

**Recollections Series Lectures
Schedule
Trinity 2021**

Wednesdays of weeks 2, 4, 6, and 8 at 4.00pm:

- **5 May** (2nd week) - *Can quantum physics restore the discarded image?* - Dr William Simpson
- **19 May** (4th week) - *The Church and the Virus* - Dr Edward Dowler
- **2 June** (6th week) - *'Quit your couch': Wordsworth on Pilgrimage* - Shanti Daffern
- **16 June** (8th week) - *Christian Contract Law and the Morality of the Market* - Prof Wim Decock (this event will be the capstone of the symposium on 'Theology & the Development of Law: Contract')

Abstracts and Bios

5 May (2nd week) - *Can quantum physics restore the discarded image?* - Dr William Simpson

Abstract:

Can quantum physics restore the discarded image?

What is the world made of, and how do we fit into it? In the 'Discarded Image', the writer and lay-theologian, C.S. Lewis, who held the chair of Mediaeval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge, described the highest achievements of the Middle Ages as the 'medieval synthesis itself, the whole organisation of their theology, science, and history into a single, complex, harmonious mental model'. The modern philosopher, however, has inherited a conception of the physical world which has displaced the humanities with the sciences, and has deprived human beings of purpose and agency. In this lecture, I will consider how the 'Quantum Revolution' in physics has opened up the possibility of a new Aristotelianism, which restores certain features of the 'Discarded Image'.

Biography:

William Simpson is a Junior Research Fellow at Cambridge and an Honorary Research Fellow at St Andrews. He holds a doctorate in philosophy from Cambridge, and a doctorate in physics from St Andrews. His interests span philosophy, physics and theology.

19 May (4th week) - *The Church and the Virus* - Dr Edward Dowler

Abstract:

The Church and the Virus

The Covid-19 health crisis has been immensely challenging for the Church at every level. This lecture will explore the theological response to the novel coronavirus, and ask about the adequacy of the Church's response to the current crisis. We will reflect on the precious gifts that have been lost over the past year, and on the lessons that may be learned for the future.

Biography:

The Venerable Dr Edward Dowler is Archdeacon of Hastings in the Diocese of Chichester, and priest-in-charge of St John the Evangelist, Crowborough. He was formerly a parish priest in London and Vice-Principal of St Stephen's House.

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2 June (6th week) - *'Quit your couch': Wordsworth on Pilgrimage* - Shanti Daffern

Abstract:

'Quit your couch': Wordsworth and Pilgrimage

'Quit your couch' exhorts the character of the Wanderer in Wordsworth's conversational epic poem *The Excursion* (1814). De Quincey estimated that Wordsworth's legs, while 'pointedly condemned by all the female connoisseurs in legs' nonetheless 'must have traversed a distance of 175 to 180,000 English miles'. By his own description, Wordsworth was a 'pilgrim resolute'. I will draw out his poetry's persistent and interconnected exploration of walking practices, ideas of holy place and questions of moral or spiritual formation.

My focus is *The Excursion*, a moral and dramatic epic poem which has tended to be displaced in preference for Wordsworth's lyric poems and his autobiographical epic *The Prelude*. 'This will never do': Francis Jeffrey's opening gambit in his contemporary review of *The Excursion* has been tacitly accepted in modern criticism. But what does *The Excursion* 'do'? And what might it mean to describe Wordsworth as a poet of pilgrimage?

2020 was designated 'the Year of Pilgrimage' by English Cathedrals; pilgrimage is enjoying rapid resurgence as a spiritual practice in both religious and secular contexts alike. Wordsworth's poetry, I argue, offers us a lens to interrogate such things.

Biography:

Shanti Daffern is studying for a PhD at the University of Cambridge (Peterhouse), exploring ideas of pilgrimage, walking and holy place in the poetry of William Wordsworth. A Vice Chancellor's Scholar, she co-convenes the Eighteenth-Century and Romantic Studies seminar.

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16 June (8th week) - *Christian Contract Law and the Morality of the Market: A Historical Perspective* - Prof Wim Decock*

Abstract:

Christian Contract Law and the Morality of the Market: A Historical Perspective

Abstract: Modern lawyers have been accustomed to thinking law, morality and religion separately. It has become odd and even undesirable to think of religious authorities as experts in legal matters. This lecture will nevertheless argue that the first systematic and substantive doctrines of contract were developed not by lawyers but by canonists and moral theologians. In the early modern period, hundreds of treatises dealing with contract law were written by Christian thinkers who sought a doctrinal framework for solving cases of conscience most often related to transactions in the marketplace.

Biography:

Wim Decock is professor of legal history at the Universities of Louvain and Liège in Belgium. In 2013 he published a monograph on *Theologians and Contract Law: The Moral Transformation of the Ius Commune (c. 1500-1650)* that won several prizes, including the H.M. Leibnitz Prize by the German Research Foundation.

*This event will be the capstone of the symposium on 'Theology & the Development of Law: Contract'