

# Book Reviews

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*Defending Substitution: An Essay on Atonement in Paul.* By Simon Gathercole.  
Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015. 128 pp., \$19.99 Paperback.

Simon Gathercole is senior lecturer in New Testament studies in the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Cambridge and Fellow and director of studies in theology at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge. He has published several books, such as *The Gospel of Thomas: Introduction and Commentary* and *The Pre-Existent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke*. His *Defending Substitution* is a welcomed addition to the discussion of atonement in Paul's letters.

In the book's introduction, Gathercole notes that the representation view of the atonement (Christ represented sinners on the cross) has become an accepted view in biblical scholarship, but substitutionary atonement (Christ died in the place of sinners) is hotly contested. Gathercole contends that substitution deserves a place in the discussion of atonement in Paul. Substitution does not have to be exclusive of representation. They can coexist. Accordingly, then, his main argument is that "Christ's death for our sins *in our place, instead of us*, is in fact a vital ingredient in the biblical (in the present discussion, Pauline) understanding of the atonement" (14). While some challenge this doctrine by calling it legal fiction or immoral, and others present philosophical, logical, and exegetical challenges, even the "most weighty exegetical criticisms are unfounded and that there is actually good evidence for seeing substitutionary atonement as intrinsic to the biblical presentation of how God has reconciled the world to himself in Christ" (28).

Chapter 1 addresses the exegetical challenges to substitution. The Tübingen, interchange, and apocalyptic views are among these views. Gathercole is fair in his analysis of these perspectives, arguing that each has its merits. The Tübingen and interchange views share the idea that Christ identifies with us in his death. The apocalyptic view emphasizes Christ's triumph over oppressive hostile powers in his death and resurrection. Yet, Gathercole argues that each share a common problem—they down play individual sins, focusing instead on sin as an entity (47-48, 53-54). In his observation,

it “is a feature of representative understandings of the atonement that they are more corporate in nature. They are therefore not necessarily particularly equipped to incorporate reference to that aspect of human plight that consist of human sins ... *Sins*, transgressions, individual infractions of the divine will are, however, integral to Paul’s account of the human plight” (54). Another important difficulty with these accounts is that each becomes an all-encompassing explanation for atonement in Paul, which is used as a “criterion for whether other elements may or may not be fitted into Paul” (54). Each then becomes its own procrustean bed of sorts. Unfortunately, what often gets lopped off is a substitutionary view of the atonement. The following two chapters will show that substitution indeed deserves a place in the discussion of Paul’s view of the atonement.

Chapter two makes a positive case for substitution by examining 1 Corinthians 15:3: “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” According to Gathercole, the central component of Paul’s gospel is Christ’s death “for our sins.” In framing this passage within the larger context of vv. 1-11, Gathercole points to three important statements that testify to the importance of this passage: “through which you were saved” (v. 2); “as of first importance” (v. 3); and “Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach” (v. 11). The former two testify to the central character of the gospel in Paul’s thought. The latter shows that substitution is not unique to Paul, “but the proclamation of the whole apostolic college” (58). Thus for Paul, *and* the other apostles, substitutionary atonement is central to the gospel. Gathercole then explores which Scriptures Paul had in mind, saying that his gospel is “according to the Scriptures.” The closest model to a vicarious death in the Bible is the suffering servant in Isaiah 53, whose “death ... is not merely caused by the sinful behavior of his persecutors but also regarded as punishment *in place* of the people for their benefit” (69). This text underscores that in 1 Corinthians 15:3 Paul desires to express that Christ died “in place of” sinners. In so doing, “Christ dies both in consequence of the transgressions of others and in order to deal with those infractions of the divine will” (79).

Chapter 3 demonstrates that Paul compares Jesus’ death to other examples of noble deaths in antiquity. The starting point for this discussion is Romans 5:6-8. Gathercole argues that in this passage Paul does something subtly different from 1 Corinthians 15:3. While in the latter the Old Testament background to Jesus’ substitutionary death is in view, in the former

Paul “links the death of Christ with other heroic deaths from his cultural environment—what he refers to as the rare examples of death for good or righteous individuals” (86). One such death is in Euripides’s fifth-century play *Alcestis*, where Alcestis dies “instead of” her husband. Her virtuous death was commemorated by philosophers such as Plato and Musonius Rufus, and first-century inscriptions. Philosophical schools, such as the Stoics and Epicureans, mention similar deaths, idealizing death on behalf of a friend. These contemporary examples provide a fitting background for Romans 5:6-8. Even still, Jesus’ death would have perplexed most classical philosophers, who would not have understood why a person would have died for someone with whom he had no relationship or with whom he was at odds. But that’s where the parallels end. Jesus is not your average philosopher from antiquity. Whereas a pagan might dare to die for “a good man” or a “righteous man,” Jesus died for the impious—his enemies—so that they might be reconciled to God (105-106).

The book’s conclusion then summarizes each chapter, showing that substitution is central to Paul’s presentation of the gospel. Even though substitution may differ from representative, or even apocalyptic, views of the atonement, Gathercole argues that they do not have to be mutually exclusive, for there is no reason why each “could not have simultaneously inhabited Paul’s thought” (112). Gathercole helpfully points out that “It is striking how, when Paul comes to summarize his gospel in 1 Corinthians 15, he describes how Christ’s substitutionary death has dealt with sins (15:3) and in the same chapter also goes on to focus on the ultimate conquest of the ‘last enemy to be defeated,’ death (15:26)” (112). He concludes by saying, “We need not be forced to opt either for Jesus’s substitutionary death, in which he deals with sins, or for a representative or liberative death, in which he deals with the power of evil. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder!” (113).

Overall, Gathercole makes a good case for a classical view of the atonement—that Christ died “on behalf of” sinners, in their place. In the process, he interacts fairly with challenges to substitution, acknowledging that each makes a positive contribution to the discussion. He also analyzes central texts such as 1 Corinthians 15:3 and Romans 5:6-8, showing how the former is grounded in Old Testament texts such as Isaiah 53 and the latter is comparable to virtuous deaths in classical literature. Although classical literature only goes so far as to support death for a loved one or friend, Jesus supersedes

expectations by dying for his enemies. Substitutionary atonement, as Gathercole argues, deserves a rightful place in any discussion of atonement in Paul.

Yet the book's brevity is a glaring weakness. Gathercole expects this criticism. After all, he does not intend to write an exhaustive tome. Even still, I think it is important to mention that Pauline texts such as 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, which argues that "Christ died for all," and Galatians 3:13, which testifies that "Christ became a curse for us" on the cross, would have strengthened his argument for substitution in Paul's letters. Also, Gathercole mainly interacts with modern interpreters. It would have been helpful to look at earlier figures who see substitution as significant to the gospel. Among these are Athanasius, Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin. Calvin, for example, argues that Christ is our substitute, taking our punishment and appeasing God's wrath. Examining such comments would have shown that modern interpreters have gone astray from a classical view of the atonement.

Perhaps, then, a follow up to this volume is in order. Admittedly, such a book would be icing on the cake. The present volume does an admirable job of "defending substitution." Thus it achieves its goal—it shows that substitution is vital to Paul's understanding of the atonement, deserving a place in the conversation of atonement in Paul's letters.

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*Luke*. Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament. By Mikeal C. Parsons. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015, 426 pp., \$30.00 paperback.

Just as the fifteenth-century Flemish Renaissance painter, Rogier van der Weyden, masterfully depicted Luke as visual artist, similarly Mikeal C. Parsons (Ph.D. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) masterfully paints a portrait of Luke as literary artist. Parsons is the Kidd L. and Buna Hitchcock Macon Chair in Religion at Baylor University as well as the author of several works focusing on Luke-Acts, including *Acts* in Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament and his trilogy on visual exegesis, *Illuminating Luke*, which Parsons co-authored with his wife, Heidi J. Hornik.

Parsons conspicuously places his aim, structural outline, and methodology in his introduction. Parsons states the aim of his commentary as: “to read the final form of Luke’s Gospel within the first-century historical, cultural, rhetorical, and theological contexts in which it was composed as well as the first half of the first-century context, which it purports to recount” (4–5). In terms of structure, Parsons sees five major sections in Luke’s Gospel: 1:1–4:13; 4:14–9:50; 9:51–14:35; 15:1–19:44; and 19:45–24:53. Although sharing some affinity with other major commentaries (especially, Bock 1994–1996, 1:44–48), Parsons’s structural outline of Luke appears to be derived from his own rhetorical analysis of the text (16). Parsons describes his methodological approach as a “reader-centered literary approach” (xi), which focuses on the movement from author to text to audience with primacy given to the text, itself (xii, 3). Such an approach consists of both “historical and hermeneutical” considerations (17). Parsons clarifies: “the commentary attempts to understand the ways in which the rhetorical strategies, literary conventions, and cultural scripts in the final form of Luke were received by the authorial audience ... [while] not a real, flesh-and-blood audience; it is, nonetheless, historically circumscribed” (16–17). Critical to Parsons’s work is a focus on the Lukan rhetorical strategy as well as the concept of the authorial audience. Parsons elucidates: “This commentary is written from the perspective of the authorial audience, that is, the reception of the text by the audience that the author had in mind when he wrote his Gospel ... Presumably the authorial audience knew how to respond appropriately (if unconsciously) to the effects of persuasive rhetoric” (16).

Structurally, Parsons’s commentary consists of a brief introduction (twenty pages), which serves as a prolegomenon to his commentary, five chapters covering the five sections of Parsons’s structural outline of Luke’s Gospel, an impressive bibliography (twenty-four pages) of select works, as well as useful indices of subjects, modern authors, Scripture and ancient sources (vii–viii). Numerous figures, tables, maps, photographs, and structural outline graphics appear throughout the work helping to immerse the reader in the first-century Lukan *Sitz im Leben*, as well as to trace the rhetorical flow throughout Luke’s Gospel. Each chapter consists of a brief overview and graphical outline orienting the reader to the contents of the chapter, an introduction to each section, Parsons’s tracing of the narrative flow, and then concludes with a succinct survey of the theological issues covered and

how they relate to contemporary Christianity.

There is much to commend in Parsons's work. First of all Parsons's work is scholarly, yet accessible. Parsons states that his commentary "is aimed squarely at students" (xi). In this sense, Parsons hits the mark with a commentary that enables "students to understand [Luke] ... as a literary whole rooted in a particular ancient setting" (xi). Second, rather than merely parroting the comments of his predecessors, many of Parsons's insights are fresh and make a novel contribution to Lukan studies. Parsons is not afraid of taking a minority position if that is where his research leads. An example of this is in his view regarding the genre of Luke. Instead of seeing the canonical gospels as *sui generis* (i.e., a genre unto themselves; so Bultmann 1928, cols. 418–22), Parsons sees Luke belonging to the genre of encomiastic *bios* (13). Parsons adds: "Ancient *bioi* focus on elucidating the "essence" of the individual [Jesus the Christ] who is the subject of the biography ... [A biography] whose purpose includes the praise of its subject around a cluster of topics" (13). Unlike some scholars who see the genre of Luke bound to its unity with Acts (so Garland 2011, 28), Parsons sees Acts as having its own independent textual-transmission history from Luke despite their common authorship (11, 19). Third, given its focus on the rhetorical strategies employed by Luke, Parsons's commentary enables its readers to focus on the text of Luke holistically—thus, noticing the connections between the macro and micro structures of the text. In contrast to a standard verse-by-verse exegetical commentary, which often obscures the rhetorical artistry of Luke and these important intertextual, structural connections, Parsons's work shows how each part of Luke's Gospel contributes to Luke's holistic rhetorical strategy.

As good as Parsons's work is, it is not without faults. One such fault (not a fault of Parsons, but the commentary series in general) is the transliteration of all the Greek text. While perhaps aiding the non-specialist, transliteration proffers a frustrating experience to readers proficient with the Greek text. A better solution would have been to offer both the Greek lexemes as well as their transliterated counterparts in brackets. Second, the fact that there are no footnotes makes further research difficult as his readers must continuously look to the back of the book to locate Parsons sources in the bibliography (again, a critique of the series and not Parsons *per se*). Third, and last, Parsons's repeated references to the "Lukan Jesus" (e.g., 301, 304, 340) may give some readers (especially first year seminary students not yet acquainted with this

terminology) the impression that Parsons is arguing for a multiplicity of antithetical Jesus Christs across the canonical gospels—as if Jesus was a wax nose that the gospel writers were free to twist and mould *mutatis mutandis* to fit their own individual theological programs. It seems that Parsons would have better served his readers by having a sidebar discussing the issue of the various portrayals of Jesus throughout Scripture and history (so Pelikan, *Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture*, 1985), rather than assuming *a priori* that his “authorial audience”—i.e., undergraduate and graduate students—would be familiar with this nomenclature.

In sum, Parsons’s commentary evinces the erudition and fruit of a lifetime of scholarship devoted to the study of the literary artistry of Luke’s Gospel. While I did not agree with Parsons’s conclusions at every point (I would say the same for every other commentary I have read), this work hits the mark and deserves a spot on the shelf of any serious student of Luke’s Gospel. While not a standalone commentary (perhaps best accompanied by an exegetical work such as Bock 1994–1996, Culy, Parsons, and Stigall 2010, or Gundry 2011), it is a valuable tool for anyone who is teaching/preaching through Luke’s Gospel.

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*Persuasive Preaching: A Biblical and Practical Guide to the Effective Use of Persuasion.* By R. Larry Overstreet. Wooster, OH: Weaver Book Company, 2014, 298 pp., \$24.99 paperback.

Contemporary society is distrustful of those who seek to persuade, yet understanding the necessity for persuasive techniques. For example, one may be suspicious of a used car salesman but accepting of promotional ploys aimed to get the customer interested in buying a car. This mindset, in addition to several other factors, has influenced the pulpit, resulting in many pastors proclaiming God’s Word without a focus on persuading hearers to respond. Larry Overstreet’s latest work calls preachers back to persuasive preaching by citing scriptural examples and providing personal examples as well.

Overstreet is a retired seminary professor, serving students for 30+ years. He retired as Professor of Pastoral Theology and director of the D. Min. program at Corban University School of Ministry (formerly Northwest Baptist Seminary) but continues to teach adjunctly at Piedmont International University and to serve the local church as interim pastor. He received his Bachelor's Degree from Bob Jones University in Bible and Speech. His Master of Divinity came from San Francisco Baptist Theological Seminary, while his Doctor of Philosophy was received from Wayne State University in Communication, Rhetoric, and Public Address, concentrating his dissertation on the rhetorical value of Aristotle's use of references to deity. Equipped with training in both theology and rhetoric, Overstreet has focused his academic career in practical theology, as is evidenced by his numerous articles, particularly those in *Preaching* magazine. He has also authored another monologue, *Biographical Preaching: Bringing Bible Characters to Life*.

In Overstreet's pastoral experience, he, like many, recognizes a trend of moving away from the giving of public invitations in the last several decades. Additionally, he argues many sermons fail to call the hearers to action, i.e., to respond to the preached word. These two tendencies are indicative of a move away from persuasive preaching. While the concept of persuasion is often offensive in the current culture, the author believes it to be a biblically necessary part of every sermon. The sermon must stress the teaching of God's Word with an unmistakable summons to obey that Word. "This book, therefore, is a call to restore the necessary characteristic of persuasion to our preaching" (4).

The book is divided into four sections: "Issues Facing Persuasive Preaching," "Biblical Support for Persuasive Preaching," "Structuring Persuasive Messages," and "Pertinent Applications in Persuasive Preaching." Various chapters comprise each section. The work ends with an epilogue, five appendices, a bibliography, and three indices.

After a brief prologue that overviews the entire work, Part 1, "Issues Facing Persuasive Preaching," encompasses two chapters. Chapter 1 identifies and defines persuasion. Incorporating aspects of definitions from both Christian and secular communication scholars, Overstreet defines persuasive preaching as "the process of preparing biblical, expository messages using a persuasive pattern, and presenting them through verbal and nonverbal communication means to autonomous individuals who can be convicted and/or taught by



God's Holy Spirit, in order to alter or strengthen their attitudes and beliefs toward God, His Word, and other individuals, resulting in their lives being transformed into the image of Christ" (14). In chapter 2, "Problems Facing Persuasive Preaching," the author briefly summarizes the tenets of modernism and postmodernism and juxtaposes them with nine aspects of truth to which the evangelical preacher holds. In doing so, Overstreet identifies the disjunction between these worldviews and the assumptions that underlie persuasive preaching.

In Part 2, comprised of chapters 3-7, the author gives biblical evidence for his proposition. Chapter 3 begins to consider the specific language of persuasion. Overstreet argues *πείθω* is used in Greek literature with a focus on the *results* of persuasion. The remainder of the chapter summarizes the use of this Greek verb in the Gospels, Johannine literature, and non-Pauline epistles. Overstreet concludes that persuasion was a natural and integral part of first-century life and the ministry of the apostles and NT authors. The fourth chapter considers the uses of *πείθω* in the Pauline corpus, helpfully grouping the uses according to nuance of meaning rather than by epistle. Such categories of meaning include persuasion as "winning over," "obedience," "confidence," "being convicted," "faith," and "emphatic declaration." This chapter concludes with an interpretation of an often-cited passage which seems to contradict Overstreet's proposition, 1 Corinthians 2:4, "And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom ..." in which the author succeeds in demonstrating the fallacy of making this passage wholly paradigmatic for all of Paul's preaching.

Chapter 5 examines other Greek words connected to the Apostle Paul and his proclaiming of God's Word so as to piece together a Pauline theology of preaching. Overstreet provides a detailed examination of terms related to preaching and categorizes them based on their nuanced meaning. He concludes that "a Pauline theology of preaching ... is entirely consistent with his preaching being persuasive." While chapter 5 related to Aristotle's *logos* and *pathos*, chapter 6 focuses on *ethos*, the credibility of the speaker. Overstreet provides a brief exegesis of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and 2 Timothy 2:14-16 to demonstrate that Paul sought to persuade his readers by demonstrating his own trustworthiness. Chapter 7, the final chapter of Part 2, considers words in the Old Testament that relate to persuasion and examines them in their context. From these uses, Overstreet derives "Old Testament Principles of

Persuasion,” with one principle presented per word examined. The author’s designation—“principles”—may be too strong, especially since the principle is derived from only one use of the word while other uses are ignored. Rather, this chapter provides information on *aspects* of persuasion gleaned from the specific use of OT words, and those aspects are beneficial.

While Part 2 emphasizes the theory of persuasion—its biblical support, Part 3 focuses on the practice of persuasion in “Structuring Persuasive Messages.” Here Overstreet suggests four types of organizational patterns and devotes one chapter to each (chapters 8-11). These patterns include motivated sequence, problem-solution, cause-effect, and refutation. Each chapter introduces the pattern, discusses the various parts of the pattern, and points the reader to examples in an appendix. The motivated sequence approach helps to focus the sermon on the action expected of the hearers, leading them to consider “Now what?” This sermon approach may be adapted to various types of audiences (favorable, undecided, apathetic, or opposed) and a helpful graphic (131-132) is provided to assist the preacher to craft each part of his sermon with his audience in mind. The problem-solution approach begins by convincing the audience of a pertinent problem and its grounds before presenting a biblical solution. This approach fits well with life-situation preaching. The cause-effect approach is effective to persuade the audience to start or stop a particular action or belief because of its effect on their lives. Overstreet provides a beneficial organizational outline demonstrating how the preacher can emphasize either the cause or the effect (147-148). The refutation approach is especially effective when the audience is opposed to the speaker’s thesis. It identifies the audience’s objections and refutes those objections by providing evidence and logical argumentation.

Part 4 considers three additional topics that relate to persuasive preaching: manipulation, the Holy Spirit, and the invitation. Chapter 12 examines the difference between manipulation and ethical persuasion, citing both secular and Christian scholars. One of the longest and most valuable chapters in the book is chapter 13, “The Holy Spirit in Preaching.” In it, Overstreet provides a biblical theology of the Spirit’s work in preaching and the preacher. Tracing the work of the Spirit, the author notes he communicates, empowers, and demonstrates God’s Word and enables the preacher of God’s Word. The often underemphasized role of the third person of the Trinity is given his due place here. “The Invitation,” chapter 14, presents the motives and bases of biblical

invitations and concludes with characteristics and potential liabilities of invitations. Overstreet's blend of the biblical foundation for the invitation combined with practical advice on giving invitations is a clear strength.

After the body of the work, an epilogue considers the Book of Deuteronomy as four sermons delivered by Moses, followed by five appendices. Appendices A-C outline the uses of *πείθω* in Greek literature. Appendix D parses the use of the word group *πείθω* in the NT. Appendix E provides additional sermon outline examples for each of the four persuasive preaching methods discussed in chapters 8-11. A bibliography and subject, author, and scripture indices conclude the book.

Regarding strengths, Overstreet has done an excellent job building a biblical case for employing persuasion in preaching. He effectively demonstrates that the preacher must be motivated by having transformation take place in his hearers when he crafts and delivers his sermon. Additionally, his investigation of the Greek words related to persuasion is exceptional and the presentation of his results is superb. Other minor strengths are worth mentioning. First, the book provides both the original word and the English transliteration for Hebrew and Greek words, making it accessible to those without knowledge of the original languages. Second, making good use of footnotes, the author points to additional sources where it is not appropriate to develop a point in the body of the work (e.g., 39 fn. 53, 183 fn. 18). Lastly, the sample sermons, both those found in Scripture and those crafted by the author based on Scripture, provide tangible examples to the reader of Overstreet's methods.

Regarding weaknesses, in certain places, the author does not fully develop the context of a reference. For example, in his discussion of perhaps the most explicit statement on persuasion in the NT, 2 Corinthians 5:11, "Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men," Overstreet gives less than one page of consideration. The author does an admirable job on the daunting task of surveying the Bible's theology of persuasion; however, deeper exegesis of a few key passages would be helpful (as is evidenced in his refutation of 1 Cor 2:4, 49-55).

Overstreet's discussion of modernism and postmodernism in chapter 2, while succinct (5 pages), is helpful. However, specific implications of these views on persuasive preaching is not explicitly discussed. That is, while the "Problems Facing Persuasive Preaching" were implied in the author's

discussion, perhaps specific examples would have better contextualized Overstreet's insightful connections. Similarly, while chapter 12 gave an excellent overview of the issues related to manipulation and ethical persuasion, a more thorough discussion of specific practices and why they are categorized as ethical or unethical would add to the usefulness of this work.

In conclusion, *Persuasive Preaching* is written so as to be accessible to both pastors and students, but is not so elementary as to be of little value. Rather, both groups will benefit from Overstreet's arguments and examples and, by God's grace and for His glory, will be persuaded to preach persuasively.

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*Orthodox, Puritan, Baptist: Hercules Collins (1647-1702) and Particular Baptist Identity in Early Modern England*. Reformed Historical Theology 32. By G. Stephen Weaver, Jr. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015, 234 pp., 69,99 €.

Those acquainted with the seventeenth-century English Particular Baptists are familiar with William Kiffin, Hanserd Knollys, and Benjamin Keach. But who is Hercules Collins? This lesser known and underappreciated Particular Baptist pastor is the subject of Stephen Weaver's revision of his doctoral dissertation. His thesis pointedly speaks to the issue of Baptist identity. Weaver argues that "the writings of Hercules Collins demonstrate that he, and by extension his fellow Particular Baptists, viewed themselves as faithfully operating within both the historic Nicene-Christianity shown in the early creeds and the Protestant orthodoxy codified by the Westminster Assembly in the Westminster Confession of Faith" (25). He demonstrates this thesis by showing the influence and representative status of Collins and then, as the title suggests, relaying the evidence that Collins was both orthodox and Puritan and that his Baptist ecclesiology flowed from these commitments.

While Weaver discusses Collins as representative and significant throughout the work, this is the primary objective of the first chapter. Through the narrative of Collins's biography, a strong case is made by highlighting

noteworthy elements of Collins's ministry. He was the third pastor of the Wapping Church from 1677-1702, the oldest Baptist church in London, which was originally pastored by John Spilsbury. Collins was persecuted and imprisoned with other Baptists before the Act of Toleration. He signed the Second London Confession. He was present at all four London general assemblies between 1689 and 1692 and a supporter of ministerial maintenance and the common fund to accomplish it. He was also very well networked, with close ties to Kiffin, Knollys, and Keach.

As a significant but typical Baptist, Collins was orthodox. Weaver demonstrates this in the context of the heretical views propounded by Matthew Caffyn and Thomas Collier. Collins's *An Orthodox Catechism* (1680) included the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, clearly illustrating his Trinitarian and Christological orthodoxy. His constructive articulation of orthodoxy in the catechism questions and his signing of the Second London Confession is further evidence of his doctrinal fidelity to the catholic tradition.

Collins also viewed himself as comfortably within the Puritan framework. The definition of Puritanism that Weaver offers is the Reformed regulative principle. While too narrow to account for conforming Puritans like Richard Sibbes or Arminian Puritans like John Goodwin, this definition does capture something of the essence of Puritan movement, namely, to submit faith and practice to the authority of Scripture. The regulative principle was also fundamental for the distinct Baptist ecclesiology. Weaver demonstrates the kinship of early Baptists with Puritans by drawing attention to their Separatist ancestry and adoption of Puritan confessions with minor modification. He shows Collins's particular affinity with the Puritan hermeneutic and preaching method articulated by William Perkins. Further, Weaver equates Collins's approach to persecution with the Puritans. He uses this as an opportunity to expound Collins's two prison writings, but does not provide evidence for what the Puritan approach to persecution looked like. It would perhaps be more helpful to speak in terms of Puritan approaches to persecution, as fleeing, going underground, and bold nonconformity were all frequent practices, and a Puritan theology of suffering, with which Collins seems to have resonated.

That Collins was a Baptist was the result of his consistent application of his definition of the church and the regulative principle. Collins accepted the definition of the church in the Thirty-Nine Articles, but favored John

Owen's. The entailment of a visible church made up of the faithful was regenerate church membership, which in turn necessitated religious liberty and congregationalism. Believer's baptism by immersion was understood to be the plain testimony of Scripture and therefore the logical conclusion of the Puritan regulative principle. Concerning the Lord's Supper, Collins held the spiritual presence view, which includes the spiritual presence of Christ and the spiritual nourishment of believing participants. Weaver offers an extended defense of the reality that this was the understanding of seventeenth-century English Particular Baptists, as apposed to the strictly memorial view. He ably walks the reader through the evidence of confessions, catechisms, and personal writings.

Weaver makes a welcome contribution to the fields of Baptist studies and early modern British history. He provides the most extensive biography of Collins to date and the first sustained discussion of his thought and significance. His work is straightforwardly organized, clear, and for the most part concise. Both scholars and those simply wanting to know more about Baptist origins and early English Baptist life will find this book rewarding. Weaver persuasively defends his thesis that Hercules Collins illustrates an understanding of Baptist identity that includes Christian orthodoxy and Puritanism, with Baptist distinctives emanating from this foundation. Weaver will surely disappoint those who espouse Landmarkism or see soul liberty as the core Baptist tenet, but he offers a historically sound and theologically faithful account of Baptist identity.

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