 544; Son, *Zion Symbolism*, 91; O’Brien, *Hebrews*, 483.

⁶⁴ It is debated whether *panēguris* refers to what precedes (the angels) or to what follows (the assembly of the firstborn). The presence of *kai* after *panēguris* suggests that it is to be construed with what precedes, as a circumstantial dative qualifying the angels. If it is construed with what follows the *kai* functions as in v. 22, expressing the idea that the readers have come to a festal gathering, “even” (*kai*) the assembly of the firstborn. Apart from v. 22 *kai* functions elsewhere in this list to join different aspects of Mount Zion, making this latter option unlikely, although it is reflected in the punctuation of NA²⁸. For arguments for construing it with what precedes see Attridge, *Hebrews*, 375; Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 441–42 (note jj); Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 679.

⁶⁵ For these connections with Qumran see John Strugnell, “The Angelic Liturgy at Qumran—4Q *Serek Širôt ‘Ólat Haššabbat*,” in *Congress Volume Oxford 1959*, ed. G. W. Anderson, VTSup 7 (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 320; Bruce, *Hebrews*, 357–58; Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 468. Some of the early literature on Qumran (especially Bertil Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament: A Comparative Study in the Temple Symbolism of the Qumran Texts and the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 94–99) overstates the case for connections between Qumran and this text in Hebrews, as the differences are significant. See the judicious comments in Georg Klinzing, *Die Umdeutung des Kultus in der Qumrangemeinde und im NT*, SUNT 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 201–2, who suggests the adoption of a common tradition with significant differences in the way it has been put to use. See also Jub. 31:14; T. Levi 3:5; 1 En. 5–16; Apoc. Zeph. Already in the OT numerous angels inhabit heaven and are involved in the worship of God (Ps 89:6; 103:21; 148:2), a tradition also reflected in Rev 5:11–12.

and participating in angelic worship, while still earthbound (in Rome?). Mount Zion, therefore, encompasses earth and heaven and is where the new covenant community encounters God and his heavenly entourage. The “assembly of the firstborn inscribed in heaven” comprises the firstborn ones, who belong to Jesus the firstborn one, already in the world to come (1:6). This is the “assembly” (*ekklesia*) of Heb 2:12 that he came to sanctify, the siblings of Jesus, all the faithful, past and present, Jew and gentile, from all over the world.⁶⁶

The next pair of descriptors describes “God the judge of all” and the “spirits of the righteous made perfect.” In 10:26–31 those who persist in sin have only the fearful prospect of judgment. But the reference to God as judge, juxtaposed in this verse with the reference to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, that is, the righteous dead,⁶⁷ indicates that there is also the prospect of positive judgment for those made perfect—Christians who have died already worshipping in heaven.⁶⁸ These include those listed in Heb 11 (see Heb 11:40) and all who endure to the end. For these people there is the prospect of eschatological acceptance.⁶⁹ Thus, the community of Christ-followers on earth, wherever located, is also in the heavenly temple in the presence of myriads of angels, faithful believers past and present and the righteous dead, now participating in the “Sabbath celebration” (*sabbatismos*) of Heb 4:9.⁷⁰

The final pair of descriptors, forming a climax to the entire sequence, refers to the “mediator of the new covenant, Jesus” (*diathēkēs neas mesitē Iēson*),⁷¹ and “the blood of sprinkling, speaking in a better manner⁷² than Abel” (*haimati rhantismou kreitton lalounti para ton Abel*).⁷³ That Jesus is there indicates a reference to the heavenly temple, where he is enthroned, although not “in heaven”, but wherever his people are located. The blood of sprinkling echoes Heb 9:11–22 and the inauguration of both the Sinai covenant and the new covenant, the latter enabling the promised eternal inheritance (Heb 9:22) envisaged in the present text.

⁶⁶ Attridge, *Hebrews*, 23; Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 655.

⁶⁷ P. J. Arowele, “The Pilgrim People of God (An African’s Reflections on the Motif of Sojourn in the Epistle to the Hebrews),” *AJT* 4 (1990): 444–45. See 1 En. 22:3–4; 41:8; 103:3–4.

⁶⁸ John M. Scholer, *Proleptic Priests: Priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, JSNTSup 49 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 146.

⁶⁹ O’Brien, *Hebrews*, 487.

⁷⁰ Lane, *Hebrews* 9–13, 467; Koester, *Hebrews*, 545.

⁷¹ As often in Hebrews the name “Jesus” appears in an emphatic position at the end of the clause. See 2:9; 4:14; 6:20; 7:22; 12:2; 13:20.

⁷² *Kreitton* (“better”) is probably best construed as an adverb (Attridge, *Hebrews*, 377) rather than a singular adjective where it would refer to “something better.” P⁴⁶ and 1505 read *kreittona* (plural, “better things”), but this attestation is minimal.

⁷³ The subject of the verb to speak (*laleō*) is a complex exegetical issue. Earlier I referred to Smillie, “The One who is Speaking,” who argues that God is speaking in this verse, while others argue that either Abel (see Heb 11:4) or Abel’s blood (see Gen 4:10) is speaking. Paul Ellingworth and Eugene A. Nida, *A Handbook on the Letter to the Hebrews* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1983), 313 note that most translations add a reference to the blood of Abel speaking (alongside the sprinkled blood of Jesus), and this reading is explicit in P⁴⁶ followed by L and a few minuscules where the definite article is neuter, governing the neuter *haima* blood, rather than *ton* (masculine, governing *Abel*), read by Codices Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus and Bezae and numerous minuscules. One late minuscule (1962) reads the genitive definite article. While I find Smillie’s conclusion satisfying, it is somewhat difficult in that it introduces a ninth descriptor to which the readers have come (God speaking), not separated from the eighth with *kai*.

This neatly balanced pericope contrasts the terrifying events surrounding the inauguration of the Sinai covenant with “the ultimate, eschatological encounter with God in the heavenly Jerusalem.”⁷⁴ Considerable temple symbolism surfaces in the description, indicating that, under the new covenant, the encounter with God in Christ is the reality to which the Jerusalem temple pointed. Given the emphasis in Hebrews on the need to persevere, it seems clear that this imagery does not nullify the eschatological goal that lies ahead of the readers. Rather, it clarifies that they can now experience what is promised to them at the end of their journey. There, they will find a reality that had been experienced all along.⁷⁵ Here the faithful have access to the presence of God, yet to be consummated in the future when they attain to God’s rest (4:11), as long as they remain faithful.

THE SOURCE OF THE IMAGERY IN HEBREWS 12:22–24

It seems clear that lying behind this text in Hebrews is the notion that Mount Zion is the place where God is encountered, where he is worshipped by the saints and the angels, where Jesus is present, and from where God addresses his people with an urgent call to listen. But Mount Zion has been translocated so that it is no longer identified with the earthly Jerusalem, but with the heavenly, where God’s faithful people gather with the saints and angels. Whether the theme of the return of the exiles to Zion is present is unclear. I note that the events described in Isa 2:2–4 and Mic 4:1–4 are said to happen “in the last days” (LXX Isa 2:2, *en tais eschatais hēmerais*; Mic 4:1 *ep’ eschatōn hēmerōn*) and that God’s speech through a Son in Hebrews takes place “in these last days” (*ep’ eschatōn hēmerōn toutōn*, 1:2). I note the piling up of expressions for Jerusalem and Zion in the Isaiah and Micah texts and in Heb 12:22. And I note that the word of YHWH comes from Jerusalem in Isa 2:3 and in Mic 4:2, and the claim that the mouth of YHWH has spoken (LXX *laleō*) in Mic 4:4. These compare favourably with the prominence of God’s speech in Heb 12:18–25. I note the atmosphere of rejoicing in Isa 35:10 and in Heb 12:22–24, and the significance of the themes in Isa 34–35 to Hebrews overall. I note the redundancy of the ark of the covenant in Jer 3:16, something implied in the new covenant of Heb 8:13–9:14; 12:24. I note the atmosphere of joyful worship in Heb 12:23, compared with the same in Jer 31:13–14, and the everlasting covenant of Jer 50:4–5 where the returning exiles turn their faces toward Zion, compared with the everlasting covenant of Heb 13:20. These allusions are intriguing, and were no doubt ideas in the air when the author was writing his letter, but whether any of them are definitive for 12:22–24 is unclear.

What is remarkable is that while these ethnic Jews are somewhere in the Mediterranean diaspora, probably in Rome, they can be described as having come to Mount Zion. However, no journey is implied, since Zion is immediately qualified as a reference to the “heavenly Jerusalem.” This expression does not appear in the OT, but is found several times in Second Temple Jewish literature, in Rabbinic Judaism

⁷⁴ O’Brien, *Hebrews*, 491.

⁷⁵ R. Jewett, *Letter to Pilgrims. A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York: Pilgrim, 1981), 223; Scholer, *Proleptic Priests*, 144.

and elsewhere in the NT.⁷⁶ There was a conversation about this heavenly city in the post-exilic period and beyond that the author of Hebrews contributes to. So, while the OT envisaged a return to the earthly Jerusalem, this was later downplayed, and indeed in the NT, where Jerusalem is always a city under judgement, abandoned. The destination of Abraham, to which the recipients are to direct their attention is the heavenly city, whose architect and builder is God (11:10, 16). This is the “city of the living God,” not the earthly Jerusalem, which is implied but not named in 13:12-14 as the place the believers are to leave, following Christ who was ejected from there.

CONCLUSION

I began with two ethnic Jews, one in a synagogue with a *kippah* on his head, and one a Jewish follower of Jesus,⁷⁷ both claiming that the *Aliyah* was in fulfilment of Isa 2:2–4. I am not sure that I agree with either of them, since that text implies that the nations rather than the Jews would encounter God in Zion and learn *halakhab* from God there. The author of Hebrews was an ethnic Jew writing to ethnic Jews, and whether or not the Isaiah text was in his mind when he wrote, he claimed that God’s voice was to be heard not in the earthly Jerusalem but in the heavenly, in the presence of the mediator of the new covenant, Jesus. This is because God no longer dwells in the earthly Jerusalem, he dwells in Christ and wherever his people gather in Christ’s name. If fulfilment of the Isaiah text is to be found at all, it is to be found in Christian worship wherever Christ-followers are found, both Jew and gentile. And those who pin their hopes on an encounter with God in the earthly Jerusalem today will ultimately be disappointed.

⁷⁶ See T. Dan 5:12–13; 2 Bar. 4:2–7; 4 Ezra 7:26; 10:27, 54; 13:36; 1 En. 90:28–39; 2 En. 55:2; Tob 13:10–17; Sib. Or. 5. 250–51; Gal 4:26; Rev 3:12; 21:1–4; b. Hag 12b; B. Bat. 75b. See Barrett, “Eschatology,” 374–76.

⁷⁷ See Bock, “Dispensationalist View,” 110–11.

WHAKAWHITI KŌRERO: THEOLOGY AND SOCIAL VOCATION

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The reflections in this essay build on many conversations with Tim Meadowcroft over the years, as we have sought to respond to our own regional context. I am pleased to offer this paper in honour of the countless contributions that Tim has made to the communities of learning in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Papua New Guinea, and further abroad. As he reaches this point of retirement from formal teaching responsibilities, we can only hope that the years to come will be full of renewed energy for research and engagement in our region.

The scope of our topic is very broad, and there are many places where we could begin.¹ One might arbitrarily nominate a few months in 1769, when an English ship called *Endeavour* sailed around Aotearoa, bearing a copy of the King James Version, published “by His Majesty’s Special Command.” This was no ordinary book. It had shaped an entire world, which was held to be created in 4004 BC and more recently divided among Christian monarchs. In Cook’s Bible, the patronage of King James reflected the sacred alliance between church and state in seventeenth century England, an alliance that could continue to underwrite not just a Bible translation but also the colonial Doctrine of Discovery and the patterns of sociality within settler colonialism. This unholy alliance of Bible, culture and law might seem a very unpromising starting point to begin a conversation about relational theology, but it is part of the colonial story that is shared between Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, and critical reflection on it will be revealing in several ways. The story provokes some fundamental questions about the conditions that may allow for any genuine conversation, which will in turn yield some implications for a theology of sociality. In this paper I want to show how a critique of coloniality helps us to think afresh about the relationship between creation theology and the love of neighbour.

First, we may remember that the King James Version points to the tribal politics of Christianity. The *Endeavour* did not set sail under the authority of a papal bull or a Catholic version of the Doctrine of Discovery. Protestant imperial competition unfolded within a revised version of international legal imagination, which presented itself as more humanitarian and more respectful of Indigenous natural rights.² In the 1830s, mission societies levelled some strong critique against colonial abuses of power,³ but by the end of the nineteenth century these critiques had subsided, along with the very idea of natural rights. The earlier anxieties about colonialism on the Pākehā side seem to have been steadily

¹ This paper was first presented at a conference at Laidlaw College, “Whakawhiti kōrero: Conversations between Theology and Social Vocation,” 1–2 October, 2018. I am grateful to the organizers of the conference for the opportunity to participate in such a rich, interdisciplinary conversation.

² Mark G. Brett, *Political Trauma and Healing: Biblical Ethics for a Postcolonial World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 36–54.

³ Hilary Carey, *God’s Empire: Religion and Colonialism in the British World, c. 1801–1908* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 322–28.

overwhelmed by economic interests, but with an exquisite irony, some of the Māori resistance in the second half of the nineteenth century began to draw on the Bible and theology. Theology offered the possibility of mediation between Māori and Pākehā, but there were still a number of impediments to genuine conversation. I will not pretend to know all the details of nineteenth century history in Aotearoa, but I offer some suggestions here for conversation.

The collaboration of the northern chiefs in their Declaration of Independence in 1835 (*He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga*) forged a new kind of collaboration on the Māori side, and in the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, the chiefs did not yield sovereignty to the English Crown.⁴ This became clear in the 1850s in a new way when Chief Wiremu Tāmihana advocated for an alliance of Māori iwi under a king, and his reasoning was in some respects comparable with what we find in the books of Samuel. In the biblical narrative, the elders of Israel introduce the novel idea of a king in order to unite their tribes mainly because the Philistines were advancing from the west. Similarly, the Māori of the nineteenth century were experiencing a threat to their own tribal sovereignty with Pākehā advancing from the west. But Tāmihana's argument attempted a more subtle compromise than we find in Samuel, which could better express the implications of the Treaty of Waitangi: a new *Kingitanga*, supported by local Māori councils, could relate directly to the English version of sovereignty.⁵ The suggestion was, in effect, an adaptive vision of political theology that could hold together the various parties in a new complex society.

Tāmihana's remarkable biblical arguments were advanced in a famous speech in 1861. The Crown had suggested to the Waikato Māori that they could keep their land "so long only as they are strong enough to keep it; might and not right will become their sole title."⁶ Tāmihana's response is recorded in the British Parliamentary Papers at the time.⁷ He begins with traditional *waiata* as lament,⁸ and moves on to a poetic critique of the colonial administration. If the British were to take to heart their own Bible, they should acknowledge the law of the monarchy stipulated in Deut 17:15, "Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother" (KJV). The English who had been "far away" had now drawn near (invoking Eph 2:13), but in this expanded sociality, only a Māori brother could exercise *rangatiratanga*, whatever the shared arrangements under the Treaty of Waitangi might suggest. England had its monarch, and so did Māori: "leave this King to stand upon his

⁴ Waitangi Tribunal, *Te Paparahi o te Raki: Northland Inquiry, Part One* (Wellington: Waitangi Tribunal, 2014), xxii.

⁵ Richard S. Hill and Vincent O'Malley, *The Māori quest for Rangatiratanga / Autonomy, 1840-2000*. Occasional Papers 4 (Wellington: Treaty of Waitangi Research Unit, Stout Research Centre, Victoria University of Wellington, 2000), 2–5.

⁶ Vincent O'Malley, *The Great War for New Zealand: Waikato 1800-2000* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2016), 141. I am indebted to Steve Taylor for his presentation on Wiremu Tāmihana, delivered at Whitley College for the "Reimagining Home" conference, 2–5 July, 2017. See Steve Taylor, "Indigenous Home-making as Public Theology in the Words and Deeds of Māori Leader, Wiremu Tāmihana," in *Re-imagining Home: Understanding, Reconciling and Engaging with God's Stories Together*, ed. Darren Cronshaw, Rosemary Dewerse, and Darryl Jackson (Sydney: Morling Press, forthcoming).

⁷ Wiremu Tāmihana, "Reply to the Declaration Addressed by the Governor to the Natives Assembled at Ngaruawha," *Great Britain Parliamentary Papers*, 1862 [3040], 73.

⁸ On the *waiata* as lament see, Alistair McKenzie, "Learning to Lament in Aotearoa," in *Spiritual Complaint: The Theology and Practice of Lament*, ed. Miriam J. Bier and Tim Bulkeley (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013), 173–186.

own place, and let it rest with our Maker.”⁹ This political claim sits within a larger theology of creation: “God did not make night and day for you only. No, summer and winter are for all, the rain and the wind, food and life, are for all of us.”¹⁰

Chief Tāmihana’s argument was extraordinary in many respects, but I want to take it as an example of the kind of theology that can build a more complex society within which it is possible to live with multiple sovereignties. This kind of theology was much needed in settler societies, but the theologians at the time seem to have had their energies diverted by other issues, and the social vocation of Christianity was embedded, in large measure, within an ideology of a civilizing mission.¹¹

Tāmihana’s theology set a different agenda. He conceived of a world structured with multiple social identities and loyalties, covenanted together in such a way that those identities could also find common ground. The Treaty of Waitangi did not need to be seen as the submission of one group to another, or as a legal sanction for unequal distributions of power. Rather, it provided a set of principles which fostered new relationships, which were themselves ultimately grounded in the divine gifts of the created order. This theology implicitly affirmed the possibility of expanding a social identity while recognizing the validity of other ways of imagining connections to God. And this points us to one of the key questions for any political theology: how do people hold together the particularity of their own distinctive commitments while, at the same time, seeking to form a common life with those who have a different vision of the world? Or to put that in more personal terms, how do we love our neighbour without imposing our own expectations on them?

Mindful of these questions of power and culture in the formation of a common good, how is a social vocation to be conceived in theological terms? I want to explore some of the contours of Old Testament theology, before turning to the radical demands that are implied in the call to love our neighbour.

BEGINNING WITH CREATION THEOLOGY

We have begun by acknowledging Tāmihana’s grounding of sociality in a creation theology. A number of the Old Testament writers also begin with creation and only then move to sociality. The creation theology in Psalm 104, for example, has deep resonances with Indigenous spiritualities. Instead of seeing God’s dwelling in heaven, with divine sovereignty being exercised at a lofty distance, this psalmist finds a sacral presence throughout the cosmos. All of creation becomes, in effect, a temple.¹² The spirit of God pulses with an intimate power through every living creature.

⁹ Tāmihana, “Reply to the Declaration,” 73.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ As already noted, however, problems with colonialism were clearly articulated already in the 1830s and '40s. See, e.g., Louis A. Chamerovzow, *The New Zealand Question and the Rights of Aborigines* (London: T.C. Newby, 1848).

¹² Thomas Krüger, “‘Kosmo-theologies’ zwischen Mythos und Erfahrung: Psalm 104 im Horizont altorietalischer ‘Schöpfungs’ Konzepte,” *BN* 68 (1993): 49–74. A comparable view is suggested in Amos 9:6 and Isa 66:1–2. Amos 9:6 is distinctive insofar as this cosmic hymn is immediately followed by a dramatic critique of Israel’s election. Brent Strawn, “What is Cush Doing in Amos 9:7? The Poetics of Exodus in the Plural,” *VT* 63

[All creatures] all look to you
to give them their food in due season;
when you give to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.
When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die
and return to their dust.
When you send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the ground. (Ps 104:27–30)

This immanent conception of divine presence is comparable in some respects with the first creation narrative in the book of Genesis, even if these texts come from quite different theological schools. In Genesis 1, for example, it is not simply that the Creator lives in the heavens,¹³ but rather, that the heavens themselves are the created “firmament” (Gen 1:7–8). They are the hard dome that holds back the primeval waters above the sky. This implies an ancient cosmic geography, which we cannot take literally any more, but the theological emphasis of Genesis 1 is not found in its cosmic dividing of the waters above the dome and the waters below that earth; that conception was an intercultural commonplace. The theological proposal in this representation of the world’s beginning was that God is qualitatively different from the world, and as a consequence God is free to appear anywhere.¹⁴ We can view this as the common ground between Psalm 104 and the first creation narrative, since they both find God at work throughout the whole earth, and not just in Israel, and not just in a temple. Accordingly, Genesis 1 consistently refuses to name God using Israel’s national name, Yhwh. God is consistently named “Elohim” in the first creation narrative (without a definite article), and this is not so much a name as a tantalizing abstraction, like “divinity” in English, which leaves open the naming of God.

Genesis 1 begins a larger composition that is woven throughout the first few books of the Bible, and in contrast with the national tradition, this composition insists that the ancestors only knew the Creator under the name El Shaddai (Exod 6:2–3). The abstract non-naming of God in Genesis 1 expresses an inclusive monotheism, in principle shared by all humankind.¹⁵ Most importantly, all human beings – both men and women – were made in the image of Elohim, and not in the image of a national

(2013): 99–123. See further, Konrad Schmid, “Himmelsgott, Weltgott und Schöpfer; ‘Gott’ und der ‘Himmel’ in der Literatur der Zeit des Zweiten Tempels,” in *Der Himmel*, ed. Dorothea Sattler und Samuel Vollenweider (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2006), 111–148.

¹³ In some traditions, God’s dwelling may be located “above” the heavens, as in Ezekiel 1 and Ps 29:10. Cf. Christoph Uehlinger and Susan Müller Trufaut, “Ezekiel 1, Babylonian Cosmological Scholarship and Iconography: Attempts at Further Refinement,” *ThZ* 57 (2001): 140–171.

¹⁴ Schmid, “Himmelsgott,” 135–36.

¹⁵ See especially Albert de Pury, “Gottesname, Gottesbezeichnung und Gottesbegriff: ‘Elohim’ als Indiz zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Pentateuch,” in *Abschied vom Jahwisten: Die Komposition des Hexateuch in der jüngsten Diskussion*, ed. Jan C. Gertz, Konrad Schmid, and Markus Witte, BZAW 315 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 25–47. Regarding the Yahwistic traditions in Genesis, see now Mark G. Brett, “Yhwh among the Nations: The Politics of Divine Names in Genesis,” in *The Politics of the Ancestors: Exegetical and Historical Perspectives on Genesis 12–36*, ed. Mark G. Brett and Jakob Wöhrle, FAT 124 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 113–130.

god. The basic assertion was that the one Creator had many names, and by implication, each people group could find their own way to God. In contrast with the national denomination in Deuteronomy, which calls for a uniformity of religion, this is a more ecumenical social vision, which biblical scholarship has dubbed the “Priestly” tradition.

The genius of Wiremu Tāmihana’s theology is that he proposed, in effect, a combination of the national and the creation traditions. In order to grasp this paradoxical combination, I have been suggesting that we also need to appreciate the diversity of creation traditions in the Hebrew Bible, which stretch from the Priestly creation story to the wisdom literature. While Priestly denomination in the Torah is often seen as diametrically opposed to the wisdom traditions, I would argue that there are some very substantial agreements between them. The Priestly and the wisdom traditions both addressed the question of how to relate to God outside of Israel’s own peculiar covenant traditions. Similarly, the understanding of a universal divine presence in Psalm 104 is linked to the presence of wisdom in all of creation and not just within the land of Israel. Accordingly, in the wisdom traditions like Proverbs and Job, we find a way of understanding the traces of God in the world through the experience of creation, rather than through the peculiar story of Israel.¹⁶

Let’s consider the Book of Job for a moment. In this book, ethics are clearly grounded in creation rather than in the law of Moses, but Job’s understanding of social vocation also overlaps with what we find in Mosaic law. Especially in ch. 31, Job claims that he has defended the rights of slaves, widows, orphans and aliens, subscribing precisely to the social norms that we find in Israel’s national laws, without agreeing that these norms are based on a Yahwistic faith.¹⁷ Job sees himself as answerable before El, rather than Yhwh:

If I have rejected the rights (*mishpat*) of my male or female slaves,
when they brought a complaint against me,
what then should I do when El arises?
When he investigates, how shall I respond?
Did not He who made me in the belly make them,
and form me in the one womb?
If I have withheld anything that the poor desired,
or brought resignation to the eyes of the widow,
eaten my morsel alone, and the orphan has not eaten from it...
then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder,
and let my arm be broken from its socket...
No stranger (*ger*) spent the night outside;
I have opened my doors in their path. (Job 31:13–17, 22, 32)

¹⁶ Human wisdom is localized, whereas divine wisdom encompasses the whole world and all its creatures, but this is more a difference of scope and extent. See especially Paul S. Fiddes, *Seeing the World and Knowing the World: Hebrew Wisdom and Christian Doctrine in a Late-Modern Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹⁷ E.g., Deut 14:28–29; 16:11–14; 24:19–22.

This social vision is law-observant without the need of positive law, and Job is engaged in an argument with El rather than Yhwh. In this respect, the name of Job's divinity coincides with the "Elohim" and "El" of the Priestly denomination in the Pentateuch.

In developing his theology of protest, Job shifts attention from Torah observance to world observance. Having established the ethical foundations in creation, he urges his friends to learn from nature:

But ask the wild beast, and *she will instruct you*;
the birds of the air, and they will declare to you;
speak to the earth, and *she will instruct you*;
and the fish of the sea will relate to you.
Who among all these does not know
that the hand of Yhwh has done this?
In his hand is the life of every living thing
and the spirit of all human flesh. (Job 12:7–10)

This passage is dense with allusions to the creation narratives in Genesis, but most striking is the two-fold choice of the verb form *wetorekha* (literally, "and she will instruct you"). This wording is related to the familiar noun for law and instruction in the legal tradition: *torah*. The semantic play is too significant to pass over, and we must therefore conclude that the earth has, according to Job, its own forms of instruction for those who are willing to listen. This where we might find Job in fundamental agreement with Indigenous spiritualities.

At this point, then, we can draw some preliminary conclusions about the value of the Priestly and wisdom traditions for intercultural theology. Rather than Deuteronomy, which tends to promote a uniformity of national religion, the Priestly and wisdom traditions in the Hebrew Bible are ready to engage in a different way with the nations. It is no accident, then, that when the Apostle Paul comes to reflect the Old Testament covenants, he concludes that the Gentiles can enter into the story and blessings of Abraham, the founding ancestor of the international Priestly tradition, but not into the national covenant. The followers of Jesus are not baptized into Moses.

The theological proposal that came from Wiremu Tāmihana in 1861 fits together very well with the social visions of the Priestly and wisdom traditions, and it is a great tragedy that the dominant theology of settler colonialism did not take this road.¹⁸ It is especially in the Priestly and wisdom traditions that we find the universality of creation theology, which can then shape the character of engagement with the neighbours who share our common life. With this creational approach, we can conclude with Luke Bretherton that

¹⁸ See especially Graham Paulson and Mark Brett, "Five Smooth Stones: Reading the Bible through Aboriginal Eyes," in *Voices from the Margin: 25th Anniversary Edition*, ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2016), 61–76; Jione Havea, ed., *Postcolonial Voices from Downunder: Indigenous Matters, Confronting Readings* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2017); Norman Habel, *Acknowledgement of the Land and Faith of Aboriginal Custodians* (Melbourne: Morning Star, 2018).

As creatures, situated in various covenantal relations... we are always already in relationship with others. Our personhood is the fruit of a social and wider ecological womb as much as a single physical one; that is, we come to be in and through others not like us, including non-human others. This means we cannot exist without some kind of common life with a plurality of human and non-human ways of being alive.¹⁹

LOVE OF NEIGHBOUR AS SOCIAL VOCATION

Some Christian theologians tend to ground all talk of social vocation in a doctrine of the Trinity. Perhaps because I am a Hebrew Bible scholar, I am reluctant to do so. But as I have already suggested, it is actually the Apostle Paul who, already in his first-century gospel for the Gentiles, orientates his scriptural interpretation around Abraham rather than Moses. Abraham, not Moses, is the ecumenical ancestor, and the Priestly tradition can point us down the road towards an intercultural theology without at the same time sacrificing any of the particularity of a faith in Yhwh. Accordingly, I am more inclined to pursue Luke Bretherton's theology of the neighbour, rather than conceptions of Trinitarian theology that may inadvertently convey a lack of hospitality in the very peculiarity of Christian language.

In his book, *Christ and the Common Life*, Bretherton examines the spectrum of relational practices through which human solidarity may be built, ranging from personal and ecclesial interactions, to more broadly political constructions of the common good. At each layer of social interaction, we may encounter power imbalances and exploitation, and by implication, the need for reconciliation if a common life is to be created or sustained. And this raises a fundamental question of motivation: what are the most compelling reasons for creating and sustaining a shared world of meaning in human relationships?

In many respects, the easiest and most natural way to answer this question is with a “ripple” theory of sociality, which suggests that our strongest solidarities begin with one's central point of connection within a family, but in addition, that solidarity may flow outwards like ripples in a pond to tribes and nations – with the strength of the social bonds steadily weakening as they move further and further from the ego's own family. Within Indigenous cultures, these ripples would include the wider ecological relationships with one's own traditional country. Even as an account of natural affections, however, there are limitations to ripple theories, not least because violence and abuse can arise even within a single family, and unexpected friendships can form across the most formidable of social distances.

If we conceive of the love of neighbour as a vocation, as Bretherton argues, then the crossing of social boundaries could become a practice that may be exercised on a daily basis. Neighbour love does not cease at the border of a nation state, because literally anyone can become a neighbour, even an enemy. Some have suggested that a love of enemies may be regarded as utopian practice, and not a

¹⁹ Luke Bretherton, *Christ and the Common Life: A Guide to Political Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, forthcoming), cited by kind permission of the author.

political one, but this response simply points us to the distinctive difference between national loyalties and a Christian love of neighbour. The *institutionalizing* of boundaries between friends and enemies is inherently problematic from a Christian point of view.

Bretherton argues that political arrangements should always be seen as contingent, and open to revision. We should be ready to relinquish them into the hands of the Creator. Letting go of these “contingent” social arrangements is a lot easier said than done, since they are often constructed and maintained over generations, if not centuries. But suspending our prejudices is a necessary condition for the love of neighbour. A neighbour does not arrive in our lives with a pre-assigned social category (like an ethnic label or a gender), or a legal status (like a citizen or a refugee), or a role (like a business client or a soldier), all of which can conveniently structure our social expectations. The neighbour arrives in one’s world simply as a person, or more broadly, as a creature of God, and loving them might well call us across great social distances – whether economic, cultural, or even geographical distances. Ironically, this suspension of conventional identity formations is precisely what allows us to love a person in all their particularity.

While at first glance this account of neighbour love might indeed appear utopian, it is better described as a vocation. Betherton puts it this way:

Being a neighbor is a vocation that does not depend on liking, having a rapport with, or being equal to others... Indeed, the encounter with a neighbor confronts us with a need to interrogate our own settled identities, roles, and habits and the ways these inhibit our ability to love our neighbor. Neighbor love therefore disrupts hierarchal, institutional, and identity-based ways of structuring status.²⁰

If we can relate this argument back to the Priestly imagination in the Hebrew Bible, it is the fundamental recognition that human beings are made in the image of Elohim that allows this paradigm of biblical theology to suggest that natives and immigrants should be embraced by a single law (notably in Exod 12:49; Lev 24:22).²¹ To update that daring vision for our present discussion, we might say that it is necessary to reach through the many layers of social descriptors and categories in order to welcome the person beyond any categories into our own social world. In order to discover a common good, it will be necessary to cut across established patterns of meaning.

This account of neighbour love sharpens some of the key issues for us, but it also reveals that this kind of love differs markedly from our conventional attachments. We might need to conclude, in fact, that this is not an everyday vocation, but one which calls us into liminal experiences. Acknowledging this liminality might also help to explain why, in the famous parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25, the love of the poor and the stranger is performed in a kind of cloud of unknowing.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Mark G. Brett, “Natives and Immigrants in the Social Imagination of the Holiness School,” in *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity in the Early Second Temple Period*, ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana Edelman (New York: T&T Clark, 2014), 89–104.

Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?” (Matt 25:37–38)

It is not that the righteous in this parable have special spiritual powers that allow them to discriminate between those who belong to the body of Christ and those who do not. Quite the contrary, it is clear that the righteous do not have such powers of discrimination, and this points to the kind of unknowing that can provide for the love of enemies. Here we encounter a paradoxical Christology without Christ – or at least, a Christ who is hidden.²²

While I would not want to base any procedures for professional social practice directly on this parable in Matthew 25, I do want to suggest that we should find a remarkable analogy between the righteous who cannot identify Christ in the stranger and the Priestly Abraham who does not yet know the name of Yhwh. The love of a neighbour whose humanity lies beyond any categorization intersects with the love of a God whose name is not yet known. Both of these theological perspectives in scripture urge us into a liminal space beyond conventional attachments to family, culture and religious denomination. Both neighbour love and Priestly theology provoke us to suspend our prejudices in order to listen again, and to embrace the other simply because they are made in the image of Elohim, or more broadly, because they are creatures who are enlivened with the spirit of Elohim. In this liminal space, we do not rest on conventional understandings or preconceived generalities, and instead, we learn to pay attention at a much more basic level.

It is not that we can remain transfixed in this liminal state, in a cloud of unknowing, because this is not how we live our everyday lives. There are other kinds of love that certainly require enduring attachments, especially the range of relationships that have a covenantal value – including the more explicitly named relationships within the body of Christ. But a radical love of neighbour provides the conditions under which we might delight in the particularities of others, and not impose our preconceptions upon them. This is the kind of social vocation that allows our world to expand, much in the way that Wiremu Tāmihana suggested long ago when he invoked Ephesians 2:13 in his speech of 1861, when he saw that the English who had been “far away” were now drawn near. This new proximity called for a new set of covenant relationships, expressed in *te Tiriti o Waitangi*.²³ The idea that the Treaty might be a new sacred covenant between multiple communities seems to have been shared by many of those who signed the Treaty in 1840.²⁴

²² Cf. Paul’s comment in 1 Cor 10:4 on the desert rock as a “hidden Christ” in Israel’s journey from Egypt. Similarly, the theme of hiddenness arguably belongs to cosmic Christology. See especially Vicky S. Balabanski, “Hellenistic Cosmology and the Letter to the Colossians: Towards an Ecological Hermeneutic,” in *Ecological Hermeneutics: Biblical, Historical and Theological Perspectives*, ed. David G. Horrell et al. (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 94–107.

²³ Andrew Picard, “‘On the Way’, and ‘In the Fray’ in Aotearoa: A Pākehā’s Covenantal Reflections from the Context of a Treaty People,” *Pacific Journal of Baptist Research* 11 no. 1 (2016): 44–58.

²⁴ Picard, “Treaty People,” 52, citing Tui Cadogan, “A Three-Way Relationship: God, Land, People. A Māori Woman Reflects,” in *Land and Place, He Whenua, He Wahi: Spiritualities for Aotearoa New Zealand*, ed. Helen Bergin and Susan Smith (Auckland: Accent Publications, 2004), 31.

CONCLUSION

In some respects, it might be very difficult to think of a political process like the Treaty of Waitangi as an expression of social vocation, but that is precisely what I want to suggest. It presents a model for a society within which multiple communities maintain a continuity of identity while risking new relational practices and covenantal connections.²⁵ Misunderstandings will be inevitable, and for that very reason, it will often be necessary to enter the liminal space of neighbour love in order to practice the suspension of prior judgements. The relational processes are made all the more difficult when power and resources are distributed unequally, but then, inequalities of power are often characteristic even of the most intimate relationships within a family. Whether we are paying attention to individuals or to groups, the vocation of neighbour love calls us to expand our social imagination and to recognize our common creaturely dependence on God. The love of neighbour provides the conditions that enable us to love all of God's creatures in the way that they are created to be loved.

²⁵ See further, Paul Fiddes, "Covenant: A Basis for Inter-Faith Dialogue in Scripture and Baptist Thinking" (unpublished paper given at the Commission on Interfaith Relations of the Baptist World Alliance, Vancouver, 5 July 2016).

SCRIPTURE ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

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I

What might it mean for Christians to read and interpret the scriptures of Israel in the light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? This is the fundamental question of theological hermeneutics, and all other questions in the field of (Christian) theological exegesis of Scripture must be addressed in light of it.¹ In contrast with some of the many other existing approaches to biblical exegesis, engaging with this question is not principally a matter of the proper application of methodological rigour, though this is of course a *sine qua non* of sound exegesis, but rather demands a certain kind of spiritual discipline, and entails a particular understanding of the place of Scripture in the context of Christian teaching as a whole.² Indeed, disciplined exegesis is the foundation of all genuine Christian teaching, and those embarking on the quest to understand what it means to read Scripture in avowedly and unashamedly Christian terms could do far worse than devote their time to the patient reading of St Augustine's fundamental *De Doctrina Christiana*.³ They could do still worse than meditate deeply on the Lukan narrative of the risen Jesus expounding what the scriptures of Israel have to say about the Anointed to the two travellers *en route* to Emmaus, and later in Jerusalem, opening the mind of the disciples to understand the scriptures.⁴

Although this essay is ultimately concerned with the possibility of a Christian reading of the scriptures of Israel, it will engage primarily with Luke 24:44–49, in which the risen Jesus opens the minds of the gathered disciples to understand the scriptures (Luke 24:45).⁵ It does not, however, seek to offer

¹ Since I will shortly argue that the theological appropriation of the Scriptures needs always to attend intelligently to their likeliest original meaning, I am not intending to distinguish artificially between “exegesis” and “hermeneutics,” a distinction that, in my view, is of questionable heuristic value.

² Although I have a number of misgivings about certain aspects of his approach to Scripture that I do not propose to explore in detail here, though the general character of these misgivings may well become clear in the course of what follows, I have in mind at this point the late John B. Webster's works “The Dogmatic Location of the Canon,” in *Word and Church: Essays in Christian Dogmatics*, 2nd ed. (London: T&T Clark International, 2006), 9–46, and *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch*, *Current Issues in Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

³ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, ed. and trans. R. P. H. Green, *Oxford Early Christian Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁴ While I will be following the Greek text of the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), my wording of this gloss on Luke 24:13–35, 36–49 is influenced by that of David Bentley Hart's arresting *The New Testament: A Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

⁵ The Greek of Luke 24:45 reads *tote diēnoixen autōn ton noun tou sunienai tas graphas*, “then he opened their mind[s] to understand the scriptures.” I take the singular *nous* to be distributive (thus e.g. NRSV). It is thus analogous to the distributive singular of *kardia*, “heart” in Luke 24:32, 38, which is here synonymous with *nous* (thus, e.g., I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 905). In all probability, the distributive singular in this case reflects semitic syntax (James Hope Moulton, Wilbert Francis Howard, and Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963), 24 (§2) (= MH); cf. F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and ed. R. W. Funk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 77 (§140) (= BDF)).

any new insights into matters such as which scriptures in particular the risen Jesus in the Lukan resurrection narrative expects his hearers to understand anew,⁶ and certainly does not intend to contribute in any direct way to the study of the appropriation of the scriptures in the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, on which much ink has been spilt already. Rather, its aim is to understand a little better how the role of the risen Jesus as inspired interpreter of the scriptures might best be understood in light of certain aspects of the literature of late Second Temple Judaism, and to use that renewed understanding to inform contemporary Christian exegesis.

The reason for beginning with Luke 24:44–49 is that it is here above all that we get at least a provisional answer to the question, “Do we need the New Testament?”⁷ It is here, moreover, that we encounter the most succinct expression in the Greek New Testament of what it must have meant for some of the earliest followers of Jesus to encounter the scriptures of Israel in the unexpected light of the crucified and risen one. One might wonder whether it is worth dwelling yet again on such a familiar passage, and while it is tempting to fend this anticipated objection off with the pious retort that such is the richness of the Lukan narratives of the encounters of the risen Jesus with his startled disciples that there are always depths to them that have yet to be fully plumbed, this will not quite suffice (even though it may nonetheless be true), and a richer and more nuanced response is needed that resists the seductions of glib piety and the temptation to find in the scriptures what we are already predisposed to find there. *Ne nos inducas in tentationem.*

There is a different, more explicitly historical reason for looking again at Luke 24:44–49. The reason is that there are number of important facets of what might best be termed the “literary imagination of Jewish antiquity”⁸ that are reflected in this passage, which may be at least slightly obscured as a result of the way the canon functions to cut off subsequent readers and hearers of the Gospels from the imaginative assumptions that would have been natural to their authors and earliest readers and hearers. A genuinely robust approach to theological hermeneutics must pay more than lip service to the importance of historical-critical exegesis, for a number of reasons, of which two will have to suffice for now. The first has to do with the prevailing intellectual climate in general, the second with the specific issue of what it might mean to read the scriptures of Israel with an avowedly Christian lens, given the many and various ways in which much early Christian discourse severed subsequent Christian exegesis

⁶ This is, of course, complicated by the fact that neither the Jewish scriptures, nor any other known Jewish texts of the Second Temple period, unambiguously anticipate a dying and rising Messiah. The scriptures are here placed in the service of Lukan Christology. Thus, e.g., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB 28A (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 1581 (cf. pp. 1565-1566, on Luke 24:26).

⁷ I am alluding, of course, to John Goldingay’s provocatively entitled *Do We Need the New Testament? Letting the Old Testament Speak for Itself* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015). Goldingay opens this book by immediately answering in the affirmative (p. 7), his deeper concern being to allow the scriptures of Israel nonetheless to speak for themselves, and for Christians to learn to hear their distinctive voices afresh, a concern with which I am in wholehearted agreement. See now Goldingay’s rendering of Israel’s scriptures, *The First Testament: A New Translation* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018), which—not entirely unlike Bentley Hart’s rendering of the Greek New Testament—goes to significant lengths to reproduce in translation the distinctive cadences of the original.

⁸ The recent book that, more than any other, has served to bring this phenomenon into focus is Eva Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

from its Jewish roots, in the process contributing to the long and tragic history of Christian anti-Judaism, whose recent effects are only too well known.

There is a distinct temptation, in the current intellectual climate, to engage in putatively robust intellectual debate not only purely within the confines of one's own particular discipline, which is largely unavoidable if one happens not to be a polymath, but purely under the terms of one's own particular epistemic framework. Now there is an obvious sense in which all thought proceeds on the basis of certain tacit presuppositions, all scholarship adheres to—and indeed should adhere to—an agreed set of contingent and in principle alterable disciplinary norms, methods, and procedures, and all critical reflection is in some way and to some degree shaped and determined by whatever brute facts happen to condition our existence. The risk, however, is that this may lead to a non-falsifiable, wholly self-referential discourse,⁹ that is not only hermetically sealed against incursions from beyond the pale, but which meets any criticism with a facile and thoughtless *tu quoque*, to the effect that since we all unavoidably approach our objects of study with presuppositions and commitments, mine are just as valid as yours, and your objections merely reflect your own blindness to the commitments and presuppositions that you yourself bring to the discussion. It will not do simply to retreat to one's particular commitment,¹⁰ perhaps on the banal and in the end misleading grounds that we *all* have commitments that condition and determine the paths our thinking takes, without taking the risk of engagement with intellectual approaches that might call our most cherished assumptions into question. Such a retreat ought to be judged both intellectually and morally indolent, which is in no way to imply that an intellectual stance is possible that is wholly objective, unadulterated by subjectivity, and free from the tyranny of its own unexamined assumptions.

To be sure, in the case of Christian theological exegesis, there is a basic commitment, a decision for the risen Christ, grounded in a movement of faith prompted and inspired by the Holy Spirit, that should indeed form and direct the work of exegesis, the vocation and purpose of which is the edification of the Church. Yet this commitment needs to be held with a twofold humility of mind that is both humble and repentant before the Throne of Grace, and wise to its own tendency to claim a degree of epistemic certainty in the face of all objections that is not only unwarranted, but in fact impious. The poet of the book of Job understood this clearly. The theme of knowledge is at the heart of this most

⁹ The recent and already notorious “Sokal squared” affair was apparently designed to expose just such a rot at the heart of what its perpetrators pejoratively termed “Grievance Studies” (see Helen Pluckrose, James A. Lindsay, and Peter Boghossian, “Academic Grievance Studies and the Corruption of Scholarship,” *Arvo Magazine* (October 2, 2018), <https://arvomagazine.com/2018/10/02/academic-grievance-studies-and-the-corruption-of-scholarship/>, accessed October 15, 2018). There are many and various problems with what these scholars did, and I for one have serious misgivings about it (I am not alone), but it should at least serve as a reminder—to practitioners of theological exegesis not least—of the moral and intellectual dangers of retreating into the false security of a self-referential discourse.

¹⁰ William Warren Bartley's *The Retreat to Commitment*, 2nd ed. (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1984) still repays careful reflection.

unsettling work,¹¹ as indeed is the very possibility of theology, of authentic speech before God.¹² That is essentially what Job 42:7–9 is about, pointing to the paradox at the heart of the poem that it is precisely those who dare to speak piously in God’s defence, in the face of all objections to the integrity of their position, who are most at risk of God’s righteous judgement (Job 13:7–9). Job’s peculiar priesthood consists in intercession on their behalf, to secure forgiveness from the very God in whose defence they had falsely, albeit honestly, believed themselves to be speaking.

Patient, and appropriately self-critical,¹³ attention to the historical exegesis of the biblical texts may, in fact, be a genuine exercise in humility on the part of one who dares to think and speak theologically (let alone claim to be a theologian).¹⁴ There is, moreover, a morally weighty argument in favour of recognizing historical-critical exegesis as a fundamental and inalienable component of theological exegesis, and it is not simply that the proper construal of the *sensus literalis* of the scriptures is foundational for anything else that might be said about them, true though this surely is. It is that we can grapple with the biblical texts in the contexts in which they first emerged, without the sometimes distorting lens of the traditions through which they have been transmitted, and thereby correct some of the misconceptions that have been fostered and perpetuated by their reception and effect, including, indeed perhaps particularly, within the traditions of the Church.

Perhaps one of the most obvious areas in which this is the case is in the reconstruction of the Jewish context of the earliest Christian writings, which can not only act as a corrective against Christian misunderstandings of first-century Judaism, which have played their part in the egregious history of Christian anti-Judaism far beyond what the authors of the earliest Christian texts could have intended or anticipated, but should serve as a basis for renewed engagement between Jewish and Christian scholars today.¹⁵ In the case of particularly troublesome texts such as Matt 27:24–26 and John 8:41–47, an

¹¹ See e.g. James E. Harding, “Divine Knowledge in the Book of Job and 4QInstruction,” in *Far from Minimal: Celebrating the Work and Influence of Philip R. Davies*, ed. D. Burns and J. W. Rogerson, LHBOTS 484 (London: T&T Clark International, 2012), 173–192.

¹² James E. Harding, “The Book of Job as Metaprophecy,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 39 (2010): 523–547.

¹³ I have in mind at this point the “chastened historical criticism” advocated by John Barton and John Muddiman (see the “General Introduction,” in *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, ed. J. Barton and J. Muddiman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1–5, and Barton’s more extensive discussion in his *The Nature of Biblical Criticism* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007)), but also the proposal advanced by W. John Lyons (“Hope for a Troubled Discipline? Contributions to New Testament Studies from Reception History,” *JSNT* 33 (2010): 207–220), for reconceptualising historical criticism in terms of reception history (as the allusions to the reception and effect of the biblical texts in the next paragraph should make clear), notwithstanding the constructive criticisms levelled by Jonathan Morgan (“Visitors, Gatekeepers and Receptionists: Reflections on the Shape of Biblical Studies and the Role of Reception History,” in *Reception History and Biblical Studies: Theory and Practice*, ed. E. England and W. J. Lyons, Scriptural Traces 6, LHBOTS 615 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 61–76).

¹⁴ It is not clear to me that one could seriously claim *oneself* to be a theologian without hubris. Stephen Freeman has reflected thoughtfully on this from within the Russian Orthodox tradition: see his “I Am Not a Theologian” (*Gloria to God for All Things*, May 9, 2008 (<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/gloria2godforallthings/2008/05/09/i-am-not-a-theologian/>), accessed October 24, 2018)).

¹⁵ The annotations, in-text essays, and more extensive essays in the two editions of *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, ed. A.-J. Levine and M. Z. Brettler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011 and 2017) are collectively a fine example of the kind of scholarship I am thinking of, the essays by Amy-Jill Levine (“Bearing False Witness: Common Errors Made About Early Judaism,” 759–763 in the 2017 edition) and Ed Kessler (“The New Testament and Jewish-Christian Relations,” 763–767 in the 2017 edition) in particular summarising *in nuce* both what is

historical appreciation of these texts, chastened by an awareness of the effects of their reception and effect, may prompt a faithfully critical reading against the grain.¹⁶ There should be no reason to suppose that adopting a certain kind of hermeneutic of suspicion could not be an act of faithfulness rather than of arrogance and impiety.

There are at least three things that need to be held in creative tension in approaching the task of Christian theological exegesis, and it is a genuine tension, in which there is not always necessarily an accessible or satisfactory answer to be had that brings resolution and closure. One whose vocation entails daring to think and speak theologically, however, is obligated to engage in this work, even though she or he is in no way obligated to complete it.¹⁷ First, patient attention needs to be paid to the biblical texts in their original languages and in their ancient contexts,¹⁸ insofar as these can be reconstructed, focusing particularly on what is distinctive about the texts in question in comparison with other, putatively analogous texts. Second, given that the Church in its wisdom discerned the need for a canon of Scripture, notwithstanding either the manifest diversity of early Christian literature on the one hand or the historically distorting and at times morally problematic effects of the canon on the other,¹⁹ attention needs to be paid to what the texts in question have in common with other works in the scriptures of

problematic in the New Testament and certain prominent strands of the Christian tradition of interpretation, and what is at stake in terms of modern dialogue between Jews and Christians.

¹⁶ I owe the notion of reading against the grain above all to feminist exegesis, which has proved to be a particularly insightful and morally significant development in modern biblical criticism. Outside the Biblical Studies guild, the notion of resistant reading is associated particularly with Judith Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), who wrote of the way that American literature has “immasculated” female readers, compelling them to identify with a male perspective that is assumed to be universal (Judith Plaskow’s fundamental work *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), begins by levelling a broadly comparable criticism at the canonical texts of the Jewish tradition). Perhaps the most important entry into this vital field now is the recent attempt by Esther Fuchs to offer, through a series of interconnected essays, a critical survey of feminist criticism hitherto, and a “map for feminist biblical studies” for the future (*Feminist Theory and the Bible: Interrogating the Sources*, Feminist Studies and Sacred Texts (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016), here p. 10). A few years ago I ventured an attempt at a resistant reading of the prophetic marriage metaphor in Deutero-Isaiah (“In the Name of Love: Resisting Reader and Abusive Redeemer in Deutero-Isaiah,” *The Bible & Critical Theory* 2 no. 2 (2006): 14.1–14.15), the theological implications of which are still unclear to me.

¹⁷ At the risk of appropriating, perhaps inaccurately, a tradition that properly belongs to another, the words of the third generation tanna, Rabbi Tarfon, come to mind: “You are not obligated to complete the work, but nor are you free to be excused from it” (*lo alekha hammelakhah ligmor velo attah ben khorin libbatel mimmennah*) (*m. Avot* 2:16). Transliterations from Hebrew and Aramaic follow SBL General-Purpose Style, and pronunciation conventions for modern Hebrew, rather than a hypothetical reconstruction of authentic ancient pronunciation.

¹⁸ Patient attention to the study of the biblical languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) is, it seems to me, a *sine qua non* of genuinely responsible engagement with the biblical texts, and the fact that their intensive study is these days often not only no longer a requirement for pastoral ministry, but no longer an essential element in many Theology programmes in universities and theological colleges, is a matter of the most serious concern.

¹⁹ The key primary sources, with thorough analysis, are conveniently collected in the valuable recent work by Edmon L. Gallagher and John D. Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists from Early Christianity: Texts and Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). The potentially de-historicizing effect of the fact of the canon (or *canons*, given the differences between the various Christian churches on which works, precisely, belong) needs to be tempered by an awareness of the materiality of early Christian literary culture. On this, see most recently Brent Nongbri, *God’s Library: The Archaeology of the Earliest Christian Manuscripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018). Nongbri levels a mild criticism (*God’s Library*, 12–13) at Larry Hurtado (of whose work he is generally appreciative) for succumbing to the risk of decontextualizing the early Christian manuscript evidence by drawing on canonical categories to organize it (in reference to Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artefacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006)).

Israel and the Church, even if such commonalities cannot always be easily explained in strictly historical terms.²⁰ Third, and most fundamentally, the task of Christian theological exegesis needs to be approached in the context of prayerful spiritual discipline, alert to the manifold ways in which these strange, ancient documents mediate a divine word that confronts us ever anew with that decision from which, in all honesty, we might prefer to escape.

II

What are we to make of the comment in Luke 24:45 that the risen Jesus “opened their mind(s) to understand the scriptures” (*diēnoixen autōn ton noun tou sunienai tas graphas*)?²¹ This comment not only echoes the previous pericope (Luke 24:13–35), in which the risen Lord exasperatedly addresses the unperceiving travellers as “foolish and slow of heart in believing all the prophets have spoken” (*ō anoētoi kai bradeis tē kardia tou pistenein epi pasin hois elalēsan hoī prophētai*)²² and interprets for them the things concerning himself in all the scriptures (*diērmēneusen autois en pasais tais graphais ta peri heautou*), prompting them later to recall that their hearts had been burning within them as he was speaking to them on the road, when he opened up the scriptures to them (*ouchi hē kardia hēmōn kaiomenē ēn en hēmin hōs elalei hēmīn en tē hodō hōs diēnoigen hēmīn tas graphas*), but also seems to echo certain passages in the Jewish literature of the late Second Temple period concerned with the revelation of divine insight, particularly in the apocalyptic literature, in addition to texts from Qumran and the rabbinic literature to do with prayer. It also resonates with the wider context of Luke-Acts, and with the wider corpus of the New Testament as a whole, insofar as it suggests that genuinely Christian discernment, which is grounded in the exegesis of sacred Scripture, takes place only by means of the working of God upon our minds.

There are two main points to be noted. First of all, the idiom used here by Luke, to “open the mind” (*dianoigein ton noun*), reflects an idiom occasionally attested in Jewish texts from the late Second Temple period written in Hebrew and Greek, and attested later in the Hebrew language of prayer in connection with understanding the Torah. That idiom is “to open the heart,” in Hebrew *pathakh lev*, in which *lev* corresponds to the modern English “mind” more than to “heart,” referring, in line with

²⁰ An approach to historical-critical exegesis that over-emphasizes the distinctiveness of the biblical writings at the expense of what they share in common is problematic on both historical and theological grounds. Grant Macaskill’s profound work *Union with Christ in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), one of the most important works of recent scholarship to navigate the difficult relationship between historical and theological engagement with the writings of the New Testament, evidences a particularly acute awareness of this.

²¹ What follows is a revised form of two related but slightly different papers presented at the New Zealand Association of Theological Schools combined conference at Carey Baptist College, Auckland, June 28–30, 2016, and the Wisdom in Israel and in ANE Wisdom Literature section, European Association of Biblical Studies annual conference, Berlin, August 7–11, 2017. It is a privilege to be able to offer this revision in honour of the Rev Dr Tim Meadowcroft, and I have tried to relate what I have to offer to two of his interests, the book of Daniel and the theological exegesis of Scripture. I have not sought to be original—in theological discourse genuine originality should in any case occasion suspicion—and must apologize for not providing exhaustive references for every point that has been anticipated by other, wiser, and more knowledgeable, scholars than I. I can only dare hope that at least some of what I have written may open up a fresh angle on old traditions.

²² On the use of the genitive of the articular infinitive, characteristic of Lukan style, see BDF §400 (8) (pp. 206–207); MH 3.141–142 (note that *ton pistenein* is not attested in Codex Bezae).

Hebrew idiom, to the faculty of understanding. Second, the role the risen Jesus embodies in relation to the scriptures here recalls both apocalyptic texts such as Daniel, in which an angelic figure bestows understanding on a human recipient of the revelation of heavenly mysteries, and some of the exegetical texts from Qumran, chiefly the *pesher* to Habakkuk, in which a uniquely inspired human teacher enables an elect group to understand prophecies that had not been understood even by the prophet upon whom they had originally been bestowed. With the exception of Daniel, and conceivably also early Palestinian Jewish prayer texts that might be plausibly but provisionally reconstructed from the evidence of 2 Maccabees, the later rabbinic literature, and the rabbinic liturgy, it is improbable that Luke is directly dependent on these traditions, but the Lukan resurrection narrative nonetheless shares particular religious ideas in common with them.

The language of “opening” (*dianoigein*) is used at a number of points in the Lukan resurrection narrative. Here, this verb is related to both the recognition of the Lord Jesus following his resurrection, and the formerly hidden meaning of Israel’s scriptures, which had borne veiled witness to the crucifixion and resurrection of the Anointed. Thus, whereas in Luke 24:16 the disciples on the road to Emmaus had failed to recognize their mysterious companion as the Lord because their eyes were restrained from recognizing him (*hoi de ophthalmoi autōn ekratounto tou mē epignōnai auton*), in Luke 24:31–32, their eyes “were opened” (*diēnoichthēsan*) so that they recognised him when he broke and shared bread with them, and they recall how their hearts had been burning within them as he “was opening” (*diēnoigen*) the scriptures to them on the road, explaining how, according to Moses and the Prophets, it was necessary for the Anointed to suffer and only then to enter into his Glory (*doxa*). The same verb, *dianoigein*, is later used in the Acts of the Apostles, where we read that the Lord opened (*diēnoixen*) the heart (*kardia*) of Lydia to attend to what was said by Paul on the Sabbath in a place of prayer (*prosenuchē*) somewhere just outside Philippi (Acts 16:14), leading to her baptism, and the baptism of her household. This same verb is then used to indicate Paul’s oral exposition of the meaning of the scriptures in the synagogue of Thessalonica, that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and rise from the dead (Acts 17:3). In this passage there is no direct object to the verb *dianoigein*, perhaps suggesting that this verb has already become, in effect, a technical verb referring to the exposition of the scriptures, perhaps anticipating the later rabbinic use of the Hebrew verb *pathakh* in a broadly comparable sense.²³ This usage of *dianoigein* is unique to Luke-Acts among the writings of the New Testament.²⁴ In the context of the whole of the narrative of Luke-

²³ I say *anticipating*, because there is no clear evidence to suggest that Luke is dependent on an already existing Jewish use of *pathakh* in this sense (as C. K. Barrett points out in *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 2; ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 810–811), even though, as I am arguing here, Luke probably *is* directly or indirectly dependent on an existing Jewish idiom *pathakh lev*, “open the heart.”

²⁴ Its only use in the NT outside Luke-Acts is in Mark 7:34, where *dianoichthēti* is the Greek gloss of *ephphatha*, probably to be construed as the Aramaic *ithpeel* (or possibly *ithpaal*) of *ṣptkh*, “be opened,” in light of S. Morag, “Εφφαθα: Mark VII. 34: Certainly Hebrew, not Aramaic?,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 17 (1972): 198–202, who concludes, based on evidence drawn from Samaritan Aramaic, that the command Mark attributes to Jesus here is at least as likely to be Aramaic (*ṣptkh* in the *ithpeel* stem) as Hebrew (Morag’s analysis is followed by, e.g., Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1:1–8:36*, WBC 34A (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 395–396). Morag was responding to an earlier article by Isaac Rabinowitz (“Εφφαθα: Mark VII. 34: Certainly Hebrew, not Aramaic,” *JSS* 16 (1971): 151–156), which had attempted in no uncertain terms to demolish Matthew Black’s earlier defence of *ephphatha* as a

Acts, Acts 16:4 and 17:3, and by extension Acts 28:23, link the apostolic mission back to the resurrection narrative, in which the risen Jesus not only is the first to interpret the scriptures thus, but entrusts the same task—that is, the proclamation of the christological truth in the scriptures once veiled but now revealed—to the apostles who will bear witness to him at his command. It is an illustration of the familiar way that Luke 24:44–49 anticipates *in nuce* the entire unfolding of the apostolic mission, organically rooted in the things that Jesus began to do and to teach (*ἐρξάτο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν*)²⁵ in his earthly ministry.

The use of *dianoigein* both for the recognition of Jesus, where it is the *eyes* (*ophthalmoi*) of the disciples that are opened, and for the exposition of the scriptures, where it is their hearts or *minds* (*nous*) that are opened so that the scriptures may be rightly understood, highlights the inseparability between the recognition of the identity of the risen Jesus, and the full understanding of the scriptures as referring, in a formerly veiled manner, to him. The disciples could not discern this prior to the resurrection, and it was both the fact of the resurrection, and the consequence of their encounter with the risen one, that healed their lack of understanding. Both the risen Jesus (Luke 24:25–27, 45–47) and later Paul (Acts 28:23), make the nature of the identity of the Anointed into the very meaning of the scriptures, which is clear to all those whose *hearts* (*kardia*, sing.) are not closed to understanding. Not only does this foreground the deep interconnection between the mission of Jesus and the apostolic mission, but it grounds the understanding of those who accepted the proclamation of Jesus and Paul itself in the scriptures, for not only the crucifixion and resurrection of the Anointed, but also the truth that some would fail to understand that this is what the scriptures had long foretold, belongs to the unfolding of scriptural prophecy. Acts culminates, after all, with Paul’s identification of Isa 6:9–10 with the rejection of his proclamation by some in the synagogue at Rome: “the hearts of this people have become dull” (*ἐπαχυνθῆ γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου*).

The nouns *kardia*, “heart” and *nous*, “mind,” of course, are essentially synonymous here, as is widely recognised. They each denote the organ of intellection. The noun *nous* is used only in Luke 24:45 in the Gospels and Acts, though it is hardly uncommon elsewhere in the New Testament,²⁶ and the verb *noein* is certainly used in the Gospels.²⁷ It is far more prominent in the writings of Philo of Alexandria,

transliteration of an Aramaic reflexive verb with assimilation of *t* in pronunciation (“ΕΦΦΑΘΑ (Mk 7.34), [TA] ΠΛΑΣΧΑ (Mt. 26.18W), [TA] ΣΑΒΒΑΤΑ (passim), [TA] ΛΙΛΠΑΧΜΑ (Mt. 17.24bis),” in *Mélanges bibliques en hommage au R. P. Béda Rigaux*, ed. A. Deschamps and A. de Halleux (Gembloux: Duculot, 1970), 57–62 (57–60)). Black, in turn, was responding to an earlier iteration of Rabinowitz’s argument, in “‘Be Opened’ = Ἐφφάθα (Mark 7 34): Did Jesus Speak Hebrew?,” *ZNW* 53 (1962): 229–238 (see also John A. Emerton, “*Maranatha* and *Ephphatha*,” *JTS* 18 (1967): 427–431). Rabinowitz’s argument was that *ephphatha* ought to be read instead as a transliteration of a Hebrew *niphal* form of *ṣṭkḥ*. Rabinowitz’s construal of this form remains possible (as Emerton explicitly, and Morag tacitly, admitted).

²⁵ Acts 1:1. The organic connection between the apostolic mission and the pre-resurrection work of Jesus is somewhat obscured by the translation of Acts 1:1 in the NRSV, in which Luke refers to all that “Jesus did and taught from the beginning.”

²⁶ Rom 1:28; 7:23, 25; 11:34; 12:2; 14:5; 1 Cor 1:10; 2:16; 14:14, 15, 19; Eph 4:17, 23; Phil 4:7; Col 2:18; 1 Thess 2:2; 1 Tim 6:5; 2 Tim 3:8; Tit 1:15; Rev 13:18; 17:9.

²⁷ In the Gospels, see Matt 15:17; 16:9, 11; 24:15; Mark 7:18; 8:17; 13:14; John 12:40 (= Isa 6:10, where the dative *τῇ καρδίᾳ* [1QIsa^a = *blbbm*] indicates the instrument with which God’s people will fail to understand) (note: the LXX

along with its approximate synonym *dianoia*, and will become a very important term of Christian anthropology in the Patristic period.²⁸ In contrast, the noun *kardia* is much more commonly used in the Gospels and Acts, in line with the tendency of the Greek scriptures to render Heb. *lev* and *levav* with Gk. *kardia*. The correspondence between *kardia* and *nous* is clear from the way the constituent pericopae of the Lukan resurrection narrative are interrelated, and by the close similarity between Luke 24:45 and Acts 16:14. In Luke 24:25, the disciples have failed to understand the words of the prophets because they are “mindless and slow of heart (*kardia*) to believe,” in 24:32 it is the “hearts” (*kardia*, sing.) of the disciples that were burning as the risen Jesus was opening the scriptures to them, and in 24:38 it is in their “heart” (*kardia*) that doubts (*dialogismoi*) are rising up. Then in Acts 16:14, the Lord “opened [Lydia’s] heart to attend” (*diēnoixen tēn kardiaian prosechein*) to what Paul was saying, just as the risen Jesus had “opened [the disciples’] minds to understand” (*diēnoixen ton nous ton sunienai*) the scriptures. The variation in vocabulary reflects good narrative style better than would the slavish reproduction of identical words and phrases, the sense being essentially the same in each case.

At least part of the background to this lies in the Greek text of Isa 6:9–10, quoted by Paul in the synagogue in Rome at the end of Acts to those who turn their back on his exposition of the scriptures (Acts 28:23–28). There, it is because of a hardness of “heart” (*kardia*) that their ancestors had failed to “understand” (*sunienai*) the message conveyed by the prophet. Moreover, Isaiah was not speaking with his own, independent voice, but rather with that of the Holy Spirit, which meant, strongly echoing Luke 24:44–49, that the meaning of the prophecy would not become clear until Paul’s audience in the synagogue in Rome divided over whether or not to accept the Gospel he was proclaiming to them. This passage from Isaiah has, of course, already been cited by Luke’s Jesus in the context of the explanation of the parable of the sower (Luke 8:10; par. Matt 13:14–15; Mark 4:12), where again *kardia* denotes the organ of intellection (Luke 8:12, 15; par. Matt 13:19).

The suggestion that the early Christian appropriation of Isa 6:9–10 is fundamental to understanding Luke 24:44–49 and Acts 28:23–28 is hardly novel, but it is important not to be misled by the canonical context into supposing that this exhausts the intertextual resonance of these passages. To be sure, Isa 6:9–10 is of paramount significance because it belongs to the pattern of prophecy and fulfilment to which both Luke 24:44–49 and Acts 28:23–28 allude, and it is explicitly quoted in the latter passage. Isaiah evokes the notion of the hardening of the heart as a figure for the constitutional inability of the people of God to perceive the truth of things. Equal attention needs to be paid, however, to the converse, that is, the *opening* of the heart to perceive faithfully that which is true. It should at least be considered that, in addition to Isa 6:9–10, the Lukan narrative is also evoking the living language of prayer of the Jewish communities of the late Second Temple period. The evidence for this is primarily to be

of Isa 6:10, and the other quotations of this passage in the NT, have *sunienai* rather than *noein*). In the Epistles, see Rom 1:20; Eph 3:4; 1 Tim 1:7; 2 Tim 2:7; Heb 11:3.

²⁸ On the intellect in the writings of the Church Fathers, see A. N. Williams, *The Divine Sense: The Intellect in Patristic Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). More work needs to be done on the relationship between the patristic understanding of the intellect and the understanding(s) of the intellect in the Jewish and Christian scriptures.

found in 2 Maccabees and the Qumran scrolls,²⁹ and secondarily—though no less significantly—in prayers preserved in the Jewish liturgy and the Babylonian Talmud (their relatively late date notwithstanding). A cursory survey only will be offered here, but a more thorough and penetrating study of the echoes of Jewish prayer throughout the Lukan narrative is a *desideratum*.

In the first letter cited in 2 Maccabees from the Jews of Jerusalem and Judaea to their fellow Jews in the Egyptian diaspora, the epistolographer expresses the wish that God would give his addressees a “heart” (*kardia*) to “revere” (*sebesthai*) him, and to do his will (*ta thelēmata*, pl.) “with a great heart” (*kardia megalē*) and “with a willing soul” (*psuchē boulomenē*). He further expresses the wish that God would “open your heart to his law and to the commandments” (*dianoixai tēn kardia n hymōn en tō nomō autou kai en tois prostagmasi*). There are strong echoes here of passages in the Jewish scriptures, particularly those that preserve the language of prayer. In Ps 102:7 (LXX) (= Ps 103:7 in the MT), for example, the psalmist blesses the Lord, “who made known his ways to Moses, and his will (*ta thelēmata*, pl.)³⁰ to the sons of Israel.” Obedience to the commandments in the Jewish scriptures is chiefly a matter of the “heart” (usually Heb. *lev* or *levav* and Gk. *kardia*), which is, of course, what is in mind in Deut 6:4–9,³¹ where Israel is commanded to love (*ahav*) YHWH by observing the commandments. In Ezek 11:19–20, the Lord will replace the stone heart of the returning exiles with a fleshly heart (Heb. *lev basar* and Gk. *kardia sarkine*) in order to walk in his commandments, a motif that is shared by passages later in Ezekiel, and of course in Jeremiah. In Jer 38:31–34 (LXX) (= Jer 31:31–34 in the MT), YHWH will put his laws into the minds” of the returning exiles (*epi tēn dianoian*, where the Heb. reads *beqirbam*, “within them”), and write them “upon their hearts” (*epi kardias autōn*, where the Heb. reads *al libbam*, sing., “upon their heart(s)”). In Ezek 36:26–27, obedience to the commandments results from the divine gift of a new heart (Heb. *lev* and Gk. *kardia*) and spirit (Heb. *ruakh* and Gk. *pneuma*), and from YHWH placing his own spirit (Heb. *ruakh* and Gk. *pneuma*) within the returning exiles. Importantly, these passages make the transformation of the heart a divine gift, the gracious initiative of God in redeeming his exiled people.

The work of the Chronicler echoes this use of the language of the “heart” in connection with obedience.³² David commands Solomon to serve his ancestral god “with a whole heart and a willing soul” (*belev shalem uvenefesh khafetsab*) in 1 Chron 28:9 (Gk. *en kardia teleia kai psuchē thelouse*), a passage that may well be reflected in the Greek *kardia megalē kai psuchē boulomenē* in 2 Macc 1:3.³³ David prays in 1 Chron 29:19 that YHWH would give his son Solomon a whole heart (Heb. *levav shalem* but Gk. *kardia*

²⁹ Second Maccabees is not uncommonly cited by commentators on Luke and Acts (and *vice versa*). See e.g. Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 403 n. 24, Pervo suggesting 2 Macc 1:4 as the source for the idiom; Robert Doran, *2 Maccabees: A Critical Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 26. What is less in evidence among Lukan scholars, however, is close attention to the further intertextual resonances suggested by 2 Macc 1:4, to which commentators on the latter have helpfully pointed (see further below).

³⁰ The MT of Ps 103:7 reads *alilotav*, “his deeds.”

³¹ For a most compelling Christian theological account of Deut 6:4–9, see R. W. L. Moberly, *Old Testament Theology: Reading the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 7–40.

³² 1 Chron 22:19; 28:9; 29:9, 17, 18; 2 Chron 6:14, 37, 38; 11:16; 12:14; 15:12, 15, 17; 16:9; 19:3, 9; 20:33; 22:9; 25:2; 29:34; 30:19; 31:21; 34:31; 36:13.

³³ 1 Chron 28:9 is cited in connection with 2 Macc 1:3 in Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 26.

agathē, “good heart”) to observe his laws, statutes, and commandments. In his benediction in 1 Chron 29:10–19, David beseeches God to make the heart of the people firm towards him (*vebakhen levavam elekha*, “and strengthen their heart(s) towards you”), and to give Solomon a whole heart (Heb. *lev shalem* and Gk. *kardia agathē*) to observe and do the commandments.³⁴ In 2 Chron 17:6 we read that the heart (Heb. *lev* and Gk. *kardia*) of King Jehoshaphat of Judah was exalted in the ways of YHWH, which meant walking in his commandments (2 Chron 17:4). The phrase “a whole heart” (*lev shalem*) in reference to piety occurs only in Chronicles (1 Chron 28:9; 29:9) and Isaiah (38:3) in the Hebrew scriptures, but is attested thereafter at Qumran, where it occurs in the Damascus Document and, notably, the Thanksgiving Hymns. In CD I, 10, when God appraises (*byn qal*) the deeds of the nascent community, he recognises that they have sought him “with a whole heart” (*blb shlm*) and raises up for them a righteous teacher to direct them “in the way of his heart” (*bdrk lbw*) (CD I, 11). In the Thanksgiving Hymns, in a long prayer of blessing beginning at 1QH^a VII, 21 and probably continuing to 1QH^a VIII, 40 or 41,³⁵ the hymnist claims to serve the Lord “in truth and (with) a whole heart” (*b’mṭ wblb shlm*) (1QH^a VIII, 25). This strongly echoes the language of Chronicles, but elsewhere at Qumran there are more obvious echoes of the language of Deut 6:4–9, whether as a work of Scripture or as part of the living tradition of prayer.³⁶ In CD XV, 9–10, for example, the covenant entails returning to the Torah “with all one’s heart and soul” (*bkl lb w[b]k[l] npsb*), a phrase repeated in CD XV, 12, and in 1QH^a VII, 23 the hymnist claims to have purified himself from iniquity with all his heart and soul (*bkw l lb wkw l npsb*).

What we do not find in the Hebrew scriptures is the language of “opening” the heart or mind. The conceptual foundations of the opening of the heart can, nevertheless, perhaps be traced back to Deut 30:6. The unblocking of a stubborn heart (cf. Isa 6:9–10) is a work God will perform for an exiled and repentant Israel, drawing them back to obey His commandments. It may go back further still, to Hos 13:8aβ, where God is imagined as a bear robbed of its young, who will “rip open the casing of their hearts” (Heb. *eqra segor libbam* and Gk. *diarrēxō sunkleismon kardias autōn*),³⁷ because his people have forgotten him. In Ps 119:18, we do find the language of opening (Heb. *glb* and Gk. *apokaluptein*) the eyes in connection with the commandments (*gal enay vabbitah / niflaot mittoratekha*, “open my eyes so that I may behold wonders from your Teaching”), but not yet the opening of the heart or mind.³⁸ Second

³⁴ The Septuagint uses *prostagmata* in 1 Chron 29:19 and 2 Chron 34:31 to translate *kehuqqim* (cf. 2 Macc 1:4, where *prostagmata* is collocated with *nomos*).

³⁵ Hartmut Stegemann, “The Number of Psalms in 1QHodayot^a and Some of their Sections,” in *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. E. G. Chazon, STDJ 48 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 191–234 (215); Hartmut Stegemann and Eileen Schuller, *Qumran Cave 1.III: 1QHodayot^a with Incorporation of 1QHodayot^b and 4QHodayot^{c,f}*, DJD 40 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2009), 99–100, 110–111. 1QH^a VIII, 26 begins *brwk ’th*, “Blessed are you ...,” but this probably begins a new sub-section rather than an entire new prayer of blessing (thus Stegemann, “The Number of Psalms in 1QHodayot^a,” 215, 230–231).

³⁶ Cf. also Ps 119:2, 10, 34, 58, 69, 145. Psalm 119, of course, is replete with echoes of Deut 6:4–9. For the heart as the locus of obedience, see Ps 119:80, in which the psalmist prays that his heart might be perfect in God’s statutes (*yehi libbi tamim bekuqqekha*). For a recent Christian theological account of Ps 119, see Rebecca Eaton Burgess, “A Christian Reading of Psalm 119: An Exploration of Torah as God’s Self-Revelation using a Trinitarian Hermeneutic” (PhD diss., University of Otago, 2017).

³⁷ Following the NJPS translation.

³⁸ Jonathan Goldstein has suggested that the idiom found in 2 Macc 1:4 has been transferred to the heart from the eyes (citing Ps 119:18) and ears, but also raises the possibility that it could have been extrapolated from Hos 13:6–

Maccabees 1:4 aside, we initially find the language of opening the heart or mind in some of the prayer texts from Qumran, specifically the hymn with which the cave 1 copy of the Rule of the Community closes, and, again, in the Thanksgiving Hymns. In each case it is God who opens the heart, and the result is the acquisition of divine insight.

So in 1QS XI, 15–16, a hymnist, presumably a *maskil*, blesses “My God, who opens the heart of your servant to knowledge” (*brwk ’th ’ly hpwtkb ld’h lb ’bdkb*). The form of this line of the blessing is, of course, reminiscent of the benedictions of the *Amidah*, particularly *barukh attah adonay kbonen haddaat*, “Blessed are you, O Lord, who graciously grants knowledge.” Very similar to 1QS XI, 15–16 is a passage from the Thanksgiving Hymns in which the hymnist addresses God as one who has opened his heart to divine insight (*[’th ’ly ptkbth lbby lbyntkb*) (1QH^a XXII, 31).³⁹ This precise idiom does not occur again in the extant fragments of the Thanksgiving Hymns, or in the extant scrolls from Qumran as a corpus, but broadly similar idioms do. In 1QH^a XVIII, 33 the hymnist says that his heart has been opened to the eternal fountain (*lbby nptkb lmqwr ’wlm*), and here we should take the niph'al verb *nptkb*, “is opened” as a divine passive and the eternal fountain as the fountain of knowledge referred to elsewhere in this work (see 1QH^a X, 19–20; XX, 32; XXIII, 16). The hymnist in 1QH^a X, 19–20, by virtue of this bestowal of divine insight, is in turn able to open the fountain of knowledge to others who are graced with the ability to understand, because God has placed understanding in his heart (*bvnh smth blbbw lptwkb mqwr d’t lkn’l mbvnyym*).

In 1QH^a XX, 36–37, the hymnist asks, “How could I understand unless you had given me insight? What could I sp[ea]k if You had not opened my heart?” (*w’ykb ’byn ky’ ’m hskelny wmb ’d[br] blw’ ghyth lby*) (cf. XVIII, 8–9). A few lines later (XXI, 6–7), he says, “for to one of uncircumcised ear the matter is uncovered, and the heart [of stone perceives w]onders” (*ky’ l’rl ’wzn nptkb dbr wlb [h’bn ytbwnn bn]pl’wt*).⁴⁰ A little later in the same hymn (XXI, 10), he continues, “You have opened a heart of dust to be attentive ...” (*wiglb lb ’pr lhšmr*). In 1QH^a XXIV, 28–29, God has “opened my heart [to] the wonder of Your mysteries” (*[l]pl’ rzykb ghyth lby*).⁴¹ Finally, based on a comparison with these passages and the fragmentary parallel in 4QH^b, the editors have proposed that 1QH^a XV, 40–41 should read, “[And yo]u, my God, [have made my foot firm on the path of your heart, you have opened my ear to rumours of your wonders, and my heart to understand] your truth” (*[w’t]b ’ly [kwnnth rgy bdrk lbkb wšmw’wt pl’kb ghyth ’wzny wlbby lbbyn] b’mtk*).⁴²

In the case of 2 Maccabees, the idiom “open the heart” echoes not only the Hebrew of these Qumran texts, but more closely an idiom known from the rabbinic language of prayer. In the first of the prefixed letters with which 2 Maccabees opens (2 Macc 1:1–10a), the noun *kardia* appears three times as

8 (*II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 41A (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 143). In respect of opening the ear, in Job 33:16a Elihu claims that God “opens the ear(s) of human beings” (Heb. *yigleh ozen anashim*), which in the LXX turns into *anakalupei noun anthrōpon*, “he opens the *mind(s)* of human beings.”

³⁹ Here, to “open the mind” (*ptkb lbb*) is parallel with “uncover the ear” (*glb ’zn*).

⁴⁰ For the reconstruction, see Stegemann, Schuller, and Newsom, *Qumran Cave 1.III*, 261, 264.

⁴¹ For the reconstruction *[l]pl’* in 1QH^a XXIV, 28, see Stegemann, Schuller, and Newsom, *Qumran Cave 1.III*, 283, 287.

⁴² Stegemann, Schuller, and Newsom, *Qumran Cave 1.III*, 199, 213.

the Jews in Jerusalem and Judaea express the wish that God would give their Egyptian brothers a heart to worship him (*dōē hymin kardian pasin eis to sebesthai auton*) and do his will with a whole heart and a willing soul (*poiein ta thelemata kardia megalē kai psychē boulomenē*), and that he would open their hearts to his Law and to the commandments (*dianoixai tēn kardian hymōn en tō nomō autou kai en tois prostagmasi*). Assuming that the letter is indeed authentic, it would date from either 143/142 BCE (2 Macc 1:7), or from 125/124 BCE (2 Macc 1:10), depending on a number of rather complicated issues that cannot be entered into here. What does seem to be clear is that the language of the letter is replete with idioms attested in texts that came to be regarded as scriptural, and that unlike the main body of the narrative that follows, which claims to be an *epitome* of a much larger work in Greek by Jason of Cyrene, the letter is almost certainly a translation from an Aramaic or Hebrew original.⁴³ What is also clear is that even if the original was in Aramaic, the letter strongly echoes the Hebrew language of prayer known from later liturgical texts.

In 1940, Charles C. Torrey offered a retroversion of the two prefixed letters from Greek into Aramaic, to illustrate his view that the Greek text was a largely faithful translation from an already slightly corrupt Aramaic original. In 2 Macc 1:4, Torrey retroverted the Greek *dianoixai tēn kardian hymōn en tō nomō autou kai en tois prostagmasi* to the hypothetical Aramaic *nyptkb lbbkwn [lmkbkm] b'wryth wbgymwhy wllshlmb*,⁴⁴ which he then translated, “may he give you a heart [*to understand*] his law and his statutes *and to fulfil them*.”⁴⁵ His rationale for reconstructing a missing verb, the *peal* infinitive *lmkbkm*, is because in his view there needed to be a way of accounting for the Greek preposition *en* in the translation. The disappearance of the verb was, according to Torrey, to be explained by virtue of the fact that *lbbkwn* and *lmkbkm* would have looked similar enough in the cursive script to provoke an instance of scribal parablepsis.⁴⁶ It is by no means clear that a verb has gone missing here, because as we shall see in a moment the Greek preposition *en* in fact reflects a very literal rendering of an idiom attested in Hebrew prayer, but I do think it noteworthy that Torrey should have reached for a verb of intellection to fill in the gap he perceived in the text: God is invoked to open the hearts of his people precisely so that they will *understand* his Law.

It is almost certainly the case that the language of 2 Macc 1:4 is best explained as an allusion to an ancient prayer akin to the blessing which still forms part of the *Qedushah Desidra*,⁴⁷ or the prayer of Mar bar Ravina cited in the Talmud Bavli (*b. Ber.* 17a),⁴⁸ both of which contain the same idiom of opening the heart *to the Law*. The prayer of Mar bar Ravina contains the plea “open my heart to your Law, and let my soul pursue your commandments” (*petakh libbi betoratekha uwemitsvotekha tirdof nafshi*). The prayer is

⁴³ Opinions vary as to which is the more likely. Goldstein leaves open the question of whether the letter was originally *written* in Hebrew (Aramaic he regards as less likely, though the letter does reflect the conventions of Aramaic epistolography), or merely *thought* in Hebrew or Aramaic (*II Maccabees*, 139).

⁴⁴ Charles C. Torrey, “The Letters Prefixed to Second Maccabees,” *JAOs* 60 (1940): 141.

⁴⁵ Torrey, “The Letters Prefixed to Second Maccabees,” 146-147.

⁴⁶ Torrey, “The Letters Prefixed to Second Maccabees,” 141 n. 14.

⁴⁷ Cited in connection with 2 Macc 1:4 in Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 142, 143.

⁴⁸ *The Koren Siddur with Introduction, Translation and Commentary by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks* (Jerusalem: Koren Publishers, 2013), 135. The *Qedushah Desidra* is cited in connection with 2 Macc 1:4 in Goldstein, *II Maccabees*, 143; Daniel R. Schwartz, *2 Maccabees* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 137; Doran, *2 Maccabees*, 26.

drenched in the language of Scripture. The preposition *b* surely indicates the grammatical object of the verbs “open” (*ptkh*) and “pursue” (*rdp*), which presumably means that there is no need to posit any missing verb in the original of the first prefixed letter in 2 Maccabees, any more than we need to posit a missing verb in this rabbinic prayer. In the form attested in the Babylonian Talmud, this prayer cites the closing invocation from Psalm 19, further illustrating the conceptual background to the connection between the heart and a devotional piety grounded in Torah observance: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart find favour before you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer” (*yihyu leratson imre fi vehegyon libbi lefanekha adonay tsuri vegoali*). The Gemara a little later cites a saying which it attributes to the fourth generation tanna R. Meir: “Study with all your heart and with all your soul to know my ways and to be diligent at the doors of my Law. Guard my Law in your heart and let reverence for me be before your eyes” (*gemor bekbol levavekha uvekbol nafsbekeha ladaat et darki velishqod al daltey torati netsor torati belibbekeha veneged eynekeha tihyeh yirati*). In the liturgy, the *Qedushah Desidra* appears in the context of a prayer beginning “A redeemer will come to Zion” (quoting Isa 59:20), which reflects the ancient custom of studying the Prophets after prayer.⁴⁹ It contains the plea, “May he open our hearts to His Law, and put into our hearts love and reverence for him, that we may do his will and serve him with a whole heart” (*hu yiftakh libbenu betorato veyasem belibbenu ahavato veyirato velaasot retsono uleovdo belevav shalem*).⁵⁰ Here the opening of the heart to the Law is a prayer for God to inspire obedience to his commandments. Now it must be stressed that we do not have direct textual evidence that this prayer existed at the time of the letter quoted at the beginning of 2 Maccabees, but the fact that the Qumran scrolls attest the idiom of “opening the heart” in the context of prayer, and that 2 Macc 1:3–4 explicitly connects this idiom with obedience to the Law,⁵¹ strongly suggests that some form of it did exist, and that it was already familiar from the context of the reading and study of the scriptures. If this is the case, then given that the Gospel of Luke concludes with a reference to those who had been with Jesus “blessing God” (*eulogountes ton theon*) in the Temple (Luke 24:53), that is, to their prayer, and given that when Luke tells us that the Lord opened Lydia’s heart to attend to what was said by Paul (Acts 16:14) it is at a place of prayer (*proseuche*), it seems at least plausible that Luke is drawing on precisely the familiar Jewish language of prayer.

The use of *nous* rather than *kardia* in Luke 24:45 still needs to be accounted for. Certainly, as suggested above, the author’s desire for stylistic variation would be an obvious explanation, but the language of Luke 24:45 surely also reflects the fact that *nous* was a known translation equivalent for *lev*

⁴⁹ *The Koren Siddur*, 174–175. The *Qedushah Desidra* is alluded to in the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Sot.* 49a), where, justified by a wordplay between the Aramaic noun *sidra*, “order” and its Hebrew cognate *sedarim*, “orders” in Job 10:22, it is said that the world continues to exist because of the recitation of this prayer. The noun *sidra* could be used to denote a section of Scripture (Jastrow 959a).

⁵⁰ I am citing this prayer from the text of the modern Ashkenazic liturgy (*The Koren Siddur*, 177).

⁵¹ The absence of a verb of intellection probably does not reflect a corruption of a lost Aramaic original (*pace* Torrey), but rather the fact that 2 Macc 1:3–4 may be concerned with *obedience to the Law* as much as *understanding of the Law*. The grammatical similarity between 2 Macc 1:3–4 and the *Qedushah Desidra* is noteworthy, and even though the prayer absorbed later elements as it evolved, reflecting in particular its connection with the practice of discoursing about Scripture in Aramaic, its petition for the opening of the heart to the Law is itself surely ancient. The jussive *yiftakh*, “may he open” corresponds to the aorist optative *dianoixai*, the distributive singular *libbenu*, “our heart(s)” corresponds to *ten kardian hymon*, “your heart(s),” and the preposition *b* before *torato*, “to his Law” corresponds to the preposition *en* before *tō nomō auton*.

and *levav*, attested very occasionally in the Greek scriptures.⁵² It is a considerably less frequent translation equivalent for *lev* and *levav* and than is *kardia*, but the fact that it is used at all confirms both that in at least some contexts there was a recognised functional equivalence between *kardia* and *nous*.⁵³ In Exod 7:22–23, *lev* is used twice to refer to the heart of Pharaoh, but the translator chooses *kardia* for the first instance and *nous* for the second. Similarly, in Josh 14:7–8, *levav* is used to refer to the mind of Caleb (in the MT, which reads *kaasher im levavi*, but of Moses in the LXX, which reads *kata ton noun autou*)⁵⁴ and then *lev* to refer to the heart of the people of Israel, but *nous* is used in the first instance and *kardia* in the second, though in this case it is said that Caleb’s companions caused the heart of the people to “melt” (Heb. *mss* hiphil, but Gk. *metastēnai*, “alter”), which is perhaps more appropriately predicated of the heart than the mind. In Isa 10:7 there are two instances of *levav*, but the first is represented by *psuchē* and the second by *nous*.

In Luke 24:45, the consequence of the risen Jesus opening the mind of the disciples is that they understand, and the object of their understanding is a corpus of revelatory literature that would, without an interpreter, be impossible to comprehend correctly. Although there is no evidence at all that any of the authors of the Gospels were acquainted directly with the *pesharim* from Qumran, it is worth noting that the closest analogy to the role of Jesus as scriptural interpreter is precisely in the Qumran *pesharim*, specifically in 1QpHab VII, 1–5, where the ancient prophecies of Habakkuk are understood to be cryptic, even to the prophet himself, until a divinely inspired interpreter appears to reveal their hidden meaning. This inspired interpreter is the equally cryptically named “righteous teacher” (*mmrb htsdq*). The analogy is suggestive, but admittedly imprecise. While the meaning of the scriptures is cryptic in both cases, in the Habakkuk *pesher* their meaning concerns the events that would come upon the elect community in the last generation, whereas in the Gospel of Luke the meaning of the scriptures is related to the identity of the Anointed, who is also the inspired interpreter himself. So the *meaning* of the scriptures is different in each case, but an inspired interpreter is nonetheless necessary in both contexts for the meaning of the scriptures to be properly understood.

A final point concerns a similarity between Luke 24:44–49 and the book of Daniel. Both Luke-Acts and the Qumran scrolls are related, in different ways and to different degrees, to the literature and thought of Jewish apocalyptic. There is considerably more to be said about this, but for now one similarity between Luke 24:44–49 and Daniel will have to suffice. Luke 24:44–45 shares with the book of Daniel both the idea of the heart or mind as the organ of understanding, and the idea that the meaning of Scripture is opaque until an authoritative, inspired interpreter comes along to make the meaning clear, and to bestow understanding. In Daniel, this takes place, notably, in response to an act of prayer (Dan 9:4–19). In Dan 9:2, the “scrolls” (*sefarim*) are pondered by Daniel so that he can understand the hidden meaning behind the seventy-year prophecy of Jeremiah. The meaning is opaque until he has offered a

⁵² See Exod 7:23; Josh 14:7; Job 7:17; Isa 10:7, 12; 41:22.

⁵³ For a very clear example in the NT of this functional equivalence, see Eph 4:17–19, in which *nous*, *dianoia*, and *kardia* are used together.

⁵⁴ Presumably resulting originally from the well-known difficulty of distinguishing *w* and *y* in the square script.

prayer of repentance, which notably concerns Israel's failure to observe Torah, as if their hearts had hitherto been closed to it. Then the *angelus interpretes* Gabriel descends in order to grant Daniel understanding (*lehaskilekha vinah*) (Dan 9:22). In the following chapter, we read that Daniel's prayer and fasting lead to an unnamed *angelus interpretes* being sent to Daniel to make him understand (*lahavinekha*) what is going to happen to his people in the latter days (Dan 10:14). The angel is responding to Daniel setting his mind to understand and to humble himself before his God (*natatta et libbekha lehavin ulehitannot lifney elohetkha*) (Dan 10:12). In the Old Greek, the translator renders this *edōkas to prosōpon sou dianoēthēnai kai tapeinōthēnai enantion kurion tou theou*, "you gave your face to understand and to be humbled before the Lord your God." In the translation attributed to Theodotion, the angel says to Daniel *edōkas tēn kardian sou tou sunienai kai kakōthēnai enantion tou theou sou*, "you gave your heart to understand and to be abased before your God." Inasmuch as the Lukan infancy narrative recalls aspects of the language and thought of the apocalypses of Daniel 7–12, so too does the Lukan resurrection narrative, and it is, broadly speaking, in relation to this conceptual world that Luke 24:44–49 makes the most obvious sense.

III

A few brief words ought to be offered in conclusion. To read Luke 24:44–49 is to be reminded that theological exegesis, construed truthfully, is not an exercise of unsanctified human reason, but a prayerful exercise of discernment that comes to us as a gift of God, as a bestowal of divine insight. A patient engagement with the ancient literary environment of the narrative helps us to see, furthermore, that this notion is grounded in a Jewish apocalyptic pattern of thought—this is, in fact, the primary sense in which "apocalyptic was ... the mother of all Christian theology"⁵⁵—and more than likely in the lived experience of Jewish prayer. Thoughtful attention to the literary environment of Jewish Palestine in the late Second Temple period should not only enrich our apprehension of Luke 24:44–49, but remind us of the extent to which this narrative is fundamentally the product of a distinctively Jewish movement.

Theological exegesis is, moreover, inseparable from a robust Christian anthropology. It entails the recognition that, left to its own devices, the human heart and mind—thus, the faculty of understanding—has suffered the *sclerōsis* consequent upon human sin, and must be redeemed and transfigured, so that the Christian may read with the mind of Christ.⁵⁶ This means that faithful exegesis

⁵⁵ This essay may be read, in a sense, as a confessional footnote to the corrective response by Florentino García Martínez to this highly problematic claim of Ernst Käsemann: "Die Apokalyptik ist—da man die Predigt Jesu nicht eigentlich als Theologie bezeichnen kann—die Mutter aller christlichen Theologie gewesen" ("Die Anfänger christlichen Theologie," *ZTK* 57 (1960): 180). García Martínez was able to revisit, and critique, Käsemann's argument in light of the intensive research that has been done in recent decades towards a more precise understanding of Jewish apocalyptic literature, and in light of the full publication of the Qumran scrolls. Both of these developments in scholarship have necessitated a wholesale reconsideration of the nature of first-century CE Palestinian Judaism and of the earliest Christian movement within it. See García Martínez, "Is Jewish Apocalyptic the Mother of Christian Theology?," in *Qumranica Minora I: Qumran Origins and Apocalypticism*, vol. 1, STDJ 63 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 129–151.

⁵⁶ See esp. Rom 7:23, 25; 11:34 (= Isa 40:13, where Heb. *ruakh yhv* = Gk. *noun kurion*); 12:2; 1 Cor 2:16 (= Isa 40:13); Eph 4:23–24; Rev 13:18 (!); 17:9. Contrast Rom 1:28; Eph 4:17–18; Col 2:18; 1 Tim 6:5; 2 Tim 3:8; Tit 1:15.

presumes the practice of spiritual discipline. Perhaps few claims could be more counter-cultural in the contemporary academic environment than that genuinely faithful exegesis, in the Christian sense, is inseparable from the rediscovery of the importance of *askēsis*. Equally, this entails an epistemic humility that recognizes that no matter how faithfully we might happen to discern the will of God in Scripture, we are tempted to err, and, most seriously, to err in claiming that God is unequivocally on our side.⁵⁷ To seek to read Scripture in the light of the resurrection of the Anointed is, in part, to recognize just how much we share with the earliest disciples, who not only failed to recognize their Lord on the road, but whose hearts had been closed to apprehending him in the scriptures.

⁵⁷ For this risk, compare Luke 24:44–49 with *Barn.* 10:12, which shares much with the older text, and would scarcely be difficult to reconcile with the thought of Acts 28:23–28: “[H]ow could they know or understand (*noēsai ē sunienai*) these things? We, however, speak as those who know (*noēsantes*) the commandments in an upright way, as the Lord wished. For this reason he circumcised our hearing and our hearts, that we may understand these things (*perietemēntas akoas hēmōn kai tas kardias, hina suniōmen tauta*)” (*The Apostolic Fathers II*, Loeb Classical Library 25, ed. and trans, B. D. Ehrman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 50-51). The *Epistle of Barnabas*, like Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho*, belongs to the deeply problematic *Adversus Judaeos* tradition, but it was nonetheless transmitted by Christian scribes, and cannot be easily disentangled from the early Christian appropriation of the Jewish scriptures that was formed within, and between the lines of, the writings of the New Testament. A morally sound approach to Christian theological exegesis needs to face squarely the often horrifying consequences of sincere Christian attempts to read the Jewish scriptures in the light of Christ, and to hold them (and ourselves) to account.

RECEPTION HISTORY: SIGNALLING CHANGE IN BIBLICAL STUDIES

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It is a pleasure to offer this article in recognition of Tim Meadowcroft, who has contributed so significantly to biblical scholarship and biblical scholars in this part of the world. This tribute contains three themes that reflect Tim's scholarship: his hermeneutical depth, his passion for the Old Testament and his role as a teacher and encourager of biblical scholars.

Biblical scholars have an increasingly diverse and complex set of interpretive tools with which to examine the text in the effort to understand it well. Yet this burgeoning group of newer interpretive approaches also signals a sea change in the academic discipline that is biblical studies. The ideas that underpin a number of these interpretive approaches demand a change in some of the foundational assumptions about what the Bible is and what the task of the interpreter is. These are issues that bubble under the surface of biblical studies, occasionally rising to the surface, but so far not broadly affecting the discipline. More needs to happen because the newer critical methods are growing, and the landscape is changing incrementally. Students entering the field need help to orientate and the discipline needs to handle the transition from a modernist world to a postmodern one.

RECEPTION HISTORY

Reception history is a parade example of a new critical method which is increasingly popular. It is also an approach to biblical studies which is highlighting, and to an extent magnifying, fault lines within biblical studies. The discussion which follows is largely taken from a Hebrew Bible/Old Testament perspective, but writings of New Testament scholars indicate the same issues are true in the discipline generally.

Reception History, as the title implies, focuses on the history of how the text has been understood. That is not simply a history of scholarly interpretation but also a history of the effects of a wide variety of interpretations. The German *Wirkungsgeschichte*, sometimes translated, "history of effects", emphasises that the impact of the text is the key focus of reception history. Choon-Leong Seow comments that he prefers to call the approach "History of Consequences", which for him encapsulates all the influences of the text, from exegesis and scholarly interpretation to "application, use, influence, and impact" along with the ethical implications of interpretation and use of the text.¹ In his introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception of the Bible* Jonathan Roberts writes:

The reception of the Bible comprises every single act or word of interpretation of that book (or books) over the course of three millennia. It includes everything from Jesus reading Isaiah, or Augustine reading Romans, to a Sunday School nativity play, or the appearance of '2COR4:16' as

¹ Choon-Leong Seow, *Job 1–21* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 110.

a stock number on military gun scopes. No one and nothing is excluded. Reception *history*, however, is a different matter. That is usually - although not always – a scholarly enterprise, consisting of selecting and collating shards of that infinite wealth of reception in accordance with the particular interests of the historian concerned, and giving them a narrative frame.²

What I find helpful about Roberts' words is the identification of the reception history task as the selecting and collating of particular examples of reception that can be shown to cohere in some way. Reception history is a meaning making exercise, a way of storying the impact of biblical texts. Implicit in such storying is the analysis of the effects, which John Lyons indicates in his succinct definition, "Reception history aims to understand the interaction between a text, a context and an audience's response."³ Roberts' definition above notes that reception is a very broad category but his examples are largely written texts. One of the values of reception history is that it is exploring other forms of communication such as music, drama, and art that interpret biblical texts. Reception history is revealing the great breadth of the influence of the biblical text.

There are already a growing number of examples of the production of reception histories. Along with *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception of the Bible*, about half of de Gruyter's 30 volume *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* has been published.⁴ Commentary series such as the *Blackwell Bible Commentary* series and the IVP's *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* have multiple published volumes. In addition, the theory and practice of reception history is being discussed and demonstrated in various journals and volumes such as the LOBOTS *Scriptural Traces* series.⁵

Reception History has its roots in the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer, a German philosopher whose book *Truth and Method (Wahrheit und Methode)*, first published in 1960, has been a significant influence on the theory of interpretation.⁶ In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer pointed out that objective interpretation as claimed by science, and literary theory, of the time was impossible. He argued that every person comes to a text with a mind shaped by his or her historical context. Gadamer said that a key factor in our interpretation of texts is our own awareness of our pre-judgements or prejudices. That is, that the more we understand ourselves as interpreters, the more clearly we understand our differences from the historical text, the better chance we have of understanding the otherness of the text. The result is that the interpreter is able to see the text more closely to its own historical horizon and not according to the interpreter's own conditioned presuppositions. He argued that the interpretation of texts, including ancient texts like the Bible, involves the bringing together of two horizons, that of the reader and that of the text.

² Jonathan Roberts, "Introduction", in *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception of the Bible*, eds. Michael Lieb, Emma Mason and Jonathan Roberts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1. Emphasis in the original.

³ William John Lyons, "Hope for a Troubled Discipline? Contributions to New Testament Studies from Reception History" *JSNT* 33 no. 2 (2010): 213.

⁴ Hans-Josef Klauck et.al. *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009–2018).

⁵ Examples of journals include, *Journal of the Bible and Its Reception*, *Biblical Reception* and the online journal *Relegere*.

⁶ Hans-Georg. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev ed., trans. J. Weinsheimer and D.G. Marshall (London: Continuum., 2004). German original *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1960).

Gadamer did not propose a method of interpretation, rather, he claimed to be describing “the conditions in which understanding takes place.”⁷ He was interested in explaining the philosophical and theoretical aspects of what happens to an interpreter when the that person seeks to make meaning of a text rather than in the mechanics. While Gadamer was not interested in method, his insights have influenced several hermeneutical methods. One of those is reader-response theory, which focuses on the reader as meaning maker. Another approach that has grown out of Gadamer’s ideas is reception history, how the text has been understood and the impact of that understanding.

RECEPTION HISTORY VERSUS HISTORICAL CRITICISM

All new interpretive methods face challenges and reception history is no exception. Over the past decades various aspects of the approach have been critiqued and debated. One issue is whether it coheres as a hermeneutical method. Reception history is more a loosely linked set of methods than a cohesive method. Susan Gillingham following, the lead of Christopher Rowland, argues that the discipline is still in its infancy and that new hermeneutical models take time to develop.⁸ She wrote that in 2015 and references Rowland’s comment from 2004. While there are some bench mark works emerging, the field is too diverse to have any coherence beyond being a historical enterprise focused on reception. Although Gillingham speaks of reception history using a range of methods, she writes as if she expects an overarching hermeneutical model to arise in time. Given the great breadth of the potential receptions open to examination and the diversity of the biblical material it is unlikely one model will be found to work. Note for example, Chris Rowland’s comments that the *Blackwell Bible Commentary* series did not start with a particular hermeneutical theory in mind and that experience had made clear that “one model will not suit every book.”⁹ Apart from the methodological issues there is probably also a worldview one here. Modernists will look for the coherence of an overarching model but postmodern scholars are unlikely to put so much store in essentialist models as the measure of a discipline or its value.

Gillingham notes that biblical studies as a discipline has undergone considerable change over her career and even defining what the discipline is or what it does is difficult now.¹⁰ When this factor is added to the current pressure on many university departments as humanities disciplines shrink, it is not surprising that methods that further diversify the field and appear to dilute its uniqueness cause disquiet in the academy. Yet the greater tension is probably more internal than external. One might say that pressure along the fault lines of Biblical Studies as a discipline have been building for several decades and reception history has added yet more pressure to a growing strain. Whether the result is a lengthy set of tremors and with an occasional larger jolt or a seismic shift of major proportions is yet to be

⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 295.

⁸ Susan Gillingham, “Biblical Studies on Holiday? A Personal View of Reception History” in *Reception History and Biblical Studies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 23.

⁹ Chris Rowlands, “A pragmatic approach to Wirkungsgeschichte: reflections on the Blackwell Bible Commentary series and on the writing of its commentary on the Apocalypse.” n.p. [Cited 12 Sept. 2018]. Online http://bbibcomm.info/?page_id=183, 1-2.

¹⁰ Gillingham, “Biblical Studies on Holiday?”, 18.

revealed. Nevertheless, the assumed foundations of the discipline, the nature of the Bible as literature, and the goals of studying it are shifting.

These stress points seem to be underlying issues in some of the debate that goes on between the established king of historical criticism and new pretender of reception history. An example of what I mean can be seen in a debate that is known in some circles as “Hurtadogate.”¹¹ It started with comments by prominent New Testament scholar Larry Hurtado, who identified in his blog what he saw as essential skills for a New Testament PhD in the UK.¹² It amounted to the basic historical-critical skills, with relevant languages (Greek, Hebrew, German and French) and ability to engage with text criticism. While Hurtado granted that approaches like reception history were valid endeavours he indicated that they are supplementary to the foundational skills. Others, for a variety of reasons, saw his prescription as delimiting New Testament studies too narrowly.¹³ Part of the response had to do with current state of biblical studies as a discipline within the shrinking humanities curriculum in many universities noted above. Yet another, as Hurtado noted, had more to do with worldview.¹⁴ It is about with what biblical scholars think they are about and can achieve, which is clearly changing with postmodern influence.

Historical-critical scholarship begins by trying to obtain the most accurate text, that which most closely approaches what the author originally wrote. It then seeks to identify the various historical layers, categorises the style and context of the text and examines how it is shaped. This is supported and supplemented with philology, archaeology, history and interpretive tradition. The goal is to understand *the* message of *the* text as accurately as possible. However, two key questions call this goal into question and thus the priority of the historical-critical method as the foundation upon which biblical interpretation is built. Those questions are: is there *an original text* and is there *a meaning*? Reception history is reinforcing the answer “no” to both those questions, so widening the cracks in the foundations and of historical-critical method.

WHERE IS THE ORIGINAL TEXT?

One part of the response to the question about whether there is an original text or not intersects with the debate about where one starts the reception history task. Traditionalists argue that historical-criticism is the foundation on which new methods should build.¹⁵ Thus reception history, like all new interpretive

¹¹ Jonathan Morgan, “Visitors, Gatekeepers and Receptionists: Reflections on the Shape of Biblical Studies and the role of Reception History” in *Reception History and Biblical Studies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 69.

¹² Larry Hurtado, “Tools of the Trade.” [Cited 13 Sept. 2018]. Online <https://larryhurtado.wordpress.com/2011/09/04/tools-of-the-trade/>

¹³ For example, see James G. Crossley, “An Immodest Proposal for Biblical Studies” *Relegere: Studies in Religion and Reception* 2, no 1. (2012): 153–77; Michael Sandford, “On the Past and Future of New Testament Studies: A Response to Larry Hurtado.” *Relegere: Studies in Religion and Reception* 4, no 2. (2014): 229–40.

¹⁴ Larry Hurtado, “On Diversity, Competence and Coherence in New Testament Studies: A Modest Response to James Crossley’s ‘Immodest Proposal’” *Relegere: Studies in Religion and Reception* 2, no 2. (2012): 253–64. See footnote 21.

¹⁵ Hurtado appears to assume this, writing, “I think it is an asset to be able to read the Greek New Testament and draw upon scholarly investigation of its texts in tracing their subsequent reception history” (“Diversity, Competence and Coherence”, 362). On the other hand, he earlier comments positively on Lyons’ proposal to

methods starts after historical-criticism has finished. Yet, it is obvious that the historical-critical method is itself a form of reception and is as equally open to analysis as any other aspect of reception. The attempt to identify the most original text to interpret results in a scholarly creation, that is, a text that is a modern scholarly reception of the manuscripts that our critical texts are drawn from. Brennan Breed sums up the situation well with his description of the standard Hebrew OT. “The *Biblica hebraica stuttgartensia*, the most commonly used critical edition of the Hebrew Bible, is a modern scholarly edition of a medieval manuscript with late antique vowels, written in an anachronistic script and surrounded by diachronous layers of paratextual symbols.”¹⁶ He goes on to argue that the hermeneutical formulation of studying what is behind the text, in the text, and in front of the text, breaks down when the “in the text” element is drawn from a text which is itself a complex mixture of things behind and in front of the text. Whether it is *BHS* or the Greek UBS/Nestle-Aland NT, the original text we draw on is a reception built on layers of reception.¹⁷

This line of thought needs to be taken a stage further. The western church and scholarship has made the Masoretic Text its foundation for the Old Testament, yet the Orthodox Church has persisted with the Greek Septuagint used by the early church. That means that some books, such as Daniel and Jeremiah, differ quite significantly between branches of the church. So the form of the text that is used by western scholars is a reception, as is the context in which the original language version is presented. The plurality of texts is not limited to western scholarship because the “received” nature of the biblical text is not something that begins with modern critical scholarship. Since the Dead Sea Scrolls gave us a Hebrew version of Jeremiah that is the equivalent of the Septuagint text of Jeremiah, it has been apparent that the shorter LXX form is not a result of translational editing. Rather, it is clear that some biblical books existed and were used in more than one form in overlapping time periods. The text of these books existed in different forms because they were still developing. Another example is that earlier Septuagint versions of 1 and 2 Samuel indicate that its *Vorlage* lacked some material that is now part of the Masoretic Text. Our current MT is an expansion, which leads James Harding to the following observation:

...the layers of tradition history within 1 and 2 Samuel suggest that the process of telling and retelling the story of David and Jonathan, is already present *within the biblical text itself*. Indeed, it might be fairer to say that the very idea of a “biblical text itself” reflects an arbitrary and particular, though historically explicable attachment to one particular moment in the evolution of the story of David and Jonathan. This has further implications for reception history, because it

consider historical criticism a part of reception history (“Hope for a troubled Discipline?”). Some reception critics have also worked on this basis. John Sawyer comments that “the reception history of the Bible, is based on the premise that how people have interpreted, and been influenced by, a sacred text like the Bible is often as interesting and historically important as what it originally meant”, in his series editor’s preface in each of the *Blackwell Bible Commentary* series. However, his own commentary in the series on Isaiah he does not restrict himself to reception after the text reached an “original” state, but includes reception within Isaiah itself. See for example, Sawyer, *Isaiah* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 41–42.

¹⁶ Brennan W. Breed, *Nomadic Text: A Theory of Reception History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 6.

¹⁷ While there are differences between the eclectic nature of the critical Greek NT and the reliance of *BHS* on the Leningrad codex, the key point that both represent receptions of the original language texts remains.

suggests that reception history does not begin when there is a fixed text, but is already in process. In other words, the fixing of the text itself is a particular moment within its own history of reception.¹⁸

What is true for 1 and 2 Samuel and for Jeremiah is also apparent in other Old Testament books. These observations have forced text critics to abandon old ideas of recreating original autographs and to find other ways of defining what they are doing. In most cases, that seems to be to recreate an early version of the MT that the scholar understands to be authoritative in some form.¹⁹ While I have focused on the Old Testament a similar set of issues also pertain to the New Testament. For example, Gospel studies is now so much more aware of the development trajectory that gives rise to four different versions of the same traditions. What we have in our Bibles are (re)created versions of texts taken at various stages in their development.

There are two conclusions worth noting here. First, as Harding notes, relegating reception history to the study of a finalised text is arbitrary when, “[t]ext and reception are inseparable”.²⁰ As Breed notes “the phrase ‘the original text’ actually means ‘the text I have chosen to study for various contingent reasons.’”²¹ John Lyons’ argument that historical-critical methodologies need to relabel with the terminology of reception history is audacious but it rests on a valid premise.²² When it comes to the foundations of the biblical text, it is reception history all the way down.²³ This is not a statement in support of some kind of hegemony of reception history over historical-critical hermeneutics. It is simply an admission of the nature of the text. Second, given the fluidity of the text, the endeavour of producing the most accurate original text is relativized. What we are left with is developing traditions which means drawing a boundary line as to when those texts became “the original” is a matter of reception. These are not particularly new issues, they have been simmering for some decades but reception history is highlighting them. Ironically, it is frequently the findings from historical criticism that reception history is using as the means to prise open the cracks in historical criticism’s founding assumptions.

There have been attempts to create some debate around these issues but they are not common conversations.²⁴ Most scholars are teachers, so continuing to push these issues to the background is not going to help our students or the discipline. For one, our students are increasingly postmodern in their presuppositions so they don’t see the problems those of us with modernist assumptions do. Secondly, they will increasingly encounter scholarly work that assumes a more fluid text and need to have some

¹⁸ James E. Harding, *The Love of David and Jonathan* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2013), 136. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁹ See for example, Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (3rd ed.: Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 161–169.

²⁰ Harding, “What is Reception History and What Happens to You if You Do It?” in *Reception History and Biblical Studies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 38.

²¹ Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 13.

²² Lyons, “Hope for a Troubled Discipline?” 210.

²³ Brennan Breed, “What Can a Text Do? Reception History as an Ethology of the Biblical Text,” in *Reception History and Biblical Studies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 97.

²⁴ Lyons, “Hope for a Troubled Discipline?” is aimed at provoking debate which he argues needs to happen. He was prompted by the lack of response to G. Aichele, P. Miscall and R. Walsh, “An Elephant in the Room: Historical-Critical and Postmodern Interpretations of the Bible” *JBL* 128 (2009): 383–404.

ideas about how to negotiate their reading. As someone who teaches hermeneutics I find myself reflecting on the shape of my teaching programme.

FINDING MEANING

The related question to that about the text is the question about meaning. Reception history changes the dynamic in the interpretive process. The historical-critical method largely separated interpretation from the traditions of the past. It aimed to jump over all previous interpretation and go back to the text in its ancient context. What did the original author mean, or what did the text mean to its earliest readers? There were always exceptions but if previous interpretations were noted it was usually to support the modern interpreter's understanding. Further, the focus is on one meaning. If options present themselves scholars grapple with those options in order to choose the best alternative.²⁵ While multivalence may be recognised, it is usually accommodated into the wider themes of the text.

The focus of reception history is not one meaning but the many receptions. As Breed states, it is about tracing the "history of a text's unfolding capacities."²⁶ It confronts us with the history of interpretation in all its variety, but particularly as it is presented in the tradition of the Church and Synagogue. That which historical criticism jumped over, reception history requires us to reconsider. One of the key things it highlights is Gadamer's argument that all interpretation is bound to the interpreter's context. Whether a scholar is aiming to get as close to the meaning of the original context or not, every interpretation is influenced by the interpreter's own context. What we might want to pass judgement on as "misinterpretations" can become explicable in context.

Reception history opens us up to the richness of the text and its capacity to speak to myriad contexts. In a brief study of Daniel 7, Breed first notes how the vision of the four beast/kingdoms is itself a "redeployment of earlier symbolic patterns."²⁷ He then notes that even when interpreters are agreed on the identification of the kingdoms, the implications of that identification vary.²⁸ There is a long history of interpreting the fourth kingdom as Rome. Both Jews and Christians experienced Rome as the oppressor and saw the link to the fourth beast. For communities after the demise of the Roman Empire, from medieval Jews to twentieth century Korean Christians the fourth beast has symbolised their oppressors. Yet the same text has also been seen as a justification for the fifth kingdom. Read in conjunction with the emphasis on converting the monarch in Daniel 1-6, the fifth kingdom has been understood as a transformation of the fourth, rather than its destruction. Constantine's recognition of Christianity set in motion a wave of interpretations which saw the Roman Empire, or its putative

²⁵ Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 164, notes that the inability to decide between variant readings does not mean one is not original, an evaluation must be made. The problem is the evaluation is made in terms of the critic's conception of the nature and context of the original which is rarely acknowledged.

²⁶ Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 142.

²⁷ Breed, "What Can a Text Do?", 106.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 106–109.

successors, as a transformed fourth kingdom. Agreed identification of the fourth beast is understood in opposite ways according to context.

This reinforces the idea that texts do not have one meaning, historically context has heavily influenced how the text is understood. Even if we aim for some original meaning, the context of the later interpreter in dialectic with the meaning observed in the text produces meaning that is shaped to the interpreter's context. This is evident in the way that Daniel 7 is appropriated by 4 Ezra, Revelation and subsequent Jewish and Christian tradition. This is not an argument against attempting to understand the text as clearly as we can in the best context we can set it in, but is a reminder that all interpretations are contextual and contingent. Reception history presents us with other interpretations of a text which are valuable and which relativize our claims about the meaning of the text.

Reception history demonstrates that a text in different contexts is interpreted differently. This again is nothing new, neither is it something that the historical-critical method ensures against. As with the discussion of the nature of the text above, historical criticism provides tools that reception history is using to challenge the base assumption of one meaning to a text.

In another study, Breed again provides a helpful example. He discusses Job 19:25–27, a passage notable for its various interpretative options.²⁹ At the base level it is very difficult to set the book of Job in a historical context. It might, in its present form, reflect either an exilic or Hellenistic context. It seems to be based in a folk tale and likely developed over time. If anything, Job is multi-contextual rather than the product of one context. Breed sets his interpretive approach within a Persian era Israelite context. The chapter 19 speech by Job in response to accusations by Bildad is also difficult to set in a literary context. It can be read in the context of the second cycle of speeches and with some intertexts as drawing on the trope of death, like a number of laments. In the last verses of the speech Job presents himself as wrongly in Sheol with a potential way out. In this case Job and his friends are debating who enters Sheol and why. Yet the text could also be read, in keeping with other texts in Job, in a forensic way, as Job's legal defence. In this case Job imagines a court scene. In 19:24 Job writes his legal testimony before declaring his kinsman-redeemer will rise up to vindicate him in 19:25. These interpretive options are the result of historical-critical analysis of the passage.

Whereas historical criticism chooses an option, reception history lets alternative readings stand side by side. It is open to the semantic potentialities of the text. What is biblical scholarship about and what should we be teaching and modelling to students? Do we say the text only has one meaning, in a similar way to Jülicher's insistence that parables only had one primary point of comparison, or do we say the text is contingent and capable of being multi-vocal?

²⁹ Breed, *Nomadic Text*, 143–148.

CONCLUSION

Two underpinning assumptions of the historical-critical method, that of an original text and that of an original meaning in the text, have been background questions in biblical studies for several decades. Reception history adds weight to those questions by repeatedly highlighting the fluidity of the biblical text and the contingent nature of all interpretations. What is more, reception history is actively appropriating historical criticism to present its case. Biblical studies as a discipline cannot continue to overlook the widening cracks in the foundations of the historical-critical method. The answer is not a rejection of either method, nor the drawing of artificial borders between them, nor the hegemony of one over the other, but the acknowledgement that they are complementary and that reception history offers a means to deal with the fault lines in the foundations of historical criticism.

As someone who was educated in a modernist setting and who has looked to the historical-critical method to make sense of the biblical text, the trends in biblical studies can cause some disquiet. Yet the evidence from reception history is compelling, not least because it draws so strongly on existing historical criticism and reinforces problems already acknowledged by that method. The world of biblical studies is changing, the strains in the fault lines have been growing for some time and the discipline as a whole needs to acknowledge that more fully. The received nature of the text we study needs to be acknowledged and choices justified rather than making vague claims about originality. Issues of meaning need to be more widely acknowledged as contextual and the possibilities that individual texts may speak more than one message in any context more readily accepted. The discipline needs the clarity and future scholars in the discipline need to start out with a better understanding of the nature of the biblical text and its interpretation.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM, THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS, AND ADONIRAM JUDSON'S BURMESE NEW TESTAMENTS

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Tim Meadowcroft was one of my doctoral supervisors, forming a great team with Allan Bell. For the entire duration of my doctoral candidacy I was living in Yangon, Myanmar, visiting New Zealand once a year for supervision meetings. In one of these early meetings, Tim said to me, “I finally understand you! You just love beaver away at this technical work.” With a nod in that direction it is a privilege to offer this article in honour of Tim on his retirement. It is serendipitous that this collection of articles for Tim is in a Baptist publication, for mine concerns that most celebrated of Baptists, Adoniram Judson, the pioneering missionary to Myanmar (Burma). Judson’s translation of the entire Bible into Burmese, completed in 1840, remains the most widely used version in modern day Myanmar, a veritable “textus receptus.” This article will look at Judson’s translation of the NT into Burmese and consider its relationship with *the* Textus Receptus.

When Adoniram Judson had finished his translation of the entire Bible into Burmese, a project which had taken from 1816 to 1840, he sent some copies to the USA with a covering letter that included these words:

In my first attempts at translating portions of the New Testament, above twenty years ago, I followed Griesbach, as all the world then did; and though, from year to year, I have found reason to distrust his authority, still not wishing to be ever changing, I deviated but little from his text, in subsequent editions, until the last; in preparing which I have followed the text of Knapp, (though not implicitly,) as upon the whole the safest and best extant; in consequence of which, the present Burmese version of the New Testament accords more nearly with the received English.¹

In his analysis of the Judson Bible, James W. Khong independently concluded that Judson’s NT variant choices “go together with (the) KJV.”² My previous research on the Judson Bible focused on his OT translation and textual criticism, demonstrating that Judson exploited the best international scholarship of his time to produce a sophisticated version of the OT in Burmese. His reading of Ps 92.10b, “you (God) have poured over me fresh oil” (NRSV), for example, only entered English versions with the RSV

¹ Adoniram Judson. “Letter, Dec. 28, 1840,” *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* 21, no. 6 (1841): 186.

² James W. Khong, “Presenting the Gospel Message to the Modern Burmans: Through Scriptural Translations” (MA Miss. Dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary School of World Mission, 1992), 87. Khong’s thesis is a valuable analysis of three Burmese Bible translations by a native Myanmar speaker with reference to modern translation theory.

in 1952.³ Yet, by his own testimony, Judson moved away from the best available scholarship for his final NT translation. This article will pursue three questions in relation to the issues raised above:

1. What are the differences between the final and earlier editions of Judson's Burmese NT?
2. How do Judson's earlier and final NT editions compare with modern English versions as opposed to the KJV ("the received English" in the letter above)?
3. Finally, and most difficult to answer, why was Judson suspicious of Griesbach's critical editions of the Greek NT?

To answer these questions, I have compared Judson's 1832 NT edition with his final 1840 NT edition.⁴ The 1840 NT translation is still the most commonly used Burmese version to this day, although spelling was standardised in subsequent editions. For this research I have used an 1866 publication.⁵ Griesbach's critical Greek NT is available on BibleWorks 10.⁶ Unfortunately I have not had access to "Knapp's text" in order to see to what extent the changes in the 1840 edition, from the 1832 edition, were based on Knapp, but this does not hinder my analysis.

METHODOLOGY

To get a comprehensive answer to the differences between the 1832 and 1840 Burmese NT editions would require line by line analysis of both texts. But this demands too much effort and time, certainly more than my present questions require. Instead, I have made use of the NRSV's text critical notes, which are more generous than most modern English versions. I have gone through the NRSV NT and compared the variant readings it highlights with the KJV, the Judson 1832 and 1840 editions, all the time keeping an eye on Griesbach's critical Greek NT. This methodology cannot claim to give a comprehensive analysis of the two Judson NT editions and there are almost certainly other differences between the two versions, based on text critical decisions, beyond those I have identified. Nevertheless, my methodology is sufficient to answer the questions, and has also shed light upon why Judson was suspicious of Griesbach's critical NT texts.

Any hope I might have had that the earlier version of Judson's NT might resemble our modern versions was quickly dashed. The 1832 edition is more similar to the KJV than to modern NT versions. This is because Griesbach's critical Greek NT was still largely similar to the Textus Receptus. The breakthroughs in NT textual criticism that produced our modern NT versions were to come in the late 19th century, and Griesbach was yet a child of the late 18th century. Nevertheless, he was a seminal figure and those later breakthroughs built upon his thorough ground-breaking work.

³ See John Hans de Jong, "A 19th Century New England Exegete Abroad: Adoniram Judson and the Burmese Bible" *HTR* (forthcoming, 2019).

⁴ *The New Testament, in Burmese*. (Maulmein, 1832).

https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=UylKAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

⁵ *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; Translated into the Burmese from the Original Greek*. (Rangoon: American Baptist Mission Press, 1866.) <https://books.google.com.mm/books?id=y2lpAAAACAAJ>

⁶ Johann Jakob Griesbach. *Novum Testamentum Graece: Manual Edition*. 1805. On BibleWorks – Version 10.0.8.498.

THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS AND GRIESBACH'S GREEK NT

In 1516, Desiderus Erasmus of Rotterdam published the first edition of his Greek NT.⁷ After the invention of the printing press, Erasmus' Greek NT was not the first to be printed, an honour which went to the Complutensian Polyglot (1514).⁸ The Complutensian Polyglot was a better critical Greek NT than that of Erasmus but it was Erasmus' text that became the standard Greek NT for Reformation and Protestant scholarship, the "Textus Receptus." Bruce Metzger paints Erasmus' NT in the worst possible terms. It was hurriedly put together, was based upon inferior Greek texts, and constitutes a "debased form of the Greek Testament."⁹ While not disputing the substandard character of Erasmus' NT, Robert Hull gives some mitigating factors,

Had he (Erasmus) been given more time and expended more effort to gather manuscripts, he could have produced a better text (by today's standards) than what he did produce – but only marginally so, for the science of textual criticism was not far enough advanced to prepare him to make the judgments needed, even if he had been able to acquire many more ancient manuscripts."¹⁰

Erasmus' NT was reproduced in influential editions in the sixteenth century by Robert Estienne, known as Stephanus (1546, 1549, 1550, 1551), and Théodore de Bèze (Beza), Calvin's successor at Geneva, who reproduced Erasmus' NT in ten editions from 1565-1611 (one posthumous). Both of these scholars engaged in textual analysis, but they only made annotations to Erasmus' text rather than producing their own, in this way bolstering the authority of Erasmus' NT.¹¹ Its authoritative status as the "received text", Textus Receptus, came from the preface to the second edition published by the Elzevir brothers in Leiden (1633), claiming that "[the reader has] the text which is now received by all, in which we give nothing changed or corrupted."¹² This marketing strategy has had far reaching effects, with the status of Erasmus' NT as the Textus Receptus evoking powerful religious convictions, even to the present era.¹³

⁷ The following account draws heavily on Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): Chapter 3, "The Pre-critical Period: The Origin and Dominance of the Textus Receptus", 137–164; and Chapter 4, "The Modern Period: From Griesbach to the Present," 165–194. I will, however, refer to Metzger in the body of the essay as these historical sections have been largely reproduced from Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968.)

⁸ The Complutensian Polyglot was not published, however, until 1522, after it received the papal imprimatur in 1520, "by which time it had been 'scooped' by the edition of Erasmus." Robert F. Hull, Jr. *The Story of the New Testament Text: Movers, Materials, Motives, Methods, and Models* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 36.

⁹ Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 149.

¹⁰ Hull, *New Testament Text*, 37–38.

¹¹ Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 149–152.

¹² *Ibid.*, 152.

¹³ See, e.g., the YouTube video entitled, "The NIV is a fake Bible" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dS-tlgZ0PvI> accessed 11/09/18. Similarly <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lr-onxCHaLE> "NIV (do you use the New International Version NIV?)" accessed 11/09/18. These video presentations condemn the NIV because it departs from the Textus Receptus.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, scholars made great progress in collecting variant readings from the NT manuscripts, but these efforts were routinely condemned as attacks on the sacred text. John Mill's collection of 30,000 variant readings, for example, was attacked by Daniel Whitby as undermining the authority of scripture and "tantamount to tampering with the text."¹⁴ A new stage in NT textual criticism began with Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687–1752), who established that the reliability of manuscripts lies not in how many there are, but in the quality of the manuscript. He assessed the reliability of NT manuscripts by distinguishing two groups of texts: Asiatic, from Constantinople and its environs, and African – divided into two, represented by codex Alexandrinus and the Old Latin. Bengel also formulated the idea that the difficult reading is preferred to the easy reading. For his pioneering work he was attacked as an enemy of the faith.¹⁵ Johann Salomo Semler (1725–91) further refined Bengel's methodology, classifying NT manuscripts into three major groups.¹⁶

Johann Griesbach (1745–1812) built upon this work, and Metzger credits him with having "laid foundations for all subsequent work on the Greek text of the New Testament."¹⁷ Griesbach further refined both the groups of texts – Alexandrian, Western, and Byzantine – and text-critical theory with his fifteen canons of textual criticism.¹⁸ In addition to Griesbach's contribution to the development of NT textual criticism, he was the first to change the text itself, rather than making annotations to the Textus Receptus, as previous textual critics had done.¹⁹ His Greek NT editions were published at Halle 1775–77, Halle and London 1796–1806; Leipzig 1803–07, and editions were also published in England, Scotland and America.²⁰

The first Greek NT to be printed in the USA was the Textus Receptus, in Massachusetts in 1800.²¹ Griesbach's critical Greek NT, however, was not far behind, being introduced to a burgeoning American biblical scholarship by the forerunner of the New England biblical studies movement, Joseph Stevens Buckminster. Amongst a library of 3000 volumes that he brought back from Europe were Griesbach's works on New Testament textual criticism. Buckminster had Griesbach's 1794 "manual" edition of the Greek NT printed in New England, under the auspices of Harvard University, in 1809.²² Such was their commitment to rigorous scholarship that Griesbach's text was accepted above the Textus Receptus by the New England scholars, who formed the heart of the nineteenth century American biblical studies movement. It was Griesbach's NT text that Adoniram Judson pored over for many years as he translated

¹⁴ Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 152–158. Quotation, 155. Consider also the title of Leonard Twell's response to Daniel Mace's NT which had extensive text-critical annotations: *A Critical Examination of the last New Testament and Version of the New Testament: wherein the Editor's Corrupt Text, False Version, and fallacious Notes are Detected and Censur'd* (London, 1731–32). Cited in Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 158.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 158–160.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 161–162.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 165–167. See further, Hull, *New Testament Text*, 72–75.

¹⁹ Hull, *New Testament Text*, 74.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 167.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 164.

²² Jerry Wayne Brown, *The Rise of Biblical Criticism in America, 1800–1870: The New England Scholars* (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1969), 23–24. The "manual" edition was Griesbach's Greek NT with abridged text-critical notes.

the NT into Burmese. But, as his letter reveals, Judson harboured suspicions over Griesbach's text and eventually abandoned it in favour of George Christian Knapp's critical Greek NT.

COMPARING JUDSON'S 1832, 1840 AND MODERN NEW TESTAMENTS

Analysis of Judson's 1832 and 1840 editions is presented in four categories. It must be noted, however, that compared with the 36 instances discussed below, I observed a further 227 times in which both the 1832 and 1840 editions agree with the KJV, over and against the NRSV. This shows how similar Griesbach's NT is to the Textus Receptus.

1. Variants Followed in the 1832 Edition But Not the 1840 Edition, Based on Griesbach's Text, Adopted in Most Modern New Testaments

This first section identifies passages in the 1832 edition where Judson followed Griesbach over and against the Textus Receptus, decisions which have stood the test of time and are followed by most modern versions. Judson then rejected these variant readings and followed the readings found in the Textus Receptus for his final 1840 edition.

Matthew 6:13 "For the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours forever. Amen." Like the NRSV and most modern English versions, the concluding doxology to the Lord's Prayer is omitted from the 1832 edition, but reappears in the 1840 edition.

Matthew 6:18 "...your Father who sees you in secret will reward you (openly)." Most modern NTs omit "openly", as does the 1832 edition, but it reappears in the 1840 edition.

Matthew 20:22 "But Jesus answered and said, 'Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' They say unto him, 'We are able'" (KJV). The underlined section is omitted from most modern versions, and from the 1832 edition, but included in the 1840 edition.

Matthew 24:13 "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (KJV). The underlined section is omitted from most modern versions and the 1832 edition, but included in the 1840 edition.

Mark 9:38 "And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us" (KJV)." The underlined phrase, "who does not follow us" is omitted from most modern versions and the 1832 edition, but included in the 1840 edition.

Luke 9:56 "For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village" (Lk. 9:56 KJV). Most modern versions and the 1832 edition omit the underlined sentence, but it reappears in the 1840 edition.

Luke 11:2 "And he said unto them, 'When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth'" (KJV). "Our" is omitted

from most modern versions, and from the 1832 edition, as is the clause, “Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.” Both return in the 1840 edition.

Luke 11:4 “And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil (KJV).” The underlined clause is omitted from most modern versions and the 1832 edition, but included in the 1840 edition.

Luke 17:36 “There will be two women grinding meal together; one will be taken and the other left” (NRSV). This entire verse is omitted in most modern versions and the 1832 edition, but included in the 1840 edition.

Acts 8:37 “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (KJV). This verse is omitted from most modern versions and from the 1832 edition, but included in the 1840 edition.

Acts 15:18 “Known to God from eternity are all His works” (NKJV). The underlined words are omitted from most modern versions and the 1832 edition, but included in the 1840 edition. The omitted words constitute what is judged an addition (underlined): *gnōsta ap aiōnos estin tō theō panta ta erga autou*. Thus, NRSV, “Known from long ago.”

Colossians 1:14 “In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins” (KJV). “Through his blood” is omitted in most modern versions and the 1832 edition, but reappears in the 1840 edition.

Hebrews 2:7 “Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands” (KJV). The underlined clause is omitted in most modern versions and the 1832 edition, but reappears in the 1840 edition.

These thirteen instances show Judson’s 1832 Burmese NT, like many parts of his OT translation, utilized the cutting edge of biblical scholarship, enabling him to make text-critical decisions which are accepted today. Unlike his OT translation, Judson subsequently rejected these decisions and reverted to the traditional readings of the Textus Receptus for his final edition of the Burmese NT.

2. Places Where Both the 1832 and 1840 Editions Agree, Against the Textus Receptus

This second section analyses eleven places where Judson’s 1832 and 1840 editions of the NT both disagree with the Textus Receptus and follow textual variants which have been accepted by most modern NT versions. Without access to Knapp’s text it is not possible to see whether Knapp also followed these variants, although it seems likely that he would have, or at least could have, as his was also a critical Greek NT, although inferior to Griesbach’s.²³ There may also have been places where Judson has continued to follow Griesbach against Knapp.

²³ See the contemporary comparative review, Gray and Bowen, “The New Testament in the Common Version, Conformed to Griesbach’s Standard Greek Text,” *The North American Review* 31 (1830): 267–275.

Matthew 16:20 “Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ” (KJV). Most modern versions omit “Jesus” from this verse, as does both the 1832 and the 1840 editions.

Matthew 27:35 “And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots” (KJV). The underlined section, not included in most modern versions, is omitted from both the 1832 and 1840 editions.

Matthew 28:20; Mark 16:20; Luke 24:53 The concluding “Amen” to the gospel is omitted from both the 1832 and 1840 editions, as it is in most modern versions.

John 3:25 “Then there arose a question between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying” (KJV). Most modern versions and both the 1832 and 1840 editions have “a Jew.”

Acts 17:27 “That they should seek the Lord...” (KJV). Most modern versions have “God” instead of “The Lord”, as do both the 1832 and the 1840 editions.

1 Thessalonians 2:15 “Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:” (KJV). Most modern versions have “the prophets”, as also in both the 1832 and 1840 editions.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming” (KJV). Most modern versions and both the 1832 and 1840 editions have “the Lord Jesus.”

1 Timothy 2:7 “Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity” (KJV). “In Christ” is omitted in most modern versions and both the 1832 and 1840 editions.

1 John 5:21 The final “Amen” is omitted in most modern versions and both the 1832 and 1840 editions.

This section shows that Judson did not reject the discipline of textual criticism for the NT, nor did he have an unconditional commitment to the Textus Receptus.

3. Variants which are different from both the Textus Receptus and modern versions, based on Griesbach

The third section of analysis shows two cases where the 1832 edition followed Griesbach’s text critical decisions, which have not stood the test of time.

John 6:69 The 1832 edition, following Griesbach, has “The Christ, the Son of God”, omitting the “living” from the KJV and the 1840 edition, “The Christ, the Son of the living God.” Both are quite different from most modern versions, “The Holy One of God” (NRSV). This modern reading was followed by the New England scholar George Noyes, a contemporary of Judson, who translated Tischendorf’s Greek NT in 1869.²⁴

²⁴ See BibleWorks—Version 10.0.8.498. For Lobegott Friedrich Constantin von Tischendorf (1815–1874), see Hull, *Story of the New Testament Text*, 78–79.

Romans 16:25-27 In the 1832 edition, the conclusion to Romans, 16:25–27, is transposed to immediately after Rom 14:23, becoming Rom 14.24-27. The 1840 edition repositioned it back to 16:25–27. History has proven that in this case Judson made the right decision in following the Textus Receptus in the final 1840 edition.

4. Places Where the 1832 Edition Follows the Textus Receptus Against Griesbach

The following ten cases show Judson rejecting Griesbach's decisions and following the Textus Receptus in the 1832 edition, decisions which were retained in the 1840 edition.

Romans 15:29 “And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ” (KJV). The underlined phrase is different than most modern versions which omit “of the gospel”, e.g., “and I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ” (NRSV). Griesbach also omits this phrase (*tou euangelion*.) Judson, however, included it in both the 1832 and 1840 editions.

Galatians 4:6 “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (KJV). In most modern versions and Griesbach, the underlined “your” is “our.” In both the 1832 and 1840 NTs Judson follows the Textus Receptus.

Ephesians 4:9 “Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?” (KJV). Although “first” is omitted in most modern versions and Griesbach, Judson includes it in both the 1832 and 1840 NTs.

Ephesians 6:24; 1 Timothy 6:21; Titus 3:15; Philemon 25 Judson includes the final “Amen” in both editions of his NT, although most modern versions and Griesbach omit it.

Colossians 2:2 “That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;” (KJV). In place of the underlined text, the NRSV has, “God's mystery, that is, Christ himself” (*tou mystēriou tou theou, Christon*), which (in Greek) is close to Griesbach: “God's mystery” (*tou mystēriou tou theou*). Judson, however, follows the Textus Receptus in both the 1832 and 1840 editions.

1 Timothy 3:16 “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (KJV). Most modern versions and Griesbach read “he” or “who” instead of “God”, e.g., “He (Greek *hos* “who”) was revealed in the flesh” (NRSV).²⁵ Judson follows the Textus Receptus in both the 1832 and 1840 editions.

1 John 5:7-8 “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. ⁸ And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one” (KJV). The underlined section is omitted in most modern versions and Griesbach, but included in both the 1832 and 1840 editions. This variant, the so-called

²⁵ See *Ibid.*, 63, for how (*hos*) became (*theos* “God”).

Comma Johanneum, is so weakly attested that even Erasmus omitted it at first, not inserting until the third edition of his Greek NT in 1522.²⁶

This fourth section gives insight into why Judson was suspicious of Griesbach. Judson was, on the one hand, a meticulous scholar, but on the other he was an orthodox Calvinistic evangelist and church planter. He may have been uncomfortable removing “of the gospel” in Rom 15:29, but more tellingly Col 2:2, 1 Tim 3:16 and 1 John 5:7–8 all have christological and Trinitarian elements that Judson has retained. It must also be remembered that in Judson’s base, New England, orthodox Calvinists were locked into an intractable battle with the Unitarian movement.²⁷ It is evident that Judson was unwilling to follow Griesbach in these cases on theological grounds.

CONCLUSION: WHY JUDSON WAS SUSPICIOUS OF GRIESBACH

If Judson was suspicious of Griesbach’s critical NT text, why did he use his text for so many years before abandoning it? The answer is clear. Griesbach’s critical NT text was considered the gold standard within the New England biblical studies movement, the movement which produced Judson.²⁸ As the committed biblical scholar that Judson was, there was probably never any question about whether he would use Griesbach’s Greek NT as the basis of his translation. Yet he was suspicious of Griesbach’s text, and eventually abandoned it in favour of George Christian Knapp’s Greek NT. What led to this decision?

Judging from a review article in *The North American Review*, a Boston publication, Griesbach’s reputation had not diminished in New England by 1830.²⁹ Gray and Bowen (first names unknown) compared Griesbach’s Greek NT with Knapp’s. They were unequivocal that Griesbach’s NT was a ground-breaking new recension whereas Knapp’s was a much inferior work. Of Knapp’s NT, Gray and Bowen wrote,

The language of the preface throughout leads the reader to anticipate a sort of halting compromise between critical accuracy, which had made some of its claims heard, and a lingering popular attachment to some vitiated passages, which have now, with a remarkable unanimity of sects, been condemned, as not entitled to a place in scripture.³⁰

This resonates with the changes that Judson made in his final 1840 edition of the NT. The analysis of Judson’s 1832 and 1840 editions above shows that significant textual decisions in the 1832 edition, which have carried the day in modern versions, were rejected in the 1840 edition, where he turned back to the Textus Receptus. It seems that the power of the Textus Receptus had a hold on Judson. This becomes

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 37; Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 146–148.

²⁷ See Brown, *The Rise of Biblical Criticism*, especially 10–26; 125–139.

²⁸ About this movement see Brown, *The Rise of Biblical Criticism*; John H. Giltner, *Moses Stuart: The Father of Biblical Science in America* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 1988); Jay G. Williams, *The Times and Life of Edward Robinson: Connecticut Yankee in King Solomon’s Court* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 1999). For Judson as a product of this movement, see John Hans de Jong, “New England Exegete Abroad.”

²⁹ Gray and Bowen, “Griesbach’s Standard Greek Text”, 267–275.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 271.

evident in the fourth section of the textual analysis where even in the 1832 edition Judson did not follow Griesbach, particularly 1 Tim 3:16 and 1 John 5:7–8. These passages explicitly confirm Christ's divinity and the doctrine of the Trinity, respectively. Although Judson was, apparently grudgingly, committed to following Griesbach's text, he would not follow him there. Here two different sides of Judson appear. On the one hand he was an accomplished and meticulous scholar, but on the other he was a committed believer and a church planting evangelist. It seems these two sides were in some tension when it came to translating the NT. In the final analysis, tension between scholarship and faith played a role in Judson's translation of the NT into Burmese.

THE BLOOD MANIPULATION OF THE SIN OFFERING AND THE LOGIC OF DEFILEMENT

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In a meeting this year of “Old Testament geeks,” as Tim Meadowcroft called us, we had an animated discussion about the significance of sacrifice driven by some of the questions I raised. Towards the end, Tim turned to me and said, “I’m not sure that we have answered your questions.” While the questions do not always get answered and new ones keep coming, I am grateful for the opportunity for such conversations and offer up my reflections on the sin offering in honour of Tim.

The *hatta’th*, usually translated “sin offering,” is a key expiatory sacrifice marked out by its unique blood manipulation that forms a central part of the ritual on the Day of Atonement.¹ Understanding the significance of the prescribed actions in the *hatta’th*, however, is fraught with difficulty. First, as with most descriptions of rituals, there is very little explanation as to the meaning, so that there is a certain amount of gap-filling involved in the process of interpretation. Since the mid-twentieth century increasing methodological doubts have been raised in anthropology regarding the interpretation of rituals, though biblical scholarship has only recently started to take on board these considerations. Essentially, given the multiplicity of interpretations around rituals in general and the paucity of explanation in the biblical material in particular, the former scholarly confidence of finding a univalent meaning in ritual action was called into question. The focus shifted from a symbolic system (what does it all mean?), interpreted either from a participant or an outsider’s perspective, to a functional view (what does it do/achieve?).²

Secondly, the *hatta’th* is brought to address two distinct “problem areas,” namely, unintentional sins (e.g., Lev 4:2, 13–14, 22, 27) and some ritual impurities (e.g., Lev 12:6; 14:19; 15:30). In the first case, the offerer is forgiven (e.g., Lev 4:20), in the second he or she is pronounced clean (e.g. Lev 12:8). Thus, both the issue and the resolution are markedly different in the two cases, yet the sacrifice offered is the same. The question that springs to mind is what the exact connection is between these two seemingly disparate concerns that are united under the same remedy, as it were.

This article then will address two issues. Taking into consideration the methodological strictures around interpreting rituals symbolically, I nevertheless wish to reflect on the actions performed in the blood manipulation of the *hatta’th* sacrifice, specifically the daubing of blood on the horns of the altar

¹ Other sacrifices with expiatory functions (Lev 1:4; 5:16b) are the burnt offering (*’ola*) and the guilt offering (*’asham*). The former, however, does not specify any particular sins and the latter has a narrower application for very specific sins (mainly sacrilege). It is also not performed on the Day of Atonement. I also note that throughout this article I use transliterated Hebrew in line with SBL’s General-Purpose Transliteration rules.

² For some of the recent methodological issues, see W.K. Gilders, *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible: Meaning and Power* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 1–11 and Y. Feder, *Blood Expiation in Hittite and Biblical Ritual: Origins, Context and Meaning* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2011), 147–65.

and sprinkling. Secondly, I shall consider the connection between ritual impurity and sin in order to understand why the same sacrifice deals with both issues.

TWO INFLUENTIAL INTERPRETATIONS

The Substitutionary Model

While a detailed history of interpretation regarding the *hatta'th* sacrifice is outside the scope of this article, I wish to take two representative examples to set up some of the background and issues at stake. Traditional Christian interpretation has generally followed a substitutionary perspective on sacrifices focussing on the resolution to sin and primarily concerned with the effect of the ritual on the worshipper. In this view, the sins of the person were placed on the sacrificial animal via hand-leaning and its death was accepted in place of the person's (based on the view that sin leads to death cf. Rom 6:23).³ The actual details of the blood manipulation were left unexplained.

Despite its prevalence, this view suffers from a number of shortcomings. First, it does not address ritual impurities (which also require the *hatta'th* sacrifice), or tacitly assumes that they fall under the category of sin, which is not the case. Secondly, the idea that there is a transfer of sin via the hand-leaning in the *hatta'th* is questionable. It is based on the ceremony at the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:21) when the high priest places both hands on the head of the scapegoat and confesses Israel's sins over it. However, as Milgrom points out, the hand leaning in the regular *hatta'th* involves only one hand not two, and there is no mention of confession or the transference of sins. Moreover, it is also performed in sacrifices that have no expiatory function (*shelamim*—Lev 3:2).⁴ Thirdly, the transfer of sins is problematic because these would defile the animal, whereas we are told that its flesh is holy (Lev 6:22).⁵ Further, ritual impurities and inadvertent sins (for which *hatta'th* is offered) do not require the death penalty.⁶ Thus the punishment (the substitutionary death of the sacrificial animal) would be disproportionate to the crime.

Although many modern commentators maintain that the *hatta'th* purifies persons, how this is achieved if not via substitution is often sidestepped. One theory that does address the question is Gane's view that the blood of the *hatta'th* carries the sin or impurity of people to the altar, which is removed on the Day of Atonement.⁷ His meticulous analysis and insightful reflections have much to commend them, though the idea that *hatta'th* blood carries impurities and sins into the sacred sphere seems counter-

³ E.g., C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, vol.1 of *Commentary on the Old Testament* (trans. James Martin; 1866; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 305–7.

⁴ J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, AB3 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 150–53.

⁵ A. Dillmann, *Die Bücher Exodus und Leviticus* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1897), 459.

⁶ J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, AB3A (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1475. Also e.g., W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament I*, trans. J.A. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 165, n.2.

⁷ R.E. Gane, *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 176–81.

intuitive. It runs into the same difficulty as the substitutionary model in that the blood would be contaminated as it reaches the altar.

Milgrom's Theory of Defilement

Perhaps the most influential alternative theory in the twentieth century has been Milgrom's construal, which proposed that the *hatta'th* purifies sancta, not people.⁸ Sancta acts as a magnet to impurity attaching itself aerially to the temple to be cleansed regularly, as well as thoroughly once a year on the Day of Atonement. Impurity in the holy precincts is the primary problem because its undue accumulation may lead to the deity leaving his earthly abode. Thus, according to Milgrom, once sancta is cleansed from the effects of the worshipper's offence, the person can be restored in relationship to God, declared clean or forgiven. The idea, he contends, is supported first by the observation that the *hatta't* blood is never applied to people, only to sancta, thus what is being affected must be sancta. Secondly, at the ordination of priests when the altar and the tabernacle are also consecrated, the daubing of the *hatta'th* blood on the altar is followed by the statement that Moses cleansed the altar (*vayyehatte' 'eth-hammizbeah*—Lev 8:15). Milgrom further notes the parallels with ANE practices where impurity is feared as demonic. While Israel did away with demonic connotations, Milgrom argues that impurity's dynamic power to defile sancta has been retained.

There is much to admire in Milgrom's simple scheme and in his meticulous handling of the material. By fusing the source of the problem (pollution of sancta), he is able to unite the solution and explain how the same blood manipulation resolves such seemingly diverse issues as ritual impurity and inadvertent sin. For lack of space, it is impossible to give a detailed critique of Milgrom's view here, nevertheless, I wish to make two basic points. First, his argument fundamentally depends on the fact that both ritual impurity and sin defile from a distance (which he bases on Lev 15:31; Num 19:13; Lev 20:3).⁹ Admittedly, grave sins can defile without the person's physical proximity as seen in Lev 20:3 (Molech worship pollutes the sanctuary no matter where it is performed). However, where the effects of ritual impurity are described explicitly, they always spread by contact (e.g. Lev 15:4–11; Num 19:16) or close proximity (e.g. Lev 14:46–47; Num 19:14–15). The first two references on which Milgrom bases the idea of ritual defilement by distance involves gap-filling in a way that runs counter to how ritual impurity normally behaves. The actual verses do not describe the effect of the original ritual impurity; rather, they point to the result caused by delaying purification or a refusal to do so.

There are, however, some alternative ways of understanding the issue, which are congruent with ritual impurity's general behaviour of spreading by contact or proximity. One is the rabbinical view that

⁸ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 253–261. Milgrom's theory has been followed by others. E.g., J.E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, WBC4 (Dallas: Word, 1992), 57, 70. G.J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 93–96. Throughout this article I use "sancta" as the technical category for sacred objects including the sanctuary.

⁹ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 257, 310–11, 946.

the person goes to the sanctuary or eats sacred food in an impure state (*t. Shevu.* 1:8; *Sifra*, Hovah 13:10).¹⁰ Similarly, Maccoby does not think that delaying purification is sin unless the person comes to the temple in such a state. He understands neglecting purification to include an ellipsis: “if the person enters the sanctuary.”¹¹ Another approach, I would argue, is that it is not ritual impurity *per se* that causes defilement either by contact or from afar, but the defiant, rebellious attitude of the person who refuses to undergo or grossly neglects purification despite the express command of YHWH.¹² Both of these interpretations are in line with how impurities behave in general.

Secondly, Milgrom’s theory relies on etymology to support his argument that *kipper* (usually translated as “to atone/expiate”) primarily means “to purge” (from the Akkadian cognate *kupuru*, “to smear, wipe” or “wipe off”).¹³ However, as Feder points out, this is a fallacy because the word in Hebrew is never used in this concrete sense, so “there is no reason to assume that any of these potential ‘original meanings’ were known to Hebrew speakers.”¹⁴

The above interpretations illustrate the kind of gap-filling involved in making sense of ritual and highlight why scepticism over ritual meaning has grown in recent decades. Despite the methodological strictures there is good reason to question these extreme positions. As Feder points out, ritual arises out of social and personal concerns (famine, illness, etc.) and it functions to alter the state of affairs that are at issue. As such, it is seen as a means of communicating with inanimate forces and in order to be recognised as viable, it must do so in an unambiguous way.¹⁵ In Feder’s construal, the reason why the original connection is obscured is because rituals undergo a development in which the original action addressing a specific need is removed from its socio-historic context when codified and needs re-interpretation within a new framework.¹⁶ This development is rather like the way writing evolves in some cultures from pictograms that have an iconic relationship to the object they stand for (e.g. the pictogram for a house resembles a physical building). As writing becomes conventionalised the resemblance gradually disappears until the signs come to represent phonetic values and lose the connection to the original object altogether.¹⁷

It should be noted, however, that even though the linguistic analogy is illuminating, it does not follow that rituals are equally arbitrary once codified. To be sure, the connection is more conventionalised, but that does not make it meaningless and it may still retain aspects from its former social context such that it is possible to discern “iconic” echoes. If so, then a diachronic view may provide

¹⁰ Cited *ibid.*, 257.

¹¹ H. Maccoby, *Ritual and Morality: The Ritual Purity System and its Place in Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 165–181 (esp. 170).

¹² So too Gane, *Cult and Character*, 144; Kiuchi similarly posits that sancta pollution occurs because of a failure to undergo purification in Lev 15:31 and Num 19:13, 20 not because the unclean person enters the sanctuary complex. It is not clear though whether he thinks that it is explicitly the act of defiance that is at issue. N. Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering in the Priestly Literature: Its Meaning and Function*, JSOT SS 56 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 61–62.

¹³ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 1080.

¹⁴ Feder, *Blood Expiation*, 169.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 151–52.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 164.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 163.

an extra test against which a proposal on a particular ritual's function-meaning may be evaluated. In the following, then, I shall discuss the significance of the blood manipulation in the *hatta'th* sacrifice and put forward my own proposal regarding the blood daubed on the horns of the altar, which I shall test against Feder's diachronic reconstruction, as an added check on my views.

THE BLOOD MANIPULATION OF THE HATTA'TH

Daubing Blood on the Horns of the Altar

Turning to the blood manipulation in the *hatta'th*, the key and most constant act present in all such sacrifices and unique to it, is the daubing of blood on the horns of the altar.¹⁸ Its function is nowhere explained in connection to the *hatta'th*. Nevertheless, it is reminiscent of the practice of taking hold of the horns of the altar in an appeal to God's mercy and protection (Exod 21:14; 1 Kgs 1:50; 2:28). This is not a substitution of the animal's life in exchange for the worshipper. Rather, the hand-leaning ceremony expresses ownership and a symbolic identification between owner and animal.¹⁹ As the blood of the animal is daubed on the horns of the altar, it is as if the worshipper had grasped them in a plea for mercy. While initially this may sound like an unexpected connection, a closer examination highlights some noteworthy parallels.

The concept of criminals seeking asylum at an altar or sanctuary against prosecutors is well known in the ancient Mediterranean world (e.g. *Thucydides* 4:98).²⁰ In the legislation of Exod 21:13–14 the only type of crime mentioned is bloodshed, and protection is only offered if the killing is not premeditated.²¹ Some biblical narratives further suggest that asylum was sought in other cases as well, though again, intentionality mattered. Thus, Adonijah seeks sanctuary after plotting to make himself king (1 Kings 1:50 cf. 1:5–8, 24–27). Given that there was a certain amount of uncertainty around the succession of David, he is at first given the benefit of the doubt but eventually executed when he continues to manoeuvre for power (2:13–25). A further example of asylum in cases other than bloodshed

¹⁸ Likewise, the blood poured out at the base of the altar is unique to the *hatta't*, though less significant (*shpk*—Exod 29:12; Lev 4:7, 12, 18, 25, 30, 34 or synonymous *ytsq*—Lev 8:15; 9:9; cf. 'to dash' *zrq* elsewhere—Lev 1:3; 3:2; 7:2). In the Day of Atonement ceremony, it is not even mentioned perhaps because no blood is left after all the sprinkling. This may reinforce its secondary importance.

¹⁹ A number of scholars understand hand-leaning with one hand as ownership. E.g., D.P. Wright, "The Gesture of Hand Placement in the Hebrew Bible and in Hittite Literature", *JAOs* 106 (1986): 433–46; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 151–53; Gane, *Cult and Character*, 53–56.

²⁰ E.g., W.H.C. Propp, *Exodus 19–40*, AYB (New York: Yale University Press, 2006), 208. S.R. Driver, *The Book of Exodus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 216.

²¹ Barmash, in her detailed study of homicide, argues that altar/sanctuary asylum was not for homicide but for political intrigue based on 1 Kings 1:51; 2:28, and that Exod 21:13–14 cannot be used as an argument for altar asylum for killers. Among other things, she finds it doubtful that a killer would be allowed to touch the altar when defiled by the blood spilled. P. Barmash, *Homicide in the Biblical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 71–93. However, her arguments fail to convince, not least because accidental manslaughter does not create the same bloodguilt as premeditated murder. It is preferable to read the narratives recounting altar asylum as an extension on the practice described in Exod 21:13–14.

is reflected in Solomon's verdict of Shimei who, having cursed David when he fled Absalom, is now offered protection as long as he stays in Jerusalem (1 Kings 2:36–38). Although it is not the perpetrator who seeks asylum in the sacred city, but the judge who offers this alternative, it may nevertheless demonstrate the idea that asylum could cover a wider range of crimes than bloodshed.²² Again, intentionality plays a part in the judgement of his case. Although cursing God's anointed is a weighty matter, Shimei's crime is extenuated by his later confession when David is reinstated in power (2 Sam 19:23). Solomon extends clemency with some conditions (asylum only in Jerusalem), but when these measures are flouted, protection is withdrawn. The same principle of intentionality (or lack thereof) is also evident in the law of asylum cities (Numbers 35).²³ This is paralleled by the unintentional sins for which the *hatta'th* is offered. To the question of how ritual impurities fit into the above scheme I shall return later. Suffice it to say here that they likewise share a lack of intentionality and mostly arise out of the human condition. Thus, the person with skin disease cannot help the outbreak, nor the one with a discharge. Although childbirth can be traced back to an intentional sexual act that triggered a chain of events leading to it, conception itself cannot be predicted or controlled. We see then that there is a reasonably good parallel between altar/sanctuary or city asylum, which encompass a wider set of sins than accidental homicide and the unintentional sins and ritual impurities covered by the *hatta'th*.

It is also noteworthy that Feder in his exploration of the social contexts in which the root *kpr* was used, traces the lexical forms back to homicide and blood feuds in which the verb *kipper* was originally about appeasing the blood avenger or the innocent blood of the victim, which cried out for justice.²⁴ If he is correct, then this diachronic perspective provides further connection and support for my theory.

The one exception that does not fit comfortably with my analysis is Lev 8:15 where Moses daubs blood on the horns of the altar and thereby purifies it (*vayyehatte 'eth-hammizbeah*). The preposition *'eth* makes the altar the direct object of cleansing. As mentioned before, this forms the basis for Milgrom's theory that the *hatta'th* purifies sancta, not people. It is worth noting, however, that this is a unique occasion, which is not meant to be repeated regularly and therefore not the best basis on which to build a case for the interpretation of the regular *hatta'th*.

Moreover, Feder argues in his diachronic examination of Leviticus 8 and Exodus 29 (consecration of the altar and the priests) that the original function of the *hatta'th* was atonement for

²² Milgrom observes that asylum in a city with a temple is common in the ANE extending the idea of protection from the sanctuary to the whole city unlike the Israelite cities of refuge which had no known connection to sanctuaries. J. Milgrom, *Numbers* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1989), 505–506.

²³ Earlier scholarship supposed that cities of refuge were developed in a later period, when altars became off-limits to the laity due to the priestly theology of holiness (e.g., Milgrom, *Numbers*, 505). Barmash, however, argues that the two developments are parallel rather than consecutive (e.g. Deut 19:1–13 does not introduce cities of refuge as an innovation and Neh 6:10–11 suggests that sanctuary asylum was still valid in the postexilic period). Barmash, *Homicide*, 73–74, 78–79. The supposed chronology of these developments does not affect my argument, though if Barmash is right and altar/sanctuary asylum is an ongoing possibility even in the post-exilic period, then the blood daubed on the altar does have a stronger iconic connection that would be recognisable and memorable.

²⁴ Feder, *Blood Expiation*, 167–96.

people. The idea of purging the altar was a later development, together with the shift of expressions moving from *kipper* 'al- "making expiation on behalf of" to *kipper* 'eth + direct object "to purge."²⁵ This is a good example of the earlier point about the evolving of ritual function moving away from an iconic relationship between action and function to an increasingly conventionalised one needing explanation. Thus, the fact that an explicit statement is given regarding the function of daubing the blood on the horns of the altar suggests that the original iconic (and therefore self-evident) link between action and function has become obscured. In other words, the *batta'th* sacrifice in Lev 8:15 may be the exception (in its function as cleansing or consecrating the altar) that proves the rule, i.e. that daubing the blood on the horns of the altar primarily functions in affecting people, not cleansing sancta.

Sprinkling the Blood

I now turn briefly to the action of sprinkling (*bizṣab*) in the *batta'th* sacrifice, which is uncontroversial and fairly straightforward. While it is not unique to the *batta'th*, it is never practised in the other major sacrifices (burnt, peace or guilt offerings). In the *batta'th*, it is only performed when the whole community is implicated in the sin. Thus, it is done in the case of the high priest whose unintentional sin brings guilt on the people (Lev 4:3, 7) and when Israel, as a whole, sins (Lev 4:13, 17). Corresponding to the above, sprinkling occurs in the Day of Atonement ceremony in connection with the high priest (Lev 16:11) and the people as a whole (v.15), highlighting again the communal aspect. Leviticus 4 does not explain the reason for the sprinkling and the atonement formula still points to atonement for the people involved (*kipper be'adh* or 'al- "to atone for/on behalf of"). Nevertheless, this additional action underlines the seriousness of communal sin. In the Day of Atonement ceremony, however, sprinkling becomes a prominent element alongside daubing blood on the horns of the altar. Corresponding to it, the atonement formula for people (Lev 16:11, 17) is complemented by a second formula for sancta (*kipper* 'eth- + direct object – Lev 16:16, 18–20). The former appears in every *batta'th* just like the daubing of blood on the horns of the altar.²⁶ Therefore I propose that the twofold action in the *batta't* relate to the two objects the *batta'th* affects: the blood on the horns is linked to atonement for people and sprinkling to the same for sancta. In other texts where blood, water, or water and ashes are used in sprinkling, the action is interpreted as cleansing the person or object (Lev 14:7, 51–52; Num 8:7; 19:12, 19) and there is no reason to doubt the same function in the Day of Atonement ceremony of sprinkling the *batta'th* blood.²⁷

From a diachronic perspective, Feder considers sprinkling a secondary development.²⁸ Further, in his exploration of the verb *kipper*, he observes that the initial nuance of the word in the context of

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 45–53.

²⁶ Lev 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:6, 10, 13; 8:34; 9:7; 12:8; 14:19, 31; 15:15, 30; 16:11, 17.

²⁷ When oil is used for sprinkling (occasionally mixed with blood) it functions as consecration (Exod 29:21; Lev 8:11, 30).

²⁸ Feder, *Blood Expiation*, 38–43.

homicide is to appease someone's/God's anger, which gradually changes to a more mechanistic view of dealing with the bloodguilt that leaves a stain or creates a debt.²⁹ "In other words, a dynamic that was once understood as the expression of the wills of personalized supernatural actors was ultimately treated as an embedded law of nature."³⁰ This coheres well with my own observations regarding the two-fold action in the *batta'th*. While the daubing of blood on the horns of the altar reflects a relational element between persons (humans appealing to God's mercy), the sprinkling action corresponds better with the idea that actions leave a physical mark on the environment in the form of defilement, which needs to be dealt with.

The question that remains is how these two different aspects of the *batta'th* and the two main actions performed in the ritual relate to the two types of issues for which *batta'th* is brought. At first glance, appealing to God's mercy and protection by metaphorically grabbing the horns of the altar fits better with the question of sin, while cleansing the altar seems more appropriate in the context of ritual impurities.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN RITUAL IMPURITY AND SIN

In the following, I shall explore the connection between ritual impurity and sin in order to understand why the *batta'th* is offered for both ritual impurity and some sins and how the two-fold action of blood on the horns of the altar and sprinkling relate to them. To start with, it is worth reiterating the basic characteristics of ritual impurity and sin.³¹ The four major groups of ritual impurity are connected to childbirth, leprosy, (genital) discharges and corpse contamination (Leviticus 12–15; Numbers 19).³² Ritual impurity defiles the person and is contagious. Certain forms may be contracted by touch (e.g. some genital discharges—Lev 15:4–12, 19–28), the more virulent ones pollute even by close proximity (corpse contamination—Num 19:14). It has long been noted in scholarship that these four categories that generate ritual impurity relate to sex (childbirth, genital discharge) and death (leprosy, corpse contamination).³³ While not sinful, they are singled out as problematic in God's presence (symbolised by the idea of impurity) indicative of the need for the worshipper to become more god-like in order to

²⁹ Ibid., 173–186.

³⁰ Ibid., 183.

³¹ For a helpful discussion of terms and of the nature of ritual impurity in the OT see J. Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21–42.

³² It should be noted that "leprosy" in the Bible is a reference to a variety of skin/scale diseases such as eczema or the like. I simply use the conventional term for convenience.

³³ Leprosy has the least obvious connection to death, but as Milgrom points out, scaly skin is seen as a disintegration of the body (cf. Num 12:12). Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 1002. For the view that ritual impurities link in with sex and death, see T. Frymer-Kensky, "Pollution, Purification, and Purgation in Biblical Israel", in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Carol L. Meyers and M. O'Connor (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbraun, 1983), 391–414 (401). David P. Wright, "Unclean and Clean (OT)", *ABD* 6:729–41 (739). Milgrom subsumes the sexual aspect under the idea of death suggesting that genital discharge (blood, semen) are the loss of potential life. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 766–68, 1000–1004. For an evaluation of Milgrom and arguments for the dual rationale see also J. Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 56–58.

approach the divine.³⁴ Sex and death are two major attributes that at present mark out humanity in contradistinction to God who neither dies nor procreates.

The dual focus on sex and death in ritual impurity is mirrored in the moral realm in the sin of sexual immorality and murder and in the religious realm in the worship of other gods (spiritual adultery) and child sacrifice (again, murder).³⁵ These grave sins likewise defile, though they are not contagious by touch or proximity, but have an effect even if the person does not come to the sanctuary. This may indicate that sin is always unacceptable not only when one approaches God's presence, but at all times and in all places.

There is also a certain significance discernible in the nature of the sin and the *locus* of its effects. Thus, sexual immorality (incest, bestiality, adultery, etc.) defiles the person (Lev 18:20, 23, 24), but also the land (v.25), bloodshed likewise defiles the land (Num 35:30–34) and the worship of other gods defiles the sanctuary (Lev 20:3) and God's name. In Israel's legislation, both sexual immorality and murder are civil offences against other people, even if ultimately they are sins against YHWH. In the first instance then, defilement affects the land where the community lives, though it will ultimately affect the sanctuary in the sense that it stands in polluted land. The worship of other gods most directly offends YHWH, hence it is his earthly dwelling place that is defiled. Further, it is a taint on his reputation since such blatant unfaithfulness reflects badly on him. Most significantly, the taint that these grave sins leave cannot be removed by sacrifice (Num 15:30–31) but only by the death of the sinner, so it is imperative that Israel avoids these.

Wright, in reflecting on the connection between ritual and moral impurity, saw the former as a first line of defence, a hedge around the more serious issues, which provides a test of one's attitude. Those who breach this outer perimeter of faithfulness will not stop there but will break the moral-religious law too.³⁶ Thus to ignore purity rules is in one sense a mark of arrogance dismissing the distinction between God and humanity that separates finite human beings in their current condition from the divine. In other words, it negates the necessity for preparation in meeting God and suggests an implicit equality with him. Corresponding to the direct affront to God himself the object of defilement is again his sanctuary (Lev 15:31; Num 19:13, 20).

Put differently, purification from ritual impurities is a constant reminder to abstain from grave sins and an index of faithfulness in the weightier moral-religious matters. Thus, there is an intrinsic connection between ritual impurities and sins in that the former provide a "preview" of the pathology

³⁴ Sexual union in marriage is a gift of God and procreation a mandate (Gen 1:28; 2:24) and only inappropriate post-Eden in the context of meeting the divine (cf. the need to cover genitals in God's presence—Gen 3:7, 21; Exod 20:26; 28:42–43, to abstain from sexual activity to meet God at Sinai—Exod 19:16). Arguably, death may be seen as more negative (Gen 3:19) though recognised as part of humanity's present condition and in that sense a natural and unavoidable occurrence. For an insightful and detailed reflection on the function of *imitatio Dei* in ritual and sacrifice see esp. Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple*, 58–66.

³⁵ Molech worship is included in a list on sexual immoralities in Lev 18:21 and Israel's unfaithfulness with other gods is routinely described as spiritual adultery throughout the OT. E.g., Deut 31:16; Judg 8:27; Isa 57:3; Jer 2:20; 3:2, 6–10; 13:27 Ezek 16:15–22; 23:27; Hos 1:2, 4:12–13; Ps 106:39; 1 Chr 5:25, etc.

³⁶ D.P. Wright, "The Spectrum of Priestly Impurity", in *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel*, ed. G.A. Anderson and S.M. Olyan, JSOT SS 125 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 150–81 (esp. 170–80).

of sin, which in its excessive forms can defile in a deadlier way than ritual impurities. On another level, as we have seen, both ritual impurities and inadvertent sins share a lack of intentionality and therefore present a low-grade risk, so grouping them together under the *batta'th* ritual makes sense.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, given the multiplicity of connections between ritual impurity and sin on several levels, it becomes clearer how the actions performed in the *batta'th* sacrifice function, specifically, daubing blood on the horns of the altar and sprinkling. I proposed that the former is a symbolic expression of appealing to God's mercy echoing the practice of altar asylum. Performed both for ritual impurities and for unintentional sins, it drives home the point that finite human beings, living in a constant cycle of birth, procreation and death and entangled in sin, cannot approach a holy God unless he graciously accepts them. Just as Moses had to be shielded from God's glory (Exod 33:21–22) in his presence, so on a lesser scale, God's protection is needed for people to encounter him in their human condition (expressed in ritual impurity) and as sinners. This may also explain why *batta'th* is offered at all major festivals for the community,³⁷ even when there is no specific sin or impurity in view, and further supports the idea that the blood on the horns of the altar expresses a humble attitude appealing to God's mercy for acceptance through ritual.

Sprinkling, which may have developed as a secondary action and is mainly performed in the Day of Atonement ceremony, cleanses the sanctuary indicating the effects of the human condition (again, both ritual impurity and sin) on God's abode. I further argued, that the above two actions correspond to the two-fold atonement formula (one for people and one for sancta).

³⁷ Num 28:15, 22, 30; 29:16; Lev 23:19.

REVIEWS

DAVID B. CAPES, *THE DIVINE CHRIST: PAUL, THE LORD JESUS AND THE SCRIPTURES OF ISRAEL*. GRAND RAPIDS: BAKER, 2018. (XVII + 206 PP) [ISBN: 9781498231572]

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The Divine Christ is based upon a series of public lectures given by David Capes in 2014 at Acadia Divinity College, Wolfville, Nova Scotia. As such it represents Capes' re-visitation of his earlier work (e.g. *Old Testament Yahweh Texts in Paul's Christology*, WUNT 2/47, Tübingen: Mohr, 1992) and response to more recent developments within Pauline and New Testament Christology. The book, then, is about Paul's use of *kyrios* ("lord" in Greek) to refer to Jesus and what that signifies given that *kyrios* was also the way the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) translated the divine name, YHWH.

Perhaps due to the origin of the book as a public lecture series, Capes begins with an analysis of the English Bible tradition and its use of "lord", "Lord" and "LORD". He discusses which words in the original biblical languages are translated in this way and the issues arising from this. While, for a biblical scholar this may feel like a strange starting point, it serves as an accessible point of entry for a non-specialist audience. The first chapter continues with a helpful discussion of the first century treatment of the divine name (YHWH) in biblical texts in and the various ways in which Jews honoured the divine name. The most significant conclusion of this chapter is that when Paul quotes Greek Old Testament texts that in Hebrew referred to YHWH he is surely aware that behind the Greek *kyrios* is the divine name (p. 19).

The second chapter outlines the critical debate of the 20th century, beginning with Bousset, and the view that the monotheism of 1st century Judaism was far too strict to allow the earliest Christians to call Jesus *kyrios*. Thus, this epithet was only applied later when Christianity entered (polytheistic) Greek culture. Capes discusses the proponents and opponents of this view. Following Hengel, he concludes that Bousset's restrictive view of Jewish monotheism was based primarily on a much later, more defensive, form of Judaism. Rather, the Judaism of the first century was able to accommodate a variety of divine manifestations, including angels, word (*logos*) and wisdom (p. 42).

In chapter three the exegetical work of the book begins. Here Capes surveys the use of *kyrios* to refer to Jesus in Paul's undisputed letters. Paul could use *kyrios* for human masters, false gods, or the God of Israel. However, in the vast majority of cases *kyrios* is used for Jesus. Capes points out that Paul never justifies his use of *kyrios* for Jesus and it is found in traditional liturgical elements and so is probably the "common property of the Jesus movement" rather than an innovation of Paul's (p. 49). He finds that while Paul uses *christos* (Christ) in the context of Jesus' sacrifice, when Paul uses *kyrios* it is usually in the context of ethics, eschatology or liturgy. He parallels this to the contextual use of YHWH in the Old Testament. Particularly compelling is his observation that "the day of Lord", "the coming of

the Lord” and the final judgement, are all Old Testament ideas associated with YHWH that in Paul are transferred to Jesus (pp. 65–71).

Chapters four and five continue the exegetical work. Both chapters focus on Paul’s quotation of or allusion to Old Testament texts that contain the name YHWH. In chapter four he analyses those which in Paul retain God as the referent (Rom 4:7–8; 9:27–29; 11:34; 15:9–11; 1 Cor 3:20; 2 Cor 6:17–18). In doing so he demonstrates that Paul still used *kyrios* for God, as distinct from Jesus. Chapter five analyses Old Testament YHWH texts that now have Jesus as the referent (Rom 10:13; 14:11; 1 Cor 1:31; 2:16; 10:26; 2 Cor 3:16; 10:17; Phil 2:10–11; 1 Thess 3:13). Capes finds that while Paul always makes it clear if he is intending to refer to God, “he seldom offers a straightforward statement that he intends to refer to Christ” (p. 149). This is possibly because Jesus is the default referent of *kyrios*, “because Paul uses *kyrios* overwhelmingly as a Christological title” (p. 149). Interestingly, Capes observes that Paul can use the same scriptural passage to refer to Jesus in one instance and to God in another.

In chapter six Capes brings the results of his exegesis into the contemporary discussion of early Christian Christology. He begins the chapter with a summary statement: “Very early, at the beginning of the Christian movement, influential voices such as Paul considered Jesus constitutive of God’s unique identity” (p. 151). Chapter six both defends and unpacks this statement, specifically in relation to Paul’s use of *kyrios* for Jesus. In many ways Capes follows and builds on recent contributions by Bauckham, Hurtado, and N.T. Wright. He criticises Bauckham and Wright, however, particularly for being too quick to dismiss Jewish mediator traditions (p. 166). In contrast he argues for incorporating the insights of Alan Segal (*Two Powers in Heaven*, Brill, 1977) and the rather more obscure A. R. Johnson (*The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God*, University of Wales Press, 1942). Thus he argues that early Christian exaltation of Christ was not a departure from Jewish monotheism in the early first century. Rather, early Christian exaltation of Christ could be seen as a response to the deeds (especially the nature miracles, pp. 174–75) and words (p. 181) of Jesus within an early Jewish framework.

Overall, this is an excellent study. It combines both closely focussed exegesis with analysis of the wider context. It presents the data in a clear manner and makes a compelling argument for the significance of Paul’s use of *kyrios* language for Jesus. I would question the extent to which it maintained the character of an accessible popular work. After the first chapter it became far more academically focussed and I think at several points more was assumed of the reader than the first chapter’s focus on English translations implied. A particularly glaring example was a single off-hand reference to “Yavne”, by which I presume he meant the late first-century council of Jamnia (p. 160), but there was no indication for the uninitiated as to what was meant or what period was indicated. The brevity of the book also meant that a number of significant issues did not receive sufficient discussion. I would have valued a more thorough account of what exactly it meant that “Jesus occupies divine status with God” (p. 156) and the work of A.R Johnson, which would be unfamiliar to most, needed greater explication around the concept of “corporate personality” (p. 166) as this was clearly a key idea for Capes own thought. Notwithstanding, I commend this work to anyone interested in Christology,

early Christianity or Paul's Letters. Capes has (again) successfully shown the importance of Paul's use of Old Testament YHWH texts for the debate around the early church's view of Jesus.

MICHAEL HORTON, *REDISCOVERING THE HOLY SPIRIT: GOD'S PERFECTING PRESENCE IN CREATION, REDEMPTION, AND EVERYDAY LIFE*. GRAND RAPIDS: ZONDERVAN, 2017. (336 PP) [ISBN 9780310534068]

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Michael Horton is professor of systematic theology at Westminster Theological Seminary California and an ordained minister in the United Reformed Church of North America. While readers in Aotearoa might not be familiar with his work, anyone who does will be familiar with his constant theme of the 'ordinary.' In *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit*, 'ordinary' once more guides much of the discussion. Against Roman Catholic institutionalization and Pentecostal experiences of ecstasy, Horton's major concern is to show that the main way the Holy Spirit works is through the ordinary. Consider the significance of this word ordinary as Horton makes use of the term. In traditional Reformed theology, the Holy Spirit works through *means of grace*, which are historically understood to be the Word, sacraments, and prayers. That might sound odd to the modern ear, as so much modern Christianity is about me and my radical experiences, but it is a hallmark of historic Protestantism. Through this theme of the ordinary, whether it is *The Ordinary Christian Life* (a refutation of David Platt's very unhelpful *Radical*), or his *Pilgrim Theology*, Horton wants to make sure we recognize the presence of God, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in the mundane, ordinary routines of life.

Rediscovering the Holy Spirit, though, is more than a continuation of this theme. It is also a major work on pneumatology from a Reformed perspective. Horton's work offers a biblical, historical, and theological exposition of the third person of the Trinity. Throughout, Horton shows us how biblical and systematic theology should work together, while also critiquing modern works on the Holy Spirit.

The book begins with a defence of historic Nicene theology, which lays the foundation for Horton's emphasis on the Spirit as the perfecter who completes God's works. Horton affirms that each work of God is a work of the whole Trinity, but helpfully uses the theory of appropriation to talk of the Holy Spirit's specific and distinctive work. This work of completion happens, of course, not just miraculously, but through the ordinary.

Chapters two and three give a riveting survey of the Spirit in the Old Testament and the life of Christ. Drawing on Calvin and John Owen, Horton helpfully shows the role of the Holy Spirit on the human nature of Christ. Here we see that Christology and Pneumatology must go together. Horton demonstrates the Holy Spirit's work in redemption and not just in salvation's application to individuals Christians, which is the more common focus on pneumatology.

Moving on, one unique part of this book comes in chapter four. Here Horton writes of the Spirit's immanence, as one would expect. God is with his people through the presence of the Holy Spirit. However, Horton also writes of the Spirit's transcendence. This lays the groundwork for Horton's treatment of the Spirit's power and his role in judging sin. Unique to Reformed approaches to the Spirit, Horton also has much to say about the bodily absence of Christ. Naturally, Horton turns to the Upper Room discourse where Jesus says it is better for him to go back to the Father because he will send the Holy Spirit. However, the disciples do not fully understand and learn this lesson until Pentecost. This provides Horton an opportunity to discuss the work of the Spirit in the Old Testament. More than most Reformed accounts of the Spirit, Horton concludes that there is both a *qualitative* and *quantitative* difference of the Spirit between the Old Testament and the New. Personally, I find this section of the work quite convincing as the Spirit seems to function more corporately in the Old Covenant while both corporately and individually in the New Covenant.

From here, Horton moves on to talk about the gifts of the Spirit. Horton finds the evidence for a 'baptism of the Spirit' lacking and unbiblical. Christians' filling of the Spirit can fluctuate, but the historic Protestant position is that a Christian either has the Holy Spirit or they do not (which would mean they are not converted) so there is no second blessing or two-tier Christianity. In fact, this would go against his theme of the ordinary work of the Holy Spirit.

Whether we agree with Horton or not, he provides exegetical and theological support for his views. And while he leans toward the cessationist position, his conclusion at this point is far from dogmatic and leaves the door open for the unexplainable and the extraordinary works of the Holy Spirit as well. Chapter 10 is where Horton brings his arguments together and most passionately and persuasively connects the person and work of the Holy Spirit to the ordinary Christian life.

In Aotearoa/New Zealand, this work will likely be unique, especially in Baptist and Pentecostal circles. However, pastors and theological students, will greatly benefit from this book, even if it is only to learn the (often misunderstood) Reformed understanding of Pneumatology. It would be wonderful if small groups and lay people read this book as well, though a lot of historical and theological knowledge is assumed.

To conclude, Horton offers a rich, biblical and theological treatment of the Holy Spirit from a historical and confessional Reformed perspective. This review is not trying to say Horton is 'the Reformed' view on Pneumatology, but it is a good, substantial contribution that is well worth your time. In addition, Horton is an engaging and clear writer. While you might not agree with everything Horton has to say, you will be challenged, and you will learn. You will also come away with a new appreciation for how God works, by his Holy Spirit through the ordinary means of grace and through the mundane moments of life.

PAUL T. NIMMO. *BARTH: A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED*. LONDON: BLOOMSBURY T&T CLARK, 2017. (224 PP) [ISBN 9780567032645]

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Paul Nimmo, King's Chair of Systematic Theology at the University of Aberdeen, has written a detailed and articulate introduction to the life and thought of the 20th-century Swiss theologian, Karl Barth. Nimmo does a marvelous job accomplishing his goal to "introduce readers to the theology of Karl Barth" (xii). The book comprises eight chapters.

Chapter one captures the life and work of Barth in fourteen easy to read pages. Nimmo captures the shift in Barth's theology, largely due to World War I, from Barth's earlier focus on "the human experience of God" (p. 2) to his later understanding that "theology can only ever move from and return to the Self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ which is never under human control or command" (p. 13).

Barth's life work culminated in what could be considered his magnum opus, the four-volume *Church Dogmatics*. Since Barth requested his theology be analyzed and understood through his *Church Dogmatics*, Nimmo uses the format of *Church Dogmatics* to structure chapters two through six of his book: 2- The Doctrine of the Word of God, 3- The Doctrine of God, 4- The Doctrine of Creation, 5- The Doctrine of Reconciliation I, 6- The Doctrine of Reconciliation II.

In chapter two, the author explores Barth's theology concerning the doctrine of the Word of God in its three forms in the Trinity, Scripture, and proclamation of the Church, acting as Barth's Prolegomena. In its first form, Barth's focus is on the "Trinitarian account of Word and Spirit which enables our present knowledge of God" (p. 37). As Nimmo continues to explore the doctrine of the Word of God in Barth in its second and third forms, he clearly and fairly discusses Barth's innovative, yet controversial position. While the author points out Barth's divergence from the classical Protestant tradition he helpfully responds that Barth insists that the Word of God "which speaks in and through Scripture" (p. 43) is without error and Nimmo points out that Barth never once calls out any supposed errors in the text of Scripture.

Chapter three moves from Barth's Prolegomena to theology proper. Barth's doctrine of God begins with his denial of natural theology and belief that knowledge of God only comes from God's self-revelation to us. Thus, it is no surprise that Nimmo argues the most important thing we must recognize in Barth's belief concerning the reality of God is the way in which it represents the living God. It is in this section of Barth's dogmatics that Barth provides one of his most significant contributions to modern theology, his doctrine of election. Nimmo deals with Barth's theology here with charity and seeks to give Barth a fair presentation pointing out two possible readings of Barth while speaking to the ongoing debate surrounding Barth's doctrine of election.

Chapter four deals with Barth's doctrine of creation. Nimmo is careful here to understand Barth's thought within its historical context. This section of his *Church Dogmatics* was written in the wake of World War II and even while much of Europe was in ruins Barth "unremittingly affirms the goodness of creation, the love of God for it, and the potential of humanity within it" (p. 75). Barth explores this by, first, looking at the work of creation theologically while remaining unhindered by attempts to give scientific explanations of the universe's origins. Second, he gives a Christological anthropology arguing that a true understanding of humanity can only be gained as humanity is considered in relation to God. Third, he concludes his doctrine of creation by examining the relationship between the Creator and the creature.

Chapter five and six seek to help the reader gain an understanding of Barth's doctrine of reconciliation. Nimmo very skillfully turns almost 3,000 pages of Barth's work on reconciliation into 58 readable and well-summarized pages. It is in this section of Barth's *Dogmatics* that we get his mature work on Christology, hamartiology, soteriology, and pneumatology and the author points the reader to see Barth's consistent underlying methodological principle to derive knowledge of God and humanity only through Jesus. While Barth's method has been and continues to be controversial his work here continues to be an "important voice in theological conversation" (p. 138).

Chapter seven explores and consolidates the theme of ethics that is woven throughout Barth's *Dogmatics*. Nimmo helpfully breaks his ethics down into three sections; general ethics, special ethics the doctrine of creation, and special ethics the doctrine of reconciliation. Nimmo helps the reader see how, for Barth, ethics is the result of dogmatics done properly. It is clear from Nimmo's articulation of Barth's ethics that it is directly grounded not only in his theological method and denial of natural theology but also in his understanding of the Creator-creature relationship.

Nimmo concludes his book with five helpful pages which lay out Barth's legacy and his continued significance in dogmatics today. Nimmo gives two possible reasons for continued interest in Barth's theology. The first is ongoing issues of how to interpret what Barth is arguing. The second is to continue to explore the extent of Barth's influence on modern theology.

Nimmo has given us an extremely well written and scholarly book in order to help us to understand a theologian of great magnitude. As a short book, it provides one of the best-summarized treatments of Barth and his thought that is currently published. Nimmo is careful to ground his explanation of Barth's theology in its proper historical context. The controversy surrounding Barth is handled with extreme care by the author as well. The various sides and critiques are met with charity giving each side an equal hearing while attempting to provide a response from Barth to those critiques. Another helpful aspect of this book is that as Nimmo unpacks the difficult box of Barth's theology, the author takes time to pause and provide helpful reflection on the material that has been unpacked. Barth's theology is so dense it is easy to get bogged down in the details, however Nimmo is careful to draw out the main themes of Barth's thought in order to provide a simple introduction to Barth's theology. I applaud Dr. Nimmo and his work on this book and I hope that it is used by all who are attempting to understand the theological giant of Karl Barth.

THE ROLE OF THE SYNAGOGUE IN THE AIMS OF JESUS. JORDAN J. RYAN,
MINNEAPOLIS: FORTRESS PRESS, 2017. (396 PP) [ISBN 9781506428116]

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Jordan J. Ryan's *The Role of the Synagogue in the Aims of Jesus* is a masterful piece of scholarship. He sets out to examine how Jesus used synagogues throughout Israel to further his ministry, and the case he presents is well argued and robust. He begins in chapter one by laying out the gap the book seeks to fill: the synagogue has not featured much in studies of the historical Jesus despite considerable focus on his Jewish background. Because synagogues regularly feature in the Gospels, they must fulfil a particular role in Jesus' aims and therefore his teaching in synagogues should be understood within that context. To achieve this, he uses a combination of historiography and philosophy of history, drawing particularly on the work of R. G. Collingwood (*The Idea of History*) and Bernard Lonergan (*Insight and Method in Theology*). (He discusses the work of both authors in more detail in the appendices.) This combination provides an intriguing answer to what Ryan (following Collingwood) terms the "scissors-and-paste" method (pg. 13) usually employed in historical Jesus studies, of which he is a harsh but fair critic.

In chapter two, Ryan reviews current scholarship on the synagogue and outlines the various Greek, Hebrew, and Latin terms used, concluding that these can refer to a gathering, a building, or one of the many functions of a synagogue. He argues for two types of synagogue: public and association. Association synagogues were mainly found in the Diaspora where they function like a modern-day club. Not everyone in a town or city can participate as they are gatherings for a particular group. By contrast, public synagogues were found in Israel because the Jews had political and religious control. They functioned more like a local council with the community gathering for a range of religious and political reasons. The third chapter looks into the details of the first century public synagogues, focusing on its functions, people, and buildings. Ryan evaluates how the synagogue is used in the study of Jesus in chapter four. He outlines three phases in the preceding scholarship and concludes that research done on the synagogue has not played a large role in any of them.

In chapters five to seven, Ryan explores how the synagogue fitted into Jesus' aims by looking at the evidence in the Synoptic Gospels. In chapter five, he notes that, despite the few occasions of Jesus preaching in the synagogues preserved in the Gospels, the Kingdom was a core element in Jesus' synagogue teaching. Chapter six focuses on Luke 4:16–30, particularly the debate regarding Jesus' level of literacy. Here Ryan's methodology shines as he is able to balance the historical evidence for literacy in the ancient world with a good dose of pragmatism and comes to a solid conclusion which respects both the extra-biblical evidence and the account of Luke. Chapter seven covers the healings and exorcisms that took place in synagogues (Mark 1:21–28; 3:1–6; Luke 13:10–17) and places them in the context of the public synagogue outlined in chapter three. The result is a well-rounded account of

Jesus engaging the challenges of the Pharisees and synagogue officials to convince the town that his teaching was legitimate.

Chapter eight turns to John 6:25–71 and posits a synagogue location for this event in Capernaum where Jesus is initially successful in convincing the synagogue audience. However, when he mentions eating his flesh and drinking his blood, they turn against and reject him. Ryan considers that the rejections at Nazareth and Capernaum could have led to Jesus changing his tactics, but only hints at whether the result was his journey to Jerusalem or a shift towards open-air teaching. This shift away from the synagogue could have been fleshed out further as it raised more questions than it answered.

The penultimate chapter (chapter nine) turns to Jesus' teaching in the temple. Ryan argues that the temple functioned in ways similar to the synagogue, but that its scope was national rather than local. He also discusses the reaction of the Jerusalem elites to Jesus' followers, who were threatened with exclusion from the synagogue. Such exclusion, Ryan argues, would result in those people being cut off from participation in an institution central to the functioning of first-century Jewish society. It could be argued that the drawbacks of such a fate are as clear as with a religious understanding of the synagogue. However, under Ryan's socio-religious-political synagogue, a much deeper threat is highlighted in that Jesus' followers faced an all-encompassing exclusion from the institution at the heart of their society, tantamount to being cut off from all government support today.

In concluding, Ryan sees this book making a three-fold contribution: 1) the adoption of a combination of philosophy of history and historiography as a method in historical Jesus studies; 2) the reconstruction of the synagogues as a local-official institution; and 3) the role of the synagogue in Jesus' aims.

Overall, Ryan's work is engaging and thorough, critiquing the downsides of historical Jesus studies while also providing a robust alternative method that draws greatly on the practices and realities of history. His challenge to the dominant "scissors-and-paste" method stems from a desire to see the field of historical Jesus studies move beyond a discussion of which sources are authentic to interpreting the historical value of those sources. Throughout chapters 5–9, Ryan clearly explained how he was using the central feature of his methodology, historical imagination, to draw his conclusions from the combination of the Gospel text and the historical reconstruction of the synagogue, providing a baseline for anyone wishing to utilise it in their research.

One of the many strengths of this study is how Ryan provides a glimpse into the workings of the first-century synagogue that is not limited to a religious function and has a central place in Jewish society. Against this background, Gospel events that take place in the New Testament appear in a more nuanced light than against a solely religious background. They transition from two- to three-dimensions and Jesus' actions in the synagogues and the reactions they provoke start to make more sense. Ryan's interpretation of Jesus' interactions with the synagogue provides details easily missed after twenty-one centuries of distance and are of considerable benefit to historical Jesus and New Testament studies.

JONATHAN GRANT, *DIVINE SEX: A COMPELLING VISION FOR CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS IN A HYPERSEXUALISED AGE*. GRAND RAPIDS: BRAZOS PRESS, 2015. (249 PP) [IBSN 9781441227164]

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Divine Sex presents a Christian understanding of sexuality. Grant's persuasive rhetoric and ability to draw upon personal experience is charismatic. However, Grant's approach also has drawbacks, testifying to the complexity of the subject. Grant does not identify his starting position, which leads to unexamined assumptions. As a result, this book may not be compelling for individuals who have different experiences to Grant.

In chapter one, Grant uses an awe-inspiring experience at Whistler and Blackcomb to frame his argument on sexuality (15). Grant emphasises the exhilaration and risk of the mountains, creating a metaphor for the state of contemporary relationships. He claims that relationships are "hypersexualised" (15), romantically idealistic concerning experimentation, and fatalistic regarding commitment (29).

Grant argues in chapter two that our identity is no longer built on an external moral code, but internally, through our pursuit of emotional and sexual satisfaction (30–31). Grant believes this "culture of authenticity" owes its origin to the "American Renaissance", where poets and philosophers like Walt Whitman and William James focused on (1) self-exploration and personal expression; and (2) spiritual transcendence (32–33).

In the four following chapters, Grant expresses concern at our culture's understanding of sexuality. Initially, he discusses the competitive tone of our workplaces and the expressivist nature of our home lives (57), reasoning that both are modern routes to individual freedom. He claims that postmodernity developed afterwards, emphasising the individual even further (57). Grant then looks at the impact of capitalism on sexuality. He maintains that we cannot help "*whether* we love" but "*what* we love" (73), and that sin has corrupted our desires so that we are drawn to idols rather than God (73–74). Grant examines the "hypersexuality" present in contemporary culture (93) arguing that we have diminished sex into a kind of "happiness technology" that devalues people and physical intimacy (99). His concern at the rise of pornography is particularly persuasive at this point (102–113). Finally, Grant explores the impact that an atomistic worldview has had on sexuality, which developed due to the loss of "transcendence (higher reality)" and "teleology (purposefulness)" (116–119). Grant suggests that Christians must be situated within a larger, coherent Christian story to counter this atomised perspective (125–132).

In chapters seven to eleven, Grant proposes that the way of countering the "influence of the modern social imaginary" is to go beyond cognitive approaches to discipleship and engage Christians in "*counterformation[all]*" journeys (135). Grant highlights the need for the church to develop a stronger

vision of Christian sexuality that is eschatological, metaphysical, formational and missional (142–143). Grant then identifies the need for Christian desire to be rightly oriented and, through the transformation of God (171), freed from false desires (169), such as self-love and addiction (172–174). Grant believes in the formative power of the gospel as a “counternarrative” to our “modern sexual scripts” (192–193). Grant suggests forming mimetic discipleship groups as a way of equipping individuals with the skills needed to counter secular understandings of sexuality (203–206). Grant also maintains that being intentional about the practices we engage in is key to forming us according to a Christian vision of sexuality (216–229).

It is hard not to be persuaded by Grant’s perspective in *Divine Sex*. His examples come from years of ministry and of what he has observed. However, despite clearly holding a conservative (in the traditional sense) Protestant position, Grant does not articulate this. In his discussion on postmodernity, for instance, he assumes that the individualism of the enlightenment developed due to a self-centred desire to be free from God’s influence. In doing this, he does not recognise any historical church-state governance that oppressed the working classes within Christendom, compelling a greater focus on individual rights (c.f. Thomas Paine’s *The Rights of Man* or Colin Gunton’s *The One the Three and the Many*). He seems to romantically assume that once things were good, now they are bad. This leads to philosophically unconvincing discussions in chapter nine where he attempts to demonstrate how a Christian perspective rectifies the evils of the enlightenment.

However, the most noticeable assumptions in *Divine Sex* concern sexuality. In chapter four, Grant discusses the evils of consumeristic and objectifying approaches to the body without reference to either feminist or liberationist theologies. Instead, when he begins to articulate a Christian understanding of sexuality in chapter five, he depends almost exclusively on Stanley Grenz’s book *Sexual Ethics* (96–98). Later, Grant comments that in our culture we “choose” our gendered/sexual identities “despite the unambiguous testimony of our bodies” (121–122). This was a startling comment. If it were unambiguous, there would be no debate. However, some believe that there is genuine diversity, not only in a static sense, concerning what we are initially born as, but also in a process sense. Our experiences change us physically, and our physicality impacts our experiences. Referring to male and female like clearly demarcated categories ignores those who do not easily fit. Grant seems to believe the Christian view is straightforward. He simplifies and dismisses the perspectives of others on the subject, most notably, Rob Bell, where Grant comes very close to presenting a “straw man argument” (177).

Sex is a difficult topic for any one person to address. But perhaps its difficulty is suggestive of something essential. We cannot tackle it alone. Sex and sexuality inherently concern the self’s relations with the “other”. In my view, theological engagement in this subject is similar. It cannot be done without acknowledging both ourselves, and where we stand, and the “other”, and where they stand. I do not think that Grant’s work engages sufficiently with truly “other” perspectives. As a result, using his analogy from chapter one, I am not convinced that Grant leaves his camp sufficiently to tackle the mountain.