

# Still Waters Revival

**“For the 3rd Reformation”!**  
**An Evaluation and Review of the Work  
of a Reformed Publisher in Canada**  
by

**Dr. Stephen Westcott**

**M**any members of the BRF and readers of this Journal will already be aware of the publishing ministry of Still Waters Revival Books of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. For those who are not, an introduction and “review” of this publisher (rather than a more formal “book review” of one of their products) may be of interest. This may be more necessary than for most Christian book publishers, simply because the conviction behind this enterprise, the product range, everything to do with Still Waters is radically “different”- and often very refreshing indeed.

Largely the concern of brothers Reg and Greg Barrow and the Puritan Reformed Church of Edmonton, Canada, Still Waters aims to get as wide a range of hitherto rare Reformed and Presbyterian books back into notice and circulation as possible, and along with them offers a huge range of Reformed tapes and more modern printings of sound books and literature.

Having said that it must be noted that the deep conviction of all at Still Waters Books (and the Puritan Reformed Church of Edmonton, PRCE) is that the National and Solemn League and Covenant sworn by the “three kingdoms” at the time of the Westminster Assembly are still in force and indeed are obligatory on all nations descended from the Covenanted nations, i.e. on Canada, the U.S., Australia, New Zealand and so on, as well as still so for us in the U.K. Further, Churches failing to acknowledge the Covenants and embody them in their testimony are “backslidden” or “sinful” (that is covenant-breaking) in that regard. Naturally this means that the stance and witness of the PRCE is a very minority one today, that it has involved some controversy (with more “mainstream” Covenanter bodies such as Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, RPCNA, as well as other Presbyterian denominations), and- returning to the publishing effort- that their catalogue is heavily weighted towards “Covenanter classics”. Folks interested (or concerned) over the obligation of the Covenants, or Covenanting authors and history, will find mate-

rials to their heart's content from Still Waters. It may be noted, in passing, that the issue is indeed a "live" one today, for any group seeking to re-establish a Presbyterian church in England. Should they start afresh with no history or on-going testimony, or should they claim historic continuity from the Presbyterians of the past? If the latter they must face the fact that those great Presbyterian Puritans voluntarily swore the Covenants, and that England was solemnly covenanted to acknowledge God in Christ as her own head and supreme ruler. Man changes, but God does not ("Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto", Galatians 3:15). Relation to the Covenants, and a policy re. their continuing renewal, is therefore something that an emerging revived Presbyterianism must face up to, should we again be blessed with such a thing in England. And if you find that in these days of confusion you are clinging to and advocating- a) "Received/ majority" text Bibles, b) Inspired Psalmody and c) Reformed Confessionalism, then it is surely an attractive and exciting thought that these elements provide the "core" for Church unity-uniformity of worship and doctrine and practice- not just in Britain but for any culture or nation on earth. And that is the essence of the Covenant- to provide an agreed platform and promote uniformity in the Churches, whilst the Covenant is a sworn bond to spread that covenanted unity as far as possible worldwide.

Still Waters range, however, covers much, much, more than strictly Covenanter items, and is drawn from a wide range of the best Presbyterian and Reformed sources. There is, however, also something of an emphasis on the writings of various of the Scottish "Marrow" theologians, so "free offer of the gospel" items will need to be noted and avoided by most BRF members. But do not let that put you off- there is plenty more to choose from and so large a range will inevitably contain some items that you or I might prefer not to see made available again.

The second unique feature of Still Waters books is their reliance largely on "bound photocopies" for their publications. This is a factor that merits a little explanation. The fact is that the market for reprinting Puritan books is just about glutted. The fault lies mainly with U.S. publishing houses, who picked up on the revival of interest in Puritan works (pioneered over here by the Banner of Truth Trust) and rushed almost anything by a "Puritan" into (usually Photostatted) reprint. Almost all the Puritan works and sets that we once searched for on the used book market are in print again, sets and sets and sets of them! Ministers soon found that they could collect but lacked the time to read (much less digest) all the re-issued books. And still the hopeful publishers flooded the market. Worse still the selection of works to reprint was often far from judicious. A reaction set in, inevitably. One major Puritan publisher tells me that suddenly now:

"If it's not by Watson or Brooks, they don't want to know" (!)

In this climate a publisher will not risk the cost of reprinting, binding, marketing etc., unless he is sure of sales that will cover his costs and render a profit. Very many rare and valuable items are thus simply never going to get back onto the "popular" market or be offered by "regular" publishers. Still Waters address this problem by taking gems that publishers would not risk reprinting in the normal fashion, and reproducing them in a photocopied format. The result is then bound, for cheapness and simplicity, edgewise, making a book that has the page tops towards the spine of the opened page, and displays two leaves at a time. The binding is of two kinds- a simple "comb" type edgebind, or durable hardcover glued version (one cheaper than the other.)

It must be said that the "feel" and "quality" of the result is not so high as books produced in the normal way, and the handling is somewhat awkward. Also they do not sit too well on a shelf. BUT- if the content of the book is what you want, then this system (and the tireless searches and labours of Still Waters) offers access to books that one might otherwise only dream of seeing (much less owning), and all at amazingly affordable prices.

A glance at their catalogue shows over 300 titles available, with a proportionate number of cassettes (sermons, Psalms etc.). Here are some on offer: "*The English Hexapla.*" Printed by Bagsters in 1841, this contains the New Testament in 6 early English versions (Wickliffe 1380, Tyndale 1534, Cranmer 1539, Geneva 1557, Rheims 1582, and King James 1611), Scholz's Greek text at the page top. Original copies are hard to find and sell for up to £400. At the time of writing, Still Waters was offering this at \$100 or \$149 Canadian, depending on binding.

"*Westminster Annotations*". I mentioned these commentaries to a scholar working on the Puritans and the Assembly recently, and he did not know they existed! A "semi official" production of the Westminster Assembly this complete Bible commentary was produced at the request of Parliament by the Westminster Divines, with the help of other Puritans who were not delegates. Authors include Gouge, Ley, Casaubon, Reynolds, Meric, Gataker and others. 2,383 pages in six volumes, this set has never been reprinted since the seventeenth century and is very scarce indeed. \$40 or \$50 Canadian per volume.

"*Diodati's Annotations*". A complete Bible commentary in 2 volumes by John Diodati of Geneva. Translated in 1651. Richard Baxter included this in his list of "most essential books for Christian edification". Never reissued in England. 1,100 pps for \$100 or \$199 Canadian.

"*Booke of the Universal Kirk of Scotland*". Edited by Alexander Peterkin this is the record of the earliest Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland

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1560-1616. A vital source for "original intent" Presbyterianism from the days of John Knox. \$20 or \$30 Canadian.

*"Spiritual Refining"* by Anthony Burgess. Published in 1652-1654, 2 vols., 1,120 pps. \$40 or \$60 set.

But the interested reader should secure a copy of the catalogue for himself. He can contact "Still Waters" at:

Still Waters Revival Books, 4710-37A Ave., EDMONTON, Alberta, T6L 3T5, Canada.

**Phone:** Canada-403 450-3730.

**Email:** INTERNET: [swrb@swrb.com](mailto:swrb@swrb.com)

**Home page** <http://www.swrb.com> (where some books are available for free download).

Unfortunately there is no U.K. stockist so all materials have to be sent direct from Canada at approx. 27% extra, and surface mail takes from 6 to 10 weeks. On the other hand Still Waters have a habit of packing their parcels with lots of free "extras" in the form of pamphlets and booklets (largely Covenanter!) that provide a feast of interesting additional (and free!) reading.

(Please note all the prices mentioned above pertaining to certain selected items were as per the "time of writing", and may have fluctuated since. Also, "Still Waters" do special discount sales at various times in which reduced prices are evident. *Ed.*)

And by the way, Canadian Dollars are between 20 and 35% lower than U.S. Dollars. Still Waters' slogan is -"For the THIRD REFORMATION"- which might in itself give us all food for thought!

**Stephen P. Westcott, Ph.D, Litt.D., BRISTOL.**

**"When the greatest part of a Church maketh defection from the Truth, the lesser part remaining sound, the greatest part is the Church of Separatists, though the maniest and greatest part in the actual exercise of Discipline be the Church; yet in the case of right Discipline, the best though fewest, is the Church; for truth is like life, that retireth from the maniest members unto the heart, and there remaineth in its fountain, in case of danger."**

***Samuel Rutherford (1644) Quoted in Still Waters Catalogue 1996.***