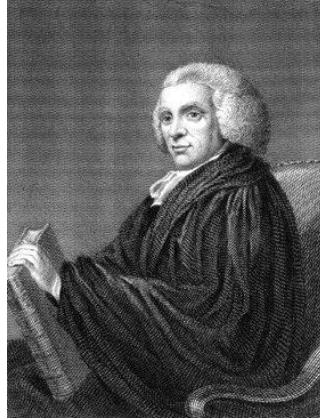




*Reading Holy Scripture in the Anglican Tradition:
William Jones of Nayland*



1) Review: what is figural reading?

Summary: Refusal to privilege and part of the canon, because “all of God’s lights combine” that we are to discern how “all God’s words interlock with others, across history, books, and characters, through “**similitude, resonance, and moral form**...sees connections in all the corners of the Scriptural text” [*All Thy Lights Combine*]

- a) **Receives Biblical words in canonical context** – the relationship between the words of the text within their immediate placement and the context of a chapter, book, testament, and the entire canon.
- b) The divine nature of its words mean that God uses Scripture to initiate a divine encounter and shape our formation in Jesus Christ
- c) Embraces the power of the imagination in Scriptural images across the canon
- d) Continues the tradition of the medieval fourfold senses of the Scripture that any text might hold: the literal, the moral, allegorical, and the anagogical

2) William Jones of Nayland (1726-1800)

- a) Rector of parish church in Nayland, Suffolk, theologian, natural philosopher, and scientist
 - i) Was a High Churchman – for the High Church the legitimacy of Anglican ordained ministry was adherence to Creeds and Tradition
- b) Embraced the multiple meanings and images of Scriptural words, following the BCP tradition
- c) Long and fertile publishing career

3) *The Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity* (1756)

- a) Jones refutes an Anglican priest, Samuel Clarke, *The Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity*, 1712, highpoint of Trinitarian controversy in Church of England – late 1600’s to mid-1700’s
- b) Jones argued that Clarke used the method of proof-texting, treating words as specimens, divorced from their scriptural context; also made no reference to the Old Testament
- c) Instead, Jones sought scriptural referents for meanings of words; doctrinal significance of texts can only be made in relationship to other texts of scripture
- d) Appealed to tradition: history: true Scripture doctrine is Catholic according to the Vincentian canon (what has been believed everywhere, always, and by all)

- e) The writers of the New Testament used the Old Testament to expound their teaching; New Testament texts affirmed each other
- (1) 2 Peter 3:18 and Isaiah 43:11
 - (a) John 1:14 and Isaiah 6:5
 - (b) 1 Cor 10:9 and Psalm 78:56
 - (c) 1 Peter 2: 7-8 and Isaiah 8: 13-14
 - (2) Intertextual* references Christ's divinity in the New Testament *(relating to or involving a relationship between two texts)
 - (a) Luke 1:76 and Matt 11:10
 - (b) 2 Cor 5:19 and John 14:11;
 - (c) 1 Cor 15: 24 and Luke 1:33
 - (d) John 3: 16 and Eph 5:25
 - (3) Intertextual references to divinity of Holy Spirit
 - (a) Matt 9:38 and Acts 13:2-4
 - (b) 2 Tim 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21

Lectures on the Figurative Language of the Scriptures (1787)

An Excerpt from *All Thy Lights Combine: Figurative Reading in the Anglican Tradition*

Of this figurative language, the elements first to be understood are those which are borrowed from the images of nature. And here a vast field is open to us, as wide as the world itself. If we consider it in due order, we must begin with the creation; which is related in the book of Genesis, is a pattern of the new creation in Christ Jesus; and is so applied by the apostle: God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Till this light shines in the heart of man, he is in the same state as the unformed world was, when darkness lay upon the face of the deep; and when the new creation takes place, he rises in baptism, as the new earth did from the wears, by the spirit of God moving upon them. The lights of heaven in their order are all applied to give us conception of God's power, and shew us the glory of his kingdom. In the 84th Psalm, the Lord is said to be a sun and a shield; a sun to give light to his people, and a shield to protect them from the power of darkness.

Christ, in the language of the prophet is the sun of righteousness, who as the natural sun revives the grass, and renews the year, brings on the acceptable year of the Lord, and is the great restorer of all things in the kingdom of grace; shining with the new light of life and immortality to those who once sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. And the church has warning to receive him under his glorious character: Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. When he was manifested to the eyes of men, he called himself the light of the world, and promised to give the same light to those that follow him. In the absence of Christ as the personal light of the world, his place is supplied by the light of the scripture, which is still a lamp to our feet, and a light unto our paths. The word of prophecy is as a light shining in a dark place; and as we study by the light of the map, so we must give heed to this light, if we would see things to come.... You see, our God is light; our Redeemer is light; our scripture is light; our whole religion is light; the ministers of it are light; all Christian people are children of the light, and have light within them. If so, what an obligation is laid upon us, not to walk as if we were in darkness, but to walk uprightly as in the day, shewing the people of this world, that we have a better rule to direct us than they have... This is the moral doctrine to be derived from the usage of light in the sacred language.

Here I would also observe, that the figures of the scriptures necessarily introduce something figurative into our worship; of which I could give you several instances...the primitive Christians signified their relation to the true light, worshipping with their faces towards the east....To this day our churches, especially that part which is appropriated to the most solemn act of Christian worship, is placed toward the eastThe primitive Christians called their baptism their illumination; to denote which, a light was put into the hands of the person after baptism, and they were admitted to hear the lectures of the catechists in the church, under the name of the illuminated. The festival of Christ's baptism was celebrated with the ceremony of a number of lighted torches.