

extent of Laud's charity – and his apparent intimacy with pastry cooks, buttery servants and their ilk – has been either unknown or ignored by critics who saw his wider disciplinary and liturgical programs as autocratic or worse. James gives us a new Laud in the ledger 'as a barometer of [his] personal fortunes, since through it we can trace his career at both its highest and lowest points'. The archbishop's confinement in the Tower results in a winding-down of palace expenditures, an almost complete cessation of his receipt of gifts from 'the great and the good', and the eventual dispersal of servants to other households. The final purchase is a poignant 'twelve brooms for the stables' on 14 January 1642. The editor has given scholars of the man and the period an intimate portrait of a career at zenith and nadir.

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Gordon Kuhrt and Stephen Kuhrt, *Believing in Baptism: Understanding and Living God's Covenant Sign* (London: T & T Clark, 2020), pp. 384. ISBN 978-0567694447 (hbk). doi:[10.1017/S1740355321000371](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355321000371)

Gordon Kuhrt, now reaching 80 years of age, wrote the forerunner of this book, *Believing in Baptism*, back in 1987. That book, coming from a convinced Anglican evangelical, served a real need in assisting a whole growing constituency within the Church of England into a positive view of baptism. Evangelical Anglicans in the first half of the twentieth century, rubbing shoulders with Baptist friends who were always confident about their own practice, tended to feel wrong-footed about infant baptism; and they also wrestled uncomfortably with the 1662 Prayer Book wording such as 'Seeing now . . . that this child is regenerate'. As infant baptism was practised almost indiscriminately in England, being provided for any family that asked for it, there lurked a further question: 'If infants are admissible to baptism, are there any criteria to determine which infants can be baptized, and which not?' Evangelicals faced in addition a growing tendency, present in the winked-at 1928 confirmation service and much assisted by Gregory Dix, to a magnifying of confirmation beyond what they could see the Scriptures warranted. The whole scene seemed full of minefields. And Gordon Kuhrt's first edition in 1987 had a strong and effective mine-clearance purpose to it. It was timely and welcome and greatly helped straighten people's thinking.

In the 34 years that have elapsed, the quest for a fuller doctrine of baptism has lost much of its defensive aspect, but the theological knots that have needed untying for evangelicals are still there. In this new volume, where Gordon Kuhrt has been joined by his son Stephen, the knots are addressed not only with measured theological argument, but also with a vivid portrayal of the discussions of five mythical (but typical) clergy of different traditions in an imaginary 'Melton Sudbury', and these 30 pages provide bookends to the actual argument. In Melton Sudbury all the questions are aired in a dialogical way; all the participants are full of kindly forbearance towards each other's obvious errors; and, although they part still

ministering to their own congregations, the reader can detect the gentle privileging of the answers which the rest of the book conveys unequivocally.

The whole treatment is on a larger scale than in the first book. The basis for the whole treatment is asserted to be God's covenant of love, the single great theological theme that unites the Old 'Covenant' with the New. The two massive chapters given here to this theme amount to about 40% of the whole argument. This immediately put me in mind of Pierre Marcel, whose *The Biblical Basis of Infant Baptism* (1951, translated in 1953), was the only hardback defence of infant baptism by an evangelical in my student days. Marcel gave nearly half his book to the covenant and only came to baptism (and finally infant baptism) in the wake of this in the second half. The procedure becomes almost deductive – that is, granted these deep and undeniable premises the practice of Christian baptism springs inevitably from them – and that can be checked, for, sure enough, inspecting the actual phenomena of New Testament usage confirms our deduction. I am reminded of how Neptune was discovered among the planets in 1846 – dead reckoning from the movements of a known heavenly body, that is, Uranus, charted where a planet yet unknown should be in the sky; the Berlin observatory turned its telescope to that place; and, lo and behold, there it was. So with Marcel – establishing the doctrine of the covenant led to consideration of the New Testament references to baptism, and they confirmed the accuracy of the covenantal premise. This, however, is not how in 1781 Herschel had discovered Uranus; in this earlier case the astronomer first observed the phenomena of an unknown moving object, then plotted its course, and finally declared it a planet. And to most enquirers (and not least the Kuhrts' ministers debating baptism in Melton Sudbury) finding out how baptism occurs in the New Testament, and with what meaning and effect it appears, is the route to understanding it. However, while the weight of the Kuhrts' detailed exploration of covenant would suggest they had adopted the dead-reckoning and deductive process, in fact they had themselves followed Herschel before starting on that process; for they chart 'The Bible and Baptism' in ch. 2, and we learn enough there to be able to help the disputants in Melton Sudbury without recourse to weighty covenantal theology (and 'covenant' never gets mentioned in Melton Sudbury). As a result, the two chapters on covenant are more comparable to a next stage of Herschel following his discovery of the planet with an investigation of how Uranus got to where it is than to any advance calculating where it ought to be prior to actually identifying it. I submit that the undoubted thoroughness of the two chapters rather outstrips the actual role they play.

Granted this foundational work, the untying of the baptismal knots is achieved with relatively little difficulty in relatively short compass. Baptism does not automatically confer the benefits it signifies (oddly, while the Gorham judgment is quoted on p. 188, neither Gorham nor Goode appear in the bibliography); baptism is properly given to infants in believing families; it is not to be given indiscriminately (the Lima Statement is appropriately cited here, and the Church of England's canons are well expounded, though omitting to refute the notion that citizens have a right in law to baptism for their children); those baptized as infants should not seek a 're-baptism' in later life; there is, however, scope for a renewal of baptismal vows with submersion (why do they use the ambiguous term 'immersion?'); and confirmation

too is a pastoral rite, not a revealed sacrament to ‘complete’ baptism’ (and the New Testament is sifted to support this).

Is anything missing? Well, I would have welcomed more of baptismal history, not least in the Church of England and its formularies. I think, however, that the authors would reply that there is scope for such a book, but this wasn’t intended to be it. What they did intend was a treatment with deep roots in God’s covenant, a flowering of very relevant (and convincing) pastoral theology affecting usage, and an upshot in Melton Sudbury where questions are answered and doubts dismissed. It will well serve every ordinand and illuminate every thinking lay person. It needed to be good, as it will be very difficult to displace. And it is very good.

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Patrick Whitworth, *And Did Those Feet: The Story and Character of the English Church AD 200–2020* (Durham: Sacristy Press, 2021), pp. viii + 653. ISBN 978-1789591521 (hbk).

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This is a marvellous read and would be an excellent introduction either for someone embarking upon their studies, or indeed for lay people both within and outside the Church as a general background history. It is medium brow to popular in style and content, but breathes not only considerable learning, but also a lifetime’s engagement with its subject matter. It really does cover the entire panorama of history hinted at in the title. As with any book of this sort, some sections are more profound than others and naturally within a number of sections there is heavy dependence on particular volumes. None of this, however, invalidates the usefulness and attractiveness of Patrick Whitworth’s account.

The first section is one of the most informative, and particularly on the church during the Roman occupation. This is a period rarely covered in an accessible volume of this sort and the endnotes suggest a wide range of research resources. Equally the Anglo-Saxon period is well summarized, albeit that material on this period is more readily available. The early Middle Ages, including both the Viking and Norman invasions are sharply focused in the pages allowed, and here – and throughout the entire volume – useful theological interludes are particularly helpful; the account of Lanfranc and Anselm is one good example.

Of course, in a book of this sort there are places where it does feel like a very swift gallop through a succession of monarchs, but often there will be concise accounts of the Church’s reaction and engagement with crises – successive plagues is one such case. The section on Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas and Abelard is admirable in introducing the novice to areas of considerable theological and philosophical complexity. With the English mystics we are reminded of the English spiritual tradition. Wycliff and the Lollards come together with the Peasant’s Revolt, hinting at a wider feeling of national instability and rebellion.