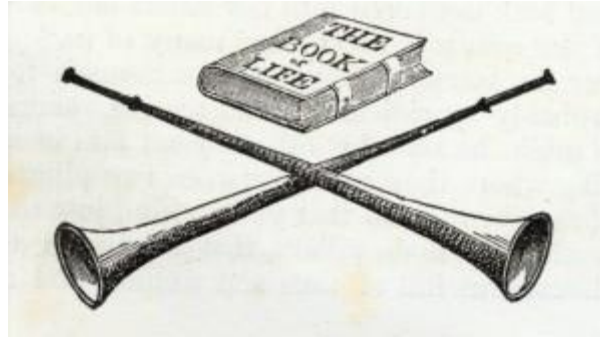


The Reformed Baptist Trumpet



“For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for battle?”

1 Corinthians 14:8

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Editorial: Updates



Here are **three important updates** concerning the Keach Conference and *The Reformed Baptist Trumpet*:

First, the twelfth annual Keach Conference was held Friday evening-Saturday morning, September 27-28, 2013 at Christ Reformed Baptist Church in Charlottesville, Virginia. The keynote speaker was Richard Barcellos, who spoke on Chapter Seven (“Of God’s Covenant”) from the *Second London Baptist Confession of Faith* (1689). Ron Young, Sr. also offered an exhortation titled *Occupy till I come* (Luke 19:13). The conference messages are available [online on sermonaudio.com](http://online.sermonaudio.com).

Second, the thirteenth annual **Keach Conference** is scheduled to be held Friday evening-Saturday morning, **September 26-27, 2014** at Covenant Reformed Baptist Church in Warrenton, Virginia. The conference theme will be Chapter Eight “Of Christ the Mediator” from the *Second London Baptist Confession of Faith* (1689). Speakers TBA. Check the [RBVA website](http://RBVA.org) for updates.

Third, this is a double issue of *The Reformed Baptist Trumpet*. We were able to produce only two issues in 2013, though it is our goal to produce four issues annually. We will see what 2014 holds. In this issue, you will find an article by Jeffrey T. Riddle, reviewing and critiquing a recent video promoting “street preaching.” The article asks whether contemporary street preaching actually rests on secure Biblical foundations. You will also find an article by W. Gary Crampton which examines the Old Testament account of the Judge Jephthah and argues against some modern interpretations of this account. The issue also includes a review of a recent book by Mark Gignilliat which provides a survey of Old Testament criticism since the Enlightenment. Finally, it includes another *Paradosis* article, this time reprinting a 1692 hymn written by Benjamin Keach, based on Psalm 90:1. Ω

Jephthah's Vow

By

W. Gary Crampton, Th.D.



In Judges 11:30-40 we read of Jephthah the Gileadite making a vow to God that if He were to give Jephthah the victory over his enemies (the Moabites and Ammonites), that he would give to God, as a burnt offering (*holah*), whatever came through the doors of his house to meet him when he returned from battle. In this highly controverted passage of Scripture, the question is: When Jephthah's daughter came out of the house to meet her father on his return from victory did he actually offer her as a human sacrifice to God?

On the one hand, there is the affirmative response, i.e., that Jephthah did indeed offer his daughter as a human sacrifice to God in fulfillment of his vow.¹ This is the view which was held

¹ F. C. Cook, editor, *Barnes' Notes*, Volume 2 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, n.d.), 447-448; Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Volume II (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.), 195-198; Matthew Poole, *Matthew Poole's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Volume I (Mc Clean, Virginia: MacDonald Publishing Company, n.d.), 484-485; and Iain M. Duguid, *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 2009), 412-413.

by Josephus and a number of Jewish “doctors” (i.e., commentators).² It is also supported by the use of the Hebrew word *holah* in the passage, which is “the word” normally used in the Old Testament for literal burnt offerings, wherein the life of an animal is taken.³ One commentator states it this way:

It seems probable that Jephthah had a human sacrifice in mind, since animals do not normally come out to greet the returning troops. Just as he confused Chemosh and Molech [the gods of Moab and Ammon], in the previous section [Judges 11:1-29], so now he confused the Lord with Chemosh and Molech. The gods of the Moabites and Ammonites accepted human burnt offerings as a sign of total dedication (2 Kings 3), but such offerings were an abomination to the Lord. The Lord would have delivered Israel anyway, even without Jephthah’s rash vow.⁴

Others, on the other hand, believe that there are “insuperable difficulties in the way of the literal interpretation of the [Jephthah’s] words.”⁵ They argue that the burnt offering given to God is not that of human sacrifice, but it has to do with Jephthah’s daughter remaining a perpetual virgin.⁶ This is the view adopted by this writer.

Several matters should be noted before going into more detail on Jephthah’s vow. First, if he did offer his daughter as a human sacrifice, he did so in direct violation of the (Mosaic) Law of God (Exodus 20:13; Leviticus 18:21; Deuteronomy 5:17; 12:31), to which Jephthah would have access. This being so, it is very unlikely that Jephthah would have thought that such a vow would please God. Second, it is apparent that the final verses of the passage explain exactly what the vow was and how it was carried out. In verse 37 the daughter asks for a two month

² Poole, *Commentary*, 485; John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Volume 2 (Paris, Arkansas: The Baptist Standard Bearer, 1810, 1989), 341.

³ The Hebrew word *holah* is used over 280 times in the Old Testament. See David Miller, “Jephthah’s Daughter,” *Reason and Revelation*, August 2013 (33[8]:95). Dr. Miller’s observations have been very helpful in this study.

⁴ Duguid, *Holman Christian Standard Bible*, 412-413.

⁵ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Volume 2 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 2:389.

⁶ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 2:388-395; Miller, “Jephthah’s Daughter”; Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven, Connecticut; Yale University Press, 1998), Volume 15, “Notes on Scripture,” 15:160-169.

period of mourning “to bewail my virginity.” Verse 38 informs us that her friends went with her to comfort her during this period. At the end of the two months, when the daughter returned, we read in verse 39 the vow was “carried out” and she “knew no man.” Finally, verse 40 says that the daughters of Israel made it a custom to “lament” her virginity “four days each year.”

These things being so, it seems best to understand the “burnt offering” phrase in a figurative sense, somewhat similar to Hannah who “sacrificed” her son Samuel (as a Nazirite), to serve under the direction of Eli (1 Samuel 1:11), and remain in the priestly ministry for the remainder of his life. Then too, as Keil and Delitzsch point out, the word *holah* “does not involve the idea of burning, like our word ‘burnt offering,’ but simply that of going up upon the altar, or of complete surrender to the Lord.”⁷ As this was Jephthah’s only child (verse 34), he would be “sacrificing” his family line, i.e., the family line would become extinct. And the daughter would be “sacrificing” the possibility of ever having children.⁸ Iain Duguid explains:

Jephthah’s daughter was very different from her father. She had no recriminations for him, only an exhortation to fulfill his vow, just as the Lord had fulfilled the conditions. Unlike Abraham, whose faithfulness to God’s demand resulted in a multitude of descendants, Jephthah’s “faithfulness” issued in the complete cutting off of his [family] line. That is part of what made the fact that she would die a virgin something to be mourned. She died unfulfilled because she would never get married and have children. Such a fate would normally condemn someone to be numbered among the unremembered in Israel. However, though Jephthah’s daughter has no name in the text, the young women of Israel honored her memory year after year.⁹

In this writer’s opinion, perhaps the most thorough refutation of the “human sacrifice” view, while at the same time the most conclusive argument in favor of the “perpetual virginity” view, was penned by Jonathan Edwards in his “Notes on Scripture.”¹⁰ He wrote: “That Jephthah did not put his daughter to death and burn her in sacrifice, the following things evince.” Five arguments in support of this statement follow.

One: Jephthah’s vow would have obliged him to only that which the Mosaic Law requires. If the first thing to meet him when he returned from battle was an unclean animal, then he would

⁷ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 2:395

⁸ Miller, “Jephthah’s Daughter.”

⁹ Duguid, *Holman Christian Standard Bible*, 413.

¹⁰ Edwards, *Works*, 15:160-169.

have not have “sacrificed” it in the same way he would sacrifice a clean animal. According to Leviticus 27:7-13 the unclean animal would need to be taken to the priest; the priest would then determine the value of the animal and how it was to be “offered.” In accordance with the same Law, Jephthah’s daughter would have been taken to the priest who would determine how she would be “offered” to God (Leviticus 27:4). She would not have been sacrificed as a “human sacrifice.”

It is also noteworthy that in Numbers 6 we read that Nazirites were to be devoted (“offered”) to God in a special way. Samuel (1 Samuel 1:1) and Samson (Judges 13:5) are two such examples. Women Nazirites were also offered to God, and as a part of their “holiness” requirement they were forbidden to marry (Numbers 6:2, 8; Leviticus 12). Edwards goes on to explain that the women mentioned in 1 Timothy 5:1-16 (those who are “really widows,” verse 3), were also forbidden to marry. These women were in some way, although not technically Nazirites, similar to the Nazirite women under the Old Testament. Anna the prophetess was also a Nazirite in this sense (Luke 2:36-37).

It is probable, avers Edwards that Jephthah dedicated his daughter as a Nazirite, if not in the technical sense of the Old Testament church, at least in a fashion that the women in the New Testament mentioned above were Nazirites. He writes:

That which Jephthah did was this: he took her up to the sanctuary before the Lord, and presented her before the priest, that he might estimate her and then paid according to his estimation...whereby she was redeemed from being made a burnt sacrifice, according to the Law. And by thus presenting her in the sanctuary, and offering up that which was accepted instead of her blood, she was actually separated according to the vow. Her separation began from that time, and thenceforth she was to begin her strict abstinence from all legal impurities, and to spend her time in sacred offices. And it is probable that Jephthah thenceforth left her in the sanctuary, to dwell there as long as she lived, as Hannah did to her son Samuel, whom she had devoted to be a Nazirite.¹¹

Two: As has been noted above, Jonathan Edwards also argues that it is very improbable that Jephthah, who is noted in Hebrews 11:32 to be a pious man, would consider offering his daughter as a human sacrifice in that it is contrary to the teaching of the Word of God. This would be little different than the practice of the Ammonites who offered human sacrifices to their God Molech (Leviticus 20:2). Edwards notes that we do read in Genesis 22 that God called

¹¹ Edwards, *Works*, 15:167.

upon Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God, but even there God did not allow it to take place.

Three: The concept of the daughter being offered up as a human sacrifice is inconsistent with her request to “go and wander on the mountains” for two months and bewail her virginity” (Judges 11:37).

Four: The first sentence of verse 39 states that “And it was so at the end of two months that she [the daughter] returned to her father, and he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed.” The next sentence of the same verse, “she knew no man” tells us exactly what that vow was. In Edwards’ view it is “exegetical” of the foregoing sentence. The vow that Jephthah vowed had to do with the perpetual virginity of his daughter.

Five: Finally, in verse 35, Edwards comments that when Jephthah says that “Alas my daughter! You have brought me very low! You are among those who trouble me! For I have given my word to the LORD, and I cannot turn back on it,” he (Jephthah) is not lamenting the fact that she must be put to death, but as has been noted above, that she being devoted as a Nazirite which will mean that his family line will cease. Jephthah now “had no [physical] issue to inherit his estate, or keep his name in remembrance, which in those days was looked upon an exceeding great calamity.”¹²

It is apparent to this writer that Jephthah’s vow had to do with the perpetual virginity of his daughter. It had nothing to do with the sacrifice of her as a burnt offering in the sense of putting her to death. Such an action would be foreign to the mindset of a pious man such as Jephthah (Hebrews 11:32). Ω

W. Gary Crampton, Minister and Elder, Reformed Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia

¹² Edwards, *Works*, 15:169.

Review and Critique:

“Go Stand Speak” and the Contemporary Street Preaching Movement

Jeffrey T. Riddle

“Street preaching” appears to be growing in popularity, especially among many young evangelical and revivalistic-influenced Calvinists. One mark of its rising popularity is evidenced by the release of a recent video, *Go Stand Speak: The Forgotten Power of the Public Proclamation of the Gospel*.¹³ In this essay I will be offering a review of the video but also taking the occasion of this review as a jumping off point to explore and critique the contemporary “street preaching” movement.

The “Go Stand Speak” video defends and encourages the practice of “out of doors, public proclamation” or “in-your-face” street preaching. It is produced by Eric Holmberg of the Apologetics Group, a media ministry which has released, among other things, the popular video *Amazing Grace: The History and Theology of Calvinism* and Pat Necerato of “Go Stand Speak,” a parachurch evangelistic ministry.

There is no question that Jesus and the apostles often conducted public ministry in the “open air.” One thinks of Jesus teaching his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7) or of Peter preaching at Pentecost (Acts 2). There is also no question that Christian ministers have conducted open air ministries at various points in the history of the church. One thinks of Whitefield and Wesley, for example. The question is whether or not the type of street preaching advocated by those within this movement is wholly consistent with the Biblical and historical practice of “open air” ministry. We must ask, in particular, whether it is fitting to encourage men to engage in public preaching in any context who have not been ordained as ministers and office bearers approved and sent out by the local church.

Overview of Video Content

The two hour video is divided into five segments: (1) Part One: Introduction. This section introduces the topic and advocates street preaching that is “public, out of doors, in-your-face.” (2) Part Two: Thus Saith the Lord. This segment attempts to provide a Biblical rationale for this ministry. (3) Part Three: The Power of the Preached Word. This section has a hodge-podge of material on the Biblical and historical practice of street preaching as an “incarnational”

¹³*Go Stand Speak: The Forgotten Power of the Public Proclamation of the Gospel* (The Apologetics Group and Go Stand Speak Ministries, 2010).

ministry. (4) Part Four: The Man, The Method, and the Message. As the title of this section indicates, this segment discusses the spiritual qualifications of the street preacher, the method he should pursue in this ministry, and the content of his preaching (the gospel). (5) Part Five: Objections to Street Preaching. This segment anticipates objections raised against this practice. It advocates street preaching as the practice of Jesus, the apostles, and historic Christianity. Perhaps the theme is best summed up in a quote from itinerant minister Paul Washer: “We must go to them, because they’re not going to come to us.”

The video is primarily a collage of excerpts from interviews on the subject of street preaching from various contemporary practitioner and advocates of the practice. Beyond Holmberg and Necerato, the video prominently features Paul Washer (HeartCry), Ray Comfort (Way of the Master), Jeff Rose (JeremiahCry), Sean Morris (YMBB Ministries),¹⁴ and about a dozen others. Of interest to Reformed Baptist viewers, the video features a few brief excerpts from Al Martin and John Reuther.

In addition to the main presentation, the video also includes three additional “special features”: (1) “Encouragement to God”: various extra clips and interviews; (2) Footage of Eric Holmberg doing open air preaching outside the 2010 Kentucky Derby; and (3) “Dr. Peter Hammond on the History of Open Air Preachers (Farel and Livingstone).”

General Observations on Video Style and Content

In general I found the video to be overly long. It might have conveyed the same message in briefer scope and perhaps, thereby, more interestingly. Along these lines, some of the material, including the interview excerpts, were repetitive (the same persons making the same or similar points more than once). Finally, the film at times lacks focus. It dabbles in church history, analysis of contemporary culture, practical “how to” steps for street preaching, etc., often jumping from one topic to another without clear transitions, order, or conclusion.

¹⁴ Sean Morris is given a significant presence in the video. An internet search reveals that Morris is part of a small independent church in Wells, Texas ([The Church of Wells](#)) that has been accused of some cult-like practices (e.g., some parents in Arkansas have accused the church of brain-washing their adult daughter; local media reported the death of a young child in the church while the church leaders prayed for the child’s healing and resuscitation, resulting in questions about the whether or not the child received proper medical care; postings on the church website offer “rebuttals” to those who have criticized the church [mostly family of church members]; and critics have posted online attacks of the church, etc.). I do not have enough information to judge these matters and indeed the most righteous, godly, and faithful churches in a community are often the most maligned by outsiders and non-Christians. The prominent role given to such a seemingly young and untested man as a spokesman for this movement, however, raises questions about discernment by the video producers.

In addition, for a video that represents many individuals and ministries that might claim to be Calvinistic/Reformed or, for that matter, even conservative evangelical, there were some distracting content elements. This includes the use of numerous images (video and still pictures) depicting Jesus, without sensitivity to those who might have second commandment concerns about this practice. It also includes the use of approving quotations and allusions to Roman Catholic “saints” (e.g., “St.” Boniface and “St.” Francis) and to non-evangelical writers, like Flannery O’Connor,¹⁵ C.S. Lewis, and J. R. R. Tolkien. In a discussion of the yearning for human freedom partnered with a clip from one of the “Lord of the Rings” movies, for example, Holmberg’s voiceover oddly states, “the message of true liberty and the defeat of Sauron and the return to Middle Earth offered by Jesus and his new creation kingdom may be one of our most effective tools in piercing hearts and calling the lost” [see the 1:00:20 mark].

Biblical Concerns

Beyond matters of style there are more significant concerns that might be raised with this video. We begin with Biblical concerns, which will demand the majority of our attention. We will then move on to doctrinal, historical, and practical concerns. The first question is whether or not the type of ministry advocated in this video rests on a solid Biblical foundation. Does the Bible mandate the *necessity* of the type of “in-your-face” street preaching advocated in the video? Below are ten of the Biblical texts and patterns in the Bible that are cited in the video to support the practices they advocate:

- (a) The book of Proverbs speaks of “Lady Wisdom” standing and crying out in the streets (Proverbs 1:20; chapters 8—9).
- (b) In Isaiah 6, God is telling us to go even as he told the prophet Isaiah.
- (c) Old Testament prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Jonah were street preachers.
- (d) Jesus was a street preacher.
- (e) Jesus said we should proclaim the gospel from the rooftops, and this justifies “street preaching” (Matthew 10:27; Luke 12:3).
- (f) John the Baptist did street preaching and Jesus said that the least in the kingdom is greater than John (Matthew 11:11; Luke 7:28). Therefore, the least Christian should be able to do the kind of ministry that John the Baptist did.

¹⁵ The O’Conner quotation: “When you can assume that your audience holds the same beliefs as you do, you can relax a little and use more normal means of talking to it; when you have to assume that it does not, then you have to make your vision apparent by shock—to the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost-blind, you draw large and startling figures” (from “The Fiction Writer & His Country”). The irony of this quotation is that O’Connor probably intended it in reference to her own literary efforts to critique conservative Southern Protestants and advocate her own sacramental Roman Catholic worldview.

- (g) Street preaching and other forms of evangelism are an act of obedience to Jesus' command to love one's neighbor (see Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27).
- (h) In John 7, Jesus preached publically in the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles. He did this without any invitation and it was not usual for anyone to preach in the temple.
- (i) The apostles were street preachers.
- (j) Paul and the apostles advocated this form of ministry in their letters (citing passages like Romans 10:14; 1 Corinthians 1:21).

At first glance, this might seem to be a compelling list of Biblical prooftexts for "street preaching." We will look more closely, however, and respond to each of these points:

- (a) The personification of wisdom in Proverbs is undoubtedly a powerful metaphor. Many have even seen in it the "pre-incarnate Christ." Does this image, however, have anything to do with "street preaching"? Advocates seem to seize on the pictures in Proverbs 1:20 ("Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:") and Proverbs 8:1-3 of Lady Wisdom crying out while standing in the "high places," on the "paths," "at the gates," and "at the doors." Lady Wisdom, however, is presented as a parable and metaphor in Proverbs. In context, the setting is parental instruction of a son in the ways of wisdom (1:8). It has nothing to do with street preaching and everything to do with encouraging a son to heed the wise counsel of his parents. To make this image a basis for street preaching is to engage in eisegetical misinterpretation. Such a simplistic method might, for example, erroneously lead one to make a proof text for women as street preachers, since personified wisdom in the passage is a woman.
- (b) Isaiah 6 provides a narrative of the prophetic call of Isaiah. It is a passage that lends itself to understanding the call to ministry and church office. It says nothing about the means that Isaiah was to use in fulfilling his ministry and nothing about street preaching. Isaiah was, in fact, a court prophet who exercised his ministry not by standing on the street corner preaching to disinterested passers-by but by standing before the kings and courtiers of Judah (e.g., most typical would be the setting described in 2 Kings 19:5-6: "So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said unto them...."; cf. Isa 7:3 ff.; 37:5 ff.).
- (c) Jeremiah's ministry was as that of a prophet to the nation of Judah and much of it seems to have taken place in the temple environs (in or near "the LORD's house") and palace in Jerusalem (cf. Jer 7:1-2, 17:19; 19:14; 22:1; 26:2; 36:6). Thus, it appears to be stretching it quite a bit to say that Jeremiah's ministry was equivalent to that of modern street preachers. Jonah, on the other hand, was indeed given a special commission from God himself to go and preach in the city of Nineveh. The question here, however, is the level of continuity and discontinuity between the extra-ordinary Old Testament

office of prophet, given by direct divine revelation, and the ordinary ministry given to church officers today. We do not find instructions in the New Testament to replicate the extra-ordinary service of the prophets in the ordinary ministry of the church in the present age.

- (d) That Jesus was a street preacher is taken as axiomatic by those in this movement. The speakers on the video do not even bother to cite specific passages to back up the claim. Is there ground, however, to challenge the assertion that Jesus provides the model for contemporary “street preaching”? I believe there is.

When those in the “street preaching” movement say that Jesus was a street preacher they are saying that Jesus went out into public places without invitation or following and indiscriminately called on disinterested persons passing by to listen to his preaching and to become his disciples. To paraphrase the “Go Stand Speak” speakers, he did not wait for anyone to come to him, he went out to them. Is this, however, an accurate picture of the public ministry of Jesus in the Gospels? We will examine the presentation of the ministry of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke to evaluate this claim.¹⁶ Notice the following:

First, Luke emphasizes that Jesus began his public ministry not by indiscriminately preaching in the streets or at non-religious public gatherings (musical concerts, athletic events, pagan temples, dramatic performances in the amphitheater, horse races in the hippodrome, market days in the *agora*, etc.) but in the Jewish synagogues of Galilee. The first note of Jesus’ public ministry after his baptism and temptation is found in Luke 4:15: “And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.” As is often the case with Biblical narrative, this first description proves programmatic for that which follows. The center of Jesus’ early public ministry is the Jewish synagogue and not the pagan temple or marketplace (cf. Luke 4:16-21, 31-33, 42-44; 6:6).

Second, Luke also emphasizes Jesus’ exercise of his public ministry in private homes and in other locations where his primary focus is on instruction of his gathered disciples, though persons in need often come or are brought to these gatherings seeking interaction with Jesus. Luke 4:38-39 provides the first example of this as Jesus goes from the synagogue into Simon’s home where he heals Simon’s mother-in-law. In Luke 5:17-26 the Evangelist records how a paralytic man was lowered on his bed through the roof of a house where Jesus was teaching. The man was placed “into the midst before Jesus” (5:19). In Luke 5:29 Jesus goes in to the house of his newly called disciple Levi

¹⁶ It is fitting to examine the Gospel of Luke to test the claim that Jesus was a “street preacher,” since we will turn later to the book of Acts (written also by Luke; cf. Luke 1:1-5; Acts 1:1-2) to test the claim that the apostles were “street preachers.”

where he shares a meal with other invited tax collectors and sinners. Jesus eats in the home of Simon the Pharisee, when a sinful woman anoints his feet (7:36-50). He enters the home of Mary and Martha and teaches (10:38-42). He breaks bread on the Sabbath day and teaches in the home of one of the chief Pharisees (14:1, 7, 12).

Along these lines, it is interesting to note that when Jesus sends out the twelve and the seventy, he does not instruct them to enter the marketplaces but homes (see 9:4-6; 10:5-7; note that the seventy were only sent into the “streets” of the cities where the gospel was rejected in order to shake the dust from their feet, 10:10-11; 14:1). After the synagogue, it seems that the private homes of disciples and others where both disciples and invited non-believers gathered was the most common venue for the exercise of Jesus’ ministry and the ministry of those he sent out.

Third, though Luke does present Jesus conducting an “open air” ministry, particularly as he travels, it is not the kind of street preaching advocated by this movement. Jesus is sought out by the multitudes in public places where he ministered to them. Contrary to the view of contemporary “street preaching” advocates, the model of Jesus’ ministry in public places in Luke is not so much of him going out to raise a crowd, but of the crowds coming to him and seeking him. Again, the first direct mentions of this phenomenon are likely to be taken as paradigmatic. So, in Luke 4:42 it says, “And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people [the Greek is the plural *ochloi*, crowds or multitudes] sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.” On the heels of this in Luke 5:1 it says, “And it came to pass, that, as the people [*ochlos*, crowd or multitude] pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret.” Such examples continue throughout Luke (see 6:17; 7:11; 8:4, 19, 40; 9:18; 12:1; 14:25; 15:1; 17:11, 20; 18:18). The general picture we get of Jesus in the Gospels is not that he went out into public places to preach and teach indiscriminately to otherwise disinterested passers-by. On the contrary, the picture we get is that people were drawn to Jesus or that they brought others to him. In other words, we might say, contrary to conventional “street-preacher” wisdom, Jesus did not go to them, but they came to him.

We see this especially in the central “Journey Narrative” of the Third Gospel (Luke 9:51—19:40). Here Luke also records various encounters that Jesus had with persons along the way to Jerusalem (cf. 9:57; 10:25; 11:27, 53-54; 12:13; 13:1, 23; 14:15; 15:1; 17:11-13; 18:18, 38; 19:1-2). Once in Jerusalem, Jesus taught the people and preached in the temple (cf. 20:1; 21:37-38). Though the temple was a public place, it was also clearly a designated place of worship and religious activity. In Jesus’ temple teaching, his purpose is not to address otherwise disinterested crowds but to interact with the various religious leaders, like the chief priests, scribes, and elders (20:1-2; 19-22), and the Sadducees (20:27) who have come to the temple for religious and spiritual purposes.

(e) Does Jesus' reference to proclamation from the rooftops in Matthew 10:27 and Luke 12:3 justify street preaching? This passage is cited several times in the "Go Stand Speak" video. A look at the context of this saying by Jesus, however, raises serious doubts as to whether it might be rightly applied at all to street preaching.

In Matthew 10, Jesus is instructing the twelve disciples. In v. 25 he says that if his opponents have accused him of being in league with Beelzebub, they will make similar charges against his followers. He continues to tell them that things which are hidden will one day be uncovered (v. 26) and what has been heard "in the ear" (i.e., privately) will be preached upon the housetops (i.e., publically). The point seems to be that the nefarious deeds and motives of Jesus' opponents will one day be exposed publicly ("upon the housetops").

This is perhaps even clearer in Luke 12 where Jesus begins, "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (v. 1). It is the hypocrisy of the Pharisees that will one day be made publicly known. It will be "proclaimed upon the housetops" (v. 3).

(f) What about appeal to Jesus' statement that the least in the kingdom would be greater than John the Baptist (Matt 11:11; Luke 7:28) and the argument that since John was a public preacher then the least Christian should be a public preacher? This argument is faulty on several grounds. Most importantly, one can in no way surmise from this teaching that Jesus expected all followers to become public preachers. If this were the case then all Christians, including women, unqualified men, and children who are believers would be compelled to be public preachers and this would flatly contradict New Testament teaching (cf. James 3:1). Jesus' point, instead, is that the surpassing greatness of the least in the kingdom even in comparison to John comes by virtue of the fact that they have expressly believed in Jesus as Lord. John died before Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, and so, like the prophets of the Old Testament, he did not fully understand all that the mission of Jesus entailed (cf. Luke 7:19). Believers are privileged in that mysteries which were hidden from past generations have been revealed to them (see Eph 3:5).

(g) Is "street preaching" an obedient response to Jesus' command to love our neighbor? The exegetical context of the Great Commandment teaching by Jesus does not appear to have evangelistic activity as its primary focus and application. The Great Commandment is Jesus' summation of the two tables of the Ten Commandments (cf. Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-37). To love God is to fulfill the first table of the moral law. To love one's neighbor as oneself is a fulfillment of the second table of the moral law. The latter is the summation of how Jesus' disciples are to interact with their fellow human beings (whether Christians or non-Christians). Certainly the most good we can do to our fellow man is to point him to Christ. We must, however, use scriptural means to achieve that end. Appeal to the Great Commandment

is not then an obvious justification for any proposed particular method of evangelism (e.g., “in-your-face” street preaching).

(h) Was Jesus’ preaching in the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles in John 7 an example of “preaching without invitation”? This appears to be another rather flimsy justification for street preaching. Jesus stands in the temple as the great Prophet, Priest, and King. It is altogether appropriate for him to speak in the temple. The chapter has no focus at all on Jesus’ speech being “without invitation.” This is an imposition upon the text to justify “street preaching.”

(i) The claim is made not only that Jesus was a street preacher, but so too were the apostles. Can this claim be backed up, however, by Scripture? The obvious place to look is the Acts of the Apostles.

In Acts 1 we are told that the early church in Jerusalem numbered 120 persons at the time just after Jesus’ ascension, and they gathered in an “upper room” (vv. 13-15). At Pentecost they were “in one place” (2:1) when the Holy Spirit was poured out. This place was most likely somewhere in the temple environs, since those drawn to them were *diaspora* Jews who had come to Jerusalem to worship at Pentecost. These first instances set a pattern, according to Acts, for the typical places where the early Christians gathered and where preaching and teaching took place: (1) in the temple (or, later in the synagogue); and (2) in private homes or meeting places. This is well illustrated in Acts 2:46 (emphasis added): “And they continued daily with one accord **in the temple**, and breaking bread **from house to house**, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.” Notice that there is no mention here of the early disciples going out to the street corners to preach to disinterested passers-by.

This pattern continues to be emphasized by Luke in his description of the early days of the Christian movement in Jerusalem. Peter and John go to the temple at the hour of prayer (3:1). After the healing of the lame man, people rush to them at Solomon’s porch (3:11). The disciples “were with one accord in Solomon’s porch” (5:12).

Indeed, after the death of Stephen and the scattering of believers beyond Jerusalem (8:1), there is mention of those who were scattered abroad going “every where preaching the word” (8:4). The “every where” (8:4) most likely refers to the geographical dispersion (i.e., in every surrounding locality or region; in fulfillment of Acts 1:8) rather than to all manner of venues (e.g., the *agora*, public streets, etc.). It is specially noted that Philip “went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them” (8:5). We are not told, however, where he did this preaching. Context indicates that this preaching was most likely done in synagogues or gatherings in private homes where hospitality was offered. After Saul (Paul) is converted, for example, we are told that he “straightway preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God” (9:20). Furthermore, Peter travels to the home of the God-fearer Cornelius who “called together his kinsmen and near friends” to hear the preaching of the apostle (10:24 ff.).

These examples again illustrate the two primary venues for Christian preaching in Acts: the synagogue and private homes. In no place is there an explicit description of one of these early Christian preachers going out to stand on a street corner to preach to otherwise disinterested passers-by.

The pattern of preaching in synagogues (or private homes) is especially emphasized in Luke's description of Paul's ministry during his missionary journeys in Acts (cf. Paul's ministry in Salamis, 13:5; in Pisidian Antioch, 13:14, 43-44; in Iconium, 14:1; at a place of designated prayer in Philippi, 16:12-13; in Thessalonika, 17:1-2; in Berea, 17:10; in Athens, 17:17; in Corinth, 18:4; in the home of Justus, 18:7; in Ephesus, 18:19; 19:8; in the school [*schole*] of Tyrannus, 19:9; in Troas in the "upper chamber" of a private home, 20:7-8). Notice that contrary to the perceptions of those in the street preaching movement, Paul's ministry does not begin with indiscriminate "in-your-face" street preaching to disinterested passers-by but in explicitly religious gatherings on the sabbath in the synagogue with Jews and God-fearers or in private gatherings of disciples.

Special consideration must be given to Luke's description of Paul's ministry in Athens in Acts 17, and especially to Acts 17:17: "Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him." This verse might appear to provide the only example in Acts of Paul offering public proclamation in the *agora* or marketplace. Notice, however, that Paul's ministry begins in the synagogue and that it only afterward overflows into the *agora*. The setting then is more like that presented at Pisidian Antioch with hearers, particularly God-fearers, following Paul to hear more of what he had begun to say in the synagogue (cf. 13:43). The picture then would not be of Paul going into the *agora* to preach to disinterested passers-by but of his meeting in the *agora* with those who followed him there from the synagogue. He does not come to draw an audience, but he comes with an audience already in tow. Paul is indeed confronted in this setting by scoffing Epicurean and Stoic philosophers "because he preached (*euangelizo*) unto them Jesus, and the resurrection" (v. 18). He is then brought into the Areopagus where he stands and speaks to onlookers (vv. 19, 22). Before one seizes upon this as an example of the type of street preaching being advocated today, however, one should note that Paul does not go to the Areopagus to draw a crowd. Rather, he is brought there or invited there by those who wish to hear him speak.

After his arrest in the temple in the Jerusalem, Luke records Paul engaging in a number of public apologetic defenses of the Christian faith, whether on the stairs leading to the Roman barracks (21:37-40 ff.); before the Jewish Sanhedrin (ch. 23); before Felix (ch. 24); before Festus (25:1-12); or before Agrippa and Bernice (25:13—26:32). The book of Acts ends with Paul imprisoned under house arrest in Rome for two years but free to preach and teach to those who came to him (28:30-31). These examples of public ministry, however, are hardly parallel to the type of street preaching advocated today.

The best contemporary parallel to these events would be for a Christian to steadfastly maintain his testimony if arrested for his faith.

(j) Finally, the claim is made that “street preaching” was advocated by the apostle Paul and the other apostles in their epistles. Passages on the centrality of preaching like Romans 10:14 and 1 Corinthians 1:21 are cited in support of this claim, but these say nothing explicitly about *street* preaching. Given the fervency with which many advocate this practice as an essential part of Christian ministry, we would expect to find Paul and the apostles explicitly urging the recipients of their letters to go out into the public streets and marketplaces to do “in-your-face” street preaching. When we actually read the epistles, however, we find that there are no such direct commands. Quite the contrary, we find Paul urging the Thessalonians to “study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you” (1 Thess 4:11). Public preaching is not a task generally given to all believers but one specifically entrusted to church officers (cf. 1 Cor 9:1-18; 2 Tim 4:1-5; James 3:1), though each believer is to stand ready to defend the faith when challenged (1 Peter 3:15).

Special attention should be given to Paul’s description of evangelism in 1 Corinthians 14:23-25 as providing an apostolic model for doing evangelism:

23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? 24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: 25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

Granted, the specific purpose of this passage is to advocate for prophesy given in intelligible utterance versus speaking in tongues in unintelligible utterance and not to define the proper venues for evangelism. However, we should not overlook what the passage teaches us about how evangelism was done in the early church. It assumes the following: (1) the whole church gathered in one place (i.e., this is not the lone preacher going to stand on the street corner); (2) the unlearned and unbelievers were invited into these gathered meetings (i.e., contrary to conventional street preacher wisdom, these people came to the church’s gatherings, rather than the church going out to them); and (3) these unbelievers came under conviction of their sin and were converted to become worshippers of God as they heard the gospel intelligibly proclaimed in an explicitly Christian assembly. From this we might surmise that the normative way for the church to do evangelism is (1) to gather publically to worship, especially on the Lord’s Day; (2) to invite unbelievers into our assembly; and (3) to preach intelligibly in hopes that the unconverted in our midst might come under conviction and be saved.

Summary of Biblical evidence:

So, how might we summarize the Biblical evidence for the type of ministry advocated by the contemporary street preaching movement? We cannot find clear warrant for this method in the Old Testament examples of Lady Wisdom or of the prophets. Turning to the New Testament we find that the ministry of Jesus was most often in the synagogue or in private homes. He also conducted “open air” ministry, but he did not go to the crowds. Instead, they came to him. The apostles largely followed the example of Jesus. Public preaching was done by church officers in gatherings of believers to which non-believers would be invited or which non-believers would intentionally seek out. We find no explicit example in the New Testament of anyone who is not a church officer publically preaching or teaching in any venue. We find little to no evidence of Christian preachers going out to public places (streets, etc.) to preach to disinterested passers-by.

Along these lines, we ought also to consider Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount: “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (Matthew 7:6). Here Jesus teaches that holy things should not be offered indiscriminately to those who will simply trample them underfoot. Does not this command serve as an injunction against much of what is typically described today as street preaching?

Doctrinal Concerns

The survey of Biblical practice sketched above should be enough to provide pause before making the naïve affirmation that the type of street preaching advocated by some today fits perfectly the Biblical pattern. It also raises some other significant doctrinal concerns. Here are a few:

First, it has implications for the doctrine of the Biblical means of grace. It suggests that the simple method of preaching that occurs in the gathered congregation—which appears to be the Biblical pattern— is not an effective enough means to be used for evangelism. Rather than simply inviting, calling, and bringing unbelievers into the gathered church worship services where they might sit at the feet of Christ and listen to him as his minister preaches (cf. Eph 4:20-21), it says we must alter our means by going out to unbelievers. Rather than enhancing the esteem of preaching, one wonders if this does not in fact demonstrate a lack of confidence in preaching, much the same as that reflected in contemporary emphasis upon “personal evangelism” or “counseling” in lieu of ordinary preaching in the church’s Lord’s Day worship among the assembled saints.

Second, this movement risks making the focus of preaching, which is an element of worship, and, thereby, worship itself, to be upon men and not upon God. Strange to say, but could it be that street preaching has more in common with “seeker-sensitive” advocates than it realizes? It essentially says, “People will not come to church to hear preaching, so we must take preaching to them. We must change our worship venue and manner in order to accommodate the felt needs of unbelievers.” The focus of Biblical worship, however, is not on the worshippers and certainly not upon unbelievers, but upon the Lord. The primary purpose of

worship (including the element of preaching) is not evangelism per se but the glorification of God. The standard for evaluating preaching (in whatever venue) is not whether it is pleasing to men, or even if it is reaching men, but whether it is pleasing to God.

Third, this movement risks placing undue emphasis on *the physical place* where preaching is undertaken rather than upon the more important matter of the *essence* of preaching. Biblical preaching can conceivably take place on a street or in a public marketplace, just as it can take place in a home, in a lecture hall, or a meeting house which a church rents or owns. The *place* of preaching is less important than the *what* of preaching. Along with the *what* of preaching (its basic content) come also the key questions of the proper *context* of preaching (in the gathered assembly) and the *who* of preaching (by a God-called and ordained minister). These are part of preaching's essence. Those who so passionately advocate street preaching run the risk of making an idol merely of the *venue* of preaching, neglecting the more significant questions of *essence*.

Fourth, this movement raises concerns related to ecclesiology. Some advocates of street preaching seem to urge any and all Christians to take to the streets to engage in public preaching. The Bible, however, teaches that preaching is not a universal obligation of all Christians. Not all Christians are to be public preachers and teachers. Aptitude to teach is a special capacity given to the church's teaching elders (cf. 1 Tim 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:9). It is their special calling and responsibility to preach and teach publically. Part four ("The Man, the Message, the Method") of the "Go Stand Speak" video gives a list of the qualifications for the street preacher, largely borrowed from Spurgeon, including things like having a good voice, being adaptable, and having a large heart. What it omits is the requirement that the preacher be called by God to be an elder or set part to this task by a local church. Unbridled advocacy of street preaching runs the risk of laying guilt upon men not called to preach and worse yet sending out those who have not been called and who, thus, are not qualified. This makes the faith vulnerable to compromise and to the adaptation and infiltration of false teaching and practice.

Historical Concerns

Though the primary concern should be with Biblical precedent and doctrinal concerns, we might also ask if the type of street preaching being advocated today is as deeply rooted in the wider historical Christian tradition as its advocates maintain. In the "Go Stand Speak" video, for example, appeal is made to the likes of St. Francis, George Whitefield, John Wesley, C. H. Spurgeon, and E. M. Bounds, among others. We are not denying that "open air" ministry has been conducted and advocated in the past. One wonders, however, if this appeal might be overstated and even somewhat distorted. Would we want to base patterns for Biblical ministry on the practices of a medieval mendicant order like the Franciscans?¹⁷ In addition,

¹⁷ For a brief survey of how the medieval Franciscan and Dominican orders gained papal sanction and promoted papal authority through public preaching, see Rodney Stark, *The*

though we might grant that Whitefield and Wesley did preach out of doors, we should also recall that they did so primarily when establishment church buildings were closed to their use. We should also keep in mind that the Methodist movement eventually developed and opened its own meeting houses and chapels for their gatherings.¹⁸ It appears that the type of “in-your-face” street preaching being advocated in the street preaching movement today came into prominence primarily with the revivalism of the 19th century.¹⁹ Even then, it likely was not always what some might imagine today. Spurgeon, for example, in his *Lectures to My Students* advocates “open air ministry,” but it should be kept in mind that he did so while addressing students in his ministerial college.²⁰ Even Spurgeon did not see the call to preach as universal among Christians but limited to those called by God and ecclesiastically sanctioned for public ministry.²¹

In addition, we would also do well to note that even in the midst of the revivalist movement not all warmly welcomed the innovations introduced. The stalwart Presbyterian theologian R. L. Dabney, for one, offered a stinging critique of the popular mass evangelistic efforts of lay preacher D. L. Moody in his 1876 essay “Lay Preaching.”²² He made similar points in his essay “Spurious Religious Excitements,” which he concluded by observing:

One corollary from this discussion is: How perilous is it to entrust the care of souls to an ignorant zeal! None but an educated ministry can be expected, humanly speaking, to resist the seduction of “revival measures,” or to guard themselves from the plausible blunders we have analyzed above. And the church which entrusts the care of souls to

Triumph of Christianity: How the Jesus Movement Became the World’s Largest Religion (HarperCollins, 2011): pp. 307-308.

¹⁸ See Iain H. Murray, *Wesley and Men Who Followed* (Banner of Truth, 2003).

¹⁹ For a helpful survey and analysis of this era and its impact on contemporary evangelicalism, see Iain H. Murray, *Revival & Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism 1750-1858* (Banner of Truth, 1994).

²⁰ Charles H. Spurgeon, “Open Air Preaching: A Sketch of its History” and “Open Air Preaching: Remarks Thereon” in *Lectures to My Students* (Zondervan, 1954): pp. 234-253, 254-271.

²¹ *Ibid.*, see “The Call to the Ministry,” pp. 22-41.

²² R. L. Dabney, “Lay Preaching,” *Discussions*, Vol. 2 (Sprinkle Publications, 1982): pp. 76-95.

lay-evangelists, self-appointed and irresponsible to the ecclesiastical government appointed by Christ, betrays its charge and duty.²³

Dabney's prohibitions against the practice of "lay preaching" would have been shared by most of his Protestant, Puritan, and scholastic forebears, such as John Calvin, George Gillespie, John Owen, Thomas Manton, Francis Turretin, Wilhelmus a Brakel, John Gill, and John Brown. It also would extend to many modern Reformed and Calvinistic theologians, including A. W. Pink and Gordon Clark.²⁴ The prohibition of lay preaching unsanctioned by the local church was, in fact, the confessional position of the Westminster Standards, as Question 158 of the Larger Catechism instructs:

Q. By whom is the word of God to be preached?

A. The word of God is to be preached only by such as are sufficiently gifted, and also duly approved and called to that office.²⁵

A similar sentiment is also expressed in chapter 26 ("Of the Church") in the Second London Baptist Confession (1689), which limits public preaching to pastors and "others also gifted and fitted by the Holy Spirit for it, and approved and called by the church."²⁶ By the late 19th century, Dabney's opposition to Moody was more like a voice in the wilderness or an attempt to hold back a virtual tidal wave of egalitarian, democratic "every member a minister" sentiment.²⁷ One is left to ponder whether the contemporary street preaching movement reflects more the spirit of the revivalistic age than the spirit of the apostolic age.

Practical Concerns

Lastly, one might also raise practical and even ethical concerns about the contemporary method of "in your face" street preaching. Some have recently made this a "free speech" issue, challenging various local laws against public disturbance. No doubt there is an increasingly

²³ R. L. Dabney, "Spurious Religious Excitements," *Discussions*, Vol. 3 (Sprinkle Publications, 1996): p. 474.

²⁴ See the collection of quotes from the men here cited in the article [Against Lay Preaching](#) on the website of Covenant Protestant Reformed Church, Ballymena, Northern Ireland.

²⁵ *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Free Presbyterian Publications, 1976): p. 251.

²⁶ *The London Confession of Faith 1677/1689* (Chapel Library, n. d.): p. 38. For a discussion of the "gifted brethren" in early Particular Baptist churches see James M. Renihan, *Edification and Beauty: The Practical Ecclesiology of the English Particular Baptists 1675-1705* (Paternoster, 2008): pp. 107-114.

²⁷ See Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (Yale University Press, 1989).

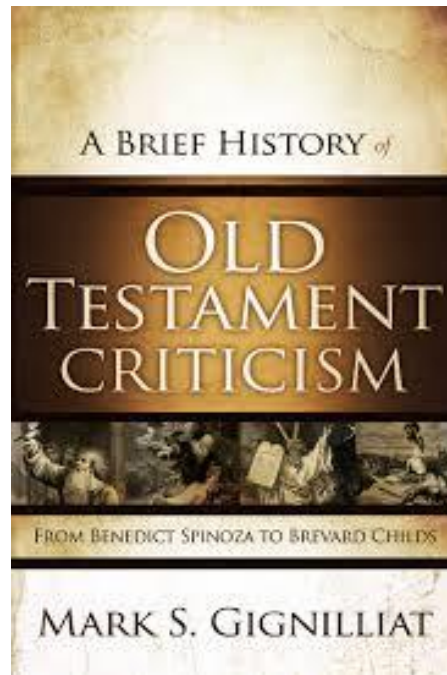
hostile stance against traditional Christianity by many secularists. When the apostles were told to stop teaching in the name of Jesus, they did indeed reply, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). We must ask, however, whether the absolute prohibition that the apostles faced against teaching in the name of Jesus is really parallel to the prohibition of preaching in busy shopping centers or on street corners. Again, what of Paul’s admonition that Christians live quiet and peaceable lives? One wonders, in fact, if some street preachers do not revel in the notoriety of experiencing some “persecution” for their public preaching. Paul taught that Christians were to submit to governing authorities (Romans 13:1-7), and Peter taught that however commendable it was to suffer “for righteousness sake,” believers should not suffer for “evil doing” (1 Peter 3:14, 17).

We might ask further about the ethics of some street preaching practices. Is it really right to take a captive audience at a train station, subway, or bus stop and essentially *force* them to listen to preaching? Would we feel the same level of tolerance if we, our children, or our fellow church members were unwillingly forced to hear Muslim, Mormon, or Wiccan teaching while going about some necessary activity in public life? No doubt, some will tell anecdotal stories of the occasional incident where a person will become interested in what the street preacher is saying and some spiritual fruit will result. We cannot base our practice, however, on such anecdotal experiences. For, no doubt, there will be many others who will raise examples where street preaching has had the opposite effect. Our practice must be based on Biblical warrant rather than anecdotal experience, and, as our survey above has suggested, there is precious little evidence that Jesus or the apostles went out into the public streets and attempted to gain an audience with otherwise disinterested passers-by. Contrary to contemporary street preacher wisdom, it appears that Jesus did not so much go out to the people (to draw a crowd) as much as the people came to Jesus (in crowds).

Can preaching be done in the “open air” in a Biblical manner? Of course, it can. Again, we cannot be legalistic about the *place* of preaching. A gathering for worship can take place on a street or in any other public setting. If the saints are assembled to hear a set-apart minister rightly divide the word of truth and set forth the gospel, preaching can take place as an element of worship in just about any venue. The Biblical model suggests, however, that preaching most often took place in private religious gatherings, either in synagogues, homes, or rented spaces. Did this mean that they opposed evangelism? Of course not! It does perhaps mean, however, that they saw wisdom in Jesus’ teaching that pearls were not to be cast before swine. It also meant that they invited the unlearned and unbelievers into their midst to hear the Word of God intelligibly proclaimed, and they prayed for their conversion. Like the friends of the paralytic they brought the spiritually lame and placed them “into the midst before Jesus” (Luke 5:19). Have we lost confidence in this Biblical pattern? Ω

Jeffrey T. Riddle, Pastor, Christ Reformed Baptist Church, Charlottesville, Virginia

Book Review



Mark S. Gignilliat, *A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism: From Benedict Spinoza to Brevard Childs* (Zondervan, 2012): 186 pp. Reviewed by Jeffrey T. Riddle.

As the title indicates, this book offers a survey of modern historical-critical study of the Old Testament from the Enlightenment to the present day. The author completes this survey not through a general discussion of scholarly trends and developments, but by a “picture gallery tour” (p. 12) examining the key contributions of seven prominent Old Testament scholars, spanning a period of some four hundred years (Spinoza died in 1677 and Childs in 2007). The author teaches Old Testament at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama.

Gignilliat opens by explaining that this work is “by no means a comprehensive attempt at expounding the very complex history of Old Testament interpretation.” (p. 12). It is instead a “historiographical approach” (p. 13) or an attempt to convey history through historical biography. The seven figures discussed are: Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677); W. M. L. De Wette (1780-1849); Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918); Herman Gunkel (1862-1932); Gerhard Von Rad (1901-1971); William Foxwell Albright (1891-1971); and Brevard S. Childs (1923-2007).

Each chapter follows the same general pattern with enough variation so as not to be tedious. Gignilliat first introduces the subject and his significance. Second, he offers a biographical sketch of the person’s life and a description of his cultural setting. Third, he surveys the

subject's primary works and contributions to the field of Old Testament studies. Fourth, he offers a concluding evaluation.

Gignilliat writes in a popular and engaging manner. Technical topics are helpfully explained. The personal details peppered throughout the biographical sketches are particularly interesting and humanizing. So, we learn, among other things, that De Wette's 1804 doctoral dissertation was only sixteen pages in length (p. 44), that Wellhausen was rumored to swim on Sunday mornings so that pious churchgoers could see him with a bathing suit over his shoulders (p. 58), that pro-Nazi students avoided Von Rad's courses (p. 108), and that Albright was a sickly and bookish lad who at age ten saved up enough money by doing chores to purchase a volume on Babylonian history (p. 124).

Most importantly, Gignilliat provides a winsome narrative through this "picture gallery" to describe the development of historical-critical study of the Old Testament. It begins in the Enlightenment with Spinoza setting the trajectory for modern-critical study of the Old Testament by applying rational rather than supernatural interpretation. With De Wette came the influence of Romanticism, including skepticism toward the factuality of the religious history of Israel in the Old Testament. Wellhausen was a German idealist who articulated the classic Documentary Hypothesis (J-E-D-P) of the Pentateuch and influenced the trend toward late dating the Old Testament to the exilic and post-exilic eras. With Gunkel came the emphasis upon finding the *sitz im leben* of the text, along with form and genre criticism. Von Rad championed a tradition-historical approach to Old Testament exegesis and placed the spotlight on "Israel's first and greatest theologian—the Yahwist" (p. 115). The positivism of Albright, the "dean of biblical archaeologist," and his "Baltimore school" (over against the Alt-Noth school) emphasized comparative ANE studies, valuing one manuscript, one papyrus to a thousand theories. Finally, with Childs came the "canonical approach" and its attempt to understand the text in its final form.

On one hand, I do not think anyone would object to the seven towering figures who were chosen to be included in the book. On the other hand, there will no doubt be some who might wish that Gignilliat had included a few others (an objection he anticipates on p. 13). Given that Gignilliat writes from a more or less self-consciously "evangelical" perspective, it might have been interesting if he had also included some figures representing a more conservative perspective in reaction to the rise of modern historical-critical methodology, like Franz Delitzsch or Edward J. Young (again, an objection he anticipates on pp. 169-170). Admittedly, however, he chose to work with more mainstream and influential figures from the wider academy. Along these lines, it might also have been interesting if he had included some figures from the pre-critical world of Biblical studies (e.g., Augustine, Calvin, Owen, etc.).

In the introduction, Gignilliat notes that he does not come to this discussion as a “neutral observer” (p. 13). In the postscript, he makes clear his own high regard for Child’s canonical approach (p. 169). Gignilliat also addresses in the postscript some of the tensions that exist for scholars who are attempting both to hold a confessional perspective on the Old Testament and to make use of the historical-critical method, though he ends by stating that he wonders “if the polarity is as evident today in our particular epistemological climate” (p. 175).

Though Gignilliat expresses more confidence in the believing scholar’s ability to embrace the historical-critical method and retain a high view of the Scripture than I might personally affirm, his book is to be commended. It presents an interesting and useful survey of Old Testament criticism since the Enlightenment. This will prove a helpful work, in particular, for seminarians and graduate students, as well as pastors and others, who wish to get a bird’s eye view of the key people, moments, movements, and works in modern Old Testament critical scholarship. Ω

Jeffrey T. Riddle, Pastor, Christ Reformed Baptist Church, Charlottesville, Virginia

Paradosis

Paradosis is the Greek word for “tradition.” This is a recurring feature of The Reformed Baptist Trumpet highlighting voices from the Reformed, Puritan, and Baptist past.



Image: Benjamin Keach (1640-1704)

Benjamin Keach was a Puritan Particular Baptist pastor who lived from 1640-1704. He is the namesake for the annual Keach Conference. Keach published *The Banqueting House or A Feast of Fat Things: A Divine Poem* in 1692. The book contains 222 poetic hymns, several consisting of multiple parts, so that Keach might introduce them as “Sacred Melody containing near three hundred Sacred Hymns, etc.” In the introduction, Keach says he writes for three audiences: (1) for those who would like an affordable collection of religious verse as an aid to understanding scriptural metaphors; (2) for parents and masters of families who might use such verse in teaching children in their household; and (3) for godly Christians who desire to sing hymns in private and public worship. Keach makes reference to controversy with some who deny that singing is a gospel ordinance. He also makes clear his understanding that Paul’s references to “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16) sanction the composition and singing of uninspired hymns: “We are exhorted to *sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs*, and since we have none left in form in the Scripture, it follows that those who God hath gifted that way ought to compose them; for a hymn or song cannot be without its form. Certainly God doth not enjoin a duty on us, that he hath not left sufficient rule, how to come at it, nor have we any

ground to expect the extraordinary gift.”²⁸ He adds that there is not “any more reason to object against compiling sacred hymns to be sung out of the Word of Christ, than there is to object against pre-compiled sermons that are to be preached.”

The following is hymn three in the collection (slightly edited), based on Psalm 90:1 and meditating on God as the dwelling place of the saints. Though no metrical or musical notation is given in the original, the hymn is written in the common meter and thus may be sung to tunes such as ST. ANNE (“O God Our Help in Ages Past”); AZMON (“O For a Thousand Tongue to Sing”); or NEW BRITAIN (“Amazing Grace”), among others.

Hymn 3

Psalm 90:1

Part One

God the saints’ dwelling place

1. Thy saints Lord have a dwelling strong,
And thou that dwelling art.
No habitation like to this,
Hath any haughty heart.
2. For ‘tis the low and humble soul
That in the Lord does dwell:
Where such do rest, and have repose,
This dwelling doth excel.
3. A house, ah ‘tis our home always,
And when we absent be:
How do we long for to return,

²⁸ This, of course, is not the interpretation given to these passages by those who hold to exclusive psalmody. Advocates of exclusive psalmody argue that all three terms refer to the canonical psalms. For a defense of this interpretation, see Michael Bushel, *Songs of Zion* (Crown and Covenant, 1980): pp. 70-76.

So do our soul till we

4. Return again unto our God,
When we from thee do stray:
O bring us to our bless'd abode,
Christ Jesus is the Way.
5. We here no perfect rest shall find,
Until we fix-ed are
In our brave house that is above
No palace like it here.

Part Two

1. A house preserves from heat and cold,
From winds and cru-el storms
Those who Lord dwell in thee are bold,
Being safe from fear of harms.
2. And in our house our comforts lie,
And all our chiefest treasure:
God is our joy, our souls' delight,
To whom is sweetest pleasure.
3. Propriety unto a house
Doth make it valu-ed.
Our interest in our God alone,
Makes us lift up our head.
4. In a great house are many rooms
To dine and also lie,

Rare secret chambers also we

Do in thee clearly spy.

5. Each attribute is as a room

Whither thy saints do go

By precious acts of faith, and then

Nothing they fear below.

6. Another house, tho' stately tis,

It may be battered down;

But thou art such a house, O Lord,

That can't be overthrown.

7. Haste then away to your abode,

Let all with speed haste home.

For dreadful storms you may expect

Will very quickly come.

Part Three

Chambers of Safety

1. O come, O come, God's people all,

With speed haste ye away,

Enter your chamber great and small,

No longer do you stay:

2. For God, the mighty God above,

Is rising from His place,

And will the hills and mountains move,

And vengeance pour apace.

3. There is a way found out that ye
 May safely be secured,
When sinners shall consum-ed be
 Who basely are misled.
4. Doth it not thunder afar off,
 It lightens also fore:
O tremble all, and do not scoff,
 For hark 'tis more and more.
5. Children, get home, and do not stray,
 Haste to your dwelling place;
For if you make the least delay,
 Then sad may be your case.
6. All who abroad or in the fields
 Do foolishly remain,
They may as the Egyptians were,
 Be ruin-ed and slain. Ω