



The theology of preaching: A Reformed perspective

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Introduction

Under the First Head of the First Book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland, compiled at the outset of the Scottish Reformation in 1560, stands the following:

Seeing that Christ Jesus is he whom God the Father hath commanded onely to bee heard and followed of his sheepe, wee judge it necessary that his Gospell be truely and openly preached in every Church and Assembly of this realme, and that all doctrine repugnant to the same, be utterly repressed as damnable to mans salvation.¹

Later in the text, under the Ninth Head, “Concerning the Policie of the Kirk”, the true preaching of the Word is deemed ‘utterly necessarie’ – alongside the rightly administered sacraments, common public prayers, catechetical work with children and ‘rude persons’, and church discipline.² And recommendations are given for the regularity with which the Gospel should be preached: in the ‘great townes’, every day should be marked with ‘sermon or common prayers’; in ‘every notable town’, one day beyond Sunday should thus ‘be appointed’; in ‘smaller townes’, a sermon on Sundays before noon was the minimal requirement.³

In truth, such recommendations were largely aspirational rather than ever fully realised. The lack of financial resources and the shortage of qualified ministers – evidently neither is a recent problem – meant that they were at best implemented piecemeal and occasionally, and never actually held sway nationwide.

Yet what this First Book of Discipline indicates beyond doubt is that the preaching of the Word was utterly central to the vision of the Scottish Reformers: that deep in the DNA of the Reformation instincts of this nation – however diminished or occluded or buried such instincts may now be – lies an inescapable awareness that the true and public preaching of the Gospel *matters* in the church, and matters to the point that it is seen to be not just *one* priority, but *the* priority of the church.

In the history of Reformed churches in Scotland, this central tenet of Protestant belief has given rise to various practical arrangements for preaching. Pulpits have been positioned high and low, to the centre and to the side; they have been mounted on every conceivable wall of church buildings, and regularly erected outside. At different times and in different places, different sermon styles have prevailed: there have been short homilies, lengthy diatribes, and prolix expositions. Preaching has been based on one or other lectionary, on serial exposition of one biblical book or extended passage, on diverse topical themes arranged in a series, or simply on the preacher's chosen text for the day. And the category of those permitted by the church to preach has been now wider, now narrower.

These issues, however, will not be foremost in this paper. This should assuredly *not* be taken to mean that they are deemed unimportant or uninteresting – far from it. By contrast, they are deeply important and highly relevant for preaching.

But it seems to me that to consider such practical issues properly and fruitfully, we have to consider them within their larger context, as part of a wider framework. And that framework is the theological understanding in the Reformed tradition of the centrality and significance of preaching. Against this theological backdrop, all the afore-mentioned arrangements might be said to relate to the *well-being* of the church rather than to the being of the church itself, and to relate to matters of culture, temperament, taste, and expectation rather than to essential substance. Now again, culture, temperament, taste, and expectation are far from insignificant: the preaching of the Word is, after all, a concrete event in our space and time. But in considering these matters, it also seems wise to retain a broader perspective.

In what follows, then, I hope to explore in greater detail the larger

framework of the Reformed theology of preaching. On one level, this may seem to risk being rather *impractical* – this paper will not offer guidance on how to prepare or deliver a sermon, or on its form, content, place, surrounds, or preacher. Yet on another level, I trust that it will be *deeply* practical, in so far as it aims to stimulate reflection upon the *meaning* of the event of preaching – without that sort of *reflexive* and *contemplative* moment, discussion of the *directly* practical issues may be in vain.

I will turn first to think a little further about the reason preaching occupied – and perhaps still occupies – a central place in the life of Reformed churches. And I will turn second to explore some of the theological dimensions of the act of preaching, and in particular the relations of the event of preaching to the Word and to the Spirit. By way of a brief conclusion, I want to recognise what may be some of the contemporary challenges to the place of preaching in churches today.



The place of preaching in the Reformed churches

What makes the church the church? How can we tell where a church exists?

These questions may seem somewhat strange to our contemporary sensibilities, but at the time of the Reformation, they were loaded and fraught questions. Among Protestants, they were usually answered by way of identifying ‘marks’ or ‘notes’ of the church, features by which a ‘true’ church could be recognised. Across the traditions and confessions – not only of the Reformed, but also of Lutherans and Anglicans – either two or three such notes were always identified.

Thus, to draw on a typical example, the Scots Confession speaks of the ‘notis [...] of the trew kirk’ as being, first, ‘the trew preicheing of the worde of God’, second, ‘the rycht administratioun of the sacramentis’, and third (and perhaps rather regrettably) ‘ecclesiasticall discipline’.⁴ Now it is no coincidence that it is the preaching of the Word of God which comes first in this list: although all such named marks of the church are *necessary* marks, for the Reformed at least, some marks were undoubtedly more necessary than others. Thus Francis Turretin argues that ‘In the first degree of necessity is the

pure preaching and profession of the word, since without it the church cannot exist [...] the administration of the sacraments does not have an equal degree of necessity'.⁵ And similarly John Calvin writes of the second mark – sacraments – as an 'appendix' to the promise: as Christ and the apostles attest, they 'require [...] preaching to beget faith'.⁶ However important and essential they are, sacraments are second to preaching the Word.

The outworking of this view had both practical and theological ramifications.

Practically, Donald Macleod notes, 'The concern to ensure appropriate preaching dominated all the arrangements of the Reformed churches'.⁷ This is true not only of traditional Reformed church architecture, in which the pulpit and its positioning (especially its height!) became a crucial consideration. It is also true of traditional Reformed church liturgy: in the words of David Cornick, the latter 'is structured around the Word, preparing to hear it, listening to it, entering into its exposition either through listening and thought, or by more active participation and then preparing to live it in the world'.⁸ Thus the often unfairly and ignorantly derided 'hymn sandwich' need not be a slavish wooden liturgical coffin; at its finest, it provides a structured yet dynamic and meaningful opportunity for a congregation to approach, hear, contemplate, and understand the Word of God – and in this way for the congregation to be nourished by it and to be sent out to live for it.

Theologically, meanwhile, Brian Gerrish observes, 'it was a fundamental principle of the Reformation that there is no people without the proclamation of the gospel; it follows that where the gospel is not proclaimed, even a packed sanctuary is not a church'.⁹ Of course, in its original Reformation context, this seemingly innocuous principle harboured a polemic dimension. The word 'gospel' as it is used here has specific doctrinal content, linked to the central aspects of Reformation teaching. At the same time, to emphasise the preaching of the church was at least implicitly to downplay the centrality of the sacraments in and to the church. And these moves connected closely with a number of other Reformation concerns: the desire to foreground the teaching and reception of Scripture alone, freed from the accrued traditions in belief and practice of the medieval

church; the desire to promote an active response of a faith leading to justification, as opposed to resting content with the passive reception of the sacraments; and the consequent desire to give congregations access to Scripture and its exposition in the native language of the community, resulting in the concomitant effort for wider education.

There was also, however, a constructive aspect to the ‘preaching principle’. As our opening quotation from the First Book of Discipline indicates, for the Reformers the necessity of preaching was no abstract or irrelevant matter: the very salvation of human beings was at stake in their coming to true faith through the preaching of Christ’s Gospel. In speaking of the ‘true preaching of the Word’ as the principle mark of the church, the emphasis fell not so much upon the ‘preaching’ as upon the ‘Word’, and upon the faith it could engender and the redemption it could bring. In the words of Jane Dawson, ‘Regular exposure to the Word, preferably expounded by a preacher, was believed by the Reformers to be the main method by which Scotland would be converted to a lively Protestant faith.’¹⁰ Preaching the Word of God truly in traditional Reformed theology thus meant exposing people to the Word of God which could bring them to faith and thus to salvation.

Of course, neither then nor now was preaching considered to be the only way of proclaiming the Gospel. Then as now, the worship service of the church involved many liturgical dimensions beyond preaching, not to mention the wider engagement of the church in acts of mission and wider acts of love in the world at large. Through and in all of these activities too, the Gospel could be proclaimed. Yet it is the event of preaching itself which was the focus of the Reformation service, just as it remains the focus of most contemporary services in Reformed churches, and it is this event which we will explore further in the next section.



The event of preaching

Thus far we have been considering the important of the preaching of the Gospel for the existence and recognition of the church. In this section, our attention shifts to consider in greater detail the *event* of preaching, and this from two perspectives: first, the event of preaching and the Word; second, the event of preaching and the Spirit. Our focus

in attending to these perspectives will be upon the way they have been consistently foregrounded in the history of the Reformed tradition. Yet given that preaching might be considered the truly ecumenical practice¹¹ – recognised and practised in all denominations – what is said here may resonate more widely.



The event of preaching and the Word

The uniform testimony of the Reformation tradition agrees that as we are creaturely and sinful human beings, it lies beyond our capabilities to preach the Word of God. This is a chastening starting-point in any theological discussion of preaching: the Word of God that we are to preach quite simply lies beyond us.

First, the Word of God lies beyond us in so far as it is an *external* Word. The Christ crucified whom we – with Paul – are to preach (1 Corinthians 1:23), the Christ who is attested to us in Scripture, is not under our control or in our possession, as if the Word of God were unproblematically at our disposal whenever we choose. And the consequence of this is that our preaching must be ‘ec-centric’. I mean this not primarily in the sense of simply being weird or strange (though perhaps it must be that too) but in the sense that its source, its centre, and its goal lie outwith us and outwith the community, lying instead in the Word of God which must again and again come to us in order to be in us. Thus preaching that focuses *primarily* on *our* feelings or *our* stories and *our* achievements is misguided. Heinrich Bullinger offers a wise note of caution on this point: ‘all the ministers of the church must beware, that they follow not herein their own affections [... and thereby] set forth to the church their own inventions, and not the [W]ord of God’.¹² This is not to suggest – of course – that our human feelings, stories and achievements are unimportant, even in preaching: but it is to argue that these only receive sermonic relevance as they are addressed, challenged, and transformed by the Word that comes to us.

Second, the Word of God lies beyond us in so far as it is the Word *of God*. The Word of God is not ours to generate and to speak – it is the Word of an Other, a Word to which we can only seek to point in our preaching and for whose presence through our words and in our midst we can only pray. To pretend that it were otherwise, to arrogate

to fallen human beings the innate power to set forth the Word of God, is to engage in an exercise of arrogant hubris and blatant idolatry. As Karl Barth states quite simply: ‘Preaching cannot claim to convey the truth of God’.¹³ There is at this point no easy or cosy co-operation of divine activity and human activity that can be presupposed as the dependable backdrop of the Christian act of preaching: there is no simple harmony or symbiosis between the sinful human words we can muster and the true Word of God that lies beyond our reach. The two stand rather in a fundamentally antithetical relationship, participating in the diastatic relation of divine wisdom and human foolishness.

This twofold beyond-ness of the Word of God that is to be preached receives concrete form in the church in its written deposit in the externality and otherness of Scripture. Bullinger again provides a typical statement of Reformation belief in this regard when he writes, ‘the interpreters of God’s holy word, and faithful ministers of the church of Christ, must have a diligent regard to keep the scriptures sound and perfect, and to teach the people of Christ the word of God sincerely’.¹⁴ The terms ‘the scriptures’ and ‘the word of God’ are here, as for Protestant belief at large, simply interchangeable. They are not identical – we will return to this point in a moment – but their interchangeability indicates the belief that the Word of God is set forth for us in the books of Christian Scripture. And the result, as James Kay observes, is that ‘all preaching must be governed and, hence, tested, by the scriptural witness’.¹⁵ That witness, for the Reformed, was present not only in selected passages, but across the entire canon of Scripture – hence the Reformed habit of preaching sequentially through different books of Scripture, trusting securely in the comprehensive inspiration of both Old and New Testaments.

There is clearly once again a polemic dimension to this view: it is the Word of God found in Holy Scripture, *as opposed to* in any historic tradition, church practice, or human agenda, that is recognised as the final authority in a Reformed church. In the First Article Declaratory of the Church of Scotland, for example, it is stated that the Kirk ‘receives the Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as its supreme rule of faith and life’.¹⁶ It is not that there is no wisdom in other sources; it is, however, to assert the primacy of scriptural wisdom.

At the same time, and especially in a calmer and less polemical context, there is also a constructive purpose and agenda here: it is Scripture in its setting forth of the Word of God that is to form the subject of Christian preaching. Of course, the Word of God is not exhausted by Holy Scripture, for, as Herman Bavinck makes clear, the two are not identical: ‘In Scripture [...] “Word of God” is never identical with Scripture, even though we may undoubtedly call Scripture “the Word of God” ’.¹⁷ The ultimate referent of all of Scripture – and thus of all of the preaching of the church – is Jesus Christ, the one living Word of God. This Jesus Christ is not trapped in a book, however esteemed that book might be; rather Jesus Christ lives and reigns in the church and in the world even today, creating and sustaining Christian faith and nurturing and guiding the Christian church. But it is precisely Scripture, in its testimony to this living Word of God, that is to be attended and attested in reverence and obedience. On this basis, that it sets forth Jesus Christ, Scripture is the touchstone and rule of Christian preaching in the Reformed tradition.

The beyondness of the Word of God is not, of course, the end of the story. To use a term much-loved in the Reformed tradition, the Word of God *accommodates* itself to our capacity. By the grace of God, our act of human witness in preaching can become the occasion for God to reveal Godself to us in our frail and fallible words, thus rendering entirely possible something that for us, left to our own devices, is entirely impossible. God becomes not only that which is preached – the *object* of preaching – but also the One who reveals – the *subject* of preaching. This is in the true sense an *apocalyptic* event – the entry of God into our time and our space to reveal and declare God’s Word through the words of preaching. And it is in this sense – and in this sense *only* – that the Reformed on occasion boldly declare with the Second Helvetic Confession that ‘The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God’.¹⁸ Such a declaration is grounded solely on the possibility and actuality of the intervention of God. It seems madness, folly, to believe that God can become present to us in human words. But if we did not believe that this could and did take place, then all of our preaching would be a mere vanity project.

In preaching, in other words, we have to do with a remarkable instance of the *concurus Dei* – of the concurrence of divine action with human action. As Otto Weber suggests, then, ‘The proclaimed Word is itself a “form” of the one Word of God [... it] is therefore neither mere communication nor an action borne by men. Rather, it is an inherent part of the salvation-event.’¹⁹ This event is particularly associated, as we will see below, with the work of the Spirit. But again, such a concurrence – such an event, the Spirit of God (!) – is not under our control: it is rather a disruptive occurrence, an invasive act, an untameable moment

One final dimension of this Word requires brief elucidation here, and that is the careful Reformed articulation of the Word of God as both Gospel and Law. This is not a topic without attendant theological controversy, especially between different Protestants. When the Reformed insisted that the Word of God preached should contain both Gospel *and* Law, the Lutherans feared that a *new* law might be erected in opposition to the crucial doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone. And at points in history, their fears were perhaps realised: the Reformed tradition has on just one or two occasions been known to be slightly over-legalistic

But properly understood, the preaching of the Word of God as Gospel *and* Law simply recognises that the liberating Word of grace is at the same time an encouraging Word of empowerment. As Barth notes, ‘God cannot draw [us] to God without involving [us] in responsibility’.²⁰ The Word of God is a proclamation of reconciliation and freedom, but also a calling into service and obedience. This need not mean the erection of a new law, as Lutherans have feared: instead it is the denial of any ‘cheap grace’ and – at the same time – the recognition of a new creature. Both Gospel and Law belong to Scripture and, just so, both Gospel and Law belong to preaching. Now it will not take much effort to think of a sermon where the balance has been wrong, where a congregation has been sent away with an unnecessary sense of failure and burden or with an inappropriate sense of lightness of being. Thus the balance and order in preaching is crucial: it is the Gospel that is the principal object of preaching – the first word and the last word.



The event of preaching and the Spirit

When we now turn to consider the event of preaching in relation to the Holy Spirit we are reprising a well-established discourse. Not only the original magisterial Reformers but Protestant theologians ever since have insisted upon the absolute inseparability of Word and Spirit. In the words of Calvin, ‘the Spirit wills to be conjoined with God’s Word by an indissoluble bond’.²¹ Hence Huldrych Zwingli demands that ‘we should hold the Word of God in the highest possible esteem – meaning by the Word of God only that which comes from the Spirit of God’.²² There is thus no Word that speaks in the church or the world without the activity of the Spirit and no activity of the Spirit that is without the presence of the Word.

To consider the Spirit in the event of preaching requires a twofold perspective.

First, there is the activity of the Spirit on the preacher. It has already been noted that the Word of God is beyond us in every sense, but that God accommodates the Word of God to our inadequacies. From our side, this happens in an event of inspiration, as the Spirit fills the otherwise inadequate words of the preacher to point truly to Jesus Christ. As Doug Gay notes, ‘What undergirds the event of human preaching becoming the word of God is the decision and act of God the Holy Spirit, taking up human words and actions that are not adequate to this end.’²³

That this takes place, again and again, is a basic item of Christian faith – attested in Scripture and experienced in churches down the centuries. Of course, the miraculous and interruptive work of the Spirit does not render the task of sermon preparation redundant – more as might be wished otherwise! There is a calling to the preacher to be a good and faithful servant in attending diligently to the text each week and to the careful crafting of a relevant sermon. Perhaps one way of thinking about this preparation is to highlight the question of *transparency*:²⁴ what words of the preacher will not obstruct or occlude the Word of God but will best allow the light of that Word to shine through by the power of the Spirit? The preacher is, after all, a mere witness – pointing not to themselves but to the Word which comes to both preacher and congregation from beyond, from God.

In all this, it is important to realise that the Spirit works in the world of the preacher *here and now*. The Word of God is not trapped in the distant past of Golgotha or in the musty pages of Scripture, but by the Spirit becomes present and operative in the church today. And this in turn means that the Spirit inspires the words of the preacher to address the present: in the words of Hendrikus Berkhof, ‘the Spirit seeks to bridge the gap between the world of the prophets and apostles and our world’.²⁵ The sermon is not a timeless artefact; by the grace of God and the work of the Spirit it becomes concrete and particular, addressing a given community at a given point in space and time. As David Fergusson writes, ‘it is recognized [in the standard Reformed view] that Scripture requires to be interpreted and applied to the situation of the congregation’.²⁶ This is part of the majesty of the sermon in its exposition and application. The focus on the sermon as a word *for the present* leads Bullinger to write of the dishonouring of God of ‘those wh[o] cry out against the exposition of the scriptures, and would not have the ministers of the word and churches to declare the scriptures in open and solemn audience, neither to apply them to the places, times, states, and persons’.²⁷

Second, then, there is the act of the Spirit on the congregation. No listener can truly hear the sermon as witnessing to the Word of God and thus as the Word of God without an act of the Spirit taking place. Zwingli offers a concise but firm account of what is at stake here: ‘Even if you hear the gospel of Jesus Christ from an apostle, you cannot act upon it unless the heavenly Father teach and draw you by the Spirit [...] God reveals himself by his own Spirit, and we cannot learn of him without his Spirit’.²⁸ So even if the preacher be inspired, and the Word of God be truly preached, still there is a missing dimension unless we recall the work of the Spirit upon the listener. It is with this in view that Calvin, recalling the apostle John’s declaration, suggests that ‘we are to expect nothing more from [God’s] Spirit than that he will illumine our minds to perceive the truth of his teaching’.²⁹

And just as the preacher speaks by the power of the Spirit to a concrete and particular community, so the members of that community hear the Word of God as a concrete and particular word *to and for them* by the power of the Spirit. It does not remain an external Word that relates only distantly or abstractly. Instead, as the Second Helvetic

Confession posits, '[the] preaching of the Gospel is ... called by the apostle "the spirit" and "the ministry of the spirit" because by faith it becomes effectual and living in the ears, nay more, in the hearts of believers through the illumination of the Holy Spirit'.³⁰ One of the great mistakes that can be made – by preachers as well as by congregations – is to consider the sermon a merely intellectual exercise. Calvin makes the point again: 'it will not be enough for the mind to be illumined by the Spirit of God unless the heart is also strengthened and supported by his power'.³¹ And hence, as Dawson observes in respect of the early Scottish Reformed preachers, 'ministers sought to provoke an emotional response from their listeners as well as teach them the new doctrines'.³²

That the Spirit touches the minds *and hearts* of the members of the Christian community in the preaching of the Word of God has implications for how sermons are crafted. They are to speak not only to the mind, but also to the soul; to address matters not only intellectual, but also emotional; and across these categories, and perhaps above all, to be *pastoral*. David Lyall writes powerfully of the desire that 'every sermon will be an example of pastoral preaching'.³³ What that looks like depends on the time and the place and the people involved – the concrete arena of the sermon. A pastor will know best where the people are and what the people need. It does not mean making everyone feel good all the time – but perhaps some of the time might be nice ... and not just on high and holy days when the community is full of drop-ins and part-timers as well as the faithful. And in turn those who hear the sermon are not immune from the call to active participation. The Westminster Larger Catechism describes aptly what is required of the one who hears the Word preached: they are to 'attend upon it with diligence, preparation, & prayer, examine what they hear by the Scriptures, receive the truth with faith, love, meekness, and readiness of mind, as the Word of God, meditate, and confer of it, hide it in their hearts, and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives'.³⁴

Yet even in the case of a wonderful pastoral sermon addressed to a wholly engaged listener, there remains a danger at this point of conceiving the sermon as an individualistic event – an interaction between the individual preacher, God, and the individual person in the pew. Now certainly, we should not lose sight of the way in which

a sermon will speak to specific people in unique ways. But a fully developed understanding of the sermon as event will recognise not only the communal *context* in which the sermon is delivered; it will also comprehend the communal *work* of the Spirit. The Spirit works to create and build community precisely through the preaching of the Word to a gathering of people who congregate specifically to hear that Word preached. In this way, as Emil Brunner suggests, ‘Preaching [...] becomes a creation of fellowship’.³⁵ The Spirit of God is the gift first to the church as community, and only then to the individuals within it.

We have been thinking through the event of preaching in relation to the presence of the Word and the illumination of the Spirit. But one final note must be sounded here: indeed, perhaps it should have been the first note. If preaching truly relies upon and hopes for the activity of God, then it must be an activity undertaken and attended *in prayer* from start to finish – from the first moment of preparation to the last moment of delivery, on the part of the preacher, and from hearing the prayer for illumination to hearing the prayer of ascription on the part of those listening. As Bullinger writes, ‘We must pray continually, that the bountiful and liberal Lord will vouchsafe to bestow on us his Spirit, that by it the seed of God’s word may be quickened in our hearts’.³⁶ Indeed, then, the prayer for illumination that should precede the sermon is perhaps the pivotal moment of the whole event: the invocation of God in respect of the words of the preacher and the hearts of all those present is the cornerstone upon which true preaching of the Word rests.



Conclusion

In this paper, I have sought to think to present a concise outline of the centrality and significance of preaching within the Reformed theological tradition. Drawing on some of the classic sources of Reformed theology down the centuries, I have highlighted the centrality of preaching for the life of the church and have considered the distinct but inseparable connections of preaching to the Word and to the Spirit which are involved in any theological account of the preaching event.

It may be feared that all this theological rhetoric risks becoming an exercise in abstract contemplation, far removed from the reality of Sunday preaching in the parish today, and rather idealised compared to the somewhat murkier cultural history of Scottish preaching. And certainly the challenges of preaching today are far greater than has been made explicit above. There is a shortage of preachers and a decline in congregations; less time for preachers with increasing workloads to devote to sermon preparation; greater demand upon the church and its preachers to refocus their work outside its walls; and an (unfortunate) ongoing ecumenical pressure to see not preaching but the Eucharist to be at the centre of the church.

Precisely in the midst of such challenges, however, the need to reflect theologically about the centrality and significance of the preaching event becomes more and not less necessary. After all, the preaching of the Word of God in the power of the Spirit has attended the church as a charism across its history, not only constituting the church as such but also inspiring and empowering its people. Thus whether our immediate concern is how to prioritise competing demands, how to triage limited resources, how to rearrange church furniture, or how to train future ministers, careful reflection on the event of preaching – far from being an indulgent luxury without practical import – remains an important moment in the life of the church.

Notes

1. James K. Cameron, ed., *The First Book of Discipline* (Glasgow; Edinburgh: Covenanters Press, 2005), 87.
2. *Ibid.*, IX, 180.
3. *Ibid.*, IX, 180f.
4. Scots Confession (1560), §18, in *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften* [hereafter *RB*] (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2002–), vol. 2/1, 273.
5. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger, 3 vols. (Philippsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992), vol. 3, 18.xii.VII, 78.

6. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols. (Library of Christian Classics; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), IV.xiv.3 and IV.xiv.4, 1278 and 1279.
7. Donald Macleod, “Word and Sacrament in Reformed Theologies of Worship: A Free Church Perspective”, in Duncan B. Forrester and Doug Gay, *Worship and Liturgy in Context: Studies and Case Studies in Theology and Practice* (London: SCM, 2009), 81.
8. David Cornick, *Letting God be God: The Reformed Tradition* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2008), 56.
9. B. A. Gerrish, *Christian Faith: Dogmatics in Outline* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 212.
10. Jane Dawson, “Patterns of Worship in Reformation Scotland”, in Forrester and Gay, *Worship and Liturgy in Context*, 141.
11. The ongoing assertion that baptism is the truly ecumenical practice has less claim to validity in light of a) the non-practice of baptism in some Christian denominations, and b) the lack of reciprocal recognition of baptism between different Christian denominations.
12. Henry [Heinrich] Bullinger, *The Decades*, ed. Thomas Harding, trans. H. I., 5 vols. (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock, 2009–10), vol. I, sermon iii, 74.
13. Karl Barth, *Prayer and Preaching*, trans. Sara F. Terrien and B. E. Hooke (London: SCM, 1964), 67.
14. Heinrich Bullinger, *Decades*, I.iii, 75.
15. James F. Kay, *Preaching and Theology* (St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press, 2007), 18.
16. See http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/church_law/c_church_constitution#article1, accessed 31st August 2018.
17. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2003–08), IV, 449.
18. Second Helvetic Confession (1566), §I, at *RB* 2/2, 273–274.
19. Otto Weber, *Foundations of Dogmatics*, vol. 2, trans. Darrell L. Guder (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1983), 585.
20. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956–75), II/2, 511.
21. Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.viii.13, 1163.

22. Huldrych Zwingli, “On the Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God”, in *Zwingli and Bullinger*, ed. and trans. G. W. Bromiley (Library of Christian Classics; Louisville, Ky.; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1953), 93.
23. Doug Gay, *God Be In My Mouth: 40 Ways to Grow as a Preacher* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 2018), 44.
24. See Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I/2, 764, 777–78 for more on this need for ‘transparency’.
25. Hendrikus Berkhof, *Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Study of the Faith*, trans. Sierd Woustra (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979), 357.
26. David Fergusson, “The Theology of Worship: A Reformed Perspective”, in Forrester and Gay, *Worship and Liturgy in Context*, 76.
27. Bullinger, *Decades*, I.iii, 74.
28. Zwingli, “On the Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God”, 79, 82.
29. Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.viii.13, 1162f.
30. Second Helvetic Confession (1566), §XIII, at *RB* 2/2, 300.
31. Calvin, *Institutes*, III.ii.33, 581.
32. Dawson, “Patterns of Worship”, 144.
33. David Lyall, “Tone-deaf to Mystery: Worship, Preaching and Pastoral Care”, in Forrester and Gay, *Worship and Liturgy in Context*, 112.
34. Westminster Larger Catechism, A. 160, in *RB* 3/2.2, 338.
35. Emil Brunner, *Dogmatics*, volume III: *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation* (trans. David Cairns; London: Lutterworth Press, 1962), 102.
36. Bullinger, *Decades*, I.ii, 66.