



themelios

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DESCRIPTION

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REVIEWS

The book review editors generally select individuals for book reviews, but potential reviewers may contact them about reviewing specific books. As part of arranging book reviews, the book review editors will supply book review guidelines to reviewers.

EDITORIAL

Take Up Your Cross and Follow Me

— D. A. Carson —

D. A. Carson is research professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

Editor's Note: This is a lightly updated transcript of one of Carson's addresses at the 150th anniversary of Grace Baptist Mission in the UK. This one was broadcast over BBC Radio 4 on Sunday, October 30, 2011. It is a brief apologia for mission in a world that regularly despises mission.

For many people, the thought of missionary work sounds, at best, painfully old-fashioned. It conjures up mental images of black-and-white photographs, now curled and yellowed; of intense, well-meaning, men and women in dated dress, imposing their stern Victorian values on the free spirits of foreign shores. Worse, to many contemporaries missionary endeavour is not merely old-fashioned, but positively mischievous. For missionaries are necessarily intolerant people. They invade cultures not their own, and by pushing Jesus and the gospel, they announce that they think their religion and culture are superior to the local one—and that, surely, is the very essence of intolerance. As one recent critical missionary biographer puts it, missionary work is “inherently patronizing to the host culture. That's what a mission is—a bunch of strangers showing up somewhere uninvited to inform the locals they are wrong.”¹

So what are we doing in 2011 in Solihull, celebrating the 150th anniversary of Grace Baptist Mission? Instead of celebrating, wouldn't it be more admirable to hold a service of public contrition and tell the world we're sorry and will not send any more missionaries?

Christians, of course, cannot forget that during his lifetime Jesus himself trained people to go and herald the good news. Christians remember that Jesus was *sent* by his Father, he insisted, to seek and save those who are lost. So it is not too surprising that he in turn *sends* his followers. That's what our word “mission” means: it derives from the verb “to send.” “As the Father has *sent* me,” Jesus once said, “I am *sending* you” (John 20:21 NIV). Among his last recorded words are these: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:20 NIV). So Christians, understandably, will entertain a high view of those who actively seek to discharge Jesus' mission.

¹ Sarah Vowell, *Unfamiliar Fishes* (New York: Riverhead, 2011), 55.

There are two common objections raised against this Christian view of missionary endeavor. It's worth reflecting on them before we contemplate the most convincing reason why missionary work is essential.

First, Jesus himself insists, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged" (Matt 7:1 NIV). Doesn't this mean that if we follow Jesus' teaching we should refuse to make moral and religious evaluations? Certainly that view is common on the street. "I don't mind Jesus," we hear; "it's Christians I can't stand. Christians run around self-righteously telling people how to live, condemning other religions, sending missionaries off to meddle in other cultures. Why don't they follow the instruction of the Jesus they claim to serve? After all, he said, 'Do not judge, or you too will be judged.'"

When I was a boy I learned a few of the first principles of interpreting texts. I learned, "A text without a context becomes a pretext for a proof-text." So I suppose we better remind ourselves of the context where Jesus says, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged." It's found in the Sermon on the Mount. That sermon contains quite a few teachings of Jesus. Here, for example, Jesus criticizes the man who looks at a woman lustfully, on the ground that such a man has already committed adultery in his heart (Matt 5:28). Here he teaches us not to store up treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy and where thieves break in and steal; rather, we must store up for ourselves treasures in heaven, knowing that where our treasure is, there our hearts will be, too (6:19–21). Here he tells us to watch out for false prophets, which presupposes we must make distinctions between the true and the false (7:15–20). Here he insists that on the last day not everyone who says to him "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of his Father who is in heaven (7:21–23). In all these utterances, Jesus is making moral, religious, and cultural evaluations. He is, in short, making *judgments*. So after making all these judgments, what does he mean by saying "Do not judge, or you too will be judged"? The context shows that he means something like "Do not be cheaply critical, or you will be subjected to the same criticism." In other words, there is no way on God's green earth that this command prohibits his followers from making moral judgements, when making moral judgements is precisely what the sweep of his teaching demands that they do. But he does insist that when they follow his instruction and make evaluations and judgments they must do so without cheap criticism of others—a notoriously difficult requirement. There must be no condescension, no double standard, no sense of superiority, no patronizing sentimentality. Christians are never more than poor beggars telling other poor beggars where there is bread. This humble tone ought to characterize all Christian witness, all Christian missionary endeavor. But to argue that Jesus wants his followers to make no judgments at all merely betrays biblical illiteracy.

Second, people often protest, "Yes, but isn't missionary work, indeed all attempts at trying to win another to your faith, terribly intolerant?" Well, no—not if one operates with older definitions of tolerance. Tolerance used to be understood to be the stance which, while disagreeing with another's views, guarded the right of those views to be heard. The new tolerance insists that disagreeing with another's views, saying they are wrong, is intrinsically intolerant. But frankly, that notion of intolerance is incoherent. The Labour Party doesn't agree with the Conservatives; Marxists don't agree with Capitalists; Muslims don't agree with Christians. Each pair may acknowledge some commonalities, but on many fronts, they differ. Yet each *tolerates* the other if each insists that the other has equal right to speak and convince others of their position. Intolerance is introduced, not when one says another party is wrong, but only when the views of others are quelled by force or corruption. If missionaries try to impose their views on others by force of any kind, they have lost the richest Christian heritage; where

they seek to teach and put their case, all the while loving others sacrificially, they are upholding the highest standards of both intellectual integrity and tolerance.

But the best warrant for Christian mission is Jesus himself. He claims all authority is his, but he speaks not as a cosmic bully but as the crucified Lord. He insists that men and women have rebelled against his heavenly Father, but he joins himself to the human rebels so as to identify with them. He declares they deserve punishment, then bears the punishment himself. He claims to be the Judge they will meet on the last day, and meanwhile entreats them to turn to him, to trust him, and live. If one is going to follow a leader, what better leader than the one who demonstrates his love for his followers by dying on a cross to win them to himself? What political leader does that? What religious leader does that? Only God does that!

And then, in a small piece of mimicry, his followers are challenged to take up their cross and follow him. If one of the results is a worldwide missionary movement, I for one will pray for it to thrive.

* * * * *

With this issue we welcome Dr Mike Ovey to his own regular column in *Themelios*: “Off the Record.” Dr Ovey is Principal of Oak Hill College, London, a theological institution that trains both Anglicans and Independents for the work of the ministry. In addition to his many articles, not a few of them published in *Churchman*, Mike is probably best known around the world for his part in bringing to birth the important book *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution*. Adding to *Themelios* a wide-ranging and free-wheeling opinion piece from someone as well informed as Mike can only benefit our readers.

OFF THE RECORD

The Goldilocks Zone

— Michael J. Ovey —

Mike Ovey is Principal of Oak Hill College in London.

J*ust right.* This is the key refrain in the Goldilocks story as she tries out the chairs, porridge, and beds of the three bears, whose home she has entered (apparently illegally, but nothing turns on that). ‘Just right’ is also a good summary of a formidable (if not conclusive) apologetic argument for God’s existence. The argument suggests that it is staggeringly implausible, if not impossible, for so many finely tuned conditions necessary for human life (size of planet, atmosphere, distance from sun, etc.) to occur without conscious design. Our planet is a Goldilocks planet, with the competing extremes of heat and cold, light and dark, all just right for our existence. But alter the balance, and our life becomes impossible: too close to the sun, and our water is no longer liquid; or if the Earth is too small, it becomes harder to retain its gases.

The Goldilocks ‘just right’ idea can be applied to theology, too. In fact, I think it must be. One of the most powerful tensions in theology as a discipline is the tension between the local and the global. And here too we need a Goldilocks zone.

By ‘local’ in this context I mean theology’s tendency to drive down into the particular. Thus, a theology gets qualified by particular adjectives: Liberation theology, Pentecostal theology, Black theology, Charismatic theology, Queer theology, and so forth. The particular adjective readily defines the theology from the viewpoint of the human who constructs the theology, and it delineates how Christian truth seems to them. There again, the theology can be qualified at the level of sub-disciplines, or sub-sub-disciplines, as with a study of John’s Gospel using the tools of, say, Jungian psychology or Schüssler Fiorenza’s liberation hermeneutics. But again, the result is a local theology since one or two particular tools are used out of a complete range, just as one may localise oneself at Palm Beach on Sydney’s northern coast rather than the UK’s oddly named Bognor Regis. This comparison highlights that a key question is not simply what ‘local’ tools one uses, but why one has chosen them. Thus, Paul’s material on the submission due from slaves looks very different if one assumes that all history is really about class warfare.

Now, ‘local’ theologies have many strengths. Indeed, to some extent such localisations are necessary. The necessity arises because humans are finite knowers, and it is good to recognise that I am a white middle-aged male enculturated into the UK’s professional classes. Here, ‘localised’ theology reminds me of my finitude as a justified yet sinful human creature in this particular society, space, and time. Further, I am reminded therefore of my necessary dependence on other local theologies to offset my limitations of race and class, as well as my professional limitations as a systematician who definitely needs the correcting perspectives of other theologians, whether they teach in seminaries and colleges or from the pulpit in local churches.

But 'local' theologies have their perils. A local theology can so stress the particular that what falls outside my own particularity becomes alien to me. Thus, the UK does not legally recognise slavery: if I restrict myself to my particularity of white middle-aged professional UK male, then Paul's slavery passages, including the duties on slave-owners, seem existentially irrelevant to me. Moreover, precisely because what falls outside my 'location' is alien to me, I can be isolated and deaf to some of what calls me to leave aspects of my location. My choice of 'local theology' can be deeply isolating, or better, insulating. A way of doing theology that could help me recognise finitude can instead allow me to lock myself into it. Sadly, the focus of local theology can become the 'local' human, not the transcendent God to whom that local theology should refer, an example at worst of theology morphing into anthropology.

Further, it is not just a question of being unable to hear others from different local theologies. Increasingly it may be a question of being unable to speak to them as well. I can become so obsessed with the technicalities of my own field that I both forget and am unable to communicate to those outside it. And sometimes, of course, those outside can play deaf. It might be tempting, for instance, to discount this article because its author is a white middle-aged professional, etc.

Naturally, I am going to suggest that local theology must be tempered by a more 'global' theology and that we need a theological Goldilocks zone which captures both local and global. However, before I do, we should recall why 'global' theology cannot simply replace local theologies.

By 'global' in this context I am not merely getting at the idea that theologians and ministers can learn truths which go beyond their own local positions, but also need to be heard within other local theologies. A westerner can have something of permanent value to say to an easterner and vice versa. At its best, global obviously gets beyond the local. But adopting a 'global' position can run the risk of suggesting we think we have expressed those truths completely and exhaustively, to the exclusion of other local theologies. It is worth remembering here how easy it is for an apparently local theology to *act* as if it were a fully 'global' theology. That is a significant danger given the way that a particular local theology may seem especially *chic*.

Two observations are appropriate about global theologies that claim not just truth going beyond the local, but exhaustive truth beyond the local. First, the tendency is to focus on me the theologian as the possessor of an exhaustive truth. Sometimes you do hear evangelicals talking about 'mastering', or 'cracking', or 'mining' a passage of Scripture. The trouble is such language can suggest that that passage has nothing fresh or deeper to say to me. There is profound spiritual danger here for me. I am tempted to see myself as just a bit more like God in my theological grasp than is possible, or fitting, for a human creature. Once again, theology becomes anthropology.

The second observation is that while we evangelicals rightly insist on both the inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture, at times we seem in more danger of confusing sufficiency with exhaustiveness than we think. And unfortunately, it is tempting to indulge that confusion since an ostensibly exhaustive account of, say, Green Christianity can become one which squeezes out any possible alternative view. Exhaustiveness allows my own account of social engagement, for instance, to become final. Postmoderns surely have a point here, that totalising truth-claims can offer intoxicating power.

By this stage we can see that, perhaps bizarrely, over-stressing either the local or the global leads to the same result: the morphing of theology into anthropology. This is why theologians, whether ministers or teachers, simply must stay in the Goldilocks zone, if, that is, they want to be theologians rather than anthropologists.

What does that look like? Older generations of evangelicals would remind us that the knowledge of God is in two broad classes: there is God's perfect self-knowledge of himself (sometimes called archetypal knowledge), and there is the knowledge God has of himself that he has communicated to us (sometimes called ectypal knowledge). God has indeed spoken to us, and his words are true. But we do not hold God's entire knowledge of himself. To have that would entail knowing all of God's perfect attributes completely and in complete relation to each other. Since we believe those perfections to be infinite, it is not possible for a finite creature to know the truth of them in the same way the infinite God does, namely, exhaustively. His archetypal self-knowledge is true *and* exhaustive, while our ectypal knowledge is true *but not* exhaustive.

That category of ectypal knowledge gives us space to be rightly local (my knowledge of God from his self-disclosure is not exhaustive) and rightly global (my knowledge of God from his self-disclosure has truths even for those who are not white middle-aged, etc., and I should speak those truths). Consistently seeing my theological knowledge derived from God's self-disclosure as ectypal, not archetypal, helps keep me in the theological Goldilocks zone. In spiritual terms it helps or requires me to be humble before truth (for I am a creature, not God), yet confident in truth (for I am a creature to whom God has spoken and whom God has created to be spoken to). Humility *and* confidence. Evangelicals rightly decry the distorted humility of agnostic theologies which have no confidence that God speaks at all. Equally, evangelicals need to beware an over-confidence that blurs the distinction between ectypal and archetypal. To focus that for myself, maybe I should ask if to my mind when a student or church member disagrees with my sermon or my lecture, it actually counts as disagreeing with God.

John Owen on Union with Christ and Justification

— J. V. Fesko —

J. V. Fesko is Academic Dean and Associate Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology at Westminster Seminary California, Escondido, California.

1. Introduction

C. S. Lewis argues that we should prefer old books over new books because every age has its own outlook. By reading old books, we can learn from the past and possibly correct errors in our own outlook.¹ When rummaging in the historical-theological past, one giant figure who stands out among a field of Lilliputians is John Owen (1616–83), who is perhaps the most significant English theologian and certainly on a very short list for premier Protestant divines from Europe from the seventeenth century.² Owen has been called the “finest theological mind England ever produced.”³ Owen’s reputation has been cemented in the history of theology due to his extensive writings on a host of doctrinal topics, evidencing a wide breadth of knowledge, history, reading, exegesis, philosophical astuteness, and theological acumen.⁴

But what is of particular interest for this essay are Owen’s views on union with Christ and the doctrine of justification. There is much discussion at present over these doctrines coming from many different corners in the various fields of theological study: historical, systematic, exegetical, and biblical.⁵ What commends an investigation on these subjects is that Owen spent a good part of his

¹ C. S. Lewis, “Introduction,” in St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation: De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1996).

² Carl R. Trueman, *John Owen: Reformed Catholic, Renaissance Man* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 1. Trueman elsewhere cites a biography of Owen: Peter Toon, *God’s Statesman: The Life and Work of John Owen* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1971); cited in Carl R. Trueman, *The Claims of Truth: John Owen’s Trinitarian Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998), 1n1.

³ Carl R. Trueman, “John Owen as a Theologian,” in *John Owen: The Man and His Theology* (ed. Robert W. Oliver; Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2002), 43.

⁴ Trueman, “John Owen,” 44–51. His writings have been collected in *The Works of John Owen* (ed. William Goold; 24 vols.; Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1850–53).

⁵ In Luther studies, e.g., the Finnish reading of Luther has become popular (cf. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998]). Likewise, in Calvin studies books and essays on the Genevan’s doctrine of union with Christ multiply (e.g. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation*; Partee, *John Calvin*; Cornelis Venema, *Accepted and Renewed in Christ: The “Twofold Grace of God” and the Interpretation of Calvin’s Theology* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2007]; Mark A. Garcia, *Life in Christ: Union with Christ and Twofold Grace in Calvin’s Theology* [Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008]; J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007]; Julie Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* [Grand

writing career engaged in debate over these two doctrines. The seventeenth century was a period where antinomianism was on the rise, and the pendulum swung hard in the opposite direction and yielded a neonomian reaction.⁶ Historically, antinomians were charged with the belief that the moral law was in no way binding upon the redeemed sinner whereas neonomians were accused of erroneously combining faith and works in a person's justification. Works such as Tobias Crisp's (1600–43) *Christ Alone Exalted* and Edward Fisher's (fl. 1625–55) *Marrow of Modern Divinity* were labeled antinomian, and the likes of Richard Baxter (1615–91) fired off numerous responses throughout his writing career.⁷ Between the Scylla of antinomianism and the Charybdis of neonomianism, Owen set forth his own understanding of union with Christ and justification.

Recent claims, however, about Reformed Orthodox theologians like Owen maintain that they did not have a doctrine of union with Christ. In his analysis of Reformed Orthodoxy, Charles Partee argues, "Calvin is not a Calvinist because union with Christ is at the heart of his theology—and not theirs."⁸ Others, such as William Evans, claim that Reformed Orthodox theologians greatly restructured the earlier formulations of John Calvin (1509–64) and distorted the Reformer's union with Christ model of redemption with the imposition of the foreign category of the *ordo salutis*.⁹ Calvin was indifferent regarding the respective order of benefits—justification need not precede sanctification because both were given to the believer in their union with Christ. While examining Calvin's relationship to the broader Early Modern Reformed tradition is beyond the scope of this modest essay, examining Owen's views on union and justification will demonstrate that the aforementioned claims are incorrect.¹⁰ This

Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010]). In systematic circles, books on union with Christ continue to surface (see, e.g., J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011]; Michael Horton, *Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007]; Robert Letham, *Union with Christ: In Scripture, History, and Theology* [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2011]). And in biblical studies, New Perspective advocates such as N. T. Wright have argued that union with Christ is key to Paul's soteriology, something that earlier Reformed theologians seemed to have missed (Travis Tamerius, "Interview with N. T. Wright," *Reformation and Revival* 11:1 [2002]: 129; N. T. Wright, "New Perspectives on Paul," in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges* [ed. Bruce L. McCormack; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006], 255–56).

⁶ For the historical context of the antinomian controversies, see Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain: Disciplinary Religion and Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism to 1638* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); David R. Como, *Blown by the Spirit: Puritanism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in Pre-Civil-War England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); David D. Hall, ed., *The Antinomian Controversy, 1636–38: A Documentary History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990).

⁷ Tobias Crisp, *Christ Alone Exalted* (London: John Bennett, 1832); Edward Fisher, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* (London: G. Calvert, 1645); see, e.g., Richard Baxter, *Confession of His Faith: Especially Concerning the Interest of Repentance and Sincere Obedience to Christ, in our Justification and Salvation* (London: 1654); idem, *Aphorismes of Justification with Their Explication Annexed: Wherein Also Is Opened the Nature of the Covenants, Satisfaction, Righteousness, Faith, Works, etc.* (Hague: Abraham Brown, 1655); idem, *Of The Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to Believers* (London: Nevil Simons and Jonathan Robinson, 1676); idem, *A Treatise of Justifying Righteousness in Two Books* (London: Nevil Simons and Jonathan Robinson, 1676).

⁸ Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 27.

⁹ So William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation: Union with Christ in American Reformed Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 43–83.

¹⁰ For the relationship between Calvin and the later Reformed tradition, see Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

essay proves that Owen embraces union with Christ but at the same time gives priority to the doctrine of justification over sanctification, that is, that he holds to an *ordo salutis*.

Owen gives *priority* in this sense: a person can say that they are sanctified because they are justified, but a person cannot say that they are justified because they are sanctified. In other words, Owen maintains the classic hallmark of Reformed theology: justification and sanctification are distinct but inseparable benefits of union with Christ, but a person's sanctification (the fruit of which is good works) is not in any way mixed or confused with their justification. Justification logically comes before sanctification because good works are the fruits and evidences of justification, not its antecedent cause. Moreover, justification is a complete act whereas sanctification is an inaugurated but nevertheless incomplete process.

This priority is expressed through the *ordo salutis* or the *golden chain* (as it was more commonly known). While some think that maintaining such a priority is at odds with the doctrine of union with Christ, Owen sees no such conflict.¹¹ The reason Owen sees no conflict is that he has a full-orbed soteriology that is rooted in the pre-temporal *pactum salutis* between the Father and the Son. Key to comprehending Owen's views is recognizing the *proximate* and *ultimate* sources of the believer's redemption.

To prove this thesis, the essay proceeds at the logical beginning of Owen's soteriology with the *pactum salutis*. This doctrine in many ways sets the stage for what follows. We then move on to discuss the relationship between union with Christ, justification, and sanctification. Finally, the essay shows how Owen assembles the individual parts as a whole while maintaining the priority of the forensic in redemption. Along the way, the essay compares Owen's views with other views of the period. And though perhaps transgressing the line dividing history from theology, the essay concludes with some observations about the importance of Owen's doctrines of union with Christ and justification vis-à-vis contemporary discussions of the same.

2. *The Pactum Salutis*

Among the many adjectives that can be applied to Owen's theology is the term *covenantal*.¹² This term certainly applies to Owen's soteriology. From the earliest days of the Reformation, Reformed theologians employed the covenant concept in their theology, but by the seventeenth century the *pactum salutis* was beginning to feature more commonly in the theological systems of the Reformed orthodox. The *pactum salutis* is the covenant made among the members of the Trinity to bring about the redemption of fallen man through the covenant of grace. In general terms many Reformed theologians held to a threefold division of the *pactum salutis*, the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace.¹³ The

2001); idem, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹¹ So Evans, *Imputation and Impartation*, *passim*.

¹² Sebastian Rehnman, *Divine Discourse: The Theological Methodology of John Owen* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 156–57.

¹³ For a brief survey of Owen's views on the covenants, see Sinclair Ferguson, *John Owen on the Christian Life* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987), 20–32. For the origins of the *pactum salutis*, see Richard A. Muller, "Toward the Pactum Salutis: Locating the Origins of a Concept," *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 18 (2007): 11–65. For contemporary treatments of the threefold covenant division, see R. Scott Clark and David VanDrunen, "The

covenant of works was the original covenant made with Adam at creation. Concerning the doctrine of the covenant, Owen writes in the preface to Patrick Gillespie's (1616–75) book on the *pactum salutis*, "For the doctrine hereof, or the truth herein, is the very center wherein all the lines concerning the grace of God and our own duty, do meet; wherein the whole of religion does consist."¹⁴

Regarding the *pactum salutis* (or covenant of redemption), Owen explains that there are five characteristics:

1. the Father and the Son mutually agree to the common goal of the salvation of the elect (Heb 2:9–10; 12:2; Zech 6:13; 13:7; Ps 55:14; Prov 8:22–21);
2. the Father as *principal* of the covenant requires the Son to accomplish all that is necessary to secure the redemption of the elect—to do the Father's will (Mic 6:6–7; 1 Pet 1:18; Heb 10:4; Rom 3:25; Phil 2:6–7; Gal 4:4; Rom 8:3; Heb 10:9; Isa 49:5; John 14:28; Isa 53:10);
3. the Father promises to reward Christ for accomplishing his will (Isa 42:4; Ps 16:10; 89:28; Heb 5:7; Isa 53:10–11; Heb 12:2; Isa 42:1–4; Heb 7:28);
4. the Son accepts the work given to him by the Father (Ps 40:7–8; 16:2; Isa 50:5; Phil 2:6–8); and
5. the Father agrees to accept the Son's work upon its completion (Isa 49:5–6; Ps 2:7 Acts 13:33; Rom 1:4; Ps 2:8; John 17:1, 4–6, 12–16; Heb 9:24).

Evident from the cornucopia of texts that Owen cites and exegetes is the basic idea that Scripture shows that the Father and Son agreed to redeem the elect. Owen believes this agreement was covenantal in nature.¹⁵ Within these basic characteristics are the ground of Owen's doctrines of union with Christ and justification.¹⁶

For Owen, as for most Reformed theologians, the doctrine of election is never considered abstractly; it is never a bald choice on God's part. Rather, election is always coordinated with the other loci, such as Christology, pneumatology, and soteriology.¹⁷ For example, in the Savoy Declaration (1658), a confession for which Owen was one of the chief architects and which therefore reflects his theology, states,

It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus his only-begotten Son, according to a covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest, and King, the Head and Savior of his church, the Heir of all things and Judge of the world; unto whom he did from all eternity give a

Covenant before the Covenants," in *Covenant, Justification, and Pastoral Ministry* (ed. R. Scott Clark; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2007), 167–96; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (1932–38; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 211–18, 265–304; Geerhardus Vos, "The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Richard B. Gaffin Jr.; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1980), 234–70; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (3 vols.; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 2:117–22, 354–77; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003–2008), 3:193–232.

¹⁴ John Owen, "Preface" to Patrick Gillespie, *The Ark of the Covenant Opened: or, A Treatise of the Covenant of Redemption Between God and Christ as the Foundation of the Covenant of Grace* (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1677), n.p. See also Sebastian Rehnman, *Divine Discourse: The Theological Methodology of John Owen* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 162.

¹⁵ Owen, *Vindiciae Evangelicae*, 12:507.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12:500–507.

¹⁷ See, e.g., Richard A. Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986).

people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.¹⁸

In Owen's case, as well as for other Reformed orthodox theologians, election is coordinated with the *pactum salutis*, which entails these other doctrinal loci. Owen believes that the whole of redemption, justification, and reconciliation is predicated upon the work of Christ, which is agreed upon in the *pactum*, but is not effectual until its actual execution in history. A person does not lay hold of Christ's accomplished work until they are united with him and share in the communion of his benefits through the work of the Spirit.¹⁹

Owen rejects the doctrine of eternal justification and believes that the *pactum* is something distinct from its execution in time and history. Again, the Savoy Declaration states, "God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did in the fullness of time die for their sins, and rise again for the justification: nevertheless, they are not justified personally, until the Holy Spirit does in due time actually apply Christ unto them."²⁰ Rather, the *pactum* establishes Christ as the federal representative of his people as the *second Adam*, which establishes a forensic foundation for all that follows in the redemption of the elect. Owen writes, "This, I say, was the covenant or compact between the Father and the Son, which is the great foundation of what has been said and shall farther be spoken of about the merit and satisfaction of Christ. Here lies the ground of the righteousness of the dispensation treated of, that Christ should undergo the punishment due to us."²¹

3. Union with Christ and the Ordo Salutis

Grasping Owen's doctrine of the *pactum* is cardinal in understanding how he prioritizes the forensic element in redemption. But we must first understand what Owen believes about union with Christ before we can proceed. Owen, like most Reformed theologians, holds to the doctrine of union with Christ.²² Owen believes that all of the benefits of redemption flow from the believer's union with

¹⁸ Trueman, *John Owen*, 105–6; *A Declaration of the Faith and Order Owned and Practiced in the Congregational Churches in England: Agreed upon and Consented unto by Their Elders and Messengers in Their Meeting at the Savoy, October 12, 1658*, 8:1, in Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition* (3 vols.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 3:112. The Savoy Declaration was the Independent (or Congregational) revision of the Westminster Confession of Faith. It was revised by 120 representatives from congregational churches in England at London's Savoy Palace in 1658. The Congregationalist theologians agreed with the doctrine of the Westminster Confession but revised its Presbyterian polity (Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creeds and Confessions*, 3:104–5).

¹⁹ Owen, *Vindicae Evangelicae*, 12:507. See also idem, *The Doctrine of the Saints' Perseverance*, 11:336–43; Trueman, *Claims of Truth*, 145.

²⁰ Savoy Declaration, 11:4, in *Creeds*, 3:115; cf. Trueman, *Claims of Truth*, 212–13; idem, "John Owen's *Dissertation on Divine Justice: An Exercise in Christocentric Scholasticism*," *CTJ* 33 (1998): 103; Hans Boersma, *A Hot Pepper Corn: Richard Baxter's Doctrine of Justification in Its Seventeenth-Century Context of Controversy* (Vancouver: Regent, 2004), 103–5.

²¹ Owen, *Vindicae Evangelicae*, 12:507.

²² For a brief survey of Owen's doctrine of union, see Ferguson, *Christian Life*, 32–36. For contemporary treatments of union with Christ from a Reformed perspective, see Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 447–53; Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 587–619; John Murray, *Redemption, Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 161–74.

Christ.²³ Union with Christ, writes Owen, “is the cause of all other graces that we are made partakers of; they are all communicated to us by virtue of our union with Christ. Hence is our adoption, our justification, our sanctification, our fruitfulness, our perseverance, our resurrection, our glory.”²⁴ Union with Christ, therefore, is the all-encompassing doctrinal rubric that embraces all of the elements of redemption.

But this is not to imply that for Owen union is merely an intellectual concept. Rather, union with Christ is a spiritual conjugal bond effected by the Holy Spirit, the goal of which was love: “There is love in the person of the Father peculiarly held out unto the saints, as wherein he will and does hold communion with them.”²⁵ But Owen’s doctrine of union does not preclude him from distinguishing the different elements comprehended by union (justification, sanctification, adoption, etc.).

Owen sees no problem with affirming both union with Christ and articulating an *ordo salutis*. Owen explains that Paul never speaks about the necessity of sanctification, regeneration, or renovation by the work of the Spirit antecedently to the believer’s justification. Owen is careful to preclude including the believer’s good works from any role in regeneration, renovation, and justification. Owen declares that Paul does not intimate

any order of *precedency* or connection between the things that he mentions, but only between justification and adoption, justification having the priority in order of nature: “That, being justified by his grace, we should be heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” All the things he mentions are inseparable. No man is regenerate or renewed by the Holy Ghost, but withal he is justified;—no man is justified, but withal he is renewed by the Holy Ghost.²⁶

Owen carefully safeguards the doctrine of justification because Paul states that God justifies the *ungodly* (Rom 4:5), which means that the believer’s justification has to be antecedent to his sanctification. Owen explains, “It is necessary that we should be sanctified, that we may be justified before God, who justifies the ungodly, the apostle says not in this place, nor any thing to that purpose.”²⁷ Sinclair Ferguson summarizes, “For Owen, then, such order as there is in the *ordo salutis* would seem to be: Effectual Calling; Regeneration, Faith; Repentance; Justification; Adoption; and Sanctification.”²⁸ Ferguson goes on to comment that for Owen, divine election finds its outworking in the *ordo salutis*, which all coalesces in the believer’s union with Christ.²⁹

4. Justification and Sanctification

As we look more intently into Owen’s doctrine of justification, other reasons surface as to why he gives priority to it. The priority of justification is especially evident when it is compared and contrasted

²³ Owen, *Communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, 2:8–9, 16.

²⁴ Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 21:149–50.

²⁵ Owen, *Communion*, 22, 54.

²⁶ Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification*, 5:133.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Ferguson, *Christian Life*, 35.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

with the doctrine of sanctification. Owen believes that the doctrine of justification is of the greatest importance, even siding with Martin Luther (1483–1546), who writes, “Amisso articulo justificationis, simul amissa est tota doctrina Christiana [If the article of justification is lost, the whole of Christian doctrine is lost].” Owen then comments, “And I wish he had not been a true prophet, when he foretold that in the following ages the doctrine hereof would be again obscured.”³⁰ By the time Owen wrote his treatise on justification (1677), there was a confessional corpus of definitions that had codified the doctrine, whether in the Gallican Confession (1559), the Belgic Confession (1561), the Thirty-Nine Articles (1563), the Irish Articles (1615), or the Westminster Confession (1647).

One of the key elements of the Savoy Declaration that Owen saw to was explicitly referring to the imputation of the active and passive obedience of Christ:

Those whom God effectually calls, he also freely justifies, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ’s sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believer, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; *but by imputing Christ’s active obedience to the whole law, and passive obedience in his death for their whole and sole righteousness*, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God (emphasis).³¹

Owen holds that justification is by faith alone, includes the forgiveness of sins, includes the imputed active and passive obedience of Christ, and is a once-for-all definitive act.³² Beyond these basic points, how does the priority of justification emerge in comparison with sanctification in Owen’s theology?

Owen believes that nothing less than perfect righteousness can withstand the scrutiny of God’s judgment before the divine bar. Reflecting upon Ps 130:3 (“If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?”), Owen is convinced that the believer’s inherent righteousness (read sanctification) cannot withstand the demands of God’s justice required for justification: “If no man can stand a trial before God upon his own obedience, so as to be justified before him, because of his own personal iniquities; and if our only plea in that case be the righteousness of God, the righteousness of God only, and not our own; then is there no personal, inherent righteousness in any believers whereon they may be justified.”³³

Owen gives three reasons that inherent righteousness is imperfect and therefore unsuitable for a believer’s justification. First, there is a contrary principle of habitual sin that abides within the believer so long as they dwell in this world. Owen explains, based upon Gal 5:17, that none of the faculties of the soul are perfectly renewed as long as a person lives in the world. Second, inherent righteousness is defective because sin clings to every act and duty, whether internal or external. The believer’s good works are but “filthy rags” (Isa 64:6). Third, inherent righteousness is lacking because of actual sins (in contrast to original sin).³⁴

³⁰ Owen, *Justification*, 5:67.

³¹ *Savoy Declaration*, 11:1, in *Creeds*, 3:115; also Trueman, *John Owen*, 105–6.

³² Cf. Owen, *Justification*, 5:87, 89, 96, 110, 217, 219.

³³ *Ibid.*, 5:225.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 5:234–35.

For these three reasons, Owen gives priority to justification over sanctification. Owen establishes the bedrock of salvation, therefore, upon the imputed righteousness of Christ:

If it be a *perfect righteousness* that is imputed unto us, so it is esteemed and judged to be; and accordingly are we to be dealt withal, even as those who have a perfect righteousness: and if that which is imputed as righteousness unto us be *imperfect*, or imperfectly so, then as such must it be judged when it is imputed; and we must be dealt withal as those which have such an imperfect righteousness, and no otherwise. And therefore, whereas our *inherent righteousness* is imperfect (they are to be pitied or despised, not to be contended withal, that are otherwise minded), if that be *imputed* unto us, we cannot be accepted on the account thereof as perfectly righteous without an error in judgment.³⁵

So for Owen, the imputed perfect righteousness of Christ is the ground of the believer's justification and salvation because imputation, not inherent righteousness, gives right and title unto eternal life.³⁶ Owen's position contrasts with Baxter, who argues that the believer's final justification at the consummation is based upon their good works.³⁷

The priority of justification prominently emerges when Owen explains the relationship between justification and the final judgment: "Some affirm that the apostle excludes all works from *our first justification*, but not from the second; or, as some speak, the continuation of our justification."³⁸ Though Owen does not name names here, he has the views of the Roman Catholic Church, Jacob Arminius (1560–1609), and Baxter in mind. Rome, Arminius, and Baxter all hold that justification is an ongoing process where the believer's sanctification plays a role in their final justification.³⁹

Elsewhere, Owen acknowledges that the Roman Catholic Church holds to a double justification, a first and second. The first justification infuses a habit of grace or charity in baptism, and the second is consequent of the first and based upon the good works that proceed from this infused habitual grace. Owen mentions the Council of Trent (1546) by name.⁴⁰ He objects to such a formulation because it turns sanctification into justification: "The whole nature of *evangelical justification*, consisting in the gratuitous pardon of sin and the imputation of righteousness, as the apostle expressly affirms, and the

³⁵ Ibid., 5:172–73.

³⁶ Ibid., 5:173, 267.

³⁷ Baxter, *Justifying Righteousness*, 7; idem, *Confession of Faith*, 296; cf. Boersma, *Hot Pepper Corn*, 273–327, esp. 290–99, 315–16; J. I. Packer, *The Redemption and Restoration of Man in the Thought of Richard Baxter* (Vancouver: Regent College, 2003), 241–65, esp. 252–53, 257–63.

³⁸ Owen, *Justification*, 5.284–85.

³⁹ *Council of Trent*, Session 3 (13 Jan 1547), in *Creeds*, 2.826–39; Baxter, *Justifying Righteousness*, 7; idem, *Confession of Faith*, 296; Jacob Arminius, *The Works of James Arminius* (ed. James Nichols and William Nichols; 3 vols.; 1825–75; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 2:407. One should note, however, that despite the similarities between Trent, Baxter, and Arminius, there are dissimilarities among these three, especially between Trent and the two Protestants, Baxter and Arminius. Baxter and Arminius, e.g., disagreed with the idea that baptism was the instrument of justification. Both Baxter and Arminius believed their own positions were different from the Roman Catholic doctrine (see, e.g., Arminius, *Works*, Disputation 19.11, 1:600–601).

⁴⁰ Owen, *Justification*, 5:137–38.

declaration of a believing sinner to be righteous thereon, as the word alone signifies, is utterly defeated by it.”⁴¹

If Owen rejects double justification, how does he explain the relationship of justification to the final judgment? Owen distinguishes between the *nature* and *essence* of justification and the *manifestation* or *declaration* of it. The former occurs in this life, the latter on the day of judgment. In this life when a person is justified, they know of it in their heart, but there is no formal external evidence of it before the church and the world. At the final judgment, the believer’s justification will be publicly declared and made manifest before the church and world. But Owen is careful to stipulate, “Yet is it not a *second justification*: for it depends wholly on the *visible effects* of that faith whereby we are justified, as the apostle James instructs us; yet is it only one single justification before God, evidenced and declared, unto his glory, the benefit of others, and increase of our own reward.”⁴² For Owen, there is only one justification grounded upon the imputed perfect righteousness of Christ. To introduce a second or final justification, in his mind, introduces the believer’s sanctification (hence confusing them); the believer’s good works are always ill suited for the scrutiny of judgment before the divine bar.⁴³

5. Relating the Parts to the Whole

Thus far we have surveyed Owen’s soteriology and recognize that he affirms the *pactum salutis*, union with Christ, the *ordo salutis*, and the priority of justification over sanctification. How does Owen relate all of these different elements within his soteriology? Does union with Christ or justification retain chief place in Owen’s theology? Or has Owen presented an irreconcilable soteriology that cannot be sorted out? In some cases, historians must rely upon implication and interpretation of a theologian’s soteriology in order to relate the individual parts to the whole. But this is not the case with Owen because he addresses these issues in a number of places.

Owen can explain the causes of justification in a very traditional manner by employing Aristotelian distinctions. Owen explains that the supreme moving cause of justification is God; the meritorious cause is Jesus Christ and his mediatorial work; and the instrumental cause is faith.⁴⁴ When we dig a little deeper into the particular elements of justification such as imputation, Owen looks to union with Christ:

God has appointed that there shall be an immediate foundation of the imputation of the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ unto us; whereon we may be said to have done and suffered in him what he did and suffered in our stead, by that grant, donation, and imputation of it unto us; or that we may be interested in it, that it may be made ours: which is all we contend for. And this is our *actual coalescency into one mystical person* with him by faith.⁴⁵

To be sure, Owen does not confuse justification (the forensic) with sanctification (the transformative), but rather states that a person must be in union with Christ to partake of the forensic benefit of

⁴¹ Ibid., 5:138.

⁴² Ibid., 5:139.

⁴³ Ibid., 5:140.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 5:360.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 5:218.

imputation. Owen clearly states this point: “Our actual interest in the satisfaction of Christ depends on our actual insertion into his mystical body by faith, according to the appointment of God.”⁴⁶ Elsewhere, Owen bluntly asserts, “The foundation of the *imputation* asserted is union.”⁴⁷

A question quickly arises: How can Owen consider union with Christ to be the foundation of the forensic benefits (which implies that union takes priority over both justification and sanctification as the more fundamental category) and yet still assert the priority of justification over sanctification? Has Owen inextricably impaled himself upon the horns of a dilemma? Owen is not confused, but rather addresses imputation anthropologically or from the vantage point of the application of redemption. Owen explains that concerning union and imputation, “Hereof there are many grounds and causes . . . but that which we have immediate respect unto, as the foundation of this imputation, is that whereby the Lord Christ and believers do actually *coalesce into one mystical person*.”⁴⁸

Here, the broader context of the seventeenth-century justification debates provides some interpretive assistance, as Owen likely has the views of Baxter in mind. Baxter redefines union with Christ in such a manner as to exclude the imputation of Christ’s righteousness as well as his indwelling through the Holy Spirit. Baxter’s view is a political rather than mystical union.⁴⁹ In opposition to Baxter (though Owen does not mention him by name), Owen writes,

That there is such a union between Christ and believers is the faith of the catholic church, and has been so in all ages. Those who seem in our days to deny it, or question it, either know not what they say, or their minds are influenced by their doctrine who deny the divine persons of the Son and of the Spirit. Upon supposition of this union, reason will grant the imputation pleaded for to be reasonable; at least, that there is such a peculiar ground for it as is not to be exemplified in any things natural or political among men.⁵⁰

Owen does not believe he is asserting anything distinctively Reformed by promoting imputation as founded in union, but rather something that the universal church has affirmed in every age. But one should not therefore stop the investigation and conclude that Owen believes that union is more foundational to justification and sanctification. What of Owen’s statement about the “many grounds and causes” of imputation?

Owen is not content to define union with Christ and justification strictly in terms of the *applicatio salutis* or redemption considered anthropologically. When one steps back to the bigger picture beyond the application of redemption, Owen explains how imputation occurs prior to its application to the believer through union with Christ:

The imputation of sin unto Christ was *antecedent* unto any real union between him and sinners, whereon he took their sin on him as he would, and for what ends he would; but the imputation of his righteousness unto believers is consequential in order of nature

⁴⁶ Ibid., 5:218.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 5:209.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Richard Baxter, *Of the Imputation of Christ’s Righteousness to Believers* (London: Nevil Simmons, 1676), 55; cf. Boersma, *Hot Pepper Corn*, 234–41.

⁵⁰ Owen, *Justification*, 5:209.

unto their union with him, whereby it becomes theirs in a peculiar manner: so as that there is not a parity of reason that he should be esteemed a sinner, as that they should be accounted righteous.⁵¹

Owen is not guilty of doublespeak when he writes that imputation is both antecedent to union and consequent to it. Rather, we come full circle to our starting point and Owen's doctrine of the *pactum salutis*.

When Owen discusses the origins of union with Christ, he reaches back to the *pactum salutis*: "The first spring or cause of this *union*, and of all the other causes of it, lie in that *eternal compact* that was between the Father and the Son concerning the recovery and salvation of fallen mankind."⁵² The incarnation, the assumption of human nature, was designed in the *pactum salutis*. Within the terms of the *pactum*, the Father predestined the Son as the incarnate God-man unto grace and glory unto two ends: (1) what was specific to his own person and work and (2) what he was to communicate to the church. As such, the Father designated Christ as head of the church and committed the elect of God, according to the terms of the *pactum*, unto Christ to be delivered from sin, the curse of the law, and death.⁵³ Owen summarizes the work of Christ within the architecture of the *pactum* under the idea that Christ was made "the surety of the new covenant." Quoting and commenting on Heb 7:22, Owen writes, "Jesus was made a surety of a better testament.' This alone, of all the fundamental considerations of the imputation of our sins unto Christ, I shall insist upon, on purpose to obviate or remove mistakes about the nature of his *suretiship*, and the respect of it unto the covenant whereof he was the surety."⁵⁴

Owen then goes on to discuss in great exegetical detail the nature of Christ's role as surety of the covenant. Owen argues that even though the term ἔγγυος (*surety*) appears in only this one place in the NT, one occurrence is just as authoritative as twenty. To define and understand the term, Owen digs into the Septuagint and Hebrew OT. He notes that the term occurs in Prov 6:1: "My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger." According to Owen, the Hebrew OT term ערב is translated by the Septuagint as ἔγγυάω. Owen cites Prov 17:18 and 20:16 as other occurrences of these lexemes. He then explains, "ערב originally signifies to *mingle*, or a *mixture* of any things or persons; and thence, from the conjunction and *mixture* that is between a *surety* and *him* for whom he is a surety, whereby they *coalesce* into one person, as unto the ends of that suretiship, it is used for a *surety*, or to give *surety*."⁵⁵ Owen illustrates this point from Gen 43:9, Judah's words to his father Jacob concerning Benjamin: "I will be surety for him [אֲנִכִּי אֶעְרַבְנֹו]; of my hand shalt thou require him." Owen explains, "In undertaking to be surety for him, as unto his safety and preservation, he engages himself to *answer* for all that should befall him; for so he adds, 'If I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, let me be guilty for ever.'"⁵⁶

⁵¹ Ibid., 5:354.

⁵² Ibid., 5:179.

⁵³ Ibid., 5:179–80.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 5:181. For Owen's extended treatment of the *pactum* and Christ's role as covenant surety, see his *Hebrews*, "Federal Transactions between the Father and the Son" (Exercitation 28), 19:77–97.

⁵⁵ Owen, *Justification*, 5:181. Owen's lexical claims seem generally accurate in the light of the most recent lexicographical studies. Cf. BDAG 271; Johan Lust, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint: Revised Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003), 167; HALOT 1:876–77.

⁵⁶ Owen, *Justification*, 5:182.

All of this lexicographical and exegetical spadework leads Owen to conclude, “A *surety* is an undertaker for another, or others, who thereon is justly and *legally* to answer what is due to them, or from them.”⁵⁷ Given that Christ’s suretiship is legal in nature and involves the imputation of the sins of the elect to Christ and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the elect as a stipulation of the *pactum salutis*, Owen rests redemption upon the forensic. For Owen, therefore, the legal elements of redemption are ultimately foundational for the transformative. Or stated another way: the *proximate* source of the believer’s redemption is union with Christ with its dual benefits of justification and sanctification. Justification has priority, however, over sanctification because at its core is the perfect and complete imputed righteousness of Christ, the *ultimate* cause of which is Christ’s voluntary acceptance and promise to be covenant surety for the elect in the *pactum* between the Father and the Son.

6. Conclusion

Owen cuts a careful path between the dangerous poles of antinomianism and neonomianism. With great precision he skirts the dangerous Scylla of antinomianism by arguing that the believer is in union with Christ, which ensures that the believer will yield the fruit of good works because of Christ’s indwelling presence. At the same time, Owen also successfully navigates by the treacherous Charybdis of neonomianism because he argues that the believer’s justification, title, and right to eternal life is grounded upon the imputed righteousness of Christ. The imputation of Christ’s righteousness is not something that the believer earns through their obedience but is something he received—something that has been agreed upon in a mutual covenant between the Father and the Son in eternity past, long before the believer ever existed. For Owen, though, this covenant in eternity past is not merely a bald choice by God but rather involves a number of different doctrinal loci, Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, as well as their subsets, such as union with Christ and the *ordo salutis*. The doctrine of the *pactum salutis* provides the answer as to how Owen gives ultimate priority to the forensic and proximate priority to union with Christ. For Owen, the ground of redemption is found in the imputed righteousness of Christ.

Owen’s views, though perhaps striking an odd chord to contemporary ears, were quite mainstream and mundane within the early modern Reformed context of the seventeenth-century. And contrary to the claims of some historians, Owen holds the doctrines of union with Christ and the *ordo salutis* together without a raised eyebrow despite the purported incompatibility between the two.

Owen’s “old” ways can inform present discussions about union with Christ and justification among the various theological disciplines. Richard Muller has noted that, as a group, systematic theologians do not read historical documents.⁵⁸ Theologians construct their doctrines in ignorance of the past or only mine the past looking for opinions that will promote their own formulations. The same can be said of biblical scholars and especially those within the NT guild. For NT scholars, the history of interpretation usually starts somewhere in the early nineteenth-century with little to no attention given to the previous

⁵⁷ Ibid., 5:182.

⁵⁸ Richard Muller, “Reflections on Persistent Whiggism and Its Antidotes in the Study of Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Intellectual History,” in *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion* (eds. Alister Chapman, John Coffey, and Brad S. Gregory; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 137.

eighteen hundred years of church history. For all of his claims to offer a revolutionary understanding of justification, N. T. Wright sounds all too much like Richard Baxter.⁵⁹

It seems more than incumbent upon scholars, regardless of one's field of specialty, to investigate what the church has said on any one subject before offering one's own reading and interpretation of Scripture. Might there be something to learn from theologians of the past? In this one case, Owen presents a wealth of theological grist to consider and evaluate when it comes to the doctrines of union with Christ and justification. Owen offers a more satisfying account of union with Christ and justification. Unlike some NT scholars who explain justification only from Pauline texts, Owen's doctrine stretches from Genesis to Revelation, from eternity past to the consummation; integrates theological loci—*theology proper*, Christology, pneumatology, anthropology; and is coordinated with the doctrine of the covenant.

Lewis is correct: we need the breeze of ages past blowing through our minds as we seek to understand Scripture. We do not forge our theology upon the anvil of individualism. God has given the Scriptures to the church, and hence all exegesis and theology should be performed in dialogue with the church. That is how Owen forged his doctrines of union and justification.

⁵⁹ Paul Helm has offered an in-depth comparison of Baxter and Wright. See, e.g., "Analysis 15—Baxter's Soup and Wright's Soap," <http://paulhelmsdeep.blogspot.com/2008/analysis-15-baxters-soup-and-wrights.html> (accessed August 3, 2011).

The Earth Is Crammed with Heaven: Four Guideposts to Reading and Teaching the Song of Songs

— Douglas Sean O'Donnell —

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Perhaps when you read the Song of Songs you feel as perplexed as the Ethiopian eunuch did with Isaiah. If asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” (Acts 8:30b), you can only reply, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” (Acts 8:31a).

If so, you are not alone in your quest for clarity. Saadia, a ninth-century Jewish rabbi, likened the Song to “a lock for which the key had been lost.”¹ Franz Delitzsch, a nineteenth-century German Lutheran Hebraist, wrote, “The *Song* is the most obscure book of the Old Testament. Whatever principle of interpretation one may adopt, there always remains a number of inexplicable passages. . . .”² More recently, Marvin Pope comments, “[N]o composition of comparable size in world literature has provoked and inspired such a volume and variety of comment and interpretation as the biblical Song of Songs.”³ Daniel Estes adds, “Scholars vary widely on nearly every part of its interpretation. . . . Virtually every verse presents challenges in text, philology, image, grammar or structure.”⁴

My favorite example of perspicuity angst comes from Christopher W. Mitchell, who begins his commentary, published in 2003, by reviewing the history of his study of the Song: “My fascination with the Songs of Songs began in 1978 . . . when I took a graduate class on its Hebrew text at the University of Wisconsin—Madison. That fascination grew under the tutelage of my doctoral advisor, Professor Michael V. Fox.” Mitchell goes on to talk about how he has read commentaries and articles, preached and taught, and since 1992 worked earnestly on his 1,300 (!) page commentary on the Song. He has

¹ Marvin H. Pope, *Song of Songs* (AB 7C; Garden City: Doubleday, 1977), 17.

² Franz Delitzsch, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*, in C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 6:497.

³ Pope, *Song of Songs*, 17.

⁴ Daniel J. Estes, “Song of Songs,” in Daniel C. Fredericks and Daniel J. Estes, *Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs* (AOTC 16; Downers Grove: IVP, 2010), 267. Cf. Roland E. Murphy, “Canticle of Canticles,” in *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (ed. Raymond E. Brown et al.; Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 507.

worked almost thirty years on the Song, but then he writes in his preface about his desire to spend another decade to “delve more deeply into . . . this most difficult book of sacred Scripture.”⁵

Scholars who disagree on much of the Song all agree it is a tough text. Thus, we need a guide to uncoil its complexities, solve its riddles, and find that lost key to unlock its door. In this article, I seek to offer some basic directions to help us, especially those of us who preach, to navigate through the often dark (but ah so beautiful!) waters of Solomon’s Song. By means of setting four guideposts in place, I hope to open God’s Word, as Philip did, and “beginning with this Scripture,” teach you “the good news about Jesus” (Acts 8:35), revealing to you something of the meaning of the mystery of marriage (Eph 5:32).

1. Guidepost One: This Is a Song

We start with the first guidepost: *This is a song*.

Our text begins, “The Song” (Song 1:1a).⁶ The significance of this simple observation is that it identifies the genre. This is not a letter, gospel, law book, prophecy, or an apocalyptic revelation. This is a song. And a song (this is what I’ve learned after many years of study) is written to be sung. (Aren’t you glad I’m your guide?)

Perhaps this Song was originally written to be sung during the seven-day marriage festival.⁷ We know that Israelite wedding celebrations lasted this long from Gen 29:27, Judg 14:12, and extra-biblical Jewish history. And we know from Jer 7:34 that singing was part of these festivities: “the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.”⁸

Thus, following the lead of Duane Garrett,⁹ I envision the following scenario. Just as there were professional singers and musicians for temple worship (e.g., 2 Chr 29:28), so I envision professional singers and musicians poised to sing and play for these week-long weddings. And each day, as the bride and groom come out of their chambers, the wine is served, the music begins, and the singers sing. The soprano starts, “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for your love is better than wine” (Song 1:2). Then, over sweet strum of the strings, the tenor softly serenades, “Behold, you are beautiful, my love” (1:15). And throughout the song, as the soprano and tenor call back and forth, from time to time

⁵ Christopher W. Mitchell, *The Song of Songs: A Theological Exposition of Sacred Scripture* (Concordia Commentary; St. Louis: Concordia, 2003), xx.

⁶ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers.

⁷ While I disagree with M. Bossuet’s sevenfold division of the text (based on this tradition), I agree that it is probable that the Song originated or was eventually used during the seven-day wedding celebration. See C. Hassell Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books* (Chicago: Moody, 1988), 255.

⁸ Tom Gledhill, *The Message of the Song of Songs* (BST; Downers Grove: IVP, 1994), 27. Estes notes, “The term *šir* is often, but not exclusively, used for lyric songs and especially for love songs (cf. Isa 5:1; Ezek 33:32). It could well refer to a wedding song, for music was typically employed in wedding celebrations (Jer 7:34; 16:9; 25:10; 33:11; cf. Murphy, *ABD* 6:151)” (“Song of Songs,” 302).

⁹ Duane Garrett organizes his commentary as a song, with soprano, tenor, and chorus (“Song of Songs,” in Duane Garrett and Paul R. House, *Songs of Songs/Lamentations* [WBC 23B; Nashville: Nelson, 2004], 32). He summarizes, “I suggest that the Song of Songs is a unified work with chiasmic structure and is composed of thirteen individual songs, or *cantos*, for presentation by a male and a female soloist with a chorus” (31).

other voices join in—like a chorus in a Greek play or a choir in an Oratorio. These voices are comprised of the young maidens, “the daughters of Jerusalem” as our text calls them.

That is what I envision day after day for *seven* days, a *perfect* celebration of the new creation of man and wife as one. Whether or not you envision it precisely that way, however, what matters most is that you see the Song as a song.

Furthermore, when you think “song,” you must think “poem” or lyric poetry. “This is a song” is the same as saying “this is a poem set to music.” This is obvious everywhere, even in the first verse. Our song begins with a poetic device called consonance: “The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s” (*shir hashirim asher lishlomoh*).¹⁰ In Hebrew, we hear the repeated “sh”-sound, and even the English translation gives a repeated “s”-sound.

Herein the potential danger lies. We can read and teach the Song, forgetting or neglecting its poetry and quickly run from alliterations to applications. The cry for practical propositions beckons the preacher. It is important that we learn real-life lessons from each poetic pericope. But it is likewise important (nay, necessary!) to first understand and feel the power and play of words, what only poetry can do to the human heart and imagination. For there is a difference between saying,

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that’s best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes.
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.¹¹

and saying,

A woman in a black dress with shiny beads looked pretty when she walked by.

There’s a difference between saying,

Pease porridge hot, pease porridge cold,
Pease porridge in the pot, nine days old;
Some like it hot, some like it cold,
Some like it in the pot, nine days old.

and saying,

If the pea pudding has been in the pot for nine days, no thanks, I’ll pass.

If you turn that simple nursery rhyme into a statement, it loses its punch. Take away the poetic structure (8 syllables, 9 syllables, 8 syllables, 9 syllables) and poetic devices such as alliteration (the p-words), assonance (the o-sound), and the rhyme scheme (hot/pot . . . cold/old), and you take away the point of the poem: to make you laugh.

¹⁰ On the significance of this sound, see Richard S. Hess, *Song of Songs* (Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 39.

¹¹ Lord Byron, “She Walks in Beauty.” This poem was the first of several English poems that Isaac Nathan set to synagogue tunes, published as *Hebrew Melodies* (1815).

The Song is a song. Thus each time you read and teach a poetic section, you should ask yourself, “What is the poetry doing?” You should try to feel the poetry before you act upon its message.¹² You should, in a sense (and with your senses), *smell* the myrrh, frankincense, and aloes, *touch* the polished ivory, *taste* the wine and apples, *hear* the flowing streams, *see* the gazelles leaping over the mountains . . . yes feel the flashes of fire, the very flame of the LORD.

That is the first guidepost: This is a song.

2. Guidepost Two: About Human Love

Here is the second guidepost: This is a song *about human love set in the context of marriage*.

We will deal with the second part of that sentence first. We have already noted that this is a wedding song. Let me now defend that claim. We know it is a wedding song from the cultural context. (The sexual revolution of the 1960’s hadn’t yet reached Jerusalem in 960 B.C.) In that place and time, there were only two kinds of love: “free love” between a man and a woman in marriage, and sexual slavery, which is found in adultery and fornication.¹³

So we know that this is a wedding song from the cultural context (i.e., in Israel only sex within marriage was celebrated), but also from the language of the Song itself.¹⁴ After the word “wedding” is used in 3:11 (as the wedding day of Solomon is used as a foil), the word “bride” is used of the young woman six times in the next seventeen verses (chs. 4–5). This is the heart of the Song, the section that undoubtedly describes sexual relations. Further support for this marriage-song thesis is found in the language of a permanent pledge, such as “set me as a seal upon your heart” (8:6) or “my beloved is mine, and I am his” (2:16a; cf. 7:5; 8:4).¹⁵

Thus, this is a wedding song that is naturally about what weddings celebrate: *human love*. On the back cover of Tom Gledhill’s excellent commentary are these words:

At first reading the Song of Songs *appears to be* an unabashed celebration of the deeply rooted urges of physical attraction, mutual love and sexual consummation between

¹² In *Sermon 79:1*, Bernard of Clairvaux teaches, “But in this marriage song it is affections, not words, that are to be considered” (*On the Song of Songs I–IV* [trans. Irene Edmonds; Cistercian Fathers Series; Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian, 1980], 4:138). Leland Ryken adds, “The Song of Solomon is affective, not analytic” (*Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible* [2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992], 289).

¹³ Roland E. Murphy states, “These touches alone suffice to indicate why the Song should not be described as a treatise on ‘free love.’ The cultural setting is one that encouraged strict standards of sexual morality and marital fidelity (e.g., Deut 22:13–29). What this poetry celebrates is not eroticism for its own sake, and certainly not ribaldry or promiscuous sex, but rather the desires of an individual woman and man to enjoy the bond of mutual possession (2:16; 6:3; 7:10[9])” (*The Song of Songs* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990], 98). Similarly, Brevard S. Childs writes, “The Song is wisdom’s reflection on the joyful and mysterious nature of love between a man and a woman within the institution of marriage. . . . The writer simply assumes the Hebrew order of the family as a part of the given order of his society, and seeks to explore and unravel its mysteries from within” (*Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979], 575). Cf. Daniel Grossberg, “Two Kinds of Sexual Relationships in the Hebrew Bible,” *HS 35* (1994): 1–25.

¹⁴ Steven C. Horine (“An Integrative Literary Approach to the Song of Songs” [PhD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1998]) has argued persuasively that the whole Song is set within a marriage relationship.

¹⁵ David A. Hubbard, *Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon* (The Communicator’s Commentary 15B; Dallas: Word, 1991), 273.

a man and a woman. Tom Gledhill maintains that the Song of Songs *is in fact* just that—a literary, poetic exploration of human love that strongly affirms loyalty, beauty and sexuality in all their variety.¹⁶

If you didn't know and weren't influenced by the history of the interpretation of the Song, and simply read the Song as is, you would likely surmise—with phrases like, “kiss me,” “his right hand embraces me,” “your two breasts are like two fawns,” and so on—that this is *erotic* poetry set within the *ethical* limits of the marriage bed.¹⁷ However, the near consensus of both Jewish and Christian interpretation for at least 1600 years was that the Song is not about human love at all, but only divine love. That is, it sings of God's love for Israel and/or Christ's love for the church or the individual Christian soul.¹⁸

The reason for this seems to be the presupposition that human sexual love is an inappropriate topic for Scripture. Nicholas of Lyra (1270–1349) could speak of the love between a bride and groom as “proper” but not the proper subject of Scripture and thus the Song. Such fleshly love even within marriage has, in his words, “a certain dishonorable and improper quality about it.”¹⁹ Similarly, Theodoret of Cyrus (c. 393–c. 457) wrote that those who give the Song a “corporeal interpretation” have committed an “awful blasphemy.”²⁰

This explains why—from Origen of Alexandria to Charles Spurgeon of London, from the medieval mystics to the American Puritans—Christians allegorized every jot and tittle of the Song, each thigh and breast and kiss and consummation. For example, one commentator says that the phrase “while the king was on his couch” (1:12) refers to “the gestation period of Christ in the womb of Mary,” and the “sachet of myrrh that lies between [the bride's] breasts” (1:13) symbolizes “Christ in the soul of the believer, who lies between the great commands to love God and one's neighbor.”²¹ Those allegories are

¹⁶ Gledhill, *The Message of the Song of Songs*, emphasis mine.

¹⁷ Garrett adds, “The Song achieves something that medieval Christian culture could not fathom and that modern and postmodern culture cannot artfully attain: a man and woman who maintain passionate desire for each other in the context of conventional morality” (“Song of Songs,” 102).

¹⁸ Origen exemplifies (and establishes!) the traditional Christian hermeneutic: “It seems to me that this little book is an epithalamium, that is to say, a marriage-song, which Solomon wrote in the form of a drama and sang under the figure of the Bride, about to wed and burning with heavenly love towards her Bridegroom, who is the Word of God. And deeply did she love Him, whether we take her as the soul made in His image, or as the Church” (*The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies* [trans. R. P. Lawson; ACW 26; New York: Newman, 1956], 21).

¹⁹ Nicholas of Lyra, *The Postilla of Nicholas of Lyra on the Song of Songs* (ed. Kenneth Hagen; trans. James George Kiecker; Reformation Texts With Translation [1350–1650]; Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1998), 29. Cf. John Calvin's remark about the heretic Castellio, who thought the Song was about an immoral affair: “He [i.e., Castellio] considers that it is a lascivious and obscene poem, in which Solomon has described his shameless love affairs” (*Ioannis Calvini Opera quae supersunt omnia* [*Corpus Reformatorum* xxxix, 1873], col. 675).

²⁰ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Song of Songs, Preface*, cited in ACCS 9 (ed. J. Robert Wright; Downers Grove: IVP, 2005), 290.

²¹ Quoted without reference in George L. Klein, ed., *Reclaiming the Prophetic Mantle* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 119. For hundreds of more examples of allegories, see *The Song of Songs: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators* (trans. and ed. Richard A. Norris Jr.; The Church's Bible; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

orthodox (and certainly Christ-centered and thus edifying), but they are also exegetically absurd²² and potentially theologically dangerous.

It is dangerous when Christian commentators, theologians, and pastors think there is a radical dichotomy between the sacred and the secular—praying is sacred; kissing is secular. When we believe that sexuality is the antithesis of spirituality and that there is a great chasm between *eros* and *agape*,²³ we are in danger of losing not only our witness to the world (“What? Your religion has nothing to say about sex except that it is bad?”),²⁴ but also vital tenets of the Christian faith: the incarnation (John 1:1, 14), the bodily resurrection (1 Cor 6:12–20; 15), and the new heavens and new earth (2 Pet 3:13).

Take the incarnation, for example. Our creed is undermined if the “truly man” part of the “truly God and truly man” is not truly human flesh (1 John 4:2–3; cf. 1:1). How could satisfaction for sins be made if Jesus is not both God and man (cf. Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*)? Yet notions that the body is “the tomb of the soul,” as Orpheus taught and some Christians embraced,²⁵ or “Brother Ass,” as St. Francis famously phrased it (a useful but infuriating beast), isn’t far removed from Matthew Henry’s hermeneutic, which says, “When we apply ourselves to the study of this book [i.e., the Song] we must not only, with Moses and Joshua, *put off our shoe from off our foot* [we are on holy ground, but we must also] . . . forget that we have bodies.”²⁶ Really?! Why should we forget that we have bodies when the Bible contains no separation between godly purity and physical passion? Why should we forget that we have bodies when there are four poems in the Song about delighting in seeing, touching, and tasting (!) the human body? Why should we forget that we have bodies, when for our salvation “the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14)?

²² See Martin Luther, “Lecture on the Song of Solomon: A Brief but Altogether Lucid Commentary of the Song of Songs” (*LW* 15:264). Roland Murphy adds a helpful reminder: “Despite the pretense of exegetical precision, exaggeration and uncontrolled fantasy seem to be flaws endemic to allegorical exposition” (*The Song of Songs*, 93).

²³ The Song “portrays the love between the Lord and his people as *desire*. With his immensely influential *Agape and Eros*, Anders Nygren persuaded three generations of theologians and exegetes that self-giving love, *agape*, and desire, *eros*, are two incompatible sorts of love, and that only the former characterizes the relation between the biblical God and his people; no allegory plausibly solicited by the Song can agree.” Robert W. Jenson, *Songs of Songs* (*Int*; Louisville: John Knox, 2005), 12. For further exploration on the general fallacy of Nygren’s connection of these concepts with these terms, see D. A. Carson’s discussion on *agapaō* and *phileō* in *Exegetical Fallacies* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 51–53.

²⁴ John Updike puts it well: “Carnal passion has its natural place in the annals of Israel; Judaism recognized that the body is the person, a recognition extended in the strenuous Christian doctrine of the bodily resurrection. A world-picture must include everything that is the case, and the love frenzy of the young . . . completes, along with the cynicism of Ecclesiastes, the despair of Lamentation[s], the problematic of Job, and the plagues and war-fury of Numbers, the picture. We might even say that, in this era of irrepressible sexual awareness, we trust the Bible a bit more because it contains, in all its shameless, helpless force, The Song of Solomon” (foreword to *The Song of Solomon: Love Poetry of the Spirit* [ed. Lawrence Boadt; New York: St. Martin’s, 1999], 10).

²⁵ This notion appears in Plato (*Phaedr.* 250c; *Crat.* 400b–c; *Gorg.* 493a–c), but its origins likely lie with Orpheus, on whom, see William Keith Chambers Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion: A Study of the Orphic Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 217–18. On the sexual attitudes in early Christianity, see Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

²⁶ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible* (repr., McLean, VA: MacDonald, 1985), 3:1053.

Following Marvin Pope's analogy, I liken the history of interpretation to Hans Christian Andersen's children's tale, *The Emperor's New Clothes*.²⁷ Like the Emperor's ministers and subjects affirmed that he was indeed wearing clothes (when he was not), so interpreters kept telling themselves and their readers that the Song is solely about spiritual love (when it's not). But just as a child saw the reality of the situation—the emperor is naked!—so do we see that the characters in the Song are naked. They are naked and unashamed. And we today should share their lack of shame. For the Song is a song that Adam could have sung in the Garden when Eve arose miraculously from his side, and it remains a song that we can and should sing in the bedroom, the church, and the marketplace of ideas.

Don't get me wrong here. The lyrics here about seeing, touching, and tasting are "candid but not crude."²⁸ They are not prudish, but neither are they immodest. They are far removed from the sexual anarchy and idiocy of our Top 40 music, as well as the crass love poetry of the ancient Near East. The Song has a beautiful balance: it has adult content, but it is adolescent-appropriate. It is not X-rated, but rated PG: parental (and pastoral) guidance recommended. This Song guides us to see with scriptural sensibilities that the earth is crammed with heaven,²⁹ that the way of a man with a woman is "too wonderful" (Prov 30:18–19), and that marriage is not simply a concession to the necessity of procreation, but an affirmation of the beauty, chastity, and sacredness of human love.

This is a song about human love set in the context of marriage. I hope I have pounded that second (sadly necessary) guidepost soundly into place.

3. *Guidepost Three: Found in the Bible*

With our second guidepost in place, let me quickly add the third lest we get off course. Just because the Song is about human love does not mean that we must think a-theologically about it, namely, that it has nothing to say about God's love for us or our love for God.

This is not an English poem scribbled on the New York City subway. It is a Hebrew poem, and there is no Hebrew literature of this era that is non-religious. The Song is constructed of imagery that borrows heavily from the rest of the OT. For example, when we read the garden imagery in 4:12–5:1, it is right and natural for us to think about Eden; or when we read on the theme of intoxicating love in 1:2, the command of Prov 5:19 to be "intoxicated always in her [i.e., a wife's] love" ought to come to mind. This Song of Scripture is saturated with other scriptural language.

The Song uses Hebrew words, Hebrew names, Hebrew places, Hebrew poetic devices, *and* has a Hebrew author: "This is the Song of Songs which is Solomon's" (1:1). That last word—"Solomon's"—sets this Song within an historical and theological context. So here is the third guidepost: this is a song about human love set in the context of marriage that is *found in the Bible*. The Song of Songs cannot be

²⁷ Pope writes, "The quest for the supposed lost key has been futile, for the door to the understanding of the Song was not locked, nor even shut, but has been wide open to any who dared to see and enter. The barrier has been a psychological aversion to the obvious, somewhat like the Emperor's New Clothes. The trouble has been that interpreters who dared acknowledge the plain sense of the Song were assailed as enemies of truth and decency. The allegorical charade thus persisted for centuries with only sporadic protests" (*Song of Songs*, 17).

²⁸ Estes, "The Song of Songs," 289.

²⁹ I reference a line from the seventh book of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh: A Poem in Nine Books* (New York: Crowell, 1883), 265.

read properly if it is read outside of its canonical context.³⁰ We must read its positive marriage imagery in contrast to Israel's unfaithfulness as depicted in the prophets. While God rejoices over his people as "a bridegroom rejoices over his bride" (Isa 62:4), Israel spoils the honeymoon with their spiritual promiscuity and adultery.³¹ And whether we think there are no allusions or a thousand allusions to the Song in the NT,³² we must read it in light of the person and work of Jesus, the very compass of the Christian canon. John the Baptist calls Jesus "the bridegroom" (John 3:28; cf. Matt 9:14–15), and Paul calls him our "one husband" (2 Cor 11:2). Jesus' kingdom and consummation is like "a wedding banquet" (Matt 22:2; Rev 19:7). The Song is a song about human love set in the context of marriage, which is *found in the Bible*, and the Bible's ultimate reference point is Jesus: his birth, life, teachings, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, mediation, and return.

Perhaps an illustration will help. If you were to read C. S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia* and did not know that Lewis was a Christian and uses Christian symbolism and parts of the plot of the Bible, then you might never see Aslan, who dies and rises and rules, as a Christ-figure. You might just think he is a lion who talks, a neat character in a nice children's tale. But those who know something about the author and his intentions see more of what he wanted his readers to see: the story beneath the story. The story of Jesus opens our eyes to the subtle details of those Narnian adventures.

Similarly, knowing the story of Jesus opens our eyes to the story of the Song. The love celebrated here has as its source and ultimate illustration Jesus Christ; the loyalty, beauty, and intimacy of human love depicted in this Song points to "that Love that undergirds all of reality and in whose Presence alone all longing can be satisfied."³³

Therefore, with this third guidepost in place, throughout our reading and teaching of the Song, we should seek, without exaggerating analogies, to be exegetically accurate, thoroughly canonical, and thus "boldly Christological."³⁴ Literary merit and guileless veneration of human sexuality are not the reasons that love's soft and idyllic voice appears between Ecclesiastics and Isaiah.

4. Guidepost Four: Written to Give Us Wisdom

Our fourth and final guidepost is about wisdom. This is a song (guidepost one) about human love (guidepost two) found in the Bible (guidepost three) *written to give us wisdom* (guidepost four).

³⁰ Cf. Richard Swinburne, *Revelation: From Metaphor to Analogy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 207–8.

³¹ See the story of Hosea, and read the forthright language of Ezekiel (16:7–8), Jeremiah (2:2, 19–20), and Isaiah (54:5–8).

³² According to UBS⁴ there are no quotations or allusions to the Song of Songs in the NT (*The Greek New Testament* [4th ed.; ed. Kurt Aland et al.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993], 887–901). Conversely, Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg claims, "The New Testament is pervaded by references to the Songs of Songs. . . . Proportionally no book of the Old Testament is so frequently referred to, implicitly or explicitly" ("Prolegomena to the Song of Solomon," in *Commentary on Ecclesiastes with Other Treatises* [trans. D. W. Simon; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1860], 297).

³³ Iain Provan, *Ecclesiastes/Song of Songs* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 254.

³⁴ Mitchell, *The Song of Songs*, 7. For additional guidance on how to interpret sections (not each body part, flower, bird, tree, etc.) christologically, see my ten sermons in Douglas Sean O'Donnell, *The Song of Solomon* (Preaching the Word; Wheaton: Crossway, forthcoming).

I say “wisdom” because we can rightly categorize the Song of Songs as Wisdom Literature, thus fitting in with the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. The most obvious reason is 1:1: “The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s.” This is Solomon, the king of Israel, but also the wisest of men, the supreme sage of the Bible’s Wisdom Literature.

In the Christian canon, the order goes Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. Proverbs begins, “The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel” (1:1).³⁵ Ecclesiastes begins, “The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem” (1:1) = Solomon?³⁶ Finally, the Song starts, “The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s” (1:1). The part translated “which is Solomon’s” could indicate:

- Dedication: to or for Solomon
- Subject Matter: about Solomon
- Affinity: in the Solomonic literary tradition
- Authorship: by Solomon.³⁷

I take the traditional view,³⁸ the most natural linguistic view,³⁹ that Solomon was the author.⁴⁰ I take this Song as one of Solomon’s 1,005 songs (see 1 Kgs 4:32). As the superlative superscription states, the “song of (all) the songs,”⁴¹ it is the very best of all of his prolific songwriting labors.⁴²

³⁵ Bullock’s summary reflects well my view of authorship: “It is our opinion that 1:1–29:27 is Solomonic in authorship, although some allowance may be made for editorializing in the process of compilation and final edition of the book” (*An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books*, 159).

³⁶ The book title, “Ecclesiastes,” is the Greco-Latin form of the Hebrew *qōhelet*. It might be that Ecclesiastes is a “royal autobiography,” that is, “[t]he person who calls himself Qoheleth pretends to be Solomon in order to argue that if Solomon cannot find satisfaction and meaning in life in these areas, no one can” (Tremper Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 7). Yet from looking at what the text itself says about the author (see 1:1–2, 12, 16; 2:1–12, 15, 17, 20; 4:13; 7:25–29; 8:2–5; 10:16–17, 20; 12:9–10)—especially calling him “the son of David” and “King in Jerusalem” (1:1), and then describing his wisdom (1:12–18; 2:12; cf. 7:25), wealth (2:1–11), and literary achievements (12:9–10; cf. Prov 1:1)—I find no reason we should not call the author of Ecclesiastes “Solomon.” Moreover, as Longman points out, “the verb *qahal*, on which the name Qoheleth is formed, occurs a number of times in 1 Kgs 8, which is Solomon’s speech at the dedication of the Temple” (*Ecclesiastes* [Cornerstone Biblical Commentary; Carol Stream: Tyndale, 2006], 253).

³⁷ See Ernest C. Lucas, *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Psalms and Wisdom Literature* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003), 175.

³⁸ “In the entire Rabbinic literature, we find no one contesting Solomon’s authorship of the Song of Songs, understanding the title: ‘The song of songs, which is Solomon’s’ literally” (Rabbi A. J. Rosenberg, “The Midrashic Approach to the Song of Songs,” in *The Five Megilloth* [ed. A. Cohen; New York: Soncino, 1984], 11).

³⁹ Mitchell argues that the phrase “which is Solomon’s” is “more naturally understood as *lamed auctoris*, introducing the author of the text” (*The Song of Songs*, 549). Note also what Longman says, “The superscription is like the title page of a modern book in that it provides information about the genre, *author*, and occasionally the subject matter and date of a book (e.g., Isa 1:1; Jer 1:1–3; Nah 1:1). Superscriptions are found in other wisdom contexts as well (Prov 1:1; Eccl 1:1), where, interestingly, Solomon is either mentioned or implied” (Tremper Longman III, *Song of Songs* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001], 87, emphasis mine).

⁴⁰ In favor of Solomonic authorship, see Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody, 1964), 474; Lloyd G. Carr, *The Song of Solomon* (TOTC; Downers Grove: IVP, 1984), 19; John G. Snaith, *Song of Songs* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 5.

⁴¹ On the superlative, see Pope, *Song of Songs*, 294.

⁴² Contra Origen’s view (and others) that the Song is the apex of all revelation or the best of all the songs in Scripture.

I also side with the medieval Jewish scholar Rashi that Solomon wrote this Song not in his youth but in his old age⁴³ and that he did so as an act of contrition. In other words, in view of his idolatrous, polygamous relationships that led his heart away from the Lord (1 Kgs 1–11) and away from sexual purity and marital intimacy, he sets himself up as the foil in this Song.⁴⁴ Thus, he writes this greatest of his songs in a distant “self-deprecating tone”⁴⁵ to say to his first readers and to us, “Listen, on this matter of marriage, do as I say, not as I did.”⁴⁶ Put differently, he says, “Don’t emulate my love life. Emulate theirs—this imaginary (or real?) couple. Emulate their simple, monogamous, faithful, passionate love for each other.”

Whether one holds this particular view or not,⁴⁷ it is important to see the Song as part of the wisdom corpus,⁴⁸ based partly on its association with Solomon, but also on the *wisdom admonition* that functions as a refrain throughout the Song: “I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem . . . do not stir up or awaken love until it pleases.” That refrain is first found in 2:7 and then also in 3:5 and 8:4. Besides that wisdom admonition, there is another subtle refrain, what we may call a *wisdom admission*: “My beloved is mine, and I am his.” This is found in various forms in 2:16, 6:3, and 7:10. These two refrains function as a double-edged key that helps unlock the front door of the Song. They highlight that this is a unified poem, not a collection of random poems pasted together; and they direct us to the wisdom Solomon seeks to give two different groups: the married and the unmarried.

The primary target audience is the unmarried, specifically single young women, “the daughters of Jerusalem.” Thrice the refrain begins, “I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem.” These “daughters” are the “virgins” mentioned in 1:3 or the “young women” in 2:2.⁴⁹ They might be viewed as “bridesmaids,”⁵⁰ but they certainly should be understood as young Israelite women (of Jerusalem—Israel’s city girls and

⁴³ See Rosenberg, “The Midrashic Approach to the Song of Songs,” 13.

⁴⁴ Bruce K. Waltke views the three references to Solomon in the Song (1:5; 3:6–7; 8:11–12) as “all negative” (*An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007], 164). While these references are arguably all negative, I view only the last as certainly negative.

⁴⁵ Daniel C. Fredericks and Tremper Longman III, “Song of Songs,” in *NLT Study Bible* (Carol Stream: Tyndale, 2008), 1085.

⁴⁶ “[T]he fact that Solomon himself did not always heed its teachings does not mute its value or render it invalid” (Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* [Downers Grove: IVP, 1998], 469).

⁴⁷ With all that said, nevertheless, I agree with Longman: “Fortunately, little is at stake in terms of authorship” (*Song of Songs*, 7).

⁴⁸ Duane A. Garrett notes, “Wisdom in the Bible is meant to teach the reader how to live in the world. For this reason politics, personal morality, economics, social behavior, and many other areas of life all come under its teaching. And certainly courtship, sensual love, and marriage cannot be excluded since these areas are among the most basic universals of human experience. The Song of Songs celebrates love, but it also teaches love; in this respect it must be counted as wisdom literature” (*Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* [NAC; Nashville: Broadman, 1993], 366–67). Cf. Katharine J. Dell, “Does the Song of Songs Have Any Connection to Wisdom?” in *Perspectives on the Song of Songs* (ed. Anselm C. Hagedorn; BZAW 346; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 8–26.

⁴⁹ Longman writes that the “simplest theory” is that the “daughters of Jerusalem,” “daughters of Zion,” and the “young women” (i.e., virgins) reference the same group (*Song of Songs*, 94).

⁵⁰ William Sanford LaSor et al., *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 514.

“local lasses”).⁵¹ It addresses women of marriageable age,⁵² whose bodies are ripe for sexual love,⁵³ who desire marital intimacy, but are still unmarried.

These girls are admonished to wait for sexual intimacy. Their bodies are saying “yes.” Their instincts for intimacy are saying “yes.” Their suitors might even be saying “yes” (or at least “please”). But they are admonished to say, “no.” The wisdom message to these young women is to wait. Virgins, stay virgins (!) . . . not forever, but for now. Wait for marriage. That is wisdom. That is the simple wisdom in this complex book.

Now notice how Solomon artistically does this. The admonition does not come through the voice of a celibate prophet, a learned rabbi, a stern sage, or even a father or mother (as common in the Wisdom Literature), but through the voice of a newlywed—the bride, a former daughter of Jerusalem herself, one of their peers. This is a book about peer pressure at its biblical best! Yes, the protagonist in this poem is a young bride.⁵⁴ And this newly married woman comes out of her wedding chamber, love scene after love scene, to tell the young ladies, “Wait for this—what I’m enjoying. It’s worth it. Cool your passions now, and arouse them later, when it’s time.” The daughters of Jerusalem who hover around this “poetic drama” (they seem never to leave the scene) are the key to understanding the purpose of this whole wisdom poem.⁵⁵

Setting the Song alongside Proverbs, another Wisdom book, sheds further light on the feminine-focus of the Song. The book of Proverbs can be called “a book for boys.” The word “son” is used forty-four times; the word “daughter” is never used. “My son, stay away from that kind of girl, and don’t marry this kind of girl. But marry and save yourself for that girl—Prov 31:10–31.”⁵⁶ That’s how the book ends, quite intentionally, for Proverbs is a book for boys. The Song of Songs is a book for girls. And its message to girls is “patience then passion” or “uncompromised purity now; unquenchable passion then.” Or put another way: In Proverbs the young lad is told to take a cold shower. In the Song the young lassie is told to take a cold shower.

However, also in the Song the married couples—the newlyweds and not so newlyweds—are told to take a warm shower . . . together. I mean it. God’s Word means it. The shower part is optional, the passion part is not. There are two refrains to the Song: one is to the unmarried (young women especially); the other is to the married. That second refrain goes like this: “My beloved is mine, and I am his.” This is the

⁵¹ Pope, *Song of Songs*, 318.

⁵² Hess writes, “Certainly, the maidens in the Song are unmarried women who are, or shortly will be, sexually mature” (*Song of Songs*, 51).

⁵³ Hubbard, *Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*, 344. Cf. Othmar Keel, *Song of Songs* (trans. Frederick J. Gaiser; CC; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 278.

⁵⁴ Garrett writes, “The man and woman of Song of Songs are young. Their bodies are perfect: beautiful eyes, black hair, golden skin, and not a tooth missing (Song 4:2). The young man leaps on the hills like a gazelle (Song 2:9). The young woman’s cheeks have the blush of youth (Song 6:7). They are new to love and to sexuality. It is a glorious, wonderful, and fleeting time—like the springtime that the Song itself describes (Songs 2:10–13) (“Song of Songs,” 104).

⁵⁵ The term “poetic drama” I borrow from Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 164. I acknowledge that while the Song is not a drama, it holds some dramatic features—characters and a “loose temporal progression” or a “collage or kaleidoscope of scenes that suggests a story,” as Daniel Estes phrases it (“The Song of Songs,” 291–92).

⁵⁶ See Douglas Sean O’Donnell, *The Beginning and End of Wisdom: Preaching Christ from the First and Last Chapters of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011), 47–60.

second side of the double-edged key. It opens to us the wisdom admission of mutual compatibility and absolute intimacy: two becoming one.

In an indirect and impressionistic manner, the second refrain functions as an invitation to intimacy. In Titus 2:3–4, Paul instructs the older women to “train the young women to love their husbands.” Here in the Song, the young woman (the bride) trains the older women to love their husbands. That is, the Song is a like a splash of fresh water that some of us old lovers need thrown on our faces. Or to change metaphors and borrow one from the Song itself, it is like the wind that rekindles a flame that is dying out: “Awake, O north wind . . . come O south wind! Blow” (4:16) . . . blow this fizzling spark into a forest fire.

So the Song asks the Christian husband and wife, “How’s your love life? Is your wedding bed dead or alive? Is it as cold as a frozen pond in February or as hot as the Florida sand in August?” Reading, studying, listening to, and feeling the Song of Songs is like attending a wedding and witnessing the ripeness and rightness of young love. This Song is God’s provision to sustain loving marriages and renew loveless ones. It is his provision for increased intimacy that reflects the intimacy of Christ’s love for the church, an intimacy that makes the world turn its head to view our marriages and say, “So, that’s the gospel. What must I do to be made *wise* unto salvation?”

5. “*Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?*”

It is no easy task to navigate through the deep waters of Solomon’s Song. When we read from its opening scene

Kiss me, make me drunk with your kisses! (Song 1:2a)⁵⁷

We will indeed rejoice and be happy for you.

We will indeed recall your *lovmaking* more than wine. (Song 1:4b)⁵⁸

we scratch our heads, only after we blush. We not only wonder how the two things that we will do our best to teach our young daughters to avoid—kissing boys and comparing such kissing to alcoholic consumption—made it into God’s Holy Word, but we also wonder how to explain to our congregations how such erotic poetry is appropriate and edifying for the church gathered. The four guideposts presented in this article—*this is a song (guidepost one) about human love (guidepost two) found in the Bible (guidepost three) written to give us wisdom (guidepost four)*—cannot explain every image or solve every philological, grammatical, and structural riddle, but hopefully they can give us greater confidence to read and teach this holy book that is wholly applicable today.

⁵⁷ Song 1:2a, as translated by Ariel Bloch and Chana Bloch, *The Song of Songs: A New Translation* (Berkeley: University of California, 1995), 45.

⁵⁸ Song 1:4b, as translated by Hess, *Song of Songs*, 52.

The Profit of Employing the Biblical Languages: Scriptural and Historical Reflections¹

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In 1524, six years after posting his “Ninety-five Theses,” Martin Luther (1483–1546), father of the Protestant Reformation, charged his contemporaries:

Let us be sure of this: we will not long preserve the gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit [Eph. 6:17] is contained; they are the casket in which this jewel is enshrined; they are the vessel in which this wine is held; they are the larder in which this food is stored. . . . If through our neglect we let the languages go (which God forbid!), we shall . . . lose the gospel.²

Are such musings mere rhetorical overstatement? Must individuals in every generation know and appropriate the biblical languages, Hebrew and Greek, in order to maintain the purity of the gospel and the health of the Church worldwide?

¹ In the spirit of Phil 2:29–30, I dedicate this paper to the founders of Bethlehem Seminary (established in 2009). As an overflow of their treasuring of Christ and love for his Church, Chancellor John Piper, President Tim Tomlinson, Academic Dean Tom Steller, Board Chairman Sam Crabtree and the rest of the leadership teams of Bethlehem Baptist Church and Bethlehem College and Seminary have formed an educational institution to train Christian ministers—a school that has a unified course sequence that is based on the Hebrew and Greek Bible, all for the glory of God, the good of his people, and the purity of the Gospel for generations to come. May the eternal Son of God preserve this institution in humility, truth, and love, and may he, for the fame of God’s name, raise up many other schools like it in congregations throughout our world.

Earlier drafts of this essay were presented to the Hebrew Language and Exegesis Consultation at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in New Orleans on November 19, 2009 and at the Desiring God National Conference in Minneapolis, MN, on October 2, 2010. The author appreciates the numerous colleagues and listeners who responded thoughtfully. For a synthesis of the biblical foundations for Bethlehem College and Seminary, see “The Earth is the Lord’s: The Supremacy of Christ in Christian Learning,” Appendix 1 in John Piper, *Think: The Life of the Mind and the Love of God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 185–203; <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/conference-messages/the-earth-is-the-lords-the-supremacy-of-christ-in-christian-learning>. Some of the principles set forth in this paper borrow from that address.

² Martin Luther, “To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools,” in *The Christian in Society II* (ed. Walther I. Brandt; trans. Albert T. W. Steinhäuser and rev. Walther I. Brandt; Luther’s Works 45; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1962 [orig. 1525]), 360. In the same context, Luther goes so far as to claim that his use of the biblical languages was the primary instrument that brought about the Protestant Reformation: “I know full well that while it is the Spirit alone who accomplishes everything, I would surely have never flushed a covey if the languages had not helped me and given me a sure and certain knowledge of Scripture. I too could have lived uprightly and preached the truth in seclusion; but then I should have left undisturbed the pope, the sophists, and the whole anti-Christian regime” (366).

This article supplies scriptural and historical justification for keeping the biblical languages central in training vocational ministers of God's Word. It makes no attempt to clarify *how* to maintain skill in Hebrew and Greek.³ Rather, the argument is designed to clarify *why* congregations and schools should stress original language exegesis when equipping shepherds. The study's main contribution comes in the way it discloses the perspectives of a number of influential figures from the past. This essay includes extensive quotations from ministers such as Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Owen, and J. Gresham Machen. By allowing these greats to speak to this issue in their own words, my hope is that this study will have a more significant, lasting impact.⁴

Before progressing, it is important to emphasize upfront that not everyone needs to know the biblical languages, even though all should seek to know God. First, the Lord has graciously made his Word translatable so that those "from every tribe and language and people and nation" may hear of and believe in the Savior. Ezra and the Levites helped a non-Hebrew speaking audience "understand the Law" (Neh 8:7–8; cf. 13:24); the NT authors often preached from the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT; and people proclaimed the gospel at Pentecost in a way that "each one was hearing . . . in his own language" (Acts 2:6). As such, believers today can and should utilize the quality translations available to us in order to meet God and make him known.

Second, grasping the fundamentals of Hebrew and Greek neither ensures correct interpretation of Scripture nor removes all interpretive challenges. It does not automatically make one a good exegete of texts or an articulate, winsome proclaimer of God's truth to a needy world. Linguistic skill also does not necessarily result in deeper levels of holiness or in greater knowledge of God. Why then do we need some in the Church who can skillfully use the biblical languages?

This article gives four reasons:

³ For advice on keeping up one's ability in the biblical languages, see most recently Constantine R. Campbell, *Keep Your Greek: Strategies for Busy People* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010).

⁴ A number of helpful contemporary works address the place of the biblical languages in the Church and academy, but no major advances are made beyond those set forth by the great cloud of witnesses that has gone before. See E. Earle Ellis, "Language Skills and Christian Ministry," *RefR* 24.3 (1971): 162–63; David Ford, "Keeping up with Biblical Languages While in the Ministry," *Foundations* 14 (1985): 41–44; Richard G. Watson, "Secularists Did Not Steal the Colleges," *Presbyterian Journal* (June 18, 1986): 8–10; Dennis E. Johnson, "The Peril of Pastors without the Biblical Languages," *Presbyterian Journal* (September 10, 1986): 23–24; Scott J. Hafemann, "Seminary, Subjectivity, and the Centrality of Scripture: Reflections on the Current Crisis in Evangelical Seminary Education," *JETS* 31 (1988): 129–43; Wayne G. Strickland, "Seminary Education: A Philosophical Paradigm Shift in Process," *JETS* 32 (1989): 227–35; Allan M. Harman, "The Place of Biblical Languages in the Theological Curriculum," *RTR* 50:3 (1991): 91–97; Paul M. Doriani, "A Pastor's Advice on Maintaining Original Language Skills," *Presb* 19:2 (1993): 103–15; Bruce K. Waltke, "How I Changed My Mind About Teaching Hebrew (or Retained It)," *Crux* 29:4 (1993): 10–15; G. K. Beale, "Seminary Education, the Biblical Languages and the Pastoral Ministry," unpublished paper, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, So. Hamilton, MA, 1994; Scott J. Hafemann, "Is it genuinely important to use the biblical languages in preaching, especially since there are many excellent commentaries and pastors will never attain the expertise of scholars?" *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 3:2 (1999): 86–89; idem, *2 Corinthians* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000): 171–73; John Piper, "Sacred Study: Martin Luther and the External Word," in *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy: God's Triumphant Grace in the Lives of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2000), 76–111; idem, "Brothers, Bitzer Was a Banker," in *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 81–88; John D. Currid, *Calvin and the Biblical Languages* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2006), 79–84. Of these studies, those most helpful with respect to the issue at hand are Johnson (1986), Strickland (1989), Harman (1991), and Piper (2002).

1. Using the biblical languages exalts Jesus by affirming God's wisdom in giving us his Word in a book (God's Word as foundation).
2. Using the biblical languages gives us greater certainty that we have grasped the meaning of God's Book (studying God's Word).
3. Using the biblical languages can assist in developing Christian maturity that validates our witness in the world (practicing God's Word).
4. Using the biblical languages enables a fresh and bold expression and defense of the truth in preaching and teaching (teaching God's Word).

The first reason relates to the nature and foundational place of God's Word, and the last three grow out of the pattern of Ezra's resolve, which resulted in a ministry blessed by God: *study* the Word › *practice* the Word › *teach* the Word. "The good hand of his God was on him, for Ezra set his heart to study and to practice the Torah of Yahweh and to teach both statute and rule in Israel" (Ezra 7:9c–10, author's translation; cf. 8:22).⁵ (See Table 1.)

Table 1: The Pattern of Ezra 7:9c–10

Study the Word	Observe accurately and thoroughly, understand clearly, and evaluate fairly.
Practice the Word	Feel properly, and apply wisely, helpfully, and appropriately.
Teach the Word	Express compellingly in words what has been studied and practiced.

1. Using the Biblical Languages Exalts Jesus by Affirming God's Wisdom in Giving Us His Word in a Book

The God who always acts to preserve and display his glory⁶ chose to disclose himself and his will through a written Word, given to us in Hebrew (and Aramaic) and Greek. In the words of Martin Luther, "Although the gospel came and still comes to us through the Holy Spirit alone, we cannot deny that it came through the medium of languages, was spread abroad by that means, and must be preserved by the same means."⁷ Sadly, we live in a world where not only "the word of the cross" is considered foolish (1 Cor 1:18) but many deem unnecessary the sheath that guards and contains this sword, namely, the biblical languages. However, as Luther asserts, "If God did not despise [Hebrew and Greek] but chose

⁵ See also Jason S. DeRouchie, "A Life Centered on Torah," in Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 249–50. Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this study are from the English Standard Version.

⁶ See John Piper, "The Goal of God in Redemptive History," Appendix 1 in *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (rev. and expanded ed.; Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2003), 308–21; idem, *God's Passion for His Glory: Living the Vision of Jonathan Edwards with the Complete Text of The End for Which God Created the World* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1998).

⁷ Luther, "Establish and Maintain Christian Schools," 358.

them above all others for his word, then we too ought to honor them above all others.”⁸ Similarly, John Owen (1616–1683), the leading Puritan of the seventeenth century, correctly noted in 1678 that “the words of the Scripture being given thus immediately from God, every apex, tittle or iota in the whole is considerable, as that which is an effect of divine wisdom, and therefore filled with sacred truth, according to their place and measure.”⁹

In his wisdom and for the benefit of every generation of humankind, God chose to preserve and guard *in a book* his authoritative, clear, necessary, and sufficient Word.¹⁰ Initially, God uniquely entrusted his written revelation to the Jews in the Hebrew OT (Ps 147:19–20; Rom 3:2). He spoke his Word through the prophets (Deut 18:18; Heb 1:1; 2 Pet 1:21), who in turn wrote down those words in the language of the people, thus securing a lasting guide and witness (Deut 31:24–26; Isa 30:8; Dan 9:11). This written, canonical text was then to be copied (Deut 17:18; Josh 8:32), studied and meditated on (Josh 1:8; Ps 1:3; Neh 8:13), and taught by faithful followers from generation to generation, whether priests, prophets, princes, parents, or the like (Lev 10:11; Deut 6:7; 17:18–20; 18:18; 31:11; Ps 78:5). Then, in the fullness of time (Gal 4:4), God spoke again, now through Jesus, his eternal Word (John 1:1; Heb 1:1), who called his disciples to obey his teachings (Matt 28:20). He also promised his disciples that the Holy Spirit would recall for them all he taught (John 14:26; 16:12–13). Then these apostles, empowered by the Spirit of Christ in them, spread abroad the teaching of Jesus through what we now call the NT (Eph 2:20; 3:5; 2 Pet 3:2; Jude 3).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 359. Luther further asserts, “The apostles themselves considered it necessary to set down the New Testament and hold it fast in the Greek language, doubtless in order to preserve it for us there safe and sound as in a sacred ark. For they foresaw all that was to come, and now has come to pass; they knew that if it was left exclusively to men’s memory, wild and fearful disorder and confusion and a host of varied interpretations, fancies, and doctrines would arise in the Christian church, and that this could not be prevented and the simple folk protected unless the New Testament were set down with certainty in written language. Hence it is inevitable that unless the languages remain, the gospel must finally perish” (360).

⁹ John Owen, “The Causes, Ways, and Means of Understanding the Mind of God as Revealed in His Word, with Assurance Therein,” in *The Works of John Owen* (ed. William H. Goold; 17 vols.; Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1967 [orig. 1678]), 4:213. Elsewhere Owen writes, “The nature of this doctrine [of salvation] is such, that there is no other principle or means of its discovery, no other rule or measure of judging and determining any thing about or concerning it, but only the writing from whence it is taken; it being wholly of divine revelation, and that revelation being expressed only in that writing. Upon any corruption, then, supposed therein, there is no means of rectifying it. . . . Nor is it enough to satisfy us, that the doctrines mentioned are preserved entire; every tittle and ἰῶτα in the Word of God must come under our care and consideration, as being, as such, from God” (“Of the Divine Original, Authority, Self-Evidencing Light, and Power of the Scriptures,” in *The Works of John Owen* [ed. William H. Goold; 17 vols.; Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1968], 16:302–3). Owen correctly views the doctrine of Scripture’s inerrancy as directly bearing on our present manuscripts, for the extant texts substantially align with what is considered the original wording of the original autographs (so too Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994], 96). However, I believe that Owen elsewhere goes too far in insisting that the Hebrew copies of the OT he had were “the rule, standard, and touchstone of all translations, ancient or modern, by which they are in all things to be examined, tried, corrected, amended; and themselves only by themselves” (“Of the Integrity and Purity of the Hebrew and Greek Text of the Scripture,” in *The Works of John Owen* [ed. William H. Goold; 17 vols.; Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1968], 16:357; cf. 16:301, 349–50, 359). As Peter J. Gentry cogently argues, “Differences . . . between the LXX and other witnesses to the text which are genuine textual variants should be evaluated on a case by case basis, and one should not prefer *a priori* either the LXX or the MT” (“The Text of the Old Testament,” *JETS* 52 [2009]: 33).

¹⁰ See Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 73–138.

Jesus highlights the significance of God's *written* Word when he declares that he prophetically fulfills all OT hopes: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, *not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished*" (Matt 5:17–18). The very details of the biblical text bear lasting significance and point to the person and work of Christ. As such, we align ourselves with God's wisdom and participate in his passion to exalt his Son when we take the biblical languages seriously in studying his Book.

2. Using the Biblical Languages Gives Us Greater Certainty That We Have Grasped the Meaning of God's Book

This second reason for the importance of Hebrew and Greek relates to the study of Scripture. Knowing the original languages helps one observe more accurately and thoroughly, understand more clearly, evaluate more fairly, and interpret more confidently the inspired details of the biblical text.

The Bible is clear that it was given to the simple, not just the scholar. It is designed to make "wise the simple" (Ps 19:7), to impart "understanding to the simple" (119:130), and to be easily taught to children (Deut 6:6–7; Ps 78:5–8).

These truths, however, do not mitigate either the sustained call to careful, God-reliant study or the fact that those without the languages still need the scholar to render the biblical text in an understandable way. Speaking into a context where people were abusing the gift of tongues and not appreciating the clear prophetic word, Paul asserts, "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor 2:14). He then later charges the Corinthians, "Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature" (14:20). Similarly, Paul tells Timothy, "Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. . . . Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:7, 15). These texts together stress that *God-dependent, rigorous thought, directed toward God's Book, is the call of every minister*.

Peter's comment elsewhere regarding Paul's writings clarifies the deadly result of careless biblical interpretation: "There are some things in [Paul's letters] that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures" (2 Pet 3:16). Destruction comes to those who mishandle God's Word.

We can draw five summary points from these passages:

1. Every Christian should seek to think maturely, which means yearning for the clear Word of God, rightly understanding what is good, and being innocent to what is evil (1 Cor 14:20).
2. Ignorant and unstable people misappropriate God's Word, but those who are neither ignorant nor unstable can rightly understand it (2 Pet 3:16).
3. The answer to ignorance and instability and the means to right understanding in everything is God-dependent thinking over his revealed Word, given through his prophets (2 Tim 2:7).
4. Without God's Spirit guiding the human mind and altering the human heart, we will never fully grasp the message of Scripture (1 Cor 2:14).
5. An interpreter is shameless before God and handles the Word rightly only when God approves of the interpretation (i.e., when we rightly grasp God's original intention through

the biblical author; 2 Tim 2:15); this process takes self-discipline (“do your best”) and is a central element in Word-based vocational ministry (“a worker”).

2.1. Grasping the Meaning of Scripture

How then can we best think over and rightly grasp the meaning of Scripture, if not through original language exegesis? J. Gresham Machen (1881–1937), during the first presidential convocation address of Westminster Theological Seminary in 1929, clearly stated,

If you are to tell what the Bible does say, you must be able to read the Bible for yourself. And you cannot read the Bible for yourself unless you know the languages in which it was written. . . . In his mysterious wisdom [God] gave [his Word] to us in Hebrew and in Greek. Hence if we want to know the Scriptures, to the study of Greek and Hebrew we must go.¹¹

Many others before Machen held similar convictions. For example, in his inaugural address to his students at Wittenberg in 1518, Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560), German reformer and collaborator with Martin Luther, asserts, “Only if we have clearly understood the language will we clearly understand the content. . . . If we put our minds to the [Hebrew and Greek] sources, we will begin to understand Christ rightly.”¹² Accordingly, John Calvin (1509–1564), the great French theologian and influential leader

¹¹ J. Gresham Machen, “Westminster Theological Seminary: Its Purpose and Plan,” in *J. Gresham Machen: Selected Shorter Writers* (ed. D. G. Hart; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2004), 188–89 (orig. published in *The Presbyterian* 99 [October 10, 1929]: 6–9). Similarly, Machen writes, “If . . . the student . . . can read the Bible not merely in translations, but as it was given by the Holy Spirit to the church, then they are prepared to deal intelligently with the question of what the Bible means” (189). In 1977, at the inaugural address of London Theological Seminary, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899–1981) took issue with Machen’s words (“A Protestant Evangelical College,” *Knowing the Times: Addresses Delivered on Various Occasions, 1942–1977* [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1989], 369–70): “So to say that a man cannot preach, and cannot even read his Bible if he does not know Greek and Hebrew, I am afraid, must be categorized as sheer nonsense. This is most serious, for it seems to me to show an ignorance of the spiritual character of the biblical message. . . . The key to an understanding of the Bible is not a knowledge of the original languages. You can have such a knowledge and still be ignorant of the message, as so many are and have been, unfortunately. It is the man who has a spiritual understanding who understands the Word of God.” I greatly appreciate Lloyd-Jones’ emphasis on the need for the Spirit’s help in interpretation and on the effectiveness of translations to communicate God’s Word. It is also noteworthy that he claimed that the minister needs “a sufficient knowledge of Greek and Hebrew” to use the best secondary sources (370). However, he also stressed that ministerial students need to be “trained in what is called exegesis, a true understanding of what the text is saying” (370), and this statement demands further clarification in light of his earlier assertions. As Harman says, “How can they be sure they know what the text is saying? The Bible is perspicuous in whatever language it comes to us, but for detailed study and interpretation a knowledge of it in the original languages should add to understanding and ultimately add to clarity of proclamation of it. To approach the text of Scripture through translations or commentaries is to deprive ourselves of direct access to God’s revelation” (“The Place of Biblical Languages in the Theological Curriculum,” 95). For a helpful discussion of the relationship of reason and the work of the Spirit in understanding biblical truth, see Piper, “Rational Gospel, Spiritual Light,” in *Think*, 69–80; cf. 119–54.

¹² Philipp Melanchthon, “The Reform of the Education of Youth,” as cited in *The Reformation: A Narrative History Related by Contemporary Observers and Participants* (new ed.; ed. Joachim Hillerbrand; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 59–60. Melanchthon may have been influenced here by Desiderius Erasmus (ca. 1466–1536), the Dutch Renaissance humanist and Roman Catholic theologian, who two years earlier had written in his treatise on the method of biblical interpretation, “Understanding what is written is impossible if we do not know the

of the Protestant Reformation from Geneva, emphasizes that attempting to fully grasp the meaning of Scripture without the original languages is “to make all revere a Scripture hidden in darkness like the mysteries of Ceres, and let none presume to aspire to the understanding of it.”¹³ Finally, writing in 1678, John Owen states, “In the interpretation of the mind of any one, it is necessary that the *words* he speaks or writes be rightly understood; and this we cannot do immediately unless we understand the *language* wherein he speaks, as also the *idiotisms* of that language, with the common use and intention of its *phraseology* and expression.”¹⁴

The call for original language exegesis does not mean translations ineffectively communicate God’s Word. Indeed, translations are “God’s Word” in so far as they accurately align with the Hebrew or Greek original.¹⁵ However, the presence of numerous quality translations only heightens the need for some people in every generation who can evaluate these versions in light of their source.¹⁶

language in which it is written” (“*Methodus*,” trans. Patrick Preston, in Allan K. Jenkins and Patrick Preston, *Biblical Scholarship and the Church: A Sixteenth-Century Crisis of Authority* [Farnham-Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2007], 250 [§4]). A little later, in 1524, Luther himself made similar statements (“Establish and Maintain Christian Schools,” 364, 366): “If we understood the languages, nothing clearer would ever have been spoken than God’s word. . . . I know full well that while it is the Spirit alone who accomplishes everything, I would surely have never flushed a covey if the languages had not helped me and given me a sure and certain knowledge of Scripture.”

¹³ John Calvin, “Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, with the Antidote,” in *Tracts and Letters*, vol. 3 of *Selected Works of John Calvin* (ed. and trans. Henry Beveridge; 7 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 75. In light of his convictions (see previous footnote), one wonders how the Roman Catholic Erasmus would have responded to the Council’s declaration had he still been alive.

¹⁴ Owen, “The Causes, Ways, and Means of Understanding,” 4:215.

¹⁵ Owen writes, “Translations contain the word of God, and are the word of God, perfectly or imperfectly, according as they express the words, sense, and meaning of those [Hebrew and Greek] originals” (“The Hebrew and Greek Text of the Scripture,” 16:357). From a slightly different perspective, A. T. Robertson stated in 1923 (*The Minister and His Greek New Testament* [1923; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977], 17): “The real New Testament is the Greek New Testament. The English is simply a translation of the New Testament, not the actual New Testament. It is good that the New Testament has been translated into so many languages.”

¹⁶ Owen asserts, “The sense and substance of the Scripture being contained entirely in every *good translation* (amongst which that in use among ourselves is *excellent*, though capable of great improvements), men may, by the use of the means before directed unto [i.e., ‘diligent reading of the Scripture, with a sedate, rational consideration of what we read’], and under the conduct of the teaching of the Spirit of God in them, usefully and rightfully expound the Scripture in general unto the edification of others” (“The Causes, Ways, and Means of Understanding,” 4:216; for the embedded quote, see 4:199). A sentiment similar to Owen’s regarding the level to which we can call translations “God’s Word” was echoed over a century later in these words by the English Baptist theologian John Gill (1697–1771): “To the Bible, in its original languages, is every translation to be brought, and by it to be examined, tried, and judged, and to be corrected and amended” (*Body of Divinity* [London: Briscoe, 1839; repr., Atlanta: Turner Lassetter, 1957], 13a). He further writes (13b, italics added): “Let not now any be uneasy in their minds about translations on this account, because they are not upon an equality with the original text, and especially about our own; for as it has been the will of God, and appears absolutely necessary that so it should be, that the Bible should be translated into different languages, that all may read it, and some particularly may receive benefit by it; he has taken care, in his providence, to raise up men capable of such a performance, in various nations, and particularly in ours; for whenever a set of men have been engaged in this work, as were in our nation, men well skilled in the languages, and partakers of the grace of God; of sound principles, and of integrity and faithfulness, having the fear of God before their eyes; they have never failed of producing a translation worthy of acceptation; and in which, though they have mistook some words and phrases, and erred in some lesser and

2.2. Thinking More Deeply and Gaining More Confidence

There are certain levels of thinking, wrestling, and assurance that are possible only when one exegetes the original language. A. T. Robertson (1863–1934), Professor of New Testament at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, clarifies part of this point when he notes that “the minute study called for by the Greek opens up unexpected treasures that surprise and delight the soul.”¹⁷ The biblical languages are the very means by which God gave us his Word, and using them forces interpreters to ask questions that would have gone un-raised, to observe details that would have been missed, to evaluate arguments in a way otherwise impossible, and to grasp more clearly and confidently the intended message of the biblical authors.

2.3. Interpretive Challenges for Those without the Languages

At least two serious interpretive challenges face the minister who is unable to use the biblical languages. The first is captured by Machen, who rightly observes that a student without Hebrew and Greek “cannot deal with all the problems [of interpretation] at first hand, but in a thousand important questions is at the mercy of the judgment of others.”¹⁸ With respect to secondary resources for study, this means that students without skill in the languages must either use what Machen figuratively calls “works that are written . . . in words of one syllable,” or they must borrow what others say without accurate comprehension or fair evaluation.¹⁹

With respect to the biblical text, interpretations done apart from Hebrew and Greek are always dependent on someone else’s translation.²⁰ By God’s grace we have many good English versions. Yet how is one to evaluate whether a given translation is justified? And how is one to respond when faced with great diversity in the versions themselves, as in the various renderings of the *Shema* in Deut 6:4,²¹

lighter matters; yet not so as to affect any momentous article of faith or practice; and therefore *such translations as ours may be regarded as the rule of faith.*”

¹⁷ Robertson, *The Minister and His Greek New Testament*, 21.

¹⁸ J. Gresham Machen, “The Minister and His Greek Testament,” in *J. Gresham Machen: Selected Shorter Writers* (ed. D. G. Hart; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2004), 212 (orig. published in *The Presbyterian* 88 [February 7, 1918]).

¹⁹ Ibid. Luther (“Establish and Maintain Christian Schools,” 364) avows, “It is . . . a stupid undertaking to attempt to gain an understanding of Scripture by laboring through the commentaries of the fathers and a multitude of books and glosses. Instead of this, men should have devoted themselves to the languages. . . . If you knew the languages, you could get further with the passage than they whom you are following. As sunshine is to shadow, so is the language itself compared to all the glosses of the fathers.” While these words are strong, the literary context makes clear that Luther is not discounting the use of secondary sources as much as he is stressing the benefits of interpreting God’s Word firsthand. Indeed, he affirms that the wise will seek the counsel of others (Prov 11:14; 24:6) and asserts that the “right sort of books” in a library would include not only “the Holy Scriptures, in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and German, and any other languages in which they might be found” but also “the best [and most ancient] commentaries” and “any books that would be helpful in learning the languages” (376).

²⁰ A related challenge is that those without the languages are fully dependent on others to address the textual variation found in the biblical witnesses.

²¹ The Hebrew of Deut 6:4 reads, שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד. The interpretive challenges involve clause delineation, lexical meaning and function, and identifying subject and predicate. A quick comparison of The Message, KJV, NIV/ESV, NRSV, and NASB discloses the dilemma. For an introductory overview of the issue, see Cynthia L. Miller, “Pivotal Issues in Analyzing the Verbless Clause,” in *The Verbless Clause in Biblical*

the “without a vision” text in Prov 29:18,²² or of the virgin daughter versus virgin fiancé issue in 1 Cor 7:36–38.²³

Regarding “simple preachers,” who approach the interpretive process without the languages, Luther states, “Even though what they said about a subject at times was perfectly true, they were never sure whether it really was present there in the passage where by their interpretation they thought to find it.”²⁴ More than a millennium before, in 397, St. Augustine (354–430), Latin Church Father and Bishop of Hippo, similarly affirmed, “The literal translation cannot be ascertained without reference to the text in the original tongue.”²⁵

The second challenge faced by those without Hebrew and Greek is that no two languages bear one-to-one correspondence, so even the best translations lose something in their renderings.²⁶ In the words

Hebrew: Linguistic Approaches [ed. Cynthia L. Miller; Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999], 4–6).

²² “Where there is no *vision*, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” Many preachers have used this classic KJV translation of Prov 29:18 to promote the need to have an intentional strategy or plan for one’s own life. However, the Hebrew text never uses וַיִּרְאֵהוּ that way. Rather, “vision” points to a “divine revelation,” as is suggested by the second line in the verse itself: “Where there is no *prophetic vision* the people cast off restraint, but blessed is who keeps the *law*” (ESV). See Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (NAC 14; Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 231.

²³ Both the KJV and NASB translate παρθένος in 1 Cor 7:36–38 as “virgin” daughter, whereas the NIV and ESV render it “virgin” fiancé. For a full discussion of the issues, see Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 594–98.

²⁴ Luther, “Establish and Maintain Christian Schools,” 361.

²⁵ Saint Augustine of Hippo, “On Christian Doctrine,” in *Augustine*, vol. 18 of *Great Books of the Western World* (ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins; trans. J. F. Shaw; Chicago: William Benton; Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 641b (§2.12). The irony of this quote is that Augustine himself never learned Hebrew, had an incomplete knowledge of Greek, and discouraged Jerome from translating the Latin directly from the Hebrew, being convinced that the Old Greek was sufficient. Nevertheless, the validity of his statement stands. On another note, while reflecting on the challenges of translations, Owen asserts, “What perplexities, mistakes, and errors, the ignorance of these *original languages* hath cast many expositors into, both of old and of late, especially among those who pertinaciously adhere unto *one translation*, and that none of the best, might be manifested by instances undeniable, and these without number” (“The Causes, Ways, and Means of Understanding,” 4:215).

²⁶ Different translation theories stand behind the various Bible versions available in modern languages, creating a continuum of literalism based on how they handle lexical, grammatical, and cultural correspondences. Translations differ on whether they are form- or sense-driven and to what degree they are gender-inclusive, and liberal-versus-conservative theology does not appear to play a role in which theory one prefers. One must assess a translation’s quality by its faithfulness to the Hebrew or Greek original and in light of the target audience and communicative purpose of the translation itself. Even when one knows Hebrew and Greek, sermon or lesson preparation always benefits from interacting with a number of versions along the equivalence continuum, and the expositor should always be aware of the main translation his audience uses. For more on translation theory, see Eugene A. Nida, “Theories of Translation,” *ABD* 6:512–15; Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (3rd ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 33–54; David Dewey, *A User’s Guide to Bible Translations: Making the Most of Different Versions* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2005); Gordon D. Fee and Mark L. Strauss, *How to Choose a Translation for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding and Using Bible Versions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007); Leland Ryken, *The ESV and the English Bible Legacy* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011); cf. D. A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978); Paul D. Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004).

of Robertson, “The freshness of the strawberry cannot be preserved in any extract.”²⁷ Owen puts it this way:

There is in the originals of the Scripture a peculiar *emphasis* of words and expressions, and in them an especial *energy*, to intimate and insinuate the sense of the Holy Ghost unto the minds of men, which cannot be traduced into other languages by translations, so as to obtain the same power and efficacy. . . . It is [therefore] of singular advantage, in the interpretation of the Scripture, that a man be well acquainted with the *original languages*, and be able to examine the use and signification of words, phrases, and expressions as they are applied and declared in other authors.²⁸

Furthermore, linguistic features like discourse markers, verb choice and placement, and connection are often difficult to fully convey cross-linguistically, so those working only with a translation are at a loss in capturing all that the original authors intended, especially the flow of thought.²⁹ As Machen says, “Our student without Greek cannot acquaint himself with the form as well as the content of the New Testament books.”³⁰ Or as Robertson observes, even when many translations are examined, “there will

²⁷ Robertson, *The Minister and His Greek New Testament*, 17. Robertson further writes, “The fact that [the NT] was written in the *koiné*, the universal language of the time, rather than in one of the earlier Greek dialects, makes it easier to render into modern tongues. But there is much that cannot be translated. It is not possible to reproduce the delicate turns of thought, the nuances of languages, in translation.” Some have compared approaching Scripture with or without the languages to viewing a high-definition digital picture to a television receiving only an analog signal.

²⁸ Owen, “The Causes, Ways, and Means of Understanding,” 4:214–15. Similarly, Augustine observes, “In some languages there are words that cannot be translated into the idiom of another language” (“On Christian Doctrine,” 641a [§2.11]).

²⁹ For an overview of a number of discourse features in the Hebrew Bible that are often missed in translation, see Duane A. Garrett and Jason S. DeRouchie, *A Modern Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2009), chs. 37–41, esp. §37.C–E, §39.B, and §40.A. For a comparable discussion of biblical Greek, see Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010). When asked whether the biblical languages are truly important in sermon preparation, seeing as “there are many excellent commentaries and pastors will never attain the expertise of scholars,” Scott J. Hafemann helpfully responds (*The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 3:2 [1999]: 88): “But I have saved the best for last. Knowing the biblical languages enables us to do something very few commentaries ever do: trace the flow of the argument of the text. Commentaries save us time by providing the historical, linguistic, cultural, canonical, and literary insights that we simply do not have time to mine for ourselves week in and week out. For \$35.00 we can benefit from ten years of a scholar’s life! But in the end, what we preach is the point and argument of the biblical text, as informed by this backdrop, but not replaced by it. Commentaries and translations do not excel in tracing the flow of an argument and mapping out the melodic line and theological heartbeat of a text. By definition, most commentaries are atomistic, while a translation often must obscure the density and complexity or ambiguity of the original for the sake of its target language. So when all is said and done, we do not learn Greek in order to do word studies, but in order to see where the conjunctions are and are not, where participles must be decoded, where clauses begin and end, where verb tenses really make a difference and where they do not, and, in the end, what the main point of a text actually is.” For more on tracking the flow of a biblical author’s thought, see Thomas R. Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 97–124, and www.biblearc.com.

³⁰ Machen, “The Minister and His Greek Testament,” 212. With respect to such details, Erasmus argues for the necessity of the languages (*Methodus*, 250–51 [§5]): “What about linguistic peculiarities that cannot be expressed in a different language so as to retain the same light, their native grace and equal emphasis? What about

remain a large and rich untranslatable element that the preacher ought to know.”³¹ For this, Hebrew and Greek alone can help.

2.4. Synthesis of the Call to Be Students of God’s Book

§2 highlights the importance of the biblical languages for Bible study. *I am not suggesting that those who know the languages will always get things right or that through the languages all interpretive challenges are set aside.* Indeed, Luther is correct that, although without knowledge of Hebrew and Greek “it is impossible to avoid constant stumbling . . . there are plenty of problems to work out even when one is well versed in the languages.”³² Nevertheless, as Owen states, through the biblical languages “a hindrance is removed” and “occasions of manifold mistakes are taken away, and the cabinet is as it were unlocked wherein the jewel of truth lies hid, which with a lawful diligent search may be found.”³³ It is in this context I assert that using the biblical languages enables one to observe more accurately and thoroughly, understand more clearly, evaluate more fairly, and interpret more confidently the inspired details of the biblical text.

3. Using the Biblical Languages Can Assist in Developing Christian Maturity That Validates Our Witness in the World

Scripture is clear that a true encounter with God’s Word will alter the way we live, shaping servants instead of kings and nurturing Christ-exalting humility rather than pride.³⁴ Bible study should overflow in deeper levels of radical surrender to the Lord and his ways. In both the OT and NT, the pattern for nurturing sustained life with God is this: *teaching or reading* the Word leads to *hearing* the Word, which gives rise to *learning to fear* God, which overflows in *obeying* the Word (Deut 31:11–13; cf. 6:1–2; 17:19–20; John 5:25; 6:45). One is self-deceived and will be cursed if he claims to be a man of the Word yet fails to live it out (Matt 23:2–3, 23, 25–27; Jas 1:22). However, those who hear and act will be blessed

certain things that are too minute for completely accurate translation (a matter that Jerome constantly proclaims and complains about)? What about the very many things which, restored by Jerome have been lost by the injury of time, like the Gospels amended in accordance with Greek truth? What about the books corrupted in the past and being corrupted now by the mistakes or rashness of the scribes? Finally, what about the fact that those things to which Jerome made the appropriate emendations are not sufficiently understood if you just do not know the languages on evidence from which he relies? Because, if Jerome’s translation once sufficed, what is the purpose of warning in the Papal decrees that the truth of the Old Testament is sought in Hebrew books, but the faith of the New Testament from Greek sources? Certainly, at that time Jerome had already made his translation.”

³¹ Robertson, *The Minister and His Greek New Testament*, 19.

³² Luther, “Establish and Maintain Christian Schools,” 363. Augustine similarly observed, “Very often a translator, to whom the meaning is not well known, is deceived by an ambiguity in the original language, and puts upon the passage a construction that is wholly alien to the sense of the writer” (“On Christian Doctrine,” 642a [§2.12]).

³³ Owen, “The Causes, Ways, and Means of Understanding,” 4:215.

³⁴ This will not happen perfectly overnight but progressively over our lifetimes, until we meet Jesus face-to-face (Phil 3:12–14; 1 Thess 5:23–24; Heb 12:22–24; 1 John 1:8–10; 3:2–3).

(Jas 1:23; cf. Rom 2:13), and others will “see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matt 5:16).³⁵

Having addressed how exegeting the biblical text in the original languages aids study, we now turn to the benefits of Hebrew and Greek for one’s walk with God and witness in the world. Using the biblical languages helps clarify what feelings God wants us to have and what actions he wants us to take. The languages help foster a depth of character, commitment, conviction, and satisfaction in life and ministry that substantiates our Christian testimony in the world.

3.1. The Biblical Languages as a Means for Knowing God and His Ways

In 1918, speaking out against the secularization of Christian education, J. Gresham Machen asserted,

In many colleges, the study of Greek is almost abandoned. . . . The real trouble with the modern exaltation of “practical” studies at the expense of the humanities is that it is based upon a vicious conception of the whole purpose of education. *The modern conception of the purpose of education is merely intended to enable a man to live, but not to give him those things that make life worth living.*³⁶

Study is supposed to lead us to what is most important in life.

Paul writes, “I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (Phil 3:8). The apostle treasures what the psalmist also knows to be true: “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Ps 16:11). Seeing God, knowing God, savoring God—he alone brings maximum pleasure for the longest amount of time. Is this not a pursuit worth making?

But how can it be done? Solomon provides sound guidance in Prov 2:1–5:

My son, if you receive my words
and treasure up my commandments with you,
making your ear attentive to wisdom
and inclining your heart to understanding;
yes, if you call out for insight
and raise your voice for understanding,
if you seek it like silver
and search for it as for hidden treasures,
then you will understand the fear of the LORD
and find the knowledge of God.

Mining God’s Word is the means to the most grounded, authentic, satisfied, and God-glorifying life. *Through Scripture* “you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.”

One cannot help but see, therefore, the intimate link between the biblical languages and our daily lives. If the Word is the means to knowing God and living for him and if the biblical languages are the

³⁵ Obeying God validates an authentic inward transformation by God, and faithfulness to God is a necessary qualification for eldership (1 Tim 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9). Rebirth gives rise to holy conduct, not as the basis for our justification but as the evidence of it (Rom 6:6–7, 22; 8:13), and sustained growth in holiness gives assurance to us and to others of our life in Christ (Mark 5:16; 2 Pet 1:5–10; 1 John 2:18–19).

³⁶ Machen, “The Minister and His Greek Testament,” 211 (italics added).

very means by which God communicated his Word, then knowing Hebrew and Greek can directly serve one's desire for God and display of God in daily life. Exegeting Scripture through the original languages assists in shaping proper feelings toward God's truth and in applying this truth in wise and helpful ways.

The leaders of the Protestant Reformation always viewed the principle of *sola Scriptura* to require not only serious biblical scholarship but also "the practice of godliness": "Piety was the first prerequisite, followed by biblical and theological scholarship."³⁷ Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531), who initiated the Protestant Reformation in Switzerland, helpfully assesses the importance of biblical languages in the growth of Christians:

Once a young man is instructed in the solid virtue which is formed by faith, it follows that he will regulate himself and richly adorn himself from within: for only he whose whole life is ordered finds it easy to give help and counsel to others.

But a man cannot rightly order his own soul unless he exercises himself day and night in the Word of God. He can do that most readily if he is well versed in such languages as Hebrew and Greek, for a right understanding of the Old Testament is difficult without the one, and a right understanding of the New is equally difficult without the other. . . .

But in respect of [Hebrew and] Greek as well as Latin we should take care to garrison our souls with innocence and faith, for in these tongues there are many things which we learn only to our hurt: wantonness, ambition, violence, cunning, vain philosophy and the like. But the soul . . . can steer safely past all these if it is only forewarned, that is, if at the first sound of the voices it pays heed to the warning: Hear this in order to shun and not to receive. . . .

If a man would penetrate to the heavenly wisdom, with which no earthly wisdom ought rightly to be considered, let alone compared, it is with such arms [namely, the languages] that he must be equipped. And even then he must still approach with a humble and thirsting spirit.³⁸

³⁷ Harman, "The Place of the Biblical Languages in the Theological Curriculum," 91.

³⁸ Ulrich Zwingli, "Of the Upbringing and Education of Youth in Good Manners and Christian Discipline: An Admonition by Ulrich Zwingli," in *Zwingli and Bullinger* (The Library of Christian Classics; Ichthus Edition; ed. G. W. Bromiley; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953), 108–9. Elsewhere, Zwingli directs, "You and other territories should—when the occasion arises—allow useless ministers to die off, with God's help, and apply a portion of their possessions to poor parishes and the other portion toward training a few scholars in the languages for the good and benefit of your area. Otherwise there is grave danger when reading (which in our day has become so popular), that—as may be clearly seen—a goodly number of those who read become merely *more informed and eloquent than pious and god-fearing*. Those very people burst forth with every nonsense which has no basis at all in the original language and context" ("The Preaching Office, June 1525," in *In Search of True Religion: Reformation, Pastoral and Eucharistic Writings*, vol. 2 of *Huldrych Zwingli—Writings* [ed. and trans. Edward J. Furcha; Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1984], 173–74). In a similar vein, Owen cautions against letting knowledge of the languages lead to arrogance: "Withal this skill and faculty, where it hath been unaccompanied with that humility, sobriety, reverence of the Author of the Scripture, and respect unto the *analogy of faith*, which ought to bear sway in the minds of all men who undertake to expound the oracles of God, may be, and hath been, greatly abused, unto the hurt of its owners and disadvantage of the church" ("The Causes, Ways, and Means of Understanding," 4:216).

3.2. The Biblical Languages as a Means to Dying to Self and Living for God

For biblical interpreters today, all of whom are non-native speakers of ancient Hebrew and Greek, the benefits of the languages for holy living are not limited to the ways they help us encounter God through his Word. Indeed, the arduous task itself of learning, keeping, and using the languages provides many opportunities for growth in character, discipline, boldness, and joy. Machen rightly observes that the languages are “the most laborious part” of biblical studies.³⁹ But he would have also agreed with Robertson, who says, “There is no sphere of knowledge where one is repaid more quickly for all the toil expended.”⁴⁰

Our God, who is passionate for his own glory and our joy, calls people whose primary language is not Hebrew or Greek to handle his Word with care. The countless hours of memorizing, parsing, diagramming, and tracing the logical flow of thought are designed not only to help us grasp the biblical message but also to conform ourselves to it. “Grammar is a means of grace” in more than one way,⁴¹ and at times God makes it difficult for us to interpret his Word correctly in order to fight our laziness and to develop character. When tempted to give up on the languages due to their taxing nature, may students of God’s Book remember that the Lord is graciously calling them to greater God-dependence and less self-reliance, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (1 Pet 5:5).⁴²

3.3. Synthesis of the Call to Be Doers of the Word

When it comes to the order of Ezra’s resolve (*study* the Word › *practice* the Word › *teach* the Word), the area of personal application is too quickly neglected. Abounding hypocrisy hinders Kingdom-expansion, but biblically grounded study accompanied by a virtuous life substantiates the gospel.⁴³ Because our knowing God and living for God develops only in the context of the Word and because Bible study is best done through the original languages, Hebrew and Greek serve as instruments of God to develop holiness, which enhances the mission of the Church.

4. Using the Biblical Languages Enables a Fresh and Bold Expression and Defense of the Truth in Preaching and Teaching

In 1909, ministering amid the rising waves of Protestant liberalism, Benjamin B. Warfield (1851–1921), Professor of Theology at Princeton Seminary and J. Gresham Machen’s senior faculty member and mentor, claimed, “A low view of the functions of the ministry will naturally carry with it a low

³⁹ Machen, “The Minister and His Greek Testament,” 211.

⁴⁰ Robertson, *The Minister and His Greek New Testament*, 15.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁴² While the following quote may initially appear tendentious, in light of the fact that there are likely thousands of purposes for every single act of God in space and time, Owen is probably correct. Addressing the numerous challenges raised by the textual variations within the biblical witnesses, he states, “God by his providence preserving the whole entire, suffered this lesser variety to fall out, in or among the copies we have, for the quickening and exercising of our diligence in our search into his Word” (“Of the Divine Original,” 16:301).

⁴³ Accordingly, Erasmus (“*Methodus*,” 258 [§26]) asserts, “You will be sufficiently immune from refutation if you advance to that point where you succumb to no vice, and lapse into no desires, even if you depart from a disputation where you had the worst of it. He who teaches Christ without spot is unquestionably a great teacher.”

conception of the training necessary for it.”⁴⁴ If ministers are to be merely overseers of religious programs, agents designed to advance modern culture, or inspirational speakers, then certainly Hebrew and Greek are unnecessary. But if ministers are called to be specialists in the Word and winsome advocates for the truth, everything changes. As Warfield says,

If the minister is the mouth-piece of the Most High, charged with a message to deliver, to expound and enforce; standing in the name of God before men, to make known to them who and what this God is, and what his purposes of grace are, and what his will for his people [is]—then, the whole aspect of things is changed. Then, it is the prime duty of the minister to know his message; to know the instructions which have been committed to him for the people, and to know them thoroughly; to be prepared to declare them with confidence and with exactness, to commend them with wisdom, and to urge them with force and defend them with skill, and to build men up by means of them into a true knowledge of God and of his will, which will be unassailable in the face of the fiercest assault. No second-hand knowledge of the revelation of God for the salvation of a ruined world can suffice the needs of a ministry whose function it is to convey this revelation to men, commend it to their acceptance and apply it in detail to their needs. . . . *For such a ministry . . . nothing will suffice for it but to know; to know the Book; to know it first hand; and to know it through and through. And what is required first of all for training men for such a ministry is that the Book should be given them in its very words as it has come from God's hand and in the fulness of meaning, as that meaning has been ascertained by the labors of generations of men of God who have brought to bear upon it all the resources of sanctified scholarship and consecrated thought.*⁴⁵

Nine years later, in 1918, Machen himself stressed that a preacher is true to his calling only if he succeeds “in reproducing and applying the message of the Word of God.”⁴⁶ That is, the Bible “is not merely one of the sources of the preacher’s inspiration, but the very sum and substance of what he has to say. But if so, then whatever else the preacher need not know, he must know the Bible; he must know it at first hand, and be able to interpret it and defend it.”⁴⁷ And how can this best be done, if not through original language exegesis?

Having considered the uniqueness and importance of God’s Book, the priority of studying God’s Book, and the necessity of applying God’s Book, this section addresses the responsibility of teaching God’s Book. My intent is to show some ways that knowing the biblical languages (1) provides a sustained freshness, a warranted boldness, and an articulated, sure, and helpful witness to the truth and (2) equips one to defend the gospel and hold others accountable in ways otherwise impossible.

⁴⁴ Benjamin B. Warfield, “Our Seminary Curriculum,” in *Benjamin B. Warfield: Selected Shorter Writings* (ed. John E. Meeter; 2 vols.; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2001), 1:369 (orig. published in *The Presbyterian* [September 15, 1909], 7–8). He also writes, “A comprehensive and thorough theological training is the condition of a really qualified ministry. When we satisfy ourselves with a less comprehensive and thorough theological training, we are only condemning ourselves to a less qualified ministry” (1:373).

⁴⁵ Warfield, “Our Seminary Curriculum,” 1:372 (italics added); cf. Machen, “The Minister and His Greek Testament,” 211; idem, “Westminster Theological Seminary,” 193.

⁴⁶ Machen, “The Minister and His Greek Testament,” 211.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 212.

4.1. A Door for Personal Discovery and Passionate Proclamation

Saturated study of Scripture through the languages provides sustained opportunity for new discovery, freshness, and insight, all of which enhance one's teaching. *The goal in instruction is not to be original in one's message but to be individual in one's grasp of truth and in the presentation of the message.* In A. T. Robertson's words, through wrestling with the Hebrew and Greek Bible, "the originality that one will thus have is the joy of reality, the sense of direct contact, of personal insight, of surprise and wonder as one stumbles unexpectedly upon the richest pearls of truth kept for him through all ages."⁴⁸ Centuries earlier, Martin Luther similarly wrote, "Where the preacher is versed in the languages, there is a freshness and vigor in his preaching, Scripture is treated in its entirety, and faith finds itself constantly renewed by a continual variety of words and illustrations."⁴⁹

4.2. The Minister as an Able Guide

It is a devastating reality that local churches today often treat ministers more as general managers of congregational affairs than as specialists called to know and teach God's Book. Thus critical questions about the Bible are left to theological professors and the like, while congregational leaders stand ill-equipped to confront the biggest problems facing the world with the only answer that can satisfy. However, as Machen rightly observes,

Especially while doubt remains in the world as to the great central question [of the truthfulness and beauty of the gospel], who more properly than the ministers should engage in the work of resolving such doubt—by intellectual instruction even more than by argument? The work cannot be turned over to a few professors whose work is of interest only to themselves, but must be undertaken energetically by spiritually minded men through the church. But obviously, *this work can be undertaken to best advantage only by those who have an important prerequisite for the study in a knowledge of the original languages upon which a large part of the discussion is based.*⁵⁰

In a world filled with competing truth claims, ministers are called to guide their flocks in biblical truth. Certainly the biblical languages can assist toward this end.

4.3. An Aid for Declaring and Defending Biblical Truth

The call of every Bible expositor is to communicate "as one who speaks oracles of God" (1 Pet 4:11). Teachers of God's Book "will be judged with greater strictness" (Jas 3:1; cf. 2 Pet 2:1, 3), and condemnation will fall on all who add to or take away from God's words (Deut 4:2; 12:32; Josh 1:7; Prov 30:6; Rev 22:18–19).

Because life and death are at stake when the Word is proclaimed, Paul tells Titus that the elder in God's Church "must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it" (Titus 1:9). Such an effort is best done with the biblical languages. As Luther observes,

⁴⁸ Robertson, *The Minister and His Greek New Testament*, 20–21.

⁴⁹ Luther, "Establish and Maintain Christian Schools," 365.

⁵⁰ Machen, "The Minister and His Greek Testament," 212–13 (italics added).

When it comes to interpreting Scripture, and working with it on your own, and disputing with those who cite it incorrectly, [one unskilled in Hebrew and Greek] is unequal to the task; that cannot be done without languages. Now *there must always be such prophets in the Christian church who can dig into Scripture, expound it, and carry on disputations. A saintly life and right doctrine are not enough.* Hence, languages are absolutely and altogether necessary in the Christian church.⁵¹

One contemporary example of the benefits of knowing the languages in order to preserve the gospel is seen in the way Christian apologists skilled in the languages are better equipped to defend the doctrine of Christ's deity when confronting Jehovah's Witnesses. A careful walk through the Greek NT discloses the numerous heretical errors of the New World Translation.

Writing in response to the Council of Trent (April 8, 1546), where the Roman Catholics asserted that the Latin Vulgate translation alone was the only authentic text of Scripture, John Calvin avows, "By one article they have obtained the means of proving what they please out of Scripture, and escaping from every passage that might be urged against them."⁵² By turning from the biblical languages, we "shut our eyes to the light that we spontaneously may go astray."⁵³

In this regard, Luther stresses,

All teachings must be judged. For this a knowledge of the language is needful above all else. The preacher or teacher can expound the Bible from beginning to end as he pleases, accurately or inaccurately, if there is no one there to judge whether he is doing it right or wrong. But in order to judge, one must have a knowledge of the languages; it cannot be done any other way.⁵⁴

Luther expresses constant frustration at "simple preachers," unskilled in the biblical languages, who continually mishandle God's Word:

⁵¹ Luther, "Establish and Maintain Christian Schools," 363 (italics added). Zwingli believed just as strongly about the necessity of the languages aiding one's ability to know and defend biblical truth. In the following quote, however, I believe he goes too far, for he writes as if a knowledge of the languages alone makes one an accurate reader of texts: "It is true and quite certain that human hearts are not turned toward God by anything other than God who draws them, so help me God, however learned a person might be; nonetheless, one must have knowledge of Scripture because of those who do violence to it. For hypocrisy stops short of nothing. It dares present itself as if it were the spirit. But when one discovers afterwards that their speaking does not conform to God's word, one knows which is hypocrisy. For among the simple one soon reaches the point at which violence is done to God's word; they don't know what it is all about. Nonetheless, one has to probe for meaning, to find out whether it is thus. In this way a believer is well informed on whether or not the right meaning has been found. And there is no better way to do that than through languages. For just as in German nothing remains unknown to us when it is written out because we all know German, so—if we knew Hebrew as well as German—we should be able to fathom the Old Testament. Similarly, if we knew Greek as well as German, nothing in the New Testament should be hidden from us either. Therefore all commentaries and teachers are nothing when compared to the knowledge of languages. . . . Therefore it is essential that we have teachers in several places who are able to instruct others in the languages" ("The Preaching Office, June 1525," 173).

⁵² Calvin, "Antidote," 3:69.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 3:71.

⁵⁴ Luther, "Establish and Maintain Christian Schools," 365.

When men attempt to defend the faith with such uncertain arguments and mistaken proof texts, are not Christians put to shame and made a laughingstock in the eyes of adversaries who know the language? The adversaries only become more stiff-necked in their error and have an excellent pretext for regarding our faith as a mere human delusion. When our faith is thus held up to ridicule, where does the fault lie? It lies in the ignorance of the languages; and there is no other way out than to learn the languages. . . . [Those without Hebrew and Greek] often employ uncertain, indefensible, and inappropriate expressions. They grope their way like a blind man along the wall, frequently missing the sense of the text and twisting it to suit their fancy.⁵⁵

4.4. Synthesis of the Call to Preach the Word

Machen asserts that what was needed in his day were not “theological pacifists who avoid controversy, but . . . earnest contenders for the faith.”⁵⁶ The same is true at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The biblical languages sharpen preaching to make it as pointed, accurate, and penetrating as possible. Preaching without original language exegesis is like wielding a blunt sword. May our God build an army of men and women in the next generation who can boldly articulate and defend the truth of the gospel because of their humble grounding in Hebrew and Greek.⁵⁷

5. Conclusion

Writing to his contemporaries who were questioning the need for Christian education, Martin Luther avows,

Since it becomes Christians then to make good use of the Holy Scriptures as their one and only book and it is a sin and a shame not to know our own book or to understand the speech and words of our God, it is a still greater sin and loss that we do not study languages, especially in these days when God is offering and giving us men and books and every facility and inducement to this study, and desires his Bible to be an open book. O how happy the dear fathers would have been if they had had our opportunity to study the languages and come thus prepared to the Holy Scriptures! What great toil and effort it cost them to gather up a few crumbs, while we with half the labor—yes, almost without any labor at all—can acquire the whole loaf! O how their effort puts our indolence to shame! Yes, how sternly God will judge our lethargy and ingratitude!⁵⁸

If Luther could say these words in 1524, how much more true are they today!

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 362.

⁵⁶ Machen, “Westminster Theological Seminary,” 192.

⁵⁷ A complementarian perspective of biblical manhood and womanhood necessitates that there be women who are skilled teachers of Scripture in their designated contexts—e.g., Priscilla standing alongside her husband Aquila to explain the way of God to Apollos in private (Acts 18:26); (grand)mothers instructing their (grand) children in the sacred writings (2 Tim 1:5; 3:15); older women teaching younger women the Word of God (Titus 2:3–5). Certainly there is a place for godly women to handle God’s Book in the languages it was given.

⁵⁸ Luther, “Establish and Maintain Christian Schools,” 364.

Hebrew and Greek are gifts of God that we can use for gain or ill. Many ministers without the languages treasure Christ and ably pass on this treasure (2 Cor 4:7), and others who know Hebrew and Greek are massively blinded from the glory of Christ (4:3–4). Nevertheless, the biblical languages aid in the “open statement of the truth” (4:2) by which gospel light goes forth (4:5–6), and knowing the languages provides an unmatched connection for individuals with the unchanging Word, which remains unscathed in this ever-changing world.

For the Christian minister who is charged to proclaim God’s truth with accuracy and to preserve the gospel’s purity with integrity, the biblical languages help in one’s study, practice, and teaching of the Word. Properly using the languages opens doors of biblical discovery that would otherwise remain locked and provides interpreters with accountability that they would not otherwise have. The minister who knows Hebrew and Greek will not only feed himself but will also be able to gain a level of biblical discernment that will allow him to respond in an informed way to new translations, new theological perspectives, and other changing trends in Church and culture. With the languages, the interpreter’s observations can be more accurate and thorough, understanding more clear, evaluation more fair, feelings more aligned with truth, application more wise and helpful, and expression more compelling.⁵⁹

In light of the above, I offer the following action steps to readers of all vocational callings:

1. *Seminary professors and administrators.* Fight to make exegeting the Word in the original languages the core of every curriculum that is designed to train vocational ministers of God’s Book.
2. *Church shepherds and shepherds-in-training.* Seek to become God-dependent, rigorous thinkers who study, practice, and teach the Word—in that order!
3. *Other congregational leaders.* Give your ministers who are called to preach and teach time to study, and help your congregations see this as a priority.
4. *Young adult leaders and college professors.* Encourage those sensing a call to vocational ministry of the Word to become thoroughly equipped for the task.
5. *Everyone.* Pray to our glorious God for the preservation of the gospel, for our leaders, and for the churches and schools training them.

May God through his Word satisfy and sustain his Church for generations to come, and may he continue to raise up individuals in every generation who rightly and unashamedly handle the Word of truth for the purity of the gospel and the glory of Jesus Christ (2 Tim 2:15).

⁵⁹ For the pattern “observe › understand › evaluate › feel › apply › express,” see Piper, *Think*, 191–98.

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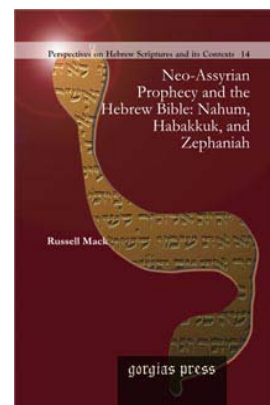
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OLD TESTAMENT

Russell Mack. *Neo-Assyrian Prophecy and the Hebrew Bible: Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*. Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and its Context 14. Piscataway: Gorgias, 2011. xviii + 386 pp. £105.00/\$160.60.

The relationship between the message of Scripture and the varied historical contexts in which it was authored is complex. Interpreters, however, must make every effort to understand the linguistic, historical, and theological aspects of the text together. The volume under review here offers new insights on the historical and linguistic aspects of interpretation by examining the minor prophets Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah in relation to “prophetic” and related literature produced by the Neo-Assyrian empire in the seventh century. Because Judah was consistently under Assyrian hegemony from the middle of the eighth century onward, the two cultures were in close contact and the transmission of various elements of Assyrian belief and propaganda surely took place. In particular, there was a strong religious element in Assyrian statecraft so that the biblical prophets who interacted with Assyria typically did so on theological rather than nationalistic or xenophobic grounds.



The work, based on a dissertation submitted to Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion (Cincinnati) in 2008, begins by briefly overviewing recent developments in the study of prophecy (ch. 1) and other fields relevant to the study (ch. 2) before laying out a multifaceted method that attends to social relations (semiotics), the relation between texts and the groups that produce them (structuralism), identifiable prophetic genres and departures from them (genre theory), the powers that authors have in writing (anthropology), the Marxist claim that “political reality shapes thought” rather than vice versa, the use of human imagination in history writing (new historicism), and the distinction between propagandistic and literary texts (reader response theory). For those who doubt the possibility or promise of interdisciplinary biblical studies, this work proves a *tour de force*.

Mack next takes up the primary texts, dealing with Neo-Assyrian prophecies of the seventh century (primarily to the Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal; ch. 4) and contemporary supplemental materials (royal inscriptions and various communiques from the divine realm; ch. 5). All these texts, which represent several genres, fall into the category of propaganda, since in Neo-Assyria “monarchic patronage supports both prophets and the writers of the [royal inscriptions] and their work supports royal ideology” (p. 150; cf. also pp. 128, 132, 174).

The biblical materials that Mack studies differ in important ways from these Assyrian sources “due in large part to [their] being produced under a different social locus. [Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah] bear none of the characteristics of monarchic patronage” (p. 174). Because “an oral aesthetic permeates” the entire OT, Mack is not convinced that the oldest parts of prophetic books can be traced back to a pre-written, oral stage. As a result, he finds unconvincing the long-standing practice of dating the final written product by tracing its evolution through oral transmission to literary composition and successive redaction. He proposes instead that a prophetic book be dated primarily by comparing its genres with comparable genres from earlier and later periods; in other words, genre B is clearly derived from genre A, and B can arise no other way, so B must be later than A.

Nahum, for example, bears “the mark of creative literary activity that witnessed the creation and transformation of genres and adaptation of older forms to meet needs not previously experienced” (p. 176). Mack contends that “there is nothing in these books that directly relates to the seventh century,” departing from the majority of scholars who see at least the core of the book (less 1:2–8 and a few other sections) as the product of the seventh century (p. 180). He then argues that Nah 1:11–2:1 corresponds for the most part to the seventh century Assyrian texts surveyed in ch. 4, but that several variations (direct address to the recipient, modification of the divine self-identification formula, the use of Assyrian motifs like the breaking of a yoke, and the replacement of the Assyrian encouragement formula with the announcement of a messenger announcing good news) show that “[t]he author has appropriated and modified a standard prophetic form, the victory oracle, well attested in Assyria, to fit his purposes” (p. 198). While he admits, “it is impossible to trace the [genre adaptation’s] trajectory with certainty” because victory oracles are attested before, during, and after the seventh century, Mack discounts the eighth century on the grounds that the two relevant texts in 1 Kgs 20 lack the encouragement formula. He also does not consider the Mari evidence from the early second millennium (no reason is stated), and inclines instead toward the possibility that Jehoiachin’s scribes were “allowed to study Mesopotamian religious texts” once he was released from prison in Babylon (pp. 199–200).

Nahum 2:2–14 is dated similarly. Although the invasion report it includes has analogues in the Assyrian royal inscriptions to which Israel and Judah might have had some degree of access from the eighth century onward, Mack reasons, “genre adaptation typically occurs when changing historical/political realities require accompanying ideological changes” (pp. 208–9; cf. the tenet of Marxist literary criticism cited earlier that political reality shapes thought [p. 37]). Since the exile of Judah would have provided the “greatest impetus for re-examining the community’s place in the historical process and YHWH’s control over events,” he assigns a post-exilic date to this passage as well. Nahum 3:1–17 is tentatively dated to the fifth century (although “there is no reason to doubt that the taunt was known to pre-exilic Israel”) on the basis of Otto Kaiser’s 1974 suggestion that the core of Isa 1–39 dates to the fifth century (p. 215); no appeal is made to genre adaptation in this case. Mack’s treatments of Habakkuk (pp. 233–80) and Zephaniah (pp. 281–321) follow the general lines laid out here.

It seems to me that the priority of genre adaptation as a means of dating texts requires more substantial defense and development. To offer a specific critique, it is quite difficult to establish an absolute *terminus a quo* after which a (new) genre, never before attested, came into being exclusively through the modification of existing genres. Genre adaptation is also a slim basis on which to free the interpreter from concerns of historical referentiality and the striking Israelite claims that YHWH’s commitments to Israel and David are perpetual and extend far into the future, a feature that Mack finds absent from the Assyrian material (pp. 131, 167). On this point, Mack’s inference that the “historical context/deeds” of the prophetic figures tied to the twelve books of the minor prophets were unimportant to the people who produced those same books because they lack “significant references to prophets or their deeds” (p. 338, following P. R. Davies) seems to be a *non sequitur* argument.

Although only partially the author’s responsibility, mention must be made of a number of typographical errors in Hebrew and English items (pp. 3, 12, 36, 49, 261n377, etc., including the Tetragrammaton, p. 219). A subject index would also help readers use the volume efficiently.

While Mack’s use of genre adaption to date biblical texts will not convince every reader, his comparison and contrast of these three Hebrew prophetic books and Neo-Assyrian sources remains illuminating. Unlike the Assyrian texts, in Nahum “[Yahweh’s] anger is not directed against the king’s

enemies. YHWH has displaced the king in this motif” (p. 219). Again, Nahum states that all God’s people, and not simply the king, will benefit from divine protection (p. 220). Even more interesting is that “[w]hile the general content of the book supports the conclusion that the Assyrians are YHWH’s primary enemy in . . . Nahum, they are never referred to in this way” (p. 224). Coupled with the conclusion that Nahum is not propaganda but a literary work “intended to help the community navigate crucial changes in ideology and their perception of reality” (p. 230), Mack contributes to an understanding of Nahum’s worldview that integrates the book’s rhetoric and the effects its author intended it to have on its readers and hearers. The same holds true for the chapters dealing with Zephaniah and Habakkuk.

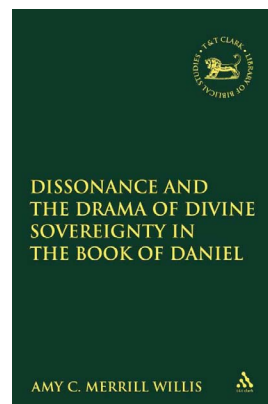
Mack has undertaken a challenging project, particularly by drawing upon a wide variety of methods. While in some cases their cross-cultural and/or synchronic applicability can be questioned (e.g., Marxist literary criticism), the collective insights they afford cohere with one another and shed light on the message of the prophets treated. Despite the criticisms advanced above, the work’s value is substantial, and one can hope that similarly integrative efforts will follow in its wake.

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Amy C. Merrill Willis. *Dissonance and the Drama of Divine Sovereignty in the Book of Daniel*. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies. New York: T&T Clark, 2010. xii + 219 pp. £70.00/\$130.00.

The church’s beloved book of Daniel is often cited for its well-known stories with the book’s plentiful visions left aside only for end-times discussions. Amy C. Merrill Willis studies these visions and angelic discourses, resulting in a reading of divine sovereignty as a drama during foreign rule.

Chapter one details her premise and sets her agenda for the remainder of the study. She limits the study to the visions and angelic discourses found in 2:31–45 and chs. 7–12. Sovereignty is a well-recognized theme in Daniel but challenges the theodicy construct as an inadequate explanation of the ancients’ view. The visions are the presence of God during this period, and he is described with theologically and ideologically significant forms and even a human-like appearance at points. The final difference in this approach is the attempt to relate the social setting of the audiences and writers. Merrill Willis’ view is similar to Danna Fewell’s, but with a more in-depth look at the visions and the social setting. She relies on Jon Levenson’s *Chaoskampf* work in Dan 7 but extends dissonance and an unfolding dramatic process of sovereignty to more visions of the book. The dissonance arises from a community that finds “themselves socially elevated but politically subordinated, aspiring to participate in cosmopolitan culture while committed to traditional Jewish faith and practices” (p. 21). These tensions that are present for the writers and readers are considered. This work reads the visions in Daniel as drama that “overcome[s] incoherence with respect to subordination and foreign power . . . enact[s] resistance to foreign rule, create[s] symbolic deliverance from that rule, and also legitimate alternative institutional models for divine power and presence” (p. 34).



Chapter two focuses on Nebuchadnezzar's dream in 2:31–45. Merrill Willis locates the writing of this section to the Seleucid period with its core purpose being to make sense of the subjugation of Israel to Gentile powers. She identifies three redactional levels but focuses on the later Seleucid period when the invisibility of God was disconcerting to the faithful Hebrews. The telling of this dream helped to make God visible into history. This argument from the vision is that God is present through the control of royalty and its divestment at God's will.

Chapter three tackles the key section of the book: the vision of the four beasts and the Ancient of Days (Dan 7). Merrill Willis sees two cycles of the beast vision with the second portion of the vision giving special attention to the little horn. She locates this redaction in the second cycle to the time of Antiochus IV. The first cycle of the four beasts seems to borrow from Canaanite *Chaoskampf* myths. Each action of the beasts is shown to be under divine control as shown by repeated passive voice verbs. Merrill Willis points out the absence of such language for the fourth beast signifying its larger threat. This threat requires a theophany to reassert divine sovereignty that parallels theophanies of Ugartic deities and other ANE cultures.

In Dan 8, the issue of its relationship to Dan 7 is at the forefront. She asks whether Dan 8 is a sequel or a remake. A prevailing view seems to be that Dan 8 is a remake or more precisely a midrash of Dan 7 accomplishing similar aims. She finds divergences from Dan 7 impacting time, space, and objects conveying symbolic meaning. Daniel 8 uses domestic beasts and presents the four kingdoms excluding Babylon and rulers without divine authorization with the pinnacle being Antiochus IV, the little horn. Tension builds through the repeated use of the verb to become great. Divine power appears absent as the tension builds. The resolution comes from hearing a time limit set for Antiochus IV's success (2,300 days). Also the "time of wrath" functions to show an ambiguous relationship of God and wrath towards his people. The resolution comes without hands (8:25) as the invisible and incomparable deity removes the little horn.

The final chapters follow the same trajectory exploring Dan 9 and 10–12. Merrill Willis sees Dan 9 as a cohesive section resolving the temple's destruction as part of God's punishment through abandonment. This fits within Deuteronomic theology. There is a continuation between the prior exile and the Seleucid occupation. Daniel 10–12 sets forth resurrection as a resolution to many of the issues in Dan 8. Resurrection rather than restoration of the temple becomes the hope and display of divine power. This final chapter also examines more closely the role of *maskilim* (editors of Daniel). A key remark of the conclusion is that sovereignty instead of evil or persecution makes up the difficulties in the visions. She concludes that divine power is now located in the Jewish community and specifically the *maskilim*. The visions of the book of Daniel are meant to contradict other claims of power and assert divine sovereignty.

Merrill Willis approaches the visions of Daniel with a well-developed lens acknowledging rhetorical forces and cohesion where possible while presenting plausible explanations for dating and historical circumstances of writing. Her conclusion regarding the *maskilim* may warrant continued consideration for their place in Seleucid-era Israel. Her interaction with comparative literature and close reading allows her a contributing role to the discussions of Collins and Goldingay.

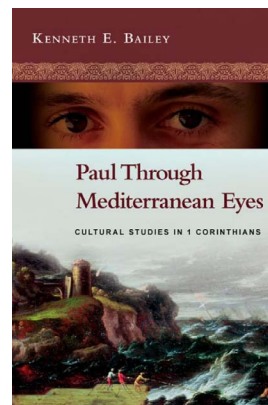
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NEW TESTAMENT

Kenneth Bailey. *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2011. 560 pp. \$30.00.

First Corinthians is a notoriously difficult book that was written to answer obscure questions relating to a troubled church with unique issues. Or was it? In this long-anticipated work, Kenneth Bailey challenges such traditional assumptions, arguing instead that the book presents a coherent and carefully structured work written for all believers. Having a rich background of over forty years living and teaching in the Middle East, Bailey brings a fresh and remarkably unique approach to 1 Corinthians that will challenge many established works. That Bailey's approach is distinct can be seen in his own admission:

The New Testament can be likened to a vast ocean. There are two well-known ways to sail upon it. One is to set the sails to the prevailing winds and currents and to use great caution in any deviation from them. The other is to move through uncharted waters, explore neglected islands and inlets and then return and attempt a faithful report on the journey. I have chosen the second. (p. 31)



So what is distinctive about Bailey's approach in assessing 1 Corinthians? In essence, the main thrust of Bailey's approach has to do with his understanding of the rhetorical features of the book. Bailey places his methodological approach on the table when he states, "the basic presupposition of this study is that Paul's *Hebrew literary heritage* profoundly influences Paul's rhetorical style" (p. 53). Bailey, contrary to most traditional approaches, argues that the book is not so much addressing *ad hoc* issues and questions of a particular church as much as it is a theologically themed argument that is both coherent and highly sophisticated. While Bailey concedes that the structure of 1 Corinthians involves a Corinthian correspondence, Bailey argues that "some of the Corinthians' questions (oral and written) are worked into *Paul's outline*, instead of the other way around. *He* sets the agenda, not the Corinthians" (p. 26). The questions of the Corinthians, while real, are incorporated to support a greater rhetorical structure that Paul drives. This style of structure, Bailey argues, reflects a Hebrew rhetorical style similar to that found in the prophetic books of the OT such as Isaiah and Amos.

To present his approach, Bailey divides 1 Corinthians into a series of small cameos that when combined form larger chiasmic structures that he refers to as "ring compositions." These "ring compositions" provide the thematic glue that unifies the Corinthian letter. In surveying the larger structure of the epistle Bailey argues that there are three motifs driving the letter: "1. The cross and the resurrection, 2. Men and women in the human family and worship, 3. Christians living among pagans: To identify or not to identify" (p. 26). While *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes* goes through 1 Corinthians in order, the goal of the book is not to provide commentary on every verse as much as to present these unified theological expressions that, Bailey argues, carry the book.

Bailey's approach is indeed fresh even if somewhat unusual. The strength of his work lies in the thorough analysis of rhetorical devices, contextual investigation, and historical sensitivity. Bailey accesses a wide variety of material including "twenty-three versions of 1 Corinthians . . . that were

translated across 1,600 years” (p. 16). This, combined with his interaction with numerous Middle Eastern commentaries, some dating back nearly 1,000 years, makes for interesting reading. His engagement with rhetorical devices of both the Hebrew and Greek styles is insightful, compelling, and thorough. Bailey’s reflections take seriously cultural expression in the ancient world and the impact that should have for a modern reading of the text.

The major strength of the book, however, is potentially the biggest stumbling book. Bailey’s rhetorical analysis of 1 Corinthians is intriguing but at times feels so highly nuanced that the obvious reading of the text seems to get lost. There are times, for example, when the chiasmic structures presented feel forced. His treatment of 1 Cor 7:25–41, rather than assuming that Paul is simply addressing a variety of issues relating to marital status that are loosely related, seems to flatten the differences under key headings that seek to unite the passage (see p. 221). While it smooths out the passage into coherent themes and “ring compositions,” the text itself feels far more complicated than Bailey’s headings suggest.

In another situation, Bailey argues that Paul cleverly uses rhyming syllables in two consecutive cameos to consolidate his message (p. 87). He reasons that the seven syllables per line represent “well-known ancient Semitic poetic meter” (p. 88). In validating this proposition, however, he calls on only one example, which is from the fourth century A.D. This hardly establishes that Paul is using a “well-known” practice. It is upon the basis of his tenuous proposition that he then concludes, “By breaking into *a Semitic poetic meter* in the *Greek language* he strives mightily to gain the respect of both Jew and Greek and to be bring them together at the cross” (p. 88). Bailey’s argumentation for a highly sophisticated use of rhetoric at this point is not convincing and leads the reader to question the validity of Bailey’s overall methodological approach. While there are times where “ring progression” and rhetorical nuancing are evident (such as Bailey’s helpful treatment of 1 Cor 12–14, pp. 325–418), there are other times when Bailey’s approach seems to override the obvious flow of the text.

Though *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes* has the potential to lose some readers in the details, the book provides a fresh and distinctive approach to 1 Corinthians that many will find engaging. Bailey’s unique presuppositions force the reader to reevaluate traditional assumptions. While not every reader will be convinced of Bailey’s arguments, every reader will be indebted to him for drawing the attention of the reader back to the inspired text of 1 Corinthians. This is a worthwhile resource that will provide a good supplement to traditional commentaries on 1 Corinthians.

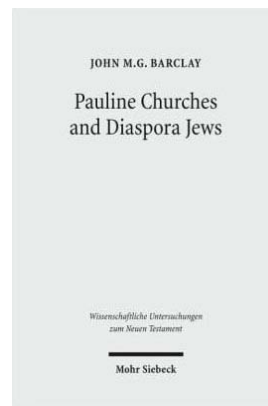
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John M. G. Barclay. *Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 275. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2011. 454 + xii pp. \$129.00.

Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews draws together some nineteen essays penned by John Barclay over the last twenty years. The essays, while diverse in terms of subject matter and method, revolve around a common scope: what can be learned from comparing Pauline churches with Diaspora Jews? One of the central questions Barclay seeks to unearth is how Pauline churches constructed their new “Christian” identity. Each essay, therefore, attempts “to investigate the social formation of identity in the Pauline stream of early Christianity” (p. 8) using Diaspora Judaism as the analogic point of comparison.

After an introductory chapter that situates the essays within the history of scholarship and introduces the major themes, the book is divided into three further sections. Section II, “Pauline Churches and Diaspora Jews,” contains seven essays (chs. 2–8) that reflect on the social features of the Pauline churches in comparison with Diaspora synagogues. Thus, chapter two examines the social significance of Rom 14:1–15:6 and argues that while Paul safeguards the practice of Torah observance among the Roman Christians, his command to welcome non-Torah observing Christians into the assembly “*effectively undermines the social and cultural integrity of the Law-observant Christians in Rome*” (p. 56, italics from original chapter heading). Hence, “Paul’s instructions . . . created tensions which were likely to grow to the point when a difficult social choice would have to be made between the Jewish and Christian community” (p. 58). Chapter three argues that whereas Philo insists upon the literal observance of circumcision for Jews, Paul innovatively gives priority to the metaphorical sense of circumcision and expands “its field of reference to include heart-circumcised Gentiles” (p. 76). Chapter four claims that whereas Josephus praises the Torah for its ability to produce harmony in every area of life of the Jews, Paul’s articulation of his ethics in 1 Corinthians is more under-determined as he seeks to make space for diverse cultural expressions of a common faith. Chapters six and seven apply deviance theory to the question of apostasy in Judaism and Christianity. Barclay argues that the label of apostasy is negotiable and a matter of one’s perspective. Whereas the Maccabean literature constructs a strict definition of social integration with “Hellenism” as apostasy, other texts celebrate Jewish social integration without supposing Jewish identity to be compromised. The case of Paul is striking in that he was often denounced by fellow Jews as an apostate, but other “Jewish Christians . . . accepted Paul’s stance as compatible with their understanding of Judaism” (p. 135).

Section III, “The Invention of Christian Identity in the Pauline Tradition” (chs. 9–13), explores Paul’s “strenuous efforts to construct, define and secure the identity of believers, which was often in practice unclear, undetermined or fragile” (pp. 23–24). For example, the surprising divergence between the churches in Thessalonica and Corinth is due, in part, to their distinctly different social interaction with outsiders. Whereas the Thessalonians’ experience of social alienation and conflict with outsiders reinforces the validity of Paul’s apocalyptic message, the Corinthians’ integration with the world pushes Paul to reinforce the apocalyptic dualism between “this world” and “the present age” and forces him to construct boundaries between the Corinthian assembly and the outside world. In another example, Barclay argues that in 1 Thess 4, Paul “Christianizes Death” by “tying Christian hopes for the dead so tightly to the core beliefs of the Christian confession” (p. 234). And in the Colossians household code



Paul invents a “comprehensive life-hermeneutic” (p. 254) that calls upon the church to serve the Lord in every imaginable role, occupation, and deed.

Section IV, “Josephus, Paul and Rome,” contains four essays (chs. 14–17) that explore Josephus’ rhetorical techniques in *Contra Apionem*. Barclay turns to postcolonial theory to illuminate Josephus’ slippery discourse that shifts “equivocally from apparent complicity to subtle subversion, and back again from apparent resistance to subtle implication in the structures of the system it seems to subvert” (pp. 30–31). For example, Josephus portrays Jewish martyrs as “tougher than the toughest Spartan ideal” (p. 329) and as exemplars of the Roman “contempt of death in the face of the Romans themselves” (p. 328). Chapters 18 and 19 note that while Paul writes within the context of Roman religion, he never differentiates one cult or deity from another. Despite the prevalence of the Roman imperial cult, not once does Paul refer to it directly. For Paul, Caesar and Rome are simply entities within the larger apocalyptic battle between flesh/sin and Spirit. Paul does not make Rome the focus of his critique precisely because all worship not directed to God in Christ is idolatrous. In Barclay’s words, “At the deepest level Paul undermines Augustus and his successors not by confronting them on their own terms, but by reducing them to bit-part players in a drama scripted by the cross and resurrection of Jesus” (pp. 386–87).

John Barclay is one of the premier NT scholars of our generation, and this compilation of his essays in one monograph makes an excellent scholarly contribution. The comparison of Pauline churches with Diaspora Jews sheds light on numerous aspects of the creation of Christian identity, the construction of boundaries between the Pauline churches and the outside world, and the reasons for the separation between the church and the synagogue. Though he probably underestimates the role and influence of Augustan religious and political ideology on Paul and his churches, his essays on Paul and the imperial cult should, further, require sustained analysis from the recent cottage industry of counter-imperial readings of Paul.

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Matthew S. Harmon. *She Must and Shall Go Free: Paul's Isaianic Gospel in Galatians*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 168. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010. 330 pp. \$150.00/£94.95.

The present book is the published dissertation of Matthew Harmon, who is currently Professor of New Testament studies at Grace College and Theological Seminary. Harmon attempts to demonstrate the influence of Isaiah (primarily Isa 40–66) in each section of Paul’s letter to the Galatians, and he offers many interesting suggestions along the way. By his own admission, Harmon notes that some suggestions of Isaianic influence will seem less plausible than others, but he intends to show that the cumulative effect of multiple areas of influence provides the necessary credence that Paul was addressing the Galatian crisis through Isaianic motifs and categories (p. 33).

Harmon begins with issues of prolegomena in ch. 1, overviewing studies on the use of the OT in the NT and more specifically on Paul’s use of Isaiah.

MATTHEW S. HARMON

She Must and Shall Go Free
Paul's Isaianic Gospel in Galatians

DE GRUYTER

He aims to provide the first full-treatment of Isaianic influence on Galatians. Chapters 2–4 contain multiple examples of such influence followed by a final summary in ch. 5. For the present review I will be selective and note only the areas of influence that I found the most important and intriguing.

Chapter 2 focuses on Gal 1–2 with the most notable areas of influence stemming from Isa 49 and 53. In the opening chapters of Galatians, Paul appears to present himself as the Servant spoken of in Isa 49:1–6. He refers to himself as “a slave/servant of Christ” (δοῦλος; Gal 1:10). In Gal 1:15 he states that he was set apart before he was born and called by God in a manner that reflects Isa 49:1. He says in Gal 1:24 that the churches in Judea “glorified God because of me,” reflecting Isa 49:3. Lastly, he speaks of going to Jerusalem to discern if he “had run in vain,” which is likely language from Isa 49:4. These suggestions are quite fascinating for getting a glimpse into Paul’s self-understanding. Additionally, these points take on greater significance in relation to the other main focus that Harmon sees in Gal 1–2: the influence of Isa 53 in Gal 1:4 and 2:20. In each instance, Jesus is presented as the Suffering Servant. The question then is how Paul can present himself *and* Jesus as the Servant of Isaiah? Harmon explains that the “bridge” is Gal 2:20 since Paul claims that he participates in the crucifixion of Christ and is indwelt by Christ (pp. 118–19). Thus, the mission of the Servant continues through Paul. I find this proposal very attractive, though I would add that suffering should not be left out from Paul’s particular commission as the Servant since he presents himself in Galatians as one who suffers for Christ (Gal 3:1; 4:13–14; 5:11; 6:14, 17).

Chapter 3 argues that Paul’s use of the Pentateuch in Gal 3–4 is based on a particular Isaianic reading of it. In fact, according to Harmon, it is at this point where Paul diverges from the agitators in the interpretation of the Pentateuch (p. 125). In Gal 3, Harmon detects multiple Isaianic influences including the parallels with Isa 53 in Gal 3:1, 10–14. Harmon rightly acknowledges the allusions and echoes to the exodus in Gal 4:1–7, yet he argues that these exodus motifs are influenced by Isaiah’s expectation of a new exodus (end of exile). While this is possible, the main aspect of the Isaianic new exodus that would have contributed to the plausibility of Harmon’s suggestion, “new creation,” is not present in this context. Harmon attempts to draw “new creation” into Gal 4:1–7 from 6:15, but this is not as convincing as Harmon suggests. Continuing on in Gal 4, Harmon addresses the notorious allegory of Gal 4:21–31. Here Harmon provides one of the best treatments on this text that I have come across. What was particularly satisfying for me was his explanation of the citation of Isa 54 in relation to the allegorical use of Genesis, noting that Hagar’s husband—according to the citation of Isa 54—is the Law. Thus, Harmon demonstrates that the allegory fits nicely within Paul’s overall argumentation against the Law’s continuing function, showing that the Law produced no children for Sarah, who was barren until the coming of Christ, the true seed (p. 184).

Chapter 4 focuses on Isaianic influence in Gal 5–6, although Harmon admits that this section does not contain as many clear allusions and echoes as the first four chapters of Galatians. Following G. K. Beale, Harmon notes that the “fruit of the Spirit” discourse is largely dependent on Isaiah. In Gal 6:1–10, Harmon cannot find any allusions, echoes, or thematic parallels, but he argues that this section builds upon Paul’s discussion on the “fruit of the Spirit” and so reflects the Isaianic influence there. Nearing the end of the epistle, Harmon notes that the reference to “new creation” in Gal 6:15 is Isaianic and argues that the term is comprehensive: anthropological, cosmological, and ecclesiological. Harmon provides good arguments for this broad interpretation, but the argument of Galatians taken as a whole, and the immediate context regarding circumcision, fits an anthropological reading better. The parallel between “new creation” and the Israel of God in Gal 6:16 likely broadens the referent to the corporate collective

of believers, but the parts make up the whole (i.e., it is still anthropological), and thus I find Harmon's comprehensive interpretation unconvincing.

Chapter 5 summarizes the findings. Intriguingly, Harmon shows something of a narrative substructure from Isa 49–54 in Gal 1–4 as both speak of a Servant called before his birth to bring salvation to the Gentiles (pp. 250–54). Although Gal 5–6 departs from the pattern of Isa 49–54, Harmon suggests that this is because Gal 5–6 spells out for the Galatian situation what has been argued previously (p. 254). So he concludes that the function is similar in the relationship between Isa 49–54 and 55–66.

Overall, Harmon's book is an exciting and informative read. His explanations are insightful, and he includes many helpful charts comparing the MT and LXX of Isaiah with Pauline texts. Although a few of Harmon's suggestions are not fully convincing to me, he succeeds in demonstrating how impactful Isaiah was for Paul as he wrote his letter to the Galatians. *She Must and Shall Go Free* is a must-read for those serious about Galatians and Paul's use of the OT.

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Tom Holland. *Romans: The Divine Marriage; A Biblical-Theological Commentary*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011. xiv + 543 pp. \$56.00.

Tom Holland has shouldered an unusual mantle in his commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans. He desires to stand squarely within the Reformation tradition, while taking issue with many Reformational readings of Romans. For Holland, many readings of Romans (Reformational or not) falter in one of two areas. First, they insufficiently acknowledge the fundamental indebtedness of the letter to the OT. Second, they insufficiently grasp the corporate character of Romans. Romans, Holland maintains, was written to a community. It speaks to individuals only in so far as they are members of that community (p. 19).

The subtitle of this commentary captures both of these concerns. Romans reflects a "divine marriage"—in Christ, God has constituted believers his bride. This marriage is "the culmination of the new exodus" theme that Holland argues is central to OT and NT biblical theology (p. ix). For Holland, the promises of the OT converge upon a promised new exodus that would entail, among other things, restoration from exile, a Spirit-anointed Davidic scion, a new covenant, heart-circumcision, a return to Jerusalem, a new temple, and a marriage with a cosmic banquet (pp. 8–9). This cluster of promises provides the interpretative matrix for the whole of the NT.

How do these commitments inform Holland's reading of Romans? Holland understands Paul's personification of "sin" in Romans in terms of a "pseudonym for Satan" (p. 62n12; cf. pp. 82n11, 236n70). Consequently, the fall of Adam resulted in "Adam [being] taken as Satan's willing prisoner," and his posterity "in bondage to Satan" (p. 79). The fall is nothing less than "spiritual adultery" (p. 160). This condition, according to Rom 3:9–18, is one that Paul also represents in "new exodus" terminology—Adamic man is in a state of exile (p. 75).

A BIBLICAL THEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY

Romans

The Divine Marriage



Tom
HOLLAND

Not surprisingly, Paul depicts the saving work of Jesus in specifically paschal terms (Rom 3:21–26). Christ has “freed” a “community . . . from its covenant bondage to Sin” (p. 227). In Rom 6, Paul “urges the local Roman church, to live as the servant of God, just as Israel was urged to after her redemption from Egypt.” Her redemption, to put it another way, was Yahweh taking the church to be his bride (cf. Rom 7:1–6; p. 227). The work of the Spirit in Rom 8 is the Bridegroom’s “bridal gift” to the church, who is led by the Spirit on her “pilgrimage to the New Jerusalem” (pp. 252, 269). Romans 9–11 answers the question “where do the Jewish people fit into the new exodus?” (p. 297), and Rom 12–15 develops the church’s corporate life in distinctly new exodus terms (see pp. 423, 434–35, 449, 467).

How does Holland understand “justification,” a leading theme of the epistle, to operate in Romans? He is satisfied with neither Reformational nor New Perspective readings of this concept: the New Perspective is “wrong” in its rejection of the Reformation, while the Reformation is incomplete (pp. 109–10). Justification is “a rescue from a condition of condemnation to an experience of covenantal relationship with God” and, as such, is a corporate category (p. 126). God justified “the community” and did so at the “moment of Christ’s death” (p. 126). Individuals “become part of the justified community” through faith and so “catch up experientially with what Christ has already done for all his people” (p. 126). What does it mean to be corporately justified? It means, in part, that the church, the bride of Christ, may not be charged with “adultery in the new marriage” (p. 191). And yet, Holland cautions, “Paul’s argument [here] cannot be directly applied to the experience of the individual” (p. 191). What does it mean to be individually justified? Justification is legal and forensic, but it is more than that—spiritual “circumcision” (Col 2:11–12), “salvation,” and “God making covenant” are all necessary components of corporate—and presumably individual—justification (p. 129).

Holland’s exposition of Romans is an engaging and stimulating one. Given Paul’s express concern to anchor his gospel and the righteousness of God in the OT (Rom 1:17), Holland’s instinct to place Romans on the biblical-theological trajectory extending from the OT, and his identification of Romans as a fundamentally covenantal letter are all surely correct. Holland’s proposal, furthermore, may help to explain both some of the background of Paul’s marriage analogy in Rom 7:1–6 and the preponderance of Isaianic quotations in the epistle.

As suggestive as Holland’s thesis is, it is not altogether persuasive. Had the OT narrative that Holland charts informed not only the content but also the structure of Romans in the way that Holland proposes, one might have expected more explicit indication of this fact in the epistle. As it stands, a number of the exodus and exile connections for which Holland pleads seem to me to be exegetically tentative at best. The “new exodus” may contribute to the biblical-theological background of Romans, but it may be putting matters too strongly to assign to it a controlling and generative role in the letter.

Furthermore, Holland’s treatment of justification raises questions that do not receive full answers. Precisely how do what Holland terms communal justification and individual justification intersect? To what degree do they overlap in Christian experience? What exegetical grounds are there for claiming that justification in Paul is a concept inclusive of non-forensic and arguably transformative blessings?

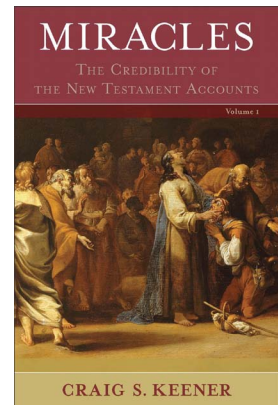
One of the greatest strengths of *Romans: The Divine Marriage* is that it compels readers to read Romans in light of the categories and covenants set forth in the OT. Whether or not one agrees entirely with Holland’s reading, this work serves to remind us that the Scripture is a unified, not a fragmented,

book with a single, coherent, and integrated message. And for that reminder we may be genuinely grateful.

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Craig S. Keener. *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*. 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011. 1,172 pp. \$59.99.

Every once in a while a book comes along that is long overdue within the academic community. Craig Keener's *Miracles* is just such a book. Ever since the rise of the Enlightenment, academic circles have been inculcated with a naturalistic, anti-supernatural bias that pervades almost every discipline, from sociology to anthropology to psychology. And the discipline of biblical studies is no exception to that rule. When it comes to the miracles contained in the NT accounts, scholars have been chronically skeptical of their veracity and credibility. Keener's work is designed to challenge that bias. His intent is not to *prove* the truth of the NT miracles, nor of modern ones, but simply to show that the accepted predisposition against the *possibility* of miracles is intellectually indefensible. Of course, Keener's book is not the first to challenge the modern predisposition against miracles. But his book is unique in that it is up-to-date on the latest scholarship, vast in its detail and documentation (over 1,000 pages!), pays particular attention to ancient historiography, and offers an impressive catalog of modern (and ancient) miracle testimonies.



Keener offers two main arguments in the book, a historical one and a philosophical one. (1) The historical argument is that the miracle reports in the Gospels and Acts are based on eyewitness testimony (not legendary accretions or the invention of the later church). Put simply, we have solid historical evidence that the earliest followers of Jesus (and the apostles) thought they were witnessing miracles. Such ancient testimony to miracles, argues Keener, is analogous to what happens today when we receive reports that people have witnessed miracles. (2) The philosophical argument is that supernatural explanations for these miracle claims should not be ruled out from the very start. Instead, many of these miracle claims are best explained by supernatural causation, and the modern historian should at least be open to that possibility.

In order to address the historical question, Keener devotes the first three chapters to an in-depth investigation of the miracle accounts in the Gospels. Chapter one examines the Gospel accounts directly and argues that the miracle accounts of Jesus are central to the narrative of Jesus' life and are present in the earliest layers of the tradition (and thus unlikely to be later, mythical additions). Chapters two and three compare and contrast the miracle accounts in the Gospels with the miracle accounts in other Greco-Roman and Jewish literature. Keener demonstrates that although there are broad similarities between these extra-biblical miracle accounts and those of the Gospels, there are also significant differences. Thus, we have no reason to think that the miracle stories in the Gospels are due to the influence of pagan stories of magic and divination. Instead, the influence is often the other way

around. Given Keener's extensive background in historical Jesus studies, his analysis in these chapters is first-rate: thorough, insightful, and attentive to the complex historical details.

Chapters 4–6 address the philosophical question of whether modern historians ought to reject miraculous explanations *a priori*. After a fascinating survey of the history of anti-supernaturalism in chapter four, Keener devotes the next two chapters to the most significant proponent of anti-supernaturalism: David Hume. Although modern philosophers have largely debunked Hume's arguments, some biblical scholars still appeal to these arguments to support their anti-supernatural bias. The problem, as Keener so deftly points out, is that Hume's argument is fallaciously circular: "[Hume] argues, based on 'experience,' that miracles do not happen, yet dismisses credible eyewitness testimony for miracles (i.e., *others'* experience) on his assumption that miracles do not happen" (p. 109, emphasis his). Put differently, Hume's argument is based on the "uniformity of human experience against miracles" (p. 112); a uniformity that he can establish only if he rejects, *a priori*, all eyewitness claims to miracles. Thus, he assumes what he is trying to prove.

One of the reasons Hume was able to appeal to the supposed "uniformity of human experience against miracles" is because of the "lack of many comparable modern claims" (p. 209) in his own day. In other words, Hume and his contemporaries did not have access to the abundant miracle claims in the world around them. Keener seeks to remedy this problem by devoting a significant portion of his book, chapters 7–12, to cataloging the variety of miracle reports available in our modern time. This is a most fascinating section of the book and stunningly rich in detail and documentation. Keener offers accounts from all over the world, but focuses mainly on the "majority world," including Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Not only does this survey effectively refute Hume's appeal to the uniformity of human experience against miracles, but it also effectively challenges traditional Western assumptions about religion in the developing world. Anti-supernaturalists will often dismiss miracle claims from these parts of the world due to the fact that they view the inhabitants as primitive, uneducated, and, to some extent, gullible. But Keener points out that such an approach is blatantly "ethnocentric" and "derogatory" (p. 222). Thus, the academic elite in America and Europe find themselves in an ironic dilemma. While they are often quick to critique others for being ethnocentric, they find themselves guilty of these very charges when they reject the miracle claims of the non-Western world on the basis of its so-called "primitive" culture.

Of course, Keener is well aware that not all of these miracle claims around the world are valid instances of miracles; some have other (and better) explanations. Thus, chapters 13–14 discuss other possible explanations for such claims, such as fraud, genuine anomalies, psychosomatic cures, the placebo effect, and the power of suggestion. While acknowledging that sometimes these factors can account for eyewitness miracle claims, it is not intellectually credible to think that such things can explain *all* miracle claims. Indeed, chapter 14 demonstrates that there have been formal investigations into miracle claims that have sought only to find alternative explanations, rather than being genuinely open to the possibility of divine intervention. These investigations, he argues, are overtly prejudiced against religion and use unreasonable standards for what can count as a "credible" miracle claim—standards that would not be sustained in other areas of life (e.g., a court of law).

In the end, Keener has written an impressive and well-argued work on a very important subject. Not only has he reiterated the long-standing critiques against Hume in a fresh way, but he has broken new ground by exploring modern miracle claims with unprecedented documentation. Any future

discussions of miracles in the NT or in the modern day will surely have to reckon with the arguments of this book.

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David M. Moffitt. *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 141. Leiden: Brill, 2011. 334 pp. £121.00/\$166.00.

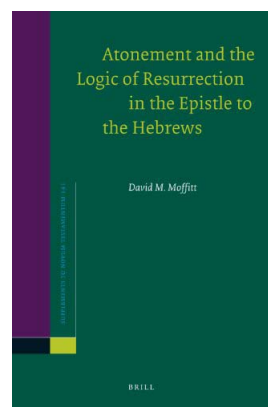
This volume, a revised version of the author's dissertation at Duke University (2010), seeks to refute the common belief that Hebrews sees little (if any) importance in the event of Jesus' resurrection. Rather, he argues, the resurrection plays a crucial role in how Hebrews understands Jesus as both Son exalted above the angels as a prototypical recipient of faith's inheritance and as High Priest who makes atonement on our behalf.

The starting point for Moffitt's argument is that Hebrews presents Jesus as an *embodied* person in heaven. As such, and only as such, he is qualified to receive the coming inheritance of Adam's descendants: exaltation above the angels and authority over the created realm. This argument is based primarily on the contrast between Jesus' possession of a physical body and the angels who are spiritual beings in Heb 1:5–14, and the subjecting of the οἰκουμένη (1:6; 2:5) to Jesus via his humanness in Heb 2:5–18 alongside second temple notions of the οἰκουμένη being ruled in the eschaton by Adam's descendants.

If Jesus is indeed our forerunner and example, as many texts in Hebrews seem to suggest, Moffitt contends that such a notion is implausible apart from the resurrection. Jesus' testing with regard to his faith in the one "able to save him from death" (5:7), for example, is helpful to us in our testing only if he was indeed saved from death via the resurrection. In addition, Jesus' place at the head of the hall of faith, the forerunner of those who will receive the "better resurrection" (11:35), is valid only if Jesus has already received that resurrection.

The second main argument of the book is that if Jesus must have been raised to be the exalted "Son" whose siblings will someday share in his inheritance, the same is true for his role as their High Priest. Moffitt notes that Jesus was qualified to be a priest in the order of Melchizedek only on account of his "indestructible life" (7:16). He could not have been such a priest while on earth because he died—clearly at that point he did not possess indestructible life.

This clearly goes against the common assumption that Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice (a priestly act) *while on the cross*. Rather, Jesus' offering himself to God on our behalf took place after the resurrection when Jesus ascended bodily to heaven and presented himself in the heavenly sanctuary. This sequence of Jesus' atoning action correlates well, Moffitt argues, with recent studies in Leviticus that see the application of the blood (which represents the *life* of the victim, not its *death*), rather than the slaughter of the victim, as the ultimate atoning act. Atonement takes place not at the cross but rather in the presentation of Jesus' resurrected life in the heavenly sanctuary.



Thus, the story of Jesus in Hebrews is this: Jesus died, was raised, ascended, presented himself in the heavenly holy of holies, and was elevated above the angels to the throne at God's right hand. As Moffitt summarizes, "His death sets the sequence into motion. His appearance before God in heaven effects atonement. The bridge between the two is his resurrection" (p. 294).

If a weakness exists within Moffitt's central argument, it is the initial claim that for Hebrews, Jesus' ascension to the throne is contingent upon his continuing incarnate state (as opposed to the spiritual nature of the angels). That some second temple texts (e.g., *Life of Adam and Eve*) saw the eschatological renewal as a material reality is apparent, but I am less convinced that Hebrews 1–2 views Jesus' enthronement in these terms. I am not saying that Moffitt is wrong but that I am not yet convinced.

I have doubts about a few peripheral elements, particularly his reading of Ps 40 vis-à-vis Heb 10 (pp. 234–47) and the use of later extra-biblical sources to suggest common earlier traditions (e.g., *The Cave of Treasures* [pp. 139–41] and Talmud Babli [pp. 150–55]). Some of these discussions also distract rather than contribute to the flow of the book; the argument (via the use of Ps 40 in Heb 10) that Jesus is the one who has already undergone the suffering that marks the way to perfection, for example, strikes me as a relatively straightforward point requiring less attention than it receives. Readers could skim these sections without losing the substance of the argument.

Finally, I find it unfortunate that Moffitt makes no reference to pre-modern Christian readings of Hebrews. What of the commentaries of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Chrysostom, Severian, Oecumenius, Photius, and Augustine, not to mention Luther, Erasmus, and Calvin? So frequently the "consensus" of scholarship refers solely to the last century, and in this case the reader is left wondering whether any of these earlier interpreters of Hebrews have anything to say about its perspective on the resurrection.

A colleague who interacted with Moffitt's work in its earlier stages predicted to me that it would bring about a "Copernican-like revolution" in Hebrews scholarship. That is probably a bit strong! Yet Hebrews' lack of emphasis on the resurrection is certainly a truism in current scholarship, and this volume makes a very strong case for overthrowing that consensus. Whether dealing with specific texts or theological issues in Hebrews, subsequent works will have to take Moffitt's work into account.

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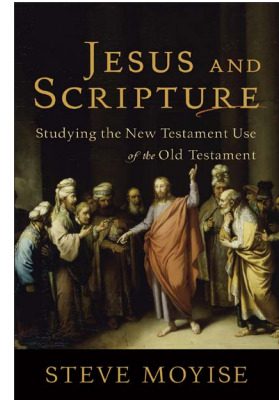
Steve Moyise. *Jesus and Scripture: Studying the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011. viii + 147 pp. \$21.99.

Steve Moyise is professor of New Testament at the University of Chichester (UK). He has authored or coedited several books on the use of the OT in the NT and is a specialist in the subdiscipline with which the present book is concerned.

The book is an introduction to the use of the OT in the Gospels. It consists of an introduction, seven chapters, a conclusion, and two appendices. Chapters 1–4 overview the use of Scripture in each of the four Gospels. Chapters 5–7 introduce the reader to three diverse approaches of scholarship to the subject at hand, which Moyise labels “minimalist,” “moderate,” and “maximalist,” largely by acquainting the reader with their major practitioners.

As in his earlier companion volume to Scripture in Paul (*Paul and Scripture: Studying the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010]), shaded boxes are placed at appropriate points in the book to highlight important topics that may be new to a student, but are relevant to the discipline such as “New English Translation of the LXX (NETS),” “The text of the LXX known to Matthew,” and “Hillel’s seven exegetical rules.” More than a few of these boxes, however, reflect that Moyise is interested in questions tied up especially with historical Jesus research (e.g., “The criterion of embarrassment”; “Critical editions of Q”; “Were the Gospels written by eyewitnesses?”; “Gospel of Thomas”).

Moyise is not an evangelical (he explicitly places himself in the “moderate” camp; pp. 120–21), and he regularly questions the historical authenticity of OT quotations placed on the mouth of Jesus in the Gospels. For those who, with solid rationale, believe that the Gospels present a reliable picture historically of what Jesus said and did, Moyise’s skepticism will become onerous. It becomes evident that Moyise is less interested ultimately in the use of the OT in the Gospels *per se* and more interested in how its use contributes to our knowledge of the historical Jesus. The subtitle of the book perhaps should have been instead, *Studying the Historical Jesus through the Gospels’ Use of the Old Testament*. It is not that the question of historicity is not important to evangelicals (Moyise’s “maximalists”). Christian faith stands or falls upon whether the events of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection actually occurred. But evangelicals, by virtue of their presuppositions, have already embraced a position that understands the Gospels to convey historically reliable information. They are not wrestling, like Moyise, about what OT quotations can or cannot be traced to the historical Jesus. Evangelicals tend to take the text at face value and believe that all the quotations put in the mouth of Jesus in the Gospels are there because they *do*, in fact, ultimately derive from his lips. That the Gospel writers probably felt free to paraphrase Jesus’ OT quotations on occasion does not detract from this. Therefore, evangelicals are usually asking a different set of questions than Moyise when it comes to the use of the OT in the Gospels. Evangelicals want to understand the significance of the quotation in its new context (its “meaning-effects”) and its contribution to biblical theology. Furthermore, despite Moyise’s comments that questions about original authorial intention are passé (pp. 119–20), evangelicals remain and should remain deeply concerned with this issue. I would submit that Jesus and his Jewish interlocutors were deeply concerned with this issue. There is no sense in having a debate over Sabbath or divorce if there is no original authorial intention to which one can appeal to validate one’s interpretation. The appeal to Moses is an appeal to what Moses “meant.” A debate over a text’s meaning betrays the assumption that an author meant



something, that this authorial intention is recoverable, and that this something functions as the agreed-upon arbiter between the diverse interpretations being advanced. Moyise and I do not disagree over the importance of “how a text applies/speaks to the present” (p. 120); the difference, in my view, concerns how one arrives at such a valid application. I remain unconvinced that a faithful application of Scripture can be obtained apart from a prior consideration of authorial intent and original context.

Several evangelical publishing houses have recently introduced an “academic” division into their array (e.g., IVP, Broadman & Holman, Baker). What is noteworthy is that such publishers have consequently attracted writers other than those of an evangelical stripe. The problem arises when evangelical students—trusting evangelical publishers to produce works that reflect evangelical presuppositions—read Moyise’s remarks concerning the general unreliability of John (p. 9 and throughout), with little notice from the back cover or introduction of Moyise’s less than evangelical approach. Because the publishing name “Baker” graces its cover, many will assume that Moyise is an evangelical. Therefore, uninitiated students may interpret Moyise’s statements about John as a major position within their camp. Recent critically engaged yet thoroughly evangelical works have argued that solid rationale exists to hold the opposite in John’s case (e.g., Keener, Blomberg, cf. Richard Bauckham’s volume on eyewitness testimony). These works are not found in Moyise’s select bibliography, and Bauckham’s significant tome is relegated to an endnote (p. 133n1).

I do recommend the book, nevertheless, to evangelical students. Moyise offers a brief yet intelligent survey of the use of the OT in the Gospels. Much in the book is thoughtful and thought-provoking. Moreover, Moyise has written his overview “not to propagate my conclusions” but “to encourage readers to work out their own” (p. 121). Evangelical students can learn much from him. Despite the stated purpose, however, an introduction to the OT in the Gospels, which provides help to questions that Moyise’s “maximalists” are finally asking, still remains to be written.

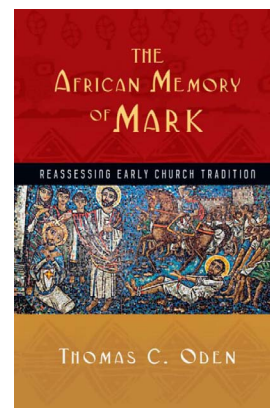
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Thomas C. Oden. *The African Memory of Mark: Reassessing Early Church Tradition*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2011. 279 pp. \$22.00.

The author is Director of the Center for Early African Christianity at Eastern University, St. Davids, Pennsylvania. Oden is one of the general editors of the landmark Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture series (29 vols.; IVP, 1998–2010).

The purpose of the book is “to show the greater plausibility of the African memory of Mark than of its modern [Western] mythic alternatives” (p. 256). The intended audience is not a “scholarly” one, but ordinary readers, especially “youthful Christian believers on the African continent” (p. 14). The author claims that his work is the first in decades to reassess the historicity of the African traditions concerning St. Mark, his African origins, his relationship to the apostle Peter, and his African ministry and martyrdom.



Oden unwraps for the reader a rich and venerated history of African church tradition and story that is virtually unknown outside of Africa. By the phrase, “the African memory of Mark,” Oden means the ancient African tradition concerning St. Mark, “the full weight of cumulative evidences coming out of the African continent over the length of centuries, including evidences from archaeology, epigraphic and literary sources, as well as oral traditions and stories of the saints” (p. 29). Within this African memory, embedded as it is in Coptic (and less directly, Ethiopian) Orthodox history, tradition, and liturgy, resides an ancient account concerning St. Mark. According to this memory, Mark was born in Cyrene of Africa (as a diaspora Jew), was related to the apostle Peter, and—upon Peter’s death in Rome and the completion of his gospel—journeyed to Alexandria and established the apostolic church. There he also died a martyr’s death. St. Mark is therefore understood today by the Coptic Orthodox Church as the apostolic father of African Christianity (based in Alexandria), just as Peter is understood by the Roman Catholic Church to be the apostolic father of Western Christianity (Rome).

Oden is passionate about his subject matter and believes that it holds significance for helping to lift African Christianity out of its low self-esteem, induced—at least in part—by colonialism and the oppression that too often accompanied it. Oden believes that to recover and retell to African Christianity its own apostolic story—obscured by Western dominance and its skepticism towards African traditions—is to offer her a sense of place and destiny among the nations of the world as an intellectual and spiritual equal.

Oden seeks to legitimize the African memory of Mark by arguing for its historicity. Some, however, will probably question aspects of Oden’s historical reconstruction. First, three of Oden’s four stated sources are late (see pp. 60–76). Second, Oden occasionally defends conclusions that are based upon slight biblical evidence (e.g., in his interpretation that the house of the mother of John Mark served as the venue for the events of the Last Supper and for Pentecost; see ch. 6). Third, Oden occasionally wants to suggest that an aspect of the memory is historical despite concessions of its highly speculative nature (e.g., the suggestion that Peter, guided by Mark, fled Jerusalem, took refuge in Babylon, Egypt, and wrote 1 Peter from there; see pp. 114–22). Oden is right, however, to question the thoroughgoing skepticism of the earlier German scholarship of Adolf von Harnack and Walter Bauer. Moreover, I agree with Oden that it is historically probable that Mark journeyed to Alexandria and established there the apostolic church (so also, most recently, specialist Birger Pearson, “Earliest Egyptian Christianity,” Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, 19 Nov 2011; Eusebius, however, was apparently unaware of any tradition concerning a Markan martyrdom).

Oden has stumbled upon a fascinating African church tradition and has presented it in an accessible way. With this book, Oden once again invites an ethnocentric and parochial Western Church to explore the continent of Africa and its distinct Christian legacy. Indeed, it is legitimate to ask whether Oden’s ideal reader may be the *Western* believer despite the statement that the intended audience is “believers on the African continent.” The book opens another world to the former. It bids this reader to the top of the hill to gaze upon the vistas of African Christianity, to marvel at its distinctive history, and to appreciate its robust intellectual and spiritual traditions. The book gently chides the reader for assuming that the Western version of the faith was all that there is or all that matters. It desires to stir a passion within the reader to explore African Christianity more and to read further.

Let other historians be alerted that the time is ripe for a thorough reassessment, to follow up what Oden has initiated (and let this include less unwarranted skepticism in the vein of Harnack and Bauer, with new approaches to better assess African traditions and historical memory). In the meantime,

African Christianity may find in the tradition of the “African memory of Mark” a unique sense of continuity with the earliest apostolic witness and thus a stronger sense of shared destiny in the global Church’s mission of bringing gospel blessing to the rest of the world.

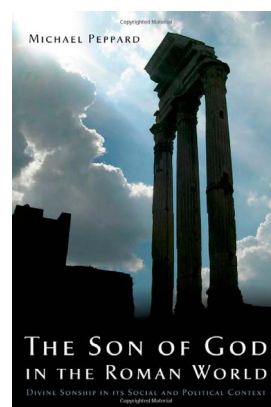
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Michael Peppard. *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in Its Social and Political Context*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. xii + 289 pp. \$74.00.

Michael Peppard notes that a metaphor no longer works when its meaning becomes stable and fails to provoke or stimulate the reader. For the great span of the history of the church, the metaphor of divine sonship has lost its original meaning because divine sonship has been situated within the context of “conceptions from elite theological debates of later centuries” rather than within “the Roman sociopolitical environment of the first and second centuries” (p. 3). Peppard critiques the “Platonic” and “Nicaean” hermeneutical framework within which scholarship has, even if implicitly and unconsciously, understood the term “son of God,” and reinterprets the metaphor within the context of Roman father-son relationships. Rather than denoting Jesus’ “philosophical essence” or “absolute divinity,” the term “son of God” is best illuminated when understood analogically with the divine sonship of the Roman emperor.



Chapter 1, “Divine Sonship before Nicea,” suggests that NT scholars too often assume the term “son of God” is self-evident and anachronistically use “Platonic” categories such as being/becoming or transcendent/mundane. Alternatively, scholars who use *religionsgeschichtliche* methods have produced an array of historical evidence, but they too have shortcomings. Wilhelm Bousset simply assumes the title implies metaphysical essence. Martin Hengel unjustifiably dismisses the possibility of the influence of Roman emperor worship. Larry Hurtado minimizes the possibility of non-Jewish influence on early Christology, and he is able to claim that there is no true analogy to the worship of Jesus only by ignoring Roman emperor worship. The method that Peppard prefers draws from *religionsgeschichtliche* methods, but is less concerned with the origin of a term as much as for its resonance. Thus, “son of God” may have conjured up Davidic ideology for one audience, tales of Greek gods for another audience, and the Roman Emperor for another. Peppard’s approach is to examine how the term “son of God” would resonate with a Roman audience, and then ask how “this resonance affects our understanding of the Gospel of Mark and other selected Christian texts” (p. 28).

Chapter 2, “Divinity and Divine Sonship in the Roman World,” examines the transformation in scholarly perspectives on divinity in the Roman Empire. Whereas older scholarship, influenced by Platonic concerns with essence and an over-privileging of elitist *literary* sources, assumed a total division between the material world and divinity, recent scholarship has argued that divinity “was not an essence but a status—a status honored because of powerful benefactions. . . . When continuous benefactions led to continuous honors, that process could admittedly lead to a kind of ontology—a status solidified because of a god’s perpetual benefactions” (p. 35). In other words, divinity is less a matter of ontology

as it is of status bestowed upon powerful entities who distribute benefactions. Humans and gods were, then, on two ends of a sliding scale with the possibility for the former to attain divine status provided they demonstrate their divinity through powerful benefactions: “Benefactions were what led to worship, and continuous benefactions led to continuous worship” (p. 40). The premier example of a human who attained the status of god through benefactions is the Roman Emperor.

Chapter 3, “Begotten or Made,” sets forth an alternative framework for understanding the “son of God.” Within the Roman world, adoption was a crucial practice that stabilized family lines by securing a legitimate son to receive one’s inheritance. Adoption was, furthermore, a significant mode for “imperial succession, of transmitting power from father to son” (p. 50) for those who did not have natural sons. Peppard emphasizes that adoption was often a privilege of the elite for extending kinship relations, that the adopted son *really became* the son of the adoptive father, and that the practice could increase the prestige of the father who gained the adopted son’s clients. The most significant adopted son was Octavian, whose adoptive father was *both* Julius Caesar and Jupiter. As the son of a God through adoption, Augustus became “the father of the Roman people, he himself with divine lineage through his adoptive father, and his family would now preside in the fatherly role over the Empire” (p. 61). Through his adoption Augustus “incarnated . . . Jupiter’s traditional fatherly role” (p. 62) and became the *paterfamilias* of the Empire. The imperial adoption of a son was often construed as a divine election whereby the gods declared the divine status of the adopted son of God.

Chapter 4, “Rethinking Divine Sonship in the Gospel of Mark,” asks, “How would a listener more attuned to Roman culture than the Jewish Scriptures have understood” Mark’s account of Jesus’ baptism (p. 86)? Peppard notes patristic testimony that links Mark’s Gospel to Rome and suggests that the “characterization of Jesus can be justifiably construed in the light of Roman imperial ideology” (p. 93). Peppard’s thesis is that Mark depicts Jesus’ baptism as his adoption by God, a divine adoption where Jesus is made a counter-emperor. Peppard emphasizes that the language of “adoption” should not be understood as indicating a low Christology; rather, given that “adoption is how the most powerful man in the world gained his power” (p. 95), Mark’s Christology should be construed as high. Peppard argues that the aorist verb εὐδόκησα consistently connotes “choice” or “election,” and therefore, the phrase from Mark 1:11 ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα should be translated as “I have chosen you.” The dove that descends upon Jesus would be understood by a Roman audience as a sign of God’s adoption of Jesus as a counter-emperor. Rather than a Roman eagle, the symbol of military might, the descent of the dove shows that “this counter-emperor will not rule in the spirit of the bellicose eagle, but in the spirit of the pure, gentle, peaceful, and even sacrificial dove” (p. 123).

Chapter 5, “Begotten and Adopted Sons of God—Before and After Nicea,” shows how Peppard’s examination of sonship in the Roman world “allows us to hear new resonances of divine sonship in early Christianity” (p. 132). Peppard argues that in the first and second century both “adoptive sonship” (e.g., Paul’s epistles and *Shepherd of Hermas*) and “natural/begotten sonship” (Gospel of John) “were used to refer to the divine sonship of Jesus Christ *and also* to the divine sonship afforded to all Christians” (p. 132). Both metaphors were legitimate means of expressing Christology *and* soteriology and were interwoven. Starting in the third century with Origen, however, one begins to find a demarcation between the two metaphors: adoptive sonship is true only for Christians and Jesus is emphatically seen as “begotten, not made.” Peppard states this clearly:

Earlier, in the first two centuries, adoptive sonship could be used to symbolize both Christ and Christians, based as it was on the exalted status of well-known adopted sons

in Roman society. But by the late fourth and into the fifth century, theologians like Cyril and Augustine would hammer home a different point: *stop mixing metaphors*. Jesus is God's begotten son by nature; you are all God's adoption children by grace. (p. 171)

There is much to like in this monograph. The method is clear as he seeks to understand how early Christian texts would *resonate* with audiences; he brings the best of recent scholarship on Roman religion and social practice to his interpretation of the early Christian writings; he provides a strong reading of Mark's Gospel in light of Roman imperial ideology; and he demonstrates convincingly how the originally mixed metaphors of adoptive sonship and natural/begotten sonship were separated in the third and fourth centuries.

Throughout my reading of Peppard, I did, however, have two quibbles. First, while more work has been done to situate Mark's Gospel within a Jewish context, would not many of Mark's readers have been familiar with *both* a Roman imperial context *and* the Jewish Scriptures? When the NT writings refer to Jesus as "son of God," would not many have thought of *both* the Emperor *and* the royal son of David? While Peppard is right to focus his energies on accounting for the side that has been underplayed, a richer analysis would have incorporated both contexts. Second, Peppard falls prey to the NT scholarly penchant for using the abstraction of "Platonism" as a foil for his readings. The third- and fourth-century church fathers can no longer, on his read, understand the original meaning of "the son of God" because they are preoccupied with Platonic preoccupations of essence and preexistence. Yet many of the NT writings are indeed concerned with the "ontological status" of Jesus, assert and assume his preexistence, and do not create a false dichotomy between "being" and "function."

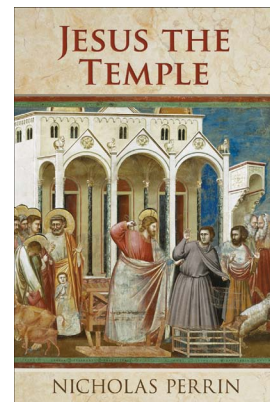
These two minor critiques, however, should by no means detract the reader from engaging with this book. The work is highly readable, engaging, helps to fill a lacuna in our understanding of the term "son of God," and will serve as an important dialogue partner for my teaching and research.

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Nicholas Perrin. *Jesus the Temple*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010. 223 pp. \$29.99.

Nicholas Perrin is associate professor of New Testament at Wheaton College Graduate School. He was formerly a research assistant to N. T. Wright. As one reads *Jesus the Temple*, it becomes apparent that he agrees with Wright on some significant points. For instance, Perrin says at several points that Jews in the first century were still anticipating the end of the exile and the fulfillment of OT prophecies related to the end of the exile.

Perrin's basic aim is to provide a historical Jesus study that brings out how closely Jesus identifies "himself and his movement" with "Yahweh's eschatological temple" (p. 12). The ushering in of the new eschatological temple of God occurs in accordance with the following plot. Jesus and the NT writers identify pervasive corruption on the part of the priesthood who oversee the Jerusalem temple. This corruption has risen to the level of "apostasy within the temple," which means that "the abomination that causes desolation" (Dan 9:27) has appeared in the temple (p. 12).



The abomination's presence in the temple signals that the prophesied time of tribulation has come. The tribulation will culminate in the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. In place of the temple, Jesus establishes the eschatological temple, which includes himself as the new temple and his followers who are in union with him (pp. 11–12, 77–78, 110). Like other “counter-temple movements” from the time of Jesus, Jesus’ followers distinguish themselves from the corrupt temple leadership by identifying themselves “both as and for the poor” (pp. 77–78).

In support of his basic aim and plot for the advent of the eschatological temple (referred to as the temple plot below), Perrin provides extrabiblical historical evidence and evidence from the NT. In terms of extrabiblical historical evidence (ch. 1), he points to two other Jewish “counter-temple movements” that appear to support the temple plot that he later finds in the teachings of Jesus and in the NT. One such movement produced the *Psalms of Solomon* and the other produced sectarian writings that show up in the Dead Sea Scrolls. He closes chapter 1 by showing how John the Baptist’s ministry stands in continuity with these two movements. Chapter 2 overviews the NT and tries to show that the NT writers, including Paul, support the same essential temple plot that one finds in the Jewish counter-temple movements of chapter 1. Chapter 3 examines Jesus’ temple cleansing in the Gospels. Perrin’s goal here is to show that Jesus himself supports the same temple plot when he cleanses the temple and speaks about the significance of this action (see esp. p. 111). According to chapter 4, Jesus follows the example of other counter-temple movements in bringing hope of deliverance to the poor. Finally, chapter 5 connects some of Jesus’ characteristic actions, like healing and exorcisms, to ushering in the eschatological temple, which is “centered around” Jesus himself (p. 180).

As far as evaluating Perrin’s work, the big question is whether Perrin’s big picture will hold up under close scrutiny. Can one really show that Jesus and the NT writers agree with the basic tenets of his plot for the advent of the eschatological temple (his temple plot)? Some elements of the plot seem problematic. The two most noteworthy elements have to do with the apostasy of the priests and tribulation. More NT evidence is necessary to support the claim that the apostasy of the priests means the appearance of the abomination of desolation in the Temple and the arrival of the time of “messianic tribulation” (p. 78). It would be helpful to see a defense of these points. Perrin makes them in passing and acts like the NT supports his points (pp. 12, 77–78), but a more robust defense of them would buttress his proposed temple plot. Along these lines, a more clear explanation of the period of tribulation that he refers to at various points would be helpful for the reader. His limited explanation of it seems to tie Jesus and the church’s tribulation primarily to the first century, starting with events leading to Jesus’ death and ending with the fall of the Jerusalem temple. But perhaps this is not what he means at all. The reader cannot be sure.

In terms of contributions and helpfulness, Perrin’s book attends to a significant theme, namely, the fulfillment of the temple in Jesus and the church. Along the way, he also shows that Jesus was not the only one during his time to point out the corruption of the temple leadership and the need for change (ch. 1). He attends to his temple theme primarily from a historical standpoint and tries to show that the actions of Jesus have a lot to do with ushering in the eschatological temple. He prompts some interesting questions. For example, should one associate Jesus’ concern for the poor, his healing ministry, his exorcisms, or his feeding of the crowds with his fulfillment of the temple? These do not generally top the list in terms of actions or teachings that single out Jesus as the fulfillment of the temple, but further evidence may show that one or more do belong on the list somewhere. The third chapter helpfully surveys historical Jesus scholarship regarding Jesus’ temple cleansing. I found it to be

the most helpful chapter of the book. It demonstrates Perrin's knowledge of historical Jesus scholarship and interacts capably with a large body of data. Overall, Perrin's work is readable and accessible. It will be the most pleasing to those who have an interest in historical Jesus studies. They will appreciate Perrin's attempts to connect Jewish literature, Jesus' teaching, and the rest of the NT along a common trajectory, one that shows that Jesus ushers in the eschatological temple.

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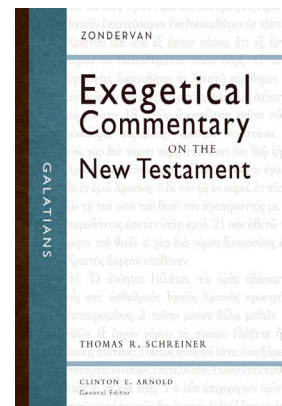
Thomas R. Schreiner. *Galatians*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. 423 pp. \$34.99.

Teachers of seminary courses on Galatians are regularly frustrated by that basic question, "What book(s) should I buy?" While Galatians stands at the center of exegetical and theological discussions and has received attention in articles and monographs, it has until recently been somewhat overlooked by commentary writers. Schreiner thus offers a welcome resource.

He writes as a conservative evangelical pastor-scholar for those who will preach and teach Galatians. His clear writing combines well with a series format that puts the Greek in parentheses and focuses on expositing the author's English translation, allowing the student or pastor without extensive knowledge of Greek to follow the argument.

Following an introductory section that moves briskly and effectively through concerns such as date, recipients and their situation, structure, etc., each passage of Galatians is presented via seven steps: (1) The "Literary Context" places the portion within the flow of the book. (2) The "Main Idea" succinctly summarizes the passage, usually in a couple sentences. (3) The "Translation in Graphic Layout" breaks the passage into clauses and phrases with a label to show relationships. This is extraordinarily valuable as a tool to assess the unit, in particular to instantly identify levels of subordination and coordination. Because of discrepancies between Pauline sentence length and that found in most translations, the flow of thought is sometimes obscured, and expositors can major on minor points. This visual aid can serve as a valuable corrective. (4) A statement of "Structure" follows to express the logical flow within a given passage and also to explain the "Graphic Layout" where needed. (5) The "Exegetical Outline" presents the flow of the passage and helps visualize how the unit in question sits within the larger argumentative section. While this might seem like a lot of effort as a preliminary to exegesis, it presents the steps that the student of Scripture ought to work through, intuitively if not explicitly, in approaching any passage. As such, it serves as a powerful teaching and learning tool, and it was a constant point of reference for this reviewer. (6) Once these steps of placing the text in context are complete, Schreiner offers his "Explanation of the Text," i.e., the verse-by-verse exposition. (7) Finally (in terms of the main exposition), a "Theology in Application" discussion seeks to develop the theological, including pastoral-theological, implications of the text.

In addition to these seven steps, two elements are noteworthy: (1) Schreiner presents sharply focused excursions on major issues as they arise. They showcase Schreiner's ability to cut through thorny issues



in few words (they tend to be a couple of pages). (2) The fifteen-page conclusion to the commentary, “Themes in Galatians,” is a concise theology of Galatians that will surely serve as a point of reference for many.

Schreiner offers straightforward and sensible explanations of most difficulties. As expected in a commentary at this level, he doesn’t defend every conclusion, though the footnotes regularly point to further discussion. Often, the semi-technical nature of *Galatians* means that readers will have to accept Schreiner’s conclusions or do their own digging. This is true concerning both exegesis and academic engagement.

Concerning Paul’s evaluation of the Jerusalem apostles, Schreiner finds that Paul agrees with the apostles in terms of gospel content, but must walk a fine line lest his own ministry be undermined by a cult of personality. Schreiner interacts, albeit with a light touch, with the New Perspective. That is to say, he upholds a traditional reading while pointing to flaws in NPP readings—without letting the critiques clutter his exposition of the text. He understands “the faith of Christ” as the Christian’s faith in Christ. His view of the law conforms more to the “modified Lutheran view” than the traditional Reformed position.

Some format-related limitations are evident. The volume contains a Scripture index but catalogs neither Greek terms nor non-biblical ancient writers. Sometimes *Galatians* feels like it is addressed to the American church: illustrations and applications tend to relate to American life and institutions. With the globalization of academia, this comes as something of a surprise.

The “Theology in Application” sections are bound to be somewhat controversial. Though they are helpful, some arguably move too quickly to moral or universal truths. For example, having exegeted Paul’s description of the events in Antioch (Gal 2:11–14), Schreiner mixes into a discussion of the gospel the suggestion that Christian leaders are vulnerable to sin, that this can impact others, that we therefore need to learn how appropriately to rebuke one another, and that we need to accept correction with humility. While all of this is true, is it really how Paul wanted the Galatians to respond to these words? Does it move too quickly to what *we* are meant to do, while Paul’s purpose in these verses is to highlight what God has done in the gospel and how that has been threatened not by a “mere leader of the church,” but by the Rock, by Cephas himself? In a discussion of apostles and pillars, Cephas plays a special role, but now he is floundering. The move to universal and existential issues must not detract from the particularity of this threat to the gospel. And our need to apply the text to contemporary life must not turn gospel foundations, with their particular historical and theological truths, into rules for living.

A second “Application” that left me with reservations relates to Gal 4:21–5:1 and is titled “Liberation from Sin.” In this section, Schreiner speaks of the power of grace to set free, concluding with a paragraph on the unchanged person in which he suggests that such a person may be unconverted. He then names the problem of pornography and, citing a pastor who counsels in this area, suggests that the non-Christian can never overcome it and that the failure to overcome is “one of the signs to him that a person was not truly a believer” (p. 309). While Schreiner unmistakably points to the complexity of the issue of the believer’s ongoing struggle with sin and while it is correct that the Spirit produces discernible and inevitable change, the question of assurance nevertheless requires special sensitivity: before reaching any conclusions about a person, a great many things—including personal and spiritual maturity—need to be taken into consideration. That is to say, the sharp edge of pastoral care may require more nuance than can be loaded into a single paragraph.

This is, to be sure, an isolated instance from one who writes with pastoral warmth. Schreiner is on the short list of books that I will recommend to those who ask about Galatians. I usually found myself agreeing with Schreiner's interpretation of Galatians, and where I didn't, it was often more a case of wanting to dig deeper than of rejection. *Galatians*, because it is timely, clearly written, persuasive, and pastorally rich, will serve the needs of both those enrolled in a course on the epistle and the pastor embarking on a preaching series.

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King L. She. *The Use of Exodus in Hebrews*. Studies in Biblical Literature 142. New York: Peter Lang, 2011. xx + 214 pp. \$77.95.

The goal of this book, a revised version of the author's dissertation (Dallas Theological Seminary), is to examine the prescriptive ontology that Hebrews derives from its use of Exodus (p. 9). To be more specific, it examines the foundational role that Exod 3:14 (alluded to in Heb 11:6) and Exod 25:40 (cited in Heb 8:5) play in the epistle's broader conception of the God-world relation.

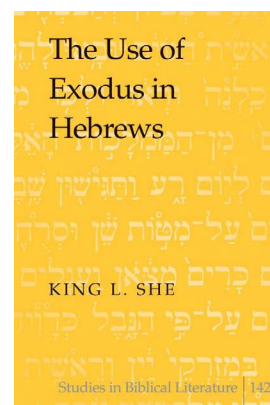
The book opens with two basic premises. First, the current diversity in Hebrews scholarship is a "crisis of faith" (i.e., diversity of interpretation) resulting from the fact that Hebrews scholars have read Hebrews descriptively but not prescriptively (exactly what the author means by "descriptive" and "prescriptive" is unclear) (pp. 5, 94, 121, 157). Second, the necessary model for reading Scripture prescriptively has been offered in the work of Fernando Canale; the "crisis of faith" indicates that scholars have not paid sufficient attention to Canale (pp. 7, 57).

Following from these premises, She claims the primacy of Exodus for a prescriptive reading of Hebrews. First, the ontology of Hebrews is founded upon the divine nature of Jesus, "Christ as YHWH"—this is the substance of the "confession that the recipients of Hebrews are in danger of deserting" (p. 19). Since divine ontology is the central problem in Hebrews and the ontology of Jesus is derived from its allusion in Heb 11:6 to Exod 3:14, that allusion is the centerpiece of the epistle (p. 165). Second, Exodus also undergirds Hebrews' perspective on the God-world relation through its citation of Exod 25:40: "see to it that you do everything according to the pattern you saw on the mountain" (p. 46).

This multifaceted dependence on Exodus leads to further conclusions. First, the central background of Hebrews' rhetorical situation is that of the golden calf incident—this is how Hebrews defines apostasy (pp. 27, 29, 144, 149). Second, Hebrews is *entirely*, in She's terms, "autopistic" (dependent on biblical concepts) rather than "axiopistic" (dependent on extra-biblical concepts, i.e., natural theology and philosophy) (pp. 53–55, 111).

The contribution of this book is largely in the issues it raises. How do NT books reflect the ontology of their OT sources? Does diversity of interpretation imply a "crisis of faith" for evangelical readers of Scripture? What value may we place on pre-modern biblical interpretation in light of its metaphysics?

Beyond these stimulating questions, however, this book is extremely weak. Consider, first of all, She's dependence on Canale. She assumes Canale's version of the Hellenization thesis without mentioning



a single pre-modern source, claiming, “Scriptures have never [prior to Canale] been accorded the foundational role in Christian reflection about God” (p. 59), and referring to Canale’s 1983 dissertation, “Biblical ontology (pedagogy) does exist and it was born in 1983” (p. 78). She goes on to suggest that, for classical (i.e., pre-Kantian) theology, “the pre-existence or theophany of Christ in the OT is not real because it is understood as a timeless divine entity” (p. 107), and “[c]lassical theology is contrary to *Auctor’s* ontology for he is convinced of the reality of history and its significance for eternity” (p. 93).

Second, one finds repeated misuse of secondary sources. She cites scholars as supportive of an argument when in fact the cited piece says nothing of the sort (e.g., Hafemann on pp. 31–32; the correlation of Canale and Seitz on pp. 35–36; Thiele on pp. 40–41; McKnight on p. 57; Sterling on p. 122). He cavalierly dismisses Hays on intertextuality (pp. 65–66) as well as numerous Hebrews scholars (e.g., Son, Emmrich, Gelardini, pp. 166–68) simply because they understand the NT to interact with extra-biblical sources. He also constantly argues that a point is valid because “scholars” have argued it, and a glance at the footnote reveals one or two unpublished dissertations as constitutive of “scholars” (pp. 15, 64, 130, 136, 151, 159).

Third, the interaction with Hebrews’ use of sources is sorely lacking in scholarly rigor. Intertexts, for She, are *solely* based on the notes in the NA²⁷ (pp. 11, 35). Hebrews could not have formulated its Christology in conversation with *any* extra-biblical sources because Second Temple Judaism did not have a high Christology (p. 157). Hebrews must be using Exodus because the two share some common cultic terminology (even though the same terms are found in droves in Leviticus and Numbers as well) (p. 38). The suggestion that “[t]he most important allusion is Exod 3:14 (Heb 11:6) because it serves as the ontological marker to indicate the identity and activity of God in biblical history” (p. 48) would, in theory, be a powerful claim with serious ramifications for further study of Hebrews, but She makes no *argument* on its behalf.

Fourth, the book contains numerous outlandish claims and unwarranted personal attacks. For example, She claims that scholars have misunderstood Canale because Canale told him so in a personal conversation (p. 57). On another occasion, “It is well-known that main stream evangelical seminaries advocate the multiplicity of sources as the foundation of theology,” and “bible students are ‘instructed’ to construct doctrines in light of the creeds of church councils lest they be branded heretics or are unable to graduate with their theological degrees” (pp. 58–59). The role of the creeds in the contemporary church is certainly a matter of debate; to so quickly dismiss them altogether is unwise.

In conclusion, I could not disagree more strongly with the presuppositions, content, and conclusions of this book. The use of Exodus in Hebrews is a topic worthy of our attention, and as such it deserves better treatment than She provides.

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James W. Thompson. *Moral Formation according to Paul: The Context and Coherence of Pauline Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011. xv + 256 pp. \$24.99.

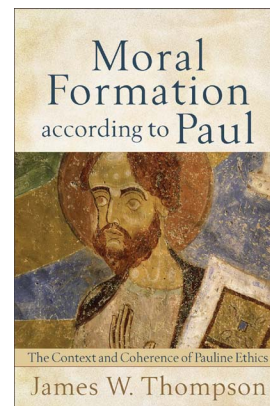
One debate that has famously shaped Pauline scholarship in the last generation is whether Paul's understanding of the law is either consistent or coherent. In this book, James W. Thompson asks a distinct but related question: Is Paul's vision of the moral life of Christians a coherent one? Having concluded in an earlier monograph that the goal of Paul's ministry was moral formation, and contending here that "moral instructions are the means toward the transformation of the community," Thompson undertakes in this work to explore the contours and shape of those instructions (pp. ix, 3).

Thompson's introduction both helpfully maps the field of academic opinion concerning moral instruction in Paul and charts the course that this book will follow. The first chapter highlights dimensions of the ethics of Diaspora Jewish literature. These Jews "urge their readers to appropriate the identity of ancient Israel as the people set apart from their contemporaries and called to demonstrate their election by a shared standard of conduct" (p. 39). That shared standard is the Law of Moses. These Jews placed comparatively little emphasis on the ceremonial laws of Moses, stressing in their moral teaching the Holiness Code (Lev 17–26). They did not hesitate, Thompson argues, to draw from Hellenistic philosophical writings where those writings overlapped with the commands of Torah.

Subsequent chapters argue a strong affinity between Paul's ethics and those of Diaspora Jewish literature. The second chapter argues that across his correspondence Paul is concerned to cultivate an identity distinctive to the Christian church—one of "fictive kinship" as the family of God (p. 61). This identity, bolstered by a "new symbolic universe" consisting of a "shared narrative" and "rituals" that help to "sustain this narrative" (pp. 44–45), provides the foundation for the church's "corporate ethic" (p. 62). Chapters three through five explore Paul's ethics proper. Conceiving 1 Thessalonians as "catechesis for new converts" (p. 86), Thompson sees Paul's emphasis in this letter upon "sexual morality and community responsibility" as one shared with Diaspora Jewish writers. Paul's lists of virtue and vice, which Thompson helpfully tables (pp. 91–93), manifest Paul's debt "to the Holiness Code, the summaries of the law, and the Jewish paraenetic tradition" (p. 109). While Paul did not require that Gentile Christians keep the ceremonial commands of the Mosaic law, he did require that they keep its moral demands. He further believed, with other Diaspora Jews, that "all humanity is subject to the law's [moral] demands" (p. 133).

Chapters six and seven stress Paul's differences with his Jewish contemporaries. Paul expressed a profound and otherwise unparalleled "anthropological pessimism" of non-Christians to keep the law's demands. He held an "optimism" in Christians' "potential" to observe the law—an optimism rooted in the Spirit's enabling, not the law's enabling (pp. 155–56). Paul, furthermore, emphasized love to a degree unparalleled among his contemporaries. This emphasis is owing to the way in which, for Paul, "the new experience in Christ brings new dimensions to the concept." Even so, Paul did not set law against love. Love, rather, "is the lens for observing [the law's commands]" (p. 180).

Before he draws his conclusions, Thompson devotes a final chapter to exploring whether the Disputed Letters reflect continuity or discontinuity with the Undisputed Letters with respect to ethics (p. 181). While he argues for an essential continuity among them, he contends that the Pastoral Epistles



reflect certain ethical departures from the Undisputed Letters. Specifically, they abandon the “strong Pauline communal emphasis on ‘one another’” and “equate . . . the Greek cardinal virtues . . . with Christian conduct” (p. 206).

Thompson’s work has many commendable features. He successfully makes the case that Paul’s ethic is a fundamentally coherent one. He further demonstrates continuity in Paul with the OT’s summons to Israel to live in light of a distinctive identity grounded in their redemption by God. He also provides much exegetical support for what theologians have termed “the third use of the law” in Paul’s ethical reflections.

Thompson’s claims raise a couple of questions as well. To speak of the familial character of the family as “fictive,” of the Christian identity as rooted in “a new symbolic universe,” and of the sacraments as “reenact[ments of] aspects of the founding narrative and reinforce[ments of] the memory that shapes their place in the world and their identity” (p. 45) hardly does justice to the fundamentally realistic character of the historical events that, for Paul, underlie and define Christian identity. Further, Thompson overstates what he perceives to be the differences between the ethics of the Pastoral Epistles and the ethics of the Undisputed Epistles. When one takes into account the fact that each Pastoral focuses upon the ecclesiastical responsibilities of a younger ministerial associate, any absence of “one another” passages recedes in importance. When one furthermore recognizes, as Thompson does, that elements of the Greek cardinal virtues are present in the Undisputed Letters, any difference between the Undisputed Epistles and the Pastorals on this point is one of degree and not of kind.

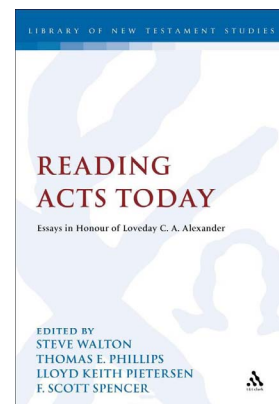
In conclusion, Thompson has produced a helpful and engaging discussion of Pauline ethics. In its concern to set those ethics in their context, to demonstrate leading themes and commonalities within Paul’s ethical instructions, and to stress the fundamental coherence of Paul’s ethical reflection, *Moral Formation According to Paul* is a valuable resource for scholar and student alike.

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Steve Walton, Thomas E. Phillips, Lloyd Pietersen, and F. Scott Spencer, eds. *Reading Acts Today: Essays in Honour of Loveday C. A. Alexander*. Library of New Testament Studies 427. London: T&T Clark, 2011. xxiii + 232 pp. £65.00/\$120.00.

This volume is offered in honor of Loveday Alexander, Professor Emerita of Biblical Studies at the University of Sheffield and Canon Theologian of Chester Cathedral. The contributors include two of Alexander’s former PhD students (Walton, Pietersen) and other accomplished NT scholars, both conservative and critical, from North America and Europe. The essays offer various models for “reading Acts today,” including comparison with extra-biblical texts, historical and source criticism, reception history, and literary and theological studies.

Part one includes five essays broadly concerned with “Reading Acts in its Ancient Context,” reflecting Professor Alexander’s scholarly contribution in *The Preface to Luke’s Gospel* (1993) and *Acts in its Ancient Literary Context* (2005). In ch. 1, Richard Burridge contends that treating Luke-Acts “as a single work



in two volumes is problematic for genre” (p. 4). Applying the criteria he employed in his work on the genre of the Gospels, BurrIDGE concludes that Acts is best described as a “biographical monograph,” which recounts Jesus’ continued activity through the ministry of Peter, Paul, and the early church (p. 28). While this is an important contribution to the discussion of the genre of Acts, it is unfortunate that BurrIDGE does not consider Brian Rosner’s suggestion that Acts is best categorized as “biblical history,” consciously modeled on the historical books of the Septuagint (“Acts and Biblical History,” in Winter and Clarke, eds. *The Book of Acts in its Ancient Literary Setting* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 65–82).

In ch. 2, Thomas Phillips explores the significance of the “sign” of swaddling clothes in the Lukan infancy narrative. He detects extensive symbolic use of swaddling clothes in Greek literature before the NT period, particularly in Euripides’ *Ion* and the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*. Phillips then suggests that “the literary motif of a divine son establishing his place within the divine family” offers a culturally appropriate backdrop for reading Luke 2:7, 12. The author ably explores the interesting ancient motif of swaddling clothes, though one wonders if the Jewish shepherds, to whom this “sign” is given in Luke 2:12, would have possibly made such a connection.

In ch. 3, Dennis MacDonald defends the novel thesis that Luke’s narration of Judas’ death is dependent on Papias. The author builds his case on a number of premises not defended in this essay, such as Mark’s knowledge of Q and a second-century dating of Acts. Further, the evidence MacDonald offers for Luke’s dependence on Papias (whose writings are preserved by fourth-century authors Eusebius and Apollinaris) would more plausibly be read the other way around (as suggested by Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006], 14).

In ch. 4, Scott Spencer explores the emotional impact of the death of Ananias and Sapphira in Luke’s narrative. He reads the references to “great fear” in Acts 5:5, 11 in dialogue with Aristotle, who advised that readers fear “the right things . . . for the right purpose . . . in the right manner . . . at the right time” (cited on p. 66). Spencer concludes, “Ananias and Sapphira literally die of shame” (p. 73), and their shameful death does not move the church to cowardly retreat but to bold advance.

In ch. 5, Barry Matlock examines the portrayal of Paul’s conversion/call in his undisputed letters (Gal 1:11–17; Phil 3:2–11; 1 Cor 15:1–11), noting differences of perspective between these letters and Acts concerning Paul’s past persecutions and his claims to apostleship as a witness to the risen Lord. Matlock’s essay may have been strengthened (and at some points challenged) by more substantial engagement with 1 Tim 1:12–17; Acts 22:3–21; 26:4–23.

Part two offers six essays devoted to “Reading Themes in Acts.” In ch. 6, Joel Green critically assesses recent challenges to the unity of Luke-Acts on the grounds of canonical placement (Wall), reception history (Rowe), and authorship (Walters). He concludes, “Acts itself invites a reading strategy that ties the narrative of Acts back into Luke’s Gospel, with Acts as a deliberate narrative continuation of Luke” (p. 106).

In ch. 7, James Dunn suggests that Luke and Paul offer readers different geographical and ideological perspectives in their portrait of Paul. Dunn maintains that Luke follows a “Jerusalem version” of Paul’s controversial visits to Jerusalem and thereby “went out of his way to present Paul in terms which more traditionalist Jewish believers . . . would probably have preferred” (p. 136). He considers Paul and Luke to be in “outrageous disagreement” regarding the number of Paul’s Jerusalem visits (p. 127), but Dunn’s reading (which equates Gal 2:1–10 and Acts 15) is not without its problems. This reviewer wonders if the use of Paul’s Jewish name “Saul” (until 13:9) and the “we” passages (first at 16:10) might offer additional clues not considered here by Dunn regarding Luke’s narrative portrait of Paul.

In ch. 8, Heidi Hornik and Mikeal Parsons assert that Luke's depiction of Acts 2 utilizes language "that appeals as much to the eye as to the ear" (p. 139), a strategy called *ekphrasis*. The authors then consider the reception history of the Pentecost scene in Christian liturgy and visual arts.

In ch. 9, Howard Marshall argues that Acts 20:28 serves as the functional equivalent of the ransom saying in Mark 10:45b. He suggests that while the *Christus Victor* motif is "integral" to the theology of Acts (p. 166), such an understanding assumes the atoning significance of Jesus' death, which is most explicit in Acts 20:28.

In ch. 10, Daniel Marguerat asserts that witnessing to Jesus' resurrection (Acts 1:21–22) entails reading history theologically (Acts 2–3), announcing the restoration of human beings (Acts 8–9), unfolding the universality of salvation (Acts 10), and embodying the message in one's own life (Acts 26).

In the final chapter, Steve Walton considers "the two sides of people engaging with God: the divine initiative and the human response" (p. 188). In Acts, angelic beings, the Spirit, visions and dreams, Scriptural interpretation, and the name of Jesus are means by which God is known and experienced. Walton understands Acts 2:42–47 as programmatic for the corporate life of believers and suggests that this portrait invites readers "to identify with those believers and to live and respond to God in similar ways" (p. 200).

The editors of *Reading Acts Today* are to be commended for offering a fine tribute to Professor Alexander, which should be a welcome addition to theological libraries worldwide. Many reading strategies for Acts are illustrated effectively by able scholars, though some important issues such as Luke's use of Scripture or textual criticism in Acts are not addressed. Among the many fine essays in *Reading Acts Today*, those by Burrige (ch. 1), Green (ch. 6), and Marshall (ch. 9) clearly advance the discussion of Acts scholarship on genre, the narrative unity of Luke-Acts, and Luke's theology of atonement, respectively. Walton's chapter on spirituality may be particularly useful to pastors and others seeking to apply Acts to the life of the church.

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HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

Gerald Bray, ed. *Translating the Bible: From William Tyndale to King James*. London: Latimer Trust, 2010. 237 pp. \$12.99.

Five hundred years ago you could have gone into a bookshop in England and bought a range of books on different subjects that catered to the interest and tastes of a growing reading public. . . . But there was one potential best seller that you could not have bought anywhere—a Bible . . . [with the result that] although there was a general familiarity with these great Biblical themes, few people knew what the Bible really said and almost nobody could have questioned the official teaching of the church by comparing it with the source material from which it was supposed to be drawn. (p. 1)

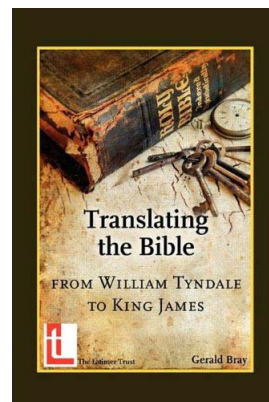
With this opening paragraph Gerald Bray begins the history-altering tale of the publication of the Bible in English. This book, like several others in the last year or so, was spurred by the four hundredth anniversary of the King James Version. This flurry of publications is valuable in reminding us of the immense blessing that is ours in having ready, indeed easy, access to the word of God in our own language.

Though the title and book cover might suggest that this is a book-length treatment written by Gerald Bray, this book is actually a collection of the prefaces of the main translations of the Bible into English from 1525 to 1611 with an introductory essay by Bray. As such a collection, this book is distinct from the many other volumes produced for the four hundredth anniversary of the KJV.

The introductory essay, in Bray's characteristic clarity and breadth of knowledge, summarizes the history of English Bible translation, focusing upon the work on and character of the key English translations: Tyndale's, The Great Bible, Geneva Bible, Bishops' Bible, Douai-Reims Bible (Roman Catholic), and the King James Bible. Bray also helpfully notes how the missionary character of the early church led almost immediately to vernacular translations of the Bible around the known world. He also mentions that vernacular translation continued to flourish in parts of Eastern Europe because they had been evangelized by the "eastern church, which had preserved the translation principle, and not by the western church, based on Rome, which preferred to keep everything in Latin" (p. 3). This summary essay is, of course, more brief than what can be found in other sources, but this makes it a handy quick-reference.

The bulk of the book is the text of the prefaces to these translations (sometimes prefaces to more than one edition) with the text slightly updated for ease of reading. Having a readable version of all these prefaces in one place makes this a valuable historical resource. These prefaces are not mere one-to-two-page acknowledgements. Rather, they are often lengthy (fifteen to twenty pages is common), engaged arguments for the propriety of translation, proper translation method, and doctrinal treatises.

For example, the preface to the KJV, which is often left out of copies today, runs to twenty-five pages in this printing and tackles these subjects among others: propriety of vernacular translation, defense of continuing translation, defense of using the Hebrew text of the OT over the Septuagint, and some discussion of translation theory. It is a remarkable piece of literature in itself. The breadth of learning,



from church fathers to classical authors, is striking. Passing allusions are made to biblical references that would be considered obscure today (not to mention passing references to classical authors and themes that the “general reader” was expected to catch). Reading this essay would be a good cure for what C. S. Lewis called “chronological snobbery.” There is also a strong evangelical, and even devotional, strain in this preface. In strong and beautiful language, it extols the Scriptures and urges the reader to give serious effort to reading and studying them.

If we be ignorant, they will instruct us; if out of the way, they will bring us home; if out of order, they will reform us; if in heaviness, comfort us; if dull quicken us; if cold inflame us. . . . The Scripture then being acknowledged to be so full and so perfect, how can we excuse ourselves of negligence, if we do not study them, of curiosity, if we be not content with them? (pp. 208–9)

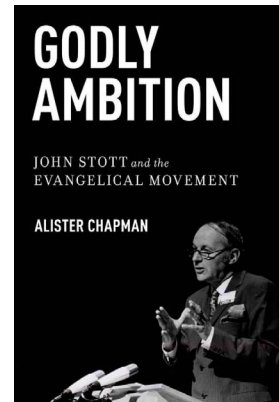
This is a useful volume for acquainting oneself with the primary documents in the history of English Bible translation. It will be of academic use to those working in church history and theology and devotional use to any Christian. These prefaces are also significant in the current discussion of translation theory as they demonstrate a carefully thought-out approach to that topic.

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Alister Chapman. *Godly Ambition: John Stott and the Evangelical Movement*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. xi + 222 pp. \$55.00.

John R. W. Stott passed away in July 2011. He was arguably the best-known evangelical in the world after his longtime friend Billy Graham. It seems fitting that the first academic biography of Stott was published within a few months after the longtime evangelical statesman’s death. Alister Chapman’s *Godly Ambition* traces Stott’s storied career from his conversion and education to his urban pastorate in London to his increasingly global ministry during the years after his retirement from full-time parish ministry. Chapman was granted unprecedented access to Stott’s personal correspondence, providing nuance to the less critical biographies written by Timothy Dudley-Smith and Roger Steer. Chapman argues that Stott was a gifted and ambitious man who sought to leverage his influence to help build the evangelical movement in England and eventually worldwide, though always for the glory of God more than the advancement of Stott’s own interests.

Chapman divides his book into six chapters that are both chronological and thematic, a natural structure because Stott accentuated different priorities as his career progressed. Chapman begins by discussing Stott’s privileged upbringing and education, his conversion to fundamentalism through the influence of youth evangelist Eric Nash, his post-conversion tensions with his family (especially his father), and his calling to pastoral ministry. He was educated at Cambridge, where he shaved some of the harder edges from his earlier fundamentalism and became committed to working from within the Anglican Church toward national revival. During the postwar years, Stott enjoyed considerable success



in university ministry, which first introduced him to American evangelicals. He also became close to Billy Graham while the latter was preaching in the UK in 1954 and 1955. Stott came of age during the waning years of British imperialism, and Chapman argues that Stott (and other Anglican evangelicals) continued to believe that an educated ministry committed to reaching cultural elites could be used by God to advance the gospel throughout England and ultimately the world.

From 1945 to 1975, Stott served as a clergyman on staff at All Souls Church, Langham Place, a large church in London; the final twenty-five years he was the rector at All Souls. Stott emphasized expositional preaching and personal evangelism in a culturally diverse context, though his affluent congregation and cerebral sermons made little headway in reaching the poorer and less educated residents in his parish. He proved more successful at influencing other evangelicals through his preaching and teaching ministry.

Over the years, Stott became more involved in interests beyond his parish. As the cultural context changed in the 1960s, Stott had a harder time connecting with university students, though he emerged as the key leader among evangelicals within the Church of England. He pushed back against non-Anglican evangelicals whom he perceived to be sectarian, most notably Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Chapman contends that Stott's elitist background led him to center his efforts on the Anglican Church because of its historic place at the center of English culture. Stott's parish declined a bit as he focused on other priorities, so he stepped out of the pastorate in 1975 to better focus on his broader interests in evangelism, Anglican renewal, foreign missions, and cultural engagement. He also hoped to become a bishop, though that ambition never materialized.

During the latter half of his ministry, Stott devoted most of his time to global missions and promoting cultural renewal. He also became a more accomplished writer, emerging as a leading public theologian within the evangelical movement, and he frequently represented evangelical interests in ecumenical organizations such as the World Council of Churches. Stott drifted further leftward, especially in his political and cultural views, eventually arguing that social justice is just as central to the Great Commission as personal evangelism, though he continued to champion the latter. His views on social justice influenced the Lausanne Covenant (which he helped to draft), though the long-term effects within the Lausanne movement were mixed; non-Western leaders appreciated the broader agenda, while American evangelicals like Graham preferred to focus primarily upon evangelism. Stott was more successful at promoting his priorities through his own ministries, Langham Trust (1974) and the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (1982). The former ministry promoted leadership development and evangelical theological education in the majority world, while the latter focused on cultural engagement and social justice in Britain. Stott's role at Lausanne and his growing writing ministry made him even more popular outside of England than within his native land, especially among American evangelicals, who provided substantial funding for Stott's ministries.

Chapman's biography is a model for critical, but sympathetic engagement with a leading religious figure. He paints a picture of Stott that does not gloss over shortcomings, including struggles with pride, theological oddities, pastoral frustrations, and interpersonal conflict with other evangelical leaders. Yet Chapman argues that Stott was sincerely motivated by an earnest desire to see the gospel proclaimed, the hurting cared for, Western culture revived, and Christian leaders adequately trained. Stott was a devoted evangelical who was shaped by many factors, including his background, his conversion to fundamentalism, his ecumenical interests, and his ministry successes and failures. For pastors and other Christian leaders, Chapman's book provides a glimpse into the real world of ministry, where

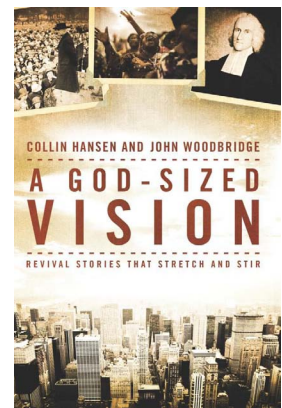
mixed motives and unrealized dreams can still be used in the evangelical cause. For scholars, Chapman's book is the starting place for any future studies of Stott (there will be many) and a template for how to write a good biography that balances appreciation for the subject without resorting to hagiography.

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Colin Hansen and John Woodbridge. *A God-Sized Vision: Revival Stories That Stretch and Stir*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. 194 pp. \$16.99.

Revival stirs the imagination of evangelicals like few other topics. The privilege of partaking in a radical move of God goes beyond our wildest dreams. Increasingly, however, our humanistic explanations of what happens within revivals paired with the theological extremism of certain modern-day “revivals” leaves us questioning whether God will ever move in our day.

It is this issue that authors Collin Hansen and John Woodbridge explore in *A God-Sized Vision*. Written in an engaging and moving style, the volume reintroduces the concept of God-ordained revival as a pervasive force within evangelicalism. The introduction and the first chapter reinvigorate a focus on what biblical revival is given the confusion about the nature of revival among many congregations. True to arguments both Hansen and Woodbridge have articulated elsewhere, the Word of God must remain central if the revival is truly God-ordained.



In the second chapter, the authors turn to selective events in the history of the church that highlight how God moved in certain times and specific places. Beginning with the First Great Awakening, the authors examine the role of the Bible and the gospel as foundational to every true awakening. The usual cast of characters is here—Edwards, Whitefield, Tennent—but the spotlight focuses on Edwards. It is Edwards's criteria of true revival—it exalts Jesus Christ, provokes Satan, prioritizes the Bible, and inspires love (p. 182)—that sets the stage for the examples selected for this particular volume.

It is in this decision that Hansen and Woodbridge tip their interpretive hand. The authors, heavily influenced by Martin Lloyd-Jones's work on revival, take a strong Edwardsian interpretation of what a true revival should look like. They hew to this interpretation in their particular historical selections to inspire the reader, yet this may lead to surprising choices. For example, when discussing the broad Second Great Awakening in chapter three, the conversation focuses on Yale and Edwardsian Timothy Dwight. While the Cane Ridge revivals and the “Burnt-Over District” are mentioned briefly (pp. 60–61), the authors largely ignore Finney, dismissing him as introducing problematic theology (p. 34), and instead emphasize Dwight's insistence that all true revivals are grounded in the Word of God and the work of the Spirit.

After covering the Second Great Awakening, the authors turn to the Prayer Revival of 1857–1858 before looking at the more global scene of revivals in Wales, India, Korea, and East Africa. It is in these more globally focused chapters that readers discover the broader work of God in nations that often are not included in the standard narrative of revival presented in the West. The authors also begin to

insert more of their understanding of the nature of revival by arguing that the leading contributor to the demise of a revival is the movement away from Scripture (p. 115).

If the Bible and gospel proclamation anchor any true revival, Hansen and Woodbridge point to the essential nature of God's people confessing sin as a sign true revival has arrived. To demonstrate this, they point to the revivals that broke out in China at the beginning of the twentieth century through the ministry of Jonathan Goforth. After the Boxer Rebellion left many missionaries embittered following the tragic losses of family and close colleagues, God brought a powerful revival as missionaries began confessing their sins to each other and to the Chinese. The authors tie this to the rise of evangelicalism in the mid-twentieth century in America by closing out their historical narrative focusing aptly on Billy Graham.

While never fully offering a full definition of "revival" for the readers, the conclusion does bring together the central threads of the narrative accounts. The authors present five key evidences of a revival in addition to the Edwardsian hallmark: persisting in prayer, repenting from sin, preaching the gospel, acknowledging God's authority with humility, and serving God with boldness.

This volume is perfect for pastors and lay-leaders alike. The retelling of the historical events is clear, inspirational, and God-focused. Readers will be challenged to rethink our human, limited expectations of God and the realities of his promises in his Word. It is only when we are able to attain a "God-sized" vision for what God can do that we will ever truly see God move in revival during our lifetime.

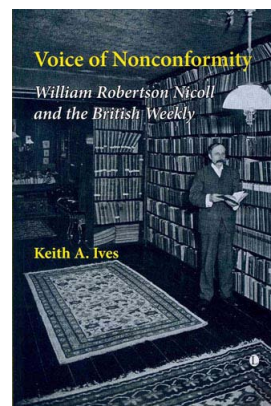
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Keith A. Ives. *Voice of Nonconformity: William Robertson Nicoll and the British Weekly*. Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2011. 261 pp. \$48.00.

Readers fascinated with late Victorian religious history will find in this book an in-depth account of the gradual unraveling of evangelical orthodoxy in Britain as Protestant faculties of divinity and pulpits demonstrated how the "tide" was receding, drawn by the pull of German criticism. The story is told through the lens of the Scottish minister-cum-literary editor, William Robertson Nicoll (1851–1923); he left the North while still a young pastor in search of a milder climate that would spare him from the pulmonary ailments that had already claimed the life of his mother and brother.

Already an author of popular Christian works while in his pastoral ministries in the North, Nicoll turned to religious editing in England in order to support his growing family. Soon there began the editorial relationship with Hodder (later Hodder & Stoughton) that was to endure as long as he lived. Readers of *Themelios* will be interested to find that it was Nicoll the entrepreneurial commissioning editor whose hand can be detected when they take up century-old standard volumes such as the *Expositors Greek Testament* (4 vols.) and the multi-volume blue-bound *Expositor's Bible*. He commissioned and edited them all.

But the thrust of the Ives volume is not literary antiquarianism, that is, tracing out the story behind old books once intended for the minister's library; it highlights Nicoll's role as the literary middle-



man for newer “views” of *two kinds*. One of these (the better known, to be sure) would eventually leach away dogmatic certainty from Britain’s broadly evangelical Protestant churches in the space of two generations. In sum, Nicoll is depicted as the one who while of fairly conventional evangelical views himself, was forever casting about to find biblical commentators and theological writers who were only moderately infected by the burgeoning critical views that were flooding Britain after 1870. Given his own Scottish upbringing, education, and ministerial service, it was no surprise that through the agency of Hodder & Stoughton, Nicoll soon drew to the wider attention of British (and American) readers still-honored names such as Alexander MacLaren, A. B. Davidson, George Adam Smith, and James Denney—the gradual effect of whose literary labors eventually contributed to the diminution of evangelical certainty.

Ives, the researcher and biographer, is not without admiration for Nicoll, yet it is hard to escape the impression that the author believes that Nicoll was a kind of “weak link” who, while maintaining his own evangelical certainty, “bent” rather than withstood the challenges of his time. Nicoll’s reliance on the “moderately critical” was, on this understanding, a colossal miscalculation. Such an interpretation, while now almost the conventional wisdom among conservative evangelicals, does beg the question of who were those articulate able theological conservatives in academia, in the age of theological downgrade, on whom Nicoll might have been relying instead. When one reads the treatment of this period in other recent monographs such as Mark Hopkins’ *Nonconformity’s Romantic Generation* (Paternoster, 2003) and Alan F. P. Sell’s *Hinterland Theology* (Paternoster, 2008), one instead reaches the conclusion that Nicoll actually did his best with the personnel at hand. A somewhat “liberalized” evangelicalism seemed to him and to many others to be the way the future was unfolding. It was not until an unforeseen conservative theological reaction (which, as for Britain, we might date to the founding of the Cambridge Inter-collegiate Christian Union—the precursor of IVCF) spontaneously arose in 1910, that there was concrete reason to expect otherwise.

But I have spoken of Nicoll as literary middle-man in *two* senses, and the latter of these—though less well known than the first—may indeed have been the greater of the two. And Ives’s drawing our attention to this may be the greater service provided by his biography. Ives makes clear that Nicoll, the expatriate Scot, assisted in marshaling both Scottish and English Nonconformist religious, social and political thought into a formidable political constituency through his editorship of the *British Weekly*, for almost a century a powerful print organ serving as a literary link for Britain’s non-Anglican churches.

The *BW*, taking its rise in 1886 at a time when Britain’s non-Anglican (or “Free Church”) Protestants were coalescing, politically, in support for the rising national Liberal party, became a powerful organ under Nicoll’s founding editorship. It disseminated both the troubling theological views emerging within this constituency and the socio-political aspirations of these rising middle classes at a time when they were chafing under longstanding inequities (especially in education). In a masterly treatment of the unforeseen bitter fruits of the intermingling of politics and religion, Ives shows that the Nonconformist pursuit of national political voice as the nineteenth century ebbed served, as decidedly as the disseminated critical views of the Bible, to divert Nonconformity away from its traditional values.

The election of the Liberals to form Britain’s parliamentary government in 1906 secured for that party and its largely Nonconformist constituency political ascendancy in the decade before the nation was plunged into World War in 1914. Thus, the final decade of Nicoll’s life and literary labors was preoccupied more and more with social and political questions, less and less with gospel concerns. This was a doubly bitter development in that the Liberal party (which entered into a wartime coalition

with the Conservatives) would both lose credibility by its over-association with the drudgery of World War and political ground to the rising Labor Party. And the latter, which represented the aspirations of the working classes, was a constituency far less oriented to Christianity than the fading Liberal-Nonconformist alliance.

In the end, we are shown that Nicoll was, over time, caught in a double editorial miscalculation: he wrongly calculated that a liberalized evangelicalism would sustain itself (when it would prove incapable of doing so after 1920). He was equally wrong in calculating that Nonconformist Christianity in Britain would reap only benefit by its ever-closer relationship with the Liberal party. The Liberals experienced a precipitous post-war decline lasting more than half a century, leaving Nonconformity “widowed.” Modern evangelical readers of this tale will be inclined to pay the greater attention to Nicoll’s misreading of the theological tea leaves; Ives’ researches suggest that they should instead ponder how, under Nicoll’s editorial leadership, Nonconformity paid just as dearly for its injudicious political alliances.

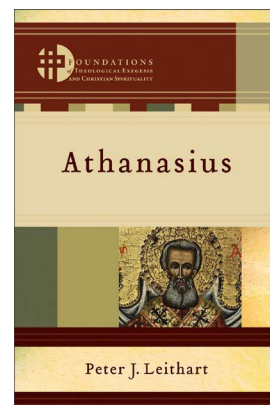
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Peter J. Leithart. *Athanasius*. Foundations of Theological Exegesis and Christian Spirituality. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011. xvi + 204 pp. \$27.99.

Peter Leithart is senior fellow of theology at New Saint Andrews College and serves as the organizing pastor of Trinity Reformed Church in Moscow, ID. Adding to his published contribution to a wide range of topics, he has produced two recent works on Patristics, including his well-received *Defending Constantine* (IVP, 2010).

The present volume is the first contribution to the Foundations of Theological Exegesis and Christian Spirituality series edited by Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering. The editors desire to address the relation of biblical exegesis, dogmatic theology, and participatory metaphysics within the thought of a particular church father (pp. ix–xi). The purpose of this effort is to recover the shared inheritance of the Nicene faith as an important entry point for the growing interest in ecumenical endeavors within Christianity. The editors and Leithart foresee this volume furthering such discussions within seminary and university communities as well as among educated lay readers.

The introduction establishes a guiding rule for reading Athanasius according to his own convictions: Christ unites Scripture and all things, for the nature of all things is about Christ (pp. xv–xvii). Christocentric metaphysics is thus established as the exegetical approach of Athanasius that must be the lens through which one interprets his works (for examples, see pp. 28–33, 39–41, 53). Leithart’s first chapter provides the context in which Athanasius lived and wrote as well as an overview of Athanasian scholarship. It also reiterates Leithart’s established position that Athanasius viewed the relationship between Scripture and metaphysics united in Christ as all of life and history receive proper interpretation through the Word depicted in the Bible (p. 25).



The second chapter establishes Athanasius within the Nicene tradition of theological interpretation as opposed to modern critical approaches to understanding Scripture. Athanasius considered doctrine not as an obstacle but rather a clarifying agent. He was in a unique position as one relying on the authority of Nicene tradition—a tradition that he helped formulate directly—in his embattled interpretation of Scripture against Arianism (pp. 27–28). For him, conformity to Scripture was the “touchstone of all theological truth. The Arians agree, and as a result the battle over Arianism was largely an exegetical battle—not a battle for the Bible, but a battle over the Bible” (p. 33). Such exegetical skirmishes were not merely distant contemplations of Christ but rather participation with Christ in his triumph over death by refuting devilish distortions of Scripture (p. 55). Leithart addresses contemporary Trinitarian considerations through the teachings of Athanasius in chapter three, placing this doctrine at the center of the patristic “evangelization of metaphysics.”

Chapter four examines the doctrine of creation as an equally important aspect of Athanasius’s theology as his Trinitarianism, yet his views on creation remained subjected to Christ as the central element in his thinking (p. 92). Chapter five argues that Athanasius held the incarnation of Christ as the ultimate meaning and crux of history as Christ took on flesh to do the works of the Father. Through the incarnation, the impassible Creator suffered so that passible creatures might triumph over death and suffering, thus leading to deification (pp. 145–46). The final chapter highlights Athanasius’s view concerning the new creation: the goal was initiated by God’s grace, secured by the incarnation, and assured because of the resulting ontological change of God’s creation. For Athanasius, the Christian *politeia*, a collective way of life, is Christ’s means for applying his triumphant work to remake the world and thus bring about this goal (p. 173).

Many aspects of this work will lead readers to value Leithart’s contribution. Students new to the field of Patristics often search in vain for an introductory text—an issue that Leithart resolves in this book. He offers adequate citations that will introduce researchers to the key works associated with Athanasius and the broader field of study. Also, Leithart provides a helpful contribution to the field of hermeneutics in his discussion of Athanasius as a representative of the Nicene tradition of theological interpretation of Scripture. This aspect of his work helps readers understand Athanasius’s exegetical approach, thus fulfilling a central mandate of the Foundations of Theological Exegesis and Christian Spirituality series. Certainly, Leithart furthers the editors’ desired *ressourcement* of Christianity’s shared Nicene inheritance through this work. Finally, the author provides a systematic approach to understanding Athanasius, whose lack of systematization can prove difficult for the newcomer.

Many readers, however, may find certain elements in Leithart’s book to be wanting. Perhaps, his audience will find the work a bit difficult in certain places as he builds upon an existing scholarly conversation on matters such as the Trinity. While Leithart does a fine job explaining the major perspectives, this discussion may be better suited for a graduate audience to the exclusion of university students and an educated laity. Another minor issue is Leithart’s truncated treatment of Athanasius’s historical context. Possibly resulting from his excellent systematic examination of this church father, the author provides some insight to Athanasius’s circumstances. Readers will likely come away from such passages, however, with more questions than adequate answers. For instance, why was Athanasius exiled, and how did those experiences impact his writings? Also, did certain bishops, such as Eusebius of Nicomedia, support Arius because they disagreed with Athanasius’s teachings on the matters that Leithart examines?

Leithart's work is a welcome addition to the study of patristic exegesis and deserves close attention by students of historical theology. It will likely serve as an excellent option for seminary and graduate classes either as a primary text or as a resource for introducing the study of patristic theology.

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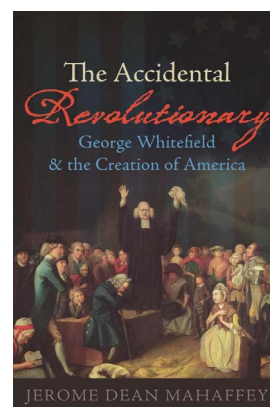
Jerome Dean Mahaffey. *The Accidental Revolutionary: George Whitefield and the Creation of America*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011. xii + 202 pp. \$24.95.

Was the United States founded as a Christian nation? In what ways was the American Revolution religious? Jerome Dean Mahaffey prods at perennial questions like these in *The Accidental Revolutionary* by narrowing on a particular figure, challenging people when thinking about the American Revolution to think first not of George Washington, but of George Whitefield.

Mahaffey, who earned the BS (University of Memphis), MA (Syracuse University), and PhD (Arizona State University West) in communication arts and holds the Corrine Graf Endowed Chair of Mass Communication at Indiana University East, initially developed an interest in Whitefield because Whitefield was an effective communicator. Mahaffey offers *The Accidental Revolutionary* as a more accessible version of his 2007 volume, *Preaching Politics: The Religious Rhetoric of George Whitefield and the Founding of a New Nation* (Baylor), referring readers to *Preaching Politics* for primary source data. As Mahaffey shows, Whitefield's communication prowess contributed significantly to the formation of an American identity. Whitefield facilitated "the first uniquely American collective experience" (p. 58) through his use of advance publicity, his strategic preaching itineraries, his proclamation of a consistent message throughout the colonies, his ability to unify disparate parties, and his perfected skill in eloquent and dramatic speech.

Mahaffey's claim, however, is not to assert that Whitefield was a gifted communicator who honed his craft. Rather, he argues, "Without Whitefield . . . American independence would have come much later, if at all" (p. xi). Mahaffey aims to show that Whitefield developed the "logic template" (p. 145) in his arguments defending the religious revivals of the Great Awakening that would be employed in arguments defending the Revolution and that ultimately "one's identity and the rules about Americanness originated from the Awakening worldview as sowed by George Whitefield" (p. 189). In the end, "of all the colonial leaders and their ideas, if you remove Whitefield and his contribution, no one else had the message, popularity, and influence to shape American colonists into people who could declare independence" (p. xi).

Mahaffey traces several details in Whitefield's life that relate to his thesis, including his support of King George II during the Seven Years War (1756–1763), his work with Benjamin Franklin in successfully calling Parliament to repeal the Stamp Act (1765), and his wariness of the British government's "deep laid plot" to constrict the colonies' civil and religious liberty (p. 153). But the best way to see Mahaffey's argument is in comparing the "logic templates" of the revivals and the Revolution. During his 1739–1741 tour of America, Whitefield sparked a widespread revival by preaching a new-birth message,



teaching that people are not converted because their parents are church members, but because they experience heart-change. Whitefield's message undermined established ministers who saw the revivals as enthusiastic frenzy, not Spirit-induced transformation. To give people a reason to abandon old churches and organize themselves in new churches that embraced heart-religion, Whitefield alleged that some of these ministers were unconverted and were using arbitrary power to limit Christian freedom. He developed an "us versus them" polarity between revivalists and anti-revivalists that allowed the revivalists to form a shared identity across the colonies.

Turning toward the Revolution, Mahaffey recognizes, "Whitefield did not publish anything that would stir the colonial crisis" (p. 170). Nonetheless, he holds that revolutionaries infused Whitefield's revival logic-template with political rhetoric. The colonists were suffering under leaders who ruled by heredity and exercised arbitrary power in a way that threatened their civil and religious liberty, which made them unfit for their positions. Such reasoning made the American colonists feel justified in abandoning Britain and reorganizing themselves in a nation that embraced true liberty through self-rule, so the Americans formed a new identity as "us" and identified the British as "them." Mahaffey says that while "the new birth was the center of Whitefield's message and ministry," "the concept of the new birth was larger than religious conversion," for it symbolized transformation both from "sinner to saint" and from "European to American" (p. 191). In the end, Mahaffey's portrait of Whitefield is of a shrewd politician, whose political savvy is the "framework for his character, dramatic skills, marketing skills, eloquence, passion-laden sermons, political involvement, and public conflicts" (p. 191).

Mahaffey's book offers several compelling insights. Whitefield was the key figure in the first event that united all the American colonies in one shared experience, and the parallels between Whitefield's arguments in the revivals and the arguments in the revolution are striking and undeniable. It is also clear that Whitefield used his political savvy and communication expertise to carry out his religious and civil enterprise.

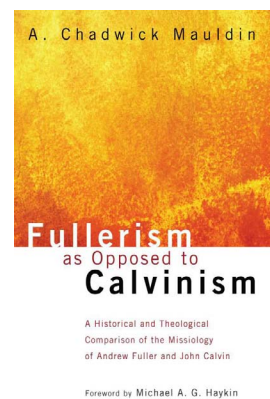
Still, the volume gives a few causes for pause, such as Mahaffey's use of sources dating only to 2002 and earlier—except for three sources in his foreword and conclusion. From a macro-level viewpoint, it seemed to this reader that Mahaffey was onto something, but that the extremity of his argument felt somewhat contrived. It is possible that the Revolution may not have occurred when it did without Whitefield, but Whitefield was not a political revolutionary, and it is unconvincing to suggest that other revolutionaries could not have developed logic like Whitefield's to convince a people to declare independence. The difficulty with his thesis is that an argument about counterfactuals is ultimately impossible to substantiate. In essence, Mahaffey is right to argue that Whitefield contributed in some way, albeit unsuspectingly, to political independence through his preaching methods and content and that he shared a belief with many in the eighteenth-century English-speaking world that the flourishing of religion relied largely on political liberty. But one should not attribute more to Whitefield than warranted and should not forget that spiritual liberty mattered more to Whitefield than civil liberty.

Mahaffey's book is a well-communicated book with a provocative thesis. It is recommended, bearing in mind the reservations above, both for those who want to understand Whitefield's engagement with the political realm and for those who have forgotten the role that religious leaders played in the long saga that ushered colonial America into revolutionary America.

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A. Chadwick Mauldin. *Fullerism as Opposed to Calvinism: A Historical and Theological Comparison of the Missiology of Andrew Fuller and John Calvin*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011. xiv + 115 pp. \$16.00.

Andrew Fuller (1754–1815) is among the half-dozen most influential theologians in the Baptist tradition. One of the areas Fuller most shaped Baptists and other evangelicals is missiology. He popularized Edwardsian Calvinism among the British Particular Baptists, who applied these theological emphases to global missions. Fuller’s ideas, which his better-known friend and missions pioneer William Carey owned, then spread to other evangelicals in Britain and North America, helping to inaugurate the modern missions movement in the English-speaking world. In his short monograph *Fullerism as Opposed to Calvinism*, a revision of his MA thesis at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chadwick Mauldin argues that contemporary Calvinistic Baptists should consider jettisoning the “Calvinist” and “Reformed” labels and instead more self-consciously identify with “Fullerism,” which is a better fit for reasons of history, identity, and especially missiology.



Mauldin builds his case by contrasting Calvin’s doctrine and missiology with that of Fuller, a Baptist who self-identified as a Calvinist. He argues that Calvin’s missions efforts, though sincere, were tepid compared to his historical contemporaries, the Anabaptists. Fuller, who as a Baptist enjoyed considerable ecclesiological affinity with the Anabaptists, combined their emphasis on cross-cultural evangelism and church planting with a broadly Calvinistic soteriology, embodying something akin to a balanced middle between Calvin and the Anabaptists. Hence, contemporary Calvinistic Baptists should identify with Fuller, whom they closely resemble, rather than Calvin, who when viewed through the lens of Fuller was ecclesologically aberrant and missiologically insufficient. This is a well-worn argument made by some Baptists and some Reformed pedobaptists; Mauldin’s contribution is adding the missiological element to the debate. Mauldin also includes an appendix that records a lengthy interview with James Leo Garrett, the dean of Southern Baptist theologians. It’s hard to determine exactly how familiar Garrett is with Fuller’s theology based on his comments, though he seems to be in general sympathy with Mauldin’s thesis.

Mauldin makes a good case that contemporary Calvinistic Baptists are more akin to Andrew Fuller than John Calvin; it seems doubtful anyone questions that reality. Whether Baptists should abandon any identification with the Reformed or Calvinistic tradition is an altogether different matter. Calvinistic Baptists argue that they are Calvinists with a baptistic “twist”; their commitment to credobaptism and congregational polity differs from the pedobaptism and Presbyterian polity that characterizes most (though not all) Reformed groups. The very terms “Calvinistic Baptist” or “Reformed Baptist” imply as much. In terms of missiology, while Fuller may be a better role model than Calvin, it seems unusual to pit Fuller against Calvin since Fuller understood himself to be in substantive (though not uniform) continuity with Calvin. It also seems unusual to restrict this argument to Baptists. By Mauldin’s logic, Reformed pedobaptists who emphasize missions should also abandon the Calvinist label because they have a stronger missiology than Calvin.

The Reformed tradition is anything but monolithic. While Calvin is the most well-known Calvinist, he is hardly the benchmark for all things Reformed, including Reformed missiology. Mauldin fails to

account for missiological development within the Calvinistic tradition—of which Fuller was very much a part! Mauldin adequately demonstrates that Fuller and Calvin were not identical in their missiological emphases, which is a given, but he will likely convince few readers that Calvinistic Baptists should therefore drop the modifier. Most who adopt the Calvinist or Reformed labels do so for reasons unrelated to missiology, or, for that matter, the convictions of John Calvin himself.

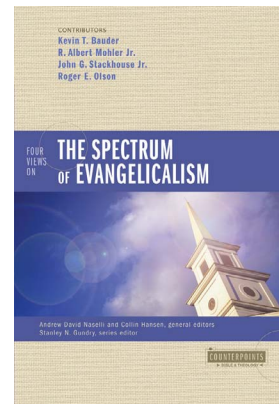
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Andrew David Naselli and Collin Hansen, eds. *Four Views on the Spectrum of Evangelicalism*. Counterpoints. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011. 222 pp. \$16.99.

Whereas evangelical authors have contributed their differing perspectives on a range of theological issues through the Zondervan Counterpoints series, the question “What is an evangelical?” has finally reserved a volume on its own. It is an appropriate addition to this series because it demonstrates the fundamental need for the point-counterpoint. The lack of an evangelical magisterium makes such a discussion both possible and necessary and, for all of its frustrations, exploring evangelical differences is certainly more entertaining than what the Catholic or Orthodox churches could produce from within their own ranks. To be sure, if the Holy Father were to pen a chapter on the Blessed Virgin Mary, any Catholic counter-pointers would need to be quite delicate with their response.

Though one certainly could quibble with the number of positions represented (wanting more, not less), one cannot argue with the choice of representatives for each group. The four contributors and their respective positions include Kevin Bauder (fundamentalism), R. Albert Mohler Jr. (confessional evangelicalism), John G. Stackhouse (generic evangelicalism), and Roger E. Olson (postconservative evangelicalism). Each contributor represents and defends his position well, offers critical and constructive remarks to his counterparts, and with conviction and care realizes that the conversation will likely never be settled. Editors Andy Naselli and Collin Hansen have moved the discussion beyond mere definitions by asking each author to address three recent issues that have openly divided evangelicals: Evangelicals and Catholics Together, open theism, and penal substitution. Naselli’s concluding chapter is particularly helpful as it summarizes the key arguments and their implications in fine fashion. Taken altogether the theme, contributors, structure, and format do not disappoint.

Bauder’s position is best described as critical fundamentalism, as he distinguishes himself not only from broad-based evangelicals but also from populist revivalism and hyper-fundamentalism. Accordingly, the essence of fundamentalism is not purity but the unity and fellowship of the church. Such unity is at minimum based on the gospel itself (i.e., guilty sinners forgiven by the grace of God through the work of the incarnate Son, whose death on the cross provides substitutionary atonement on their behalf), but it also entails limits to fellowship from those who profess to be Christians. These limits include first-degree separation from those who deny the gospel (i.e., Catholics) and some level of second-degree separation from those who cooperate with those who deny the gospel. Though Bauder distances himself from extremes within the fundamentalist movement (such as the King James Only



crowd), he avers that mainstream fundamentalism still must distance itself from evangelicalism as a whole: “As long as some evangelicals cannot tell the difference between a person who professes the true gospel and one who denies it . . . fundamentalists are not likely to view those evangelicals as thoughtful or perceptive Christian leaders” (p. 48).

Mohler, a thoughtful and perceptive Christian leader in his own right (except in the eyes of those on the leftward side of Baptist life), promotes confessional evangelicalism as an alternative to the other three positions. Evangelical, he argues, is a crucial term that helps to clarify a segment of Christians who are neither Roman Catholic nor Protestant liberals. Nevertheless, examining evangelicalism from a historical, phenomenological, and normative sense demonstrates how the term is not sufficient in itself to tidy up such a group. While appreciating Bebbington’s famous quadrilateral, Mohler notes how Catholics, liberals, and Mormons alike can too easily coopt it. His call for confessional evangelicalism is based in part on conducting “theological triage,” where evangelicals can agree on first-order theological issues (such as the Trinity, deity of Christ, justification by faith alone, and the full authority of Scripture) while at the same time refusing to divide over tertiary issues (e.g., finer points of eschatology). The secondary issues that normally give rise to denominational distinctives (i.e., issues of baptism) do not lie dormant in such a confessional model, but neither do they produce further divisions among brothers and sisters in Christ. Thus, Christians who may not worship together because of secondary issues are still able to cooperate on various levels without the inherent fear of fellowshiping with “apostate” Christians.

Stackhouse softens the discussion a bit, not only with his wry humor but also by asserting that evangelicalism is more flexible than Bauder or Mohler suggest. To their chagrin, his idea of generic evangelicalism would include not only open theists but also some who are repelled by the penal substitutionary view of the atonement. This is not to say that such views are valid, he says, because people who maintain these positions can be truly evangelical and truly wrong at the same time. Stackhouse’s nuance is not meant as doublespeak. He is careful enough to close the evangelical door to those who either (1) have little in common with orthodox Christianity or (2) do not subscribe to Bebbington’s quadrilateral. But he argues that there is always room for improvement in the evangelical camp. This path can even be a two-way street where those on the periphery may ultimately provide a positive contribution to the broader evangelical family.

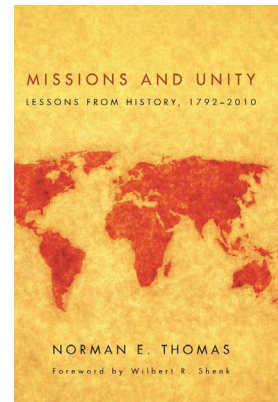
Olson sprinkles his chapter with a series of personal reminiscences in the evangelical world, presenting himself somewhere between a martyr-in-waiting and the still-unrecognized savior of sensibility. The premise of his postconservative evangelicalism is that evangelicalism is a movement—not an organization—and as such has no definable boundaries. Olson recognizes that his detractors will accuse him of taking a sociological rather than theological approach, but he insists that theological beliefs of evangelicals have been sociologically conditioned: “Who is to say which theologians and confessional statements were historically normative for evangelicals?” (p. 166). Olson believes that historic evangelicalism has a definable center but argues that the Bebbington quadrilateral leaves sufficient room for diversity on each point. He therefore adds a fifth criterion: respect for historic, Christian orthodoxy. Olson contends that this addition provides a necessary connection to the ancient church fathers as well as the reformers, but he also uses this addition to illustrate further how Christians throughout the centuries have nuanced key doctrines, thus proving the ongoing need for evangelical latitude.

In addition to the typical audience that forms the “must read” for this book (pastors, professors, students, and the like) one can easily add a fourth group: outsiders who study evangelicals. The positions affirmed in this book clarify that believing the Bible, respecting Billy Graham, and voting Republican do not an evangelical make. And yet this particular strength of the book also reveals one of its most significant weaknesses: one person simply cannot represent the whole. Other confessional evangelicals could easily see Mohler’s refusing to sign ECT as leaning towards fundamentalism, whereas other postconservatives can see Olson’s appreciation for the great tradition as nostalgic nonsense. Such a criticism is muted by the reality that fuller representation would lead not only to a larger book but perhaps a multi-volume set. Thankfully, Naselli and Hansen successfully got the conversation underway without letting it get out of hand.

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Norman E. Thomas. *Missions and Unity: Lessons from History, 1792–2010*. American Society of Missiology 47. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2010. xxv + 321 pp. \$39.00.

The suggestion that world missions have helped to advance the collaboration and unity of the churches engaged in the enterprise is not, in itself, a radical or startling proposal. There is no reader of this journal who will, *a priori*, reject this idea as a working hypothesis. The education abroad of the children of missionaries has required cross-denominational and intra-mission collaboration on a large scale; mission aviation bush planes have regularly transported members of distinct mission agencies on the same flights. Here is sufficient collaboration and unity to demonstrate that there is substance to the contention that mission advances unity. Yet this is not, very fully, what Norman E. Thomas, emeritus professor of World Christianity at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH had in mind in researching and writing *Missions and Unity* (hereafter *M&U*).



It is the contention of the irenic Thomas that missionary exertion, since the departure of William Carey for India in 1792, has had embedded within it an impulse not only for the type of pragmatic missionary collaboration mentioned above, but as well an impulse for ever-closer union of Christians and of their churches. The march of missionary history has, to put it plainly, also been a march towards always-closer relations between the various church bodies engaged in that march. In his introduction, Thomas outlines *thirteen* possible expressions of Christian unity; the actual physical union of Christian denominations is but one of those described (p. xxiii). The book therefore is full of interest and latent possibilities for everyone interested in the history of missions, of ecumenical relations, and of world Christianity.

Yet Thomas’s claim that pursuing world missions advances collaboration and unity is one that the conservative evangelical reader can test only with great difficulty. The disconcerting fact is that the historical trajectory Thomas marshals in support of his claim that missionary exertion since Carey inevitably advances the global unity of the churches is a trajectory from which a very high proportion of conservative evangelical Christians and their churches and mission agencies in the western world have

stood apart since 1910. The global Missionary Conference, held in Edinburgh in that year was the last world missionary consultation to encompass the full range of all Protestant churches and missionary agencies. Theological tensions, already germinally present at Edinburgh, would become so pronounced in the post-WWI context that conservative evangelicals judged that the necessary consensus about the gospel—required as the basis for further comprehensive missionary consultation—was so lacking that further unrestricted conferencing was imprudent.

All this to say that Thomas' building of a historical case that missions promotes Christian unity is hobbled by his needing to admit (and this he does candidly) that global missionary consultation and coordination since 1910—whatever it may have eventually gained through the post-WWII inclusion of Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox representatives—was lost through the steady diminution of the conservative evangelical voice. Edinburgh's continuation in the form of the International Missionary Council (which met at regular intervals following WWI) and the eventual merger of that body with the fledgling World Council of Churches in 1961 was a continuation in which steadily fewer evangelical voices were heard. In this important respect, at least, the pursuit of world mission did not in itself maintain or advance any unqualified collaboration or unity effort. It might even be said to have served to set unity back through its disregard of theological boundaries.

Now Thomas, to his credit—because from the beginning of this volume he acknowledges that physical and organic church union is not the *only* unity worth discussing—provides himself with a *modus operandi* for giving ample consideration to the ways in which twentieth-century world evangelicalism, largely standing apart from global ecumenism, carried forward the principle of collaboration and unity in mission through agencies of its *own* design. It is Thomas's view that through the post-WWII establishing of the World Evangelical Fellowship (extensively a reinvigoration of the moribund World Evangelical Alliance founded at London in 1846) and the various global evangelical congresses commencing with the Berlin Congress on World Evangelism (1966) and the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (1974), the global evangelical community exhibited (albeit in its own manner) the ways in which the concerted pursuit of world mission drives collaboration and unity of purpose among Christians, Christian agencies, and churches.

I wish to praise this volume in two definite respects. First those who have consulted Ruth Rouse and Stephen Neill's *The History of the Ecumenical Movement* have lamented the gradual diminution of the evangelical voice in that history, focused as it is on the trajectory that led to the founding of the World Council of Churches in 1948. Thomas knows that story; he also knows that it is not the whole story of collaborative efforts among the Christians of the world. Thomas has aimed at inclusion and succeeded. Thus one can find here reliable accounts in *M&U* of both the founding of the American Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association (1917) and Evangelical Foreign Mission Association (1945). By the same token, one finds as well in *M&U* extensive consideration of the contribution of Roman Catholic Second Vatican Council thinking on the theology of religions and its bearing on the question of the finality of the Christian message. Inclusion is the operative term.

The work is also characterized by generosity of treatment. No one will accuse Thomas of pressing the argument that nothing short of the organic union of all the churches will represent the ultimate triumph of the unity in mission story he has been concerned to relate in such detail. From the beginning, he has insisted that there is a multiplicity of ways in which Christian unity through mission can be realized.

Yet the strengths of this book are also its Achilles heel. Having read Thomas closely, I cannot recall a single theological judgment rendered in the entire work. The story of *Missions and Unity* contains no

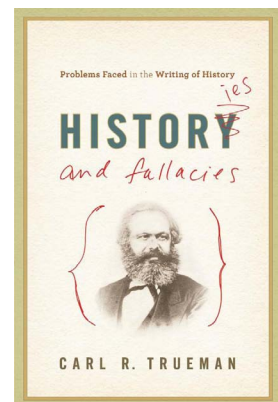
villains, no dark characters, no persons whose stated convictions put them beyond the pale of acceptable missionary or theological thinking. But the twentieth-century history of mission included Pearl Buck (1892–1973), who scandalized devout Christians by insisting that she and other American missionaries were not in China to seek conversions. It included William Ernest Hocking (1873–1966), who reported in 1932 after a year’s global tour that American missionary effort would be best focused on education and welfare rather than the evangelization of native peoples. It included Philip A. Potter (b. 1921) who, while World Council of Churches secretary for World Missions and Evangelism, framed a program seeking the violent overthrow of the admittedly racist government of South Africa. This, because it passed for “Mission and Evangelism,” led to the withdrawal of groups as diverse as Irish Presbyterians and the Salvation Army from the World Council. So much for “unity in mission.”

In the end, Thomas is to be faulted not for spotty research or forgetting significant detail, but for steadily supporting the notion that the Christian message contains little or nothing that is nonnegotiable. On his understanding, the world Christian movement, finding unity in its taking a reduced, non-dogmatic faith to the world in the end need exclude no one. And so, while the gracious Thomas includes accounts of twentieth-century world evangelicalism in this inclusive tale, he has at the same time reminded us of the reasons for which we have (by and large) stood apart from the mainstream he means to extol. Yet I caution: do not dismiss this book cavalierly! Thomas can help the evangelical reader by his sketching out an important story during the last decades of which evangelicals have been outsiders looking in. This reviewer doubts that we can properly understand the tension points evident in the recent Cape Town 2010 conference (meant to carry forward the concerns of earlier Lausanne consultations) without it.

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Carl Trueman. *Histories and Fallacies: Problems Faced in the Writing of History*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010. 192 pp. \$9.99.

Carl Trueman is Professor of Historical Theology and Church History and Paul Woolley Chair of Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary in Glenside, PA. His *Histories and Fallacies: Problems Faced in the Writing of History* is a vibrant and engaging introduction to critical historiography, the method by which one writes history. Trueman’s work is at base an apology for history itself, an especially careful critical history that advances the cause of truth. Nowadays, “the question has been raised in various forms as to how we know the stories being told us by historians are reliable” (p. 15). After all, we live in the Age of the Perspective, when everyone has an opinion and every opinion is valid. Like most any good piece of history, Trueman’s work thus begins with a problem, a question, that he answers from various angles.



His first chapter considers the recent phenomenon in historical circles known as Holocaust denial (HD). Truman wisely concedes from the outset that “history is not simply ‘the past’ but is a representation of the past by someone in the present” (p. 26). He cites approvingly John Lukacs’s definition of history as the “remembered past” and notes upfront that no history is neutral. This does not mean, however,

that history cannot be objective. It is true in Trueman's view that the historian cannot prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that events of the past happened. What they can do, though, is marshal evidence and from that evidence construct a narrative or theory that makes best sense of the extant data. In forming the case for the reality of the Holocaust, for example, Trueman references scientific evidence (pp. 39–45), the "aesthetic fallacy" (pp. 45–52), and positive evidence (pp. 52–61) to show that there are various tools that the critical historian uses in the task of narrativial defense. Of great importance are "corroboration and verification," by which the interpreter of the past sifts the evidence and establishes plausibility, if not infallibility (p. 62).

Trueman is a shrewd scholar who practices the virtues he preaches in *Histories and Fallacies*. He works methodically and carefully, showing himself slow to trust visionary ideas and eager to assemble all the data he can in order to make the strongest possible assertion. As noted, he does not shy away from acknowledging the necessarily subjective aspect of the historical enterprise. "Philosophical commitments" are unavoidable on the part of the historian (p. 67). He champions multi-causality in numerous places, arguing that in all but the most straightforward instances, numerous factors run together to create the events, themes, persons, and trends we study.

The book's second chapter, "Grand Schemes and Misdemeanors," amply demonstrates this. More than most any evangelical historian I know, Trueman interacts extensively and even appreciatively in places with Marxist historiography. At first blush, this could sound alarming—indeed, will the hammer-and-sickle soon flutter over the entrance to Westminster? In actual fact it is not. Trueman profitably plumbs the work of Marxist historian Christopher Hill, for example, in showing that even the ultimately bankrupt socialist historiography may, with its overweening economic focus, shed light on spiritual works like John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (pp. 90–91).

In the book's third chapter, "The Past Is a Foreign Country," Trueman nicely distills why history is an essential discipline to theology and philosophy and not their ugly stepsister. In a discussion on historical anachronisms, Trueman opines that "to abstract ideas from their historical context is to place them outside or above history," a problem that could be addressed in many Christian institutions by a more interdisciplinary approach fusing, say, on-the-ground events and in-the-cloud ideas (p. 116). Many a seminarian or graduate student has wondered not merely what the enlightenment *philosophes* thought, but what they were like. Knowing that Rousseau was a vengeful prima donna whose behavior seemed bent on placing himself back in the state of nature, for example, sheds valuable light on his theoretical project.

It is fallacies Trueman is after in the fourth chapter, "A Fistful of Fallacies," and it is fallacies he finds. Denouncing reification (pp. 142–46), oversimplification (pp. 146–52), *post hoc propter hoc* (pp. 152–56), and several other missteps common in the guild, Trueman again suggests by dint of material that the historian's task is a careful one. He also briefly weighs in on "providentialism," or an overly confident reading of the hand of God in discrete historical events. Of course, providence is for Trueman "a sound theological doctrine" (in another realm the Westminster divines breathe a sigh of relief), but to his mind, the universality of providence means that it is "of no great use in particular explanations" (p. 167). There is a whole school of evangelical historiography that will read the rather short section on providence with some discomfort; I wondered as I read what Trueman would think of the way George Marsden closes his larger work on Jonathan Edwards by ascribing his greater significance to the greatness of God.

Histories and Fallacies will stimulate and instruct seminarians, graduate students doing historical work, pastors wishing to learn standards for critical history, and the justly growing number of readers who gravitate to Trueman's work (I nearly said celebrity!). It is not perfect; in the introduction, Trueman notes three separate times that many historians talk about theory instead of writing history. His discussion of "providentialism" is also lacking.

Nevertheless, taken together with *In Defense of History* by Richard J. Evans, this book constitutes a helpful, witty, and informed guide to historiography. Written by one of evangelicalism's most faithful historians and theologians, it is a welcome introduction to the academic discipline in which we "come to understand the forces and influences that shape the way the world was in the past, and hopefully become more aware of the way in which forces previously unnoticed and invisible shape and guide the present," directing it to a most forceful and elegant conclusion (p. 173).

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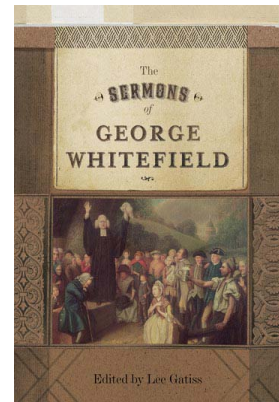
George Whitefield. *The Sermons of George Whitefield*. 2 vols. Edited and introduced by Lee Gatiss. Watford, UK: Church Society, 2010. 966 pp. \$55.89.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones called George Whitefield the greatest English preacher who ever lived. That assessment ranks him ahead of the great Puritan and Victorian preachers, including the "Prince" himself, Charles Spurgeon. In light of his gifts, influence during the First Great Awakening, and sheer volume of sermons on both sides of the Atlantic, estimated at 30,000, we could safely call Whitefield a preaching juggernaut. Thus, it is not surprising that Whitefield's sermons were republished for the first installment of the Reformed Evangelical Anglican Library (REAL), which seeks to recover a "more robust vision of Anglican theology and identity" (1:5). These two volumes contain sixty-one sermons, the vast majority of Whitefield's extant transcripts.

Lee Gatiss, also the Series Editor for REAL, introduces Whitefield's preaching methodology, Anglicanism, and Reformed theology. He believes, "we need a heavy dose of his theology, we need his inspiration, and we need his urgent international vision for evangelism" (1:41). At the same time, he offers a balanced critique pointing out some of Whitefield's flaws regarding church life, preaching style, and exegesis.

Readers will be helped by Gatiss' editorial work of the 1771 edition. He cleaned up the paragraphing and syntax without sacrificing Whitefield's "eighteenth century voice" (1:39). His scholarship as a church historian also enhances the work. Gatiss corrects the popular view that Whitefield did not intend to return to England after he departed in 1769 by pointing to contrary evidence in Sermon 61. Finally, his extensive footnotes also shed light on many of Whitefield's sources, quotes, and historical context. Though some readers may desire subject and Scripture indexes, their absence does not detract from the overall quality of the work.

As helpful as Gatiss's introduction and editorial work may be, the deep value of these volumes resides in the original sermons of the great preacher. Whitefield was a preacher who revered the Bible.



His sermons were largely expositional, keeping the immediate and canonical context in view. The grand narrative of Scripture can be found throughout. His goal was to preach to the head and the heart. Sermon 59 exemplifies Whitefield's approach:

That we might deal with you as rational creatures, we have endeavoured calmly, and in the fear of God, to address ourselves to your understandings; but the hardest work is yet ahead, namely, to affect and warm your hearts. This I take to be the very life of preaching. . . . Moses and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, dealt much in exhortations, as well as in opening and explaining the weighty matters of the Law. And if we are taught by the same Spirit, we shall, like them, bring light and heat with us, when called to speak of, and enforce the things which concern the kingdom of God. Without proper mixture of these, however a preacher may acquire the character, in the letter-learned and polite world, of being a calm and cool reasoner; yet he never will be looked upon by those whose senses are exercised to discern spiritual things, as a truly evangelical and Christian orator. (2:421)

In every sermon, Whitefield preached in an experimental manner desiring a godly response from his hearers.

Though dimmed by the printed page, Whitefield's passionate and persuasive style shines through. His sermons are filled with exhortations and evangelistic appeals. Whether preaching to saints in a church, coal miners in a field, or passengers on a boat, Whitefield possessed an incalculable desire to see people converted to Christ. He consistently made appeals with eternity and the sovereign work of the Spirit in view:

If you perish, remember that you do not perish for lack of invitation. You shall stand forth at the last day and I here give you a summons to meet me at the judgment seat of Christ and to clear both my master and me. Would weeping, would tears prevail on you, I could wish my head were waters and my eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep out every argument and melt you into love. . . . But such power belongeth only unto the Lord, I can only invite (2:102).

Additionally, Whitefield knew his audience well and preached in a discriminating manner. He sought to persuade his hearers while keeping their spiritual and temporal circumstances in mind.

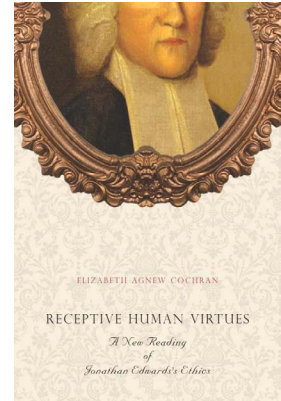
There is much to be gleaned from reading Whitefield's sermons. Becoming acquainted with Whitefield and his preaching should instruct, correct, and motivate a new generation of pastors and laypeople alike. In a day where there is a heightened focus on Reformed theology on the one hand and passionate mission on the other, Whitefield stands as a preeminent example of both. These volumes are a noble attempt to bring the Anglican Church and those of different denominational stripes back to such a vision through Whitefield's preaching. We are indebted to Gatiss and REAL for making these sermons available for today's church.

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SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND BIOETHICS

Elizabeth Agnew Cochran. *Receptive Human Virtues: A New Reading of Jonathan Edwards's Ethics*. University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. xii + 203 pp. £48.95/\$59.95.

In 2003, there was a publishing blitz to coincide with the tercentenary of Jonathan Edwards's birth. It would have been safe to assume the interest in Edwards would quickly wane. Instead, that initial publishing blitz has continued. The field of Edwards studies continues to develop and expand at an ever-increasing rate. That said, there is much work to be done. One major lacuna in the field has been the failure to put Edwards in conversation with contemporary issues, questions, and figures. This is not neglected entirely, but the breadth of the field demands an increasing effort to show how Edwards is an important figure for theological retrieval. Fortunately, Elizabeth Cochran does just that, addressing key assumptions in the field of ethics and invoking Edwards as an important theological ethicist for contemporary ethical discourse.



Cochran runs her account of Edwards's ethics against the backdrop of contemporary assertions concerning the Enlightenment and virtue ethics. Using Alasdair MacIntyre and J. B. Schneewind to outline these assertions, Cochran argues that Edwards serves as a decisive counter-example to their claims. From many ethicists' point of view, the Enlightenment project failed modernity by undermining virtue ethics. Therefore, recovering virtue ethics is seen as central to eliminating Enlightenment values that continue to assert their authority in our era. The generation preceding Edwards is often seen as the main culprit for this decline, capitulating to the force of the enlightenment rather than seeing its destructive tendencies. This makes Edwards a particularly interesting test case. If these theories about Enlightenment values and the neglect of virtue ethics are true, then Edwards should be steeped in a project already burying itself. Rather, Cochran argues, Edwards provides a theologically robust account of virtue ethics that speaks meaningfully and deeply into contemporary ethical discourse.

In Cochran's evenhanded analysis, Edwards is portrayed as a theological thinker who appropriated the primary ethical theories of his day. Therefore, Cochran addresses Edwards's Neoplatonic coloring through his interactions with Cambridge Platonism. Rather than allowing philosophical influences to overtake her account, Cochran rightly grasps Edwards's impulse to adopt and adapt intellectual ideas into a Reformed Trinitarian theology. Instead of wielding his theology against these philosophical schools, Edwards breathes fresh life into them by relocating them in relation to the communicative God of Christian revelation.

At the heart of Edwards's ethical thought is the anti-Aristotelian notion that habituation cannot lead to true virtue. Virtues are received and not achieved, we might say. This impulse in Edwards's work follows his Reformed soteriology. Just as salvation is not earned, so virtue, a fruit of salvation, cannot be earned. All true moral action, therefore, is not only received from God, but is an imaging of God's own life. Human virtuous activity is an image or type of the divine nature. God's emanating self-revelation is for the purpose of revealing his nature that people might participate in his own love. Creaturely participation in God's self-revelation is the engine of the moral life and conformity to God's Son. Moral formation begins with an understanding and vision of the goodness and beauty of God known in Christ. This is, therefore, a deeply spiritual and theocentric account of the moral life.

Commentators have long noted that Edwards's ethical thought is located within his aesthetics. Furthermore, few doubt that in Edwards's thought God is the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. Cochran goes several steps further by turning her attention to Christ's role to exemplify the virtues as well as the development of what she calls "incomplete virtues." To the first, one of Christ's roles in the incarnation was to portray virtue. As a fully divine and fully human person, Christ "exhibits" and "practices" both divine and human virtue. Creaturely virtue, in other words, is unveiled perfectly in the person and work of Christ. This christological perfection can, at times, rework the virtues in a way unknown in the tradition. Cochran uses Christ's embodiment of humility as an example of one such virtue. Again, Edwards the theologian is important here. Virtue is not delineated as a model in which God must fit. Rather, Christ perfectly personifies creaturely virtue in such a way that we come to Christ to ask what it means to love, have humility, etc. To the second point noted above, Edwards provides a distinctive account for virtues available to *sinful* humanity apart from God. Cochran describes these as "incomplete virtues." These incomplete virtues have a "negative moral goodness"; they oppose sin in some manner; and they complement and coincide with true virtue. These incomplete virtues lack true virtue and therefore lack a grasp of divine beauty inherent therein. Interestingly, unlike true virtue that is received and not developed through habituation, incomplete virtues are. This underscores how different these are to true virtue, even as it upholds their value in society. Importantly, these incomplete virtues, while failing to be true virtue, are still capable of being sanctified by God without changing their "denominations." These are not without purpose, in other words. This is particularly relevant when it is kept in mind that Edwards was a pastor of a congregation who *had* to attend church. Edwards continually worried about his lazy, "sermon proof" congregation. The incomplete virtues were a way to encourage the unregenerate in ethical action even while pointing them to Christ, the only place where true virtue is finally known.

Cochran offers us a much-needed volume on Edwards's ethics that provides both a close reading of Edwards's virtue theory, putting it in conversation with the tradition, as well as engaging contemporary judgments concerning the history of ethical thought. Cochran navigates Edwards's material and context with rigor and dexterity and speaks helpfully into current conversations and debates. I found it particularly helpful when she would stand back from her argument and draw contrasts and comparisons with the tradition, particularly Aquinas and Augustine. That said, at times, it would have been helpful for her to stand back from her argument as a whole to reorient the reader to her case against both MacIntyre and Schneewind. Admittedly, this might have more to do with my own naivety about these issues, but I think it would have helped the cohesion of her argument. That said, this volume is an excellent addition to the field of Edwards studies. It, undoubtedly, adds to the case being made that Edwards is a theologian of the highest order and helps to make the case that his voice deserves to be listened to.

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Oliver D. Crisp. *Retrieving Doctrine: Essays in Reformed Theology*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2010. xiv + 209 pp. £12.99/\$22.00.

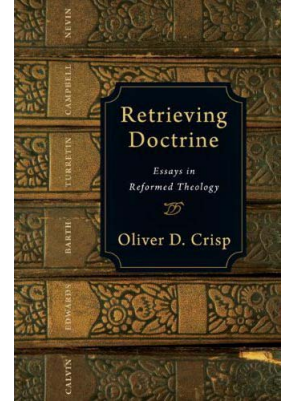
Retrieving Doctrine is a collection of new and previously published essays that approaches nine core topics of the Reformed tradition through six of its most significant contributors: Calvin, Barth, Edwards, Turretin, Campbell, and Nevin. Taken together, these essays span the critical theological junctures of the tradition. Additionally, Crisp addresses the sometimes thorny problems through the lens of Analytic Theology (See “On Analytic Theology,” in *Analytic Theology* [eds. Crisp and Rea; Oxford University Press, 2009]). *Retrieving Doctrine*, then, acts as the first book-length venture to explore what Analytic Theology would look like from a specifically Reformed perspective.

Crisp treats his sources honorably. He gives them every benefit of the doubt and taking them at their word, even when flat contradiction appears unavoidable.

Because *Retrieving Doctrine* is an anthology of essays, I can give only a terse sketch of the chapters here. Part I, “Creation and Providence,” contains two essays: one on Calvin and the other on Barth. This enjoyable pairing showcases Crisp’s ability to engage the sources historically and critically, while commending what is most appreciable from each. These two chapters contain the least amount of “analytic” method as compared to the ensuing essays. Chapter one brings diverse views such as Sally MacFague, Open Theology, occasionalism, and even Bruce McCormack’s Christology into conversation with Calvin while simultaneously maintaining a sensitivity to Calvin’s theological circumspection. Chapter two focuses on Barth’s general commensurability with the Reformed tradition in relationship to his theological employment of creation. These two chapters make for enjoyable reading.

Part II, “Sin and Salvation,” begins with nuanced corrective regarding Jonathan Edwards’s view of imputation (ch. 3), ferreting out the significance of mediate and immediate federalism for the uninitiated reader of Edwards. This is logically followed by Turretin’s argument for the (philosophical) necessity of the Incarnation (ch. 4). Chapter five introduces the reader to John McLeod Campbell’s shift of emphasis away from classical penal substitution and the theological implications of such a move. Most scandalously for theology nerds, Crisp takes on Barth’s alleged universalism (ch. 6) in the most uncomplicated way, not allowing Barth’s veiled and impenetrable statements to act as the definition of his own theological positions. Most readers will either react with “That’s what I always thought!” or “He is pigeon-holing Barth!”—either way, the punctuation will most likely remain the same.

Part III, “The Christian Life,” begins with an essay on Calvin and prayer. Specifically, what theological justification can Calvin hold for impetration (entreated prayer) that corresponds to a consistent view of divine sovereignty *and* makes sense of the Scripture’s report of prayer (ch. 7)? Chapter eight offers a perspicacious account of John Williamson Nevin’s view of the “organic nature of the church.” Reviving Nevin’s thought, this chapter will challenge any reader to rethink previously held views of the church’s nature and function. This chapter on Nevin is well-placed at the end of the book where it ties together many of the recurring themes highlighted thus far (e.g., the Fall, imputation, the Incarnation, atonement, etc.). In the final essay, Edwards’s consistency with regard to *fencing the Lord’s table* is given a historical and metaphysical context as it is juxtaposed to Salomon Stoddard’s “Half Way Covenant” view of Communion (ch. 9). While Part III is not practical theology *per se*, these chapters certainly bring



readers into conversation with Reformed theologians, including Crisp himself, who aid inasmuch as they force our categories and require a re-contextualization of our own theology.

Having kept an eye on the Analytic Theology movement over the past few years, I've been very interested to see what kinds of theological works it would produce. Although some concerns still linger, Crisp has allayed my apprehensiveness that theology, for the analytic theologian, might become a reductive enterprise aimed at merely mathematical precision. Crisp is clearly a sensitive reader and aware of the constraints of the task. As he notes in *Analytic Theology*, a strong objection to that style of theology is that it might be "ahistorical and does not pay sufficient attention to the social and cultural factors that shape Christian doctrine (p. 50)." *Retrieving Doctrine* escapes this criticism entirely. Because Crisp shapes the discussion of these theologians through a historically-sensitive and honorably exegetical lens, the essays are both propaedeutic and insightful. As a reader, I felt challenged to engage each thinker and to reconcile their work with my own theology. In this sense, *Retrieving Doctrine* works as constructive theology.

In the face of these outstanding essays from a top-notch thinker, some unease with the methodology remains. Most importantly, Crisp intentionally and overtly undertakes an "analytic" method for most of the chapters and often constrains himself to a metaphysical discussion. All theologians must choose their constraints and Crisp's choice here funds many fascinating questions and provocations throughout the text. However, one does wonder whether or not this analytically constrained approach will yield equally constrained theological outcomes—like the maxim "When you're holding a hammer, everything looks like a nail." For instance, does Crisp nail Barth on his universalism through a strictly analytic argument? Is there another way in which Barth intends to be understood that is missed *en toto* because of what Eleonore Stump terms analytic philosophy's occlusive blindness to other forms of understanding (*Wandering in Darkness* [Oxford University Press, 2010])? That question remains unresolved within the pages of *Retrieving Doctrine* but should stick in the craw of all theologians and pastors.

Despite this concern, I do not hesitate to commend *Retrieving Doctrine* to those who want to reengage these theologians within today's theological landscape. Crisp has reinvigorated these treatments in a way in which most will find intriguing, at the very least. In the so-called evangelical world, it is refreshing to see monuments of Reformed thinking in adjacent examinations, opening the horizon of their overlapping theology to what can often be narrowed divisions within the Reformed church.

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Kent Eilers. *Faithful to Save: Pannenberg on God's Reconciling Action*. T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology 10. New York: T&T Clark, 2011. 240 pp. £65.00/\$120.00.

Without question, Wolfhart Pannenberg is one of the most creative and powerful theological thinkers of the late twentieth century. Friends and foes alike have acclaimed his *Systematic Theology* as one of the most, if not *the* most significant theological offering since the *Church Dogmatics*, and for those familiar with this work, it is not hard to see why. Pannenberg's theology is a sweeping re-imagination of the whole of Christian theology in light of the *eschaton*. It is energetic, exciting, and endlessly resourceful. And yet, his thought is often portrayed in the secondary literature as flat, two-dimensional, lacking any nuance, contour, or resiliency. In fact, students who never read a word of Pannenberg but receive his thought only by way of the secondary literature might be hard pressed, on the basis of these descriptions, to discern any distinction whatsoever between him and Hegel.



But with the recent publication of his dissertation, *Faithful to Save: Pannenberg on God's Reconciling Action*, Kent Eilers aims to show that such portraits are too inattentive to the contours of Pannenberg's thought. Eilers does this by setting forth an account of Pannenberg's mature theology of God's reconciling acts as found in the three volumes of his *Systematic Theology*, tracing three key themes in four chapters on the anticipation, actualization, proclamation, and completion of reconciliation in history. The three themes Eilers identifies are: the freedom of divine action, history as a function of God's faithfulness to creation, and divine faithfulness as "holding fast" to creation. And while Pannenberg is often understood as more or less dissolving the immanent Trinity into the economic Trinity and thus making God in process with the world, Eilers contends that a close reading of these themes reveals Pannenberg's real interest in grounding all of God's reconciling acts *ad extra* in the abundance of his life *in se*.

Eilers recognizes that this caricature of Pannenberg's view often arises from a real concern to do justice to one of Pannenberg's most central themes, the notion that ontology is eschatologically determined. Yet he thinks this unfairly discriminates against Pannenberg's real and often explicit concern to maintain divine freedom. The problem, as Eilers sees it, is that many have misconstrued the relation between the economic and immanent Trinity because they fail to see how this relation, and all divine and human action, is conditioned by Pannenberg's doctrine of God, who is spiritual, infinite, and eternal.

Humanity, though it asserts its independence in vain, is a creature, and therefore ultimately finite and dependent upon God; its freedom consists only in the movement of the personal history that God gives it *from the past* to its future. But divine action cannot be conceived of competitively with human action, for in God's transcendence, God embraces the difference between himself as infinite and the human as finite. And because, for Pannenberg, God's eternity consists in the simultaneity of all time, on his account "God is not subject to the march of time as creatures are [and thus God] does not have ahead of him any future that is different from his present" (p. 50).

In other words, the ontologies of God and man stand in a different relation to history and eschatology. Humans are conditioned by history in a way that God is not. History itself is nested in and underwritten by God's infinitude and eternity, and thus while humanity travels through history to a place they have never been and toward an ontology they are waiting to finally receive, God's entrance into human

history is always grounded in the fullness of God's immanent life, his infinitude. This grounding implies an irreversibility such that entrance into human history could not introduce a mutation into God's life *in se*. If this is correct, the economic Trinity would, for Pannenberg, constitute the immanent Trinity in a strictly noetic sense, insofar as the economic Trinity is the basis of our knowledge of the immanent Trinity. God's faithfulness can then be understood as that attribute by which God remains faithful to himself even as he "holds fast" to his creation.

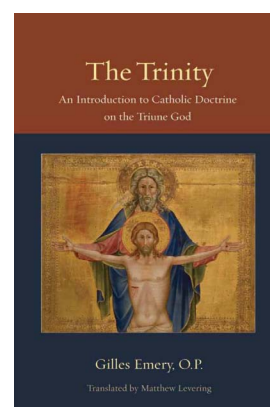
Eilers makes this argument, as one might expect, as he considers the *anticipation* of reconciliation in chapter two. But the substance of this argument reintroduces itself throughout Eilers's treatment of God's work in the entire course of the history of reconciliation, and most particularly in the *actualization* of reconciliation in creation and human exocentricity, in the church's *proclamation* of the gospel, and in the eschatological *completion* of reconciliation in "totality." This is because, from Eilers's perspective, Pannenberg sees divine and human interaction as patterned by the relation between the finitude of the creature and the infinitude of God's own life.

Eilers's argument is clear, insightful, fresh and generous. Critics of Pannenberg may find it *too* generous and wish for more critical reflection. There is, for instance, no real extended account of the fall, the nature of sin, the relation of fallenness to finiteness, or the bearing that this might have for the final success of Pannenberg's theodicy. But the critical responsibility of a work like this is to clearly parse the intentions of Pannenberg himself, and in this regard, Eilers's book is scrupulously fair. It will not bring criticism of Pannenberg's theology to an end, but hopefully it will put some tired stereotypes to rest, and in this way open the way for a new generation to engage and dialogue with this powerful and nuanced theologian. The book will certainly make its mark in the secondary literature devoted to the interpretation of Pannenberg's work, but it will also supply all kinds of insights to those interested in Trinitarianism, soteriology, anthropology, and the Christian life more generally.

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Gilles Emery. *The Trinity: An Introduction to Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God*. Translated by Matthew Levering. Thomistic Resourcement Series 1. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011. xvi + 219 pp. £21.95/\$24.95.

Gilles Emery, a Dominican priest and professor of dogmatic theology at the University of Fribourg, has established himself in the past decade as possibly the leading authority on Thomas Aquinas' Trinitarianism. His volumes *Trinity in Aquinas* (Sapientia, 2003) and *The Trinitarian Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford, 2007) have quickly attained the status of standard works. In his latest book, *The Trinity*, Emery's approach is predominantly contemplative, endeavoring "to display the intelligibility that Trinitarian faith possesses" (p. xiii), yet in a manner "oriented toward beatitude" (p. xiv). The volume unfolds through six chapters in which the author focuses chiefly on the foundations of the doctrine, not entangling himself with recent theological currents.



Chapter 1 offers an overture to Trinitarian faith in which Emery, following Basil of Caesarea, notes a twofold path by which we may approach the Trinity: (1) in our *experience* of saving grace we first encounter the Spirit and then proceed through the Son to the Father (Spirit › Son › Father); (2) in *God himself* the Father begets the Son and they together spirate the Spirit and, in similar order, in the economy of salvation the Father sends his Son and together they send the Spirit (Father › Son › Spirit) (p. 11). Whichever way we approach the knowledge of the three divine persons, our entry point into the doctrine is through redemptive revelation, not speculative thought. Emery writes, “In the New Testament, the manifestation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is directly connected to the gift of new life by grace” (p. 12).

Chapter 2 sets forth the biblical foundation for the doctrine of the Trinity. Emery is especially keen to point out the “mission” of the Son and Spirit, emphasizing their roles as those *sent* from and *returning* to the Father. He finds in the creative and redemptive going forth and return of the Son and the Spirit evidence of their divinity and the revelation, though analogical, of their eternal relations in the Godhead. “It is in the act of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that we discover their unity and features proper to each person (their ‘properties’)” (p. 22).

Chapter 3 explores the proclamation of the Trinitarian faith as it is found in various early confessions, from the NT to the *credo* of the first Council of Constantinople. Emery explains how and why Christian confessions of the Trinity began to shift from a solely economic focus on the persons’ work in creation and salvation to predominantly ontological statements about the eternal mystery of the Trinity in himself. Most notably, the various heresies assaulting the Church’s Trinitarian faith forced early Christians to better articulate the ontological foundation for God’s three-personed economic activity. This was crucial in order to show that God’s subsistence in three persons was not merely a result of his activities in creation and redemption and thus true only by some supposed correlation to the world. “The divine persons cannot be conceived solely in function of their relationship with the created world” (p. 82). Emery’s entire discussion of the early Christian symbols, especially of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed, offers an intelligent yet easy entrance into the issues that shaped classical Christian dogma.

Chapter 4 delivers a rather detailed treatment of what it is that constitutes a divine person. Emery concludes that it is the inter-Trinitarian relations themselves (paternity, filiation, and spiration) that are constitutive of the persons. He writes, “The divine person is a *subsisting relation*” (p. 108). Noting the incomprehensibility of this notion, he adds, “The constitution of a person by a relation remains the exclusive prerogative of the divine Trinity, because only in God does a relation ‘subsist’” (p. 109).

Chapter 5 weaves together various strands of Trinitarian data into a single doctrinal tapestry. Emery sets the tone for the doctrinal synthesis by observing, “[E]ach time that we direct our attention to a divine person, we consider simultaneously the two others, because the three persons are relative to each other and they are present in each other, both in their innermost being and in their action for us” (p. 111). Readers are treated to several discussions: the Father as the “principle” (not the “cause”) of the Son and Spirit (p. 114) and as the “principle without a principle” (pp. 120–23); the Son as image of the Father and his eternal generation as the intelligible ground of creation (pp. 123–33); and the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son (pp. 134–39), with a helpful treatment of the motivation for and principle foundations of the Filioque (pp. 139–49). One of the most striking features of this chapter is Emery’s explanation of how it is that there is no passive potency in the relations between the divine persons (pp. 149–50). God is pure act even in his Trinitarian relations!

Chapter 6 concludes the volume by returning to the creative and saving action of the Trinity. Emery shows that the distinct modes of action attributed to the various divine persons is rooted in each one's distinct mode of existence, that is, in the eternal relations of divine person to divine person (p. 163). Though the author expresses heavily qualified sympathy for Rahner's Rule (that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and the immanent is the economic), he rather dislikes the economic/immanent dialectic that it engenders. He prefers instead to speak of the Trinity in himself and the Trinity revealed in the creative and redemptive "missions" of the Son and Spirit rather than of the "immanent" Trinity and the "economic" Trinity (pp. 177–78). For many readers this return to the patristic "missions" model will present a genuine way out of the dialecticism that tends to dominate all sides in modern debates about the Trinity.

Although principally written for interested Roman Catholics, Protestants should find *The Trinity* to be a sound introduction to a crucial doctrine. Emery's prose is scholarly yet widely accessible, at once traditional and constructive, without being dry or novel.

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Laurie Essig. *American Plastic: Boob Jobs, Credit Cards, and Our Quest for Perfection*. Boston: Beacon, 2010. xxv + 219 pp. £17.99/\$26.95.

American Plastic by sociologist Laurie Essig is an intriguing and provocative secular exploration of idolatry in which she attempts to semantically link "plastic" identity with "plastic" money as harbingers of "unregulated greed and a culture of worshipping the rich" (p. xvii). But her book is more than a sociological analysis; it is a political diatribe that seeks to place responsibility for the global maladies of postmodern ideologies on American "neo-liberal" economic policies.

Essig begins with a study of the history of "plastic," documenting the increasing commodification of beauty as a means of achieving social power—a pursuit nurtured by the media's normalization of the perfect body through its projection of fictionalized celebrity images. This rise of "plastic" beauty was exacerbated by what Essig terms the "deregulation" of medicine in which "patient" became "consumer" and "reconstructive" surgery became "cosmetic" (ironically, she neglects to substantiate the semantic shift from "cosmetic" surgery to "plastic" surgery, implied in her argument). She then lays the groundwork for her political discourse: plastic surgery is a soothing salve for the political anxieties and fiscal insecurities resulting from our plastic economics. We use plastic money (debt) to recreate our plastic, malleable selves, thereby focusing our anxiety on our bodies (pp. 25–26). Curiously, she does not hold individuals responsible for this cultural phenomenon, but blames the "neo-liberal" capitalistic government that has failed to take responsibility for regulating the desires and weaknesses of its citizens, thus enabling its idolatries—and its debt (p. xxii).

The term "neo-liberalism" refers to the economic policies of Milton Friedman and the Chicago school of economics, which maintained that capitalism works most effectively when the power and personal freedom of the individual is unfettered by governmental regulation. After analyzing the economic impact of such policies, Essig presents the premise of her argument: "By making most people less secure economically, by deregulating medicine, and by allowing the banking industry to create new

forms of credit, neoliberalism ended up written on the bodies of ordinary Americans as plastic surgery” (p. 33).

After sharing her encounters with “who” these plastic surgeons and their clients are, Essig examines “how” they came to be, labeling this cultural phenomenon the “plastic ideological complex.” This complex consists of the pervasive celebrity-driven cultural media texts that present to us the ideal body image and promote the need for plastic transformation of our ordinary ugliness—a perfectibility manifested even in the plasticity of pornography and body manipulation procedures. She credits “neoliberals” with the promise of empowerment and promotion of the belief that “a standardized, less individual body would lead to a better job, better husband, and a better life” (p. 35). Choice, according to Essig, is the neoliberal ideology that drives people to seek plastic solutions to their economic insecurities. She concludes that we are trapped—entombed in aging, deteriorating bodies and a crumbling economy, while our culture demands that we be perfect and beautiful, at any cost (p. 175). Plastic, as the promise of a better life, has become our savior. And so to free ourselves, we use “plastic” money to pay for the costs of “plastic” surgery, incurring tremendous debt in which we become further entrenched (p. xxii). This savior is no savior at all.

What solution does Essig offer? We are to demand economic and political reform (p. 183), to “think through such decisions with others” (p. 185), and to “stop seeking perfection and demand a society that is good enough for everyone” (p. 186). But can this be a viable solution when, as she notes, we are trapped—when the systems and the “others” are as enculturated by the plastic ideological complex as we are? It seems a sad case of the blind leading the blind. Furthermore, she confesses that as a parent she is even unable to convince her daughters to think more about their character than their looks (p. 88). It is clear that Essig has made the correct diagnosis but like the common cold the pervasiveness of the illness renders it incurable; for, in fact, we have become what we worship—the image of plastic.

What Essig has illuminated for us is the perfectible plasticity of the post-modern persona—the pliable, fragmented self, defined by consumption, where ambiguity and uncertainty reign and where lifestyle is a matter of choice. The problem, therefore, is not neoliberal economic policies, but is more deeply rooted in the loss of identity and corrosion of character so emblematic of postmodernism (pp. 166–68). In our postmodern preoccupation with externals, we have lost sight of the core of who we are—our soul—and along with it an integrated understanding of the meaning of embodied existence. The body is seen as a mere shell of the self and a tool for self-expression. It has become a cultural artifact.

American Plastic is engaging. It is laced with fascinating anecdotes from Essig’s personal experience and encounters at plastic surgery conventions. And her frequent use of third person personal pronouns when speaking about the inexorable demands of a plastic culture creates an equivocity that keeps the reader wondering whether she herself subscribes to the pursuit of the perfected plastic body. In places she laments these current cultural ideologies, declaring that our bodies do not signify who we are, that choice is not necessarily freedom, and that plastic surgery is not the answer (pp. 168–69). She sees that what we idolize most are plastic images, almost apprehending that we have become what we worship, the image of plastic. At times she is remarkably accurate in her diagnosis, noting that we are “consumers trapped in a culture that demands we be beautiful” (p. 175) and “warriors in the battle over the meaning of our bodies” (p. 111). But then, as if touching a live wire, she jumps away, never to return or explore those ideas more deeply. Instead, she strikes out at politics. By placing the blame on political ideologies and economic policies, what Essig does not do is hold people responsible for the choices they make. Spending money you don’t have on a deteriorating body you can’t ultimately save—and can’t afford to

save—all because of financial and emotional insecurity does not seem senseless to Essig (pp. 51, 53). For her, people are responsible *to* find solutions for their anxieties, but not responsible *for* the consequences of their choices; they are victims of the system, not of their own greedy or imprudent choices (p. 40). The greed she condemns lies not with the individuals but with the “neo-liberal” capitalist system.

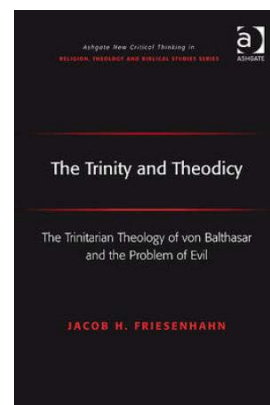
In *American Plastic*, Laurie Essig has made keen observations concerning the inauthenticity of American culture through the examination of one aspect of that culture, plastic surgery. While her observations provide the potential for meaningful insight into the contemporary understanding of the body and the self, by focusing on the surface of the issue and inconclusively implicating political ideologies rather than probing more deeply into the contemporary socio-cultural meaning of the body, this work, like the superficial nature of plastic examined, lacks the power to make a lasting impression. While Essig has made a correct diagnosis (we are plastic people who live in a plastic culture), she has misdiagnosed the etiologic agent: political and economic ideologies are not the cause but only co-morbidities. The true etiologic agent is the postmodern loss of identity and meaning of embodied selfhood. Any attempt to treat the wrong etiologic agent will be nothing more than the application of a “plastic” Band-Aid when a transformation of heart and mind is required, a transformation that only a true Savior can provide.

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Jacob H. Friesenhahn. *The Trinity and Theodicy: The Trinitarian Theology of von Balthasar and the Problem of Evil*. Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies Series. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011. 197 pp. £47.50/\$89.95.

The task that Friesenhahn sets before him is articulating a distinctly Christian, Trinitarian theodicy by bringing Hans Urs von Balthasar’s doctrine of the Trinity to bear on the so-called “problem of evil.” Engaging in a theodicy is not a misguided enterprise that entails subjecting God to human standards of justice, avers Friesenhahn, but a legitimate and necessary pursuit of affirming God’s justice in the face of pervasive evil. Friesenhahn finds unsatisfactory pat answers such as “evil is necessary for the recognition of good,” “evil is a pedagogical tool for spiritual betterment,” “evil is punishment for sin,” and even the free-will defense.

Chapter 2 overviews treatments of the challenge of evil in analytic philosophy. Attention is given first to David Hume and his highly influential *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779). For a direct and powerful attack on the free-will defense, Friesenhahn next turns to J. L. Mackie, who asserts the possibility of a world in which all persons would choose both freely and rightly. Next, Friesenhahn gives Alvin Plantinga a hearing in his (1) rebuttal of the contention that evil logically disproves theism and (2) affirmation of the free-will defense against Mackie’s challenge.



In the next section of his survey, Friesenhahn turns to the theodicies advanced by philosophers of religion John Hick (Irenaean), Eleonore Stump (Thomistic), and Marilyn McCord Adams (divine suffering). Careful exposition is followed by fair evaluation. In the end, all positions are found wanting.

Chapter 4 turns to the Bible to uncover the resources for addressing evil. The biblical overview focusing on the question of evil is clear, punctuated by pithy fragments of theological interpretation and stirring exhortation. It interprets key portions in Scripture, helpfully highlighting features such as the inherent goodness of God's creation, the dire consequences of sin, and the centrality of providence manifested in God's ability to bring good out of evil.

After the foray into analytic philosophy, philosophy of religion, and Scripture, Friesenhahn lays out Hans Urs von Balthasar's theology of the Trinity, which he uses to articulate a Christian theodicy that purportedly avoids the shortcomings of the theodicies already presented.

In Balthasar's view, the essence of the Trinity is *interpersonal kenotic love*. The Father generates the Son in a continual act of self-donating love, while the Son's being consists of his incessant offering of himself, eucharistically, back to the Father. The Spirit results from these intersecting movements as the seal of perfect mutual love. The entire economy, and particularly Christ's death and descent into hell, is for Balthasar the manifestation of the inner-Trinitarian life of love. The kenosis of the incarnation, cross, and descent of Christ is the extension of the eternal kenosis that takes place in the immanent Trinity. In short, salvation history is the eternal drama of the Trinity acted out economically. Alert theological minds will have picked up the Moltmannian echo in these lines. But Friesenhahn is keen to stress that Balthasar, despite undeniable similarities, treads a different path than does Moltmann. Both agree that the cross is an inner-Trinitarian event, revelatory of God's Triune nature. However, *contra* Moltmann, Balthasar excludes the idea that God's Trinitarian nature emerges historically.

One of the most striking aspects of Balthasar's theology of the Trinity, which Friesenhahn employs as the pillar of his theodicy, is the notion that the immanent Trinity, and more specifically, the so-called "infinite distance" that exists between the divine Persons, is the ground of the possibility of evil and suffering. Balthasar writes, "The distance between the Persons, within the dynamic process of the divine essence, is infinite, to such an extent that everything that unfolds on the plane of finitude can take place only within this all-embracing dynamic process" (*Theo-Drama* [San Francisco: Ignatius, 1998], 5:245).

Building on John Paul II's description of suffering as belonging to the essence and mystery of humanity, Friesenhahn then brings Balthasar's theology of the Trinity to argue for the instrumental value of evil and suffering. We are told that suffering, when united to Christ, acquires salvific meaning, enables participation in the redemptive suffering of Christ, and facilitates a sacramental participation in the life of the Trinity (*theosis*).

Friesenhahn ends his constructive section with a look at William P. Young's immensely popular novel *The Shack*, which he describes as offering a narrative theodicy that illustrates Balthasar's thought on the Trinity as inter-personal kenotic love.

The final pages of the book are dedicated to the problem of natural evil. The author briefly surveys and rejects the natural theodicies on offer and admits that Balthasar's thought cannot be applied to animal and natural evil, and he leaves finding a compelling solution as the object of future theological reflection.

Some critical comments are in order at this point. The first worrying suggestion, pertaining to Balthasar's thought, is that the "infinite distance" between the Persons of the Trinity is the ground of the possibility of evil and suffering in the world. This is one of the main pillars in Friesenhahn's theodicy.

He is quick to clarify that it is the possibility of evil, not evil itself, that is grounded in the divine nature. It is far from clear, however, how a positive distance between the divine Persons, problematic as the language of distance already is, entails the possibility of negative distance and evil. Furthermore, we learn that the *finite* distance between God and the world, with all the potential for negativity included, subsists within the *infinite* distance between Father and Son. Logically, the world, even its sinfulness, is closer to the Father than the Son. The absurdity of such reasoning is astounding.

The most worrying move that Friesenhahn makes is his sweeping domestication and instrumentalization of evil. Evil is shorn of its negativity and positively instrumentalised. Here is Friesenhahn in his own words: “Human suffering united to Christ is meaningful as grounded in the Triune God, and thus grounded, human suffering transports man beyond himself through the Son in the Spirit to the Father” (p. 141). It is not just suffering resulting from persecution that has meaning and purpose (Col 1:24), but suffering in general is presented as meaningful when united to Christ. Nothing is said of how exactly suffering can be united to Christ’s past and completed suffering. Furthermore, even if we grant the validity of the point, a further complication arises. If the universal experience of suffering is to acquire salvific meaning and purpose, the cross must be universally effective in realizing redemption. In other words, universalism must be true. Otherwise, Friesenhahn is speaking merely of “evil endured” (Blocher) by followers of Christ, namely, persecution. No distinction is made, however, between evil and suffering universally experienced and persecution-related suffering.

In the final pages of the book, after a positive appraisal of *The Shack*, Friesenhahn presents an admission that, we argue, undermines his entire thesis. In referring to the impossibility of instrumentalizing certain debasing and dehumanizing forms of suffering, he says, “speaking of the victim as able to *choose* to make certain *use* of his or her suffering may well not be the most appropriate form of discourse” (p. 162). With this concession, Friesenhahn has made it clear that the proposal he has put forward, even if found to be theologically coherent and existentially compelling, has a much more limited scope and, consequently, cannot be regarded as a solution to the problem of evil and suffering universally experienced, which is what solutions to the problem of evil are generally understood to be.

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Lloyd P. Gerson. *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 1,312 pp. £150.00/\$240.00.

The fact that an early marginalized movement that gathered itself around shared remembrances of the earthly Jesus and the infamous Theodosian decrees of 391 can share the same name is testimony to an intriguing historical phenomenon of Christianity on both sides of the spear. In other words, how Christianity as a movement, marginal and insignificant as its origins might have been, developed into a kind of establishment represents one of the more complicated historical puzzles that has occupied historians for centuries.

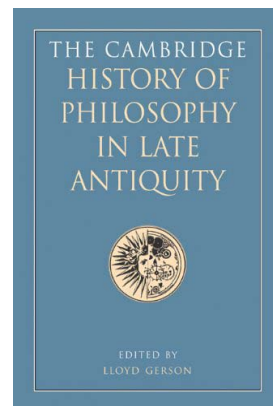
The relevance of this is in tracking early Christianity's sprawling experimentation of explicating its own identity within the shifting imaginaries in which it found itself. Sadly, the resources of early Christian thought and theologies of the political and the self are rarely used by pastors, research students, and professors at the seminary level who are engaged in more or less analogous pursuits. Part of this neglect is owing to the relative inaccessibility of the material and to the lacuna of Protestant seminary curricula. Church history for us tends to begin with the Reformation and recourse to Augustine and others as sorts of precursors. Moreover, when the material is consulted, it tends to be abstracted from its wider philosophical milieu and environment. In any case, this functional neglect of early Christianity's struggle to come to terms with its confession and mission is to our detriment. We would be better cultural critics, better missiologists, better theologians of the moment if we took notice of the conversations buried within the early centuries of the Christian church.

It is within this context that the edited volumes by Lloyd P. Gerson, *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (CHPLA) proves invaluable. These two volumes contain over forty specialized essays by leading experts on philosophical issues and philosophers of significance ranging from the period 200–800 CE. The volumes were designed to be the “successor” to the earlier *The Cambridge History of Late Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* edited by A. H. Armstrong in 1967. Since the forty-odd years of its respective appearance, however, an overwhelming amount of material has come to light. CHPLA in this sense builds upon (and in some cases repairs) the foundation of this earlier collection.

The two volumes consist of forty-eight essays divided into eight larger parts (parts 1–5 appear in vol. 1, and parts 6–8 in vol. 2):

1. “Philosophy in the Later Roman Empire” (pp. 11–231)
2. “The First Encounter of Judaism and Christianity with Ancient Philosophy” (pp. 233–97)
3. “Plotinus and the New Platonism” (pp. 299–373)
4. “Philosophy in the Age of Constantine” (pp. 375–455)
5. “The Second Encounter of Christianity with Ancient Greek Philosophy” (pp. 457–581)
6. “Late Platonism” (pp. 583–763)
7. “The Third Encounter of Christianity with Ancient Greek Philosophy” (pp. 765–839)
8. “Philosophy in Transition” (pp. 841–914)

A brief orientation introduces each main part and proves helpful in getting a sense of such new material. The volumes also contain an appendix that includes a complete digest of philosophical works known to have been written during the period under consideration (pp. 915–65). There are also significant



bibliographies consisting of primary and secondary literature for each chapter printed at the end of the second volume (pp. 983–1182). Helpful, too, are the Index locorum (pp. 1183–1248) and General Index (pp. 1249–84) for navigating specific texts or themes. It was surprising to discover the complete lack of illustrations, timelines, and so on. The two general maps at the head of volume 1 make this oversight even more striking. Nevertheless, *CHPLA* is a remarkable achievement. The cost might be prohibitive, but if you are able to talk your librarians into securing a copy, the investment will surely prove itself.

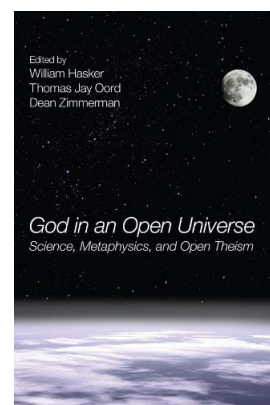
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William Hasker, Thomas Jay Oord, and Dean Zimmerman, eds. *God in an Open Universe: Science, Metaphysics, and Open Theism*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011. vii + 206 pp. £14.12/\$22.00.

This is a companion volume to Thomas Jay Oord's *Creation Made Free* (see p. 133 for review). This contains seven papers. Whereas the previous volume contains essays by panentheists and process theists, this one is genuinely committed to open theism. The authors here are committed to the notion that God is free to create a universe or refrain from doing so. Also, they are more modest about where science in fact leads. The authors in this book acknowledge that theology and science are very complicated domains that contain vast networks of theories. As such, there are areas of science that may fit equally well with several broad theological positions.

William Hasker's "The Need for a Bigger God" discusses the need for a religiously adequate conception of God. The conception must be adequate in that it is consistent and takes account of current science, but it must also be religiously adequate in that the Christian God is deeply personal. Hasker's essay starts out arguing that open theism has a more adequate conception of God than its rivals, but then he seems to get lost on a tangent defending his emergent dualism. He argues that (2) God would make creatures with libertarian freedom, (2) emergent dualism fits well with evolution, and (3) open theism offers the best account of God and the God-world relation. Hasker points out that these three theses fit together nicely but that they are not logically entailed by one another.

Jeffrey Koperski's "Metatheoretic Shaping Principles: Where Science Meets Theology" offers an excellent overview of basic issues in the history and philosophy of science. The structure of science is today typically held to involve three layers. First, there is the layer of observation and data. The second layer is more abstract and involves theories and laws that try to account for the data. The third layer involves metatheoretic shaping principles (MSPs). These are basic principles one uses to determine which theories, laws, and models of reality are adequate. These involve basic metaphysical and epistemological assumptions about reality such as the uniformity of the laws of nature and explanatory virtues in scientific models. Koperski does an excellent job at spelling out these ideas and the roles they have played in the history of science and theology. He notes that there are two MSPs that conflict with open theism: universal deterministic causation and global scientific realism. After discussing various options that open theists can take to get around this conflict, he makes a very important point in regards



to science and theism. These two MSPs conflict with theism in general because the differences between open theism and classical theism are not that relevant when it comes to the relationship between science and theology. There are other factors that shape one's overall metaphysics, and it is one's overall metaphysics that determines how one will deal with specific issues in contemporary science.

David Basinger's "Religious Belief Formation: A Kantian Perspective Informed by Science" discusses issues related to religious belief formation and neurophysiology. There are several factors that deeply shape the way human persons develop and retain beliefs such as one's genetic dispositions and cultural background. Despite such things, it is still the case that a person can come to modify her beliefs when she is confronted with internal inconsistencies within her web of beliefs as well as counterevidence. Basinger attempts to draw out the implications of these scientific findings for religious belief, education, and religious tolerance.

Alan Rhoda's "The Fivefold Openness of the Future" lays out five senses in which the future is open. The future is causally open in that there are several possible futures. It is ontically open in that the future does not yet exist. It is alethically open in that propositions about the future are neither true nor false. The future is epistemically open in that no one can know which future states of affairs will obtain. Finally, the future is providentially open in that the future states of affairs are not exhaustively ordained. Rhoda attempts to argue that if one accepts certain assumptions, these five senses of the open future stand or fall together. If he is successful, he has narrowed the options for theists to take: one either holds to open theism or theological determinism. Molinism and other forms of free will theism are out if the argument goes through. In order to get around the argument, Rhoda claims that one must deny one of the following assumptions: knowledge entails truth; truth supervenes on being; no partial future exists; God has an exhaustive acquaintance with reality; God knows all truths; and God sustains the world in existence. It seems to me that the most likely assumption for a free will theist to jettison would be truth supervenes on being. Several philosophers, like Trenton Merricks, have argued against it on non-theological grounds. Merricks's recent work has not only argued against the claim that truth supervenes on being; he has also used this to develop a defense of Molinism.

David M. Woodruff's "Presentism and the Problem of Special Relativity" and Dean Zimmerman's "Open Theism and the Metaphysics of Space-Time" deal with what is probably the biggest conflict between open theism and contemporary science. On the standard interpretation of the Special Theory of Relativity (STR), the past, present, and future are all said to have equal existence. For those of you who are in America, you are not currently in Scotland like I am. Yet Scotland exists just as much as America does. In a similar way, on STR, the past and future are said to exist just as much as the present does even if you do not happen to be located at those times. Here is the rub for the open theist: the open theist is typically committed to *presentism*—the view that the past no longer exists and the future does not yet exist. (On a side note, classical theologians historically all held to presentism as well.) One character trait of open theism is that since the future does not yet exist there is nothing for God to know about the future. As such, God does not have foreknowledge. STR calls all of this into question.

Woodruff's paper does a fine job at explicating the problem and articulating possible solutions. Yet the solution that he offers is unsatisfactory. He argues for a position where there is no unique present moment of time, but he wants to continue to call this presentism. As an unrepentant presentist, I was utterly baffled as to how Woodruff's proposal could still count as presentism. Zimmerman's paper does not suffer from this problem. He offers a novel way of understanding STR while still preserving presentism. He also critiques other accounts that seek to reconcile STR with presentism (e.g., William

Lane Craig). Yet Zimmerman makes an interesting point that I myself have often wondered about: we know that STR is false. It makes false predictions and ignores the effects of gravity. A major project of contemporary physics is to develop a new fundamental theory through either the General Theory of Relativity or Quantum Mechanics. So I have to ask: Why should the presentist be concerned with STR?

Robin Collins ends the book with “Prayer and Open Theism: A Participatory, Co-Creator Model.” Collins offers an interesting discussion on the nature of participatory prayer. He first argues against naturalistic accounts that view prayer as something akin to the placebo effect. Then he critiques theological determinist and Molinist accounts, before laying out his co-creator model. He also examines tough questions about unanswered prayer and why God requires prayer. I simply cannot do justice to the rich conversation that Collins offers. Instead I will simply say that this paper contains all of the hallmarks of Collins’s other writings: clarity, intellectual rigor, sensitivity to biblical theology and spirituality, and a deep awareness of science.

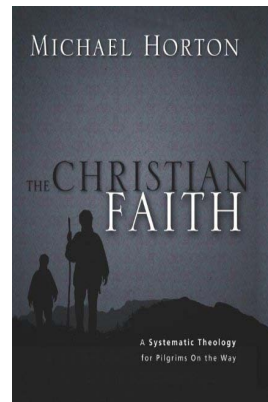
All in all, this book is one that ought to be taken seriously by theologians and philosophers. It will be a difficult read for those who do not have a background in philosophy. However, it offers one of the best defenses and articulations of open theism to date, and I imagine it will spark much discussion in contemporary theology.

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Michael Horton. *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011. 1,052 pp. £31.99/\$49.99.

Michael Horton is the J. Gresham Machen Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics at Westminster Seminary California. He has authored over twenty books, among which is a four-volume dogmatic series (published by Westminster John Knox) that presents theology academically, in dialogue with several contemporary voices from a wide range of confessional stances. Horton’s more popular theological discussion is widely known through *Modern Reformation* magazine, a radio broadcast entitled White Horse Inn, and several of his books that have made him a significant spokesman of Reformed theology engaging contemporary North American culture. *The Christian Faith* is a systematic theology that finds a balance between these two trends in Horton, the dialogue with contemporary academic voices and a concern to teach theology to lay people. That *via media* is an important attribute of this tome.



The six-part structure of the work has a God-centered approach: “Knowing God” includes prolegomena and Holy Scripture; “God Who Lives” covers God’s being; “God Who Creates” encompasses God’s works and anthropology; “God Who Rescues” covers Christology; “God Who Reigns in Grace” covers soteriology and ecclesiology; and “God Who Reigns in Glory” covers eschatology. These six parts are preceded by an introduction that freshly presents the theological endeavor, one that doesn’t fit the common accusation towards propositional theology as disregarding the drama. Horton presents a mnemonic four-part path for Christians that starts with the *drama* (creation, fall, redemption, and

consummation) showing that Christianity is about historical events, moves on to *doctrine* that defines our understanding of the drama, proceeds to *doxology* (focused praise), and ends with *discipleship*, which is the lifestyle of the Christian in procession to the City of God. This is not a rigid four-stage path in the life of faith, but the pattern illuminates both the periods of reformation as well as decline in the Church (p. 25).

This survey of the Christian theological path comes back elsewhere in the work (pp. 205–18, 309–13, 646), thus exemplifying Horton’s ability for interconnectedness throughout a 1,000-page book. Horton applies Paul Tillich’s paradigms of *overcoming estrangement* and *meeting a stranger* to worldviews (pp. 36–47), understandings of revelation (p. 115), epistemology and doctrine (p. 219), and human identity (p. 387). The law and gospel distinction appears in prolegomena (pp. 91, 136–39), anthropology (pp. 385–86, 395–96, 429), soteriology (pp. 629, 633–34, 649, 679), ecclesiology (pp. 712, 717, 755), all the way to eschatology (p. 982). This continuity of language allows for an uncommon but healthy connection between the theological loci. The chapters are linked in such a way that this systematic theology reads as one book, not a compilation of separate doctrines.

Doctrinal correlation throughout the work is even more striking with covenant as a theological framework of the system (more so in his four-volume dogmatics). Covenant is the governing ontological model introduced in the beginning of the work (pp. 41–47); Horton unfolds it not as a separate locus with its own chapter but as an interwoven motif (not a central dogma, p. 29) that reappears throughout the whole book. Scripture is the covenant canon (ch. 4); doctrine is developed covenantally (pp. 210–18); the Trinity’s planning and acting is exhibited in the covenant of redemption (p. 303); common grace is a promise of the Noahic covenant (p. 367); sin is the violation of the covenant of creation (pp. 415–31); Christ’s kingdom is tied to various covenants in the history of redemption (pp. 537–42); justification and adoption highlight both the legal as well as the relational aspect of the covenant (pp. 632, 645); and even a specific form of church government is tied to covenant (p. 854–61).

Horton’s emphasis on covenant is both unique and intriguing. Its uniqueness is in the fact that *The Christian Faith* is arguably the only modern systematic theology that takes covenant as the most emphasized structural framework of theology. Based on the exegetical work of Meredith Kline, Horton is always connecting the various historical covenants with different doctrines. The intriguing aspect is how the connections shed light on new patterns of thought. For example, when he asserts that the covenant relationship is essential to human nature (pp. 380–81, 384, 397, 425), one could react by saying that the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (VII.1) posits covenant as a “voluntary condescension on God’s part” added to our natural obedience towards the Creator. However, Horton wants to underscore the relational aspect of the *imago Dei* rather than a particular substance or faculty, and how sin is the marring of the relationship and redemption restores it.

Every dogmatic project of this breadth has to choose what to emphasize and what to synthesize or leave behind. This work has whole chapters on doctrines such as union with Christ (ch. 18) and glorification (ch. 21), long sections on alternative philosophical epistemologies (p. 57–77), the order of God’s decree (pp. 315–23), and the history of millennial debates (p. 920–33). On the other hand, there is very little on the person of the Holy Spirit; his section on church polity (p. 854–61) omits any discussion of various models of ecclesiastical government; there is only one paragraph on the male-female distinction (p. 391); it does not treat the nature of the imputation of sin; and his eschatology does not develop some significant signs of Christ’s second coming (preaching to all the nations, apostasy, and tribulation). This is not a criticism on Horton’s choices, but a reminder to readers that no summary

of doctrines could be called definitive because it involves leaving out a few things. Nevertheless, the emphases are usually a book's most noteworthy contributions to our studies.

Besides the Reformed motifs we already mentioned (covenant, law, and gospel), other emphases become helpful tools for the student of theology. First, Horton is careful in always presenting exegetical and historical sections to virtually every major doctrine. The exegesis provides the topography of a doctrine before one can trace a street map, a reference to the logical connections of systematic theology (p. 29). The historical concern covers not only different periods of church history, but the authoritative creeds and confessions on which the Christian church has grown. Second, Horton critically engages modern theologies such as Avery Dulles's models of revelation (pp. 113–15, 123–26), Stanley Grenz's sources of theology (pp. 169–73), George Lindbeck's models of doctrine (pp. 206–10), Karl Barth's supralapsarianism (pp. 317–23), Robert Gundry's view of imputation (pp. 637–40), and Jürgen Moltmann's eschatology (pp. 930–33), thus supplying the contemporary dialogue that is missing in older dogmatics. On top of that, Horton is always careful in choosing the best literature to reference in footnotes for further research.

These qualities are enough to make this volume a very useful guide for students of theology not only to understand doctrine better, but to renew one's wonder with the story (drama), to praise the writer of such a plot (doxology), and to follow his calling in this world (discipleship).

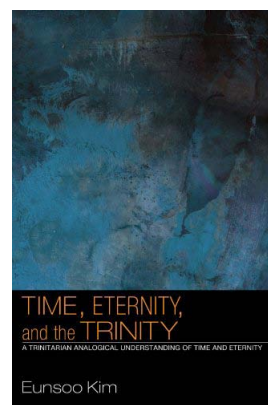
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Eunsoo Kim. *Time, Eternity, and the Trinity: A Trinitarian Analogical Understanding of Time and Eternity*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010. viii + 367 pp. £26.32/\$41.00.

In the past few decades, the nature of God's eternality has sparked intense discussion and debate. Is God timeless or temporal? Logically speaking, these are the only two options since they are logically contradictory: God is either temporal or atemporal. Various authors have attempted to offer a third way between these two positions, but none have succeeded because there is no such thing as a third way between two logically contradictory positions. The present volume is another attempt at developing a third way.

Kim's book has several noteworthy virtues. First, it is clearly written. Second, Kim has familiarized himself with the philosophy of time. There is a tendency (sometimes intentionally and sometimes not) within systematic theology to stay away from the philosophy of time. It was refreshing to see Kim engage this field of study. Third, Kim nicely summarizes the biblical, historical, and contemporary philosophical issues surrounding the debate over God and time.

As noted above there is much debate between defenders of divine timelessness and divine temporalism. Contemporary defenders of divine timelessness, like Paul Helm, typically hold to a tenseless theory of time where all moments of time (past, present, and future) equally exist. Classical theists (who affirmed divine timelessness) and contemporary divine temporalists hold to a tensed theory of time where only the present exists—the past no longer exists, and the future does not yet



exist. Within contemporary discussions there is a widespread agreement that divine timelessness is not compatible with a tensed theory of time. (A few notable exceptions may be E. Stump, N. Kretzmann, and B. Leftow. As far as I am aware, I am the only one who calls into question the compatibility of timelessness and tenseless time.) Kim concurs with this agreement and assumes a tensed theory of time. Kim, thus, rules out divine timelessness. Part of his thesis is to offer an account of God's relation to time if a tensed theory of time happens to be true.

Another aspect of Kim's thesis is to solve the debate between timeless and temporal views of God by getting beyond these two "extremes." The way forward is to offer an analogical Trinitarian understanding of time and eternity. Before doing this, however, Kim sets out to do a few things: (1) offer a biblical view of time and eternity; (2) critique contemporary divine temporalism; and (3) discuss Karl Barth's and Hans Urs von Balthasar's views on God and time.

Kim's chapter on the biblical understanding of time and eternity occurs before his chapter on the philosophy of time. As evangelicals we want to start with the Bible, but this methodology can sometimes be problematic. This is because the questions that we ask are not always the questions that the biblical authors seek to address. As such, it can be difficult to draw inferences from Scripture without inserting our own views into the text. When it comes to the nature of time, the Bible gives us very little to work with. The best that we can say as theologians is that there are multiple philosophical theories on the nature of time, and from there we can debate which ones are compatible with Scripture. Kim, like many others, claims that *the* biblical view is that God created time with creation. Time came into existence when God created the heavens and the earth. This is an untenable position for at least two reasons. First, in order for the Bible to teach that time is created, it would need to tell us what time is either directly or indirectly. Is time relational, absolute, or substantival? The Bible never addresses this metaphysical question. There simply is no such thing as *the* biblical view of time since the Bible neither explicitly nor implicitly teaches what time is. Second, apart from the metaphysical question 'What is time?' the Bible would then need to teach either explicitly or implicitly that time began to exist. This is something that the Bible does not do. The Bible is quite comfortable talking about time before creation. For instance, Ps 90 describes God as existing from perpetual duration in the indefinite past before creation.

Kim's critique of divine temporalism leaves much to be desired. For instance, his criticism of Alan Padgett's view is that Padgett lacks a real engagement between time and eternity. This criticism seems unpersuasive since Padgett's *God, Eternity and the Nature of Time* carefully analyzes divine action and sustaining. Another criticism from Kim is that divine temporalism cannot account for the biblical doctrine of divine simplicity and immutability. One problem with this criticism is that divine simplicity is not taught in Scripture, which is one of many reasons that divine temporalists have abandoned the doctrine. Further, divine temporalists like Padgett have offered sophisticated accounts of immutability that are perfectly compatible with scripture.

He has two main criticisms of temporalism: (i) it entails panentheism, and (ii) it cannot account for the infinite qualitative difference between time and eternity. In regards to (i) it seems odd to say the views of thinkers like Wolterstorff, Padgett, W. L. Craig, and R. Swinburne entail panentheism. The only justification Kim gives for this is that temporalists hold that the world's time is in God's eternity. If this necessarily entails panentheism, then Pseudo-Dionysius, Augustine, Anselm, Peter Lombard, and many other classical theists are panentheists, for they all hold that time is contained in God's eternity. In regards to (ii), Kim's statements are sparse and at times vague, but I gather the difference has something to do with the fact that God is life and contingent creatures tend towards death apart from God's grace.

If this is the infinite qualitative difference between time and eternity, then all of the divine temporalists noted above have this built within their accounts. As such Kim's objection will need more content in order to succeed.

Next, Kim offers a clear exposition of Barth's and Balthasar's views on time and eternity because he sees in them significant insights on this topic that others do not have. I disagree. Most of the purportedly significant insights fall into two categories: (i) those that are not novel to Barth and Balthasar and (ii) those that appear to be incoherent. However, the main problem that plagues Barth and Balthasar is that each rejects divine timelessness but then endorses everything that timelessness affirms. Divine timelessness holds that God exists without beginning, without end, and without succession. Barth and Balthasar hold that God exists without beginning, without end, and without succession.

After expounding the views of Barth and Balthasar, Kim gets to the task of explicating his own views. Kim's account ultimately goes as follows: 'The Triune God's eternity is the source of created time. Prior to creation, God existed in a simultaneous state of affairs that lacked succession. Then, in the act of creation, God takes on temporal succession.' This struck me as odd since this is the account of God and time that has been masterfully articulated by Swinburne, Padgett, D. Zimmerman, and G. DeWeese. It appears that Kim has done something similar to what Barth and Balthasar have done. It seems as if he rejects divine temporalism and then affirms all that it holds. If this is the case, Kim has not offered a substantive third way between divine timelessness and divine temporality.

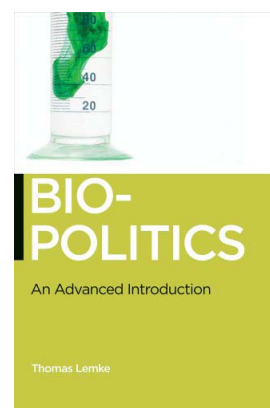
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Thomas Lemke. *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction*. Translated by Eric Frederick Trump. Biopolitics: Medicine, Technoscience, and Health in the 21st Century. New York: New York University Press, 2011. xiii + 145 pp. £12.99/\$20.00.

Biopolitics is not easy to define. In *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction*, German sociologist Thomas Lemke does not back away from this fact but instead seeks to provide a historical narrative outlining the contours and development of the term and its use. In fact, the term has been used in conflicting and contradictory ways, so a standard definition is unhelpful because it would likely distort this history. At root it "denotes a politics that deals with life" (p. 2). "Biopolitics may refer to issues as diverse as financial support for agricultural products, promotion of medical research, legal regulations on abortion, and advance directives of patients specifying their preferences concerning life-prolonging measures" (p. 1). So for our purposes it is helpful to note that biopolitics is at the very least an interdisciplinary notion that brings questions from fields like bioethics into conversation with political concerns and realities.

Lemke begins by noting two early approaches to biopolitics. Naturalistic concepts of biopolitics take life as the basis for politics. In this view, politics must orient itself "toward biological laws" and take them "as a guideline" (p. 10). Examples from this approach demonstrate biopolitics's checkered history: racism and Nazism both connect to this. Politicist concepts, on the other hand, conceive of life



processes as the object of politics. For example, ecological regulation would fall into this trend, as would technological progress for the sake of “fixing” biological “problems.” Lemke’s central thesis is that both of these approaches fail because they both assume one stable pole: either life defines politics or politics life (p. 4). Since there is in fact instability, Lemke turns to the thought of Michel Foucault, who first developed a more balanced notion of biopolitics:

In contrast to the former conception of biopolitics, Foucault describes biopolitics as an explicit rupture with the attempt to trace political processes and structures back to biological determinants. By contrast, he analyzes the historical process by which “life” emerges as the center of politics strategies From this perspective, biopolitics denotes a specific modern form of exercising power. (p. 33)

Even Foucault’s use of the term shifts (p. 34).

The rest of the book essentially follows thinkers inheriting and modifying Foucault’s thought. Giorgio Agamben focuses on the concept of *homo sacer*, which was a figure in Roman law. “This is a person whom one could kill with impunity, since he was banned from the politico-legal community and reduced to the status of his physical existence” (pp. 54–55). Agamben sees this concept of “bare life” in asylum seekers, refugees, the brain dead, and other vulnerable persons. Thus biopolitics becomes a way of dealing with these types of people. Lemke also covers the thought of Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Agnes Heller, Ferenc Fehér, Didier Fassin, Paul Rabinow, and many others. In this exploration he brings many other topics into conversation with biopolitics as he seeks to chart the development in the various thinkers. Lemke concludes the book with a brief constructive chapter in which he tries to describe the biopolitics mode of functioning rather than its causes or effects (p. 118). He concludes by contrasting biopolitics with bioethics. Bioethics, in his view, focuses on the question, what is to be done? “An analytics of biopolitics, on the other hand, seeks to generate problems. It is interested in questions that have not yet been asked As a result, an analytics of biopolitics has a speculative and experimental dimension: it does not affirm what is but anticipates what could be different” (p. 123).

Because of the varied interpretations and explorations of biopolitics and Lemke’s explicit desire for it to be interdisciplinary, theological perspectives are necessary though not explored in any depth in this book. Christian bioethics would benefit from exploring some of the questions that biopolitics raises because biopolitics deals with many similar concerns from different angles. While still addressing issues of the dignity of human life, bioethics can explore connections to this theme such as economic concerns and issues of power and exploitation in research and development.

Biopolitics should be of wider interest to evangelical theology as well. Some of Lemke’s most interesting examples of problems come from poor countries where persons are being exploited and used, where their lives are disposable. Missions agencies and missionaries must be aware of this reality and the opportunities it opens up for ministry and witness. In addition, doctrines such as the incarnation and practices such as the Lord’s Supper provide resources for addressing the connection between life, politics, and power. While this particular book is most likely of interest to graduate students studying bioethics, political theology, or other related specialties due to its focus on the historical development of the idea, biopolitics in general invites continued engagement from evangelical theologians.

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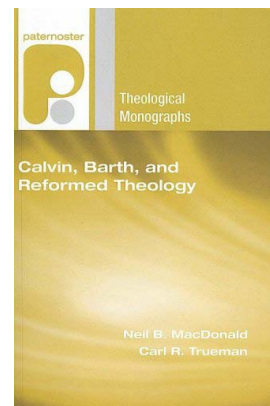
Neil B. MacDonald and Carl Trueman, eds. *Calvin, Barth, and Reformed Theology*. Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2008. 181 pp. \$24.00.

Whose theology offers a better guide to the ongoing work of Reformed theology—that of Calvin or of Barth? It is this basic question that the collection of essays in this book seeks to answer. Seven essays total are divided across four main parts: (1) Historical Overview; (2) The Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist; (3) Atonement; and (4) Scripture. The Historical Overview comprises the opening chapter and should be read first, but after that the order of reading is not critical as each of the subsequent parts is topically self-contained.

Carl Trueman starts things off, providing “a broad background to Reformed theology in both its original early modern context and in its appropriation in the writings of Karl Barth” (p. 3). Critical in Trueman’s narrative is that in Calvin’s context the confessions of the Reformed churches functioned as ecclesiastical consensus documents by which the benchmark of Reformed theology was established. Calvin’s theology thus functions only as a *de facto* benchmark of Reformed orthodoxy in that it so well reflects these early confessions. Weighing in on the question in hand, Trueman thinks that Barth’s theology stands materially in more discontinuity than continuity with the Reformed confessions.

The first of two chapters comprising Part 2 compares Calvin and Barth on the Lord’s Supper (Trevor Hart); the second compares them on baptism (Anthony Cross). Hart helpfully sets up his discussion reviewing the questions that were/are central to historical discussions about the Eucharist. On Calvin’s view, Hart highlights the sacramental nature of the Lord’s Supper—a dual dynamic in the sign of the Supper in which from the human side we participate by faith and from the divine side God draws us to himself in communion with Christ through the working of his Holy Spirit. Since Barth never completed his volume on the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper, Hart extrapolates in fair measure from Barth’s more developed views on baptism. From this Hart argues that Barth rejected the Supper being a “sacrament” and saw it primarily as a single movement of human activity directed towards God in faith and obedience. Following this, Anthony Cross adeptly covers a lot of ground in his comparative analysis on baptism. For Calvin, the sacramental nature of baptism “is the initiatory sign by which we are admitted to the fellowship of the Church, that being ingrafted into Christ we may be accounted children of God” (p. 65). As such water baptism is integrally linked to Spirit-baptism. Cross contrasts this with Barth, who rejects the sacramental nature of baptism, seeing it instead as “a free and responsible human act” (p. 70). The major weakness of Barth’s view, according to Cross, is the radical distinction he makes between Spirit- and water-baptism.

Part 3 likewise comprises two chapters. The first exposit Barth’s doctrine of substitutionary atonement (Neil MacDonald); the second deals with the doctrine of atonement by way of the doctrine of election that underpins it (Myron Penner). MacDonald presents Barth’s view of substitutionary atonement as founded primarily on the narrative of the synoptic Gospels. It follows along these lines: Jesus’ mission entailed declaring God’s final judgment on Israel and the world. Pilate’s judgment on Jesus, leading ultimately to the cross, was actually YHWH’s own judgment on Jesus. The passion story is thus Jesus undergoing YHWH’s judgment in place of Israel and the world—“same judgment, different object of judgment equals substitutionary atonement” (p. 109). By MacDonald’s lights, Barth’s interpretation represents a triumph of dialectic and imagination and “is preferable to Calvin’s view



of atonement principally because the narrative historicity it presupposes is rational to affirm by the standards of the Enlightenment” (p. 115). Following this, Myron Penner ably lays out Calvin’s theology of atonement, describing it as a thoroughly Reformed and scripturally faithful account; he then evaluates how compatible Barth’s account is with it. As Penner explains, Calvin’s atonement theology centers on the two-natures theology of Christ, being thus rooted with God in eternity. Barth’s atonement theology, on the other hand, begins with the actual person of Jesus Christ in the incarnation—“what is sometimes called Barth’s actualism” (p. 137). The issue of divine election and reprobation figure significantly in the discussion. In the net analysis, Penner concludes, Barth’s view is not compatible with Calvin’s and is thus not recommendable.

Rounding things off for Part 4, Stephen Holmes lays out in brief measure Calvin’s view of Scripture. Simply put, Holmes presents why Calvin believed that the Bible should be believed. At base the answer has to do with the workings of the Spirit in the human heart. Lastly, Craig Bartholomew discusses theological interpretation of Scripture as relates to Calvin and Barth. Boiling it down, Calvin and Barth represent the type of biblical interpretation that we need to appropriate for our day.

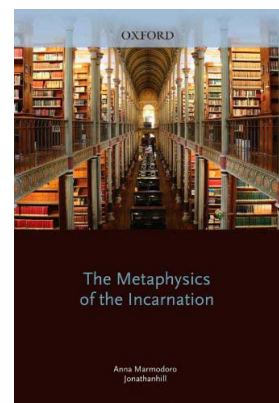
Two such luminaries as Calvin and Barth can be compared in only the most modest terms in a single assortment of essays as we have on offer in this book. Nevertheless, with the exception of Holmes’ fine inclusion, which focuses solely on Calvin, these essays contribute an insightful “compare and contrast” on three main loci of theology. Do these essays give the answer as to whose theology offers a better guide to the ongoing work of Reformed theology? The majority consensus here seem to share Trueman’s opinion, though it is hardly dispositive. What is missing in my opinion and would have completed this work most fittingly is an epilogue that offered a summary evaluation of these essays in light of this prime question presented at the start.

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Anna Marmodoro and Jonathan Hill, eds. *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. 262 pp. £68.00/\$125.00.

The doctrine of the incarnation stands at the center of the Christian faith. It claims that Jesus Christ is both fully human and fully divine—one person in two natures. The traditional doctrine has been the subject of intense conceptual scrutiny as well as the occasion for awe-struck worship. Criticisms of the classical doctrine (some of which echo very old criticisms) have become quite pronounced of late, and recent work in metaphysics (and especially philosophy of mind) has opened up several interesting lines of inquiry. *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation* utilizes such recent work to reexamine the metaphysics of the incarnation.

Generally, theologians and philosophers of religion who wish to develop an account of the doctrine in lines with Christian orthodoxy (consistency with Scripture and the ecumenical creeds, thus rejecting such heresies as Arianism, Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, and Monophysitism) tend to think of the two natures of Christ as either *abstract* or



concrete natures. For the abstractist, the human nature of Jesus is a property or set of properties; more precisely, it is the total of all the properties or attributes that one has to have to be truly human (one must be a *homo sapiens*, made in the image of God, etc.). So in becoming fully and truly human, the Son or Logos took upon himself this (abstract) human nature. Although he became a particular human person (Jesus of Nazareth), the Son did so by taking all the properties that one must have to be human (an abstract human nature). And as the Son does so, he retains the full divine nature; he still has the full set of properties required by divinity (omniscience, omnipotence, omnibenevolence, etc.). The concretist, on the other hand, insists that what the Son assumed in the incarnation was not an abstract set of properties but a *concrete* human nature (e.g., for many such theorists, a human body and soul). This book contains contributions by partisans from both camps; it also includes attempts to plow new furrows.

After a lucid introduction by Jonathan Hill, Brian Leftow sketches and defends a concretist account of the incarnation, one in which we should think of Jesus Christ as the composite of the Logos with a body and soul: “the Word becomes flesh by having flesh grafted on” (p. 23); the Son is “grafted into B+S at conception” (p. 24). Leftow is sensitive to charges of Nestorianism, and this worry is the burden of Oliver D. Crisp’s essay. Crisp is a concretist: “God Incarnate is a whole composed of the proper parts of God the Son and (the parts of) his human nature” (p. 45). Crisp is aware that anyone who follows Aquinas’s suggestion that the human nature is taken up by the Logos as something like a garment will face challenges, and he concludes his defense of this model by concluding that it avoids Nestorianism because it is “consistent with the statement that the person who is Jesus Christ is God the Son” (p. 60). Richard Cross mines the depths of the theology of John Duns Scotus to suggest something that actually runs counter to Scotus’s own view: the view that Christ’s (concrete) human nature “should be thought of as an *instrument* of the second Person of the Trinity” (p. 186). Similarly, Thomas P. Flint explores different versions of concretism. What he calls “Model T” (after Thomas Aquinas) suggests that the Logos or Son assumes a concrete human nature as a *part*, so that the incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, is a composite made up of two parts (divinity and the body and soul that is this particular human nature). He contrasts this with what he calls “Model A,” the view that when the Son unites himself to this particular human nature the “composite thus formed is not the Son” but rather a contingent entity we call “Jesus Christ” (p. 79). Flint lays out different challenges that face the respective concretist theories, and he offers suggestions for further work.

Thomas Senor is concerned to protect (among other things) the unity of the person of Christ (he insists that any acceptable view must hold that Jesus Christ and God the Son are identical), and he draws upon the resources of several very different proposals for his advocacy of an “ecumenical kenotic Christology.” Drawing from Thomas V. Morris’s influential “two minds” view as well as from compositional Christology and recent work in kenotic Christology, Senor proposes a concretist version of kenoticism. Stephen T. Davis, on the other hand, also defends a kenotic account, but his is an abstractist model. He is especially concerned to account for the biblical witness to the weakness and ignorance of Christ, and he is convinced that a kenotic account is the best way to do so. He recognizes that his strategy has much in common with “classical” christological theories, and he concludes by saying that while a proper understanding of kenosis helps Christians avoid the common charges that the doctrine is incoherent, his “own reasons for following the kenotic route are primarily biblical” (p. 133). Richard Swinburne stakes out an abstractist view as well, but his differs from that of Davis in the endorsement of a “two minds” Christology to account for the full range of biblical witness to Jesus Christ: “we are led to a ‘two minds’ view; and to understand the separation of the two natures as implying that not merely

did he do different actions but he acquired different and sometimes contradictory beliefs when acting with his divine powers than when acting with his human powers” (p. 162). Joseph Jedwab continues this reflection on the knowledge of the incarnate Son, and he employs recent work in philosophy of mind to defend an account of the unity of consciousness that allows for consistency with creedal orthodoxy. Michael Rea, following his earlier employment of the notions of “material constitution” and “numerical sameness without identity” for the doctrine of the Trinity, offers a proposal to think similarly with respect to the incarnation. Anna Marmodoro puts recent development in philosophy of mind (the “Extended Mind” thesis) to work in Christology, whereby the divine mind is thought of as “extending onto an external device (Jesus) to carry out (some of) its mental activities” (p. 206). Robin Le Poidevin concludes the volume by revisiting the old question of the possibility of multiple incarnations.

Overall, this is a splendid collection of essays. Many of the contributions are of sterling quality, and the breadth and diversity of the proposals shows us something of the richness of the tradition of Christian reflection on these matters. While we might (quite reasonably) wish for more direct engagement with recent work in historical theology as well as biblical and systematic theology, this is an excellent work that will repay careful study.

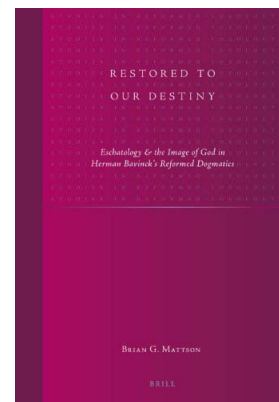
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Brian G. Mattson. *Restored to Our Destiny: Eschatology and the Image of God in Herman Bavinck’s Reformed Dogmatics*. Studies in Reformed Theology 21. Leiden: Brill, 2011. 286 pp. \$144.00.

This new volume is a rich study in the theology of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Dutch Reformed theologian Herman Bavinck. The author encapsulates his project as being “a conceptual analysis designed to tease out the synthesis between Bavinck’s anthropology and eschatology, which together provide the framework for how his soteriology should be understood” (p. 203). And tease out he does in impressive fashion through six chapters.

Chapter 1 sets out the metaphysical foundations that ground Bavinck’s account of nature and grace—a motif that plays a central role in his theology. For Bavinck, creation ontologically is a masterpiece of divine art with an eschatological *telos*. Chapter 2 focuses on the relationship between God and Adam. As Mattson describes, Bavinck presupposes that God’s relationship with Adam, “with its ‘reciprocal fidelity’ and moral obligations” (p. 72), was covenantal in character from the very outset. Central to Mattson’s thesis is that Bavinck sees the covenant of works, given in special revelation by God to Adam and Eve in the Garden, as critical in what shapes the outworking of the biblical narrative—what Mattson dubs a “Once upon a time” to a “Lived happily ever after.”

Mattson turns next in chapter 3 to the significance of the image of God in Bavinck’s theology. Every human person, in Bavinck’s words, is “a micro-divine being” (p. 113), not simply in terms of just bearing the divine image, but rather, humanity *is* the image of God. The whole human being is the *imago Dei*—the body as well as the soul belongs integrally to the image of God. This now sets the “Once upon a time” stage in the biblical narrative. Adam’s failure to keep the covenant of works changes the



narrative, of course. Chapter 4 discusses the ramifications of Adam's fall in regard to the *imago Dei*. For Bavinck, the divine image still defines humanity in its essence, but the moral qualities native to human nature are now wholly corrupted and inclined to all evil. Mattson all along emphasizes the importance in Bavinck's theology for how the divine plan plays out in redemptive history according to a wonderfully "organic" design. Chapter 5 develops this idea further with respect to Christ and the *imago Dei*. As Mattson discusses, the covenant of works was broken under the headship of Adam, and all humanity as under Adam is ever since fallen and under God's condemnation. But with Christ as the last Adam, the covenant of works is now both fulfilled and superseded in the covenant of grace under Christ's headship.

Chapter 6, "Christ and Covenant," expands on the divine plan in both its vertical and horizontal dimensions. By Adam's sin death enters the world, but eschatological hope and salvation enter by way of the covenant of grace, revealed in germinal form immediately after the fall in Gen 3. As Mattson shows, the temporal-historical outworking of the covenant of grace in Bavinck's theology has its ground in the pre-temporal covenant of redemption (*pactum salutis*) between the persons of the Trinity. The organic connection between the covenant of works and covenant of grace is seen in the common requirement to fulfill the same fundamental stipulations—complete and unswerving loyalty, gratitude, and obedience to God's will—no different in essence than what God required of Adam and Eve in the Garden. Thus, Christ's obedience in his state of humiliation all the way to the cross achieves "the removal of the original judgment and curse on Adam and his posterity" (p. 230). And the resurrection of Christ represents the eschatological "Lived happily ever after" for all those who would trust wholly in Christ, not in themselves or in any other thing. Mattson aptly finishes this chapter with the quote by Bavinck that inspired the title to his book: "[T]he image of God in humanity may be mangled and mutilated by the sin of the first Adam; but by the last Adam and his re-creating grace they are all the more resplendently restored to their destiny" (p. 236).

This book is an excellent contribution to Brill's Studies in Reformed Theology series. I highly commend it, most especially to those with an historical-theological interest in Bavinck's work, or to those like myself whose interest is systematic-theological. With this latter interest in mind, the balance of my remarks highlights several areas of Bavinck's theology whose wider implications merit further constructive engagement. A key (if not *the* key) theological point Mattson brings out is that biblical anthropology entails a built-in eschatological component. This idea is certainly not novel or unique to Bavinck, but it remains a fertile area for theological construction in light of Bavinck's own synthesis. Speaking of which, foundational to Bavinck's eschatological framework are the concepts of the covenant of works and the image of God. These concepts are clearly more than just "organizing principles" in his view. Rather, they serve as "organic fundamentals" in the design of God's overall plan and outworking of redemptive history. The term "organic" pertains to Bavinck's anti-dualist view (i.e., no nature/grace dichotomy) regarding the relation of creational ontology to redemptive (re-creational) ontology. A question Mattson suggests in his conclusion is whether an organic eschatology can at all neglect the doctrine of the covenant of works. To be additionally considered here is how the covenant of works relates to the role of Israel and the Mosaic covenant and how this then applies christologically.

Two final suggestions for further engagement with Bavinck's theology as analyzed throughout this book concern the image of God and the relationship between nature and grace. Bavinck's holistic doctrine of the *imago Dei*, for one thing, goes against the grain of much contemporary theological work in this area. It has much both to offer and to challenge current developments of this subject. The relationship between nature and grace is noticeably important in Bavinck's work. In my judgment there

is a need to differentiate with much better theological clarity the idea of grace before the fall, which on Bavinck's terms means the idea of grace in the context of Adam being in a covenant of works and the idea of grace after the fall. Such questions and concerns as these are surely worth taking up in ongoing systematic theological work.

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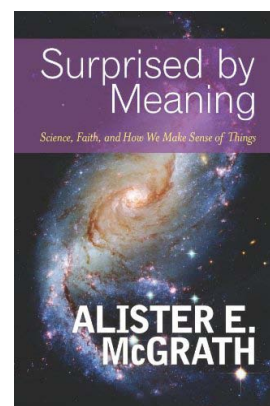
Alister E. McGrath. *Surprised by Meaning: Science, Faith, and How We Make Sense of Things*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011. viii + 136 pp. £11.99/\$17.00.

Alister McGrath continues his prolific publishing in this introduction to theology and science. McGrath, who holds doctorates in both biology and theology, has published widely on this topic already, including his trilogy, *A Scientific Theology*. As the subtitle indicates, the present volume interweaves three themes: the nature of science, the nature of faith, and the possibility of meaning. Regarding the final theme, McGrath's thesis is twofold: (a) people long to make sense of the world, and (b) science cannot address questions of meaning, whereas Christian faith can.

In defending these ideas, McGrath is actively seeking to overturn the "warfare thesis" of New Atheists (e.g., Richard Dawkins), that is, that science and religion are in fundamental conflict. Instead, McGrath contends that science and faith answer different sets of questions. He speaks highly of science, but limits its scope to "secondary problems" about how the universe is structured, while only faith can deal with "ultimate and decisive questions" about the meaning of the universe (p. 39). For instance, though science can explain the physical world, it cannot explain its own explicability: Why should the universe be rational and accessible to study at all? Science *assumes* rather than demonstrates the explicability of the universe.

McGrath is careful, however, not to push the distinction between science and faith to an unbridgeable chasm. On the contrary, science and faith both employ an "abductive" method—inferring from the evidence (whether physical or biblical) to the best possible explanation. Further, though science and faith investigate different levels of reality, there are points of contact between the disciplines: science prompts questions that only faith can answer. For instance, why are physical constants calibrated so precisely to allow for the development of life (the "anthropic principle")? Or why do separate evolutionary lineages produce similar physical forms ("teleological convergence")? The Christian reply to such queries is that God has purposefully designed the universe to sustain life in order that his creatures may glorify him. While the anthropic principle and teleological convergence do not prove the Christian narrative, they "resonate" strikingly with Christian faith (p. 72).

McGrath concludes by considering the issues of ethics and meaning, domains beyond the purview of science. McGrath hammers the New Atheists for seeking to hijack science—a values-neutral discipline—to serve ideological ends. Instead, McGrath contends that science itself is neutral, but its presuppositions resonate with faith rather than atheism. Then, shifting the conversation back to meaning, he considers questions of identity, value, purpose, and agency, arguing that Christianity answers these



far more adequately than its atheistic rival. So in a book examining the relation between science, faith, and meaning, the capstone of McGrath's argument for Christianity is that secular worldviews cannot provide a solvent ethic or ground for meaning.

The main contribution of this book is the balanced approach to the relationship between scientific and theological knowledge. McGrath is an articulate spokesman for the compatibility between modern science and theology or, more pointedly, evolution and creation. For instance, though McGrath finds William Paley's teleological argument outdated, he draws on famous Darwinians Thomas Huxley and Ernst Mayr, who both testify to a "wider teleology" in nature (p. 76). In other words, science attests that the evolutionary process has built-in purposiveness, thus producing resonance between the narratives of evolutionary development and God's providential creation.

There are two areas that could have been expanded in the book. The first is the omission of Intelligent Design (ID): McGrath does not take the opportunity to address this widely held Christian viewpoint. Indirectly he seems to oppose ID when he argues against Paley, who, like ID, invokes special creative acts as the explanation for design. This means that McGrath appeals to God's agency primarily for the fine-tuning of physical constants at the *origin* of the universe without explaining how God's agency operates after the beginning. ID has made much of God's *ongoing* formation of "irreducibly complex" structures, so it is unfortunate that McGrath does not specify how God relates to the evolutionary process after the universe's origin.

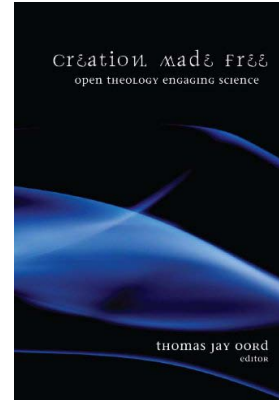
Another drawback in the book is that there is little to distinguish his Christian apologetic from other religious apologetics (e.g., Judaism, Islam, or Deism). Though he references the Trinity on two occasions—to say that God can be both wholly transcendent and lovingly immanent (p. 53) and that God's personal agency means we reason after his acts, not presume what he must do in advance (p. 70)—these insights are more generically theistic rather than necessarily Trinitarian. We can applaud McGrath for being sensitive to the distance between Christian theology and apologetics, but more needs to be said for him to close the gap.

On the whole, though, the book is a helpful introduction to the interface between science and theology. Though occasionally repetitive, McGrath's prose synthesizes vast citations from theological, scientific, philosophical, and cultural commentators into his clear and conversational style. One of his most interesting techniques is paralleling Richard Dawkins's narrative about Charles Darwin's work. Like Dawkins, McGrath speaks appreciatively and enthusiastically about Darwin's contribution to science; the subtext, of course, is that Christians can appreciate modern scientific theory without capitulating their faith. While McGrath has not addressed the perceived divide as fully as he might have, he has provided a useful introduction to and case for the compatibility of science and faith.

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Thomas Jay Oord, ed. *Creation Made Free: Open Theology Engaging Science*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009. vii + 272. £19.90/\$31.00.

Over the past few decades open theism has grown from a loose idea into a full-blown movement within evangelical theology. Most of the discussions to date among open theists have focused on critiques of classical theism, the problem of evil, the doctrines of omniscience and providence, and the need to distinguish itself from other related movements (e.g., process theism). In more recent times, open theists have come to realize that a robust and adequate conception of God and the God-world relationship must go beyond these issues—important as they are—and begin to develop connections with contemporary science. In 2007 a three-week seminar was convened at the Eastern Nazarene College to focus on the relationship between Open theology and science. The participants met again in 2008 at Azusa Pacific University to further discuss their work. Oord explains that this was the first time that the leading scholars in the Open theology movement were able to come together for extended conversation. These meetings eventually led to the present volume and a companion volume called *God in an Open Universe*, edited by William Hasker, Thomas Jay Oord, and Dean Zimmerman (see my review on p. 118). The present volume focuses on the relationship between open theism and science in four broad areas: (1) creation and cosmology, (2) evolution, (3) divine knowledge, and (4) humanity.



It would be better if the subtitle of the book were instead *Some Open Theists Kind of Engage with Science*. I say this for two reasons. First, I say “Some Open Theists” because several of the authors are panentheists or are so deeply indebted to process theology that it is hard to distinguish them from a Whitehead or a Hartshorne. If open theists truly wish to distinguish themselves from these movements, it seems rather odd to include papers like this in a volume on Open theology. Also, there are papers like Alan Padgett’s. Padgett offers an account of foreknowledge that is intentionally distinct from traditional and open theology accounts (p. 176). Again, this is odd for a book on Open theology. Second, I say “Kind of Engage with Science” because several of the papers either do not engage with science at all or do so in the most surface-level way. For instance, part one contains five essays on creation and cosmology. Only one actually engages with science, while another discusses biblical issues relevant for science and religion dialogues. Given the space limitations of this review and the lack of scientific engagement from several of the papers, I will focus on the papers that actually engage with science or at least have meaningful implications for theological engagement with science. Some of the papers that do not engage with science are quite good, but they seem oddly placed in a book on theology engaging science.

Karen Strand Winslow’s “The Earth is Not a Planet” closely exegetes the creation story in Genesis and argues that it presents the creation of land and sky, but not a planet and other galaxies. The significance of this for science and theology is that one cannot force contemporary scientific understandings into a biblical text that knows nothing of such things. Instead one must come to see what questions the biblical text is trying to address.

Craig Boyd’s “The Goodness of Creation and the Openness of God” argues against young earth creationist notions of a perfect creation made only a few thousand years ago. Apart from the claims of contemporary science that the universe and earth are significantly older, Boyd offers biblical and philosophical arguments against this view. Part of the argument involves distinguishing several types

of perfection: ontological, aesthetic, and moral. On Boyd's interpretation Genesis does not declare that creation is morally perfect.

Greg Boyd's "Evolution as Cosmic Warfare: A Biblical Perspective on Satan and Natural Evil" deals with the problem of natural evil as found in biological evolution. Why is evolution such a wasteful process, and why is nature so violent? Boyd's answer builds off of an interpretation of Genesis like Winslow's, and his own previous work on theodicy and the Christus Victor theory of atonement.

Nothing in these three papers seriously engages with science, but the issues dealt with have clear and important implications for dialogues between science and theology. What is important to note is that the arguments and claims of these papers are not necessarily unique to open theism. For instance, a Calvinist can agree with a Christus Victor theory of atonement, and any broadly classical theologian can affirm the interpretation of Genesis that is offered.

Thomas Jay Oord's "An Open Theology Doctrine of Creation and Solution to the Problem of Evil" examines several possible cosmological models that are currently on offer in contemporary science. He argues that open theists need not hold to *creatio ex nihilo*. Instead Oord claims that they should hold that God always exists with a creation of some sort because by nature God is always creating. He also holds that, necessarily, since God is love he must give "freedom and agency to all creaturely entities." Further, "God cannot fail to offer, withdraw or overcome divinely-given freedom and agency" (p. 52). Somehow all of this is supposed to be an entailment from "God is love." It is not clear to me how this God is free or able to overcome evil.

Clark Pinnock's "Evangelical Theology after Darwin" is a good example of a surface-level engagement with science. His paper reads like a sermon—and a well-written one at that. It offers no technical discussion of evolution, but instead dismantles common misunderstandings about theology and evolution and gently tries to assure evangelicals that they need not be bothered by evolution.

Alan Rhoda's "Beyond the Chess Master Analogy: Game Theory and Divine Providence" critiques several open theist models of providence before offering his own built on game theory. I have been impressed with Rhoda's previous work, and this essay confirmed in my mind that Rhoda is a force to be reckoned with. He brings a clarity and sophistication to his articulation of open theism that is much needed. On Rhoda's account God is not an irresponsible risk-taker. Instead, God knows all possible worlds since such possibilities follow from either God's nature or will. It is the case that God does not know which future possibilities will in fact be realized, but God's knowledge entails having an exhaustive contingency plan. Rhoda ends his paper by considering reasons that God might create a world and play the game, and he critiques Calvinist and Molinist accounts of providence. Calvinists, he says, offer a risk-free game since God ordains everything, but the players in the game are not in fact genuine players since they are determined. A Calvinist will respond that God creates in order to bring glory to himself. But, Rhoda asks, didn't God already have all of the glory? Molinists have genuine players since God does not determine everything, but Rhoda wonders why God might create at all. Wouldn't a God with middle knowledge be satisfied with a virtual world? It seems to me that the Molinist has a ready reply to this question. She can say that God's knowledge is exhaustive *de dicto* but in creating a world God gains knowledge *de re* (knowledge by acquaintance) of the creatures that he has created. God can't have this intimate type of knowledge with non-existent creatures in a virtual world.

Richard Rice's "The Final Form of Love: The Science of Forgiveness and the Openness of God" looks at forgiveness studies in the social sciences, therapy, politics, and theology. He clearly articulates how the concept of forgiveness is understood in each of these areas of study. Rice ends his paper by arguing

that open theism can best account for the findings of these disciplines as well as offer a correction to some of their claims. It is not clear to me how open theism accomplishes such a thing. Rice's claims in this section of his paper are claims that just about any Christian theologian can make save for one: "God takes risks." For Rice, the open future and God's risky behavior make it possible for God to bring about true loving forgiveness and the hope of a genuine transformation of human persons. But, contra Rice, for God to be a God of love and forgiveness who offers hope to human persons, he need not be a God who takes risks, nor does the future need to be open in the sense that open theists claim it is.

As a whole, the book contains an unfortunate number of typos, missing words, repetition of words, and the like. It also contains an unfortunate number of bald assertions that open theism simply fits better with science than classical theism. This is a claim I often see with panentheists and process theists as well. Very rarely does one find an actual argument offered as to why classical theology cannot fit with contemporary science. Especially since the claims of relativity theory are often held by contemporary defenders of classical theology to bolster their position and cut against the open theist's views. It seems to me that several of the papers in this volume should have been cut to make room for the papers in the companion volume. Most of the papers in the companion volume offer a serious engagement with science. It would have been nice if the two volumes could have been compiled as one.

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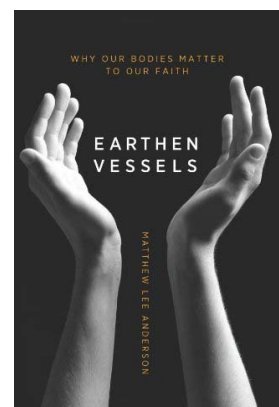
ETHICS AND PASTORALIA

Matthew Lee Anderson. *Earthen Vessels: Why Our Bodies Matter to Our Faith*. Bloomington: Bethany House, 2011. 255 pp. \$14.99.

In *Earthen Vessels*, Matthew Lee Anderson has written a thoughtful and thought-provoking book on the importance of our bodies as flesh and blood. Anderson, who works at The Journey, a church in St. Louis, Missouri, and blogs at *Mere Orthodoxy* and *Evangel*, questions the common knee-jerk assumption that evangelicals have a negative view of the body. But he does believe that too often we neglect it in our theological reflection.

Earthen Vessels argues for the goodness of the body in creation and its reaffirmation and transformation in redemption. In particular it calls us to pay attention to the way our lives and our faith are mediated through our bodies. The body, says Anderson, citing Gilbert Meilaender, is the "place of our personal presence" (p. 60). The body "does not only mediate information about me—it is my presence in the world" (p. 93).

Anderson highlights the various ways in modern culture that we try to manipulate our bodies rather than receiving them as a gift. The body has become a canvas on which we pursue self-identity. Yet in reality, "God transforms our bodies not through technique, the assertion of our own wills, but through giving us himself in the Holy Spirit" (p. 31).



Attending to our bodies means attending to our environment. One of Anderson's maxims is "we make the world and then the world makes us" (pp. 84–85, 210). In other words, we need to take seriously the way our physical environment shapes our lives, our church life, and our societies.

The book is theologically rigorous for non-academics, written in an engaging way and full of cultural reflection. I commend it. It will make you think.

And yet I was disappointed. I find myself hard-pressed to summarise the message of the book, beyond the fact that our bodies matter and that the gospel might have something to say about many body-related issues. We get thoughts on consumerism, individualism, freedom, dieting, community, technology, tattoos, sexuality, homosexuality, death, mourning, cremation, corporate worship, and the sacraments. But this material does not seem to be tied to a central argument other than that the body matters. What is said is good, but not distinctive. The focus on the body does not seem to bring anything new to each of these discussions. A number of times we are presented with a fascinating piece of cultural analysis, but just when we are looking forward to a Christian alternative, the focus shifts elsewhere.

There are many expressions of preference, but rather fewer assertions of a definitive nature. Anderson would prefer you not to get a tattoo, but will not say it is wrong. He would prefer you to be buried, but stops short of saying cremation is ungodly. Maybe this is the correct posture in each case. But the overall effect is like having a conversation with an interesting person who is full of interesting ideas, but once in a while one wishes it felt more like an essay or lecture—a sustained argument that led to a conclusion.

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Simonetta Carr. *John Calvin*. Christian Biographies for Young Readers. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2008. 63 pp. \$18.00.

Simonetta Carr. *Augustine of Hippo*. Christian Biographies for Young Readers. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2009. 62 pp. \$18.00.

Simonetta Carr. *John Owen*. Christian Biographies for Young Readers. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2010. 62 pp. \$18.00.

Simonetta Carr. *Athanasius*. Christian Biographies for Young Readers. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2011. 64 pp. \$18.00.

Simonetta Carr's Christian Biographies for Young Readers series masterfully fills a large hole in quality children's books teaching church history. Church history fascinates me. I thoroughly enjoy learning from godly men and women of the past who have followed Christ and wrestled with God's Word. It is also a thrill to teach church history and draw from historical theology in preaching. For quite some time, however, there has been an inadequate number of quality resources available for teaching children in this area.

Simonetta Carr is working to correct this with this series. Each volume is beautifully illustrated with original art, archaeological photos of historical sites, helpful maps, and images of historical artifacts. All this works together to create a very informative and pedagogically friendly tool for educating children on events, places, people, and cultures and the church's past. The design, cover, and page quality make these books not only pleasurable when reading them to your own children, but keepsakes for grandchildren as well.

In addition, each volume contains a helpful timeline and "Did You Know?" section near the end of the book. This section contains a series of facts about the subject and key events surrounding the life of the saint being studied. (I recommend reading this section first, as the data here will help put the content of the rest of the book into proper context.)

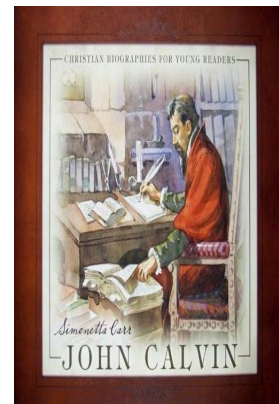
Each volume in *Christian Biographies for Young Readers* is written at a reading level suitable for children ages seven to ten. The author has sought to recount the key events and features of each person in this series with appropriate age-sensitivity since there are events in the lives of these men that do not belong in biography aimed at young children. The author has considered carefully how to communicate historical biography in an engaging manner to children. While children younger than seven would probably be unable to read the books on their own, nothing in the contents need prevent conscientious adults from reading these books to younger children.

What follow are a few further comments about four specific books in Carr's Christian Biographies for Young Readers series.

John Calvin

This initial volume of what has grown now into four volumes (with more to come) was released just in time for the celebration of John Calvin's five hundredth birthday. At a time when stacks of books were being released for pastors and theologians on the life, ministry, and theology of Calvin, Simonetta Carr helpfully offers a children's book on this great theologian.

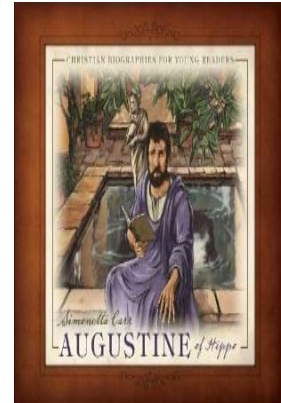
In a relatively brief amount of space, the author ably unfolds the life of Calvin along with his major theological, cultural, and pastoral contributions while accurately setting his life within the larger context of the Protestant Reformation. As a result, children and parents alike gain a deeper understanding of the man, his teaching, and the debt owed to him and others who contended for the purity of the gospel during this difficult time in church history.



Augustine of Hippo

Like the volume on Calvin, this one on Augustine covers a large sweep of Augustine's life, from his "Growing Up" to the last days of his life. In between we learn of his desperate search for wisdom, his following of the Manicheans, the faithful prayers of his mother, his conversion in Italy and discipleship under Ambrose, and finally his return to North Africa and his "forced" appointment as bishop of Hippo.

As in each of the volumes in this series, in this treatment of the life of Augustine the author does not shy away from the theological controversies of the day. What particularly stands out is the way Augustine addressed these controversies with the Scriptures. As a result, the reader is able to get a sense for various ways in which historical theology has developed through the centuries, and how our beliefs today have been passed on to us by faithful servants of Christ through the ages.



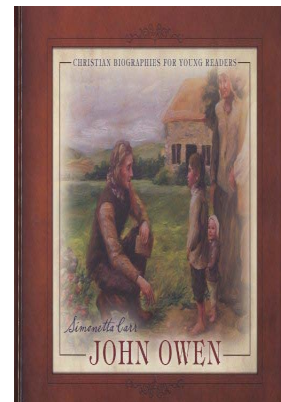
John Owen

As with the other subjects in this series, the life and ministry of John Owen is monumental. The volume of writings left to us from his pen is hugely significant not only for the formulation of Reformed theology but also for the practical life of the church. In addition, Owen lived during one of the most tumultuous times in England's history.

Given all of that, the author crafts a book that captivately weaves the narrative of Owen's life into the history of England, the development of church practices, and the depth of Owen's theological contribution.

In addition to the timeline and "Did you Know?" sections, this volume also contains "A Modern Version of John Owen's Lesser Catechism." This serves as a great tool for parents and children (especially those who may not be familiar with catechesis) as well as serving as an illustration of Owen's pastoral ministry.

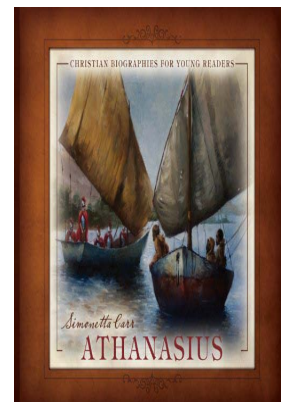
It is the inclusion of aspects like this to these volumes that make them unique, helpful in teaching, and books to which parents will return again and again.



Athanasius

The latest volume in this series (as of the writing of this review) is *Athanasius*. Unlike the other historical figures in this series thus far, Athanasius provides unique challenges for any historian, let alone one writing for children. The information we have on Athanasius is minimal compared to John Calvin or Augustine. In addition, some of what has been passed down is speculative in terms of its historiography.

Carr skillfully summarizes the key facts regarding Athanasius's life, the time in which he lived, and the theological context in which he ministered. This includes discussions of Athanasius's key role in defending the eternal deity of Christ and orthodox Trinitarianism. She writes in an engaging style that captivates and keeps children's attention while at the same time assumes they



can process a substantial amount of information. Nothing is dumbed down. She helpfully explains when details given are derived from history and therefore less certain while not confusing the main storyline of the historical account.

Young readers will gain wonderful insights into the life of one of God's faithful servants who suffered and served his Lord faithfully so that others who came after him would have a sound understanding of who Jesus is and what he accomplished for his people. Ultimately, the reader will see the steadfast faithfulness of God.

One weakness regards the author's assumption throughout the book that the reader attends a church where one of the historical creeds of the church are read publically on a regular basis. One wonders if that is the case for the majority of the readers. (It will certainly not be true for most readers here in New Zealand.) It seems that those parts of the book that refer to this practice could be reworded so as not to assume that the children reading the book attend a church that follows this practice.

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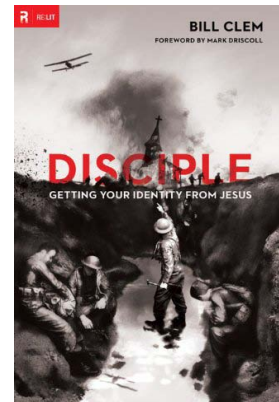
Bill Clem. *Disciple: Getting Your Identity from Jesus*. Re:Lit. Wheaton: Crossway, 2011. 236 pp. \$15.99.

Bill Clem's *Disciple: Getting Your Identity from Jesus* seeks to answer the question, "What does a disciple's identity look like?" This question can't be answered apart from an understanding of who God is, so the author begins by helping us see just that. What is God's story? Who is the hero of the story? This lays a strong, God-centered foundation for the rest of the book as it unpacks the identity of a disciple.

The broad structure of the book outlines what Clem takes to be the four main aspects of a disciple's identity. These are *Image, Worship, Community, and Mission*. Does the disciple understand who they are? Can the disciple discern the true God from idols? What does a community of disciples look like? What are disciples to do and why? Each chapter that deals with a facet of a disciple's core identity has a corresponding chapter that deals with the distortion of that aspect of the disciple's identity. Thus the chapter on "Worship" has a corresponding chapter called "Worship Distortions." This is a helpful organizational tool that shows the positive side and its implications as well as, conversely, the negative side and its corresponding negative implications. Being able to identify the things that will challenge you as you attempt to be Jesus' disciple is certainly a key part of the process, and this consistent aspect in the book is one of its main strengths.

This book would be quite useful for one-on-one mentoring or small group study. Each chapter concludes with assignments for actualizing the content into the life of the reader. It will certainly draw one deeper into the Scriptures as disciples follow through on what is outlined at the end of each chapter.

Disciple is a simple and clear diagnostic of what a disciple is and isn't. And this led to my main quibble with the book: the aspect of formation. How do we actually pull this off? The book deals with painting a picture of what a disciple is. It is primarily descriptive in nature, so I was left yearning for



something more formative and practical. Those seeking an exhaustive how-to manual with lists of tips and tricks for Christian multiplication will be left wanting.

My own impatient heart was exposed as I read this. What began as my main quibble (not enough practical how-to) quickly turned into my main conviction. In our culture we are unconsciously addicted to the quick and easy solution: whatever it takes to get the job done and get it done fast! “Give me something useful!” is a constant demand, and we want metrics and quantifiable results. Yet discipleship does not fit neatly onto a spreadsheet. Simply put, the Spirit does not submit to our agenda or impatience. Neither does this book. We need to have the right foundation upon which we make disciples, and this book helps us do that very thing. What masquerades as “practical” oftentimes veers quite far from what is realistic since human beings are far more complex and organic than a simple math equation or diagnostic formula.

Is it any wonder that Jesus doesn’t provide us with a step-by-step process for discipleship? There is no manual, and there is no magic bullet. Jesus taught his disciples how to be disciples by being with him and hearing from him. We do that same thing by soaking in his Word and hearing him speak over and over again. The author does a commendable job of leading us to this Jesus.

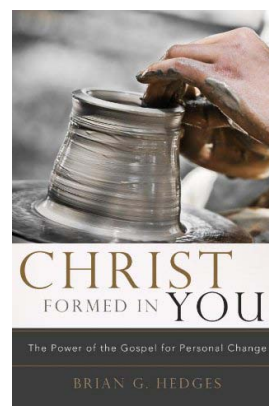
At the end the book does give practical application as it lays out a plan for multiplication of disciples. Being a disciple does require intentionality that is consistent over time, and the author gives some prescriptive ways for how to accomplish that. Yet this is done without dictating a rigid model that fails to account for individual styles and personalities and the organic nature of authentic discipleship.

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Brian Hedges. *Christ Formed in You: The Power of the Gospel for Personal Change*. Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd, 2010. 302 pp. \$15.95.

What is the gospel? What are its implications for everyday life? What is the Christian’s responsibility to pursue holiness? What are the biblical motivations for personal change? What are the roles of spiritual disciplines and community in the Christian life? How does all of this relate to the centrality of the gospel? As many continue to ask questions about these and related topics, one may not be surprised to find another book with “gospel” somewhere in the title. Where does this book fit in? While many books zero in on one or two of these questions or related topics, Brian Hedges provides a unique contribution by “bring[ing] these pieces together, presenting a single, unified, gospel-centered vision of how to understand and live the Christian life” (p. 21). In short, the unified vision is that personal change is about becoming like Jesus and that this happens through understanding and applying the gospel to our lives.

Throughout the book, Hedges introduces key aspects of the Christian life and explains them with the goal of relating the topic to the gospel and the goal of becoming like Christ. The first five chapters focus on the foundations of personal change. Chapters 1–2 overview redemptive history and the message of the gospel, demonstrating that the *goal* of spiritual growth is to become like Christ while the



means of spiritual growth is beholding Christ's glory in the gospel. Chapter 3 seeks to unpack the truth of justification by faith, especially with an eye to how it counters a "legalistic approach to the pursuit of transformation" (p. 63). The focus of chapter 4 is regeneration: the deep, inward transformation that is needed (and provided) for spiritual growth. Romans 6 is the focus of chapter 5, which demonstrates that sanctification happens by applying the "gospel resources that are ours through union with Christ" (p. 99).

Chapters 6–9 move forward from "these definitive, once-and-for-all events (justification and definitive sanctification)" to how they "get worked out in the actual pursuit of holiness" (p. 114). After explaining the nature of holiness in chapter 6, the next two chapters walk through the process of killing sin (mortification) and growing in grace (vivification). Hedges takes readers on an autobiographical journey in chapter 9 to discuss the critical topic of Christian motivation. He recounts how the Bible, John Piper, and the Puritans all helped him to understand that "the balanced, biblical reality is that the pursuit of holiness and the quest for joy are not at odds" (p. 166), for "the desire for happiness is the motivation for pursuing holiness" (p. 178). The final chapters connect theology to the practicalities of everyday life with a focus on three means, or tools, that God uses to change us: spiritual disciplines, suffering, and community. With each of these, the emphasis is on how God uses them to make us like Christ (the goal of change) through the gospel (the means of change).

Several strengths of this book stand out. First, Hedges succeeds in his goal of bringing various aspects of Christian growth into a single unified vision. His contribution lies not in saying anything new or moving any particular discussion forward but in bringing many things together in an integrative way. Second, the book is laced with Scripture as well as insights from Christians both past (Luther, Calvin, Edwards, Lewis) and present (Keller, Piper, Lovelace, Ferguson). As such, it will easily become a helpful reference tool for locating important biblical texts and wise quotes on each of the topics discussed. Finally, this is a very clear and carefully written book. Hedges often walks through an outline of upcoming sections, organizes his thought into lists, and steps back to help the reader see where the current topic relates to the others already discussed.

All things considered, therefore, this is a helpful and well-written book. Yet some readers may not find the writing style to be particularly engaging. While strong on content and clarity, the manner of communication is somewhat deficient in elements that make for a great read: striking prose, turns of phrase, and even a sense of wonder at the realities being explained—which would certainly be fitting for a book on the gospel of grace and the miracle of personal transformation.

That aside, the strengths already noted mark this out as a gift to the church. This book would be helpful for any Christian who desires to learn more about several of the most important biblical topics related to growth as a Christian. Since it brings numerous theological and practical topics together, considering all of them in relation to the gospel, this is an excellent book to put in the hands of a new believer. Leaders would also benefit from using this in the process of discipleship, perhaps as a starting-point for further dialogue.

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Brad House. *Community: Taking Your Small Group off Life Support*. Re:Lit. Wheaton: Crossway, 2011. 239 pp. £8.99/\$15.99.

With many churches implementing or retooling their small group ministry, there is no lack of books that seek to instruct pastors and ministry leaders on the subject. In *Community: Taking Your Small Group off Life Support*, Brad House begins with a timely warning for those leaders desiring to equip Christians by adding small groups: “Lifeless community begins when we don’t have a clear understanding of why we are in community in the first place. . . . We generally ask how we can get more people in [small groups], rather than addressing the question of why they exist” (p. 31).

House answers this question by keeping community at the center of why the groups exist. He explains that small groups do not exist simply to keep people in the church or so that we have a means of caring for one another. These are healthy benefits, but they are derivative of the main purpose of small groups:

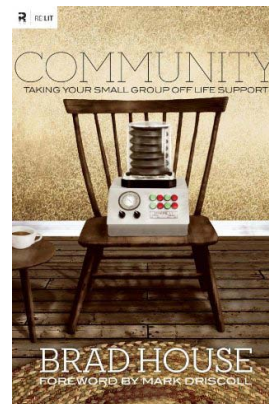
We have community groups because we have seen the glory of God and we have been given the grace to live our lives to exalt the Christ. We have community groups because we have been reconciled to God and one another. . . . We have community groups as a proclamation of the goodness of our God and testimony to the completed work of the cross. (p. 43)

The strength of the book is that it is not a polemic for a new kind of small group or innovative method for how to do small groups, but rather an extended argument for the necessity of community within a healthy church (and in every spiritually healthy Christian). House states plainly what functions small groups should have in the church and spends the book expanding upon these functions. These functions are discipleship, pastoral care, and mission.

In the first section House describes the foundation of community using the metaphors of image, body, and ownership. In the second section he describes the practical outworking of these concepts within the church. The third section is a helpful tool in implementing the vision for community that had been cast throughout the book. Even chapter 10, “Boot Camp”—which I initially thought would be beyond the reach of small and mid-size churches—was insightful for how to implement this vision.

Pastors and ministry leaders in the church will probably benefit most from the foundational principles of community and in the vision that is cast for why small groups are essential in the life and outreach of the church. Additionally, the book is a helpful tool for assessing how well the church is doing on mission. House points out that evaluating a church’s missional health helps to diagnose the church’s health as a whole.

If a group is missional, it is because the members of that group are missional. If a group is not, this is indicative of a deficiency in the participants of that group. In this way, community groups are great barometers of how well the church understands the gospel. If they have been transformed by the gospel, then it will show in the community life of the group. (p. 93)



Chapter 5, “Neighborhood,” is particularly effective in showing why small groups need to be mobilized on mission and why using small groups for outreach on a local neighborhood level promotes accessibility, ownership, and effective outreach.

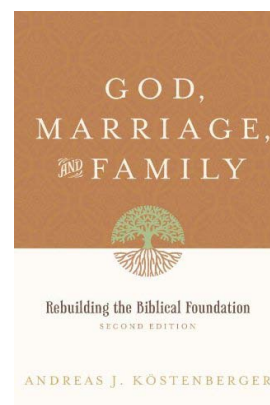
A weakness to the book is that House overplays his strong argument on the missional nature of community in his otherwise helpful chapter on repentance. While I appreciate including this chapter (which would regularly be overlooked in such a book), he needlessly inserts the word “missional” into his definition of repentance when listing off a number of passages intended to show how repentance leads to a greater missional thrust of believers throughout the Bible (p.195). But isn’t change the nature of repentance to begin with? Should we merely reduce this change to renewed mission? Rather than potentially confusing categories, perhaps it would be better to keep a reinvigorated missional focus as one of the many actions or attitudes that are changed when God’s people are marked by a renewed love for God and desire for holiness. One other small quibble is why (inexplicably) all the Scripture references are endnotes. In preparing to teach about small groups, most leaders would probably prefer that the references are easily accessible. Apart from these minor nuisances, however, ministry leaders will be greatly helped by this thorough and biblically compelling book on community in the local church.

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Andreas J. Köstenberger with David W. Jones. *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*. 2nd ed. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010. 399 pages. \$22.99.

When the second edition of *God, Marriage, and Family* hit the shelves in 2010, reviewers focused a tremendous amount of critique on a new chapter about family-based ministry. In fact, I think it is fair to say that this theme, which comprised one part of one chapter in the new edition, dominated the vast majority of the online chatter about the book. This was most unfortunate—not because it is an unworthy topic (see Timothy Paul Jones’s [well-done review](#) in *The Journal of Discipleship and Family Ministry* 1:1 [2010]: 63–65), but because the controversy seemed to be out of proportion with the book’s main contribution. The discussion of family-based ministry is more of a sideline in this book (about nine pages out of 399). Regardless of your views on family ministry, *God, Marriage, and Family* remains the best biblical theology of family and sex on the market. This is one of the few books (both in its first edition and now in its second) that I have turned to time and again for a cogent discussion of what the Bible says about a variety of controversial family and gender issues. Whenever Andreas Köstenberger writes something, I pay attention. But *God, Marriage, and Family* may well be his most important contribution of all.

The book divides into thirteen chapters and an appendix. The first several chapters focus primarily on laying a biblical-theological foundation for understanding marriage. After a brief discussion of the “Current Cultural Crisis” in chapter 1, the authors summarize the OT (ch. 2) and NT (ch. 3) teaching on marriage. Chapter 4 discusses the “nature of marriage” as a covenant rather than as a sacrament or contract. This chapter also includes some new material on the meaning of the conjugal act within



marriage. Chapters 5–6 summarize the OT and NT teaching on the family, while chapters 7–8 deal with “special issues” related to the family: childlessness, family planning, abortion, birth control, adoption, parenting, physical discipline, spiritual warfare, and family traditions. Chapter 9 gives a brief biblical theology of singleness and explains the special role that single Christians should play in the life of the local church. Chapter 10 considers the ethics of homosexuality and robustly and biblically defends covenanted heterosexual monogamy as the biblical norm. Chapter 11 consists of Köstenberger and Jones’s interpretation of biblical texts on divorce and remarriage (the appendix includes technical exegetical details on this question). Chapter 12 sets forth biblical qualifications for leadership in the church with a special focus on the requirement of marital faithfulness. Chapter 13 is a brand new chapter explaining the relationship between the family and the local church. A portion of this chapter takes a fairly critical look at the “family-integrated church approach.”

This book is countercultural in the very best sense of the word. Köstenberger and Jones weave a thoroughgoing complementarian vision of marriage, manhood, and womanhood. With exegetical rigor, they show from the Bible what God’s purpose is for husbands and wives. The husband’s relation to the wife is based on Christ’s relation to his church. Just as Christ loved his bride sacrificially, so also a husband’s responsibility consists mainly of leading, providing for, and protecting his wife and family. As the church submits to Christ, so also a wife’s main responsibility in marriage lies in submitting to her husband and being a helpmeet to him.

These roles also define what child-rearing should look like in the Christian home. Little boys are to be raised to become men who know and embrace their role as leaders, protectors, and providers in their own families. Little girls, likewise, are to be raised as the trusted helpmeets that God designed them to be as well. So at the center of Köstenberger’s book is a distinct, biblical vision for manhood and womanhood that defines every aspect of the Christian family. Köstenberger’s point of view runs counter to the egalitarian spirit of the age, but it nonetheless faithfully depicts biblical norms.

In addition to the new chapter on the relation of the family to the local church, Köstenberger and Jones make other helpful changes in the second edition that strengthen the overall work. These include:

- A summary of recent debates on physical discipline of children, singleness, homosexuality, and divorce and remarriage
- A new section on the theology of sex
- A new section on parenting teenagers
- A streamlined format for the chapter on divorce and remarriage that includes moving some of the more technical material into an appendix

In all of this, there is updated interaction with relevant works that have been published since the first edition.

A couple of the new sections are worth highlighting in light of recent evangelical discussions. In chapter 4, “The Nature of Marriage,” Köstenberger and Jones add an entire section on “a theology of sex” (pp. 79–84). Their aim in this section is to explain the biblical “purposes” for sex and to set forth a sexual ethic based upon those purposes. Köstenberger and Jones access the recent work of Dennis Hollinger (*The Meaning of Sex: Christian Ethics and the Moral Life* [Baker, 2009]) to advocate four purposes: procreation, companionship, the public good, and pleasure. With these purposes in mind, Köstenberger and Jones then list ten items that run counter to God’s purposes for sex and that are therefore immoral: fornication, adultery, homosexuality, impurity, orgies, prostitution, lust, sodomy, obscenity and inappropriate sexual language, and incest. In a related note, Köstenberger and Jones

rule out pornography and masturbation as well (p. 326n56–57). The strength of this section is that the ethical evaluation is not limited to whether the Bible specifically prohibits a given activity (the approach taken in chapter 10 of Mark and Grace Driscoll's *Real Marriage* [Nelson, 2012]). Rather, Köstenberger and Jones test each activity by its conformity to God's purposes for sex, the ultimate goal of which is the glory of God. This method allows the authors to ethically evaluate activities that Scripture may not explicitly address.

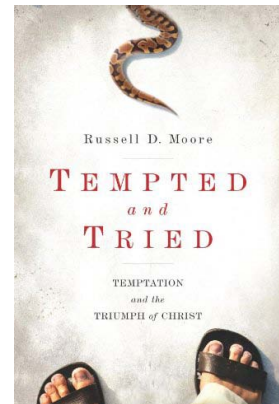
Another important section in the book is the updated material on corporal punishment. This second edition of *God, Marriage, and Family* was published in 2010, a full year before the appearance of William Webb's major contribution to the discussion, *Corporal Punishment in the Bible* (IVP, 2011). But Webb gave a preview of some of the main lines of his argument in a paper presented at the Evangelical Theological Society in November 2007, and Köstenberger and Jones very helpfully interact with that paper. The authors highlight three fallacies in Webb's paper that I believe apply as well to Webb's 2011 book. In fact, Köstenberger's critique foreshadows the very careful [review](#) that Tom Schreiner penned for The Gospel Coalition in September 2011. Köstenberger and Jones conclude, "Webb's effort to discredit a biblical theology that includes corrective physical discipline by *reductio ad absurdum* fails to convince" (p. 343n37).

My disagreements with *God, Marriage, and Family* are very small and virtually inconsequential to my overall positive evaluation of the book. Even though many of the book's arguments are not new, it draws together a tremendous amount of important material into one volume. Also, the book's consistent connection to Scripture makes it stand out among other works of its kind. John Piper was right when he said, "the special value of this book lies in its pervasive exposition of Scripture." Every page is a treasure trove of biblical wisdom about marriage and family. Every pastor ought to have *God, Marriage, and Family* in his study as a top-shelf item. There is no other book like it.

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Russell D. Moore. *Tempted and Tried: Temptation and the Triumph of Christ*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2011. 208 pp. \$14.99.

Since the publication of John Milton's masterwork *Paradise Lost* in 1667, scholars both theological and literary have struggled with its depiction of the devil. The literati deem Milton's devil uneven, a weakness in characterization because he appears cunning one moment, simpering another. Theologians have quibbled with Milton's portrait of the fall for similar but differently motivated reasons: his devil is too dynamic, his Adam milquetoast. Milton, they say, makes evil look exciting. Secular academicians may be forgiven for missing that Milton's understanding of the devil was rooted in the Bible, which reveals that Satan is a roaring lion and slithering snake, ghastly beast and angel of light, boastful accuser and wily tempter. The theologians, on the other hand, seem to have forgotten how delicious and dazzling that forbidden fruit looked.



Milton got it right. For evil looks exciting today same as it did in the seventeenth century, just as it did in the beginning when the serpent first preached those fork-tongued lies to Eve. The strength of Russell Moore's *Tempted and Tried* is Miltonic strength—fiercely honest about the enemy's wiles and brutally realistic about the destruction therein. Early in the book, Moore writes, "The sheer animal force of temptation ought to remind us of something: the universe is demon haunted" (p. 20). And since it may be true that the greatest trick the devil ever pulled is convincing the world he doesn't exist, Moore alerts us on page after page to the devil's presence and persistence.

Lest the book fall into lamentable "demon under every bush" handwringing, however, Moore shows us clearly and powerfully that Christ is Lord over all demons. When he writes at the close of the first chapter, "Perhaps you should listen, beneath your feet, for the gentle clatter of hooves" (p. 59), I suspect he is referring both to our shuffling in the slaughterhouse procession and the metaphorical cloven hooves dancing around us, but for every goosebumpy line of warning there is a spine-tingling declaration of victory—such as this one: "Our enemy doesn't outwit Jesus . . . Through the Spirit of Christ, the same becomes true of us" (pp. 95–96).

Where too many books on spiritual warfare failed, pitting our feeble power against the devil's or caricaturing the role of angels all out of biblical perspective, *Tempted and Tried* places Christ's power at center stage. "Gospel freedom is the most important aspect of resisting temptation," Moore writes (p. 170). In his gospel-centered framework, Jesus's obedience and sovereignty provide no safe place for the devil and his minions. Because the gospel is true, the story of Christ's work becomes the story of the Christian's work: "The first step in fighting temptation is to remember who you are in Christ and to situate that within a larger story of God's kingdom economy, the economy of the gospel" (p. 175). This speaks not just to the gospel's place in our story, but to the place of our story in the wider scope of God's story of redemption. So Moore helps us see how the gospel applies to contemporary narratives as it applies in the biblical narrative(s).

How else is Moore's work Miltonic? The sheer poetry of the thing. Russell Moore can *write*, friends. And I was stirred to fight my own temptations to writerly envy at his deft phrasing and moving composition. Here is one of my favorite passages:

A blood-crusted eyelid opened. The breath of God came blowing into that cave, and a new creation flashed into reality. God was not simply delivering Jesus—and with him all of us—from death, he was also vindicating him—and with him all of us. (p. 125)

Another of my favorite passages comes from the cheekily titled "(Not a) Conclusion," in which Moore recounts the baptism of a recent convert.

He'd never thought about Satan in such personal, such confrontational terms. It was as though he had walked into another dimension, one in which dripping wet people incited fights with demons.

That's because he had. (p. 194)

This particular scene resonated with me because I read it so soon after a spooky encounter of my own. I had gone on a pastoral visit to an elderly lady whom I had never met before. But she called to say she needed to talk to me, so I went. As soon as I entered her rundown mobile home, I was confronted not just by the hoarder-like levels of trash everywhere, not just by the strange pictures of Indian-style

Jesuses on her walls, not just by her unkempt appearance, but by a profound sense of heaviness on my spirit—an oppression.

The longer we talked, the heavier it grew. I tried praying internally while keeping up the conversation. She steered the discussion to all manner of New Age gobbledygook and heresy. She tried to read my mind and guess my astrological sign. Then she grabbed my hand, saying she wanted to read my palm. I withdrew it, not harshly but directly, and said, “I don’t want you to do that.” Something changed in her face, snapped. It was just a blip. Did you see the scene in *The Lord of the Rings* movies where Bilbo asks Frodo if he can see the ring, and for a split second he becomes demonic about the face? It was like that.

I was reminded of the reality of the enemy, that he hates me and wants me dead. And I was reminded that this is true even when crazy old ladies aren’t snapping at me. Russell Moore’s book is eternally helpful in this regard. So many portions of it put my head on a swivel, pricked my ears to listen for the slightest snapping of a twig. *Tempted and Tried* reminds us well of the war we are waging with forces in the heavenly places, calling it as the Bible would have us do the “normal Christian life” (p. 165). And thank God it emphasizes the victory already had is the victory to have today and ever after.

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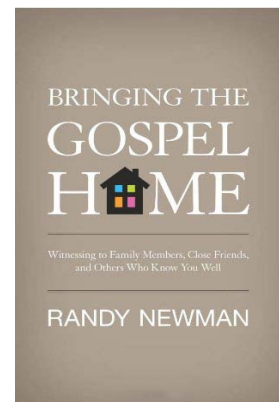
Randy Newman. *Bringing the Gospel Home: Witnessing to Family Members, Close Friends, and Others Who Know You Well*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2011. 220 pp. \$14.99.

Sadly, the Christian church’s effectiveness in evangelizing family members and near friends probably falls in the category of what has a greater possibility of discouraging than encouraging—that is, unless there is a solid, assessable remedy to the maladies they expose. Randy Newman’s *Bringing the Gospel Home* seeks to provide such a remedy.

Newman desires to serve those yearning to break through the seemingly impossible impasse often met with when it comes to sharing the gospel with family members and those that know us well. *Bringing the Gospel Home* represents a well thought-out, practical approach to evangelizing relatives and close friends in a way that avoids artificial techniques while solidly guiding and equipping the reader.

He summarizes his approach with the memorable slogan, “Witnessing to family takes TLC.” He then adds, “I hope they catch my reference to ‘Tender Loving Care’ but then I tell them I mean something else. ‘T’ stands for time, ‘L’ stands for love, and ‘C’ stands for comprehensiveness” (p. 209). Newman elaborates on this arresting statement by suggesting that evangelism to friends and family members requires a longer perspective, a deeper reservoir of love, and a more comprehensive approach than most assume.

While one might expect the book to be organized around specific difficult evangelistic relationships, this is intentionally avoided. Instead, the book is structured around what Newman describes as “over-arching dynamics that transcend specific relationships” (p. 22). He explains in his introduction that his hope is to avoid the trap that family members often fall into when seeking to evangelize their loved ones,



namely, obsession with what they say and do, wanting to say and do just the right thing. Instead, we need to be amazed by grace so that God's love spills out through our tone and how we carry ourselves.

One might initially fear that Newman's hope might be realized at the high price of truly delivering a book that is evangelistically helpful in any practical sense. This, however, is not the case. He admirably achieves his goal while providing solid instruction on evangelism. Each topic is helpfully treated in a way that seeks to provide theological and biblical grounding. Once this is established, the principle is fleshed out in actual evangelistic relationships that mesh well with common difficult evangelistic circumstances believers find so agonizing. In seven chapters he establishes a biblical understanding of family and emphasizes the crucial role of grace, truth, love, humility, time, and an eternal perspective in evangelizing family members and others who know us well. Each chapter includes insightful questions and exercises that are very helpful aids to making use of his concepts.

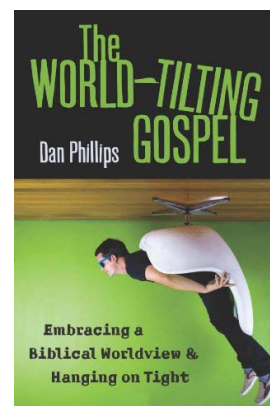
Bringing the Gospel Home is well-written and enjoyable to read. One might say that Newman manages to chart a course safe enough so that readers from a variety of theological backgrounds can enthusiastically embrace his offering. In fact, it is difficult to find much to disagree with. This is not to suggest the book is lacking in content but rather that Newman delivers a helpful and delightful read on an important subject. *Bringing the Gospel Home* should be widely read because it addresses concerns important to all. It is also a helpful read for preachers seeking to sensitively help parishioners deal with the challenge of evangelism to those dear to them. Moreover, it would make an excellent offering for Sunday School classes and small group settings.

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Dan Phillips. *The World-Tilting Gospel: Embracing a Biblical Worldview and Hanging on Tight*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011. 315 pp. \$17.99.

Countless popular books have been written on the Christian life. Unfortunately, many of them are unhelpful, for they are often flawed both exegetically and theologically. Dan Phillips has written a very accessible and clear primer in which he explains the gospel and the nature of the Christian life. The vivid and clear style with which the book is written makes it ideal to give to young Christians. And many older Christians who are confused about the gospel and the Christian life will find it helpful as well.

The book consists of four main sections. In section one Phillips lays out the problem with human beings. God is the center of the story as the creator, but Adam and Eve wanted to be the center of the story; hence, they sinned. Phillips unpacks the devastating consequences of sin for human beings and its drastic nature. Human beings are not just spiritually sick but dead in trespasses and sins. In the second section, Phillips turns his attention to God's plan to save human beings. God is both the sovereign creator and the redeemer. The God-centered message of the scriptures comes to the forefront, especially when we consider God's holiness, love, and wisdom. Human beings are saved through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, and Phillips unpacks the crucial and foundational importance of Jesus's substitutionary



death. Nor is the resurrection ignored, for the author recognizes that salvation comes through both the cross and resurrection. In the cross and resurrection of Jesus, the holiness, love, and wisdom of God are manifested.

The third section examines how we become part of the people of God. Both God's work and the response of human beings are included here. Human beings are summoned to repent and believe. Phillips rightly emphasizes that both faith and repentance grip the whole person. Faith and repentance are not confined to the intellect and hence must not be confused with the error of "cheap grace." At the same time, the author reminds us that our new life as Christians is a miracle. We are born from above, and hence salvation is a sovereign work of God.

In the final section of the book, Phillips considers the Christian life. Here he criticizes the "free grace" view, which denies the need for any significant change in the life of believers. He also takes on what is often called victorious Christian living or Keswick spirituality where one "lets go and lets God." The Christian life is a daily battle, and believers yield themselves to the Holy Spirit as they live their lives.

My review does not communicate the freshness and vitality that characterizes the book, which makes it a helpful work to give to others. Many in our culture do not read, and we need books like this that communicate clearly and simply.

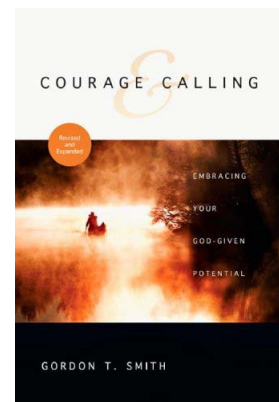
One of the book's strengths is that it begins with the narrative of Scripture. Still, while no book can do everything, it would have been helpful to relate the biblical story more specifically to the theme of the kingdom in Jesus' ministry. Many are asking how the kingdom relates to the story, and Phillips does not pursue this theme. Furthermore, a section on the church would be a helpful addition. Many believers in our culture have an individualistic and privatistic view of the Christian life. Nevertheless, we can be thankful for what Phillips has accomplished in this work. He has written a book that is accessible, theological, and practical. That is no mean feat, and for that we should be grateful.

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Gordon T. Smith. *Courage and Calling: Embracing Your God-Given Potential*. 2nd ed. Downers Grove: IVP, 2011. 269 pp. \$17.00.

Gordon T. Smith is the president of reSource Leadership International, an agency that seeks to foster excellence in theological education in the developing world. Smith has served in the realm of formal theological education, including various administrative positions, such as Vice President and Dean, and as a professor at seminaries. He has also served in a number of pastoral posts in Canada and the Philippines.

The purpose of this book is to explore the calling of God for believers in relation to vocation. Vocation, according to Smith, is not "an occupation or 'line of work,'" but rather expresses the Christian individual's mission in the world (pp. 10–11). In this sense, vocation is a matter that falls within the three callings of a Christian that Smith identifies. The first of these callings is the general call to follow Christ. The second call is the specific call, which is vocation, the subject of this book. Third,



Smith notes the immediate responsibilities that are called of God in specific moments throughout the day (p. 10).

There are a number of helpful items in this book. First, Smith offers a commendable theology of work, beginning with an encouragement to be good stewards of our lives. By this Smith envisions living well and taking our lives seriously. This means that we take into account that our lives have “inestimable value” and living congruently to who we are (p. 18). Along with this last point, Smith offers an entire chapter (ch. 3) to understanding how to determine what our vocation should be in finding our calling. Since vocation is “much deeper and all-encompassing than career or occupation,” Smith presents ways that Christians determine vocations that encompass God’s call. In differing from the previous version of this book, Smith allows for our passions to be primary factors in determining our vocation. Four questions help discover one’s passions (p. 68): What do you want most of all? What matters to you? Where are you at home? And what breaks *your* heart because it breaks the heart of God? Smith comments that God will continue to use our talents and gifting, and we should still be tuned in to hear God’s call, but the answers to these questions will go a long way in determining our vocation.

A third concept that arises in the book is the defeat of the sacred-secular divide in understanding vocation. Smith rightly believes that all vocations have sacredness (p. 133) since vocation is a response to a specific calling from God. As vocation provides the means for the Christian to be on mission in God’s world, there is no sphere in which God does not use Christians in vocation. This idea that no sphere of vocation is absent from the work of God echoes the familiar claim of Abraham Kuyper: “There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, ‘Mine!’” For Smith this idea means that religious work does not carry inherently more weight or value than other vocations and that men and women are called of God into each sphere and sector of society (p. 36).

For such a helpful book, it remains necessary to address at least two weaknesses. The first is the human-centered tone that the book takes throughout. It would be entirely difficult to avoid such a tone when the book is written to help those seeking to understand work and vocation. The emphases to know thyself, to determine your passions, and to know how you fit with others in vocation permeate throughout the book. While providing some hedging against this idea, it remains true that as you read this book an eye bends to self more frequently than above. The second point of weakness is the heavy reliance upon Prov 31 to draw out the theological vision for work. While this text is significant, and rightly used in the discussion, Smith draws a heavy dose of his theological basis from this text. Others, such as Hoekema in *Created in God’s Image* (Eerdmans, 1994), provide more textual spectrum in defending a theological position regarding work.

Gordon Smith has written a most helpful book that addresses a necessary topic in a time when many face unemployment or job transition. Smith encourages readers to find their passion and to pursue a vocation that allows them to fulfill that passion. While many of us work to provide, we should not neglect that we still have a calling that may fall outside that occupation. The Christian can find both and should face with confidence the call of God into a specific sector of vocational life. Smith echoes C. S. Lewis in *The Weight of Glory* by saying that we are far too easily pleased in understanding our vocation by settling often for paychecks and things that satisfy us less than God’s call. I wish I had this

book in my hands when I was in college, and I hope many Christians use this book to evaluate what God is calling them to do in their life vocation.

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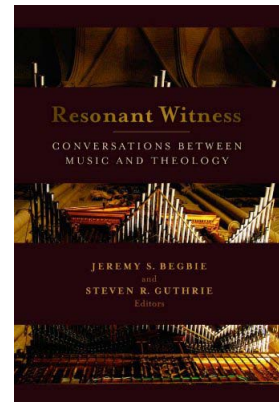
MISSION AND CULTURE

Jeremy S. Begbie and Steven R. Guthrie, eds. *Resonant Witness: Conversations between Music and Theology*. Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Liturgical Studies Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. 497 pp. \$34.00.

This publishes the anticipated proceedings of the 2002 Music and Theology Colloquium, jointly coordinated by the “Theology through the Arts” project at the University of St Andrews and the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship at Calvin College. The book collects seventeen chapters written by theologians, musicologists, and music practitioners, only two of which have appeared in earlier publications. Insofar as this is a theological endeavor, all participants adopt a “broad perspective of Christian Trinitarian orthodoxy, grounded in Scripture and classically expressed in the church’s ecumenical creeds” (p. 9).

Both the colloquium and volume share the self-conscious aim “to demonstrate the fruitfulness of theology for music, and the fruitfulness of music for theology, with a view to encouraging sustained engagements between musicians and theologians in the future” (p. 4). Jeremy Begbie’s introduction provides access into the volume. He defines music as an embodied practice concerned with music-making and music-hearing, and he stresses the importance of multidisciplinary and multileveled approaches to musical engagement. Theology might enrich music by looking at either *particular instances* of music or the *processes* involved in the act of music given what is revealed in the Christian proclamation. Alternatively, a look at these instances and processes might enrich theology’s interaction with God, the church, and the world at large. Among the challenges of this interdisciplinary endeavor, however, is the temptation to abuse music through a *theological instrumentalism* or elevate it in an act of *theological aestheticism* that reduces theological significance to a musical norm. Theology’s “pressure of interpretation” must flow “from the decisive self-communication of God in the history of Israel culminating in Jesus Christ” (p. 13).

The book’s first section, “Music and Cosmos,” pertains to various relationships between God, music, and the rest of creation that theological discourse has articulated. Carol Harrison’s reading of Augustine’s *De Musica* sets the stage for this examination through a detailed exegesis of Book 6. Music is “an art that must be practiced in every moment of a creature’s existence if it is to remain in right relation to God and not fall back into non-being” (p. 31). Against previous interpretations, Harrison argues that Augustine believes temporal events of music should be enjoyed in their *usefulness* as physically embodied manifestations that point to their source, helping to reorient creatures towards their *end* in the triune God.



The remaining four chapters in this section mark progressions in Christian thought concerning the music-cosmos relation after Augustine. Nancy van Deusen addresses the material values of music articulated by medieval poet-theologian Philip the Chancellor through his studies of Aristotle's *Physics*. Joyce Irwin overviews the relationship between music and God's Word articulated in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century German Lutheranism, followed by Begbie's chapter arguing from the work of the Lutheran composer J. S. Bach for a sense of cosmic beauty brought to light through artistic formation. John Paul Ito concludes the section by attempting to reconstruct a Pythagorean relation between music, mathematics, and theology in light of modernity.

The second section, "Music and Culture," focuses on the significance of theology for culturally embedded aspects of music. Daniel Chua finds modernity bound to a secular theology locating its identity against the notion of God and depending on residual theological structures to express itself. He explicates the significance of Galileo's father, Vincenzo Galilei, for both the disenchantment of the modern world and the sixteenth-century attempt to humanly *re-enchant* the world through Opera: "to dis-enchant the world is literally to leave it *un-sung*. Opera sings in an unsung world as nostalgia for an ancient age enchanted by music" (p. 144). Having abandoned a theology of divine creation, humanity was left to waft between a godless materialism and self-deifying idealism. Chua exemplifies this meaninglessness of existence with the work of Rameau, Rousseau, Kant, and Romantic composers' Promethean attempts at *creatio ex nihilo*, and proposes that theology might restore a meaningful relationship between the supernatural and natural realms for music by substituting a *relational* emphasis on Trinitarian love in place of the *rational* emphasis of modernism.

The following two chapters in this section concern the twentieth-century Roman Catholic composer Olivier Messiaen. Robert Sholl's chapter applauds Messiaen for his use of modernist compositional technique to recontextualize the "negative shock" prevalent within modernist composition into a "positive shock" of grace that God might use to call humanity to himself. However, Catherine Pickstock's chapter is critical of Messiaen insofar as she finds his work too modern in its dismissal of narrative and history, after which she then explicates the merits of more postmodern compositional attempts she finds to strike a more constructive sense of musical grace and hope.

The third section, "Music and Theology," offers formal theological engagements with instances and processes of music as theological texts. David Moseley's chapter compares Barth and Bonhoeffer on music's ability to bear witness to Christ. Noting Bonhoeffer's criticism of Barth's supposed *Offenbarungspositivismus* (positivism of revelation) and Barth's bewildered response to this accusation, Moseley focuses his essay on the aspects of each theologian's account that he finds to closely correlate. As each theologian was musically trained, Moseley begins with biographical accounts of each theologian's musical development before enumerating the views outlined in their theological texts. Moseley argues that although Barth does not provide examples of the secular "parables of the kingdom" he says are possible (*CD IV/3.1*), a horizontal reading of this text with Barth's work on Mozart (written concomitant with the 1955–1956 lectures that informed *CD IV/3.1*) provides good reason to believe Barth found Mozart's music to be a possible secular parable witnessing to Christ. If this is true, and Barth's parables take musical form, Moseley shows how a great resonance is seen between these parables and the witnessing function at work in Bonhoeffer's conception of the "polyphony of life."

The other chapters in this section continue the engagement with music as theological text. Richard Plantinga interacts with J. S. Bach's vocal compositions, and after arguing for the legitimacy of Barth's Lutheran identity, locates in his passions an intricate collaboration of music and word that conveys

an overtly Lutheran understanding of death. While distancing itself from a natural theology, Alastair Borthwick, Trevor Hart, and Anthony Monti's chapter engages in a theology of nature and examines the nature of time in the work of the composer Gustav Mahler alongside other non-religious modernist compositions, considering the way these models might be helpful in a Christian engagement with eschatological issues. Bruce Ellis Benson's chapter details a specific understanding of the improvisatory nature of scriptural interpretation.

The final section, "Music and Worship," details specifically worship-related issues. Steven Guthrie exegetes Eph 5 and Col 3 with the hope to erase the harmful bifurcation of an emotional "worship time" and intellectual "teaching time" prevalent within contemporary churches. Guthrie finds that the specific mention of song in Ephesians is often divested of theological significance. However, he argues that a proper understanding of the grammatical structure at work in this passage testifies to the importance of corporate song for the Spirit's work in strengthening church unity and growth in the knowledge of God. Guthrie further suggests that reflection on what is at work in the act of singing will help the church mature in this knowledge, and he concludes with an address of practical concerns related to church music.

The rest of the chapters in this section interact with the emotional aspects of music and worship. Begbie's chapter contrasts with Guthrie's work, as he looks at the theological value of music's ability to educate and focus human emotional participation and at the significance this holds for participation in Trinitarian worship through Christ as High Priest. Medieval theological interaction with emotion and music is further explored in Margot Fassler's chapter on the composer-theologian Hildegard of Bingen, whose work utilizes texts from Song of Songs and Revelation alongside extra-biblical metaphor and erotic imagery to explore human and divine love. Michael Hawn's chapter draws attention to a theological sense of belonging established through the corporate singing of African freedom songs. In light of Heb 2:12, Michael O'Conner concludes the section with a survey of Christian tradition depicting Jesus in song, and suggests the significance of the corporate singing of Christ and his saints in the new creation.

Overall, this volume proves a valuable read for both academic and practical interest in the intersection of theology and music. Like any interdisciplinary endeavor, the growing discipline of "theology and the arts" faces challenges, not least that of sorting out *who* asks its questions, *what* questions they ask, and *how* they intend to ask and answer them. Hence one should expect this volume to have a wide and varied authorship and not be surprised if it sometimes leaves its readership unsure of its unifying features. Admitting this ambiguity is not to criticize the existence of such volumes as much as to encourage readers who value musico-theological discussion to share in this challenge.

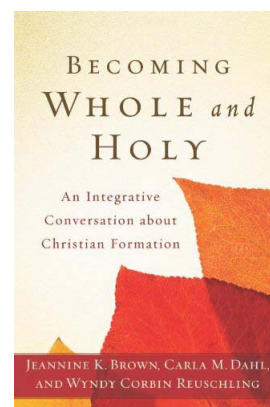
The division of the volume into four sections is helpful insofar as it orients readers towards possible ways of relating the chapters, as is the fact that several of the authors comment on other chapters in the volume—both of these are benefits of participating in the published form of the colloquium. An extensive glossary of music terms is especially convenient for less musically trained readers, and the musically literate may value the inclusion of relevant fragments from the scores discussed. Most of this volume's contributors avoid an overly-autobiographical approach to their chapters and offer interesting projects that are well-defended given the terms they supply. While some offer more developed theological conclusions than others, all demonstrate a commitment to orthodox Christianity alongside a commitment to respect the musical instance or process they choose to explore. Many of the conclusions rely on a vocabulary of words like "resonance," "fruitfulness," and "givenness" to establish

the connections they find, but this seems to demonstrate an appropriate humility more than a lack of thought and source, as well as to evidence their place in a developing field.

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Jeannine K. Brown, Carla M. Dahl, and Wyndy Corbin Reuschling. *Becoming Whole and Holy: An Integrative Conversation about Christian Formation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011. 197 pp. £22.00/\$24.99.

In our earbud-embedded world where conversation is a luxury and interaction with fellow humans would involve turning off computers and phones, three authors have come together to remind us what true conversation is all about. *Becoming Whole and Holy* is an interdisciplinary, integrative dialogue, the joint work of colleagues who seek to understand the role of human formation in each of their own disciplines (hermeneutics, social science, and ethics) as well as how formation's interactions in one discipline informs its role in the other disciplines. Brown, representing hermeneutics, and Dahl, representing social sciences, are colleagues at Bethel Seminary in Minnesota. Reuschling, a former colleague who currently teaches at Ashland Theological Seminary in Ohio, represents ethics.



This book is divided into eleven chapters, with the first introductory and the last a case study. The middle nine chapters are divided into three groups of three. Within each grouping, each author takes a turn presenting two chapters followed by the third chapter in which the other two authors receive and integrate the presentation. They find points of resonance with their own disciplines, raise questions for further research and interact with points of dissonance between disciplines. These third chapters are presented in a friendly “letter” format to the presenter.

Throughout their dialogue, the authors take on the question of what it means to be human—answered in their title (and on p. 10) that to be “fully human means becoming whole and holy.” From this common platform, each takes on the topic of what becoming means in their respective disciplines. The goal is to allow “each discipline its full voice” (p. 10), valuing no discipline over the other. While some may argue that the discipline of biblical studies should trump the others, the authors maintain that no one can claim “objective or final understandings” of all that Scripture offers, thus they agree to maintain an understanding of each voice as equal “at the interdisciplinary table” (p. 14).

In chapters two and three, Dahl looks at formation in the social sciences as being both instantaneous as well as a long process. She emphasizes the role of love, which leads to trust and a trustworthy environment where change can occur in safety. Dahl also notes attitudes that can increase the responsiveness to God’s formational work as well as constraints or obstacles to the process. In her view, even constraints can help shape one’s becoming, with the exception being systems that shut down conversation and squelch growth. In the end, though none will achieve complete wholeness or holiness in this life, the process of becoming leads one to the ultimate goal of intimacy with God. Chapter four is Brown’s and Reuschling’s reception, interaction, and integration with Dahl’s offering.

In chapters five and six, Brown takes her turn, beginning with a look at what the scriptural narrative states about human becoming, finding that becoming necessitates a return to God and then a participation “in the divine intention of imaging God” (p. 73). Brown, too, explores how this is lived out communally as well as individually, noting the culmination is yet to come. She further delves into two rubrics for becoming: dependence (of the finite upon the infinite) and discernment (“the process of watching for God’s work, listening for God’s voice, and following God’s lead,” p. 81). As one progresses in their personal holiness, it should lead to community and communal holiness, which then should lead “to mission to the world and fullness of life or wholeness” (p. 97). Chapter seven again incorporates the reception and integration of the other two authors to Brown’s offerings.

In chapters eight and nine, Reuschling brings her offering of the discipline of ethics and its contribution to the understanding of formation to the table. If becoming results in a particular moral framework, how does that play out in the actual reality of living one’s life? How does being a created, finite being made in the image of God play out in my daily existence? Reuschling looks at the relationality of the Trinity as the model for our own relationality as humans. She then explores how this model informs our actions. Chapter ten is Dahl’s and Brown’s responses.

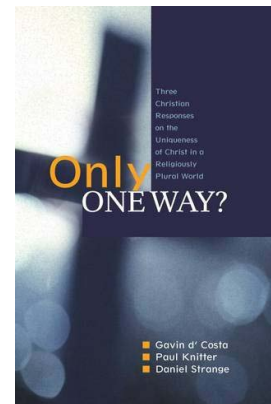
In their concluding chapter, the three authors have a roundtable discussion of how their studies of formation’s integration with their disciplines plays out in the real life situation of immigration. They look at the narratives of the immigrants and the displaced in Scripture, the role of prayerful listening in hearing the needs of the other, and the social implications of differentiating between legality and morality. As the conversation progresses, each respectfully interacts with the others’ perspectives, allowing themselves to be shaped by the others’ views. The conversation is enlightening in many respects for the reader, not only in the topic discussed but also in their modeling the process of an integrative conversation.

This book is a tremendous read, one which could be included in any curriculum dealing with formation or integration. One downside was its slow start—fourteen pages to explain that they were going to have a respectful adult conversation. But in today’s individualistic, fragmented, ear-budded world, perhaps an explanation of how to have a conversation is actually necessary.

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Gavin D'Costa, Paul Knitter, and Daniel Strange. *Only One Way? Three Christian Responses on the Uniqueness of Christ in a Religiously Plural World*. London: SCM Press, 2011. vii + 240 pp. £25.00/\$45.00.

As a result of globalization and mass migration, western Christians live in an increasingly pluralistic world. Growing awareness of this diversity raises some pressing questions. How should we view the teachings and practices of non-Christian religions? To what extent can we affirm the presence of truth and goodness in non-Christian religions and, if so, on what basis? Is it possible for adherents of non-Christian religions to experience salvation apart from the witness of the church? Formally, these questions are discussed within the “Christian theology of religions,” which emerged as a distinct theological discipline following Vatican II. In *Only One Way? Three Christian Responses on the Uniqueness of Christ in a Religiously Plural World* Gavin D'Costa, Paul Knitter, and Daniel Strange present three conflicting approaches to these questions. The book is divided in three sections. In the first section, each theologian outlines his constructive proposal. In the second, each critiques the other proposals. In the final section, each contributor responds to these criticisms.



Gavin D'Costa is a Catholic theologian who teaches at the University of Bristol. D'Costa roots his proposal in the official teachings of the Catholic Church (especially the conciliar documents of Vatican II). On the one hand, he insists that Jesus Christ alone is the source of salvation such that no salvation is possible apart from Christ and his church. On the other hand, non-Christians may experience salvation apart from the sacramental mediation of the institutional church. An important parallel exists between righteous Israelites *before* the coming of Christ (who were destined for salvation but did not know Christ) and those *at the present time* who have not heard the gospel. Just as Christ descended into hell to save righteous Jews (1 Pet 3:19), those at the present time who respond positively to the promptings of divine grace (through the universal work of the Spirit) may also experience salvation. This inchoate salvation is brought to completion through a post-mortem encounter with Christ in purgatory. Although non-Christian religions are not salvific, the Holy Spirit is nevertheless at work in them preparing non-Christians for the gospel through their institutions and practices (*praeparatio evangelica*). Moreover, non-Christian religions may, through positive elements, lead the church into a deeper understanding of Christian truth. In this context, the church serves as a light to the nations proclaiming the good news about Christ.

Paul Knitter is a Catholic who teaches theology, world religions, and culture at Union Theological Seminary. Although he is Catholic, his proposal departs significantly from teachings of the Magisterium. According to Knitter, all God-language is “symbolic.” The symbols we use can never adequately describe their object. The Christian symbol for God (Trinity) points us to a creating, communicating, and animating mystery. The Adamic “fall” is not a historic event but a symbol for negative realities that accompany the unfolding of evolution. The fundamental human problem is not “corruption” (i.e., original sin) but, as Buddhism teaches, “ignorance.” For Christians, Jesus Christ embodies the divine mystery that is beyond description. The death of Jesus should not be interpreted as “fixing something that was broken” (e.g., satisfying God’s wrath, which amounts to divine child abuse) but rather interpreted as “embodying and making known” the mystery of God (p. 69). If we conceive of salvation as fixing what is broken, there can be only one savior; however, if we understand salvation simply as revealing God, room exists “for other revealers for other cultures and other historical periods” (p. 70). In this context,

the Spirit “animates other religions as it animates Jesus and Christianity—in a diversity that, like the diversity of the triune God, enables ever greater unity among the religions but can never be reduced to only one religion” (p. 59).

Daniel Strange is a Reformed evangelical who teaches culture, religion, and theology at Oak Hill College. His proposal draws on Hendrick Kraemer, J. H. Bavinck, Cornelius Van Til and, more generally, Reformed tradition. The relationship between Christianity and non-Christian religions can be summarized in the following way: “non-Christians religions are essentially an idolatrous refashioning of divine revelation, which are antithetical and yet parasitic on Christian truth, and of which the gospel of Jesus Christ is the ‘subversive fulfillment’” (p. 93). Strange argues that the biblical concept of idolatry offers a “sophisticated analytical tool” for thinking about non-Christian religions (p. 111). Although non-Christians have objective knowledge of God, they respond with suppression and exchange (Rom 1:17–32). It is important, however, to recognize that this suppression is not uniform but varies in depth and expression (due, in part, to common grace). As a result, there is both “principle discontinuity” and “practical continuity” between Christianity and other religions (p. 114). The former is rooted at the worldview level in the antithesis between light and darkness while the latter is rooted in the fact that non-Christian religions are inconsistent in practice. This inconsistency is rooted in common grace (the non-salvific work of the Holy Spirit), the *imago Dei*, and reception of primal revelation (*prisca theologia*). In this context, the gospel both confronts alternative religious worldviews and offers appealing answers to questions that other religions cannot themselves answer (i.e., subversive fulfillment).

One feature that differentiates *Only One Way?* from traditional “three views” books is the amount of space devoted to critical interaction among the contributors. Nearly half of this book is devoted to two separate rounds of dialogue. Not only does this help readers understand the position of each theologian more fully, but it also gives them a clearer picture of the underlying theological assumptions. A second strength relates to the way the presentations are structured to address the broad spectrum of theological issues that must be considered in developing a Christian theology of religions. Contributors discuss theological method, creation, fall, God, Christ, Trinity, salvation, eschatology, dialogue, justice, and mission vis-à-vis non-Christian religions. This structure helps readers (rightly) recognize that the debate over the theology of religions is not merely a dispute about soteriology (e.g., fate of the unevangelized) but includes a wide range of substantive theological questions. In this context, the differences among the contributors are rather striking. Moreover, this approach represents a welcome alternative to recent proposals in which some theologians present a single doctrine as the interpretive key to a Christian theology of religions (e.g., recent attempts to argue that the doctrine of the Trinity provides the key to affirming the validity of non-Christian religions). A final strength represents the way D’Costa, Knitter, and Strange engage directly, substantively, and charitably over their differences.

Apart from Knitter’s references to Buddhism, readers will encounter little concrete interaction with non-Christian religions. This represents a primary weakness of the book. It might have been helpful for each contributor to pick a sample religion and show (at least in a cursory way) how his proposal leads a different “Christian” reading of that religion. It would have been helpful, for example, to see how Strange’s “subversive fulfillment” approach would interpret Buddhism or Islam. *Only One Way?* offers

a helpful introduction to current debate in the theology of religions and represents a useful classroom resource.

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Ben Daniel. *Neighbor: Christian Encounters with “Illegal” Immigration*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010. xxi + 166 pp. £12.00/\$20.00.

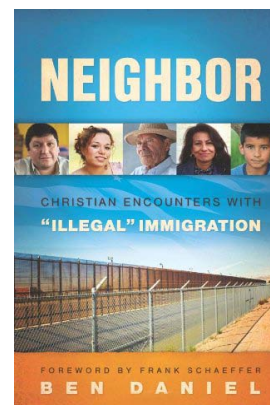
Migration is a global phenomenon that today is occurring at unprecedented levels. While migration always has characterized the history of humanity, the staggering numbers that are being witnessed now—over two hundred million—have never been seen before. People are moving within their nations or to other countries because of natural disasters, armed conflicts, and economic need. These large shifts in population are causing all sorts of reactions in the receiving communities—from compassionate welcome to rejection born of uncertainty of the impact that newcomers might have on native culture, societal infrastructures, and security.

Ben Daniel’s *Neighbor: Christian Encounters with “Illegal” Immigration* focuses on a specific immigrant population: Hispanics crossing into the United States along its southern border with Mexico. The author states his purpose very clearly in the Introduction: “My desire for this book, then, is not so much that it will inspire charity or political activism (though I do not wish to discourage either), but that readers will recognize in undocumented immigrants the potential for long-lasting, life-giving friendship” (p. xix). His is an effort to give immigrants—especially the undocumented—a human face.

Neighbor is divided into three parts, each of which ends with a section titled “Reflection and Action,” which offers suggestions for further discussion and practical engagement on the topic of immigration. The first part covers four chapters, the first of which presents an account of the life of Father Toribio Romo González, a Mexican martyr who is the patron saint of immigrants; he was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 2000. Chapter two briefly surveys the relevant biblical material, while chapter three looks at the importance of immigration in church history, with an emphasis on Calvin’s Geneva.

Part two is shorter, only two chapters long. Each chapter focuses on an official of the United States government. The first is a Democratic representative of California, who for a long time has worked for the reform of immigration legislation. The second is a federal judge in Las Cruces, New Mexico, which is close to the Mexican border. This judge’s Christian faith informs how he treats and sentences undocumented immigrants who appear in his court. This part of *Neighbor* offers a view from the other side of the law: these are vignettes first coming from one who wrestles with crafting immigration legislation; the other comes from one enforcing current policy. Both the representative and the judge demonstrate that the immigration laws in the United States are misdirected, and they do what they can to bring empathy and common sense into the national debate.

Part three contains four chapters, which describe, in turn, the *Frontera de Cristo* ministry to immigrants on both sides of a border crossing in Arizona, an organization called CRREDA, which



leaves water in the desert for those making that dangerous trek, the New Sanctuary Movement, and educational programs in San José, California, designed to empower immigrant children and their parents. As in the rest of the book, the information is communicated through the lens of the author's encounters with people directly involved in these efforts. *Neighbor* closes with ten provocative Study Questions, endnotes, and a helpful index.

The strength of Daniel's work is its personableness. He writes in an easy-to-read style, and the stories of his experiences with such diverse individuals in so many different contexts are engaging and interesting. Immigration is about people—the people who have risked so much to cross national borders, the people who work to improve the legal realities of the national immigration system, and the people of the multiple civil and religious organizations and projects that reach out to these vulnerable newcomers. The book's conclusion, "*Mi Beautiful Barrio*," explains the title. His urban *barrio* (the Spanish word for "neighborhood") is a fascinating mix of Hispanic and Asian immigrants and native-born. They have become friends, fellow families in a shared life. These immigrants truly are Daniel's "neighbors."

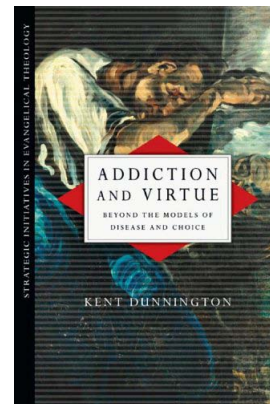
The theology section of the book is not very detailed, and the historical survey is limited. Daniel, however, does exemplify a few categories that he mentions in passing. One is the need for a new "religious imagination," a sensitivity to the spirituality of immigrants that sustains them in the quest for a better life (pp. 55–56). He also suggests that the church maintain a "prophetic suspicion" towards those in power who do not regard the plight of the needy (p. 71) and a "prophetic witness" to the truth of immigration realities (pp. 128–29). These exhortations are what this book is all about. Daniel's is a call to welcome the stranger in the name of Christian compassion and hospitality and because of our common humanity. To do otherwise, he claims, would be to fall prey to the angry fear toward the outsider that has characterized so much of American history.

Some may say that this book is thin in theology and Bible and discount it. I would respond that the strength of *Neighbor* lies elsewhere. It is in introducing the reader to a complex topic through the door of story into a world of real, needy people. This is not a theological treatise on immigration; it is about Christian incarnation at a time when nationalism and xenophobia can override faith. For that reason, *Neighbor* is worth reading.

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Kent Dunnington. *Addiction and Virtue: Beyond the Models of Disease and Choice*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2011. 208 pp. £19.99/\$30.00.

Dunnington's monograph on addiction charts a course between the two dominant models of addiction—disease and choice. Initially, he analyzes and critiques both approaches and demonstrates how neither achieves an understanding of the problem without remainder. Biological and genetic accounts fail to explain how some regain will power without medical treatment; voluntarism “makes intelligible the possibility of recovery only by denying the category of addiction” (pp. 34–35). Alternatively, Dunnington proposes the category of “habit” as “an intelligible path between the muddled polarities of ‘disease’ and ‘choice’” (p. 10). Chapter two explores Aristotle's teaching on incontinent actions, those which are “performed whenever a person rationally approves of what is good, desires what is bad, and following appetite, does what is bad” (p. 37). While physical and psychological craving explain aspects of addictive behavior, they cannot clarify why someone pursues addiction when craving is absent (p. 55). Prolonged “bad” habits or lack of “good” habits become “second nature” in an individual and generate a rational mode of existence where knowledge informs our desires and desires inform our knowledge (p. 52).



Chapter three maintains that, on its own, will power is not enough to explain or enable humans “to tend toward one among a variety of potential actions” (p. 58). Aquinas's work on habit as “rational appetite” accounts for the consistent actions of the will in a certain direction, even in spite of opposition, whether internal or external in origin (p. 61). In the realm of addiction, this insight mediates between common polarities: instinct—disposition; determinism—voluntarism; involuntary—voluntary (p. 63). While habit resembles each feature, it walks between them: “addiction is a rationally informed habit” (p. 73). The inner workings of habit on a person's imagination, evaluative skills, and memory show that habits are complex and thus not easily conquered through the intellect and will alone.

Chapter four considers the difference between intemperance and addiction. Instead of mere pursuit of sensory pleasure, addiction aims beyond the sensate “toward the attainment of particular moral and intellectual goods” (p. 84). Addiction, as habit, is the counterpoint of virtue; as a vice, it targets and mimics the good life, which is legitimately advanced only in and through virtue (p. 96). Chapter five elucidates how today's society exacerbates the problem of addiction. Modern people have lost the *telos* of virtue and the *telos* of participation in the transcendent (p. 103). There is no overwhelming consensus and no “shared context for envisioning the good life for human persons” (p. 101). Consequently, addiction is a way of organizing the pursuit of happiness through an otherwise arbitrary, lonely, and boring modern existence (p. 105).

Chapter six argues that while sin and addiction are not identical, the removal of sin from the theory of recovery has devastating repercussions. Dunnington champions Augustine's view of sin as the bondage of the human will and demonstrates how sin as an act, as a habit, and as a pre-disposition, mirrors the testimonies of addicts, especially with regard to the paradox that “addictive behavior is at one and the same time voluntary and yet beyond the immediate control of a supposedly autonomous will” (pp. 132–33). The category of sin elevates the status of addiction to loss of “our perfect good of eternal friendship with God” (p. 140). It also establishes redemption as the alternative to addiction, not the cold comfort of a return to the status quo of the American dream (p. 139). Chapter seven

recapitulates the earlier chapters to conclude that addiction is “a counterfeit form of worship” (p. 141). Returning to Aquinas, Dunnington compares and contrasts charity and addiction, presenting them as two alternatives to integrating the good life and contemplation of the divine (p. 144). Both love for God and addiction enable an individual to “assess and evaluate every possible course of action in terms of one definite end that eclipses every other contender for absolute allegiance” (p. 151). Finally, Dunnington enumerates positive and successful aspects Alcoholics Anonymous as a way of calling God’s people to more closely identify with the power and prevalence of addiction; pointedly, “the challenge addiction presents to the church is whether or not it can embody the purposive, ecstatic and all-consuming love of God in a way that is more compelling than the life of addiction” (pp. 193–94).

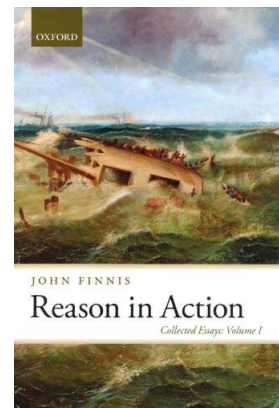
Dunnington’s philosophical and theological contribution is a nuanced challenge to the models of disease and choice. His multi-layered explanation on the perplexing issue of an individual continuing in a pattern of destructive living, even though they know better, resonates with the NT’s presentation of habitual sin. His care to present the addicted person as *imago Dei* and as someone in search of meaning helps to curb the stereotype “morally reprehensible” and reveals a latent self-righteousness in individuals and communities of Christianity. Still, the particularities of the *telos* Dunnington presumes for the addict may not always fit the situation; moreover, one must be careful when ascribing “meaning making” to sinful behavior that cannot be granted any positivity or legitimacy in our lives. Dunnington does not view the work as a recovery manual per se; nevertheless, there is plenty here for pastors and counselors working with addicted individuals. While the interaction with Aristotle and Aquinas may cause trouble for some readers, the presentation of these giants is lucid and the research could serve a wider audience. *Addiction and Virtue* sets the stage for a new scene in the church, where she is no longer dulled and distracted by a secular vision of happiness, but is a vibrant, attractive, and welcoming community of “repentant sinners.”

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John Finnis. *The Collected Essays of John Finnis: Volumes I–V*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. 2,170 pp. £150.00/\$300.00.

John Finnis has been active in the public communication of ethics at the highest academic level for over forty years. *The Collected Essays of John Finnis: Volumes I–V* brings together 106 papers. The earliest of the essays collected in the five volumes dates from 1967, the latest from 2010. Included in this total is nearly two dozen previously unpublished works. To give details of all the nuances of every essay in Finnis’ collection of published journal articles would be far too exhaustive. Instead, the way Finnis has thematically linked the ‘essays,’ as he terms them, provides an accessible platform for each theme. Each volume can be read as a solitary work, but it is only when the volumes are combined that appreciation of the scope and range throughout Finnis’ work can begin.

It is an interesting enterprise in *The Collected Essays* to see Finnis approach and interpret his work in a cumulative, substantive body. Most commonly associated with his work



on Legal Philosophy (or Jurisprudence), the five volumes provide a thematic insight into his work in contemporary philosophy: *Reasons in Action; Intention and Identity; Human Rights and Common Good; Philosophy of Law*; and *Religion and Public Reasons*. Through these five volumes, Finnis builds upon his new classical theory of natural law, originally articulated in *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford University Press, 1980), arguably his best known work. This acclaimed contribution to the philosophy of law and practical reason is built upon and significantly contributes to any publication seen in the *Collected Essays*. It may be argued that the *Collected Essays* show the full picture of Finnis' philosophical contribution for the first time. Yet to what extent is Finnis developing and contributing to the theory? Indeed, in subsequent writings highlighted in the essays, Finnis displays his contribution to divisive ethical debates, such as those surrounding nuclear deterrence, abortion, and sexual morality, which can be seen as practical application of the theory of natural law previously presented. It can be argued, however, that this practical application merely works out a theory that could benefit from integrating more academic criticism and suggestion for the benefit of the new classical theory of natural law.

Clear from the outset, Finnis is writing from a Roman Catholic theological perspective. The theory of natural law Finnis adopts draws heavily from Thomist and Aristotelian sources, hence it is often referred to as the new classical theory of natural law. Equally the theory has been referred to as 'New Natural Law Theory', a term that reflects the philosophical techniques being used and one that will be used in the remainder. Historically, natural law themes have been articulated as part of the product of a philosophical critique of ethical scepticisms, whether nihilism, relativism, subjectivism, or hedonism (1:201). From this basis it can be seen why such themes would appeal to a legal philosopher writing in the Roman Catholic tradition. The new natural law theory, proposed by Finnis in *Natural Law and Natural Rights* is essentially a theory of practical rationality. The first principles of practical reasoning are a number of basic goods, things that are worth pursuing for their own sakes. Finnis's list in 1980 included life, knowledge, aesthetic experience, play, practical reasonableness, friendship, community, and religion. These basic goods are aspects of agents' well-being and lead to human flourishing for the agent. This is a dramatic simplification. *The Collected Essays* convey, in part, how Finnis has altered his account: first, he has widened the basic good of play to include skillful performances included in work; second, he has included as a distinct form of basic good—the unique form of interpersonal communion he calls 'the marital good.' Whilst these are definite alterations, it is questionable the extent to which Finnis has radically developed the theory. Within Volume 1, Finnis acknowledges his failure to include the good of marriage as a basic human good within *Natural Law and Natural Rights*. However, the inclusion of marriage has been relentlessly debated by the New Natural Lawyers and its omission frequently questioned by critics.

John Finnis is often referred to as a constitutive member of the 'Grisez School.' This school represents Germain Grisez's collaboration with John Finnis and Joseph Boyle. While Grisez formed much of the new natural law's philosophical theory, Finnis traditionally receives the acclaim. How much does Finnis recognise Germain Grisez's influence? While Grisez is referred to intermittently throughout *the Collected Essays*, Finnis owes a large debt to the Grisez School. For the natural law theory of morality Finnis here proposes, providing his foundation for the political theory and jurisprudence he defends, is as he suggests at the beginning of *NLNR*, 'squarely based on the work of Germain Grisez' (*Natural Law and Natural Rights*, p. vii). Therefore, while the application in the *Collected Essays* can be attributed towards Finnis, the formation of the theory needs to be attributed to Grisez, with John Finnis applying this to the legal arena.

There is no questioning the practical application of new natural law theory. Essays focussing upon abortion, euthanasia, cloning, and *in vitro fertilisation* abound within the collection. Particularly within Volume 2, Finnis engages with philosophers, bio ethicists, and judges in the highest international courts. The essays in Volume 2 explore themes in Finnis' work touched upon lightly in *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, such as personal identity and integrity, existence, group identity, and intention. This provides an often controversial exposition of the practical implications of new natural law theory.

Throughout the essays it is immediately apparent that an insight is provided into political and academic debates that have raged over major areas of law (particularly the public enforcement of morality) over the last half century. From this Finnis engages a host of eminent academics, including Peter Singer, Ronald Dworkin, John Rawls, Martha Nussbaum, H. L. A Hart, and Amartya Sen.

Volume 3 brings together Finnis' wide-ranging contribution to fundamental issues in political philosophy. It discusses human rights, referring to them equally as 'natural rights' to outline their history in classical philosophy. Human rights as 'natural rights' have been an extensive part of Finnis' new natural law discussion and application. From *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, Finnis derives a human rights basis, which is applied throughout the essays, asserting that: 'human beings are of equal worth and bearers of true moral rights by virtue of their humanity' (3:9). Throughout the *Collected Essays*, reference is frequently made to Finnis' previous substantive work such as *Fundamentals of Ethics* (Georgetown University Press, 1983) and *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory* (Oxford University Press, 1980). However, particular and almost constant reference is made to *Natural Law and Natural Rights* throughout *The Collected Essays*.

Finnis does indeed apply a rights basis, although one wonders how this applies to both the state and government. Volume 3 does not endorse state paternalism. Finnis, while opposed to many actions on moral grounds (following a traditional Roman Catholic perspective) believes the state should not actively prevent the population from performing immoral acts. The prime reason for this is *reason*. Finnis illustrates in volume 5 a central element of the new natural law theory: the main tenets of personal and political morality, and of a good legal order, are taught both by reason and authentic divine revelation. Reason also provides the basis for theological reflection, for religion is fundamentally an 'operation of reason, theoretical and practical' (5:2) and practical because directed towards choosing and acting. Indeed, all the different meanings and applications of reason are covered by the five volumes.

Philosophy and theology for Finnis are intrinsically linked. For the question of whether the 'existence and character of our universe give cogent reason for affirming the existence of such a transcendent explanation [of God] is a philosophical question' (5:80). For Finnis, the existence of God can be discovered through nature, using the process of reason. This position, traditionally associated with the Roman Catholic Church, invokes criticism from a more Reformed position. For the teaching of total depravity would often mire any conclusion formed on the basis of an agent's reason alone. Accordingly, Finnis outlines his understanding of Catholic theological reflection on moral questions (and therefore on political and legal questions) to be a search for a reflective equilibrium between (1) revelation in the authoritative teaching of the church and (2) what would be judged morally reasonable even without revelation (5:10). Once again, he links philosophy and theology, reason and revelation.

Within the final chapters in *Natural Law and Natural Rights* and *Aquinas*, Finnis argues for a divine creator and providential maintainer of the universe. Finnis sees no need to do so here. Instead he indicates in volume 5 arguments for refuting atheism and agnosticism. Several of the papers indicate ways in which they open onto the ground for learning more about God's nature. For Finnis, religion

shares in reason's radically public character (5:3). Thus a deity can be approached through reasoning on a public basis. But this needs to be distinguished from a Rawlsian public reason approach since there is 'no need for the phrase public reason' (5:4). Rather the *Collected Essays* support practical reasonableness, which comes into view as a 'further basic intelligible good to which a distinct practical first principle directs us' (5:4). Once more, the thematic link is displayed throughout his *Collected Essays*, founded in the new natural law tradition to present legal, philosophical, political, and theological opinion across the vast amount of material analysed and debated.

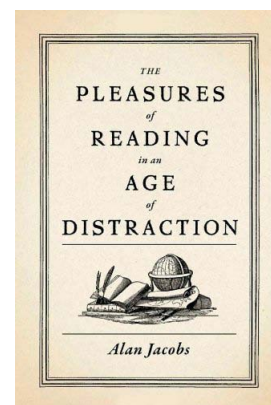
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Alan Jacobs. *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 162 pp. £12.99/\$19.95.

The literary landscape is strewn with signposts decrying the decay of print publication and robust readership. Can readers continue to flourish in the strange new world of new media? With this volume, Alan Jacobs enters the fray by examining the effect of this cultural climate on the task of reading. As a professor of English at Wheaton College, Jacobs is a vocational reader who has reflected on these issues carefully. With no traditional chapters, the book takes the form of an extended essay where each section or heading begins a new topic or idea. With this meandering format, each step further into the book develops an element of Jacobs's overall perspective on the task of reading.

Jacobs begins by pointing to the number of "devoted readers in America" and notes that there has been a "surprising uptick in the reading of literary fiction and other long-form works." Contrary to the "lamentations of many contemporary Jeremiahs, the cause of reading is not a lost one by any means" (p. 5). However, many who share an enthusiasm for reading also lack confidence and "wonder whether they are reading well, with focus and attentiveness, with discretion and discernment" (p. 6). Jacobs explores the root of this anxiety by reviewing the main tenants of *How to Read a Book*, the enduringly popular guide for reading by Mortimer Adler. According to this approach, getting "the most" out of a book is the duty and obligation of a good reader. Reading, in other words, is fundamentally a "means of self-improvement" (p. 9). A characteristic example of this mindset is the "eat-your-vegetables lists of approved authoritative texts" in a given field that are endlessly (and usually annually) proliferated (p. 12).

Jacobs argues that this "strongly legislative tone is not ideally suited to today's habits of mind" (p. 8). Rather than pursuing the didactic tact of telling us *what* to read, Jacobs seeks to describe *how* we read and presses the motivations for *why* we read. In stark contrast to duty-driven reading, the most prominent reason for reading in Jacobs's account is "that reading books can be intensely pleasurable" and that "reading is one of the great human delights" (p. 10). This type of reading is difficult because "a significant chunk" of the American reading public still "can't take its readerly pleasure straight but has to cut it with a sizable splash of duty" (p. 11). Jacobs seeks to articulate "a very different model of what reading can be all about" (p. 12).



His understanding of the task of reading forefronts a dual emphasis on reading *for pleasure* and reading *at whim*. These interlocking principles govern his remarks throughout and serve as the heart of Jacobs's contribution to this discussion. First, Jacobs seeks to convey his "commitment to one dominant, overarching, nearly definitive principle for reading: *Read at Whim*" (p. 15). He distinguishes between reading with "thoughtless, directionless preference that almost invariably leads to boredom or frustration or both," which he calls "whim," and reading based on the guidance of "self-knowledge," which he characterizes as "Whim" (p. 41). The reader governed by the "sovereignty of Whim" is one who reads out of desire and delight rather than duty or perceived accomplishment.

Though "reading at whim" might sound purely capricious, Jacobs connects this element with the "pleasures of reading." He warns at the beginning of the book that his reflections are not for those who dislike or feel indifferent to reading. Rather, they are for "those who have caught a glimpse of what reading can give—pleasure, wisdom, joy—even if that glimpse came long ago" (p. i). His paradigmatic suggestion: "Read what gives you delight—at least most of the time—and do so without shame" (p. 23). Though "reading for fun" or "reading for entertainment" is sometimes derided, words like "pleasure" and "joy" are "richer words, with a greater range of connotations" (p. 17). For Jacobs, "It should be normal for us to read what we want to read, to read what we truly enjoy reading" (p. 33). Jacobs avoids saying that "all reading is equally good, equally valuable" (p. 38). However, his "standard of readerly value" is not matched to the informative or beneficial nature of a given work. Instead he appeals to "the standard of the reader's own pleasure—a criterion that sounds more simple and straightforward than it is" (p. 38). There is nothing mechanical or arbitrary about the act of reading and the joy it can bring. People read for pleasure and are deeply affected by scanning their eyes over marks on a page, and "this is a mystery" (p. 33).

The power of these two elements (reading at whim and reading for pleasure) is that they can help guide us as we choose from the many options that are always on offer. For Jacobs, becoming a "self-guided" reader is a more laudable goal than mechanically following a prescribed path that allows us to "offload accountability for our reading" (p. 43). Rather, the goal should be an "informed consent to Whim's sovereignty—without a teacher to direct us" (p. 43). This is Jacobs's overriding concern, to help individuals mature into certain types of readers, namely, ones in tune with their own readerly habits and desires.

The follow-up concern Jacobs addresses is how one can maintain this type of love and practice of reading "in an age of distraction." Interacting with several forms of recent technology (e-readers, social bookmarking, etc.), Jacobs considers the implications of reading various types of text in online platforms. He also analyzes the notion of distraction in general and the effect it has always had on readers. The temptation to "rotate through the possibilities for informational novelty" is acute, especially for a generation of people who are "very rarely without the option of going online" (p. 79). This situation threatens "to return us all to virtual babyhood" (p. 79), where overstimulation is a recurring reality. The siren song of the link will indeed be irresistible unless "we do some work to alter our habits" (p. 78).

Recognizing that the recent technological paradigm shift creates a nexus of perplexing issues, Jacobs nonetheless argues that it is unreasonable to render technology as "the enemy of reading" (p. 82). Rather, "it's at least possible for new technologies to be part of the solution instead of part of the problem" (p. 82). But for many, there's the rub: "It's not hard to come up with handy-dandy practical suggestions; what's hard is *following* them—or rather, even *wanting* to follow them. What's hard is imagining, fully and vividly, the good things that happen when we follow through" (p. 84). The ability to

read devoid of distraction is painful to lose and “worth cultivating” (p. 86) because “raptness is deeply satisfying” (p. 86).

The value of hermeneutical reflection on reading is the opportunity for the bewildered reader to “develop strategies of discernment” (p. 111). The call to journey deeper into the world of books is calling, but “you just have to practice to hear it above all those other voices screaming for novelty” (p. 133). One simple method Jacobs suggests is the countercultural practice of reading slowly (pp. 67–68). If reading really is all about the uploading of information, then slow reading would be intolerably deficient. However, Jacobs intimates that there lurks a more excellent way. Aside from information technologies, at a deeper level internal distractions are unfailingly present, and “the spell of reading is always in danger of being broken” (p. 124). In order to experience the fullest reading experience, one has to possess a “deep solitude” that will often times need to be created “by force of will sharpened by habit” (p. 125).

Jacobs’s prose surely ambles but never seems to ramble. Along the way, he entertains a delightful assortment of variegated asides, including discussion of the cognitive processes involved in the task of reading, the stunning plasticity of the brain, the lurid myth of multitasking, the odious art of marking up library books, the joy of “getting lost” in a good story, Machiavelli’s reading habits, and Harold Bloom’s disdain for the *Harry Potter* series. Though most readers will recognize that there are certainly other modes of reading that must be pursued at times (e.g., digesting dense theological tomes!), Jacobs makes a persuasive case that reading for pleasure should remain a live option in any discipline. There might also be room in this account for further considering the distorting effects that sin can unleash upon our readerly whims and desires (i.e., What should we do if the “joy” of reading that Whim brings us turns out to be Turkish delight?).

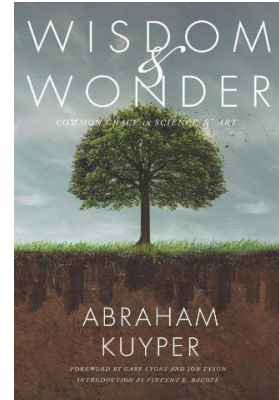
The book as a whole makes many compelling points and refreshingly celebrates the God-given gift of reading in an age where texts are ubiquitous but often neglected. As he warmly reminds us, “The books are waiting” (p. 25). His waits as well. He has given us a rumination on reading that is instructive while also itself a pleasure to read. So, violating Jacobs’s own embargo on mandating books for someone else to read, *tolle lege* . . . but only if you want to.

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Abraham Kuyper. *Wisdom and Wonder: Common Grace in Science and Art*. Translated by Nelson D. Kloosterman. Grand Rapids: Christian's Library Press, 2012. 191 pp. \$14.99.

Although many Christians know about Abraham Kuyper, a much smaller number have actually read his works. This volume promises to change that, fueling a more popular readership and broader exposure to Kuyper's theological framework for cultural analysis.

Wisdom and Wonder represent a series of popular articles on science and art that were eventually collected, bound, and released in 1905 as *Common Grace in Science and Art* (*De Gemeene Gratie in Wetenschap en Kunst*). The editors of this newly translated English edition attempt to keep this popular appeal in mind by providing Kuyper's original work with a new title (*Wisdom and Wonder*), a handsome cover, short readable chapters, user friendly sidebar quotes, and a thematic illustration for each chapter. With a foreword, introduction, and endorsements by contemporary English speaking writers and scholars working in the Kuyperian tradition, this volume is a popular introduction to Kuyper's cultural theology, particularly as it navigates such challenging arenas as science and art.



Importantly, Kuyper's focus is not science and art per se, but rather the theological foundations for Christian engagement in these two fields. Here he makes ample use the doctrines of creation, the *imago dei*, the cultural mandate, sin, and, most importantly, his theology of common grace. Although thinking about science and art have developed significantly since Kuyper delivered these essays, the theological foundations Kuyper offers still deserve careful theological consideration.

In his treatment of science, Kuyper develops the fracturing power of sin to destroy a coherent, integrated picture of the world. To do this, Kuyper examines the philosophical assumptions of naturalism and empiricism that have taken hold of the natural sciences. Regarding the former, Kuyper reminds us that evolution is not sufficient for a naturalist account, since the theory merely pushes the question back to the origin of the conditions that made the process possible. Regarding the latter, Kuyper challenges the idea of a neutral observer, questioning the existence of observers who act as merely "elegant photographic cameras" (p. 66). Along the way, Kuyper introduces some important philosophical distinctions, such as between "seeing" and "seeing as" (p. 64). These further buttress Kuyper's claim that positivistic accounts of scientific knowing have neglected the human person, who is irreducibly "spiritual." Those familiar with philosophy of science will recognize Kuyper's reclamation of the human subject as anticipating later work in the philosophy of science, such as the work of Michael Polyani and Paul Feyerabend.

Kuyper's discussion of art orbits a theology of beauty, art and worship, mimesis, creativity, and the artist as *imago dei*—all themes to be picked up and discussed later by neocalvinists Herman Bavinck, Hans Rookmaaker, Calvin Seerveld, and Nicholas Wolterstorff. Although Kuyper's accent on beauty as the central criteria for artistic excellence has been controversial in the twentieth century, his defense reminds us that any theological account of art that rejects beauty is equally problematic. The issue of beauty aside, Kuyper's discussion of art provides a number of commendable moves, such as his support for the democratization of the arts, his affirmation of the role of the imagination, his critique of art for art's sake, and his defense of Christian culture-making as critical for enriching human life.

As with other writers in the late Victorian era, Kuyper displays traits characteristic of this period. These include a tacit colonialism when speaking of “primitive” societies (p. 60) and a penchant for dualisms between “higher” and “lower” realms in science and art (pp. 79, 118). Yet even here one can appreciate how Kuyper’s theological development puts such assumptions in tension. Victorian binaries are strained when introduced to a theology of creational “multiformity,” and his view of the universal *imago dei* is at odds with his Eurocentrism.

These anachronisms aside, readers will be surprised by the relevance of this volume and how prescient—even prophetic—many of Kuyper’s insights are. For example, precipitating thinkers like Thomas Kuhn, Kuyper speaks of the critical role of communities in these fields, arguing that the social structures that create such communities of learners are, in fact, a divine gift. Clearly, Kuyper provides a compelling theological account for not only gifted individuals, such as the Steve Jobs and Francis Alÿs’s of this world, but also the social and cultural structures that make the blessings that come to us through the sciences and arts possible.

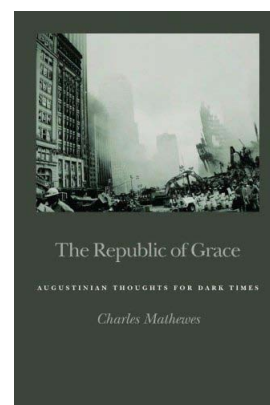
The dominant theme that emerges throughout the volume, finding its support in more than one of his theological *loci*, is Kuyper’s defense of the independence and integrity of science and art. It is right, Kuyper assures us, that these ventures came out from under the umbrellas of church and state. Behind his argument is not only a vision for public space, but also a pastoral concern that believers not abandon these important endeavors. Kuyper wrote these words in hope that believers would recognize that although these fields were not free from the curse of sin, they still were upheld by God’s grace, thereby legitimating Christian participation. Undoubtedly, this newly released translation will continue to encourage Christian engagement in the challenging arenas of science and art.

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Charles Mathewes. *The Republic of Grace: Augustinian Thoughts for Dark Times*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 271 pp. £12.99/\$20.00.

The Republic of Grace is a primer on Augustinian Christian spirituality that takes the current religious politics of the USA in the wake of September 11, 2001 along with globalizing consumer capitalism as the basis of exposition. The subtitle makes clear that Mathewes’s hope is that Augustine of Hippo’s thought can renew the shared practice of hope, faith, and love in the same way that Augustine’s *City of God* made those practical virtues compelling after the fall of Rome in the fifth century and through the so-called Dark Ages. Practices of hope, faith, and love are needed now for the early twenty-first century’s severe social, political, ecological, and economic challenges.

The book starts by commending a teacher who urged the relevance of thinking well about God even on the afternoon of 9/11. Mathewes the professor is much alike. The exposition is in two main parts. Part I, “Seeing as Christians,” analyzes current affairs and global politics in theological perspective. Mathewes deals with *hope* in relation to the politics of terror, *faith* in relation to an unchallenged worldwide American empire that emerged after November



1989, and *love* in light of the proclivity of global capitalism to turn human values into commodities to be bought and sold. Part II shows how Christians can engage these big-scale issues by practices of love, faith, and hope. Part I is more analytic in nature; Part II is more programmatic.

Perhaps the most attractive element throughout the six main chapters is recognizing the ambivalence of the human situation in time. Augustine and Mathewes recognize that the motivation for, say, patriotism, is partly right and partly wrong. Empire itself is not inherently bad, as the Occupy movement might imply and a strain of evangelical Christian analysis affirms. Rather the goodness or badness of “imperium” depends on its use of power (p. 77). After all, order is a good thing, and order cannot exist without some restraint. Taking this line on patriotism enables the reader to see that America is both a force for good and for evil at the same time, as Rome was. Demonizing America is no more correct than uncritically lionizing it. Augustine emerges as a model thinker for times of chaos. It becomes clear that his thought was subtle and profound, convincing and satisfying enough to virtually re-found European civilization after Rome.

Mathewes nails down his analyses with a wealth of this-worldly detail, parallel to the detail with which Augustine examined the post-Roman situation in *City of God*. To indicate the richness of the exposition, consider chapter two. Analyzing “empire,” Mathewes first reviews Augustine. Roman patriotism was founded on “splendid vices.” Romans got as far as they did because they had a love of the city. Even if this love is a distant analogue to the love of God, it requires self-discipline for its pursuit and so leads toward “a certain probity and rectitude in their behavior” (p. 81). Rome was an ambivalent phenomenon for both good and evil. The Christian should not agitate for replacing the imperfect state but make as much common cause as feasible though faith, hope, and love. America is a similarly ambivalent phenomenon. America’s messianic self-understanding means that its need for love by the world is bottomless. As Colonel Pogue says in the film *Full Metal Jacket*, inside every gook is an American trying to get out (p. 93). Mathewes surveys America on its unique geo-political mission of secular salvation (pp. 83–98), which, were it not so thoroughly theological, would not be out of place in an *Economist* magazine special issue. In theological light, America’s twenty-first-century role is a this-worldly translation of Christianity. The genuine Christian response will be also ambivalent—affirming the good, working against abuse of power. Christians need to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the nation-state (p. 107). Seeing the ambiguity of history may lead to a more generous appraisal of international politics, to a willingness to bring hopes and fears to a negotiating table, presumably as alternative to support of militarism (p. 111).

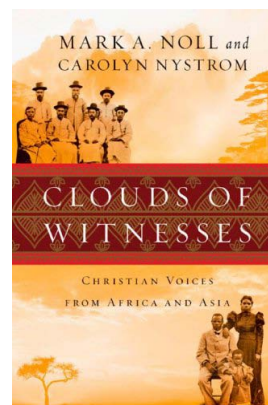
By tracing Augustine’s own preoccupations in an updated account, Mathewes teaches on major Augustinian themes in their natural context. The primer teaches on Augustine’s eschatology, his non-cyclical progressive history-writing, his view of humanity as stretched out in time between memory and future, and his hermeneutics. For example, Mathewes highlights Augustinian ideas of human ambivalence between dominance and dependence in his exposition of love against millennial capitalism. “Libido dominandi” means we dehumanize ourselves when we refuse to take a transcendent God with ultimate seriousness and to stake all on him. Humans “despair of believing in a god who is as good as we need God to be” with the result that we “seize the role of satiating our desires for ourselves” (p. 118). Notice the way that the discussion speaks of universal human traits that have both individual and civic implications. Augustine’s anthropology can connect individual spirituality with ecclesial and even civic spiritual practice.

Theological ethics seems to be in a time of transition between big-tent, whole-society liberals, and more recent Hauerwasian Christian separatists. This may replay the sixteenth century's uneven quarrel between whole-society-minded Reformers and the separatist Anabaptists who became Mennonites, Hutterites, or Amish, and influenced many free churches. In this divided field, Mathewes's Augustine is both concerned for the world and also consistently and distinctively Christian. This primer is at least an unmatched starting point to learn about Christian ethics, historiography, and theology. It might even help readers see faith, love, and hope as ways of being in our world, while yet simultaneously waiting for the ultimate hope.

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Mark A. Noll and Carolyn Nystrom. *Clouds of Witnesses: Christian Voices from Africa and Asia*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2011. 286 pp. \$25.00.

This is the second book on global Christianity by Mark Noll, Francis McAnaney Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame, and Carolyn Nystrom as coauthor. Nystrom is a freelance writer who has authored or coauthored over seventy works, many historical or devotional in nature. Their previous work, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith*, also published by InterVarsity two years prior, seeks to trace the interrelatedness between American evangelicalism and world Christianity. In *Clouds of Witnesses*, Noll and Nystrom focus solely on world Christianity. They present seventeen biographies of important Christian heroes that many in the West would not likely be aware of. The book's title intentionally echoes the language of the biblical book of Hebrews to show that these men and women were both "exemplars" as well as faithful confessors of Christ (pp. 15–16). While the authors recognize that "focused biographical attention is not all that is needed," though such work can "promote sympathetic engagement and charitable discussion with brothers and sisters in Christ from around the world" (p. 10), this beginning work grants both significance and equality to these African and Asian brothers and sisters, giving them somewhat of a voice in the West.



Of the seventeen biographical subjects, seven are from Africa, three from India, one from Korea, and six from China. From Africa they present these: Bernard Mizeki (c. 1861–1896), John Chilembwe (c. 1870–1915), and Albert Luthuli (1898–1967) from Southern Africa; William Wadé Harris (c. 1865–1929) and Byang Kato (1936–1975) from West Africa; and Simeon Nsibambi (1897–1978) and Janani Luwum (1922–1977) from East Africa. Those from India are Pandita Ramabai (1858–1922), V. S. Azariah (1874–1945), and Sundar Singh (1889–1929?). The lone representative from Korea is Sun Chu Kil (1869–1935). Finally, from China are Dora Yu/Yu Cidu (1873–1931), Mary Stone/Shi Meiyu (1873–1954), John Sung/Song Shangjie (1901–1944), Yao-Tsung Wu/Wu Yaozong (1893–1979), Wang Mingdao (1900–1991), and Ignatius Cardinal Kung/Kung Pin-Mei (1901–2000). The authors dedicate a chapter to each of these men and women. In each chapter, they begin with a snapshot of the event(s) that served to define in some form the life and contribution of that person, followed by a recounting

of as much of their early life as possible. This is followed by a more detailed discussion of their most formidable years, concluding with a brief analysis of their greatest contributions. Each chapter is brief, roughly 15–20 pages, and at the end of each chapter the authors analyze significant sources they used and that are also available for further reading. This is an invaluable service. To add to the book's usefulness, they also include a list of important works on the study of global Christianity just before the index in the back of the book. The authors also write a helpful "Afterword" that, along with their "Introduction," provides the authors' only attempt at overall analysis of these great Christians.

In the "Afterword," Noll and Nystrom point out that these biographies help to show the greater diversity present within Christianity now than in times past. They adeptly warn that this diversity should lead global Christianity to greater care in analyzing its various traditions: "The degree to which appreciation, critical scrutiny, cautious appropriation, or regretful rejection should guide the growing number of connections among Christian traditions is one of the important issues raised by the potpourri of lives we have introduced" (p. 276). Among the other important conclusions they humbly propose, they also identify "how often a spark lit by missionary-native contact initiated remarkable Christian expansion through native agency" (p. 276). This is a refreshing statement in the light of most scholarship on global Christianity. Like Kenneth Scott Latourette, whose greatest works marveled at the ability of Christianity to transcend geography, time, and culture, and were fittingly pro-missionary, Noll and Nystrom also see a role for cross-cultural missionary ministry within global Christianity. Nonetheless, they rightly reject the hegemony of the Western missionary in favor of viewing the missionary as "one important cog in a divine economy of many cogs—where the whole enterprise of expansion and maturation is bigger than any one perspective can comprehend" (p. 277). In this statement, they find the happy medium between the history of Christianity and the history of Christian missions, and their work is a good example of what that would appear to be.

This book is a helpful resource for the young scholar and the missionary. Undergraduate and possibly graduate students would benefit from the introduction to these Christians from afar as well as the bibliographic material provided in the book. The missionary would do well to learn that they are participants in a story that transcends them. As important as Ralph Winter's call for mission to the hidden peoples of the world really is, there are thriving churches all over the world who share the same mission to these same peoples. At that same time, missionaries can be encouraged that their work is not in vain. Just as missionaries have seen the Spirit work among new Christians like those presented, they can expect that same Spirit to continue that same work in the future.

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Jane Williams. *Faces of Christ*. Oxford: Lion, 2011. 128 pp. £9.99/\$16.95.

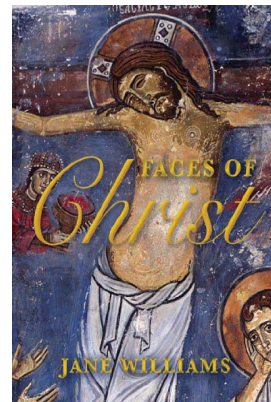
Sixty-five beautifully reproduced full-color images of frescoes, icons, paintings, and sculptures from the sixth to twenty-first centuries accompany theologian Jane Williams's substantive text on the person of Jesus Christ. As in her previous Lion publications (*Approaching Easter* and *Angels*), this book draws both from her expertise as a theologian (tutor in Theology at St Mellitus College and visiting lecturer at King's College, London) and the potential communicative power of representational art to "reach parts of the human mind and heart that words cannot" (p. 6).

Through each successive chapter's text and accompanying images, Williams chronologically narrates the story of Christ from the Annunciation (and Jesus' family tree) through the Passion into Pentecost. Selected events form the framework for Jesus' "Ministry and Miracles" as well as his "Life and Teaching" by highlighting his roles as miracle-worker (feeding of the five thousand, healing the hemorrhaging woman and blind man, and walking on water), storyteller (the Good Samaritan, the Good Shepherd and the Prodigal Son) and rule-breaker (through his surprising exchanges with women and children).

The strength of interaction between word and image is most apparent when Williams explores the same event (such as the baptism of Christ) in multiple artistic iterations, drawing into dialogue with her text the thematic elements each artist has chosen to emphasize. Through this deliberate interplay of media (word and image) Williams hopes, quite simply, that the "face of Christ . . . will emerge for the reader" (p. 6). Readers looking for expert insight into the history and context of a particular artist or work will find scant commentary. Indeed, Williams makes no claims to provide such, but as a theologian focuses instead on interpreting the works through the lens of Christology. Images become the means by which she may "make theological points" while at the same time expecting the images to make their own (p. 6). Williams's thoughtful engagement through text and image offers, at times, refreshingly poignant reminders of the high stakes inherent in such events as the Annunciation to Mary or the desert temptation of Jesus and challenges the reflective reader to consider parallel choices one must make in light of the story of God.

Inherent to any work that pairs text and art are assumptions concerning the relative primacy and communicative power of word versus image. To observe a contrasting approach, one might consider the recent publication of Christopher R. Brewer's *Art That Tells a Story* in which contemporary works of art, framed by the grand narrative categories of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Consummation, are instead accompanied by minimal text that serves primarily to suggest and direct contemplation as a secondary accompaniment to the images. The large coffee-table-book format and substantial white space surrounding each image also ensure that the weight of communicative power is placed upon the work of art, with the biblical and interpretative text playing a secondary and complementary role. In Williams's more diminutively sized book, text takes the upper hand in communication, whereby the image serves primarily to augment and illustrate her points.

One final observation: while the flyleaf promises "some of the many images of Jesus Christ that have been created by artists across the centuries and around the world," I was disappointed to find only one image from the twenty-first century (a nativity sand sculpture, circa 2003) (p. 31) and two works by Jewish painter Marc Chagall that originate from the second half of the twentieth century (1952–1966



and 1971) (pp. 37, 106–7). Given Williams’s implicit aim to engage the reader with a living Christ, it is unfortunate that the majority of images are too easily relegated to the past and associated only with museum walls or Christmas cards. One refreshing exception is the selection of Edith Caitlin Phelps’s *Wayside Madonna* (1939) (p. 35). Placing this modern depiction alongside stereotypically familiar images of Mary with Jesus reveals the visual potential present in such contrasts.

Christ is, as Williams reminds us, “the citizen of every country, a member of every race, the eldest son of every family, inviting all to become brothers and sisters of his Father” such that we may find “our humanity in his countenance” (pp. 6, 9). Including additional contemporary artists such as Peter Howson, David Mach, Edward Knippers, and Janet McKenzie as well as more non-Western depictions, such as those highlighted in MOBIA’s 2007 exhibition *The Christian Story: Five Asian Artists Today*, would have only served to strengthen her claim to the universality of Jesus for humanity and increase the relevance and communicative power of Williams’s book.

On the whole, Williams offers a visual feast for mind and heart—an engaging meditation by which to see Christ so that “our own faces begin to change into his likeness” and we become “what we are called to be: God’s beloved daughters and sons” (p. 9).

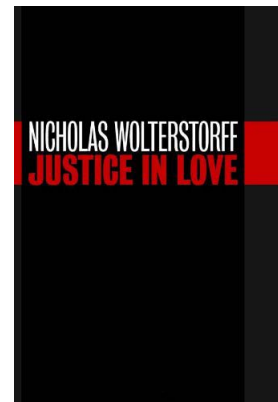
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Nicolas Wolterstorff. *Justice in Love*. Emory University Studies in Law and Education. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. ix + 293 pp. £23.99/\$35.00.

Nicolas Wolterstorff, emeritus professor of philosophy at Yale University, has given us his *Justice in Love*, which further develops the field of moral philosophy after his earlier *Justice: Rights and Wrongs*. Whereas his former work critiques John Rawls’s theory of justice, this sequel addresses the moral and biblical question of the relationship between justice and love. Over the course of four major sections, twenty-one chapters, and 282 pages of text, Wolterstorff gives us plenty to ponder, much that challenges commonly held positions, and significant conclusions that differ from the historic understandings of the Church, especially the Augustinian and Reformed tradition, in his interpretation of the nature of God’s justice.

As Wolterstorff opens his book, he familiarizes the reader with the two chief impulses that have formed the moral conscience of Western civilization: love and justice. The former has its unique source in Judeo-Christianity, the latter in the philosophical and legal traditions of Greco-Romanism, as well as in the “Jerusalem strand.” But the perennial question posed in moral reflection as well as in the political realities of Western civilization has been “what do justice and love have to do with each other?” (p. vii). For the perception has existed that the aims of each will conflict; pursuing justice will overtake and deny the imperative to forgive (which is essential to the demand of love), while the imperative of love will in some cases require what is essentially unjust.

Consequently, two motivations initially drive Wolterstorff’s project. First, he looks to develop “an understanding of love such that the imperative to act justly is not in conflict with the law of love, not



a restriction thereon, not even a supplement, but such that doing justice is an example of love” (p. 84). Second, he seeks to develop a theory of justice that will achieve this end and be fully commensurate with this understanding of love. The first three parts of his book argue this case. But in the fourth part a third impulse for Wolterstorff’s project appears: to present his interpretive vision of the doctrine of God’s justification.

As someone who places himself in the *agapist* tradition, Wolterstorff’s starting point critiques representatives of that tradition, namely, Soren Kierkegaard, Anders Nygren, and Reinhold Niebuhr. He does so in order to uncover “the points at which modern day agapism proves inadequate, particularly the points at which its understanding of the relation between love and justice proves inadequate” (p.16), in order to work out his own version of the compatibility of love and justice. His chief concern in this regard is the assertion made within the agapist tradition that God’s love for us, being of pure grace, is not concerned with *just* treatment of us. What justice would require of us God forgives, “for God’s love for us is pure benevolence, gratuitous generosity all the way down” (p. 108). Since the paradigm of God’s love is forgiveness, which is not what justice requires, God can be *just* towards us or *forgiving* towards us, but not both simultaneously. In response, Wolterstorff concludes, after extensive explanation and argumentation, that the nature of *agape* love by which God loves us, by which we in turn love God, our neighbors, and even ourselves, is not the love of *benevolence*, but the love of *care* (p. 104). Consequently, to love in an *agape* manner means that we seek “to enhance someone’s flourishing with seeking to secure their just treatment” (p. 101). This form of love, Wolterstorff argues, is not in conflict with the essential demands of justice, nor will it engender, when functioning properly, the unjust treatment of others.

But this reconciliation of love and justice hinges in every way on how Wolterstorff defines justice. In this regard he discusses the “founding texts of the agapist tradition”: Matt 5:17–48 and Luke 6:27–36 (pp. 120–26). His analysis leads to the conviction that Jesus rejects the *Lex Taliones*, and since the *Lex Taliones* is the negative aspect of the reciprocity code, Jesus “repudiates . . . the reciprocity code as a whole” (p. 125). Upon this point Wolterstorff, in the strongest manner, argues that Jesus was rejecting the notion of justice and its punishments as being retributive: “if Jesus was not rejecting retribution in rejecting the negative side of the reciprocity code, what was he doing? I see no plausible answer to this question” (p. 128). While recognizing that his view runs counter to “the majority opinion in the Christian tradition” (p. 128), Wolterstorff presents a notion of justice that he sees as robust and biblical, what he calls the “reprobative” theory of punishment.

The need of brevity prevents us from explicating the lines of development Wolterstorff uses to drive his analysis on behalf of the reprobative perspective; in its essence it is what focuses on the perpetrator, imposes hard treatment as the moral method of condemning him for his wrong, and shows resentment of the same and anger at him for his act (pp. 196–97). In this definition Wolterstorff finds the nature of justice that is operative in the biblical narrative, in God’s anger against those who break his law, and in the punishments God inflicts. It is this form of justice that allows forgiveness without violating justice. As Wolterstorff states, after an extensive argument, “God’s punishment of human beings for their wrongdoing is a condemnation of what was done and an expression of God’s anger. Full and complete forgiveness . . . requires foregoing reprobative punishment. But what we also saw [in his extensive argumentation] is that such foregoing does not, as such, violate or undermine justice” (p. 205–6).

As Wolterstorff begins the fourth part of his work, he has, if his arguments can be sustained, harmonized biblical love and justice by the process of redefining *agape* as *care* and justice as *reprobative*. Now he turns to the question of “The Justice of God’s Generosity in Romans,” a sustained analysis of

the doctrine of justification in Paul's letter according to his "reprobative" justice understanding. Not surprisingly, his analysis is "along the lines of the 'New Paul'" (p. 247), fully accepting the verdict that the reformational understanding of justification is a serious misreading of the text. Further, this tradition's understanding of justification is "incoherent." Wolterstorff argues that "acquitting and pardoning, declaring innocent and forgiving, are not only distinct but incompatible" (p. 258). Instead of justification being the imputation of righteousness, Wolterstorff maintains "that Paul does not say that *Abraham* was reckoned as *dikaios*; that would have the ring of imputation to it. He says that Abraham's *faith* was reckoned to him as *dikaiosunē*" (p. 263). In other words, when God reckons the sinner who has faith justified, it is nothing other than God dismissing the charges that stood against him. And it is upon the ground of the sinner's faith that God in his justice and judgment acts in this way.

Wolterstorff rejects other aspects from the Reformed tradition as well. A case in point is his treatment of the penal substitutionary view of the atonement (pp. 192–93). Wolterstorff fails to give the Reformed understanding its best presentation, echoing the sounds of classical Arminianism in his misstatements and critique. This is unfortunate, but not surprising. Earlier in his work, Wolterstorff states, "that Christ's suffering was in some way *for us* is undeniably a component of New Testament teaching" (p. 192). To be so vague on the meaning of Christ's suffering *for us* is indicative of theological confusion elsewhere. Where he sees the cross as only a "component" of NT teaching, Paul sees it as of "first importance" (1 Cor 15:3). This tells us much, when, in reading Wolterstorff's analysis of faith and justification in the book of Romans, we recognize that here is a view of salvation for which the work of Christ is incidental, not central. It is difficult to see on Wolterstorff's analysis of justification the necessity of Christ's cross work at all. If the ground of justification is faith, then the death of Christ is not necessary, only faith.

However, Wolterstorff's treatment of justice and justification is but an outworking of a position he has taken earlier involving Jesus and the *Lex Taliones*. It is critical to Wolterstorff's project as a whole that he be absolutely correct in his claim that Jesus rejected the *Lex Taliones* and thus the "reciprocity code." Yet Wolterstorff's analysis rests on the mistaken assumption that Jesus is speaking to his audience about the scriptural form of the Law, rather than about a set of misinterpretations associated with the Oral Tradition. This interpretative decision disables him from arriving at any other position with regards to his understanding of justice in love.

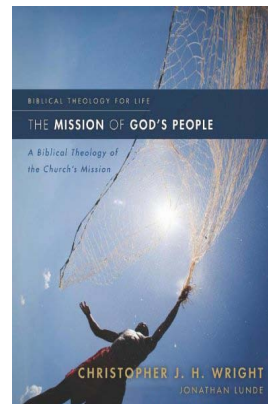
While much that Wolterstorff says about love, forgiveness, and certain aspects of justice are insightful and illuminating, the benefits for pastoral ministry may be insufficient to merit the kind of slow reading a philosophically written work requires. Yet, for the aspiring scholar, there is enough substance here for further study. For the Reformed tradition, Wolterstorff's challenges need to be answered in fullness.

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Christopher J. H. Wright. *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. 304 pp. \$24.99.

The terms “theology” and “mission” typically do not appear in the same sentence except to question the possibility of whether any connection necessarily exists between the disciplines. The former is usually thought to be more theoretical and the latter more practical in nature. The unfortunate result of this dichotomy has been that theologians have often worked without an awareness of missiological issues such as contextualization and globalization, whereas missiologists have tended toward a pragmatic focus on techniques and models in evangelizing the unreached. In this volume Chris Wright, the International Director of the Langham Partnership International, attempts to draw together theology and mission in a more accessible way than his earlier magnum opus, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (IVP, 2006). Though people often think that *The Mission of God's People* abridges *The Mission of God*, it answers a different set of questions: “What does the Bible as a whole in both testaments have to tell us about why the people of God exist and what it is they are supposed to be and do in the world?” (p. 17). *The Mission of God's People* thus builds upon *The Mission of God* while extending its arguments in more practical directions.



Wright’s book represents the inaugural volume in Zondervan’s Biblical Theology for Life series. As such, Wright follows the threefold structure prescribed by the series editor: (1) “Queuing the Questions” seeks to broaden the term “mission” from its narrow association with ministering cross-culturally; (2) “Arriving at Answers” explores various biblical descriptions of God’s people; and (3) “Reflecting on Relevance” briefly summarizes the book. The halfway point of the book contains an “Interlude—Pause for Thought,” which reviews the preceding material while surveying the remainder of the book. Zondervan’s new series is attractively packaged with short chapters, a user-friendly inductive format, and numerous headings and sidebars that orient the reader throughout the book.

As the bulk of the work, the “Arriving at Answers” section merits closer attention. Each of the thirteen chapters in this section explores one aspect of being God’s people (e.g., people who know their story of redemption, people who are a blessing to the nations, and people who walk in God’s way). Such an emphasis on “being” rather than “doing” stands in welcome contrast to the usual emphasis on missionary methods to the detriment of missionary holiness. The strengths of this approach are many, such as how Wright demonstrates that the entire Bible pulses with the heartbeat of a missionary God who seeks to redeem his entire creation in both spiritual and physical dimensions. His exposition of a “people who care for creation” (ch. 3) is particularly helpful in its treatment of biblical texts on “new creation” as the basis for ecological mission and creation care.

One weakness of the book bears mention. In broadening mission to include nearly every aspect of the church’s purpose on earth, Wright has perhaps overcorrected the tendency to frame the missionary task as a series of false dichotomies (e.g., going vs. sending, spiritual vs. social gospels, evangelism vs. discipleship, and sacred vs. secular vocation). This leads Wright to neglect several important distinctives of the missionary enterprise in the last few decades. For example, Wright does not offer a systematic account of the eternal judgment of the unreached as one motivating factor (among many) in the work of mission, nor does he interact with Ralph Winter’s seminal proposal at the 1974 Lausanne Congress that

unreached people groups should receive priority in missionary work. More constructive engagement with these contemporary missiological trends would strengthen Wright's book. Though Wright would probably counter that such engagement falls outside his scope, these trends cannot be ignored because of their claim that making disciples of all nations possesses a certain primacy over other kinds of ministry in the mission of God's people.

These minor issues notwithstanding, *The Mission of God's People* shows Wright at his eloquent best as a missionary theologian and statesman. Scholars will find the detailed discussions in his earlier volume *The Mission of God* to be more comprehensive, but this book exemplifies Wright's ability to bring biblical theology to the masses in a compelling way. Thus, the book deserves careful attention from church leaders, laypeople, theologians, and missiologists alike. Few readers will fail to be moved by Wright's integrative and inspiring vision for what a biblical theology of the church should be: "No theology without missional impact; no mission without theological foundations" (p. 20).

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