

## Editorial

*Printed Source and Digital Resource  
in Economics and Theology*

The scholarly research methods of various fields, including those at the core of the editorial focus of the *Journal of Markets & Morality*, are undergoing significant changes in light of new developments in digital technology. Researchers in fields such as philosophy, history, and theology, as well as economics and social sciences, are gaining access to new sources from a variety of periods. This access involves digital dissemination of contemporary scholarship and secondary source material as well as the ability to display and download digital versions of sources hundreds, sometimes thousands, of years old.

What this means in essence is that we are undergoing a kind of digital renaissance—a rebirth of learning powered by newly available and sometimes newly discovered sources. The printed sources of the past are increasingly becoming available, oftentimes instantaneously and without explicit cost, as digital resources. In one sense, the digital availability of sources is not exceptionally novel. From the beginning of the so-called computer age, researchers have found ways to display analog information in digital formats and make use of those newer formats to aid research, thus making scholarly efforts more efficient and comprehensive. However, what is changing is the standard model for the dissemination of these sources. Rather than relying primarily on a specialized bibliography developed by an editorial committee made up of experts that in turn is digitized and distributed by gated access, more recent broadscale digitization efforts are beginning to undercut the older model.

Specialized digital collections, such as the Goldsmith's-Kress Library of Economic Literature, Early English Books Online (EEBO), or the Digital Library of Classic Protestant Texts and the Digital Library of the Catholic Reformation,

provide a predigested and coherent, albeit limited and rather narrow, offering of digital resources. The digitization efforts of Google, Internet Archive, and the major research libraries of Europe, present a rather different problem and opportunity for researchers. In these latter cases, the issue is not so much a matter of gaining access through often-expensive institutional subscriptions. Instead, the problem and the challenge is to narrow down the vast sea of resources that are increasingly and freely available into something coherent and useful. It is essentially this challenge of curation, endemic to projects such as Google Books, that has necessitated scholarly collaboration to bring some semblance of order to the digital chaos. In the realm of early modern theology and philosophy, for example, the Post-Reformation Digital Library ([www.prdl.org](http://www.prdl.org)), on whose executive editorial board I serve, is a digital bibliography of open-access primary sources from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Likewise, the older and more familiar Online Library of Liberty ([oll.libertyfund.org](http://oll.libertyfund.org)) covers thousands of years of published material focused on economic, political, and religious liberty.

A cursory survey of the Post-Reformation Digital Library (PRDL) of material relevant to the editorial vision of the *Journal of Markets & Morality* shows, for instance, a significant swath of material from a variety of confessional and philosophical traditions in the early modern period. The journal's *Scholia* have focused on previously unavailable and untranslated primary source materials from this era, and works from authors of many of these sources are now freely available in their original languages. Sources from Reformers such as Girolamo Zanchi (1516–1590) and Wolfgang Musculus (1497–1563) or Roman Catholic theologians such as Cardinal Cajetan (1468–1534) and Martin de Azpilcueta (1491–1586) can now be readily and quickly downloaded to a variety of reading devices. Similarly, the *De politiae Mosis observatione* of Franciscus Junius (1542–1602), slated to be the *Scholia* in the next issue of the journal, is available for download from Google Books.

The implications of the breadth and availability of these sources to scholars today is enormous. With the increasing opportunity of access, there is a corresponding increase in the responsibility of researchers to integrate these sources into their work. The basic ethical and economic feature of the digital renaissance then is the proper use of the stunning array of newly available research tools. This is at its heart a question of stewardship. In this way, researchers and scholars should view themselves as stewards, entrusted with the care and use of something by someone else. In the case of digital scholarship, and specifically with access to the primary sources of the kind under discussion here, the basic ethical reality is that “from everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked” (Luke 12:48 NIV).

The *Journal of Markets & Morality* remains committed to meeting this stewardship responsibility in its own sphere of influence. To this end, this issue of the journal includes our regular features of articles and book reviews intended to advance the discussion and understanding of economic freedom and moral responsibility. We continue to offer the journal in both print and digital format, as the conclusions of a previously published case study continue to be relevant (see Jordan J. Ballor, “Scholarship at the Crossroads: The *Journal of Markets & Morality* Case Study,” *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 36, no. 3 [2005]: 145–65, available at [www.marketsandmorality.com](http://www.marketsandmorality.com)).

We also include instances of two occasional features in this issue. First, we have a controversy between Jonathan Malesic and Hunter Baker on the question: “Is Some Form of Secularism the Best Foundation for Christian Engagement in Public Life?” Second, we include a new translation and introduction to a piece by the Dutch Reformed theologian Herman Bavinck (1854–1921). This translation is the second of our *Status Quaestionis* features, which are intended to bring to the fore recent sources relevant to the modern state of the question on ethics, economics, and theology. John Bolt, professor of systematic theology at Calvin Theological Seminary and editor of the recent translation of Bavinck’s four-volume *Reformed Dogmatics* (Baker Academic, 2003–2008), provides the translation of a paper presented by Bavinck at the First Social Congress in the Netherlands in 1891. Bavinck’s piece, “General Biblical Principles and the Relevance of Concrete Mosaic Law for the Social Question Today (1891),” is set into its context by an extensive introduction by Bolt. This introductory piece stands in its own right as a significant contribution to our understanding of the development of Christian social thought in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century.

It is also worth noting that with this issue of the journal the long-time executive editor of the *Journal of Markets & Morality*, Dr. Stephen Grabill, becomes editor emeritus. We include a special editorial from him reflecting on his tenure at the journal, and readers can rest assured that he will continue to be closely involved in the editorial direction of the journal. Again, the theme of stewardship comes to the forefront of our thinking as he leaves behind a significant record of achievement and a high standard of scholarship. Dr. Stephen Grabill’s time as editor of the *Journal of Markets & Morality* has been characterized by close editorial care and precision, a commitment to responsible scholarly expression, and innovation in terms of content and delivery. At the close of his time as executive editor, Dr. Stephen Grabill is most deserving of the “well done” said to a “good and faithful servant” of freedom and virtue (Matt. 25:31).

—Jordan J. Ballor, Ph.D. cand.