



themelios

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THE GOSPEL COALITION

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DESCRIPTION

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EDITORIAL

The Beauty of Biblical Balance

— D. A. Carson —

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

When I was a young man in pastoral ministry, I wrote a book-length manuscript under the title shared with this editorial. I sent it to only one publisher. That publisher turned it down with more grace than the manuscript deserved. He gently pointed out major exegetical and logical flaws in one of the arguments. I could see he was right, and, suitably humbled and foolishly discouraged, I couldn't bring myself to expend the time and energy to fix the problem. I moved on to other things.

Decades later, however, I remain convinced that, even if one particular error needed repair, the main thesis of the book was right: the Bible depicts the importance of balance along quite a few quite different axes, and it is important not to confuse them.

Before I list some of these different axes, I should acknowledge that balance is not always a virtue. For example, when Scripture commands us to love God with our whole being (Deut 6:4–5; Mark 12:29–30), it does not add, “Of course, all things in moderation: one must balance love for God with other priorities.” Applied in the wrong contexts, the appeal for balance may be a mask for moral indifference and spiritual compromise. But let me assume that we have heeded the warning and turn to some of the different axes around which we need to maintain balance.

1. Balance in the Use of Our Time, While We Attempt to Be Faithful to Scripture

The Bible exhorts us to discharge many responsibilities, all of them time-consuming: to work, love our neighbor, love our spouse, bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, pray, meditate on God's Word, meet together with other believers for mutual edification and corporate praise, bear witness to the gospel with unbelievers, and much more. If we are elders/pastors/overseers, the work of teaching demands careful study, while the teaching itself extends indefinitely beyond Sunday morning sermons to include one-on-one Bible study, small group study, training others, and counsel of many kinds for the people in our flock, including the members of our own family. All of these are good things; all of them require time. The same Scriptures insist on proper cycles of rest: God gives his beloved sleep. Add to this pile the peculiar rush of duties that befall us in peculiar circumstances: a family member falls critically ill; two children are graduating from university about the same time that a third is getting married; the family business is on a knife-edge between a great leap forward and going belly-up—and all of these circumstances are under God's providential arrangement.

The needed balance in the face of such demands turns on right priorities in using the time God has given us, along with refusing to feel like dismal failures because we cannot squeeze thirty hours of living into twenty-four. We have all the time that God has wisely allotted; there is no more. We can work away at making our use of time more efficient; above all, we can pursue godly priorities. And we can trust the wisdom of our good and wise heavenly Father.

2. Balance in Integrating Complementary Biblical Emphases

What I have in mind are such paired exhortations as the injunction to speak the truth, coupled with the injunction to do so in love. This kind of balance is quite different from the first kind. The first kind is what the gaming theorists call a zero-sum game: no matter how hard we hope otherwise, our daily distribution of time always sums up all the discrete blocks of time to achieve the same total: twenty-four hours. One cannot allot more time and energy to one responsibility without correspondingly diminishing one or more of the other blocks. But this second kind of balance is not a zero-sum game. One must not diminish the obligation to speak the truth by appealing to the priority of love; one must not diminish the obligation to speak in love by appealing to the priority of truth. There is no zero-sum game.

In the case of the claims of truth and love, these twin virtues have roughly parallel claims: God mandates both of them. Both “truth” and “love” carry slightly different overtones in different contexts, of course, but there is no intrinsic reason that we should think that either diminishes the other.

Other pairs in this category of balance are more complicated yet. For example, Christians must constantly recognize that they are saved by grace; Christians must perform the good deeds that God has created us to discharge (cf. Eph 2:8–10). In this case, although neither pole should diminish the other, they are not quite parallel and certainly not reciprocal. In many respects the good deeds are the necessary fruit and even the demonstration of the grace; the converse is not true.

It is easy to think of other polarities under this heading that sustain relationships that are more complex yet. For example, the Bible urges Christian unity (think John 17), and the Bible insists on the non-negotiability of sound doctrine (think Gal 1), even if this means the most fundamental disruption of unity, namely, excommunication. The two *desiderata* are not quite parallel: one, the truth of the gospel, is *always* non-negotiable; the other, the virtue of unity, is *often* presented as something eminently desirable, but sometimes as an act of compromise (e.g., the alliances of Jehoshaphat). In other words, to achieve balance in polarities of this sort, one must study how Scripture holds them up, if and how each relates to the other, whether both are equally non-negotiable, and so forth.

3. The Balance of a Healthy Biblical Diet

This could be cast as something important for almost all Christians, but I shall cast it in terms of the responsibility of pastors to feed the flock of God with the whole counsel of God. There are at least three components to this balanced diet:

First, pastors should be teaching and preaching from all parts of the Bible—from both the Old and the New Testaments, and from the different genres of the Bible: history, lament, chronicle, psalm, epistle, proverb, apocalyptic, wisdom, and so forth. Pastors should keep looking back over their shoulders to see what they have covered and what they have not covered recently.

Second, pastors should be checking up on themselves to see if they are covering all the major biblical themes. It is sadly possible for a preacher to choose texts from many different parts of the Bible and yet overlook major themes of the Bible. For example, it is possible to handle text after text with a tone and an application that are invariably denunciatory, even angry, sometimes self-righteous, and devoid of much grace; alternatively, it is possible to handle text after text in such a way that underscores God's love and grace but without a word about God's jealousy, wrath, and judgment. When I was in pastoral ministry, every six or nine months I'd skim the index of a systematic theology or two so as to alert me to themes I had not so much as touched on.

Third, because the Bible is not a collection of miscellaneous religious texts that the preacher is honor-bound to cover but a God-breathed collection that establishes trajectories—trajectories of both narrative and theme—the balanced preacher will so trace out these trajectories to demonstrate how rightly handling the word of truth follows inner-canonical lines that bring us to Jesus and the gospel. Failing to do this regularly is simply not faithful, balanced, biblical preaching. In other words, balanced biblical preaching does not take place where the preacher unpacks sentences in the narrow focus of the immediate context without keeping an eye peeled for the biblical-theological storyline, for the entire canonical context.

4. Balance as the Product of a Spiritual Diagnostician

I suppose I might have included this fourth point with the third. Yet there is a fundamental difference. The balance that the third point calls for gathers around the nature of Scripture itself; the balance that this fourth point calls for demands spiritual discernment so as to know which biblical emphases the lives of specific people most urgently need. Small wonder that the Puritans called their pastoral care “the cure of souls.” Like the medical doctor who must make an accurate diagnosis before prescribing something, so the pastor must make an accurate diagnosis before closely applying particular biblical truths and themes. The ministry of Jesus shows us that we should not treat the cocksure and the self-righteous the same way as the broken, the contrite, and the desperate.

5. Balance in Integrating Complementary Truths That Lie on the Edge of Great Mysteries, Not Least Complementary Truths about God

God is unfathomably loving, yet his wrath reflects his perfect justice. He is utterly sovereign, yet he personally interacts with other persons, not least the human beings he has made in his own image, such that he holds them accountable for what they say and do and feel and imagine; for sovereign though he is, he never treats them as insensate robots. God is one, yet he exists as three persons who interact with one another. Even to begin to make sense of these complementary truths, it is not long before one is wrestling with the relationships between time and eternity, with the nature of secondary causality, with the nature of the will and the nature of freedom, with the notions of person and substance. Part of the aim of biblical balance in these cases is to learn to state the complementary truths in such a way that one is not unwittingly undermining something else that Scripture says. One refuses to draw inferences from one facet of the truth that endangers some other facet of the truth. One learns to let each truth function in our lives and in our theology in the same ways they function in Scripture, and in no other ways.

It would be easy to add more axes where Christians need to achieve biblical balance. For example, the Bible itself establishes something of a hierarchy of truths, so part of maturity in pastoral ministry is tied up with maintaining a similar sense of proportion and priority, aligned with the Bible itself. Moreover, it would also be easy to expand each of the five points listed above into an entire chapter replete with examples and pastoral applications. What should be clear even from these short paragraphs, however, is that biblical balance requires thought, self-examination, ongoing study of Scripture, humility of mind, and a continuing resolution to bring every thought captive to Christ.

OFF THE RECORD

The Right to Ridicule?

— Michael J. Ovey —

Mike Ovey is Principal of Oak Hill College in London.

The wisest and the best of men—nay, the wisest and best of their actions—may be rendered ridiculous by a person whose first object in life is a joke.’ Thus comments Jane Austen’s character Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* to Elizabeth Bennett. Ridicule is a theme running throughout the novel, and Austen certainly does a fair amount of it herself.

But there are questions about its proper application. Shortly after Darcy’s speech, Elizabeth’s father remarks about his plans for a future guest: ‘There is a mixture of servility and self-importance in his letter, which promises well. I am impatient to see him.’ He later amusingly engages this guest in a conversation which displays the guest’s servility and self-importance for all to see—all, that is, except the guest. The scene is both entertaining and yet disturbing. For sure, the reader feels that the guest ‘deserves’ ridicule. But nevertheless Elizabeth’s father is determined to bring out the worst in his guest to amuse himself and the more perceptive of his daughters. Elizabeth’s father has rightly seen two serious vices in his guest’s character, yet encourages them rather than steering his guest toward safer ground.

Elizabeth’s father later risks ridicule himself as his weakness contributes to the seduction of his empty-headed youngest daughter, but his final response to this runs: ‘For what do we live, but to make sport for our neighbours, and laugh at them in our turn?’ His defence of ridiculing others is, if you like, that he is prepared to be ridiculed back. The hint is that if he is prepared to take ridicule, he is in some sense allowed to dish it out.

This takes us to the broader question of the use of ridicule in human engagements, and especially in theological discussion. For the way that a discussion is held and carried forward can be as important as the final conclusion. Thus, the basic distinction between a true argument and a valid argument in elementary logic recognises that a true answer can be reached for inadequate reasons. Similarly, Eph 4:13 indicates that truth must be expressed in a particular way—in love (an application of the general NT insistence on charitable other-personed love). Luther’s reflections on how an externally ‘righteous’ action can be produced by self-seeking and self-pleasing are very pertinent here. And it is in the context of the *way* Christians should conduct themselves in theological discussion that I want to examine the use of ridicule.

This question assumes renewed force because discussion now happens not just through journals, books, and conferences, but through the Internet and its possibilities of blogging, Facebook, and Twitter. These possibilities multiply all kinds of discourse, including discourse on serious theological topics. The convention of informality in these possibilities makes it easier for many of us to access these debates. But the informality also allows unsavoury strategies, like trolling, which aims not to advance debate but

to disrupt it by provocation and conscious offense. There is an obvious question whether ridicule can cross over into something illicit too.

Yet ridicule has legitimate uses. Strikingly, ridicule can put something into a truer perspective. Isaiah 44:9–20, for example, pursues a strategy of ridicule, and this helps the reader. For the ridicule prods the reader or listener to grasp how vastly incongruous it is to worship something when the other half of it is firewood consumed by the flames. There, ridicule functions as a reality check. It puts things in their true perspective and ultimately has a beneficial and benevolent function for the people of God, helping us see how absurd idolatry is.

There again, ridicule is sometimes a resort for those without power. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennett is the family's second daughter, with limited prospects. Her initial internal ridicule of Darcy is partly the response of the weak against the socially strong, and it elicits the reader's sympathy and perhaps admiration that she will not be cowed. She can do little else, but she can ridicule him.

Further, ridicule is very close to the well-tryed principle of *reductio ad absurdum*. Here one works through the consequences of a proposition to show, normally, self-contradiction, falsehood, or absurdity. Thus a British nationalist of my acquaintance was arguing that all immigrants into Britain should be repatriated. He was also extremely proud of his Norman ancestry. My contention was that on his own reasoning he and myriads of others should be repatriated to France, since they were simply long-standing immigrants dating from 1066. This was unsympathetically received and perceived as ridicule, although I think it legitimately used *reductio ad absurdum*.

However, there is also a darker set of possibilities with ridicule. Sometimes ridicule is not the protest of the weak against the strong, but can be a bullying tool in the hands of the strong to keep the weak weak and to bolster one's own position. And in the academy, whether theological or not, position and popularity and the power of patronage can make some very strong indeed. Reputation does seem to me to be a real commodity in the academy, and ridicule, because it can be so close to demeaning and belittling, can do real undeserved harm to another.

Thus some blog posts or discussion threads comment not on the argument but on a writer's alleged intellectual incapacity ('moron'), extreme position ('classic fundamentalist'), and possible associations ('on a par with fascists'). Such rhetoric tends to isolate the writer in question and to some extent demonise him or her, uniting others against the writer as a person, not simply against the position he or she has advanced. Such isolation tactics can occur less publicly but still seriously in a private lecture within an institution. Such isolation tactics are all too tempting for us, partly because they give vent to our anger at a particular position, but also because they can be a rhetorical shortcut and are easier than intellectual engagement with the position itself. Such ridicule tactics shade readily into bullying. I wonder whether the Christian theological academy is quite as free of bullying by ridicule as it should be.

Further, ridicule is not always used to clarify, but sometimes to obscure or avoid an argument. The object here is not to cooperate in a discussion by providing something that genuinely tests the strength of an argument but to find a way of competing successfully in public opinion. Gorgias of Leontini (ca. 430 B.C.) is credited with the slogan 'One must defeat the seriousness of one's opponents with laughter and their laughter with seriousness' (see Aristotle *Rhet.* 3.18, 1419b4–5). We rapidly recognise the rhetorical shrewdness and force of this (Gorgias was after all a teacher of rhetoric). For with this strategy one remains deliberately out of step with one's dialogue partner, disabling their contribution by always responding in a different key. To that extent this can be a strategy for silencing a dialogue partner because the dialogue partner cannot speak in the key in which he or she chooses.

This underlines how it is possible to engage in dialogue with two very different models. On the one hand, dialogue can be a cooperative enterprise in which one meets seriousness with seriousness, laughter with laughter. And here the point of ridicule is to take the joint conversation further, as a tool of clarification or restoration of perspective, as we have outlined earlier. This simple but profound point of dialogue as a cooperative enterprise is taken and developed by H. P. Grice into maxims for rigorous and respectful conversations. His fundamental proposition rightly underlines that a conversation has a *joint* purpose, not just a unilaterally imposed one. He writes, 'Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.'

By contrast one can also conduct a dialogue competitively rather than cooperatively. Ridicule wrongly used can feed this competitive strategy. It can become a tool not of cooperation but of asserting power over others by insisting on dialogue in a key that others have neither proposed nor accepted. Hence there are serious questions of holiness to be faced by a Christian scholar who uses ridicule: Am I using it cooperatively, in love and charity for my neighbour with whom I am in dialogue? Or am I using it as tool of violent domination (because there can be a 'covert thrill of violence' [George Steiner] as I ridicule and demean others in the name of truth)? Of all scholarly communities, the Christian academy should be marked by the cooperative principle, with its connotations of charity, fellowship, and mutuality. But particularly as I read what we say on the Web and our readiness to ridicule others, I wonder how far our scholarly communities are really distinguishable from the world's. We want truthful, honest, faithful orthodox Christian scholars. We also need holy ones.

Bonhoeffer as Bible Scholar

— Robert W. Yarbrough —

Bob Yarbrough is professor of New Testament at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri.

What is a Bible scholar? What does or should one look like? That is a question being asked today, as these three books indicate:

1. Stephen Moore and Yvonne Sherwood, *The Invention of the Biblical Scholar: A Critical Manifesto* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011).
2. Ben Witherington III, *Is There a Doctor in the House? An Insider's Story on Becoming a Bible Scholar* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011).
3. Andreas Köstenberger, *Excellence: The Character of God and the Pursuit of Scholarly Virtue* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011).

Not only is Scripture a front-burner matter at present;¹ so is how we should approach Scripture academically.

Scripture and what to do with what it seems to demand of the believer were certainly front-burner issues for Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945), as his sadly truncated career teaches us. Many studies have explored Bonhoeffer's ways of reading Scripture.² We cannot interact in detail with Bonhoeffer's exegesis here. I will content myself rather with (1) calling attention to today's lively interest in Bonhoeffer, (2) conducting a brief thought-experiment highlighting Bonhoeffer's steadfast Christian consciousness, and finally (3) noting a few features of Bonhoeffer's legacy that perhaps challenge us in our resolve to uphold robust faith in God's Word written in a time when such faith is not necessarily easy, popular, or highly prized in many circles.

1. Current Resurgence of Interest in Bonhoeffer

Published works by and about Dietrich Bonhoeffer in the wake of his death go back into the early 1950s. In 1953 there appeared Eberhard Bethge's edition of Bonhoeffer's correspondence and musings entitled *Prisoner for God: Letters and Papers from Prison*.³ Since that time there has been a continual

¹ Editor's note: See Robert W. Yarbrough, "The Embattled Bible: Four More Books," *Them* 34 (2009): 6–25, available at http://thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/the_embattled_bible_four_more_books.

² As the merest of examples spanning the last half century, see Walter Harrelson, "Bonhoeffer and the Bible," in *The Place of Bonhoeffer: Problems and Possibilities in His Thought* (ed. Martin Marty; New York: Association Press, 1962), 115–39; Jay Rochelle, "Bonhoeffer and Biblical Interpretation: Reading Scripture in the Spirit," *CurTM* 22:2 (April 1995): 85–95; Stephen Plant, "'In the Bible It Is God Who Speaks': Peake and Bonhoeffer on Reading Scripture," *Epworth Review* 33:4 (2006): 7–22.

³ Martin Marty, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Letters and Papers from Prison* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 248.

ebb and flow of interest in Bonhoeffer. Currently we are witnessing something we might call not just a flow but a spike in Bonhoeffer studies, particularly of a biographical nature. Some of us have read Eric Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*.⁴ In addition to Metaxas, nearly a dozen other books on Bonhoeffer have appeared just since about 2004:

1. Stephen Haynes, *The Bonhoeffer Phenomenon: Portraits of a Protestant Saint* (2004)
2. Larry Rasmussen, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Reality and Resistance* (2005)
3. John Matthews, *Anxious Souls Will Ask . . . : The Christ-Centered Spirituality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (2005)
4. Mark Devine, *Bonhoeffer Speaks Today: Following Jesus at All Costs* (2005)
5. Keith Clements, *Bonhoeffer in Britain* (2006)
6. Sabine Damm, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Resistance* (2009)
7. Jeffrey Pugh and Martin Marty, *Religionless Christianity: Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Troubled Times* (2009). Wrestles with why Bonhoeffer is of interest today.
8. Ferdinand Schlingensiepen, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer 1906–1945: Martyr, Thinker, Man of Resistance* (2010)
9. Jon Walker, *Costly Grace: A Contemporary View of Bonhoeffer's The Cost of Discipleship* (2010)
10. Martin Marty, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Letters and Papers from Prison* (2011). A biography not of Bonhoeffer but of his book we call *Letters and Papers from Prison*.

This spate of publications has grown out of a pair of more seminal sources. There are, first, critical editions of the Bonhoeffer corpus as these make their way into English; *Letters and Papers from Prison*, for example, just appeared in its full English edition in 2010. Second, there is Eberhard Bethge's definitive biography of over 1,000 pages edited, revised, and published by Victoria J. Barnett in 1998. The book is called simply *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography*.

These publications all point to fascination with Bonhoeffer that clamors for reflection. They repay close attention by any who share Bonhoeffer's concern for the knowledge of God and devotion to God through faith in Christ in times where evil and suffering and rank unbelief seem on the rise at an alarming rate at every hand.

2. A Brief Thought-Experiment

An obvious point of attraction to contemplating Bonhoeffer is his martyrdom. The formal charge against him involved the conspiracy of which he became part to assassinate Hitler. But as a German Protestant pastor, he would not have had the conviction to join in had he not been deeply grounded in Christian convictions that gave him an unusual vision and force of character. Due to these convictions, for a very long time before the conspiracy in the middle of World War II, he was moved to oppose the Nazi movement. He was speaking out and acting when a troubling percentage of German theologians and clergy were either complicit in the Nazi movement or too passive in their opposition to it. Even the Confessing Church, *die Bekennende Kirche*, was too docile and collaborative for Bonhoeffer's theological outlook and ethical scruples.

You would like to think that under those circumstances you would have been on the side of the angels as many think Bonhoeffer was. But others fiercely debate the morality of the conspiracy

⁴Nashville: Nelson, 2010.

involvement for which some admire Bonhoeffer. Martin Marty points out that an SS colonel named Walter Huppenkothen was tried three times in the 1950s for sentencing Bonhoeffer and consigning him to the gallows. But Huppenkothen was never convicted for this apparent war crime. In the eyes of most Germans, including German Protestants, Bonhoeffer had broken the law and deserved that law's penalty. Apparently the counter-argument carried little weight that *not* stopping Hitler on his way to slaughtering millions might condemn you before a higher tribunal. As a result, it was 1995 "before a German court saw clear to declare posthumously that Bonhoeffer had been innocent."⁵ In the eyes of his countrymen and many fellow churchmen, he was a criminal for a full half-century after he laid down his life for the sake of what he thought was faithfulness to Jesus.

The state of the world and of Germany in 1945 was so complex and fractured that it is idle for us to wonder what we would have done in Bonhoeffer's setting. We can scarcely reconstruct it adequately to settle the question. But perhaps a more modest query might give us a more feasible instrument for at least a measure of self-diagnosis.

As this readership consists largely of a fellowship ascribing to Christian belief, it is reasonable to assume that most of us believe in and would publicly affirm the proposition that Jesus of Nazareth following public execution under Pontius Pilate was bodily raised from the dead. That death and resurrection stake an ethical claim on our lives, such that we must be willing to do Jesus's will as Scripture reveals it even if it cost our lives. Here we have something in common with Bonhoeffer, who not only confessed this belief but validated his belief with his life. I wonder if we would have wielded our belief for the same reason, in the same way, and with the same result as he did.

Imagine it is April 8, 1945. Imagine you are an ordained minister who has been in jail in recent years, without a "pastorate" in the usual sense for over a decade. You have the appearance of being an inactive minister. Moreover, you have been a prison inmate for many months now, incarcerated for a capital crime against the state.

It is the first Sunday after Easter. You are one of a small number of inmates being schlepped around Germany in a decrepit wood-burning utility van to avoid Allied bombs as desperate guards try to transport you from one prison to the next. Would a motley group of largely Catholic fellow inmates and also an atheist ask you to perform a service of worship? They did Bonhoeffer in this setting. Imagine they did so in your case.

What kind of worship leadership could you provide? Would you have a clear enough mind, would you have a stomach, for leading worship with your execution imminent? Bonhoeffer did. To this disparate and desperate bunch he preached on that week's lectionary readings, including Isa 53 and this from 1 Pet 1: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Eyewitness, fellow prisoner, and I think non-believer Payne Best recalls that Bonhoeffer "spoke to us in a manner which reached the hearts of all, finding just the right words . . ."

Recently in *The Christian Century*, author and activist Bill McKibben displayed the jailhouse mentality I would have been tempted to adopt had I been in Bonhoeffer's place. McKibben was arrested in Washington D.C. last summer at an anti-oil pipeline demonstration on a Saturday. After just one night in jail, McKibben looked around on Sunday morning and thought this: "I could feel my own courage flagging a bit along with that of the 40 or so other men up and down our cell block. I knew we

⁵Marty, *Dietrich*, 187–88.

represented a very wide range of faiths, including a pretty good showing for ‘none at all,’ so a regular church service was not in order.”⁶

For Bonhoeffer, though, a regular church service *was* in order, at least as regular as he could make it. He read and preached from the church lectionary readings set for that day. Equally in order was his brave response when he finished the closing prayer and two Gestapo agents entered the room. “Prisoner Bonhoeffer,” they intoned. “Get ready to come with us.” Everyone knew that meant the scaffold. Payne Best recalls that at that harrowing point Bonhoeffer drew him aside and said, “This is the end. For me the beginning of life.”⁷

We may be seminary professors, or pastors, or lay teachers of Scripture, or students in college or seminary. If not Bible scholars, then we are at least advanced Bible students. Would we have been looked to for leadership regarding reassurance relating to Scripture in such a setting? Would we have found words of promise to utter? Would we have displayed resurrection hope when the hangman called? Bonhoeffer’s memory is hallowed. Yet his example haunts.

3. Bonhoeffer’s Legacy for the Bible Teacher

Some might protest this essay’s sympathetic attention to Bonhoeffer in an evangelical publication. The criticism of Eric Metaxas’s Bonhoeffer biography has been withering at times because Metaxas reads Bonhoeffer as too sympathetic to evangelical convictions.⁸ Many prefer to see Bonhoeffer as a champion of communist or liberal or postliberal or even atheist thought. Evangelical Christians have neither part nor portion in his legacy, the argument goes.

We may concede that Bonhoeffer hailed from a setting and inhabited a culture and era that contained profound built-in dislocations between his times and convictions and many of ours today, 106 years after he was born. How could it be otherwise? Yet Martin Marty’s account of Bonhoeffer’s latest and most radical writings, his *Letters and Papers from Prison*, establishes to my satisfaction that continuity, not discontinuity, best accounts for his convictions overall. Marty documents widespread “creative misuse”⁹ of Bonhoeffer by interpreters who highlight and twist Bonhoeffer statements to support post- and non-Christian agendas. The staunchly confessional and increasingly biblicist Bonhoeffer did not jettison Christian faith at the end, Marty shows.

There lies point one for us to affirm: confessional courage. Whatever our gifts and calling, Bonhoeffer’s example surely challenges us to live faithfully to the end, even if the price be death. For many of our peers in kingdom service in other, less privileged realms, death or at least bitter hardship is turning out to be the going price. For examples, simply google “Voice of the Martyrs.” Fairly recent Southern Baptist history contains comparable examples, like the shootings in 2002 at the Jibla Baptist Hospital in Yemen (since renamed). Medical workers William Koehn (age 60), Kathleen Gariety (53), and Dr. Martha Myers (57) did not count their own lives dear but laid them down for their witness to Christ.

⁶Bill McKibben, “Pipeline to Disaster,” *Christian Century* 128:21 (October 18, 2011), 10.

⁷The story is told in Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer*, 528.

⁸See for example Richard Weikart, “So Many Different Dietrich Bonhoeffers,” *TJ* 32 (2011): 69–81; idem, “Metaxas’s Counterfeit Bonhoeffer: An Evangelical Critique,” <http://www.csustan.edu/history/faculty/weikart/metaxas.htm> (accessed November 8, 2011).

⁹Marty, *Dietrich*, 75.

Marty also shows, following Bonhoeffer's friend and biographer Eberhard Bethge, that the pivot of Bonhoeffer's work, outlook, and service was Christology.¹⁰ This should hearten most *Themelios* readers, as we surely share with Bonhoeffer a robust affirmation of Christ's incarnation, divinity, humanity, and present reign over all. Call Bonhoeffer, call us, what you will: we appear to be united in our common exaltation of and personal commitment to the Son of God of historic Christian confession. If that is true, much criticism of Metaxas is beside the point.

We might note that Bonhoeffer seemed to have an eye for what one could call the apocalyptic dimension of his era in the run-up to Axis hegemony (recall, e.g., the rape of Nanking in 1937¹¹) and World War II. It is in tragic hindsight of what he glimpsed and what most denied that his work takes on special poignancy. Surely we are not on the cusp of some analogous international cataclysm? We could wish for Bonhoeffer's prophetic instincts; it might put fire in our bones when we are prone to be at ease.

Might this help? It has been plausibly estimated that since the early 1920s, around the world there have been nearly 1 billion abortions—about 950 million, actually.¹² At current rates we will have reached 1 billion very soon. I wonder if that alone constitutes enough of an affront to God to justify Bonhoefferian radicality in our work, if I may coin a term. This would be in response, not to political usurpation in one nation most relevant to us, as terrible as the Nazis were and the Holocaust was, but because we realize how richly this world as a whole deserves divine retribution. Six million Jews is horrendous, but 950 million is about 158 times the Holocaust. Scripture seems to indicate that God is slow to anger, not bereft of the capacity. If justice exists in or around this cosmos, how short the time may be for us to extend the good news of redemption in whatever ways granted to us! (And to be quite clear: I have in mind here radical and engaged gospel-ministry and legal political activity where warranted, not physical aggression of any kind against abortion clinics or doctors.)

Bonhoeffer wrote to his betrothed Maria von Wedemeyer, "I live in a great, unseen realm of whose real existence I'm in no doubt."¹³ Bonhoeffer's greatest legacy for us in the sense of an example to follow may be that his resonance with this unseen realm moved him to concrete acts of ultimately public fidelity to the God who spoke so powerfully to him as he pored intensively over Scripture while his life drew to a close. Bonhoeffer's dedication to Scripture at this time is implied by Bethge's claim that in Bonhoeffer's later years, "no writer, apart from Luther, was so fully represented in Bonhoeffer's library . . . or was so

¹⁰Ibid., 49. Cf. 155, 224.

¹¹ See Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking* (New York: Basic, 1997).

¹² <http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/policy/abortion/wrjp3310.html> (accessed November 8, 2011).

¹³ Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer*, 496.

frequently consulted” as Adolf Schlatter.¹⁴ Few would dispute that Luther and Schlatter were Scripture-centered interpreters, Bible scholars of the highest order.¹⁵ So, it turns out, was Bonhoeffer.¹⁶

¹⁴Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man of Vision, Man of Courage* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 34.

¹⁵Editor’s note: On Schlatter, see Werner Neuer, *Adolf Schlatter: A Biography of Germany’s Premier Biblical Theologian* (trans. Robert W. Yarbrough; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995); Adolf Schlatter, *Do We Know Jesus?* (trans. Robert W. Yarbrough and Andreas J. Köstenberger; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005); Robert Yarbrough, “Adolf Schlatter’s ‘The Significance of Method for Theological Work’: Translation and Commentary,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 1:2 (1997): 64–77; idem, “Adolf Schlatter,” in *Biblical Interpreters of the Twentieth Century: A Selection of Evangelical Voices* (ed. Walter Elwell and J. D. Weaver; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 59–72; idem, “Schlatter Reception Now: His New Testament Theology,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 3:1 (1999): 52–65; idem, *The Salvation Historical Fallacy? Reassessing the History of New Testament Theology* (History of Biblical Interpretation Series 2; Leiden: Deo, 2004), 81–114; idem, “Witness to the Gospel in Academe: Adolf Schlatter as a Teacher of the Church,” *Perichoresis* 4:1 (2006): 1–17; idem; “Adolf Schlatter (1852–1938),” in *Dictionary of Major Bible Interpreters* (ed. Donald McKim; Downers Grove: IVP, 2007), 881–85.

¹⁶The author wishes to thank audiences at the Tyndale Fellowship breakfast in San Francisco in November 2011, at Phoenix Seminary in January 2012, and at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in March 2012, for critically interacting with earlier recensions of this essay. I have also benefited from comments by students from the Covenant Seminary Theological Society.

Sacramental Supersessionism Revisited: A Response to Martin Salter on the Relationship between Circumcision and Baptism

— David Gibson —

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Martin Salter has recently argued that Reformed paedobaptists are mistaken in citing Col 2:11–12 ‘as evidence that baptism replaces circumcision as the covenant sign signifying the same realities.’¹ His essay is a model of exegetical care, and he approaches the contentious issue of the application of covenant signs with graciousness. His position is that for Paul there is a disjunction between physical and spiritual circumcision, such that in Col 2:11–12 he is referring to the latter, and Salter seeks to demonstrate that ‘circumcision’ and baptism do not signify precisely the same realities.

In this response, I argue that Salter’s article has the potential to advance the debate which surrounds credo- *vs* covenant baptism precisely because his essay is largely an exercise in missing the point. I do not intend to engage in a detailed response to his exegesis of Col 2:11–12 for the simple reason that, as a Reformed paedobaptist, I can agree with most of it and still find myself happily at home in a theological world which regards baptism of infants as ‘the jewel displayed upon the engagement ring of God’s covenant promise.’² My claim is that Salter explains a biblical text but not its place in biblical theology, and he does not see how the text he understands fails to undermine a theology he does not. To put it another way, Salter makes a theological mountain out of an exegetical molehill.

Part of the history of the credo- *vs* paedobaptism debate is the venerable tradition of proponents speaking past each other. I am not so naïve as to think that my essay might prove to be anything other than one more example of the problem. Nevertheless, in showing why covenantal Reformed theologians do well to affirm the substance (if not every detail) of Salter’s treatment of Col 2:11–12, my hope is that both essays, taken together, might add at least a little clarity to how this tradition perceives the relationship between circumcision and baptism. There is a need for such clarification because misunderstandings are common. The significant recent study of the biblical covenants by Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum cites Salter’s article approvingly in arguing that it is *spiritual* circumcision which is tied to union with Christ and baptism. This means that baptism does not replace physical circumcision

¹ Martin Salter, ‘Does Baptism Replace Circumcision? An Examination of the Relationship between Circumcision and Baptism in Colossians 2:11–12,’ *Them* 35 (2010): 15–29, available at http://thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/does_baptism_replace_circumcision_an_examination_of_the_relationship_betwee (henceforth ‘Baptism’).

² Sinclair B. Ferguson, ‘Infant Baptism View,’ in *Baptism: Three Views* (ed. David F. Wright; Downers Grove: IVP, 2009), 100.

in the way paedobaptists suggest.³ Although I cannot here offer a complete defense of paedobaptism, I argue that the credobaptist critique based on Col 2:11–12 typically mounts only an invalid criticism of the practice.⁴

My argument is that in Reformed creeds, confessions, and various theological writings, the language of baptism ‘replacing’ circumcision needs to be understood as a form of *theological shorthand* for a nexus of ideas tied to a particular understanding of covenant signs. It is that bigger picture which credobaptist theologians do not share and which causes them discomfort when others use ‘replacement’ terminology. Supersessionist language is usually controversial when it is deployed in other theological contexts, and no less so here. But when seen against a larger theological canvas, there is nothing in Col 2:11–12 or Salter’s exegesis of this text which militates against using ‘replacement’ vocabulary because those who do so usually know how they are intending it.

To make this case, I do four things: (1) I summarize Salter’s argument and try to highlight his view of its significance for paedobaptists. (2) I supplement Salter’s ‘all-too-brief outline of Paul’s theology of baptism and circumcision’⁵ by showing some serious difficulties with how he conceives of circumcision in its OT context, particularly in relation to Abraham in Rom 4 and Gen 17. I suggest that Salter misconstrues the relationship between the physical and the spiritual in the Abrahamic covenant. (3) I connect the Reformed understanding of covenant signs with Salter’s exegesis of Col 2:11–12 and agree with his argument that the fulfillment of physical circumcision is spiritual circumcision. My aim is to show why this does not contradict the sacramental supersessionist motif which exists in Reformed texts. (4) Contrary to the impression Salter gives, I show that this exegetical argument is not news for paedobaptists, and I consider John Calvin as an example. This test case suggests that, despite his exegetical care, Salter uses inexact language when he argues for circumcision and baptism not signifying precisely the same realities and so confuses the theological categories of sign and the thing signified.

1. Summarising Salter’s Argument

Martin Salter’s thesis is that the paedobaptist’s ‘baptism-replaces-circumcision’ thesis is illegitimate, and his argument unfolds in three clear stages.

First, a brief treatment of Colossians’ *Sitz im Leben* leans towards the view that the believers in Colossae were under threat from a ‘heresy’ containing a mixture of Jewish mysticism and Greek philosophy. This provides the caution that Paul’s purpose is primarily polemical, not sacramental.

³Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 701–3.

⁴My essay intends to be a spirited critique which keeps the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. I agree with Douglas Wilson: ‘we must at least recall that in discussing the sign of the covenant we are discussing the least important thing about it. Which is greater? The gold on the altar, or the altar which sanctifies the gold? Which is greater? The sign of the covenant, or the covenant itself? Those who are visible saints together with us are to be loved for the sake of Jesus Christ, whether or not we believe them to be mistaken on the question of the “water that divides”’ (Douglas Wilson, *To A Thousand Generations—Infant Baptism: Covenant Mercy for the People of God* [Moscow, ID: Canon, 1996], 40).

⁵Salter, ‘Baptism,’ 20.

Second, Salter outlines a Pauline theology of baptism and circumcision to contend that ‘there is a disjunction for Paul between physical and spiritual circumcision.’⁶ A close analogy between physical circumcision and baptism is questionable because of how Paul views them both. Baptism symbolises washing, cleansing, and regeneration; it incorporates us into the body of Christ; and it unites us to Christ in his death and resurrection. ‘For Paul, baptism effects a vital union with Christ.’⁷ The argument here is that baptism ‘sits within a complex of events’ which are irreducibly connected to spiritual life (regeneration, cleansing, incorporation, repentance, faith, reception of the Spirit), so it is hard to connect in a like-for-like sense with Paul’s understanding of circumcision. It is ‘easier to construct what Paul says circumcision does *not* do rather than what it does.’ Salter sees in Paul a clear distinction between physical and spiritual circumcision and a disjunction between the outer rite and the inner reality.⁸ Whereas spiritual renewal is in some way intrinsic to the rite of baptism itself, no such thing is intrinsic to circumcision.

Salter’s third section forms the main body of his essay. He aims to demonstrate that spiritual circumcision and baptism do not signify precisely the same realities. Colossians 2:8–23 teaches the believers that by virtue of their union with Christ they have fullness in him and need neither embrace new teachers nor seek new practices. Colossians 2:11 specifies the reason for this union with Christ, and Salter asks a series of questions of 2:11–12 to perceive the referents of and relationship between ‘circumcision’ and baptism.

The Colossians have received a spiritual or ‘Christian circumcision’ (περιτομή ἀχειροποιήτω), which cuts away the sinful nature (ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός) and which Christ has performed at the time of their conversion (ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ). So *if* there is a replacement theology operative in the text, ‘it is between the physical, done-by-human-hands circumcision and the spiritual, performed-by-Christ circumcision.’⁹

In 2:12, baptism signifies not just burial with Christ but also resurrection with him. The final piece of the jigsaw is Salter’s argument that the adverbial participle συνταφέντες is contemporaneous relative to the main verb, περιετμήθητε. Different strands of the exegesis come together here to make an important point. In Rom 6:3–4, Paul presents baptism as a ‘death-burial-resurrection’ rite, whereas Col 2:11–12 presents it as a ‘circumcision-burial-resurrection’ rite. That is to say, the *spiritual* circumcision Christ performed is another way of describing the death of the ‘old man’ or sinful nature, so it parallels the ‘death’ of Rom 6:3. Just as this death occurs within the sphere of baptism in Rom 6:3, so this spiritual circumcision occurs within the sphere of baptism in Col 2:11–12.

The ‘circumcision-made-without-hands’ is a *part* of what baptism signifies. Baptism, thus, includes the ‘death’ that is circumcision here, but signifies more, namely, burial and resurrection. While there is a connection, therefore, between *spiritual* circumcision and baptism, they do not signify precisely the same realities.¹⁰

This exegetical material leads Salter to his main conclusions. Paedobaptists should not appeal to Col 2:11–12 ‘as evidence of baptism replacing circumcision, signifying the same realities. The replacement

⁶Ibid., 16.

⁷Ibid., 19.

⁸Ibid., 19–20.

⁹Ibid., 25.

¹⁰Ibid., 27.

and fulfillment of circumcision is *spiritual* circumcision. Baptism is the sphere in which this occurs.¹¹ Correspondingly, baptism and spiritual circumcision are connected with spiritual cleansing and new life, and in those respects they are ‘unlike physical circumcision, which is sharply distinguished from spiritual circumcision and its concomitant realities.’¹² Paedobaptists blur what Paul sees clearly: the distinction between the physical and the spiritual.

Salter provides a close reading of Col 2:11–12, and the exegetical detail appears to make his case compelling. I argue that a number of other details which Salter either overlooks or handles in confusing ways means that his argument fails. It fails not because his reading of Col 2:11–12 is wrong *per se*, but because he does not perceive how its substance belongs in paedobaptist theology as much as credobaptist.

2. Supplementing Salter’s Outline of Paul’s Theology of Baptism and Circumcision

The question of baptism replacing circumcision is both exegetical and hermeneutical. Wider frameworks of thought are in play on both sides of the baptismal divide when considering individual texts in detail. Paedobaptists do not usually contest this. Calvin, for instance, clearly bases his defence of infant baptism on the fundamental unity of the covenant of grace and on a parallel between circumcision and baptism as covenant signs.¹³ His approach is both exegetically derived and hermeneutically influential. Exegetical parts contribute to a theological whole which informs exegesis so that there is a symbiotic rather than strict linear relationship between exegesis and theological presupposition.¹⁴

This is important because Salter’s article provides a good illustration of the effects of such scaffolding for exegesis. It is clear that his essay works by viewing an individual biblical text through a wider hermeneutical lens. Salter first of all outlines Paul’s theology of baptism, and then Paul’s theology of circumcision, and the result is a range of explicit theological commitments which operate in the background as he examines Col 2:11–12 in the foreground.

In so doing, whether he intends to show this or not, Salter’s methodology reveals that a detailed examination of one important passage cannot correct the perceived theological misstep that paedobaptists take. That is because a significant part of Salter’s exegetical case—the contrast between physical and spiritual circumcision—rests on a particular understanding of the nature and meaning of physical circumcision which is not unequivocal in the text of Colossians itself. Salter’s exposition of Col 2:11 is tied closely to his earlier brief presentation of a Pauline theology of circumcision, both drawing on its argument and providing some development. On Col 2:11, he states, ‘Here the contrast between the physical and the spiritual needs to be drawn out,’ and he provides a brief biblical theology of circumcision to help explain the ‘circumcision made without hands.’¹⁵ I argue that Salter engages Col

¹¹ Ibid., 29.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. John T. McNeill; trans. Francis Lewis Battles; 2 vols.; Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1960), 4.16.1–32, 1324–59.

¹⁴ For more on this, cf. Moisés Silva, ‘Systematic Theology and the Apostle to the Gentiles,’ *TJ* 15 (1994): 3–26; Henri Blocher, ‘The “Analogy of Faith” in the Study of Scripture: In Search of Justification and Guide-Lines,’ *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 5 (1987): 17–38.

¹⁵ Salter, ‘Baptism,’ 21.

2:11–12 with a seriously deficient understanding of physical circumcision writ large in his interpretive framework. To be clear: I am not suggesting that his hermeneutical lens is not itself exegetically derived; I am suggesting that it is exegetically wanting and therefore hermeneutically misleading.

For Salter, physical circumcision has both positive and negative aspects, and in his presentation of these aspects he says things which are clear and true but also things which are demonstrably incorrect and confused. At the heart of Salter's position is a disjunction between physical circumcision and spiritual circumcision, but he is unable to state clearly what physical circumcision means. For instance, he says, 'it is easier to construct what Paul says circumcision does *not* do rather than what it does.' He then follows this immediately by referring to Rom 2:25–29 and states, 'physical circumcision anticipates the true circumcision of the heart, and inner not outer circumcision defines the "true" Jew.'¹⁶ This is confusing because it actually explains with an active verb what circumcision does do: it *anticipates* the true circumcision of the heart. The second half of the sentence states what circumcision does not do, but Salter says more than he appears to realise. Similarly, he can say, 'the circumcision without hands is the new covenant fulfillment of an old covenant promise' and also that physical circumcision 'is a *type* that anticipates the circumcision of the heart.'¹⁷ On a straightforward reading of Salter's own terms, we should want to exercise caution in driving too large a wedge between physical and spiritual in our understanding of what physical circumcision means. In what sense can something physical be a type of something spiritual and yet thereby still be disjoined from it? How can it be *purely* physical?

This kind of language is accompanied by other phrases which are also open to important qualifications. Here are three examples: (1) Circumcision of the heart is 'not something intrinsic to the rite itself.'¹⁸ What does Salter mean by 'intrinsic'? It would be problematic to say that heart circumcision is intrinsic to physical circumcision in an *ex opere operato* sense; but perhaps it is intrinsic to it in a typological and signifying sense. (2) 'To read spiritual circumcision into the OT rite is mistaken.'¹⁹ What does Salter mean by 'into'? Again, it would be a mistake to see spiritual circumcision *in* physical circumcision in the *ex opere operato* sense, but to distinguish is not necessarily to separate. (3) Physical circumcision 'did not equate with spiritual circumcision.'²⁰ This faithfully reflects Pauline argument in terms of his polemic against Judaisers but, as I try to show below, a lack of strict *identity* between physical and spiritual does not entail the total *absence* of connections between them.

At every point Salter's aim is to separate physical from spiritual circumcision as part of showing the 'disjunction' between circumcision and baptism. Physical circumcision is just that, but since baptism actually participates in spiritual realities, it cannot replace circumcision. This means, when Salter does come to state positively what physical circumcision does, the depiction is very limited. It is 'a sign and seal of faith in the case of Abraham (Rom 4:11)'. The connection of faith and physical circumcision in Abraham's case does not carry implications for a connection between faith and physical circumcision in the case of his descendants. Romans 4:11 'is speaking descriptively about *Abraham* and

¹⁶ Ibid., 19.

¹⁷ Ibid., 22 (emphasis added).

¹⁸ Ibid., 19n34.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 21.

not prescriptively about his seed. Abraham's descendants are circumcised as a seal of the covenant God made with *Abraham*, not because they themselves have faith.²¹

So Salter presents us with two key issues to address: (1) What did circumcision mean for Abraham and his children? (2) What light does this shed on the relationship between the physical and the spiritual aspects of the Abrahamic covenant? These questions are very closely connected, and their answers overlap. I outline my responses by working backwards from Rom 4:11 to Gen 17 and then forward again to trace my understanding of how circumcision functions in its covenantal context.

2.1. The Circumcision of Abraham and His Children

We should note, contrary to Salter, that Rom 4:11 does not say that circumcision was a sign and seal of Abraham's faith but rather 'a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith' (σφραγίδα τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῆς πίστεως).²² Circumcision is a seal of God's promise of righteousness, not of human faith in the first instance. A 'seal' is the outward validation or confirmation of a message or a reality. Paul regards the Corinthian believers as the seal of his apostleship, the mark of his authenticity (1 Cor 9:2; cf. also John 6:27; 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30; Rev 7:1–3). This understanding of σφραγίς makes a lexical contribution to seeing τῆς δικαιοσύνης in Rom 4:11 as an objective genitive so that circumcision is the authenticating and confirming mark of the righteousness which was Abraham's by faith (with τῆς πίστεως understood as a genitive of source). This means that to speak of circumcision's connection to faith is necessary but not sufficient, and to speak *only* of faith here is to undermine the spiritual significance of circumcision even in Abraham's case.²³

Close attention to the text, therefore, means we may ask this: Is circumcision a seal *of* faith (i.e., of Abraham's response to the covenant promise), or is it a seal *to* faith (i.e., of the covenant promise which elicited his response)? In many respects how we answer this question may be connected with our reading of Gen 17 (see below). But I take Paul's meaning to be that 'circumcision is the authenticating mark that certifies the truth of God's promise, that he will give righteousness to the one who has faith.'²⁴ Circumcision is sign and seal that God justifies the wicked (Rom 4:5). 'Since the "sign and seal" have reference to the same reality according to Rom 4:11–12, circumcision should also be understood as a seal of the promise of God's grace to be received by faith, not of the faith that received the promise of grace.'²⁵

If circumcision signified justification by faith alone for Abraham, then the very heart of the issue is discerning what it signified for his children, and here Salter's argument goes astray. It is true to say that Abraham's descendants are not circumcised because they themselves have faith, but it is not true

²¹ *Ibid.*, 20 (emphasis original).

²² Unless otherwise noted, all quotations are from *The Holy Bible: New International Version*®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by International Bible Society, www.ibs.org. All rights reserved worldwide.

²³ C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975–1979), regards Abraham's circumcision as 'the outward and visible authentication, ratification and guarantee, of the righteousness by faith which was already his while he was still uncircumcised' (1:236). For Cranfield 'it is Abraham's righteousness, not his faith, which is directly at issue throughout this passage' (1:236n3).

²⁴ Mark E. Ross, 'Baptism and Circumcision as Signs and Seals,' in *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism* (ed. Gregg Strawbridge; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2003), 94. Ross shows how some paedobaptist and credobaptist discussions of this verse have come to wrong conclusions (see 86–97).

²⁵ Ferguson, 'Infant Baptism View,' 93.

to say that they ‘are circumcised as a seal of the covenant God made with *Abraham*.²⁶ Rather, according to Gen 17:7, they are circumcised because of the covenant God made with *them*. The text is quite emphatic about this. The covenant is between God and Abraham (בְּיָמֵי וַבִּינְיָהוּ) and his *offspring after him* (וּבִין זֶרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו), throughout *their generations* (לְדֹרֹתָם), to be God to Abraham (לְהִיוֹת לְךָ לֵאלֹהִים) and to his *offspring* (וּלְזֶרְעוֹ; v. 7). As part of that covenant, God will give the land to Abraham and to his *offspring after him* (לְךָ וּלְזֶרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו) for an everlasting possession, and the LORD will be *their* God (וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים; v. 8). Abraham and his *offspring* (אַתָּה וְזֶרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו) are to keep this covenant throughout *their generations* (לְדֹרֹתָם; v. 9; cf. v. 10). Circumcision is to be the sign of this covenant, a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham’s *offspring* (בְּיָמֵי וַבִּינְיָהוּ; v. 11) and this command is given not just to Abraham, but to his *descendants* as well (וְהָיְתָה בְרִיתִי בְּבָשָׂרְכֶם; v. 13). Moreover, it is not the one who fails to *administer* the circumcision who is cut off from the people, but rather the one who *himself* is uncircumcised—*he*, the uncircumcised one, has broken the LORD’s covenant (אַתָּה־בְּרִיתִי הִפַּר; v. 14). In sum: Abraham is circumcised because God makes a covenant with him, and his descendants are circumcised because God makes *the same covenant with them*. But what did their circumcision mean?

2.2. Physical and Spiritual in the Abrahamic Covenant

As Salter recognises and states, the OT promises a day when God himself will circumcise the hearts of his people (Deut 30:6). The OT itself spiritualises the physical rite by promising a heart renewal. But the critical question is whether the promise is there from the very start, attached to the rite’s inception as it were, or appears only later. Salter cites Beasley-Murray’s argument that ‘The prophetic call for heart circumcision is a pictorial application of the rite, not an exposition of its meaning.’²⁷ This sees spiritual and promissory understanding in circumcision only at a later stage of Israel’s history; an originally physical sign *comes to have* a spiritual significance. To put it another way, it demands that the promises to Abraham are physical, but they are taken up into a spiritual dynamic which emerges later on, perhaps in stages; so the later seers within Israel can take the physical sign of circumcision and apply it to the promises of the new covenant.

The major problem with this, of course, is that it conflicts with the scriptural understanding that the original presentation of the covenant and its signs to Abraham and his descendants is *spiritual* as well as physical. This is precisely where the Reformed argument for the unity of the covenant of grace gains some of its traction and has a direct bearing on the meaning of sacramental signs and seals. ‘In this way

²⁶ Salter, ‘Baptism,’ 20.

²⁷ Salter, ‘Baptism,’ 22, quoting G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1972), 158. Earlier Salter also cites the work of Werner Lemke (‘Circumcision of the Heart: The Journey of a Biblical Metaphor,’ in *A God So Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller* [ed. Brent A. Strawn and Nancy R. Bowen; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003], 299–319) to argue that ‘circumcision of the heart’ is part of a larger trajectory concerning spiritual renewal which is not intrinsic to the rite itself. But Lemke’s article works from several problematic premises about the compositional histories of the OT which tend to rule out earlier parts of the Pentateuch providing theological influence on later parts. For Lemke, it is not just that circumcision is taken up into a later trajectory of thought; it seems that to him the later trajectory may be the *original* one and is itself followed by a further and later return to a purely physical sense to circumcision in Ezek 44:6–9. This merely physical sense is present in the so-called ‘Priestly’ stratum of the Pentateuch responsible for Gen 17, with the covenant language of Gen 15 deriving from a different source.

we ought to understand all the earthly promises given to the Jewish nation: that the spiritual promise, as the head to which they refer, should always hold the first place.²⁸

The spiritual promise is the head to which the earthly promises refer: this is not a theological construct placed on the text but one which emerges from, for instance, Gen 17. The meaning of circumcision for Abraham and his descendants is bound up with the promise of the covenant. He and his descendants enter an ‘everlasting covenant’ (לְבְרִית עוֹלָם; v. 7), and God gives them the promise of the land of Canaan as an ‘everlasting possession’ (לְאָחֻזַּת עוֹלָם; v. 8). Both times, in vv. 7–8, the covenant promise is that this God, the LORD, will be Abraham’s God, and for his descendants he will be their God as well. The significance for circumcision should not be missed. If this is what the covenant promise actually is, then to receive the sign of it is to be marked for *spiritual* ownership, not simply national identity. The male Israelite body carried a mark of belonging to one God in particular.

Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum follow the research of John Meade in seeing an Egyptian background to the rite: only the priests in Egypt were circumcised, but the circumcision of every Israelite male was an appropriate sign for a people who would be known as a kingdom of priests.²⁹ Regardless of whether the priesthood motif is certain, it does seem correct to view circumcision in Gen 17 as symbolizing complete devotion to God. Furthermore, as Victor Hamilton observes, God actually calls circumcision itself ‘my covenant’ (בְּרִיתִי; v. 10) as well as being a ‘mark’ or ‘sign’ of the covenant (לְאֹזֶת בְּרִית; v. 11).³⁰ Both ideas coalesce in the striking words of v. 13: ‘My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant’ (וְהִיתָה בְּרִיתִי בְּבִשְׂרְכֶם לְבְרִית עוֹלָם). If physical circumcision is the inscribing in the flesh of the everlasting covenant as a sign of devotion to the God of the covenant, then its significance is much more than merely physical.

Credobaptist arguments often treat this point inadequately. Shawn Wright, for instance, appears to see no spiritual significance in circumcision at all: ‘Circumcision was a physical marker of ethnic Israel identifying them as distinct from other nations.’³¹ Paul Jewett does see a double reference in circumcision to both the earthly and the heavenly aspects of the covenant, but maintains that because this sign of the covenant is ‘given to all those who are Abraham’s seed according to the flesh,’ then the ‘emphasis is entirely on this outward relationship.’³² Stephen Wellum’s position is more nuanced again. Although he holds that the meaning of circumcision in Rom 4:11–23 applies to Abraham ‘and to him alone,’³³ Wellum also says that circumcision has a two-fold typological significance in that it anticipates Christ and anticipates the need for a new heart. Yet for Wellum the ‘most important’ meaning of circumcision

²⁸ Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.16.11, 1334.

²⁹ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 272–75.

³⁰ Victor P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 470: ‘The designation of circumcision itself as a covenant is a synecdoche for covenantal obligation: “this is [the aspect of] my covenant you must keep.”’

³¹ Shawn D. Wright, ‘Baptism and the Logic of Reformed Paedobaptists,’ in *Believer’s Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ* (ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright: Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 238.

³² Paul K. Jewett, *Infant Baptism and the Covenant of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 98.

³³ Stephen J. Wellum, ‘Baptism and the Relationship between the Covenants,’ in *Believer’s Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ* (ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright: Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 154.

is that ‘it marks out a physical people and nation.’³⁴ On the one hand, it is hard to understand how circumcision’s christological significance can be less important than its physical significance; even more to the point, Wellum provides no exegetical evidence for this position at all. As we have seen, the view that circumcision’s dominant meaning is to mark out a physical people is hard to sustain from Gen 17. It is also hard to see what kind of weight this argument can bear since it seems that circumcision pre-dated the Israelites and their patriarchal ancestors and since many of their contemporaries also practised it. Jeremiah 9:25–26 records Egypt, Edom, Ammon, and Moab as co-practitioners.³⁵

This is not to say there were no differences between the Israelite practice and that of the surrounding nations. One of the distinguishing features of the Abrahamic rite was its application on the eighth day after birth, rather than at puberty or arrival at adulthood. But this intensifies the question of circumcision’s meaning. Interestingly, Gentry and Wellum see important theological implications in this distinctive practice of the Israelites: ‘the eighth day is the beginning of the new creation, and this fits with the new creation imagery connected with Abraham as the new Adam.’³⁶ Given that Abraham himself was not circumcised on the eighth day, the new creation understanding of circumcision necessarily attributes significant spiritual meaning to the circumcision of his offspring.

This line of thinking connects with traditional Reformed understandings of the rite. Geerhardus Vos argues that because the promises of God in the OT had proximate reference to temporal and natural things, there was a danger that ‘natural descent might be understood as entitling to the grace of God.’ But infant circumcision pointed to the fact that human nature is bound in sin, and the removal of the flesh signified the need for the uncleanness to be taken away. ‘Circumcision teaches that physical descent from Abraham is not sufficient to make true Israelites.’³⁷ And so within the wider covenantal framework the connections to baptism as a covenant sign are profound. Each generation must not think that the promises are theirs by mere physical descent. The promises are all of grace, and for that reason covenant children are severed and sprinkled. They are of the flesh, so they need to be cut and cleansed.

Doubtless biblical scholars will continue to debate exactly what the ancient practice of circumcision signified. My point here is a simple one: categories which neatly separate the physical from the spiritual are too imprecise to build an adequate conceptual framework for understanding covenant signs.³⁸ Scripture is clear that the covenant promises, containing as they do the promise of the physical land of

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 157.

³⁵ Cf. Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 469; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50* (WBC 2; Dallas: Word, 1994), 23–24.

³⁶ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 274.

³⁷ Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1948), 90. I am grateful to Steffen Jenkins for this reference. Vos’s treatment leads him to say, ‘Dogmatically speaking, therefore, circumcision stands for justification and regeneration, plus sanctification’ (90). He can say this, I would argue, because he has climbed inside the logic and thought-flow of Rom 4 and is capable of seeing in Gen 15 and 17 what the apostle Paul sees. It is a biblical-theological Pauline hermeneutic. Gentry and Wellum, however, discuss what circumcision indicates and signifies in Gen 17 but are unable to state clearly that circumcision is a seal of the righteousness Abraham had by faith before he was circumcised. As a result their reading is more biblicist than biblical-theological.

³⁸ Another way of approaching this matter might be to suggest that the terms ‘physical’ and ‘spiritual’ simply introduce a false dichotomy at this point in biblical revelation. For if we were to argue that God’s covenantal purposes are to restore in creation the biological family—as the ‘Abraham as new Adam’ motif would suggest—then the critique of credobaptism is that its covenant theology is *not physical enough*. For this line of thought, see

Canaan, simultaneously contained typological and spiritual significance. In Gal 3:6–8, Paul understands the covenant promises to Abraham to include justification by faith for the Gentiles as the gospel was announced to him. Abraham made his home in the Promised Land, but he did so ‘like a stranger in a foreign country . . . for he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God’ (Heb 11:9–10). Abraham is one of the great exemplars of living by faith, one of those who did not receive the things promised: ‘they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one’ (Heb 11:16). The physical promises have an inherent futurist orientation built into them, and Paul shares this perspective in Rom 4:13, where he understands the promise of the land as the promise of the earth: ‘It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.’³⁹

The important point here is that the circumcision of Abraham and his offspring was a sign of all these promises, for they are what the covenant actually is. In Deut 10:11–22, the LORD commands Moses to lead the Israelites to possess the land, reminds them of his covenant love for their forefathers, and then instructs them: ‘Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer’ (v. 16). As Douglas Wilson explains, ‘Thus, on one level, the sign of the covenant did signify the promise concerning Canaan. However, of necessity, it also signified the heart condition that would make the keeping of this external covenant possible.’⁴⁰ In this way, we should see spiritual circumcision—a circumcision of the heart which the OT regularly promises (Lev 26:41–42; Deut 30:6; Jer 4:4; Ezek 44:7)—to be no more in opposition to physical circumcision than the promise of the heavenly country was in opposition to the promise of the land. The physical signified the supra-physical, pointing *from* itself *beyond* itself, both to show what God truly required of his people (heart circumcision) and what he truly promised (a redeemed world). Likewise, in places like Rom 2:28–29, it is not so much that Paul separates physical and spiritual circumcision but rather that he puts them in correct relation to each other to show that the former without the latter is pointless, just as the latter derives some of its figurative meaning from the physical fact of the former. To distinguish is not to separate. ‘God placed a spiritual value on physical circumcision only so far as it represented a circumcised heart (cf. Jer. 9:25–26). As a sign, circumcision was external. But as a sign it was also given to point to spiritual realities.’⁴¹

The upshot of my argument is that the spiritual significance of circumcision for Abraham was the same as for his children precisely because it was the sign of the covenant and the covenant meant the same thing for both. Abraham believed God, was counted righteous, and was circumcised as sign and seal of that righteousness which he had by faith (Rom 4:11–12). Genesis 17 shows us there is no difference in the meaning of the circumcision given to his children. For them, as for Abraham, it is the sign in their flesh of the everlasting covenant.

Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931), 41–77, esp. 65; Peter J. Leithart, ‘The Sociology of Infant Baptism,’ in *The Baptized Body* (Moscow, ID: Canon, 2007), 113–36.

³⁹This is not to suggest that the physical promise of the land is merely ‘spiritualised’ in Paul’s exegesis of the covenant in Genesis. Rather, as Moo shows, the wording of Rom 4:13 ‘does not exactly match any promise to Abraham found in the OT but succinctly summarizes the three key provisions of the promise as it unfolds in Genesis’ (*Romans*, 274). These promises are (1) an immense number of descendants, (2) the land, and (3) that Abraham would be the source of blessing to all the peoples of the earth.

⁴⁰Wilson, *To a Thousand Generations*, 42.

⁴¹Ibid.

This is a further point of confusion in credobaptist critiques of paedobaptism. Salter suggests that Abraham's descendants are circumcised because of the covenant with Abraham, not with them, and so states that all Rom 4:11 can prove is 'believer's circumcision.'⁴² In this Salter is following Thomas Schreiner, who finds it 'mystifying' that Rom 4:11 could be used in support of infant baptism. This is because Schreiner sees the text speaking only of *Abraham's* circumcision, not the rite in general, as well as teaching a specific sequence of events: circumcision *follows* Abraham's faith, so Schreiner wonders how it can possibly apply to infant baptism, which is the reverse (baptism followed by faith).⁴³ The reason, however, is that Gen 17 makes it clear that circumcision is the sign and seal not only of Abraham's righteousness by faith but also that of his descendants, just as Paul makes it clear that the promise of inheriting the world through the righteousness that comes by faith was given to 'Abraham *and his offspring*' (Rom 4:13). Abraham believed and then was circumcised; his children were to be circumcised and then believe. The simple yet far-reaching fact often overlooked in credobaptist arguments is that the covenant was not made with Abraham alone.

3. Connecting the Reformed Understanding of Covenant Signs with Salter's Exegesis of Col 2:11–12

This sketch of a biblical theology of circumcision presents us with an alternative hermeneutical framework for reading Col 2:11–12. Salter approaches this text having 'already begun to see that a close analogy between baptism and circumcision is questionable.' For him, baptism as a ritual is not something that Paul normally divorces from its spiritual meaning, and baptism 'sits within a complex of events including regeneration, cleansing, incorporation, repentance, faith, reception of the Spirit, and so on.'⁴⁴ Thus, because there is a 'disjunction between the outer rite and the inner reality' of circumcision, there can be no connection between circumcision and baptism: circumcision corresponds simply to the outer rite and baptism to the inner reality. But 'disjunction' is a noun easy on the eye and hard on the theological senses. What does it actually mean?

I contend that when we use the language of baptism sitting 'within a complex of events' associated with spiritual life, then we need to see that circumcision in the OT likewise sat within a similar complex of spiritual events listed above. This is not to say that physical circumcision and water baptism are indexed to spiritual realities in exactly the same way.⁴⁵ It is simply to claim that Salter tends to slide

⁴² Salter, 'Baptism,' 20.

⁴³ Thomas R. Schreiner, 'Baptism in the Epistles: An Initiation Rite for Believers,' in *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ* (ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright: Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 87.

⁴⁴ Salter, 'Baptism,' 20.

⁴⁵ Contra Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 78, the replacement of circumcision by baptism does not depend on the belief that circumcision in its OT covenant context signified exactly the same realities as baptism in the NT. Rather, 'The one signified a promise in embryo given to a man, to his family, and to his nation. The other signified the same promises now fulfilled in Christ and extended to people throughout all the nations of the world. The signs belong to different epochs of redemptive history. Thus circumcision by its very nature indicated the restrictions and limitations of the old covenant and the epoch it governed (e.g., it was only administered to male seed). Pentecost—and with it baptism—marked an epochal transition, breaking down gender distinctions peculiar to the old covenant (Acts 2:17–18; Gal 3:26–29) so that the new sign has no gender restriction' (Ferguson, 'Infant Baptism View,' 87).

between the language of ‘type,’ ‘anticipation,’ ‘disjunction,’ ‘contrast,’ and ‘distinction’ without any real concept of both the theological relationship and nuanced differences between such terms. In a confined space these words are being asked to do some very heavy lifting.

My differing biblical theology of circumcision necessarily leads me to suggest that Salter has not understood how and why Paul perceives of circumcision negatively. Paul does so because those who have it on their bodies are meant to have it in their hearts. His God-given gospel and apostolic mission, however, are regularly opposed by those of his own race who contend for the physical *without* the spiritual. They bear it in their flesh but not in their hearts, yet they believe they are in a right standing with God. Paul’s argument in Romans and Galatians is that this flatly contradicts the chronology of salvation history and the rite’s meaning as God originally gave it. Salter appears to think that Paul speaks negatively because circumcision is physical. I argue that Paul speaks negatively because his opponents have not perceived in the physical sign what the everlasting covenant required of them. In the sign, Paul sees the need for a righteousness which is by faith, but his interlocutors find in it either their own righteousness or a supplementary fullness to what they have received in Christ.

None of this minimises the strength of the point Paul is making by sidelining the circumcision performed by human hands in Col 2:11. Peter O’Brien shows that the LXX uses the adjective χειροποιήτος (‘made with hands’) to denote idols, false gods and images, and the NT regularly uses it to ‘set forth the contrast between what is constructed by man and the work of God alone.’⁴⁶ Yet as O’Brien also notes, Jesus said that he would erect a temple within three days ‘not made with hands’ (Mark 14:58). The disjunction here between type and antitype is not the kind which implies the physical temple had no connection whatsoever to spiritual realities.

This hermeneutical framework points very naturally to the same exegetical conclusion about Col 2:11 which Salter reaches in his essay: it is the spiritual, performed-by-Christ circumcision which fulfills and replaces the physical, done-by-human-hands circumcision. This is the clear meaning of v. 11 even though, as Salter shows, the exact sense of ‘body of flesh’ and ‘circumcision of Christ’ are open to different interpretations. But whether we take the meaning to be that (1) Christ’s physical body was stripped off in his death, so that ‘circumcision’ is a metaphor for the ‘violent removal of the whole body in death’⁴⁷ or (2) Christ has stripped away the sinful nature,⁴⁸ in v. 11 it is that act by Christ which is the circumcision the Colossians have received. On this level, then, the claim of Salter and other credobaptists that baptism does not replace circumcision appears valid. Another way of putting this might be to say this: Christ’s coming has not *terminated* circumcision but *transformed* it. The fulfillment of physical circumcision in the circumcision of Christ means that circumcision still continues today. It is not now done by the hands of men, but by Christ for all those who are united to him by faith.

However, the way in which Salter develops his argument in relation to v. 12 leads him to seriously overstate his case with regard to what this replacement motif does and does not mean in relation to baptism. Salter makes it very clear from a detailed treatment of Col 2:12 that baptism signifies not just burial with Christ, but also his death and resurrection, with the spiritual circumcision of v. 12 being parallel to the ‘death’ of Rom 6:3 and ‘should be viewed as occurring within the sphere of baptism.’⁴⁹ That

⁴⁶ Peter. T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* (WBC 44; Dallas: Word, 1982), 115–16.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁴⁸ Murray J. Harris, *Colossians and Philemon* (2nd ed.; Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010), 92; Salter, ‘Baptism,’ 22–24.

⁴⁹ Salter, ‘Baptism,’ 27.

is to say, baptism functions as a kind of meta-term to encapsulate the spiritual reality of being united to Christ in his death/circumcision-burial-resurrection. It is the sign which signifies the sum total of these realities. But here is the key point: unless the baptism of v. 12 is taken to be *purely* spiritual (and therefore not referring to water baptism), then it is this very position which commits one to holding that a physical rite signifies a spiritual reality. And it is only Salter's alternative hermeneutical framework, not the text of Colossians itself, which prevents him from seeing that one physical rite (baptism) now signifies what another physical rite (circumcision) previously signified.

Rightly, Salter holds that the baptism in view here in v. 12 cannot be purely spiritual. Throughout his essay he argues for a now well-established position that 'any attempt to distinguish between Spirit baptism and water baptism in the Pauline epistles goes beyond what Paul himself wrote.'⁵⁰ This view holds that our attempt to distinguish Spirit-baptism from water-baptism in texts such as Rom 6:3–4 would have puzzled Paul and that the early church viewed the gift of the Spirit and water baptism simply as components of one unified experience.⁵¹ But the import of this view, of course, has to be that it is not wrong to see the baptism of v. 12 as referring to water baptism (even if it also refers to Spirit baptism). A physical rite signifies spiritual realities with the sign and the thing signified linked very closely together.

If we follow Salter and argue that the adverbial participle συνταφέντες in v. 12 is contemporaneous to the main verb περιετμήθητε in v. 11, then it is important to stand back and see the wood for the trees and observe what Paul is actually saying to the Colossians. It could be paraphrased like this: 'You have been circumcised. It is a circumcision done by Christ (spiritual). It is not a circumcision done by the hands of men (physical). You were circumcised spiritually in Christ, having been baptized. When you were circumcised, there was no knife present—but you did get wet.' And if this baptism is 'the technical expression for the Christian initiation rite by water,'⁵² bound as it is to Spirit baptism, then it is the physical sign of the spiritual reality. It may signify more than spiritual circumcision, as Salter shows, but it does not signify less. The question is this: Has anything else physical ever signified spiritual circumcision? Yes: physical circumcision, and that is what baptism replaces. Some kind of replacement language has to be warranted because baptism itself is a 'backward-looking' sign of the thing signified (death-burial-resurrection of Christ and union with him) which 'replaces' circumcision as the 'forward-looking' sign of the thing signified (death-burial-resurrection of Christ and union with him). Figure 1 represents this diagrammatically:

⁵⁰ Ibid. Here Salter is citing Anthony R. Cross, 'Spirit-and Water-Baptism in 1 Corinthians 12:13,' in *Dimensions of Baptism* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross; JSNTSup 234; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 120–48. Cross argues that references to baptism can stand for the entire Christian initiation process by way of synecdoche.

⁵¹ So Schreiner, 'Baptism in the Epistles,' 74–75; Moo, *Romans*, 359–67; I. Howard Marshall, 'The Meaning of the Verb "Baptize,"' in *Dimensions of Baptism* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Anthony R. Cross; JSNTSup 234; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 8–24.

⁵² Moo, *Romans*, 359.

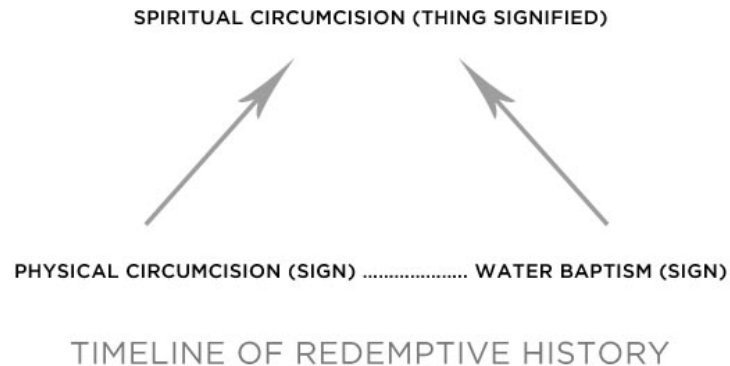


Figure 1

This way of thinking allows the paedobaptist to say that spiritual circumcision fulfills and ultimately replaces physical circumcision, while still arguing that there is a biblical basis for replacement language in relation to water baptism as well. This is because water baptism does not fulfill the spiritual reality but rather signifies it. It is the sign which has been replaced, not the thing signified.⁵³ Patrick Fairbairn explains, ‘The relation between circumcision and baptism is not properly that of type and antitype; the one is a symbolical ordinance as well as the other, and both alike have an outward form and inward reality.’⁵⁴ In relation to baptism and circumcision, ‘replacement’ language works on two levels: the type/antitype level of fulfillment and the level of signification. Spiritual circumcision fulfills and replaces physical circumcision, but baptism replaces physical circumcision as the sign of the spiritual reality.

It is this very signification of spiritual realities in baptism, however, which leads credobaptists to argue that paedobaptism cannot be in line with the Scriptures since the NT ‘connects faith, repentance, the gift of the Spirit and baptism closely together implying the presence of all of them in each instance.’⁵⁵ Baptism is something radically new when seen in comparison to circumcision. As Wellum puts it, ‘circumcision as a type, *pointed to* a spiritual regeneration. Baptism, on the other hand, testifies that by faith *these realities have occurred*.’⁵⁶ Given the explicit connections between baptism and faith, not only in Col 2:12 but throughout the NT, many credobaptist theologians are frankly amazed that some who share a high view of Scripture would sit so loosely to the clear chronology of faith followed by baptism.

Such concerns are understandable if the paedobaptist position is presented as containing an *ex opere operato* efficacy which necessitates the baptismal regeneration of infants. Reformed paedobaptist theologians, however, understand the connection between faith and baptism such as we find in Col 2:12

⁵³ If we take the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper as an example, we can see that the fulfillment of one sign by the reality does not mean that a new sign cannot be given in its place. Christ’s death fulfills the Passover meal and thus ‘replaces’ it. But Christ’s death is itself given a new sign, a sign of the new covenant: bread and wine. The arrival of the fulfillment of the first sign does not militate against Jesus introducing a new meal to ‘replace’ the previous meal.

⁵⁴ Patrick Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture: Viewed in Connection with the Entire Scheme of the Divine Dispensations* (2 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1857), 1:326. Fairbairn’s discussion of the meaning of circumcision remains one of the finest available (see 1:315–28).

⁵⁵ Salter, ‘Baptism,’ 28.

⁵⁶ Wellum, ‘Relationship between the Covenants,’ 159.

within the covenantal framework I outline above. The reason the sign of the covenant may be applied to infants before there is any faith on their part is not because of a lower view of baptism or a weaker view of the necessity of saving faith. It is because God's covenant promise of righteousness by faith for all those who believe has always been for their descendants as well. Just as God made the covenant with Abraham and his offspring, so it is important to see that when God promises to circumcise his people's hearts, he also promises to circumcise 'the hearts of your descendants' (Deut 30:6; cf. Ezek 37:25; Isa 65:23). This is why the sign of the new covenant in Christ is held to apply to the children of believers as well. Sinclair Ferguson shows that, without exception, divine covenants in redemptive history are made with believers and with their seed. In the light of this integral relationship between covenant and the seed principle, he notes that the abrogation of the 'you and your seed' principle would require a specific divine edict and even wonders 'whether it could be abandoned and the covenantal administration itself remain.'⁵⁷

At this point the paedobaptist and credobaptist diverge not in their view of the *importance* of faith but in their view of the *covenantal* significance of faith. For instance, Jewett states, 'It is beyond all cavil that in the NT faith is the threshold over which the individual must step into the Christian life, a step which is symbolically taken in the initiatory rite of baptism.'⁵⁸ Given that Jewett intends such a statement to critique infant baptism, the response is simply to say this surely compromises Paul's very argument in Romans and Galatians that salvation has *always* been by faith. 'For is it not beyond all cavil that in the Old Testament, too, faith is the threshold over which the individual stepped into a saving relationship with God, a step which was, beginning with the Abrahamic covenant, symbolically taken in the rite of circumcision?'⁵⁹ It is the paedobaptist who is preserving the fundamental unity of God's saving purposes precisely by regarding his children in the same way covenants have always regarded children.⁶⁰

To argue in this way, of course, begs the question of whether this wider covenantal perspective is valid. Perhaps there are both qualitative and quantitative differences between the OT covenantal arrangements and the new covenant in Christ which classic Reformed theology has not perceived. At this point, however, I do not need to provide a detailed defence of the covenantal paradigm for my argument. For although the overall coherence of paedobaptism is bound up with that paradigm, my gesturing in its direction is intended here comparatively rather than definitively. That is, I am simply attempting to parallel Salter's wider hermeneutical framework with an alternative one as a way of showing that the exegetical parts are capable of contributing to more than one theological whole. There is nothing in the text of Col 2:11–12 itself which renders the covenantal paradigm invalid.

⁵⁷ Sinclair Ferguson, 'Infant Baptism View,' 102–3. Clearly this raises important questions about conditionality in the covenant. For a sensitive treatment, see Robert Rayburn, 'Parental Conditions and the Promise of Grace to the Children of Believers,' in *To You and Your Children: Examining the Biblical Doctrine of Covenant Succession* (ed. Benjamin K. Wikner; Moscow, ID: Canon, 2005), 3–28.

⁵⁸ Paul K. Jewett, 'Baptism (Baptist View),' in *Encyclopedia of Christianity* (4 vols.; ed. Edwin H. Palmer; Wilmington, DE: National Foundation for Christian Education, 1964), 1:520.

⁵⁹ Herbert S. Bird, 'Professor Jewett on Baptism: A Review Article,' *WTJ* 31 (1969): 149.

⁶⁰ For exemplary treatments of why baptism is a sign and seal of faith in Christ yet should include infants within its subjects, see James Bannerman, *The Church of Christ* (2 vols.; 1869; repr.; Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1960), 2:65–120; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Volume 4: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation* (ed. John Bolt; trans. John Vriend; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 521–39.

Indeed, when we consider the data of this text on its own, it is modern forms of credobaptism, not paedobaptism, which actually struggle to align themselves with the exegetical details. Colossians 2:11–12 fits into the NT norm of baptism being part and parcel of conversion as the initiatory rite of the faith. Salter quotes with apparent approval Moo’s position that ‘baptism is the instrument through which we are buried with [Christ],’ and Salter states, ‘for Paul, baptism effects a vital union with Christ.’⁶¹ It is not clear to me what meaning words such as ‘instrument’ and ‘effects’ have in the modern varieties of credobaptism, where baptism is subsequent to conversion, sometimes after several years, and perhaps only following a period of interview and assessment by the leadership of a church. In theological terms, it appears that the covenant sign of justification has become a functional sign of sanctification.

4. Distinguishing the Theological Categories of Sign and the Thing Signified: John Calvin as a Test Case

This final section draws the various strands of my argument together by showing how Salter does not understand the way some of the Reformed texts he cites use ‘replacement’ language. Salter states that he consulted twenty works which appeal to Col 2:11–12 to prove that baptism replaces circumcision, but only one of these provides sustained exegesis, and the aim of his essay is to show that when Col 2:11–12 is examined in detail the replacement motif is seen to be invalid.⁶² On the face of it, this observation is much less significant than it appears. We might just as easily argue that Salter arrives at his view of baptism not replacing circumcision because he does not provide sustained exegesis of the meaning of circumcision in Gen 17 and its OT covenant context. Nevertheless, there is more to be said here about at least one of the figures to whom Salter attributes the common Reformed replacement mistake, namely, John Calvin.

At the start of his essay Salter cites this question from Calvin, where Calvin is referring to Col 2:11–12: ‘What do these words mean, except that the fulfillment and truth of baptism are also the truth and fulfillment of circumcision, since they signify one and the same thing?’⁶³ Salter includes Calvin among those who make the ‘baptism-replaces-circumcision’ claim but who do so without ‘exegetical care.’ This is unfortunate, for it ignores what Calvin says about Col 2:11–12 in his commentary and so fails to see that Calvin also believes that the ultimate fulfillment and replacement of physical circumcision is spiritual circumcision. Here is what Calvin says on Col 2:11:

Let us therefore bear in mind that outward circumcision is here compared with spiritual, just as a figure with the reality. The figure is of something absent; hence it destroys the presence of the reality. What Paul contends for is that, because what was shadowed forth by a circumcision made with hands has been fulfilled in Christ, it now has no fruit or practice. Hence he declares that the circumcision which is made in the heart is ‘the circumcision of Christ,’ and that therefore what is outward is not now required; for

⁶¹ Salter, ‘Baptism,’ 19, quoting Moo, *Romans*, 364.

⁶² Salter, ‘Baptism,’ 16n6.

⁶³ Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.16.11, 1333.

where the reality exists, that shadowy sign vanishes, since it has no place except in the absence of the reality.⁶⁴

Calvin is clear that it is spiritual circumcision which replaces physical circumcision: ‘where the reality exists, that shadowy sign vanishes.’ That reality is not baptism but the circumcision of Christ. This is actually the same meaning as the words Salter quotes above from Calvin’s *Institutes* in 4.16.11, for Calvin does not say there that baptism is the fulfillment and truth of circumcision. Rather he says that the fulfillment and truth of baptism and circumcision *is the same thing*, that is, something other than both of them and which both of them signify. It is obvious that ‘the same thing’ is spiritual circumcision. This much is evident even from the immediate context in *Institutes*, 4.16.11.

It is with this understanding that Calvin brings circumcision and baptism into relationship with each other in his exegesis of Col 2:12: ‘Christ, [Paul] says, accomplishes in us spiritual circumcision, not through means of that ancient sign, which was in force under Moses, but by baptism. Baptism, therefore, is a sign of the thing exhibited, which when it was absent was figured by circumcision.’⁶⁵ This position is the same as the one I argue for above. For Salter, it is *either* spiritual circumcision *or* baptism which replaces physical circumcision. For Reformed paedobaptists, it is *both-and* precisely because of the relationship between the sign and the thing signified.

This means that if we include Calvin in a school of thought which holds that baptism ‘replaces’ circumcision, then we must recognise that such language is a necessary but not sufficient description of his position. It is in this way that the Reformed use supersessionist terminology in relation to circumcision and baptism. Baptism replaces circumcision, not by fulfilling it, but rather by being the new sign of the same thing that both signify. Using replacement language is simply theological shorthand for the fundamental unity of covenant *signs*. It is not intended in the sense of baptism ‘fulfilling’ circumcision nor as a complete description of every aspect of the relationship between the signs. Indeed, Reformed texts state that baptism replaces circumcision *precisely because* they understand that spiritual circumcision fulfills physical circumcision.

That Salter has not understood the way the Reformed understand the terminology of the sign and the thing signified is evidenced in a recurring use of confusing language from the start of his essay and which appears in glaring form in his conclusion, again in relation to Calvin. Here is how Salter introduces his argument:

Second, I will argue that there is a disjunction for Paul between physical and spiritual circumcision, and it is the latter to which Col 2:11 refers. Third, I shall demonstrate that ‘circumcision’ and baptism do not signify precisely the same realities in these verses. This issue is important and relevant for church practice. If baptism replaces circumcision and signifies the same realities, then as a covenant sign it ought to be administered to infants of covenant members. If, however, we can demonstrate that such a link does not exist, it calls into question practices based upon such a connection, to the extent that they rely on Col 2:11–12.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Calvin, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians & Colossians* (Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries 11; ed. D. W. Torrance and T. F. Torrance; trans. T. H. L. Parker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 331–32.

⁶⁵ Calvin, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians & Colossians*, 332.

⁶⁶ Salter, ‘Baptism,’ 16.

In the first sentence Salter speaks of physical and spiritual circumcision, but in the second sentence ‘circumcision’ appears in quotation marks. The quotation marks are a way of showing that the word ‘circumcision’ is capable of more than one meaning and that on one understanding of the word—*spiritual* circumcision—baptism and ‘circumcision’ do not signify the same realities. This denotation matters because in the fourth sentence above Salter says, ‘If baptism replaces circumcision and signifies the same realities . . . ’; so I understand him here to have reverted to speaking about physical circumcision again.

This makes Salter’s outline of his own argument confusing. It takes the paedobaptist premise (baptism replaces circumcision and signifies the same realities) and refracts it through Salter’s exegetical lens (*spiritual* circumcision and baptism do not signify the same realities), with the result that he changes the terms of the debate. None of the paedobaptist examples Salter cites claim that spiritual circumcision and baptism signify the same realities, so it is not clear who he is speaking to when he argues that they do not signify the same realities. All those texts say that physical circumcision and baptism signify the same realities (spiritual circumcision among them even though it is not exhaustive of them).

Salter’s way of construing things causes him to misrepresent the paedobaptist position in his conclusion. His exegesis ‘shows that spiritual circumcision and baptism do not signify precisely the same realities,’ and here Salter states that this position is contra Calvin, again citing *Institutes*, 4.16.11.⁶⁷ If Salter is referring to the same quotation given earlier from Calvin (‘What do these words mean, except that the fulfillment and truth of baptism are also the truth and fulfillment of circumcision, since they signify one and the same thing?’), then the error is obvious. For Calvin does not say that spiritual circumcision and baptism do signify precisely the same realities, nor could he have said anything like this within the terms of his theology because it contains a fundamental confusion about the sign and thing signified. As we have seen, Calvin’s position is that spiritual circumcision *is the thing signified* by baptism, and it is inimical to his thinking to talk of spiritual circumcision ‘signifying’ when used in relation to the language of baptism. Physical circumcision and water baptism, for Calvin, are the entities which do the signifying; what they signify is spiritual circumcision, which is the truth and fulfillment of both.

The only conclusion I can draw is that in using terms the ways he does, Salter has not grasped the paedobaptist understanding of the relationship of physical circumcision and baptism to the shared reality of what they signify. He does see, however, that ‘If baptism replaces circumcision and signifies the same realities, then as a covenant sign it ought to be administered to infants of covenant members,’⁶⁸ and there is nothing in the text of Col 2:11–12 which tells against this conclusion.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶⁹ I am very grateful to Jonathan Gibson, Bradley Green, Ian Hamilton, Martin Salter, Stephen Wellum, and Garry Williams for their comments on a previous draft of this essay.

Response to David Gibson

— Martin Salter —

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I was very grateful to David for sending me a copy of his essay before publication. It displayed great grace and charity in a discussion which can sometimes generate more heat than light. I have genuinely enjoyed reading his essay, and it has prompted me to think again and work harder at what the Bible actually says, which is always edifying.

In particular I appreciate his careful exegesis of Gen 17 (though I have some questions remaining) and his more nuanced link between the physical and spiritual aspects of the covenant and rite in the OT. It is particularly informative.

David also helpfully shows the ways in which spiritual circumcision is anticipated in physical circumcision and celebrated in baptism. It is at this point where our hermeneutical frameworks take us in different directions. Space does not permit an articulation of Reformed Baptist covenant theology, but suffice to say we would disagree on a number of the details. For example, the physical nature of the old covenant seems downplayed—it is interesting to observe that the covenant relationship as it pertains to Ishmael in Gen 17 is overlooked. Further, one would want to ask, “What is new about the new covenant? Is it possible to be in the old covenant yet not be saved? Is that possible in the new?” Frustratingly at one point categories of covenant and salvation are confused such that entry into the covenant, and entry into salvation, are presented as the same thing, which in the old covenant they clearly are not (see notes 58–59).

Finally, it is asserted that the exegetical case proposed in my article is a mere molehill. I fear that the nuance of the exegesis presented in my original article may have been lost among my admittedly, at times, confusing efforts. To recap: circumcision points toward the need for spiritual circumcision; baptism signifies and celebrates the spiritual circumcision realized—and more—i.e., burial and resurrection. As such, as David almost confesses in one or two places, the realities indexed to the sign are not *precisely* the same. I agree with this last sentiment. We still need to flesh out what some of those are and the implications thereof.

As David states, “Circumcision teaches that physical descent from Abraham is not sufficient to make true Israelites” (citing Vos). Try replacing the words ‘circumcision,’ ‘Abraham,’ and ‘Israelites’ with ‘baptism,’ ‘Christian parents,’ and ‘people of God.’ The NT would nowhere support such a statement regarding baptism.

I appreciate David’s critique of Baptist practice: we are guilty of often divorcing the sign from the thing signified, and we do often make people jump through some unnecessary hoops. But let’s be honest: we’re all credo-baptists really (at least those of us who are Reformed); it is simply that my paedo-baptist friends remove it a generation. This in turn prompts a further question on the relationship between baptism and circumcision. Does the faith of the Israelite’s parent have any bearing on his entitlement to the sign? In other words, should an unregenerate Israelite have his son circumcised? If so, why?

That question, for the Baptist, reveals the difference between the old and new covenant and, therefore, between the signs of the old and new covenant.

All of that said, I applaud David's early citation of Wilson: "Which is greater? The gold on the altar, or the altar which sanctified the gold? Which is greater? The sign of the covenant, or the covenant itself?" Amen.

Telling the Story from the Bible? How Story Bibles Work

— David A. Shaw —

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Is it stating the obvious to say that a children's bible is not a Bible?¹ Perhaps. After all, a moment's reflection reveals they are not the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible. They omit entire genres and books, and they add a great deal, not least copious and captivating illustrations. On the other hand the confidence we have in them suggests that we receive them as something like God's Word. It says it is a bible on the front, and it tells all the best stories; so nothing to fear here. How else are we to explain the almost complete lack of resources to evaluate these works, even though they have been in production for centuries and are read as widely as any other form of Christian literature in the home and are deeply formative for their young audiences? And yet serious reflection on children's bibles, academic or otherwise, is hard to come by.² When, for example, was the last time you heard a thoughtful review of a children's bible at a church service? Where are the resources to help parents, should they find the time (and they should!) to read one carefully, away from the whirlwind of a bedtime routine, with a Bible in the other hand? Academic disdain for children's literature may play a role, but I suspect for the most part that people do not examine children's bibles because they assume that they are safe. The result is not just that in some cases children are exposed to deeply unhelpful material; (1) it leaves parents without any real guidance as to the strengths and weaknesses of story bibles, which are as numerous as they are in any other Christian book, and (2) the complexity of these works goes unnoticed and their potential unfulfilled.

In particular, the impact of story bible artwork on children goes unnoticed—an impact that my five-year-old daughter's recent prayer expresses: "Dear God, thank you that you show us in the Bible all the pictures that you did." Help is at hand, however, in the flourishing field of children's literature studies that offers analytical tools for visual, as well as textual, narratives.³ Such studies highlight what

¹To avoid ambiguity, children's bibles will be referred to as 'story bibles,' 'children's bibles' or 'bibles' (lowercase) and the Christian Scriptures as 'the Bible' (uppercase) or 'Scripture'.

²Reviews of children's bibles cannot be found in academic journals, either of children's literature or evangelical theology, with the exception of Andrew David Naselli and Jennifer J. Naselli, "Theology for Kids: Recommending Some Recent Books for Younger Children," *Them* 33:3 (2008): 119–24, available at <http://thegospelcoalition.org/publications/33-3/book-reviews/theology-for-kids>. But even this offers only uncritical and extremely brief reviews of three story bibles. For representative popular level reviews, see Alison Mitchell, "Choosing a Bible for Children," n.p., available at <http://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/choosing-a-childrens-bible> (cited July 11, 2012); Naomi Ireland, "Children's Bible Review," n.p., available at <http://www.youthworks.net/index.php?s=&c=24&d=861&e=&f=&g=&a=1178&w=7003&r=Y> (cited 7th September 2010).

³The field of children's literature studies has grown significantly since the 1980's with several key works focusing on the analysis of illustrations, e.g., Perry Nodelman, *Words about Pictures: The Narrative Art of Chil-*

ought to be obvious: pictures in books designed for young children truly are worth a thousand words, influencing how a child interprets a story. These tools, however, require calibrating for use with children's bibles since their focus is almost entirely on the relationship between word and image *within* a picture book. Children's bibles, on the other hand, involve a more intricate web of relationships. As a "bible," it stands in some relation to the biblical text *behind* it; as an illustrated work, it contains *within* itself a marriage (happy or otherwise) of word and image; and as a work of religious instruction, it is shaped by presuppositions regarding the nature and needs of the child *in front* of it.

This last point needs a disclaimer. This article is not overly prescriptive about what a story bible *ought* to do. The reasons for this are several. (1) It will take the length of this article just to establish *what* story bibles do—how they work—and this is an essential step. Only once we are equipped to see what a story bible is doing can we decide whether it is doing what we think it ought to do. (2) I am not sure there is a definitive answer to the question of what a story bible ought to do. Put another way, there is no perfect story bible awaiting publication; rather we should think of them like commentaries or bible translations: the best choice depends upon who it is for and in what context they use it. (3) There is a place for variety especially in the case of story bibles because many families will have several which they use in rotation and find that children at different ages and stages are able to appreciate different approaches. (4) Reflecting upon the broader question of what it means to bring children up 'in the instruction of the Lord' (in which story bibles play a small role) will certainly include the importance of biblical literacy, a personal response to the gospel, the formation of a Christian worldview and character, and more besides, but theological and denominational differences will cause the emphasis to fall in different places. It is important for you the reader to know what you want a story bible to do; this article may help you decide if a story bible is doing that. (5) Even if there is still work to be done, resources are available to help us come to a view on these wider questions,⁴ but, to my knowledge, no attempt has been made to lay bare the complexity of these books that seem so simple.⁵

This article, therefore, seeks to make two advances: (1) to integrate disciplines that have previously been kept apart by drawing literary and especially visual narrative theories into the conversation; and (2) to offer a more comprehensive model for evaluating story bibles by highlighting the significance of four relationships:

dren's Picture Books (Athens: University of Georgia, 1988), and M. Nikoleva and C. Scott, *How Picturebooks Work* (New York: Garland, 2001). A recent work, synthesising these and others is Vasiliki Labitsi, "How Illustrations Tell Stories: Proposing an Analytical Tool for the Study of the Visual in Children's Literature," *The Journal of Children's Literature Studies* 6:1 (2009): 52–73. §§2–4 apply Labitsi's model to story bibles.

⁴In no particular order and by no means exhaustively, the works of Tedd Tripp helpfully emphasise formative instruction and heart-centred discipline: *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd, 1995); *Instructing a Child's Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd, 2008). Daniel J. Estes rightly highlights the significance of wisdom literature in constructing a biblical pedagogy in *Hear, My Son: Teaching and Learning in Proverbs 1–9* (New Studies in Biblical Theology; Leicester: Apollos, 1997). There is also an increasing appreciation of educational approaches such as that of classical Christian education, e.g., Dorothy Sayers's classic essay "The Lost Tools of Learning" (1947), or the related approach of the British educationalist Charlotte Mason.

⁵Three suggestive articles are Russell W. Dalton, "Perfect Prophets, Helpful Hippos, and Happy Endings: Noah and Jonah in Children's Bible Storybooks in the United States," *RelEd* 102 (2007): 298–313; Alan Jacobs, "A Bible Fit for Children," *First Things* 73 (May 1997): 22–27, available at <http://www.leaderu.com/ftissues/ft9705/articles/jacobs.html> (cited 26 November 2010); and Francis Landy, "Noah's Ark and Mrs Monkey," *BibInt* 15 (2007): 351–76. Taken together these highlight many of the problems and pitfalls of story bibles, but they do not explore their complexity or offer tools for their analysis.

1. The text of a story bible and Scripture
2. The images of a story bible and Scripture
3. Word and image within a story bible
4. The story bible and the child⁶

We give illustrations, textual and visual, from the story of the fall in Genesis, drawn from surveying over fifty children's bibles.⁷ Focusing on this one biblical narrative offers some welcome limits, given the limitations of space. We conclude by suggesting ways that the substance of this article can help assess story bibles, and a forthcoming review article in *Themelios* will reflect on two or three recent and popular children's bibles.

The narrative of the fall commends itself for several reasons. (1) It allows for a wide coverage of story bibles since nearly all include it.⁸ (2) It is clearly significant, standing as it does at the beginning of Scripture and setting salvation history in motion. As Bottigheimer notes, "profound and enduringly important relationships are established in these opening chapters of the canonical Bible: God and humanity, women and men, good and evil, knowledge and innocence, language and suffering."⁹ (3) The biblical narrative is so enigmatic that nearly every story bible feels the need to fill out and interpret the events and to set them in the wider context of Scripture in ways that lay bare many of their presuppositions. As such it allows us to observe the importance of a story bible's treatment of a narrative in isolation and its attempt to set it in a wider biblical context.

1. Did God Really Say . . . ? The Relationship between Story-bible Text and Scripture

The first task then is to ask how the text of a story bible relates to the biblical text it claims to summarise and explain. There are two parts to this question: (1) How does the story bible's version of any given story relate to the details of the specific passage(s) where that story occurs in the Bible? (2) How does the story bible relate that story, if at all, to the Bible's wider story? That is, does it connect individual narratives together as Scripture does, by highlighting, among other things, the fulfilment of types and promises? These two aspects of the question will be addressed in turn in what follows.

⁶Unless we distinguish the terms, this essay uses 'child' and 'reader' synonymously, although in the case of younger children an adult will often be the reader, the child the hearer, and both viewers of the picture books.

⁷Broadly, the bibles discussed are intended for English speaking children aged 0–12 and make some claim to be 'bibles' (as opposed to treatments of only one narrative, e.g., Noah), but they offer less than the full biblical text. See the appendix for a full list of the story bibles this article cites.

⁸Several aimed at the youngest children, however, choose to omit it. E.g., Sally Lloyd-Jones, *Tiny Bear's Bible* (illus. Igor Oleynikov; Carlisle: Candle, 2008); Maggie Barfield, *The Little Bible Storybook* (illus. Mark Carpenter and Anna Carpenter; Milton Keynes: Scripture Union, 2007); Sarah Toulmin, *Baby Bible* (illus. Kristina Stephenson; Oxford: Lion, 2006); Carolyn Nabors Baker and Cindy Helms, *The Beginners Bible for Toddlers* (illus. Danny Brooks Dalby; Dallas: Word, 1995).

⁹Ruth B. Bottigheimer, "Children's Bibles as a Form of Folk Narrative," in *Folk Narrative and Cultural Identity: 9th Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research 1989* (ed. Vilmos Voigt; Budapest: Loránd Eötvös University, 1995), 187.

1.1. Story Bible and the Story in the Bible

In the course of discussing an 18th century children's bible Bottigheimer outlines four possible changes to the biblical text which are helpfully concise and comprehensive, namely omission, addition, reformulation, and transposition.¹⁰

1.1.1. Omission

Even those story bibles which disavow the additions and emendations of others have omitted a great deal of biblical material, indeed whole genres, as a brief survey of any contents page will reveal. As Alan Jacobs observes, "some decisions come, as it were, pre-made: no ceremonial law, no prophecy, no apostolic theology, no apocalyptic visions."¹¹ Nor do the historical books survive intact, for they are heavily edited, and the common criterion for inclusion is apparently that they must either be about children or exciting to them.¹² Should Jesus' teaching about children really be so prominent at the expense of teaching about judgment or humility or self-righteousness? Would the NT support the view that if a child needs to know one thing about David, it is that he knew what to do with a slingshot?

There are, therefore, descending degrees of omission: whole genres, whole narratives, and details within narratives. In treatments of Gen 3, several omitted details are striking. Some, generally the shorter accounts, omit the character of the serpent entirely, any detail of the temptation, or any mention of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. One simply states, "Adam and Eve did something God told them not to do. So God had to punish them. He sent them away from their home in the Garden of Eden."¹³

The effect of this is to transform a failure to believe what creation has so clearly demonstrated—the goodness of God and the power and truth of his Word—into a generic act of disobedience. Consequently, in numerous children's bibles, the fall does not explain what is wrong with humanity and the wider creation but is merely a cautionary tale on the importance of obedience, later complemented by positive examples such as Noah and Abraham.¹⁴ To be sure Gen 3 has both explanatory and exemplary power (it

¹⁰ "An Alternative Eve in Johann Hübner's Children's Bible," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 16.2 (1991): 75.

¹¹ Jacobs, "A Bible Fit for Children," 26. Perhaps the most baffling omission in story bibles is the book of Proverbs since (1) much of it explicitly aims to instruct children, (2) it is easily memorized, and (3) it is an illustrator's dream, full of vivid and often comic images. This omission is partly made up for by the excellent (but unillustrated) Peter Leithart, *Wise Words: Family Stories That Bring the Proverbs to Life* (3rd ed.; Moscow, ID: Canon, 2003).

¹² This surely explains the most ubiquitous of stories—baby Moses, David and Goliath (where David's youth is often exaggerated or at least emphasised), the calling of Samuel, Jesus at the Temple, the healing of Jairus' daughter, and any story that allows copious illustrations of smiling anthropomorphised animals. Thus story bible writers and illustrators reverse the actor's maxim about never working with children and animals!

¹³ Kenneth N. Taylor, *My First Bible in Pictures* (illus. John Dillow; 2004; repr., Carlisle: Candle, 2006), 10. Cf. Taylor's earlier *My First Bible in Pictures* (illus. Richard Hook and Frances Hook; Wheaton: Tyndale, 1989; repr., Carlisle: Candle, 2001), n.p.: "Adam and Eve are very sorry and sad. They did something God told them not to do. Now God is punishing them. They must go away from their nice home in the Garden of Eden." (In order to distinguish these titles of the same name, we will always list the date when citing them.) In Christina Goodings, *My Little Bible Board Book* (illus. Melanie Mitchell; Chester: Marks and Spencer, 2007), n.p., there is God's instruction regarding the tree but no mention of the snake or the temptation scene.

¹⁴ E.g., Baker and Helms (*The Beginners Bible for Toddlers*) begin the Noah story, "As the world got older, people became very bad. God found one good man" (22); further, "Abraham was a good man. He lived in a place

says to us “this is how the world came to be like this” *and* “this is how not to treat your Creator”), but this emphasis in story bibles on obedience tends towards a moralism alien to the Bible. In particular, several story bibles describe the events of Gen 3 in ways that echo how children disobey: Adam and Eve did something God told them not to do, broke a promise, or touched something they ought not have touched. The moral(istic) lesson seems clear: make sure you obey, or you might be sent away.

If one tendency is to omit details of Gen 3 in order to emphasise obedience in the abstract, another is to omit a detail which emphasises God’s grace. The biblical narrative balances God’s being true to his word—they will die—with his providing for and making promises to the fallen Adam and Eve. Yet many story bibles omit any reference to God’s clothing Adam and Eve with animal skins (Gen 3:21) or promising one to come who will crush the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15).¹⁵ The result is a distorted view of God, for much is lost if it is not clear that the same God who pronounces curses also makes promises. All of which is to say that in the writing of story bibles, as in life, it is possible to sin by omission.

1.1.2. *Addition*

Story bibles add to Scripture at several levels. First, even those bibles that take their text verbatim from Scripture add headings to chapters or sections, following the example of most contemporary English Bible translations.¹⁶ The ways story bibles title Gen 3 create quite different expectations: “The Serpent in the Garden,”¹⁷ “Adam and Eve Disobey God,”¹⁸ “Eve’s Temptation,”¹⁹ “The Terrible Lie,”²⁰ or “A Very Sad Day.”²¹

Second, some additions imaginatively supply extra information. For example, story bibles customarily describe the Garden of Eden in greater detail than Genesis does.²² At this level the judgments are largely ones of taste. Russell W. Dalton objects to filling any gaps where the biblical writer invites the reader to use their imagination, but this is not sustainable within the picture book genre, for the possibility of

called Haran. And he loved God very much” (28). While the introduction to Noah has a clear resonance with Gen 6:9 (“Noah was a righteous man”), Gen 12:1 introduces Abraham without any such commendation, which in part allows Paul to offer Abraham as a paradigm for the justification of the *ungodly* in Rom 4:1–25.

¹⁵ E.g., Paul J. Loth, *My First Study Bible: Exploring God’s Word on My Own* (Nashville: Nelson, 1994); V. Gilbert Beers, *The Toddlers Bible* (illus. Carol Boerke; Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor, 1992); the works of Taylor cited above.

¹⁶ Those that take their text directly from Scripture include *Tomie dePaolo’s Book of Bible Stories* (illus. Tomie dePaolo; New York: Putnam; Zondervan, 1990); Doris Rikkers and Jean E. Syswerda, eds., *Read with Me Bible: A Story Bible for Children* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993; repr., Carlisle: Candle, 1998). Both employ the NIV.

¹⁷ *The Children’s Bible in Colour: The Old and New Testaments* (1964; repr., London: Paul Hamlyn, 1965), 18.

¹⁸ *Tomie dePaolo’s Book of Bible Stories*, 15; Rikkers and Syswerda, *Read with Me Bible*, 14.

¹⁹ Fiona Tulloch, ed., *The Children’s Bible: Illustrated Stories from the Old and New Testaments* (2007; repr., London: Arcturus, 2008), 12.

²⁰ Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, n.p.

²¹ David Helm, *The Big Picture Story Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 37.

²² E.g., Jenny Robertson, *In the Beginning* (illus. Alan Parry; Ladybird Bible Books 1; Loughborough: Ladybird, 1978), n.p.: “God placed man in a beautiful garden . . . he saw flowers so beautiful that he stretched out his hands to touch them. Sounds came to his ears: the glad songs of many birds, and the sound of running water.” Cf. Anne de Vries, *Story Bible for Young Children* (illus. Hermine F. Schäfer; trans. Baukje Gray and David Rudston; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 10.

adding nothing to the biblical text disappears the moment one sets a picture next to it.²³ Dalton rightly highlights, however, a danger: additions may become so commonplace that story bible and Scripture merge. He observes, to the surprise of many, that Gen 6 does not mention Noah's neighbours mocking him or animals entering the ark two by two.²⁴ It is therefore important to observe how and with what success story bibles distinguish Scripture from their own text. Some story bibles have apparatus such as text boxes that quote Scripture.²⁵ Luther's solution was to conclude most phrases with 'etc.' by which he signified a fuller text behind his own, an approach that hardly lends itself to reading aloud but demonstrates a healthy intent.²⁶

A third area of addition concerns the emotions of actors about which the biblical text is silent. Most prominent in the case of the fall is that some story bibles ascribe emotions to God when Gen 3 says nothing of his emotional state.²⁷ Genesis 3 does not describe God as angry or sad or grieved. That kind of language comes in Gen 6:6, but it is notably absent from the earlier passage. As a result the focus falls upon the measured way in which God interrogates and passes sentences upon the other actors.²⁸ Story bibles, however, frequently omit the variegated curses and in their place report on how God feels:

God was angry because they had broken their promise.²⁹

God grew very angry and put a curse on the serpent.³⁰

Filled with anger God punished Adam and Eve.³¹

His voice sounded both angry and very sad.³²

²³ Dalton, "Perfect Prophets, Helpful Hippos, and Happy Endings," 299–300.

²⁴ The text of story bibles have probably popularised the former, illustrations the latter.

²⁵ E.g., Starr Meade, *Mighty Acts and God: A Family Bible Story Book* (illus. Tim O'Connor; Wheaton: Crossway, 2010); Tulloch, *The Children's Bible*.

²⁶ For example, "God commanded Adam and said/ You shall eat from all trees in the garden/ But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat etc. The serpent spoke to the woman/ On no account will you die/ rather God knows/ when you eat thereof/ so shall you immediately be like God etc." (translated by Alex Richardson from the German cited in Bottigheimer, "Martin Luther's Children's Bible," 155).

²⁷ We could also mention the frequent addition that God created Eve because Adam was lonely. E.g., Tulloch, *The Children's Bible*, 13; Juliet David, *Candle Bible for Toddlers* (illus. Helen Prole; 2006; repr., Carlisle: Candle, 2007), 19. One story bible even adds that God created humanity because *he* was lonely: "God needed someone he could love and be close to. So he made Adam and Eve to be his friends and take care of his earth" (Mary Batchelor, *My First Bedtime Bible* [Milton Keynes: Authentic, 2006], 12).

²⁸ The order in which God judges the serpent, Eve, and Adam highlights the way in which the created order has been inverted, but it also reflects the measured way in which God deals judgment.

²⁹ James Harrison, *My Very First Bible* (illus. Diana Mayo; London: Dorling Kindersley, 2005), 13.

³⁰ Bridget Hadaway and Jean Atcheson, *The Bible for Children* (London: Octopus, 1973; repr., London: Cathay, 1983), 13.

³¹ Tulloch, *The Children's Bible*, 13.

³² deVries, *Story Bible for Young Children*, 13.

Terrible pain came into God's heart. His children had just broken the one rule; they had broken God's heart.³³

What is the effect of such additions? At one level they are unobjectionable, provided that the story bibles make some attempt to distinguish this as embellishing the biblical text. This does, however, raise literary and theological questions.

In literary terms, there is a rhetorical purpose in maintaining silence as to an actor's emotions. It provides a gap that invites the reader to supply the emotions that the text may later confirm as appropriate or subverted.³⁴ In the case of Gen 3, the gap invites the reader to feel for themselves the horror of what has happened: God's generosity and goodness doubted and disputed without justification. The question, then, concerns method, and story bible authors should at least be sufficiently conversant with the Bible's narrational strategies to justify an alternative approach.

Theologically, one might also ask which of these accounts of God's emotions is closest to those that the biblical narrative evokes. How does Scripture suggest that God feels about the rebellion of his creatures? And what vocabulary might best capture those emotions for the young reader?

Fourth, some additions do not merely embellish but actually distort the biblical narrative. For example, a number of versions of the fall describe Eve's approaching or desiring the fruit even before the serpent appears, incriminating Eve by varying degrees:

While Eve was looking at the special tree, a snake spoke to her.³⁵

One day she goes alone to the tree and gazes at the forbidden fruit.³⁶

One day the woman wandered on her own until she came to a beautiful tree she had never seen before. . . . as she looked longingly at the fruit she heard a rustle among the leaves.³⁷

³³ Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, 33.

³⁴ As John H. Sailhamer argues, "the author of the Pentateuch has left the reader virtually alone with the events of the story. He does not reflect or comment on the events that transpired. We, the readers, are left to ourselves and our sense of the story for an answer to the questions it raises" (*The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992], 102). For further chapter-length discussions of this technique, see Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories* (trans. John Bowden; Paris: Cerf, 1998; repr., London: SCM, 1999), 129–39; Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 186–229.

³⁵ Betty Fletcher, *My Very Own Bible* (illus. Lou Police; Eugene: Harvest, 1991; repr., Carlisle: Candle, 1993), 14.

³⁶ Iva Hoth, *The Picture Bible* (illus. Andre Le Blanc; 1978; repr., Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor, 1998), 19.

³⁷ Robertson, *In the Beginning*, n.p. In an interesting redactive process, when the *Ladybird Bible Books* were lightly revised and bound together in the *Ladybird Bible Story Book*, the language of longing is delayed until the serpent has spoken; only then does Eve "long to taste some" (Jenny Robertson, *The Ladybird Bible Story Book* [illus. Alan Parry; Loughborough: Ladybird, 1983], 11). The same process changes Eve's hair colour from blonde to brunette!

The last two examples are not alone in having Eve “on her own” at the moment of temptation. This is more reformulating than adding since Gen 3:6 reveals that Adam has been present with Eve, albeit silent and culpably so.³⁸ And so with that we turn to the significance of reformulations.

1.1.3. Reformulation

This focuses not on merely what story bibles add but what they alter. We have just seen how two story bibles deviate from Scripture by saying that Eve was alone at the tree; two further examples will suffice.

In the first, modesty in the face of some of the darker OT themes motivates a typical reformulation. One story bible has Adam and Eve covering themselves with leaves not because they knew they were naked and felt ashamed but because “it was now the cool of the day.”³⁹

The second example reveals inattention to the subtlety of the biblical text. According to Gen 3:1, the first question the serpent asks Eve is, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” In light of God’s invitation to eat from any tree in the garden *except* the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, this attempts to make God out to be less generous than he is. This theologically significant point is lost on many children’s bibles that offer alternative questions:

Did God tell you not to eat of the tree in the middle of the garden?⁴⁰

Did God really tell you not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?⁴¹

Did God say you could eat the fruit of all the trees?⁴²

1.1.4. Transposition

Transposition involves the right elements of the biblical narrative but not necessarily in the right order. A significant example from the fall narrative is God’s promising that one of Eve’s descendants will crush the serpent’s head. Some story bibles omit all reference to God’s promise and provision to his now sinful creatures (see §1.1.1). Others transpose the promise to the end of the retelling so that the narrative concludes more positively than in Scripture. *The Jesus Storybook Bible* not only does this but

³⁸ Also the plural verb forms by which the snake addresses Eve imply Adam’s presence. See Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis* (2 vols.; NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 1:188. Adam’s culpability in God’s eyes is clear from how (1) Gen 3:9 explicitly calls “the man” (not Eve) to account and (2) Gen 3:24 explicitly expels “the man” (not Eve).

³⁹ Anne Edwards, *A Child’s Bible in Colour: The Old Testament* (illus. Charles Front and David Christian; London: Wolfe, 1969; repr., London: Pan, 1973), 7. It is just possible that shame remains the motive here for Adam and Eve if they clothed themselves because they knew that ‘the cool of the day’ was when God habitually walked the garden, but a young audience is unlikely to conclude anything other than that they were cold, and Edwards makes no other reference to God’s habit or its timing.

⁴⁰ Arthur W. Gross, *A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories* (illus. Rod Taenzer; Saint Louis: Concordia, 1948), 6.

⁴¹ Tulloch, *The Children’s Bible*, 13.

⁴² Heather Amery, *The Usborne Children’s Bible* (illus. Linda Edwards; London: Usborne, 2000), 8. Helm’s *The Big Picture Story Bible* rightly catches the import of the serpent’s question (“He told them to doubt God’s goodness” [38]), but (I am sure unintentionally!) it strengthens the serpent’s case by mentioning only God’s prohibition regarding the Tree of Knowledge and not his permission to eat from all the other trees. This makes God appear less generous than he is.

also recasts the exclusion from the garden as a purely protective measure on God's part, for Adam and Eve's hearts

would break now, and never work properly again. God couldn't let his children live forever, not in such pain, not without him. There was only one way to protect them. "You will have to leave my garden now," God told his children, his eyes filling with tears.⁴³

That this language is so reminiscent of a love story is no accident, for it is in those terms that Sally Lloyd-Jones conceives salvation history.⁴⁴ Thus, the various changes evident in her treatment of the fall relate not so much to her view of that story *in* the Bible but to her view of the story *of* the Bible. Nor is she alone, for many story bibles claim to present not many stories but one story, and this shapes how they retell each narrative. Although they achieve this by combinations of additions, omissions, reformulations, and transpositions, attempts to relate a narrative to the bigger picture are so significant that they deserve separate treatment, and to this we now turn.

1.2. Story Bibles and the Story of the Bible

As much as it is a recent trend for children's bibles to disavow collections of unrelated stories that fail to discern a unifying metanarrative,⁴⁵ the thought is not new. Jesse Lyman Hurlbut's story bible of 1932 is subtitled *One Hundred Sixty-eight Stories, Forming a Continuous Narrative of the Holy Scripture from Genesis to Revelation*.⁴⁶ Given that this is a longstanding approach and a resurgent one today, any evaluation of story bibles must assess how they relate (or fail to relate) individual narratives to a wider context.

There is naturally a spectrum of approaches. In the case of the fall, the briefer versions, intended for the youngest children, make no effort to relate those events to salvation history.

The first hint of such an approach comes with the serpent, which story bibles frequently identify with Satan although Gen 3 is silent on the matter; only later biblical texts make that link (e.g., Rev 12:9). Some apparently mention Satan only to explain the phenomenon of a talking animal, but others are keen to establish him as an antagonist in the unfolding drama: "Satan crept into God's beautiful garden looking like a snake. Satan hated God. Satan wanted to be God."⁴⁷ *The Jesus Storybook Bible* is even more Miltonian: "God had a horrible enemy. His name was Satan. Satan had once been the most beautiful

⁴³ Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, 34.

⁴⁴ "The Bible isn't a book of rules, or a book of heroes. The Bible is most of all a Story. It's an adventure story . . . It's a love story" (Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, 17).

⁴⁵ E.g., Meade, *Mighty Acts and God* emphasises that we should trace a single covenant of grace from Genesis to Revelation. Helm's *The Big Picture Story Bible* expresses and demonstrates a debt to Graeme Goldsworthy's Bible-overview material, following the fortunes and failings of God's people living in God's place under God's rule (13). Lloyd-Jones acknowledges the influence of Tim Keller's christocentric hermeneutic from which she admits to have "liberally borrowed" (*The Jesus Storybook Bible*, 7); that Lloyd-Jones weaves this thread throughout the whole story bible is evident in the subtitle: *Every Story Whispers His Name*.

⁴⁶ Hurlbut, *Hurlbut's Story of the Bible*.

⁴⁷ Helm, *The Big Picture Story Bible*, 38.

angel, but he didn't want to be just an angel—he wanted to be God. He grew proud and evil and full of hate, and God had to send him out of heaven.”⁴⁸

Related to the enmity between Satan and God is the promised conflict between the serpent and the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15). Some story bibles transpose the promise to the end of their narrative (see §1.1.4 above), and those that do generally treat it more fully. While most, in keeping with the Bible, allow the promise to be somewhat enigmatic, others give away the ending, naming Christ and some explaining his life and work in some detail.⁴⁹

Finally, there is the issue of the ongoing effect of the fall. Theologically, these effects include the corruption of human nature, indeed of all nature, and the incursion of wrath, as a result of which the fall becomes both the once-for-all descent into sin and an event that the history of Israel in particular and humanity in general constantly recapitulate.⁵⁰ Some story bibles take time to explain these things by adding commentary to their account of the fall. Others, truer to the strategy of the biblical narrative, make the point by highlighting how Israel repeats the fall throughout history. This is an undoubted strength of *The Big Picture Story Bible*, which, for example, describes the exile as another expulsion from God's garden/land: “Do you remember when God sent Adam and Eve away from him out of the garden? Well, God was doing it again. He was sending his people out of his place because of their sin.”⁵¹

These then are the contours of the relationship between story-bible text and Scripture. At this stage the picture is incomplete, but we have clarified one aspect of the task of assessing story bibles: we must ask how the text of a story bible relates to the biblical text it claims to represent and what any addition, omission, reformulation, or transposition achieves, either in retelling the passage or relating it to a wider narrative. If nothing else, we hope that the reader is persuaded that the text of story bibles can be good or ill. Subtly changing the details of biblical narratives and relating details to the rest of Scripture will shape how a child forms their first thoughts of God's character, how their life relates to his purposes,

⁴⁸ Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, 28.

⁴⁹ Those that explicitly mention Jesus include Anne deVries, *The Children's Bible: Bible Stories Simply Told* (Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 1996); Carine Mackenzie, *The Christian Focus Story Bible* (illus. Kevin Kimber; Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2004), 14; Catherine F. Vos, *The Child's Story Bible* (6th ed.; 1940; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 9–10; Gross, *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*, 9–10. Vos and Gross give new subtitles or chapters to the promise of salvation, further emphasizing it. The open endings of some biblical narratives are a particularly powerful form of narrative gap (e.g., giving the reader only as much information as the disciples in Mark 16 and leaving the reader to piece together what occurred or asking the reader how they would answer God's question in Jonah 4). Genesis 3 is open-ended: it hints at hope, but that hope is as yet insubstantial; supplying more information this early relieves tension that the biblical text builds and then relieves only at the end. For a survey of how story bibles omit or reformulate the ending of Jonah, see Dalton, “Perfect Prophets, Helpful Hippos, and Happy Endings,” 306–8.

⁵⁰ Romans is a case in point: 1:18–32 describes Gentile idolatry in ways that both echo Israel's idolatry and suggest that all such sin recapitulates the fall, whereas 5:12–21 focuses on Adam's transgression as a watershed moment, matched and overcome only by Christ's obedience.

⁵¹ Helm, *The Big Picture Story Bible*, 208–9. *The Big Picture Story Bible* borrows its scheme from Graeme Goldsworthy, who arranges his Bible-overview materials under the headings people, place, and rule (see Graeme Goldsworthy, *The Goldsworthy Trilogy: Gospel and Kingdom, Gospel and Wisdom, The Gospel in Revelation* [2000; repr., Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003], 51–57). What we must ask, however, is whether Helm ever imposes that scheme on the biblical text. For example, Helm introduces the Goliath episode with the statement that the Philistines “ruled over God's people” (158). Judges 14:4 says that the Philistines ruled over Israel in the time of Samson, but this language is absent from 1 Samuel; Helm presumably imports it to sustain the theme.

and to what end he has given us his word. §2 turns to the artwork of story bibles, which, at least for younger readers, has even greater power to shape these first impressions.

2. More Than Meets the Eye? The Relationship between Story-bible Art and Scripture

A Bible for Children should be copiously illustrated. . . . For preference, the illustrations . . . should highlight the main theme of the relevant passages and, if possible, give some extra information as well.⁵²

A moment's thought will reveal what complications might ensue from following Harm Hollander's advice. How does one illustrate the "main theme" of the fall? If there is space for one illustration, what should it be: a snake in a tree, Eve eating a fruit, Eve offering a fruit to Adam, angels and flaming swords? What "extra information" should be given? How should it be divided between word and text? Then there is the impossibility of not giving a great deal of "extra information." Genesis is silent on the age and appearance of Adam and Eve, on what kind of fruit it was, and whether the snake was in the tree; yet in the act of illustration, one must make these judgments.

Furthermore, any experience of reading a story bible with children will establish the importance of those judgments. The images far more than the wording on the page holds attention and provokes questions. The images are also a more fixed aspect of the books. Theological preferences, the constraints of time, the low ebbing of energy at bedtime, and the comprehension-level of the child may motivate parents to edit and reformulate the text. The picture, however, remains a stubborn presence.

Therefore, their theological and aesthetic evaluation is crucial. To that end we will adapt the Visual Narrative Analysis Model (VNAM) that Vasiliki Labitsi developed,⁵³ a model that culls the best of recent visual narrative criticism and offers a framework by which to answer three crucial questions: (1) How do pictures tell stories? (2) How do images relate to text in a picture book? (3) How do images engage their viewers? The first of these will be the focus as we consider the relationship between story bible art and Scripture. §§3–4 will take up the second and third in due course.

2.1. "Your Eyes Will Be Opened": The Fall in Scripture and in Picture

Labitsi has two main headings for analyzing a visual narrative: representation (broadly speaking, *what* it depicts) and composition (*how* it depicts it). Representation involves setting, character, narrative structures, time, decisive moments, and style/media. Composition involves positioning, salience, and book design.⁵⁴ After briefly discussing each of these, we will see how story bibles make visual connections

⁵²Harm W. Hollander, "A Children's Bible or a Bible for Children," *BT* 37 (1986): 425.

⁵³Labitsi, "How Illustrations Tell Stories," 52–73 (cited in n. 3 above).

⁵⁴To my mind the distinction between 'representation' and 'composition' is somewhat murky; 'style/media' more naturally comes under the heading 'composition,' but it matters little. As is often the case with such tools, it would be tedious to assess each story bible by working through each of these aspects mechanistically. The point of this article, however, is to demonstrate the sheer number of factors involved in evaluating artwork and to show the significance of these categories by applying them to Gen 3. A forthcoming review article will draw on these categories without necessarily taking them in turn.

(alongside the verbal connections that §1 discusses) between individual narratives and the bigger picture of Scripture.

2.1.1. Representation

Setting

As Labitsi notes, “setting may be represented in detail or minimalist. Where a wealth of detail is provided, this enables readers to develop familiarity with the space and suggested time of the story.”⁵⁵ In the case of biblical illustration, minimalist images can make the described events seem timeless, whereas detailed pictures have the power to make the setting either familiar or strange. Many story bibles make Eden a tropical paradise. In others, the details familiarize Eden to children, essentially turning it into English parkland. Some combine the two (as in Figure 1).

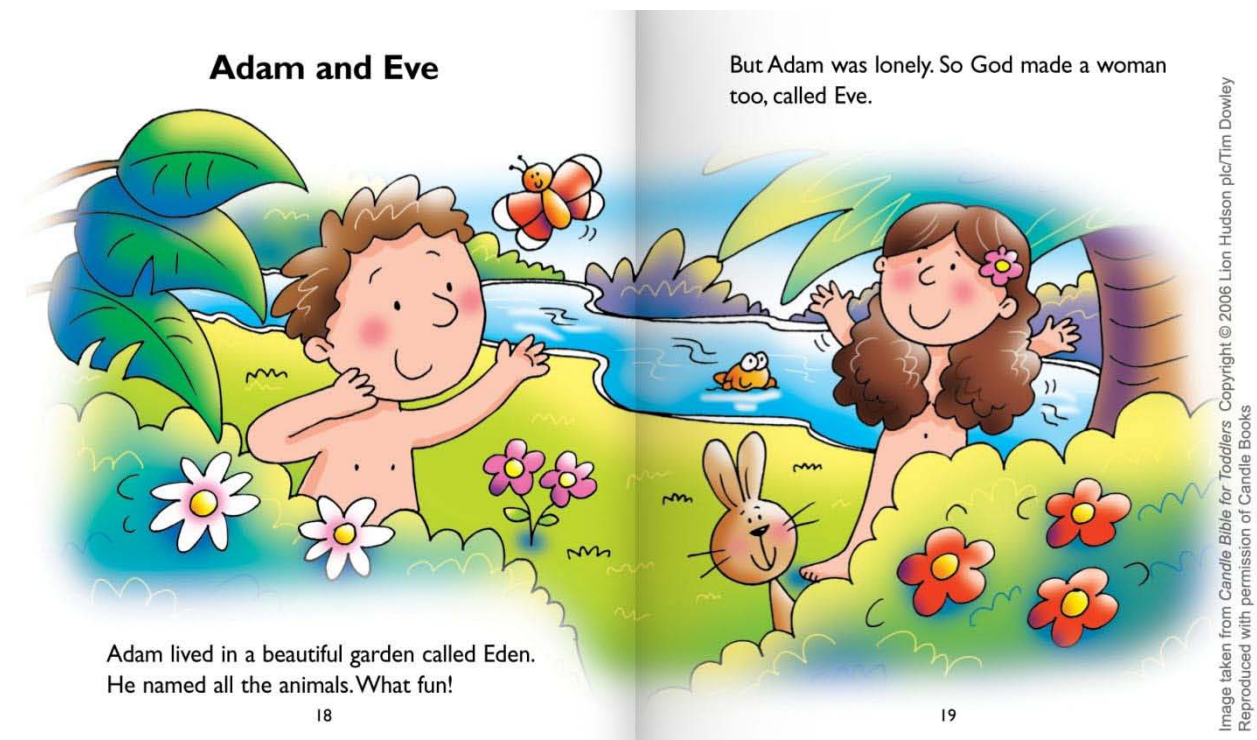


Figure 1. Setting⁵⁶

Within the purview of ‘setting,’ Labitsi also discusses circumstantial details and visual metaphors. For Labitsi, circumstantial details are “details not referred to in the written text . . . often [taking] the form of secondary characters not referred to in the text.”⁵⁷ Given our concern with the biblical sources, this immediately raises the question whether any details “not referred to in the written text” of a story bible have any basis in Scripture. Examples abound of both kinds. Those story bibles that include biblical

⁵⁵ Labitsi, “How Illustrations Tell Stories,” 56.

⁵⁶ Juliet David, *Candle Bible for Toddlers* (illus. Helen Prole; 2006; repr., Carlisle: Candle, 2007), 18–19.

⁵⁷ Labitsi, “How Illustrations Tell Stories,” 56.

details visually but not textually rely to some extent on the biblical literacy of the reader to supply the significance. Some say nothing about the serpent (see §1.1.1 above) but still illustrate him. Every story bible that illustrates the expulsion from the garden shows Adam and Eve to be clothed, but few mention that God provides the clothing for them (Figure 2).

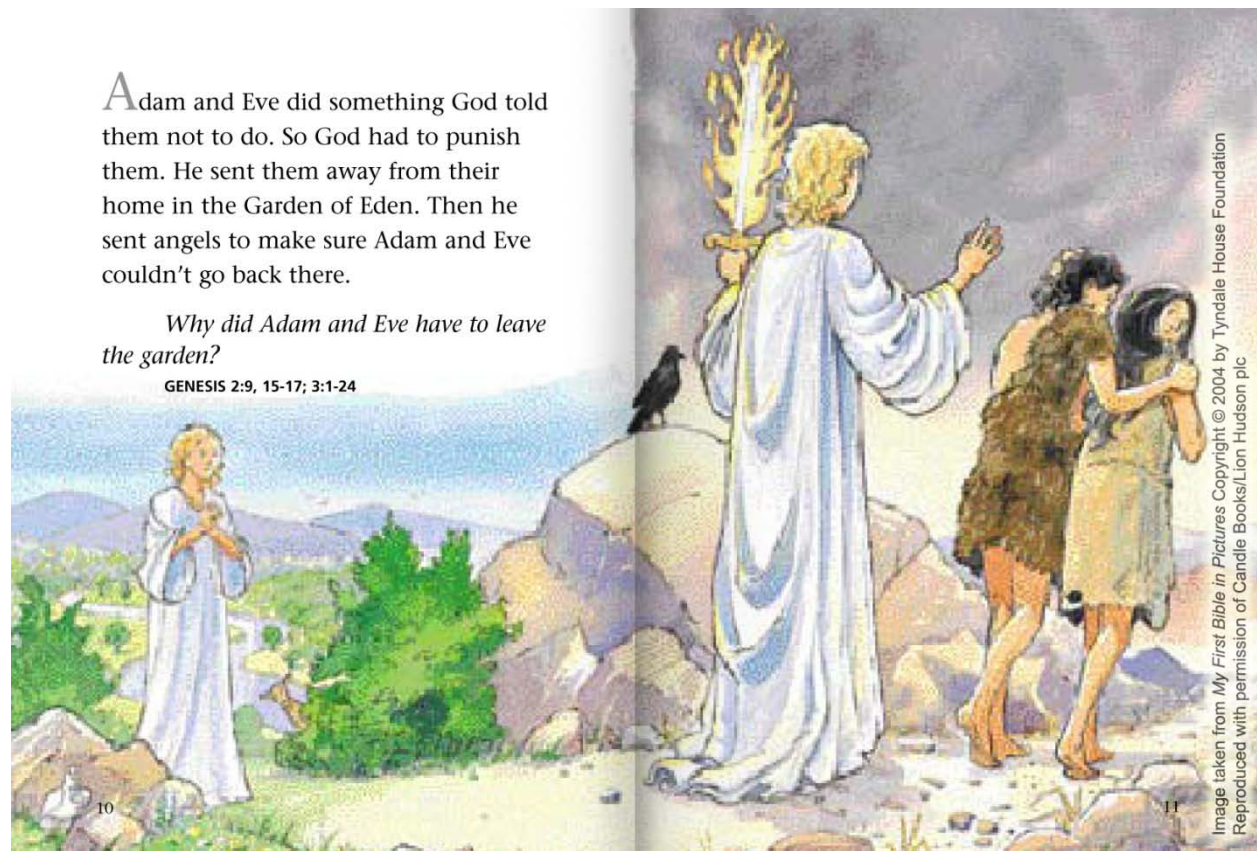


Figure 2. Setting: Circumstantial Details⁵⁸

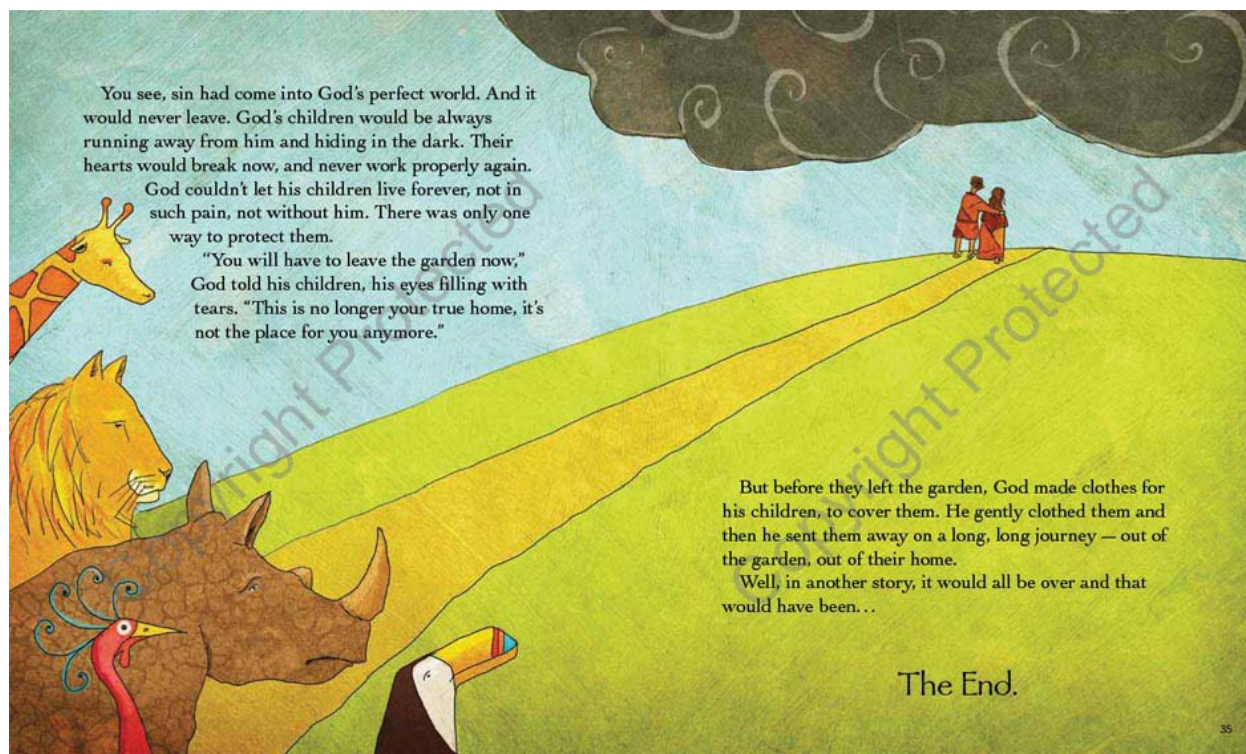
Of the circumstantial details not found in Scripture, the most significant are frequently visual metaphors. Scripture hardly describes the appearance of the land within and beyond Eden, so artists feel at liberty to supply metaphor-laden landscapes.⁵⁹ *My Very First Bible* is typical, populating Eden with bunnies, butterflies, and a pair of white doves: all is peace and safety.⁶⁰ By contrast, the land beyond Eden is usually barren and bare, devoid of vegetation and life (see Figures 2 and 3), although several

⁵⁸ Taylor, *My First Bible in Pictures* (2004), 10–11.

⁵⁹ Other biblical narratives make much more use of geographical and temporal settings, and we might fairly judge story bible illustrators at least in part by their ability to highlight these details (e.g., the recurring significance of wilderness landscapes in the life of Israel and of Christ). As Leland Ryken insists, setting is “much more complex, more interesting, and more important to the meaning of a story than is often realised” (Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987], 54; see 54–62 for the subsequent discussion).

⁶⁰ Harrison, *My Very First Bible* (cf. Figure 1). There is also no subsequent illustration of the expulsion or the land beyond Eden but only of Adam and Eve looking chastened, still surrounded by sunflowers (13).

artists depict a darker version of Eden, densely overgrown, thorny, and threatening. Story bibles frequently employ the pathetic fallacy as a form of visual metaphor: dark clouds or lightning stand for divine judgment (see Figure 3).



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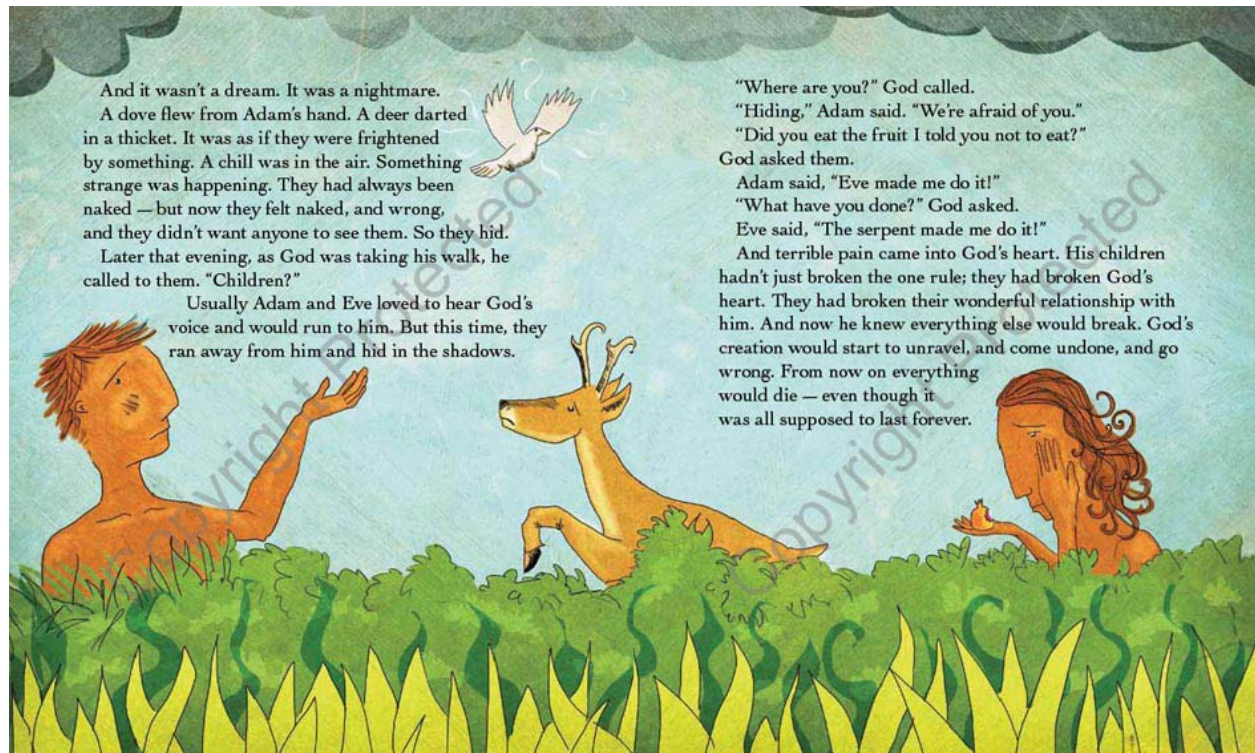
Figure 3. Setting: Visual Metaphors⁶¹

Characters

In relation to human actors, the most significant considerations are of appearance and characterization. Most story bibles intended for the youngest children have caucasian and, where possible, youthful characters.⁶² In early twentieth-century story bibles, Adam and Eve retain their caucasian looks, but their physiques are more classical, creating a sense of historical distance. Establishing any sense of ethnic difference is much rarer. Of our sample, only *The Jesus Storybook Bible* shows Adam and Eve and their offspring with Near Middle Eastern skin colour (Figure 4).

⁶¹ Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, 34–35.

⁶² David appears as a very young boy in *My Little Board Book*; in *My Very First Bible*, a child takes the place of Moses leading Israel through the Red Sea, and both the account and image of Solomon focus upon him in his youth. In the *Candle Bible for Toddlers*, not only are Noah, Abraham, and Moses all friendly grandfatherly figures; they are also hardly distinguishable from one another, all conforming to a benign image of old age.



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Figure 4. Characters⁶³

In the VNAM, characters include not just human but also anthropomorphized animals. These abound in story bibles, which frequently use them to interpret events. In *The Candle Bible for Toddlers*, a troubled bee watches Eve eating the fruit. In *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, an assortment of animals look gravely on as Adam and Eve depart the garden, as does the dove in Taylor's *My First Bible in Pictures* (Figures 2 and 3). This dove also serves as a visual metaphor: it represents the light of Eden against the developing darkness, which the raven represents on the opposite page.

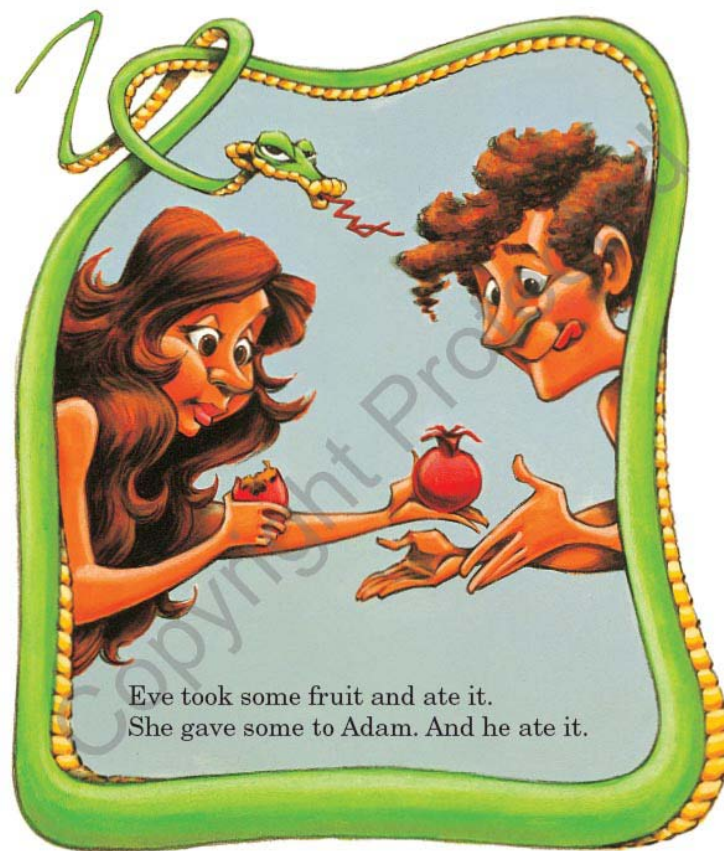
Narrative Structures

In Labitsi's third category, vectors create narrative structures. A vector is "a strong directional thrust in an image that connects characters with each other."⁶⁴ Consider the composition of the temptation scene in the *Read with Me Story Bible* (Figure 5): Adam and Eve mirror each other; the symmetry distributes the guilt equally. Another story bible constructs quite a different narrative: the vector highlights not their mutual contemplation of the fruit but their regard for one another.⁶⁵ Eve looks seductively at Adam, and he is tempted not by the fruit so much as by her. In this version, quite at odds with the biblical account, she has become the object of temptation, and her appearance, blonde and curvaceous, coupled with the absence of the snake, makes her the temptress also.

⁶³Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, 32–33.

⁶⁴Labitsi, "How Illustrations Tell Stories," 56.

⁶⁵Robertson, *Ladybird Bible Story Book*, n.p., which regrettably we are unable to reproduce here.



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Figure 5. Narrative Structures⁶⁶

Time and Decisive Moments

Given the complexity of illustrating the passing of time⁶⁷ and the limitations of space, story bibles generally restrict themselves to one or two 'freeze-frame' illustrations of most narratives. For this reason, we can merge Labitsi's categories of time and decisive moments.

Choosing a decisive moment to illustrate is clearly significant, but that is not the first choice that has been made: "the story itself [the biblical author in our case] 'carefully and characteristically' isolates

⁶⁶ Ridders and Syswerda, *Read with Me Bible*, 16.

⁶⁷ Demonstrating the passage of time visually is difficult, as Labitsi notes ("How Illustrations Tell Stories," 57): "the representation of time passing in a single frame is a paradox," so story bibles rarely attempt it. 'Continuous narrative' is one option for artists, where they show a character in more than one place in any given frame, but the potential for confusing young children means that artists often avoid this. A rare example in treatments of the fall is Nicola Baxter, *Stories From the Bible* (illus. Roger Langton; Wigston, Leics.: Armadillo, 2004), 8–9.

certain moments,” and when artists reduce that number or select others, “this overpowers the meaning a written text conveys.”⁶⁸

The fall can illustrate this potential for an image to overpower the written text. The pace of the narrative in Gen 2:5–3:24 slows for three phases of direct discourse: the dialogue between the serpent and Eve (3:1–5); the dialogue between God, Adam and Eve (3:8–13); and God’s monological pronouncement of personalised curses on the serpent, Adam, and Eve (3:14–21). However, given the difficulty and sensitivity of illustrating either God’s interview with Adam and Eve or the pronouncement of curses, the visual emphasis falls on the temptation scene and especially on the expulsion.⁶⁹ Even within the first of those scenes, there is often a disconnect: the Bible dwells on the serpent’s tempting Eve, but story bibles frequently depict her offering the fruit to Adam, a detail that Gen 3:6 mentions only briefly.

Careful viewers of story bibles, therefore, will hold not just the details of an illustration up against Scripture. They will also consider the pace of the biblical narrative: Do the illustrations cause the viewer to pause on the same details, or do they shift the focus elsewhere? What effects do such decisions have? Some decisions, such as an artist’s understandable reticence to draw God, demonstrate that other factors influence what artists illustrate, but the effect of these decisions needs pondering nonetheless.

Style/Media

The variety of artistic styles in story bibles is as wide as can be found in any other genre of children’s literature. The development in style through the last century, from black-and-white realism to cartoon colour, is probably less a declension into popularism than the result of technological advance, but its effects are worth pondering nonetheless. As Nodelman argues, generally speaking, “realistic art inevitably implies an attitude of scientific objectivity. . . . We similarly assume that impressionism is intent in capturing the beauty of an ever-changing world,” and doubtless styles and media that mirror popular cartoons suggest a degree of safety and proximity in the events they depict.⁷⁰ Hurlbut, on the other hand, uses a combination of illustration and photographs of the Holy Land, presumably to achieve some sense of realism and historical veracity.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Perry Nodelman, “How Picture Books Work” in *Only Connect: Readings in Children’s Literature*, (ed. S. Egoff, G. Stubbs, R. Ashley and W. Sutton; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 252, quoted in Labitsi, “How Illustrations Tell Stories,” 58.

⁶⁹ Story bibles do not illustrate God’s interview with Adam and Eve probably because illustrators are understandably reticent to depict God. So artists may rather incongruently welcome the fall, which cuts humanity off from direct discourse with God, because it spares them the challenge!

⁷⁰ Perry Nodelman, *Words about Pictures: The Narrative Art of Children’s Picture Books* (Athens: University of Georgia, 1988), 88. This does mean that the cartoon format is an inferior or childish style, for as Nodelman observes, “the extraordinary expressiveness of cartooning seems to make it a particularly appropriate means of communicating narrative information. To suggest that all picture-book art is a form of cartooning is no insult; it merely stresses the extent to which the purposes and pleasures of this art differ from those we assume of other kinds of visual art” (100).

⁷¹ Others distance their readers not so much by Near Middle-Eastern or historical detail as by artistic styles that reference another historical period altogether. In this vein is Hoth’s *The Picture Bible*: its comic-strip format reflects vintage comics, and its prelapsarian characters look like they are on the set of a 1950’s Tarzan film. After the fall, the characters appear much more Near Middle-Eastern in appearance and costume. It appears to attempt to make Adam and Eve appear pre-historical or a-historical, but they look like generic westerners.

2.1.2. Composition

Although there is some overlap with Labitsi's material on representation, the next three categories focus not on *what* story bibles illustrate so much as *how* they illustrate.

Positioning

According to Labitsi,

a character placed on the left side of a visual composition suggests a 'given' and on the opposite side something 'new'. A character placed at the bottom signifies something 'real', and at the top something 'ideal'. Also a character placed at the centre of a polarized composition is a 'mediator' forming a bridge between the 'given' and the new and/or ideal.⁷²

Naturally, the vertical dimension is important in relating heaven to earth in story-bible artwork, but so too is the horizontal. If a story bible considers the temptation a decisive moment worth depicting, it will almost certainly show Eve on the left (the given, having already succumbed to temptation) passing a fruit to Adam on the right (the new, confronted with a choice)—as in Figure 5 above.⁷³ One story bible also elevates Adam so that he is cast as the ideal, receiving temptation from the real below. Whether this demonises Eve is less clear, and the relative position of the serpent, if depicted, will sometimes enable one to judge.⁷⁴ There is, nonetheless, in the Genesis narrative itself some sense of hierarchy, minimally descending from God to humanity to the rest of creation. This feature of the narrative lends itself to visual representation, although artists have largely overlooked it.

Salience

"Salience refers to the degree to which an object draws attention to itself, due to its size, placement in an image foreground, overlapping with other elements, colour, tone, and sharpness."⁷⁵ In images of the expulsion from Eden, the enthusiasm of artists at the opportunity to depict angels and flaming swords arguably causes those elements to dominate not only the picture, but also the whole narrative, given that in some cases it is the only image offered for the fall (see Figure 6).⁷⁶

⁷² Labitsi, "How Illustrations Tell Stories," 62.

⁷³ The *only* exception in our survey is Harrison, *My Very First Bible*, which shows Adam on the left, hand extended, and Eve on the right, holding and looking at the fruit. So strong is the positional convention that it is ambiguous as to whether Adam has just passed the fruit to Eve or whether he is about to receive it.

⁷⁴ Ruth B. Bottigheimer ("Publishing, Print and Change in the Image of Eve and the Apple 1470–1570," *ARG* 86 [1995]: 207–10) detects an alternative left-right scheme that she believes has incriminated Eve for centuries. Drawing upon iconography of final judgment since the third century A.D., which places the damned on the left and the saved on the right, Bottigheimer argues that this places Eve among the condemned and that this iconography is sufficiently well known for readers to grasp the point. However, Labitsi's argument that visual narratives assume a movement from left to right in the same way the eye moves over text explains the composition of many more images than iconography can account for. As Nodelman comments, "we tend to read pictures from left to right, as we have learned to read print" (*Words about Pictures*, 135), and he cites the interesting example of a Hebrew children's book whose text *and images* flow in the opposite direction (176).

⁷⁵ Labitsi, "How Illustrations Tell Stories," 62.

⁷⁶ Note the use of colour to highlight the sword in Taylor, *My First Bible in Pictures*, against the background of muted greens and yellows (Figure 6). This and the 2004 story bible of the same name illustrates Taylor's



Figure 6. Saliency⁷⁷

Book Design

Book design involves a number of features. The balance of text to image on a page varies enormously, as does the degree to which they are distinct. Frames around images set them apart and set the reader at greater distance to them.⁷⁸

Front and back endpapers frequently carry an image taken from within the bible and merit consideration. Several commission a special image to form a bridge into the story bible, showing Jesus in first-century clothing surrounded by children in modern dress.⁷⁹

Another longstanding tradition is to offer maps of biblical lands in the endpapers, which has at least two resonances, neither of which are unwelcome. The first is of history books and atlases, establishing

version of the fall with one image: angels expelling Adam and Eve. In *A Childs Bible*, simply a flaming sword accompanies the text.

⁷⁷ Taylor, *My First Bible in Pictures* (1989), n.p.

⁷⁸ We return to this point in §4, which considers how the viewer interacts with illustrations.

⁷⁹ E.g., Taylor, *My First Bible in Pictures* (1989); Gross, *Child's Garden of Bible Stories*; Vos, *Child's Story Bible*.

that the events described happened somewhere in our world, albeit long ago. The second resonance is of the epic adventures of children's literature: Middle Earth, Narnia, Treasure Island, Gulliver's Travels, the Odyssey, and so on.

Finally, the front cover is clearly significant as the first impression children get of the story bible, but we would be naive to think that covers are designed for their eyes only. As Labitsi observes, "the qualities of cover design are of particular importance to publishers for their potential to promote a book and attract readers," and parents will be purchasing on behalf of children. That said, covers are usually of a piece with the contents, and the image is often selected from those within the bible, most frequently either Noah's Ark or Jesus surrounded by children. Either way, the scene generally speaks of warmth and safety.⁸⁰

2.2. Seeing the Bigger Picture: Story Bible Art and the Story of the Bible

Biblical scholarship is increasingly sensitive to how typology and intertextual references suffuse Scripture, whereby events and texts relate to what has gone before in ways that illuminate and steer interpretation. What often goes unnoticed is how well-suited illustration is to this task: it can achieve inter-visually what Scripture achieves inter-textually, and it can do so with the same subtlety.⁸¹ In light of this, we now consider how story bibles employ images to relate a narrative to the wider biblical context.

In this respect *The Big Picture Story Bible* is outstanding. Gail Schoonmaker's artwork of the fall establishes no less than five motifs, all of which later artwork puts to use.

The *first* is a stance of worship with arms outstretched, first used by Adam and Eve and later by Abraham. An illustration of Solomon's time later parodies this when the figures adopt the same pose as they worship idols and true worship is restored in the NT which frequently shows people in a similar pose, worshipping God or Jesus.⁸²

The *second* motif frames Solomon's fall into idolatry as recapitulating the fall. A piece of half-eaten fruit lies beside him, like the one discarded at Adam's feet as he hides from God (see Figure 7).

⁸⁰ That an illustration of Noah's Ark could have such domesticated connotations demonstrates the truth of Landy's observation that the story "is a pervasive cultural object, and one largely detached from its biblical moorings. It has entered a different canon, along with Winnie the Pooh, Peter Rabbit, Franklin the Turtle, Mother Goose, Thomas the Tank Engine, Curious George" ("Noah's Ark and Mrs Monkey," 351–52).

⁸¹ Perhaps some might object precisely because illustrations make the connections only subtly. But why should story bibles not enable the same kind of delight that comes from piecing together the clues and allusions of Scripture? That a seven-year-old can return to a story bible and see connections missed two years earlier makes story bibles truer to Scripture rather than obscuring it, for the child is learning to how to read in a more mature fashion.

⁸² This pose is also used to forecast the future. One pre-Fall scene has Adam and Eve with arms raised in worship of God, but the shadows they cast are reaching for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Helm, *The Big Picture Story Bible*, 32); the Solomon narrative echoes this. The same effect is put to good use on a poster for *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace* where a young Anakin Skywalker's shadow falls in the shape of Darth Vader (<http://www.sci-fimovieposters.co.uk/star-wars-posters/star-wars-episode-I-the-phantom-menace-original-british-quad-movie-poster.htm>; accessed 11 July 2012).

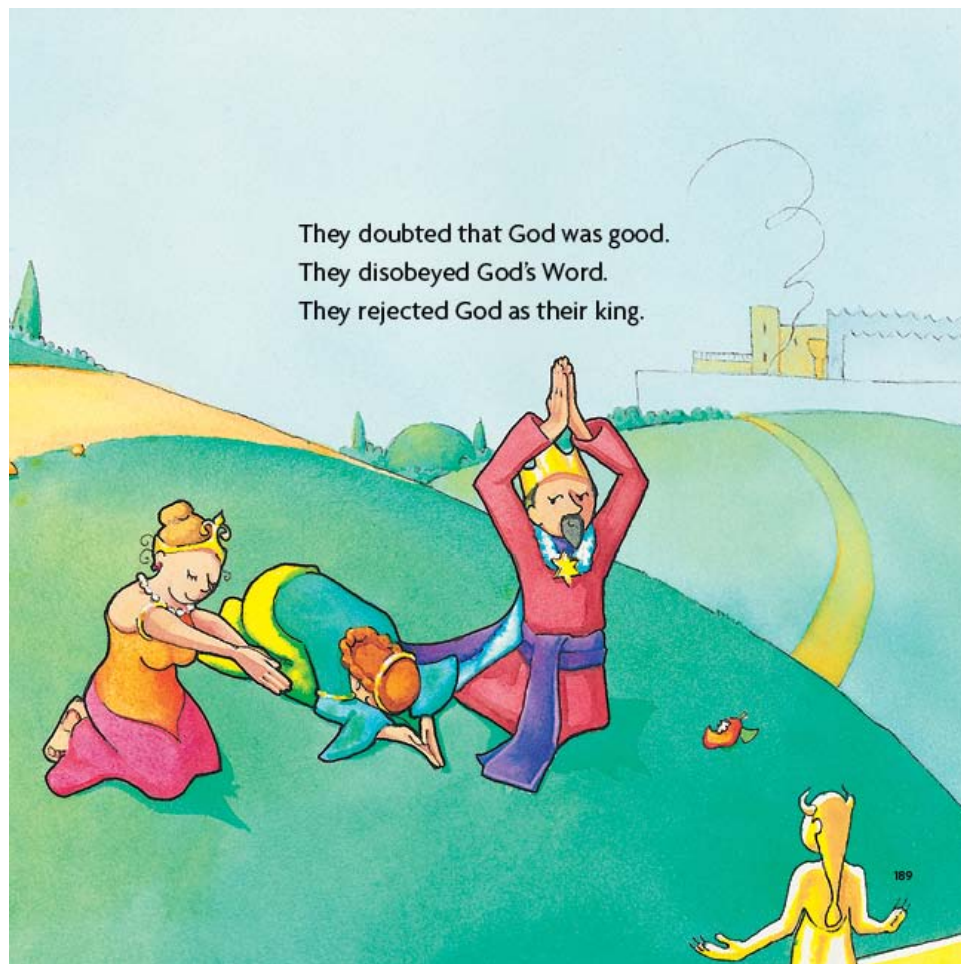
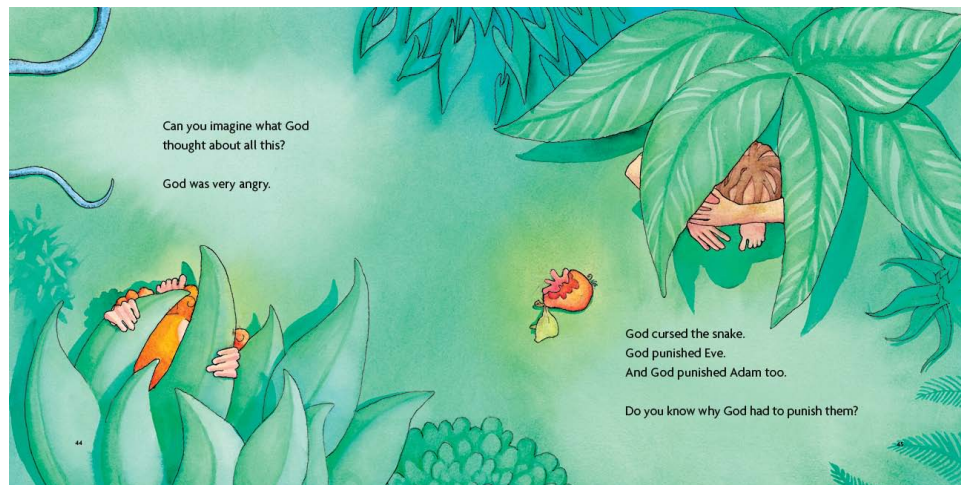


Figure 7. "Inter-visuality" in *The Big Picture Story Bible*⁸³

⁸³Helm, *The Big Picture Story Bible*, 44–45, 189.

The *third* and *fourth* motifs set up Israel's conquest of the land and their subsequent exile as a parallel to Adam and Eve's enjoyment of and expulsion from Eden. The text makes this connection (see §1.2 above), but so does the artwork with two visual allusions: (1) a family after the conquest enjoying the fruits of the land, sitting by a river, alludes to Adam and Eve's life in Eden (Figure 8), and (2) the footprints left by the exiles allude to footprints that Adam and Eve leave as they depart the garden (Figure 9).

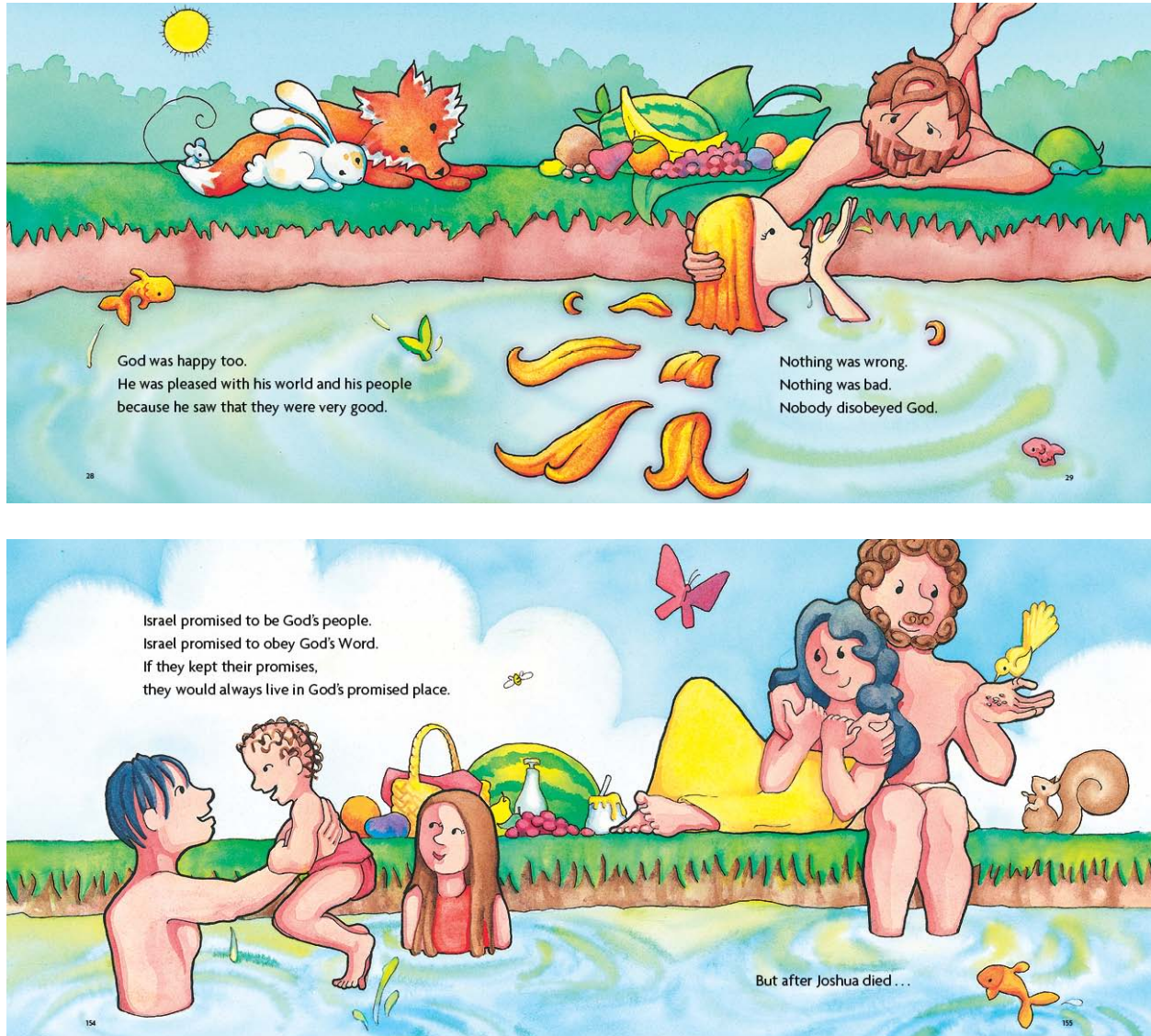


Figure 8. "Inter-visuality" in *The Big Picture Story Bible*⁸⁴

⁸⁴Helm, *The Big Picture Story Bible*, 28–29, 154–155.

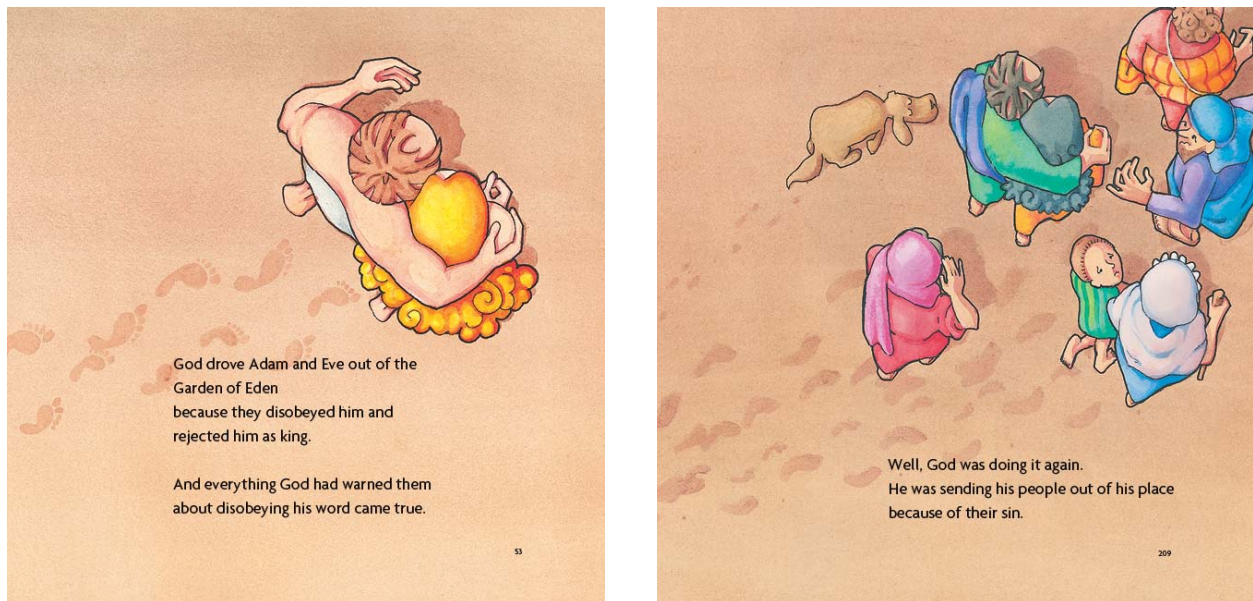


Figure 9. “Inter-visuality” in *The Big Picture Story Bible*⁸⁵

The *fifth* motif is perhaps the subtlest, and it involves a fox. *The Big Picture Story Bible* uses animals throughout to demarcate narratives: a cat appears throughout the Abraham narrative; a lizard accompanies Joseph; butterflies populate Jerusalem post-exile; and a fox attends Eve (and often preserves her modesty) in Eden. Unlike the other animals, however, the fox reappears later in the resurrection narratives, linking creation to the new creation, of which the risen Christ is the firstfruits (Figure 10).⁸⁶ This fox, therefore, is an intertextual fox. While it might be an incongruous symbol given the fox’s reputation in biblical and other children’s literature and while this instance involves more invention than the others, it is nevertheless a rather sophisticated way of teaching biblical truth visually.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Helm, *The Big Picture Story Bible*, 53, 209.

⁸⁶ The physical resemblance of Adam and Jesus in *The Big Picture Story Bible* reinforces this Adam-Christology.

⁸⁷ Jesus calls Herod a fox in Luke 13:32, viewing him, in Darrell L. Bock’s understated words, “with something less than respect” (*Luke* [2 vols.; BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994–1996], 2:1247. Whether this characterisation of Herod makes him out to be deceitful or destructive is disputed, but it is hardly complimentary. So also Ezek 13:4 and Song 2:15. See the discussion in Bock, *Luke*, 2:1247. Any familiarity with the fox in children’s literature confirms the same range of characterisation. There is, however, biblical precedent for this use of recurring motifs in relation to one individual that warrants imitation in children’s bibles. For example, in Genesis Jacob sleeps on stones (Gen 28:11), sets up commemorative stones (Gen 28:18–22; 31:45–54; 35:14), and moves stones (Gen 29:10). As Robert Alter highlights, “Jacob is a man who sleeps on stones, speaks in stones, wrestles with stones, contending with the hard and unyielding nature of things, whereas, in pointed contrast, his favoured son will make his way in the world as a dealer in the truths intimated through the filmy insubstantiality of dreams” (*The Art of Biblical Narrative* [London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981], 55). The same holds for Joseph, who is twice deprived of clothing (Gen 37:23; 39:12–13) before clothing his brothers (Gen 45:22), much as Christ is stripped that we might be clothed with his righteousness—all images that cry out for illustration. What *The Big Picture Story Bible* lacks, however, is this correlation between motif and character or narrative, for the choices seem somewhat arbitrary.

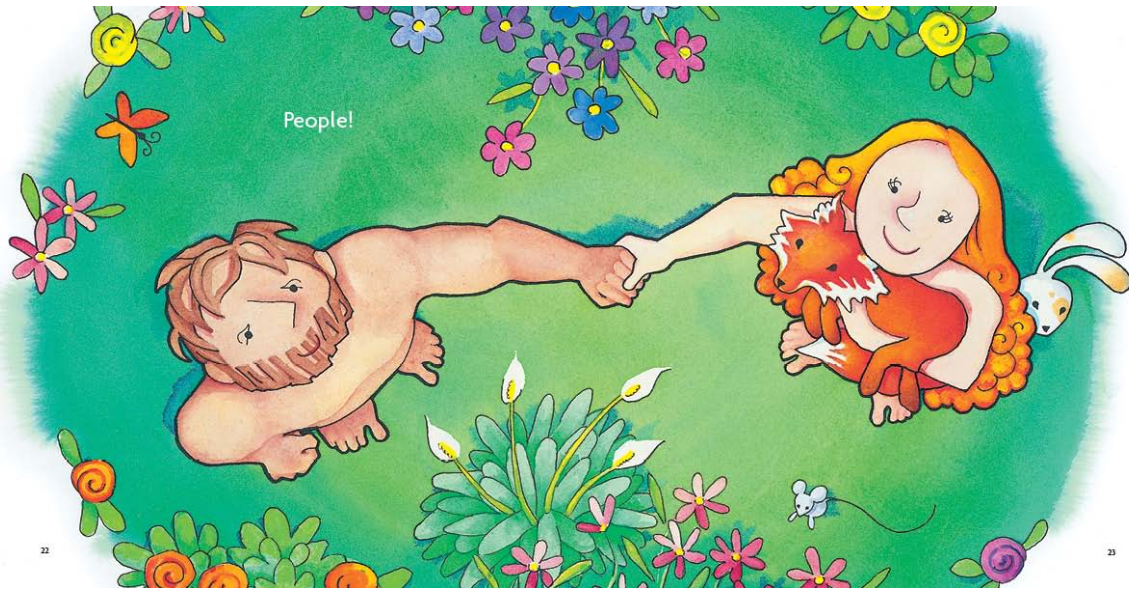


Figure 10. An Intertextual Fox⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Helm, *The Big Picture Story Bible*, 22–23, 384.

To summarize §2, it is important to attend to images. The nature of illustrated books is that they are as much ‘words about pictures’ as they are ‘pictures about words.’ Most parents will recognize how children filter and interpret what they hear by what they see, if they are listening at all and are not distracted by some detail of the artwork. Any evaluation of story bibles, therefore, demands that we grasp and deploy the tools of visual narrative analysis (outlined above) to some degree as we explore how story-bible artwork relates to Scripture. This opens our eyes both to how existing story bibles work and to the largely overlooked potential for harnessing the power of images, especially their capacity to relate one passage of Scripture to another.

3. On the Same Page? The Relationship between Word and Image within a Story Bible

Our third section turns to the relationship between word and image within story bibles. Bottigheimer rightly describes artwork as the “internal exegesis” of story bibles, but she oversimplifies the relationship between word and image in story bibles by describing it as one of simple “affirmation.”⁸⁹ Things are decidedly more complicated since artists have two texts before them (the Bible and the story bible) and since illustrating inevitably involves supplying much more information than one can find in either text.

Labitsi’s model, therefore, is more realistic. It describes three kinds of relationship between text and image within picture books: enhancement, counterpoint, and contradiction.⁹⁰ It is best to view these categories as points on a spectrum rather than as distinct categories; nevertheless, they are a helpful heuristic tool to outline the third relationship of our model.

3.1. Enhancement

Given the power of images to linger in the viewer’s mind, it is especially important to note where artists enhance additions or changes that the texts of story bibles make to Scripture. Of those that explicitly name Christ as the one who will remove the curses of Gen 3, *The Children’s Garden of Bible Stories* is perhaps the foremost. Accompanying the textual decision to exchange the enigmatic protoevangelium of Gen 3:15 for a fuller exposition of the atonement are two illustrations that only enhance this status. It depicts the angel’s expelling Adam and Eve with rays of light set against dark clouds. A page later there is a kind of mirror image, where rays of light set against dark clouds shine from the cross of Jesus. It implies that Jesus bears and cancels the judgment, thereby enhancing and affirming the story-bible text.

A second, less edifying example concerns the characterization of Eve. *The Picture Bible* has already embellished the biblical text by putting words in Eve’s mouth: “Taste it—one bite will do no harm. See I have eaten some!”⁹¹ The artist further enhances this incrimination by placing Eve in the foreground, in silhouette and with a claw-like hand raised dominating both the whole picture and Adam within it.

⁸⁹ Bottigheimer, “Children’s Bibles as a Form of Folk Narrative,” 187.

⁹⁰ In reference to my outline of Labitsi’s model at the beginning of §2, §3 is concerned with ‘Written and Visual Narrative Interaction.’ Labitsi (“How Illustrations Tell Stories,” 63) credits the taxonomy to Maria Nicolaeva and Carole Scott, which they develop in *How Picturebooks Work* (New York: Garland, 2001).

⁹¹ Hoth, *The Picture Bible*, 20. This goes quite against the biblical text, for as Nahum M. Sarna notes, “The woman is not a temptress. She does not say a word but simply hands her husband the fruit, which he accepts and eats” (*Genesis* [JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989], 25).

Within this category we might also note how images can clarify ambiguities in the story-bible text. For example, one story bible entitles the fall narrative “Eve’s Temptation.” As it stands, this could refer either to the snake’s tempting Eve or to Eve’s tempting Adam. The picture, however, depicts Eve holding out the fruit to Adam with an enticing look of her face, and the composition that has the serpent and Eve aligned, facing Adam, clearly signals Eve’s tempting Adam (see Figure 11).



Figure 11. Enhancement⁹²

3.2. Counterpoint

Images of this kind “offer alternative information” to the text without contradicting it.⁹³ Again, given our concerns, we must ask whether the alternative information can be found in Scripture. An example of where it can is the customary depiction of Adam and Eve clothed in animal skins when the story-bible text is silent.⁹⁴ In that instance, the detail would only counterpoint the text if the child or parent were sufficiently biblically literate to draw attention to it and explain its significance.

3.3. Contradiction

Although admittedly rare, there are instances of images contradicting the text of story bibles. This can occur when an image refuses to follow the movement of the text. For example, one story bible narrates the fall across a double-page spread, by the end of which, according to the text, “everything is

⁹² Tulloch, *The Children's Bible*, 12–13.

⁹³ Labitsi, “How Illustrations Tell Stories,” 63.

⁹⁴ See Figures 2 and 3.

going wrong!”⁹⁵ The image, on the other hand, by showing a smiling Adam and Eve denies any change in their circumstances. In this case, if the child has only the images to go on, they cannot construct a narrative with any resemblance to that of the text.⁹⁶

4. Drawing You In: The Relationship between Story Bible and Child

The fourth and final relationship, completing this evaluative model, is between the story bible and its readers. We consider first how the *author* addresses the reader⁹⁷ and then, with the remaining material from Labitsi’s model outlined in §2, the means by which the *artist* interacts with the viewers.

This fourth relationship emphasizes the degree to which story bibles are more than just works of children’s literature. Most authors and artists seek to inform and engage so as to elicit faith, meaning that story bibles are a form of devotional literature.⁹⁸ This has two implications: (1) parents and teachers need to be clear on the goals they have in mind when purchasing a story bible, and (2) they need to know *how* to assess whether any given story bible meets those requirements.

The first implication is worth developing a little, for things are not simple. Story bibles address their audiences in myriad ways and with different goals in mind. Some do not explicitly comment on their narratives; their explicit intention may be merely to make bible stories familiar, even if, as we have seen, their textual decisions and visual depictions communicate a great deal more. Those that address the child more directly do so with very different presuppositions behind them and goals before them. Some aim for conviction of sin and conversion. Others assume faith and address young children as members of God’s family. Some address children in their individual situation while others are designed for a family to read and respond to corporately. Some of these variances reflect denominational distinctives and theological presuppositions, and the variety is by no means regrettable. What it demands, however, is clarity from those purchasing story bibles; they must know what they want story bibles to do. Then comes the work of discerning whether a story bible does what they want it to do, so we turn, finally, to consider how story bibles interact and instruct by word and image.

⁹⁵ Goodings, *My Little Bible Board Book*, n.p.

⁹⁶ Nodelman (*Words about Pictures*, 194–96) applies this revealing test to secular story books. A second example of contradiction comes from Lloyd-Jones, *Jesus Storybook Bible*, 168–69: it pictures Jonah emerging from the mouth of the fish in the pose of a superhero in flight. It is an amusing image, but it contradicts both the story bible’s treatment of Jonah to that point and the Bible’s characterisation of the unwilling prophet.

⁹⁷ Frequently, a preface establishes this relationship by addressing either the child or the adult reader. For example, the first words of some story bibles directly address children: “If you will listen carefully, I am going to tell you a wonderful story” (deVries, *Story Bible for Young Children*, 6); “Dear Children, Here is a book telling stories from God’s holy book, the Bible. . . . I hope this book will help you know and love Jesus even more than you do now” (Taylor, *My First Bible in Pictures* [2004], 5). Those that address parents include Taylor, *My First Bible in Pictures* (1989) and Meade, *Mighty Acts and God*, 14.

⁹⁸ There are, of course, a few story bibles that treat the biblical narratives as of literary interest only, assigning them a place in a separate canon alongside Aesop’s fables and Greek mythology, but the majority of publications have a devotional aspect.

4.1. Textual Interaction

4.1.1. Within the Narrative

Although most story bibles retain the third person narration of the biblical histories and Gospels, some address the reader directly.⁹⁹ The *Jesus Story Book Bible* employs explicit commentary with the occasional explanatory gloss.¹⁰⁰ *The Big Picture Story Bible* goes beyond this by inviting the reader to participate:

Now Adam and Eve had a choice to make.
They could obey God's word,
or they could listen to Satan.

What do you think you
would have done?
Do you know what Adam and Eve did?¹⁰¹

A further stage beyond this reveals divergent understandings of the reader's moral status. On the one hand there is *The Bible Opened for Children*:

Now you think I daresay that Adam and Eve would be so grateful to God for placing them in such a beautiful garden . . . but I'm sorry to say this was not the case: they disobeyed God.¹⁰²

Minimally this seeks to capture the naivety of a first reading, but it appears also to draw alongside the reader as a moral superior to Adam and Eve.¹⁰³ By contrast, Catherine Vos makes plain our identification with the fallen Adam and Eve:

⁹⁹ There are biblical exceptions of course. Luke 1:1–4 addresses the first reader and by implication subsequent readers. So too John 20:30–1. Authors can interact with their readers without breaking from the narrative mode. deVries' version of the feeding of the 5,000 concludes with Jesus's instruction to gather up the leftovers because "You must never waste food" (*Story Bible for Young Children*, 181). Thus deVries rather boldly puts words in Jesus' mouth rather than addressing the child herself.

¹⁰⁰ E.g., "You see, sin had come into God's perfect world" (Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, 34). For discussion of the significance of 'explicit' and 'implicit' narration, see Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 102–6.

¹⁰¹ Helm, *The Big Picture Story Bible*, 41.

¹⁰² Mary Bradford, *The Bible Opened For Children* (London: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, 1866), 3.

¹⁰³ This appeal to the child's sense of virtue arguably reveals deeply held convictions about the nature of a child. Bottigheimer's history of story bibles, *The Bible for Children: From the Age of Gutenberg to the Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), reveals a radical process of editing that purged all the more violent and sexual episodes from story bibles. She attributes this to a misogynistic desire to erase powerful biblical heroines such as Jael and to whitewash the patriarchs whose drunkenness and license were an embarrassment. See especially ch. 9, "Philogyny, Misogyny and Erasure" (142–51). She argues elsewhere, however, and more persuasively, that these changes reflect an altered view of the child under the influence of John Locke (Ruth B. Bottigheimer, "The Bible for Children: The Emergence and Development of the Genre 1550–1990," in *The Church and Childhood* [ed. Diana Wood; SCH 31; Oxford: Blackwell, 1994]). This is also the view of Alan Jacobs in "A Bible Fit for Children." In Locke's view the child entered the world not with a mind full of innate ideas but as "unfurnished cabinets." As such, exposing children to only what is virtuous preserves their innocence. Locke himself applied his theory to the writing of story bibles for children, calling for "A good History of the Bible for young people to read, wherein

If Adam and Eve had obeyed God, their hearts would have stayed clean and sinless, and all the people in the world would have had sinless hearts. But now we are all wicked because Adam and Eve disobeyed God. The Bible says ‘There is none good, no not one.’¹⁰⁴

Naturally there is merit both in promoting virtue and in confronting children with human sinfulness, without which the Christian story will make no sense. Nevertheless, any evaluation of story bibles must ask what they emphasize and how they teach the child to perceive their own spiritual condition. It can be instructive to ask what impression a story bible would make if a child read it cover to cover:

- Now I know more stories.
- Now I see how all the stories fit together. (This is the goal of not a few recent story bibles.)
- Now I see how the good end happily and the bad unhappily. (This is Oscar Wilde’s definition of fiction and the impression that some story bibles give, but mercifully, it is not the message of the Bible.)
- Now I see the goodness of God, his purposes for creation, the salvation he offers me, and the life of faith he calls me to live among his people. (This is more ambitious.)

4.1.2. Marginalia

As Bottigheimer observes, story bibles “consist of the story sections of the Bible, to which are added commentary, verses, summaries, questions and answers, or bits of ancient history.”¹⁰⁵ They frequently embed commentary in the narrative, but more commentary may form another layer of text, occupying separate text boxes or headings (marginalia).

Kenneth Taylor’s story bibles ask comprehension questions at the end of each narrative.¹⁰⁶ Stories in *The Mighty Acts of God* conclude with “a short separate feature called ‘As For Me and My House’ . . . providing parents with additional ideas for discussion or activities related to the truths presented in that particular story.”¹⁰⁷ After the fall narrative, the questions include “List the things we can know about God from this story” and “What kinds of things do people—including you and your children—do that show they now have sinful natures?”¹⁰⁸

§1.1.2 above explains the value of relegating this material to the marginalia as a means of distinguishing the Biblical narrative from the author’s own additions. In this section we are asking

everything, that is fit to be put into it, being laid down in its due Order of Time, and several things omitted which were suited only to riper Age [so that] Confusion, which is usually produced by promiscuous reading of the Scripture, as it lies now bound up in our Bibles, would be avoided” (quoted in Bottigheimer, “The Bible for Children, 49. The degree to which other theorists of child development (e.g., Piaget) influence story bibles could be significant and is yet to be examined, but it is beyond the scope of this project.

¹⁰⁴ Vos, *The Child’s Story Bible*, 9.

¹⁰⁵ Bottigheimer, *The Bible for Children*, 4.

¹⁰⁶ See Figure 2. Taylor’s three published story bibles are: *My First Bible in Pictures* (2004), *My First Bible in Pictures* (1989), both cited above, and *The Bible In Pictures For Little Eyes* (1956; repr., Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1980).

¹⁰⁷ Meade, *Mighty Acts and God*, 15.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 22. The latter question reveals a distinctive feature of this story bible: it addresses parents as well as children. It is, as its subtitle claims, a *family* story bible.

how those additions address the child. As with comments within the narrative, we must ask what presuppositions concerning the reader's spiritual condition are revealed by a story bible's marginalia and how authors are directing their readers to reflect on the text.

4.2. Visual Interaction

How an artist addresses the viewer is altogether more subtle.¹⁰⁹ Labitsi describes four ways that an artist constructs the relationship between the artwork and the viewer:

1. Gazes: how characters meet the viewer's gaze
2. Point of view: how the artist positions the viewer within the visual narrative
3. Framing: how the artist frames the images
4. Modality: how realistic and therefore how relevant a picture appears

4.2.1. Gazes

According to Labitsi, "the moment a character turns to face the reader 'the narrative spell is broken and the boundary separating (imaginary characters) from (real) readers is breached.'¹¹⁰ Since many story-bible writers are concerned to assert the reality of biblical characters, it is surprising that they do not use this device more widely.

An unconventional but effective example involves the gaze of tigers (see Figure 12). *My Very Own Bible* illustrates the fall with Adam, Eve, the snake, and the tree, static and two-dimensional in the background. In the foreground, however, are three tigers advancing towards the viewer with gazes fixed upon them. This powerfully communicates a sense of threat, even if the nature of the threat is rather dislocated from the events transpiring in the background and, indeed, from the biblical account.

Similarly, in *The Children's Bible*, Eve is looking at Adam, offering him the fruit. But because the viewer looks over Adam's shoulder in the composition of the image, she is almost gazing at and offering the fruit to the viewer (see Figure 11 above).

¹⁰⁹The artist's intentions usually are less explicit than the author's since generally authors (not artists) write a preface.

¹¹⁰D. Lewis, *Reading Contemporary Picturebooks* (London: Routledge, 2001), 162, quoted in Labitsi, "How Illustrations Tell Stories," 60.

A TALK IN THE GARDEN

God gave Adam and Eve the Garden of Eden for their home. He said, "You may eat anything that grows in the garden except the fruit of the special tree."

While Eve was looking at the special tree, a snake spoke to her. "God won't really mind if you eat from the special tree. You don't have to obey Him."

Eve listened to the snake. She looked at the pretty fruit. Oh, how she wanted to try it! Finally she ate it. Adam ate it too.

God came to talk with them. "Because you haven't obeyed," God said, "you must leave the beautiful garden."

Genesis Chapters 2 and 3

14

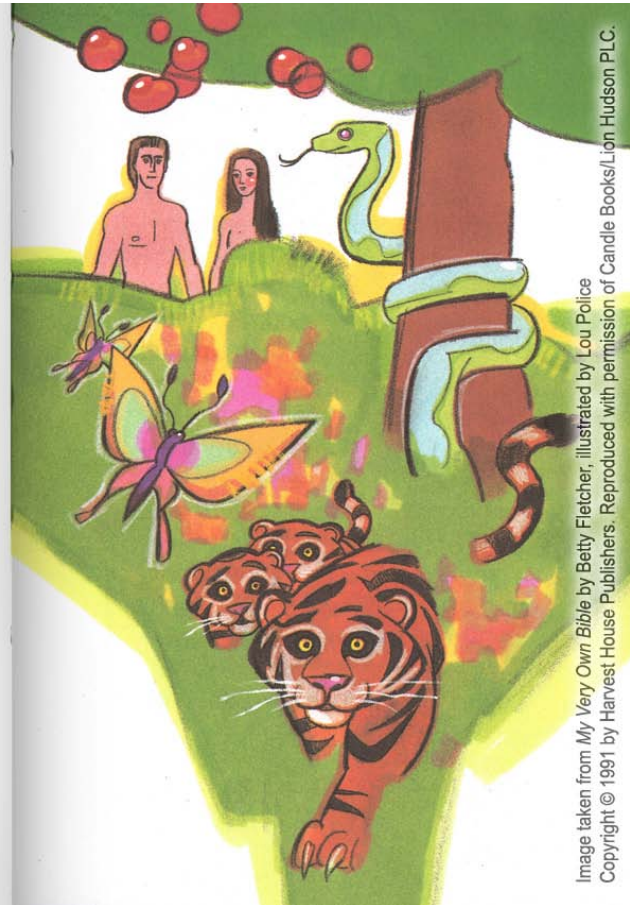


Figure 12. Gazes¹¹¹

4.2.2. Point of View

That last example also highlighted the significance of the point of view the artist assigns the reader. A second example validates Labitsi's assertion that "when point of view is manipulated upwards or downwards along a vertical axis, readers experience an increase or diminution of power over the characters represented."¹¹² *The Big Picture Story Bible's* illustrations of the fall travel along this axis at various points, always in concert with the author's interaction with the reader (see Figure 13). At the point of temptation, when the text asks the reader, "What do you think you would have done?" the viewer is on the same level as Adam and Eve, looking up at the fruit. Later, when the text asks the reader, "Can you imagine what God thought about all this?" the image looks down on Adam and Eve as they try to hide themselves; the viewer now stands with God, combining their points of view.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Fletcher, *My Very Own Bible*, 15; see also Tulloch, *The Children's Bible*, 12–13.

¹¹² Labitsi, "How Illustrations Tell Stories," 60.

¹¹³ In a related way, it is interesting to reflect on the perspective story bibles show for Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden. Do viewers stand with God in Eden and watch them go, or do they join Adam and Eve east of Eden and look back to the way that angels are now barring?

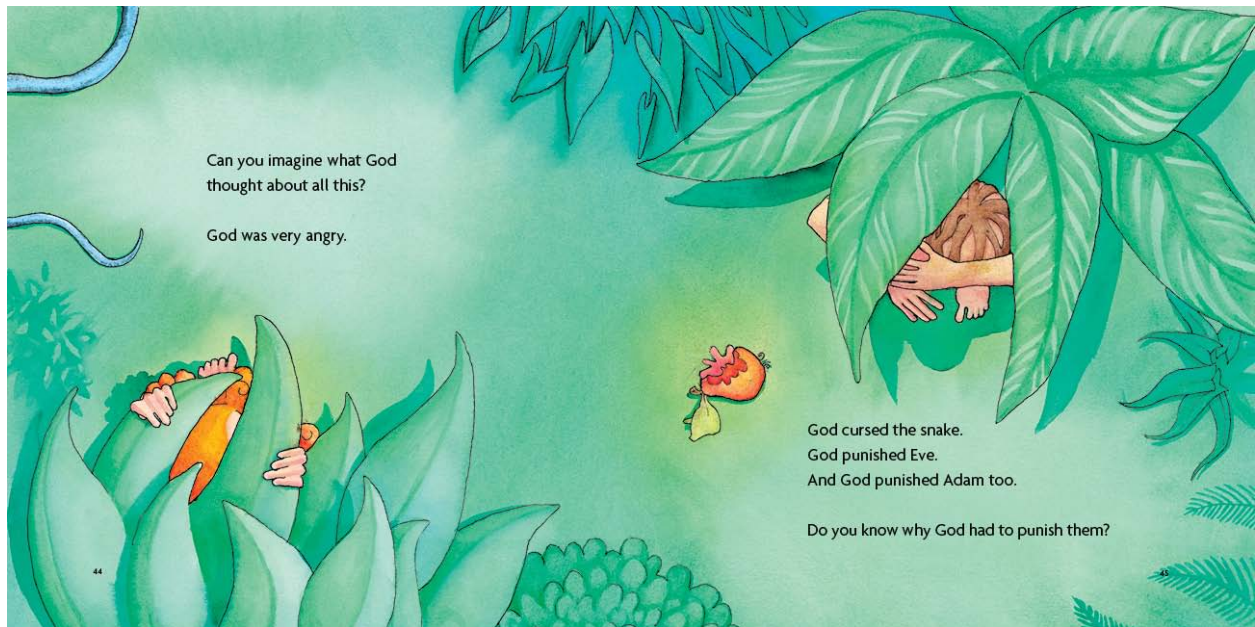
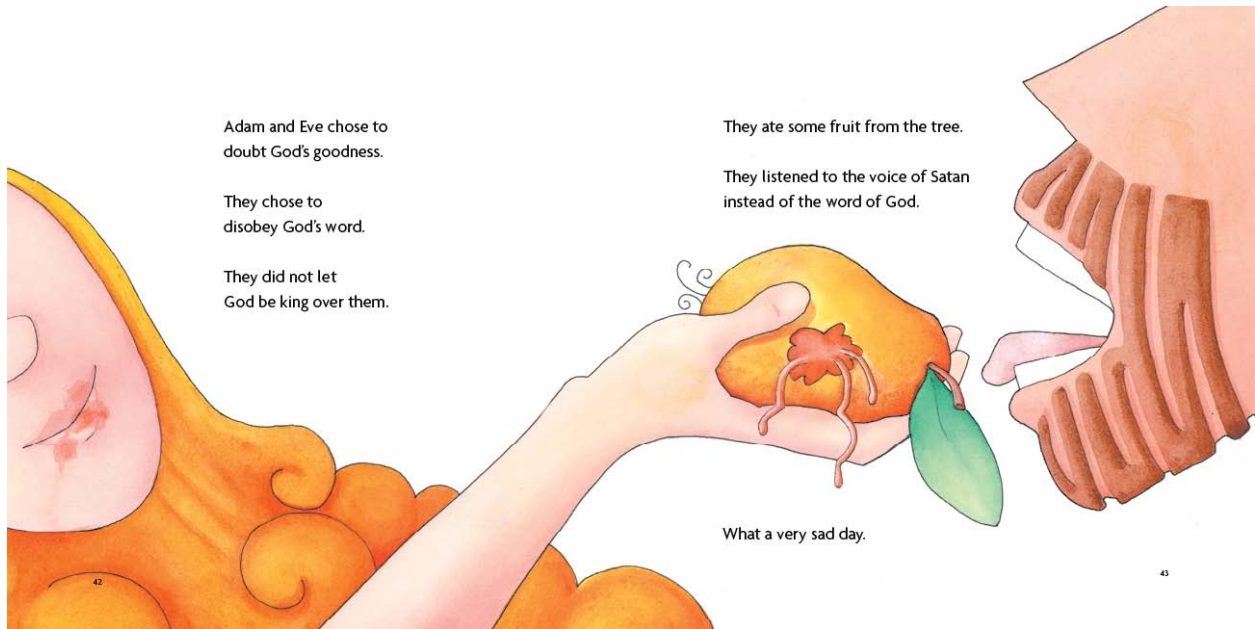


Figure 13. Point of View¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴Helm, *The Big Picture Story Bible*, 42–45.

4.2.3. Framing

There are two issues relating to distance: (1) the proximity of the characters and (2) how the artist frames an image. The proximity of the characters can establish a more personal relationship, especially “close-ups where only the character’s whole face or part of it can be seen.”¹¹⁵

A strong frame implies distance, and “Bleed’ illustrations, where images extend to the edges of the paper, require active and personal involvement from readers because they symbolically invite them to enter into the book.”¹¹⁶ This is by far the more common today as exemplified by the *Candle Bible for Toddlers*, which combines bleed illustrations with a waving Adam and Eve to invite the viewer in (see Figure 14).

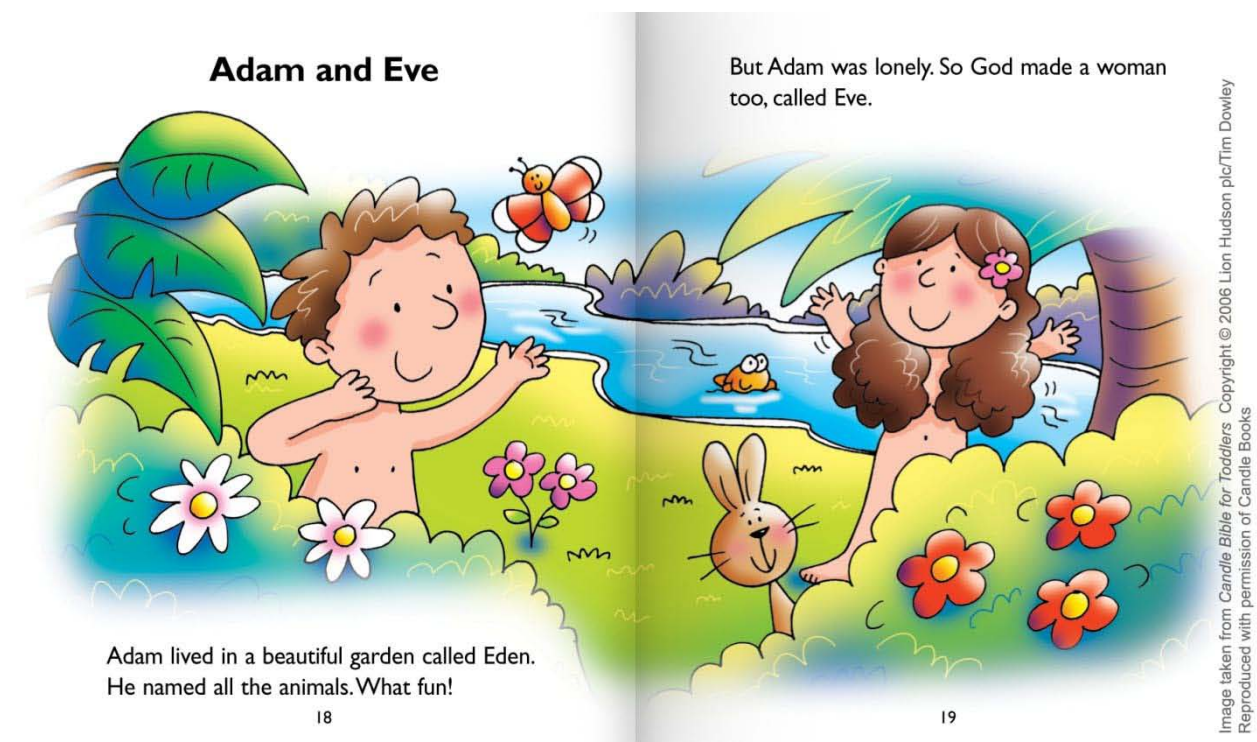


Figure 14. Framing¹¹⁷

4.2.4. Modality

Labitsi’s final category of visual interaction is perhaps the most indirect, for she simply observes that realism in artwork makes its content more credible.¹¹⁸ In the case of story bibles, this faces the artist with a dilemma, for realism can emphasise the distance of biblical events from a present-day child’s

¹¹⁵ Labitsi, “How Illustrations Tell Stories,” 60. *The Big Picture Story Bible* further emphasises the viewer’s participation in the fall with this device. See Figure 13.

¹¹⁶ Labitsi, “How Illustrations Tell Stories,” 61.

¹¹⁷ David, *Candle Bible for Toddlers*, 18–19.

¹¹⁸ Labitsi, “How Illustrations Tell Stories,” 61.

life experience. On the other hand, a cartoon format runs the risk of making the events and characters seem imaginary. Nevertheless, story bibles generally prefer the cartoon format (see Figure 14), with increasing realism as the intended age of the audience increases.

5. Conclusion

Assessing children's bibles is not child's play. The relationships between them, the Bible, and their readers are complicated, yet because we too easily see them as simple and trustworthy, we have not learned how to read them carefully or critically enough. Nor, I suggest, have we exploited their potential to the full, a potential recognised by no less a theologian than Martin Luther.

In 1529, Luther published a collection of illustrated stories from the Bible "for the sake of children and simple people who are more apt to retain the divine stories when taught by picture and parable than merely by words or instruction."¹¹⁹ Luther's preface expresses the hope that his work "may mark a beginning and set an example for others to follow and to improve upon as their talents allow."¹²⁰ Others most certainly followed, but whether they improved upon his offering is less clear. Indeed, until now it has been hard even to attempt an assessment, given the lack of a clear methodology by which to evaluate story bibles.

The aim of this article has been to aid that task by laying bare how story bibles work. In particular, I have attempted to do two things:

1. Highlight how any evaluation of a story bible must consider four relationships:
 - (1) the story-bible text and Scripture;
 - (2) the story-bible image and Scripture;
 - (3) word and image within the story bible; and
 - (4) the story bible and the child.
2. Equip readers of story bibles to explore those relationships with the resources of textual and especially visual narrative analysis.

The end of this article is therefore but the beginning of the work. In a forthcoming review article, I will apply these tools to two or three of the more influential and widely read story bibles published in recent years. For now, however, and in closing, let me offer a couple of suggested strategies for assessing children's bibles, distilling the essence of this article for a couple of different contexts:

Scenario 1: You are at your local bookshop/church bookstall; you have five minutes and want to check out the new children's story bible.

1. If there's a preface, read it. What goals if any does the author/illustrator have for their work?
2. Look over the table of contents. Does it include any biblical genres other than narrative? Is there (minimally) creation, fall, Abraham, Moses, incarnation, crucifixion (yes some omit it!), resurrection, ascension, Pentecost, the church, and the new creation?

¹¹⁹ Martin Luther, *Devotional Writings* (ed. Gustav K. Wiencke; vol. 43 of *Luther's Works*; ed. Helmut T. Lehmann; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 43. The *Passionalbüchlein* ("Book of the Passion") includes eleven stories from the OT and thirty-eight from the NT; it was added to the 1529 edition of the Personal Prayer Book. The first edition had fifty full-page woodcuts (illustrations), and later editions adopted woodcuts by Albrecht Dürer.

¹²⁰ Luther, *Devotional Writings*, 43.

3. Choose a few stories you know well. Is the language clear? Excerpted from the Bible or heavily paraphrased? What's omitted, added, changed, and/or moved around? Does the story bible attempt to fit the stories into a wider context? Do the pictures reflect the emphasis of the biblical narrative *and* the story-bible text? Are there comprehension or application questions? Are they appropriate to the meaning of the story in its biblical context? Often the most revealing stories are the fall, the flood, Jonah (rare is the story bible that includes Jonah 4), and the death of Jesus.

Scenario 2: You have an hour or two to spare with a story bible in one hand and a Bible in the other.

1–2. Repeat steps 1 and 2 above.

3. Read it cover to cover. First impressions? What stands out? Any recurring phrases or refrains? Does the artwork repeat any motifs or echo earlier illustrations? In a sentence, what is the story bible trying to say?

Relationship 1: The Text of the Story Bible and Scripture

4. Choose a few stories you know well. Re-read the biblical version and then the story bible. Is the language clear? Does it excerpt or heavily paraphrase the Bible? Does it distinguish its text from the Bible? How? What's left out? What's added? Does it fill gaps? What's changed? What's rearranged?

5. Does the author make any attempt to link the story to the wider story of salvation? How?

Relationship 2: The Images of the Story Bible and Scripture

6. Consider the setting of the illustrations, the landscape, and the use of animals and other visual metaphors. Will they help or hinder comprehension and concentration? (I had to spend a few minutes the other evening reassuring one of my daughters that the mouse in the jar got out okay before Jesus filled it with water at the wedding in Cana!)

7. Do the characters correspond to the biblical description if there is one? If not, what is the effect of the artist's decisions about appearance (e.g., age)? Are characters easily distinguishable from one another? Easily recognized if they recur later?

8. How are the characters relating in the image? Where has the artist freeze-framed, and how does that fit with where the biblical narrative lingers?

9. Is the style of illustration fitting? Does it vary?

10. As your eye moves from left to right across the images, how are characters positioned? What has the artist decided to show you happening? Do they pause on the same scenes in the narrative that the author and/or Scripture does?

11. What does the artist draw your attention to by foregrounding, enlarging, or highlighting in some other way?

12. What's on the cover? Front and end papers? Does this confirm the story bible's overall emphasis?

13. Does the artist make connections to the wider story of salvation? If so, is it by using visual motifs or metaphors? Are they well-chosen?

Relationship 3: Word and Image within the Story Bible

14. Do the images enhance a biblical detail or something the story bible has added?

15. Do they counterpoint the text by supplying some additional information? What is the impact of seeing but not hearing about that detail?

16. Do any images contradict the text or the flow of the text that is set beside it?
 17. Could a child retell the story based on the illustrations, or would the illustrations mislead them?

Relationship 4: The Story Bible and the Child

18. Does the main body of the text engage the child? How? With questions? Assertions? Giving what impression of the child's standing before God and their moral capacity?
 19. Are there discussion questions? Are they focussed on comprehension or application? Are they appropriate? Moralistic? Is that approach consistent through the story bible? What response does it call for? Any suggested prayers?
 20. How does the artist engage the viewer? Do characters look out at you? Which ones?
 21. Whose point of view does the artist give you? God's? Jesus's? The disciples'? The crowds'? Does the point of view shift within individual narratives? To what effect?
 22. How, if at all, does the artist use close-up or distance you from the action?
 23. Is the artwork realistic? Are the children you will read the story bible with likely to identify with characters? Do the characters look like them? Which characters? Is that a good thing?

6. Appendix: Story Bibles Cited¹²¹

- Amery, Heather. *The Usborne Children's Bible*. Illustrated by Linda Edwards. London: Usborne, 2000.
- Baker, Carolyn Nabors, and Cindy Helms. *The Beginners Bible for Toddlers*. Illustrated by Danny Brooks Dalby. Dallas: Word, 1995.
- Barfield, Maggie. *The Little Bible Storybook*. Illustrated by Mark Carpenter and Anna Carpenter. Milton Keynes: Scripture Union, 2007.
- Batchelor, Mary. *The Children's Bible in 365 Stories*. Illustrated by John Haysom. 1985. Repr., Oxford: Lion, 1995.
- Baxter, Nicola. *Stories from the Bible*. Illustrated by Roger Langton. Wigston, Leics.: Armadillo, 2004.
- Beers, V. Gilbert. *The Toddlers Bible*. Illustrated by Carol Boerke. Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor, 1992.
- Bradford, Mary. *The Bible Opened for Children*. London: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, 1866.
- The Children's Bible in Colour: The Old and New Testaments*. 1964. Repr., London: Paul Hamlyn, 1965.
- David, Juliet. *Candle Bible for Toddlers*. Illustrated by Helen Prole. 2006. Repr., Carlisle: Candle, 2007.
- deVries, Anne. *Story Bible for Young Children*. Illustrated by Hermine F. Schäfer. Translated by Baukje Gray and David Rudston. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978.

¹²¹ The sample was taken in 2010, so it does not cite a number of more recent story bibles. The forthcoming review article will offer an up-to-date survey before evaluating several from recent years in depth.

Telling the Story from the Bible?

- Edwards, Anne. *A Child's Bible in Colour: The Old Testament*. Illustrated by Charles Front and David Christian. London: Wolfe, 1969. Repr., London: Pan, 1973.
- Fletcher, Betty. *My Very Own Bible*. Illustrated by Lou Police. Eugene: Harvest, 1991. Repr., Carlisle: Candle, 1993.
- Goodings, Christina. *My Little Bible Board Book*. Illustrated by Melanie Mitchell. Chester: Marks and Spencer, 2007.
- Gross, Arthur W. *A Child's Garden of Bible Stories*. Illustrated by Rod Taenzer. Saint Louis: Concordia, 1948.
- Hadaway, Bridget, and Jean Atcheson. *The Bible for Children*. London: Octopus, 1973. Repr., London: Cathay, 1983.
- Harrison, James. *My Very First Bible*. Illustrated by Diana Mayo. London: Dorling Kindersley, 2005.
- Helm, David. *The Big Picture Story Bible*. Illustrated by Gail Schoonmaker. Wheaton: Crossway, 2004.
- Hoth, Iva. *The Picture Bible*. Illustrated by Andre Le Blanc. 1978. Repr., Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor, 1998.
- Lloyd-Jones, Sally. *Tiny Bear's Bible*. Illustrated by Igor Oleynikov. Carlisle: Candle, 2008.
- . *The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name*. Illustrated by Jago. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
- Loth, Paul J. *My First Study Bible: Exploring God's Word on My Own*. Nashville: Nelson, 1994.
- Mackenzie, Carine. *The Christian Focus Story Bible*. Illustrated by Kevin Kimber. Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2004.
- Meade, Starr. *Mighty Acts and God: A Family Bible Story Book*. Illustrated by Tim O'Connor. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.
- Ridders, Doris and Jean E. Syswerda, eds. *Read with Me Bible: A Story Bible for Children*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993. Repr., Carlisle: Candle, 1998.
- Robertson, Jenny. *In the Beginning*. Illustrated by Alan Parry. Ladybird Bible Books 1. Loughborough: Ladybird, 1978.
- . *The Ladybird Bible Story Book*. Illustrated by Alan Parry. Loughborough: Ladybird, 1983.
- Taylor, Kenneth N. *My First Bible in Pictures*. Illustrated by John Dillow. 2004. Repr., Carlisle: Candle, 2006.
- . *My First Bible in Pictures*. Illustrated by Richard Hook and Frances Hook. Wheaton: Tyndale, 1989. Repr., Carlisle: Candle, 2001.
- . *The Bible in Pictures For Little Eyes*. 1956. Repr., Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1980.

Tomie dePaolo's Book of Bible Stories. Illustrated by Tomie dePaolo. New York: Putnam, 1990.

Toulmin, Sarah. *Baby Bible*. Illustrated by Kristina Stephenson. Oxford: Lion, 2006.

Tulloch, Fiona, ed. *The Children's Bible: Illustrated Stories from the Old and New Testaments*. 2007.
Repr., London: Arcturus, 2008.

Vos, Catherine F. *The Child's Story Bible*. 6th. 1940. Repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

High Stakes: Insider Movement Hermeneutics and the Gospel

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1. Messianic Muslims and Muslim Evangelicals

1.1. What Is IM?

In June 2011, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) passed an overture entitled, “A Call to Faithful Witness.”¹ This overture, while sounding alarms on biblical translations that render the familial terms for God (Son, Father) with less offensive terms in the target language, also brought ecclesiastical attention to increasingly popular approaches to missions described as Insider Movements (IM).² Called now Jesus Movements by some,³ these controversial methods have gained traction in regions

¹Overture 9 of the PCA General Assembly 2011. As instructed in this overture, the 2011 General Assembly moderator of the PCA appointed a study committee to produce an analytic report on Insider Movements. Published in May 2012, Part One of this report focuses on Bible translation and divine familial language. The report also includes the full text of the final version Overture 9. See “A Call to Faithful Witness, Part One—Like Father, Like Son: Divine Familial Language in Biblical Translation,” <http://pcaac.org/Ad%20Interim%20on%20Insider%20Movements%20Report%205-17-12.pdf> (accessed May 21, 2012).

²There is not just one version of the Insider Movement, and some prefer the language of Insider Movements. For our purposes IM represents both the singular and the plural. Extensive explanation, defense, and debate about IM can be found in numerous issues of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* [EMQ], *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* or *International Journal of Frontier Missions* [IJFM], and *St. Francis Magazine* [SFM]. For a sympathetic look at IM, see the articles at <http://www.thepeopleofthebook.org/strategyInsiderArticles.html> (accessed May 28, 2012); see also, Kevin Higgins, “The Key to Insider Movements: The ‘Devoteds’ in Acts,” *IFJM* 21:4 (2004): 155–165. A recent 18-author critique of IM comes in *Chrislam: How Missionaries are Promoting an Islamized Gospel* (ed. Joshua Lingel, Jeff Morton, and Bill Nikides; Garden Grove, CA: i2 Ministries, 2011). For a simpler but insightful introductory critique of IM, see Jeff Morton, *Insider Movements: Biblically Incredible or Incredibly Brilliant?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012). For direct interchange between proponents and opponents of IM, see the entire issue of *St. Francis Magazine* 5:4 (2009).

³See Kevin Higgins, “Discipling the Nations and the Insider Movement Conversation,” *Mission Frontiers* 33:1 (January–February 2011): 26–27. Other identifiers include, “Movements to Jesus within Islam (Buddhism, Hinduism),” “kingdom movements to Jesus,” “Jesus movements that multiply disciples obedient to the Bible within different religious traditions,” “the Kingdom paradigm,” and “incarnational movements.” Cf. Morton, *Insider Movements*, 5.

where the Christian gospel has historically encountered harsh opposition. Motivated by the perceived scarcity of measurable fruit in places like Bangladesh and other predominately Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu countries,⁴ evangelical missionaries have employed IM techniques since the 1980s. In the 1990's, IM popularity expanded around the globe as many missionary practitioners became enamored with its tactics.⁵ Since these two formative decades, various forms of IM practice have entered the mainstream, crossed organizational and denominational boundaries, and now shape much of evangelical missions.

To their credit, IM-ers have sought to address certain missiological blind spots and have implemented greater methodological self-consciousness, seeking to halt unwittingly importing Western culture under the banner of Christianity.⁶ Measuring the success of that rectification to cultural imperialism is not our present concern. Rather we attend here to the more controversial facets of IM thinking. Many IM proponents insist that Muslims who convert to Christ should hold fast to various Islamic practices and avoid the identity of "Christian" altogether. This avoidance exceeds the realm of labels, as converts are called to *remain* inside Islamic religion and *retain* their Islamic cultural and religious identity. It is fair to say that most IM advocates intend that these *remaining* and *retaining* insiders not simply carry on their cultural and religious practices unthinkingly, but do so with an eye toward recasting these religious traditions and exposing their fellow Muslims to *Isa-Masih* (Jesus the Messiah).⁷ Some IM-ers assert that Christian missionaries should get "inside" the social and religious boundaries by public *conversion* to Islam, and some western missionaries have become practicing Muslims to deliver the message of Jesus.⁸ Still others assert that genuine Islamic perspective affirms that the "religion revealed by all the prophets

⁴For the sake of expediency, we will focus our attention primarily on IM in the Muslim world.

⁵Closely aligned to IM is C-5 on the C-Scale taxonomy, created by John Travis ("Must All Muslims Leave Islam to Follow Jesus?" *EMQ* 34 [1998]: 411–15). The C-scale presents a spectrum of "expressions of faith by MBBs [Muslim background believers]," where the "C" represents a different type of "Christ-centered community." For a gentle yet formidable critique of C-5, see Timothy C. Tennent, "Followers of Jesus (Isa) in Islamic Mosques: A Closer Examination of C-5 'High Spectrum' Contextualization," *IJFM* 23:3 (2006): 101–15.

⁶IM advocate John Travis argues that Christian terms and Christianity bear liabilities antithetical to the gospel. "In the Muslim context, the word 'Christian' . . . connotes Western culture, war (the Crusades), colonialism and imperialism." Muslims "associate Christianity . . . [with] negative aspects of present day Western culture like immodest dress, sexual promiscuity, disrespect of elders, indulgence in alcohol, Hollywood violence, narcotics and pornography" (John Travis, "Messianic Muslim Followers of *Isa*," *IJFM* 17:1 [2000]: 53–59). Cf. J. T. Smith, "How Islamic Can Christianity Be?" <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2012/05/14/how-islamic-can-christianity-be/> (accessed May 28, 2012).

⁷For more discussion of these tactics, see also Phil Parshall, "Danger! New Directions in Contextualization," *EMQ* 34:4 (1998): 404–10; Stan Guthrie, *Missions in the Third Millennium: 21 Key Trends for the 21st Century* (rev. ed.; Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005), 130–35; Warren C. Chastain, "Should Christians Pray the Muslim Salat?" *IJFM* 12:3 (1995): 161–63; Basil Grafas, "Insider Movements: An Evangelical Assessment," http://www.i2ministries.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=120:insider-movements-an-evangelical-assessment&catid=27:articles-category&Itemid=72 (accessed May 26, 2012).

⁸This fact has been confirmed by direct correspondence with missionaries in secure areas; these particular tactics are also affirmed, albeit guardedly, in John Travis, "Messianic Muslim Followers of *Isa*," 55. Tennent ("Followers of Jesus," 108) notes that some C-5 advocates, including Travis, have moved away from calling westerners to become Muslim for the sake of evangelism. Cf. Roger Dixon, "Moving on from the C1–C6 Spectrum," *SFM* 5:4 (2009): 14; republished in *Chriislam*, 96.

(e.g., Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus, and Muhammad) was originally the same . . . ‘true Islam’ is what real Christians believe.”⁹

How have such paradigmatic changes in missions gained traction? Though causes surely vary, ultimately IM practice prevails because of conviction. Affirming their commitment to Scripture, many have grown to believe IM methods alone honor the gospel’s integrity, that these movements alone follow the Spirit of God today. In fact, IM advocates view their missiological methods as not only within the scope of biblical permissibility, but rather as *mandated* by how Scripture portrays apostolic patterns. Is this so? Has IM unearthed the buried jewel of historic missions, recapitulating the first-century successes recorded in Acts? Is IM’s interpretation and application of the interface of apostolic method and first-century religion rich *rediscovery* or radical *redefinition*?

Piloting IM thinking is a set of determinative *hermeneutical* commitments, and it is these hermeneutical features that will serve as the focus of our analysis. Professing converts and missionary practitioners could surely be found to defend IM practice and proclaim evidence of its fruit. However, neither a battle of anecdotes nor listings of alleged successes and failures adequately reckon with IM practice. IM *thinking* needs addressing according to Scripture, and IM-ers themselves have discerned this need. As criticism has mounted, IM advocates have openly defended IM practices, producing not only anecdotes and statistics, but also arguing from Scripture itself. Such defenses have come primarily from missiologists and missionary practitioners, most with strong ties to Fuller Seminary’s renowned innovative missiologists, such as Donald McGavran. So integral to IM is this Fuller foundation that before we can adequately address its hermeneutical contours, we must understand the historical and conceptual impetus for these contours—that is, the cultural anthropology and missiology of McGavran and his colleagues.

1.2. A New Map for Missions

At the end of his influential life, McGavran cried out, with all of his missiological gravitas, for a “giant step” of prayerful deployment of frontier missionary societies to “focus on the unfinished task of world evangelization!”¹⁰ In this forceful plea, McGavran claimed that missiological zeal for the unreached masses would succeed only if combined with deliberate, tactical mobilization. Emotion without strategy is empty, and as he assessed his contemporary landscape, existing missions structures appeared woefully deficient to the monumental task. “Unless here in America literally thousands of new frontier missionary societies are founded, in thousands of local churches in most Churches (denominations), the ‘unreached peoples’ will not be reached.”¹¹ Notwithstanding the exaggerated American-centric dependence for worldwide evangelistic success, one can only appreciate McGavran’s vision and zeal.

McGavran proved himself a fearless maverick and strategist, a perpetual advocate for creative cultural analysis and attendant missiological corrections. In a fashion similar to and openly sympathetic to the controversial formulations of fellow Fuller professor Charles Kraft, McGavran paradigmatically relied upon cultural anthropological and sociological research.¹² Assessing his ardor and analysis, one

⁹ Bernard Dutch, “Should Muslims Become ‘Christians?’” *IJFM* 17:1 (2000): 17. One of the issues debated between IM advocates is the true prophethood of Muhammad.

¹⁰ Donald A. McGavran, “A Giant Step in Christian Mission,” *Mission Frontiers* 1:3 (1985): 31–33.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹² See, for example, Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), vii–xviii, 93–95. See Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Theologizing in Cross-Cultural*

should also note here his foreboding definition of unreached peoples. Tucked neatly in the rallying call to mobilization lies a striking distinction between reached and unreached peoples, an underlying sociological concept that has birthed a powerful impetus for IM. McGavran asserts,

An “unreached” ethnos or segment of society is one in which individuals who are Christ’s followers are perceived by their fellows to have “left their own people and traitorously gone off to join another people.” Putting it positively, a people is to be considered reached when its members who become Christians are perceived by their fellows as “still our people who are pointing the way to what they believe as a good path for us all to follow.”¹³

The so-called traitorous departure of Christians, which McGavran bemoaned as early as *The Bridges of God* in 1955,¹⁴ generated early rationale for missiological recalibration. Taking aim at the “problem” of converts leaving their families and their social identities, and marching in step with McGavran’s vision for the world and angst over measured missions failures in resistant cultures, missiologists such as Charles Kraft, Ralph Winter, Kevin Higgins, John and Anna Travis, Dudley Woodberry, and Rebecca Lewis have drawn the IM map. By extending the boundaries of McGavran’s “people groups,” they have found ways to affirm a broader range of religious and cultural neutrality.¹⁵ McGavran consistently opposed missiology shaped by Western individualism,¹⁶ and IM proponents have elevated such “people groups” and “people movements” into a decisive paradigm, asserting broader acceptability of their non-Christian religious identity and practices, and encouraging “believing families . . . [to] remain inside their socioreligious communities.”¹⁷ Capitalizing on McGavran’s categories IM advocates have advanced extant socio-religious identity to a place of functional stasis and prominence,¹⁸ so that following Jesus means appropriating him within the boundaries of existing religions.

Perspective (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979) and Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996). For points of sympathy and critique regarding Kraft, see Harvie M. Conn, *Eternal Word and Changing Worlds: Theology, Anthropology in Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 149–50, 167–76, 329–38.

¹³ McGavran, “Giant Step,” 31–32 (emphasis original).

¹⁴ Donald McGavran asserted, “To Christianize a whole people, the first thing *not* to do is to snatch individuals out of it into a different society” (*Bridges to God: A Study in the Strategy of Missions* [New York: Friendship, 1955], 10). McGavran, responding to the rugged individualism that still dominates western evangelicalism, argues for “people movements” that seek to advance the Christian faith in a way that “the social life of the individual is not destroyed” (16).

¹⁵ IM advocates, in keeping with Fuller missiology, define religion in terms of cultural norms. See, e.g., Charles H. Kraft, “Is Christianity a Religion or a Faith?” in Charles H. Kraft, ed., *Appropriate Christianity* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005), 83–97.

¹⁶ McGavran, *Bridges*, 16, 34, 68–99.

¹⁷ Rebecca Lewis, “Promoting Movements to Christ within Natural Communities,” *IJFM* 24:2 (2007): 76 (italics original).

¹⁸ We would be remiss here to neglect the contemporaneous and correlative theological changes at Fuller Seminary. Having established itself with explicit commitment to biblical inerrancy in 1947, Fuller openly abandoned its commitment to full biblical inerrancy by 1965. As reliance upon cultural anthropology and sociology increased, trust in Scripture correspondingly diminished. This shift in authority represents an entirely different epistemological, hermeneutical, and methodological (missiological) paradigm. See George Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987; repr. 1995); Nor-

Thus, according to IM missiological cartography, the best route toward creating a growing body of Jesus followers is to insist they (1) remain in existing cultural, social, familial, and religious networks and (2) retain their unique religious identity and practices. Asserting that much of what Westerners discern as *church* are truly “man-made ecclesiastical structures,”¹⁹ IM strategists call us to accept and promote such non-Christian communities of those who *follow Jesus*. All roads may not lead to Jesus, but the Spirit of Jesus surely blazes redemptive trails in non-conventional, *non-Christian*, ways.²⁰

1.3. God and the Apostles: The First Insiders?

The conviction of the IM promoters, self-consciously *evangelical*, is resolute: “What is truly at the heart of the insider movement paradigm is the God Who is at work directly among the nations, including their religions, to make in each a people for Himself. These are His movements, and He is the true Insider.”²¹ To IM theorists and practitioners, proclaiming the gospel to the unreached peoples of this age *requires* these correcting methods, methods that, they argue, emulate the behavior of the apostles. IM missiologists effectively see themselves as restoring *biblical* missions. With an eye to emulating courageous apostolic method, IM advocates ask, what did Jesus really do? What did the apostles do? What did the early church do? And what would they do today to reach peoples whose cultural and religious identities are thoroughly non-Christian? What would they do to reach people whose identities, relationships, and existence center in and survive only in these non-Christian, even anti-Christian contexts?

Reflecting on Paul’s missionary-zealous “I would become” words in 1 Cor 9, J. Dudley Woodberry, Professor of Islamic Studies at the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, raises the question about twenty-first-century emulation/application of apostolic method:

If Paul were retracing his missionary journeys today, would he add, “To the Muslim, I became a Muslim”? . . . Would he and the Jerusalem Council endorse Muslims being free to follow Jesus while retaining, to the extent this commitment allows, Muslim identity and practices, just as these Jerusalem leaders endorsed Jews being free to follow Jesus while retaining, to the extent that commitment allowed, Judaic identity and practices?²²

man L. Geisler and William C. Roach, *Defending Inerrancy: Affirming the Accuracy of Scripture for a New Generation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 17–24.

¹⁹ Rebecca Lewis, “Can the Kingdom of God Break Out of Christendom? Expecting the Unexpected,” *Missions Frontiers* 33:3 (May–June 2011): 15.

²⁰ Some IM proponents make explicit the *temporary* nature of “Messianic” Islam, where practices like “mosque attendance may only be a transitional part of some C5 believers’ spiritual journey” (John Travis, “Messianic Muslim Followers of *Isa*,” 55). This transitional feature of IM or C5 practice is neither shared by all nor made explicit by most.

²¹ Kevin Higgins, “Inside What? Church, Culture, Religion, and Insider Movements in Biblical Perspective,” *SFM* 5:4 (2009): 91.

²² J. Dudley Woodberry, “To the Muslim I Became a Muslim?” *IJFM* 24:1 (2007): 23. Cf. Brian K. Peterson, “The Possibility of a ‘Hindu Christ-Follower’: Hans Staffner’s Proposal for the Dual Identity of Disciples of Christ within High Caste Hindu Communities,” *IJFM* 24:2 (1988): 87–97. Georges Houssney provides an insightful critique of Woodberry’s thesis in “Would Paul Become Muslim to Muslims?” in *Chislam*, 62–76.

2. Insider Movement Hermeneutics

2.1. Rebecca Lewis and IM Advocacy²³

With such questions ringing in our ears, we turn now to Rebecca Lewis, the daughter of another Fuller missiologist, Ralph D. Winter. In her writings, Lewis has attempted to rigorously defend IM and to define its legitimate parameters. In what sense can or *should* religious and cultural identity remain unchanged when trusting Jesus Christ? In what sense can we properly “assert that Christ calls people to change their hearts, not their religions”?²⁴ Not only a theorist, but a seasoned practitioner among the Berbers of North Africa, Lewis self-consciously reflects upon her own mission undertakings. Her growing corpus of publications, most of which is accessible on the Internet, has also elevated her influence for promoting and practicing IM.

Before addressing her thought directly, let me commend Lewis for her clear writing, general hermeneutical consistency, and energetic presentation. Her McGavran-*esque* vision for worldwide evangelism combined with a refusal to accept humanly constructed boundaries for kingdom work is at a formal level commendable. “We’ve never done it that way before” is an unconscionable, disastrous posture, one that finds no turf in Lewis’s thought. In addition, though it is an all too common practice to isolate the gospel message from the method of its proclamation, Lewis rightfully asserts the indivisibility of the two.

Employing a hermeneutical and methodological approach typical of the prevailing IM thinking, Lewis’s crystallized defense of IM appears in an article entitled, “The Integrity of the Gospel and Insider Movements.”²⁵ This particular article will henceforth serve as our primary, though not exclusive, point of reference for analysis since it usefully distills key theological and missiological arguments that expose prevailing IM hermeneutics. Those either curious or concerned about IM will find here an accessible exposition of its interpretive and theological underpinnings, as well as a window into its practical implications. Attuned to IM critics, Lewis appeals that we revisit both how we understand the Christian gospel and assess IM. While her article renders nothing fundamentally new to IM discussions, its numerous engagements with Scripture, its comprehensive claims, and its disarmingly simple appeal beg a response.²⁶ Moreover, while Lewis has written other pieces on sociological factors in missions²⁷ and

²³ I am grateful to Rebecca Lewis for her responses to an earlier version of this analysis. Her comments have helped refine this article for its final form.

²⁴ Guthrie, *Missions*, 132–33. The sharp distinction between religion and relationship serves paradigmatically in IM, reflecting the religion vs. faith categories espoused by Charles H. Kraft. Cf. Tennent (“Followers of Jesus,” 111) also highlights the “trap” of yielding to the false dichotomy of “personal” versus “propositional.”

²⁵ Rebecca Lewis, “The Integrity of the Gospel and Insider Movements,” *IJFM* 27:1 (2010): 41–48, available at http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/27_1_PDFs/27_1_Lewis.pdf (accessed 11 July 2012).

²⁶ Dick Brogden, a seasoned missionary to Muslims in Africa, critiqued an earlier article by Rebecca Lewis (“Insider Movements: Honoring God-Given Identity and Community,” *IJFM* 26:1 [2009]: 16–19), where he challenges numerous IM presuppositions. See Brogden, “Inside Out: Probing Presuppositions among Insider Movements,” *IJFM* 27:1 (2010): 33–40. This article is particularly useful, as the author has allowed a running commentary of response from Lewis to his critique.

²⁷ See, for example, Rebecca Lewis, “Underground Church Movements: The Surprising Role of Women’s Networks,” *IJFM* 21:4 (2004): 145–50.

other IM-related subjects,²⁸ in this article she explicitly attempts to build her most compelling *biblical* case for IM philosophy and methodology.

Honing in on selected Scripture texts, Lewis explicitly and ambitiously argues that IM is not simply *a* biblical position but *the* biblical position. Another prominent IM advocate, Kevin Higgins, shares this clarion ambition, owning a grand sense of IM's historic significance:

I believe the debate about Insider Movements actually is a debate about the gospel, one as potentially earth-shaking as the Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, and Anabaptist reform movements of the 16th century. Those movements were driven by the recovery of basic, foundational biblical truths such as justification by faith, a gospel of grace, the priesthood of all believers, and the place of the Bible in the life of the church and of the believer. And they forced church leaders to re-evaluate church practice and doctrine.²⁹

Highlighting the increasing numbers of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists to whom “God is granting faith in Jesus Christ” yet who are not “becoming ‘Christians’ in name or adopting traditional Christian forms or identity,”³⁰ Lewis suggests that Insider Movements are actually not a *creation* of missiologists at all, but spontaneous activities that require us “to evaluate if they are biblically legitimate.”³¹ The role of missiologists is rendered passive and investigative, rather than persuaded and promotional. Regardless of how we might treat this interpretation of the *origin* of IM,³² as the growing publications make obvious, perpetuation is hardly passive. Description has openly become prescription, and commensurate with Higgins’ analysis, Lewis’s argument raises prescriptive questions about both *practice* and *doctrine*.

2.2. The IM Stakes

One of the pervasive challenges of interacting with IM argumentation is clarity. Definitions, identifiable theological parameters, and even clarifying applications of IM assertions remain elusive. IM argument characteristically delivers broad affirmations that posit trajectories but leave the explicit nature of those trajectories fluid. *Non*-definition is surely intentional, as IM paradigms align with Paul

²⁸ See, for example, Rebecca Lewis, “Strategizing for Church Planting Movements in the Muslim World: Informal Reviews of Rodney Stark’s *The Rise of Christianity* and David Garrison’s *Church Planting Movements*,” *IJFM* 21:2 (2004): 73–77; idem, “Promoting,” 75–76; idem, “Honoring,” 16–19; idem, “Can the Kingdom,” 15; idem, “Possible Pitfalls of Jesus Movements: Lessons from History,” *Missions Frontiers* 33:3 (May–June 2011): 21–24.

²⁹ On this basis, Higgins elevates the seriousness of the IM proposals: “Similarly, I see Insider Movements as fueling (and being fueled by) a rediscovery of the Incarnation, of a thoroughly biblical approach to culture and religion, of the role of the Holy Spirit’s leading God’s people to ‘work out’ the gospel in new ways, and of an understanding of how God works in the world within and beyond his covenant people. And we may be forced to re-evaluate some widely held ideas and practices of our own” (Higgins, “Devoteds,” 155–56). That Higgins emphasizes Christ’s incarnation as missiological exemplar rather than Christ’s redemption as substitutionary underscores a thoroughgoing theological misalignment.

³⁰ Lewis, “Integrity,” 47. See also Lewis’s development of an alleged historic basis for the spread of the gospel “along pre-existing social networks” (“Strategizing for Church Planting Movements,” 75; “Honoring,” 17–18).

³¹ Rebecca Lewis’ response in Brogden, “Inside Out,” 33, note *a*. IM frequently emphasizes that IM and C-5 thinking are descriptive, not prescriptive.

³² Even if it could be shown that IM movements have been spontaneous (a debated assertion), that assessment does not warrant turning analysis into system, description into prescription. Spontaneity does not inherently signify divine blessing.

Hiebert's "centered set" paradigm in which *movement* defines following Jesus.³³ Belief in Christ is not about doctrine ("bounded set") *per se*, but about orientation; it is not about adherence to particular beliefs according to defined boundaries, but instead about process toward the center, Jesus Christ ("centered set"). Lewis marches in lock step with this thinking. While she surely would not deem all religious practices acceptable for a Christ-follower, the rigorous commitment to undefined boundaries compels avoiding specific contemporary examples or tools for analyzing such questions; to do so would establish improper boundaries when the very notion of such boundaries derails the paradigm. With exquisite irony, however, such centered-set orientation is *bounded* by a commitment to no definitive boundaries.³⁴

In 2007, Lewis described IM trajectories in terms of their diverse, non-Western, non-traditional communal character: "insider movements' consist of believers remaining in and transforming their own pre-existing family networks, minimally disrupting their own pre-existing families and communities. These believing families and their relational networks *are* valid local expressions of the Body of Christ."³⁵ Lewis and other IM advocates deem divergent religious structures sufficiently neutral, so that they speak of "Messianic" or "biblical" Muslims, and "Hindu Christ-followers."³⁶ Accordingly, whether Muslim, Hindu, or Buddhist, extant socio-religious structures should serve as suitable expressions of believing in Jesus.³⁷ Lewis calls us to rethink our categories and, with no express bounding qualifications, to legitimize the non-Christian communities of those who follow Jesus. Scripture endorses, she contends, such a posture toward these religious forms: "Just like in the New Testament, He [Jesus] does not seem to be concerned that religious structures or forms be established in His name."³⁸

To be sure, Lewis describes insiders as "remaining in and transforming"³⁹ these networks; however, the effectiveness of such transforming influence is both highly suspect and actually impossible to

³³ For an explanation of bounded and centered set paradigms, see Paul G. Hiebert "Conversion, Culture and Cognitive Categories," *Gospel in Context* 1:4 (1978): 24–29.

³⁴ While influential in missiological discourse, Hiebert's bounded-set versus centered-set distinction fails to satisfy conceptually or practically. Bounded sets necessarily possess centering features, and centered sets necessarily operate within certain boundaries. Moreover, any claims that these paradigms are mutually exclusive or that one is inferior to the other cannot be biblically defended. Charles Van Engen (*Mission on the Way: Issues in Mission Theology* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996], 183) builds his "Evangelist Paradigm" around centered-set assumptions. He claims, "The major question is not to what religious system a person belongs. Rather, the crucial issue is one's center. The ultimate question is the question of discipleship, of one's proximity to, or distance from, Jesus the Lord"

³⁵ Lewis, "Promoting," 76 (emphasis original).

³⁶ Rick Brown, "Biblical Muslims," *IJFM* 24:2 (2007): 65–74; John Travis, "Messianic Muslim Followers of *Isa*," 53–59; Peterson, "Possibility of a 'Hindu Christ-Follower,'" 87–97; <http://www.jesusinthequran.org/> (accessed May 26, 2012).

³⁷ Lewis insists on two distinct characteristics of IM: "1. The Gospel takes root within *pre-existing communities* or social networks, which *become* the main expression of 'church' in that context. Believers are not gathered from diverse social networks to create a 'church.' New parallel social structures are not invented or introduced. 2. Believers *retain their identity* as members of their socio-religious community while living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible" ("Honoring," 16, emphasis original).

³⁸ Lewis, "Can the Kingdom," 15.

³⁹ Lewis, "Promoting," 76.

measure objectively.⁴⁰ But even more fundamentally, the way in which such networks and their practice are to be “transformed” reveals that IM thinking is predisposed to accept other religions’ traditions and practices. Such alleged neutrality of religious activity, which governs the IM paradigms, must receive fullest biblical scrutiny. For opposing reasons, both proponents and opponents trumpet that it is critically necessary to expose IM thinking. Notwithstanding the vital missiological questions, one must appreciate the theological and ecclesiological import here, a point that Lewis herself extends without ambiguity and with redundant refrain: at stake is “the integrity of the gospel itself.”⁴¹

In keeping with these high stakes, we must consider this integrity question. Is the IM “gospel” of which Lewis speaks truly the *biblical* gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God? Does the IM approach to Scripture faithfully present Jesus Christ as risen *Lord*, with all that attends him cosmically, redemptively, hermeneutically, ecclesiological, and missiologically?

2.3. Foundations of IM Hermeneutics

In “Integrity,” Lewis delineates core principles: the gospel’s *unchanging content* and *unchanging scope*. Concerning the latter, Lewis underscores the universality of the good news for all peoples. Concerning the former, she avers in words that formally echo Paul’s commendation of gospel purity (Gal 1:1–9): we must not distort the gospel “by adding additional requirements such as adherence to Christian traditions.”⁴² By overtly affirming gospel purity and universality, the initial formulation sounds promising. Such hopefulness grows in her cursory framing of biblical history, as she evidences a grasp of the organic character of Scripture, seeing the gospel as a realization of the Hebrew Scriptures:

Since circumcision was the sign of the covenant God had made with Abraham, and Pentecost was the celebration of the giving of the law on stone tablets to Moses, the gospel as a new covenant, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, were the fulfillment, not the abrogation, of all God’s promises in the Hebrew Scriptures.⁴³

Digging beneath the presenting structure of Lewis’s formulations, however, we discover some woefully wobbly footings in the interpretive paradigm. The assertion of organic biblical fulfillment is tempered by her insistence that the Jewishness of the gospel was a matter of a “religious framework.” Old Covenant practices were culturally specific, and as such they are not matters of the gospel (spiritual), but matters of religion (human).⁴⁴ Even the fact that the OT “religious framework” was “God-given”⁴⁵ evidently means only that its content, which called for certain practices, was just for the Jews *as a nation, a culture, a people group*. In the NT age, the gospel’s unchanging content came to these Jewish people in their context first, but their context of religious practice is ethnically theirs, and the Jewishness of the gospel is dispossessed of significance beyond that of its historic foray into their communities.

⁴⁰This difficulty is exacerbated in view of identity confusion. Are insiders Muslims? Are they Christians? Are they Muslims *and* Christians? What really does “Messianic Muslim” mean?

⁴¹Lewis, “Integrity,” 46.

⁴²Ibid., 42.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴In keeping with the Fuller analysis (see note 15), religion, for Lewis, stems from a people group, defines their context, and functioning primarily as a feature of cultural identity rather than bearing spiritual or moral significance.

⁴⁵Lewis, “Integrity,” 42.

Accordingly, to Lewis, this “Jewish religious community” is effectively a cultural and non-theological entity of which certain members in the first century appropriated Jesus into their religious life and forms. The practices in this religious community are spiritually insignificant in an ultimate sense, entirely disconnected from the real substance of the gospel. Thus, the gospel’s meaning transcends these cultural phenomena, *not in a way of radical transforming but of gradual reinterpreting*. It is here for the first time that the critical substructure of her thought surfaces—that is, the driving commitment for Lewis, in harmony with McGavran and Kraft, is cultural anthropology.

Under such a cultural-anthropological mindset, *temporality proves cultural assignability*; that the Jewish religious forms had a terminus indicates that they lack(ed) divine authoritative mandate or, at the very least, they lack(ed) spiritual import in a way necessary for spiritual life. Lewis claims, “Paul showed that the religious traditions of Jewish believers had not delivered them from their sinful nature (Ephesians 2:3), nor from their bondage to demonic forces (Galatians 4:3).”⁴⁶ She then concludes, “Neither would these traditions deliver the Gentiles from sin, and could merely lead to a new type of bondage.”⁴⁷ On the surface, this language may seem compatible with Pauline thought. Paul indeed calls believers in Christ away from dependence upon religious activity to full dependence upon Jesus Christ. As Lewis reiterates, “Paul’s main concern was clearly for the integrity of the gospel.”⁴⁸ What she *means*, however, by “religious traditions,” gospel integrity, and dependence on Christ we must consider further.

The primary religious form Lewis raises is circumcision. With her governing cultural orientation, Lewis insists that Paul “had changed the mark of the covenant from an external mark (circumcision, Gen 17:13) to an internal mark.”⁴⁹ This external mark of the covenant to Lewis is one of those religious traditions, and as such it possessed no real, spiritual value in its Old Covenant expression. Immediately we face a problem. This conclusion fails to uphold Scripture’s presentation of circumcision,⁵⁰ and it defies both the thoroughgoing spiritual character of this sign and the integrated way in which Scripture (in the OT and NT) presents redemption, faith, and obedience. While some in Israel errantly treated it as such, it was never merely an ethnic sign (Rom 4:11), making any such external rendering of circumcision morally culpable, not religiously neutral.⁵¹

Questions about circumcision invariably draw us to the Pauline epistles, such as Romans, Galatians, Philipians and Colossians. We comment briefly here on Col 2:11–12. Interpretations vary on this

⁴⁶ Ibid., 45.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 46.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 44.

⁵⁰ For more on the biblico-theological character of circumcision, see John Fesko, *Word, Water, and Spirit: A Reformed Perspective on Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2010), and Meredith Kline, *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968).

⁵¹ Our point here does not force a decision concerning paedo- or credo-baptism, but rather insists upon the inherent *spirituality* of circumcision as both Testaments attest. [Editor’s note: Cf. David Gibson’s article in this issue of *Themelios*: “[Sacramental Supersessionism Revisited: A Response to Martin Salter on the Relationship between Circumcision and Baptism](http://thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/sacramental-supersessionism-revisited-a-response-to-martin-salter-on-the-relationship-between-circumcision-and-baptism),” available at <http://thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/sacramental-supersessionism-revisited-a-response-to-martin-salter-on-t>.]

text,⁵² but what is clear in any reasonable exegesis is that Paul discerns the spiritual significance of circumcision to find its fulfilled theological meaning in Christ's redemption. The spiritual weight Paul gives to circumcision is no NT *creation* (Rom 2:28–29; 4:11–12), but rather a NT *fulfillment*. Paul *did not change* circumcision from an external to an internal reality. Circumcision had always been a spiritual mark (Deut 10:12–16). Indeed, it was a matter of explicit covenant command by God himself to his covenant people for their obedience (Gen 17; Lev 26:40–42; Rom 2:25–29; Eph 2:11–14).

Paul repeatedly and harshly rebukes those who seek redemptive efficacy in circumcision (Gal 5:2–6), but even in his rebuke, his treatment of the subject defies any purely cultural interpretation of the sign itself. Contrarily, while circumcision was neither an end in itself nor a means of earning right standing before God (cf. Gal 6:15), the Apostle Paul builds upon its organic spiritual significance throughout the OT, expressing how the sign culminates in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

In summary, that physical circumcision was mandated only in the OT age does not make its true meaning cultural or mere religious custom; such a conclusion is at best a naïve interpretive *non sequitur*. The change in the NT, in its laying to rest the obligation of circumcision, was not due to circumcision's cultural negotiability, but to the conclusion of its prior covenantal function (Eph 2:12). Accordingly, the OT-to-NT transition discloses movement from spiritual promise to spiritual fulfillment, rather than cultural forms creatively appropriated or interpretively hijacked by the apostles.⁵³

Lewis's culture-centric rendering of circumcision then exposes the structural footings in her interpretive method. Determining that abrogating circumcision evidences that it is spiritually negotiable manifests a determinative epistemological reliance on culture as the driving force for biblical interpretation. Cultural primacy in Jewish practice flows seamlessly to the conclusion that other religious practice is also culturally neutral and thereby no inherent concern of the gospel. That such a determinative cultural grid drives Lewis's IM interpretation comes into full view when we see how she analyzes other biblical passages through her circumcision-paradigm.⁵⁴

2.4. John 4 and Samaritanism

Capitalizing on a text often referenced by IM proponents, Lewis contends that Jesus's dealings with the Samaritan woman (John 4) disclose a gospel message that extended beyond the Jewish religion.⁵⁵ According to Lewis, "Jesus had given Samaritan believers the freedom to worship '*in spirit and truth*' without requiring them to become proselytes or to come to the Jewish synagogues."⁵⁶ This conclusion is

⁵² While it is not the majority view, this author concurs with O'Brien's interpretation that the circumcision of Christ is the eschatological judgment borne in his own body (Col 2:11–12). Peter T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* (WBC; Waco: Word, 1982), 117–18.

⁵³ John Murray wisely reminds us, "Our knowledge of the Bible, if it is to be really adequate, must be knowledge of the Bible as it is, and must reflect . . . [its] organic character We must understand that the whole Bible stands together and that fibres of organic connection run through the whole Bible connecting one part with every other part and every one truth with every other truth" ("The Study of the Bible," in *Collected Writings*, vol. 1: *The Claims of Truth* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976], 5).

⁵⁴ Though Lewis comments especially on John 4 and Acts 15, other favorite IM texts include Num 22–24; 2 Kgs 5; 1 Cor 7; 1 Cor 9; and the book of Jonah. See Bill Nikides, "The Insider Story: Theology," in *Chrislam*, 12–22; idem, "Lost in Translation: Insider Movements and Biblical Interpretation," in *Chrislam*, 44–61; Tennent, "Followers of Jesus," 105–9.

⁵⁵ See Lewis, "Integrity," 42. Lewis also treats John 4 and Acts 15 in "Honoring," 17–18.

⁵⁶ Lewis, "Integrity," 42.

true, but not in the manner Lewis infers from this passage. Jesus is not proclaiming cultural ambivalence, that is, that Jewish tradition/custom is acceptable and Samaritan tradition/custom is acceptable. He does not preach ambivalence about socio-religious identity. Rather he proclaims that he fulfills the revelation that came through Abraham and Moses and that he has arrived to usher in the promised new age.

The historico-transitional cast of the passage shines brightly: “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father” (John 4:21).⁵⁷ Christ’s message about worship “in spirit and truth” is laden with this temporal—or better, eschatological—significance.⁵⁸ Strikingly, the particularity of his Jewishness sustains this historic, eschatological point. When Jesus says, “salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22), he argues for the broad scope of his theological significance on the *basis* of his narrow identity as a Jew. In other words, what makes his salvation efficacious to the Samaritan woman is his OT-fulfilling incarnate identity as the promised Jewish Messiah (“I who speak to you am he,” John 4:26) breaking into history in Palestine. His soteric value resides precisely in fulfilling special revelation, a revelation that moves from particularity (Jewish) to universality (Samaritans, Gentiles, etc.) in keeping with the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:1–3). In short, his universal relevance springs forth from his eschatological particularity.

Loaded then with decisive theological significance, Jesus’s instruction to the Samaritan woman simply cannot be squeezed into affirming cultural neutrality! Instead, identifying himself as the genuine fulfillment of biblical revelation and as the eschatological Messiah, Jesus called her to a radical and new allegiance, commensurate with the theological weight of the historic moment. His ontological and eschatological identity beckoned a categorically different understanding and practice of worship—“spirit and truth” worship defined by faith in the Son of God, *not by Samaritanism*. Of course, following Jesus does not delegitimize the Samaritan woman’s cultural identity, but faithful following also cannot be properly construed as affirming her religious identity and practices in a way that makes worship in “spirit and truth” culturally rendered rather than eschatologically transformed. Proper interpretation of this event requires bringing all dimensions of Samaritanism under the theological authority of Christ’s identity, rather than in any way yielding Christ’s authority to Samaritan cultural or religious hegemony. At the very least, Lewis’s construction fails to reckon with the text’s permeating eschatology and thereby eclipses its central meaning and mistakes theological substance for cultural diversity.

2.5. Acts 15 and Redemptive History

After discerning certain cultural/religious affinities of Samaritans and Jews, Lewis turns to what she considers the more difficult case of the Gentiles, their culture and their religion. Summarizing her analysis of the first-century expansion of the gospel, she asks a couple of formative questions:

Did the gospel message bring grace only to those who join the family of faith as it was then construed (the circumcised believers who kept the Mosaic Law) or could the gospel bring salvation to all, regardless of their social and religious context? . . .

⁵⁷ Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

⁵⁸ Fortifying the already explicit eschatological contours of the passage is the emphasis on the *Spirit*. See D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Leicester: IVP, 1991), 224–26.

Did the message of Jesus Christ only have power to save those who also accepted the religious framework in which Christ himself was incarnated, or could the gospel save those in an alien context as well?⁵⁹

Initially, these questions seem innocuous enough. After all, who would deny that the gospel did not and does not require Gentiles to become Jews? Who would deny that the gospel defies works-religion? In turning to the Acts 15 dispute, Lewis discloses what she fully intends by her questions. She describes faithful Jews in the Old Covenant as practicing “religious traditions,”⁶⁰ and then concludes that Peter’s speech in Acts 15 intended to defend “the power of the gospel to save believers who retain their Gentile culture and identity.”⁶¹ Moving directly to the Apostle Paul, she concludes that he likewise argues “repeatedly that the gospel must move into the Gentile people groups unhindered by external religious expectations.”⁶² Lewis accordingly concludes that to make religious practices a matter of the gospel is to pervert the gospel’s purity. In addition, religious traditions of the Jews already proved themselves impotent to save,⁶³ and “it is the gospel that is the transformative power in the life of a believer,”⁶⁴ not his religion. Therefore, as Lewis sees it, one’s religious practices are not the turf of the gospel, as the gospel surpasses—or better, does not concern itself primarily with—one’s religious identity or practices.

This cultural wrapping of first century Jew-Gentile relations comes quickly unraveled. According to Scripture, real faith introduces the believer to an entirely new identity in Jesus Christ (Col 3:1–17) and to a brand new familial identity in communion with others distinctly called as God’s children by faith (Rom 8:16–17; 1 Cor 12:12–31). Christ’s lordship transcends religion and culture, not in the sense of ignoring it, but in rebuking its ungodly practices and in calling redeemed Jews and Gentiles to biblical, Christ-shaped community, with its divinely revealed ethical and religious forms. The divine gift of faith vivifies dead and unbelieving hearts (Eph 2:1–10) and combats all rebellious moral and religious practices (Jas 2:14–26; 1 Cor 6:1–20)—whether they are distortions of revealed religion or humanly (or demonically) created false religion. One’s core commitments and practices receive comprehensive and radical recalibration according to the gospel of Jesus Christ (Heb 10:19–39; 1 Cor 15:1–58).

The best of IM advocacy surely concurs with the *principle* of the gospel’s confrontation with unbelief, but with IM commitments to the autonomy of those in other religious cultures, *what* the gospel combats and *how* it does so remain both unbounded and inadequate. Discernment about the gospel’s authoritative impact upon cultural and religious practices becomes hopelessly obscured when one’s paradigm for interpretation is cultural rather than redemptive-historical. Lewis’s exposition here unavoidably suffers from such obscuring, as she assesses the situation through a fluid cultural paradigm rather than a decisive theological/eschatological one. Below we explore more specifics concerning the gospel’s power and calling. But for now we should state simply that for understanding the Jew and Gentile context, the organically and theologically rich contours of biblical revelation simply will not be

⁵⁹Lewis, “Integrity,” 43.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid., 44.

⁶³Ibid., 45.

⁶⁴Ibid.

squashed under cultural analysis that indiscriminately affirms religious identity and practice or in any way minimizes the spiritual antithesis between belief and unbelief.⁶⁵

Before proceeding with Lewis's argument, a word here regarding biblical interpretation is in order. Critical to biblical hermeneutics is the organic nature of redemptive events typified, anticipated, and fulfilled. From Scripture's redemptive-historical perspective, Jesus was the embodiment of biblical (Jewish) promise, and thus the eschatological thrust in John 4 actually characterizes biblical revelation. Jesus's Jewishness matters then for *theological* reasons, as it was to the Jews that divine revelation had come and to the Jews that the promise of Messiah had come (Gen 12). Moreover, Christ's fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12), for example, is as relevant to the *Gentiles* as it is to the Jews; Abraham is called the father of all who believe—Jew and Gentile (Rom 4:11–12; Gal 3:7–9, 27–29). While divine revelation comes *through* the Jews, its authoritative, redemptive message was not only *for* the Jews! As anticipated in the OT (Gen 12:1–3; cf. 1 Pet 1:10–12), the first century marks the hinge point of the ages (Heb 1:1–4) when Jesus Christ the Protagonist of all history brings the unfolding of revelation to its dénouement in his life, death, resurrection, and ascension. The spiritually dynamic revelation of the NT is grounded in the spiritually alive, yet anticipatory, revelation of the OT. The sub-eschatological restlessness (anticipation) of the OT revelation is, in fact, embedded in the revelation itself.⁶⁶

As presented by the apostles, the first century A.D. was a unique, unrepeatable period of redemptive history. It is epochally transitional; the work of Jesus Christ inaugurates the promised new age (Acts 2:17; Heb 1:1–2; 9:26; cf. Matt 12:28; Paul's use of "first fruits" in Rom 8 and 1 Cor 15). The entire NT organically connects to the OT, as it climactically presents the incarnate Son of God as the substance of all OT anticipation (see, e.g., Luke 24:13–49; Rom 1:1–7; Heb 1:1–4; John 5:39–47). Accordingly, it must be understood that the primary events about which the NT concerns itself—the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—are, at their very core, *eschatological*.⁶⁷ Hence, Acts and the epistles of the NT must be seen first in view of these historic, christological events. As Paul has put it, his entire ministry centers upon the Scripture-fulfilling life, death, and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor 2:2; 15:1–3); Christ's person and work exhaustively shapes his interpretation of Scripture (2 Cor 1:20); and Christ's

⁶⁵ Such ambiguity and truncation have become common in much missiological argument. For example, Van Engen (*Mission on the Way*, 183–87) proposes three missiological implications of his "Evangelist Paradigm": (1) faith particularism, (2) cultural pluralism, and (3) ecclesiological inclusivism. While we appreciate the unambiguous assertion of salvation in Christ alone, this model fails to consider adequately critical epistemological questions, clouds the relationship between faith and culture, and by a truncated definition of the church, effectively distances personal faith from Scripture's determinative teaching on ecclesiology. "As Paul declares in Romans, and we see modeled in Acts, to confess with one's mouth and believe in one's heart that Jesus is Lord—that is all there is. Nothing else really matters. All else is to be held lightly. Everything else is negotiable." (184)

⁶⁶ David B. Garner, "Did God Really Say?" in *Did God Really Say? Affirming the Truthfulness and Trustworthiness of Scripture* (ed. David B. Garner; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2012), 154–59.

⁶⁷ All too often eschatology is improperly relegated to speculative charts and graphs seeking to depict the chronology of *future* events. Scripture presents eschatology in an unambiguously different sense, connecting the OT and NT in a historico-genetic, two-age fashion (cf. Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*; repr., Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1994). A building anticipation of the coming Messiah in the Last Days characterizes the OT age. The NT presents Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of that anticipation and explicitly exposes his first coming in terms of its epochal significance (see, e.g., Heb 1:1–2). In short, Jesus launches the Last Days; he inaugurates eschatology. Historically and theologically speaking, we are not awaiting the Last Days; since the first century A.D., we have been *in them*.

historic triumph defines his method of proclamation (Eph 3:8–13).⁶⁸ The interpretive presupposition of apostolic ministry is the accomplishment of redemption in Jesus Christ; this eschatological center shapes all reflection upon redemption accomplished, applied, and proclaimed.⁶⁹

In the historically unique period of transition in the book of Acts, the church is growing into its understanding of this cosmically significant meaning of Jesus Christ's work and the unprecedented outpouring of the Holy Spirit. While cultures surely felt a jolt at this critical historical point, this is not a period merely of cultural upheaval. It is foremost a period of *theological* upheaval in which the OT worship forms are replaced by the substance of those forms—Jesus Christ himself. The apostles faced the challenge of guiding the church to move from these spiritual typological forms (OT) to understanding and applying their antitypical realities (NT). Again, this transition is not primarily a matter of cultural adaptation but of organic theological realization. The Old Covenant shadows had given way to the glorious christological light. The reason the apostles handled things in Acts 15 the way they did, when they recognized “the movement to Christ among the Greeks was from God and the Greek ‘Christians’ should not be required to adopt the religious traditions of the church in Jerusalem,”⁷⁰ was *not* cultural neutrality. Rather they acted because of the epochal transition that Jesus Christ the Son of God inaugurated, attested by the outpouring of his Spirit. Christ's work, in fulfillment of the promise made to Abram (Gen 12), marked the dawn of the new age in the gospel. This historic, theological reality changed *everything*.

2.6. Eschatology and Identity in Christ

To summarize then, the argument in Acts 15 is decidedly *not* a defense of “the power of the gospel to save believers who retain their Gentile culture and identity.”⁷¹ Such a conclusion betrays a reductionistic and theologically anemic interpretation of the work of Jesus Christ! Old Covenant Jewish practices had been divinely given, possessing real spiritual significance, a significance culminating in the once-for-all work of Jesus Christ. Now OT faith in its old forms truly had come to an end; it attained fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Thus because of Christ, to return to Judaism in its Old Covenant forms was eschatologically retrogressive, and to obey the covenant God through the Old Covenant spiritual signs was no longer necessary.⁷² Such termination of Old Covenant practice indicated God's faithfulness to his spiritual promises (Gen 12; Gal 3:8)! Of course, we do not find the apostles calling their hearers to repudiate their cultural identity indiscreetly; rather we find them consistently calling their hearers to a faith that produces obedience (Rom 1:7; 16:25), in which their union to Jesus Christ now comprehensively defines their identity, and due to this identity, they are called to submit all of their lives, cultural habits, and religious practices to the explicit authority of Jesus Christ. Solidarity of faith

⁶⁸ See, for example, Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2007), 198–238.

⁶⁹ See John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955).

⁷⁰ Lewis, “Integrity,” 44.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁷² Isolated apostolic instruction (e.g., 1 Cor 7) for continuing circumcision should be understood according to the transitional age of the first century. “The one mark of sociological distinction formerly did have religious significance but does so no more—circumcision” (Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 311).

and confession within ethnic diversity manifests a rich component of the single eschatological people of God (Heb 2:10–18; Rev 7:9–12).⁷³

Yet just as she does with Jesus and the Samaritan woman, Lewis renders the Acts 15 cultural context supreme, and in her hermeneutical paradigm eclipses the redemptive-historical. In Lewis's IM schema that both elevates culture as interpretively primary and neutralizes religion's spiritual significance, salvation in Christ saves one not *from* false religion, but *in* false religion. This critical theological mistake manifests itself not only in the way in which Lewis interprets the ancient Scriptures, but also the way in which she presents Scripture's teaching for IM's contemporary practice in people groups around the world.

3. IM Hermeneutics: Christian Life, Church and Missions

To address the modern mission context, Lewis reflects back to her interpretation of the Jew-Gentile relations. To put it in her own language,

It is more accurate to recognize that in the first century there were in existence at least two radically different religions based on Jesus Christ. There was the Jewish version, breathing life into the Laws of Moses and Jewish ritual holy days, and there was the Greco-Roman version, turning philosophy-loving hearts, that explored the nuances of the Trinity and the incarnation.⁷⁴

With this ancient analysis in view, Lewis insists we should recognize that “Paul was setting a template for how the gospel penetrates radically different cultures.”⁷⁵ Besides the historical inaccuracy of asserting “radically different [Jewish and Gentile] cultures,”⁷⁶ these striking statements and other supporting ones beg further consideration. As Higgins promised, IM does indeed force “church leaders to re-evaluate

⁷³While arguing consistently for unity of the body (in identity and spiritual obedience), Paul does not deny the presence of differences between the Jew and the Gentile (Gal 2:15). In fact, in 1 Cor 7:17–24 (cf. Lewis, “Integrity,” 46), he urges the first-century Jews and Gentiles to pursue New Covenant obedience, while not concerning themselves with their circumcised or uncircumcised status—a vital matter of obedience under the Old Covenant (cf. Gal 2:3). Paul here very practically evidences his understanding how the eschatological age brings the spiritual obedience of circumcision to an end. “Paul’s concern . . . is not that they *retain* their present social setting, but that they *recognize* it as a proper one in which to live out God’s call. . . . Thus he tells them that being in Christ does not negate their present situation; but neither is he arguing that it absolutizes it. . . . The gospel absolutely transcends, and thereby eliminates altogether, all merely social distinctions. In Christ Jew and Greek together, whether slave or free, make up one body” (Fee, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 309, 311–12). Though IM advocates seek to find a contemporary parallel in Islam, Jay Smith demonstrates the falsity of the parallel: “The problem with *saying like or remaining in Islam* is that Islam is both a religion and a culture. Staying in Islam means to take on all the religious connotations, as well as its spiritual power. In these verses [1 Cor 7:17–24] Paul does not suggest Gentiles stay as pagan worshippers in their local temples” (Jay Smith, “An Assessment of IM’s Principle Paradigms,” in *Chriislam*, 286). Cf. Tennent, “Followers of Jesus,” 107.

⁷⁴Lewis, “Integrity,” 45.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 47.

⁷⁶The vigorous cultural distinctions presented here simply do not withstand scholarly analysis regarding the Hellenized Jewish world of the first century. See, e.g., Martin Hengel, *Jews, Greeks and Barbarians: Aspects of Hellenization of Judaism in the Pre-Christian Period* (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); James D. Newsome, *Greeks, Romans, Jews: Currents of Culture and Belief in the New Testament World* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992). Even if, as Louis Feldman contends, Hengel’s Hellenization thesis is overstated, history

church practice and doctrine,”⁷⁷ and accordingly, Lewis’s conclusions deliver formulaic and, as we will see, relativizing assertions concerning faith and faithfulness. We will present three interrelated applications of her IM hermeneutic for contemporary *practice* and *doctrine*.

3.1. Relativized Religious Practice

With unfettered clarity, Lewis’s summary statements reiterate the IM view of religion’s cultural relativity. According to IM thought, Jews take their ancient traditions and add new “gospel” meanings; Gentiles take their own religious proclivities and imbue them with fresh meanings, establishing their own religiously and culturally practiced “gospel.” Since the OT came to Jews in their cultural context, we must interpret it first on the basis of that human context. Therefore, seeing the OT in its NT fulfillment is essentially cultural; such interpretation was good for the Jews but unnecessary for the Gentiles. Even NT commands must be read through the cultural lenses required by IM hermeneutics.⁷⁸ Ironically, Lewis’s idea of the unchanging and transcendent power of the gospel obscures the fact that her version of the gospel changes according to the culture in which it goes; its transcendence becomes transience, its power, acquiescence. Gospel appropriation takes shape according to the *norma normans* (norming norm) of the religious culture.

This IM rendering of religious practices—whether biblical or extrabiblical—moves Lewis in two directions. On the one hand, concerning the Jews, it relativizes the gospel fulfillment of OT promise. By squeezing Old Covenant practices into non-spiritual, non-theological matters, Lewis makes NT interpretation of them unique to Jewish believers. In like fashion, this cultural determination facilitates turning pagan religious practices into spiritually neutral, negotiable matters. While she does not get explicit about what specific religious practices she advocates the Gentiles of the first century to maintain, by her extrapolation to the contemporary implications, we can discern with little doubt the scope of religious relativism in view. Muslims stay Muslim, Buddhists stay Buddhist, and Hindus stay Hindu. Why? Because these “families and communities are claiming to know and to submit to Jesus as their Lord and Savior” while living “in midst of cultures similar to the idolatrous pantheon of the Greco-Roman world” and “remaining members of their communities, including most aspects of their religious culture.”⁷⁹

In one critical way, Lewis is correct: followers of Christ often should remain in their cultures, their workplaces, and their familial networks, serving as both salt and light (Matt 5:13–16). But the IM paradigm illegitimately extends the boundaries for such remaining and retaining, and it unavoidably attenuates the gospel’s authority. By proffering the gospel according to cultural constraints, cultural hegemony relativizes the magisterial quality of the gospel. In this regard, Lewis asserts, “no one should consider one religious form of faith in Christ to be superior to another.”⁸⁰ To Lewis retaining Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu religious practice is not only okay; it is *the only way in which the integrity of the gospel is maintained*. The unchanging gospel according to Lewis is a centered-set gospel, one allegedly

defies any *radical* difference between Jewish and Gentile culture (Louis H. Feldman, *Judaism and Hellenism Reconsidered* [JSJSup 107; Leiden: Brill, 2006]).

⁷⁷ Higgins, “Devoteds,” 155.

⁷⁸ Lewis, “Integrity,” 45.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

uncluttered by boundaries of shared identity and uniform religious activity. Yet this cannot be. The cost is too high. When cultural anthropology frames hermeneutics, culture and faith undergo unbiblical conflation, the antithesis between belief and unbelief suffers eclipse, and the lines between believing practice and unbelieving practice enter an impenetrable fog.

Of course, Lewis views her own thinking on these epistemological and methodological points as *biblical*, yet she unwittingly reframes her assessment of scriptural authority by a Fuller-fed irreducible cultural diversity: “Today people of many different cultures . . . are claiming their biblical right to live out their faith in diverse ways that are nevertheless grounded on the supreme authority of the Bible.”⁸¹ In Lewis’s thinking, biblical authority functions by leaving the right of decision-making for gospel obedience in the hands of the people group and even with the *individual* in question.

Matters of church practice immediately surface. While Lewis does not raise baptism *per se*, her hermeneutical approach raises the question of the necessity of baptism as an act of insider obedience. In fact, some IM sympathizers have determined that baptism is a negotiable form and not a biblical mandate.⁸² For our discussion here, let it suffice to say that the interpretive paradigm of cultural primacy leads to disturbing vicissitude on such essential ecclesiological questions.⁸³ IM hermeneutics inverts culture and revelation; it brings the authority of biblical revelation under the authority of religion and culture, rather than religion and culture under the full authority of biblical revelation. Again, the propriety of contextualized gospel appropriation should surely be appreciated; but the *manner* in which it is affirmed here eloquently begs the meaning of Christ’s authority.⁸⁴

In addition, according to Scripture (e.g., Exod 20:4–6; Deut 4:2; Mark 7:6–9), worship activity—even zealous worship activity—not revealed by God for his people is false religion.⁸⁵ It is idolatry. As Paul himself notes, zeal without knowledge is wholly deficient (Rom 10:2). Moreover, if idolatry is not defined by what one does (religion), then what identifying features are there? Idolatry of the heart is

⁸¹ Ibid., 45.

⁸² See Phil Parshall, *Muslim Evangelism: Contemporary Approaches to Contextualization* (2d ed.; Colorado Spring: Biblica, 2003), 199–210. See also, H. L. Richard, “Unpacking the Insider Paradigm: An Open Discussion on Points of Diversity,” *IJFM* 26:4 (2009): 180; Higgins, “Inside What?” 74–91. Bill Nikides critiques Kevin Higgins and Donald McGavran for their relegating sacraments to something less than central church practice. Bill Nikides, “A Response to Kevin Higgins’ ‘Inside What? Church, Culture, Religion and Insider Movements in Biblical Perspective,’” *SFM* 5:4 (2009): 98n8.

⁸³ “The theological framework and analysis present in C-5 writings has been overly influenced by Western individualism and the privatization of faith which tends to keep the doctrines of soteriology and ecclesiology at arms’ length” (Tennent, “Followers of Jesus,” 111).

⁸⁴ The authority of Jesus (“the Lord of glory,” Jas 2:1) singularly shapes the *gospel-defined religion* that is “pure and undefiled before God, the Father” (Jas 1:27a), and unites his church (1 Pet 1:22–23). Biblical religion “must be in harmony with the divine standard (*para tō theō kai patri*, ‘before the God and Father’), and so acceptable in his presence—acceptable religious observance related to ‘God our Father’” (D. Edmond Hiebert, *James* [Chicago: Moody, 1992], 126).

⁸⁵ For treatment on the authority and teaching of Scripture for worship (i.e., the “regulative principle”), see Hughes Oliphant Old, *Worship Reformed according to Scripture* (rev. and expanded ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002); Philip Graham Ryken, Derek W. H. Thomas, J. Ligon Duncan III, eds., *Give Praise to God: A Vision for Reforming Worship* (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2003), 17–105; Terry L. Johnson, *Reformed Worship: Worship That Is according to Scripture* (Greenville, SC: Reformed Academic, 2000); G. I. Williamson, “The Regulative Principle of Worship,” <http://www.nethtc.net/~giwopc/documents/RPW.pdf> (accessed May 20, 2012).

an idolatry of the life; the practice of the life manifests the faith commitments of the heart. Imagine, if possible, Elijah calling the prophets of Baal (1 Kgs 18) to worship Jehovah God and encouraging them to do so in their temples, at their altars, and according to their familiar pagan practices. Such a proposal sounds preposterous. Yet the idea of a converted Muslim practicing the Five Pillars of Islam *is IM gospel*.

Such relativism affects not only matters of corporate practice, but also of personal integrity and morality. For example, IM-ers' concerns to preserve Muslim identity have provided grounds to equivocate about the spiritual significance of saying the *shahada* ("There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet"). Some have argued that since Messianic Muslims do not really believe it or mean it in the way of a sincere Muslim, repeating this conversion formula for Islam is acceptable. Responding to allegations of integrity violations, Rick Brown attempts to distinguish dishonesty from dissimulation;⁸⁶ others, like Brother Yusuf, insist, "saying the *shahada* does not harm the believer's witness to Jesus. On the contrary, it gives him a hearing."⁸⁷ The decision about the right to affirm—with or without sincerity—this most vital component of the Five Pillars of Islam derives from the cultural context, pragmatism, or the personal preferences (fears?) of the individual. With palpable irony, in its over-reliance on culture, people groups, and religion, the IM paradigm ironically sustains a stubborn western *individualism*.⁸⁸ The determination about the way in which the gospel confronts one's religious habits resides with the new follower of Christ, and not at the end of the day, with the authoritative voice of God in Scripture *or even with the community* of Jesus followers.

Manifestations of such IM thinking then are unsurprisingly diverse, as the conclusions about cultural and religious variance are as innumerable as are the interpreters themselves. Relativity reigns, as each IM conclusion underscores the epistemological and interpretive malfeasance of the IM hermeneutic. IM effectively turns Scriptural authority, Christian doctrine, Christian morality, and the explicit teaching of Scripture about the church on their heads.

3.2. Relativized Holiness in a Relativized Church

Making a case for a pure and powerful gospel, Lewis writes, "Paul delineated in Romans, chapters 6–15, that it is the gospel that is the transformative power in the life of a believer."⁸⁹ Indeed this is true, but unlike Lewis, Paul never removes the gospel from its overarching covenantal context in biblical revelation. Grace is gracious because the Law objectively and divinely condemns. Guilt before God is in the context of this good and holy Law (1 Tim 1:8; Rom 7:12) so that real, biblical grace extends to one under real, biblically defined guilt. Real biblical grace comes to one corrupted by real, biblically defined sin. As Paul presents the gospel, it is by vital, Holy Spirit-produced union with Christ—the one who has obeyed the Law in full (John 6:38, 15:10; Rom 5:19; Gal 4:1–6)—that the believer enjoys resurrection life. By the grace of God then, every believer's resurrection life (1 Cor 15:1–58) is lived by the power of

⁸⁶"Some Messianic Muslims say the *shahada*, but not all of them are true believers in it. Nominal Muslims say the *shahada*, but they are not true believers. Some of them are engaging in dissimulation—masking one's inner thoughts and intentions. That is not the same as deceit, which involves the manipulation or exploitation of others rather than mere social conformity or self-protection." Rick Brown responds to Gary Corwin in Gary Corwin, "A Humble Appeal to C5/Insider Movement Muslim Ministry Advocates to Consider Ten Questions," *IJFM* 24:1 (2007): 12. This article includes responses from five proponents of IM.

⁸⁷Brother Yusuf also responds to Corwin in Corwin, "A Humble Appeal," 12.

⁸⁸Because of its localized autonomy, relativism moves irresistibly to individualism.

⁸⁹Lewis, "Integrity," 45.

the Spirit of Christ for obedience to God's revealed will (Rom 13:8–14; Gal 5:1–26; 1 Tim 1:8–11; Jas 1:8–13) “in accordance with the glorious gospel” (1 Tim 1:11a).

By contrast, Lewis articulates a notion of the moral transforming power of the gospel in a way that abstracts transformation from explicit biblical mandate. To Lewis gospel transformation occurs internally and mysteriously, but her culturally driven IM paradigm deprives the gospel of its fullest implications to one's life, culture, religious practice, and identity. For Lewis, it is in this formal (religious and cultural) indifference that the gospel retains its essential purity and integrity. For Lewis, gospel integrity requires external practices to remain culturally defined. With this formulation, Lewis effectively bifurcates heart and life, disconnecting gospel belief from gospel practice as defined by the divine Word—“the law of liberty” (Jas 1:19–25). For at least two reasons OT and NT revelation will simply not withstand this divide.

First, as we see in Paul's formulaic summary in Rom 1:1–7 (cf. Gal 3:8), the gospel of the NT is the gospel of the OT. Gospel reality is trans-testamental. The epoch differs—one is of anticipation and the other of realization; but gospel essence organically prevails in all ages of history. In view of the thoroughly gracious revelation from Genesis to Revelation, the heart/life integrity of the NT is the heart/life integrity of the OT, or as the Reformers noted, salvation has always been by *faith alone* but never by a *faith that is alone*. According to both Testaments, working faith is the only real, living faith (Ps 1; Jas 2:14–26; Eph 2:8–10; Gal 5:6). These works of faith find their basis in the revealed will of God, and his Word serves as the basis for understanding and obeying his voice by faith. Identity, faith, and obedience organically interpenetrate in the biblical gospel—in both its OT and NT stages. For believers of all ages, the gospel tethers heart and life inextricably together, as faith in the Redeemer calls for life and practice shaped by the Redeemer's revealed will (cf. Exod 20:1–17; Rom 12:1–2).

Second, Lewis's expression of “two radically different religions based on Jesus Christ,” while utterly confusing in terms of how to speak of a united body of Christ in such terms (cf. Eph 4:1–6), betrays a failure to receive the full implications of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection for a people of God who by the Holy Spirit are fully united to Christ and thereby to one another. A predominant thrust of the NT is ecclesiological unity—a unity grounded in our union with Christ and manifest in the shared identity, faith, and practicing fellowship of Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:11–22; John 17:1–26; 1 Cor 1:18–31). The Apostle Paul is as exercised as he is explicit:

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. (Eph 2:14–21)

Theological unity accomplished by Christ Jesus prescribes functional, relational, moral, and ecclesiastical unity. United in Christ, the people of God—Jew and Gentile—are irrevocably joined by Christ's Spirit in purpose and worship, faith and practice, identity and community (Eph 4:1–6). Eschatological reality

in Christ compels a practiced ecclesiological unity of God's people—recognized, realized, relished, and retained.

As noted already, Lewis forthrightly extols the autonomy of the local people group to discern how to appropriate Jesus. Hence, IM boundaries remain fuzzy, and even IM's centered set trajectory becomes blurred by its paradigmatic commitment to cultural hegemony. Yet it is incomprehensible to speak of Christ's Lordship, biblical authority, and spiritual transformation in him apart from the explicit life demands that Jesus and the apostles expound—demands that norm our religious and worship practices. Culturally determined religion produces inevitable disunity; divided religions produce a divided church, something that defies the entire thrust of divine revelation.

While it is true that genuine conversion is a matter of faith and of the heart (John 3), it is thereby also unavoidably a matter of new identity (2 Cor 5:16–21). True followers of Christ enter the pathway of discipleship, a pathway that is narrow (Matt 7:13–14) and costly (Luke 9:23).⁹⁰ Christian identity in the church and its New Covenant forms are not optional for followers of Christ (Eph 4:1–6). The church is radically more than a committed community of those in a pre-existing social or religious network, who find the message and identity of Jesus compelling and seek to draw him into their preexisting religious constructs.⁹¹ The King of kings, in whose kingdom true believers belong, defines the believer's identity. The Bridegroom who is the Head of his church defines this identity. The Chief Shepherd of the sheep, in whose fold true believers belong, defines this identity. So it distorts the gospel to accept a conversion of the heart that fails to include the clarion call of vital *in Christ* identity (Col 3:1–17; Eph 1:3–14, 4:17–5:21). “In short, one's religious identity with Jesus Christ creates a necessary rupture with one's Islamic identity, or our identity in Jesus Christ would mean nothing. It is unethical to pretend this discontinuity does not exist or to act as if it is merely a matter of cultural forms.”⁹² When Muslim (or Buddhist or Hindu) identity is retained upon following Christ, *personal identity* suffers a divorce from one's ultimate *identity in Christ*, creating an inescapable religious schizophrenia.⁹³

That the Spirit of God can and does work in unexpected ways is without question (see John 3). That he works without consideration for Christ's church as biblically defined is, well, simply unbiblical. After all, Scripture makes abundantly clear that Christ's headship is linked directly to his church (see, e.g., Eph 1:22–23; 5:23), and the Holy Spirit works in absolute solidarity with the will of the Father and the Son (John 14:15–17, 25–31; 16:4–15; Rom 8:9–11). Moreover, the teaching given through the apostles, which underscores the centrality of the church over which Jesus is Lord, also *reveals* unique, non-negotiable characteristics of that church, including biblical organization (Titus 1:5); regular assembly (Heb 10:24–25); baptism (Matt 28:18–20; Acts 2:38–39); the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17–32); and preaching, fellowship, and prayer (Acts 2:42; 2 Tim 4:1–2).

⁹⁰ Lewis insists (“Honoring,” 18) that insider movements properly “affirm that people do not have to go through the *religion* of Christianity, but only through Jesus Christ, to enter God's family.”

⁹¹ See Tim and Rebecca Lewis, “Planting Churches: Learning the Hard Way,” *Mission Frontiers* 31:1 (January–February 2009): 16–18.

⁹² Tennent, “Followers of Jesus,” 113.

⁹³ Lewis frequently juxtaposes the constant (extant social structures as the context for the expression of faith) and the dynamic (the *becoming* and *transforming* influence of faith on the existing socio-religious structure). The unexplained interface of these constant and dynamic elements issues a dissatisfying obscurantism. See Lewis, “Honoring,” 16.

Summarily, through his apostles he has defined the marks and attributes of his church, matters that simply cannot with biblical integrity be reduced to cultural adaptability. Yet the IM mantra sounds from the missions minaret: Jesus “does not seem to be concerned that religious structures or forms be established in His name.”⁹⁴ As far as Lewis is concerned, the shape of ecclesiology is in some sense optional; its form is a *culturally* determined entity.⁹⁵ While it is true that the West has infused certain cultural patterns into its forms of worship⁹⁶ and that entering God’s family transcends *human* institution, it simply does not follow that all ecclesiology and body dynamics are culturally determined. Scripture as God’s revealed Word will not allow for such an anthropocentric construction of a relativized, disunifying, would-be ecclesiology.

3.3. Relativized Mission

As demonstrated already, according to the IM interpretive paradigm, the ultimacy of culture shapes a proper understanding of the Scriptures. Such cultural primacy also must, according to the IM paradigm, comprehensively fashion our understanding of the contemporary context. Why? Because the only proper way to engage contemporary cultural analysis is to recognize cultural parallels between our current context and the biblical one. IM’s cultural construct view of interpreting Scripture drives unwaveringly toward seeing apostolic activity as primarily *exemplar* activity. In fact, to honor Scripture’s authority is to discern the parallels and to find ways to emulate them in missional enterprise. This culturally driven New-Testament-as-Model hermeneutic permeates Lewis’s IM argumentation, and is highlighted by the oft-employed formative analogy made between current “movements of faith to Christ” and “the first century believers.”⁹⁷

In view of perceived cultural parallels and a superficial interpretation of the actions of Jesus and the apostles as repeatable phenomena, missiological conclusions are drawn. Having already determined that religious practice in the Scripture is neutral and negotiable, IM theorists insist that we must treat contemporary religious practices with the same “gospel” ambivalence. What is the result? The Bible becomes a how-to manual, and its message is eclipsed behind the cultural interpretive edifice. Unrepeatable and incomparable events in redemptive history become paradigms; and sadly yet disastrously, with equal and opposite force, theologically critical matters become culturally negotiable ones. In such IM method, the cultural *how* of missions effectively replaces the authoritative *whom* of missions. The lordship of Jesus Christ submits to the lordship of culture, making religious identity turf beyond the scope of Christ’s redemptive and reigning authority and creating an endless array of mistaken trans-contextual comparisons and conclusions.

The parallels that Lewis draws here are as clear as they are biblically naïve.⁹⁸ Acknowledging how some western Christians resist other religious traditions, Lewis pushes us to see how our context parallels that of first-century Jews, wherein like those early Jewish believers, we have “2000 years of our own valuable

⁹⁴ Lewis, “Can the Kingdom,” 15.

⁹⁵ Cf. Lewis, “Promoting,” 76.

⁹⁶ Other cultures have done the same.

⁹⁷ Lewis, “Integrity,” 41, 42.

⁹⁸ Lewis is explicit about this transcontextual parallel elsewhere: “Can we see that the Muslims are like our Samaritans, with their Abrahamic religion, and the Hindus are like our Gentiles, with their idols and temples?” (“Honoring,” 19).

teachings and traditions that we want everyone to build on.”⁹⁹ Employing the relativizing hermeneutic that facilitates drawing contextual and methodological parallels, she invokes gospel integrity once again. Just as Paul and the other apostles modeled, “Today we have the opportunity to reaffirm the power of the gospel to move into other cultures and other religious frameworks, and transform them from the inside out.”¹⁰⁰ Thus, to Lewis and other IM advocates, our responsibility is to discern how the apostles refused to force religious practices on the Gentiles, to accept that other religions are acceptable, and to emulate the apostles in allowing religious activities innate to other cultures to provide the parameters for new religious identity and “gospel transformation.” If we do not, “we are actually undermining the integrity of the gospel.”¹⁰¹

IM missiologists and practitioners express a sincere desire to spread the news of Jesus Christ. On one very crucial level, we appreciate their vital and oft neglected focus upon kingdom expansion. How often the western Christian has become comfortable going to church but disinterested in going away from church to the world’s unreached. To be sure, Acts and the epistles boldly expose gospel growth and expansion and call the church throughout the ages to action (Acts 1:8–9; cf. Matt 28:18–20). The work of fearless, tireless, and expansive gospel preaching exposed in the work of the first-century believers under the leadership of the apostles provides a compelling and *convicting* model for the twenty-first-century church.

Dennis Johnson wisely warns, however, against two extreme positions in interpreting the Acts of the Apostles. On the one hand, some see Acts functioning as a precedent; all of Acts is reproducible for the church today. On the other hand, some try to force Acts effectively into irrelevant history, where “although Acts accurately describes the church’s infancy, this description is not supposed to guide our lives today.”¹⁰² Seeking to honor the rich and relevant theology of the NT, the inimitable realities of the first-century church, and the historical genre of Luke-Acts, Johnson wisely presents a *via media*. Luke writes history that “*must make a difference to our faith and life*, just as his mentor, Paul, describes the purpose of Old Testament history as ethical instruction (1 Cor 10:11) and teaching (Rom 15:4; see also 2 Tim 3:16).”¹⁰³ Put succinctly, the application of Acts (and for that matter the entire NT) must be done with a view to the decisively unique events of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ *in history*. “Caution is needed . . . lest we . . . think that simply because the author records how some people responded to certain events in the course of the narrative we ought to have the same response today.”¹⁰⁴ Application and emulation are critical; but they must grow out of appreciating the cosmically significant and unrepeatable events. This revelation of Jesus Christ consumes the writers of the NT, exhaustively determines their radical message (1 Cor 1:18–31), and thoroughly directs their seemingly

⁹⁹Lewis, “Integrity,” 44.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 47.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Dennis E. Johnson, *The Message of Acts in the History of Redemption* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1997), 4. Johnson urges readers to read Acts in view of Luke’s purpose to show what God *has done in Christ*; to read Acts with a view to the theology of the NT epistles; to read Acts in a way that honors its deeply rooted OT thought structures, Hebraistic styles, and theology; to read Acts in coordination with Luke; to read Acts in view of its structural signposts (5–13).

¹⁰³Ibid., 5.

¹⁰⁴Walter L. Liefeld, *Interpreting the Book of Acts* (Guides to New Testament Exegesis; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 58.

unsophisticated methods (1 Cor 2:1–5). It is on the basis of the unrepeatable acts of God in Christ and the faithful Christ-centered preaching of the apostles that we now proclaim Christ’s comprehensive lordship over the nations (cf. Phil 2:5–11).

Thus, as resurrected and exalted Lord (Phil 2:1–11), Jesus Christ authoritatively defines everything (Matt 28:18), including our ecclesiology and missiology. For this reason, even for professed missiological motives, we are in no position to neutralize culture or to promote movements that lack the decisive clarity of the full biblical gospel, the teaching of Scripture about its own authority, and the nature and practice of the church, including its sacraments. These are divinely ordained doctrinal and ecclesiological matters, not cultural, “man-made ecclesiastical structures”;¹⁰⁵ the church and its ordinances of Christ are matters of the gospel itself.¹⁰⁶ And to uphold gospel purity, proclamation of that gospel must involve uncompromised expression of such Christ-centered, apostolic teaching—for the *practice, doctrine, and advance* of the church universal.

4. Conclusion

For the newcomer, IM teaching and practices often elicit shock. To be sure, these inventive methods have generated virulent responses, not only from alerted westerners but even more so from Muslims who have trusted Christ. Muslim convert and pastor Edward Ayub of Bangladesh anguishes over IM practices in his homeland: “Not only do some of these people counsel people to remain Muslim rather than confess Christ openly, they counsel those who have left Islam, having become Christians, to convert back and join mosques.”¹⁰⁷ Another Muslim convert, Abdul Qurban, dispassionately depicts IM practice he has witnessed:

Christian missionaries encourage Muslims to embrace Jesus as their Savior but remain Muslims by continuing to read the Qur’an, profess the shahada [“There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet”], and participate in mosque activities. They keep their faith in Christ a secret, only to be revealed (somewhat) if another Muslim asks them about Jesus. By maintaining their Muslim identities (and even their beliefs), yet purportedly believing the Gospel, those Muslims remain inside in their communities, waiting for the potential to provide a witness to their fellow Muslims.¹⁰⁸

No longer in incubation, IM has hatched into a mature, practiced, sanctioned conviction. Its pervasive practice around the world by untold numbers of missionaries, mission agencies, and persuaded nationals has created a missiological, ecclesiological, and existential crisis. Its powerful presence is why Christians around the world like Edward Ayub of Bangladesh implore the western church to face and combat the practice, begging the provocateurs to cease and desist. What then must we say to IM advocates about their message and their methods?

We return in closing to the substance of Lewis’s warning that “we should not trivialize this discussion [about people turning to Christ without identifying themselves with Christianity] as a new

¹⁰⁵ Lewis, “Can the Kingdom,” 15.

¹⁰⁶ “A new convert not only *has* faith, he or she is brought *into* a common faith” (Tennent, “Followers of Jesus,” 111).

¹⁰⁷ Ayub Edward, “Observations and Reactions to Christians Involved in a New Approach to Mission,” in *Chrislam*, 256.

¹⁰⁸ “Flirting with Frankenstein: Insider Movements from the Inside,” in *Chrislam*, 238.

radical contextualization or a new missiological strategy designed to make it easy for Muslims to come to Christ. Something much more profound is at stake: the integrity of the gospel itself.¹⁰⁹ I agree. The gospel *is* at stake, and we must not trivialize it. But herein lies the problem: *Lewis's working definition of the gospel and its contemporary expression are trivializing.*

Scripture is clearly written *to* and *in* a cultural context; God's redemptive acts and interpretive words occur in real history.¹¹⁰ Hence, we affirm the presence of cultural factors in Scripture, even those that present challenging interpretive decisions (e.g., head coverings in 1 Cor 11). However, because Scripture organically centers on Jesus Christ, its divinely orchestrated theological substance must determine the parameters of culturally transient factors. Therefore, culture must be viewed according to Scripture's self-interpreting authority rather than Scripture according to the interpretive authority of culture. Submission to scriptural authority means allowing Scripture to define its own hermeneutic rather than (consciously or unconsciously) imposing a foreign hermeneutic upon it.¹¹¹ In short, the divine canon transcends and trumps any cultural canon.

With all humble diligence, students of missions must not read the NT through the lenses of cultural anthropology, even if the motivations for doing so are self-consciously missional. Rather, anthropology must submit to the scrutiny of Scripture and Scripture's Christ. This distinction is a matter neither of tactics nor semantics; it is a matter of upholding gospel integrity. Any method that wittingly or unwittingly blends the Lord Jesus into unbelieving religious practice is not biblical missions; it is syncretism. Aware of the risk of syncretism, Lewis concludes that this worry can be alleviated by providing "*effective and accurate*" Bible translation, by infusing "*local cultural practices and even religious rites*" with "*new meanings*," by refusing to pressure other Christians to conform to particular religious forms, and by resisting the temptation to control "Jesus movements" in cultures other than our own.¹¹² These remedies are inadequate, however, as the embedded cultural IM hermeneutic governs the proposals themselves. Moreover, assessing syncretism through the lenses of an already syncretized theology corrupts the analysis.

Ultimately, assessment of IM must occur according to Scripture's authority and Scripture's *own* definition of the gospel in its rich theological, eschatological, and ecclesiological contours. Lewis's IM interpretive paradigm muffles the full voice of the gospel and fails to pass the test of careful biblical scrutiny. Imposing its culturally framed NT-as-model hermeneutic upon the Holy Scriptures, IM theory as Lewis presents it fails to read the Bible biblically, robs God's Word of its organic unity centered in the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus Christ, and draws conclusions about the gospel and its proclamation that unavoidably obscure biblical practice and doctrine. In bequeathing ultimate authority to cultural analysis, IM advocacy has redefined the *content* and the *conduct* of the gospel, *as well as* the means to *advance* this "gospel." And in it all, this redefinition has made such "gospel" biblically unrecognizable. In answer then to the prevailing question of this essay, we lament that the "gospel" that such IM construction

¹⁰⁹ Lewis, "Integrity," 46.

¹¹⁰ See Geerhardus Vos, "The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos* (ed. Richard B. Gaffin Jr.; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1980), 3–24.

¹¹¹ The Westminster Confession of Faith 1.9 states well Scripture's final interpretive authority: "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself."

¹¹² Lewis, "Possible Pitfalls," 22–24.

preaches is not the biblical gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, but “a different gospel—not that there is another one” (Gal 1:6b–7a).¹¹³

Of course, our coming Judge, the Lord of the harvest, will himself perfectly separate the wheat from the tares. But it is this pressing fact that compels us to believe, practice, and proclaim his gospel in its biblical purity and according to its biblical integrity.

¹¹³ See David B. Garner, “A World of Riches,” *Reformation 21* (April 2011), <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/a-world-of-riches.php> (accessed May 20, 2012).

Some Reflections on Enns and *The Evolution of Adam*: A Review Essay

— Hans Madueme —

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The gist of this new book by Peter Enns is that evangelicals should revise their expectations of Genesis and Paul—with reference to Adam and the fall—in order to relieve perceived tensions between Christianity and evolution.¹ This thesis turns out to be controversial.

On the one hand are evangelicals who disagree with Enns and judge his basic argument a capitulation to modern science. If Enns is right, then present-day conservative evangelicals are wrong, the early twentieth-century fundamentalists were wrong, pre-nineteenth-century Protestant Christianity was wrong, the post-Reformation scholastic tradition was wrong, the Reformers were wrong, and the entire medieval and patristic tradition was wrong. And why? Because Darwinian natural science and the biblical criticism that emerged with the rise of historical consciousness in the eighteenth/nineteenth century are right.

On the other hand, those sympathetic with Enns are worried that old bugaboos like inerrancy are tearing apart the evangelical movement and bringing unnecessary disrepute to the Christian faith. This also places an unbearable strain on younger evangelicals who seek to cultivate the best Christian minds as they follow Christ: Are they to play the ostrich, bury their heads in the sand and deny what every sane, intelligent person believes in the twenty-first century?

That is the situation—alas—and Enns is brave enough to begin a conversation (p. 112). Taking him up on this, this brief reflection offers a perspective on why many Protestants, myself included, have significant reservations about his arguments. I shall simply assume that readers have already read the book; specific details of Enns's argument can be found in other reviews (e.g., see countless print, online and blog reviews).² Better yet, read the book for yourself. It is well-written, accessible, and provocative. My main purpose is to dialogue with Enns from my location as a Reformed systematic theologian. Like Enns, these reflections "are an outworking of my own Christian convictions" (p. xii, with italics); I have

¹ Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say about Human Origins* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012).

² E.g., see the reviews by Jonathan Jong in *Theology and Science* 10 (2012): 215–17; C. John Collins (April 26, 2012), http://thegospelcoalition.org/book-reviews/review/the_evolution_of_adam; and the ten-part series by Roseanne Sensen ("RJS") on the Jesus Creed blog, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/jesuscreed/2012/01/17/adam-in-genesis-and-paul-rjs/> (this is the first installment published online on January 17, 2012). (Editor's note: All the citations to websites in this article worked when accessed on July 10, 2012.)

good friends who disagree with some of the claims I make here. Further, this review is not comprehensive since there are vital matters I do not touch on—not even to wave as I drive by.³ Instead, (1) I begin with initial observations before broaching a few areas worthy of discussion: (2) the doctrine of Scripture, (3) natural science and historical criticism, (4) further theological concerns, (5) a methodological aside, and (6) concluding thoughts.

1. Preliminary Remarks

Ever since 1859, when Charles Darwin published his *Origin of Species*, Christians from across the theological spectrum have been retelling the doctrine of the fall, some explicitly rejecting relevant aspects of evolutionary theory, others consciously embracing them. In *The Evolution of Adam*, Enns offers a creative and provocative argument in the latter category.⁴ If the mainstream theory of evolution is true—an assumption he makes in the introduction (p. x) and throughout—then his proposal ranks easily as one of the strongest on offer. Enns sees clearly the niggling problems in many evangelical and non-evangelical attempts at reconciling the scientific and theological data, and he pushes for a more compelling solution.

This book is a sequel to *Inspiration and Incarnation*, another controversial volume that was part of the reason Enns left Westminster Theological Seminary.⁵ My own view is that WTS was right to part ways with Enns, a move that perhaps should have been made years earlier. But I sometimes wonder if, in the broader evangelical debate, Enns has unfairly become the fall guy. In my experience, a fair number of evangelical biblical scholars, socialized in the same guild, share many of Enns's methodological commitments (it is not always clear why they would have strong disagreements with the ideas expressed in his latest book). Who knows how many evangelical scholars—both young and old—are privately sympathetic to Enns's ideas but too afraid to come out of the closet? In other words, to what extent do Enns's proposals actually point to broader questions within the state of evangelical biblical scholarship today?⁶ These are tough questions.

As we tend to do in reviews like this, I will belabor areas of disagreement—but not because there is nothing I agree with! To pick three at random: I think Enns is right when he argues that Gen 2:17 refers to spiritual and *physical* death (p. 67); I am sympathetic to his criticism of attempts to interpret Adam as a federal head of a society of hominids (p. 120);⁷ and I am grateful when he acknowledges that

³ E.g., Enns's endorsement of the so-called New Perspective on Paul (see pp. 127–31), specific claims made about the OT, etc.

⁴ For historical orientation, see David Livingstone, *Adam's Ancestors: Race, Religion, and the Politics of Human Origins* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009). See also the recent analysis in J. Matthew Ashley, "Original Sin, Biblical Hermeneutics, and the Science of Evolution," in *Nature and Scripture in the Abrahamic Religions: 1700–Present* (ed. Jitse M. van der Meer and Scott Mandelbrote; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 407–36.

⁵ Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).

⁶ See my brief remarks below in §3 on the grammatical-historical method.

⁷ Enns uses the older taxonomy ("hominid" instead of "hominin"). Prior to the 1980s, humans and their evolutionary ancestors were classified as hominids (i.e., part of the family Hominidae) to distinguish them from the great apes and their family lineage (Pongidae). But more recent studies, influenced by new molecular research, tend to classify humans and chimps within the *hominin* family (Hominini). Cf. Alan Barnard, *Social Anthropology and Human Origins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 19–20.

the book's conclusions flow out of his own "Christian convictions" (p. xii). This latter point applies to everyone who is part of this conversation—if ever there was a place where theology is autobiographical, this is it.

Given that most non-evangelical scholars have learned to live without a historical Adam, it is worth asking why Enns's book is so controversial. Is this not all so passé? Enns is a self-professed evangelical inerrantist, former WTS professor, and past editor of the *Westminster Theological Journal* (among other things). One reason for the book's lively reception is this: conservative evangelicals typically insist on the inerrancy of Scripture; they often reject aspects of mainstream science; and they have tended in the academic context to develop different concordist approaches to dealing with apparent conflicts between science and theology with special reference to the early chapters of Genesis (some more persuasive than others).⁸ Their liberal counterparts typically reject inerrancy and all its theological accoutrements; they embrace the scientific consensus; and they adapt their theology accordingly. In the debate about Adam, Enns is distinctive because he simply cuts the Gordian knot: we can remain fully committed to inerrancy but revise what we think Genesis and Paul are telling us about Adam.⁹ Here we have a professed inerrantist (unlike classical liberals) who rejects concordism (unlike classical conservatives) and simply bites the bullet (by denying a historical Adam). As Enns concedes, most of what he is arguing is not new. What is new—and controversial—is that Enns defends his position as fully consistent with inerrancy and evangelicalism at its best.

This last point is a clue to the wider academic and cultural significance of Enns's recent work. People usually assume that fundamentalists are anti-intellectualist and harbor a profound distrust of modern scholarship (not least the scientific disciplines), whereas genuine evangelicals affirm that all truth is God's truth and the pursuit of true learning is the enduring privilege of bearers of the *imago Dei*.¹⁰ For many younger evangelical scholars especially, it is precisely here that Enns emerges as the internal whistleblower. Having spent most of his professional life within its institutions, he exposes much of academic evangelicalism as a sham, a betrayal of the authentic evangelical heritage—beware the false advertising; that evangelicalism *is* fundamentalism after all.¹¹ In short, the debate over the historical Adam for many has become a test case for the abject failure of conservative evangelicalism. That is why a growing number of evangelicals find Enns and his project so compelling. There is no need for spooks or conspiracy theories here: these are scholars who were raised as evangelicals; they self-identify as evangelicals; but they are seeking a better, bigger, broader vision than the perceived ideological myopia

⁸Concordism is the idea, roughly, that when all the relevant facts are known the claims of science and the teachings of Scripture are in harmony. Cf. Edward B. Davis, "The Word and the Works: Concordism and American Evangelicals," in *Perspectives on an Evolving Creation* (ed. Keith B. Miller; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 34–58.

⁹Might one say that what Charles Goodwin did for concordist attempts to interpret the days of Genesis in dialogue with geology, Peter Enns has now done for concordist attempts to interpret Adam in relation to paleoanthropology and evolution? Cf. Charles W. Goodwin, "On the Mosaic Cosmogony," in *Essays and Reviews* (2d ed.; London: Parker & Son, 1860), 207–53.

¹⁰Cf. John Stott, *Evangelical Truth: A Personal Plea for Unity, Integrity, and Faithfulness* (rev. ed.; Downers Grove: IVP, 2003), 18–19. As Stott reminds us, in the early twentieth century, the terms "evangelical" and "fundamentalist" were synonymous (so Carl F. H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947]).

¹¹Recall Mark Noll's *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), esp. 177–208. See also the related perspective in Roger Olson, *Reformed and Always Reforming: The Postconservative Approach to Evangelical Theology* (Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007).

of conservative evangelicalism, a vision genuinely open to pursuing truth critically by engaging the best of modern learning.¹²

2. *The Doctrine of Scripture*

In response to the charge that Enns abandons any viable notion of biblical authority in order to keep up with the Joneses of modern science, he might respond by distinguishing “inerrancy” and “hermeneutics.” Such evangelicals *think* that Enns has abandoned biblical authority, but they are confusing their faulty *interpretations* of Scripture with inerrant Scripture itself; if they come around to sound biblical exegesis, then they’ll see that inerrancy was never at stake. That response, or something like it, is very common among evangelical theologians debating controversial topics in science and theology. Enns is no exception, for he marshals the inerrancy-vs.-hermeneutics distinction, implicitly or explicitly, throughout the book. And no doubt it is a distinction worth making. Surely there are many exuberant lay Christians all over the world who need to meditate on such things. Thus Enns reminds the reader in his first thesis in the conclusion: “Literalism is not an option” (p. 137). He cites Augustine on how naive Christians should avoid making idiots of themselves by pitting the Bible against well-established cosmological views. “As this quote [from Augustine] indicates,” Enns remarks, “literalism can lead thoughtful, informed people to reject any semblance of the Christian faith” (p. 138).

Fair enough, but there is perhaps more to be said. First, while many scholars love quoting Augustine here, his words were not a hermeneutical manifesto for aborting any Christian convictions that seem ridiculous to non-Christian minds. It all depends. For example, what is the conviction on view, and how central is it to the gospel narrative of Scripture? After all, Augustine held all sorts of views that would have been considered “literalistic” and “ridiculous” by his contemporaries.¹³ Second, evangelical scholars and informed lay people already affirm the distinction between inerrancy and hermeneutics. To obsess about this distinction is to strangle a truism to death (everyone already thinks they have legitimate exegesis on their side). Indeed, it becomes a proxy for something else, namely, when you are more theologically conservative than me, it’s my way of telling you that I disagree with your views and find them too literalistic. The distinction is a rhetorical way to marginalize other views that are more conservative than mine. In the debate about Adam, there’s no problem with thinking others are wrong, but far better to demonstrate it than to assume it. In my view, beating the drum against “literalism” usually does not advance the conversation.

¹² See the poignant musings in the brief commentary by David Lincicum, “Lament for a Maternal Home (or, Is There No Place for Believing Criticism in Evangelicalism?)” (posted on Peter Enns’s blog on June 20, 2012, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/peterenns/2012/06/guest-post-lament-for-a-maternal-home-or-is-there-no-place-for-believing-criticism-in-evangelicalism/>). One finds the same spirit in many of the contributions coming out of the BioLogos Foundation, the evangelical organization founded by Francis Collins (<http://www.biologos.org>).

¹³ To mention only three: (1) against Pelagius and his many allies, he believed that all human beings really sinned in Adam and were born guilty and morally corrupt; (2) against the culturally dominant Neoplatonic doctrine of recollection, he saw Christ as the inner teacher; and (3) against the influential Donatists, he argued that sacraments administered by sinful clergy were nonetheless effective, for Christ, not the clergy, is the foundation of the Church.

The book has a distinctive perspective on the doctrine of accommodation (revisiting earlier themes from *Inspiration and Incarnation*).¹⁴ Enns argues that our doctrine of inspiration should be developed phenomenologically (bottom-up) not dogmatically (top-down). He concludes that God inspired errors in Scripture:

But when we allow the Bible to lead us in our thinking on inspiration, we are compelled to leave room for the ancient writers to reflect and even incorporate their ancient, mistaken cosmologies into their scriptural reflections. (p. 95)

[T]he scientific evidence we have for human origins and the literary evidence we have for the nature of ancient stories of origins are so overwhelmingly persuasive that belief in a first human, such as Paul understood him, is not a viable option. (p. 122)

On the question of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, Enns recognizes the christological implications when he concedes that even though Jesus is the incarnate Son of God we should not think that John 5:46–47 is decisive: “Rather, Jesus here reflects the tradition that he himself inherited as a first-century Jew and that his hearers assumed to be the case” (p. 153n19). In other words, even Jesus held many views given to us in Scripture that may have been mistaken.

For the record, the classical Reformation doctrine of accommodation denies that God could ever inspire genuine errors in Scripture. By the eighteenth century, a Socinian, rationalistic, and historical-critical view of accommodation emerged that justified real errors in the Bible.¹⁵ Enns’s position is consistent with the latter, not the former. Setting this aside, what about his substantive point?¹⁶ These are hardly new questions, and I happily acknowledge the difficulties here. But I must confess that I cannot see how Enns’s solution offers a better way forward. For example, he claims that Paul was right *theologically* about Christ’s resurrection and salvation but was wrong *historically* about Adam and the fall (see ch. 7). How does Enns know this? On what epistemological grounds does he know what part of Scripture is true and what part of Scripture is false? More specifically, how does Enns know that we can trust what Paul says about Christ’s resurrection and salvation? After all, one might argue that there were resurrection myths and beliefs in apotheosis contemporaneous with (and prior to) Jesus and the apostles,¹⁷ and the modern consensus today is that people do not rise from the dead—*so if Enns is right*

¹⁴Not surprisingly, the early debates about science and theology contested the idea of divine accommodation. Cf. two essays by Stephen D. Snobelen in *Nature and Scripture in the Abrahamic Religions: Up to 1700* (ed. Jitse M. van der Meer and Scott Mandelbrote; Leiden: Brill, 2008): (1) “‘In the Language of Men’: The Hermeneutics of Accommodation in the Scientific Revolution,” 691–732; and (2) “‘Not in the Language of Astronomers’: Isaac Newton, the Scriptures, and the Hermeneutics of Accommodation,” 491–530.

¹⁵Cf. Martin I. Klauber and Glenn Sunshine, “Jean-Alphonse Turretini on Biblical Accommodation: Calvinist or Socinian?” *CTJ* 25 (1990): 7–27; Martin I. Klauber, “Francis Turretin on Biblical Accommodation: Loyal Calvinist or Reformed Scholastic?” *WTJ* 55 (1993): 73–86; Ford Lewis Battles, “God Was Accommodating Himself to Human Capacity,” *Int* 31 (1977): 19–38; Dirk Jellema, “God’s ‘Baby Talk’: Calvin and the ‘Errors’ of the Bible,” *Reformed Journal* 30 (1970): 25–47; Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (2d ed.; vol. 2; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 141, 187–88, 238, 301–2, 305–6.

¹⁶Enns gives examples of so-called biblical errors: e.g., Paul believed in a three-tiered cosmos; he knew nothing of arctic poles; infertility is always the woman’s fault; and the Bible teaches creation in the recent past rather than evolution in deep time (pp. 93–94).

¹⁷E.g., see Trygve N. D. Mettinger, *The Riddle of Resurrection: “Dying and Rising Gods” in the Ancient Near East* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001); Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (3d ed.;

about accommodation, why would we as modern Christians continue to believe in Paul's soteriology and Christology? Does his thesis collapse on itself?

Enns acknowledges my concern and offers this explanation: "For Paul, the resurrection of Christ is the central and climactic *present-day event* in the Jewish drama—and of the world. One could say that Paul was wrong, deluded, stupid, creative, whatever; nevertheless, the resurrection is something that Paul believed to have happened in his time, not primordial time" (p. 125). The idea seems to be this: as long as apostles and prophets speak about things that they themselves *experienced* as actual events—rather than intellectual traditions about "primordial time" that they inherited—we can believe their testimony to be true. But this seems to be a very slender conceptual reed. How do we know that Paul's interpretations of his experience are legitimate? How do we know that his first-century plausibility structures do not impinge inescapably on his interpretation? Sure, the NT records over 500 other witnesses (cf. 1 Cor 15:6), but why should we believe *them*? Thousands of Hindus claim to have seen Lord Shiva, but why should we believe *them*? Again, to use Enns's own categories, we know *scientifically* that people do not rise from the dead, and we know *historically* that many people in Paul's day (and before Paul's day) had ancient resurrection myths—so why should we today believe what Paul thought about Christ and salvation?¹⁸ In short, Enns needs to give us more reassurance that, on the terms of his proposal, Paul's Christology and soteriology are infallible.

Here is my point: I am not sure that Enns has a *functional* notion of biblical authority. Repeatedly in the book, he reassures us that he has not abandoned a high view of Scripture, but I do not know what he means. Jesus was the Son of God, and, so Enns says, because he was also a first-century man he could make erroneous assertions. But where does that leave us? How can "inerrancy" remain a viable concept on such terms? Scripture is a divine-human book. Enns almost exclusively privileges the human side of the equation. Enns tells us that Paul was wrong about Adam; Jesus was wrong about Moses; there are tensions, perhaps even contradictions, between different parts of the Bible; we should beware the impulse to "unify" inconsistencies in the Bible. And so on. All of these observations privilege the human dimension of Scripture, in part because Enns feels that evangelicals tend to neglect this reality. Maybe so. However, the cumulative effect is that Enns has lost any meaningful notion of *divine revelation*. Christians believe that Scripture is God's Word; God is the single divine author of all of Scripture. Enns's book does not help the reader make sense of such realities. They become problematic, even incomprehensible.¹⁹

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 148–318. The pagan idea of apotheosis is the veneration or deification of human beings.

¹⁸ I offer these questions here and in the previous paragraph as a *reductio*, not because I think they are ultimately compelling. It may be that Enns has no time for such concerns (cf. "It is commonly argued that, as goes the historicity of Adam, so goes the historicity of Christ. I disagree and suggest that we need to move beyond that obstacle" [p. 126]). If so, I am not convinced.

¹⁹ James K. A. Smith makes similar observations in his review of Enns: <http://www.colossianforum.org/2012/04/24/book-review-the-evolution-of-adam-what-the-bible-does-and-doesnt-say-about-human-origins/>.

3. *Natural Science and Historical Criticism*

Let me come back to Enns's distinction between primordial time and present-day experience (pp. 125–26). What is really going on here? It seems to me that natural science is obviously in the methodological driving seat. At this point, it is worth noting, in Enns's defense, that there need be nothing automatically sinister about science indirectly shaping some of our exegetical conclusions. As Christians "adjust" their understanding of the Bible in light of science, it could be that modern interpretations of scientific data are acting as a friend to bring to light previously erroneous readings of Scripture (e.g., the Galileo controversy). That is what Enns thinks he is doing. There is also the possibility, however, that modern interpretations of scientific data are in fact the enemy and are squeezing us into a more and more minimalistic—and mistaken—understanding of biblical authority. I hope I am wrong, but I worry that Enns is going down that path.

The difference between Enns and many theologically conservative Protestants (including myself) is that he is far too romantic about the reliability of mainstream scientific consensus. Its truth is a non-negotiable assumption throughout the book (but not in a crass way—e.g., he confesses that he is not "a materialist, nor have I bowed the knee to the false god that natural science is sometimes made to be" [p. 94]). I find this naïve for at least two reasons. First, the eyes of faith should not be surprised if there are periods in church history when central Christian doctrines seem highly implausible to the world. No believer should be surprised or alarmed at such realities. They have appeared in the past and will continue to appear; aspects of modern science are only one of many such challenges, though perhaps the most compelling in recent memory. Natural science—human reason at its most sophisticated—is not inerrant.²⁰ Second, we have a more sure word from God in Holy Scripture. Let us concede every legitimate complexity in the biblical text, and let us recognize all the literary features that demand different reading strategies, etc.; but when we rightly understand the propositional claims of Scripture, there is no higher authority, for it is God's authority.²¹ That makes all the difference in the world.

Enns disagrees. We have no other option as modern Christians, he says; my skepticism about scientific consensus is simply an untenable form of fundamentalism. Besides, he can appeal to historical-critical insights (as he does throughout the book). Here too, however, I find that he is far too romantic

²⁰ On this point, see Del Ratzsch, "Science and Religion," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology* (ed. Thomas Flint and Michael Rea; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 65: "Recurrent claims that we finally have in hand all necessary materials for completing the scientific picture have just as recurrently failed." Antirealist philosophy of science, though overstated, is instructive here.

²¹ But am I illegitimately conflating Scripture and *human interpretations* of Scripture (i.e., theology)? Theology is not inerrant either, and *that*—not Scripture—should be the proper counterpart to natural science. The point is well taken. Alas, I do not have time in this brief review to do it justice. So let me just say here that I am assuming that some theological convictions are so central—not peripheral—to the biblical narrative, so clearly attested, so widely affirmed or presupposed in the catholic tradition, that we can say they are functionally "inerrant." (I hope to defend these controversial claims in a forthcoming article on a methodological proposal I dub *scriptural realism*.) I place the historicity of Adam in this category. For now, I defer to a Christian philosopher to make a relevant clarification: "presumably . . . special revelation has what status it does have in the believing community because that community believes that at least some of its interpretations admit of no real debate. To suppose that all interpretations of the special revelation might be overturned would call into question the whole status of the special revelation in the community of believers, for it has this status because the community holds that at least some of the expressions of the special revelation express certain propositions" (Paul Helm, *Divine Revelation* [Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1982], 113).

about the reliability of modern academic consensus. Concerning the book of Exodus and the conquest narratives of Joshua, for instance, he admits there is “some sort of historical trigger” behind these stories, but they are “not blow-by-blow accounts of historical events” (p. 62). If Enns means that the biblical stories are not journalistically written as if seen through a video camera, no one would disagree. But he means more by this. In an accompanying footnote, he expresses skepticism about accounts in Exod 12:37–38 and Num 1:46 because they suggest that up to two million Israelites left Egypt: “It stretches the imagination to think that a group that large, which then spent forty years wandering around the wilderness, would leave Egypt without a trace in either Egyptian literature or the archaeological record” (p. 156n1). Archaeology sets the epistemic standard.

Consider another example. In chapter 4, he argues that the “Adam story” was actually Israel’s original creation story. He then cautiously speculates how Gen 1 and 2 came to be placed together (see p. 68 and Thesis 4 on pp. 140–42). Like all good historical-critical reconstructions, there is a measure of plausibility here. The story makes sense on its own terms. But one of the problems with this historical criticism is that it shifts the locus of epistemic authority from the canonical text to the world behind the text. Authority, for Enns, is no longer fundamentally a property of the canonical text as we have it in the sixty-six books. The authority of the biblical witness is relativized by extra-textual historical factors, and those “historical factors” depend on what historical critics, archaeologists, and others are saying. The pattern of authority is not really *sola scriptura*. To be more precise, Enns seems to be proposing that we replace the traditional canonical test with a new *christological* one. Take Paul: we are not to believe that his words given to us in Scripture are inerrant; rather we can believe Paul when his theology reflects his *lived experience* of the risen Christ (e.g., pp. 103–4). It seems doubtful that Christology can bear this heavy epistemological burden.²²

The problem seems to be this: Enns thinks that the human author of Scripture—or better, what modern biblical scholars and historians speculate about what the author could have known—*is definitive*. That seems mistaken. *The divine author is definitive*. To be sure, God the Author is not disconnected from the human author, but he is not limited to him either (Scripture is a supernatural, not a natural book). Enns makes provocative observations about Paul and his “Interpreted Bible” (see pp. 113–17). And I confess: Enns is the professional exegete; I am not. I make no pretensions to having all the answers to the difficult textual phenomena.²³ Nevertheless, a more traditional view of Scripture acknowledges the *humanity* of Paul and concedes that he could and did have all kinds of prior assumptions and traditions that he inherited extratextually. I agree with Enns that we do not have a docetic Bible. But we do not stop at the “humanity” of the Scriptures; we move on to confess their “divinity.” Since these texts are at once divinely authored (i.e., inspired), they take on a new canonical givenness by virtue of being the *Word of God*. Therefore, Paul *can* inform us how we should read the relevant OT passages; since God is the primary Author, we allow Scripture (Paul) to interpret Scripture (Genesis). That Paul may have derived some of his exegetical insights from inherited reading traditions is not germane to the status of the NT texts *as inspired Scripture*.

²² This is one of my misgivings with another book that makes similar christological claims: Christian Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible: Why Biblicism Is Not a Truly Evangelical Reading of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2011), 93–126. I am grateful to Keith Plummer for reminding me of this connection.

²³ On such questions, see the relevant essays in James K. Hoffmeier and Dennis R. Magary, eds., *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith? A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012).

Interestingly, Enns defends his argument by appealing to the “grammatical-historical approach” (see p. 140). Recovering ancient Near Eastern reading strategies to understand Genesis better is simply to follow the canons of this approach, namely, to uncover the original intent of the human authors. Enns notes that evangelicals and fundamentalists have always placed a high premium on original authorial intention (p. 36). As I allude to in my introductory comments in §1, I think Enns has a point here. However, evangelicalism at its best never claimed that the grammatical-historical approach should be understood atomistically. It is always situated within a larger providential, typological, and supernatural understanding of the concurrence of divine and human authorship. Enns either minimizes or abandons those latter realities, and the human historical context takes center stage. I admit that these are complex matters. But my point is that if the human historical context crowds out all other theological concerns, then we are left with something like a narrow biblicistic historicism that is abstracted from the broader canonical-theological action.

Perhaps that helps explain how Enns can argue that the OT is largely silent about Adam (except for the first five chapters of Genesis and 1 Chron 1:1) and has nothing to say about Adam’s fall and its disastrous effects on all of humanity (pp. 82–88). This qualifies as narrow biblicistic historicism, i.e., looking at passages in Scripture myopically without reading them in canonical and theological context. It fails to read the Bible theologically in light of God as the Author of all Scripture.²⁴ Romans 5 and 1 Cor 15 help us read Gen 3 *properly*, i.e., in canonical context. They illuminate why Cain and all the other protagonists in the OT sinned against God. Paul is doing exegesis, not eisegesis. When Enns argues that Paul is eisegeting Scripture for good christological reasons (“Paul’s reading of Genesis is driven by factors external to Genesis” [p. 87]), we see the same narrow biblicistic historicism. He fails to deal with Scripture as a unified, redemptive-historical revelation from God. He so emphasizes the contingency of the human authors that he misses the divine voice in Scripture. In my view, Christians are right to want to reconcile extratextual historical realities and intratextual canonical claims. The relevant question, however, is what sets the terms for our interpretation of extratextual historical realities? The two main options in biblical studies are the methodological naturalism of standard biblical criticism or a more robust, theistic, Augustinian supernaturalism.²⁵ My problem with Enns and the biblical scholarship that he relies on is that his assumptions in the study of extratextual history are typically constrained by methodological naturalism.

4. Further Theological Concerns

According to Enns, Scripture does not teach a historical Adam; indeed the OT does not teach it, and though Paul believed it, he was wrong to do so. The advantage of this conclusion is that it removes one of the main sources of conflict between evolution and Christianity. On one axis, that is a huge gain. But those apologetic gains immediately introduce a number of distressing theological problems. The

²⁴For some helpful treatments on why a historical Adam is important for biblical faith, see C. John Collins, *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist? Who They Were and Why You Should Care* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011); D. A. Carson, “Adam in the Epistles of Paul,” in *In the Beginning: A Symposium on the Bible and Creation* (ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron; Glasgow: Biblical Creation Society, 1980), 28–43; J. P. Versteeg, *Is Adam a “Teaching Model” in the New Testament?* (1969; trans. Richard Gaffin; Nutley: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1977).

²⁵Cf. Alvin Plantinga, “Two (or More) Kinds of Scripture Scholarship,” in *“Behind” the Text: History and Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Craig Bartholomew, C. Stephen Evans, Mary Healy, and Murray Rae; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 19–57.

first problem relates to the doctrine of the fall. One of its crucial functions within Christian dogmatics is to offer an account of the *origin* of sin within the human story. As N. P. Williams remarked in his 1924 Bampton Lectures, take away the “fall” and you are left with only two options, either Dualism or Monism.²⁶ In the first case (e.g., Manicheism), evil becomes a second eternal principle that exists alongside God—Light and Dark; Good and Evil. No one is responsible for sin because it is simply the ontological way of things, or as some might say, God is the author of sin. In the second case (e.g., Taoism), God himself is both good and evil (or transcends them); sin becomes a meaningless concept. Anyone who wants to abandon the doctrine of the fall faces this dilemma.

The second problem for Enns is that he needs to tell us why men and women are *sinful* people. In the theological jargon, this is “originated” or inherited sin, a condition in which we all find ourselves from birth because we somehow participated in Adam’s first sin.²⁷ Having no recourse to Adam, Enns cannot appeal to that tradition. How will he explain the human predicament of sin? One option is to look to evolutionary theory for help (drawing insights, perhaps, from disciplines such as sociobiology or evolutionary psychology). The challenge for such an evolutionary hamartiology will be to resist reducing sin to a merely *biological* problem.²⁸ In any case, Enns needs to clarify how he plans to augment his thesis theologically in the face of such questions (he seems to be aware of the issues—cf. p. 126).²⁹

As a way to resolve the theological conflict with evolution, an increasing number of scholars are placing the blame on Augustine. It was Augustine who first gave original sin (and the doctrine of the fall) its classical formulation. Given the obvious tension with mainstream evolution, some are thus demonizing Augustinian hamartiology. We need something better, they say—enter Irenaeus, the second century Bishop of Lyon.³⁰ Irenaeus handled Gen 3 differently from Augustine, describing Adam and Eve as morally childlike; sins are growing pains, part of the path to maturation. Enns picks up on this Irenaean (and Eastern Orthodox) way of reading Gen 3, “the story of naïveté and immaturity on the part

²⁶N. P. Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin: A Historical and Critical Study* (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1927), xxxiii. In response to evolutionary theory, Williams rejected the fall of a historical Adam and opted for a *pre-temporal* fall reminiscent of Origen.

²⁷In theology, federalism and Augustinian realism are the two classical ways of describing our union with Adam.

²⁸For an intriguing analysis of this problem, see Ted Peters, “The Evolution of Evil,” in *The Evolution of Evil* (ed. Gaymon Bennett, Ted Peters, Martinez J. Hewlett, and Robert John Russell; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 19–52.

²⁹Some steps in this direction are appearing in a growing number of studies. E.g., see Mark Worthing, “The Emergence of Guilt and ‘Sin’ in Human Evolution: A Theological Reflection,” in *Sin and Salvation* (ed. Duncan Reid and Mark Worthing; Adelaide, Australia: Australian Theological Forum, 2003), 113–29; Ted Peters, “The Genesis and Genetics of Sin,” in *Sin and Salvation* (ed. Duncan Reid and Mark Worthing; Adelaide, Australia: Australian Theological Forum, 2003), 89–112; Gregory R. Peterson, “Falling Up: Evolution and Original Sin,” in *Evolution and Ethics: Human Morality in Biological and Religious Perspective* (ed. Philip Clayton and Jeffrey Schloss; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 273–86; Stephen J. Duffy, “Genes, Original Sin and the Human Proclivity to Evil,” *Horizons* 32 (2005): 210–34; Ian McFarland, *In Adam’s Fall: A Christian Meditation on the Christian Doctrine of Original Sin* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); and the relevant essays in R. J. Berry and T. A. Noble, eds., *Darwin, Creation and the Fall: Theological Challenges* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2009) and Michael S. Northcott and R. J. Berry, eds., *Theology after Darwin* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2009).

³⁰For one of many calls to develop our hamartiology using Irenaeus instead of Augustine, see John J. Bimson, “Doctrines of the Fall and Sin After Darwin,” in *Theology after Darwin* (ed. Michael S. Northcott and R. J. Berry; Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2009), 119.

of Adam and Eve and the loss of childlike innocence in an illicit move to grasp at a good thing” (p. 88). Yes, Augustine and Irenaeus had different emphases here. But I doubt that Irenaeus can help resolve the conflict with evolutionary theory. That is because Irenaeus, like all the church fathers, believed that Adam and Eve were two historical people who gave rise to the entire human race. And even though Irenaeus described Adam as an “infant,” Adam *was without sin* until he disobeyed God.³¹ On these two points, Irenaeus could not be further removed from the standard evolutionary account.³²

5. A Methodological Aside

At least since the medieval period, if not before, Christians have wrestled with how the faithful should think about the natural world. However, “science-and-theology” as a modern, more rigorous professional discipline emerged, roughly, with the publication of Ian Barbour’s *Issues in Science and Religion* (1966).³³ Much of that professional scholarship—at least when Christianity is on view—is devoted to showing how Christian faith and science are in harmony.³⁴ There is much to admire in this work, and Christians can be grateful for many dimensions of this research. As moderns, whether we like it or not, science is the world in which we live and move and have our being. Unless our faith is to be fatefully disconnected from large facets of our lives, thinking Christians will want to know how best to relate scientific concerns, assumptions, and the like, with the love of Christ and the world he created. The discipline of science-and-theology is helpful at unmasking the popular—though quite uninformed—myth that Christianity and science are in mortal combat, enemies in a never-ending conflict.³⁵

One of Barbour’s main contributions was to develop a typology of the relationship between science and theology, namely, “conflict,” “independence,” “dialogue,” and “integration.”³⁶ Barbour’s sympathies lie with dialogue and integration. He completely dismisses the conflict position, a view he attributes to conservative evangelicals and other modern inerrantists. The discipline of science-and-theology has for the most part followed Barbour in this judgment (unfortunate, as it gives the impression that science and

³¹ E.g., see Irenaeus, *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* (trans. Armitage Robinson; London: SPCK, 1920), 81, 84.

³² On how Irenaeus and other Orthodox fathers understood Adam’s fall, see the helpful comments in Collins, *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist*, 45–46, 84–85.

³³ Ian Barbour, *Issues in Science and Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966). Others prefer the broader phrase “science and religion.”

³⁴ The journals to read here include *Zygon*, *Theology and Science*, *Science and Christian Belief*, *CTNS Bulletin*, and *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*. Key organizations are the Vatican Observatory (Rome; with research group in Arizona), the Center for Theology and the Natural Science (Berkeley), the Zygon Center for Religion and Science (Chicago), the Faraday Institute (Cambridge), and the Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion (Oxford).

³⁵ A myth made famous by Andrew Dickson White, *A History of Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (2 vols.; New York: Appleton, 1896) and John William Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (New York: Appleton, 1874). More recent devotees include new atheists like Richard Dawkins and the late Christopher Hitchens.

³⁶ His original categories for relating theology and science were as “contrasts,” “parallels,” and “derivations.” These categories later evolved into the more familiar fourfold typology in Ian Barbour, *Religion in an Age of Science* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990), 3–30.

theology are *never* in genuine conflict—nothing could be further from the truth).³⁷ The “independence” (or complementarity) position was held, in different forms, by Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, and many others, though less common today among scholars in science-and-theology.

Speaking in broader methodological terms, then, Enns’s book can be seen as a creative contribution to this discipline of science-and-theology. Throughout his book, Enns assumes the independence/complementarity model of how to relate science and Genesis (see especially Thesis 2, pp. 138–39), hence his recurring claim that Genesis has nothing to say to science (and vice-versa, e.g., see p. 57). In my view, Christians should hold Barbour’s categories loosely and apply them eclectically. There is no one-size-fits-all approach for how we should engage science. I think the same applies to Genesis. Complementarity tells part of the story, but not the whole story.³⁸ Genesis, to be sure, does not speak as widely about science as some people think, but it is an overstatement to claim that Genesis has nothing to say to scientific concerns. Thus when Enns claims, “Genesis cries out to be read as something other than a historical description of events” (p. 58), he is too breezy, too cocksure, too confident in dismissing an assumption that the catholic church has held for so long. Does it count for nothing that Jesus, Paul, the Bible, and the church East and West shared this assumption? Apparently so: “A historical Adam has been the dominant Christian view for two thousand years,” but—Enns tell us—this “general consensus was formed before the advent of evolutionary theory. To appeal to this older consensus as a way of keeping the challenge of evolution at bay is not a viable option for readers today” (p. xvi). Here again, our scientific context is driving Enns’s hermeneutical certainty. In a way, his book is a collection of interesting hermeneutical insights and exegetical theories about the Bible deployed to justify the methodological position of complementarity. But we should raise questions about such a reductive methodological assumption.

6. Concluding Thoughts

Enns is worried that evangelicals will self-destruct if we keep denying what mainstream science is telling us. He is worried that our young people are growing up as intellectual schizophrenics, believing one thing in church and another thing in the lab—and suffering under the mental strain. Many are leaving the faith because they see only two choices, affirm Adam or abandon ship. And a number of emerging evangelical scholars are disillusioned and discouraged by the chilly reception their hard-earned views of Scripture have received from Mafioso, muscle-flexing evangelical gatekeepers. His book is an attempt to bring healing and to offer a different way. I understand where Enns is coming from, but his book, I am sorry to say, is a cure far worse than the disease. I have tried to explain some of my reasons for this negative judgment, and I hope they stimulate further conversation (with Enns and others). I recognize the force of the mainstream evolutionary consensus, and I know that it raises tough questions for the viability of a historical Adam and the doctrine of the fall. But I am constrained by Scripture, tradition, and weighty theological considerations. I am a son of Adam. That is why I am a sinner. And it is why I need Christ.

³⁷ Another problem with much science-and-theology scholarship, in my judgment, is that it often seems far too willing to set aside central commitments of Scripture and the tradition in the interests of science.

³⁸ For a recent theological defense of complementarity, see David Fergusson, “Interpreting the Story of Creation: A Case Study in the Dialogue between Theology and Science,” in *Genesis and Christian Theology* (ed. Nathan MacDonald, Mark W. Elliott, and Grant Macaskill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 155–74.

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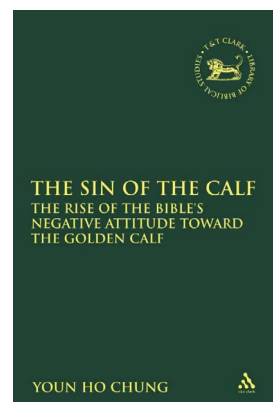
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— OLD TESTAMENT —

Youn Ho Chung. *The Sin of the Calf: The Rise of the Bible's Negative Attitude toward the Golden Calf*. Library Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 523. New York: T&T Clark, 2010. 256 pp. \$130.00.

When did the OT canon assume its final form? What are the literary interrelationships among the Pentateuch, OT Historical Books, and the OT Prophets? How did Israel's traditions develop over time? Current biblical scholarship lacks consensus on these questions since it is difficult to identify shared themes or terminology that can be traced across the canonical divisions of the OT. However, the sin of the golden calf is one such motif for its role in Israel's apostasy at Sinai (Exod 32), the "sin of Jeroboam" in making golden calves at Dan and Bethel (1 Kgs 12), and Hosea's condemnation of the "calf of Samaria" (Hos 8:6; cf. 10:5; 11:2). In this vein the present book by Youn Ho Chung, a revised 2007 dissertation at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, provides a comparative analysis of the golden calf across the corpora of the OT. Chung's book is helpful in its exegesis of the relevant texts, but ultimately implausible due to the numerous ways in which he reads against the textual grain and thus reimagines how Israel's history unfolded.



Chapter 1 provides a history of research on the golden calf. After criticizing past proposals to identify the golden calf as a pagan deity, Chung proposes that the golden calf was originally conceived in Israel not as a foreign god but "as an expression of sacred emptiness, like the Ark/cherubs" (p. 11). In Chung's view, the golden calf was originally a pedestal in the Judges period for an invisible God at the altar of Bethel, but was later condemned by the Bible when the Israelites mistakenly saw it as an iconic representation of Yahweh. The rest of the chapter lays out Chung's tradition-critical method that is geared toward supporting this hypothesis.

Chapter 2 briefly treats 1 Kgs 12–13 and the "sin of Jeroboam." Chung asserts that the worship of the golden calves at Bethel is condemned by the Deuteronomist in order to censure all worship outside Jerusalem. Jeroboam's apostasy was then used by the editors of 1–2 Kings to judge the Judean kings on the basis of whether they did away with the "high places" (e.g., 1 Kgs 15:14).

Chapter 3 compares the golden calf incident in Exod 32 with the parallel passage in Deut 9–10. Through a somewhat convoluted argument, Chung concludes that Exod 32 derives from a northern Elohistic composition (E) which can be stripped of its polemical elements to reveal that the golden calf was originally viewed in a positive way. In the Deuteronomy account, Chung identifies two tradition layers regarding the calf, an early Deuteronomistic layer which is similar to E's posture toward the calf as one of the "other gods" (cf. Exod 20:3) and a late layer which resembles the rest of the Deuteronomistic literature for its attack upon iconographic worship.

Chapter 4 analyzes Hosea's condemnation of the calf at Bethel. Chung argues that Hosea, as a prophet to the northern kingdom of Samaria, stands close to the northern Elohistic tradition in its condemnation of the golden calf. Rather than opposing Canaanite fertility region per se, Hosea opposes the national religion of Israel as a syncretistic blend of Yahweh-Baal worship (pp. 121–25) that contained sexually perverse elements (e.g., Hos 4:12–13).

Chapter 5 rehearses scholarly views on Deut 4 as a postexilic composition that resides at the same stage of development as Chung's Deuteronomistic tradition layer in Deut 9–10. Though such a position is not uncommon among critical scholars, Chung's speculation goes even further than usual in his assertion that the editor of the Decalogue in Deut 5 inserted a prohibition on making images into the Elohist version of the Decalogue in Exod 20 (pp. 189–90). In this way the Elohist Decalogue was putatively modified to resemble the Deuteronomistic version.

Chapter 6 summarizes the book's contention that the golden calf was originally part of the cultic apparatus for Israel's aniconic worship at Bethel. It is important to note that Chung's argument to this point has been built upon a series of questionable presuppositions. Even judging by the vagaries of tradition criticism, two of Chung's presuppositions are especially problematic: (1) The golden calf was of exclusively Israelite origin, a view that ignores how the calf was the most common symbol for deity in the ancient Near East and probably arose from Egypt (Jan Assman, *Moses the Egyptian* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997], 72, 211–12); and (2) E originally existed as a distinct literary work, a view that has long been doubted even by adherents of Julius Wellhausen's JEDP documentary hypothesis (see discussion in R. N. Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study* [JSOTSup 53; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987], 111–16).

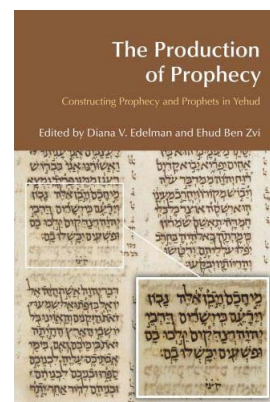
In light of these methodological problems, Chung's proposal for the tradition-critical development of the golden calf remains too speculative. The theme of the golden calf indeed draws together the different parts of the OT, but interpreters will need to look elsewhere than Chung's book for a convincing account of the development of this theme.

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Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi, eds. *The Production of Prophecy: Constructing Prophecy and Prophets in Yehud*. BibleWorld. London: Equinox, 2009. x + 235 pp. £22.99/\$39.95.

This volume contains essays that originated in the 2006 and 2007 work of a study group of the European Association of Biblical Studies entitled "Israel and the Production and Reception of Authoritative Books in the Persian and Hellenistic Periods." As the group's title suggests, its purpose is specifically "to advance knowledge about the process or processes that led to the production of the prophetic books" (p. 2). The editors' intention is not to produce a homogenous viewpoint but to encourage dialogue, and the volume's contributors disagree on some points (noted below) while agreeing on the benefit of studying prophecy as a written phenomenon and on the importance of the social role and recognition given to prophets by their community.

In his first essay, Ehud Ben Zvi further develops his suggestion that texts were reread by the returned exiles who constituted the Jewish community in what had become the Persian province of Yehud. He argues that the Pentateuchal, prophetic, and so-called Deuteronomistic books (Joshua–Kings) were formed at roughly the same time and that they influenced one another through their being constantly reread by the community responsible for all these biblical corpora. Ben



Zvi's second essay attempts to clarify further the social setting in which prophetic books would most likely have been generated, settling on Jerusalem before it attained social, political, economic, and religious prominence in the Persian period (p. 83).

Diana Edelman argues in her first essay that while prophets were the recognized divine spokespersons during the monarchic period, the disappearance of the monarchy eventually made prophetic books the vehicle for the divine voice. Since Judah is not the only nation to have had prophets associated with a monarchy that eventually lost its independence through military defeat, Edelman puzzles over why Judah was the only nation for which such prophetic sources are extant.

P. R. Davies considers the origins of the book of Amos, assuming that historical circumstances account for the book's production. While there is surely a link between the message of Amos and the future events it foresees, Davies spends little time considering its potential rootedness in eighth-century Israel, preferring instead to see it as testifying to Jerusalem-Benjamin tensions in post-exilic Yehud.

Rainer Albertz explores the role of public reading in the production of prophetic literature. Taking Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 40–55) as a case study, he "imagines" that its first edition was completed in 521 and recited by prophets who wanted to "convince the hopeless Judeans that God would now offer them a wonderful new chance of salvation . . . [and] tried to encourage them to start organizing a new beginning, and wanted to induce them to accept repatriates from Babylonia and elsewhere" (p. 105).

E. Gerstenberger examines the genesis of the prophetic books in relation to (cross-cultural) spirituality during the Persian period and looks for the "discourse" that reveals the Judeans' "system of knowledge and values" (p. 113). He presents as topics for further investigation several potential parallels between the prophetic books and aspects of their Zoroastrian context: prophetic dialogue as divine-human communication (their "basic structures are closely related" [p. 117]); antagonisms and absolute dualisms (which post-exilic Jewish thinkers used "for their own purposes" [p. 121]); and the eschatological or apocalyptic perspective which Gerstenberger is confident was adopted by the biblical writers from the ancient Iranians (p. 121). Concluding that the Persian period was "the formative era" for prophetic books in post-exilic Judah (p. 126), he also calls for new paradigms in which to explore the formation of the prophetic books, the role of the community in that process, and the relationship between the Pentateuch and the prophetic books.

Axel Knauf holds that the book of Kings is a product of the Persian period because of its redaction history and because he finds the issues it addresses (Which temple is legitimate? Whose is the land?) best suited to that period. For Knauf, Kings is historiography that is also "part and parcel of the Prophets" (p. 144), and he explores a number of subtle but important themes in Kings, underlining the many doubts it raises in the reader's mind as to the success of Israel's history. He strongly rejects any relevance of the Torah for the period after Josiah's "discovery" of it and argues that all biblical law is post-exilic (pp. 141–43). As a corresponding point, he suggests that the appearance of Deuteronomy spelled the end of prophecy and argues that "the establishment of a canonical book of revelation [Deuteronomy] is incompatible with a barely controllable institution of spontaneous announcement by the god(s) that might supplement, abrogate or otherwise endanger the authority of the book" (p. 143). He concludes that this "Abrahamic' canonical process" continued through to the Qur'an (p. 145).

In her second essay, Diana Edelman explores many of the ambiguities in the book of Jonah before considering its place within the Twelve (Minor Prophets). She argues that the ambiguities prompt the book's readers to reconsider their views of God's nature and will. Jonah's location after Obadiah and before Micah has long puzzled interpreters, and Edelman accepts Nogalski's argument for various

catchwords that link Jonah to Micah in order to argue that the LXX order (Jonah–Nahum) “is older and more original” than the order preserved in the Hebrew Bible and translations based on it (p. 161). She ends by reflecting on the implications of Jonah’s atypical form and content for the Twelve.

Two essays dealing with the formation of Jeremiah conclude the volume. Thomas Römer soberly explores its connections with the Book of Kings, while Rannfrid Thelle considers the book’s role as a source of authority once the Judean king was removed from the scene. Thelle argues that Jer 26–29 and 36 are intended to authorize “contact with YHWH” in this new scenario.

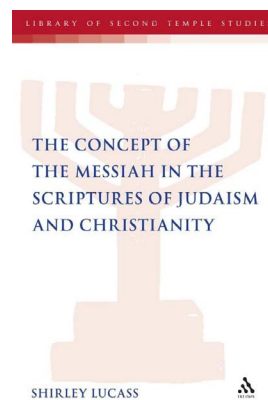
Although they develop some new insights as to the way that prophetic literature was transmitted or formed in the early post-exilic period, these essays also illustrate several widespread convictions in the critical study of biblical prophecy: the origins of prophetic books must be tied to historical circumstances that produced them; exilic and post-exilic Judah’s Babylonian and Persian environments influenced the content of the books authored in those settings; and there is a more recent tendency to date the composition of most biblical books to the Persian period. The varying confidence that the authors have in their conclusions is noteworthy: while some recognize the imaginative nature of their historical reconstructions, others see their findings as essentially certain. In the latter case, more interaction with viewpoints that differ from the trends noted immediately above would have permitted more nuanced conclusions and the recognition of alternate reconstructions of the historical realities in general and of the formation and dating of the prophetic books in particular. This collection possesses significant value but should not be viewed as presenting the only approach to these issues.

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Shirley Lucass. *The Concept of the Messiah in the Scriptures of Judaism and Christianity*. Library of Second Temple Studies 78. New York: T&T Clark, 2011. xi + 236 pp. £60.00/\$110.00.

Messianism is an important issue to both Christianity and Judaism. The concept of the messiah lies at the heart of the Christian faith with the NT claims that Jesus is the long-expected messiah. Jewish theologians have approached messianism and Jesus from multiple vantage points, ultimately denying that Jesus was the expected messiah of Judaism. Shirley Lucass offers new insights and revives some older concepts that have been neglected in order to show that Jesus “could have been the expected Messiah of Judaism” (p. xi). While the book does focus on showing that the Jesus of the NT is compatible with the messianic expectations of the Hebrew Scriptures and the messianic concept coming out of the second temple period, the end goal of the book is to “clear the ground so that a new framework for [theological] dialogue can be constructed [between Christians and Jews]” (p. x).

The work begins with an introduction that serves as a statement of the problem: “A fundamental reason Jewish thinkers have rejected the claim that Jesus is the Messiah is the high Christology in which the claim has been expressed” (p.1). Lucass then notes that there have been three main reasons why Jesus’ high Christology, or the claim that Jesus is God incarnate, has been rejected. First, the view



of the messiah as divine is not rooted in the Jewish tradition. Second, a divine messiah goes against monotheism. Third, there is no support for this idea in antecedent Judaism. Lucass believes that the elements of high Christology that are present in the NT are found in the Hebrew Scriptures through an understanding of royal ideology in the form of sacral kingship.

The first chapter begins where the introduction leaves off by noting the question, the state of the question, and the approach of the current study. The question is, "Is Jesus the Christ?" If that is the case, then Judaism fails; if it is not the case, then Christianity fails. Lucass, however, believes that this question has been ignored in most Christian-Jewish dialogue. She surveys the field of writing to show that there has been no substantial dialogue between Jews and Christians on this point in recent academic publications. All of the conversations have been one-sided with Christians discussing it with other Christians and Jews discussing the issue with other Jews. Historically, there have been several approaches to the question, but to Lucass none of them have been satisfactory. Lucass suggests a new approach. The approach that she adopts is not an historical enquiry into the person of Jesus and his ministry. Instead she makes an enquiry into the origins of the concept of the messiah.

In chapter two Lucass looks at the works of four Jewish writers (Joseph Klausner, Samuel Sandmel, Geza Vermes, and Hyam Maccoby) and their views on several topics. She looks at their views on Jesus, the person of the messiah, and the role of the messiah. Each of these writers reject that Jesus claimed to be divine and make the contention that within antecedent Judaism the messiah was expected to be a political leader and not divine. They all also contend that the NT notion of a suffering messiah does not square with the Jewish expectation.

Chapter three delves into the subject of kingship within the ancient Near East. Lucass discusses the person of the king and the role of the king within Egyptian, Hittite, Canaanite/Ugaritic, and Mesopotamian cultures. In each of these cultures the king plays a role in the priestly life of the nation, especially in making atonement for sins and establishing blessing between the national deities and the people.

The fourth and fifth chapters discuss kingship in the Hebrew Scriptures. Chapter four analyzes the Psalms. Within the Psalms Lucass discerns a developed royal ideology with similar features to those of the other ancient Near Eastern nations. This is manifested most closely in the king's participation, and close association with Yahweh, in the enthronement festival. In chapter five Lucass believes that many of the same concerns that are in the Psalms are present in the Prophets. After the fall of the monarchy, however, many of the kingly responsibilities, especially those concerned with Yahweh's bestowing blessing on the people, were given to others. Lucass believes, however, that the emergence of the servant was a replacement figure for the king.

Chapters six and seven look at the concept of the messiah during the second temple period. The sixth chapter discusses the person and role of the high priest. During this period the high priest is the anointed and is the mediator of blessing within the festivals of Israel, especially the Day of Atonement. The seventh chapter is concerned with the Son of Man figure in the second temple period. In the literature the Son of Man is a preexistent heavenly figure who is called the anointed and considered to be messianic.

The eighth chapter examines the NT. Lucass looks at the person and role of Jesus and how the NT writers describe him with all of the descriptors that are found of the messiah in the Hebrew Scriptures and second temple period. Most clearly the death and atoning work of Jesus are described. It was the concern of the NT writers to present Jesus as the messiah. Lucass argues that since they were Jewish and

they present Jesus as messianic that at least in their eyes Jesus' messianism was rooted in the antecedent Jewish tradition.

The final chapter discusses implications of the study for future religious dialogue. Lucass concludes by trying to show that Jesus could have been the messiah expected within antecedent Judaism. By holding this as a possibility Lucass believes that new dialogue can begin and that both Christians and Jews can agree that they both "emphasized different strands within the rich historic mix of early Judaism, then further dialogue can be directed at exploring what is to be gained and what is to be lost by emphasizing one strand to the exclusion of the other" (p. 209). This would then render the question from the first chapter as invalid.

The Concept of the Messiah is a well-written work with several admirable features. One of those admirable features is that Lucass gets to the heart of the matter and identifies messianism as the central theological issue impeding religious dialogue between Jews and Christians. She is correct in noting that this can often be neglected or discussed within each respective group with little or no interaction between Jews and Christians. Theologically, this does not strengthen either side, and more deliberate discussion needs to be had in this area.

A second helpful feature of this work is that she practices her intended goal by interacting with Jewish writers and theologians on this issue. Lucass does not just camp out in the writings of other Christians, but interacts extensively with the writings of Jewish scholars, as well as Christian scholars.

The final and most lasting contribution of the work is that it reintroduces the concept of sacral kingship. Lucass is correct in noting that sacral kingship "has been walked away from, not disproven" (p. ix). While the kingship found in the OT is not the same as kingship elsewhere in the ancient Near East, there are some biblical texts that need to be reevaluated. This is particularly true of some of the royal psalms, like Ps 110, and the description of the relationship of the king and Yahweh in the books of Chronicles. In 1 Chr 17:13, for instance, God says that he will be a father to the king and the king will be like his son. While biblical presentation is not exactly like that of sacral kingship found elsewhere in the ancient Near East, it does contain some similarity. Maybe there could be a modified understanding of kingship that takes into account all of these texts that have often been overlooked, especially by evangelicals. These are only a few of the helpful features of this book; there are many more.

Despite the admirable features mentioned above there are a few negative aspects of this work that need to be discussed. First, the title of the work suggests that it will analyze the Scriptures of Judaism and Christianity, but Lucass is selective in doing this. She does not interact with several important texts that deal with kingship. The books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles were mentioned only in passing and never received any in-depth analysis. These texts deal with the person and role of the king, as well as the establishment and decline of the monarchy, and need to be interacted with in a book that is concerned with kingship in ancient Israel. These texts should have been given at least a chapter within a treatment like this.

A second negative is that the book does not take on or interact with the anti-monarchial interpretations of the OT that have historically been the majority view. If messianism is related to the ancient Israelite conception of kingship, then how does one deal with the supposed anti-monarchial texts? Can the OT be largely anti-monarchial and the messianism present in the NT still be validated? These are questions that need to be answered in a treatment like this in more than a cursory way.

The final critique that I have to offer is that the end conclusion concerning religious dialogue is unsatisfying, and I suspect it is unsatisfying to most devout believers in both Christianity and Judaism. At the end of her work Lucass notes,

Both faiths could continue to worship in the same way . . . there would be no need to evangelize and no need to suspect that evangelism would take place. Both faiths could start to build a mutual trust and be further enriched by the different ways each has developed for worshipping “the one true God, the Holy One of Israel.” (p. 210)

Jesus makes exclusivistic claims about who he is (John 14:6 for instance) that cannot be ignored by either Jews or Christians. Furthermore, the Christian Jews within the NT saw evangelism of their fellow Jews as an absolute necessity. This is seen with Paul speaking in the synagogues and is seen clearly in his sentiment in Rom 9:1–5, where he is heart-broken over his fellow countrymen who have not come to faith in Christ. Jesus is seen as the fulfillment of all of the promises of Israel in texts like this one. This cannot simply be ignored.

Despite these few negatives, *The Concept of the Messiah in the Scriptures of Judaism and Christianity* would be helpful to any serious student who is interested in the subject of messianism. In the end Lucass does make a convincing argument that the way in which Jesus is presented in the NT is congruent with antecedent Judaism.

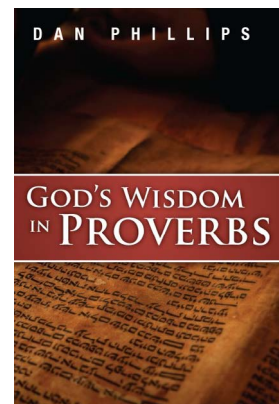
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Dan Phillips. *God's Wisdom in Proverbs: Hearing God's Voice in Scripture*. The Woodlands, TX: Kress, 2011. xxi + 405pp. \$24.99.

Dan Phillips is pastor of Copperfield Bible Church in Houston, Texas, and he writes regularly with Phil Johnson and Frank Turk at the Pyromaniacs blog. In addition to the volume under review here, Phillips has written *The World-Tilting Gospel*. Both books come at readers with a deadly seriousness about the gospel and sound doctrine tossed in a breezy light-hearted writing style. The jocular sternness is a jolting combination: Phillips brings a grin to the face then grabs for the throat. He takes the biblical languages seriously too, so while this book does not have an academic feel, it consistently engages the Hebrew text of Proverbs.

God's Wisdom in Proverbs comes in eight chapters with an epilogue and four appendices. Chapter one presents the essentials for understanding Proverbs: Phillips holds firmly to Solomonic authorship, an issue given twenty pages in appendix one. He interprets Proverbs in harmony with the rest of the Hebrew Bible, and he discusses the book's structure (relying mainly on the headings), poetry, and parallelism as he orients the reader to the interpretation of the book.

Chapter two is a thirty-page discussion of Prov 1:2–6, and chapter three explores the fear of Yahweh. Chapter four focuses mainly on Prov 2:1–6 on the topic of “how to wise up.” Chapter five exposites the teaching of Proverbs on trusting and knowing God. Chapters six and seven synthesize the



teaching of Proverbs on godly relationships and marriage, respectively, and chapter 8 rounds out the body of the book with over sixty pages on the teaching of Proverbs on child-training. In the epilogue Phillips addresses the reader who might feel condemned by the high standards set forth in the book of Proverbs: he urges faith in Christ for justification, explaining how the transforming power of the Spirit to regenerate enables people to live according to the wisdom set forth in Proverbs.

Appendix one deals with Solomonic authorship of Proverbs. Appendix two looks at “words related to teaching in Proverbs”; appendix three is given to the meaning of Prov 22:6, “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it” (ESV); and appendix four deals with “preaching and teaching the book of Proverbs.”

Appendix three takes the position that Prov 22:6 is a warning, which Phillips translates, “Start out a youth according to his own way—even should he grow old, he will not turn from it.” Phillips shows how the bare Hebrew “his way” is typically translated such that the “way” referenced is the “right” way, but he contends, with Douglas Stuart and others, that this is an unwarranted addition. The defense Phillips provides for his interpretation of this verse, taking it to state that children will be confirmed in and stay in the way they are trained to go, whether that way is good or bad, is clear and compelling.

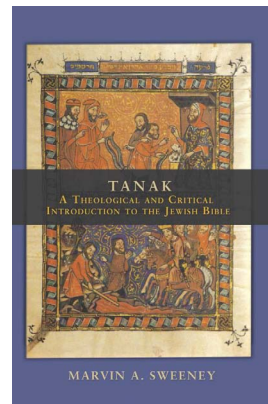
The teaching of Proverbs is desperately needed today. As our society descends into decadence, this book of the Bible will give us a backbone and help us to stand, and this applies to everything from fearing God to relating appropriately to others and cultivating marriage and training children, to say nothing of sound economic policy. We need no more “explanations” of Proverbs that nullify its teaching or assume it has no connection to its OT context. Rather, we need balanced, studied, serious, joyful, and wise explanation and application of Proverbs. Enter Dan Phillips. This would be a great book for men’s discipleship groups, for a pastor planning to preach through Proverbs, for the recent graduate, and for much else. We can thank Phillips especially for his balanced and courageous presentation of how parents should use the rod for reproof.

Our day is also a day in which some are calling for “crazy” or “radical” expressions of Christianity. These presentations are seldom seasoned with the whole counsel of God: do they take OT wisdom literature into account? Wouldn’t the OT wisdom literature help us to follow Jesus, who taught people to count the cost of doing so? Often the calls to sell all or leave all appeal to younger people, typically college students who have few responsibilities and are unmarried and without children—the very kinds of people for whom Solomon wrote Proverbs. All Christians today need the message of Proverbs, but it was expressly written to make wise the simple. Proverbs remains God’s word for God’s people. As we seek to follow Christ today, we will be wholly committed to Jesus only when we live by the Spirit-inspired wisdom that Solomon writes in Proverbs. Dan Phillips has given us a study that would be a great place to start down the path of acquiring wisdom.

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Marvin A. Sweeney. *Tanak: A Theological and Critical Introduction to the Jewish Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012. xv + 544 pp. \$59.00.

Marvin Sweeney, the author of *Tanak: A Theological and Critical Introduction to the Jewish Bible*, is professor of Hebrew Bible at the Claremont School of Theology and Claremont Graduate University. He has written numerous studies such as *Reading the Hebrew Bible after the Shoah: Engaging Holocaust Theology* (2008), *1 and 2 Kings: A Commentary* (2007), *Form and Intertextuality in Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature* (2005), *The Prophetic Literature* (2005), *Zephaniah* (2003), *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (2001), *The Twelve Prophets* (2000), and *Isaiah 1–39* (1996). Sweeney is currently preparing new commentaries on Ezekiel and Isa 40–66, as well as a two-volume study of Jewish Mysticism.



In *Tanak*, Sweeney offers a lucid critical theological introduction to the threefold division of the Jewish Bible: Torah, Prophets, and Writings. There is a detailed analysis of the larger and smaller textual units following the MT order of the books and their internal textual divisions. At the heart of this discussion, Sweeney underlines the historical and literary background as well as the overarching message. Throughout this book, he employs the conventional Jewish style of writing the divine name “G-d.” The biblical text is studied according to contemporary historical methodology with an eye on Jewish interpretation and tradition. To this end, Sweeney undertakes to study the central theological themes of the Hebrew Bible: the election of Israel and the institution of the Sinaitic covenant (Torah); breaking of the covenant with God and the emergence of Israelite prophets (Prophecy); and the national restoration of Israel (Writings). In his own words,

In an effort to interpret the Tanak as the foundational sacred scripture of Judaism, this volume proposes a systematic critical and theological study of the Jewish Bible. It draws upon the Christian discipline of biblical or OT theology, although its aims and presuppositions are very different, in large measure due to the different aims and presuppositions of Judaism and Christianity. It is critical insofar as it draws heavily on modern critical study of the Bible although throughout the volume it will be clear that the critical foundations must themselves be self-critically examined at every point in order to provide a secure basis for theological assessment of the biblical works. (p. 4)

This volume consists of five major parts: (1) Introduction (pp. 3–41); (2) Torah (pp. 45–167); (3a) The Former Prophets (pp. 171–261); (3b) The Latter Prophets (pp. 265–367); (4) Writings (pp. 371–483); and (5) Conclusion (pp. 487–89). Also it is furnished with a bibliography and indexes of authors and subjects. In chapter 1, Sweeney offers a thorough study of the Tanak as the foundation of Judaism, Christian OT theology, Jewish Biblical Theology, and the task of Jewish Biblical Theology. In particular, Sweeney aims to refute the myth of biblical theology as a uniquely Christian endeavour (contra Jon D. Levenson). For this reason, the author pays particular attention to his theological predecessors and contemporaries of biblical theological scholarship. In chapter 2, the readers are introduced to the literary framework of the *toledot* formula in Genesis along with a detailed study of the narratives of Israel’s journey in the wilderness and the entrance to the land (Exodus–Deuteronomy). The first part of chapter 3 focuses on the Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Accordingly, the second part of chapter 3 goes on to unfold the literary-historical contours of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, along

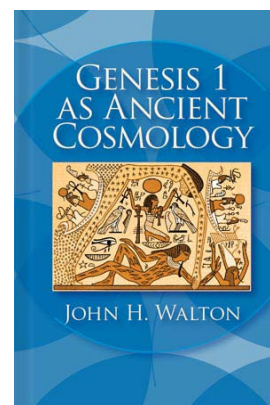
with the Twelve Minor Prophets. Chapter 4 unfolds the literary structure and theological message of the Writings: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the Five Scrolls, Daniel, Ezra–Nehemiah, and Chronicles. Finally, chapter 5 concludes with some challenging thoughts: (1) biblical theology is an appropriate field of study for Jewish biblical scholars; (2) Tanak is the normative foundation of Judaism; (3) the Jewish Bible is a collection of diverse literary works that do not represent consistent Israelite theology; and (4) the Hebrew Bible is the common ground for interreligious dialogue between Jews and Christians.

Without a doubt, *Tanak: A Theological and Critical Introduction to the Jewish Bible* is a landmark in fostering Jewish biblical theology. This eloquent book will help Christians to discover anew the foundations of Jewish theological reception of the Hebrew Bible and cultivate fruitful dialogue with Jewish biblical scholarship. Bible teachers and seminarians from either Jewish or Christian background will enjoy studying and implementing this solid introduction to the Hebrew Bible written from a contemporary Jewish perspective.

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John H. Walton. *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011. 214 pp. \$34.50.

Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology is John Walton's technical and expanded version of *The Lost World of Genesis One* (InterVarsity, 2009). In *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology*, Walton argues that Gen 1 should be read as the creation of an ordered/functional structure rather than actual acts of material creation. According to Walton, his first intention "is to understand the texts but also to demonstrate that a functional ontology pervaded the cognitive environment of the ancient Near East" (p. viii). Walton's epiphany moment was when considering Gen 1:5 and asking, "Why didn't God call the light 'light?'" (p. vii). Walton's conclusion is that it is more than the creation of "light"; it is the function of the "day." With this idea as his foundation, Walton uses *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology* to describe how Gen 1 was never intended to be an account of material origins (land, water, animals, man, etc.), but the focus of Gen 1, like the rest of the ancient Near Eastern world, was to bring order by looking at functions.



The structure of Walton's work is laid out simply but with vast detail. There are five unequal sections to the book. In the first sixteen pages, Walton frames his methodology by looking at cosmology and comparative studies. In the second section, only six pages in length, he uses tables to compare different creation accounts from the ancient Near East. The third section, the largest section of the work (100 pages), looks at the ancient cosmological cognitive environment. In this section he goes into more detail and develops the importance of creation to the relationship between the cosmos, the temple, and divine rest. The fourth section looks in-depth (72 pages) at Gen 1:1–2 and the seven days of creation. Walton focuses on exegesis in this section and deals extensively with the technical aspects of Hebrew. He further develops his idea of the importance of the temple in this section. The final section is a conclusion as Walton ties together his argument that Gen 1 should be seen as functions instead of acts of creation. He says, "the most important result of this study . . . is the realization that the Genesis

account pertains to functional origins rather than material origins and that temple ideology underlies the Genesis cosmology” (198–99).

There is much to commend Walton’s work. After all, he is trying to provide some answers to questions that have plagued people since the primeval days of creation. Though he is not always easy to read and understand, he does force the reader to slow down and consider what he says. If the reader doesn’t slow down to digest the material slowly, then the time spent reading this book will be wasted.

One of the points to commend is how Walton looks at Gen 1 hermeneutically. He believes that “all literature is dependent on the culture from which it emerges and on the literature of the cultures with which it is in contract” (p. 12). This point is perfectly made when considering literature at face-value. However, what I do not see is Walton taking into account the ability of the Spirit of God to transcend culture and literature. Does God have to use the narrator in a non-supernatural way and work only within the framework of contextual literature?

Walton understands the opening verse of Gen 1 as an independent clause that should be understood as a period of creation rather than a point in creation (p. 127). His conclusions here are based similarly on how one should understand the word **בְּרֵאשִׁית**. Walton alerts the reader to the idea and danger the modern reader is in when “imposing modern concepts of cosmological ontology onto the ancient world” (p. 127).

Walton clearly has an excellent understanding of ancient Near Eastern writings and culture. He has written *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament* (Baker, 2006), which demonstrates his ability with the genre. However, despite his excellent understanding of ancient Near Eastern texts, he occasionally does not cite them when making an argument or will cite them in such a fashion to make it difficult to figure out what is factually cited versus what he would deem common knowledge. As a reader who is very curious about the topic, it makes coming to conclusions on my own very difficult to be able to discern between the two.

If the reader can persevere and come to the end of the book, they will find that Walton makes a positive addition to the scholarly community on Gen 1. However, persevering through the text will be difficult for many because of the difficult vocabulary and the significant Hebrew exegesis. Those hurdles can make it difficult for the reader to cut through the text and get to the point of Walton’s argument. Overall, Walton’s work is helpful, but since he is a pioneer in this field and so little has been written and researched on this particular view, it will be sometime before Walton’s view is taken all that seriously. I would caution the reader that simply because he is a pioneer does not mean he should be discredited. His contribution is significant and could end up being extremely helpful for many.

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Gordon J. Wenham. *Psalms as Torah: Reading the Biblical Song Ethically*. Studies in Theological Interpretation. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. xvi + 233 pp. £12.99/\$22.99.

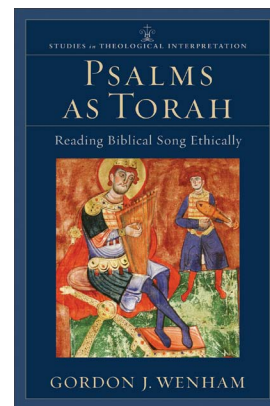
Psalms as Torah addresses a serious and surprising neglect of the Psalter in OT ethics. It follows Wenham's earlier *Story as Torah: Reading Old Testament Narrative Ethically* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004). Whereas *Story as Torah* complements Waldemar Janzen's ethical study of OT narrative, *Psalms as Torah* provides the first monograph-length study of ethics in the Psalms.

Wenham begins by observing that the Psalter is both a book for worship and for instruction. Chapter 1 reviews the uses of the Psalms by Jewish and Christian interpreters from the OT itself until the present day. Chapter 2 provides a gentle introduction to the history of critical psalms study, with a special focus on psalm titles. This begins with traditional historical readings and traces the rise of form and canonical criticism. Chapter 3 draws on the work of David Carr and Paul Griffiths to argue that the Psalter fits the pattern of an anthology of sacred texts meant to be memorized and that memorizing the psalms "has a peculiarly character-forming effect on the memorizer" (p. 53). Chapter 4 draws on reader-response theory via Dorothea Erbele-Küster and speech-act theory via Donald Evans to argue that praying the psalms involves the user in ways unlike other genres in Scripture. In contrast to reading law or narrative, in which the reader is passive, those who pray the psalms commit themselves to the attitudes and actions commended in the text.

With this methodological foundation, Wenham proceeds to analyze the ethics of the Psalter. Chapter 5 traces the concept of "law" in the Psalter with a focus on Pss 1, 19, and 119. Chapter 6 then compares the Psalms to the "law," focusing in particular on the Ten Commandments. He observes that the Sabbath command does not appear in the Psalter, while the prohibition of false witness receives frequent mention. Chapter 7 examines the Psalter's use of narrative texts from the rest of the OT, arguing that the Psalter's retelling of past events is meant to educate in theology and ethics. Chapter 8 details various virtues and vices in the Psalms. In this chapter Wenham considers both the contrast between the righteous and the wicked and the concept of the imitation of God. He briefly addresses the question of the basis for ethics in the Psalter, suggesting that while both deontological approaches (in this case, ethics based on divine command) and consequentialist approaches (ethics based on consequences) can be found woven together in the Psalter, it leans in the direction of deontology because God is so frequently described as judge and king. Chapter 9 provides a helpful and practical approach to the imprecatory psalms, or psalms calling for divine intervention. Finally, chapter 10 tests his theory about the transformative effects of prayed ethics by examining the influence of the Psalms on the NT. He highlights the influence of psalmic ethics in Luke, 1 Peter, Romans, Hebrews, and Revelation.

The unique contribution of this book is Wenham's argument based on speech-act theory that the prayed ethics of the Psalter transforms its readers in ways distinct from other genres in the OT. Wenham touches on this argument throughout the work, culminating in his treatment of select NT texts. Wenham helpfully identifies the Psalter's influence both on the NT presentation of Jesus as the righteous sufferer of the Psalms and on its teaching to Christians to imitate Christ in suffering while hoping in the vindication of God's glory.

If I have any concern about the book, it is the extent to which Wenham reads the Psalter through the lens of the rest of the OT. To be fair, this approach has warrant. In the first volume of his OT Theology,



Gerhard von Rad famously classified the Psalter as “Israel’s response” to God. However, Wenham’s choice of the Decalogue as a grid through which to examine psalmic ethics is surprising. Why does he begin there and not the Deuteronomic kingship law (cf. Jamie Grant, *The King as Exemplar: The Function of Deuteronomy’s Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms* [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004])? He rightly observes at several points that speech is the most prominent ethical issue raised in the Psalter. Why is that the case? Is there an explanation to be found within the canonical shape of the Psalter? Why not begin with the relational triangle of God, the psalmist, and the enemy? To be fair to Wenham, this is the first monograph on the subject to date, and his work establishes a suitable foundation upon which others may build.

Gordon Wenham has done a service to the scholarly community in bringing this study to print. It addresses a surprising scholarly neglect of the Psalter as a resource for biblical ethics and provides a starting point for future ethical study of this much-beloved book. Psalms as Torah will prove valuable not only for scholars, but also for pastors, students, and educated laypeople who desire to learn, teach, memorize, and pray the Psalms. It has already affected the way that I pray, so I commend it to all who love the Psalms.

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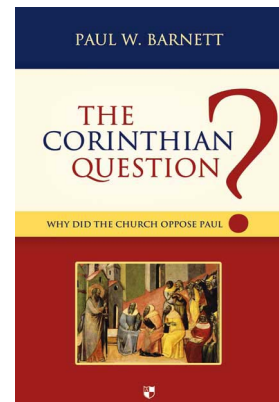
— NEW TESTAMENT —

Paul W. Barnett. *The Corinthian Question: Why Did the Church Oppose Paul?* Nottingham: Apollos, 2011. 243 pp. £11.99.

The Apostle Paul’s missionary years were between A.D. 47 and 57. He spent much of this time with the church in Corinth from A.D. 50 to 57. When Paul founded the church, there was no record of conflict in Acts 18 within the congregation. By the time Paul wrote 1 Corinthians in A.D. 55, there was much conflict. It reached a particular crisis point by the time of writing 2 Corinthians in A.D. 56. Several other letters that 1 and 2 Corinthians mention also indicate that all was not well in Corinth (cf. 1 Cor 5:9–10; 2 Cor 7:8). Where did this opposition come from? In *The Corinthian Question*, Paul Barnett provides answers by examining the NT foremost.

Barnett’s answer is that the opposition came as a result of changing church dynamics. “The church membership changed in number and character in the years following Paul’s departure” (p. 209). This factor combined with Paul’s absence, the presence of a succession of other preachers like Apollos and Cephas, and a band of travelling teachers carrying letters of recommendation, led to the crisis at Corinth. Barnett’s focus on changing church dynamics is an undervalued viewpoint and deserves further attention in the study of Paul’s opposition at Corinth.

Recent studies have focused on other means to evaluate opponents at Corinth. In recent years sociological studies have become the dominant approach to Corinthian studies. Such works have



examined the influence of Greco-Roman society upon the Corinthian congregation, drawing attention to the influence of Sophists, patronage, immorality, education, social standing, and secular leadership. While such studies have changed the perspective of viewing Paul's Corinthian opponents by rightly drawing attention away from Gnosticism, they have focused more on Greco-Roman backgrounds rather than on the NT texts. Barnett's approach is helpful, drawing attention again to the text of the Corinthian letters, the book of Acts, and portions of Romans to answer questions about opposition.

Barnett also uses a linear approach to the examination of Corinthian opponents. Rather than assuming that the Corinthian church is the same throughout the seven years of his known interaction with them, he rightly finds a progression that occurred within the church over time. Barnett prefers to see a development within the Corinthian congregation. It was small and supportive of Paul's apostolic ministry when he first left Corinth in A.D. 50, but then it experienced a number of substantial developments. Other Christian leaders like Apollos came to Corinth. The church grew, and the aspects of church life were altered.

Barnett finds varying church dynamics plainly visible within 1 and 2 Corinthians. When Barnett examines 1 Corinthians, he sees four chapters that are devoted to changing relationships: (1) chapter one with the problems of factions; (2) chapter four with the elite's judgment of Paul; (3) chapter nine with Paul's defense for declining payment; and (4) chapter sixteen, which concerns the status of Apollos, Timothy, and Stephanas. When Barnett considers 2 Corinthians, he sees the dynamics that led to the tensions within the painful visit. He views the man in incest as the one who pained Paul deeply (2 Cor 2:1–6). Barnett's approach supports the position that the commentator Hughes promoted nearly 50 years earlier.

The linear approach advocated within *The Corinthian Question* helpfully highlights other aspects of the situation at Corinth. By approaching the text of Corinthians in this manner, he draws attention to significant matters that are forgotten when the Corinthian situation is considered. He spends time considering Stephanas, a key person within Corinth. While this leader is mentioned only three times within the Corinthian correspondence, Paul exhorts the Corinthians to be subject to him (1 Cor 16:16). Barnett also pays attention to the third visit to Corinth, which many do not take into account in their evaluation of the problems in Corinth. By considering Rom 15:24–28, 16:21–23, and Acts 20:2–4, he concludes that the subsequent visit by Titus and Paul was successful in quelling the problems at Corinth. This point is often forgotten in Paul's relationship with the Corinthians.

Besides providing a linear approach focused on the Corinthian letters, *The Corinthian Question* also includes helpful appendices for readers. Barnett includes a brief discussion of the size of the church at Corinth, estimating that it was approximately 200 people. He also gives a helpful timeline. This provides, in an easily accessible format, where each significant person in the Corinthian correspondence (Paul, Apollos, Titus, and Cephas) was for each year between A.D. 50 and 56. Many studies state where these people were, whether Corinth, Ephesus, or Macedonia, but Barnett's chart is clear. It will be a great help for teachers of the Corinthian letters.

While *The Corinthian Question* raises several good points, it is concerning that Barnett concludes by declaring, "It seems the Corinthian crisis was a casualty of Paul's missionary methods" (p. 210). He sees this as a result of Paul's short length of stay in Corinth and the lack of having Titus with him. He also concludes that the tearful letter could have been written more diplomatically. Rather than placing the blame on missionary methods, the worldview that Paul faced deserves greater attention than Barnett

gives it. Paul faced strong opposition from paganism, secularism, immorality, and idolatry. Barnett could benefit with further interaction with other historical studies.

Other studies within Corinthians reveal that the secular practices of the Sophists seem to have had a significant influence on the opposition at Corinth. These studies draw attention to rhetoric, division, boasting, and status that have clear overlaps with 1 Corinthians. Furthermore, the influence of idolatry and immorality within the Corinthian community seems evident from the recent commentary by Rosner and Ciampa. Finally, some interaction with the epistle of First Clement would have added to Barnett's work. This epistle was written by Clement of Rome to Corinth somewhere within the years A.D. 95 and 97. Christians respected this letter, and Clement honored Paul calling him "the beloved apostle." Further interaction with this letter would add to the viewpoints expressed by Barnett.

The Corinthian Question will be a good resource for academics, preachers, and teachers. It reads easily and interacts with a number of scholars within the field of Corinthian studies. It would be a good supplemental book to use with other commentaries on the text.

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G. K. Beale. *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011. xiv + 1047 pp. \$54.99.

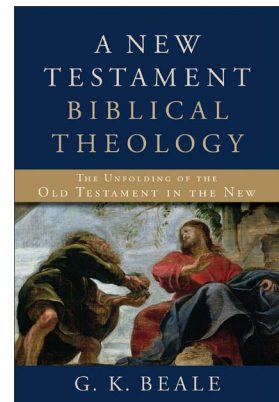
Yet another weighty tome has appeared expounding the 'biblical' theology of the NT, but this one is certainly far more than sufficiently distinctive to merit publication, although it could have been pared down with advantage.

We would naturally expect that, regardless of specific mention in the title, any exposition of NT theology would be *biblical* in that it needs to show how recognition of the use and influence of the OT is essential for explaining what the NT says. But Greg Beale goes much further in tracing and expounding with considerable detail: (a) the salvation-historical story to which the OT and NT both testify; (b) the ways in which the origins of NT thinking lie in the early Christian use of the OT; and (c) the resulting continuity, harmony, and development.

It is therefore not too surprising that the biblical index contains far more references to one OT book (guess which one!) than to any other biblical book!

Some seven key convictions of the author govern the exposition. The first, which is taken for granted, is the role of the *Holy Spirit* in the inspiration of the human authors, so that there is ultimately one author of the whole Bible who originates a harmonious, developing revelation.

A second feature, which (like the others to follow) Beale expounds and defends at length, is the stress on the '*already . . . not yet*' character of Christian experience whereby what God will bring about in the future is already happening in principle and in reality here and now but in a partial manner. Thus believers already partake spiritually of the future resurrection of the body, even though they do not yet experience the promised victory of Christ over physical death.



This means, third, that the NT is concerned largely with '*eschatological*' events. This adjective appears to signify that they will occur on the last day or in the last times and are thus the final events in world history before the dawn of the eternal state. Nevertheless, there is this 'already' experience of what will happen in the age to come, an anticipation here and now in a partial manner of what is to come then. Beale can thus state that the last days have already begun; in particular the 'great tribulation' that Jesus prophesied is already the context of Christian living. Second Thessalonians 2 is the clearest evidence that events of the kind described in the Synoptic apocalyptic discourses are already in full swing. (There is perhaps a tension here between the events that anticipate the time of the End and the events that are actually part of the End.) Consequently, virtually everything that happens, or is prophesied to happen, in the NT can be described as 'eschatological'. The term recurs incessantly; indeed Beale has a field day with 'inaugurated eschatology', 'semieschatological', 'eschatological-like', 'prototypical eschatology', and the like! Not since *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* by Alan Richardson (1958) has there been such a deluge of eschatological expressions. It may be worth remembering that the term 'eschatological' is not biblical; Jesus and Paul actually got along without using it; and it is confusing to use a noun that strictly refers to 'the *study* of the last things' to mean 'the last things themselves'. Has Beale paid proper attention to the *caveat* that he mentions (p. 177n48)?

Fourth, rather than talk of a possible 'centre' of NT theology, Beale prefers to think in terms of the basic *biblical storyline* found in the OT and continuing throughout the NT.

Fifth, Beale gives central importance in this storyline to the *resurrection* of Jesus as the source of *new life (salvation)*, but this is also closely tied to the two key features of *new creation* and the *kingdom of God*, which are aspects of the same event.

Sixth, a further central feature is the motif of the *temple*, familiar from Beale's earlier writings, beginning with Eden as the garden-temple and culminating in the people of the Messiah as the new temple which is his body. This implies the supersession of the Jerusalem temple and what goes with it.

Seventh, throughout the telling of this story Beale is at pains to show how the NT authors *generate their theology out of a profound use of the OT*. (Did you guess the chief source correctly? Yes, it is especially Isaiah, with roughly 5 index columns of references to Isa 1–39 and 11 columns for Isa 40–66). All the current tools of the trade are used to trace influences and echoes alongside clear citations and allusions.

What results from this approach? After a comparatively modest Introduction, Part 1 depicts the biblical-theological storyline of Scripture with the focus on the last days in the OT being continued in the NT. Then Part 2 focuses on the now-begun 'great tribulation'; that is to say, Mark 13 is the key to understanding the Gospel of Mark rather than something to be ignored because we can't see how it fits in alongside the rest of the story. In Part 3 the already-inaugurated resurrection of Jesus and believers (in the latter case real but not yet physical) and the coming of the Kingdom are shown to be the framework for what is going on in the NT. This leads up to the oft-repeated summary:

Jesus's life, trials, death for sinners, and especially resurrection by the Spirit have launched the fulfillment of the eschatological already-not-yet new creational reign, bestowed by grace through faith and resulting in worldwide commission to the faithful to advance this new-creational reign and resulting in judgment for the unbelieving, unto the triune God's glory. (pp. 16, 23, 182, 297 et al.)

Beale's aim is to prove that this storyline is the generative source for most of Paul's important notions and indeed those of the NT generally. This, then, is to be 'a Pauline theology of the New Testament'. But

even more at the same time it will also be 'an Isaianic theology of the NT' with Isaiah seen as the source of NT language and ideas.

Having established the framework, Beale turns to details. In Part 4 the discussion shifts back to the state of the world before redemption. This is interpreted in terms of sinful behaviour that stems from idolatry: Adam is said to be presented as an idolater who loses the image of God (understood in terms of action like God), and idolaters take on the image of their idols. God's response is to bring about the restoration of the image and hence of human rule over creation. This is accomplished through the Son of Man (Dan 7), who represents humanity and in Jesus embodies humanity as renewed in the image of God (the Adamic Son of God). The kingship of God is inaugurated in his mission. Here the argument is based on the Synoptics but then developed from Paul. There is thus a selectivity in what is expounded, with several references to material (presumably less important) being omitted for reasons of limited space.

We are now about half way through the volume and may need to pause for breath as we enter Part 5, which starts to look at the salvation process in the light of this framework. The first area is 'justification', which receives detailed treatment, but I gain the impression that the agenda is directed by the need to show that Paul teaches the same doctrine as Reformed scholars have done subsequently. There is certainly a powerful defence of the role of participation in Christ leading to clothing with his active and passive obedience, in a way that seems to me to be rather too analytical and anachronistic; I strongly welcome, however, the recognition of the central role of the resurrection that Dick Gaffin, Michael Bird, and others have rightly identified in Paul. The problem of justification by faith now alongside final justification by works is solved by arguing that the works are the necessary evidence of faith rather than the basis for justification.

The treatment of justification is followed by reconciliation, which is unwrapped in terms of new creation and restoration from exile: although the name of N. T. Wright does not occur in this chapter, those who are deeply suspicious of some of Tom's creative insights should note how frequently Beale is prepared to appreciate and learn from him (e.g., 47n55; 624n23). Of particular importance here is the unfolding of an OT basis for a concept that is often thought to lack one.

In Part 6 Beale moves on to the role of the Spirit as the present agent of new creation through the bestowal of resurrection life. Here he picks up the evidence compiled by Walt Hansen for an OT basis for the fruit of the Spirit and also returns to the theme of the temple throughout Scripture. The church is now that temple, and this leads Beale to speak of 'supersessionism' with the church replacing Judaism as the end-time Israel. The term may not be ideal and is liable to misunderstanding, but the motif is surely there. The promises to this 'new' Israel of a 'land' will be fulfilled physically and not just spiritually in the new creation. David's 'throne will find its ultimate place of real estate in the consummated new cosmos' (p. 765). Such a distinctive mark of Israel as Sabbath observance must be expressed in the church, though Beale struggles a bit over the nitty-gritty. Other marks of Christian living are treated to show how they demonstrate new-creational life. Here there is a glorious concluding section where Beale forgets that he is writing an academic account of what the NT says and bursts into sermon style as he summons his readers to new-creational living (cf. ch. 25).

The concluding Part 10 juxtaposes the lives and experiences of 'Old Testament saints' and the church, and the final note expresses the underlying and ever-present motif of the glorification of God that John Piper and James Hamilton have highlighted.

It has taken most of my space to summarise the contents with a minimum of comment, simply because of the sheer length. But this points directly to one of the strengths of this book, namely, its in-depth treatment of many passages and its helpful summaries of the author's earlier works. Even so, however, the treatment is selective (as the author is fully aware; see pp. 950–51). This book is arguing for a thesis that may not be widely held, so it requires its detailed discussion. Time and again Beale qualifies his conclusions with 'probably' and 'possibly', but not all his points need to be 'almost certainly' for the general thesis to be plausible; the reader must check up that there is sufficient strong evidence for each main affirmation.

There are three areas for discussion: The first is the interpretation of Scripture; this area includes both Beale's own interpretation of what OT passages would have meant for the original authors and readers, and also what meaning was seen in them by the NT authors who cite or allude to them. Beale is influenced here by the kind of research stimulated by Richard Hays, which attaches lots of significance to verbal coincidences that may or may not be significant. There may be a tendency to assume that the author of one passage shares the thoughts of another author without actually referring to them.

Another area that needs clarification is the new creation and the nature of the resurrected saints. Beale wants to uphold a physical resurrection of the body, but surely Paul speaks of a spiritual body. Would a physical body be eternal and incorruptible? Likewise, with regard to the physical universe.

I have difficulties with the way in which the original act of creation is followed so soon by 'the last days' and no 'middle earth' type of period. To be sure, any account of why God does not act more swiftly to save the sinful race definitively and to make known his salvation to the ends of the earth is surrounded by insoluble problems, and maybe this account of the matter is no worse than any other.

So if you want a survey that will tell you what are the characteristics and distinctive contributions of the individual authors or books of the NT, you will not find it here (although you will be able to find what many of them say or imply on the selected theme of the book), and you will need to turn to such as Frank Matera and Frank Thielman. Similarly, if you want synthetic summaries of the teaching of the NT on the various motifs that it discusses, you will need to turn to such as Donald Guthrie or Tom Schreiner. And if you want a critical discussion of the varied understandings of contemporary scholars, you will need to turn to such as Peter Stuhlmacher. This volume focuses essentially on the biblical basis for NT theology, and I found so many fresh ideas (well, fresh to me) in it that I have read it with excitement and shall need to keep returning to it for fresh stimulus.

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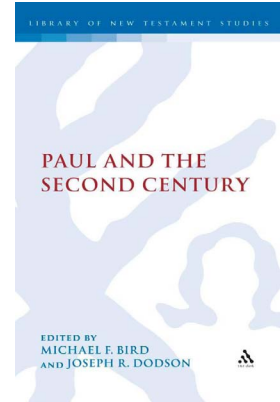
Michael F. Bird and Joseph R. Dodson, eds. *Paul and the Second Century*. Library of New Testament Studies 412. London: T&T Clark, 2011. xii + 270 pp. £70.00/\$140.00.

This volume brings together thirteen essays exploring the “variety of ways that Paul was received, interpreted, and even used in the second century” (p. xi). As Michael Bird explains in the preface, “Currently studies in *Wirkungsgeschichte* are in vogue, a new scholarly ‘pink’ if you will” (p. xi). While the term *Wirkungsgeschichte* (typically translated “effective history”) may not be familiar to some, there are reasons to believe that this trend in scholarship will not go out of fashion anytime soon. Moreover, as the volume stresses, such study can often lead to new insights into Paul and his letters. Thus, this volume should interest not only students of early Christianity but also students of the NT and Paul in particular.

The contributions are set forth roughly in chronological order. While some address a specific topic, most consider Paul’s influence on particular second-century figures or literary works. An up-to-date and useful introduction, written by Joseph Dodson, delineates the question of Paul’s influence in the second century. Then Dodson provides a much more extensive summary of the volume than what will be possible here (pp. 10–17).

In the first chapter, Stanley Porter lays out five theories regarding the formation of the Pauline canon before offering his own. Porter’s discussion draws largely upon his own previous work, as he acknowledges (see pp. 21–22n12). In the second chapter, Carl Smith discusses how Paul influenced Ignatius. He examines the nature of the evidence and analyzes four theological topics: Christology, Jewish practices among the followers of Jesus, the role of the bishop in the Christian church, and suffering and martyrdom. Michael Holmes’s chapter on Polycarp’s letter to the Philippians is structured by Daniel Marguerat’s categories of “Paul as writer,” “Paul as remembered,” and “Paul as theologian.” (Does Holmes’s use of these categories undermine Blackwell’s claim on p. 191?) Holmes’s essay also somewhat repackages previous work. Michael Bird’s essay provides “an expansive list of Pauline intertexts” in the *Epistle to Diognetus*, classifies them as citation, allusion, or echo, and finishes with some remarks “as to how Paul shaped the theological texture and rhetorical dynamics” of the epistle (p. 73). Bird concludes that the *Epistle to Diognetus* “stands within a Christian Hellenism that was very probably the same seedbed from which Christian Gnosticism grew” but argues that the Paulinism of the epistle “cannot be a Gnostic Paulinism” (p. 89).

In the fifth chapter, Todd Still introduces Marcion and Marcion scholarship, but his own comparison of Marcion’s thought and praxis with Paul’s is only about two full pages. Still’s disagreements with Sebastian Moll could also have received more substantiation. Nevertheless, for those who are unfamiliar with the field, this could be a helpful place to start. Paul Foster’s task in the sixth chapter is mostly negative. After examining a sampling of the parallels between Justin and Paul that have been proposed in scholarship, Foster concludes that there are “wide discrepancies in the arguments these texts are used to support as well as differences in the contextual ideas of the respective passages. This makes the case for literary dependence unlikely” (p. 124). In the seventh chapter, Nicholas Perrin seeks to demonstrate the importance of Paul to second-century Valentinians. He considers Valentinus himself and Theodotus and then the *Prayer of the Apostle Paul* and the *Apocalypse of Paul*. In a relatively long eighth chapter, Joel Willitts seeks to bring greater methodological precision to the question of whether second-century



Jewish Christians rejected Paul. He first defines “Jewish Christianity” and then persuasively argues that “Jewish Christianity in the second century is not essentially anti-Pauline as has been thought” (p. 167).

Andrew Gregory’s essay introduces the reader to the *Acts of Paul* and then considers its sources and models. The portrayal of Paul in the *Acts of Paul* is broken down in four constituent parts. Gregory makes interesting comparisons to portrayals of Paul in the Pauline letters and Acts. In the tenth and eleventh chapters, Ben Blackwell and Andrew Bain consider the appropriation of Paul and his letters in Irenaeus and Tertullian, respectively. Blackwell demonstrates how Irenaeus was “an interesting and historically significant interpreter of Paul” (p. 206). Bain’s chapter is almost entirely descriptive as only 17 of his 111 footnotes contain any reference to secondary literature. Pauline Nigh Hogan then treats the issue of Paul and women in second-century Christianity. In my opinion, her assessment of Paul’s influence handles the evidence too simplistically as her working assumption seems to be that the adoption of conventional gender roles among Christians is due to the influence of the Greco-Roman social world whereas the adoption of unconventional gender roles is due to the influence of Paul. In the final essay, Mark Elliot briefly treats four major theologians as interpreters of Paul: Irenaeus, Clement, Tertullian, and Origen. He advances the provocative claim that “the anti-Marcionite Paul of c. 200 C.E. looks not dissimilar to the Paul of the New Perspective of the late twentieth century and even to the philosophical Paul of the early twenty-first” (p. 256). Indexes of ancient sources, modern authors, and ancient figures complete the volume. There is no separate bibliography section.

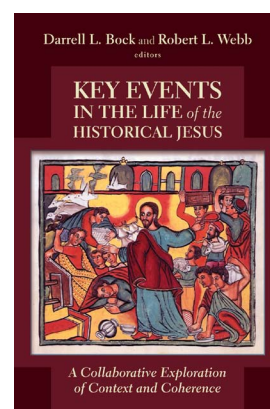
This wide-ranging volume is worthy of more sustained interaction than this review can offer. Bird and Dodson have collected a number of fine essays from an international cast of scholars. The volume will undoubtedly serve as a helpful reference for years to come.

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Darrell L. Bock and Robert L. Webb, eds. *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus: A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. xvii + 931 pp. \$70.00.

Key Events (hereafter *KE*) is the fruit of the collaborative labours of twelve scholars spanning many meetings between 1999 and 2008. The authors concentrated on twelve *events* connected with the historical Jesus, rather than his teachings. While they cite numerous authorities who have contributed to the recent avalanche of scholarship focused on the historical Jesus, their study is a singularly appropriate response to E. P. Sanders’s epochal work *Jesus and Judaism* (1984), which concentrates not on Jesus’s words, but key events. Against Bultmann, who said, ‘we can know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus’ (*Jesus and the Word*, 1958, p. 14), Sanders counters, ‘we can know pretty well what Jesus was out to accomplish’ (*Jesus and Judaism*, p. 2).

In *KE* each contributor aims (1) to set forth a case for the probable historicity of the event’s core, (2) to explore the sociological contextual information to understand the event in its first-century context, and (3) to consider the significance of the event for understanding Jesus (p. 6).



In the chapter “Jesus’ Baptism by John,” Robert Webb argues that the case for authenticity relies on the *Criterion of Embarrassment*. That is, the early church would not have included a potentially demeaning portrayal of Jesus in the Jordan among confessing sinners unless it actually happened. Further evidence of factuality may be seen in both John and Jesus having a group of disciple-followers, the latter mirroring the former. Jesus shared with John a call to Israel for renewal and repentance, but in such a way that he was not merely a ‘religious ethicist.’ Jesus identified with John in declaring the time had come for God’s saving eschatological act, but infinitely more than that, such saving eschatological action was in his hands.

Craig Evans’s essay, “Exorcisms and the Kingdom of God,” locates Jesus’s expulsion of unclean spirits within a Jewish eschatological-apocalyptic setting where the announcement of the kingdom of God involved the defeat of Satan. The historicity of the exorcisms is confirmed by the *Criterion of Multiple Attestation* where Jewish and other sources portray Jesus as a sorcerer and the Gospel sources focus on him as the frequent exorcist. The transformation of the possessed to people of sound mind, something that could be *seen*, was evidence of the in-breaking kingdom that Jesus announced, with clear christological implications.

Scot McKnight addresses “The Choosing of the Twelve,” which he authenticates by the *Criterion of Multiple Attestation*. John the Baptist had disciples, but Jesus chose *twelve* disciples, a deliberate act that raised profound questions about his authority and identity. By this, Jesus was mirroring, but infinitely more than mirroring, the origins of Israel. The Synoptics, where the accounts of the choice of the twelve are prominent, are also characterized by their lack of direct expression about Jesus’s identity, something McKnight points to as evidence of the age of the traditions and therefore of their historicity. Furthermore, Jesus’s choice of twelve is an example of *similarity* (e.g., to John, who had followers) but also of *dissimilarity* (because Jesus had *twelve* followers). One feature of Jesus and the twelve is that he alone is the teacher (“he that has ears to hear, let him hear”); they were entirely passive, as learners; they contribute no teaching to Jesus or to one another.

Craig Blomberg’s chapter, “Table Fellowship with Sinners and Outsiders,” depends on the *Criterion of Multiple Attestation* across the synoptic sources (but absent from John). Blomberg distinguishes Jesus’s meals from the Greek *symposia*. This essay establishes Jesus’s inclusion of those who had been pushed to the margins of Jewish society (the sinners, the poor, the maimed and the unclean) by religious elitists of that era, a reminder that God had chosen and saved Israel as a poor and marginalised people. The twelve, as drawn from across the spectrum of Jewish society, were further evidence of the mercy of God for Israel overall.

Donald Hagner’s essay, “Controversy over the Sabbath with Jewish Leaders,” establishes that by Jesus’s day the Sabbath was seen as pre-Mosaic, even as a pre-creation institution. Any words Jesus uttered about the Sabbath, therefore, pointed implicitly to his authority and identity especially since such pronouncements usually occurred on occasions when Jesus healed someone. His action and word, then, pointed to the onset of a new era, a permanent Sabbath, the *shalom* of the kingdom of God.

This essay also raises the issue of the historicity of Jesus’s miracles. References to Jesus’s miracles by Josephus (neutral) and the Talmud (negative) point to their authenticity by the *Criterion of Multiple Attestation*. Against the objection that acts of Sabbath healing were then permissible, Hagner argues that Jesus’s *words* were instrumental and operative for an act of healing to occur and were thus powerful pointers to his identity as God’s eschatological agent inaugurating the new age.

Michael Wilkins's chapter, "Peter's Declaration at Caesarea Philippi," points out how the idolatrous effigies at the grotto underscored the confession of Jesus as Messiah in a non-Jewish location. Is the incident historical? Wilkins thinks the ambiguity within the incident as reported speaks against it having been a later church creation. Indeed, the name "Christ" by which he was immediately known post-resurrection points back to this incident. From that moment, however, Jesus radically reshaped current notions of Messiah, especially adding the critical element of rejection, suffering, and death. Jesus's rebuke to Peter as a spokesman of Satan satisfies the *Criterion of Embarrassment* and signifies the integrity of the record. Wilkins reveals that Wrede, who claimed the "messianic secret" was Mark's invention, actually renounced that opinion before he died.

The Caesarea Philippi incident is highly significant. It brings into clear focus all the divine judgment John the Baptist had anticipated, but not the service, and made sense of all that Jesus had done to that point—the proclamation of the kingdom, the exorcisms heralding the defeat of Satan, the healings, the welcome to sinners, the calling of twelve, and the Sabbath acts. The accumulated impact of these prompted Peter to recognise Jesus as the Christ, a recognition that Jesus must modify as the Son of Man who must suffer.

The next key event is "Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem" as reviewed by Brent Kinman. This is one of those events that appear in all four Gospels, which, however, points to more than one source thus satisfying the *Criterion of Multiple Attestation*. Kinman suggests that the acclamation of the king arriving would not have involved a sufficient number of people to attract the attention of the authorities and lead to Jesus's arrest. He suggests that we should think of the Palm Sunday entry as "a-triumphal," capturing the majesty/meekness paradox. On the one hand, it evoked Solomon's regal entry (1 Kgs 1:33–37), but on the other, it fulfilled the humble entry of Zech 9:9.

Closely connected is "Jesus' Action in the Temple" in Klyne Snodgrass's study. Snodgrass sees the event authenticated because it is multi-attested on the assumption that Mark 11:15–19 recounts the same event as John 2:13–22, a view that not all hold. It was not at all an event the early church would have invented since it was implicitly subversive, something the first Christians were rightly sensitive about. From one viewpoint the 'cleansing' was an enacted protest against corrupt practices within the temple, which in turn cast the die for Jesus's arrest, trials, and execution. From a more profound outlook, however, this was an act of profound eschatological and christological importance. Jesus, Messiah of Israel, was reconstituting the temple as a "gathering place for all nations" (Isa 56).

In "Jesus' Last Supper with his Disciples," Howard Marshall argues that Jesus deliberately changed the Exodus liturgy to point exclusively forward, pointedly sharpening its eschatological and christological edge. Jesus himself is the messianic deliverer who will die as representative and substitute for his people and their sins. The two forms in which it is found in the NT established the authenticity of the tradition: the Matthaean-Marcian version (emphasising the 'blood of the covenant') and the Lucan-Pauline version (emphasising its 'newness').

Was it a Passover meal? According to Mark 14:1–2, it was, but according to John 18:28, it was not, at least not an authorized Passover. Marshall speaks of the Last Supper occurring within the 'mood of the Passover season' and that it took place 'on the edge of the Passover'. Of the acts of Jesus the Gospels narrate, none exceeds the Last Supper in revealing Jesus's sense of messianic identity as the suffering One who would establish the new age. Only the immediate disciples were present at the Last Supper.

Darrell Bock's study on "Jesus' Examination before the Jewish Leadership" establishes that it was not a formal trial since only the Romans had the authority to execute someone. The core part of this

event is the High Priest's two-edged interrogation of Jesus ("What is it these men testify against you. . . . Are you the Christ?") and Jesus's reply ("You shall see the Son of man seated . . . coming"). That reply combines Ps 110:1 and Dan 7:13, texts that individually point to Jesus as the heavenly judge, but even more so when combined as they are in his reply. Accordingly, Jesus claimed equality with God or at least a shared authority with God. A higher court would judge these judges. Because a charge of blasphemy would be meaningless to Pilate the Roman, the High Priest converted it to a charge of sedition against the *Pax Romana* in Judea, and for this Jesus was executed.

The question of the historicity of the incident is important; there were no disciples present. However, proto-disciples like Nicodemus and Joseph were there, and they may have been the sources for this report. Furthermore, the young zealot Saul may also have been aware of these details.

Robert Webb's essay, "Jesus' Roman Examination by Pilate and his Crucifixion," suggests that when we move backwards from the *titulus* "King of the Jews" we are able to identify Jesus's "crime," but also his identity which has increasingly been recognised. Based on the High Priest's allegations, Pilate crucified Jesus for sedition on the basis that only Caesar could confer *kingship*. Obliquely this indicates that Jesus was no mere prophet. The historicity of the complex of events—beginning with the High Priest's trial, continuing with Pilate's trial, and ending with the crucifixion of Jesus as 'king of the Jews'—is confirmed by Josephus *Ant.*, xviii.63–63, fulfilling the *Criterion of Multiple Attestation*.

Grant Osborne's essay, "Jesus' Resurrection as Vindication after a Certain Death," concludes the collection. It provides useful information concerning burial practices and reasons the early church would not have invented the resurrection of Jesus.

In conclusion, this is a splendid collection of essays by highly respected scholars that should find a place in every seminarian's library. It reflects superior knowledge of the primary texts, but also of the extensive secondary literature. The book is worth having for its bibliographies, but more than that for its convincing historical argumentation and uniformly high exegesis of the gospel texts. The authors are to be thanked for what is a monumental achievement.

Paul Barnett

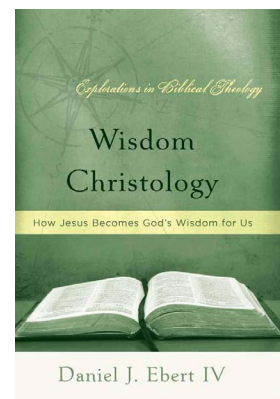
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Daniel J. Ebert IV. *Wisdom Christology: How Jesus Becomes God's Wisdom for Us*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2011. 236 pp. \$17.99.

Part of the Explorations in Biblical Theology series, Ebert's book examines the various NT texts that speak of wisdom in connection with Christology.

After an introduction, Part 1 examines the wisdom theme in the Gospels of Matthew and John, which has often been read against the personification of wisdom found in the wisdom literature (e.g., Prov 8). Carefully moving through the several passages, Ebert shows that finding "Lady Wisdom" in the background is sometimes "a stretch" and other times, although possible, unnecessary. Instead, "Jesus, explicitly identified as God's Son and qualified to reveal the Father, who invites us to find rest in him and receive his wisdom" (p.



29). He is “presented as the culmination of God’s word to his people . . . taking the place of Wisdom and Torah . . . the revelation of God” (p. 32).

Ebert helpfully recognizes the importance of the concrete revelatory event of the cross of Jesus Christ:

God’s wisdom in Christ is not merely an idea or a theoretical construction. It is grounded in historical events whereby God uniquely reveals himself. . . . God’s wisdom in Christ is particular, historical, and counterintuitive to human reason. It involves the incarnation of God’s Son, his death on the cross, the triumph of the resurrection, the sending of his Spirit, and the promise of a glorious re-creation of the world. (p. 11)

Part 2 develops these ideas by following through the wisdom theme in 1 Corinthians, Colossians, Philippians, and Hebrews. In 1 Corinthians, Paul deals with “inappropriate competitiveness based on confidence in human wisdom” (p. 61). To this pastoral problem, Paul applies the cross of Christ, for “wisdom is in the crucifixion of Christ, with all of its implications for church and world” (p. 66). In Colossians, Paul counters the threat posed by Jewish reaction to the gospel (p. 88), once again by pointing believers to Christ: “this is wisdom: the Son as the revealer of God, the sustaining Creator and center of the universe, and the Redeemer who brings redemption and peace” (p. 104). The christological hymn in Phil 2:5–11 once again points to “the cross as the locus of God’s redemptive wisdom in Christ, and the cross is also the wisdom-way for the life of the church” (p. 135). As already seen in the texts previously studied, the Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews can be distinguished from intertestamental wisdom speculation (p. 170). But Hebrews offers “more advanced wisdom concerning Christ’s person and work” (p. 171), “God’s wisdom in his Son, our Great High Priest, calls us to hold fast to the faith . . . to draw near . . . and to go on to maturity” (p. 171).

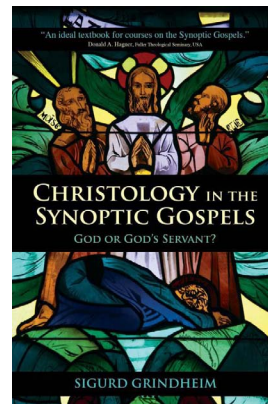
A concluding chapter summarizes the findings and addresses how to live in the wisdom of Christ. The wisdom in Christ teaches us about God, salvation, the law (which is fulfilled in Christ), and how to live as the community of faith, humble in spirit and seeking peace and reconciliation.

This is an important study of the wisdom motif as it relates to Christology and human life. Something lacking, however, is the setting of this material against a strong expectation of the future and coming kingdom of God, leaving wisdom largely explained in terms of this-worldly behavior—an ethics without much of an eschatology. Nevertheless, there is much of great importance in this eminently readable volume.

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Sigurd Grindheim. *Christology in the Synoptic Gospels: God or God's Servant?* London: T&T Clark, 2012. xiv + 212 pp. £60.00/\$110.00.

Sigurd Grindheim's new book, *Christology in the Synoptic Gospels: God or God's Servant?*, is neither focused on the historical Jesus nor the understanding of Jesus within the entire NT. Instead, the book's modest yet weighty goal is "to explain what the first three canonical Gospels teach us about who Jesus is" (p. xiii). The result is a helpful introductory work on Christology. The book is divided into four chapters, and terminology that might be new or unclear to the reader is set in bold and helpfully defined in a lengthy appendix. One of the strengths of the book is its readability, especially considering the breadth of material covered throughout the book.



After a brief introduction, Grindheim begins his exploration of Synoptic Christology with a chapter on "Israel's Eschatological Expectations." Here Grindheim explains the "different Jewish hopes regarding the end-time saviors they believed that God would send" (p. 1). The diversity of material in the OT and Second Temple Judaism is organized under five main headings: Messiah, Angel of the Lord, Son of Man, Servant of the Lord, and Wisdom of God. The bulk of the chapter deals with the varied portrait of the Messiah, in particular as a royal, Davidic figure in, for example, 2 Sam 7, the so-called messianic psalms, and *Psalms of Solomon* 17. Grindheim also deals extensively with Dan 7 because of its royal and "Son of Man" connections to Jewish messianism. This preparatory chapter proves to be the foundation upon which Grindheim places his subsequent christological analysis in the Synoptic Gospels.

The remaining three chapters of *Christology in the Synoptic Gospels* address specific aspects of the christological portraits of Mark, Matthew, and Luke. For Grindheim, the Synoptic Gospels demonstrate strong interaction with earlier Jewish traditions, but they also "show that Jesus fills an even bigger role: that of God himself" (p. 35). The christological footprint in the Gospel of Mark appears to be focused on revealing Jesus in the role of God and as God's servant. The former is demonstrated from the clear statement at the incipency of the Gospel: "the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ" (Mark 1:1). Grindheim argues that instead of the "good news" of God, Mark has placed Jesus in the role of God. Jesus's teaching with authority, healings, and the "theophany on the Sea of Galilee" (p. 47) likewise identify Jesus as "the coming of God to earth" (p. 75). The second half of the chapter focuses on Jesus as God's servant, in particular as "Son of God," which is "the most important title for Jesus in the Gospel of Mark" (p. 60). Ultimately, Mark's Gospel displays a combined portrait of Jesus as suffering Messiah and divine, authoritative Son of God.

In the Gospel of Matthew, the infancy narrative reveals two key names for Jesus: "Jesus" (Yahweh saves) and "Emmanuel" (God is with us). For Grindheim, both of these names identify Jesus with God (p. 81). It is Jesus who saves, and it is Jesus who is now God with Israel. Matthew's theme of Jesus as God's presence is seen throughout the Gospel, especially at its conclusion where Jesus proclaims to his disciples his presence with them "to the end of the age" (Matt 28:20). Matthew also identifies Jesus with the God of Israel through the attribution of worship to Jesus (pp. 96–98). Jesus as God's servant is equally important to Matthew, especially as the messianic "son of David" and the "eschatological shepherd" mentioned in the prophetic works of Micah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah (pp. 101–2). Finally,

Matthew includes Jesus's own explanation of his relationship to the Father in 11:25–30, a sonship that is “redefined through the use of wisdom ideas” (p. 110).

In chapter four, Grindheim claims that the title of Lord is far more prominent in Luke's Gospel than in the other Synoptics (pp. 118–119). Grindheim notes that Luke as narrator is concerned especially with naming Jesus as Lord, to the point that “Jesus and God share the same name” (p. 119). Jesus is depicted as both God's agent and in the role of God on earth, particularly in the act of salvation. Simeon's proclamation that he “has seen God's salvation when he has seen the baby Jesus (2.30)” demonstrates that “Jesus is not merely an agent of salvation” but the one through whom salvation comes (p. 129). Grindheim also argues that salvation and faith in Jesus are tied more closely together in Luke, a combination typically reserved for Yahweh in the OT (pp. 129–30). Like the other Gospels, however, Jesus is also pictured as God's servant. According to Grindheim, the “prophetic aspects of Jesus' ministry receive much more attention in Luke's Gospel” (p. 132), especially in his public ministry as seen in his speech at Nazareth (Luke 4:14–30) and in comparisons with Elijah, Elisha, and Moses. However, Jesus is greater than a prophet because he is the one who empowers and sends out his disciples as prophets into the world (p. 135).

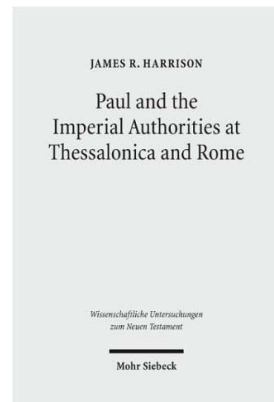
One of the greatest shortcomings in *Christology and the Synoptic Gospels* is that the introduction and conclusion are incredibly brief and oversimplified. This brevity leaves one wishing for a deeper explanation of the author's methodology as well as further instruction about how this book differs from previous approaches to christological studies. The lack of methodological explanation ultimately raises a number of questions as one reads the book. For example, how does the relationship between the NT and Second Temple Judaism impact one's understanding of the Christology of the NT? Also, since Grindheim virtually foregoes the Greco-Roman setting of the Synoptics, is the only context for understanding the Synoptic authors' christological portrayal of Jesus a Jewish one? Considering the modest length of the book there is certainly room for expansion and clarification regarding these vitally important issues.

Overall, *Christology in the Synoptic Gospels* is a valuable primer to the theological import of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Grindheim provides a welcome resource for anyone interested in delving deeper into the difficult waters of NT Christology.

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James R. Harrison. *Paul and the Imperial Authorities at Thessalonica and Rome: A Study in the Conflict of Ideology*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 273. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011. xv + 428 pp. £114.00/\$227.50.

If the last two decades of the twentieth century witnessed an intense interest in Paul's relationship to Judaism and Torah, Pauline scholarship at the beginning of the twenty-first century is preoccupied largely with Paul in his Roman imperial context. While N. T. Wright, Richard Horsley, and Dieter Georgi and others have contributed significant studies to situating Paul within a setting of Roman ideology, Harrison's work is perhaps the most sophisticated study of the topic to date. Harrison's central argument is that Paul's gospel "engaged the Julio-Claudian conception of rule" and countered and remapped this symbolic universe through the "proclamation of the reign of the crucified, risen and returning Son of God over his world" (p. 1). Whereas Rome claimed to have established rule over the world through its military power and the emperor's benefaction, Paul argues that God had established an eternal kingdom through the Messiah's crucifixion which defeated humanity's cosmic enemies and resulted in the giving of gifts to the body of Christ (p. 39). Harrison's thesis is bold as he argues that the conflict between Paul's gospel and Roman conceptions of rule is not simply how *an auditor* might have interpreted Paul's letters; rather, "it is Paul who, through the rich presentation of his eschatology, *intentionally* drove home the ideological collision" (p. 40, italics his).



How does Harrison justify the claim that Paul opposed Roman conceptions of rule with Christ's reign given that Paul does not refer *directly* to Caesar? First, Harrison argues that since many of the cities in which Paul established churches were familiar with the imperial cult, "imperial conception of rule would have been sufficiently known" to Paul and his auditors (pp. 26–27). Second, he invokes the concept of "hidden transcripts" and "codes," which Paul used diplomatically to ensure that "political divisions over the ruler did not split believers" (p. 33). Third, Paul's anti-imperial agenda can be discerned through (a) unusual additions to traditional pre-Pauline creeds, (b) motifs particular to an imperial context, (c) emphasis on Pauline themes that were prominent in imperial ideology, (d) Pauline phrases shared with imperial propaganda, and (e) overlap between Septuagintal and imperial terminology in Paul's letters.

Harrison's argument unfolds with six case studies: two devoted to the Thessalonian correspondence (chs. 2–3) and four to Romans (chs. 4–7). In 1 Thess 4:13–5:11, Paul counters "the widespread circulation of Augustan apotheosis traditions" through applying a variety of imperial terms (e.g., "*parousia*," "epiphany," "meeting," "salvation," and "hope") to the return of the heavenly Christ. When Paul speaks of the Lord's eschatological judgment of those who proclaim the slogan "peace and security" (1 Thess 5:3), he directly opposes the *Pax Romana* by the coming Day of the Lord. Harrison argues that in 2 Thess 2:1–10 it is Caligula who is "the man of lawlessness," exalted himself as deity, and sought to defile the Jerusalem temple by establishing the imperial cult therein. Paul responds by claiming that the heavenly Son of God will destroy the Antichrist just "as the recent demise of his 'demonized' precursor, Caligula, had amply demonstrated" (p. 89).

In chapter 4, Harrison turns to Paul's epistle to the Romans and argues that Paul subverts Julio-Claudian conceptions of the present time as the Golden Age of Saturn by portraying all of humanity as

subject to the reign of sin and death. In contrast to Augustus's inauguration of Saturn's Golden Age, Paul sets forth the Jewish Messiah as the sole agent who can triumph over the sin and death of the current age.

Harrison then compares "the Rule of the Caesars" with "Christ as Eschatological Ruler." He argues,

Paul's portrayal of Christ as the eschatological figure of world and cosmic history would have registered with Romans imbued with the Augustan conception of rule. . . .

[I]n focusing on eschatology as an important theological theme in Romans, Paul engages implicitly with the Julio-Claudian conception of rule as promoted in the imperial propaganda of the Greek East and the Latin West. (pp. 144–45)

So in Rom 1:3–4 Paul sets forth the narrative of Jesus as a challenge to Roman conceptions of apotheosis, to the military virtues of the Roman rulers, and to the "plethora of honorific titles credited to the Roman ruler" (p. 150). With respect to Rom 8:18ff., Paul's vivid language to describe creation's suffering in the present age proves that the idyllic cosmological propaganda associated with the imperial Golden Age is false (p. 157).

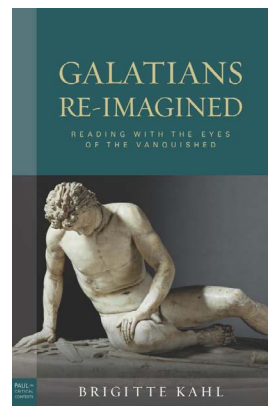
Chapter 5 argues that there is terminological overlap between imperial inscriptional propaganda and Rom 5:1–11 and that the latter is Paul's attempt to herald a new and superior Benefactor—a royal son of David—who alone could provide peace, grace, glory, and reconciliation. Chapter 6 suggests that Paul's language of "glory" should be read against the context of the Roman *nobiles'* quest for glory and its eventual embodiment in the house of Augustus. Paul directly addressed this issue for the Roman believers and polemicized against it by transferring "glory" to God, by describing idolatry—the imperial cult—as wrongful exchange of divine glory (Rom 1:23) and by connecting the quest for glory with a turning away from God (Rom 3:23). Finally, chapter 7 surveys Hellenistic and Roman literature on the ideal king and Jewish texts on obedience to Gentile rulers as the context for understanding Rom 13:1–7. He argues that Paul's exhortations "alerts his readers to the dangers posed by the imperial authorities, and spells out the ruler's limitations of power so that Roman believers might learn how to placate the authorities by astute civic behavior" (p. 308).

Harrison's volume successfully demonstrates how *some* of Paul's auditors *may* have construed *some* of his rhetoric as anti-imperial. Most convincing is his argument that 1 Thess 4–5 challenges Augustan apotheosis traditions and his claim that Paul's presentation of Jesus as "Eschatological Ruler" subverts imperial conceptions of the rule of the Caesars. While the book is impressively researched and contains a wealth of significant information for NT scholars, I am not convinced that Harrison has justified his claim that Paul *intentionally* engages in anti-imperial rhetoric. Certainly some of his *auditors* may have construed his language this way, and in practice Harrison refers to Paul's auditors much more frequently than he does Paul's intentions (e.g., pp. 86, 100–101, 104, 110, 138). Often Harrison's arguments have this sense: "Roman imperial conceptions of X were ubiquitous in Thessalonica and Rome; therefore, Paul must have been aware and concerned with this aspect of Roman ideology." The obvious problem is that Paul never directly mentions Rome as Empire, Caesar, or the imperial cult. Thus, while I learned much from Harrison's book, many of his arguments remain at the level of possible background rather than direct foreground for understanding Paul's epistles.

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Brigitte Kahl. *Galatians Re-Imagined: Reading with the Eyes of the Vanquished*. Paul in Critical Contexts. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010. xxiii + 413 pp. £16.99/\$29.00.

Galatians Re-Imagined is a creative and innovative look at Paul's letter to the Galatians as an interaction with the ideology of the Roman Empire. Brigitte Kahl, Professor of New Testament at Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, offers a "critical re-imagining" of Galatians, which, as she explains, can include the use of "images and other visual or written sources—including spaces, buildings, performances, and rituals—to deconstruct and reconstruct our perception of the ancient world in its interaction with the 'word(s)' of the text" (p. 27). Kahl's primary focus for her work is engaging in visual exegesis of the Great Altar at Pergamon (which is now on display in Berlin), devoting chapters 1–5 to the implications of this enquiry, followed by a final exegetical chapter and an epilogue.



Perhaps the most intriguing element of Kahl's visual exegesis is how it relates to the depiction of Gauls/Galatians during the Roman Empire. As she notes, the Gauls were portrayed as the conquered—the lawless barbarians placed under the rule of Rome (pp. 31, 51). Furthermore, they were often depicted as Titans and Giants, which ideologically set the subjugation of Rome's enemies against the mythic backdrop of the Gigantomachy (pp. 82–83, 95). In fact, this is precisely why the Great Altar at Pergamon is relevant for Galatians, according to Kahl, because the defeat of the Giants depicted there is a mythological depiction of Rome's defeat of the Gauls. Thus, Kahl's interpretation of Galatians is conducted through "intertextual synopsis" with the Great Altar, recognizing that Paul was writing to a vanquished people under Rome's rule.

Kahl's approach to Galatians is in many ways ingenious. It is certainly valid to consider evidence from the ancient world beyond the textual. As she claims, this also provides helpful insight into the beliefs and prejudices of the illiterate. However, there are no methodological controls given for Kahl's analysis. If criteria had been given, certainly provenance and distance should have been factors. One wonders how relevant for Galatia—whether in the North or the South—a monument in Pergamon would be. Regardless of method, Kahl's visual exegesis of the Great Altar does very little to bring clarity to the letter of Galatians and in many ways unnecessarily distorts its meaning. Moreover, Kahl admitted at the outset of the book—through the retelling of a touching story—that her rereading of Galatians is motivated by a post-Holocaust aversion to anti-Semitism (pp. 13–15). While I do not wish to be insensitive, I suspect that Kahl's motivation has also caused her to skew the evidence in Galatians. Many examples could be proliferated, but these are the most crucial: (a) the "law" being disputed in Galatians is not the Mosaic Law in itself, but the law of Rome in disguise (see pp. 9, 217, 226–227); (b) the "works of law" are "works of imperial violence and competition" (p. 262); and (c) justification is de-Judaized and placed within the framework of "Roman imperial ideology" (p. 75). Thus, the central issue in Galatians for Kahl becomes disputing imperial monotheism (p. 166), and the "other gospel" being preached in Galatia is imperial salvation (p. 255). Although these issues are massive and cannot be addressed in detail here, allow me to briefly say this: Kahl's interpretation of Galatians at best provides an insight into how the letter could have been misunderstood by Paul's audience, but it does not provide insight into the intended meaning of Galatians. It is unreasonable to suggest that "law" and "justification" should be given Roman connotations in Galatians without any hint from the letter itself that this is the case. As one counterpoint among many, in Gal 3:10 "works of the law" are defined in relation to the Mosaic law

as the citation of Deut 27:26 makes explicit in reference to the “book of the law.” The central issue that Paul is addressing in Galatians is the role of the Mosaic law for Gentile Christians. It is a sociological and theological problem related to the expanse of the gospel to the Gentiles through Paul’s ministry.

The two texts that offer a potential connection between Galatians and an imperial background are Gal 4:8–10 and 6:12–13. According to Kahl, the problem behind the text of Galatians is social dislocation (pp. 220, 222–223). Before embracing circumcision, the Galatians must pay their civic duties by observing the pagan calendar (cf. Gal 4:10) because only the Jews are exempt from these observances, and only circumcision is definitive proof of one’s conversion to Judaism (since Christianity would have been perceived as a Jewish movement). I find the arguments for a pagan calendar in Gal 4:10 unconvincing since contextually it makes far more sense as a reference to the problematic observance of the Jewish calendar by Gentiles. Indeed, this is consistent with Paul’s polemical equation of the illegitimate practice of Jewish custom with paganism elsewhere (Gal 5:12; Phil 3:2) and also makes sense of Paul’s seemingly random references to the στοιχεῖα in this context (Gal 4:3, 8–9).

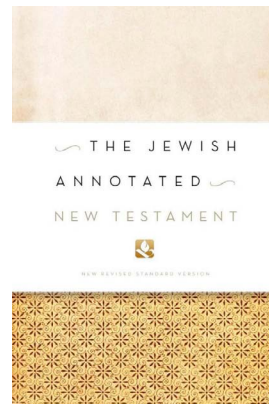
In regards to Gal 6:12–13, Kahl suggests that those who were persecuting the agitators were civic magistrates enforcing the imperial observance (p. 226). I would agree that the impetus for the agitators’ actions—persuading the Galatians to receive circumcision—is at least partially related to social pressure from local authorities. This provides a reasonable explanation for Paul’s words in Gal 6:12 that the agitators are seeking to evade persecution by persuading the Galatians to be circumcised. Since Paul would be highly unpersuasive if this reference was an exaggeration, I would agree that imperial pressure is likely in the background. In order to make sense of the reference to persecution (if it is not an exaggeration), it is probable that the unnamed “third party” assumes some level of social deviance or seditious behavior, and this provides a reasonable explanation for their actions. Yet admitting this point is not the same as suggesting that Paul’s interactions with the agitators includes an intentional critique of imperial ideology. Paul’s priority in Galatians is to *critique the actions and the teachings of the agitators*, which Paul claims is motivated by a desire to avoid persecution. Rome is merely the social impetus, not the theological foil.

In *Galatians Re-Imagined*, Kahl commendably undertakes a novel enterprise that will undoubtedly be stimulating for those interested in the political and social-historical background of Galatians. I am especially intrigued to see how “critical re-imagination” and non-textual hermeneutics will be developed by biblical scholars in debt to Kahl. Although I do not find it persuasive, Kahl’s work is critically engaging and worth a serious read.

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Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Z. Brettler, eds. *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. xxvii + 700 pp. \$35.00.

The Jewish Annotated New Testament, edited by two leading Jewish biblical scholars, Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Z. Brettler, is a welcome contribution to the study of the Jewish first-century milieu of the NT and its history of Jewish reception throughout the ages. Levine is University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies, E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies, and Professor of Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School and College of Arts and Sciences; she is the author of *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (2001). Brettler is Dora Golding Professor of Biblical Studies at Brandeis University; he is the co-editor of *The Jewish Study Bible* (2004).



In the book's preface, the editors articulate the objectives of this magisterial work:

Just as we have learned much working on this milestone project together, the first time that Jewish scholars have annotated and written essays on the complete New Testament, we hope and anticipate that all who read the annotations and essays will gain a deeper appreciation of this central religious work. . . . We further hope that this volume will make the New Testament more welcoming to Jewish readers (many of whom are unfamiliar with its contents), that these new readers may become better acquainted with the traditions of their neighbors, and that perhaps they may even experience 'holy envy' in the reading. (p. xiii)

This Jewish take on the NT is unparalleled in terms of historical depth and international collaboration. A team of fifty Jewish contributors across the world have joined together to produce a user-friendly study Bible (NRSV) that sheds light on the Jewish roots of first-century Christianity. This reference tool aims to familiarize primarily modern Jewish audience with the original authors and audiences of the NT. *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* consists of useful and readable introductions to the NT books, brief annotations, maps, charts, sidebar essays, diagrams, and major essays. Also it is furnished with a concise glossary and a general topical index. The effectiveness of this volume would be enhanced if the editors included a bibliography at the end of this volume.

In the annotations, the readers will find a wealth of textual parallels between Second Temple Judaism(s) and the NT. To complete such a tedious task, the scholars utilize a wide range of Greek and Jewish sources such as the LXX, Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls, Midrashim, Targumim, Josephus, Talmud, and other ancient sources. The social, historical, and religious contexts of the NT books are given due attention throughout the introductions, annotations, and essays. Moreover, a team of international scholars have cooperated to explore Jewish attitudes towards Christianity and vice versa since the "parting of the ways." Hotly debated topics in academic and religious circles such as apologetic interpretation of Messianic prophecies, Christian supersessionism, and theological anti-Judaism occupy this exegetical work.

At the same time, it should be admitted there is no such thing as unbiased biblical interpretation. Accordingly, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* is not an exception to this rule. For this reason, evangelicals might be interested to balance their theological understating of the NT by referring to

David Stern's *Jewish New Testament Commentary: A Companion Volume to the Jewish New Testament* (1992). As demonstrated below, the interpretations of *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* are often highly speculative. Consider below some of these speculative readings from the Gospels.

The first example is taken from Adele Reinhartz's exposition on the bread of life discourse (John 6:22–71). While commenting on John 6:53, she says, "the passage may allude to the practice of theophagy associated with Greco-Roman mystery cults such as the cults of Demeter and Dionysus. If so, this may be one indication that the Gospel's intended audience included non-Jews" (p. 171). It is unlikely that Reinhartz's highly speculative proposal may ever be proven on exegetical grounds: (1) John's Gospel definitely has a Jewish provenance (so the introduction to this Gospel on pp. 152–56); (2) John 6 consists of direct citations and allusions to the Hebrew Bible (vv. 31–33, 45–51); and (3) John 6 focuses on a Jewish audience throughout Jesus's discourse (vv. 41, 52, 59).

The second example is Aaron Gale's interpretation of Matthew's nativity story. He undertakes to explore the virgin birth of Christ from various religious perspectives (p. 4). After outlining different interpretations of the nativity, Gale asserts, "Matthew borrowed from pagan traditions, in which a male god engages in intercourse with a human woman (cf. Gen 6.1–4)" (p. 4). It is extremely unlikely, however, that the primeval story of the intercourse between the sons of God and the daughters of Adam should be compared with Matthew's report of Jesus's birth simply because these biblical texts do not share any common ground. In addition, the Jewish character of Matthew's Gospel excludes the possibility of borrowing from pagan traditions.

Despite the aforementioned reservations, I warmly recommend *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* as an essential reference book for scholars and students alike. It will certainly spark further debate in the field of Jewish interpretation of the NT, and its editors should be commended for producing a fine work that may help thinking Jews and Christians examine their theological views on the unity of the Testaments, the Jewish roots of the Gospel, and the status of Jews from within post-Easter NT theology. Bible scholars, early Christian historians, Jewish theologians, and philosophers will be enlightened to read this interesting book.

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Robert K. McIver. *Memory, Jesus, and the Synoptic Gospels*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011. xii + 241 pp. \$29.95.

Are we to follow Richard Bauckham's model of the careful, eyewitness-based transmission of the Gospel tradition sketched out in his *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* or the older form-critical model with almost no constraints as popularized in John Dominic Crossan's *The Birth of Christianity*? McIver, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at Avondale College of Higher Education in Cooranbong, Australia, argues that the best model lies somewhere in between, but his conclusions come much closer to Bauckham's than they do to Crossan's.

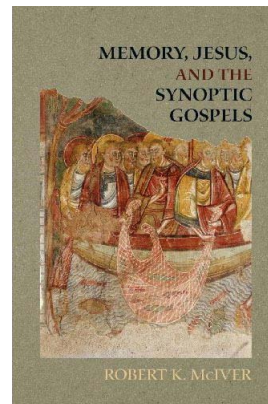
McIver ranges widely over numerous studies in the literature of modern psychology on personal and collective memory. Eyewitness testimony, even in a court of law, is often not more than 80% accurate, but the gist of episodes is usually recounted well. Errors creep in, usually unintentionally, in details of time and place, especially when other similar memories from other settings intrude and make sense even in the wrong context. Bias and the power of suggestion by others can cause some other mistakes. Accurate information about an event obtained later can, after time, seem like a memory of the event itself.

The greatest loss of memory occurs quickly after an event. What makes it from short-term into long-term storage, particularly after about five years, is likely to remain stable for decades. Crucial in preventing that early loss of detail are "flashbulb" experiences—particularly surprising, vivid, and/or personally influential events such as national tragedies, natural disasters, life-stage celebrations, and so on. Aged World War II veterans today, for example, still may have very detailed and accurate memories about certain battles in which they participated.

When individuals form part of groups that frequently recount formative events in their histories, collective memories are established. These can further enhance accurate recall, simply because those details that are selected to be narrated are heard over and over again. On the other hand, details can be modified unwittingly to prove relevant for the current setting in the life of the group in question. For the most part, however, collective memories are resistant to outright fabrication. The classic form-critical model, therefore, is seriously flawed. Much to be preferred is Kenneth Bailey's informal, controlled oral-tradition model, especially as appropriated by James D. G. Dunn.

It is unlikely that people actually took notes of Jesus's speeches as Alan Millard suggests because few in his audiences would have had access to "pen and paper" or anywhere to store and preserve them. On the other hand, the disciples' pre-Easter ministries would have given them opportunity to be telling the stories of Jesus's words and deeds almost immediately. And Jesus as a teacher would have ensured his followers had a large body of material committed to memory, as all Jewish and Greco-Roman teachers of the day insisted. A comparison of the paralleled pericope in Greek, especially of Jesus's aphorisms and parables, shows a high degree of stability and reliability of transmission.

An appendix charts out first-century lifespans. Statistics about averages around forty years must recall that almost half of all children died by age five. So it is not as impossible as some critics have alleged to imagine eyewitnesses of the life of Christ living to the end of the first century, perhaps in their eighties. There just would have been far fewer than there would be today. According to one formula, only 671 people out of 100,000 would have lived to the age of eighty.



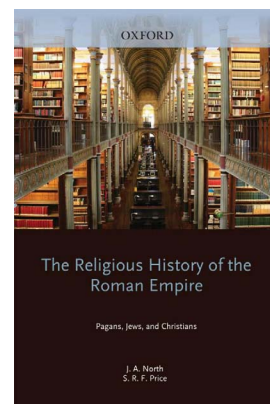
Overall, this volume contains a wealth of information that a brief review cannot begin to survey. From a purely historical and psychological point of view, without presupposing anything about the inspiration of the text, it gives readers of the Gospels reason to have a high level of confidence in their general reliability. The only factor that McIver doesn't deal much with was that the apostles and their associates would have continued in post-Easter days retelling the stories that would eventually be written down so many times that their degree of accuracy might be far higher than in the modern studies surveyed here.

Studies of these kinds, however, will by their very nature never be able to argue for complete accuracy. Belief in inspiration will always remain a theological step of faith. But McIver has certainly shown that, even without that belief, a strong case can be made for the trustworthiness of the Gospels in their main contours and doubtless in many details, even if we can't always be quite sure as to which ones. It is particularly encouraging to see the Society of Biblical Literature willing to publish a work of this nature, given their propensity for far more skeptical works.

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J. A. North and S. R. F. Price, eds. *The Religious History of the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews and Christians*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. 608 pp. \$75.00.

Since readers of *Themelios* come from varying Christian perspectives, it is worth considering the importance of North and Price's edited volume, *The Religious History of the Roman Empire*, in terms of its bearing on biblical and theological studies. The volume in the first instance falls within the genre of classics, but the texts of the Christian NT were shaped by and centered irreducibly within the classical world. There is a need for scholars of biblical and theological studies, therefore, to have at least a cursory knowledge of the classical field. This, sadly, is a rare skill. Christian scholars tend to stick with "Christian" histories, Jewish scholars with "Jewish" histories, and Classicists with "pagan" and Greco-Roman histories (see, e.g., p. 1). This is in some measure a simple byproduct of the University's division of labor. Perhaps, too, owing in part to hangovers from the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, there is a reticence in some quarters of biblical studies to engage in the religious milieu of the Roman Empire. In this approach, the primary "background"—an unfortunate word—is Judaism, and if any recourse is made to classical history or religions throughout the Empire, it is done so by highlighting the distinctive monotheistic texture to the Judeo-Christian confession or the odd statement about the Emperor cult. This approach is unfortunate in that it is guided by the colonial (arrogant?) assumption that cultures can be so neatly parsed into Jewish, Christian, and Pagan. Though it must be maintained that there were elements of distinctive identity in these sets of practices, these practices were entangled with one another. From the second century B.C., onward there was massive migration within and around the Mediterranean owing to long-distance merchants, traveling military, economic migrants, and itinerant professionals. Cities "came to contain communities speaking different languages and inheriting different traditions,



including religious ones” (p. 2). Owing in part to the movements of locally enlisted soldiers, conquest relocations, and the economic factors produced by these movements, “radically different groups and ideas in contact with one another had produced new ideas and new vocabulary as well as new practices” (pp. 3–4). Another tendency within some spheres of biblical studies is to see “Caesar” behind every bush and to fit early Christianity with an empire-sized whipping stick. This approach misses the layered realities of identity affirmation and negotiation within the complex realities of imperial administration.

The study of the religious history of the Roman Empire, however, has gone through a kind of “revolution in our way of thinking about the subject” (p. 3), and the collection of essays in this volume attempt to document these developments. This “revolution” has taken place on five broad fronts:

1. “Pagan religious traditions in the centuries after Augustus, once thought to have been in terminal decline, is now seen as showing surprisingly persistent vigour and even creativity, both in the Greek-speaking and the Latin-speaking areas of the Empire.”
2. “In relation to the evolution of pagan religion in areas of the Empire outside Italy, the degree of Roman influence, the strength of local traditions, and the emergence of mixed forms have all been radically re-assessed.”
3. “Various types of elective cult have been much debated, both those within the pagan tradition, such as Mithraism or the mystery-cults, and those from outside that tradition, such as Christianity, Manichaeism, and the various groups formed within Judaism, of which Christianity was to be the most long-lived.”
4. “Questions about the nature of Christianity in the first three centuries AD, have increasingly led to the conviction that there was no single dominant tradition, that many different forms of Christianity co-existed, before it evolved the structures and doctrines characteristic of later centuries.”
5. “It has been increasingly recognized that the awareness of pagan practices as constituting a single ‘religion,’ eventually to be called pagan-ism, emerged slowly, and mostly even then in the writings of Christians not of pagans, as a result of the competition between the different religious communities” (pp. 2–3).

These developments are traced through and ordered by four sectional divisions:

1. Changes in Religious Life (pp. 9–250)
2. Elective Cults (pp. 252–382)
3. Co-existences of Religions, Old and New (pp. 385–502)
4. Late Antiquity (pp. 505–61)

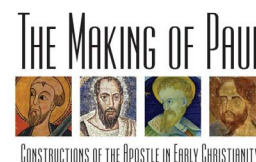
The essays selected in this volume have all appeared in print before (see pp. 562–63 for their original publication details) and were selected for their significance and impact upon the field. All the essays are worth reading, but of particular interest for this readership might be Jörg Rüpke’s essay on issues of method (pp. 9–36), Richard Gordon’s essay on the Imperial Cult (pp. 37–70), Nicole Belayche’s essay on *hypsistos* (pp. 139–74), Giulia Sfameni Gasparro’s essay on mystery and Oriental cults (pp. 276–324), Philip Harland’s essay on acculturation and identity in the Diaspora (pp. 385–418), Martin Goodman on the variety of first-century Judaism within Josephus (pp. 419–34), Judith Lieu’s excellent essay on “The Forging of Christian Identity and the *Letter to Diognetus*” (pp. 435–59), and Averil Cameron on discourses of female desire (pp. 505–30). There is also a helpful section on further reading (pp. 564–71).

All in all, this is a remarkable resource for gaining a general sense of the religious diversity and complexity within the Roman world. A good weekend alone with this collection of essays will prove valuable in terms of situating the rise of early Christianity within the complicated cartography of Roman religious history.

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Richard I. Pervo. *The Making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010. xv + 376 pp. £22.99/\$32.00.

In this book Richard Pervo, who is perhaps best known for his work on the book of Acts, brings forth reflections on the Apostle Paul that have matured over more than thirty years of teaching and research. The book surveys portraits of Paul in early Christian texts from the undisputed Pauline letters to the writing of Irenaeus (approx. A.D. 50–180). The title of Pervo’s book signals two of his points of emphasis. The first is that early Christians made “Paul.” The Paul we know is Paul as he has been represented to us. (Pervo repeatedly compares Paul to Jesus in this regard.) Yet Paul was depicted in different ways—hence Pervo’s second point of emphasis: we have been left with varied constructions of the apostle. As Pervo states in the preface, “The thrust of the following pages is toward defining profiles of Paul and Paulinism in terms of the needs, questions, and values of the persons, groups, or movements represented in various texts” (p. xii).



RICHARD I. PERVO

A brief preface is followed by a meandering introduction, which looks at the “major limbs of the [Pauline] tree” while the rest of the book inspects the “twigs and leaves” (p. 20). The bulk of the introduction explicates Pervo’s creedal outline of Paul’s portrait, featuring Paul as apostle, evangelist of the entire world, redeemed sinner, sufferer and savior, and teacher.

The object of the first chapter is to show how Paul became a book. After some introductory comments on letters and letter collections, Pervo lists a number of editorial activities that he believes were involved in the creation of a collection of Paul’s letters. He then provides examples of these editorial activities, tracing a general movement in early Christianity to universalize Paul’s letters. The chapter culminates in his thesis that an editor in Ephesus around A.D. 100 put together the first edition of Paul’s seven undisputed letters. This editor, according to Pervo, was probably responsible for the compilations of what we now know as 2 Corinthians and Philippians. Although different editions appeared and the collection continued to grow, Pervo asserts, “from the early second century onward, Paul was encountered as a book” (p. 61).

As with any other scholarly hypothesis, Pervo’s account is only as strong as his supporting evidence, and much of his case in this first chapter appears to rest on anachronism and speculation. For example, Pervo cites textual variants of Rom 1:7 and 1:15 as evidence of Paul’s followers making his letters more general. The slim textual evidence Pervo cites for this editorial activity, though, runs as late as the tenth century. It is difficult to see how this evidence illuminates any editorial activity that may have been

occurring (or not) in the first century. If the generations immediately after Paul wanted to universalize Paul's message by changing his letter addresses (among other changes), the textual evidence indicates that their endeavors were neither widespread nor successful. Furthermore, Pervo's first chapter does not contribute new arguments for his critical positions, such as the partition theories of 2 Corinthians and Philippians or the supposed interpolations in 1 Cor 14:33b–36 and 1 Thess 2:13–16. Pervo dramatically underplays the importance of Paul's *ipsissima verba* that survive in his letters and overplays his claim that "the Pauline letters that have come down to us represent Paul as some early believers wished him to be received and understood" (p. 2). In other words, even when working from the critical stance that only the undisputed letters of Paul are "authentic," it is misleading in many ways to call the epistolary Paul a construction of early Christianity.

The next three chapters are organized according to genre. Chapter two examines what Pervo takes to be the pseudepigraphic Pauline letters: Colossians, Ephesians, 2 Thessalonians, the Pastoral Epistles, 3 Corinthians, Laodiceans, Alexandrians, and the *Epistles of Paul and Seneca*. Pervo makes comments about the contents, theology, and portrait of Paul in each work. For Pervo these pseudepigraphic letters use the figure of Paul to stabilize or protect Christian communities. While Pervo's discussion of the authorship of the canonical Pauline letters assumes and helpfully summarizes previous critical scholarship, once again it introduces no new argumentation to the debate. Pervo has already stated that he does not wish to "impugn" the canonical text (p. 38; cf. pp. 5–6), yet he offers no comments on what contemporary Christians should do with the six Deutero-Pauline letters' preservation of Paul's heritage. Pervo's work is descriptive and studiously avoids the theological and ecclesiological implications of his conclusions.

The third chapter seeks to show "the continued vitality of Paul's techniques and views in the second century" (p. 148) by examining the epistolary tradition in early Christianity. Pervo reviews Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 1 Clement, the letters of Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna, 2 Peter, and the letters of Dionysius of Corinth. The fourth chapter surveys Paul in various narrative texts from the canonical Acts of the Apostles to the Pseudo-Clementines, with many others in between. Pervo declares, "The portraits in these narratives vary considerably, from the hero portrayed in the canonical Acts to the villain of the Pseudo-Clementine tradition" (p. 184).

The book then turns to a thematic analysis. A shorter fifth chapter (only 12 pages) is somewhat mistitled, "Other Representatives of Anti-Paulinism." It posits that the author of the Gospel of Matthew (especially in 5:17–20) is "a critic of Pauline theology" (p. 190). Almost all of the other authors and works mentioned in this chapter, however, are either "non-Pauline" or make use of Paul without mentioning his name. As Pervo himself concedes, "silence about Paul is not, in and of itself, grounds for proposing anti-Paulinism" (p. 198). Pervo, however, could have made more careful distinctions between not citing Paul, not viewing Paul as an authority, and being anti-Pauline. The sixth chapter surveys Paul's place in the thought of Marcion, various second-century Gnostics (including Valentinus and Ptolemy) and Gnostic works, and Irenaeus. The common denominator among these is that Paul is viewed as a theologian in the formal sense and his writings as texts to be exegeted.

A stimulating, though again meandering, conclusion restates many of Pervo's main points. Pervo presents Paul as "the foundational figure of what would become normative Christianity" (p. 237), but as a complex figure, an apostle who died in the pursuit of unity but who has often been the apostle of disunity. In an appendix Pervo presents a helpful diagram of the "Pauline family tree." The book includes a substantial bibliography, 76 pages of endnotes, and indexes of primary sources and modern authors.

As this book is a fairly comprehensive survey, its greatest strength is also a weakness: it is a first-rate introduction to early Pauline reception, but the sheer number of texts considered precludes in-depth analysis. Readers of *Themelios* probably will not share Pervo's critical positions, but there is much here to provoke thought and debate. In the end, a lot seems to hinge on an assumption Pervo expresses in the preface: "The portraits of Paul that emerge in early (and subsequent) Christianity do not arise from any concern to preserve history for the benefit of subsequent investigators; they seek to address the problems of those churches in their own times" (p. xiii). One could challenge the application of this to the self-portraits of Paul preserved in what would become the NT. Yet even for first- and second-century extra-canonical texts, we may ask, "Is this a false dichotomy?" It seems appropriate in this early period to speak not only of the ways in which early Christians *constructed* Paul but also of the ways in which he was *remembered*.

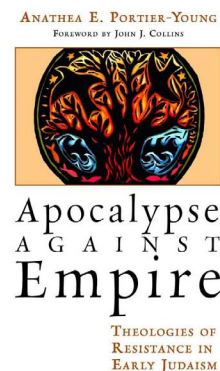
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Anathea E. Portier-Young. *Apocalypse against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. xxiii + 462 pp. \$50.00.

Since the publication of Paul Hanson's *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* in 1975, there has been a rather stated spike of genre-explication studies with respect to apocalyptic. This genre-explication has moved beyond the mere form-critical analyses to encompass the sociological function of the genre. Whereas older studies on apocalyptic were certainly aware of the political shades which colored various texts, the complexities of power relations, the variegated expressions of resistance, and the entangled realities of domination and coopted forms of indigenous struggle lacked appropriate rigorous engagement with social theoretical models. This, of course, may have been by design in that the primary emphases of apocalyptic scholarship orbited around the literary and historical-traditional. Anathea E. Portier-Young has produced a volume which intends to incorporate the literary features of the apocalyptic genre (e.g., prophetic reviews of history, narrative frames, angelic mediation, and revered human recipient of revelation), the historical and socio-rhetorical contexts of apocalyptic texts, and a social theoretical savvy into a fresh reexamination of apocalyptic texts. Portier-Young argues "that the first Jewish apocalypses emerged as a literature of resistance to empire" (p. xxii). It was during the reign of Antiochus IV where the first historical apocalypses began to take shape (p. xxi). As such, his and other Hellenistic empires became the forces against which the genre resisted. Because the boast of empire's domination reached beyond the physicality of the everyday and into the cosmological and epistemological spheres, apocalyptic responded by challenging the legitimacy of empire's sovereignty with a universality of its own.

Portier-Young divides her book into three sections:

1. "Theorizing Resistance" (pp. 3–45) on theory
2. "Seleucid Domination in Judea" (pp. 49–216) on history
3. "Apocalyptic Theologies of Resistance" (pp. 217–381) on texts



Part One consists of one chapter and attempts to lay a theoretical basis for and working definition of resistance. Defining a term like resistance is quite difficult in that there appear to be quite distinct poles of its usage, namely, from armed revolt to silent foot-dragging (p. 6). Central to Portier-Young's approach is power relations and how resistance "participates in a radical relocation of ultimate power" (p. 7). She settles for a conceptual framework to guide her investigation instead of rigid definition:

Domination, its strategies, and the hegemony that reinforces it provide the conditions for and objects of resistance.

Acts of resistance proceed from the intention to limit, oppose, reject, or transform hegemonic institutions (and cosmologies . . .) as well as systems, strategies, and acts of domination.

Resistance is effective action. It limits power and influences outcomes, where power is understood as an agent's ability to carry out his or her will. (p. 11)

Part Two consists of five chapters which trace the beginnings of Hellenistic rule and presence in Judea. This is the strongest section. Her nuanced reading of Hellenistic rule in Judea and the transition into Seleucid rule specifically through the form of the so-called six Syrian wars provides much to be commended. Perhaps most pointedly, Portier-Young exonerates insanity charges against Antiochus IV, demonstrating instead his behaviors as the result of a shrewd *Realpolitik*. What is more, Antiochus III is shown to be responsible for setting the context of Jewish revolt more than he previously has. His victory over Ptolemy V's general Scopas in the battle of Panion (200 B.C.) introduced him to the formidable foe of the Roman army at the Battle of Magnesia (A.D. 190) for control over Greece (see, esp., pp. 78–114). The Roman victory introduced the severe indemnities of the Treaty of Apamea. The financial pressures of this "treaty" led to the increased taxation of Judean lands and the posturing of the Jewish nobility—with Simon setting the precarious precedent of buying the priesthood. This is significant and is slightly understated by Portier-Young and her insistence of reading apocalyptic as resistance literature against *empire*. Much of the literature could equally be read as latent polemics against the pollution of the priesthood—a kind of reading of resilience in terms of Jewish identity. Nevertheless, her historical essays on the re-creative measures of imperial conquest, the role of Seleucid terrorist activities, and the rise of Antiochus IV's persecution and his edict are excellent and deserving of the widest readership.

Part Three consists of four chapters which examine specific texts: Daniel, the Apocalypse of Weeks, and the Book of Dreams. These texts, according to Portier-Young, represent "writings of resistance to Antiochus's [IV] program of terror, conquest, de-creation, and recreation" (p. 218). The volume concludes with a helpful conclusion and an epilogue which suggests fruitful paths for further study.

On the whole, Portier-Young's volume is a remarkable achievement in terms of its theoretical sophistication, historical sensibility, and textual rigor. I plan to return to this text often.

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Martin C. Salter. *The Power of Pentecost: An Examination of Acts 2:17–21*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011. xxiii + 115 pp. \$18.00.

How should we apply the references to prophecy, dreams, visions, and signs and wonders in Acts 2 to church life today? Martin Salter, Associate Pastor at Grace Community Church in Bedford, England, has written an engaging treatment of Acts 2:17–21, with sensitivity to the immediate and wider narrative context of Acts as well as the pastoral implications of Acts 2 for local church practice. Originally an MTh thesis at Oak Hill College in London, the book comes with a foreword from Matthew Sleeman and an endorsement from David Peterson.

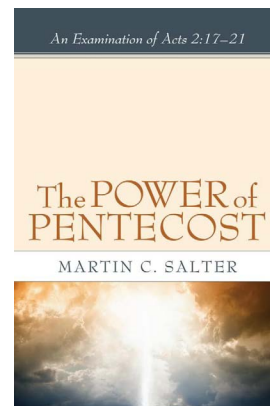
Before getting to those wider contexts, however, in chapter 1 Salter first examines the grammatical and syntactical details of Acts 2:17–21, especially any changes in these verses from the LXX and MT (such as the addition of “the last days” in 2:17 and “they will prophesy” in 2:18). This chapter also summarizes the various interpretations of “signs and wonders” in 2:19. Does this phrase refer to the miracles of Jesus, the cosmic signs accompanying the crucifixion, the phenomena of Pentecost itself (i.e., noise and fire), the miracles of the apostles, or the cosmic portents of judgment (whether final judgment, God’s wrath in general, or the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70)? Salter concludes that the addition of “in the last days” in 2:17 provides the clue that a combination of all of these views is best; they all relate to the “in-breaking and presence of the new eschatological age” (p. 17).

Chapter 2 widens the lens a little further and places these verses in the immediate context of Acts 1–2. Salter notes that Acts 2 provides evidence of Sinai parallels, a reversal of the confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel, and a list of nations which reflects the table of nations in Gen 10 as well as lists given by Roman Emperors (pp. 29–33; primary emphases or more explicit themes could be weighed here with reference to implicit themes). Overall, Salter argues, “Luke is deliberately portraying these events as a new exodus in the restoration of Israel” (p. 36).

Chapter 3 then widens the lens still further as Salter observes the phenomena mentioned in these verses (tongues, prophecy, visions, and “signs and wonders”) in the subsequent narrative of Acts. Tongues occur in “historically unique situations” (p. 42) to demonstrate who constitutes the people of God. Prophecy, however, has a much broader reference in Acts where prediction, revelation (e.g., in setting apart Barnabas and Saul in Acts 13), “ecstatic prophecy” (Salter’s description for what takes place in 19:6), encouragement and exhortation, Spirit-inspired witness and preaching, teaching, and judgment oracles are all examples. Visions relate primarily to Gentile mission in Acts (p. 49). “Signs and wonders” occur almost exclusively in Jewish contexts in Acts and, recalling the OT use of this phrase with reference to the events of the exodus, provide further evidence “that Luke is reporting the restoration of Israel in her new exodus” (p. 52). They authenticate key leaders, the apostolic message, and the Gentile mission (pp. 52–55).

Chapter 4 tackles briefly the question of whether these events are meant to be descriptive or prescriptive. Salter observes that Luke’s overarching purpose is to provide “divine verification” of the early Christian movement rather than “a paradigm of church practice in every time and place” (p. 71). In Acts, the Holy Spirit primarily points to Jesus as the risen and exalted Davidic Messiah (pp. 74–75).

Having laid the groundwork in the previous chapters, in chapter 5 Salter applies these findings to current debates. Regarding the question of whether or not Luke intends us “to construct norms for how



the Spirit will work in our churches today,” Salter concludes that the answer is “not a straightforward ‘yes’ or ‘no’” (p. 79). Although patterns may be repeatable today, that doesn’t mean they are a norm (p. 81). Salter then discusses tongues with reference to 1 Cor 12–14 and concludes that they should not be prohibited but restricted to private devotional use. Dreams and visions, as in Acts, would be rare but should not be discounted. The phrase “signs and wonders” is best reserved for the “particular redemptive-historical use” in Acts. Salter argues, however, that since we too live in the last days, we should expect to see miracles with some “family resemblances” to those in Acts (pp. 84–87, with criticisms of Warfield). Finally, Salter draws on his earlier wide application of the term “prophecy” and distinguishes between capital “P” prophecy (authoritative and foundational NT prophets) and small “p” prophecy (the activity of encouragement, preaching and rebuke in Acts, p. 92). A concluding chapter summarizes the main argument of the book: Pentecost is unique and unrepeatable, but since we inhabit the same last days, we ought to see “family similarities” to these phenomena.

Salter’s work has many strengths. Because Greek terms are translated and each chapter is succinct, it is a very readable book for a general audience. Those unfamiliar with discussions about Lukan theology will find helpful summaries of the literature related to pneumatology. The book is obviously relevant to pastors who face practical questions about how to apply some of the descriptions found in Acts. In this regard Salter’s distinctions between the unique features of Acts and later family resemblances are helpful. Most importantly, Salter provides an excellent model for approaching Acts with contemporary concerns: he prioritizes Luke’s own purposes and emphases.

I have a few misgivings, however, concerning some of Salter’s formulations. Sometimes the impression is given that cessationists such as Warfield don’t believe in post-apostolic miracles at all (e.g., p. 87). In this regard it should be noted that Warfield himself differentiated between miracles (such as a healing in answer to prayer) and the miraculous *gifts* which have ceased (see e.g., Fred Zaspel, *Theology of Warfield*, p. 356). Also, the final chapter on application sometimes goes beyond the evidence presented in the earlier chapters. The discussion of tongues, for instance, tentatively affirms and applies the view that 1 Cor 12–14 refers to a private prayer language. An analysis of 1 Cor 12–14 would, of course, be necessary in a full discussion of tongues in the NT. In a discussion of the specific applicability of Acts 2, however, perhaps more should be made of the nature of tongues in Acts 2 and whether or not that gift is applicable today. The discussion of prophecy in the context of decisions concerning church buildings and counseling sessions (p. 90) also seems to extend too far beyond the emphasis in Acts 2. Prophecy in Acts 2 is more like the empowering of all new covenant believers to point to the fulfillment of God’s saving promises in the Lord Jesus. An examination of the relevance of Jesus’s teaching in Luke 7:26–28 about prophets and the “least in the kingdom” may have helped to keep the application here more focused.

Overall *The Power of Pentecost* is a good model of how to approach Acts when searching for answers to contemporary questions. It will encourage those on all sides of these debates to work through Luke’s own purposes first before grappling with how to apply what Acts has to say to contemporary church life and practice.

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Thomas R. Schreiner. *40 Questions about Christians and Biblical Law*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010. 256 pp. \$17.99.

There are a lot of questions that can be asked about the Mosaic law. This book gives some answers. Careful exegesis and argumentation mean that even those who refuse Schreiner's conclusions ought in good conscience to engage with his claims.

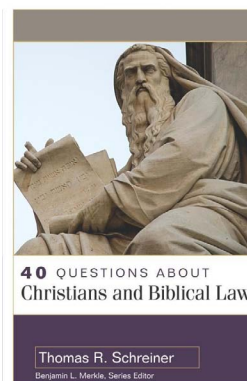
Questions about the Mosaic law are answered from the vantage point of a NT scholar persuaded, it seems, by the position Moo terms "modified Lutheranism." That is, if Calvin was a theologian who emphasised continuity between the covenants, Luther preferred to highlight discontinuity. It is modified in that it has more exegetical precision than Luther was able to offer. As Schreiner puts it, "In making the argument about the temporal difference between the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants, Paul claims that they are different kinds of covenants" (p. 69). This comment makes discontinuity central to interpreting the covenants and is predicated on a careful redemptive-historical exegesis.

The forty questions are arranged into five sections covering (1) the law in the OT, (2) the law in Paul, (3) the law in the Gospels and Acts, (4) the law in the General Epistles, and (5) the law and contemporary issues. These sections are far from evenly distributed. "Contemporary Issues" comprises four questions: discussing the Sabbath, tithing, theonomy, and preaching. Part Two, "The Law in Paul," has the most ink spilt on it. This is for good reason, covering as it does questions such as "What does the word justify mean in Paul?" (question 19), "Does the Pauline teaching on justification contradict Jesus' message?" (question 21), and "Does Paul teach that Christians are judged by their good works on the last day?" (question 24). Answering these questions, while attempting to deal sanely with literature about the new perspective, is a mammoth task. To manage it while restricted to only a few pages for each question is remarkable.

Some people may find books arranged around questions rather artificial. This genre of book seems somewhat constrained by the publisher's arbitrariness. Why not forty-two questions? Or a second volume with the same questions answered from another perspective? As a skeptic of this seemingly endless publishing phenomenon, I should perhaps alert readers to two excellent strengths of this book, arising from its question-and-answer format.

First, the format allows for a huge range and complexity of material to be explained in manageable sections. This fosters precision and clarity. Second, the discrete breaks between questions create breathing space. Part of the reason people get upset about issues to do with the Mosaic law's interpretation is that so many issues get jumbled up—Sabbath, new perspective, reformation beliefs about faith, Galatians and James, etc. The question-and-answer format of this book enables these issues to be disentangled and considered in a logical order.

In the final analysis the reason this book is worth reading is the theological exposition of the gospel it offers. Again and again, as you read through it, you will see the gospel in a new light. This book is a testimony to the fact that one of the NT's grandest ways of clarifying the nature of the gospel is by means of contrasting it to the Mosaic law. Consider how this helps us live a life of love: "Love is not summed up in the keeping of commandments, for one may keep the commandments and still fail to love. Love is more than keeping the commandments, even if it is not less than keeping them" (pp. 106–7).



This is a valuable book, all the more so for its scholarly brevity. Focusing on exegesis and biblical studies, it considers related interpretive issues such as the threefold division of the law and the new perspective on Paul. It is surely right that biblical studies take the lead in the matter of interpreting the law. Still, there would be value in a book which integrated this with the other theological disciplines. Systematics would justify and deepen the foundations of many conclusions drawn in this work. Ethics needs to come to terms with the portrait of love drawn by this reading of the Bible. Church historians could explore where the divergent (and often entrenched) readings on the role of the law originated.

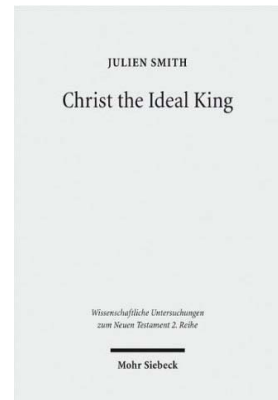
Schreiner has done us a great service in arranging part of the jigsaw so cogently—the biblical studies section. He challenges us all to reconsider the nature of the gospel we believe in and invites us to look at all areas of theology and ministry through that lens.

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Julien Smith. *Christ the Ideal King: Cultural Context, Rhetorical Strategy, and the Power of Divine Monarchy in Ephesians*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 313. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011. x + 316 pp. £79.00/\$152.50.

Despite Paul's frequent identification of Jesus as Israel's Χρίστος, there have been few attempts to situate Paul's epistles within the context of ancient kingship discourse. Smith remedies this lack by examining Paul's epistle to the Ephesians wherein "Christ is characterized as a type of ideal king" who unifies "the fractured cosmos" and "establishes on earth the harmony that is understood to exist in the cosmos" (p. 3). Paul's depiction of Christ as ideal king is the glue that holds together most of the epistle's themes.

Smith suggests that in interpreting Ephesians it is wise to consider the epistle against the context of literary works that the author would have assumed his audience to know. Thus, the bulk of the book is devoted to establishing "The Ideal King in Greco-Roman Thought" (pp. 19–89) and "The Ideal King in Jewish Thought" (pp. 90–173) as the comparative material against which Ephesians can be examined. Within Greco-Roman literature, the ideal king is often portrayed as the vicegerent of the gods who rules on their behalf and establishes heavenly concord on earth. In this regard, the king is closely connected with the gods if not necessarily always understood as divine. The king is often portrayed as an embodied "living law" who possesses law within himself. The ideal king is a philosopher who rules with virtue and is thereby able to inculcate virtue within his own subjects. Further, the ideal king is society's premier benefactor who, when ruling rightly, bestows gifts upon his subjects. With respect to Jewish literature, due to space restrictions Smith does not examine kingship ideology within the OT but limits his study to Second Temple texts. While there is much diversity within these sources, one can easily find common features of the ideal king, and many of these features overlap with the Greco-Roman writings. For example, the king reflects God's glory as he rules as his vicegerent. Likewise, the king rules with virtue, with justice and righteousness, and in accordance with the law. The patriarchs, depicted by Philo as rulers, are living laws who lead the people in virtue. Often the king is spoken of as ruling with wisdom



due to God's Spirit residing upon him. The king imitates God and thereby bestows gifts upon his people, rules with kindness, and transmits divine glory to the people. Finally, the ideal king defeats the hostile enemies of God's people and thereby ushers in a golden age of peace.

These texts, then, function as the backdrop or "cultural repertoire" (p. 18) against which Paul's kingship Christology can best be understood. Thus, within Ephesians, Paul consistently speaks of "Christ" as the agent *through whom* God acts to accomplish his purposes. Whether, then, grammatical arguments can determine if Χριστός is a proper name or royal title is largely a moot point, for the consistent description of Christ as God's chosen agent functions to portray him as God's royal vicegerent who rules on God's behalf. Smith discerns five further aspects of Paul's depiction of Christ in Ephesians that portray Christ as an ideal king. (1) Paul's articulation of the Messiah who effects reconciliation between humanity and God *and* between Jew and Gentile (Eph 2:1–22) coheres nicely with the articulation of the ideal king as the agent of the god(s) who produces the harmony on earth that was thought to exist in the heavens. The peace that the Messiah produces (2:17) resonates with the notion that the ideal king's rule would be marked by a golden age of peace. (2) Paul's Christ is the supreme benefactor who bestows gifts upon his subjects (4:1–16; cf. 1:3). (3) Paul's ethical exhortations and specifically his statement "you did not thus *learn the Christ*" (4:20; cf. 4:17–5:21) are "illuminated when set in the context of the way in which the ideal king was thought to enable the inculcation of virtue in his subjects" (p. 228). The ideal king is the philosopher-king who embodies divine wisdom *and virtue* and is able to transmit this to those ruled. Thus, the "two ways" tradition and the exhortations to abolish vice make sense as articulations of the appropriate behavior for those who submit to the Christ's reign. (4) Smith suggests the household code (5:22–6:9) "functions to demonstrate the extent of Christ's reconciling rule. As in the church, so in the household, the reign of Christ brings harmony" (p. 236). Within the code, the Messiah is the model "for the sort of behavior that promotes harmony within the household" (p. 237). (5) Smith notes that the epistle concludes by portraying not the Messiah, but the church as God's corporate warrior who defeats the enemies of God (6:10–20). Paul presents the church as participating in the Messiah's peaceful rule, a rule in which the evil powers have already been conquered.

Smith concludes by suggesting that the chief benefit of his study of Paul's kingship discourse is that "it enables us to understand the integral connection between the letter's attempt to form the identity *and* behavior of its readers" (p. 246). The ideal king, the Messiah, who has reconciled, liberated, and bestowed divine gifts upon the people is the very king who effects their moral transformation through his rule.

Smith's argument is almost entirely persuasive and helpfully illuminates the sources of Paul's christological rhetoric in Ephesians. It is surprising that there are not more full-length studies devoted to the ways in which kingship-discourse may have influenced Paul's writings. My primary concern with the book, however, is how the cultural repertoire almost overwhelms Ephesians, as only about 80 pages are devoted to Paul's epistle. Methodologically, this can have the effect of not only marginalizing what should be foregrounded, but also of forcing Paul's christological language into a predetermined framework. One further criticism is that given Paul's direct citation of the Psalms it would be have been wise to have included a discussion of how some OT writings contributed to Paul's kingship language. Nevertheless, this is an excellent and thought-provoking book.

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Mark B. Stephens. *Annihilation or Renewal: The Meaning and Function of New Creation in the Book of Revelation*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 307. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011. 343 pp. £79.00/\$157.50.

This book is a slightly revised version of the author's 2009 PhD thesis from Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. Unlike many doctoral dissertations, this one touches on a topic of much interest in the modern church and in current theological discussion, namely, the place of earthly creation in the salvific plan of God. Stephens's primary aim in this study is to determine whether the book of Revelation presents the original creational order as one that is ultimately *destroyed* by God's judgment or whether the picture is instead of a finally *renewed* cosmos, in material continuity with God's original creation.

Chapter 1 lays out the parameters of the study as well as its methodology. This work attempts to survey new creational language in Revelation *as a whole* in order to avoid an atomistic interpretation, a concern especially to be praised in the field of biblical studies, where such atomism often significantly skews exegetical investigations.

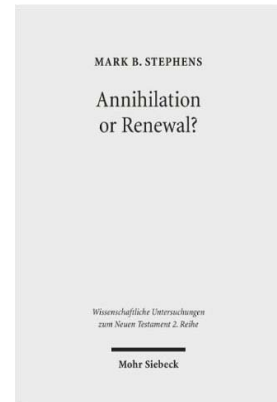
Chapter 2 surveys the issue of continuity between creation and new creation in the OT. Stephens focuses particular attention on the prophetic imagery that portrays the eschatological transformation of creation into a place of extraordinary material abundance. He concludes that the picture is not entirely consistent in that some texts focus on renewal, while some seem to indicate that creation will ultimately be destroyed, even if ultimately there is a re-creation in the end. A common focus of Stephens's chapter is critiquing those who argue that the language of creational renewal represents a merely metaphorical (rather than genuinely physical) depiction of transformation. He also insists that those places in the OT that speak of the destruction of the world often appear to be "deliberately hyperbolic" and need not entail "the literal and actual dissolution of the cosmos" (p. 41).

Chapter 3 examines the continuity question in Second Temple Jewish writings. Stephens finds a similar picture as obtained with regard to the OT (some emphasize renewal, some destruction and replacement), although with a higher amount of diversity. Considering how central the OT is in Revelation, it is somewhat disappointing to see nearly twice as much space devoted to analysis of Second Temple texts as is devoted to the OT, but given the genre expectations of biblical studies dissertations, this is understandable, even if regrettable.

Chapter 4 briefly delves into the issue of new creational continuity in Rom 8 and 2 Pet 3:5–13. It concludes that Rom 8 "clearly and unambiguously" testifies "to material continuity between present and future" creation (p. 123). Regarding 2 Pet 3:5–13, Stephens recognizes the strong *prima facie* argument that it is speaking of the eschatological destruction of the present creation, but wonders whether the focus of the passage is more on ethical change than on the actual end-time destruction of creation.

Chapter 5 offers an illuminating and up-to-date account of scholarship on the structure and setting of Revelation. He isolates two main issues relevant for his thesis: (1) sporadic Christian suffering for refusing to reverence the Roman emperor and (2) a *lack* of suffering among some Christians due to their compromise with the cultural norms of contemporary Roman society.

The book's main argument is found in chapter 6, which gives a detailed study of a variety of passages in Revelation that deal with new creation. With many of the texts, Stephens admits that the evidence regarding continuity between old and new creation is ambiguous, although he finds no texts that



explicitly rule out such a motif and finds much support for the notion that one of the overarching purposes of Revelation is to show that new creation is a putting right of everything that is wrong with the old creation, rather than an annihilation of the old creation and a replacement with a new one. In the *locus classicus* for new creation in Revelation (21:1–22:5), he sees “a rich medley of images and auditions” which communicate “the cosmic dimensions of eschatological salvation” (p. 256).

Stephens’s book is a stimulating study on an important theme. He clearly recognizes and addresses the central issues without getting entangled in distracting minutiae. The focus on the goodness of creation and the creational dimensions of eschatological redemption both in the OT and in Revelation is also to be appreciated.

There are, however, some places where Stephens’s overall thesis could be critiqued. Stephens at numerous points chides those interpreters who dismiss the language of creational abundance in the OT prophets as being a merely metaphorical depiction of the divine removal of sin and dysfunction from the world. Yet at the same time, Stephens is content to argue that the apparent indications of creational destruction and judgment in the biblical writings should not be pressed in a hyper-literal fashion because obvious absurdities would result. The same could be said for the apparently hyperbolic language of creational fecundity in the OT. Perhaps the language of physical renewal, as well as of catastrophic physical destruction, was never meant to be read in a literal (literalistic?) manner. This is not to argue that creation itself is not renewed, but simply that the metaphorical (especially the hyperbolic) nature of both new creation *and* judgment language must be attended to with adequate sophistication.

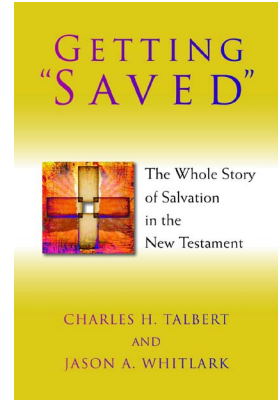
One other point is worth mentioning: perhaps the question of continuity vs. *re*-creation is not the right question to pose to the text of Revelation. Is it not rather the *fact* and *meaning* of new creation that dominates the book? As Stephens himself recognizes (in many places, but see e.g., p. 238), many texts in Revelation simply do not seem to give a clear answer about continuity, although they *do* clearly emphasize that new creation means the eradication of sin and evil from God’s creation as well as the perfect communion that will exist between God and his people in the new creation (see esp. pp. 256–57).

In sum, Stephens has presented a careful and enlightening study of the “cosmic dimensions of eschatological salvation” (p. 256) in Revelation, although to my mind his book gets somewhat sidetracked in delving into whether creation and new creation are continuous. In Revelation all of God’s creation is good, and new creation is not the abandonment of creation. Neither of these two notions, however, requires that present and future be connected by a seamless line, rather than a sharp break caused by divine judgment—a break, however, that is followed by a new heavens and new earth, God’s creation as it is meant to be.

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Charles H. Talbert and Jason A. Whitlark. *Getting “Saved”: The Whole Story of Salvation in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. v + 324 pp. £19.99/\$30.00.

In *Getting “Saved”: The Whole Story of Salvation in the New Testament*, Charles Talbert and Jason Whitlark have compiled, edited, and themselves contributed to a compelling collection of stand-alone scholarly articles which, though diverse in approach and emphasis, are all centered on the common theme of “divine enablement” in the ongoing process of salvation for new covenant believers. This is accomplished by arranging the book into four themed sections: Pauline Corpus (Part I), Gospels (Part II), Catholic Epistles (Part III), and Revelation (Part IV). In arranging the articles in this manner, the editors have thus avoided presenting the theme of ‘divine enablement’ as a merely Pauline or Synoptic phenomenon; on the contrary, they have successfully been able to demonstrate its centrality throughout the entire NT. Whitlark’s introduction to the book articulates its main concern in the form of a twofold question:



- (1) How is post-conversion faithfulness or ‘staying in’ the covenant relationship so as to experience eschatological salvation understood by the various NT texts? And (2) do these Christian texts move beyond covenantal nomism (reciprocity) to a new covenant piety (divine enablement) for staying in the covenant relationship? (p. 3)

This introductory thesis question brings me to a twofold critique: (1) the general acceptance and adoption of E. P. Sanders’s articulation of covenantal nomism as the paradigmatic pattern of religion of Second Temple Judaism and (2) the subsequent use of his categories “getting in” and “staying in” by the authors here as a framing, comparative tool with which to compare the ethical texts of the NT. This is a questionable methodological and exegetical choice in that it is increasingly being recognized in the field of NT studies, by scholars of various theological proclivities, that the Jewish religion of the Second Temple period is not indicative of a uniform paradigm such as covenantal nomism, but is better and more precisely described in terms of variegated Judaisms.

However, despite this methodological and literary concession to covenantal nomism, since the primary focus of the book is to positively explicate the NT authors’ own understanding of divine enablement as the basis of ethical living and eschatological salvation and not to conduct a detailed comparative study with Judaism itself, even those who would disagree with the supposed normative status afforded to covenantal nomism here will still greatly benefit from the findings of these articles. The results of each article are significant for biblical studies, orthodox theology, and the life of the Church.

Talbert in “Paul, Judaism, and the Revisionists,” notes that Paul perceives any “human faithfulness in relation to God” to be “due to divine empowerment” (p. 34). Each author in *Getting “Saved”* brings this “divine enablement” theme out of the biblical texts in their own way. Here Talbert focuses on the Pauline metaphor of being “clothed with Christ” by demonstrating that the theme indicates ontological change and elements of divine empowerment (p. 32–33; cf. Talbert, p. 274). Elsewhere Talbert surveys the moral philosophers, such as Seneca and Pythagorus, and argues that the Pastoral Epistles, like the moral philosophers, operate according to a widespread Mediterranean belief that those who looked upon gods, kings, and moral teachers thought that they would be transformed into their image, in a phenomenon which he calls “transformation by vision.” Additionally, Talbert shows in his chapter on

the Gospel of Matthew how themes of divine presence can indicate the divine enablement of believers through the use of the phrases and concepts of God being “with you” and baptism and prayer “in the name of” God. His results are highly illuminating and will surely precipitate further interaction with theories of the imitation of a moral exemplar and transformation by vision as means of understanding NT ethics.

Whitlark’s chapter “Enabling χάρις” shows that in the ancient world χάρις operated as part of a reciprocity system of benefaction or patronage in which, as a means of securing the patron’s fidelity to the benefactor, the patron recipient of χάρις (“grace”) felt indebted and thus was faithful to the benefactor on the basis of gratitude. This is in contrast to “divine χάρις” in Ephesians in which grace “is given to the unworthy according to divine election.” Whitlark notes that this electing χάρις is the same grace which “actually enables human fidelity” (p. 35). His work here is valuable in that it alerts the reader to the differences in understanding grace (χάρις) within contemporaneous social and ethical movements, namely, Hellenism and Christianity. I disagree here, however, with Whitlark’s assertion that “faith” in Eph 2:8 is best understood as the “faithfulness of Christ” (p. 48). While there is exegetical warrant for the possibility of such a move in other NT texts, the idea is not derivable from the text of Eph 2 itself.

Another essay by Whitlark argues for divine enablement for covenant faithfulness through the means of the “implanted word” in the Epistle of James where he demonstrates a link between a similar use of divine enablement and the term “implanted” in the Patristic texts of Irenaeus and the Epistle of Barnabas. Similarly, in “Milk to Grow On,” Clifford Barbarick argues that the theme of milk in 1 Pet 2 should be interpreted as referring to the word of God which divinely enables growth in the faith unto eschatological salvation. Here an interesting discussion ensues concerning what exactly “the word” is, if indeed the “milk” stands for “the word” in 1 Peter. Barbarick sees the “milk” as essentially the gospel message or the “imagination shaping story” of the death and resurrection of Jesus and not necessarily limited to the written “Bible” but extending even to the church’s “memory, prayer and worship” (p. 230).

In the remaining essays, the phenomenon of divine enablement as the NT means of progressive sanctification is demonstrated in a variety of ways. Whitlark shows how the themes of a cleansed conscience and the ability to approach God in Hebrews highlights divine enablement in perseverance, and Scott J. Hafemann, approaching 2 Peter through an exegesis which utilizes the ancient Near Eastern covenant formula, demonstrates that the power for virtuous living is in “God’s provisions” and the motivation is in “God’s promises” (p. 261). Michael W. Martin examines the use of an Isaianic divine warrior new exodus motif in Mark 11:1–16:8 and argues for a theology of salvation *sola gratia*, thus highlighting divine enablement through grace. The centrality of divine enablement through prayer and community is highlighted by Andrew E. Arterbury, which is both exegetically profound and ecclesiological pertinent.

I highly recommend the entire book as a step in the right direction and a helpful exegetical foundation for current discussions in the evangelical and reformed world and blogosphere concerning the nature and basis of progressive sanctification in a Protestant explication of salvation. The idea that Protestant salvation is nothing more than an external covering with either no attention or a subordinated role given toward inner renewal and transformation is a serious truncation of the gospel sometimes made by Protestants themselves (!) but one that has no basis in the writings of the Reformers or in the pages of Scripture.

One final critique of *Getting “Saved”* is that due to the employment of the categories of covenantal nomism (i.e., “getting in” and “staying in”) as a paradigm through which to approach NT soteriology

and due to the book's focus on the post-conversion elements of salvation (i.e., "staying in"), the place of initial, forensic declarative justification on the basis of faith alone in the righteousness of Christ alone is not highlighted. By no means am I implying that the authors would deny this, but I am simply pointing out that it is not addressed in the text (however, on p. 3n9, Jason Whitlark mentions another text, Jan G. van der Watt, *Salvation in the New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology* [NovTSup 121; Atlanta: SBL, 2005], which he describes as emphasizing "conversion or entrance into the Christian life and community" in the NT documents, in contrast to the post-conversion emphasis in *Getting "Saved"*). I consider this to be a weakness. One would perhaps expect that with the subtitle *The Whole Story of Salvation in the New Testament*, the book might seek to incorporate and articulate the past, present, and future aspects of salvation for believers under the new covenant. However, since *Getting "Saved"* deliberately focuses only on the middle, progressive element of salvation (with a view toward final, eschatological salvation), the book's title is potentially misleading. More work needs to be done to incorporate the type of work and scholarship achieved by these authors on progressive sanctification through divine enablement with the doctrine of forensic justification by faith alone and the doctrine of glorification. In other words, this question needs to be asked: How does Christ's work for us in justification relate to Christ's work for us and in us through divine enablement in sanctification unto glorification? I suggest that we could begin by approaching the entirety of salvation, from first to last, not in terms of Sanders's problematic paradigm of "getting in" and "staying in," but from the perspective of and as a result of our "being in" Christ. It is here in the Reformed doctrine of union with Christ that we can grasp the glory and riches of just how it is that one who is declared righteous by the righteousness of another, namely, Christ, becomes like the righteous Christ on the basis of the work of Christ alone and through the divine enablement and agency of God through his Spirit by grace alone. As we seek to rearticulate a fully-orbed reformational doctrine of salvation to our churches, students, and families, we ought to carefully consider the theme of divine enablement and grace-fueled sanctification as argued in *Getting "Saved"* and seek to situate it with in a biblical theology that clings to our union with the risen Lord for all that salvation is, past, present, and future, to the glory of God.

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— HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY —

Richard A. Bailey. *Race and Redemption in Puritan New England*. Religion in America. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. xiii + 209 pp. \$55.00.

In histories of colonial and Revolutionary America, slavery looms large in the South and religion in the North. Yet white New Englanders also owned African and Native American slaves. Even such luminaries as Jonathan Edwards often kept a household slave or two. As Richard Bailey's slim, provocative volume demonstrates, race and religion interacted in paradoxical ways in colonial New England. Religion sometimes opened greater opportunities for marginalized Africans and Native Americans, while race sometimes cut off egalitarian possibilities latent within Christian theology.

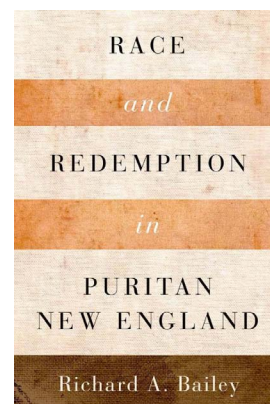
Bailey, a professor at Canisius College with graduate degrees from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and the University of Kentucky, surveys the racial views of primarily pastors and other elite New Englanders and their encounters with non-whites. This white-dominated perspective is partly explained by a dearth of sources from Native Americans and Africans. Pastors even shaped surviving conversion testimonies of non-whites, making it difficult to hear unmediated black and Indian voices.

Bailey also focuses on the ways in which white New Englanders "constructed" race through religion. He employs the language—some might say jargon—of cultural studies, a rhetoric that has come to dominate history journals, academic monographs, and revised dissertations like Bailey's. This way of framing the book helps Bailey engage with current trends in the study of race and culture; unfortunately, it will probably not help attract a broader popular audience for *Race and Redemption*.

Still, *Race and Redemption* offers a rich array of sources related to the Puritans' (he prefers "puritans") efforts to evangelize and Christianize Native Americans and blacks, including a host of conversion accounts, deathbed professions of faith, and catechisms written especially for people of color. These sources demonstrate that, in spite of myriad practical inequalities between them, Puritans still fundamentally viewed African Americans and Indians as people with souls capable not only of salvation but instruction in proper (Calvinist) theology. Indeed, one is struck by how the Puritans' missionary efforts—efforts often disrupted by local animosities, violence, and war—focused on the transmission of theological principles: human depravity, the damnation of sinners, and the wondrous offer of salvation made possible by Christ's atoning death. These efforts stood in contrast to scenes of harsh physical discipline and unequal treatment of slaves in civil and church courts.

Indeed, Bailey sees the Puritans as people living in an exceptional state of intellectual and social "contradiction," perhaps the key term in the book. Those contradictions began with their Calvinist theology, which taught, among other things, that a good God chooses only the elect for salvation, leaving the non-elect to their own preference for perdition. But is "contradiction" the right historical term for what, more generously, amounts to paradox? "Contradictory," I often wondered, compared to what? Free will Arminianism? Atheism? Do those systems not have their own tensions and inconsistencies?

Similarly, Bailey argues that people of color found that the "law represented the fundamental contradiction that men and women faced," (p. 62) as it separated them racially even while acknowledging their humanity. But again, contradictory compared to what? Modern law? The laws of other colonies?



You would be hard pressed to find a colonial-era legal code that was not racist when judged by today's standards.

Bailey makes his reference point clearer concerning Puritan "genocide" against Native Americans. Puritans, he says, believed in an OT that mandated "justice and [fair] treatment of the oppressed," so their violent expropriation of Native American land contradicted their doctrine (p. 30). But what of that same OT's passages describing the wholesale destruction of the Canaanites? Bailey knows that on such issues, the message of Scripture is hardly unambiguous. Was Puritan New England less just on racial matters than other places at other times? Absolutely. But I think, in general, it is better to explain why a people's beliefs made sense to them, rather than repeatedly insisting that those beliefs contradicted their actions.

What Bailey calls Puritan "dis-ease" with slavery did bear fruit, however, as certain evangelical New Englanders, both black and white, formed the leading edge of a new American antislavery movement during the Revolutionary era. These advocates, including Jonathan Edwards Jr., tried to resolve Bailey's contradiction in favor of human liberty.

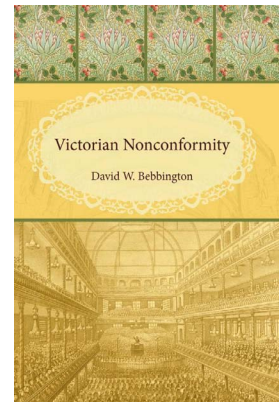
Some Reformed and evangelical readers may find that Bailey singles the Puritans out too much for special, uncontextualized criticism of racial slavery and wars against Native Americans. Perhaps Bailey just thinks that, as theologically serious Christians, the Puritans should have known better. But persistent readers will find in *Race and Redemption* much to ponder in the tragic history of race in early America. America remains deeply unequal, socially and economically, with divisions still often running along lines of race. Churches would do well to take seriously both the current realities and the deep historical background of that inequality.

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David W. Bebbington. *Victorian Nonconformity*. Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth, 2011. 70 pp. \$11.00.

David Bebbington, longtime professor of history at the University of Stirling in Scotland, is arguably the leading historian of evangelicalism in the British world. His famous evangelical "quadrilateral" of biblicism, crucicentrism, conversionism, and activism has enjoyed wide acceptance by many scholars while provoking ongoing debate among others. The same could be said of his contention that modern evangelicalism was incubated by the Enlightenment and birthed during the eighteenth-century transatlantic awakenings. In *Victorian Nonconformity*, a revision of previously published material, Bebbington focuses his attention upon (mostly) evangelicals who worshiped outside the Church of England during the latter two-thirds of the nineteenth century.

Bebbington argues, "Victorian Nonconformity was an attempt to create a Christian counter-culture" (p. 2). With the exception of the Unitarians, the Dissenters (as they were also called) were by and large evangelicals of the Methodist, Congregationalist, and Baptist varieties. Each of these traditions, as well as their various subgroups, receive treatment. Victorian Nonconformists were revival-influenced evangelists, missionaries, and champions of social reform, they emerged from



nearly every social class (though mostly the middle classes), and they could be found in the countryside and in Britain's urban centers. Women represented a disproportionate number of Dissenters, though as a general rule they were not welcomed into pulpits. Contra the Helmstadter thesis, which Bebbington critiques, most Nonconformists were both champions of individual liberty of conscience and proponents of the importance of communal expressions of the faith. Nonconformity had declined numerically from its midcentury strength by the turn of the twentieth century, in large part due to a doctrinal declension that negatively affected piety and evangelism.

Victorian Nonconformity is an excellent introduction to the "chapel" culture that existed outside the Established Church for much of the nineteenth century. The bibliography and index make this an especially suitable resource for classroom use. Numerous form errors, including misplaced hyphens, missing or extra spaces, and indentation problems distract from a helpful overview of the topic.

Nathan A. Finn

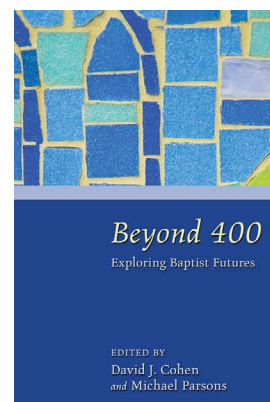
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David J. Cohen and Michael Parsons, eds. *Beyond 400: Exploring Baptist Futures*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011. xvi + 270 pp. \$31.00.

The year 2009 marked the 400th anniversary of the Baptist movement. The occasion inspired numerous conferences, symposia, articles, and monographs. *Beyond 400: Exploring Baptist Futures* represents the published proceedings of a conference held at Vose Seminary in Western Australia. The contributors include a variety of Australasian pastors and scholars, as well as the widely regarded English Baptist theologian Nigel Wright. The essays provide a useful glimpse into how Australasian Baptists are assessing their traditions and anticipating new challenges in the early years of the twenty-first century.

The contributors address a range of topics that hold interest for many Baptists, including those residing in places besides Oceania and the British Isles. Many contributors, especially Nigel Wright and Michael O'Neil, offer prescription as to the best way to contextualize Baptist identity and theology in the coming generation. Martin Sutherland, Peter Ralphs, and Michael Parsons address specific matters of ecclesiology. Richard Moore, Ian Packer, and Neville Callam offer constructive proposals concerning how Baptists should participate in the sacraments and gather for corporate worship. Other authors engage topics such as denominational leadership, social justice, the emerging church, the history of a charismatic Baptist mega-church, and the importance of missional house churches in evangelizing urban centers.

Numerous themes emerge from the pages of *Beyond 400*, many of which will be familiar to scholars of contemporary Baptist theology. Gender roles, spiritual gifts, the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility, and the boundaries of evangelicalism each make at least one appearance. Several essays lament the relative paucity of Baptist systematic theologies. The shadows of the late North American Baptist theologians James William McClendon and Stanley Grenz loom large over much of the volume, as does the influence of the "Baptist sacramentalism" movement among English Baptists and some post-liberal Baptists in America. Many Baptists from across the theological



spectrum will appreciate the emphasis on recovering the covenant ecclesiology of the early British Baptists.

Beyond 400 is one of the more stimulating volumes published in conjunction with the 400th anniversary of the Baptist tradition. North American Baptists, especially those of us in the South, frequently tend toward theological and historical myopia. Books like this help to remedy this situation as they allow us to engage the thought of Baptists who do not share our particular history and experiences on this side of the Atlantic. Scholars interested in the ongoing discussion about the nature of Baptist identity need to pay special heed to this volume.

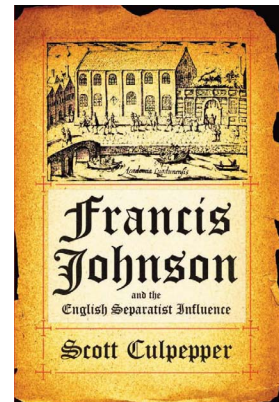
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Scott Culpepper. *Francis Johnson and the English Separatist Influence*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2011. x + 278 pp. \$35.00.

Scott Culpepper's *Francis Johnson and the English Separatist Influence* is a welcome addition to the study of English dissenting traditions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Culpepper, who recently accepted the post of Associate Professor of History at Dordt College (Sioux Center, Iowa), completed the book while teaching at his alma mater, Louisiana College. The biography is an expansion of his dissertation completed in the Religion Department of Baylor University and under the direction of William H. Brackney (now at Acadia Divinity College in Nova Scotia). Culpepper was a part of the short-lived Program in Baptist Studies at Baylor.

Culpepper's history offers a relatively detailed biography of Francis Johnson (1562–1618), demonstrates the evolution of Johnson's ideas from the 1580s until his death, and introduces the reader to the separatist movements of the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean eras. Although Culpepper gives considerable attention to Johnson's connections to John Smyth and early English Baptists and clearly understands the history to be relevant to recent debates in Baptist circles (e.g., pp. 2–3, 257–61) and foundational to future Baptist histories, the focus of *Francis Johnson* is broad in scope. (In recent years, Mercer University Press has boasted numerous historical studies of Baptists in Britain and America, but Culpepper's *Francis Johnson* evinces the press's interest in histories of other nonconformist Christian movements.)

In short, Culpepper argues that Johnson is a "pleading prophet" who contended for what he believed is truth; that truth "changed" throughout Johnson's life. The mission of Francis Johnson included his imprisonment in England, his exile from his homeland, his leadership of the "Ancient Church" of London and then Amsterdam, his separation from his brother George, the eventual schism of the Ancient Church, and his late adoption of a more inclusive approach to the Roman Catholic Church. For Culpepper, Johnson and his writings were influential in the formation of separatist leaders like John Smyth and the moderate Henry Jacob, but Johnson was in turn forced to reformulate his own theology when faced with the challenges posed by seventeenth-century "Anabaptists" and Arminians. Thus, Culpepper contends, Johnson's evolving theology—especially his ecclesiology—was based upon



his interpretation of Scripture, but also upon the events of his personal life and the eventual failure of the congregational polity he once espoused to stifle theological error.

After the requisite historiography, Culpepper introduces Johnson briefly in the context of his immediate family and his education at Cambridge. The author paints a likely picture of the young man's educational environment albeit with few insights into Johnson's intellectual formation. Culpepper notes that upon Johnson's achievement of an MA and his ordination, he was appointed a fellow of Christ's College and was the tutor of the future-Baptist Smyth, who matriculated at Cambridge in 1586. It was in Smyth's fourth year at university that Johnson publicly voiced his own Puritan theology, particularly that of a twofold order of eldership, which garnered him the ire of the heads of the colleges, imprisonment in 1589, and expulsion from Cambridge in 1590.

Chapter 2 argues that Johnson's unwillingness to submit to the ecclesiology of the established church prompted him to move to Holland and serve a Puritan congregation. While in Middleburg, Johnson apparently was convinced by his exchanges with separatists to break with the Church of England and adopt a congregational polity. Johnson returned in 1591 to London, where he was elected the pastor of the separatist congregation later to be named the Ancient Church. After being imprisoned from 1593 until 1597, Johnson—after a failed attempt in April 1597 to establish a colony in Canada—joined his congregation that had migrated to the Netherlands to avoid persecution.

Chapters 3–4 explore the division that arose within the church resulting from Johnson's marriage to Thomasine Boyes and the rift that grew between Francis and his brother George over the proper behavior and apparel of the pastor's wife, over Francis's increasing authoritarian leadership, and over his support by and of men like Daniel Studley who were of questionable character. Culpepper demonstrates the difficulties that the exiles faced in the formulation of their theological stance in regards to the English Church and State and the Presbyterianism of their Reformed neighbors, and their difficulty in defining the identity of the congregation and its leadership structure. Internal crises eventually culminated in Francis excommunicating his brother and his father, who had come to Amsterdam to broker peace.

Chapters 5–6 investigate Francis Johnson's interaction in the early 1600s with the continental Reformed traditions and then with the emerging Baptists. Culpepper reviews exchanges of Johnson and Henry Ainsworth (fellow leader of the Ancient Church) with Puritan, Reformed, and Separatist interlocutors to determine Johnson's perspectives on ecclesiology during the Jacobean era. Culpepper concludes that Johnson held to a generally Calvinistic theology and was antagonistic to the rise of Arminianism. His continuing endorsement of a separation from the established church, however, distinguished him from other Puritan thinkers, and his growing emphasis on the authority of elders divided the Ancient Church.

The last chapter focuses on the rending of the Ancient Church and Johnson's *A Christian Plea* (1617). In this book, Johnson admits the Catholic Church had been a conduit of truth, albeit one besotted by human corruption. This admission was a response to Baptist criticism that Separatists had granted *de facto* validity to baptisms performed in the Churches of England and Rome.

Although Brackney's comments in the foreword appear hyperbolic, the book is informative and even entertaining. Culpepper's retelling of the fraternal acrimony between George and Francis Johnson over the latter's marriage to the stylish widow, Thomasine, is fair, and it reveals the author's sense of humor and his eye to the present. *Francis Johnson* offers introductions and summaries of Johnson's key theological works and several contemporary treatises. Far from hagiography, the book identifies

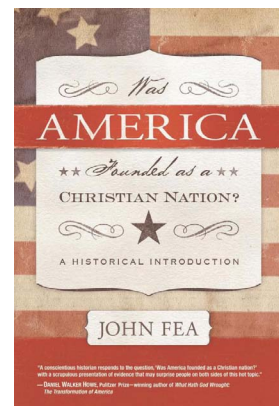
Johnson as a pragmatist, and Culpepper appears critical of the pastor's sometimes authoritarian and hypocritical administration of the Ancient Church.

The text should be accessible to undergraduate and seminary audiences and will be useful for its distillation of the English Separatist movements. It offers concise footnotes and a short, useful bibliography. Unfortunately, many readers may be distracted by the numerous stylistic and editing errors that plague the pages, and readers will either be appreciative or annoyed at the extensive block quotations that appear throughout the text.

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John Fea. *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation? A Historical Introduction*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011. xxvii + 287 pp. \$30.00.

In *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation*, John Fea presents a thorough historical treatment of the relationship between Christianity's doctrine and practice and the history of the American founding. His purpose in writing is not to give a definitive affirmative or negative answer to the question in the book's title but to set the question in historical context. Fea writes this book as an historian, and he attempts to encourage his audience to think historically about the issue of Christianity and the American founding. Rather than mining American history for nuggets that add worth to prior commitments, Fea seeks to persuade readers that studying history demands intellectual humility that allows answers to questions to be more complex than we sometimes want them to be.



Before addressing the issue of Christianity and the American founding, Fea clearly lays out the aspects of historical thinking in terms of five C's: change over time, context, causality, contingency, and complexity (pp. xxiv–xxv). Fea asserts at the outset of the book, “We need to practice history not because it can win us political points or help us push our social and cultural agendas forward, but because it has the amazing potential to transform our lives” (p. xxvii). Fea’s establishing the importance of historical thinking and his defining the tasks of the historian prior to addressing the topic at hand is a helpful and winsome way to set up the book. It also gives the reader the assurance that this book does not represent yet another socio-political axe to grind but honestly attempts to come to grips with an issue that is significant in terms of the identity of the American nation.

Fea divides the book into three parts. The first contains four chapters presenting a history of the idea of America as a Christian nation. The idea is certainly not a new one. Fea traces manifestations of the Christian America thesis as far back as 1789 with the drafting of the Constitution. Throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century, the Christian America thesis was articulated in a variety of ways, some of them quite sophisticated. Fea acknowledges, consistent with Mark Noll’s work *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (University of North Carolina Press, 2006), that in many ways the war of 1860–1865 was a conflict over what kind of Christian nation (or nations, according to the point of view) would exist on the North American continent. Furthermore, proponents of Christian America

were organized sufficiently to move for an amendment to the Constitution that would define America as a Christian nation. This effort was sustained over several decades in the latter part of the nineteenth century and into the 1920s. Whereas the Christian America thesis would be sidelined after the Scopes Trial of 1925, it would find new life in the 1970s, and it continues to be a burning issue today. Those who now argue that America was founded as a Christian nation inherit a long and consistent tradition.

Still, Fea argues in the second part of the work that the American Revolution was based far more upon a foundation of radical Whig ideology than on reasoned Christian theology or exegesis. Fea examines the events leading up to the Revolution, revolutionary sermons, the Declaration of Independence, the move toward religious freedom, and the text of the Constitution in this section. He finds that biblical Christianity was certainly not absent from the revolutionary and founding ideas, but that it was often obscured or overshadowed by radical Whig ideology or simple pragmatism. Arguments that the American Revolution and founding were distinctly Christian are too simplistic to measure up to the historical realities.

Fea concludes the work by examining a sampling of founders and their religious beliefs. Often we are told that the “founders” were devout Christians or that they were deists, secularists, etc. The “founders” are often cast in monolithic terms. Fea sets out to argue that the “founders” should not be classified as one entity; they each had their own individual religious commitments. Furthermore, arguing that the founders’ religious commitments accurately reflected their positions on the role of Christianity in the state is a non sequitur. Washington’s religious beliefs are too ambiguous to definitively classify him. Jefferson, Franklin, and John Adams each led lives that in some ways were consistent with Christianity, but all three rejected key tenets of Christian orthodoxy. Still, Witherspoon, Jay, and Samuel Adams affirmed Christian orthodoxy and represent believing Christians in the group that contributed to the founding of the American nation.

Fea concludes his work by affirming again what he says at the beginning of the book: answering the question of whether or not America was founded as a Christian nation is not so simple. What students of history can affirm is that religion has always enjoyed a special place in American society, not just since the founding but since the planting of the colonies. We can also see clearly the importance of religious freedom in the American founding, a commitment that springs from the historically American attitude toward the uniqueness and significance of religion. Christianity has had an enormous impact on the development of the American identity, but secular ideas have been particularly formative as well. America is indebted to a mixed heritage, which makes on contemporary students of American origins a demand of sober, responsible, and humble historical thinking.

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Tim Grass. *F. F. Bruce: A Life*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. xii + 265 pp. \$22.00.

Among the volumes in my library is one of great sentimental value: F. F. Bruce's 1954 volume on the *Acts of the Apostles* in the New International Commentary series. Its author (1910–1990) is the subject of this biography. This commentary's first owner was my grandfather, who—like Bruce—hailed from the east of Scotland. But unlike Bruce, my grandfather never finished school, though after his conversion he became a student of the Bible and subsequently a preacher in a local Brethren Assembly.

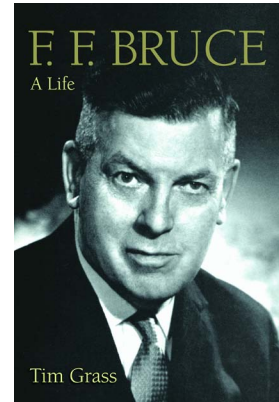
It was quite understandable that my grandfather should have acquired the volume. Luke's *Acts* was standard fare among the Restorationist-leaning Brethren, and Bruce was in the 1950s, and for some decades thereafter, the brightest light the Brethren movement possessed in the university world. A distinguished graduate of both Aberdeen and Cambridge, he did advanced studies at Vienna. Having begun to lecture in Greek at Edinburgh in 1935, he advanced through posts in Classics at Leeds (1938) and Biblical Studies at Sheffield (1947) before becoming Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism at Manchester University from 1959 to 1978. It was there that Bruce made his greatest mark as a writer and as a mentor.

Tim Grass, an accomplished writer who earlier furnished us with a modern life of Edward Irving (1792–1834) and a fresh history of the Brethren movement, here provides us with an admirable biography of Bruce. Bruce's passing in 1990 occurred just long enough ago to gain some perspective on his wider significance and just recently enough for the biographer to draw on the observations of living witnesses on three continents. Earlier, the outline of Bruce's life could be accessed only through autobiographical musings provided in his *Remembrance of Things Past* (1980). Now we have a clearer grasp of Bruce's life and legacy.

First, Bruce the man was but a larger version of the younger Bruce. Son to an itinerant Brethren evangelist, Bruce imbibed godliness at home and good learning at the Elgin Academy. The evangelist's home, rather than being "philistine" in its atmosphere, was a place of overflowing bookshelves and vigorous discussions. Brethren of northeast Scotland prized independent thought. And so it was quite natural that young Fred, who excelled in the Academy, was admitted to and earned distinction at Aberdeen University. Young Bruce excelled in those studies of the classical world with which Aberdeen had come to be especially associated in the professorship of Sir W. M. Ramsay (1851–1939). Both among the Brethren and in university circles, Bruce learned to be "his own man."

Second, the young scholar pursued his classical studies with a growing appreciation for the bearing of his discipline on the world of the NT. In the closing decades of the preceding century, the fruits of such an approach had been demonstrated in the career of J. B. Lightfoot (1828–1889) as well as by the Aberdeen professor, Ramsay. Grass indicates that this grounding in classical studies as a basis for the study of the NT gave Bruce affinity with a host of others, of which a notable example was his contemporary William Barclay (1907–1978). Anyone who has made use of Bruce's 1943 book *Are the N.T. Documents Reliable?* will recognize the contribution that such an approach can yield.

Third, it is intriguing to follow the broadening of Bruce's career, coincident with his transition from Leeds to Sheffield in 1947 and from the teaching of Classics to Biblical Studies. It was not the new post that produced the impetus for the different orientation; the latter had been percolating for some



time. While at Leeds, Bruce had completed a diploma in Hebrew and as a result was able to teach the exegesis of both testaments at Sheffield, where he became founding professor of the department. In this period, proof of his broadening scholarship was given in his extensive contributions to the *New Bible Commentary* (1953), his *Acts* commentaries (Greek text: 1951, NIC: 1954) and writings on Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls (1956). This breadth not only opened the door for his being offered the Manchester professorship in 1959, but his eventual presidency of both the prestigious Society for Old Testament Study (1965) and Society for New Testament Study (1975). As Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism at Manchester, Bruce served as the mentor of some fifty PhD students (chiefly in NT Studies).

Fourth, Bruce the independent thinker, the classical philologist and historian turned biblical scholar, also had his detractors. Was it because of his relative independence of the evangelical Christian constituency, as university professor, that he declined to adopt “shibboleths” about gender and ministry, about eschatology, about Isaianic authorship when expected to do so? Both within his own Brethren constituency and beyond in wider UK conservative evangelicalism, Bruce would regularly dismay some contemporaries who expected him to fall in line with positions more to their liking. Had the setting of the university faculty of theology compromised him? But there was at the same time a wonderful consistency about Bruce, who took his turn in Sunday ministry at his local Brethren Assembly and who traveled widely, speaking to churches and university Christian Unions. At root, the difference was that Bruce—who never took a theological degree—brought only a modest set of theological pre-commitments with him to his biblical studies. He claimed to develop his positions inductively, going only where the evidence led him. Both within UK evangelical church life and in the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research, those with stronger theological pre-commitments demurred over how satisfactory some of Bruce’s views were.

Finally, the biography raises an interesting set of questions about Bruce’s legacy. What is indisputable is that Bruce’s work in Manchester saw the mentoring of many of the preeminent evangelical NT scholars of the last half-century. In that sense, his legacy has lived on across the English-speaking world. As for his vast literary legacy (a list of publications fills 34 pages), the biographer suggests that aside from commentaries, Bruce’s strength lay in articles and lectures later reworked into book chapters that, when consolidated together in volumes, did not always finish with forceful conclusions. Bruce, on this accounting, was more the scholar and researcher than he was the advocate.

One outstanding achievement of this fine biography is that it raises probing questions for a younger generation of evangelical scholars. While reading Grass’s book, I have been mentally comparing it with John D’Elia’s life of Fuller Seminary’s George Eldon Ladd (1911–1982), *A Place at the Table* (Oxford University Press, 2008). Bruce, working entirely in the British university context, enjoyed the coveted “place at the table” that Ladd and so many of his broadly evangelical peers hankered after. What separated Bruce from Ladd was not their theological views so much as their contexts. Bruce joined university faculties of Biblical Studies and Theology by moving laterally. Having established his reputation first as a classicist, he was then able to demonstrate his wider abilities and was thus able to move easily in circles where his often-conservative views were reckoned acceptable as part of a larger spectrum. Conservative evangelical onlookers have still not resolved the underlying tensions that Bruce’s career trajectory illustrates (though his was not, in fact, such an isolated case). We need the broader resources and forum afforded by research universities, and we desire to be taken seriously in that environment. But more often than not, even when we have gained our credentials in that environment, like G. E. Ladd, we often go on to labor in a “parallel universe” of which the research university takes small notice.

Ladd, the Harvard PhD, was tormented by this lengthy sensation of being the perennial “outsider” looking in. In sharp contrast, in the providence of God, Bruce the independent-minded Brethren scholar enjoyed the advantages of the proverbial “insider.”

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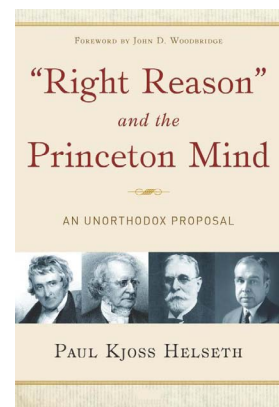
Paul Kjoss Helseth. *“Right Reason” and the Princeton Mind: An Unorthodox Proposal*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2010. xxv + 257 pp. \$21.99.

Helseth’s work seeks to address and question the “historiographical consensus” of the “Old Princeton” theological approach to apologetics. While characterized as “an accommodation of theology to the epistemological assumptions of an essentially humanistic philosophy,” Helseth contends that the Princeton theologians have been mischaracterized and misunderstood (p. xxii). Against such misrepresentations, the present work contends that the Old Princeton religious epistemology focused more on the “heart” and holistic nature of the soul rather than just on scholastic rationalism or Enlightenment humanism.

Helseth characterizes his argument as “an unorthodox proposal,” built upon the foundation that historical analysis has overestimated the influence of Scottish Common Sense Realism among Old Princeton theologians. According to Helseth, not only was the Princeton theology and apologetic centered upon moral intellectualism rather than mere rationalism, but it was also squarely within the classical Reformed tradition. *“Right Reason” and the Princeton Mind*, thus, traces the epistemological assumptions of the Princeton apologetic, demonstrating its Reformed nature and the importance of “right reason” in the context of God’s sovereign grace and moral revelation to the regenerated knowing soul (p. xxxi).

Though by no means a bait-and-switch, *“Right Reason” and the Princeton Mind* focuses on far more than just the role of reason in the Old Princeton apologetic. While Helseth purports to be challenging the historiographical consensus of the Princeton theologians, he uses this unorthodox proposal to address the current debate over the evangelical theological enterprise. While Helseth aptly defends his thesis, the scope of his work reaches beyond the thesis. However, this does not detract from the quality and merits of the book. In fact, Helseth demonstrates how the historiographical question bears a direct correlation and application for contemporary theologians.

The book consists of two parts, the first of which focuses on the aforementioned question of the epistemological assumptions of the primary representatives of Old Princeton. The implications within this section, particularly chapter four, draw the reader from the historiographical question to its contemporary application and significance. Chapter one, “The Moral Context,” demonstrates how the Old Princeton epistemology dealt with the soul as a single unit and substance. Though they addressed the rational, they never divorced it from the subjective and experiential factors of the knowing soul. The Princeton apologetic emphasized the Reformed principle of the revealing work of God to the knowing agent who is both moral and rational.



Chapter two focuses upon the apologetic of B. B. Warfield. Helseth acknowledges that Warfield affirmed that a salvific understanding of God entailed the “rational appropriation of objective evidence” (p. 51). Yet the author demonstrates that this apprehension for Warfield occurred only through regeneration of the moral state of the soul. “Right reason” begins through the work of God in the soul of the knowing agent, not through a mere rationalistic apprehension of facts. Warfield’s apologetic, as Helseth illustrates further in the third chapter, focused not upon convincing souls into the kingdom, but on demonstrating the reality of God’s moral order to the unregenerate so as to encourage them to the intellectual place whereby they would be receptive to the Spirit’s regenerating, salvific work of the entire soul. Chapter four reinforces the aforementioned arguments by examining the apologetic of J. Gresham Machen. Helseth demonstrates the role of the subjective in the Old Princeton theology to serve as a transition to second half of his book. Machen’s critique of theological liberalism, Helseth believes, provides a foundation for the rebuttal of postconservative evangelicalism in demonstrating that both the Princeton theology and its conservative successors today rightly appropriate the subjective while maintaining the objectivity of God’s revelation.

Part Two of the book addresses the relevance of the Old Princeton apologetic to the recent debate between conservative and postconservative evangelicals over the nature of theological enterprise. This second half reveals Helseth’s main contention that conservative evangelicals today stand in the true tradition of the now rightly represented Princeton theologians in their conviction and commitment to the Reformed ideal of objective, revealed moral and religious truth. He defends this position against the postconservative critique of conservative evangelicalism that the latter divorce theology from experience and make theology into a highly rational enterprise.

Chapter five describes how postconservatives have widely accepted the historiographical consensus of the Princeton theologians and have employed the same critiques against contemporary conservative evangelicals. The author argues that by correcting the historiographical consensus of the Old Princeton Seminary, one may also defend against the same critique of conservative evangelicalism. Chapter six draws parallels between Old Princeton and conservative evangelicalism to demonstrate how their understanding of theological enterprise does not lead necessarily to “rigid dogmatism,” but allows for doctrinal diversity within the camp. Helseth stresses the necessity of the “heart” in both theologies and the role of the entire soul in “right reasoning.”

Chapter seven concludes by demonstrating the postconservative critique of conservative evangelicalism fails due to its misunderstanding and/or misrepresenting both the Old Princeton theology and its contemporary successors. Both parties certainly emphasize the objective nature of truth, and both also acknowledge, Helseth argues, the subjective and experiential factors in theological enterprise. Old Princeton theology and conservative evangelicalism both maintain that the message of the biblical witness must be apprehended through “right reason,” which for both parties is “a biblically informed kind of theological aesthetic that presupposes the work of the Spirit on the whole soul of the believing theologian” (p. 221).

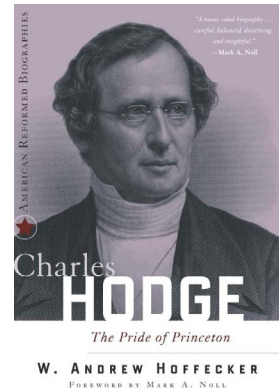
“Right Reason” and the Princeton Mind is highly recommended for both historical and systematic theologians. Helseth’s meticulous research enables him to rightly represent the Old Princeton Seminary, acknowledging where the historiographical consensus has succeeded and failed. His gracious critiques, clear organization, and contemporary awareness enable the reader to follow his line of thought and reach the same conclusions. Helseth avoids attacking those he disagrees with, but rather offers a clear defense of the Reformed tradition and its twentieth-century and contemporary proponents. Though the

content deviates from his articulated purposes, his masterful application and contemporary proposal rewards the reader nonetheless.

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W. Andrew Hoffercker. *Charles Hodge: The Pride of Princeton*. American Reformed Biographies. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2011. 360 pp. \$19.99.

As recently as 2010, the reader who wished to know more than the basic outline of the life and influence of Charles Hodge (1797–1878), the Princeton theologian and author of the famed three-volume *Systematic Theology*, had few options. Of course, there was the massive *Life of Charles Hodge* (1881) produced by his son A. A. Hodge in the aftermath of his father’s passing. Nearer to us in time, two chapters in the anthology *Reformed Theology in America* (1989) focused upon “The Princeton Theology” and on “Charles Hodge,” respectively. Tremors, indicating an upsurge of more specialized academic interest, were spread by the more recent anthology volume *Charles Hodge Revisited* (2002). But I have alluded to 2010; since then *two* notable and sizeable biographies of Hodge have appeared: Paul Gutjahr’s in 2011 (reviewed in *Themelios* 36 [2011]: 525–26) and Hoffercker’s later in 2011.



One need not, however, think of this surge of research on Hodge—spread especially over the last decade—as constituting a glut. For on closer examination, the two recent biographies, while each the product of massive and extended research, occupy quite distinct ground. The Gutjahr volume might fairly be considered intellectual biography, focusing as it does upon Hodge as a man of his age and as a man of letters. Hodge’s theological views were not unimportant to Gutjahr, but were at the same time given a place not surpassing that of the Princeton theologian’s literary interactions with his counterparts in New England and in Germany. Hoffercker’s work, while not disinterested in the intellectual development of Hodge (indeed, it pays close attention to his early education, the father-mentor role of Archibald Alexander towards him, and the importance of his study in France and Germany) is supremely focused upon the growth of his theological thought and his posture towards the heated questions of his own age. In this latter respect, Hoffercker’s work rather more resembles the original biography of 1881, while in important respects moving beyond it.

Hoffercker adeptly shows (in chs. 8–13) that Hodge, already a lecturer in biblical languages and literature at Princeton from 1820, was motivated to go to Paris, Halle, and Berlin for further studies in biblical and European languages because of a sense that American theological education (and by extension his own preparation to teach) was not “at par” with European counterparts. This sojourn, lasting from October 1826 until summer 1828, had far-reaching effects for Hodge and for the seminary. Especially in his subsequent taking up the teaching of theology (he had begun in biblical languages and literature), Hodge was decidedly abreast of the “names” and currents in European theology—a facility on display in his eventual *Systematic Theology*. It is fair to say that the European sojourn gave to Hodge an ability to gauge European theological trends as they made their way (through publication

and immigration) to America. Hodge's ongoing correspondence with Continental friends made in the 1820s—both in France and Germany—would prove significant in connection with American missionary endeavor in Europe and for the sake of securing holdings for the Princeton library.

Hoffecker treats at length Hodge's literary role in the heated contest between Old and New School Presbyterians, culminating in 1837 (chs. 14–21). We see Hodge in this setting as a moderating literary voice: he is concerned about the potential for harm in tendencies at work in the New School (the love for voluntary agencies, a perceived slackening of concern for theological orthodoxy), yet he is also concerned about the ferocity and readiness for desperate measures on the part of an "ultra" party of Old Schoolers as they worked to force the excision of their opponents. In this connection, Hoffecker offers an especially sensitive depiction of the partial estrangement that entered the relationship between Hodge and his now-elderly mentor, Archibald Alexander, as the release of the younger man's *Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church* (1851) served to vindicate the Old School party against their New School counterparts. Hodge achieved this literary purpose by depicting his Old School as the continuation of the emphases of the "Old Light" movement of the preceding century, a movement characterized by wariness towards the Great Awakening. It was Alexander's view that Princeton stood so directly in the lineage of the "New Light" (Awakening-friendly) party of the preceding century, that Hodge's depiction disappointed him. One is left to wonder, as Hoffecker skillfully untangles the threads of this period, how much Hodge's desire to vindicate the current Old School party (which he had originally supported with some reluctance) did not move him to "tilt" his analysis of the Awakening period from what it might have yielded in more pacific times.

There are further, excellent examples of Hoffecker's work as a historical theologian. Among these is his treatment of Hodge's literary exchanges with Horace Bushnell of New Haven (ch. 17), carried on in the pages of the *Princeton Review* over the question of the nurture of the children of Christian believers; Bushnell had published his influential *Christian Nurture* in 1847. Hodge parted ways with Bushnell *not* over the importance of nurture for the children of believers, but over the question of whether the Holy Spirit's work in regeneration was confined to it. Notable as well is the treatment (ch. 18) of Hodge's gradual and almost imperceptible shift from holding that slavery was permissible but best gradually ended to holding that it was an evil thing for a Christian to perpetuate it since it involved the division of families, the denial of education, and the hindering of the evangelization of those subject to it.

Hoffecker is also in fine form in detailing (ch. 25) the controversial literary relationship that existed between Hodge and his onetime substitute (during his 1820s sojourn in Europe), John W. Nevin. Hoffecker is not afraid to show that Nevin, of Mercersburg Seminary, understood John Calvin's sacramental theology better than did Hodge and that the latter, at times, unfairly disparaged Nevin's position by attributing to him views that he did not in fact endorse. Here one observes that Hoffecker is certainly in no bondage to Hodge's first biographer.

For this reviewer, there is a special sense of gratitude to Hoffecker for his chapter 33 in which the aged Charles Hodge is shown to have thrown his heart and soul into the cause of the Evangelical Alliance (founded 1846). When that Alliance convened in New York City in 1873 after earlier gatherings in five European cities, Hodge gave an impassioned address on "Christian Union," in which he emphasized the spiritual unity—already in existence, yet under-recognized—of evangelical believers in all communions. If the reader should think (as did some who listened) that such notions seemed strange springing from the lips of one who seemed to epitomize Old School Presbyterianism and its theology, Hoffecker

reminds us that Hodge had been writing with the evangelical family in view as early as his engaging manual of instruction for believers, *The Way of Life* (1841).

We should be grateful that 2011 brought us such a bumper crop on Hodge. Many of us will do well to read but one Hodge biography; if that must be, let it be Hoffecker's *Hodge: Pride of Princeton*. Here is a man in whom were united deep piety and doctrinal conviction.

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Sean Michael Lucas. *God's Grand Design: The Theological Vision of Jonathan Edwards*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2011. 224 pp. \$17.99.

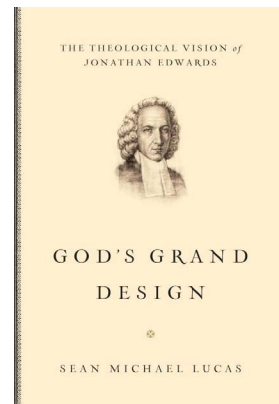
Jonathan Edwards has been called many things: America's theologian; the theologian of revival; America's evangelical. To this list, Sean Lucas adds "theologian of the Christian life" (p. 11).

Edwards wrote, "I felt in me a burning desire to be in everything a complete Christian." To that end, the American theologian devoted his heart and his mind to grasp the meaning and the depth of the Christian experience and to share it with others. Thus, the pastor-theologian wrote and preached what he lived. Since Edwards's concerns of 250 years ago remain the concerns of committed Christians today, Sean Lucas wrote this volume dedicated to explaining the theological heartbeat of America's greatest theologian.

Lucas is well-equipped to explore the mind of Edwards and present his theology in the language of the church. Lucas began writing this book when he served on the faculty at Covenant Theological Seminary, though by the time he completed it he was serving as pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. In addition to his other books, he also co-edited *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards* (Baker, 2003) with D. G. Hart and Stephen Nichols.

Over the years many Edwards scholars have attempted to locate the "center" of Edwards's theology. Perry Miller presented Edwards as a philosophical artist. Stephen Holmes read him as a proto-Barthian. Allen Guelzo's masterwork pointed to Edwards's understanding of faith. John Piper famously summarized the loci of Edwards's thought in the glory of God. Here Lucas, too, sees the glory of God as the summa of his life's work but finely nuances his thesis by arguing that this is best seen in Edwards's theology of the Christian life: "Christian life that started with God's glory and ended with all creation returning that glory" (p. 11).

For Edwards, the Christian life, argues Lucas, must be understood in light of God's grand design, that is, the "cosmic purpose of God himself—namely, for God to glorify himself and enjoy himself forever" (p. 23). To explain Edwards's thesis, Lucas divides the book into two intimately related parts: the metanarrative of God's plan of salvation and the personal application of that plan. To that end, Lucas presents his case systematically, first considering the Trinity, creation, fall, redemption, and consummation, each time highlighting Edwards's theological commitments and concerns. In this first half of the book, Lucas follows in broad strokes Edwards's own understanding of the history of redemption, making the case that "history serves to advance . . . God's purpose in uniting all things in



himself, his determination to glorify himself by emanating and remanating his own delight to and from his creation” (p. 43).

The second half of *God's Grand Design* follows this same redemptive pattern, this time at the personal level of application. Beginning with the work of salvation at the individual level, Lucas contends that Edwards believed that “God grants his people spiritual knowledge so that they might delight and rejoice and love him” (p. 88). The remainder of the Christian life, Lucas suggests, displays this beatific concern as he explores the role of the affections, the life of virtue, and the various means of grace in Edwards’s writings. In the end, the teleological end, the pilgrimage of the Christian life does not end at death but truly begins as it fulfills God’s purposes. As Lucas closes, “To die well is to have longed to delight in God’s glory and to have prayed for God’s kingdom because in heaven those longings will be satisfied eternally” (p. 189).

God's Grand Design offers much to the reader. Lucas has produced a well-read and well-written summary of Edwards’s theology. Lucas knows the Edwardsian corpus and knows how to explain it. The author deftly takes very difficult theological concepts, concepts often muddled in contemporary discussions and frequently confusing in Edwardsian works, and presents them in a way that both the experienced scholar and the uninitiated lay person can understand. From the theological constructs that defined Edwards’s Trinitarian analogies to his immensely helpful, but often misunderstood, exploration of affections to his glorious visions of heaven, Lucas handles all with clarity. Anyone looking for a good summary of a broad swath of Edwards’s thought, particularly those unable or uninterested in wading into the much deeper waters of other treatments, would do well to read this book.

For readers looking for more than a simple overview of Edwards’s theology, *God's Grand Design* offers that as well. Each chapter is well-documented. Lucas references a broad body of Edwards’s work. Rather than depending too heavily upon the vast field of contemporary interpretations, Lucas uses everything from Edwards’s sermons to his treatises and the “miscellanies” in between, allowing Edwards to explain Edwards. While some readers will complain that in his far-ranging research Lucas overlooks Edwards’s more philosophical works like *Freedom of the Will*, Lucas’s approach is helpful in that Edwards developed his ideas in the laboratory of his Christian life for the benefit of others living theirs (p. 199). The sermons and more accessible works are simply the practical outworking of the more difficult concepts explored elsewhere. Edwards did this himself. Lucas wisely follows that example here.

In addition to masterfully integrating Edwards’s theology of glory with the practical aspects of the Christian life, Lucas offers two useful appendices. Displaying the breadth of his own reading, Lucas first offers the novice an annotated bibliography of the most important of Edwards’s works and the secondary literature necessary to understand those works. Lucas offers an excellent chapter along these same lines in *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards* (pp. 228–47). The second draws upon both aspects of Lucas’s vocational life, the pastor and the professor, and seeks to guide would-be undershepherds into the vital area of the minister’s spiritual formation as Edwards saw it. Here Lucas summarizes the lessons Edwards learned during his ministerial youth, lessons about “how we as Christians and particularly as ministers of the gospel should live for God’s glory” (p. 209).

There is much to commend Sean Lucas’s latest work, *God's Grand Design*. Excellent writing and thoroughness are the hallmarks of this exceptional volume. While any reader interested in Edwards or the Christian life might enjoy this book, in the hands of the right reader it becomes a shining example of what the academy can do for the church when it turns the eyes of God’s people toward the glory of God’s

work in redemptive history that “they might participate and communicate in the eternal happiness of God” (p. 27).

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Martin Luther. *Luther's Works*. 55 vols. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan et al. St. Louis: Concordia; Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress, 1955–1986. 22,446 pp. Logos Bible Software Edition. \$259.00.

Logos Bible Software has recently teamed up with Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Press to bring what is currently the largest collection of Martin Luther's works to Logos 4. This collection is a welcome addition as it had been a void when many of Luther's previously available resources had become unavailable.



At fifty-five volumes and 22,446 pages, the print collection would look impressive on anyone's bookshelf, but the print version would also set you back significantly at a retail price of \$1,870. While there is still a market for printed books, students and scholars need to consider this collection in electronic format. The power at the user's disposal, created by Logos's ability to search and integrate such a large collection, is unprecedented.

These volumes are a great mix of different types of writings. They include Luther's lectures, sermons, devotionals, and monographs. They cover a broad range of topics from eight volumes on the book of Genesis to an entire volume dedicated to liturgy and hymns. One of the volumes included that has served people well for quite some time now is Luther's *Table Talk*. Many of the earlier print editions of Luther's *Works* did not include this volume (vol. 54, p. xi).

The real power of this Logos edition lies in the ability to search the entire collection in seconds. The print version comes with an index. However, that index does not include every single word nor does it consider phrases. With this collection, you can search for any word or phrase, and the results are returned to you in a matter of seconds.

Consider the example of someone researching the topic of justification, something Luther wrote about frequently. You could go to the index (vol. 55) and look up the word and then have to comb through every single volume to look at each reference. However, with this collection in Logos, you can search for the term justification and immediately get a result of 727 occurrences in 514 different sections, occurring in every volume. Imagine the time saved by being able to scan through the results instead of having to search through each volume. The power of Logos is in the ability to search. Dozens of hours could be saved, and this is just one example. Other examples such as “papist” return results of 1,759 results in 50 different volumes. The time redeemed in searching is added time for research or sermon preparation.

As digital media continues to grow, collections like *Luther's Works* will become more helpful. In Logos, when a source references another source you have in your library, the program automatically links you to the source so you do not have to find it yourself. This is another time saver, especially when more contemporary writers reference Luther. Cross-referencing sources has never been easier. And as

Logos' collection of historical theology grows, it is only going to make this edition of *Luther's Works* more helpful.

Another helpful feature of *Luther's Works* in Logos is the ability to access the collection with an iOS or Android device. Logos has worked hard to create a mobile app that allows you to take your library wherever you go. As you read and make notes in your mobile app in *Luther's Works*, those notes and highlights are synced back to Logos' servers, so when you look at the sources on your computer, the notes and highlights are exactly how you made them on your mobile device. Logos truly has created the finest portable library that can fit into your pocket.

I have been using Logos on and off for the last twelve years. When I switched to using an Apple computer, I quit using Logos because the Logos experience on a Mac was simply unhelpful. Now that Logos has demonstrated they can handle multiple platforms and are committed to developing for PC's, Mac's, and mobile devices, I have been back using Logos daily for the last three years. The platform has changed the way I research and study and in the process has saved me countless hours I can put back into my pursuits. The benefits of owning *Luther's Works* in Logos far outweigh the benefits of owning them in print. *Luther's Works* is a valuable addition to Logos and will be helpful to anyone considering the topics the reformer addresses.

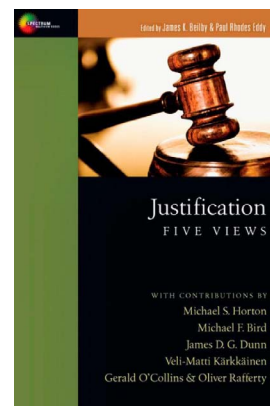
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— SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND BIOETHICS —

James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy. *Justification: Five Views*. Spectrum Multiview Books. Downers Grove: IVP, 2011. 319 pp. £15.65/\$25.00.

Historically the doctrine of justification has garnered ample attention, as it stood as the prominent dividing line between Protestant and Catholic understandings of soteriology. In recent years this discussion has become more nuanced, particularly with the entry of the New Perspective on Paul, as well as the new Finnish interpretation of Luther. One can quite easily get bogged down in the various details of this debate, and thus James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy have done a great service to the church and academy in bringing together five scholars who clearly articulate the various viewpoints on justification.

Beilby and Eddy are both professors of theology at Bethel University. They have edited a number of books in the "multiple perspective" format, and this is certainly a great addition. Their purpose was to have specific scholars engage with the topic of justification and defend their position in a biblical, historical, and theological fashion (p. 10). The work begins with two chapters by the editors where they give a brief historical survey of the doctrine of justification and also delve into more recent debates, interacting most specifically with the New Perspective on Paul. Each of the remaining chapters contain the contribution of a specific scholar



detailing their view on justification, followed by responses from the other four contributors who point out areas of agreement and also divergence in relation to their own view.

Michael Horton begins this volume's contributions with the traditional Reformed view of justification, which is "functionally identical" in all significant theological aspects to the traditional Lutheran view (p. 10). Michael Bird elucidates a mediating approach between the New Perspective and traditional Protestant perspective. James Dunn capably explicates the New Perspective and its impact on understanding the issue of justification. The new Finnish view of Luther has garnered much discussion, and Velli-Matti Kärkkäinen describes how such a perspective fits well with the Eastern doctrine of deification, all the while demonstrating his passion for an ecumenical rapprochement on this issue. Finally, Gerald O'Collins and Oliver Rafferty represent the Roman Catholic view, and it is a helpful addition as Protestants can hear this perspective directly from Roman Catholic theologians.

This is an excellent work for introductory study—though certainly not exhaustive—on this crucial subject. The editors state in the preface that a good book dealing with multiple perspectives must address an important and debated theological issue, be capable of clear definitions, and contain positions that are identifiably distinct from one another (p. 9). Certainly this work meets such criteria. Alongside the distinct positions represented, one should note that the introductory chapters detailing the historical and contemporary factors of this debate on justification superbly summarize this topic. As such, the book is well-structured and helpfully orients the reader to the details of the debate.

In assessing the various viewpoints represented, one can note a fair degree of disparity in engaging with the biblical text. Part of this stems from the fact that the contributors are made up of both biblical scholars and systematicians. Specifically the essays by Kärkkäinen, O'Collins, and Rafferty do well in engaging with the historical and theological details of their various positions, but the biblical text, while engaged to a degree, seemingly receives short shrift. Kärkkäinen makes his view quite clear that Luther's understanding of justification should entail a belief in theosis, "real-ontic" participation with God, and that justification is both declaring and making one righteous. One must ask, however, why Luther would be deemed a heretic by the Catholic Church should this be his view. Also, it appears that Kärkkäinen is driven in his conclusions by a desire for ecumenism as well as documents such as "The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" (Kärkkäinen does interact frequently with Luther's corpus). As such there is relative inattention given to biblical exegesis. Similarly, the Catholic view receives a very helpful historical treatment and a personal testimony, but Scripture is not specifically engaged. This results at times with contributors talking past one another as they seek to define their position.

While the last two chapters of this work—as helpful as they were historically and theologically—were left exegetically wanting, this is not the case with the chapters by Horton, Bird, and Dunn. While the New Perspective has been quite polemical in their castigations of the "old perspective," it would appear in this chapter that Dunn seeks to affirm much in traditional Lutheran readings in his analysis of the biblical text. As such, his reading comes across more as a "both-and" approach, though the accent still falls on exclusion of Gentiles from covenant membership instead of a failure to keep the law of God, which seemingly misconstrues Paul's emphasis. Bird's chapter holds many similarities to Dunn, though he stresses that one is brought into the covenant family by means of a forensic declaration of a new status in Christ. While exegetically a very strong chapter, Bird does caricature the Reformed view on several points, particularly regarding imputation. Horton makes a strong defense of the Reformed position, affirming imputation and demonstrating that justification is a forensic, courtroom term denoting a legal

status. Horton's essay and responses to the other contributors throughout demonstrate a fitting balance of exegetical, historical, and theological rigor.

Many more details could be explicated from this work, as it is an excellent introduction to the current debates surrounding justification in the midst of a proliferation of publications on the topic. Justification is a crucial doctrine for rightly understanding issues of sin, atonement, conversion, and righteousness. As such, this work is definitely worthy of study and engagement, and is written at a level that can be read by pastors, students, and scholars alike.

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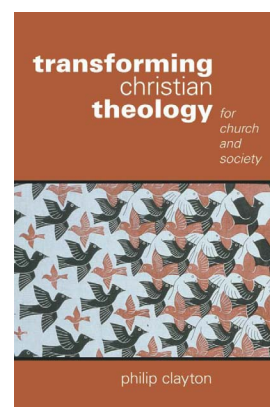
Philip Clayton. *Transforming Christian Theology: For Church and Society*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010, x + 182pp. £11.99/\$16.00.

Many books and discussions these days advocate the transformation or transforming of church, missions, spirituality, leadership, and just about any aspect of theology one can imagine. Philip Clayton, a noted philosophical process theologian at Claremont School of Theology, echoes themes we have seen in a recent preponderance of literature within the "Emergent" conversation that express dissatisfaction with the mediocrity of status quo evangelicalism and mainline denominationalism. Indeed, the book's foreword is by Tony Jones, former National Coordinator for Emergent Village, with back cover endorsements by Brian McLaren and Phyllis Tickle, who are both sympathetic to such visions of transformation.

Clayton urges us to put theology back into "the churches and to ordinary people" and "stop delegating theology to specialists" (p. 2). After all, he submits, "*Doing theology is just thinking about your faith*" (p. 2). One can readily appreciate Clayton's call to make theology relevant for the church by transforming it to the needs of today. He urges people to follow Jesus rather than remain immersed in the polemics of academic theology.

In part one, Clayton notes that church and the landscape of culture and thought has radically changed, so our approach to theology must also change. With the advent of postmodernity, and its impact on the media through the Internet, Facebook, and YouTube, change will be constant. We must embrace and adapt to these changes if the church is to responsibly incarnate the Spirit of Christ today (pp. 59–60). In order to implement this, for Clayton, we must reflect on our "world-and-life views" (abbreviated as "WLVs"; pp. 20–22). Clayton contends that a WLWV is simply the shape of one's theology when belief in God is present. Our WLVs must be applied to our local community context and humanitarian challenges while drawing upon the Wesleyan Quadrilateral of Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason, among other theological sources that include contemporary culture, other religions, and prayer.

Following Clayton's plea for a transformation of the way we think about and do theology, he returns again to changes in intellectual history, and the transition from modernity to postmodernity (pp. 27–33). The uncertainties ushered in with postmodernity require that we honestly acknowledge our doubts



and uncertainties about our faith, and join with others who are also struggling “on the Way” (pp. 40–41). In concluding part one, Clayton emphasizes once more the changes that have occurred in churches and denominations while pleading that we manage this change through honest discussions with denominational leaders by developing progressive ministry forms for the future and by rediscovering a “big tent” Christianity, emphasizing a shared “gospel of hope” instead of “historical differences” that divide us (p. 53).

Although Clayton’s unifying vision is to be commended, his verbiage at this juncture seems simplistic and vague. Certainly, we must seek unity of our essential convictions with brothers and sisters in Christ across cultures, denominations, and theological backgrounds. But does the answer lie in neglecting our historical differences? Clayton appeals to the postmodern, but he seems to focus his attention on the need for relevancy. His agenda for social relevancy combined with his unified vision of a “big tent” Christianity betrays a larger indebtedness to modernity than it does to postmodernity. The postmodern critique intentionally looks toward the value of the particular, without ignoring the local community, and communally shaped themes of understanding. Variety and difference are important qualities for a truly postmodern ecclesiology. If this is right, then it would seem that we would want to demonstrate wholehearted commitment to our particular faith traditions while building bridges with those outside our traditions, learning from their faith practices while emphasizing common core Christian commitments. Later he rectifies this a bit, but at this juncture in the book, he leaves the reader wondering.

Clayton dedicates part two to transformative theologies based on the need for radical change. He aptly stresses that Christianity must be expressed in and through the church. In spite of his proposals for sweeping change, he maintains a robust view of the church as the visible manifestation of the body of Christ: “The church is the incarnation of the Spirit of Christ in any given age, the body of Christ when Jesus no longer walks the earth. For better or worse, in its various communal manifestations it becomes his representative on earth” (pp. 59–60).

Again, Clayton implores us to get beyond a “two camp” approach of conservative and liberal (pp. 63–64, 118–24) and return to “big tent” Christianity manifesting an openness for both “seekers” and believers to “wrestle” with questions of faith (p. 68). First, for Clayton, we must identify our own theological convictions. This is done by looking to what he identifies as the “Seven Core Christian Questions”:

1. Who is God?
2. Who is Jesus?
3. Who is the Spirit?
4. What is humanity?
5. What is sin and salvation?
6. What is the nature and function of the church?
7. What is the future about?

Each of these areas is easily placed within classic theological categories such as theology proper, soteriology, ecclesiology, etc. We must offer a clear statement in our churches and Christian communities on these basic issues so that our activities reflect our theology.

To facilitate building the bridge from theology to practice, Clayton submits that our theology must be embodied within our personal narratives (pp. 79–84), committed to conciliatory efforts across various expressions of Christianity. If we work as allies instead of enemies across our denominational

and theological divisions, it will help our Christian voice be expressed the “strongest and clearest” (p. 93). Here Clayton provides an excellent admonition and more carefully nuanced contribution to his call to a “big tent” Christianity. He also challenges us to practice a theology of “self-emptying,” just as Christ emptied himself for us. We must be selfless in our practices, reaching out to those who suffer injustices and oppression, forsaking our own comforts of the familiar for the unfamiliar. The mindset of Jesus in Phil 2 is the mindset to which we are also called. Again, Clayton should be applauded for his call toward humility as a necessary character quality of the church seeking a transformational theological outreach to the broader community of Christ and society.

In part three, Clayton calls for vibrant Christian theologies that move outward from the church to the transformation of society. He titles chapter sixteen “From Church Ministries to Missional Churches.” He draws upon the work of Tom Sine, Brian McLaren, Eddie Gibbs, and Ryan Bolger to exhort the reader to discover “fresh ways to communicate” to the postmodern generation (p. 131).

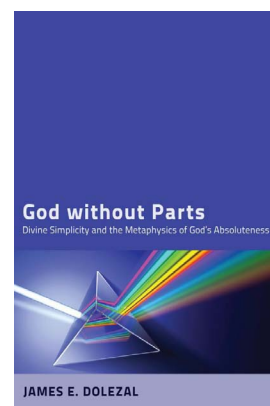
Part four concludes the book by suggesting conversational questions to help “foster transformational dialogue” in our diverse faith communities with the goal of moving toward a “big tent” Christianity that stimulates change in individuals and society.

Although his calls for transformation and renewal are appreciated, this reader struggled to find a great deal that is new and fresh in what Clayton is saying. As mentioned before, the book seems to promote similar values in accord with the plethora of literature of a similar genre in the past decade or so with respect to postmodern ministry and/or the “emergent conversation” in Christian ecclesiology. His emphasis on cultural and ecclesiological change seems at times repetitive and overstated. Clayton clearly communicates and effectively substantiates his claims about change, but he reemphasizes this to such great extent it becomes fatiguing. Nevertheless, the book certainly deserves a place in the ongoing conversation about the relevancy of the church faced with the postmodern critique. Clayton’s clear insights along with his enthusiastic, yet no less irenic spirit, are to be commended throughout the book.

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James E. Dolezal. *God without Parts: Divine Simplicity and the Metaphysics of God’s Absoluteness*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock. 2011. 260 pp. £18.52/\$29.00.

I remember the incredulity with which, as a young Christian, I first greeted the claim that God is a “simple” being. God is *simple*?! What in the world could be more complicated than God? How could the Lord whose ways are far beyond our ways be considered *simple*? The incredulity was dispelled once I learned that “simple” is a technical philosophical term meaning “not composed of parts.” The doctrine of divine simplicity is thus the teaching that God, unlike his creation, is not composed of parts. God isn’t “made up” of entities that are more fundamental or ultimate than he is. Rather, God is an absolutely unified, indivisible, spiritual being. In short, there’s nothing *in* God that isn’t *identical* to God.



Thus explained, the idea of God's simplicity seems more reasonable and appealing. Yet many Christian philosophers today treat the doctrine of divine simplicity (DDS) with almost the same degree of incredulity as I once did. They do so not because they don't understand what it means, but because they're confident that they *do* understand what it means. For example, they will argue that if DDS is true then God's attributes—his goodness, power, knowledge, and so on—cannot be external to him or internal parts of him. In other words, God's attributes must be *identical* to God: God *just is* his own goodness, power, knowledge, etc. But it isn't immediately clear how to make sense of such a claim. Moreover, if God's attributes are taken to be *properties* and if God is identical to his attributes, it follows that all God's attributes must be one and the same property—and that property must be God. So according to DDS, God is a property. But how could a property be a *person*? How could a property create the world or speak to Abraham or become incarnate and make atonement for our sins?

Such deductions explain why DDS, which was practically a nonnegotiable of medieval theology, has fallen on hard times. Into this contemporary theological context steps James E. Dolezal with a penetrating book-length defense of the doctrine of divine simplicity.

The central thesis of *God without Parts* can be stated fairly succinctly. If God is truly an absolute being (i.e., if God is utterly self-existent, independent of and unqualified by any other reality), then DDS must be true. Furthermore, DDS can be defended against many of the common objections leveled against it, most of which fail to understand its claims and theological motivations. Even if some serious perplexities remain, that's an acceptable philosophical price for maintaining God's absolute existence. To put the point somewhat paradoxically: if DDS is false, God is less than God.

The opening chapter might well have been titled, "The Rise and Fall of the Classical Doctrine of Divine Simplicity." Dolezal concisely surveys the history of the doctrine, focusing first on its "friends" and then its "foes." Almost to a man, the church fathers held to DDS and routinely deployed it in their theologizing. DDS was later endorsed by Boethius and Anselm, but the development of the doctrine reached its apex in the classic treatment of Thomas Aquinas, whose greatest contribution was to explicate the distinction between *existence* and *essence* (roughly, "whether something is" versus "what something is") and to argue forcefully that for God, and God alone, existence and essence must be identical. Thomism remains the dominant tradition among Roman Catholic theologians and philosophers, so it comes as no surprise to find DDS still defended (albeit with some reservations) in those circles today. Among Protestants, however, enthusiasm for DDS has waned over the last few centuries. As Richard Muller has documented, the Reformers and their scholastic heirs accepted Thomas's version of DDS with little question, in spite of their sharp theological disagreements with him in other areas. John Owen, Francis Turretin, and Herman Bavinck all viewed the doctrine of simplicity as essential to Christian orthodoxy. It would be historically inept, not to mention theologically myopic, to reject DDS for fear that it's a "Catholic doctrine."

Yet despite its pedigree DDS has come under considerable fire recently from conservative Protestants. More than a few Christian philosophers have renounced the doctrine—Christopher Hughes, Thomas Morris, Ronald Nash, John Feinberg, and William Lane Craig, to name only five—but perhaps the most biting criticisms have come from the most influential Christian philosopher of our generation: Alvin Plantinga. In large measure, *God without Parts* is pitched as a forthright pushback against this trend within our own theological tradition.

Chapter 2 sets out to explicate DDS by the time-honored *via negativa* ("way of denial"). Various "models of composition" (ways in which one thing can be composed of other things) are identified, and

in each case it is denied that the model applies to God. In contrast to his creatures, God is not a mixture of act and potency, has no bodily parts, is not a form-matter or supposit-nature compound, cannot be “categorized as a species in a genus,” is not a substance with accidents, and—perhaps the strongest and most controversial entailment of DDS—is not composed of essence and existence. Rather, God’s essence (*what* God is) and existence (*that* God is) are strictly identical, each being identical to God. Dolezal’s exposition, by his own admission, closely follows that of Thomas Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae* I.3. One concern about this chapter, and indeed of the book as a whole, is that (following in Aquinas’s footsteps) it appears to take Aristotelian metaphysics largely for granted. If you’re already comfortable with that metaphysics, the argument will make good sense. If you’re not (as, for example, a process philosopher would not be), then all bets are off. Such quibbles aside, the overall thesis of the chapter is an attractive one: if any one of these models of composition applies to God, it follows that ultimately something *other* than God accounts for his existence. Like us, God would require a cause or a composer (in the metaphysical sense). A denial of DDS thus amounts to a denial of God’s absolute self-existence.

Chapter 3 sets forth the theological rationale for DDS indirectly by exploring its connection to other traditional Christian doctrines. Dolezal contends that DDS offers a strong account of why God has five incommunicable attributes: aseity, unity, infinity, immutability, and eternity. The argument here is not that each of these doctrines (or their conjunction) implies DDS, but rather that DDS offers the best metaphysical explanation for these divine attributes. In each case Dolezal argues that God manifests that attribute *because* he is absolutely simple. So the contention is that DDS offers the best way—and perhaps the only conceivable way—of preserving these time-honored claims about the divine attributes. As Dolezal puts it, “It is God’s simplicity that promotes these doctrines of aseity, unity, infinity, immutability, and eternity to their status as genuinely incommunicable divine attributes.” Once again, there’s a sense in which this argument will be appealing only to those who already hold to a certain conception of God.

Chapter 4 explores in more detail the connection between DDS and God’s “absolute existence” (roughly the idea that God alone is the sufficient explanation for his own existence). Following the pattern of the previous chapter, Dolezal argues that DDS “enables us to maintain that God is identical with *that by which* he exists” (his emphasis). This is important not only for preserving the classical divine attributes but also for permitting an ultimate account of *all* existents. In good Thomist fashion it is argued that there can be *contingent* beings (like us) only if there is a being with *absolute* existence, a being whose existence is not dependent on any other being. While Dolezal doesn’t put the point so concisely, in essence he is arguing that were it not for DDS, nothing at all would exist. Another correlative, which Dolezal emphasizes at a number of points throughout the book, is that the being of God is *sui generis*. It is not the same “order of being” as that of the creation. God’s being and the creation’s being relate *analogically* rather than *univocally*.

Chapter 5 marks a shift in the second half of the book from exposition to defense. One of the main challenges faced by advocates of DDS is to explicate the relationship between God’s attributes. DDS has traditionally been taken to entail that God’s attributes are not diverse: each divine attribute is ultimately identical to every other divine attribute, and furthermore, each divine attribute is ultimately identical to God himself. This bold thesis has invoked howls of complaint, if not derision, from critics of DDS. What sense does it make to say that omniscience is really just the same as omnipotence and omnipresence? Aren’t they obviously different attributes? Still more problematically, to say that God is identical to his attributes is to say that God must be a property (since attributes are properties). But how could a *property*

(such as the property of being all-powerful) be a *person*? There seems to be a basic category mistake here. Drawing on various conceptual distinctions found in the Thomistic and Reformed scholastic traditions, Dolezal deftly explains why identifying God with his attributes isn't nearly as outlandish and incoherent as its critics make out. After critiquing a metaphysically weaker account of the divine attributes (the "Harmony Account") that fails to secure God's non-compositeness and thus his absolute existence, Dolezal endorses the recently developed "Truthmaker Account," according to which God himself (and God alone) is the "truthmaker" for true predications such as "God is omnipotent" and "God is omniscient." On this view, God himself plays the role, as it were, of the divine "properties."

Chapter 6 takes up two challenging questions concerning the implications of DDS for God's relationship to his creation, given that the latter is both complex and contingent. As Dolezal formulates the questions: (1) "How can a simple God have a proper knowledge of many *different* things without thereby possessing a complex intellect *composed* of many different ideas?" (2) "How can a simple God exercise volition inasmuch as all willing seems to add some sort of actuality to the one willing?" Here again, Dolezal's answers closely follow Aquinas: "God knows all non-divine things in knowing his own essence [and he] wills all non-divine things in willing the goodness of his essence. The primary object of God's knowledge and will is himself, while creatures are always secondary objects." On this view, it is argued, God can be identical to both his knowledge and his will; thus his absolute existence and independence from his creation are not jeopardized.

The second of these claims, however, raises a very knotty problem to which the entire following chapter is devoted. How can God's simplicity be reconciled with his freedom? If God is identical to his own will, including his will to create the world, how could his will be *contingent* in any real sense? Doesn't DDS entail that God *necessarily* wills to create? Whatever theological merits DDS might have, sacrificing God's freedom seems far too high a price to pay! Dolezal considers and ultimately rejects two proposed solutions, one from Norman Kretzmann and another from Eleonore Stump. After questioning (rightly in my view) the presumption that divine freedom must be construed in terms of "counterfactual openness" (which requires God to "stand deliberatively before a range of possibilities" and involves a real movement from "could will" to "does will"), Dolezal concedes that a residual problem persists: it's very difficult to conceive of God's free will in a way that it doesn't imply *some* kind of movement from potentiality to actuality. In the end, Dolezal appeals to divine incomprehensibility: "Though we discover strong reasons for confessing both simplicity and freedom in God [viz., both are required by the Christian doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*], we cannot form an isomorphically adequate notion of *how* this is the case. In fact, this confession of ignorance is precisely what one finds in the Thomist and Reformed traditions." I'm sympathetic to this move, but I wish a little more had been said about what *justifies* an appeal to divine incomprehensibility in this instance, given that theologians presumably don't have *carte blanche* to play the mystery card at any time in order to excuse apparent incoherencies in their positions.

God without Parts is a book about a simple God, but it is not a simple book. The argument is dense throughout and, in good scholastic fashion, is developed in terms of some highly technical metaphysical distinctions. It does not make for easy reading, but the effort is repaid because the book represents the most thorough and up-to-date explication and defense of the doctrine of divine simplicity from within the Protestant tradition. Dolezal has given us a fine example of Reformed philosophical theology: historically informed, confessionally observant, ecumenically oriented, and analytically rigorous.

Despite its many virtues, however, I must note that *God without Parts* does almost nothing to address two common objections to DDS from confessional Protestants. The first is that the doctrine lacks biblical support: it's a speculation wrapped in a deduction inside an extrapolation, one might say. For Roman Catholics, who hold a higher view of church tradition, that isn't much of a concern. (There's always the Fourth Lateran Council, which in 1215 canonized the claim that God is "absolutely simple.") But for theologians committed to *sola scriptura*, the *prima facie* lack of biblical support is troubling. One solution here is to argue that DDS may be deduced "by good and necessary consequence" (WCF 1.6) from the biblical teaching about God's attributes, particularly divine aseity. Dolezal points us to this approach in the introduction to chapter 3, but other than a passing reference in chapter 1 to Exod 3:14–15 (traditionally viewed as a proof-text for DDS), little else is said about the biblical support for the doctrine or even about the putative need for such support. (An alternative approach would be to argue that DDS is a legitimate piece of *natural* theology.)

The second objection to DDS is that it conflicts with the doctrine of the Trinity. Consider the answer to Question 9 of the Westminster Larger Catechism: "There be three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties." On the face of it the catechism is teaching us that each of the persons is the one God, yet there are still *real distinctions* between them, and those distinctions are grounded in their possession of unique *properties*. The problem is this: DDS seems to rule out both real distinctions within God and the possession of properties by God (compare the discussion of divine attributes in chapter 5). I'm not suggesting that this problem cannot be resolved; I'm merely observing that Dolezal barely acknowledges it. (A passing reference to the objection can be found in a quote from Louis Berkhof on p. 10.) In the book's index, "Trinity" is conspicuous by its absence—likewise "Bible" and "Scripture."

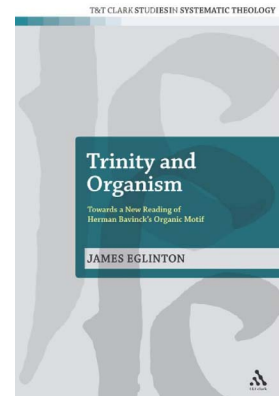
The upshot of these omissions, whether intentional or not, is that Dolezal doesn't offer us a particularly *Christian* defense of DDS. (Paul Helm, writing in the book's foreword, apparently felt obliged to give a brief defense of the compatibility of DDS with the doctrine of the Trinity and to highlight the biblical basis for God's "unsurpassable greatness.") This is not to say, of course, that the book is *anti-Christian*! Yet an orthodox Jewish or Muslim philosopher could be entirely comfortable with Dolezal's explication of divine simplicity; indeed, the Muslim might take it as a fine defense of the Islamic doctrine of *tawhid*. To repeat: my point is not that anything in Dolezal's defense of DDS is inconsistent with Christian orthodoxy, but only that a Reformed defense of divine simplicity ought to be conducted in a more self-consciously Christian context.

I trust that this criticism will not dissuade anyone from reading this fine book. "It is my hope," writes the author in his preface, "that this volume will revitalize the confession and defense of divine simplicity among orthodox Christians and will be a serviceable introduction to the doctrine for those who have hitherto found it elusive or impenetrable." There's every reason to think that if *God without Parts* is widely read and digested, that hope will be realized.

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James Eglinton. *Trinity and Organism: Towards a New Reading of Herman Bavinck's Organic Motif*. New York: T&T Clark, 2012. vii + 224 pp. £65.00/\$120.00.

With the relatively recent completion of the English translation of Herman Bavinck's four-volume *Reformed Dogmatics*, the larger theological community has begun to familiarize itself with this important Dutch theologian. Consequently, *Reformed Dogmatics* is becoming a standard theological reference for a growing number of theology students, pastors, and theologians. Bavinck's work offers readers not only a glimpse into one of the most influential theological minds of twentieth-century theology (Berkouwer and Barth both drank deeply of Bavinck before writing their own systematics), but stands as a high point in Reformed theology in the modern period. With this growing recognition of Bavinck's achievement comes a desire to better understand what is at the heart of his accomplishment.



In steps James Eglinton's *Trinity and Organism*. As the title suggests, Eglinton believes that the recurrent motif of the organic in Bavinck's theology is more than a favorite illustration; rather, it is at the center of his trinitarian theology. Eglinton begins his volume by taking readers on a fascinating journey through the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theological and social movements that shaped Holland. As he expounds the debates that captivated the Netherlands during this period—Groningen's ethical theology pitted against Leiden's rigorously naturalist, mechanical, deterministic theology—the *raison d'être* of Bavinck's own robustly orthodox retrieval for the modern world emerges.

But was Bavinck successful? In strong opposition to Jan Veenhof's influential thesis that Bavinck is something of a Jekyll and Hyde figure—constantly shifting between orthodoxy and modernity (the so-called “two Bavinck's hypothesis”)—Eglinton sees a much more sophisticated trinitarian motif unifying Bavinck's vision. To evince this reading, Eglinton must undo Veenhof's narrative surrounding Bavinck's organic motif. Contesting the assumption that Bavinck's frequent use of the motif represents little more than thinly veiled German Idealism foisted onto orthodox theology, Eglinton demonstrates (building on Brian Mattson's recent work) that the motif finds its provenance not as a reaction to Kant, but as a reclaiming of Calvin's own organic images. This being the case, Bavinck's regular appeal to the motif is not a thoughtless swallowing of modernity, but an intentional appropriation of his Reformed tradition to subvert modernity. What's more, Bavinck's use of the organic motif as a paradigm for the unity-in-diversity that marks the triune life of God reveals him as a preeminently trinitarian theologian.

To underscore this thesis, the second half of the volume revisits the numerous ways Bavinck employs this trinitarian motif. Among these, none is more important for the centrality of Bavinck's trinitarian vision than his theo-centrism. By subsuming dogmatics under the doctrines of Father (creation), Son (salvation), and Spirit (consummation), theology for Bavinck is nothing more or less than a discussion of the triune God. However, Bavinck's trinitarian theology includes more than the doctrine of the Trinity proper—all of history and nature is tied into the triune life of God. This is amplified in both the economic work of God in redemptive history and the fascinating reworking of the *vestigia trinitatis*: all creation is faintly marked by the unity and diversity of the three-in-one God. As Eglinton aptly summarizes, for Bavinck “a theology of Trinity *ad intra* leads to a cosmology of organicism *ad extra*” (p. 68).

Additional chapters further unpack the organic in Bavinck's doctrines of general revelation, Scripture, and ecclesiology. For example, when speaking about general revelation, Bavinck initially

mutates his organic theme. Yet when introducing the role of Scripture and faith in general revelation, the return of the organic theme reveals that general revelation goes unnoticed unless aided by the triune God. Again, by viewing Scripture as a single organism (unity-in-diversity), Bavinck counteracted the higher criticism of his day. The diversity of Scripture's authors, genres, and original audiences are pulled together by the triune God into a unified word that speaks through a diversity of voices. Or again, when addressing ecclesiology, Bavinck sees in the unity and diversity of the visible church not only an institution, but also the marks of an organism.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of Eglinton's work for Bavinck studies. This volume convincingly overturns a paradigm that has stymied the field, and it does so in a way that elucidates one of the most creative theological minds in the modern period. What's more, it does this while simultaneously offering an incisive overview of Bavinck's theology. This accomplishment is all the more valuable given Eglinton's rejection of a reading of Bavinck that ignores the problematic or unresolved issues in Bavinck's thought. The result is one of the best companions to Bavinck's theology in the English language. Eglinton's work leads the way for a new generation of Bavinck scholarship keen to advance Bavinck's vision for a capaciously Reformed, trinitarian orthodoxy capable of speaking with both integrity and relevance to our modern world.

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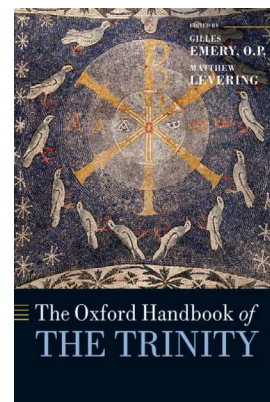
Gilles Emery, O.P., and Matthew Levering, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. xvi + 632 pp. £95.00/\$150.00.

The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity constitutes a major achievement, even in a market flooded with Trinitarian volumes. Editors Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering have assembled forty-three chapters grouped into seven sections:

1. The Trinity in Scripture
2. Patristic Witness to the Trinitarian Faith
3. Medieval Appropriations of the Trinitarian Faith
4. The Reformation to the Twentieth Century
5. Trinitarian Dogmatics
6. The Trinity and the Christian Life
7. Dialogues

Contributors herald from the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant traditions and for the most part represent the more conservative viewpoints of those respective traditions. Though the chapters vary in quality and rigor, as might well be expected in such an expansive collection, most are quite high quality. Some survey a particular area of Trinitarian study (historic or contemporary), while others are more polemical, and still others truly constructive. Each contributor is well apprised of the relevant literature on his or her topic, and each chapter includes a bibliography that will doubtless prove useful should readers desire to pursue further research.

In their introduction, Emery and Levering orient readers to the volume's most recurring themes, pointing to certain fundamental features common to the diverse currents of contemporary Trinitarian



enquiry. Among these the historical-mindedness of many modern Trinitarian theologians is most outstanding, and indeed historical studies are particularly dominant in this volume. The editors write,

What one means by ‘Trinitarian faith’ can hardly be understood outside of reference to the councils of Nicaea and Constantinople and to their reception: the doctrine of the Trinity is indissociably connected to the reading of Scripture through the ecclesial and theological traditions, with the result that the development of Trinitarian theology today appears generally as a creative reappropriation of the patristic and medieval sources. (p. 3)

Obviously, this review cannot attend in detail to the particulars of such a wide-ranging volume. Thus, a few of the outstanding contributions will be noted as well as a few criticisms offered.

In Part 1 (chs. 1–6), Khaled Anatolios (ch. 1) makes the intriguing observation that though the doctrine of the Trinity was developing at the same time the early church was wrestling with questions about the canon, no piece of biblical data for the Trinity was challenged on the basis of its canonicity. Christopher Seitz (ch. 2) boldly argues that the *literal* sense of the OT requires a Trinitarian understanding when its deliverances are properly grasped “in the light of Christ, as conveyed by the Holy Spirit” (p. 38). C. Kavin Rowe, Simon Gathercole, and Ben Witherington III offer useful discussions (chs. 1–3) of the Pauline corpus and Hebrews, the Synoptic Gospels and Acts, and the Johannine Literature. While each does a fine job of highlighting the Son’s divine status, more could have been done to differentiate this from Jesus’ status as “Son of God” in the probationary sense as second and last Adam, that is, according to his humanity.

In Part 2 (chs. 7–10), Stephen Hildebrand’s treatment of the pre-Nicenes (ch. 7) forthrightly acknowledges the erroneous and confused elements propounded by some of these early writers, yet he is careful to spotlight the genuine insights and advances made during this period, especially by Irenaeus. J. Warren Smith’s piece (ch. 8) provides a brief overview of the fourth-century fathers that amazingly avoids superficiality given the space allotted such a massive topic. His chapter warrants repeated readings.

In Part 3 (chs. 11–15), Dominique Poirel (ch. 12) charts the proliferation of Trinitarian analogies and the emergence of the doctrine of “Trinitarian appropriations” in the twelfth century, while Joseph Wawrykow (ch. 13) compares and contrasts Bonaventure and Aquinas, in particular their differing accounts over what constitutes the personhood of the Father. Russell Friedman (ch. 14) examines competing late-medieval models—one based on relations and the other on emanations—for explaining the constitution of the divine persons. Karl Felmy (ch. 15) recounts the Eastern Church’s reasons for rejecting the *Filioque* clause.

Part 4 (chs. 16–24) considers the Trinity from the Reformation to the present and is generally less interesting than the patristic and medieval discussions. Mostly this is due to the absence of major dogmatic advances during this period. Ulrich Lehner’s article (ch. 17) highlights anti-historical and anti-speculative tendencies that began to plague the confession of the Trinity in the modern era. His is an instructive and cautionary chapter. George Hunsinger’s study of Karl Barth (ch. 21) is enlightening, especially for understanding Barth’s hard dialectical distinction between the “immanent Trinity” and “economic Trinity.” One wonders if this dialectic might not partly account for the modern evangelical trend to draw a hard distinction between God’s essential being and his being in relation to creatures. Fergus Kerr (ch. 24) argues that modern analytic philosophy has not yet made a significant contribution to Trinitarian theology, though one wonders why such an observation is worthy of an entire chapter.

Part 5 (chs. 25–32) is chalk full of excellent dogmatic contributions. Kathryn Tanner’s piece (ch. 25) should go some distance in curing the murky-mindedness that often plagues Christians’ understanding of the relationship between biblical exegesis and a Trinitarian approach to reading the Scriptures. Her chapter should be read as prolegomena to Part 1 of this volume. Rudi Te Velde (ch. 26) offers a stout challenge to prevailing univocal understandings of the term “person” when said of God, insisting instead upon its analogical sense. While avoiding subordinationism, Emmanuel Durand (ch. 27) proposes a “paternal theocentrism” as a more biblical way to approach the Trinity than the currently popular filial theocentrism. Thomas Weinandy (ch. 28) argues that persons of the Trinity are not so much nouns as they are verbs, acts subsisting in relation to one another.

Parts 6 (chs. 33–39) and 7 (chs. 40–43) are overall the most disappointing in the volume, though not without a few noteworthy contributions. Geoffrey Wainwright’s discussion of the Trinity in liturgy and preaching (ch. 33) should convince church leaders that exposing the Trinity’s glory in the preaching, praying, and singing of the Church has historically been the most useful way to instill Trinitarian knowledge in the Christian layperson. Francesca Murphy’s study (ch. 37) illuminates how different aspects of prayer (invocation, meditation, and intercession) tend to focus the Christian alternatively on God’s unity and his plurality. Nonna Harrison (ch. 38) argues persuasively against feminist tendencies to replace the names of the Father and Son with feminine alternatives, and Frederick Bauerschmidt (ch. 39) critiques abuses in both Richard Niebuhr’s and the modern social Trinitarians’ models for relating the Trinity to politics. In their conclusion, Emery and Levering helpfully propose eight directives for the future of Trinitarian theology.

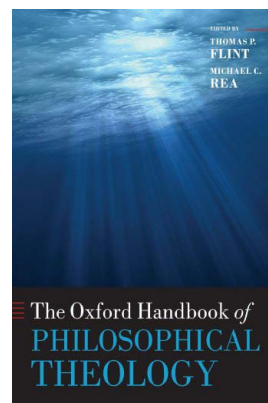
This volume should prove to be a great boon to those engaged in Trinitarian studies as well as to Christians more generally.

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Thomas P. Flint and Michael C. Rea, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. xi + 609 pp. £85.00/\$150.00.

The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology continues high-level introductions to various disciplines provided by the Oxford Handbooks Series. This particular volume, edited by Thomas P. Flint and Michael C. Rea, gives evidence of the radical resurgence of philosophical theology that occurred in the second half of the twentieth-century. An impressive list of twenty-six different philosophers contribute to the volume, which is divided into five sections (and twenty-six chapters): Theological Prolegomena, Divine Attributes, God and Creation, Topics in Christian Philosophical Theology, and Non-Christian Philosophical Theology.

Weighing in at over six hundred pages, this volume is difficult to summarize quickly. With that in mind, this review will introduce each of the sections, highlight the most exemplary chapters, and comment on the success and potential criticisms of the work.



The first section of the work discusses theological prolegomena. Inevitably, a theologian examining this handbook would cheer to see a section in which philosophers dealt with theological prolegomena. However, that same theologian would likely be disappointed with the section, for it is less about how (or if) one is justified in applying analytic concepts to the task of theology and more about the relationship between Scripture, tradition, and the church (Swinburne), the means of divine revelation (Davis), mystery in Christian theology (Wainwright), and the place of science in the Christian faith (Ratzsch). The disappointment on the theologian's part would certainly not come from the quality of the essays in this section, for they are indeed top notch. Yet this section reads much more like a philosophical introduction to and treatment of concepts relevant to theological prolegomena than a genuinely philosophical-theological prolegomena.

The second section of the book deals with the area that most likely comes to mind when one thinks of "philosophical theology," namely, a discussion of the divine attributes. In this section, the concepts of God's simplicity and aseity (Brower), omniscience (Wierenga), divine eternity (Craig), omnipotence (Leftow), omnipresence (Hudson), and moral perfection (Garcia) are given an in-depth examination. The essays in this section of the work are superb: they are precise and offer terrific (high-level) introduction to the topics at hand. However, being a volume on philosophical *theology*, this section is likely to receive further criticism from many contemporary theologians in that it pursues the attributes of God from a standpoint represented primarily by natural theology with little interaction with God's revealed identity in the pages of Scripture.

The third section of the work is dedicated to questions pertaining to God's acts in creation such as divine action and evolution (Collins), divine providence (Flint), petitionary prayer (Davison), morality and divine authority (Murphy), the problem of evil (Paul Draper), theodicy (Murray), and skeptical theism and the problem of evil (Bergmann).

The fourth section demonstrates what are the most properly theological topics with which philosophical theology deals such as the Trinity (Rea), original sin and atonement (Crisp), the Incarnation (Cross), the resurrection of the body (Merricks), heaven and hell (Walls), and the Eucharist (Pruss). This section provides the most intriguing material of the entire work. From Michael Rea's substantive introduction of the contemporary scene in Trinitarian philosophical theology to Oliver Crisp's innovative use of Karl Barth's doctrine of election to bolster a "realist" variety of penal substitution to Alexander Pruss's proposal of a "symbolic presence" view of the Eucharist, this section of the work steals the show. Indeed, those theologians who may be skeptical of philosophical theology's import for genuinely theological work need only examine this section to see that a quick dismissal of the discipline certainly will not do.

The fifth and final part of *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology* illustrates that much philosophical theology is being done outside of the Christian tradition. Dealing with Jewish (Frank), Islamic (Leaman), and Chinese (Berthrong) philosophical theology, these chapters show that genuine philosophical reflection in theological studies is not the invention of Western culture.

Before commenting on the success of the handbook, it is important first to mention an additional worry that may result from the release of this volume. As mentioned above, the contributors to this volume are first and foremost philosophers. And while this is certainly not a bad thing, at the very least it illustrates the attitude of most theologians towards philosophical theology. While many philosophers are often willing to carry their analytic tools to the theological field, theologians are unsure as to what extent their properly *theological* tools will be of any use in what may seem like the barren far-country of

analytic philosophy. While this reviewer is convinced that analytic philosophy can serve a useful purpose in theology, it is unlikely that this volume will convince any opponents of its legitimacy. Rather, those theologians searching for a justification of philosophical theology as a genuinely theological enterprise would be better served by looking to the chapters by Oliver Crisp and Michael Rea in *Analytic Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 2009).

Nonetheless, naysayers aside, this volume represents a rigorous and genuinely helpful and informative introduction to *philosophical* theology. The essays within are well-argued and competently survey the relevant literature for the given subjects. It is certain that a good portion of these essays will find their way into many syllabi and will become standard reading for graduate students (and advanced undergrad students) of philosophical theology. Of course, the hefty price tag accompanying this hardcover volume will solidify its use as a reference tool in the library rather than in the home office.

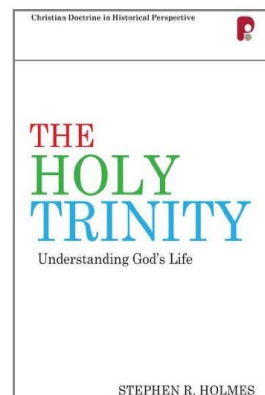
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Stephen R. Holmes. *The Holy Trinity: Understanding God's Life*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012. Xix + 231 pp. £19.99.

This is a volume in *Christian Doctrines in Historical Perspective*, a series edited by Alan Sell, and its author aspires to conform to its aim of reaching upper-level undergraduates. We are taken through the history of the doctrine from its biblical roots to its twentieth-century flower. Or are we? Is the flower an organically authentic growth out of those roots, especially as they become formed in the patristic era? Stephen Holmes thinks not, and this is the thesis he argues in this volume.

People have talked about a Trinitarian revival in the twentieth century, led by the likes of Barth, Rahner and Zizioulas. According to Holmes, it is, in fact, a novelty and not a revival. In the twentieth century, "There is generally a willingness to entangle the life of God with the history of the world, and often even a celebration of this move" (p. 32). The verb is telling and repeated at the end of the volume, where the author lists other modern shortcomings, in summing up the results of his foregoing account (p. 199). Holmes's exposition is not geared to a formal argument that the tradition got it right and the moderns got it wrong, though he does not hide his sympathies under a bushel. What he does argue is that two different things are going on. So this volume will help the reader be both informed on what the doctrine of the Trinity has meant historically (the exposition of doctrinal continuity over the centuries takes up the bulk of the volume) and warned about its twentieth-century fate theologically.

Stephen Holmes is a good, widely-read, and independent theological thinker, and this volume reflects it. Its aim seems to be quite well-achieved, although it is difficult to generalise here, for upper-level undergraduates vary a fair bit. The author is justified in presupposing that students will have some grasp of biblical materials, although a treatment of the OT such as that of Christopher Kaiser in *The Christian Doctrine of God* seems to me substantively more helpful than the discussion in this volume; but it is presumably directed at a lower-level undergraduate readership from the standpoint of Stephen



Holmes. The volume is not without lapses. A footnote on page 167 refers to ‘Melancthon,’ a typographical error repeated in the index where the said Reformer is awarded the Christian name of ‘Peter.’ Holmes seems to assume in this chapter that when Luther reputedly made the celebrated declaration at the Diet of Worms that he would need to be convinced by Scripture and ‘manifest reason’ (reflected in the author’s chapter title), he meant by reason an independent source of theological knowledge. But Hans Preuss long ago made a strong case, followed by Brian Gerrish, for example, for maintaining that Luther at this point meant inferential reasoning on the basis of Scripture. Holmes perpetuates the mistaken belief that Hegel thought in terms of thesis, synthesis, and antithesis (pp. 184–85), and I am not sure that one has to be infinitely prickly in order to take issue with what he says about Locke’s Trinitarianism, the Deists’ intellectual power, and continuities between Kant and classical Christianity (pp. 173–79).

As to the plausibility of the author’s argument about the relation of modern to traditional Trinitarian thought, it is hard to make a brief comment. It seems to me that he makes a good *prima facie* case for his position, but the force, though perhaps not the logic, of it depends somewhat on whether one believes that the tradition inaugurated by the Fathers requires a degree of correction from Scripture. Of course, even if it does, this does not entail that twentieth-century theological innovation provided such a correction. If we ask about the structure of the volume, rather than its argument, I wonder whether, even at upper-level undergraduate level, it is advisable to begin the volume with discussion of Barth’s claim that there is no *Logos asarkos* (p. 6). Despite Holmes’s well-taken introductory assurance that his audience can skip the footnotes, perhaps the audience will have a sense of being inducted into an ongoing contemporary argument before it has become fully aware of the rules. (If we do not skip the footnotes, note—with reference to what Holmes says about Barth and Dorner on page 8—Barth’s account of Dorner in *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*.) But the experience of theological teachers who use this volume may prove Holmes justified, for many of his readers will have had exposure to Barth.

Where reviewers do not need to flesh out those generalisations which commend a volume, they frequently do need to do so in the case of criticisms, and the resulting assessment risks seeming disproportionately critical. So let me underline that Stephen Holmes’s intellectual qualities are in evidence in his exposition, and it is a welcome contribution. [Kendall Soulen’s volume on *The Divine Name\(s\) and the Holy Trinity*](#), which reconfigures the debate over the Trinity, appeared too late (2011) for Stephen Holmes to take into account. It would have been interesting to see whether it would have made much difference to his argument; its fundamental thesis might have remained unaffected, but perhaps additional light would have been cast on the germane issues. Between them, the two volumes ensure that Trinitarian theology will remain alive and well for a little while yet.

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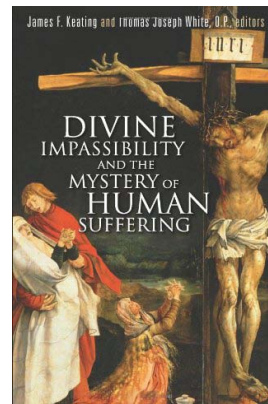
James F. Keating and Thomas Joseph White, eds. *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. x + 357 pp. £29.99/\$50.00.

Theology must address the concerns of the present if it is to serve the church that ministers in the world. Yet theology also owes its commitment to its own resources and its heritage, the communion of saints. Sometimes the pull of the present and the principles of the past seem at loggerheads. In our own day, the classical doctrine of divine impassibility has been seen by many to conflict with our deep, contemporary awareness of human pain and agony. It is precisely in a situation such as this that our greatest theological efforts are needed, and *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering* is meant to serve as a needed resource to shape future conversations along these lines.

The book comes from a conference hosted by Providence College in March 2007 on this perennial and pertinent topic. The essays range across the historical and dogmatic landscape. Chapters address the approach of the patristic era, Cyril, Hilary of Poitiers, Thomas Aquinas, and Karl Barth. Other chapters are organized topically, relating divine impassibility to a host of related doctrines, approaches, or problems: divine immutability, two natures Christology, patripassianism, the dereliction of Christ, divine transcendence, and divine providence. The contributors are top-notch, including Gilles Emery, Bruce Marshall, and Paul Gondreau among their ranks, to name but three. As with any collection of essays, the length and quality varies somewhat. In the interests of space, I will highlight only a select few.

Perhaps the most interesting feature involves the scuffle between Thomas Weinandy and Robert Jenson. In his essay “God and Human Suffering: His Act of Creation and His Acts in History,” Weinandy unpacked Jenson’s account of God, his actions in history, and the manner in which he creates (p. 100). He argues that Jenson’s project will not hold together: “His view of God renders God impotent to create, and so his articulation of God as Creator is, as a consequence, philosophically, utterly naïve and, theologically, wholly inadequate” (p. 104). The key concern for Weinandy is that a being that is “in act in one manner and is capable of being in act in a subsequent manner through change” could not create from nothing (p. 105). Thus, Jenson’s revised doctrine of God—as only defined from the future—cannot be held together with his traditional understanding of creation from nothing. Weinandy goes still further and suggests that not only creation but the acts of God in history, namely, the gospel story, cannot be performed by this kind of God, as described by Jenson (pp. 109–16). Then in the introduction to his chapter “Ipse Pater Non Est Impassibilis,” Jenson responds with exasperation that Weinandy transgressed some rules of the conference, even more so that Weinandy judged Jenson’s past proposals by a foreign metaphysical rule. Jenson notes that all theologians carry the burden of thinking of God after the “profound questions raised by pre-Christian Greece’s religious thinkers, and in responding to transform them” (pp. 117–18).

Surely the most important essay in the volume is Paul Gavrilyuk’s “God’s Impassible Suffering in the Flesh: The Promise of Paradoxical Christology.” The chapter summarizes much of the work done in his remarkable monograph *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought* (Oxford Early Christian Studies; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Gavrilyuk points to the importance of noting the context and intent of divine impassibility in patristic thought: “divine impassibility is primarily a metaphysical term, marking God’s unlikeness to everything in the created order, not a



psychological term denoting (as modern passibilists allege) God's emotional apathy" (p. 139). I might add that this distinction marks a crucial need of the hour: for advocates and critics alike of the classical tradition of divine attributes to inquire after its original intent (e.g., recent criticisms of the language of instrumentality as applied to Christ's human nature show little to no awareness of its intent; one could say the same thing for criticisms of Thomas Aquinas's denial that God has real relations with us, a statement that can sound ghastly if taken out of context but which has a perfectly comprehensible meaning when one takes it on its own terms). What Gavriilyuk terms "paradoxical Christology," then, follows these patristic thinkers in holding together two things that seem contradictory but, biblically and in light of the gospel, are not: "God, as God, does not replicate what we, as humans, suffer. Yet in the incarnation God, remaining God, participates in our condition to the point of the painful death on the cross. Remaining impassible, God chooses to make the experiences of his human nature fully his own" (p. 148).

As in a number of essays published elsewhere, Bruce McCormack's essay in this volume ("Divine Impassibility or Simply Divine Constancy? Implications of Karl Barth's Later Christology for Debates over Impassibility") seeks to show that Barth cannot be read as a Chalcedonian theologian, if by that description one means that he remained committed to the metaphysics implicit in the Chalcedonian definition; of course, McCormack does not mean to suggest that Barth is not Chalcedonian, though he wants to identify Barth's Chalcedonian commitment as, we might say, according to the spirit and not the letter (p. 158n20). His thesis is blunt: "Barth's later Christology leaves no remaining room for *any* doctrine of divine impassibility" (p. 184). McCormack argues that Barth's revised doctrine of election (in *Church Dogmatics* II/2) led him eventually to revise his doctrine of God in such a way that impassibility has no validity. McCormack realizes that Barth is not fully consistent in this regard, whether before volume four or even throughout that magisterial fourth volume of the *Church Dogmatics* (p. 172n58). As we have come to expect from McCormack, he provides a nuanced reading of and beyond Barth; one wishes only that his proposals could be put in direct conversation with, say, the patristic studies of Paul Gavriilyuk. Even if we were to accept McCormack's reading of Barth, is Barth's theology really so far from the paradoxical Christology of Cyril? The verdict is still out, it seems. And, of course, many of us continue to find a more classical reading of Barth to be entirely plausible, even if not without its own exegetical complications, which would reframe the debate entirely (as argued, for example, by George Hunsinger and John Webster).

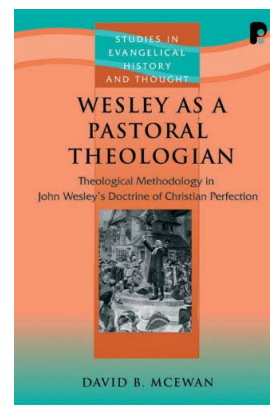
The debate about divine impassibility is not ending anytime soon. Students and pastors could do no better than read through this volume to gain understanding of the resources in the tradition and the challenges raised against it. Essays by Emery and Marshall, Weinandy and Gavriilyuk, for instance, will help see the biblical reasoning and philosophical critique intrinsic to the long-standing tradition regarding divine impassibility so that criticisms of that tradition will not be plausible unless they are nuanced and truly engaged with the material claims of the patristic and medieval fathers. And essays by Culpepper and McCormack will demonstrate the lively revisionary process that has been ongoing in the last few decades and, indeed, has roots much deeper in the tradition of kenotic Christology so that students can see the various impulses and approaches toward revision. Because the gospel is only as

good as the character of its God, we must carefully consider our thinking about the triune God revealed in Jesus Christ. This book will be a genuine help in that regard.

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David B. McEwan. *Wesley as a Pastoral Theologian: Theological Methodology in John Wesley's Doctrine of Perfection*. Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2011. 239 pp. £24.99.

Although the study of John Wesley's theological method has received great attention since mid-century, the field continues to support fresh perspectives. One of the latest comes from the hand of David McEwan, Academic Dean and Senior Lecturer in Theology at Nazarene Theological College in Brisbane, Australia. After Albert Outler coined the term "Wesleyan Quadrilateral" in the 1970s, students of Wesley have been groomed to use it as a model for theological interpretation so that even an elementary student of Wesley would recognize Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience as the methodological grid of choice. Though the Quadrilateral has had its detractors, McEwan does not consider himself among them. Rather, this author seeks to revise Outler's model in light of the postmodern conscience and its particular emphasis on community.



This study begins with the assertion that the Quadrilateral has been employed statically and frequently overlooks Wesley's pastoral concern. The consequence is the mistaken questions regarding the interrelation of the elements. Is there a hierarchy in the ordering of the elements? Is Scripture superior to the others? Can doctrine be based on some but not all of the elements? How does the Holy Spirit relate to the elements? It is this final matter which McEwan identifies as the real fault in the way the Quadrilateral has been viewed. The absence of a place for the Holy Spirit in the model is not inherent but is the result of misuse. McEwan proposes a new way of viewing the model.

McEwan's constructive case builds on and lends further support to the consensus that Wesley was foremost a pastoral theologian. McEwan discerns that the Holy Spirit is not merely a corollary to the Quadrilateral but is really *the* energizing authority. The case proceeds through a chronological survey of Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection. The narrative begins with the general context in which Wesley was born, proceeds to his experience at Oxford, then his leadership of the Methodist movement, and ends with the theological reflection of his mature years. The survey seeks to identify the remarkable consistency of Wesley's emphasis on love and relationship throughout his career. Central to love and relationship is the person of the Holy Spirit. McEwan concludes that a revised model of the Quadrilateral should make the Holy Spirit the center; that is, all of the elements must somehow rely on and point to the Holy Spirit.

In his revised model of Wesley's Quadrilateral, McEwan adopts the metaphor of a neural network in which the Holy Spirit is the energizing influence. Rather than following the typical order in which Scripture is given the prominent place of authority, he equates all of the elements but suggests they are static apart from the energizing influence of the Holy Spirit. In essence, there is only one authority—the

Holy Spirit—without which any of the elements serve their purpose. The elements are interlinked by the Spirit so that in a given circumstance any of the means may be employed as authoritative. Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience are not tools at our disposal, but means controlled by the Holy Spirit for bringing us to the knowledge of the truth. The Spirit, however, does not exist in a vacuum, but in a community of believers. The community is where the Holy Spirit operates and utilizes the elements of the Quadrilateral. Rather than “tradition,” McEwan prefers “community ethos” to encapsulate the progressive nature of Christian community.

The author states that part of the purpose of this study is to discover whether or not John Wesley had a distinctive theological method. Are we to presume that Wesley’s emphasis on love and community is distinctive? McEwan neither argues for distinctiveness nor supplies clarity on what that distinction may be. To accomplish this goal, one would expect a comparison of Wesley’s theological method with that of others. But this is not what we have here; this study is strictly a study of Wesley’s theological method in comparison to how it has been generally understood in the past. There is virtually no attention given to the overall distinctiveness of it, which is probably for the better. This does not mean that his outcome was not distinct—indeed, his doctrine of Christian perfection is commonly understood as distinctive by both its adherents and detractors.

Although the book is not intended to break new ground in Wesley’s doctrine of Christian perfection, it certainly provides a fresh look at the doctrine. The previous classics written on the topic—William Sangster’s *Path to Perfection* (1943) and Harald Lindstrom’s *Wesley and Sanctification* (1946)—were written in quite a different era though they continue to be influential. I wonder though how sure a conclusion can be if it is based on a case study acknowledged to be the subject’s “most controversial doctrine.” Nonetheless, the angle that makes this study peculiar is not so much the doctrine of Christian perfection as much as its concern with Wesley’s communal context.

In my estimation McEwan has achieved the “more appropriate model” he set out to construct, and it should be noted and explored further. The author has accurately described the typical use and identified the problem with the Quadrilateral. His portrayal of Wesley’s actual theologizing more accurately places Wesley in line with the Reformed emphasis on Spirit and the Word. Never did Wesley separate the authority of Scripture, tradition, reason, or experience from its source in God Himself. Furthermore, the effort to integrate divine authority in the person of the Holy Spirit working in community is to be commended as a good use of post-modern concern. One should not conclude from this study, however, that the Holy Spirit has been entirely lacking before now. Unless one has an inferior and naturalistic understanding of Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience, the Holy Spirit is not absent from any one of the elements though perhaps ignored. For instance, Scripture has been given the place of prominence in the Quadrilateral by many Wesleyans on the basis of the doctrine of inspiration. None of the elements need to be viewed statically or used such. McEwan fails to give any attention to this aspect of the Spirit’s presence in the Quadrilateral. Nonetheless, I believe the author’s attempt to bring the Holy Spirit to the foreground is laudable for two reasons: (1) it provides a way of understanding the interrelation of the elements, and (2) it raises to prominence the divine authority that was intended to be infused into theologizing in the first place.

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Werner Neuer. *Heil in allen Weltreligionen? Das Verständnis von Offenbarung und Heil in der pluralistischen Religionstheologie John Hicks*. Gießen: Brunnen Verlag, 2009. 315 pp. £29.95.

In translation, the title of this book is *Salvation in All World Religions? The Understanding of Revelation and Salvation in John Hick's Pluralistic Theology of Religion*. Werner Neuer has given us a study of John Hick's theology that models fairness, objectivity, and the virtue of thoroughness (Gründlichkeit), which is so highly prized in German writing. The subtitle makes it clear that the orientation of this study is primarily theological, but Neuer does not neglect the philosophical arguments where they are relevant. He ends up on a highly critical note (all one needs to do is to look at the last page to see where Neuer's analysis is heading), but he resists the temptation to write in a polemical tone. Instead, he proceeds step by step, laying out aspects of Hick's theology, attempting to clarify it, providing Hick's own defense of it, and then, finally, presenting criticisms that are so nuanced that they sound virtually understated. These critiques include both internal ones, such as inconsistencies and *non sequiturs* in Hick's thought, as well as external ones, demonstrating why Hick's analysis does not fit into traditional Christian theology.

Neuer begins with a quick look at the teaching of the Christian church prior to the twentieth century and finds that, regardless of the confessions or the mode in which it is understood, an exclusivist understanding of salvation has always been the dominant, if not the only, position within orthodox Christianity. The new intercultural experiences of the twentieth century and the rise of secular cultural pluralism have challenged the church to take a stance on how Christianity relates to the various religions that are now in our proximity. Neuer uses the tripartite division that has become standard in this type of discussion: exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism, where Hick, of course, represents the pluralistic option. Having used these three alternatives myself for a long time, I must say that I find them decreasingly helpful. Could we not apply the term "inclusivist" to Hick as well since all religions are supposed to lead to salvation insofar as they represent the model that he advocates? And going one step further, does the term "exclusivist" not ultimately apply to Hick as well since he rejects all models but his own?

Neuer agrees with John Hick in the assessment that all religions in some way or other intend to bring a person to salvation, however construed (p. 82). It appears to me that one has to either limit the meaning of "religion" or stretch the meaning of "salvation" in order to make that statement fit. For some religions (e.g., traditional religions, Confucianism, or contemporary forms of Judaism) personal salvation is not an operative concept. A step in the direction of making this assertion more meaningful is to follow Hick in deriving his model from religions of the "axial age," roughly located in the sixth century B.C., when most of the world religions originated (p. 142). The term was originated by the philosopher Karl Jaspers (p. 143), who limited "axial" religions to those that originated specifically in this era. Hick uses "axial" as much as a descriptor as a historical referent. He includes religions after the axial age as well, so as not to exclude, say, Christianity or Islam; thus "post-axial" is his preferred term. Nor does he rule out religions prior to the axial age insofar as he can find his basic scheme in them.

As Neuer scrutinizes the thought of John Hick, he finds some difficulties with Hick's concept of salvation. The problems start with the fact that Hick's soteriology begins, not with conceptual insights based on the academic study of various world religions but on his personal experience in encountering non-Christian religions (p. 87). Hick saw something that cannot be seen, namely, that behind the details of specific actions and languages, members of all religions are opening themselves to a common Reality that induces them to an equal degree to justice and love among people and that they appear to be equally

successful in doing so (p. 92). The obvious question presents itself how Hick could gain that insight, given the specific way the members of the religions themselves describe their beliefs and whatever they consider to be salvation, which are certainly disparate from each other. They worship Allah, Shiva, or Jesus; they do not see themselves as making contact with “The Real.” Insofar as Hick has an answer, it is that the individual believer does not have the opportunity to see the larger picture and so cannot recognize the underlying truths that unite all particular religions.

But then, as Neuer points out (p. 255), the concept of salvation would need to undergo a conceptual transformation, with Christianity being one, though not the only, example. In Christian theology salvation is usually understood as an either-or phenomenon. Depending on the confession, you either are baptized or not, you hold membership in the Church or not, you have faith in Christ or not. For Hick, salvation (i.e., a relationship with the impersonal and indescribable Real) brings about fruit slowly, manifesting itself in a growth in ethics and spirituality, which it may take more than one lifetime to achieve by one person.

To maintain such claims, one should be able to rely on divine revelation, and that is exactly what Hick does. For him, what the axial age signifies more than anything is that it was a time when religion started to be based on revelation. However, as Neuer demonstrates (pp. 147–61), Hick’s version of what constitutes “revelation” turns out to be rather vacuous. The common Christian understanding of revelation consists of the idea of a personal God communicating propositional truth to one or more human beings. But if you remove all of the content words from the previous sentence, you have a description of Hick’s view of revelation.

First of all, for Hick, revelation is not an event in which certain people received some kind of communication. In fact, Neuer points out that on this point (i.e., who actually receives the revelation and how) Hick has never been specific or clear. We must be satisfied with the idea that there is/was revelation, but must cease picturing revelation along the line of God’s sending ideas into a person’s mind, writing words on tablets or speaking to a prophet. Second, the idea of a personal God is already a human conceptualization and places an unwarranted limitation on the origin of revelation. Beyond our inadequate picture of a personal God, we need to remind ourselves, lies the unknowable numinous Real, which is beyond personhood. Finally, according to Hick, revelation cannot be a disclosure of some truths, let alone propositions. What is being revealed is, just as the Real, beyond words or rational description. Human beings clothe the revelation with words and concepts, but the revelation as such transcends all such limitations.

Then how can one say that there is a revelation at all? If it does not consist of something that can be reduced to propositional content and, furthermore, if it cannot be checked for truth because its ultimate subject, The Real, is also beyond our concepts, how can we say that there is meaningful revelation at all? Let me quote Neuer on this point:

For Hick, the decisive distinguishing feature of post-axial religion does not consist of a “revealed truth” or “doctrine of redemption,” however formulated, but in its (albeit limited) phenomenologically knowable soteriological effectiveness. . . . The quality of the revelation of a religion is evidenced decisively insofar as it has persevered in demonstrating its spiritual efficacy and power over history. (p. 146, emphasis his, translation mine)

In other words, we can say that a religion is based on revelation once we see that it has lasted for a long time in providing salvation to people, and the meaning of this salvation is that the person has begun a

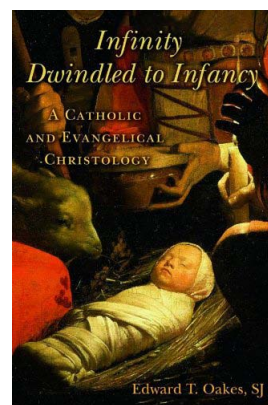
relationship to The Real. The fact that the revelation of The Real is authentic is credited to its salvific efficacy. We are driven in a circle from one vague term to the next.

Clearly, there is no way in which a review can do justice to Neuer's book because, given the nature of a review, it is bound to be more polemical than the book itself. Since the greatest virtue of the book is its thoroughness, one cannot reproduce that feature in a few short pages. Neuer concludes in no uncertain terms that John Hick's theology of religions and traditional Christian theology have very little, if anything, in common. For the careful documentation of each step along the way, I heartily recommend this book.

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Edward T. Oakes, S.J. *Infinity Dwindled to Infancy: A Catholic and Evangelical Christology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. 459 pp. £29.99/\$44.00.

The Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT) project is now eighteen years old. Opinion remains divided over the 1994 document and its attempts at rapprochement between the two ecclesial traditions. Where it addresses key Reformational concerns, such as justification, it remains most controversial. But where it addresses the broader concerns of Christian theology, there is significant agreement, most notably in the statement's first affirmation: "Jesus Christ is Lord." On this score, Jesuit theologian Edward Oakes, who has participated in the ongoing ECT dialogues, writes, "What always struck me is how little divides us (at least in my estimation) in matters of Christology. . . . For that reason, I cannot help but think that a return to the confession that does indeed unite us—the Lordship of Christ—might serve as a lodestar if we hit other doctrinal storms along the way" (p. xii). These ECT discussions form at least part of the subtext for Oakes' book, *Infinity Dwindled to Infancy: A Catholic and Evangelical Christology*. For this reason, this significant new volume on Christology deserves attention from evangelicals no less than Roman Catholics.



In the opening chapter, Oakes develops a theme that runs throughout the book, namely, the paradoxical nature of the incarnation. According to Oakes, this paradox has often been captured best by Christian poets. Indeed the title of Oakes' book is taken from a poem by nineteenth-century Jesuit priest and poet Gerald Manly Hopkins. For Oakes, attempts to explain away the paradox of the incarnation run the risk of heresy. The mystery of God becoming man—the infinite becoming finite—is, in a sense, a datum known only to faith. It is in this sense that Oakes intends his volume to be "evangelical": he is seeking to develop a Christology from within the faith rather than an apologetic addressed to those outside of the faith.

In chapters two and three, Oakes treats the biblical data in two steps. First, utilizing a "synchronic approach," he addresses the "surface data" of the NT (ch. 2). Here, Oakes takes the biblical text at face value, so to speak, without addressing christological development in the early church or the specific concerns of the individual biblical authors. He tackles this surface data by examining the various

christological titles applied to Jesus in the NT. Taking his cue from Oscar Cullman, Oakes examines titles that refer to Jesus' earthly work (Prophet, Suffering Servant, and High Priest), his future work (Messiah and Son of Man), his present work (Lord and Savior), and his preexistence (Word, Son of God, and God). Second, utilizing a "diachronic approach," Oakes addresses the history of the data, that is, the development and production of the NT (ch. 3). Here, he briefly summarizes the christological teaching of the evangelists, Paul, and Jesus himself. He also addresses the historicity of such miraculous events as the resurrection and the Virgin Birth. Oakes rejects any theory of early Christian development that sees a radical divergence between an earlier "low Christology" and a later "high Christology." Instead, Oakes argues that even the earlier strata of NT writings (e.g., Paul and Mark) betray a Christology "from above," presenting Jesus in all of his humanity, to be sure, but from the perspective of his "celestial identity" (p. 85).

The remaining chapters trace the development of Christology in its various historical phases. Oakes addresses the usual suspects: the conciliar developments of the Patristic period, the major medieval theologians (Anselm, Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Scotus), the Christologies of the Reformation (both Protestant and Catholic), and the Protestant Christologies from Schleiermacher to Barth. But Oakes also addresses some neglected christological voices from the past. For example, he includes an extended section on Maximus the Confessor, the great seventh-century defender of dyothelitism, including an excursus on the monothelite controversy. He also includes a chapter on "Christologies of the Heart" (e.g., Pietism and Sacred Heart devotion) and a substantial discussion of nineteenth-century German and British kenotic Christology.

Perhaps especially helpful for Protestant readers are Oakes's two chapters on modern Catholic Christology. On the issue of Christology and pluralism, he examines more "liberal" voices like Rahner and Sobrino and more "conservative" voices like Balthasar and Ratzinger, as well as several recent magisterial statements on the doctrine of Christ. While more liberal Catholics have argued for something close to full-fledged religious pluralism, more conservative theologians have attempted to hold together both the universality and the uniqueness of Christ's redeeming work, opening the door to a more inclusivist position. As an example of the latter approach, the late John Paul II argued that "the universality of salvation means that it is granted not only to those who explicitly believe in Christ and have entered the Church" but also to those who may have no access to the gospel but who nonetheless freely cooperate with the grace of Christ as it is revealed to them (p. 404). Christ is still the savior, but explicit faith in him may not be necessary for those who have yet to hear the gospel.

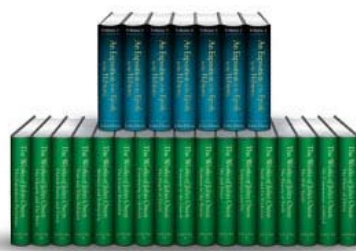
Oakes's work covers a remarkable amount of territory in just under 500 pages. His treatment of the biblical material is insightful, even if it is truncated: there is no extended discussion of the OT's Messianic hope. Oakes's historical survey helpfully summarizes the church's long history of reflection on the person of Christ, but it stops short of addressing some significant contemporary developments (e.g., the christological reflections of contemporary analytic philosophers). Protestant readers will find some points to quibble over (e.g., his occasional jabs at Luther), but for the most part Oakes does an admirable job of defending our common christological confession. Perhaps most problematic for evangelical Protestants are the inclusivist tendencies of even the more conservative Roman Catholic voices in the pluralism debate. Conservative evangelicals will want to go much further in their response to modern religious pluralism; that is, apart from explicit faith in the proclaimed gospel, there is no hope of salvation (Rom 10:14–16). These points of disagreement notwithstanding, Oakes's Christology

should prove to be a valuable resource for evangelical scholars seeking a fresh defense of Chalcedonian Christology from a Roman Catholic perspective.

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John Owen. *The Works of John Owen*. 24 vols. Edited by William H. Goold. London: T&T Clark, 2009. 13,000+ pp. Logos Bible Software Edition. \$399.95. <http://www.logos.com/product/6382/the-works-of-john-owen>.

For over three hundred years, the writings of John Owen have been prized among the greatest theological literature ever produced in English. A theological giant of his time, Owen was the author of dozens of theological treatises covering the full scope of Christian doctrine. He was widely read and appreciated for his exegetical and theological meticulousness, as well his adroitness in polemics and argumentation. For many, Owen's work defines the high-water mark of Reformed Scholastic theology.



Unfortunately, when Owen is read today, it is rarely to draw on the full range of his thought across the spectrum of Christian dogmatics, but more typically to derive benefit from this or that reflection on the Christian life. And though his works have been collected and published in various stages of completion since at least 1721, the depth of his insight has often been obscured under the sheer breadth of his writings and, of course, beneath his (in)famously obese style of prose. Consequently, Owen is often passed over for the more simple and colloquial style of Calvin. And yet Owen's works are brimming with largely untapped insights into many places where Calvin's theology tended to lack definition or specificity, most notably in the case of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Hopefully, the recent digitalizing of Owen's works by Logos Bible Software will help to right this wrong. Based on the 1862 edition published by Johnstone & Hunter and edited by William H. Goold, the collection includes all seventeen volumes of Owen's collected occasional writings. This includes the somewhat elusive, though for the specialist indispensable, original Latin text of *Theologoumena Pantodapa*, an important treatise on the nature of theology, theological method, and the history of redemption, which was not included in the more recent Banner of Truth publication of Owen's works. The collection also includes the seven volumes of Owen's assiduously researched theological commentary *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*.

Having never used Logos before but having been familiar with programs like BibleWorks and Accordance, I found the program design to be relatively simple and easy to use, though I did benefit from watching the instructional videos on the website. The program is available on both PC and Mac, and now also available for the iPhone and iPad, giving fewer reasons than ever to fundamentalists of the pencil and page, like myself, to resist the dawning of a new age.

But Logos wants you to think of it as a *library*, more than a Bible program—and as far as libraries go, they offer more books than you have shelf space. The chief benefit of buying books through Logos is that, unlike your home or office library, your digital library is portable and digitally indexed, enabling

you to search or quickly cross-reference between books in your library. And there can be little doubt that the ability to sift through large amounts of material to find paragraphs with the greatest topical relevance or to locate the occurrence of any exact phrase is a huge advantage, especially for busy pastors and serious theological students. Furthermore, the ability to quickly reference dictionaries ostensibly minimizes the linguistic barrier for those without Greek and Hebrew interested in approaching authors like Owen, who make liberal use of the languages.

Of course, this functionality increases in usefulness in proportion to your investment in the platform, and so some users will want to purchase sets of books, like Owen's works, alongside one of Logos' base packages, which come with an assortment of biblical texts, commentaries, and reference works. Invest carefully, though. Digital books are cheap, and they live forever; but natural selection has its place in literature, too. Many of the books that digital publishers use to pad these library packages have always walked with a limp, and some of them deserve to die from the herd.

At \$399, the collection of Owen's Works is roughly the same price as buying the hardback Banner of Truth edition brand new, but with the obvious benefits of portability and searchability.

I, myself, am something of a fundamentalist of the pencil and page, but as a PhD student researching the theology of John Owen, these kinds of features are critical. It is not unrealistic to think that in the near future Internet technology will provide these kinds of features and functionality for free, but until then those who depend on this technology cannot do better than Logos.

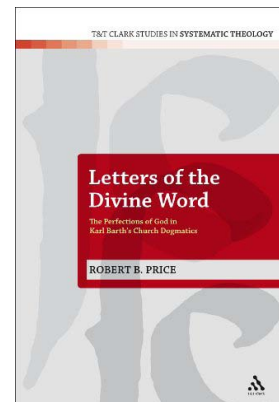
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Robert B. Price. *Letters of the Divine Word: The Perfections of God in Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics*. Studies in Systematic Theology. London: T&T Clark, 2011. v + 210 pp. £70.00/\$130.00.

The divine attributes have a longstanding history throughout the Christian tradition. While there has been a supposed recovery of trinitarian theology, the divine attributes have often been neglected in contemporary discussions regarding the doctrine of God. Furthermore, despite the growing interest in the theology of Karl Barth, his treatment of the perfections of God in *Church Dogmatics* II/1 has received little attention. *Letters of the Divine Word* is a revised dissertation by Robert Price, Assistant Professor of Theology at Talbot School of Theology, and seeks to fill the gap in both studies on Karl Barth and the perfections of God in modern theology.

It should be made clear from the beginning that this is not primarily a constructive work on the divine attributes. Rather, it is "an exercise in the genre of commentary" and therefore is "an attempt at a close reading and analysis of a single text, rather than an endeavor to argue a specific thesis" (p. 1). Most of the book presents and interprets Barth's argument, and therefore Price acts as a tour guide through the twists and turns of *CD* II/1, clarifying the terrain and pointing out key issues that one might easily bypass or misunderstand. Therefore, although this work is a running commentary on *CD* II/1, Price consistently engages the best of recent scholarship in



order to clarify Barth's views and explain central concepts and categories. The book is divided into five chapters. The first four chapters focus on the four paragraphs that make up *CD II/1*:

- Chapter 1: The Being of God as the One Who Loves in Freedom (§28)
- Chapter 2: The Perfections of God (§29)
- Chapter 3: The Perfections of the Divine Loving (§30)
- Chapter 4: The Perfections of Divine Freedom (§31)

Chapter five summarizes the theological decisions that shaped Barth's account and looks at the possibilities for future research.

"The being of God as the one who loves in freedom" is one of the key phrases for Barth that is shorthand for his entire doctrine of the divine perfections. Barth treats the divine loving first, pairing three groups of perfections: grace and holiness; mercy and righteousness; patience and wisdom. The divine freedom includes unity and omnipresence, constancy (i.e., immutability) and omnipotence, and eternity and glory.

This arrangement is out of "dogmatic necessity" and does not imply any kind of "competitive relationship" between love and freedom or their respective attributes. Rather, for Barth this follows the logical order of divine revelation where we first learn of divine love and then of divine freedom. The reciprocal and dialectical relationship between the two means that each is necessary and fulfills the other even though they are distinguished. In other words, God's freedom and loving are equally central to God's identity. However, as Price notes, interpreters often isolate or privilege one or the other (e.g., "McCormack's proposal might be said to represent an overemphasis on the divine loving" [pp. 10–11]), but this is not what Barth is proposing. Furthermore, in speaking of the divine loving and freedom, Barth "is appealing to trinitarian categories" (p. 13) where the perfections describe the common essence of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (cf. pp. 53, 177). A final important aspect of *CD II/1* is "Barth's relentless campaign against nominalism" (p. 191). This move owes its origins to Barth's view of the Trinity where God's revelation of himself is identical with his immanent life as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There is not a different "God behind God" than the one we see revealed in Jesus Christ.

Price's conclusion does not offer a substantial assessment of Barth's view, but this was not his aim. Rather, "in light of much misinterpretation [and] necessarily preliminary to any such assessment," Price presents "the clarification of precisely what Barth does and does not affirm" (p. 185). Three crucial theological decisions stand out: "(1) to ground everything [Barth] says about the perfections exclusively in God himself, (2) to expound the perfections explicitly as those of the very essence of God, and (3) not to abstract those perfections from their implications for the Christian life" (p. 186). These decisions are "the keys" to Barth's account and are consistently fleshed out throughout Price's work with great care and precision.

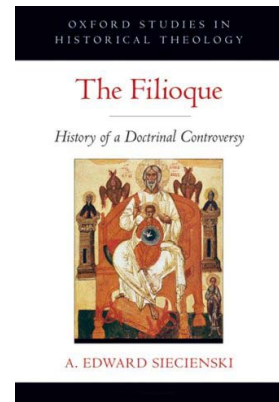
Overall, Price presents a clear and compelling account of Barth's view of the divine perfections. Readers less familiar with Barth should still find Price to be a careful guide through *CD II/1*. This work is neither a dry nor boring theological commentary, nor does Price become distracted with current scholarship or narrow conversations within Barth studies. Therefore, Price should be commended for producing a work with great wisdom and balance that contributes not only to Barth studies, but also to the small but growing discussion on the divine attributes. Pokrifka's recent work on Barth (*Redescribing*

God [Pickwick, 2010]) is a helpful supplemental text, but Price's work stands out as the best book available on the perfections of God in Barth.

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A. Edward Sicienski. *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy*. Oxford Studies in Historical Theology. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. ix + 355 pp. £30.00/\$49.95.

The *filioque* controversy is one of the more notorious clashes in church history. Not only is it seen as one of the (if not *the*) major issues dividing the Eastern and Western churches, but is often understood as a debate between two stubborn and unforgiving churches whose desire for subtle doctrinal superiority trumps unity. Sicienski provides us with a monumental achievement in breadth as he canvasses the filioque debates. Starting with the NT material on the procession of the Holy Spirit and moving through the debates to the twenty-first century, Sicienski offers a case study in church conflict. He goes far to show that any stereotyping of this debate is unhelpful, and he honestly assesses many situations where pride, language barriers, and political situations are the catalysts for driving a deeper wedge between East and West (rather than the doctrinal issues themselves). Sicienski's overview reads like a narrative introduction to East/West relations where different eras of history prove to be more amenable (and sometimes decisively less so) than others. Furthermore, his assessment is fair and balanced, showing how both sides ultimately failed to prioritize the unity of the church over an issue that, at various times, was considered settled.



What was perhaps most interesting was the issue of the Catholic church using the *filioque* in its liturgy. Even when the issue was considered settled, where the East affirmed that a correct notion of *filioque* was both an ancient and adequate *theologoumenon*, the main worry was its use in both creedal and liturgical situations. This issue rests on both the insertion of the *filioque* into the creed itself, a move that the East has always denied as a legitimate use of power (when only an ecumenical council has the authority to do so), as well as the reality that a unified church needs a unified creed. This issue is particularly important because of the ecclesial implications in the Catholic church. Even Catholic scholars who affirm that the *filioque* should not have been added to the creed have a much harder time admitting that it should now be deleted. Therefore, even when the churches agree upon a proper usage of the *filioque* as well as the mistake the Catholic church made in inserting it into the creed, it is the social and ecclesial ramifications that prove to be obstacles too large for the church to navigate (up to the present era).

At the heart of Sicienski's historical analysis and advice for reconciliation is Maximus the Confessor. Sicienski traces through the *filioque* debates and shows that Maximus continually appears as a figure either the East or the West uses to invoke a *via media* between the two conflicting sides. The fact that both churches turn to Maximus throughout the debates and that Maximus himself attempted to craft a *via media* in the debates makes him an important figure both historically and theologically. Maximus emphasizes two key points in his "Letter to Marinus." (1) The Latin teaching did not violate the

monarchy of the Father because it affirms only one cause in the Godhead (i.e., the Father). According to Maximus, the Latin reading did not confess that the Spirit receives hypostatic existence from the Son. (2) The Spirit proceeds through the Son; this procession does not apply only to the economy (a common line of reasoning against the Latin West). Instead, there is an eternal relationship of Son and Spirit. Since the Father is the sole cause in the Trinity and the Father is always Father as *Father* of the Son, so the procession of the Spirit must be connected to the person of the Son. Therefore, a properly orthodox trinitarian ordering, according to Maximus, must include a notion of the Spirit proceeding through the Son as long as the Son is not given the Father's causality (a move made by later Western theologians). In making this distinction, grounding his analysis in the Fathers and in a generous reading of both East and West, Maximus provides the space for common ground. Unfortunately, as Siecienski shows, this common ground was never utilized because other issues drove the two sides apart.

While it is generally unhelpful to critique a book that does so much for not doing more, there is one general critique I would like to make. Siecienski focuses his attention on mapping the political, ecclesial, social, and theological issues at play in the *filioque* debates throughout church history. In doing so he addresses the major forces at work behind the scenes of the argument itself. Unfortunately, at times, the theological seems eclipsed by the rest. There were, certainly, many driving factors of the debate that had nothing to do with theological issues at all, but the differing theological frameworks must certainly have played a large role. At various points throughout the volume Siecienski mentions the differing views between East and West on the relationship between "theology" (i.e., God's life itself) and "economy" (i.e., God's revelation in history). The East wanted to maintain a relatively robust distinction between the two, invoking a more broadly apophatic emphasis, while the West wanted to maintain a connection that did not collapse into identity. This issue, fundamental to the task of all theology (which, post-Rahner, should be clear), is only mentioned rather than meditated upon. It does not take much imagination to see how two different views on the immanent/economic relationship could lead to two differing theological cultures, such that communication between the two would break down over what otherwise might be considered minor issues. In other words, we could ask if the theological cultures drove the debate in an attempt to solidify the culture itself as "orthodox" and not simply the impossibility for theological agreement. I would have liked to see Siecienski develop the immanent/economic theme more throughout the volume and assess whatever import (if any) it had. Importantly, one of the moments where this issue is highlighted is in his exposition of Maximus, noting that he carefully differentiated and upheld the connection between immanent and economic. The emphasis on Maximus's thought in this area points to the importance of addressing this issue for ecumenical understanding.

Even taking that critique into account, this book provides a fantastically broad and deep overview of the *filioque* debates. It is readable, assessable, and well-conceived, and would serve anyone interested in the doctrine of the Trinity, the *filioque* debates themselves, or East/West relations.

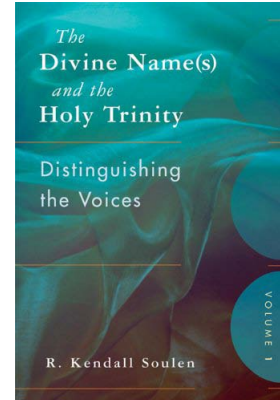
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R. Kendall Soulen. *The Divine Name(s) and the Holy Trinity: Distinguishing the Voices*. Volume 1. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011. xii + 300pp. £20.99/\$30.00.

It seems to some of us that theology has long been captive to what Whitehead called ‘adventures of ideas’; its mood is Athenian, even when its pretensions are Christian (no reflection on Whitehead himself). But occasionally a volume appears which dignifies the name of theology, introducing a novelty which is not in the service of novelty, but presented on the basis of deep and honouring reflection on the biblical texts. Such is Kendall Soulen’s book. It is in order, from the outset, to praise its excellence, both in substance and as a model for theological work.

It is the first of two volumes, unpretentiously describing its aim as an exploration ‘of the doctrine of the Trinity through an analysis of names’ (p. ix). Stimulus is afforded to this task by the emancipation of women, the growth of the Church in the Southern hemisphere and the question of the relationship between the Church and the Jewish people. However, discussion is ordered not to these phenomena, but to the biblical witness and the history of Trinitarian theology, particularly to the former. ‘The central hunch of this book is that Christians name the persons of the Trinity most adequately when they take into account three different patterns of trinitarian naming’ (p. 21): a theological pattern, which attends to the Tetragrammaton; a christological pattern, which identifies the trinitarian persons as Father, Son, and Spirit; and a pneumatological pattern, the naming here being various and the fruit of the myriad contexts in which the Church finds itself. The book spells out just what all this means. At its heart is the discernment that we have overlooked the significance of the Tetragrammaton, insufficiently grasping its dimensions in the OT, missing its presence in the NT and losing it for the most part along the track of historical theology (Aquinas outstandingly proving something of an exception.) But this negative description does injustice to the spirit of Soulen’s investigation, which is constructively uninterested in casting aspersions.

What exactly do we mean by these three patterns? The argument is that, while it seems that the most appropriate way to name the persons of the Trinity is ‘Father, Son, and Spirit’, close attention to the biblical text indicates that this is *an* appropriate, but not the *only* appropriate way. ‘In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you’ (Exod 20:24): Soulen takes his hermeneutical steer from this text, for ‘[a]t bottom . . . everything the Christian canon tells us . . . is an elaboration of the patterns encoded in this verse’ (p. 134). God’s name enshrines his uniqueness, presence, and blessing. When we listen attentively to the NT witness, we become attuned to the different voices of the different divine persons. Reflecting on what we hear, we find that ‘[t]he first person declares the divine name in a way that has special affinity with the manifestation of divine uniqueness, the second with the enactment of divine presence, and the third with the bestowal of divine blessing’ (p. 164). What is striking about the way in which Soulen develops this analysis is his ability to integrate it into a profound christocentricity. He is sensitive to the claim that the christological pattern of trinitarian naming—God is Father, Son, and Spirit—should have priority and thus, in the concluding chapters of the book, examines different dimensions of Jesus Christ’s speech about God, about himself, and about the Spirit. This thesis is delivered in such a way that the volume comprises a sustained *tour de force*.



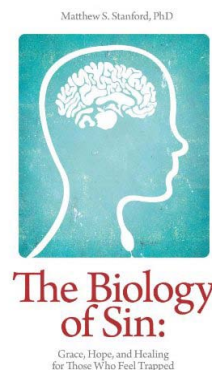
There are two lines of criticism that we should not leap to pursue. The first is that the very neatness of the pattern Soulen discerns makes it suspect. The author has been careful here, and we shall have to be as careful as he if we attempt a demonstration that his exegetico-theological scheme is, overall, selective and contrived. The second is that it will mandate (as, it will be supposed, the next volume is bound to reveal) undesirable and uncontrolled naming of God in the name of the pneumatological pattern detected in the Bible. Soulen is not an author who will fall easily for this.

However, that is not to say that we should forget these lines of criticism; what is required is fidelity to the adage that we look before we leap. It seems to me that he makes a more convincing case for the neglected significance of the Tetragrammaton for trinitarian theology—and this is a far-reaching accomplishment—than for either the mode or the status of the pneumatological pattern of trinitarian naming. But it is a virtue of this book that it forces us to ask ourselves whether or to what extent this is more a reflex reaction conditioned by a theology which we bring to this volume than the product of a dispassionate judgement on the basis of evidence presented in it. However impatiently we greet the reviewer's customary truism that a review cannot do justice to the book reviewed, it just has to be reiterated in this case. In order to be clear about the substance, let alone the force, of what the author contends, we should need to read the book itself, but I doubt if it is a book that should be definitively judged after only one reading. It is difficult to imagine that fruitful trinitarian theology in the future can avoid coming to terms with at least the elements of Kendall Soulen's proposal.

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Matthew S. Stanford. *The Biology of Sin: Grace, Hope, and Healing for Those Who Feel Trapped*. Colorado Springs: Biblica, 2010. 166 pp. £11.99/\$17.99.

Regarding human nature, theologian John Murray has noted that man does not merely have a body; he *is* body. (Cf. "The Nature of Man," in *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 of *Collected Writings of John Murray* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977], 14–22). Matthew Stanford, a professor of psychology, neuroscience, and biomedical studies at Baylor University takes this perspective to heart in his book, *The Biology of Sin: Grace, Hope, and Healing for Those Who Feel Trapped*. In it he attempts to synthesize for a lay audience brain-based research and biblical perspectives for a number of sinful behaviors. His goal is to recognize the biological predispositions that play a role in behavior the Bible defines as sinful, while always emphasizing the authority of God's Word and the grace there is for those struggling with habitual sin.



He begins in chapter one by defining sin and discussing its origins in the fall. He contends that we inherited from Adam, our biological father a physical aspect of sin, what I like to call "sinful DNA." As a result of our sinful biology at birth, our physical and mental inclinations are only for self In relation to God, there is simply no good in us, neither spiritually nor physically. . . . It is out of a mind and body corrupted by original sin that actual sins come forth. (p. 8)

This view of sin undergirds his project to examine the biological basis of sinful behavior while maintaining a scriptural view of these same behaviors as sin for which we are held accountable before God.

He devotes the next chapter to anthropological and soteriological concerns. He maintains a “three-part unity of man: body, mind, and spirit. . . . God created us as three-part beings” (pp. 17–18). He sees the mind (soul) as the nexus between the brain (body) and the spirit. The state of fallen man is a damaged body, a carnal mind, and a dead spirit. He contends that sin is pervasive and affects all three levels of being. He highlights that through Christ we are transformed inwardly and are righteous before God, but that “abnormal biological predispositions, corrupt thought patterns, and sinful desires do not simply go away by themselves once we come to faith . . .” (p. 26).

With this foundation he dedicates chapters three through seven, respectively, to the following problems: rage (impulsive aggression), lust and adultery, lying and stealing (antisocial behavior), addiction, and homosexuality. Following a brief case study of the problem at hand, his approach in each chapter is to outline the biological (brain-based) underpinnings of the problem based on available scientific research. He also provides biblical teaching germane to the issue and then discusses how to minister to a struggling individual. Throughout he gives case studies of individuals who have been helped by biological treatments (e.g., medications) and/or by pursuing a relationship with God.

The book concludes with two chapters, one exploring the impact on the female victims of men struggling with these problems (ch. 8), and one reminding readers that biology is not destiny (ch. 9). He also includes an appendix of counseling and ministry resources for the problems he discusses.

There is much to commend about *The Biology of Sin*. Stanford is no armchair neuroscientist. He spends his days in the trenches of life with struggling men and women, which lends authenticity to his concerns and his writing. By drawing attention to biological correlates of sinful behavior, often neglected in Christian treatments of these problems, he rightly moves us away from a functional view of the person as a disembodied soul. He takes seriously the effects of the fall on our bodily constitution. In so doing he models a compassionate and non-judgmental approach for the struggler. Yet he remains balanced. He does not shy away from viewing the discussed issues as sin, nor does he minimize the need for progressive sanctification through the power of the Holy Spirit. He successfully avoids the extremes of biological determinism rooted in a reductive materialist view of the person *and* an overly spiritualized view rooted in neo-Platonic views of the person. His book serves as a corrective for imbalanced approaches in ministry, which too often tend toward either extreme in the actual care of individuals.

The book does have a number of weaknesses. First, he espouses a tripartite anthropology instead of a traditional biblical understanding of human nature as a duplex of body and spirit/soul, although his overall approach for each problem behavior does not suffer too greatly from this flawed anthropology.

Second, while the biological data—some human and some animal—is fascinating, some chapters are more persuasive to me than others in describing the biological basis of the behavior in question. It’s not always clear if the biological realities he describes are cause or effect. In addition he sometimes reads biological observations back into the Scriptures anachronistically; for example, he sees the “one flesh” marital union described in Scripture as the result of “increased levels of oxytocin and vasopressin in the brain that bring about emotional bonding” (p. 57), and he views the rebellious son of Deut 21 as an example of antisocial personality disorder, which he concludes is further evidence of an underlying biological basis to this problem.

Third, while he asserts, “Through Christ, real change is possible” (p. 43), he describes this at only a superficial level. He focuses on accepting that God loves his people and that sin no longer has power over the believer. This is true, but what does internalizing and living out these realities look like over the ups and downs of life for the long haul? He highlights the importance of personal devotions and accountability with other believers, but he provides little fine-grained help for the struggler who wants to overcome sin. His use of Scripture sometimes has a “proof-texting” feel to it, rather than exhibiting a rich biblical-pastoral treatment of the problem at hand. In the end, he doesn’t really blend the biological and spiritual perspectives into a *nuanced* ministry approach.

All in all, I would recommend *The Biology of Sin* as a helpful and interesting ministry resource with the aforementioned caveats. I commend Stanford for exploring the complex nexus between the bodily and spiritual aspects of our personhood and for reminding us that wise pastoral care must include careful attention to both biological and moral-spiritual aspects of sin.

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Rachel Timoner. *Breath of Life: God as Spirit in Judaism*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete, 2011. xxv +145 pp. \$16.99. John W. Oliver. *Giver of Life: The Holy Spirit in Orthodox Tradition*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete, 2011. xii + 129 pp. \$15.99. Edmund Rybarczyk. *The Spirit Unfettered: Protestant Views on the Holy Spirit*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete, 2011. xii + 162 pp. \$15.99.

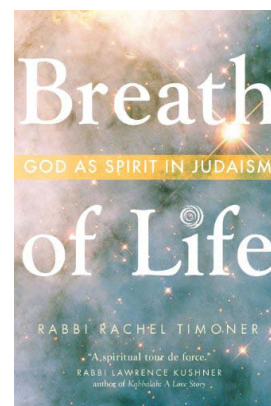
In addition to Amos Yong’s more substantial work (reviewed elsewhere in this volume), Paraclete Press has recently released three slenderer volumes on the Holy Spirit in various religious traditions: Judaism, Orthodoxy, and Protestantism. Each of these works is distinct in its format and approach.

Rachel Timoner, *Breath of Life: God as Spirit in Judaism*

Perhaps most unexpectedly from a Christian publisher is *Breath of Life: God as Spirit in Judaism* by Rabbi Rachel Timoner. Timoner is aware of the curiosity of a Jewish thinker writing for a Christian audience on the topic of God as Spirit. In an important introduction she provides for her readers an orientation to Jewish theological reflection and some signal issues such as the importance of care with religious terms and especially the name of God. She also discusses the challenge the word “spirit” poses in contemporary discourse (theological or otherwise) for Christian and Jew alike. In addition to the familiar Hebrew term for spirit, breath, and wind (*ruach*), Timoner mentions the terms *neshamah* (soul) and *neshimah* (breath).

Christian readers may find several aspects of Timoner’s presentation intriguing. Her main structural motif for the book is the story of redemption, so she divides the work into three parts—Spirit in Creation, Spirit in Revelation, and Spirit in Redemption—categories with which the reader will be familiar and comfortable.

Part one, “Creation: Breath of Life,” discusses the role of God’s spirit in forming the cosmos, in the creation of humans, and as the link to transcendence. Beginning in Gen 1, she surveys various



ways to understand the reference to the *ruach elohim* in Gen 1:2 without ever settling on a particular understanding. The chapter “Spirit in Us” spends far more time explaining the Jewish understanding of the makeup of humans—the various “spirits” in us—than it does relating the question of God’s Spirit to the human. A third chapter addresses spirit as what links us with the divine.

The longest section of the book, “Revelation: Sinai’s Inspiration,” discusses the role of spirit in the process of God’s revealing of himself in the world both by extraordinary and ordinary means. Those familiar with the Christian articulation of the role of the Holy Spirit in prophecy, inspiration, illumination, and even personal guidance will find much overlap with those concepts here. She speaks of the extraordinary way that spirit was revealed in the leadership of biblical prophets and kings (ch. 5) and contrasts that with the “Ordinary Spirit” (ch. 6). Curiously, she focuses far more on the need for spirit-impacted individuals to “bring about the messianic age” (p. 71) than she does addressing the role of the spirit in the ministry of the messiah.

The final section of the book investigates the role of spirit in redemption. Timoner looks first at the role of the spirit in acts of redemption in the Hebrew Bible and then examines the role of spirit in the prophetic literature. It is here that this reader hoped for the richness of centuries of Jewish reflection on profound passages from Ezekiel and Joel about the spirit in God’s plan of restoration. Instead, Timoner skips lightly from prophet to prophet with fuzzy reflections on wind, spirit, and breath. In the final chapter, “Spirit in Action Today,” Timoner once again lapses into discussion of the human spirit rather than on God as Spirit.

While there may be points of contact, there are also several aspects of Timoner’s work that will be off-putting to Christian readers. She hints at one in the introduction when she says of Judaism’s approach to Torah, “The meaning of any word in Holy Scripture is not fixed or finite; it is shaped by both the words that surround it and the generations of interpreters that fill the white space around it” (p. xxii). This open-endedness of biblical words is manifest throughout Timoner’s text where she frequently moves between the meanings of *ruach* in discussing particular texts and from discussion of the spirit of God to the spirit of humans in ways that approach word association.

Though the book is putatively about God’s Spirit or God *as* Spirit, Rabbi Timoner’s reflections on spirit lead her almost as frequently to speak about the human spirit. So much so, in fact, that it is not overstating the case to say that one learns more about the makeup of the *human* spirit in Judaism than one does of the distinct perspective on God’s Spirit. This reminds the reader, of course, that theological issues are organically connected and meaningful speech about the interaction of God’s Spirit with humans necessitates a richer theology of spirit than the Hebrew Bible offers. Unable to speak about the Holy Spirit as a person within the Godhead, Timoner is forced to turn to only slightly more stable ground in Judaism’s careful analysis of human spirit.

Perhaps the most disorienting feature of reading Rabbi Timoner’s reflections is how often one alternately hears proto-Christian language about the role and work of (the) Spirit alongside the voice of modern spiritual sensitivity. In one place she writes, “If we look at the pattern of usage in the Hebrew Bible, we find that God is more than spirit. God’s *ruach* is of God and identified with God but not the same as God” (p. 37). As a Christian it is almost impossible not to read this as evidence of the Hebrew Bible hinting toward the doctrine of the Trinity revealed more fully in the NT. However, a few sentences later Timoner remarks, “When we pay attention to our spirit within us, we find ourselves yearning to be in God’s presence” (p. 37). This sort of reflection would fit quite easily within the vague spirituality so popular in the contemporary milieu.

At its best a book such as this could provide useful background on the specific topic of the Spirit in Judaism while also serving as an introduction to Jewish theological reflection in general. In the end, however, one struggles to hear the distinctive voice of Judaism. One wonders whether a more definitive statement could have been offered by a member of a different sect of Judaism. It is doubtful whether most Christian readers would gain much appreciation for Judaism, Scripture, or God as Spirit from interacting with Timoner's volume.

John W. Oliver, *Giver of Life: The Holy Spirit in Orthodox Tradition*

Interestingly, John W. Oliver's *Giver of Life: The Holy Spirit in Orthodox Tradition* succeeds at exactly the point where Rabbi Timoner fails. His contribution to this series offers the uninitiated a wonderful introduction to the unique ethos of Orthodox Christianity while also providing rich theological and devotional reflection on the Holy Spirit.

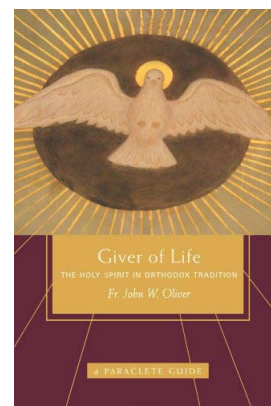
To structure his meditations on the Holy Spirit in Orthodoxy, Oliver uses an Orthodox prayer to the Holy Spirit: "O heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things; Treasure of good things and Giver of life; come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Gracious Lord." Each phrase in the prayer represents a chapter and a point of departure for meditation on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. This is a beautiful device that Oliver uses to great effect.

From the introduction on, readers are exposed to the Orthodox theological ethos as Oliver stresses the importance of moving beyond mere information about the Spirit while also warning of the limitations of our understanding and experience of God. Additionally, from the earliest pages, Oliver introduces the reader to prominent Orthodox voices from church history. Early on Oliver deftly narrates the development of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit from the OT through church history. His explanations of early church theological debates are succinct and perfectly pitched to a lay audience.

At many points Oliver's treatment is quite pastoral. In discussing the Spirit of Truth he warns the reader against confusing impressions of the Spirit with our fickle emotions. He offers a particularly rich discussion of the fruit of the Spirit in the chapter "Treasury of Good Things." First, he points out that the goal is to have the Spirit, not his fruits. He goes on to detail for each fruit what it looks like when one attempts to cultivate that fruit in one's life without reference to the Spirit. Oliver's easy transition from theological description to personal reflection and pastoral application is remarkable and exemplary for theological writing.

In several places Oliver walks the reader through aspects of Orthodox practice as a way to speak about the Spirit but also as a window into Orthodoxy in general. For instance, he offers a detailed explanation of the experience of someone pursuing baptism in the Orthodox church. Here the non-Orthodox reader is confronted with unfamiliar images and symbols and yet ones that communicate rich and familiar truths. His discussion of sacrament and symbol is also very helpful.

Evangelical readers will feel themselves in good company with Oliver on many important points: the exclusivity of Christ, the importance of theological precision, the sanctity of the Trinitarian titles, and the importance of Scripture as theological resource. There are, of course, points of difference as well: Oliver's use of liturgy as a theological resource, the role of tradition more generally, and his brief treatment of the veneration of Mary. But these differences do not sour the whole.



Oliver is a gifted writer who has clearly meditated deeply on matters of the Spirit. Despite points of disagreement, the personal warmth and devotional tone of the volume repays the reader richly. While the text is probably not suited for an academic setting, it could serve as a useful resource for those looking to enrich their understanding of the Holy Spirit or Orthodox Christianity.

Edmund Rybarczyk, *The Spirit Unfettered: Protestant Views on the Holy Spirit*

The most “academic” of the three volumes, *The Spirit Unfettered: Protestant Views on the Holy Spirit* by Edmund Rybarczyk briefly surveys Protestant thinking on the Holy Spirit beginning at the Reformation and concluding with contemporary authors. From his beginning with Martin Luther, he surveys the contributions of sixteenth-century Anabaptists, John Wesley, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Abraham Kuyper, Karl Barth, J. Rodman Williams, Jürgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Clark Pinnock, and Michael Welker.

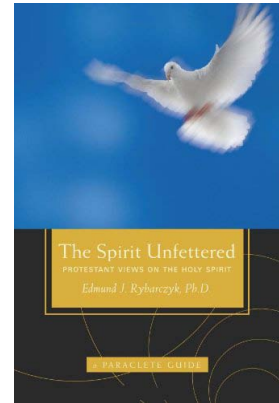
Each chapter follows a similar format. Rybarczyk first sets each thinker in his historical context, explaining the unique challenges facing the church of that day. He then surveys their teaching on the Holy Spirit and orients it to other aspects of their thought. Each chapter concludes with a section called “Abiding Influence” in which he tries to draw lines from that thinker to contemporary thought about the Holy Spirit. At the close of each chapter Rybarczyk also signals the relationship between that chapter and the next, a move which ties together the book as a historical narrative rather than it being a collection of essays or dictionary entries. It should be noted that Rybarczyk offers little by way of critique of these thinkers’ contributions. Though no bibliography is provided, the endnotes for each chapter direct the reader to source material for each thinker.

One of the greatest benefits of this book is the historical perspective that it could offer to Christians who are very often unaware of our theological heritage. It can be eye-opening to discover that popular ways to speak about the Holy Spirit and his work in our lives are relatively “new” theological developments. Rybarczyk’s presentation of the historical Protestant thought on the Spirit provides an excellent narrative to put our current language and practice in perspective.

While his effort to provide a lay introduction to Protestant thinking on the Holy Spirit is generally successful, fair treatment of many of the thinkers requires that he introduce theological language and concepts that may tax the casual reader. However, his presentations of these matters are clear and he has provided a brief glossary to assist the reader unfamiliar with special terminology such as Pentecostalism, pietism, and panentheism.

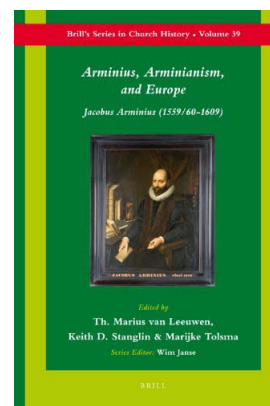
Surveys of this sort will always be faulted by some for their omissions and by specialists for their cursory treatment of major thinkers. However, the selection and treatment of these thinkers is more than adequate for the curious pastor, layperson, or college student. Furthermore, the format is well-executed to maximize appreciation of both the historical development as well as our debt to previous generations of thinkers.

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Th. Marius van Leeuwen, Keith D. Stanglin, and Marijke Tolsma, eds. *Arminius, Arminianism, and Europe: Jacobus Arminius (1559/60–1609)*. Brill's Series in Church History 39. Leiden: Brill, 2010. 299 pp. £86.00/\$147.00.

Th. Marius van Leeuwen, professor at the Remonstrant Seminary, Keith Stanglin, professor at Harding University, and Marijke Tolsma, also professor at the Remonstrant Seminary, have edited a significant volume on the life and theology of Arminius and Arminianism. The volume rides on the tail of October 19, 2009, the 400th anniversary of the death of Jacobus Arminius. The anniversary was commemorated at a conference at Leiden University, and the chapters in this volume are drawn from the conference. The volume is an effort to revisit the theology of Arminius, particularly with reference to the debate over whether Arminius was a pioneer who “enriched the Reformed tradition” or a heretic who founded a new tradition as an alternative to Reformed theology.



The volume has several strengths. First, it is diverse in its presentation, covering an array of topics. Probing the table of contents is revealing. The volume begins with van Leeuwen’s introduction, which itself is a prologue to the life of Arminius. Part 1, “Jacobus Arminius,” contains chapters by Keith D. Stanglin, “Arminius and Arminianism: An Overview of Current Research,” William den Boer, “Jacobus Arminius: Theologian of God’s Twofold Love,” Aza Goudriaan, “‘Augustine Asleep’ or ‘Augustine Awake’? Jacobus Arminius’s Reception of Augustine,” and Eric H. Cossee, “Arminius and Rome.” Part 2, “Arminianism and Europe,” delves further into Arminius and the Remonstrants who followed, including chapters by Kestutis Daugirdas, “The Biblical Hermeneutics of Socinians and Remonstrants in the Seventeenth Century,” Andreas Mühling, “Arminius und die Herborner Theologen: am Beispiel von Johannes Piscator,” Maria-Christina Pitassi, “*Arminius Redivivus?* The Arminian Influence in French Switzerland and at the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century,” and David Steers, “Arminianism amongst Protestant Dissenters in England and Ireland in the Eighteenth Century.” The volume concludes with Part 3, “Arminius’s Iconography and Bibliography.” While Parts 1 and 2 examine the theological, cultural, geographical, and political impact of Arminianism, Part 3 explores past, present, and future areas of research, including two chapters by Marijke Tolsma, “Facing Arminius: Jacobus Arminius in Portrait” and “*Iconographia Arminiana*: Portraits from 1609 until ca. 1850,” along with a concluding chapter by Keith D. Stanglin and Richard A. Muller, “*Bibliographia Arminiana*: A Comprehensive, Annotated Bibliography of the Works of Arminius.” This last chapter by Stanglin and Muller is especially valuable as a resource to scholars as it provides an official, updated bibliography for contemporary research. Regardless of whether one agrees with the agenda of the volume or the overall thesis presented by many of the authors, it is clear that a strength of the volume is its ability to investigate not only the theological views of Arminius and the Remonstrants, but the geographical, cultural, and political influence of the Arminian movement in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Second, though the volume is very favorable towards Arminius, certain chapters do recognize inconsistencies in his thought. For example, Aza Goudriaan states that according to Arminius,

it is up to the human being to decide whether to use free choice well and to accept grace in order to be saved. Those who deliberately refuse grace will not be saved. According to Arminius, this is not a Pelagian view, but rather what Augustine and the author of *De vocatione gentium* defended. As far as Augustine is concerned, Arminius backed

this up by quoting from *De natura et gratia*—for Arminius a less suspicious book to cite from than Augustine’s *De libero arbitrio*, where the same passage is found. (p. 60)

It is remarkable that Arminius, in support of his doctrine of resistible grace (synergism), could quote Augustine’s *De natura et gratia* in his favor when clearly the late Augustine was an advocate of effectual grace. Goudriaan seems to recognize the inconsistency:

In polemics he attempted to show that Augustine did not share some of the views of his Reformed opponents. On the other hand Arminius distanced himself from Augustine on various accounts. The late Augustine in particular did not fit in well with the overall tenor of Arminius’s theology. Arminius distanced himself from Augustine’s exegesis of Romans 7 and 1 Timothy 2:4 and from his doctrine of predestination, which he did not see as a core component of Christian orthodoxy. Arminius’s election of believers was not what the late Augustine advocated, nor was Arminius’s distinction between sufficient and efficient grace an Augustinian invention. . . . The Synod of Dort, however, came closer to the theological intentions of the late Augustine when it quoted another passage from *De correptione et gratia* that expressed both irresistible grace and final perseverance: “The will of no human being can resist God when he wishes to save . . . (. . . deus, cui volenti facere saluum nullum hominum resistit arbitrium).” For Arminius’s theological purposes a late Augustinian statement such as this was less convenient. (pp. 71–72)

Goudriaan is right: Dort, rather than Arminius, correctly quotes and preserves the intention of Augustine. While Arminius is correct that the Reformed did not affirm all of Augustine’s views, nevertheless, on the doctrine of sovereign grace there is no question that Arminius stands in opposition to Augustine, regardless of how Arminius tries to quote him to his advantage.

In spite of its strengths, the volume does have weaknesses. Perhaps one that deserves mention can be seen when van Leeuwen opens the volume by asking the hotly debated question: “Was Arminius a pioneer, who enriched the Reformed tradition by opening it towards new horizons, or a heretic, who founded a new tradition ‘as a full-scale alternative to Reformed theology,’ starting from presuppositions ‘opposed to virtually all the tendencies and implications of Reformed theology’ (Muller)?” (p. ix). Van Leeuwen, contra Richard Muller, is quick to answer, “Or perhaps: did he himself stay within the Reformed tradition, but with some intuitions which, when worked out by his followers after his death, alienated them from the tradition and made them into heretics?” (p. ix). Stranglin also raises the debate over whether Arminius should be considered Reformed. According to Carl Bangs, says Stranglin, the answer must be “yes.” Bangs argues, following Hoenderdaal, “the Calvinist synods that sanctioned the Belgic Confession and Heidelberg Catechism before the national Synod of Dort (1618–1619) had only regional status and were not seen as binding on the Dutch Reformed Church, or, for that matter, on Arminius” (p. 11). Bangs argues that to view Arminius as outside the Reformed tradition is to fall prey to anachronism, reading Dort’s “restrictive definition of Reformed theology” back into the previous generation.

However, more recently Richard Muller has argued that there are several problems with the thesis presented by Bangs (see “Arminius and the Reformed Tradition,” *WTJ* 70 [2008]: 19–48). For one, the synods were *not* lacking authority as Bangs supposes. Muller’s historical work here is commendable as he demonstrates that the synods were not undermined and even Arminius himself recognized their

authority from a confessional standpoint. Second, “Muller argues that, even if the documents left some wiggle room for Arminius’s views, the authorial intent behind them, which ruled out his views, was clearly known to Arminius” (p. 12). Moreover, by the seventeenth-century the Dutch synods had already denied the doctrine of conditional predestination which Arminius clearly affirmed. The Dutch churches had already declared that the biblical view was unconditional election and had established that view confessionally. Yet though Stranglin raises the debate, his conclusions are less than satisfying. While Stranglin does tip his hat to Muller, stating that one must “deal with Muller’s arguments,” Stranglin concludes, “there is more common ground in this debate than is at first apparent” (p. 12). The common ground Stranglin refers to is Muller’s agreement that Arminius “was certainly Reformed in the ecclesial sense, in his subscription to the standards, and in his colloquial sense of Dutch Protestants” (p. 12). Here Stranglin sees Muller as having common ground with Bangs. However, if this is common ground, it must be admitted that it is not much. Stranglin never mentions the very significant fact that Muller brings into question the credibility of Arminius in affirming the confessions when he was in full knowledge that they taught unconditional election. As Muller argues,

The evidence also points toward the conclusion that Arminius, a pastor and professor under extreme pressure from colleagues, from the church, and ultimately from the civil authorities, was less than forthcoming about his views. Arminius in fact noted his efforts to be ‘silent upon some truths’ and ‘expedient’ in his remarks. His affirmations of the Reformed confessional standards were made in the context of rationalizations about the meaning of the confessional texts, rationalizations that themselves were at variance with the views of the authors of the documents. . . . If Arminius was ‘a normally honest man,’ as Clarke avers, he was certainly not forthcoming concerning the theological engine that ran his system.” (“Arminius and the Reformed Tradition,” pp. 46–47)

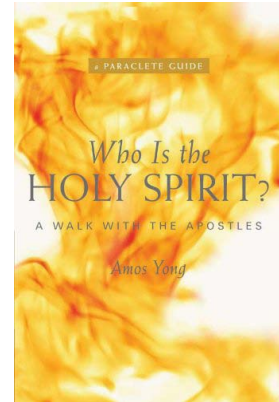
Though Stranglin’s chapter is remarkable in its survey of current research, his ambiguity here with the debate between Muller and Bangs is less than fulfilling. Consequently, Muller’s thesis still remains intact: Arminius was considered a heretic whose theology was a full-scale alternative to Reformed theology and in opposition to the Reformed confessions.

In conclusion, van Leeuwen, Stanglin, and Marijke Tolsma have put together a volume that should be applauded for its depth of scholarship and contribution to the study of Arminius and Arminianism. Nevertheless, the volume is also a reminder of how drastically Arminianism differs from Calvinism not only in the area of theology proper but especially in the area of soteriology. As Cossee observes, following Arminius “the Remonstrants made a powerful plea for acknowledgment of a *human contribution* to the implementation of God’s intention towards man” (p. 197). Here we see the shibboleth: man has a contribution to make to salvation. For those in the Reformed tradition, such a view compromises the glory that belongs to God alone for the accomplishment of salvation.

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Amos Yong. *Who Is the Holy Spirit? A Walk with the Apostles*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete, 2011. xiv + 219 pp. £13.50/\$16.99.

Though the title and back-cover summary may suggest that this is a general introduction to the role of the Spirit in Scripture and the world today, it soon becomes clear in reading Amos Yong's contribution to Paraclete Press's "Paraclete Guides" that his agenda is far more specific. In the introduction Yong signals his approach. Convinced from personal experience that many Christians' view of the work of the Holy Spirit is "too individualistic, too spiritualistic, and too ecclesiocentric," he sets as his task a rereading of Luke-Acts with a view to uncover the work of the Spirit "not just at the level of the individual but also at the level of society and its various political and economic structures" (pp. ix-x). He notes that since the events of Luke-Acts took place in the context of the Roman Empire there is an unavoidable political dimension to what they recount. His concerns are social, political, economic, and global.



In practice, Yong's reading begins with episodes in Acts and then looks back to the Gospel of Luke to see how these developments in the early life of the church fulfilled movements and themes initiated in the ministry of Jesus. Thus the paired chapters create a sort of diptych of Jesus and the early church, a technique that the author of Luke-Acts himself uses to great effect. The narrative of Acts forms the backbone of the book, and Yong provides further organization by dividing the story into seven sections, largely based off of the geographical trajectory of the spread of the Gospel.

In these paired chapters Yong's approach is to do a surface rereading of an Acts narrative through the socio-political lens and summarize what he sees to be role of the Spirit in the early church's experience. He then turns to the Gospel of Luke to look for evidence of similar themes in the ministry and teaching of Jesus. Most chapters conclude with mild exhortations for the church today to rediscover this movement of the Spirit. Many of these exhortations are too general to be of much specific value.

As is so often the case when Scripture is subjected to reading through a particular lens, such as Yong's socio-political reading, texts get pressed in directions that seem unlikely. In examining Jesus's resuscitation of the son of the woman of Nain, Yong rightly underscores that resurrection in Jewish thought involved far more than the reinvigoration of dead bodies. Accordingly, Yong suggests that the restoration of this young man's life meant the "resurrection" of his mother in restoring her social status, her livelihood, and her political representation. In an effort to discover in this more profound socio-political significance, however, Yong later suggests that the resuscitation also "return[ed] another healthy body desperately needed for the peasant economy of Nain." While many will read that as a stretch of the text's interests, Yong's later summary that "Jesus' raising the widow's young man resulted in the renewal of the town of Nain" surely goes beyond textual warrant. Several similar examples could be adduced.

Not surprisingly Yong similarly makes claims beyond what the text warrants with regard to the role of women in the early church in claiming that Tabitha and Lydia provided "matriarchal leadership" in their home towns. While he reads this as evidence of the Spirit's demolition of cultural patterns, he concludes that this reordering of the status quo has only partially been fulfilled. Here he plays Acts and the Gospels off one another suggesting that the relatively minor contribution of women in Acts falls short of the significant role Jesus intended for them and therefore reveals that "the inertia and forces

of patriarchy appear to have regained the upper hand after the death of Jesus even among the disciples and have largely succeeded in maintaining the hierarchical division between male and female since” (p. 148). He calls for a “new Pentecost” in which the prophecy of Joel is *truly* fulfilled. On other topics Yong is similarly provocative though at times less specific in his critique, e.g., substitutionary atonement, the role of the Spirit in world religions, and medical intervention. These are important issues that deserve more nuance than they receive.

Yong’s writing is clear and simple. There are a few places where Yong very ably and succinctly summarizes the significance of the coming of the kingdom and the fulfillment of Jewish expectation in the life and ministry of Jesus. He works hard not to excise the ministry of Jesus and the Spirit from the historical and canonical context. Unfortunately, these passages are a small portion of the whole.

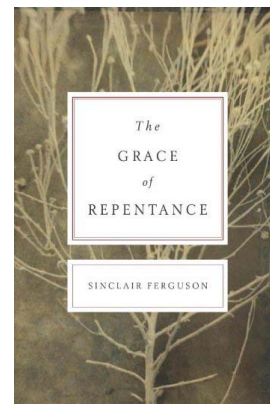
This is not a work that is likely to convince those that do not already share Yong’s approach to Pneumatology or to Scripture. Those who prefer to theologize from epistolary literature will not find Yong’s conclusions from Acts sufficient or convincing. For those who do share his preferences, the book will doubtless offer several inspiring exhortations. The writing style and accompanying study guide suggest that this work is targeted for use in a church educational setting. However, its approach to Luke-Acts is not likely to be embraced by much of the readership of this journal. While Yong may be right that our understanding of the work of the Spirit is too provincial, his proposed rereading, brimming contemporary buzzwords, seems to reveal more about the spirit of the age rather than the Spirit of the Apostles.

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— Book Notes —

Sinclair Ferguson. *The Grace of Repentance*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010. 61 pp. £4.99/\$6.99.

Confession: I am a horrible sinner. I am too often, too easily, distracted from one of the central aims of true faith: to be “determined to live in the presence of God” (p. 57). And that is why this booklet is good medicine for the sin-sick soul. (It is part of the series “Today’s Issues,” commissioned by the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals.) You can read it in one sitting, but you will meditate on it for days. Sinclair Ferguson is worried that evangelical Christians have forgotten that God calls us to a life of sincere, daily repentance. He makes his case in six chapters, written with a sermonic touch and laden with biblical insights and lessons from church history. The book begins with Martin Luther’s rediscovery that true repentance characterizes the whole life (ch. 1). Chapter 2 looks at the Bible’s take on repentance; then chapter 3 zooms in on David and Ps 51 as a case study. Chapter 4 on “A Medieval Threat” is the longest and most biting: Ferguson describes much of evangelicalism as “medievalism revived,” a neo-medievalism. He gives examples of how modern evangelicalism mimics the medieval church. And in one particularly indicting sentence, he writes, “The ‘mega-church’ is not a modern but a medieval phenomenon” (p.



50). But ultimately Ferguson is not merely about diagnosing the ills of evangelicalism, for chapters 5–6 show us the way back and what we must now do. These timely meditations on repentance are warmly recommended to all Christians who yearn to love God more faithfully.

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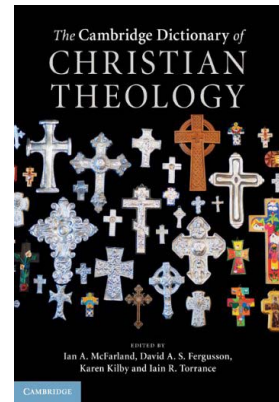
Ian A. McFarland, David A. S. Fergusson, Karen Kilby, and Iain R. Torrance, eds. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. xxi + 541 pp. £130.00/\$205.00.

Do we really need another theological dictionary? Given all the readily available information on Wikipedia and a thousand other online resources—one mouse click away—that is not an impertinent question. The editors, however, give an answer at the outset (see the preface). Patterned after Robert Audi’s *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (2008), this dictionary seeks to be a single-volume reference, compact and accessible in form, theological and generously orthodox in orientation, global and non-partisan in coverage. Over 300 contributors are recruited to write entries on a wide range of theological topics, ranging from 250 to 2,000 words in length. The longer, “core entries” form the backbone of the dictionary—covering five staple areas:

1. doctrinal loci (e.g., creation, soteriology, revelation)
2. theological style (e.g., liberal, feminist, evangelical)
3. academic disciplines (e.g., biblical theology, systematic theology, historical theology)
4. confessional position (e.g., Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran)
5. Christianity’s relation to other religious traditions (e.g., Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism)

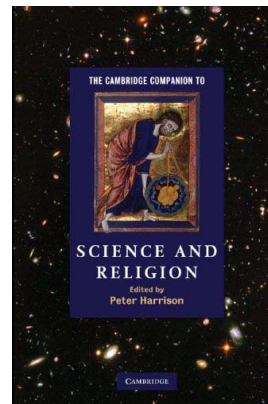
These core entry articles are more substantive, state-of-the-art analyses, while the shorter entries tend to focus more on definition and clarification of technical terms—taken together, the reader has a reliable map, a reference guide, to the complex and sometimes confusing terrain of modern theology. The editors have accomplished their goal in this handy volume, one that will prove most useful to theological students and pastor-theologians.

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Peter Harrison, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Science and Religion*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. xi +302 pp. £18.99/\$26.00.

The discipline of “science and religion” is a burgeoning academic field; it is also somewhat intimidating to outsiders since many of its experts have terminal degrees in both theology and science. Peter Harrison has enlisted a first-rate group of scholars to offer a competent introduction to the field in this Cambridge Companion volume. (Harrison has contributed some very significant monographs in the scholarly debate, e.g., *The Bible, Protestantism and the Rise of Natural Science* [1998] and *The Fall of Man and the Foundations of Modern Science* [2007].) The book is divided into three sections: Part I deals with historical prolegomena; Part II tackles examples of how science and religion relate; and the final section engages philosophical issues. There are chapters by noteworthy scholars like John Hedley Brooke, Ronald Numbers, Michael Ruse, Nancey Murphy, David C. Lindberg, Mikael Stenmark, and several others. To be sure, most readers of this journal will find something to disagree with here. Nonetheless, this volume serves as a rich appetizer to a controversial field, introducing hungry readers to the key players, the central debates and theories, and the historical and conceptual questions surrounding the fascinating encounter between science and religion.



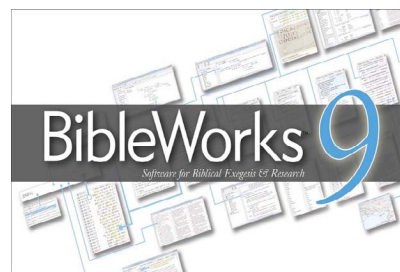
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— ETHICS AND PASTORALIA —

BibleWorks 9. DVD. \$359.00 (new); \$159.00–\$199.00 (upgrade from version 7 or 8).

BibleWorks 9 (BW9), the latest update to the leading MS Windows-based exegetical software, has enhanced an already robust BibleWorks platform for personal and technical study of biblical texts. In this review I will cover the new features in BW9; the functionality of its interface; a few personal examples of its utility for students, pastors, and teachers; and a summary of its strengths and weaknesses.

While a more exhaustive list of the new features in BW9 is available on the BibleWorks website (<http://www.bibleworks.com/content/new.html>), a few notable additions include a fourth column for expanded and more efficient analysis, digital images of several significant NT manuscripts, the *Moody Bible Atlas* by Barry Beitzel, and the NT critical apparatus from the Center for New Testament Textual Studies. With additional purchases the user may now access the *ESV Study Bible*, Bavinck’s *Reformed Dogmatics*, and Grudem’s *Systematic Theology*, along with several previously offered modules (e.g., HALOT, BDAG, QBSET). With its supplements from previous versions, BW9 features some 200 Bible translations in over 40 languages, nine Greek/Hebrew grammars, nine Greek/Hebrew lexicons, and a number of other resources that



are helpful to varying degrees (e.g., Greek/Hebrew paradigms, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, the NET Bible, the Babylonian Talmud, Schaff's *History*, Henry's commentaries, and the Westminster Standards).

Of primary interest to prospective BW9 users is unquestionably the usability of its interface. In this, BW9 does not disappoint. Search commands are flexible and fast, providing virtually instant access to an array of user-defined biblical data. Searches may be conducted, for example, on individual words or phrases (preceded by a period or quotation mark, respectively, in the command line) or (with a right-click) on the particular form or lemma of terms in the original languages. Thus the user may easily find not only all instances of a given conjugated verbal form in the Greek or Hebrew text but also every occurrence of its root or lexical form. By clicking various tabs, the user immediately may

- access every occasion of the term in a variety of lexicons, grammars, and other reference works
- survey statistics for the word within the pericope, book, or version
- peruse pertinent cross-references in any available version
- record detailed study notes on the verse or chapter

If questions arise, BW9 includes nearly 150 how-to videos encompassing over six hours of instruction, thus providing a wealth of introductory material. I have yet to discover a question that is not treated in the training videos.

For studying the biblical text personally and for teaching in the context of a seminary and local church, I have found BibleWorks to be vitally important. A few examples will suffice. In teaching a course entitled Exposition of Proverbs last semester, I used BW9 to develop a biblical theology of wisdom terms within the book of Proverbs and the OT canon. The ease and speed with which I was able to amass, correlate, and export data for word processing saved valuable time and proved greatly beneficial. In a current series teaching through the Gospel of John in my local church, I have repeatedly found BW9 to be invaluable in understanding the flow of the narrative, the meaning of key terminology, and the significance of its inner-biblical allusions. For my Hebrew students with varying skills in the original languages, BW9 has provided an efficient means for conducting detailed and original studies of biblical passages.

In conclusion, BW9 has a number of strengths along with a few areas for potential improvement. As to its strengths, BW9 is nearly instantaneous in its search results, saving time and avoiding frustration for the user. Second, a wealth of material is available for comprehensive study of a given term, verse, or passage. The data is in turn easily exportable to word processing applications. Third, its inclusion of the CNTTS critical apparatus and searchable digital imagery of NT manuscripts are welcome features that will be of particular interest for NT studies. Finally, BibleWorks has been committed historically to keeping its prices affordable, and BW9 is within reach for most students and ministry workers on a tight budget.

As to potential areas for improvement, BibleWorks does not offer a Mac version of BW9, which may discourage some users (although allegedly the software runs on Mac OSX via external programs). Second, I had some difficulty initially in getting a timely response from the customer service department when I encountered a difficulty registering the software. This was due evidently to a backlog of inquiries. Third, for those of us who work primarily in the Hebrew Bible, BW9 appears to focus more on facilitating and enhancing NT studies rather than OT studies. Not all users will perceive this as a weakness, however.

On the whole, BW9 is a powerful Bible study program that will be advantageous for any student, pastor, or teacher who wishes to engage carefully and meaningfully with the biblical text.

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Jerry Bridges. *The Transforming Power of the Gospel*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2012. 187 pp. \$16.99.

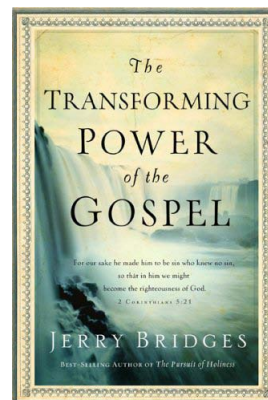
Well-titled, *The Transforming Power of the Gospel* is about just that: the role of the gospel in personal transformation. This isn't a comprehensive work on the doctrine of progressive sanctification, but a seminar in written form that focuses on what Bridges has learned more deeply about the topic over the past 25 years.

Bridges begins by recounting his journey into gospel-centeredness. Perhaps surprisingly, we learn that the truths emphasized in this book, which have become the theme of his ministry, were not fully grasped until *after* writing his most popular book, *The Pursuit of Holiness*, in 1978. "I still had more to learn," he writes (p. 15). This implies that *The Pursuit of Holiness*, while perhaps his best-known work, is not the place to go to hear what makes him tick. What has he learned since then? While we are certainly called to "pursue holiness," he discovered that the gospel is what motivates this pursuit and also what keeps us from being discouraged when we fail. These themes of gospel-motivation and gospel-encouragement form two chapters at the heart of the book (chs. 5, 6) and are also intentionally threaded throughout the whole.

Although one can't tell by looking at the Table of Contents, the book is clearly and intentionally structured. It falls into essentially two parts. The first unpacks the gospel as the foundation and motivation for transformation. Chapters 2–4 address the holiness of God, our guilt because of sin, and the grace of the gospel. While this may sound like "gospel 101," Bridges is convinced that although "we know we are saved by faith in Christ alone" we often revert to assuming "we earn God's acceptance and blessing in our daily lives by our performance" (p. 55).

This sets up the two key chapters (chs. 5–6). Here we learn that a gospel-centered life is one in which we embrace the gospel daily, standing in the "present reality" of our justification (ch. 5), and one in which gratitude for the gospel motivates our obedience (ch. 6). Chapter 7 closes this broader section by addressing the question of whether this presentation of gospel motivation is "cheap grace" that leads to lawlessness. Just the opposite, argues Bridges, is the case. It is transforming grace that "is the only sure foundation for progress in spiritual transformation" (p. 78). Shifting to the process of transformation, Bridges then carefully clarifies the Spirit's role and our role (chs. 8–9). As we depend on God's Spirit, we must use the "instruments of grace" God provides for us. This includes daily "time alone with God," where we focus on the gospel, reading the Bible, and prayer. Other instruments of grace include preaching, the Lord's Supper, and even suffering (chs. 10–12).

What makes this book unique among other resources about gospel-centered living? First, Bridges is particularly well-suited to write on the topic. With concerns afoot about a lack of emphasis on holiness among those who promote gospel-centrality, Bridges is a steady, faithful guide. His theme is not just the



gospel of grace, but how this gospel changes us to become like Christ. He hasn't abandoned his call for Christians to embrace "the pursuit of holiness"; rather, he has learned how that pursuit is driven and sustained.

Second, because of his personal writing style, the book is a delight to read. The tone throughout is marked by his humble maturity. He often lets us peer into his own life. Addressed at one point as "dear friend," we learn his favorite verse, favorite quote, and even how he approaches his daily "time alone with God," as he calls it. By the end, we are left with the impression that we have not simply gained new information; we have been mentored.

If there is one thing lacking, it is an emphasis on Christian community in the process of transformation. While Bridges encourages Christians avail themselves of the "instruments" that God uses to change us, his emphasis is overly individualistic. If Christians are to "preach the gospel to ourselves" every day, we should also "preach the gospel to one another" every day (cf. Heb 3:12–14). Finally—and this is not so much a weakness as it is a lingering question to ponder—I wonder where Bridges's emphasis on gratitude as the primary motivator for obedience fits with other biblical incentives. For instance, where do warnings of judgment or promises of future rewards fit here?

Overall, the book repays the time given to it. It is particularly well-suited to introduce the concept of gospel-centered living to Christians who have not yet grasped its importance. And since we need this message all the time and since Bridges mentors readers as he writes, it would also be a refreshing read for Christians who have grasped this for decades.

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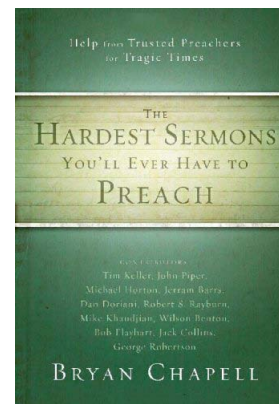
Bryan Chapell, ed. *The Hardest Sermons You'll Ever Have to Preach: Help from Trusted Preachers for Tragic Times*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011. 304 pp. \$19.99.

This book claims in its subtitle to be *Help from Trusted Preachers for Tragic Times*. It is indeed that. The preachers listed above are certainly trusted: Tim Keller, John Piper, Michael Horton, Jerram Barrs, Dan Doriani, Robert Rayburn, Mike Khandjian, Wilson Benton, Bob Flayhart, Jack Collins, and George Robertson. We trust their leadership, wisdom, exegesis, theology, and proven perseverance. They have earned (by God's grace alone!) such trust. And indeed the times we live in and the topics they tackle are "tragic."

The book contains twenty-five sermons, broken down into five topics:

1. Preaching in Response to Tragedy
2. Preaching after the Loss of a Child
3. Preaching Funerals with Especially Difficult Causes or Circumstances
4. Preaching Funerals for Public Figures
5. Preaching after Suicide

With each sermon, Chapell gives a short introduction that shares the needed situation, concerns, and approach. These introductions are tremendously valuable. They not only provide the needed



context (i.e., the loss of a young child from a Christian home), but they make the sermon fresh, realistic, engaging. The reader is able to empathize. Many of these were deeply moving to me.

Let me begin by identifying a few deficiencies. First, there is a lack of biblical exegesis. On the one hand, these are sermons on specific tragic events (many of them funeral sermons), and as such they therefore lend themselves to being more topical than exegetical. Nevertheless, the best sermons—even for the hardest of times—should be thoroughly exegetical. I am not suggesting that such sermons give no time to revisiting the tragedy, eulogizing the loss or the lost one, and addressing the family. I am stating merely that I am surprised with how little Bible is expounded on the topic at hand. While the Bible is called in repeatedly, this is generally done simply to support theological points. There are occasional sections of exegesis (e.g., p. 114) and pervasively exegetical sermons (e.g., ch. 14), but less than one would hope for in a work like this.

A second weakness is that certain theological themes are neglected. This is surprising in light of the weighty topics and life tragedies addressed. For example, in Tim Keller’s thoughtful sermon on 9/11, I appreciate his lesson that Christians should respond as Jesus did to Lazarus’s death—with weeping. But why not also reflect on the justice of God, the awful catastrophe of human sin, and thus the need for immediate repentance—as in Jesus’s response to an ancient tower tragedy (Luke 13:4–5)? And why not allow both for weeping in grief for God’s comfort as well as wailing in fury for God’s vengeance—as in Jesus’s weeping over Jerusalem after his scathing denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 23)? I concede that these sermons cover unique events and topics. But for some of them (notably the sermons on community/national tragedies and suicides) it would be appropriate to add warnings to unbelievers and believers alike about the sharp realities of death and judgment and thus the need to repent of sin and trust in Christ and his death as God’s judgment upon our sin.

With those two weaknesses stated, let me conclude with three words of commendation:

First, this book gets you to think. It faces you with the question “What would I say in that situation?” and gives substantial answers from caring and insightful pastors. It also challenges you theologically. The sermons covering five different suicides, in particular, raise important questions: Is suicide *not* the “unpardonable sin,” as all five preachers claim? Can and should I give an assurance of salvation for Christians who killed themselves, as all five sermons do, or should I speak more about the mystery of God’s judgment for a situation on which Scripture is ambiguous? Or should I instead preach the necessity of faithful perseverance to the end? These are just a few of the many questions these sermons made me contemplate.

Second, this book is much needed, filling a noticeable gap in contemporary homiletical literature. The appendices on “Texts for Tragedies” and “Helps for Conducting Funerals” are worth the price of the book, especially for young and/or inexperienced pastors.

Third, the book’s introduction and the twenty-five sermons are all God-glorifying. By that I mean that the centrality of the cross in the theology of suffering rightly saturates each page. This book will strengthen pastors and other Christians to grasp, as Paul did, that “the brand-marks of Jesus” (Gal 6:17 NASB) are for our good and God’s greater glory.

In sum, despite this review’s mild critiques, this book is truly a helpful tool for today’s preacher from some of today’s most trusted preachers.

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Health Lambert. *The Biblical Counseling Movement after Adams*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012. 220 pp. \$17.99.

Health Lambert's *The Biblical Counseling Movement after Adams* is a historical, theological, conceptual, and methodological comparison of the work of the first and second generation of counselors in the biblical counseling (BC) movement. The first generation is most exemplified by the founder of the BC movement, Jay Adams, and a large portion of this book examines his life and work. David Powlison (along with others such as Paul Tripp, Ed Welch, and Tim Lane) represents the second generation who built upon Adams's original work.

Lambert, a professor of biblical counseling at Boyce College in Louisville, Kentucky, analyzes the movement as someone who stands *not* as an outside critique looking in but as a sympathetic participant in the BC movement. Thus, he gives us an insider's perspective.

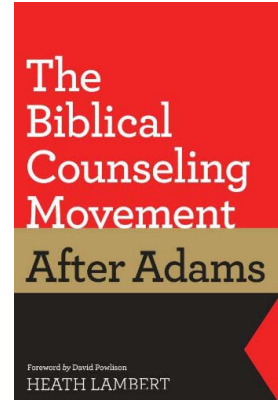
Chapter 1 describes a four-part theological drama that sets up the context in which Adams wrote his key work, *Competent to Counsel*. Chapter 2 explains the conceptual concepts that help to structure a biblical model: Adams's emphasis on sin and behavior and the second generation's development of a theology of suffering and motivational issues. Chapter 3 overviews methodological advancements, starting with Adams's more formal and authoritative style and the second generation adding to it "an approach based on the biblical teaching of loving, brotherly, one-another relationships" (p. 46). Chapter 4 describes the BC movement's engagement with apologetics. Lambert shows how Adams had a very different disposition toward believers and unbelievers and how other evangelical counselors have seen the tone of the second generation as quite different than Adams's.

Chapter 5 interacts with Eric Johnson's analysis of the movement and seeks to defend the idea that the first and second generations of biblical counselors "hold the same basic position on Scripture and the relevance of outside information for the counseling task" (p. 136). Chapter 6 sets up an example of theological advancement by showing how "idolatry is a secondary problem flowing out of the primary problem, which is a sinful, self-exalting heart" (p. 139). And the final chapter argues that Adams's bombastic style needs to be understood as a "conscious strategy" (p. 158) that fits into a larger context. Lambert also notes that Adams was humble enough to recognize that his work was imperfect and that it needed others to come afterward to improve it. Lambert ends with a few concluding thoughts for counselors.

Two major ideas clearly emerge from the book. First, BC is united about much more than it is divided about. Second, there has been significant development along the lines of conceptual content, methodology, and apologetics over the course of forty years.

Those who buy into stereotypes about BC will be helped to understand the context that gave birth to Adams's work. Readers will see that Adams did not create a simplistic counseling model; rather, his desire was to create something that was rigorously biblical. Also, Adams does find some value in psychology.

Lambert strikes the very delicate balance of both criticizing weaknesses in Adams's model while also working hard to honor Adams for his unique role as the founder of the BC movement. As with any historical evangelical movement, he helps us to see how the second generation has moved beyond the founder while at the same time building on his original work. Two significant elements of the second



generation's work are highlighted in the book. One is that Powlison and others have emphasized the importance of walking alongside a sufferer and not dealing with the sin only. The other is that the second generation has done a masterful job of developing a biblical understanding of human motivations.

Another insight for the reader of this book is the importance of future generations thinking critically, rather than assuming that previous generations understood everything perfectly. Powlison's essay "Crucial Issues in Contemporary Biblical Counseling" (*Journal of Pastoral Practice* 9 [1988]: 65–66) represents the BC movement's first effort at being self-critical. Along with Powlison, second-generational counselors have continued to articulate conceptual concepts and methodology that have refined and strengthened the BC movement's thinking and practice over the last twenty years.

Who should read this book? While *The Biblical Counseling Movement after Adams* will be useful for those both inside and outside of the BC movement, those who might be especially interested include:

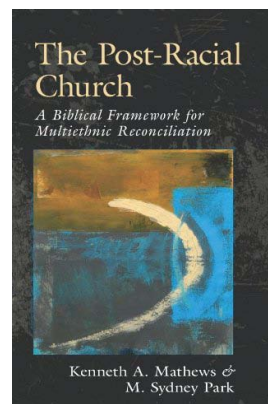
- anyone (counselors as well as others) who wants to understand the biblical counseling movement better;
- those who are interested in the history and development of counseling;
- those who are interested in how Christian thought can develop over time;
- those who want to understand the controversial figure of Jay Adams;
- those who want to understand how David Powlison and the second generation of BC developed the biblical counseling movement through its conceptual core, methodology, and apologetics;
- those who want to consider the role of theological commitments in counseling; and
- those who still live with the stereotypes about biblical counseling that were shaped out of the first generation's work.

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Kenneth A. Mathews and M. Sydney Park. *The Post-Racial Church: A Biblical Framework for Multiethnic Reconciliation*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011. 288 pp. \$19.99.

This review briefly summarizes and critically interacts with the recent work of Kenneth A. Mathews and M. Sydney Park on racial reconciliation. After briefly stating the authors' thesis and the arguments they offer to defend their thesis, this review focuses on selective critical observations of the authors' work.

The work of Mathews and Park offers an evangelical and biblical discussion of racial reconciliation in the church. As an OT scholar, Mathews focuses much of his discussion on the OT material that supports the book's thesis. As a NT scholar, Park focuses the majority of her discussion on texts in the NT. The book has an introduction, eight chapters, and a conclusion. Each chapter concludes with provocative questions to help foster thoughtful discussion. Mathews writes the introduction and chapters 1–4, and Park writes chapters 5–8 and the conclusion. Both their purpose for writing the book and their thesis of the book is "to better equip the



church in answering why Christians claim that the gospel and the Christian church are the first and last best hope for peace in a racially diverse world” (p. 22).

After introducing the problem of racism both in the world and in the church, Mathews discusses the method of the book and the church’s role in discrimination and racial reconciliation, and he defines (what would otherwise be) confusing nomenclature (pp. 15–35). For example, Mathews explains the differences between “race” and “ethnicity,” “racism” and “ethnic prejudice,” “multi-ethnic church,” and “ethnic names” as he and Park uses such terms in the book (pp. 30–35). In chapter 1 (“God’s Design for Creation”), Mathews argues that stereotyping is not biblical and was not part of God’s original design for creation (p. 37). Mathews suggests that racial stereotypes are a distortion of God’s original plan for the different races (p. 38), that Jesus has restored God’s master plan for the races through his death and resurrection (p. 39), and that the entire creation narrative suggests that ethnic stereotyping is wrong (pgs. 39–64).

Chapter 2 (“God’s Blessing for All Nations”) argues that Christians must seriously consider the broad historical context of who they are and how they came to be neighbors with different nations if they are to pursue integration in American society and in the church (pp. 67–92). Chapter 3 (“God’s People and the Also Peoples”) argues that the Hebrew Bible never suggests that God’s people was a pure race and that the “also people” were always included into God’s promises to the Hebrew people (pp. 95–121). Chapter 4 (“God’s Welcome to All”) argues that worship of the one God did not begin with Abraham and his descendants, but that there were people among the “other” nations that worshiped him (pp. 125–43).

In chapter 5 (“Jesus’ Stories of Reconciliation”), Park argues that Jesus himself practiced racial reconciliation by ministering to Gentiles and by his teaching although he preached and ministered primarily to Jews (pp. 145–70). Chapter 6 (“Stories of Peace and Worship”) argues that Jesus shattered racial hostility between Jews and Gentiles through his cross and resurrection; God has redeemed a multiethnic church to participate in a universal, multiethnic worship of the lamb, and God will judge a multiethnic people that does not worship the lamb (pp. 173–98). For the former point, Park offers a concise but impressive exegesis of Eph 2:11–22 (pp. 174–87). For the latter two points, Park offers a concise exegesis of selective texts in Revelation (pp. 187–98). Chapter 7 (“The Proclamation of the Church”) argues that the church should proclaim and participate in the practice of racial reconciliation since it reveals the manifold wisdom of God, concealed in ages past but revealed in the present age in the gospel of Jesus Christ (pp. 201–27). Chapter 8 (“One Salvation, One Fellowship”) argues that since there is one church of Jesus Christ that has participated in one salvation and has thereby become one fellowship, the church should therefore take steps to implement racial reconciliation (pp. 229–55). Park argues from numerous NT texts that racial reconciliation includes both ethnic reconciliation and social reconciliation. Finally, in the concluding chapter (“From Here to Eternity”), Park simply makes inferences and applications for the church from chapters 1–8. She urges the church to participate in the work of reconciliation, and she shares her own stories of both racial discrimination and liberation from racist ideologies (pp. 257–71).

I can find very few points with which to disagree since I agree with the thesis. My critical interaction highlights a few of the book’s many strengths and then point out a few weaknesses.

First, the greatest strength by far is that the book is strongly exegetical and presents its exegesis in an accessible way for the broader Christian community. This approach allows numerous readers (scholars, students, and laypeople) to profit from reading the book. In this regard, the book wisely

uses transliterations for foreign languages, and it does not overwhelm the reader with unnecessary or overly detailed footnotes. Instead, the authors faithfully discuss many biblical texts in both the OT and NT that address the issues of race relations, and they casually mention key scholarly literature in their footnotes. They discuss a very complex subject (just look at the scholarly literature in NT studies alone on ethnic identity formation in early Christianity) with much clarity and simplicity.

Second, the authors clearly define how they use the terms “race” and “ethnicity” early in the book before they begin to argue for racial reconciliation and before they discuss the biblical material (pp. 30–35). Consequently, readers are not left to discern on their own how the authors use the terms “race” and “ethnicity” or what they mean by racial reconciliation. Third, the authors are brilliant for partnering to write this book since Mathews is a white Southern man, who happens to be an OT scholar, and Park is an Asian Northern female, who happens to be a NT scholar. This combination provides a balanced discussion of racial reconciliation from both Testaments, and their respective ethnicities push the discussion of racial reconciliation beyond the black-white divide in evangelical churches. Park’s personal anecdotes especially complement her exegesis.

I now discuss six (very picky) negatives:

First, the book interacts too little with modern social theory on race. This is understandable, since the book is written primarily for the church rather than scholars. However, more detailed interaction with modern race theory seems necessary since many biblical scholars who are currently writing on “race,” “ethnicity,” and “racial reconciliation” are interacting with or responding to such theories.

Second, Park could give more attention to Eph 2:11–22 since this is perhaps the strongest NT text that addresses racial reconciliation. Instead, she limits her discussion almost entirely to chapter 6 (pp. 176–87).

Third, unless I have overlooked the discussion, the book spends no time considering other crucial reconciliation texts in the Pauline corpus such as Rom 5:8–10, Gal 2:11–14, and 2 Cor 5:18–20. Although these texts do not directly speak to racial reconciliation, they do speak to the issue indirectly, for they imply that reconciliation (though vertical) has implications for horizontal, social relationships.

Fourth, the book at times makes historical statements without citing primary literature. For example, the book states this without citing primary evidence: “the history of the Jewish people shows that they were at times guilty of bigotry and at other times were victims of it” (p. 81). The book offers a helpful discussion of hospitality in the ancient world, but does not cite primary texts (apart from the biblical materials) to support its comments about hospitality (pp. 125–43). Texts from the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean world would further strengthen the book’s discussion of hospitality in the ancient world.

Fifth, when the book discusses Jew-Gentile relations, it does not sufficiently employ Greco-Roman or Second Temple texts that highlight the hostility between Jews and Gentiles in the biblical world.

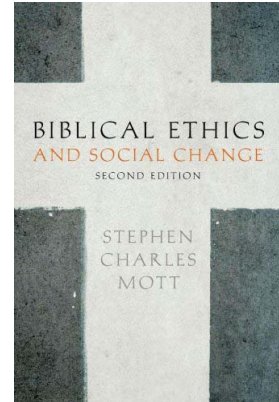
Sixth, the book would be more user-friendly with a Scripture index.

Despite these weaknesses, Mathews and Park have written a masterful work for the church of Jesus Christ to help her understand the church’s call to be racially reconciled to one another. This is one of the best evangelical works on the market that deals with the race issue. I strongly recommend this book to all interested in a biblical framework for racial reconciliation.

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Stephen Charles Mott. *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. 240 pp. \$29.95.

In a world that is constantly faced with questions about tensions in the Middle East, rising warlords in Africa, and various awareness campaigns like KONY 2012, evangelicals have wrestled with the role of Christians and the church in responding to such crises. Stephen Charles Mott's *Biblical Ethics and Social Change* shows that some of the evangelical answers center on the balance of faith and justice. The current trend of conservative publishing also bears the mark of this struggle, with many recent books discussing care for the poor, the mission of the church, and Christian place in public dialogue.



Mott, former Professor of Christian Ethics at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, has updated his 1982 book to provide current social illustrations and to incorporate research done over the past thirty years since the book's first edition. The book's title correctly answers any questions about the book's content and goal. Mott holds that the Bible in its entirety provides more than sufficient warrant for Christian concern and action for the alleviation of social injustice. For Mott, the heart of biblical thought mandates effort to correct economic and social injustices in our communities (p. xiii). Social change is necessitated anywhere that injustice exists, and the Bible provides the Christian with the motivation and, in many cases, the method for change.

The book is divided into two broad categories that build a biblical basis for social change and then provide plans that employ the biblical base: (1) "A Biblical Theology of Social Involvement" and (2) "Paths to Justice."

Part one is a helpful and often convicting biblical case for Christians being concerned and active in society, specifically where injustice exists. Mott argues that the theme of helping the oppressed is a concern of God expressed in both the OT and NT. The biblical calls to helping the sojourner, the widow, and the orphan continue from the prophets to the apostles. Mott's main argument in this section is that ethics motivated by love should be the reason for active social participation for justice (p. 49). Mott correctly connects motivation to help others because of God's value determination for individual humans with God's own activity in grace toward his people. Evil, Mott argues, is both an individual concern as well as a product of social collectives, such as government. Since evil is present in both areas, both should be employed to bring about the necessary social change. Mott defines the role of the Christian participating in biblical justice as "*taking upon oneself of the cause of those who are weak in their own defense*" (p. 60; emphasis original). Overall, Mott's biblical theology is representative of a high view of Christian Scripture as the source for answers to the questions of social justice.

Part two of the book is what many will find controversial, not because of any outlandish ethical quandaries, but rather because Mott offers pragmatic ways to move beyond the theoretical into the muck and mire of oppression and injustice. The strength of this section is that it seeks to employ the biblical theology of justice and love in practical ways in which Christians and Christian communities can participate. Mott begins with evangelism but says that this practice of verbal proclamation is a part, not the total, of God's call to the believer. The Christian must also seek to reverse injustice by reflecting genuine community, noncooperation against unjust laws, taking up of just use of arms, and political involvement. While space does not allow a full engagement with these points, it will suffice to say that

Mott is attempting to be biblical and practical in his application of part one. Since this book is written to a theologically astute audience, such as seminary students, this section is very profitable for discussion and reflection for true life application as an individual and as a pastor.

A brief word of warning for those who read this book is to be careful not to get lost in the opening of the book and its hermeneutical method. While many will, perhaps, agree with his biblical theology and, even further, his plan for change, the reader will be struck by Mott's method of determining biblical meaning. Mott states that social concern presuppositions allow for the biblical reader to find new meaning and application of the biblical text and its emphases. Mott states that modern sociological and ethical categories suggest new possibilities of meaning and application (p. xii). The warning is not towards the newer categories helping with application, but rather with biblical meaning. One would hope that a biblical ethicist would seek biblical meaning, understanding their personal presuppositions, while remaining intellectually virtuous enough to allow the Bible to change what needs changing. While Mott is correct that all ethicists approach the biblical text with underlying beliefs that are involved in the process of determining meaning, ultimately the Bible should be allowed to present its meaning, and the ethicist should then seek to employ the meaning's application.

This book will challenge the reader academically, but also personally, in its challenge to help the cause of the oppressed. Helping the helpless and defending the defenseless are clear calls in Scripture, and Mott correctly places the Christian in the middle of God's work to bring hope and help to individuals and communities in need.

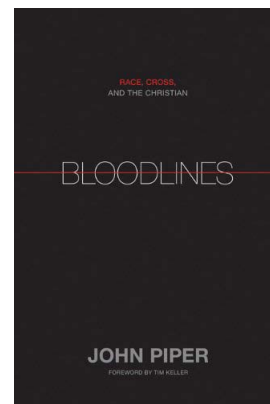
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John Piper. *Bloodlines: Race, Cross, and the Christian*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2011. 295 pp. \$22.99.

John Piper's *Bloodlines: Race, Cross, and the Christian*, his most recent addition to an already fruitful writing career, is an earnest call for racial diversity and harmony in the church on the basis of the gospel. The book's shining beauty is its rigorous gospel-centeredness: it demonstrates how *racial* reconciliation stems from *God* reconciliation, achieved by Jesus Christ at the cross for all who believe. Thus Piper does not merely call the church to racial diversity and harmony; he shows why the gospel requires it and how the gospel enables it. As he puts it, "the blood of Christ was shed for this. It is not first a social issue, but a gospel issue" (p. 227).

The book is divided into two parts. The first is more narrational and testimonial, while the second is more exegetical and theological. Because the book's chapter-by-chapter arrangement becomes a bit complex, I will weave my summary of its contents together with my analysis of its strengths and weaknesses.

One of the book's most helpful qualities is its sheer *honesty*. This is immediately evident in the first two chapters, where Piper chronicles his own story from growing up in the South during the height of the Civil Rights movement to his current ministry in an ethnically diverse urban context. Much is added to the overall punch of the book by Piper's willingness to begin with an unflinching admission (and



repentance) of his childhood racist attitudes: it gives the book a kind of credibility that a more detached treatment of the subject would likely lack. In addition, Piper's tone throughout the book is refreshingly direct, conveying a sense of the weight of the topic being addressed.

The focus of *Bloodlines* is primarily on the black-white relationship. The justification given in chapter 4 for this focus may be unsatisfying to some readers after the profound grasp in chapter 3 of the changing global dynamics facing the church on the issue of race. While the black-white relationship continues to be an area of great challenge for the church, readers whose primary interest in racial issues relates to twenty-first century global missiology may find *Bloodlines* more like medicine for the past than a map for the future. This is not a criticism of what the book *does* have to offer, but it does demonstrate a need for the church to continue to reflect on the gospel and race, especially with respect to how a wide range of diverse races and ethnicities, often without previous relationship, can bear out the beauty of Col 3:11.

Bloodlines is not merely theological. It engages with a wide range of historical figures and contemporary debates, demonstrating sensitivity to the turbulent history of the race issue, as well as its current politicization, complexity, and emotional volatility. As a somewhat arbitrary but nevertheless interesting indicator, consider that Bill Cosby is cited more frequently in the *Name Index* than Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Bunyan, Owen, and Edwards—*combined*. Chapter 5 forays into current discussions concerning the fate of young black men in America, striking a balance between explanations that emphasize personal responsibility and those that emphasize structural intervention. Piper acknowledges that some white evangelicals may have downplayed the latter, and he argues that the gospel will compel us to think in *both* categories (cf. pp. 102ff.), while at the same time insisting that the gospel cannot be domesticated according to any social or political agenda. "Jesus did not come into the world to endorse anybody's platform" (p. 85).

Chapter 6, which Piper calls the "center" of the book (p. 14), presents nine (not ten, as the foreword suggests) ways that the gospel destroys the roots of racism (guilt, greed, hate, etc.). This more systematic treatment of the gospel and racism is then given a thorough exegetical basis in the second part of the book, particularly in chapters 7–14, through interaction with such texts as Luke 4:16–30, Matt 8:5–13, Eph 2:11–22, Rev 5:9–10, Rom 3:29–30, Col 3:9–11, Gal 2:11–16, Jas 1:26–2:13, Eph 1:4–6, and Rom 15:8–9. The recurrent emphasis is that the gospel undermines racism by creating a new humanity, reconciled to God, centered on Christ, and bound to each other in love and equality. While most of this section is profoundly illuminating, there may be a degree of theological overreach in Piper's utilization of the five points of Calvinism in chapters 9, 11, and 12. Even readers (like myself) who share Piper's reformed convictions may find his arguments from TULIP less convincing than his arguments from Scripture at this point. One wonders, for example, if the exposition of Rev 5:9–10 would have been simpler and more decisive without its extended interfacing with the controversial doctrine of limited/definite atonement (pp. 136–42), or similarly whether invoking the doctrine of irresistible grace was the most compelling way to conclude his exegesis of Col 3:11 (pp. 165–67).

Chapter 15 is an argument for inter-racial marriage, while chapter 16, drawing from Nathaniel's question in John 1:46 ("can anything good come out of Nazareth?") distinguishes between right probability judgments and wrong prejudice. An important point for further discussion may concern whether Piper's list of criteria on p. 223 is sufficiently strict against negative generalizations on the basis of race. Of the book's four appendices, Appendix 3, which gives a portrait of how and why Piper's church

has pursued racial harmony and diversity, may be especially helpful to churches looking for practical ways to move forward on this issue.

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Phil Ryken. *Loving the Way Jesus Loves*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012. 222 pp. \$14.99.

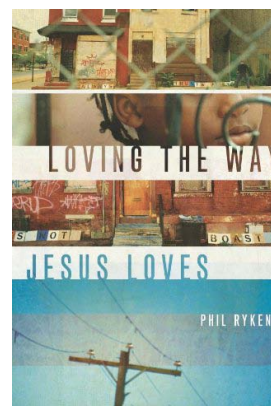
I am thankful for this book, which began as one of Phil Ryken's last sermon series at Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia before he moved to Wheaton, Illinois to assume the presidency of Wheaton College. *Loving the Way Jesus Loves* is built around a single, simple, and powerful idea: Jesus is the embodiment and epitome of love. An exposition of the great "love chapter," 1 Cor 13, should therefore naturally look to and draw upon the life of Jesus. As Ryken puts it, because 1 Cor 13 is a "portrait of love," it is also "a sketch of the Savior we meet in the Gospels" (p. 28).

Ryken's approach is significant for several reasons. Perhaps most importantly, it puts first things first by reminding us that we have *been* loved by Jesus before calling us to love others. Rather than being mere moralism, giving us more things to do, 1 Cor 13 is seen as a response to a love we have already received. Ryken's Jesus-centered understanding of 1 Cor 13 therefore provides hope and motivation to sinful people who realize their own inadequacy as they read Paul's magnificent description of what love is and does.

In each chapter of *Loving the Way Jesus Loves*, Ryken expounds a portion of 1 Cor 13 and then draws on the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life (or, occasionally, some other portion of Scripture) in order to illustrate the nature of love. Ryken's exposition of 1 Cor 13 is thorough and careful, but never tedious. The tone of the book is simple, practical, pastoral, and worshipful, with shafts of humor throughout. The book does not try to break new exegetical ground. It is not full of brilliant new insights. It is never flashy. Rather, it is consistently solid, substantial, reverent, and nourishing. Reading it felt to me like eating a good, wholesome meal. I was healthier and stronger after I finished it than when I began.

Particularly helpful is Ryken's chapter on 1 Cor 13:4: "Love is kind." Ryken lingers on the seemingly "slender virtue" of kindness and demonstrates that it is far more important than we might imagine. He takes us to Titus 3:4–7, which demonstrates that our salvation itself depends on the loving kindness of God our Savior. God's kindness is a saving love, a merciful love, a life-changing love, a generous love, and an eternal love. As we receive the kindness of God, we are called to *extend* kindness to others, and our kindness to others is in fact modeled upon God's kindness to us.

Also helpful is the chapter on 1 Cor 13:5: "Love is not resentful." Ryken highlights love's ability to forgive and to absorb evil that others do to us. This is illustrated by Jesus's forgiveness of Peter's denials. Ryken writes powerfully, "Jesus did more for Peter than simply call him to repent. A few hours later he went to the cross and paid the price for his disciple's sins." In John 21, we see Jesus giving Peter three opportunities to affirm his love (*three* opportunities to match Peter's three denials). Jesus allowed Peter to experience the forgiveness that would launch him into a bold, world-changing ministry.



These are just two examples of insightful and nourishing chapters. The book is consistently excellent throughout.

Two other features of *Loving the Way Jesus Loves* are worth mentioning. First, a study guide is included at the end, which will make this book even more helpful for use in small groups or individual study.

Second, on the cover of the book, and in black and white images throughout, are photographs by the artist Gene Schmidt and his installation “Lovetown PA,” in which Schmidt set up wooden stencils spelling out the text of 1 Cor 13 in the streets of Philadelphia (see www.lovetownpa.com). Schmidt’s project is intriguing and important. It obviously resonates with Ryken’s book: the artist and the preacher are both bringing the truth of 1 Cor 13 to Philadelphia (and beyond) in their own way. So it is a good idea to include photographs of Schmidt’s work throughout the book. Yet the combination does not work as well as it might, perhaps because something is lost in using black and white rather than color images (see the Lovetown PA website for the beautiful color photographs), perhaps because the relatively few images included in the book fail to provide the full context gained from seeing more of the images together.

This volume proves that it is possible to write voluminously (according to the back cover, Ryken has written or edited over thirty books) and at the same time clearly, powerfully, and helpfully. This book is a gift to the church, and I am grateful for it.

Stephen Witmer

Pepperell Christian Fellowship

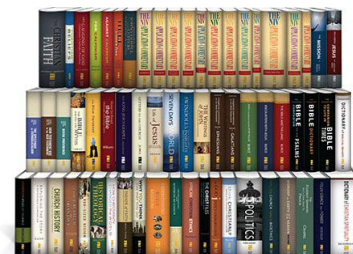
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[Zondervan Bible Reference Bundle 3](http://www.logos.com/product/17379/). 63 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. \$1,199.95. 25,000+ pp. <http://www.logos.com/product/17379/>.

Logos Bible Software has produced a third bundle of Zondervan resources that are already in print. (Cf. my reviews of the [first bundle](#) in *Them* 35 [2010]: 365–67 and the [second bundle](#) in *Them* 36 [2011]: 170–71.) This 63-volume bundle contains twelve collections of evangelical resources—each also available for purchase individually:

1. NIV Application Commentary: [OT](#) (12 vols.; 1999–2009). This includes the volumes on Genesis (Walton), Exodus (Enns), Leviticus and Numbers (Gane), Joshua (Hubbard), Judges and Ruth (Younger), 1–2 Samuel (Arnold), 1–2 Kings (Konkel), 1–2 Chronicles (Hill), Esther (Jobes), Psalms 1–72 (Wilson), Proverbs (Koptak), and Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs (Provan). BestCommentaries.com ranks ten of these twelve books in the top six for its respective book(s). NIVAC is relatively thin on exegeting the text but thick on applying it, which can be extraordinarily useful for preachers toward the end of sermon preparation.

2. [Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the NT](#) (2 vols.; 2010). *Galatians* by Thomas Schreiner and *Ephesians* by Clint Arnold are two more excellent editions to the ZECNT, which combines the strengths of BECNT and NIVAC. I don’t know of another commentary series whose format is better suited for sermon preparation.



3. [Biblical Studies](#) (9 vols.; 2008–2012). The most valuable books in this collection are John Oswalt's *The Bible among the Myths: Unique Revelation or Just Ancient Literature?*, Karen Jobes's *Letters to the Church: A Survey of Hebrews and the General Epistles*, and Michael Williams's *How to Read the Bible through the Jesus Lens: A Guide to Christ-Focused Reading of Scripture*.

4. [Counterpoints Upgrade](#) (3 vols.; 2008–2011). Zondervan's second Logos bundle includes fourteen volumes from this series, which debates controversial topics by having well-known advocates of particular views present their perspectives, followed by responses from advocates of opposing views. These three additional volumes debate divine providence (four views), the NT use of the OT (three views—a book that I assign as a primary textbook for courses on how the NT uses the OT), and the spectrum of evangelicalism (four views—a book I coedited with Collin Hansen).

5. [Biblical Theology for Life](#) (2 vols.; 2010). The first two books in the Biblical Theology for Life series (ed. Jonathan Lunde) are Jonathan Lunde's *Following Jesus, the Servant King: A Biblical Theology of Covenantal Discipleship* and Christopher Wright's *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*. Lunde explains in the series preface, "Too often, books on biblical theology have focused mainly on *description*—simply discerning the teachings of the biblical literature on a particular topic. But contributors to this series seek to straddle both the world of the text and the world in which we live."

6. [Ancient Context, Ancient Faith Series](#) (3 vols.; 2009–2010). These three popular-level books by Gary Burge are just over 100 pages each and filled with pictures: *The Bible and the Land*, *Encounters with Jesus*, and *Jesus, the Middle Eastern Storyteller*.

7. [Church History](#) (7 vols.; 2004–2011). The most valuable book in this collection is Gregg Allison's *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*, which functions as a 778-page companion to Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*. Other books include Collin Hansen and John Woodbridge's *A God-Sized Vision: Revival Stories that Stretch and Stir* and volume 1 of Everett Ferguson's *Church History (From Christ to Pre-Reformation)*.

8. [World Religions Upgrade](#) (2 vols.; 2011). Ross Anderson's *Understanding Your Mormon Neighbor* advises Christians how to relate to Latter-Day Saints, and Irving Hexham's *Understanding World Religions* views major religions through the lens of history, philosophy, culture, beliefs, and practices.

9. [Theology](#) (7 vols.; 2004–2011). D. A. Carson's interdisciplinary approach to pluralism, *The Gagging of God*, has a new preface in its fifteenth-anniversary edition. Michael Horton's *The Christian Faith* is a fresh systematic theology, and Elliot Grudem condenses his father's *Systematic Theology* (1264 pp.) into *Christian Beliefs* (160 pp.). *For Calvinism* (Michael Horton) and *Against Calvinism* (Roger Olson) respectfully debate each other on an age-old controversy. *Hell under Fire* (ed. Christopher Morgan and Robert Peterson) responds to modern scholarship that veers from the orthodox view of eternal punishment, and Andreas Köstenberger's *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters* inaugurates the Biblical Theology of the NT series.

10. [Reference](#) (6 vols.; 2010–2011). This collection includes five popular-level Bible dictionaries and the second edition of Carl Rasmussen's *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible*.

11. [Ethics and Apologetics](#) (6 vols.; 2008–2011). This includes Wayne Grudem's *Politics according to the Bible* (which I [reviewed](#) with Charles Naselli for *TGC Reviews* in November 2010) and *Why the Church Needs Bioethics* (ed. John Kilner), to which D. A. Carson contributes a chapter on the ethics of suicide and assisted suicide.

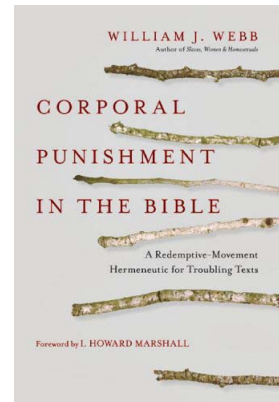
12. [Practical Theology](#) (4 vols.; 2011). *The Hardest Sermons You'll Ever Have to Preach: Help from Trusted Preachers for Tragic Times* (ed. Bryan Chapell) suggests how to preach in specific difficult situations (e.g., dealing with the death of a child). This collection also includes Glen Scorgie's 864-page *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*. (This issue of *Themelios* reviews both of these books.)

Owning these books in your Logos library allows you to quickly search them and easily read them on multiple devices. Logos [announced](#) in January 2012, for example, that the Logos app for the iPhone and iPad now syncs notes and highlighting across all platforms. So if you highlight words on your phone, they will also be highlighted when you pull up that resource on your iPad or computer; if you add a note on your desktop or laptop, that note will appear when you pull up that resource on your iPhone or iPad; etc. I have enthusiastically used Logos for fourteen years, and my enthusiasm continues to grow.

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William J. Webb. *Corporal Punishment in the Bible: A Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic for Troubling Texts*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2011. 192 pp. \$20.00.

Professor William Webb, author of *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals*, has now completed a new book on another controversial topic. In *Corporal Punishment in the Bible: A Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic for Troubling Texts*, he juxtaposes the contemporary pro-spanking position with the corporal punishment texts in the Bible, arguing that contemporary advocates of spanking have moved beyond the Bible biblically in their understanding of spanking. In other words, they have unwittingly made a move very similar to Webb's own trajectory approach by softening the corporal punishment commands. The problem is they have not gone far enough. According to Webb, the consistent position is to eliminate all corporal punishment.



The main critique that has been brought against Webb on this issue is that he does not adequately account for differences in genre within Scripture. This is one of the critiques, for example, in Andreas Köstenberger's *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundations* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), in which Köstenberger responds to a paper Webb presented on this topic. Webb's book then includes an appendix which interacts with Köstenberger's critiques.

Walter Kaiser responds similarly in *Four Views on Moving beyond the Bible to Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009). In his response to Webb's chapter, Kaiser writes,

Webb takes a handful of spanking texts from the book of Proverbs but forgets the well-known hermeneutical instructions for interpreting proverbial types of literature. . . . To take a proverb and demand that it is to be understood as a literal word with no exceptions, but universally applicable to all in all situations is to run counter to the literary genre and its own rules of interpretation. . . . However, once again Webb searches the Bible topically (not staying with chair-teaching passages in context) and gathers teachings on all sorts of corporal punishment, from Exodus 21:20–21 (slave passage) to punishments meted out by judges in the courts (Deut. 25:1–3), and lumps them (not to mention

apocryphal material from Sirach) all together with proverbial material on raising and disciplining children. This is no way to do Bible study! (pp. 252–53)

In the same book, Daniel Doriani also raises the question of genre: “Had Webb sufficiently accounted for the fact that many of his CP [corporal punishment] texts are civil/penal code, not family law?” Thomas Schreiner, too, in an online [review](#) at The Gospel Coalition website of Webb’s latest book, makes a point of how Webb lumps together texts indiscriminately. Schreiner concludes, “It seems to me that the wise application of what we find in Proverbs is well represented by those Webb criticizes: Dobson, Mohler, Wegner, Grudem, and Köstenberger.”

I agree with the critiques given by Köstenberger, Kaiser, Doriani, and Schreiner. I think they put their finger on one of the key weaknesses in Webb’s whole system. This problem is evident particularly in chapter one of Webb’s book where he identifies seven ways “that pro-spankers go beyond the specific teachings about corporal punishment found in the Bible” (p. 28).

Webb deals, first of all, with age limitations. Those today who advocate spanking also recommend guidelines for how and when to administer spankings. This includes suggestions of the age-range of children for whom spankings are appropriate. Webb, however, counters with the observation that the Bible gives no age-limitations for corporal punishment. He also cites verses from Proverbs that speak of corporal punishment for the “fool” and asserts that these could include adults as well as children.

Webb is correct in observing that the Bible does not give us explicit age-limitations for the use of corporal punishment with children. But he is incorrect to suggest that individuals would be disobedient to the instructions of the Bible if they were to limit spankings to certain ages. If we interpret the passages correctly, however, we must acknowledge that the Bible does not teach *anything* explicitly regarding the specific question of age-limitations. It could be helpful if those who advocate spanking make a distinction here. The use of corporal punishment in the discipline of children *is* taught in the Bible. But many of the specifics are not explicitly taught. Therefore, recommendations regarding some of the details of spanking are based more generally on the wisdom we glean from the whole of what the Bible says about parenting.

Webb goes too far in the other direction, giving the impression that obeying the clear instructions of Scripture would mean administering harsh beatings to our children all the way into their adulthood. If we are convinced by his portrayal of the biblical landscape on this issue, then it becomes plain that we must somehow “move beyond” what the Bible says. But what do Deut 25:1–3 and Exod 21:20–21 have to do with corporal punishment for children? Very little, in my opinion. And even within Proverbs, we must consider the distinction between disciplining the “fool” and disciplining one’s own child. There may be some overlap between the two, but we are dealing with two very different situations.

The second issue Webb addresses is the number of lashes or strokes. He refers to the pro-spanking position as “two-smacks-max.” In contrast, the Bible sets the limit at forty. “Within a broader theology of corporal punishment the maximum limit on strokes or lashes is clearly set at forty (not two) strokes for Torah infractions (Deut. 25:3)” (p. 34). Again, the comparison is unhelpful and confusing. Deuteronomy 25:3 is dealing with a legal matter among adults in the context of the Mosaic Law. The verses in Proverbs concerning parenting do not give all the specifics for how to exercise corporal punishment.

The arguments are similar in other categories. Webb discusses the “bodily location of the beatings” and “resultant bruises, welts and wounds.” He draws from verses that do *not* speak directly to the situation of parents disciplining their children, and he concludes that the back (not the buttocks) is the

biblical way of administering corporal punishment with children and that the Bible advocates leaving bruises on children.

Webb does raise many fascinating questions with which we must wrestle. I certainly have not addressed them all in this short review. But one should read Webb carefully and critically to discern whether his assertions really hold when he describes what the Bible actually teaches.

Webb's treatment of the corporal punishment issue seems to be an example of wanting to have one's cake and eat it too. He desires to embrace the popular values of our time (anti-spanking) while maintaining fidelity to the Bible. There is danger in this hermeneutical system that loosens our foothold in the authority of Scripture.

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Douglas Wilson. *Evangellyfish*. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2012. 228 pp. \$21.00.

So far this year I've read eight books by Douglas Wilson, and reading him usually evokes one of three responses:

1. I strongly agree. Witty, pithy, insightful. I wish I would've written that.
2. I strongly agree, but an improved tone could win others over. (Think Tim Keller.)
3. I strongly disagree, and the tone is off-putting. (For example, in March 2012 he [called](#) the NIV a "gender bender" translation, asking, "Who wants a Bible translation with hormone shots and breast implants?")



Evangellyfish evokes the first two responses but with a few caveats.

The book is unlike any other I've read by Wilson: it's a novel, and it's satire. Wilson's other writings have doses of satire, but this is 228 pages of non-stop satire. I don't want to give away the storyline, so I'll be vague on those details. Basically, the book is a story of two pastors: (1) a sleazy, sex-crazed mega-church pastor and (2) a faithful, down-to-earth Reformed Baptist pastor with an MDiv from Westminster Theological Seminary. And there are lots of other colorful characters.

On the one hand, this book may not be for you. First, it's preoccupied with sex. Though it contains nothing explicit, many (most?) scenes are suggestive. Second, it includes realistically coarse language when depicting what crude characters are thinking or saying: e.g., "Who the hell" (p. 21), "what the hell" (p. 99), and "damn" (pp. 24, 35, 111, 156, 179 [2x], 192, 209). Third, Wilson directs his satire almost exclusively at mega-churches in generic evangelicalism. Hardly any of the barbs hit close to home for conservative evangelicals who are robustly confessional. Even worse, the book may instill a prejudice in those readers and tempt them to look down on or be suspicious of all large churches in vanilla evangelicalism as being led by slick hypocrites and filled with superficial attenders.

On the other hand, *Evangellyfish* may be just what you're looking for. Like almost everything Wilson writes, it's witty, funny, and edifying. Especially edifying are the end of the story and how he portrays

the Reformed Baptist pastor's marriage and family. While this novel depicts sin, it doesn't glorify it; sin is dark and has miserable consequences in this life.

Here are some examples of Wilson's humorous verve:

- "Mitchell's mother had always called church choirs the war department. Luther once said that when Satan fell, he fell into the choir loft" (p. 12).
- "[H]is pulpit ministrations had left the congregation in an exhausted frame of mind, and parishioners would go home after the message, recline on the sofa, and pant" (p. 67).
- "[S]he was one of those rare individuals whose wise and sagacious appearance was immediately contradicted as soon as she opened her mouth" (p. 74).
- "Johnny was not really a highly trained logician, and would simply go as he was directed, as long as the suggested direction did not conflict with the tangled bundle of platitudes, loosely tied with string, that made up his worldview" (p. 100).
- "Michelle was a smart woman, but it must also be said she had always been a 'will that be on the test?' kind of smart" (p. 105).
- "[T]he repercussions did not seriously affect Chad's ministry at all. In fact, he got a book deal with Zondervan out of it—*Walking With Christ Through Divorce*" (p. 108).
- "[A]fter repeating several phrases unnecessarily (the sermonic equivalent of a blinking fuel gauge), John decided that he had to wrap up. He didn't feel any better. He felt like he had just tried to give a tar baby a bath in vegetable oil. Lester didn't look any cleaner, and John just felt gunked" (p. 140).
- "Pastoral snarls are like the mercies of God—they are new every morning" (p. 175).
- "[T]hat kind of anger is like manna. Even if it is good, it goes bad overnight if you try to keep it" (p. 224).

Wilson said in one interview, "I want this book to come across to intelligent readers as 'funny, dark, and redemptive.'" By those criteria, he succeeded.

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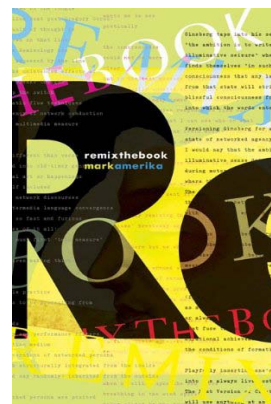
— MISSION AND CULTURE —

Mark Amerika. *Remixthebook*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011. 312 pp. \$19.95.

Remixthebook is not a book. It is, in the words of Mark Amerika, “more of a hybridized publication and performance art project that appears in . . . print” (p. xi). It is an experiment in composition and cultural creativity that defies the expectations of a “book” with its closed structure and pre-packaged creative potency. *Remixthebook* is open-source material composed of open-source material, ready and available for renewable redistribution in the age of remix. The theories behind Amerika’s hybrid composition are difficult to discern, but only for the reader who is looking for a plain statement of them. Amerika performs his theories more than he states them. *Remixthebook* is a show-and-tell performance of the philosophy of remix, the practice of combing existing cultural objects to make new creations. Discerning a central thesis or even an organized set of clear arguments would be impossible with Amerika’s performance piece, but that is not to say it lacks another kind of clarity, a lucid force of realization that strikes from any angle throughout *Remixthebook*. In this way the ideas in Amerika’s show and tell are coherent since they hang together in the same vein of flux. In order to review this “book,” I feel that it is best to simply trace some of these energetic lines of flux that inhabit *Remixthebook* instead of methodically summarizing each “chapter.” Even so, given that the “book” is what Amerika calls a “novelty generator,” it would be impossible to catch every freshly remixed idea that comes in each reading—each reading can yield new thoughts for every reader.

Remixthebook is about “Subsidizing the advance of Creativity itself” (p. 54). Amerika’s “science” of “Remixology” is a method of creativity that creates by remixing available material. In order for the artist to allow Creativity to create from existing source material (of whatever form, genre, or thinking), the artist must become, as Amerika puts it, an “artist-medium” where the artist’s own life becomes integral to making the art objects remixed by the artist. Remixing Alfred North Whitehead’s *Religion in the Making*, Amerika writes, “For if Remixology is anything at all / it is an ongoing valuation of one’s / Lifestyle Practice as an aesthetic fact” (p. 42). Creating is living in Remixology in a way that tears down distinctions between theory and practice, or art object and artist. The reason this is such an important move for Creativity’s remixing potential is in the issue of “grounding out.” Amerika suggests that in the practice of Remixology, learning how to “ground out” (p. 33) is an ever-present challenge for cultural creators, whether they are a professional DJ or the average youtube “remixologist.” Working with the analogy of an electric ground-wire, “grounding out” for Amerika, means, in one way, the practice of creating “‘on whatever ground was available’ at any given moment.” This means that the artist-medium in Remixology is not creating from individual selves or character but a “flux persona . . . a fictional decharacterization of said self (said who?)” (p. 26). Subsidizing human creativity means surrendering to the medium and what “it” wants to become, because we are the medium—the medium is our selves. Creativity in the age of remix requires folding medium and artists into one another.

Remixology performed by the artist-medium means that “the self per se / disappears in a sea of source material” (p. 63). “Source Material Everywhere,” says Amerika, is the mantra of Remixology. Just as the artist-medium uses any ground available for the artist-object, “The Next Version of Creativity /



will use anything at any given time” (p. 65), and *anything* is available for use. Creativity according to Remixology is not the generation of new ideas or objects based on a fixed archive of previous art works, literature, or music from which to draw on. Any and all of culture is open to be hacked, spliced, or remixed with anything else, and therefore open to being reinvented. *Remixthebook* itself is a performance of this theory by remixing the words of Beat poets, philosophers, Jazz musicians, among others. There is no closure on what material can be introduced into remixing; everything is at hand to be used for a new creation from the fluctuating artist-medium. Every cultural object that has been produced is available to be “pla(y)giarized” by the postproduction artist (p. 110). By opening up Creativity to “Source Material Everywhere,” the result is unexpected: “you begin to start seeing things / you never knew were there but were / somehow always right in front of you” (p. 43). The result is trans-disciplinary, breaking down preconceived divisions of culture (“art,” “music,” “literature,” “philosophy,” “theology,” “LOLCats,” etc.). Anything and everything is open in the age of remix where we are always already “remixologically inhabiting the datum / that pings your unconscious neural mechanisms / and spurs you on to create / your own version of / this enduring ‘mechanism in the making’” (p. 40).

Whether readers want to read *Remixthebook* as a report on the condition of creativity in our electronic age or as a method of Remixology for inventing novel “artist-objects,” this “book” will not disappoint. It provides a unique glimpse at the creation of culture in the digital age as well as a unique method for the creativity. At the same time, *Remixthebook* actively resists the practice of reading that looks for straightforward arguments and propositions. The value of this book for the theologian or pastor could be its ministerial application to understanding (pop) culture or perhaps as an inspiration for bringing the gospel into the culture as a remixological witness—a difficult proposal, perhaps, but one worth considering for Christians in the “age of remix.” *Remixthebook* holds promise for new thinking, if only we can learn to read it in its own terms, that is, if we are willing to become artist-mediums ready to “remix the book” and remix our individual selves which remain an open archive of source material. Unless we come to *Remixthebook* ready to jump into its flux of thoughts, rhythms, and beats—like listening to a DJ improvise—there won’t be much to make of it, but not because there is nothing in the book, only that we aren’t ready to *make something*.

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Bruce Riley Ashford, ed. *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church, and the Nations*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2011. 352 pp. \$25.99.

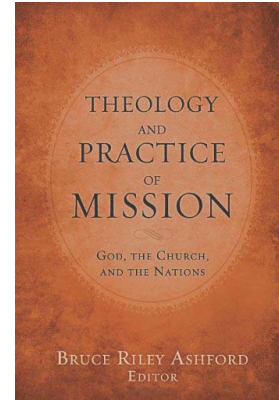
Discussing the practice of mission often starts with sociology. Reversing the trend, this book gets it right by approaching mission from a theological foundation. The result is a refreshingly non-anthropocentric analysis of missions, written by Southern Baptist authors working in various ministries throughout the world and published by a Southern Baptist publishing house, which attempts to connect with important topics in the practice of missions.

To that end, the book is divided into three parts. Part one argues that the key to understanding the mission of God's people is understanding the mission of God. It pays special attention to the biblical themes of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. These four themes highlight God's purpose in promoting his praise and in bringing about a gospel-people to share in the kingdom.

Part two connects God's people with God's mission. The church's job is to bear witness to the gospel, in word and deed, throughout culture. The book offers a theologically driven approach to social justice, church planting, and evangelism. It emphasizes the primacy of the local church, but it lacks a broader discussion of the role of non-church entities in the business of evangelism, social services, etc. There is also little to direct the reader in regard to engaging public policy, which is surprising since Southern Baptists have been very vocal in the public square. This oversight may imply that engaging public policy is not a critical part of the church's mission.

Chapter seven, "The Gospel and Social Responsibility," rightly argues that caring for the poor is the job of all Christians, but it could do more to explain how the gospel informs social responsibility. For instance, it would benefit from discussing how the gospel should inform the government's role in social services or how local churches might work with non-profit organizations to care for the poor. It advocates a 60/40 approach to caring for the poor, prioritizing those inside the church over those outside the church; it makes a further distinction between the guilty and guiltless poor. These distinctions unfortunately oversimplify the concepts of guilt and guiltlessness in terms of poverty, and under this umbrella it unnecessarily dichotomizes believing communities from non-believing communities. Furthermore, the idea that the church should prioritize a member who is poor due to his own mistakes over a non-believing community member (i.e., neighbor) who is poor through no fault of his own seems ethically counterintuitive.

In chapter eight, "The Gospel and Culture," Bruce Ashford provides a gospel-centered strategy for culture engagement. He shows that the biblical narrative from creation to restoration is essential to properly understanding culture (pp. 112–18). The rest of the chapter explains how the church proclaims and embodies the gospel in culture and brings theology to bear on "all dimensions of human society and culture" (p. 124). Christians are called to practice contextualization, Ashford argues, that is both faithful to scripture and meaningful in the socio-cultural context (p. 121). The church must be able to critique the culture and avoid the temptation to "equate the gospel with a cultural context" (p. 122). Ashford exposes the reader to significant voices on this subject, including Kevin Vanhoozer, Calvin, Luther, J. H. Bavinck, and Abraham Kuyper. In order to proclaim and embody the gospel, Christians must live faithfully to Christ in the workplace (*vocatio*) and act "Christianly" (*possessio*) in all cultural endeavors (p. 125).



The third part of the book (“The Church’s Mission to the Nations”) applies the mission of God and the church to specific issues (discipleship, church planting, suffering, and unreached people groups), to religions (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Animism), and to western culture (postmodernism). It shows that the mission of God is broad in scope and pertinent to both national and domestic missions. Chapter twenty (“Mission to Postmoderns”) would better serve the reader by thoroughly critiquing postmodernism. Part four concludes with two chapters seeking to further implement a theologically driven concept of mission and cultural engagement.

One contribution that I especially appreciate is J. D. Payne’s chapter, “Mission and Church Planting.” Payne argues that church planters should strive for simplicity (p. 204) and that the church’s simplicity is what makes it adaptable in various cultures (p. 206). He refers to “the biblical parameters” (p. 207) of the church but fails to define what constitutes a church. A discussion of essential church offices and practices would help support the thesis that ecclesiology is the foundation of missiology (p. 60). Payne thought-provokingly defines biblical church planting as “evangelism that results in new churches” (p. 203), an important definition because many church plants seem to grow by transplant rather than conversion. Payne also sounds a much-needed caution against models of church planting that simply copy other “successful” church models (p. 203).

This book is well-written and accomplishes its stated intent of providing a “biblical-theological framework for understanding the church’s mission to the nation” (p. 1). I appreciate that it sees the local church as the primary vehicle for kingdom advancement and the center of cultural engagement. *Theology and Practice of Mission* does an excellent job tracing major themes and showing how they relate to missions, and for that reason it could serve well as a supplemental text in a missiology, theology, or intercultural studies course, and its biblical approach makes it suitable for wide evangelical audience. As someone ministering in a multicultural environment, I think that this is a helpful book for those seeking to connect the gospel to culture.

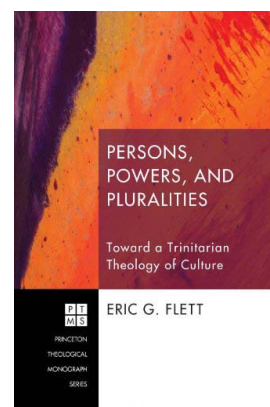
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Eric G. Flett. *Persons, Powers, and Pluralities: Towards a Trinitarian Theology of Culture*. Princeton Theological Monograph Series. Eugene, OR: Pickwick. 2011. 266 pp. £19.50/\$39.00.

Persons, Powers, and Pluralities is the product of a doctoral thesis written at King’s College, London in 2004. Flett gained his initial interest in a theology of culture while studying at Fuller Theological Seminary under the tutelage of the late Ray Anderson. The purpose of this project is to sketch the contours of a trinitarian theology of culture rooted in the theological vision of Thomas F. Torrance.

While neither the book’s title nor subtitle name T. F. Torrance, a look at the table of contents makes it clear that this book is largely an appreciative development of Torrance’s theological thought. The book has six chapters, and the first five are expositions of Torrance:

1. Torrance’s Doctrine of God: The Triune Creator



2. Torrance's Doctrine of Creation I: Order as Contingent
3. Torrance's Doctrine of Creation II: Order as Redeemed
4. Torrance's Doctrine of Humanity: Priests of Creation, Mediators of Order
5. Torrance's Theology of Culture: A Social Coefficient of Knowledge

The final chapter acts as Flett's own improvisations based on the trinitarian theology of order which he gleans from Torrance.

This format is a strength; not a weakness. Flett is careful to give Torrance's thought its due and refuses the temptation to cherry-pick at random from Torrance's framework. It is also a strength because Flett is creatively and yet faithfully extending Torrance's trinitarian theology into a field of knowledge that Torrance himself did not directly address and which may not have been central to Torrance's explicit research goals. Flett is self-consciously improvising, yet throughout the text he offers helpful markers so that the reader can recognize the moves he makes. By combining Torrance's trinitarian doctrine of God as Creator, creation as contingent, and the human person as a 'priest of creation and mediator of order,' Flett brings to light the basis of what Torrance terms 'the ontological substructure of our social existence.' He puts Torrance's core structure in dialogue with modern anthropological theories of culture, and the resultant chemistry is promising: an understanding of culture as directed and teleologically related to the triune Creator.

The central concept Flett seeks to express and explicitly direct toward social and cultural concerns is Torrance's idea of a 'social-coefficient of knowledge.' Flett notes that Torrance improvises this term by borrowing from two realms of thought—mathematics and sociology—and putting them in dialogue with one another.

In brief, a social-coefficient of knowledge is 'the social embodiment of a knowing relation' (p. 237) which involves three variables: an objective pole, a subjective pole, and the quality of relation between these two poles. The relation between the two poles, Flett notes, must be properly ordered 'in such a way that facilitates the disclosure of the objective pole, the transformation of the subjective pole, and an appropriate social embodiment that reflects both subject and object' (p. 151). The kind of knowledge shared between these two poles falls on a spectrum of varying degrees of distortion or transparency and consequently results in concrete social expressions and embodiments which reflect the quality of that relation. Flett likens the idea of a social-coefficient with the social theory of 'centered sets,' for both are fundamentally defined, shaped, and bounded by their centers and the nature of the relationships and structures that form around those centers (p. 154). This knowing relation between the objective and subjective pole takes place dialogically and dialectically in history and results in the social embodiment of that knowing relation. For this knowing relation (social coefficient) to be effective, a degree of 'semantic intentionality' is necessary so that symbols, structures, and rituals can effectively refer beyond themselves to the objective pole where the true locus of meaning exists (p. 167). It is the task of the subjective pole to articulate 'and socially embody the knowledge "received" from the objective pole of the relation' (p. 167). The key which holds these three factors (objective, subjective, and the relation between) is a fourth factor, the transcendent ground of meaning. This 'Archimedean point' provides a transcendent reference point which functions as a 'tuning fork' coordinating the other variables one to another. In this way, subjective and objective poles are both oriented by their reference to a point 'beyond the dyadic relation itself' (p. 175). Right relation to the objective world requires an 'articulate framework of thought' which is mediated to us through our 'social existence' in the world. These social coefficients of knowledge do not mediate explicit conceptual knowledge, but a "predisposition" toward

reality. Yet as human beings there is also an 'ontological substructure' to our social existence which has its source in the *imago Dei*. The ontological structure of personal being and its specific *telos* must be approximated in our social existence if it is to be sustained and not subverted (pp. 185–87).

Leaving the technical jargon aside for the moment, what Flett offers is a distinctly trinitarian way of comprehending the human situation as cultural beings. Because of the transcendent Archimedean reference point of the triune Creator, human persons are set 'free to be *determinate* without being *determined*' (p. 165). As those who are created in the image of the triune God, human persons are given a vocation as priests of creation and mediators of order and as such are invited and called to develop diverse symbolic and cultural forms which correlate and correspond to created reality without slavishly mimicking it. Throughout the book, Flett compares this creative cultural task to that of improvisational music in which the musician not only is called upon to reflect accurately a particular piece of music, but also 'to bring something of him or herself to the piece in a fresh and creative way'. A pure mimetic rendering would actually be 'a "violation" of the "semantic intentionality" of the piece' (p. 169).

Social coefficients function by providing a symbolic environment which orders social life and in so doing shapes personal being. As such, they participate in and with reality itself through an ongoing mutual modification which is more and more or less and less faithful to their created *telos*. It's worth quoting Flett at length:

the social coefficient of knowledge is to provide the human person with a heuristic, dialogical, and multi-leveled structure that refers to the openness of the human person not only to the objective created world or to other persons but also to an objective and transcendent ground of meaning. In this way the formation of the human person and the construction of human culture takes place in a conversation between an objective created order and a transcendent ground of meaning, just as the human person and the transcendent ground of meaning are embodied through the agency of the human person as priest of creation. The result is a fertile ground where plurality, both personal and social, of the richest sort may flourish. (p. 203)

One will not find a lot of critique of Torrance within these pages. Flett's purpose is not to critique Torrance, but to use him as here noted by 'transposing' Torrance's ideas from their original context within a dialogue with science and to apply them to a theology of culture.

Other than the first chapter (which is unfortunately too long), the book refrains from annoying repetition, and it gradually builds a case which flowers in the final chapter. Less patient readers might be tempted to jump to the final chapter of the book, especially as that chapter bears the book's title. While this is certainly doable, and might even serve as a place to start, what would be missed is the trinitarian coherence which holds Flett's argument together.

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David Horner. *When Missions Shapes the Mission: How You and Your Church Can Reach the World*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2011. 280 pp. \$14.99.

When Missions Shapes the Mission argues there is a gap between the biblical mission of the church and the average missions program in evangelical churches. Opening with the question, “Why are more churches not engaged in a more practical and substantial way in taking the gospel to the nations?” (p. 1), Horner then identifies the current state of missions in evangelical churches, demonstrates the biblical understanding of missions, and describes the best practices used to build a robust missions program.

Horner’s first section, “Where We Are,” begins with the differentiation between mission, missional, and missions, rightly arguing that a church can be missional but miss God’s aim in missions. Key to understanding the book is the author’s definition of missions: “Missions is God’s plan for reaching all the nations with the good news of Jesus Christ by sending His people to tell them and show them the gracious, redeeming love of a glorious God” (p. 6). As the book unfolds it becomes clear that Horner defines nations as people groups rather than nation-states.

Although the author makes sweeping statements about the neglect of missions in churches across America, he cites data only from the Southern Baptists, which is understandable since he has been a pastor in that denomination since 1978. Although I suspect the broader claim holds, he disappointingly leaves that assertion unsubstantiated. Of the data he gives regarding the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program, two of the most remarkable are that (1) less than 20 cents of every US dollar given goes to international missions and (2) 80% of churches have never sent a missionary from their own congregation.

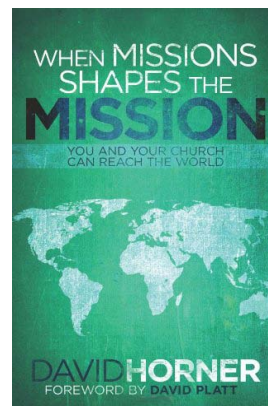
After looking at the lack of financial support and sending missionaries from our own congregations, Horner addresses the roadblocks churches face in being committed to missions. Why don’t churches have a robust, strategic and comprehensive missions program? According to Horner, the main reason is “that the missions direction of our churches rises and falls through the leadership of the pastor” (p. 29). Unfortunately, he does not identify practical ways to influence church leadership or to change church culture.

Central to the argument in chapter three, “Missing the Point,” is the necessity of going as part of the Great Commission. Horner cites NT professor Roy Ciampa, who demonstrates that the participle translated “go” still carries the mood of the main verb “make disciples.” Those who have asserted a lack of imperative concerning the need to go miss the point of the Great Commission. How will every *ethne* have the gospel unless we go ourselves or send others? The author contends, “You cannot and will not be effective in obeying the Great Commission if your disciple-making efforts remain limited to where you find yourself ‘as you go’ through your normal walk of life” (p. 47).

In Section 2, “Where We Want to Be,” the author starts in Genesis and briefly rehearses God’s plan to redeem some from all nations. However, to simply believe this is not enough, due to additional roadblocks churches face in becoming strategic about the task remaining.

Crucial to transforming a church’s mission program are the nine values from past missions models listed at the beginning of chapter six. He calls the first four foundational because they will transform the perspective of any church that lives them out. These values are:

- Power from on high as the Holy Spirit’s work flowed freely



- A passion for Christ
- Prevailing prayer
- A rich soaking in the Scriptures and sound doctrine

The final five values, Horner claims, are the natural result of living out the first four in community. They include:

- Unwavering faith that trusts God to be faithful in all things
- Holiness and purity of life (together with deep repentance and an abhorrence of sin)
- Eyes willing to see and have compassion on others
- A supportive, sacrificial, and generous sending community
- Persecution and opposition

Horner maintains that implementing these nine values will “shape the heartbeat of that congregation” that lives them out (p. 134). However, he undermines this statement by saying that not all churches with a healthy missions focus possess all these values. Horner then adds more confusion when he states, “nor is it reasonable to think that they should” (p. 134). But which of these biblical values would a church ignore or reject? Even though the final value of persecution may sound odd, it is entirely biblical to both expect opposition and not let persecution stop us from taking the gospel to the difficult places.

The list of top mission practices, which begins the “How to Get There” section, are distilled from over 100 church responses to his survey aiming to identify the most helpful missions practices of a variety of churches. These practices are grouped into three basic categories: vision building, strategy creation, and ongoing development. Horner compares the survey results to the previous nine values and then expresses surprise when the list is populated with practices and not values. Had the author surveyed the values rather than practices alone, he could have built a stronger argument for the adoption of those values.

Horner correctly identifies pragmatism as a problem for the church today. The best-practices approach is much easier to implement than the heavy lifting required to change the core values of a congregation. The reader may also be tempted to take the expedient route and build a church missions plan based primarily around the best practices. Yet church leaders and missions teams should follow Horner’s sequence by building a biblical basis for missions, committing explicitly to specific values, and only then begin to implement specific best practices.

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Ivana Noble. *Theological Interpretation of Culture in Post-Communist Context: Central and East European Search for Roots*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010. 236 pp. £50.00/\$51.00.

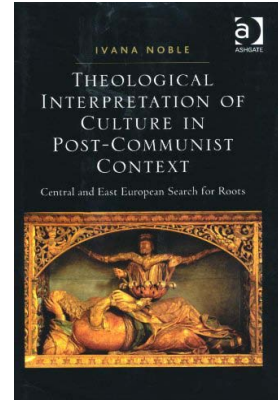
Ivana Noble is associate professor of Ecumenical Theology at the Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University; she also teaches at the International Baptist Seminary as a Senior Research Fellow (Prague, Czech Republic). She is the former president of Societas Oecumenica and has authored *Tracking God: Ecumenical Fundamental Theology* (Wipf & Stock, 2010).

Noble uses the term “culture” in its etymological sense, emphasizing its cultivating role. Her discussion of the interplay between culture and theology is “that theology can uncover areas that would otherwise remain inaccessible to culture, as well as culture being able to stimulate theology to return to the forgotten depths of the ‘underground sources’ and ‘unknown streams’ of life opened by the keys of symbolic traditions” (pp. 11–12). Focusing on the communist context in which she was raised, Noble investigates the cultural arts through a Trinitarian grid exemplified by the World (creation), Memory (redemption), and Ultimate Fulfillment (deification). In her section on the World, Noble discusses literature from Karel Čapek and Isaac Bashevis Singer. For Memory, she examines the heritage of totalitarian cultures in the folk music of Vladimir Vysotsky and Jaromír Nohavica. Finally, Ultimate Fulfillment is explained via the Central European films of István Szabó and Vladimír Michálek. Since her artists are not Christian, the author explains her method: “These languages may not seem at first sight explicitly theological, and some degree of translation between them and the language of theology is needed” (p. viii). Depending on each artist’s *Sitz im Leben*, there are a range of biblical themes that Noble explains as roots or memories that have long been suppressed in the human psyche.

Foundational to Noble’s interpretation of culture is the Eastern Orthodox perspective. Concerning evil, it is

a negative activity in the perverted course of the world, weakening the world and thus making it vulnerable to natural catastrophes and illnesses, a human perversion affecting all relationships like an illness, as well as perverted spiritual forces operating within creation. . . . It is a parasitic state taking hold of personal beings and of the world, a state of having fallen away from God, which, however, does not ultimately represent a negative alternative to God. (p. 45n2)

Consequently, she stresses that people should be thought of as victims instead of responsible agents who know what they are doing (p. 124). Despite believing the first eleven chapters of Genesis are myth, Noble writes, “The estrangement from God, the loss of paradise and mortality, were not punishments of God, but consequences of the weakening of the spirit that gave way to disobedience, pride and all selfish appetites” (p. 60). Part of the fall is that the image of God is lost, requiring renewal. Although Noble misquotes Irenaeus supportively, for Noble the need for renewal leads to deification whereby society is guided by the *Logos spermatikos*, Who by perichoretic activity cultivates the earth through a creative process toward consummation with heaven, returning us to the image of God in the “circle of love” (pp. 119, 57). The death of Christ, then, is an act of renewal where Jesus identifies with humanity as victim, fills death with love and resurrects our race. The Spirit of love is then anonymously shed in the hearts of humanity because the Spirit’s work in the world also involves a *kenosis*. Noble explains, “The love of the



Spirit says nothing about God, in order to be able to reach into the hearts of creatures for whom God has died” (p. 176). In the consummation, there is the possibility of God embracing all as an act of love. In a Trinitarian perspective, she writes, “Christ is the victor over violence in our world, not its ultimate victim. The Father is the giver of the victory, not the perpetrator of the sacrifice. The spirit makes the victory present, bringing eschatological fulfillment into human history” (p. 124).

Noble’s conclusions regarding the nature of God will be met with disapproval by most evangelicals. She writes, “In creating humankind with their freedom, God let go of omnipresence and omnipotence, as the fruits of human freedom could not be completely predicted” (p. 169). Also, fundamental to her interpretation of culture is a rejection of substitutionary atonement (pp. 124, 140, 165–66, 191–93). According to Noble, the “scandalous” western view of the atonement makes God a sacrificer, overemphasizes sin, and undermines the role of the Spirit” (p. 123). Noble also rejects the exclusivity of the Christian faith: “I do not want to argue that if our contemporaries do not share our explicit Trinitarian faith they cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit either” (p. 75). In short, “redemption happens through the recovery of a positive dialogue with God” (p. 125). In a context needing hope, Noble gives little consolation by expressing doubt that Europe will ever return to Christianity. As an alternative she suggests, “by embodying what we believe and hope for, by our own conversion, we can take others along, at least part of the way” (p. 201).

Although Noble cites limitations with her English ability, she writes with great depth. Every sentence is weighed for content and meaning. Being trained in the West, she shows great familiarity with western, non-evangelical thought and capably weaves various traditions together to express her convictions. Of particular interest is her tracing the memory of God in the variegated lives of those who live in a secular or post-secular world. While no significant contributions were made in Trinitarian studies, evangelicals that read this work will be challenged to think deeply about the contributions of Eastern Orthodoxy as well as non-evangelical perspectives on culture and human psychology. Yet, lack of adherence to fundamental evangelical doctrine is a significant weakness of the book. Consequently, while those specializing in cultural studies may find this volume helpful, as might others more conversant with engaging post-communist European culture, this is probably not the best book written on the issue for a general evangelical audience. Yet it provides a helpful tool for how evangelicals might begin to conduct their own engagement with post-communist societies from their more distinctly evangelical perspective.

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Mark A. Noll. *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. 180 pp. £16.99/\$25.00.

Mark A. Noll is Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame. *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind* is a sort of “sequel” to *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Eerdmans, 1994). If in that earlier volume Noll laments that the scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind, in the present volume Noll seeks to offer something of an update on the current status of the evangelical mind and to suggest how the evangelical faith might inform the life of the mind. As he writes in the introduction,

My contention in this book is that coming to know Christ provides the most basic possible motive for pursuing the tasks of human learning.

...

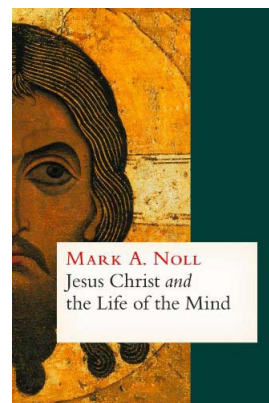
The message in this book for my fellow evangelicals can be put simply: if what we claim about Jesus Christ is true, then evangelicals should be among the most active, most serious, and the most open-minded advocates of general human learning. Evangelical hesitation about scholarship in general or about pursuing learning wholeheartedly is, in other words, antithetical to the Christ-centered basis of the evangelical faith. (pp. ix–x)

After an opening chapter summarizing classical Christology, chapters 2–4 summarize how the person of Christ (chs. 2–3) and atonement theology (ch. 4) might generate insights for the Christian intellectual endeavor. Chapters 5–7 then apply these theological insights to three academic disciplines (history, science, and biblical studies). Chapter 8 functions as a brief summary, and then the Postscript (“How Fares the ‘Evangelical Mind?’”) offers a type of big-picture update on the state of the evangelical mind—particularly how it has fared since his 1994 book.

Perhaps the chief value of *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind* is that Noll outlines what chief insights for advancing the intellectual life might flow from the heart of the Christian faith: the person and work of Christ (Noll’s attention is, however, more focused on the person of Christ than the work of Christ). Thus, in chapter 2, Christ is the creator, so in studying created things, we are studying what Christ himself has created (p. 25); since all things cohere in Christ, no aspect of reality is sequestered from his lordship (pp. 26–30); if Christ is sovereign over all things, God is then “attached” to all arenas of study (pp. 30–33); the Word was made flesh, so material reality is worthy of attention (pp. 33–35); the incarnation reminds us that attention to *this* particular world is legitimate (pp. 35–37); that Jesus was fully human in his incarnate state justifies studying human personality (pp. 37–38); the beauty of God, of whom the incarnate Son is the clearest manifestation, encourages attention to beauty (pp. 38–39). Chapter 3 suggests that attention to classical Christology yields four key principles that can inform and encourage Christian scholarship: doubleness (or duality), contingency, particularity, and self-denial.

One might quibble that while Noll seeks to ask what the atonement has to do with the intellectual life—certainly a worthy endeavor—the atonement chapter (ch. 4) is both thin and cursory, as Noll seems to recognize, though offering avenues for further exploration.

Some readers may find chapters 5–7 more provocative. Noll applies key christological truths (summarized in chs. 1–4) to the disciplines of history, science, and biblical studies, respectively.



Chapter 5 (on history) properly contends that given the truthfulness of Christianity, the Christian can believe in the possibility of historical knowledge and at arriving at some real—if non-exhaustive—understanding of the past. Readers will likely be divided on the question of providence and history writing. Noll distances himself from folks like Iain Murray, whom Noll sees as being too optimistic about discerning God’s providential hand. But Noll does not deny that Christian historians should attend to the question of providence in their writings.

In chapter 6 (on science), Noll’s framework is fairly straightforward and unobjectionable. Historic Christianity encourages attention to the created order, and there will ultimately be no conflict between God’s “two books”: nature and Scripture. Likewise, the idea that historic Christianity encourages a “come and see” approach to the created order is a good and proper summary of a legitimate principle: given that God created, governs, and upholds the world and given that God has created man with the capacity to know, reason, etc., there is every reason to attend to the created order and every confidence that humans can come to know and understand the world—if in incomplete and imperfect ways. And Noll’s contention that many contemporary thinkers have been shaped by the following three key historical turning-points is a helpful notion: (1) univocal metaphysics (following Duns Scotus, God’s “being and the being of all other things share a common essence”; p. 106); (2) harmonization between the “two books”; and (3) natural theology (as Noll summarizes: “*not only did God create and providentially order the natural world, but humans could figure out exactly how and why God ordered creation as he did*”; p. 108). Noll elevates Warfield as an example of christologically informed scholarship as one committed to the (1) *full* deity and (2) *full* humanity of Christ and by analogy a “concursum” understanding of biblical inspiration (where Scripture is the result of both the divine author and human author/s). Warfield likewise could affirm that (1) God created and governed the world and (2) evolution (of a non-naturalistic kind) could be fully accepted. [Editor’s note: Cf. Fred G. Zaspel, “B. B. Warfield on Creation and Evolution,” *Them* 35 (2010): 198–211, available at <http://thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/b. b. warfield on creation and evolution>.] Given that volume takes for granted the general legitimacy of something like theistic evolution and it subtly dismisses more conservative approaches, one wonders if Noll would have chosen Warfield if Warfield’s “concursum” approach had led him to *reject* evolutionary theory. Also, how does a “come and see” approach actually work when one takes Scripture to be the touchstone of all reality and when one considers the noetic effects of sin? That is, does the “come and see” approach encourage the kind of intellectual divide Noll is trying so valiantly to discourage—i.e., a divide where (1) humans are able—generally—to know the *world* as it is, through *observation*, while (2) *Scripture* must be *interpreted*? Thus, if Noll’s goal is to explore the reality of Jesus Christ and the life of the mind, it is worth asking how finiteness and sinfulness effects such a “looking.” And if Scripture ultimately expresses the mind and will of the triune God, are we not then back to the question of how to relate the “two books”—nature and Scripture?

After briefly summarizing J. I. Packer and B. B. Warfield on the nature of the Bible, chapter 7 (on biblical studies) is an extended summary and review of Peter Enns’s *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*. While Noll qualifies his positive evaluation of Enns at the beginning of this section of the book (p. 133), by the end there is little doubt that Noll is quite positive about Enns’s volume (p. 145). This review is not the place for a detailed critique of Enns. But it seems that Enns’s push to emphasize the “humanity” of Scripture *in fact* functions as a critique of traditional evangelical emphases on the divinely given character of Scripture. That is, Enns’s foil is the more traditional understandings of Scripture as divinely given and therefore uniquely authoritative.

Thus, rather than serving as an exemplar of how to apply classical Christology to the intellectual task, Enns's work seems to misappropriate classical christological insights.

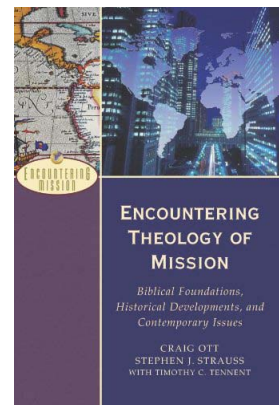
Noll's volume is a helpful theological exploration of a central question: what does Jesus Christ have to do with the life of the mind? For readers wrestling with this question, Noll ably fleshes out how attention to the reality of the person of Christ can inform the intellectual life (I do wish there was more sustained attention to the *work* of Christ). I suspect readers will be somewhat more divided on how the many wonderful christological insights are *applied* to the disciplines of history, science, and biblical studies. I hope Noll's optimism about the state of the evangelical mind is warranted, and I join with him in praying that through attending to Christ Christians might continue to develop and thrive intellectually, for indeed, as Noll (following Paul!) points out, it is Christ himself "in whom are hidden all treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

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Craig Ott and Stephen Strauss, with Timothy Tennent. *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010. xxx + 383 pp. £16.99/\$29.99.

Ott and Strauss (I'll come to the 'with Tennent' below) give us an admirably usable text. Their stated aim is to provide biblical clarity and global awareness to the church's practice of mission. In my mind they achieve the biblical clarity exceedingly well in their organized introductory presentation of the theology of mission. Global awareness, given the scope of the ambition, is harder to check off exhaustively, but certainly here is a missions text with awareness of the multi-contextual practice of mission by the church worldwide, and not just the Anglo-American. That said, as a survey of an academic field, the references are overwhelmingly Anglo-European.

Two key strengths of the text as a whole deserve immediate recognition: (1) the writers are unapologetically evangelical in holding biblical authority as 'the North Star' by which they navigate the contemporary missiological scene; (2) the book is designed as a teacher/student-friendly classroom textbook. Even without the theological affinity for readers of *Themelios*, this well-executed aspect of the publication would recommend it for introductory classes in theology of mission ahead of the now dated *Transforming Mission* by David Bosch or the more recent *Constants in Context* by Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder. Examples of its user-friendliness include highlighted quotes, distinctively laid-out sidebars on discrete themes, many of which suggest questions for 'reflection and discussion'. Examples of sidebars include a glossary of terms, the preferential option for the poor, Roman Catholic theology of mission, and discipleship in East Africa. There are diagrams and tables aplenty. Most suggestive and fruitful are the four case studies which could excellently guide classroom discussion, situating the theological discussion in real-life contexts yielding empathetic exploration for testing and applying the material being learned.



The introduction does some important ground-clearing. It establishes how the authors helpfully and decisively navigate the claims of competing nomenclatures in the field between, for example, speaking of mission or missions. Ott and Strauss argue that theology of mission is an intersecting subset bridging broader fields of missional theology and missiology (see the helpful diagram on p. xx). That theology of mission must be biblical is the conviction driving Part 1 of the book, 'Biblical Foundations of Mission.' Here Ott and Strauss survey the OT and NT, the doctrine of God in relation to the *Missio Dei*, the purpose and nature of mission, and the task of missions.

Part 2 addresses 'Motives and Means for Mission' and is careful to identify wrong motives alongside appropriate ones. Part 3 tackles Mission in Local and Global Context.

Necessarily for this type of book, controversies are more surveyed than settled. This enables teachers and students handling the text to draw their own conclusions. One example is how the authors observe critical theological problems with the popular term *incarnational* in relation to mission. Having done so, they continue to use the term in a qualified sense as pointing to the humble character of mission. My sense is that there would be less need for such burden to befall *incarnational* groundings of mission if the *pneumatological* character of mission were brought to the fore theologically. So it is unfortunate that the Holy Spirit's substantial theological appearance is tactically delayed until the end of Part 2 in a chapter on 'Spiritual Dynamics and Mission.'

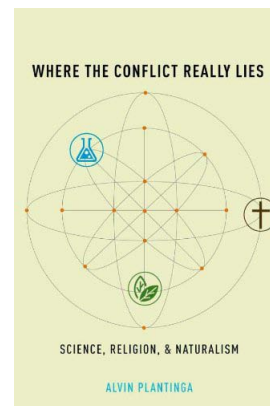
The final chapter ('The Necessity of Mission') makes clear the authors' convictions on the uniqueness of Christ in regard to salvation, the traditional doctrine of judgment and hell, and the urgency of proclamation in the light of the reality of fallenness. This discussion is addressed apologetically in reply to the question of God's fairness to those who have never heard the gospel. Again, while I may agree with the sentiment, I am not quite sure what to make of the claim in relation to biblical and post-biblical historical accounts of direct revelation through dreams, that '[t]he justice of God assures us that he will not leave without a witness any person or people group whom he knows would respond to the gospel if it were preached.' What kind of just witness would it be (if not the gospel) wherein God's justice is revealed? So here we have, appropriately if unintentionally, questions thrown out to readers for their own theologizing: questions of how to relate 'witness' and 'gospel,' or perhaps the nature of the term 'preaching.' What is unequivocally clear from the same chapter is this arresting assertion: 'The true scandal of mission is not that evangelicals believe that Jesus is the only way of salvation but that many who claim to believe this are doing little or nothing to spread the gospel to lost people around the world.'

One final observation on the matter of authorship—a quibble that highlights strong praise, I hope. Whether Timothy Tennent is to be thought of as the rap artist or soul diva who guest *features* in track/chapter 12 on 'Christian Encounters with Other Religions,' his chapter, while good in content, is aesthetically discordant. It just doesn't fit the pattern of the book to that point in style or manner of exposition. This is a quibble not to be taken as criticism of his well-known expertise, but rather to commend enthusiastically the way in which the coauthored book as a whole manages a really well-integrated weaving of the main two voices. Ott and Strauss achieve a consistency of tone and pattern of exposition that further smoothes the reading of this important survey of a vital theological locus.

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Alvin Plantinga. *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

It is not uncommon for Christians to feel uncomfortable with contemporary science. The self-appointed public defenders of science often use it to bludgeon religious people. No wonder when the club comes out the faithful reflexively wince. But does it have to be that way? In his new book, eminent philosopher Alvin Plantinga offers a different perspective on the relationship between Christianity (and by extension, some other religions) and contemporary science: not only have the alleged conflicts been exaggerated; there is deep concord between Christianity and science, and there is some ill-fit between naturalism (the rejection of any deity) and science. Christians may embrace science—even evolutionary theory—as a means to refine their understanding of God’s creation. It is the atheist who has a challenge in reconciling his faith with science.



The bulk of this book’s attention is on evolution, but two exceptions merit attention here: the roots of modern science and divine action. Despite the best efforts of historians of science such as John Hedley Brooke and Peter Harrison, it appears that few recognize that the foundation of modern science includes assumptions from Christian theology. Chapter 9 neatly summarizes some of these foundational principles and in doing so shows science-suspicious religious folk that science may be more of a prodigal son than an arch nemesis. Concerning divine action, some theists seem to have a niggling feeling that if God intervened in the world God would be guilty of some kind of inconsistency in character. In two fascinating (but not easy) chapters Plantinga handily dispels these concerns, arguing against theological problems with such a God and against any insurmountable problems in relation to quantum mechanics.

Regarding evolution, Plantinga considers arguments against the compatibility of evolution and theism including those by Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Philip Kitcher, and Paul Draper, concluding that none do better than provide very weak evidence against theism that is more than counterbalanced by other considerations having to do with the existence and character of living things. None demonstrate actual inconsistency between the existence of God and evolution by natural selection. A recurring confusion, Plantinga observes, is to take evidence for evolution as evidence for unguided, undirected, or unintended evolution. It is possible that some or all evolution is unguided, but demonstrating that organisms evolve through natural selection operating on mutations does not merit the further metaphysical add-ons. Considering Dawkins’s argument, Plantinga representatively writes, “At best it would show, given a couple of assumptions, that it is not astronomically improbable that the living world was produced by unguided evolution and hence without design” (p. 24). But he goes on to note the obvious: demonstrating that something is not astronomically improbable is a far cry from demonstrating that it is so.

Perhaps Plantinga’s weakest analysis is his examination of evolutionary psychology, including the evolutionary psychology of religion. A cloud of defensiveness floats over the treatment such that Plantinga fails to observe the same extra-scientific philosophical intrusions that he does when considering evolution generally. For instance, Plantinga takes offense unnecessarily at the notion that everything evolutionary psychologists seem to be able to say about music is that it is either an evolutionary byproduct or is adaptive for coordinating human activity. Why be offended unless

evolutionary psychology, as a science, is in a position to pass judgments regarding the worth of music? It isn't. Similarly, many of the examples of "superficial conflict" that Plantinga observes (e.g., D. S. Wilson or S. Guthrie's approaches to religion) are surely guilty of the same extra-scientific metaphysical additions for which Plantinga flags Dawkins and Dennett. Evolutionary psychology proper does not appear to necessarily conflict with theism at all.

The book's finale is Plantinga's argument demonstrating that one cannot reasonably hold naturalism and evolution by natural selection simultaneously. Plantinga has been refining this argument for twenty years and here offers a battle-hardened version. The first premise is this: that human cognitive faculties are reliably truth-aimed has a low probability given the conjunction of evolution by natural selection and naturalism. From this start Plantinga argues that the conjunction of evolution and naturalism is self-defeating. If you have no good grounds for trusting your cognitive faculties as truth-aimed, why trust them regarding the truth of evolution? It is the theist who can embrace evolution. Plantinga efficiently addresses many of the criticism raised against this argument. The fair-minded reader will conclude that the argument is at least formidable. Those who do not follow his argument may fear that Plantinga has engaged in philosophical mumbo-jumbo to arrive at such an audacious position. Plantinga seems to anticipate such a reaction and effectively uses a wide range of quotations from prominent atheist scholars in support of his key premise.

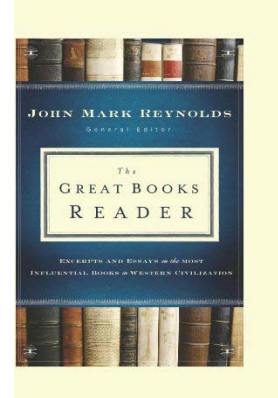
Nevertheless, those most needing to hear Plantinga's message may fail to give it a fair hearing for rhetorical rather than analytical reasons. At times it is not easy to follow without more philosophical training than the average scientist has. Further, Plantinga's case would have been rhetorically stronger had he spent more time demonstrating where genuine conflicts between modern science (its epistemology and findings) and at least some religious beliefs lie, even if non-Christian ones. Hasn't science produced at least some defeaters of enough strength to have helped cause the demise of some religious beliefs? Aren't the foundations of science inconsistent with some theologies?

A surprisingly large number of people regard science and religions as competitors for hearts and minds. If they have the courage to carefully and fairly read Plantinga's masterful new book, this conflict should be put to rest. With wit and appropriate humility, he convincingly demonstrates that the alleged conflict between at least the sort of theism that characterizes Christianity ranges from trivial to illusory.

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John Mark Reynolds, ed. *The Great Books Reader: Excerpts and Essays on the Most Influential Books in Western Civilization*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2011. 645 pp. \$34.99.

This book is an anthology of excerpts from many of the great books, from Homer to Calvin, and then from Calvin to Chesterton. The volume is edited by John Mark Reynolds, who appropriately begins with a reasonable defense of this (“indefensible”) collection of appetizers to the classics. Why do something like that?



One of the obvious answers, of course, is to whet the appetite for more. That is what appetizers *do*. With the resurgence of pedagogical interest in the great books, many parents and teachers have had to scramble to catch up. They are trying to provide the kind of education that few of us actually received, and in playing catch up like this, introductory volumes such as this one can be an enormous help. They are a help, of course, as a stop-gap measure until the classics being reintroduced into the curriculum can be read in their entirety, and more thoroughly. But even after that catch-up phase, a book like this, with its helpful commentary and accompanying essays, can provide a resource after the fact.

I am very pleased with the selections. Reynolds briefly introduces each one, and then right after the selection follows a short essay on the piece from various writers and thinkers. One curiosity is that only one of the selections (the one from *Anna Karenina*) has two essays following it, and all the others have just one. Perhaps this is just a way of tipping the hat to the prolixity of the Russians.

All the classical writers are treated with an appropriate dignity and respect (including Darwin and Marx), but not in a way that interferes with pointing out the clear problems. The only time I tripped over the gentlemanliness was when Nietzsche is given a pass for some of the consequences of his follies (p. 610). Even though he was one of the few philosophers who could write an interesting sentence, his house on the river of Western thought really was responsible for a lot of the gunk downstream.

Some of the selections are obvious because they would necessarily be required in any great books compendium (e.g., Homer, Virgil, Plato), and some of the selections are off the beaten path but clearly good choices (e.g., Chesterton, Calvin, Wesley). Calvin is at the center of *theological* history, for example, but for some reason he has been strangely neglected in “history of Western thought” programs. The famous University of Chicago Great Books collection, for example, leaves him out, a decision that left me aghast. Reynolds doesn’t make that mistake.

One of the book’s few weaknesses—albeit an understandable one—concerns the datedness of some of the translations. The translation of Dante’s *Inferno* is Longfellow’s (1867); Ormsby translated *Don Quixote* in 1885; and the translation of Newton, presumably out of the Latin, was done by Andrew Motte in 1729. When someone sets about to assemble a book like this, copyright owners of contemporary translations really ought to be less proprietary and territorial than they are, and they should think of this as free advertising instead of some form of nefarious encroachment. A rising tide floats all the boats. But quaint translations in a book you can actually use are far better than contemporary translations in a non-existent book. If the book serves its purpose and encourages people to start reading the classics more seriously, they can move on to more current translations at the appropriate time.

Another advantage to reading selections from numerous books side-by-side like this is that it makes it harder to fall into the idea that the Great Conversation (as Mortimer Adler called it) was somehow

free of disagreement and debate. While the great questions are constant (“Who are we? Where are we going? How should we behave on the way?”), the answers can vary wildly. In a volume like this, the differences of emphasis and/or perspective are clear.

But also, at the same time, another fact emerges. With the selections chosen by a Christian, it is striking that the overwhelming number of writers included here were also Christians. But this was not because of an untoward bias on the part of Reynolds—the names on this list clearly *belong* there (e.g., Pascal, Dostoevsky, Spenser, Milton). There are a total of twenty-nine writers represented here. The first four were pagans (Homer, Plato, Aristotle, and Virgil), and then a long line of Christians starts. There is a brief hiccup with Newton because of his problems with Arianism; and I personally don’t know where de Tocqueville stood, but he was certainly friendly to the Christian faith. That leaves Marx, Darwin, and Nietzsche. Out of a list of twenty-nine, we have seven non-believers and two question marks. It turns out that the Christian faith is *not* an enemy of a life of the mind. Why would we be against a great books program when we wrote most of them?

John Mark Reynolds was founder of the Torrey Honors Institute, the Great Books program for Biola University, and has recently become Provost of Houston Baptist University. In putting this book together, he has provided classical and Christian educators with a good service. There are a lot of classical Christian schools and homeschools that should make a point of having this book on the premises.

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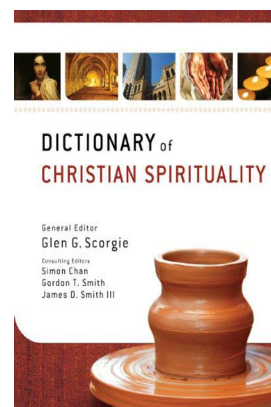
Glen G. Scorgie, ed. *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011. 852 pp. \$39.99.

Glen Scorgie has been professor of theology at Bethel Seminary San Diego, CA since 1996. He has served as academic vice-president of North American Baptist College in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, and as president of the Canadian Evangelical Theological Association. He has authored various books on Christian spirituality and on biblical and theological themes, and he presently teaches and preaches at Chinese Bible Church of San Diego.

In the words of its general editor, the *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* seeks to provide an “accessible and reliable academic resource” on Christian spiritual theology, spirituality, and spiritual formation “that will offer a discerning orientation to the wealth of ecumenical resources available while highlighting the distinct heritage and affirming the core grace-centered values of classical evangelical spirituality” (p. 8).

To achieve this, Scorgie sets out seven characteristics as goals for this project, namely, that it be:

1. biblically engaged
2. accessible and relevant to contemporary Christian practitioners
3. generous in its regard for the full range of Christian traditions of spirituality
4. attentive to otherwise neglected topics, concerns, and formative figures in the evangelical tradition of spirituality



5. global and international in both topical scope and contributors
6. reflective of interdisciplinary engagement with related fields of inquiry
7. reasonably priced

Two hundred thirteen contributors to this work come from a variety of disciplines (OT, NT, spiritual formation, church history, to name a few) and roles (professors, associate deans, emeritus professors, rectors, pastors, recent graduates, PhD candidates, seminary vice presidents, etc.), from formation communities/organizations and churches, each offering knowledgeable expertise. And so far-reaching is this book's global cast of contributors that every continent except Antarctica is represented.

One need turn only a few pages to discover this book's unique format. Part One is comprised of thirty-four "Integrative Perspectives" essays that together form 25% of the volume. Each of the six-to-eight-page essays ends with "Sources Cited" and "Further Reading" components. The integrative subjects include chapters on the OT and NT Foundations of Christian Spirituality, Doctrine of Assurance, Angels and Demons, numerous chapters giving historical surveys or developments of Christian spirituality, Music and the Arts, Spirit Baptism, the Illumination of Scripture, Incarnation, and the Sabbath.

As for the dictionary itself, entries cover a wide range of topics and persons related to Christian spirituality. These topics, comprising over 60% of the total number of contributions, include Addiction/Recovery, African and Russian Christian Spirituality, the Internet, Technology and Spirituality, Marriage, Poverty, Puritan Spirituality, Saints, Yoga, and Zen. Each entry is concise yet without absences of substance or insight. Entries about people who have made a lasting impact on Christian spirituality—both classic and more recent figures—include the likes of Ambrose of Milan, Athanasius, Anne Bradstreet, George Whitefield, William Wilberforce, Fanny Crosby, Toyohiko Kagawa, Billy Graham, David Yonggi Cho, and Dallas Willard.

The breadth and depth—though limited by space—of both the essays and topical entries included in the *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* will pleasantly surprise readers. The intentional sequencing of the essays gives a broad landscape of Christian spiritual formation. Many topics under-represented elsewhere are found collected together here in a single volume. The essays and articles are technical enough to earn a scholar's nod of approval yet user-friendly enough for laity to understand with little difficulty. Scholars, oftentimes steeped in their specialized fields, will find the broad range of contributions helpful. Readers should approach this resource with a desire to broaden their understanding of the multifaceted nature of spiritual formation, especially as it applies to the dynamics of Christian spiritual transformation.

The book meets all of the goals it establishes at the outset in at least good measure. Readers, however, may find a few of the following incidentals on their wish list. The scope of the essays (and even the dictionary articles) makes one automatically want to turn to an index of subjects, which won't be found. An index would help readers see with even greater clarity the broad expanse of topics found not only in article titles and topics but also within the text of these essays and entries. Similarly, some readers will be drawn to the list of the prominent and not-as-prominent contributors, although the desire to read a particular author's submission will be met with frustration in locating those specific articles. Perhaps a future edition will address these minor concerns with subject and author indices. An interesting omission, especially having included an essay on Jesus and the Holy Spirit, is an essay on "God the Father." Because God the Father is seen as the Architect who planned sanctification and who wills (1 Thess 4:3), commands (Heb 12:14), and is the ultimate source of it (1 Cor 8:6; Heb 10:10), this entry would complete a trinitarian theme.

Many of those in our churches, classrooms, and marketplaces in increasing numbers will have come from, have an acquaintance with, read about, or have some knowledge of a wide variety of spiritual perspectives. It befits practitioners in these venues to be able to engage in informed dialogue. Be warned: a casual perusal of the contents of this dictionary may prove time-consuming, as one discovers a growing number of appealing subjects that consume one's attention, as this reviewer has experienced firsthand.

Scorgie should be applauded in the editorial fortitude and tenacity required for the coordination of this dictionary project. It will serve as an "immediately helpful and a serviceable benchmark for future editions" (p. 8).

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