

ASTOR HALL

Ordained
Conflict
Resolution 2

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December 2019

From the Editor

Servant Thoughts this month crystalize some concerns I have had for many years about proper grammar. In an era where even young executives with MBAs need remedial courses in grammar and manners, I think that the church is not entirely immune from this cultural bankruptcy. Since good grammar and good manners are related in showing respect for others, I hope to be addressing this occasionally in the years to come.

Alan Strange gives us Part 2 of “Conflict Resolution in the Church.” If you missed Part 1, be sure to read it in last month’s issue. Because our Book of Discipline cannot cover every detail or possible situation, Strange’s article will help clarify the text.

Soon you will see another new face for OPC.org. Once again the Committee on Christian Education’s (CCE) Subcommittee on Internet Ministries (SIM) has managed the redesign of OPC.org with the indispensable help of web designer Chris Tobias and a very competent technical engineer.

David Noe completes his translation of Beza’s twenty-one theses on the Trinity (16–21). Our next classic will be David Noe’s translation of Chrysostom’s commentary on Galatians. Many of the works included in Servant Classics have never been translated into English. The Chrysostom’s commentary on Galatians will be newly translated. I am grateful for David Noe’s pioneering work for *OS*.

Professor Ryan McGraw reviews the second volume of Peter Van Mastricht’s magisterial *Theoretical-Practical Theology, Faith in the Triune God*. Even the placement of the topic of faith between Scripture and the doctrine of God demonstrates how Post-Reformation theologians never saw a dichotomy between doctrine and life.

Musicologist Timothy Shafer reviews Scott Aniol’s *Worship in Song: A Biblical Approach to Music and Worship*. This review is unusual in two ways. First, I rarely review a book this old (2009); and second, I never have a reviewer who also blurbed the book. In this case, however, I believe that this book has not been appreciated as it ought to have been. Good principles never go out of date.

I hope you enjoy Henry Vaughan’s magnificent incarnation poem, “Christ’s Nativity.” It reminds us of the artistry and faith of the Metaphysical poets.

The cover picture is from the New York Public Library last Christmas, guarded by those stalwart lions Patience and Fortitude, virtues that we need plenty of in this present evil age.

Blessings in the Lamb,
Gregory Edward Reynolds

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FROM THE ARCHIVES “INCARNATION”

http://opc.org/OS/pdf/Subject_Index_Vol_1-25.pdf

- “Incarnation, Inspiration, and Pneumatology: A Reformed Incarnational Analogy.” (Lane G. Tipton) 17 (2008): 85–90.

Ordained Servant exists to help encourage, inform, and equip church officers for faithful, effective, and God-glorifying ministry in the visible church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its primary audience is ministers, elders, and deacons of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, as well as interested officers from other Presbyterian and Reformed churches. Through high-quality editorials, articles, and book reviews, we will endeavor to stimulate clear thinking and the consistent practice of historic, confessional Presbyterianism.

Servant Thoughts

A Word Fitly Spoken

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver” (Prov. 25:11).

by Gregory E. Reynolds

Tennis whites, ladies and gentlemen matches, ball handlers in ties, all at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in Wimbledon. At Skytop Lodge in the Poconos: “no hats, T-shirts, torn or faded denims.” All little holdouts against the deconstruction of Western culture, the rejection of standards everywhere, except, of course, in computer programming and surgery. Even the word “tradition” has taken on a sour flavor.

When I went to first grade, it was one of six grades called *grammar* school—yes, one of the three disciplines of the trivium, the lower division of the seven liberal arts. In other words in order to study any subject one must first know how to write, think, and speak properly: grammar, logic, and rhetoric. To be educated is to learn the language and literature of one’s own culture. Moses and Daniel are good examples of this in the Bible.

Why am I concerned about this subject? Some may think me a grammar or speech Pharisee, but I think the risk is worth taking, since, especially in preaching and teaching the Word of God, the integrity of what we say is at stake. For ministers of the Word, words and grammar are the media of their ministries. Thus preachers should be wordsmiths, crafting oral communication of the Bible that will open, clarify, and apply God’s wisdom with simple, direct clarity from Sunday to Sunday. Those who are unaware of proper grammar will have no problem with the preacher’s improper grammar, but those who know the rules will lose confidence in him if he fails to use proper grammar. Renowned English professor Leland Ryken rightly insists:

speakers who use incorrect grammar and usage lose clarity of communication and credibility. The rules are not arbitrary; they serve the purpose of effective communication. Furthermore, people who know the rules lose respect for speakers who lower the bar of competence.¹

Someone might object that Paul was not a good preacher in the eyes of the Corinthians. But they criticized him because he was not a polished, persuasive rhetor not because he had poor grammar. “For they say, ‘His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account’” (2 Cor. 10:10).

As we listen to the political and social discourse around us, we must be aware that we are in an Orwellian language world. In San Francisco convicted criminals are now euphemistically called “justice involved persons.” A freshman congresswoman recently

¹ Leland Ryken, email message to author, July 5, 2019.

referred to border detention centers as “concentration camps.” This is a dangerous linguistic environment, so care in crafting clear and honest speech is crucial.

One of the great questions regarding grammar and dictionaries is, “Are they descriptive or prescriptive?” *Ordained Servant* uses the *Chicago Manual of Style*, the bible of English usage and American writing style, as its guide. Drawn to its logical conclusion, dismissing a linguistic standard ends in solipsism—leaving one able only to communicate with oneself. Had Humpty Dumpty followed the logic of his assertion, “‘When *I* use a word,’ Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, ‘it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.’”² conversation with Alice or anyone else would have become impossible. Without useful, pleasing, and appropriate forms of speech, manners, or anything else, civilization is impossible.

Recently in reviewing a book titled *Semicolon* by Cecelia Watson, Barton Swaim takes issue with her chastisement of prescriptivists.

Almost everybody who cares about this subject, even the vanishingly small number of grammar snobs left in the world, understand that writers who know what they’re doing can bend and break the rules to good effect. Do we need to be told one more time that all those “prescriptivist” grammarians of the 18th and 19th centuries failed to grasp the always-evolving nature of language? Do we need one more book alerting us, as Ms. Watson does, to the fact that an insistence on rule-following can exclude people of less privileged backgrounds? . . .

Like most grammarians in our latitudinarian age, Ms. Watson enjoys her status as an elite user of language but can’t bring herself to pronounce judgment of any kind, except to dismiss those who do. But language is like any other field of human endeavor: Before you master it, you’re bound to feel inadequate and look stupid sometimes. Ordinary literate people understand this, which is why they buy Strunk & White and the *Chicago Manual of Style*. They aren’t interested in “seeing, describing, and creating beauty in language that rules can’t comprehend,” as Ms. Watson puts it; they are interested in stringing words together without appearing ignorant. Ms. Watson has shown us she’s been to college, but for what reason?³

I close with several examples. I recently heard a well-educated person say, “me and her went to the beach.” Beyond being grammatically incorrect, it may well be that this rule is rooted in Christian ethics, which requires that we put others first. But even then, it’s not “her and me,” but “she and I.”

Then there are cases where a word is misused, diminishing its proper meaning. “Awesome” comes immediately to mind. A standard dictionary definition would be “extremely impressive or daunting; inspiring great admiration.” Adding to its misuse is the tiresome fact that it has become a cliché. Such overuse diminishes the value of a word and betrays thoughtlessness.

² Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1872), 124.

³ Barton Swaim, review article “Between a Stop and a Hard Pause,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 9, 2019 A-13, reviewing *Semicolon* by Cecelia Watson.

Finally, there are words that are used improperly, thus removing the nuance of the original meaning. “Enormity” is a classic example. A recent eulogy for a supreme court justice referred to the enormity of the shoes that would need to be filled. This word means “a great evil.” When confused with immensity, it eventually removes the original meaning from English usage.

I realize that poor grammar is largely caused by poor education. I am grateful to have been forced (I hated grammar in school, until I studied Greek) to learn good grammar and to have been raised in a household with two well-spoken parents, neither of whom, by the way, went past high school. And, I am still corrected on occasion (my adult children delight to do so), for which I am grateful, since good speaking is a lifetime learning endeavor. Since we serve the Word made flesh, it behooves us, especially those who preach and teach, to pay constant attention to good grammar. Good manners, of course, will dictate that we correct others graciously and often remain silent. But good grammar glorifies God.

Gregory E. Reynolds *is pastor emeritus of Amoskeag Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Manchester, New Hampshire, and is the editor of Ordained Servant.*

Servant Work

Conflict Resolution in the Church, Part 2

by Alan D. Strange

Humility is needed on all sides in church discipline—in the offended and in the restoring parties. All are challenged in this process to walk humbly *coram Deo*. Matthew 7:1–5 teaches that the offended is to be quite aware of his or her own sin, and even of contribution to the offending party’s sin. We can properly speak of an “innocent party,” but even that party is not without sin. We tend to minimize our faults and to maximize those of others. We need true humility so that in the whole process we really listen to one another, which very easily is lost when feelings run high (Phil. 2:1–11).

Galatians 6:1–5 is particularly relevant to the consistory or session as a restoring party. Those involved in restoring should be humble, profoundly aware of their own sin and need. In the process of protracted and perhaps difficult dealings this can be quite a challenge to the men on the consistory or session, who can easily become defensive and entrenched in a position, particularly against a party perceived to be willful or resistant. In the sinning/offending party, the end sought is repentance/humility.

The elements of biblical repentance (mirroring faith) are recognition and acknowledgement of the sin. Since God’s holy law has been violated, no small part of repentance involves hating the sin, in other words, having God’s perspective toward the sin. In addition to hating the sin, repentance includes turning from the sin, with an endeavor after new obedience.

True repentance does not mean that the party is no longer struggling with the sin (having gained “higher life” or a perfectionistic victory). This is perhaps the trickiest part: charity should prevail; turning from the sin does not mean never repeating it, but truly hating it and turning from it when it manifests itself. The party ought to be truly humbled and desire to walk in new obedience. We ought to restore when true brokenness is evident, not requiring victory altogether over the sin (CO Articles 57–58). Restoration is one of the greatest joys of ministry, and I have been privileged to witness several striking instances of it, in some cases after many years of rebellion on the part of excommunicated parties.

There are several different ways in which matters may be brought before a judicatory. A person may come as his own accuser (BD 5.1). In such a case, the judicatory must ascertain what the offense is. This cannot be assumed but must be clearly established from the law of God. Is it serious? Perhaps consistorial/sessional or pastoral counsel will suffice. This step needs to be very carefully handled. If a real offense has been committed (not someone confessing to something that is not sin, as someone once confessed to me having wine, not to excess, at a wedding reception) and its seriousness is clearly established, then the questions are: Is the party repentant and what shall the censure be?

Allegations of sin may be brought to the elders from the offended party or from witnesses. Those bringing the allegations must be able to testify to the inability to resolve matters under the first two steps of Matthew 18 already examined. Alternatively, the

offense because of its very nature (that has a public character given its nature, e.g., adultery) must be brought before the consistory/session, even though it is known to a few, and the guilty party may seem repentant.

A charge may be brought to the elders (BD 3.1–3 details the steps in the institution of judicial process). Make sure that section 3 is satisfied (“Every charge of an offense must: (a) be in written form, (b) set forth the alleged offense, (c) set forth only one alleged offense, (d) set forth references to applicable portions of the Word of God, (e) set forth, where pertinent, references to applicable portions of the confessional standards, (f) set forth the serious character of the offense which would demonstrate the warrant for a trial.”), as is required in BD 3.7a., which describes the preliminary investigation that must occur for the judicial process to go forward.

There are several circumstances that may occasion the bringing of a charge and determining how it is handled: if the offense is public or against the consistory/session, the offending party is brought directly before the elders; it may be brought directly to the elders if the offense is known by them or if the offense is widely known and brought by other parties. A charge of an offense may also be brought by someone who has something against an elder or the pastor not personally resolvable (BD 3.1).

When matters are brought before the consistory/session, it must seek to assure itself that such matters ought to be before it; that the parties have done their utmost to resolve the matters privately first, remembering the admonitions of BD 3.4–5, which require offenses to be resolved as privately and locally as possible. The BD and the URCNA CO (Articles 51–66), by the way, is the church’s application of the Scriptural/confessional principles governing church discipline (see BD 1 and 2), not an arbitrary set of rules that stand over against Scripture.

The consistory/session, once it has ascertained that a serious offense may have been committed, may invite the accused to come as his or her own accuser. If the accused declines, then judicial proceedings may be instituted in accordance with BD 3.3. The judicatory would then proceed to a preliminary investigation in accordance with 3.7b or 3.8. This is not at all perfunctory and in certain cases, doctrinal ones, for e.g., is perhaps the most important part of the judicial process. The judicatory would then proceed to trial if the preliminary investigation demonstrates that such is warranted. The rest of the proceedings that follow are set forth in BD 4, which details the actual trial of a judicial case.

If a trial is to be held, judicatories shall ordinarily sit with open doors, unless there is a manifest need for the doors to be closed (in the case of sensitive testimony and protecting the good names of witnesses). In the case of heresy, the doors must be open as all teaching is public. In any case, the doors should not be closed to protect the accused but to protect non-accused parties to the matter and possibly witnesses. Closing the doors for the sake of the accused looks like an “old-boys club” protecting one of its own. Conversely, closing the doors so that the proceedings of the judicatory will not be witnessed can look like railroading the accused and turns the judicatory into a “star-chamber” proceeding.

The judicatory may deny the accused the privileges of office or membership until the case is concluded. This is generally done in the case of scandalous and/or notorious sin, either for office or general membership or both. And it may also be done in the case of a

charge of heresy for the teaching officer when it would be thought injurious for him to continue teaching.

Trials may be conducted *in absentia* when the accused refuses or fails to show up for his trial. The first no-show calls for a second summons; at the second no-show, the trial may proceed. This is arguably inferior to the PCA's procedure: a no-show brings forth a summary judgment on the charge of contumacy, which must be dealt with before the presenting charge can be considered. The elders may wish thus to charge a no-show, requiring them to deal with obstinate rebelliousness before proceeding to deal with the substance of the presenting offense.

The clerk should take roll at the beginning of every session. A person must be present at each session to vote on the specifications and charges though he may otherwise deliberate, ask questions, and propose motions (BD 4.C.2.b). The clerk should keep a careful record of the trial (but a transcript is not required).

The accused is presumed innocent until proven guilty—as a biblical principle; concomitant with that is the notion that the prosecution bears the burden of proof. We are not told whether or not that means “beyond reasonable doubt” or a “preponderance of the evidence.” The accused can sit in judgment on no part of his case, including the preliminary hearing (if he is a member of the judicatory). The accused is entitled to counsel, as long as such is a member in good and regular standing of the OPC (for those tried there). The accused may raise objections as noted in BD 4.B.2:

The accused may object to the competency of any witness and the authenticity, admissibility, and relevancy of any testimony or evidence produced in support of the charge and specifications. The trial judicatory shall decide on all such objections after allowing the accused to be heard in support thereof.

Several matters arise with respect to the witnesses in a trial. Initially in the preliminary investigation the competency of a witness is to be determined. Is the witness of sufficient mental capacity to testify? Is he properly an “eye-witness”? The credibility of a witness is determined by one who, during the trial, stands up under cross-examination. Depositions may be taken by commissions and witnesses when summoned are bound to appear (before the proper body). Pursuant to BD 4:B.4, the accused may request that witnesses not testify in the presence of other witnesses.

The rules for evidence are as follows: it must be factual, not mere opinion (if not expert, do we have such?) or conclusions. Evidence can be direct—eyewitness, letter, etc. Evidence may be circumstantial—matters surrounding the alleged offense (“I drove by and saw him leaving her house at 9:30 on the date in question”). Specifications may be established by the testimony of more than one witness or duly authenticated documentary evidence. We sometimes feel stymied in this regard, being certain that a person has committed a deed but lacking sufficient direct or circumstantial evidence. We must remember that it is our duty to adhere to this standard and not to seek to bring to light what only Judgment Day may. It is unsurprising to find the world in its fear seeking for ultimate justice now. We should not fall prey to this in the church.

An examiner is to be appointed by the judicatory. He conducts the exam on behalf of the body, though other members always retain the right to take part in the examination as they see fitting. “Prosecution” witnesses are first examined by the judicatory. Then such

are cross-examined by the accused and/or his counsel. The judicatory may then conduct a re-direct examination, and the accused may follow with a re-cross examination. The subject matters of the re-directs and re-crosses are restricted to that already in evidence. Leading questions are permitted only under cross-examination (only when the witness is presumed to be “hostile” and not friendly). “Defense” witnesses are first examined by the accused, may be crossed, with the defense given the last examination on re-direct. In the OPC BD the defense always gets the last go at witnesses.

If new evidence is presented against the accused, he must be given a reasonable time to examine and prepare his defense. Exculpatory evidence produced by the accused must be examined by the judicatory, and it must take action accordingly.

Trial proceedings are as follows. The first meeting of the trial is *pro forma*, involving, first, a formal reading of the charges and specifications; then, a fixing of the time, date, and place for the second meeting. The accused is given citations to call witnesses.

The “second meeting” of the trial is the way to which all the rest of the trial is referred. The accused may at beginning of the second meeting interpose objections dealing with everything done up to this point, including matters germane to the preliminary investigation. The trial judicatory may dismiss the charge(s) or amend them (in a non-substantive way). If the trial judicatory determines to proceed to trial, the accused shall plead. If he pleads “guilty,” the trial judicatory proceeds to censure. If he pleads “not guilty,” the trial judicatory proceeds to trial. The accused may also, after the presentation of the “prosecution’s” case, move for dismissal of the case.

At the conclusion of the trial, the accused makes final arguments (if the examiner has a summation, the accused follows). Then the trial judicatory (not the accused or his counsel) deliberates on each specification and charge. If “guilty,” the trial judicatory proceeds to the censure phase. Censure is first proposed and then pronounced after the expiration of time for filing an appeal. Censures may be of the following sort: admonition, rebuke, suspension (definite or indefinite), and excommunication (censures are described in greater detail in BD 6 and CO Articles 55–56).

The appeal process (in a judicial case) allows ten days to file notice of appeal after proposal of censure; thirty days to perfect an appeal (the appeal process is described in BD 7; CO Article 31 provides simply the broad right of appeal). Only the accused (or a reversed judicatory) can appeal a judicial verdict. Appeal may be on the censure as well as on the verdict. The records of the case must be sent up to the appellate judicatory by the clerk of the judicatory of original jurisdiction. The appellate judicatory (excluding the members of the judicatory from which appeal is taken) may reverse, modify, or uphold judgment of the lower judicatory.

There is, in addition to judicial discipline, administrative discipline. Judicial discipline involves charges brought against individuals for sin, not against judicatories (whose members could be charged, though this would provide remarkable challenges), and only for sin serious enough to warrant trial.

Administrative discipline involves complaints brought against judicatories for errors or delinquencies (detailed in BD 9; CO Article 31 establishes the broad right of appeal). It should be noted that such errors or delinquencies must be of constitutional magnitude and may not be properly filed for allegations of lack of wisdom or poor judgment (there are other ways of dealing with that). Rather, complaints address doctrinal errors or delinquencies committed by a judicatory regarding the Scriptures and standards, and also

polity errors or delinquencies which are violations of the Book of Church Order. Complaints may not be brought in judicial cases. All that is objectionable in a judicial case must be stated as specifications of error in the judicial appeal (BD 7.2).

Here are some circumstances under which actions subject to a complaint might occur: A session/consistory or presbytery/classis makes a decision (error) or fails to make a decision or take a necessary timely action (delinquency) which is alleged to violate the Scriptures or the constitution of the church (the doctrinal standards or the church order), and such alleged error or delinquency can in no other way be remedied.

The complaint must be processed as soon as possible, but within three months (unless some extraordinary circumstances exist). It is the burden of the complaint to set before the judicatory as clearly as possible the alleged errors or delinquencies. The appeal of a complaint from the body complained against shall be entered at the earliest possible time, with reasons appended, and becomes the vehicle for taking the complaint to a higher judicatory, which shall consider the substance of the original complaint above all else.

Grievances against the pastor should be brought, first of all, to him and/or the elders. If private, concerns should be brought to him alone, and the parties should attempt to work through them. If with specific reference to his office (preaching, counseling, etc.), the concerns should be brought to him and then to the elders. The elders should engage in judgment (CO Articles 61–62). They should be prepared to hear the grievance and advise the pastor. The pastor should listen carefully, and the parishioner(s) should carefully heed the elders' words.

Here is another difference between the OPC and URC church orders. Not only are the rules concerning discipline more detailed within the Presbyterian (and many other continental) church orders, but also original jurisdiction with respect to a charge against a minister vests in the presbytery in all the Presbyterian church orders. In the URC, a charge against the minister would be handled at the local level rather than the classical level (though there would be consultation more broadly) as set forth in CO Article 61:

When a minister, elder or deacon has committed a public or gross sin, or refuses to heed the admonitions of the Consistory, he shall be suspended from his office by his own Consistory with the concurring advice of the Consistories of two neighboring churches. Should he harden himself in his sin, or when the sin committed is of such a nature that he cannot continue in office, he shall be deposed by his Consistory with the concurring advice of classis.

What constitutes serious sin with respect to the office-bearer is set forth in CO Article 62.

For the Presbyterian, if two or more witnesses have a concern with the pastor, then, while the session should think about a charge if the pastor denies the allegation or admits it and refuses to repent, the charge itself would be heard and tried in the presbytery. Nevertheless, a charge coming to the presbytery against a pastor should ordinarily come with the session's having drafted or endorsed it, as the judgment of the local elders is always of great importance. Rulers ought to be humble and members submissive throughout the process. Here it may be noted that elders ought themselves to engage with some regularity in the time-honored practice of mutual censure (CO Article 63). Consistories (and councils) practice mutual censure variably, but it is an accountability mechanism that permits office-bearers to make sure (in a roundtable fashion), at some

designated intervals, that all are at peace with each other or are committed to doing what needs to be done to achieve restored relations. Elders especially benefit from unity in their work, and mutual censure is an opportunity to address concerns that may impede such unity and allow office-bearers to go forward in mutual respect and affection.

It is proper for a pastor to hear criticism and not immediately respond. All appearance of defensiveness should be avoided, and forgiveness sought wherever possible. Elders should use discretion in visits or other occasions and direct that private offenses be dealt with accordingly and refer alleged public offenses to the pastor and session.

Finally, Psalm 133 furnishes us with an excellent conclusion to this essay, speaking as it does of the goodness and beauty of brotherly unity:

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

The unity of which the Psalm speaks is the end of all church discipline that seeks to promote the purity, peace, and unity of the church.

Reconciliation and resolution of conflict, in other words, lead to the beautiful unity celebrated by Psalm 133 and for which we long more and more in all of our worshiping assemblies. May God grant us such unity, with him and with each other as members of his mystical body, here and hereafter, until that perfect day when we enjoy unity in a world brought to its eschatological goal in which heaven and earth are one and God is all and in all.

Alan D. Strange *is a minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and serves as professor of church history and theological librarian at Mid-America Reformed Seminary in Dyer, Indiana, and is associate pastor of New Covenant Community Church (OPC) in Joliet, Illinois.*

ServantTechnology

OPC.org 3.0: Going Mobile

by Gregory E. Reynolds

Soon you will see another new face for OPC.org. Once again the Committee on Christian Education's (CCE) Subcommittee on Internet Ministries (SIM) has managed the redesign of OPC.org with the indispensable help of web designer Chris Tobias and a very competent technical engineer.

In 1995 the OPC initiated its first website (1.0). The minutes of the March 14-15, 1995, meeting of the CCE record the passing of the following motion, "The CCE encourage connectivity by the members of the Committee by December 31, 1995." According to whois.com, the domain OPC.org was registered on September 20, 1995. Sometime that fall the website was launched. It was remarkably simple, as were most websites of the day, consisting of our name with a series of hyperlinks. The example below is roughly a year after the initial launch.



This page was last updated on August 18th, 1996 by webmaster@opc.org.

By 1998 the graphics were slightly improved with an expanded and highlighted introduction. The number of hyperlinks remained the same.



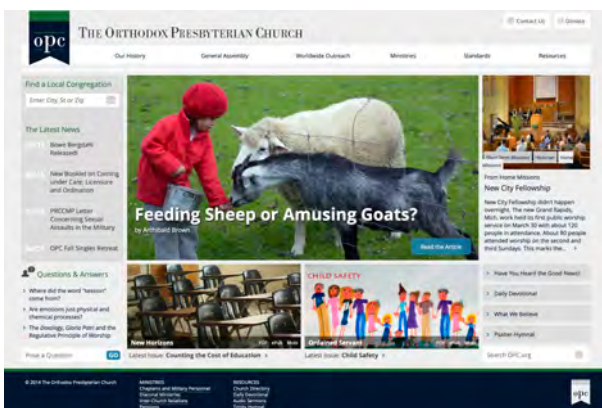
By 2003 a sidebar was added for the hyperlinks, which had been expanded to seventeen. A logo was also designed and added as a banner on the top left.



In 2005 the CCE realized that a more professional design was needed to insure a contemporary web presence, with greater access to the expanding content of the website (2.0). This was a major project. To achieve this goal, web designer Chris Tobias, webmaster Stephen Pribble, technical expert the late Barry Traver, and programmer Jonathan Barlow, were engaged to create a website, meeting the sophisticated standards of the day. While this was during the early days of the introduction of mobile and social media (known as web 2.0), those did not become a pervasive presence until later. The new website (2.0) was launched November 1, 2005.



In 2014 the same team updated the website with a more visual aesthetic, making the feature article much more prominent.



Now in 2019 we have redesigned our website to accommodate the pervasive use of mobile media devices (3.0). Our focus has always been on the dissemination of gospel truth throughout the world. Our content rich site has not changed its purpose. As I wrote in 2005:

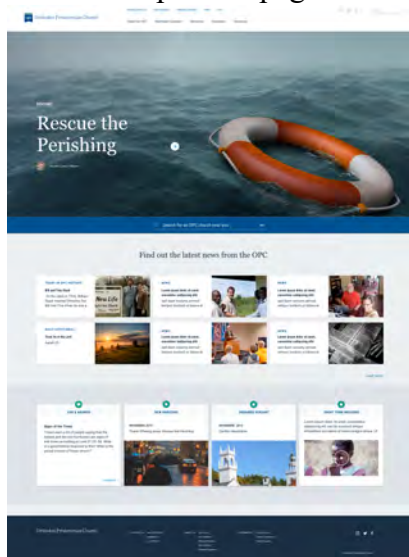
The original mission of OPC.org, as stated in a report to the 1998 General Assembly, has not changed: “The Orthodox Presbyterian Church shall, through its Committee on Christian Education, maintain an official presence on the World Wide Web through its website known as OPC.org, in order to: 1) Provide public information concerning the description, beliefs, structure, ministries, and publications of the OPC; 2) Promote the cause of Christ within the OPC; 3) Provide Reformed theological material for consideration by other Reformed churches around the world; 4) Evangelize and teach the gospel to the world.

I have been part of this project since the 2005 redesign with some trepidation. I think my colleagues on the CCE share this concern as we seek together to be good stewards of the gospel and how it is communicated. This means that we are neither utopian nor dystopian about electronic communication, thus we embrace its benefits and seek to avoid its liabilities.

Such a stance requires a prudential engagement with the electronic environment. And with this new design I would reiterate a stern warning. The internet, along with the entire electronic environment, is rearranging the entire structure of Western civilization as did the automobile a century ago. Electronic media subtly alter our thoughtforms, priorities, and relationships to God, his world, his church, and other people in ways that have the potential to undermine the Christian life. Among other things this means that face-to-face relationships may be compromised. As a member of the committee that fields Q&A questions, I have observed a number of people seeking advice that, consciously or unconsciously, does an end run around the leaders of the local church. So, while affirming and enjoying the benefits of the electronic media, we must be vigilant stewards. Among the great benefits of our website is the number of people from other countries, even Saudi Arabia and Iran, hundreds from around the world, who have visited, and in some cases interacted with, OPC.org. May the Lord continue to bless our imperfect efforts.

Here is what you can expect to see soon:

The desk top home page:



The mobile landing page:



ServantClassics

Beza on the Trinity

by David C. Noe

The following was translated from Theodore Beza's *The Unity of the Divine Essence and the Three Persons Subsisting in It, Against the Arians' Homoiousios*, published in Geneva, March 19, 1565 (the fourteenth day before the calends of April). It is a five-page introduction to his *Theses or Axioms on the Trinity of the Persons and Unity of the Essence*, with which it was published. The text is from *Tractationes Theologicae Bezae, Volumen I*, Jean Crespin, Geneva 1570, 646–50.

A letter to the most illustrious Prince Nicholas Radzvilas,¹ the supreme Marszałek² of the great Duchy of Lithuania.

Most illustrious Prince, I received two letters from your Excellency at the same time: one addressed to Mr. John Calvin of blessed memory, and the other to myself. Both of them were written beautifully and with refinement. Because I am replying so tardily, I ask your Excellency not to think this is due to any disregard, nor to any other reason than that there was a shortage of couriers traveling from here to Tubingen, the place where your letters to us originated. These are the reasons why my reply is so brief even though this is a quite serious and urgent matter.

I have read, and not without absolute terror, some comments which Gregorius Pauli,³ Casanonus, and several others who have been enchanted by Biandrata and Gentile⁴ wrote in different treatises. They are converting⁵ the three persons or ὑποστάσεις (*hypostaseis*) into three numerically distinct⁶ οὐσίας (*ousias*) or essences. In their writings I have found so many things that are both opaque and even contradictory that not even at present do I have full clarity as to their doctrinal positions and arguments.

¹ Cf. *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence*, by Anatol Lieven (Yale University Press, 1994), 47–48.

² This is the title of a very high-ranking official in the Polish court, a top adviser to the king.

³ d. 1591.

⁴ Giorgio Biandrata (1515–1588) and Giovanni Valentino Gentile (c.1520–1566), two famous, Italian born anti-Trinitarians.

⁵ *transformantes*.

⁶ *numero*.

But your letters, although they were written far more lucidly, nevertheless—if I may speak frankly with your Excellency—do not fully make up for my simple mindedness.⁷ This is especially the case in your explanation of that third conciliatory statement which, if I understand it correctly, I think is hardly at all different from the position of either Gentile or Pauli.

And so, because there is not yet much agreement between us concerning the substance of these issues, and far less even with respect to the arguments of our opponents, we can't help but be legitimately afraid that we could seem to be working in vain over these much disputed topics.⁸ Or that we are not adequately precise in attacking our opponents' position. This circumstance could inflame these already unfortunate debates rather than extinguish them. And furthermore, even the debate itself shows, with so many written documents flying back and forth, that the controversy is increasing rather than diminishing, while each man does not allow what he has just written to be adequately grasped.

Therefore, before I publish a fitting answer to the individual arguments, I demand⁹ this from you, your Excellency, in the name of Christ: you must compel¹⁰ those who do not agree with this proposition—Father, Son, Holy Spirit¹¹ are one and the same God—to do as follows. They must write out, point by point, clearly and distinctly, their own entire dogma both on the essence and on the hypostases,¹² in definite and clear theses. Then they must provide their own positions as derived both from the Word of God and from the writings of the Greek and Latin fathers. Finally, if you have no objection, they must supply refutations of our arguments, which they know full well.

Now I shall finally have the opportunity to answer both more candidly and more concisely. This is something that we would have done voluntarily even if your Excellency, in keeping with your own zeal for your country and even more for the whole church, had not petitioned us. But now, since your Excellency has specifically appealed to us, we have decided without reservation to complete this task much more willingly and carefully, with the small measure of grace granted us by the most great and mighty God.

Yet in the meantime, so that some people do not conclude that we have delayed our response because we have retreated from our position or because of duplicity, we assert openly before your Excellency, most illustrious Prince, that by God's grace we persist in the true and orthodox position. Not only that, we have also been greatly strengthened in our position by reading their falsehoods. We hold that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three truly distinct persons, and nevertheless one and the same God according to essence. For what could be more inappropriate, no, what could be

⁷ *ruditati*.

⁸ The syntax here is deliberately convoluted as Beza seeks to come to the point without offending the Prince. I have broken up a very long and hypotactically beautiful sentence into manageable English portions.

⁹ *flagitamus*, a very strong word.

¹⁰ *adigas*.

¹¹ The conjunction here is omitted, a figure of speech called asyndeton, to stress the unity of the persons in the Godhead.

¹² Here Beza uses Latin instead of Greek, which he employs interchangeably.

more irreligious than to multiply in number the most simple¹³ infinity? And so we must recoil from the blindness of the Jews, who removed the distinction between persons, and likewise abhor Sabellius's insolence. He recognizes the persons but only distinguishes between them verbally, not in fact. The Arians' blasphemy is also reprehensible. Some of them regard Christ as of a different substance, others as of like substance.¹⁴ The Macedonians are similarly detestable for attacking the deity of the Holy Spirit.

But we think that all these, however loathsome they are, have nevertheless said things less absurd than the Severians¹⁵ once did and those with whom we are now dealing. For they retain the fundamental point that God is one as his essence is one, since the Word of God alone declares the real distinction of the essence into three persons without any division. But they have refused to reason soundly from that foundation. Thus it is no wonder that they have not held onto the distinction of persons. But what in the end will they leave intact in the foundation of religion if the divine essence has been torn apart into three gods?

Nevertheless, they would readily persuade us that they avoid a multiplicity of gods if they would only say that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one, i.e., in one divine nature or essence. But even if, for example, Peter, John, and James should be described as one in *species*, they are not for that reason constituted as three men. So what value is there in retreating from their position? Why have they not instead freely and sincerely maintained what directly follows from their dogma, namely that yes, there is one deity but three gods? And that they are not equal to one another, because to exist from a separate origin¹⁶ is greater than to possess one's own existence from another's existence,¹⁷ or to be God transiently?¹⁸

Certainly they must hold that God is either one in number or many. If one, then why are they fighting so fiercely? But if many—and evidently they believe that the Son's essence has been propagated from the Father's essence so that there are in number two essences—how will they so boldly dare to deny that they posit numerically multiple gods? Therefore, if we believe them, then those ancient idolaters¹⁹ should not have been charged with merely worshiping multiple gods, but with worshiping multiple gods in three persons, and indeed false gods. This multiplication of the divine essence into two gods (for we have also heard that some of them erase the Holy Spirit) or into three gods, how is this consistent with their other dogma, that whatever things are predicated in the Scriptures of the one and only God must not be understood of the Son or Holy Spirit? For if the Father is the one and only God, it follows that the Son either is not God, or that he is God by another *genus* of deity than the Father. That is the Arians' error. If when Abel was born Adam was

¹³ *simplicissimam infinitatem*; simple here means "uncompounded," without "parts or passions" as WCF 2.1 states.

¹⁴ Beza uses Greek here without Latin gloss, ἑτεροούσιον (*heteroousion*) and ὁμοιούσιον (*homoiousion*) respectively.

¹⁵ This is a second century gnostic sect also known as Encratites.

¹⁶ *esse aliunde*, as the Father on this theory.

¹⁷ *habere suum esse ab alterius esse*, as the Son on this theory derives his existence from the Father.

¹⁸ *precario esse Deum*, as the Holy Spirit, on this theory.

¹⁹ I.e., the Trinitarian orthodox.

the one and only man, his son Abel either was not man or was endowed with another human nature than his father's, and thereby differed from him in *species*.

As for their reply, that the Father alone is “very God,”²⁰ i.e., according to their interpretation that he has his being from himself and for that reason can alone be called God, is this not an absurd expression? For the fact that one's existence derives from oneself or from another does not constitute a separate species of nature. And therefore the Father cannot nor ought to be designated the one and only God for the reason they offer, but rather the one and only Father. Just as the Son is designated the one and only Son because he is only begotten. Nor did anything like what these men invent ever occur to the Apostle when he called the Father the one and only God, and Jesus Christ the one and only Lord.²¹ And we will, God helping us, explain this more fully on some other occasion.

Now, moving on to their accusation that we are Sabellians, what justification do they really have for doing this? Sabellius, who confounded the terms essence and person, held Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to be one, while we hold that there are three, truly and really distinct by their incommunicable properties. So what similarity is there really between him and us? I would say the same as exists between darkness and light, since these two statements are not synonymous: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one; and Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God. The first statement confounds the persons, and that is Sabellian. But the second teaches that the persons are distinct in such a way that the individual persons are one, and the same is the whole divine essence. And likewise, the individual persons are not only one deity but also the one and same God. Of this threefold subsistence in the one God the order begins from the Father and ends in the Holy Spirit. Therefore, since these men mock us as though we were saying things that are contradictory—because we maintain that the three are one—they barely deserve a reply. For we do not with Sabellius hold that the three persons are one, but we distinguish the hypostases in one essence according to the Word of God by their properties and numerically.

“All the same,” our opponents reply, “you do not say ‘one thing’ but ‘one God.’”²² Quite the contrary! We do not simply say “one” but “one God.” This is plainly with reference to the one and same essence, in all which these three²³ so subsist that they are neither divided, nor at all conjoined or *synousioi*.²⁴ Instead, they are really distinct in their own incommunicable properties such that any one of the three according to hypostasis is different than the other two. And nevertheless, because the one subsists in the entire and same essence, therefore he is the one and same God as the other two.

The understanding of the Council of Nicea was no different when it wrote “God from God,” even though the phrase is somewhat vague. This was done not in order to establish two Gods or to derive any kind of deity from deity. Rather, it was simply to establish against Arius the identity of essence in two persons. Thus John writes that

²⁰ αὐτόθεος (*autotheos*).

²¹ I Corinthians 8:4.

²² The distinction here is between *unum*, neuter and referring to one entity, and *unus*, which as masculine refers to Deus, i.e., God.

²³ Not persons (the form is masculine), but Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

²⁴ συνοῦσιοι, i.e., unity of substance that does not admit distinction.

“the Word which was God was with God in the beginning.”²⁵ So he makes plain not that there are two numerical essences but two persons subsisting in the one and same essence. Hilary forcibly emphasizes the same sense in his well-known statement “One from One, Whole from Whole, Perfect from Perfect,” though he is the one author these men approve.²⁶ But Hilary’s purpose is not only to deny the existence of a twofold deity, but also to deny the existence of two gods numerically. Because obviously the Son is other than the Father, and therefore second in order (but not in degree of Godhead)²⁷ with respect to the fact that he is begotten. And yet because the Son wholly subsists in the one and same essence, he is one and same as the Father with respect to the fact that he is God.

But as for the reason why the same relationship does not obtain among created species, Your Excellency should also consider the following. Created species, like a person, although they cannot be divided as to form, nevertheless because they are constituted of quantitative individuated elements (as I would express it), they are in fact divided according to their quantitative extension.²⁸

Consequently, let us use the following as an example: although Peter, John, and James are one in terms of both their universal and specific²⁹ form, they are not, however, one individual but are referred to as three. There can really be no doubt that they are not only distinguished by their incommunicable properties but also divided by their quantitative extension. Similarly, we not only say that Gabriel, Raphael, and Michael are three distinct hypostases of one angelic nature. We also hold that they are three spirits. Even though they are not limited by corporeal extension, still, bound by the peculiar quality of their substance they are truly separated one from another. But in the divine essence that is most simple in every respect, and most infinite in act,³⁰ there can be no place for either division or composition, but for distinction only. This is something that neither flesh nor blood has revealed to us but the Son himself. Moreover, the same logic that applies to a subject’s nature also holds with respect to those things that are predicated of that nature absolutely. And so likewise, the individual Persons are the one and same eternal, immeasurable, infinite, and omnipotent God.

And so, when we read in the work of that man who is both in substance and name “Gentile,”³¹ i.e., in his pamphlet against Athanasius, that there are multiple “eternals and omnipotents,” we realized that what the Apostle had foretold had been fulfilled in him. I mean that men of this type were given over to a reprobate mind, to a mind devoid of all reason and judgment.³² Now we must take a different position on those

²⁵ John 1.1; Beza uses his own Latin paraphrase here, not the Vulgate.

²⁶ I.e., of Poitiers, c. 310–367 AD. The quote is taken from his work *De Synodis Fidei Catholicae Contra Arianos*, chapters 12 and 13. Beza may well have consulted Erasmus’ 1523 edition of Hilary, though the phrase was commonplace.

²⁷ Beza writes simply *gradu*, which I have interpreted.

²⁸ *secundum quantitatem*.

²⁹ This is to be taken in the derivative sense, i.e., relating to species, and not in the colloquial way used today.

³⁰ *actu infinitissima*.

³¹ Giovanni Valentino Gentile. Beza here, for polemical purposes, is calling him gentile in the sense of barbarian or reprobate.

³² Romans 1:28.

properties that are predicated by relation, and that one in particular which they describe as ὑφισταμένην ιδιότητα (*hyphistamenēn idiotēta*).³³ Because, as Tertullian correctly explains in his work *Against Praxeas*, the nature of the relations³⁴ is that they can be neither the same nor can one differ from another.

Finally, how can they be so outrageous as to ascribe to us what they call a “quaternity”? For they dream that we posit that God exists in himself (and this is a topic that Hilary discusses at length yet without clarity in book 4 of his work) by some unknown kind of separate οὐσία (*ousia*) anterior to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus, they claim, we hold that there is a kind of fourth “shared” God³⁵ to whom those three persons are adjoined, leaving four gods as the result. Or, at the least, that we hold that those three persons like parts of a whole constitute that one “shared” being.

But the basic experience common to the created order teaches us just how stupid their invention is. For those things that are called universals do not exist in themselves but only the hypostases that subsist in them exist. Unless perhaps these men count human nature apart from its own individuated properties as a singular entity.³⁶ Applying this concept to individuated properties results in an increase in the number of such singular entities.³⁷

And so these men should know that when we speak of the divine essence we conceive in the mind not of some shared or conglomerate God, but that in which those individual persons subsist distinctly—as we said before—by their own unique properties, in the whole and same being. By the term “Trinity” we understand not one shared God separately, but three persons subsisting in one essence. This is because, as Gregory Nazianzus has correctly written, we cannot in the mind conceive the one essence apart from the three persons, nor the three persons apart from that whole same and singular essence. It also follows from this, as my father of blessed memory John Calvin, the true defender of this truth, properly wrote, that the prayer “Holy Trinity, One God” smacks of barbarism. For if the expression is not softened by a skillful interpretation, it seems to suggest either that there is something that subsists outside the three persons or aggregates the three persons themselves, guiding the invocation toward some universal (though this universal is not per se beyond the persons, but those three³⁸ subsist in it).

I do not doubt that those who first spoke this way³⁹ meant something different. But they who have adopted this position, as Your Excellency writes, are causing great harm to a very good man and openly revealing their own irreverence. From our

³³ Underlying quality of individuation.

³⁴ *relativorum*, scilicet, in the godhead.

³⁵ *communis Deus*.

³⁶ *unum quidpiam*; the idea is that human nature does not exist except as realized in individual persons. It makes no sense, therefore, to talk of a human nature and predicable properties apart from individuals, even though the shared qualities of all human beings considered conjointly constitute human nature. Beza is asking if his opponents want to deny this point.

³⁷ For example, saying that a man is wise does not mean that the quality of wisdom exists as *unum quidpiam* (a separate, individuated entity) apart from particular individuals. Such a position leads to the absurd expansion of meaningless, unpopulated metaphysical categories.

³⁸ *tria illa* is neuter, therefore it cannot refer to the persons of the Trinity.

³⁹ I.e., using the phrase *Sancta Trinitas unus Deus*.

perspective, these men demand that we fight not with arguments that they call merely human but from the Word of God. As though it were some kind of philosophical invention to hold that there are truly three persons, while of these same persons there is in number only one essence! But while I wait for a more full response from your Excellency, I shall at the same time do the following, in order to explain more precisely the particular relevant passages of God's Word. I shall set against these men whatever the Scriptures state in defense of the one God, and against a multiplicity of gods. And because we, though we are commanded to adore one God, nevertheless worship the Son and the Holy Spirit no differently than we do the Father, therefore we believe and confess that the Son, the Holy Spirit, and the Father are individually the one God who alone must be worshiped, though from the Father, as from a foundation, the distinctions of the persons derives.

Moses in his song bears witness that Jehovah alone was Israel's guide.⁴⁰ But Paul plainly calls him Christ.⁴¹ And so they must acknowledge that there are not two gods but that the one in number, who alone was called the guide, is Jehovah, even though one is the person of the Father, the other that of the great Angel himself.⁴² Yet I will say more about these matters on a later occasion when what I am asking for from your Excellency becomes available. As it is, I direct my attention to your Majesty. I plead with you, Most Noble Prince, that you compel those men to acknowledge openly the blasphemy that they have for some time now entertained: that there are numerically many gods.

They must, I say, admit along with us either that there is one and the same God or that many gods are derived from one. Furthermore, they must acknowledge that they are becoming detestable to this one true God and all his saints. Come on, let them own up to their own doctrine openly, the teaching they have swallowed from Philoponus, Severus, Damian, and other monsters of unhappy memory.⁴³ And if they can, they must prove it with arguments, or from the Scriptures, or from the consensus of the Fathers and the ancient church. We in our turn accept the same constraint. And if we cannot make their blasphemy as obvious as the sun at noon, then, Most Noble Prince, we do not at all object to being considered and treated as false prophets.

They praise Hilary alone more than all others, not of course because no one is more confusing or vague than he!⁴⁴ Still, we do not by this statement intend any insult to him. But why do they not acknowledge without argument that Augustine is the best and most learned writer? Obviously it is because they consider him a sophist, and so they toss around the phrase "some Augustinian God" as a joke. And yet even that phrase, Most Noble Prince, is so offensive to the minds of all godly people (and rightly so) that I am not in the least surprised that all such godly people who now live flee from these men no less than from the devil himself. For who could persuade a man of good judgment that Augustine taught anything different on the subject of the Trinity than the churches of Africa? And could believe that these churches held a

⁴⁰ Deuteronomy 32.

⁴¹ 1 Corinthians 10.

⁴² *magni ipsius Angeli*, by which Beza means a theophany of Christ.

⁴³ John Philoponus (c. 490–c. 570), Severus of Antioch (d. 583), Damian of Alexandria (578–605).

⁴⁴ Beza is being facetious. Hilary's orthodoxy is not in question but the obscurity of his writing makes him an easy ally for the anti-Trinitarians.

position that was any different than what the Catholic consensus maintained? I do indeed acknowledge that the Fathers have their warts (who could deny that?); but they are the kind of blemishes that still reveal a solid foundation. When this has been removed, what will we conclude their faith was, and what will we think of their church?

And so, most Illustrious Prince, we⁴⁵ neither can nor ought to pretend before your Highness that anybody who has granted men like this access can be excused. This is especially so when we have verified time and time again by written public statements what kind of man Biandrata is, as well as the nature of Gentile's notorious and perjurious pollution. Likewise, although this particular topic is weighty and especially difficult, it nevertheless belongs to that class of subjects into which inquiry is no more appropriate, after all the countless struggles waged against heretics, than is doubt whether divinity and eternal life exist at all! Consequently, I now mourn with heartfelt grief not only that this brilliant work of the Lord is so miserably hampered, but also that the whole kingdom of Poland is torn asunder by such woeful dissensions. And I weep over it with endless tears. Still, we are compelled both to acknowledge and adore the righteous judgment of God, who punishes with deserved blindness the curiosity and pride of men who had least reason for it (I say this without rancor).

We approve, moreover, and commend to you quite precisely the holy edicts of Hezekiah, Josiah, Asa, and several other righteous kings of Judah. These constitute a pious and sound plan for your Royal Majesty to root out blasphemies, in keeping with both your sovereign authority and, at the same time, sound judgment. But be careful that some men do not craftily use this as a pretext to condemn true religion. Similarly, be sure to distinguish, as is appropriate, those who have been ensnared by such men and drawn into error from the actual authors and defenders of blasphemy.

We exhort, moreover, the individual Christian brothers among you and especially orthodox pastors of churches to resist stoutly the discord and sedition that flow from reckless zeal. So, remembering that the sword⁴⁶ has been granted to the Magistrate, not to them, they must fight with inexhaustible effort—by the Spirit from God's mouth,⁴⁷ by faith, patience, and prayers—against those who would overthrow their souls.

As for the fact that some men have twisted Calvin's words from a letter published to the Polish brethren after his death, as though he were urging them to retaliatory carnage, this is such shameless and unbearable slander!

Finally, we beseech the Polish aristocracy, known for its great bravery, and especially your exalted highness, most illustrious Prince, which I hear surpasses the whole realm of Poland in piety and moral worth, we beseech you both by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, our one God, to protect yourself and your country against these destroyers,⁴⁸ and to do so with much more zeal and resolve than you do against the

⁴⁵ Most of the verbs in this letter are first person plural. Beza is the chief author, and but it is sent in the name of the Pastors and Professors (cf. *infra*) and thus a joint document. I have varied usage *ad libitum*.

⁴⁶ Cf. Rom. 13:1

⁴⁷ I.e., Scripture.

⁴⁸ I.e., Biandrata, Gentile, and other anti-Trinitarians.

Turks and the Moscow threat.⁴⁹ If you should do so, then I predict that the kingdom of Poland will enjoy the very best and greatest blessings with all success. But if not—and may God for his goodness prevent this from happening—then I, with the most heart-wrenching sorrow, foresee this outcome: our heavenly Father will use the same disasters he once employed to avenge the terrifying blasphemies of first Arius, then Nestorius, Eutychus, and others like them, to catch these men who sin in a way not that different. Relying on God’s grace, I freely devote not only my effort but also my life to disentangle us from these threatening evils.

In conclusion, most illustrious Prince, we pray that our Lord and God, pitying his church in distress, may quell Satan’s rage, establish and strengthen all churches and most of all those in Poland in the true concord of sound faith, and go on to crown Your Highness more and more with all gifts needful for the peace and tranquility of so great a kingdom.

Written at Geneva, March 19, 1565.

The Pastors and Professors of the Genevan Church, most devoted to your Highness.

Theses or Axioms on the Trinity of Persons and their Unity of Essence as Derived from Theodore Beza’s Lectures⁵⁰

- Thesis I** True knowledge⁵¹ concerning God is the principal aspect of truly calling upon God. This is because we cannot worship what we do not know.
- Thesis II** We must seek our conception⁵² of God from his Word, because in it, and nowhere else, does he fully disclose himself to us for our salvation, and he does so such that the one who gains knowledge⁵³ of God outside his Word gains no knowledge for his salvation.⁵⁴
- Thesis III** Because God has not only fully disclosed himself to the world in the writings of the Prophets and Apostles in the most true fashion,⁵⁵ but even, most of all and especially, in their very suitable words and phrases, we must devote our effort not only to confining ourselves within the boundaries of Scripture (as regards the main point), but also observe the customary formulas of Scripture down to the finest little bit.⁵⁶
- Thesis IV** Nevertheless, the stubbornness of heretics made it necessary sometimes to fashion terminology in order to avoid their petty objections. But the Holy

⁴⁹ *Tartaris ac Moscovitis.*

⁵⁰ From *Tractationes Theologicae Bezae, Volumen I* (Geneva: Jean Crespin, 1570), 651.

⁵¹ *de Deo scientia.*

⁵² *dei cognitio.*

⁵³ *sapit.*

⁵⁴ Beza here both recognizes the existence of natural theology and limits its efficacy.

⁵⁵ *verissime.*

⁵⁶ *mordicus.*

Fathers of the church did not do this carelessly. Instead, they used the greatest reverence so that the meaning of the Scriptures was not in any way whatsoever diminished, nor was any innovation introduced into God's Word.

Thesis V This was why, long ago, the Greek terms οὐσία (*ousia*) and ὑπόστασις (*hypostasis*) were adopted against Sabellius Afer, who confused the persons with the essence, and against Samosatenus of Antioch,⁵⁷ who destroyed the Son's divine nature. Nevertheless, the author of the letter to Hebrews in chapter 1 employed the second of these terms. Nearly the whole controversy regarding these topics depends upon the explanation of these two terms.

Thesis VI Therefore, we must understand that when the Fathers are discussing the divine mysteries, they have borrowed these terms from natural phenomena.⁵⁸ This is not because they thought that subjects so distinct could properly be explained using the same terms. Instead, they did this so that, in some way, they might by a kind of comparison of things unequal set before our eyes divine realities. And with these as their weapons they resolutely silenced those who were transforming theology into mere philosophical wrangling.

Thesis VII Therefore, we will state what οὐσία (*ousia*) and ὑπόστασις (*hypostasis*) mean when it comes to natural phenomena,⁵⁹ at least as much as the present argument will require, and then explain in what respect the same terms are applied to the divine mysteries.

Thesis VIII There are some designations of a type of universal and indeterminate meaning. These by similar reasoning⁶⁰ are attributed to a whole host of predicates in which we note there is something shared. This element is in fact present in the very many different subjects concerning which, by similar reasoning, it is predicated. But still, it does not subsist outside of those subjects, just as likewise those subjects do not subsist except in that common shared element. When, for example, I say "person," I do not conceive of anything that is properly subsisting *per se*, but I note in my mind a certain shared nature apart from any particular demarcation. By a similar reasoning Peter, Paul, Timothy, and other individual subjects like these subsist. Therefore, "person" is a term that indicates οὐσία (*ousia*), a concept expressed by the designation "person."

Thesis IX Furthermore, because this conceptualizing afterward descends from that aforementioned universal to the individual and particular instances

⁵⁷ Also known as Paul of Samosata, c. AD 200–275, who was Bishop of Antioch 260–68.

⁵⁸ *a rebus naturalibus*.

⁵⁹ *in rebus naturalibus*.

⁶⁰ *pari ratione*.

through which those subjects are distinguished—I mean those in which that common notion was previously conceived and which subsist fully delineated⁶¹ by those properties—therefore, designations have also been found that are adapted to expressing these distinctions. Thus we say Peter, Paul, and Timothy, which are expressed as names of these ὑπόστασεις (*hypostaseis*) or ὑφιστάμενοι (*hyphistamenoι*), i.e., names of subjects defined by their own properties and subsisting in their own, shared οὐσία (*ousia*).

Thesis X The word “God” denotes an essence infinite, eternal, supporting itself by its own power, omnipotent, creating and conserving all the things that it has made, and thus an essence in which all perfection dwells. When I say the word “God,” I understand that essence indeterminately, which by a shared reason is predicated of its own hypostases that subsist in it.

Thesis XI The subjects designated by these titles—Father, Son, Holy Spirit—are hypostases. That is, they are distinct in their properties, and subsisting from eternity in that common and eternal essence, because they are distinguished by their own properties. For the Father is unbegotten, begetting the Son. The Son is begotten from the Father. The Holy Spirit is neither begetting nor begotten, but from the Father and the Son proceeding.

Thesis XII I am not concerned about a more subtle distinguishing characteristic between proceeding and begetting. And certainly those who have wrangled back and forth about this have ignorantly twisted the Scriptural passages that have no bearing on the issue. For the fact that the Holy Spirit is someplace said to proceed from the Father and the Son refers to his manifestation and gifts. Let it be adequate that he is the Spirit, and common to the Father and the Son, and on that basis has reference to each.

Thesis XIII Because created substances have a finite essence, they necessarily therefore are finite, and consequently are distinguished not only by their individual properties, but their hypostases also have been truly separated. Therefore, Peter, Paul, and Timothy, although by a shared reasoning are called men, nevertheless in reality they are not one man but three men, even with respect to their very humanity. For because fathers cannot communicate their own complete essence with their sons, but it is only some portion which possesses the nature of the seed⁶² that takes its origin from their fathers, the sons’ essence is derived from this. And so the sons do not possess that same singular humanity which belongs to their fathers but only a similar one that has flowed forth from it. Consequently, the particular humanity, inasmuch as it is finite, cannot exist in diverse subjects. And so, I claim, in all respects there are three: Peter, Paul, Timothy, not one.

⁶¹ *circumscrip̄te.*

⁶² *seminis rationem.*

Thesis XIV But the consideration is quite different when it comes to things divine. For because divine essence is infinite, most simple, and eternal, therefore the three hypostases subsisting in it—although they are truly three in number—because these individual hypostases are distinguished by their own incommunicable properties, they are nevertheless not three gods nor are they said to be three gods in the same way that there are three men. This is because the Son is not begotten from the Father nor does the Holy Spirit proceed from Father and Son by some “cutting off”⁶³ of a portion, i.e., by division,⁶⁴ as when anything is divided into three pieces. Nor is this by some effluence,⁶⁵ that is, by ἀπόρροια (*aporroia*),⁶⁶ such as the procreation of children from the father’s seed. Nor is it by extension, i.e., περιβολή (*peribole*), which we see in the propagation that takes place in grafting of vines. But instead, in the divine this happens by an indescribable communication of the whole essence from eternity, in which no point of beginning, middle, or end can be stated.⁶⁷

Thesis XV Therefore, there is one and precisely the same essence of begetting, of begotten, and of proceeding, although it is not the case that the Father who begets is the Son that is begotten or the Spirit who proceeds. Nor that the Son is the Father who begets or the Spirit who proceeds. Nor is the Spirit the Father who begets nor the Son who is begotten. Nor is God himself thrice-named,⁶⁸ since the properties of persons are not imaginary accidents that can be present or absent, either actually or conceptually. But they truly reside in persons and distinguish them from others. And God is not a kind of accumulation⁶⁹ either, and this for two reasons. First, because these three persons are so distinguished as not to be separated. And second, because in any given person there is not some part of God’s essence but the whole essence, and this is unable to be separated into parts⁷⁰ because it is infinite.

Thesis XVI The statement I made concerning the unity and identity of essence is also by necessity understood concerning the common attributes of that essence; for example that God is one, thus also that the one is infinite, eternal, omnipotent, etc.

Thesis XVII ὁμοῦσια (*homousia*) or ὁμοούσια (*homoousia*) when it comes to natural phenomena are termed “individua.” These are combined in the same

⁶³ *resectione*.

⁶⁴ Beza employs a Greek expression, κατὰ μερισμὸν, which he then glosses in Latin.

⁶⁵ Here Beza reverses this practice, giving first the Latin *fluxu* then a Greek gloss.

⁶⁶ The ancients (e.g., Thales, Plato, Aristotle, Lucretius) explained the effects of a magnet, the “Hercules Stone” which attracts iron, by its ἀπόρροια, “things that flow out from it” or *effluvia*.

⁶⁷ *dari*, i.e., cannot be stated or supplied because it does not exist.

⁶⁸ *trinomius*, a very rare word.

⁶⁹ *aggregativus*; this could be translated “aggregated.”

⁷⁰ *insecabilis*.

essence or species, such as man with man, beast with beast, source with source. And so this term was adopted for divine phenomena in order to refute the Arians, who claimed that the Son was from the Father—not begotten from the Father’s substance but made *ex nihilo*. Consequently, they claim, the Son is God by participating in his power, not by nature. Therefore, against such men it was decided that the Son is ὁμοούσιον (*homousion*) or ὁμοούσιον (*homoousion*) with the Father. They did not, however, intend by this term merely that the essence of the Father and of the Son is similar, as is the case in natural phenomena (this is how two essences numerically would be taken, and thus there would be numerically two gods, which is anathema). Instead, they wished to describe two realities: first, that the Son is not different from the Father in essence, not because he was made *ex nihilo*, but as he was begotten from the Father himself, and so from eternity. This distinction they marked by another term, coeternal.⁷¹ Second, that he is from the Father insofar as he is the Son, such that he is one with the Father insofar as he is God. That is to say, that the Son’s essence is not somehow a derivative⁷² essence which took its origin from another principal. The heretics called this notion *ex traduce*, and today some men advance this idea under the term *essentiation*.⁷³ But we assert that the actual, complete essence—by which the Father is God—is the Son by begetting, as the essence has been shared with him by the Father. As a result, Father and Son—insofar as they subsist in one and the same essence, or are of one and the same essence numerically, with respect to essence—are the one and same God, although, nevertheless the Father is not the Son.

Thesis XVIII Therefore, those who called the Son ὁμοιούσιον (*homoiouision*) deservedly stand condemned. By this they mean of like essence, in order to establish two essences numerically. Likewise, the other Arians deserve condemnation who said that the Son is ἑτερούσιον (*heterouision*), meaning of a different essence. And in order to avoid the deceit of those who fashioned the term ὁμοιούσιον (*homoiouision*) from ὁμοούσιον (*homoousion*) by inserting a single letter,⁷⁴ the Fathers began by the figure crasis⁷⁵ to say ὁμούσιος (*homousios*) while retaining the same meaning.

Thesis XIX Therefore when we say that the Son is of one essence with the Father we distinguish the persons but not the essence. And this form of expression must be used for the common attributes of essence rather than for essence itself. We speak with greatest precision when we say that Father, Son, and

⁷¹ συναϊδίου (*synaidiou*).

⁷² *secundariam*.

⁷³ Apparently Gentile, according to René Hoven: *Lexique de La Prose Latine de La Renaissance* (Brill, 1994), 127.

⁷⁴ I.e., the iota.

⁷⁵ A phonetic phenomenon to avoid repetition of vowel sounds. Cf. H. W. Smyth, *A Greek Grammar*, §62ff.

Holy Spirit are one in essence, or that there is one essence of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Thesis XX The ancients used these formulas not to convey the notion of a plurality of essences but to show that there was identity of essence in the relations of the persons, against those who said that Christ was made *ex nihilo* and in fact made in time. For statements of the Arians like the following lead to that understanding: “there was a time when he was not”⁷⁶ and, “he was created from things that were not.”⁷⁷ In other words, that he was established from things that did not exist. Therefore the Fathers added to the Creed⁷⁸ the phrase “true God from true God” to show that God from whom God exists, i.e., the Father, and God who is from God, i.e., the Son, are by reason of essence one God.

Thesis XXI There is some ambiguity⁷⁹ between εἶναι (*einai*) and ὑφιστάναι (*hyphistanai*), i.e., being and subsisting, and likewise between οὐσία (*ousia*) and ὑπόστασις (*hypostasis*), i.e., substance and essence. For this reason, when these terms are interchanged great errors necessarily follow, since the resolution of this controversy depends upon distinguishing between them. The writings of the ancient authors, and especially the works of Hilary and Jerome, make this very clear. Therefore, the Latin Fathers adopted the term “person” for ὑπόστασις (*hypostasis*), and the Greek Fathers likewise found this acceptable.

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⁷⁶ ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν.

⁷⁷ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ἐκτίσθη.

⁷⁸ I.e., Nicea.

⁷⁹ Homonymia.

ServantReading

Theoretical-Practical Theology, Volume 2: Faith in the Triune God, *by Peter Van Mastricht*

by Ryan M. McGraw

Theoretical-Practical Theology, Volume 2: Faith in the Triune God, by Peter Van Mastricht, trans. Todd M. Rester, ed. Joel R. Beeke and Michael Spangler. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2019, xxx + 660 pages, \$50.00.

There has been a recent upsurge of interest in classic Reformed theology. Due to the fact that much of this material is buried in Latin texts, this translation of Mastricht's *Theoretical-Practical Theology* (originally published 1698–99) has a vital role to play in mediating historical Reformed thought to a modern English-speaking audience. This second volume (of seven total projected) focusses on the doctrine of God. Mastricht provides a model of mature Reformed thought on the divine essence and the Trinity, guiding us toward heart-searching application in each chapter.

This volume constitutes a rich feast of meditations on the glory of God. Pages 1–42 simultaneously complete Mastricht's *Prolegomena* and transition to his theology proper under the topic of saving faith. Pages 43–496 explore God's names and attributes. The last ninety-five pages focus on God's Trinity. Following his intellectual predecessor, William Ames (1576–1633), Mastricht taught about the nature of saving faith as a bridge between prolegomena and theology proper. This was an important move because it reminds his readers that theology is the doctrine of living to God through Christ. Saving faith is vital for the true knowledge of the true God and Christ must be the object of that faith.

The section on the divine attributes is the largest part of this volume by far. Contra the opinions of some modern authors, placing the divine attributes prior to the Trinity and devoting more space to the attributes than the Trinity is not evidence that Reformed orthodox authors, like Mastricht, marginalized the Trinity. Instead of viewing the Trinity as an appendix to the doctrine of God, it is more proper to view the Trinity as the climax of Mastricht's doctrine of God. He also interlaces the Trinity into his treatment of the divine names and attributes, frequently showing how God's self-revelation culminates in Christ. He follows the standard threefold division regarding the doctrine of God: whether God exists (foundation), what kind of God he is (names and attributes), and who he is (Trinity). Mastricht on the divine attributes leads readers into fruitful and engaging reflection and meditation upon what kind of God we worship. His division of the Trinity into four chapters, covering who God is in general as Triune, and then each divine person in turn, leads us to the height of our knowledge of God. God has revealed himself as Triune in order to reveal his majesty in the gospel and to lead us to know and worship him. Put together, Mastricht drives us to and through saving faith in Christ to rejoice in the glory of God in the Spirit.

In addition to the general usefulness of this volume, several features stand out. Readers of volume 1 of this translated set of Mastricht will find his fourfold division familiar. Each chapter includes an exposition of a text of Scripture (exegesis), followed by a dogmatic (systematic) summary of each doctrine treated from Scripture as a whole, leading into a refutation of opposing views (elenctic theology), and concluding with application aimed at the reader's heart. These features continue to make the *Theoretical-Practical Theology* a

well-rounded theological textbook, which is what attracted Jonathan Edwards and many others to it in the past.

Throughout the volume, Mastricht treats the systematic doubt of Rene Descartes (1596–1650), asking whether this method is proper in theology. This is important historically, in part because Cartesian philosophy became one of the primary dividing points with the Reformed churches in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, and partly because it illustrates the ongoing relationship between theology and philosophy in historic Reformed orthodoxy.

Mastricht also provides readers with an extensive defense of divine simplicity, which teaches that God is his attributes and that he has neither parts nor passions. His treatment of this topic pervades almost every chapter on the divine attributes and spills into his treatment of the Trinity. This doctrine is hotly contested today and Mastricht provides readers with a thorough classic treatment of the subject.

In my endorsement to this multi-volume set, I stated that Mastricht had the precision of Turretin and the devotion of Brakel. While this is true, the present volume illustrates ways in which we should qualify this statement. Mastricht has the precision of Turretin, but not the clarity of Turretin. He often assumes and uses rather than defines and explains key theological ideas and connections. This is true, for example, in his passing glance at the controversy surrounding Calvin's teaching on the aseity of the Son. Contrary to the Western tradition, Calvin taught that eternal generation referred to the Son's person and not to his essence. Yet Mastricht neither hinted at the complexity of this debate, nor did he adequately develop Calvin's viewpoint (561), which most other Reformed authors did. Mastricht adopted the common Reformed approach to this subject in defending Calvin's orthodoxy while rejecting his position on eternal generation. While Calvin argued that eternal generation referred to the Son's personhood and not to his essence, Mastricht taught that the Father was the fountain of the deity and that he "communicated" the whole divine essence, including aseity, to the Son and to the Spirit (e.g., 2:530, 533–534, 546, 556). This is a complex debate that the uninitiated would not likely be aware of by reading Mastricht alone.

In addition, Mastricht shares the devotion of Brakel, but not his depth of devotion. The practical elements of doctrine in his system are edifying, but he largely expected his readers to develop them further. Readers will not find searching application to the extent that they will find it in Brakel. However, for readers who know something about Reformed orthodoxy more broadly, Mastricht will often push them beyond what they have learned elsewhere. This is especially evident in his extensive treatment of the economy of the divine persons in three separate chapters at the close of the volume. Reading Mastricht is like reading the conclusion rather than the introduction to classic Reformed dogmatics. This is not so much a weakness in his work as it is something that readers should be aware of as they read him.

This translation of Mastricht's doctrine of God should prove to be fruitful, both for church officers and for others who are interested in delving into classic Reformed texts. Much of his material assumes a broader knowledge of the theology that was common in his context. Readers who are unfamiliar with this context will still find here a rich feast for the soul, while those who are familiar with it will often stretch beyond what they have read on these subjects elsewhere. This work confirms the fact that this is one of the best Reformed systems of doctrine ever written. Serious students of Reformed thought cannot afford to ignore it.

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Worship in Song: A Biblical Approach to Music and Worship *by Scott Aniol*

by Timothy P. Shafer

Worship in Song: A Biblical Approach to Music and Worship, by Scott Aniol. BMH Books, Winona Lake, IN, 2009, 281 pages, \$17.99, paper.

Worship in Song: A Biblical Approach to Music and Worship, by Dr. Scott Aniol, was first published in 2009. It is one of many books tackling the controversial subject of musical style as it relates to worship; and perhaps, because of the plethora of available books on the topic, *Worship in Song* has become somewhat lost in the crowd. But it deserves to be read. There are many excellent insights in the book, with some of the most important being those that concern the wise and biblical assessment of aesthetics in worship. It is eminently readable and characterized by its clarity of expression to laymen in not only theological, but also the poetical and musical issues necessary for the evaluation of song in corporate worship.

There are a couple of reasons for this clarity in Aniol's writing. The first is that he is a master communicator. Aniol is associate professor and chair of the Department of Worship Ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, a prolific author, editor-in-chief of *Artistic Theologian*, and the founder of religiousaffectionsministries.org, a website on religion, aesthetics, and culture. But more importantly, he is uniquely trained as both a theologian and a musician. With advanced degrees in both theology and music, he has expertise in these two principal disciplines that come together in the church's songbook to pierce the hearts of God's people, helping the Word to dwell richly in the believer.

Worship in Song divides into three large sections. The first, "Laying the Foundation," comprises five chapters. These chapters include the establishment of biblical principles by which his assertions and conclusions are made, the definition of biblical worship and its influence, convincing proposals for the importance of sanctification and the affections, the distinction between passions and the affections, and a brief musicological/philosophical tour of the musical characteristics of worship from the early church and its Jewish influences through postmodernism.

The second section, entitled "What Does the Music Mean?" consists of four chapters dealing with musical expression and its relationship to the emotions, definitions of beauty and glory, the sanctification of emotions, and making musical choices. In this reviewer's opinion, this section contains the meat of what the book has to offer pastors and sessions who may be responsible for choosing what is sung in corporate worship and/or substituting tunes for various hymn texts.

In the third section, "Music in Assembled Worship," Aniol highlights the need for our worship music to be oriented toward four different categories: God, doctrine, the affections, and the congregation. Also in this section, there are chapters on making sacred

musical choices, the “styles” of biblical worship, and preparation for and participation in the worship service. The book closes with a helpful set of practical appendices.

Far from a dogmatic or legalistic approach toward making musical choices, Aniol instead encourages a wisdom approach based on biblical and aesthetic knowledge. He does this from the perspective of evaluating musical meaning and connecting it to the emotional tenor of the text to which it is attached. According to Aniol (and others, whom he cites), the emotional tone of the text is related not only to the propositional content of the text, but is steered and amplified by the various art forms that are acting upon it in a given hymn. These arts forms (i.e., poetry and music) magnify the propositional content of the text in a variety of ways. For instance, Aniol posits that the affect of the hymn begins with the poem—from the poet’s choice of specific words and poetic devices, to the poetic meter in which the words are set. He gives many interesting examples of these devices. Beginning with vocabulary, he describes how synonyms, while carrying essentially the same truth content, may carry radically different connotations. He gives as examples: homeless individual/bum; boy/fellow; unkind individual/jerk. Aniol states that for each of these pairs, “The terms mean the same thing propositionally, but they have different connotations. When we evaluate poetry, we cannot stop with looking only at the propositional content. We must also look at how the lyrics express that content” (82). He demonstrates this by comparing two love poems that express the same propositional content but in very different affective manners because of the vocabulary choice.

He continues this exploration by introducing the notion of how the various stress patterns of different poetic meters carry specific emotive content by virtue of how they relate to the motion of human beings when we have specific feelings (sad feelings are manifested with downward, slow motion, often smooth and soft, for example). By using familiar poetry for the examples, he clearly demonstrates how the same propositional content, expressed with different vocabulary and stress patterns, can evoke an entirely different feeling about that truth content. For example, the syllabic stress pattern of a limerick introduces a rhythmic feel that is similar to skipping (long-short-long, along with strong-weak-strong); the natural correlation of this stress pattern to skipping evokes in humans a response that is inherently happy since skipping is an activity of joy. He also elaborates on the use of various phonetic intensifiers in poetry (such as the “fl__” sound communicating motion as in “flutter,” or “flee”) and their use in communicating emotion in the art (85). All of this technical material is explained and exemplified in highly readable and understandable language.

After the evaluation of some of the poetic aspects of a hymn, Aniol presents general samples (not exhaustive) of combinations of musical elements (pitch, rhythm, tempo, mode, texture, volume, etc.) and corresponding affective suggestions. Without specific musical examples, it is, of course, difficult to create a comprehensive and accurate list of such combinations, but the listing is helpful to gain an idea of the goal. Questions about the emotional tone of specific works should be directed on a case by case basis to a trained musician—one who is skilled in the art of interpreting musical scores. Nevertheless, Aniol gets the reader thinking in the right direction regarding the ability of sound to communicate intrinsically.

Anticipating the likely objections of postmoderns who would argue an individualistic and hence relativistic approach to interpreting meaning, Aniol goes to lengths to distinguish between learned (or associative) meaning and what he calls “intrinsic”

meaning. He thus makes a compelling argument for universals in emotional communication, while also allowing for individual differences because of personal associations.

Also compelling is Aniol's chapter on beauty and glory. Here, he makes strong biblical cases for absolute and objective beauty (found in the being of our Triune God) and the Christian believer's responsibility for seeking that beauty. He follows this with a chapter on sanctifying the emotions and another containing considerations for choosing worship music. At the end of each chapter in the book, there are a series of thought-provoking questions for discussion for use in small-group or Sunday school format.

Aniol concludes with a strong chapter entitled, "Making Sacred Musical Choices," in which he contrasts secular affects with those in the sacred realm, and what questions one should be asking to determine what is appropriate for congregational worship. Here, he makes many logical points directly from Scripture that are thought-provoking and that should lead to careful consideration of our choices. This is no small task given the aligned and seemingly irresistible commercial forces that are attempting to co-opt the Lord's service on Sunday mornings. The Lord has mandated the use of these art forms in our worship of him, and this requires a knowledgeable and wise use of the forms. Scott Aniol makes an invaluable contribution to our acquisition of both.

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Servant Poetry

Christ's Nativity

By Henry Vaughan (1621–1695)

Awake, glad heart! get up and sing!
It is the birth-day of thy King.

Awake! awake!

The Sun doth shake

Light from his locks, and all the way

Breathing perfumes, doth spice the day.

Awake, awake! hark how th' wood rings;

Winds whisper, and the busy springs

A concert make;

Awake! awake!

Man is their high-priest, and should rise

To offer up the sacrifice.

I would I were some bird, or star,

Flutt'ring in woods, or lifted far

Above this inn

And road of sin!

Then either star or bird should be

Shining or singing still to thee.

I would I had in my best part

Fit rooms for thee! or that my heart

Were so clean as

Thy manger was!

But I am all filth, and obscene;

Yet, if thou wilt, thou canst make clean.

Sweet Jesu! will then. Let no more

This leper haunt and soil thy door!

Cure him, ease him,

O release him!

And let once more, by mystic birth,

The Lord of life be born in earth.