

Ordained Servant  
May 2019



Guidance 2

# *Ordained Servant Online*

## *A Journal for Church Officers*

E-ISSN 1931-7115

**CURRENT ISSUE: GUIDANCE 2**

**May 2019**

### *From the Editor*

Andy Selle continues to give us the fruit of many decades of ministry as a pastor and counselor in his two-part article on guidance: “Make Good Choices,” in which he presents part two: the wise biblical understanding and practice of guidance.

The doctrine of the Trinity, and more generally the doctrine of God, is pivotal in Christian orthodoxy. Harkening back to our Reformation forefathers offers a welcome corrective to some present-day confusion. Hence, the value of David Noe’s ever-expanding translation of “Beza on the Trinity.” This month Part 5.

Darryl Hart reviews a book on a controversial subject: Jemar Tisby, *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church’s Complicity in Racism*. “The Unpardonable Sin?” explores the strengths and weaknesses of Tisby’s analysis and proposed solutions to the problem of racism in the church.

Charles Wingard reviews Michael Haykin’s instructive and inspirational short biography of William Carey, *The Missionary Fellowship of William Carey*.

Finally, Pam Malkus reviews the life of the almost unknown wife of the most famous nineteenth-century preacher, C. H. Spurgeon. Ray Rhodes Jr. offers a comprehensive look at the exemplary character and fruitful life of Susannah Spurgeon in *Susie: The Life and Legacy of Susannah Spurgeon*.

Don’t miss this month’s poem, “The Call,” from my favorite sacred poet George Herbert. While poetry is usually divided up into two basic categories, the sacred and the profane (secular rather than religious), the Metaphysical poets, like Herbert, John Donne, and Henry Vaughan, blended both natural and special revelation in their poetry, thus often blurring the distinction. See my introduction to last month’s poem, “The Waterfall” by Vaughan.

Blessings in the Lamb,  
Gregory Edward Reynolds

## CONTENTS

### ServantLiving

- Andrew H. Selle, “Make Good Choices and Avoid Stupid Ones—Together! Part 2: The Wisdom View”

### ServantClassics

- David C. Noe, “Beza on the Trinity, Part 5”

### ServantReading

- Darryl G. Hart, review article “The Unpardonable Sin?” review of Jemar Tisby, *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church’s Complicity in Racism*
- Charles M. Wingard, review of Michael A.G. Haykin, *The Missionary Fellowship of William Carey*
- Pamela A. Malkus, review of Ray Rhodes Jr., *Susie: The Life and Legacy of Susannah Spurgeon*

### ServantPoetry

- George Herbert, “The Call”

### FROM THE ARCHIVES “TRINITY”

[http://opc.org/OS/pdf/Subject\\_Index\\_Vol\\_1-25.pdf](http://opc.org/OS/pdf/Subject_Index_Vol_1-25.pdf)

- “Developing a Trinitarian Mind.” (Robert Letham) 17 (2008): 91–93.

---

*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.

# ServantLiving

## Make Good Choices and Avoid Stupid Ones— Together!

---

by Andrew H. Selle

### Part 2: A Biblical View Of Choices <sup>1</sup>

In Part 1 we presented the case for considering decision-making from a corporate<sup>2</sup> rather than individual perspective, and then illustrated *three defective views of guidance*.<sup>3</sup> 1. the Discovery View (“Figure it out!”): God has one perfect plan and he wants the church to discover it. You can find it if you read all the clues correctly from the right Bible verses, advice from others, circumstances, “open and closed doors,” and inner promptings. 2. the Immediate Direction View (“Follow the Voice!”), which in its pure form expects God to communicate immediately, directly, and verbally to church leaders, and the church to obediently follow. And 3. the Self-Sufficient View (“Good luck!”), a purely pragmatic approach in which decisions are based on the opinions of various experts, secular research, and sound management principles. There is little need for divine guidance because successful results can be expected simply by utilizing the right training, skills, and resources. Now we will turn our attention to a *biblical approach*, The Wisdom View.

As was done in Part 1 with the defective views, we will continue the extended metaphor of a cross-country bus trip. Let us begin our journey—with the entire church together on a bus for the long ride. How do you get to your destination?

#### 4. The Wisdom View (“Just drive! But Listen!”)

**The Story:** Everyone on the bus has studied the maps and internalized them, to a greater or lesser degree. The drivers have pored over them. Even more, they’ve studied geography with experts so that they understand the lay of the land. There are multiple ways to get to your destination, and you’re free to choose any of them. When you hit traffic problems, or car trouble, or missed exits, you don’t fret at all, and for one major reason: on board the bus sits the Director of the US Federal Highway Administration. The Director knows everything about all the roads and possesses immediate knowledge of what is happening on them. He mingles with everyone on the bus, teaching them during their travels, and spends much time with the driving crew. They get to know him, and they trust him. The drivers especially listen intently to whatever the Director says—and they also listen to other passengers who have learned from the Director. They often ask him for help on their journey, but oddly, he rarely tells the drivers exactly what roads to take. He does, however, point them to particular maps they’ve studied, reminds them of the general rules of driving, and helps them get oriented about their position.

---

<sup>1</sup> The word “choices” combines the epistemological issue (“How do we know?”) with the ethical (“What shall we do?”). This is intentional because both of them interact in decision-making.

<sup>2</sup> “Corporate,” broadly defined as people (especially believers) functioning together—the church on any level, Christian organizations, families, and marriages.

<sup>3</sup> All of these positions are stated baldly, without any nuancing. It is important to humbly recognize that some who lean toward these views are devout Christian brothers and sisters from whom we have much to learn.

Often he encourages them, “You decide where to turn. You can do it.” Sometimes you find yourself on roads that you never dreamed possible, and sometimes you experience mechanical problems, and sometimes it seems like you’re lost; were it not for the Director sitting silently up front, you might think you were lost. You make many stops that you’d never planned, but in the end, you see that the route you took was the best one. Those who stayed on the bus realize that they actually ended up where they truly wanted to go, even though it looks rather different from their original plan. When you arrive at the destination, the Director proclaims, “Here we are! This is exactly where I wanted you to be.”

This is the Wisdom View, the correct and biblical one. Others have ably written about individual guidance,<sup>4</sup> so we will consider the topic primarily from the standpoint of its *church-wide implications*. We already have touched on the “wisdom” alternative in Part 1 in the critiques of the sub-Christian views. We will now consider a model that can help us discern wisdom by looking for it in the right places. We also must confront the demonic counterpart to divine wisdom so that we prepare ourselves for spiritual warfare.

### Three Perspectives<sup>5</sup>: Asking the Right Questions

Paul’s written prayers are instructive because they explicitly communicate to us the revealed will of God, his absolute standards that never pass away. We can think of this as the *normative perspective* that begins with the timeless truths, principles, commands, and promises of God’s Word.<sup>6</sup> Whatever Paul prays for, we also ought to pray for. Consider, for example, his prayer for the Philippian church.<sup>7</sup>

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Phil. 1:9–11)

“And it is my prayer . . .” Do not miss the obvious here: Paul prays. He asks God to give love and wisdom to the church, because unless he gives it, we will not receive it; we remain desperately needy and foolish without him. Praying for “abounding love” takes us right to the fountainhead of every good gift, the Lord’s sovereign choice to set his love upon his covenant people. Wisdom is gospel-oriented to its core. Paul continues and asks that their abounding

---

<sup>4</sup> Suggested readings are cited in Part 1.

<sup>5</sup> We will use the structure and vocabulary of John Frame, whose brilliantly simple triperspectivalism is easier to understand than to pronounce. Simply put, it means that God *speaks to people in situations*. Each of these elements is a perspective on the whole, interpreting the same data from three different angles—the normative, existential, and situational perspectives, which (respectively) capture God’s lordship attributes of authority, control, and presence. Each perspective always includes the other two. This triadic structure is replete in all his works, e.g., John M. Frame, *Theology in Three Dimensions: A Guide to Triperspectivalism and Its Significance* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2017), 24.

<sup>6</sup> I still like the term “principles” even though some are uncomfortable with it, such as Harvie M. Conn: “One problematic reference is the term *principles*, usually linked with adjectives like *eternal*, *abiding*, *timeless*, or *normative* . . .” (“Normativity, Relevance, and Relativity,” in *Inerrancy and Hermeneutic: A Tradition, A Challenge, A Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 195). Certainly we must not imagine “principles” as platonic abstractions independent of God, and we must avoid simplistic (and legalistic) applications of Scripture. Yet we must insist that the special revelation of Scripture is “objective” truth outside us, which God’s people will understand “subjectively” and personally as the Holy Spirit illumines us inwardly (Eph. 1:18).

<sup>7</sup> Philippians 1:9–11; cf. Romans 12:1–3; also, Ephesians 5:15–18 speaks of obeying the “the will of God” (revealed norms) by “making the most of every opportunity” (situation), requiring the church (people) not to be “foolish” but wise.

love would come “with knowledge and all discernment.” This is literally “super-knowledge”<sup>8</sup> about God and the unseen and eternal matters of ultimate reality, along with all “discernment”<sup>9</sup> to grasp moral absolutes and judge between right and wrong. Biblical love is never mindless or contentless, but is informed by the entire breadth of the Word that “stands forever” and reveals the Eternal God.

The next part of Paul’s prayer adds compelling new features. He asks that they would, literally, “test the things that differ,”<sup>10</sup> which begs the question, “Differ in what way?” Is he commanding them to recognize the chasm between absolute good and evil, according to the unchanging standard of God’s Word? I think not, because he has just said that and need not repeat it. The ESV captures the sense well with “approve what is excellent.” We might say, “to choose that which is most important.”

And how will the Philippian church discern those “most important matters”? First, they must understand *who* they are—that church’s unique identity. This *existential perspective* recognizes that God spoke to that particular church in Philippi. Second, they must understand *where* they are—their unique time and place. This is the *situational perspective*; it views the reality that they must follow Christ in their particular *context*. Every church in every age must do the same, because we cannot obey God’s commands in a vacuum but only in the place in which he has providentially placed us.<sup>11</sup> The three perspectives help us sort out important questions to ask ourselves as we consider guidance and decision-making.

Consider the sample questions to be asked from each perspective in the following graphic and its explanation, along with a handful of biblical references presented as a sampling of the biblical data. Note again our corporate focus on the church.

---

<sup>8</sup> ἐπίγνωσις (*epignōsis*) has an intensified, experiential, and relational force. “Conversion to the Christian faith can be described almost technically as coming to a knowledge (*epignōsis*) of the truth.” Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 404.

<sup>9</sup> αἴσθησις (*aisthēsis*) is about moral judgment; cf. the cognate in Hebrews 5:14 “senses” trained to “distinguish good from evil.”

<sup>10</sup> εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα (*eis to dokimazein humas ta diapheronta*) “in order to test the things that differ.” The same word for “testing” is used in Romans 12:2, “by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” The meaning in both texts is similar.

<sup>11</sup> Time and place certainly include the church’s geographic location, culture, and decade, but foundationally the redemptive-historical epoch in which it exists. We live between Pentecost and Christ’s return, and in that regard are in the same place as New Testament church. The gap between the Old Testament theocracy and the worldwide New Testament church must inform our grasp and application of the entire Old Testament—the “Law,” “Prophets,” and “Writings.” An excellent popular work on this subject is the final book by Edmund P. Clowney, *How Jesus Transforms the Ten Commandments* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2007).

# DIVINE PERSPECTIVES FOR CHOICES

What is the best decision to glorify God in his people?

## NORMATIVE [Authority]

### Scripture

What has God said to us?

Considers the timeless truths, principles, commands, and promises of God's Word.  
*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.* Psalm 119:105

## SITUATIONAL [Control]

### Circumstances

Where has God placed us?

Considers God's providence in ordering every detail of history—and our particular time and place.  
*...He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.* Acts 17:26.

## EXISTENTIAL [Presence]

### Persons

To what has God called us?

Considers our unique gifting and calling.  
*For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.* Ephesians 2:10

**The normative perspective** highlights God's *authority* and reveals his character and will. This perspective asks, "What does God say in Scripture that applies to this situation?" "What biblical principles are most germane to our decision?" "Which principles have the greatest importance, according to Scripture itself?" "What is the proper biblical weight to place on various principles?" "How can we keep a right sense of proportion between them?" (Ps. 119:105; Matt. 23:23; 2 Tim. 3:16–17)

**The situational perspective** highlights God's providential *control* of the entire context in which we live—our circumstances. He orders every detail of history, including our personal place and time and culture. He empowers the church to build itself up in love and to fulfill its mission in *our* world. This perspective asks,

What are our opportunities and limitations right now?" "What are the best means of accomplishing God's purposes for us in this situation?" "How can we demonstrate love for God and others, with wisdom and clear thinking, in this situation? (Acts 17:26; James 3:17)

**The existential perspective** highlights God's *presence* in the church. He causes needs to come together with the corporate gifting to meet them. This perspective asks, "How can we personally obey God's commands and believe his promises, right here and right now?" "How do the resources God has given us match the opportunities around us?" "What convictions especially move us?" "What do we have faith to accomplish?" "What should we *believe* right now and how can we *love* right now?" "What is our decision-making process? Who should make this decision, and how?" (Gal. 5:6; Eph. 2:10; 4:7–12).

All the questions above, and the many more that we could ask, rarely have simple answers, but at least we are looking in the right places to find them. By asking appropriate questions from the three perspectives, we can receive useful answers to help us make wise choices.

### **Two Roads: Choices and Spiritual Warfare**

We have seen that choices are triperspectival. They are also *binary*—good or evil. Guidance and decision-making demand that we grapple with the reality of spiritual warfare. This is very old news. In that pristine Garden of Eden, the devil impugns God’s goodness and twists his Word: “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” He supplants God’s Word with lies: “You will not surely die.” He pushes a type of God-likeness built on rebellion and pride, rather than creaturely submission: “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Our first parents listened to the arch-traitor and submitted to him, dragging the entire human race into bondage and death. It is no exaggeration to describe the entire Bible as an unfolding storyline of warfare—and God’s ultimate victory through the Lord Jesus Christ over sin, death, and the devil. We can rejoice that the story ends where it began—but infinitely better—in a new Eden forever purged of all evil and suffering, with God’s people united and resplendent in beauty, worshiping their Savior. “No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.” Heaven and earth become one. The entire cosmos, with all who dwell in it, unite in worship, never again to face temptation and failure (Gen. 3; Rev. 21, 22).

We are not there yet. Throughout Scripture, and pervading the entire Christian life, every divine narrative has its demonic counterfeit—or more accurately a dizzying plethora of counterfeits exquisitely crafted to lure the church in every age from its “pure devotion to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3). When church leaders help members of the flock, we must pay attention to the issue, “Which ‘voice’ is this person listening to? The voice of the Good Shepherd or the voice of the thief who ‘comes only to steal and kill and destroy?’” (John 10:10). And, of course, we all know that we can sin just fine without the devil’s help; our sinful nature resonates with hell. Then, when many sinners get together and make “rules and regs” we are confronted with the “world”<sup>12</sup> of corrupted value structures that make it easy to submit to demonic lies and to scorn the truth. We battle the “world, the flesh, and the devil,” and we experience this warfare on every level.

Viewing sin from the three perspectives gives us insight into its destructive web. Consider, for instance, biblical teaching about idolatry: 1. Normative perspective: Idols are “nothing” in the sense that they are false pretenders, and there is only one God. Yet idols have demonic motivation behind them and press their corrupted norms (sinful values) into our reality.<sup>13</sup> 2. Existential perspective: Within the biblical counseling movement, much has been written about idols of the heart, understanding idolatry from the standpoint of personal motivation and experience. Our inward desires “encamp” on the heart and take control over it. We “want

---

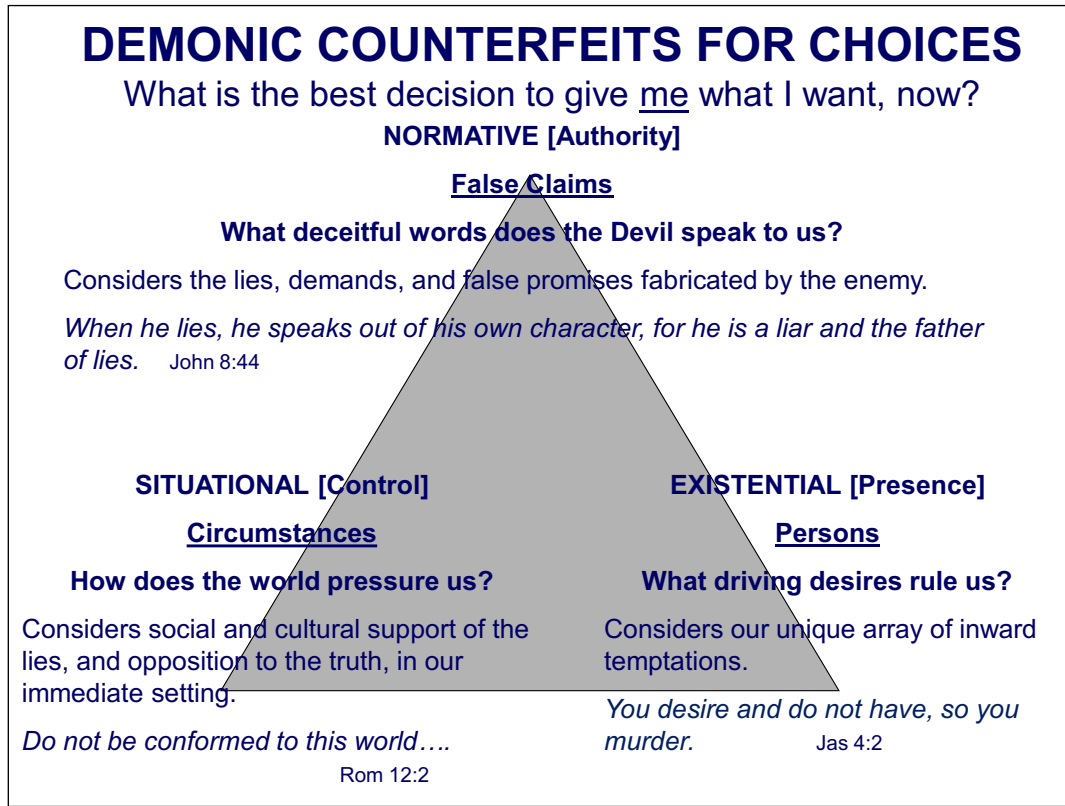
<sup>12</sup> Of this usage of κόσμος (*kosmos*) by Paul, “The world is . . . in its unity and totality the domain of demonic powers,” and yet, “even in their activity of enmity against God and tyrannization of men, (they are) subject to God (2 Cor. 12:7).” Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 91–92. The world, the flesh, and the devil come together in Ephesians 2:1–2. We can view this evil triumvirate perspectively.

<sup>13</sup> “We know that ‘an idol has no real existence,’ and that ‘there is no God but one’” (1 Cor. 8:4). And yet, “What pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons” (10:20). Taken together these two texts present an accurate understanding of both the emptiness and dominating power of idols.



something and do not get it,” leading to all manner of outward sins.<sup>14</sup> God’s blessings in this life are wonderful as gifts, but terrible as gods. 3. Situational perspective: Here we view idolatry in its organized and institutionalized forms. The “world” demands conformity to its godless values, rewarding those who conform and punishing those who do not. Therefore, we expect that the church will face persecution this side of our Lord’s return.<sup>15</sup>

The graphic below turns the spotlight on the decision-making process and the impact that sin has upon it. Note especially how sin turns the *plural of love* into the *singular of self-orientation*.



The **normative perspective** highlights the devil’s *usurped authority* and exposes his deceitful schemes. He is the source and driver of all evil, who demands worship as a counterfeit god. He organizes the demonic host to achieve that end.

This perspective asks, “What biblical principles is the devil attacking in this setting?” “How is the devil presenting partial ‘truth’ and twisting it for his own ends?” “How does this demonic message counterfeit biblical truth?” “Where is the devil creating blind spots so that we ignore important biblical teachings?” “What strongly held opinions are we elevating so high that we lose a biblical sense of proportion, and stop listening to others’ concerns?” “Which crucial principles must we fight for urgently, and which lesser ones may we release to God and wait patiently?” “How are we allowing our frustrated desires, even for good things, to

<sup>14</sup> “What causes wars and quarrels among you? Do they not come from your desires that encamp within you? You lust for something and do not get it. You murder and covet because you cannot have what you want.” James 4:1,2 (author’s translation). And note the theme of demonic origin in 3:15, where such “wisdom” is “earthly, unspiritual, and demonic.”

<sup>15</sup> “In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33). “All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” (2 Tim. 3:12).

lead to sinful communication?” (John 8:44; Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 10:20; Eph. 5:17; Eph. 6:10; James 3:15; 4:1–2; 1 John 3:8).

**The situational perspective** highlights the world under sin’s control. Nothing in Scripture ever suggests that the Lord relinquishes his absolute sovereignty over creation, yet he exercises his rule without becoming the “author of sin.”<sup>16</sup> The world unites against God with Babel-like efficiency, organizing demonic lies into comprehensive worldviews, and building power structures that oppose Christian faith and life. Idolatry gains institutional support.

This perspective asks, “How does our world tempt us, and suffering discourage us?” “How do the corrupted values of our world undermine God’s purposes for us in this situation?” “How do we squander opportunities and pretend false limitations?” “Where is the opposition to our calling and how can we move against it?” “How does a me-first attitude shatter church unity and torpedo good decision-making?” (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:15–16; James 3:16; 1 John 5:19)

**The existential perspective** highlights the inward *presence of sin* that rejects God and follows the enemy. This perspective asks, “In what ways do our hearts resist faith and obedience in this situation?” “What false promises are we listening to, and why are they so enticing to us?” “What truths do we need to believe about our new identity in Christ? How can we think and live consistently with that identity?” “How do we allow our desires and fears to become idols?” “What inconvenient truths do we suppress?” “Are we actually listening to—and valuing—the biblical concerns of those who disagree with us? or do we pridefully believe we do not need them?” “In what areas do we exhibit unbelief in God’s promises?” (Rom. 6:6–14; Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 3:3; Phil. 2:3–4).

In conclusion, we readily admit to the difficulty of the decision-making task on a corporate level. The church daily faces overwhelming complexities in a chaotic and ever-changing environment. It also faces enormous pressure from sin, within and without. Yet that very pressure tells us that we may not succumb to the luxury of unbelief, which often leads to the functionally atheistic “Self-Sufficient View” of choices. Rather, we pray to our Lord who promises generous wisdom to the church that asks for it, in faith. Throughout the entire question-answer process suggested in this article, we pray expectantly for that heavenly wisdom which is “first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere” (James 3:17).

James’s character-oriented description of wisdom makes clear that in church decision-making, often *the process is more important than the product*. Perhaps this is overstated, for there are indeed wise or foolish decisions that carry positive or negative results. In many decisions, perhaps most of them, more than one “right” choice is available. (Think church budget matters, or even calling a pastor when more than one is available, etc.) But this is our point: the *means* of our choices matter to God, and they carry implications that transcend tangible results. If we care about life in the church family, we will pay as much attention to the ride on the bus as we do to our destination. Our task is not to discover the one perfect route, but to ride together by faith, in communion with Christ and one another. We believe that the Lord of the church will lead her by these means. On our journey together, the bus will take its twists and turns, and the roads ahead are known to God alone. Yet occasionally, we look out the rear window and see a straight line, a path that makes perfect sense and that no one could have imagined except a sovereign and loving Father.

**Andrew H. Selle** is a minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and serves as a Teacher at Covenant OPC, Barre, Vermont. He is a biblical counselor and conciliator.

---

<sup>16</sup> “For God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one” (James 1:13). See also WCF 3.1.

# ServantClassics

## Beza on the Trinity, part 5

---

by David C. Noe

The following excerpt 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,<sup>1</sup> the supreme Marszałek<sup>2</sup> 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 Tübingen, 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,<sup>3</sup> Casanionius, and several others who have been enchanted by Biandrata and Gentile<sup>4</sup> wrote in different treatises. They are converting<sup>5</sup> the three persons or ὑποστάσεις into three numerically distinct<sup>6</sup> οὐσίας 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.

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.<sup>7</sup> 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.

---

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

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

<sup>3</sup> d. 1591.

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

<sup>5</sup> *transformantes*.

<sup>6</sup> *numero*.

<sup>7</sup> *ruditati*.

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.<sup>8</sup> 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 demand<sup>9</sup> this from you, your Excellency, in the name of Christ: you must compel<sup>10</sup> those who do not agree with this proposition—Father, Son, Holy Spirit<sup>11</sup> 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,<sup>12</sup> 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.

## Part 2

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 more irreligious than to multiply in number the most simple<sup>13</sup> 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

---

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> *flagitamus*, a very strong word.

<sup>10</sup> *adigas*.

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

<sup>12</sup> Here Beza uses Latin instead of Greek, which he employs interchangeably.

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

different substance, others as of like substance.<sup>14</sup> 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 Severians<sup>15</sup> 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 origin<sup>16</sup> is greater than to possess one's own existence from another's existence,<sup>17</sup> or to be God transiently?<sup>18</sup>

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 idolaters<sup>19</sup> 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 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*.

### Part 3

As for their reply, that the Father alone is “very God,”<sup>20</sup> 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

---

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

<sup>15</sup> This is a second century gnostic sect also known as Encratites.

<sup>16</sup> *esse aliunde*, as the Father on this theory.

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

<sup>18</sup> *precario esse Deum*, as the Holy Spirit, on this theory.

<sup>19</sup> I.e., the Trinitarian orthodox.

<sup>20</sup> αὐτόθεος (*autotheos*).

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.<sup>21</sup> 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.’”<sup>22</sup> 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 three<sup>23</sup> so subsist that they are neither divided, nor at all conjoined or *synousioi*.<sup>24</sup> 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 “the Word which was God was with God in the beginning.”<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup> 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

---

<sup>21</sup> I Corinthians 8:4.

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

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

<sup>24</sup> *συνούσιοι*, i.e., unity of substance that does not admit distinction.

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

<sup>26</sup> 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.

therefore second in order (but not in degree of Godhead)<sup>27</sup> 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.

#### Part 4

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.<sup>28</sup>

Consequently, let us use the following as an example: although Peter, John, and James are one in terms of both their universal and specific<sup>29</sup> 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,<sup>30</sup> 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,"<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup> Now we must take a different position on those properties that are predicated by relation, and that one in particular which they describe as ὑφισταμένην ιδιότητα (*hyphistamenēn idiotēta*).<sup>33</sup> Because, as Tertullian correctly explains in his work *Against Praxeas*, the nature of the relations<sup>34</sup> 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

---

<sup>27</sup> Beza writes simply *gradu*, which I have interpreted.

<sup>28</sup> *secundum quantitatem*.

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

<sup>30</sup> *actu infinitissima*.

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

<sup>32</sup> Romans 1:28.

<sup>33</sup> Underlying quality of individuation.

<sup>34</sup> *relativorum*, scilicet, in the godhead.

claim, we hold that there is a kind of fourth “shared” God<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup> Applying this concept to individuated properties results in an increase in the number of such singular entities.<sup>37</sup>

## Part 5

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 three<sup>38</sup> subsist in it).

I do not doubt that those who first spoke this way<sup>39</sup> 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 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

---

<sup>35</sup> *communis Deus*.

<sup>36</sup> *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.

<sup>37</sup> 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.

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

<sup>39</sup> I.e., using the phrase *Sancta Trinitas unus Deus*.



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.<sup>40</sup> But Paul plainly calls him Christ.<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>43</sup> 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!<sup>44</sup> 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 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?

**David C. Noe** is an elder at Reformation OPC, Grand Rapids, Michigan, a licentiate in the Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario, and serves as an associate professor and chair of the Philosophy and Classics Department at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He also serves on the OPC Committee for the Historian.

---

<sup>40</sup> Deuteronomy 32.

<sup>41</sup> 1 Corinthians 10.

<sup>42</sup> *magni ipsius Angeli*, by which Beza means a theophany of Christ.

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

<sup>44</sup> 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.

# ServantReading

## The Unpardonable Sin?

### A Review Article

---

by Darryl G. Hart

*The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism*, by Jemar Tisby. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019, 253 pages, \$21.99.

Details from Presbyterian church history about race relations in the United States are not pretty. Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, for instance, saw members and officers leave when Mariano Di Gangi, predecessor to James Montgomery Boice, preached about racial prejudice, opened the church and session to African Americans, and served on the mayor's commission on civil rights. At the time, Tenth Church was still part of the Presbyterian Church USA and did not join the Presbyterian Church in America until 1982; but that denomination had hurdles of its own to overcome. Sean Michael Lucas's history of the PCA's founding, *For a Continuing Church* (2015), includes stories of Southern Presbyterian conservatives who defended racial segregation on biblical grounds and sought ways to guard the church from important figures regarded as having erroneous understandings of racial equality.

The OPC herself debated the merits of civil rights during the 1960s in the pages of *The Presbyterian Guardian* that showed opposition to political reforms designed to end segregation. A black pastor in the church, Herbert Oliver, wrote an article about the positive contribution the Christian church had made to social reforms in the past and that supporting Civil Rights for African-Americans was another instance when Christians could be instruments of social change. Letters to the editor indicated that Oliver had failed to persuade some Orthodox Presbyterians. E. J. Young, for instance, wrote a letter to the editors in which he objected to both a view of egalitarianism that was clearly unbiblical and an understanding of the church's role in society that failed to highlight the ministry of the gospel. If these instances seem inconsequential, perhaps J. Gresham Machen's 1913 letter to his mother, strongly objecting to the integration of Princeton Seminary, will show how much ideas of white supremacy afflicted conservative Presbyterians who contemporary Orthodox Presbyterians esteem. If a black man were to take up residence in Alexander Hall, Machen wrote, he would consider moving out, which would have been "a great sacrifice to me."

Jemar Tisby's book, *The Color of Compromise*, purports to narrate the story of white American Protestantism's "complicity in racism," as the book's subtitle puts it. Indeed, the subtitle also indicates that this will be "the truth," an assertion that suggests most of the book's intended audience do not know about the church's history of either supporting or turning a blind eye to instances of institutional forms of racism. And yet, stories like those of Mariano Di Gangi at Tenth Presbyterian, or the PCA, or Herbert Oliver and Machen do not surface in Tisby's survey of American church history. What Tisby does cover is chiefly political developments in the United States that demonstrate the nation's and white leaders' assumptions about racial

hierarchy. From the arrival of African slaves in colonial America, defenses of slavery in the new nation that produced the sectional conflict that led to civil war, the institution of Jim Crow after the Civil War, additional mechanisms of segregation in twentieth-century America, and opposition to the Civil Rights movement, to the Religious Right's indifference or hostility to African-Americans, Tisby's book guides readers through the racial portion of American political and social history. The narrative concludes with the emergence of Black Lives Matter and the 2016 presidential election. He quotes one scholar who opined that the election of Trump was "the single most harmful event" during the last thirty years of racial reconciliation (189).

As Tisby plows through well-trod ground of American history, his examples of the church's actual complicity in racism—aside from standing by in a segregated society—are harder to come by. In some cases, the instances of racism are personal where individual blacks experienced assaults or opposition from local Christians (unidentified) or when Christian colleges either barred African-Americans from enrollment or prohibited them from living on campus. Even so, for all of Tisby's insistence that the track record of church complicity in racism is long and extensive, his evidence is anecdotal. He fails to explore the institutional mechanisms of specific communions, their policies on church membership and ordination, or arguments in defense of segregation. Not even the Southern Baptist Convention's determination to break with northern Baptists in 1845 over slavery receives any more notice than a paragraph.

This makes all the odder Tisby's decision to single out Billy Graham for examples of complicity with racism. To be sure, the most famous Evangelical of all time had a checkered history. Graham's ties to presidents (especially Richard Nixon) showed that he was not as politically astute as he could have been. At the same time, Graham regularly receives credit for integrating his revivals well before other leaders of Evangelicalism. Mark A. Noll writes, for instance, that Graham showed "how attractive a nonracist form of affective southern evangelicalism could be."<sup>1</sup> That does not mean that Graham was guiltless or confronted moral dilemmas that prevented him from taking a consistent stand against segregation. Tisby points to Graham's church membership at W. A. Criswell's First Baptist Church in Dallas; Criswell was an outspoken opponent of desegregation. Additional evidence of Graham's compromise was his association with Richard Nixon, who appealed to Evangelicals with a "racially loaded stance on law-and-order politics" (156). Overall, Graham displayed a commitment to preaching and an "assiduous" avoidance of any "countercultural stances that would have alienated his largely white audience and his supporters" (135).

That assessment of Graham is indicative of Tisby's standard for evaluating American Christians and their churches. Early in the book, he argues that the question is not simply one of excluding blacks from membership in churches (church history) or implementing poll taxes to prevent blacks from voting (political history); It is a question of inaction. "The refusal to act in the midst of injustice," Tisby asserts, "is itself an act of injustice." "Indifference to oppression perpetuates oppression" (15). This becomes the standard by which Tisby (and many other activists) lump together figures who belong to white supremacist organizations with ordinary white suburban Americans who only follow the campaigns and policies of the Democratic and Republican parties. Ignorance or passivity qualify as racism because they perpetuate an unjust system.

One problem with this approach to the church's complicity with racism is that the actual instances of ecclesiastical rejections of past failings come across in Tisby's book as too little, too

---

<sup>1</sup> Mark Noll, *God and Race in American Politics: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 157.

late. In his last chapter of historical narrative (before a section of recommendations) the author recognizes that both the Southern Baptist Convention and the Presbyterian Church in America have passed resolutions that acknowledge each communion's racist past and that call for reconciliation with African-Americans in the church and society. These attempts at repentance and repudiations of racial prejudice give Tisby room to write that "[p]lenty of white evangelicals have promoted reconciliation and have attempted to address the racism that has defined large portions of the American church" (190). That seems like a balanced assessment of recent developments. But Tisby follows with a collection of new instances of racism. It now looks "different." Today's instances of racism include saying "all lives matter" to someone who says, "black lives matter," supporting a president "whose racism has been on display for decades," telling black Christians they are "divisive" when they mention topics related to race, and talking about personal relations instead of systemic racism (191). Tisby should be complimented for such candor—that racism is a fluid category that can be applied to a wide variety of words and actions. But he does not seem to be as candid about the fact that such a fluid definition hardly establishes categories for reconciliation and repentance.

Indeed, the fluidity of categories hovers over Tisby's book and accounts for apparent contradictions in his narrative and judgments. For instance, he argues that the Civil War was chiefly the result of slavery (not preserving the Union), and that Confederate soldiers "were willing to risk their lives to protect" the evil institution (72). What Tisby fails to allow, by this logic, is that the 360,000 Union soldiers who died (almost 100,000 more than the South) were willing to give up their lives to abolish slavery. That sacrifice of life might qualify charges of deep and abiding white supremacy. A similar error of judgment clouds Tisby's recommendation that the United States make Juneteenth a national holiday. June nineteenth is a day that signifies for some the significance of the 1865 emancipation of the last remaining slaves in Texas but also points back to the Emancipation Proclamation (January 1, 1863), which made such freedom possible. Tisby writes that such a holiday would "commemorate one of the most important historical events in U.S. history." Abraham Lincoln's proclamation "opened the way for further legislation designed to grant black people their civil and human rights" (207). That is one perspective on the importance of legislation. Yet, Tisby also argues that "racism never fully goes away." It always changes and adapts. So, "you cannot erase four hundred years of race-based oppression by passing a few laws." Those lines follow Tisby's discussion of the Civil Rights Act (1964). This invites the question: if the legislation for which Martin Luther King Jr. labored could not erase the legacy of racism, why should the nation commemorate legislation that ended slavery and opened the way for civil rights for African-Americans?

In the end, Tisby puts between two covers the substance of arguments that pervade some of the perspectives from Reformed and Evangelical Protestants who comment on systemic injustice and racism on Twitter, the blogosphere, and in podcasts. For those wanting a portal into those arguments and outlooks, *The Color of Compromise* is a valuable resource. At the same time, his recommendations for "effective remedies"—awareness of racism and interaction across racial lines, reparations, learning from the black church, creating a seminary for future black pastors, field trips to important historical sites—look overwhelmingly ineffective. If laws to end slavery and Jim Crow only create new conditions for racism to adapt and persist, why should readers of Tisby's book think any redress of racial injustice could ever be satisfactory?

**Darryl G. Hart** teaches history at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Michigan, and serves as an elder in Hillsdale Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Hillsdale, Michigan.

# ServantReading

## The Missionary Fellowship of William Carey, by *Michael A.G. Haykin*

---

by Charles M. Wingard

*The Missionary Fellowship of William Carey*, by Michael A.G. Haykin. Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust, 2018, 161 pages, \$16.00.

Michael A.G. Haykin gives a concise and inspirational account of the life and work of William Carey, English missionary to India and often called “The Father of Modern Missions.” Reformed theology was the solid foundation of Carey’s ministry. Haykin explains:

In his theology, Carey married a deep-seated conviction regarding God’s sovereignty in salvation to an equally profound belief that in converting sinners God uses means. . . . Without understanding Carey’s consistent delight in Calvinism throughout his life, we cannot understand the man, his motivation, or eventually the shape of his mission. (43–44)

One example of Carey’s firm grasp of the doctrines of grace appears when he writes that one “may well expect to see fire and water agree, as persons with sinful hearts and desires cordially approve of the character of God” (47). Nothing but the sovereign and regenerating work of the Holy Spirit can surmount man’s hostility to God.

This deep, Calvinistic theology did not come from his parents. Born in 1761 to a modest family, Carey’s father served as parish clerk and village schoolmaster in Paulerspury in the county of Northamptonshire. A child of the Church of England, he grew up with the liturgical rhythms of Psalter readings and Scripture lessons that shape Anglican worship. Although the congregation lacked evangelical piety, Carey recalled that the church “tended to furnish my mind with a general Scripture knowledge” (14).

The young Carey was curious about the world beyond Britain’s borders. An uncle’s stories of serving in Canada during the French and Indian Wars piqued his interest in foreign lands—an interest that only grew as he read of the exploits of British naval captain and explorer James Cook.

At sixteen, he worked as a shoemaker’s apprentice, and his friendship with a co-worker (a member of the Congregational church) led to his conversion. This experience left him with an emerging appreciation for the spiritual vitality of England’s religious dissenters. He would soon leave the Church of England and become a founding member of a Congregational church that would later become the Baptist church at Hackleton. His study of the Scriptures and his conversations with John Sutcliff and Andrew Fuller, members of the Northamptonshire Baptist Association, resulted in his acceptance of the doctrine of

believer's baptism. Carey approached John Ryland of Northampton for baptism, and was immersed by his son, John Ryland Jr. in 1783.

Fuller, Sutcliff, and the younger Ryland forged deep and lasting friendships. Through these men, Carey was introduced to the books of towering figures of the Christian faith, and especially, those of Jonathan Edwards, whose sermons he took with him to India (48).

The importance of these lifelong friendships is the major theme of Haykin's book. Their influence upon like-minded believers in the Baptist Missionary Society made Carey's mission to India possible. Without this network's support, and the gathering of the necessary resources, the undertaking would not have succeeded.

Carey's friends supported him through intense debates over the right use of means in doing the Lord's work, and especially the sending of missionaries, evangelism, and fervent prayer. When properly understood, the doctrines of grace never enervate but motivate God's church to missions. In *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (1792), Carey pointed to the example of the eighteenth-century Moravian Brethren. Small in number, by 1760 they sent more than two hundred missionaries to gospel-neglected (such as the West Indies, Georgia, and Surinam) and remote (such as Greenland and Lapland) places in the world. In the Moravians, Carey found a fierce commitment to the right use of means in global missions (66–68).

One additional close friend must be mentioned—Samuel Pearce (1766–99). His correspondence with Carey during Carey's early years in India became an invaluable source of much-needed encouragement. Corresponding by letter required great patience; mail could take six months or more to reach its destination (94). Not without reason did Carey prize the friendship of Pearce, a man whose character won widespread admiration. Of him, William Jay wrote: "When I have endeavored to form an image of our Lord as a preacher, Pearce has oftener presented himself to my mind than any other I have been acquainted with. . . . What a savour does communion with such a man leave upon the spirit" (82).

In lesser detail, the author describes Carey's friendship with William Ward and Joshua Marshman at the famed Serampore Mission.

Carey said of himself, "I am a plodder, it is true. I have no genius, but I can plod" (3). And so he did. He overcame obstacles of procrastinating Christians who errantly applied the doctrines of grace and undercut missionary resolve. He persevered in the midst of painful family trials. He stayed the course through many years of preaching and Bible translation in dangerous outposts of the Lord's kingdom. We need plodders today. Plodders who, persuaded of the Lord's will and their duty, persevere in their gospel work.

But as critical as plodding is, it takes more than individual initiative to undertake ambitious works like Carey's missionary voyage to India. Supportive friends and networks are absolutely necessary.

I hope this fine book finds its way into many ministers' libraries. Missions fueled by doctrine, committed to the right use of means, and undergirded by deep friendships and broader networks of relationships are as essential now as in Carey's day.

**Charles Malcolm Wingard** is senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Yazoo City, Mississippi (PCA), and associate professor of practical theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi.

# ServantReading

## Susie: The Life and Legacy of Susannah Spurgeon, *by Ray Rhodes Jr.*

---

by Pamela A. Malkus

*Susie: The Life and Legacy of Susannah Spurgeon*, by Ray Rhodes Jr. Chicago: Moody, 2018, 262 pages, \$19.99.

The life of Susannah Spurgeon could have as easily been subtitled by the verse “When I am weak, then I am strong.” For that matter, Charles Spurgeon’s life and legacy could have been summarized by the same verse. Much of this couple’s lives were marked with incapacitating pain and physical, even emotional, weakness, which did not paralyze their determination or halt their assurance of the Lord’s provision to enable them to serve the needs of the church at home and around the world.

Ray Rhodes Jr.’s recent biography of Susie Spurgeon is proclaimed by the Spurgeons’ great-great-granddaughter as the most detailed and historically accurate account of the beloved wife of Charles Hadden Spurgeon written to date. Rhodes’s thorough research from Susannah’s own writings and those of family and friends who knew her well unlocks new information that provides a clear picture of her love for her husband, and her amazing work for the local and global church, both before and after Charles’s death.

Early in the book a vignette from the time of their engagement reveals the Spurgeons’ mutual submission to the Lord and their calling as a ministry couple (61). It sounds a warning to those contemplating Christian marriage and ministry to respond to the admonition of wise elders (in this case Susie’s mother) about the peculiar struggles they would experience and the importance of their particular calling.

A year into their marriage they welcomed twin boys into their home, which were to be their only children. More than two chapters (chs. 9 and 10) are devoted to devotions in the Spurgeon household. Charles Spurgeon’s friend and student, William Williams, made these observations:

At 6 PM the entire household gathered in the study for worship. The portion read was accompanied with exposition . . . Then how full of tender pleading, serene confidence in God, and of world embracing sympathy were his prayers! When bowed before God in family prayer, he appeared a grander man even than when holding thousands spellbound by his oratory. (93)

Charles had been concerned for London’s poor orphans since he first moved to the city in 1854. He witnessed homeless, impoverished children lining the streets and alleys around town in threadbare clothing and looking emaciated. Even though the Spurgeons

had only the twins, Susie and Charles would nevertheless help to care for hundreds of children through two orphanages started under Charles's ministry.

Another ministry they began was the Pastors' College. It began with one student and was initially funded by the Spurgeons' own household budget. Susie supported Charles's passion and training for poor pastors. When bedridden for years, Susie, before and after Charles's death, administered support for these poor pastors in their rural ministries by frequent gifts of theology books to augment their understanding of the Scriptures. An entire chapter in the book is given to the description of this twenty-year ministry by Susie. It describes her extraordinary dedication to this difficult work even for a healthy person, which Mrs. Spurgeon was not. Most were very thankful to receive this ministry; although there were some detractors as well, she bore it most kindly. This singular obsession, following care for her own family, shows that her goal was to educate pastors to better feed their congregations, effecting the spiritual health of all of England.

Susie described life without Charles as "bearable" after seven years of widowhood. She wasn't paralyzed by her sadness. She engaged her time and efforts with the pastors' book fund and auxiliary ministries, which included compiling a four-volume autobiography of C. H. Spurgeon.

This book gives insight into Susannah Spurgeon's motivations and concerns, particularly her love for her husband and boys and for the church local and worldwide. This work is not filled with tedious repetition given in some other biographies but includes new information and succinct description that will satisfy the busy twenty-first-century reader.

**Pamela A. Malkus** *is a member of Staunton Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Staunton, Virginia, and lives in Mt. Sidney, Virginia. She is the wife of retired Orthodox Presbyterian Church pastor Gerald Malkus, who serves congregations as an interim pastor.*



# ServantPoetry

---

## The Call

George Herbert (1593–1633)

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life;  
Such a Way as gives us breath,  
Such a Truth as ends all strife,  
Such a Life as killeth death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength;  
Such a Light as shows a Feast,  
Such a Feast as mends in length,  
Such a Strength as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart;  
Such a Joy as none can move,  
Such a Love as none can part,  
Such a Heart as joys in love.