



themelios

*An International Journal for Students of
Theological and Religious Studies*

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THE GOSPEL COALITION

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DESCRIPTION

Themelios is an international evangelical theological journal that expounds and defends the historic Christian faith. Its primary audience is theological students and pastors, though scholars read it as well. It was formerly a print journal operated by RTSF/UCCF in the UK, and it became a digital journal operated by The Gospel Coalition in 2008. The editorial team draws participants from across the globe as editors, essayists, and reviewers.

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REVIEWS

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

EDITORIAL

What Are Gospel Issues?

— D. A. Carson —

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

Today it is very common to hear that such-and-such a topic is “a gospel issue.” We must hold to the eternal generation of the Son: it is a gospel issue. We must defend inerrancy: it is a gospel issue. We must espouse complementarianism: it is a gospel issue. We must be sabbatarians: it is a gospel issue. We must hold to a specific eschatological vision: it is a gospel issue. We must hold to substitutionary penal atonement: it is a gospel issue. Alternatively, the weight of some doctrines may be diminished by our pronouncements if we declare that something or other is *not* a gospel issue. We then hear statements like these: Inerrancy may be important, but it is not a gospel issue. I disagree with your understanding of the role of the nation of Israel in the history of redemption, but that’s all right: it’s not a gospel issue. Why do you make such a fuss over complementarianism? After all, it’s not a gospel issue.

Not only do we not agree on what things are gospel issues, I suspect that sometimes we do not agree on what “gospel issue” *means*. The following reflections provide the merest introduction to some of the factors that strike me as relevant:

(1) The statement “X is a gospel issue” is simultaneously (a) a truth claim and (b) a polemical assertion attempting to establish relative importance. The latter clearly depends on the former. Both parts bear thinking about. The statement is a truth claim in that it asserts that something either is true about X, namely, that it is “a gospel issue.” The claim is either valid (if X really is a gospel issue) or invalid (if X is really not a gospel issue). But as used by most people, “X is a gospel issue” is more than a truth claim. If the truth claim is valid, the statement implicitly asserts that X is a more important topic than others that are *not* gospel issues: it is designed to establish the importance of X relative to other topics that are *not* understood to be gospel issues. What is presupposed in the statement, of course, is that the gospel has a very high level of importance, perhaps supreme importance, such that if X is a gospel issue, it too is similarly elevated in importance. It follows, then, that to abandon X, when X is a gospel issue, is somehow to diminish or threaten the gospel.

These initial observations may seem a bit theoretical, but we must see that they carry significant practical consequences. Many people use statements of the sort “X is a gospel issue” in order to establish the boundaries of Christian fellowship. We may not want to admit Bob to the leadership of our local church or our Christian group because he denies X and X is a gospel issue. We may decide to admit Rosamund to something or other, because although she disbelieves Y, in this case Y is not a gospel issue, so the topic is not properly used as a criterion of admission or exclusion.

(2) What we mean by “gospel issue” needs clarification.

On the one hand, because of the complex entanglements of theology, with a little imagination one might argue that almost any topic is a gospel issue. At one level or another, everything in any theology that is worth the name is tied to everything else, so it is possible to tie everything to the gospel. In that sense, well-nigh everything is a gospel issue.

“In the gospel, Jesus saves us from sin. Sin is comprehensively given clarity by the Ten Commandments. To ignore the Sabbath law is to ignore one of the Ten Commandments. To ignore it or annul it is therefore to break the moral law of God, and such a stance surely demonstrates that one is not seriously confronting sin, the sin from which the gospel saves us. If one claims to be a Christian but does not fight against sin, the ostensible gospel in which we believe is really no gospel at all. So observance of the Sabbath is a gospel issue.”

“Our generation is notable for the clever hermeneutical dodges it invents to sidestep what Scripture clearly says. Scripture clearly teaches complementarianism, a conclusion that can be ducked only by the hermeneutical tricks that betray a heart far removed from confessing that Jesus is Lord, which is part of what it means to confess the gospel. To confess Jesus is Lord and not bow to his Word is to deny the gospel. Complementarianism is a gospel issue.”

“The *filioque* phrase is necessary to preserve the truth that the Spirit proceeds from the Father *and the Son*. Without that confessional point, our understanding of the Trinity is adversely affected, and sooner or later that in turn affects our understanding of the work of the persons of the Godhead in redemption itself. Is it any wonder that Eastern Orthodoxy, which repudiates the *filioque* clause, puts far more weight on Jesus’ incarnation and resurrection than on his atoning work on the cross, despite the apostle Paul’s insistence that the cross is central? Thus the *filioque* clause is a gospel issue.”

I am not arguing that any of these three arguments is necessarily valid. It is easy to imagine how another person might look at the texts and arguments and reach quite different conclusions. For example, someone might hold that Scripture does *not* teach complementarianism and that for some Christians, at least, no hermeneutical tricks are consciously deployed to reach this conclusion. Therefore the egalitarian may hold that Jesus is Lord with a perfectly clear conscience. If so, then complementarianism is *not* a gospel issue. Once again: at this juncture I am not arguing for the validity or invalidity of either pole. All I am saying is that virtually any topic can be tied to the gospel in some way or another. If that is all we are doing, the argument “X is a gospel issue” is a well-nigh useless argument, because the claim could be advanced for almost any topic, irrespective of that to which X refers. The choice of X will in that case reflect rather more the identity of the individual or group that is making the claim, than the persuasiveness of the argument.

On the other hand, “gospel issue” may continue to be a useful category if it refers not to any biblical or theological topic that can be tied in some way or other to the gospel—for the organic nature of biblical and theological truth demonstrates that just about every topic can be tied to the gospel—but to biblical and theological topics the denial of which clearly affect our understanding of the gospel adversely.

(3) Clearly “X is a gospel issue” is a useless argument where there is little agreement as to what the gospel is. For example, if by “gospel” we mean the sort of thing that is often taught in lowest-common-denominator evangelicalism—e.g., “Jesus died on the cross for my sins,” without any attempt to establish what is meant by the confession—then in what sense is penal, substitutionary atonement a gospel issue? It may be a gospel issue in that in some sense or other it is tied to Jesus’ death, but that is not enough to make the statement “Penal, substitutionary atonement is a gospel issue” say anything important (my second point, above). More precisely: if “Jesus died on the cross for my sins” is a sufficient definition of

the gospel, then it is not clear that failing to believe in penal, substitutionary atonement adversely affects or threatens the gospel, for in itself this formulation of the gospel does not specify with any precision what understanding of the atonement the formulation presupposes. By contrast, if by the gospel we specify something a bit more robust (though scarcely comprehensive)—e.g., “the gospel is the good news that in Christ, and especially in his death and resurrection, God has taken decisive action to save his people from their sins, such that by Jesus’s death sin is cancelled, the judicial wrath of God is averted, believers receive what Christ merited while he receives what we sinners merited, the devil is defeated, and God displays his incalculable love, pouring out his Spirit upon us so as to convict us, regenerate us, and transform us, in anticipation of the consummation still to come” (or something of that order)—then clearly penal, substitutionary atonement *is* a gospel issue in a tight sense. It is a gospel issue in the sense that if we deny or disown penal, substitutionary atonement, the gospel is adversely affected.

When Christians talk together about what is or what is not a gospel issue, very often they are conversing with fellow believers who share, pretty closely, the same understanding of what the gospel is. For example, when members of the Council of The Gospel Coalition talk about whether X is or is not a gospel issue, at least they share a common mind as to what the gospel is. Such discussion may be useful. But others may conclude that the X in question is *not* a gospel issue precisely because they hold to a different or at least a reduced definition of the gospel.

(4) Some issues are very important but are not usefully labeled gospel issues. For example, there are important epistemological issues with which thoughtful Christians must wrestle. Again, some issues—e.g., what we mean by “person” and “substance” in discussions on the nature of the Trinity—certainly stretch back into elements of exegesis of the biblical texts, and can in some sense be tied to the gospel, but might more usefully be thought of as important metaphysical issues. Some topics might be thought of as *both* gospel issues and *other kinds* of issues. For example, Lutherans and Calvinists (to go no further) will defend somewhat differing views on the relationship between law and gospel: doubtless these can be called gospel issues (indeed, they are sometimes so labeled), but it is probably more helpful to think of them as canonical and systematic issues.

This is merely a way of saying that when we decide to talk about the relative importance of topics, we need *more* than the formula “X is a gospel issue.” Issues may be hugely important even if they are not gospel issues. Indeed, if our only criterion is whether X is a gospel issue, then if we decide that X is *not* a gospel issue, we may unwittingly generate the impression it is not an important topic. It is always worth asking: Important for what? Important in what domain?

(5) We must squarely face the fact that what we judge to be a gospel issue is shaped in part by our location in history, in a particular culture. In other words, the issues are not to be determined by logic alone. Our place in time and space entices us to evaluate whether a particular topic is a gospel issue; believers in another time and place might come to quite different conclusions, even though they share a common understanding of what the gospel is.

Certainly the majority of Christians in America today would happily aver that good race relations are a gospel issue. They might point out that God’s saving purpose is to draw to himself, through the cross, men and women from every tongue and tribe and people and nation; that the church is one new humanity, made up of Jew and Gentile; that Paul tells Philemon to treat his slave Onesimus as his brother, as the apostle himself; that this trajectory starts at creation, with all men and women being made in the image of God, and finds its anticipation in the promise to Abraham that in his seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed. Moreover, the salvation secured by Christ in the gospel is more

comprehensive than justification alone: it brings repentance, wholeness, love for brothers and sisters in the Christian community.

But the sad fact remains that not all Christians have always viewed race relations within the church as a gospel issue.

More worrying, survey after survey has shown that in America today, even among those with a robust grasp of the gospel, black Christians and white Christians do not view these matters exactly the same way. Even where both sides agree, on biblical grounds, that this is a gospel issue, black Christians are far more likely to see that this is a *crucial* gospel issue, an issue of huge importance, one that is often ignored, while white Christians are more likely to imagine that racial issues have so largely been resolved that it is a distraction to keep bringing them up. In other words, even where both sides agree that we are dealing with a gospel issue (and in that sense, an important issue), they do not agree on the relative importance of this gospel issue. It is impossible not to see that our judgments on these matters are not shaped by Scripture alone, in the same sense in which a mathematician may be shaped by Pythagoras's theorem. They are shaped by our relationships, by our race, by our culture, by where we have been brought up, by the income levels we have experienced, by the affronts we have experienced, and much more. In other words, for many topics that we have designated X, whether X is a gospel issue is not a zero sum game.

For some Christian observers, cessationism is a gospel issue. In their perception, the charismatic movement is characteristically afflicted by one brand or another of health, wealth, and prosperity gospel that distances itself from the gospel of the cross: this makes the matter a gospel issue. Some forms of the charismatic movement so construct a two-stage view of spiritual wholeness, the second stage attested by one or more particular spiritual gifts, that the nature of what Jesus achieved on the cross is in jeopardy. Others, it is argued, adopt a view of revelation that jeopardizes the exclusive, final authority of Scripture, and this threatens the gospel that the Scripture heralds. But other Christian observers, fully aware of these dangers and no less concerned to avoid them, nevertheless remain convinced that at least some charismatics manage to display their gifts without succumbing to any of these errors, while self-consciously holding to the same gospel that the observers hold. In other words, for them the charismatic movement (or, from the obverse direction, cessationism) is not necessarily a gospel issue. They want to avoid building legalistic fences around their positions. Once again, it is difficult not to see that personal experiences and sustained habits of assessment have entered into one's judgments. Determining whether X is a gospel issue is often more than a narrowly exegetical exercise.

To put the same matter another way, another sort of example might be introduced. We have seen how the doctrine of penal, substitutionary atonement is usefully considered a gospel issue provided (a) that we have adopted a robust definition of the gospel, such that (b) to disown that facet of the cross-work of Christ necessarily diminishes or threatens the gospel. But I have not heard anyone recently suggest that the exemplary function of the cross is a gospel issue, even though Peter unambiguously insists that Jesus died leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps. This is as much a gospel issue as is penal, substitutionary atonement, even though it is not treated in that way today, precisely because it is not one of the controverted points. In other words, the things that we debate as to whether they are gospel issues reflect the hot topics, and especially the denials or errors, of our age. That is one of the reasons why I mentioned the *filioque* clause and the eternal generation of the Son at the head of this editorial: at one point, they were very much considered gospel issues. The second of these two is currently making something of a comeback—but certainly if we are careless about them, our

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carelessness suggests how our own theological foci have shifted with time and demonstrates once again that discussions of the sort “X is a gospel issue” commonly address the errors and dangers of a particular age. This is not necessarily a bad thing; it is in any case an inevitable thing. But it should be recognized for what it is.

In sum, to affirm something is or is not a gospel issue is not a transparent expression. It is likely to be clearest among those who share a common confession as to what the gospel is. It is useful only when it means something more stringent than that X can be tied in some way to the gospel: one must show that without this X the gospel itself is seriously threatened. And it is always wise to recognize that some topics are hugely important on grounds other than gospel issues and that our choice of topics is generated in part by our perception of the threats and errors of our own age.

OFF THE RECORD

Projection Atheism: Why Reductionist Accounts of Humanity Can Lead to Reductionist Accounts of God

— Michael J. Ovey —

Mike Ovey is principal of Oak Hill College in London.

We often associate atheism with a very high, indeed arrogant, view of what a human being is. Thus, sometimes God is denied because his existence would threaten the overwhelmingly important value of human freedom. So argues nineteenth-century Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin. Sometimes God is denied because a human being argues that his own exacting criteria of proof have not been satisfied and since he is self-evidently so intelligent that this indicates God is not there. Thus asserts twentieth-century British philosopher Bertrand Russell.

But what happens to God if we have a very low view of what a human being is?

That's the question I want to explore in this article. There are two background considerations here. First, there is John Calvin's observation that the doctrine of humanity and the doctrine of God are intimately related. Second, there is Ludwig Feuerbach's idea that religion is a projection of our ideals. Taken together, I want to argue that if one thinks a human being is really nothing, this readily leads to atheism.

Let me explain. Calvin famously opens his *Institutes* with the observation that who we think we are and who we think God is are tied very closely together (*Institutes* I.1.1). Calvin notes that this can work inversely: when we see how great God truly is, this engenders humility in us, as we compare his perfection and infinity to our imperfection and finitude. He is great, and we are small. Similarly, if we have a very high view of ourselves, then we may be inclined to despise his goodness and our dependence on him. We are great, so he is not so great. A good example is Immanuel Kant's 1784 claim about the Enlightenment that we humans are 'mature' and therefore do not need to be told by God what to do. Since we are mature, we can work it out for ourselves, and authoritative revelation is superfluous and, indeed, offensive since it treats us like children.

Calvin seems to me quite right, not least because one can see, I think, this inverse relationship at work in Gen 3 when Adam and Eve both seek to aggrandise themselves and belittle God. Equally, one can see this inverse relationship at work in that particular species of Western modernism which has a vastly inflated view of humanity and can accordingly reduce room for God to the point that one ends up with a worldview that has no space for God at all, namely, atheism.

However, the relationship between the doctrine of God and the doctrine of humanity is not just inverse. There can be a directly proportional relationship too, whereby an appropriately high view of humanity leads to a high view of God and an inappropriately low view of humanity leads to a low view

of God. This is where Ludwig Feuerbach's projection idea comes in. Feuerbach's basic idea was that God is a projection of the highest human ideals. Thus, we have ideas of justice and goodness and charity, and we project them in their perfection onto God.

Now, there's a good deal of truth in Feuerbach's idea in this sense: he is describing one of the ways idolatry works. We attribute to God, or to our gods, the ideals we want to be true. A moment's reflection, of course, indicates that Feuerbach mistakes 'some' for 'all'. Just because some religions are idolatrous projections, it does not follow that all are. After all, a husband may idealise his wife, or a wife her husband, and blindly attribute matrimonial perfection to them; the mere fact the attribution onto the spouse is a mistaken projection does not entail that the spouse does not exist. And, one should add, Feuerbach bypasses the incarnation of Jesus, which is never good.

That said, Feuerbach's case is still valuable as an observation about idolatry. However, we can take Feuerbach further. What happens when we do not have high ideals about humanity, but low ones? Feuerbach's model predicts, of course, that God will be an idealisation of these low values (cruelty, exploitation, etc.). But going still further, what happens when we have not just low values among humanity but no value for humans at all?

By talking about no values for humans at all, I'm moving to that area of discussion which sees humans as 'nothing but' conglomerations of organic material governed ultimately by strictly natural, purposeless processes. In this worldview, there may be random occurrences but no personal, intentional intervention from outside the system. Humans are 'nothing but' these temporary self-organising bundles of stuff. The point is often made that this apparently entails that humans have no value and that one of the great inconsistencies of 'naturalist' writers like Richard Dawkins is the lack of any consistent basis for upholding human value in an objective sense.

But what intrigues me is the impact this doctrine of humanity will have on a doctrine of God. Just as Kant's idea of human maturity renders the speaking God superfluous, doesn't the idea of zero-value humanity lead to a zero-value God? After all, if I have denied my own human value by saying my rationality and conscience and soul just boil down to chemical events, is it not easy to project this onto God and deny he has value too? In essence, as I deny my own humanity, I can project this denial onto God too. Descartes notably argued from his own existence to the existence of God: perhaps we have a reverse-Descartes situation in which we project from our own non-existence to the non-existence of God.

Why does this matter? Apologetically, it makes me think about atheism from the perspective of it sometimes being an extreme version of Feuerbach's projection theory of idolatry. It also reminds me of the need sometimes to look at someone's doctrine of who a human being is before I get to discussing who God is with them. I must ask not just who they think God is, but who they think they are. More generally, I am reminded of the consequences of nihilistic worldviews, because in many ways this is an atheism born of nihilist views of *humanity*.

Pastorally, one is naturally inclined to ask why would adopt this zero-value view of humanity anyway. Is it purely opportunistic, a good way of freeing oneself because one says there are no values anywhere? After all, if I have a zero-value account of humanity, this radically frees me from needing to value others, and that naturally can be quite convenient. Moreover, we have to see this zero-value account of humanity in the light of Jesus's Incarnation. Notably, a zero-value view of humanity should include a zero-value for Jesus. And that can be quite convenient too. In fact, is it worth having a zero-value account of humanity precisely as a strategy for applying zero-value to Jesus too?

Or, paradoxically, does the zero-value view of humanity connect with a subtle self-loathing in which human disordered self-love has become so warped that it has become self-harming? Further, this puts the presentation of the gospel in a new light too. We have rightly spoken of God saving by grace alone. Part of the tragedy of projection atheism is that it is not just saying there is no God to save; it is also saying there is no 'me' to save in the first place. Part of our proclamation problem is not just proclaiming forgiveness of sins to a culture that does not believe there is such a thing as sin, but proclaiming it to a culture that at points has doubts about whether there is even a person there to sin at all.

There is, perhaps, an alluring freedom here, the kind of freedom that comes when some-one renounces their identity and lives in another country, untouched by their old obligations. But this is also very close to despair.

Let me close with another connection. So far we have been talking about projecting from humanity. Greg Beale also argues that in idolatry there is the reverse dynamic—that we become what we worship.¹ This opens up a tragic vicious circle: my zero-value account of humanity can encourage projection atheism. And my atheism can reinforce my zero-value account of humanity. Nietzsche quipped that God is dead and that we have killed him. He asked how we could be worthy of this. One might also ask whether our 'killing' of God does not also kill us.

¹G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2008).

EDITOR'S NOTE

Engaging with Edwards: Essays on America's Theologian

— Brian J. Tabb —

Brian Tabb is assistant professor of biblical studies and assistant dean at Bethlehem College and Seminary in Minneapolis, Minnesota and managing editor of Themelios.

Many scholars consider Jonathan Edwards (1703–58) to be “the most acute early American philosopher and the most brilliant of all American theologians,” who was also a loyal British citizen.¹ The past decades have seen a reawakening of academic and devotional interest in Edwards on both sides of the Atlantic. In 2003, the three-hundredth anniversary of his birth, Yale University founded the Jonathan Edwards Center and George Marsden published a celebrated biography of Edwards.² More recently, Yale launched the massive 73-volume *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Online* and an online journal devoted to Edwards studies, and countless PhD dissertations, books, and essays have been written about Edwards, including *Themelios* articles by Robert Caldwell and Jonathan Gibson.³ John Piper and others have introduced many pastors, students, and lay Christians to Edwards.⁴

This issue of *Themelios* features three articles exploring different facets of Edwards's theology and practice. Ralph Cunnington examines Edwards's doctrine of the Trinity, with particular attention to his understanding of the Spirit. Gerald McDermott surveys recent studies on Edwards's doctrine of God, particularly Kyle Strobel's *Jonathan Edwards's Theology: A Reinterpretation*.⁵ Finally, Jeremy Kimble explores the doctrinal foundations of Edwards's controversial practice of church discipline. These three essays demonstrate the importance and profit of engaging with the Puritan writer often called “America's theologian.”⁶

¹George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 1, 9.

²*Ibid.*; see also *idem*, *A Short Life of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

³Jonathan Gibson, “Jonathan Edwards: A Missionary?,” *Them* 36, no. 3 (2011): 380–402; Robert Caldwell, “The Ministerial Ideal in the Ordination Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: Four Theological Portraits,” *Them* 38, no. 3 (2013): 390–401.

⁴John Piper, *God's Passion for His Glory: Living the Vision of Jonathan Edwards* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1998); John Piper and Justin Taylor, eds., *A God-Entranced Vision of All Things: The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004). See most recently Dane C. Ortlund, *Edwards on the Christian Life: Alive to the Beauty of God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), reviewed in this issue in the “History and Historical Theology” section.

⁵Kyle C. Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology: A Reinterpretation* (T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology; London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

⁶Cf. Robert W. Jenson, *America's Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

A Critical Examination of Jonathan Edwards's Doctrine of the Trinity

— Ralph Cunnington —

Ralph Cunnington pastors City Church Manchester in England. He is research associate at the Wales Evangelical School of Theology and editor of Foundations.

Abstract: This article critically examines Jonathan Edwards's doctrine of the Trinity with a particular focus upon his understanding of the person of the Holy Spirit. While his restatement of Augustinian orthodoxy served the church well during a time of great doctrinal heterodoxy, it created some problems of its own. These problems were rooted in his use of philosophical idealism, his reliance upon trinitarian analogies, and his adapted doctrine of perichoresis.

In Jonathan Edwards's first extant manuscript dealing with the doctrine of the Trinity, he declared that he was "not afraid to say twenty things about the Trinity which the Scripture never said."¹ He made the comment against the backdrop of early eighteenth-century attempts to deny the doctrine of the Trinity on the grounds that Scripture does not plainly teach it.² Such objections were nothing new, and Edwards's response was entirely consistent with historic defences of the doctrine.³ What was surprising was Edwards's supplementary claim that "it is within the reach of naked reason to perceive

¹ Jonathan Edwards, "Miscellany 94," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 13, The "Miscellanies"* (Entry Nos. a-Z, Aa-Zz, 1–500) (ed. Thomas A. Schafer; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 257.

² Particularly significant was the publication of Samuel Clarke, *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: Printed for James Knapton, 1712); Isaac Watts, *The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity . . . Asserted and Prov'd, . . . Vindicated by Plain Evidence of Scripture, without the Aid or Incumbrance of Human Schemes* (London: Clark, 1722). See discussion in Steven Studebaker, "Jonathan Edwards's Social Augustinian Trinitarianism: An Alternative to a Recent Trend," *SJT* 56 (2003): 282; Kyle Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology: A Reinterpretation* (London: T&T Clark, 2013), 31–34; Edwards, *Msc. 94*, 256n2; idem, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 21, Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith* (ed. Sang Hyun Lee; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 4–6; John H. Gerstner, *Jonathan Edwards: A Mini-Theology* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 1987), 31.

³ In his fourth-century defence of the deity of the Holy Spirit, Gregory of Nazianzus wrote, "Yes, some people, very eager to defend the letter are angry with us for introducing a God, the Holy Spirit, who is a stranger and an intruder. . . . They must recognize that their love for the letter is a cloak for irreligion" (St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius* [trans. Frederick Williams and Lionel R Wickham; Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002], Oration 31.3, p. 118). For similar comments, see John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. John T. McNeill; trans. Ford Lewis Battles; 2 vols.; The Library of Christian Classics; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 1.13.2–5.

certainly that there are three distinct in God.”⁴ This confidence was out of step with the approach of the seventeenth-century Reformed theologians whom Edwards so admired,⁵ but it reflects how Edwards defended Trinitarian orthodoxy using the tools of eighteenth-century philosophy. Edwards's approach gave rise to a distinctive doctrine which, while remaining within the bounds of Western orthodoxy, was innovative in a number of important ways.

This article critically examines Edwards's doctrine of the Trinity with a particular focus upon his understanding of the person of the Holy Spirit.⁶ While a full treatment of the topic would require an exhaustive survey of Edwards's work, we will focus primarily (although not exclusively) upon Edwards's *Discourse* (written in the early 1730s).⁷ This is justified because the *Discourse* was the product of more than a decade's work on the Trinity as recorded in forty-four “Miscellanies.” Edwards wrote only fifteen more “Miscellanies” on the Trinity throughout the rest of his life, and most of these merely developed arguments in the *Discourse*.⁸ Thus, as Robert Caldwell has argued, it is relatively safe to conclude that the *Discourse* contains his mature Trinitarianism.⁹

The article has three parts. The first traces out Edwards's trinitarian thought in the *Discourse* and other writings, noting the influence of Edwards's philosophical thinking. The second sets Edwards's doctrine in its historical context, noting continuities and discontinuities with Augustine and asking whether the “threeness-oneness” paradigm serves as a helpful model for understanding Edwards. The final part identifies possible weaknesses in Edwards's doctrine relating either to his Augustinian heritage or his distinctive innovations.

⁴Edwards, *Msc.* 94, 257. In a later Miscellany, Edwards clarifies that reason is sufficient to confirm revelation but not to discover the nature of God: “’Tis very needful that God should declare to mankind what manner of being he is. For though reason may be sufficient to confirm such a declaration after it is given, and see its consistence, harmony and rationality in many respects, yet reason may be utterly insufficient first to discover these things” (“Miscellany 1338,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 23, The “Miscellanies”* (entry Nos. 1153–1360) [ed. Douglas A. Sweeney; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004], 348). See also Edwards's more circumspect comments in “Discourse on the Trinity,” in Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 21, Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith* (ed. Sang Hyun Lee; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 134, 139.

⁵For example, Francis Turretin, whom Edwards referred to as the “great Turretin,” wrote of the Trinity, “But as this mystery far transcends the reach of human reason, so it can be solidly demonstrated from the revealed word alone” (Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* [ed. James T. Dennison Jr.; trans. George Musgrave Giger; 3 vols.; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1992], 3.25.4).

⁶This is quite appropriate since Edwards himself devoted almost two-thirds of his “Discourse on the Trinity” to the Holy Spirit.

⁷As Sang Hyun Lee notes, *Msc.* 621 (c. 1732–1733) refers to the “Discourse on the Trinity” (Edwards, *Works Vol. 21*, 109).

⁸Robert W. Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit: The Holy Spirit as the Bond of Union in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 28. Caldwell notes that *Msc.* 1062 on the “Economy of the Trinity and Covenant of Redemption” is an exception since in it he develops the relationship between the immanent Trinity and the economic outworking of the covenant of redemption.

⁹Strobel writes that the *Discourse* represents Edwards's “mature understanding of the Trinity, though not necessarily his mature development of argumentation” (Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 35).

1. Edwards's Doctrine of the Trinity

It is commonly observed that Edwards's doctrine of the Trinity was fundamentally influenced by his philosophical idealism and theory of excellency.¹⁰ He articulated the latter in his essay on "The Mind":

This is an [*sic*] universal definition of excellency: The consent of being to being, or being's consent to entity. The more the consent is, and the more extensive, the greater is the excellency. . . . One alone, without any reference to any more, cannot be excellent; for in such case there can be no manner of relation no way, and therefore, no such thing as consent. Indeed, what we call "one" may be excellent, because of a consent of parts, or some consent of those in that being that are distinguished into a plurality some way or other. But in a being that is absolutely without any plurality there cannot be excellency, for there can be no such thing as consent or agreement.¹¹

Edwards applied this understanding to his conception of God, concluding, "if God is excellent, there must be plurality in God; otherwise there can be no consent in him."¹² Since God is excellent it follows that there must be plurality within his unity.

So where does this plurality come from? It is here that Edwards's philosophical idealism comes to the fore. For Edwards, God the Father is "the Deity subsisting in the prime, unoriginated and most absolute manner."¹³ He is the "fountain of the Godhead," and thus Scripture rightly refers to God as "without any addition or distinction."¹⁴ But since the Father is infinitely happy in himself, it follows that he "perpetually and eternally has a most perfect idea of himself, as it were an exact image and representation of himself ever before him and in actual view."¹⁵ This perfect idea is exactly like him in every respect and therefore "is God to all intents and purposes."¹⁶ Indeed "by God's thinking of the Deity, [the Deity] must certainly be generated."¹⁷ A second person of the Godhead is begotten, and that person is the Son.¹⁸ Edwards was convinced that this view was in agreement with Scripture, and he cited 2 Cor 4:4, Phil 2:6, Col 1:15, and Heb 1:3 in support. As Paul Helm has observed, Edwards developed "an

¹⁰ See for example: Amy Plantinga Pauw, "*The Supreme Harmony of All: The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards*" (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 57–89; Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 21–26.

¹¹ Jonathan Edwards, "The Mind," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 6, Scientific and Philosophical Writings* (ed. Wallace E. Anderson; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), 336–37.

¹² Jonathan Edwards, "Miscellany 117," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 13, The "Miscellanies"* (Entry Nos. a-Z, Aa-Zz, 1–500) (ed. Thomas A. Schafer; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 284. See John E. Smith, Harry S. Stout, and Kenneth P. Minkema, eds., *A Jonathan Edwards Reader* (New Haven, CT: Yale Nota Bene, 1995), xiii.

¹³ Edwards, *Discourse on the Trinity*, 131.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 116. In Msc. 260, Edwards writes, "Seeing the perfect idea of a thing is to all intents and purposes the same as seeing the thing; it is not only equivalent to seeing of it, but it is seeing of it, for there is no other seeing but having an idea" (Jonathan Edwards, "Miscellany 260," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 13, The "Miscellanies"* (Entry Nos. a-Z, Aa-Zz, 1–500) (ed. Thomas A. Schafer; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 368).

¹⁸ See also: Edwards, *Msc.* 94, 258.

ingenious and bold" ontological argument for the generation of the Son, arguing that where a person has an idea of a non-material object, that object comes into existence. Since God is a perfect spirit, his idea of himself *is* himself.¹⁹ There are problems with this line of reasoning (to which we will return), but it formed the basis for Edwards's argument from reason for the existence of the Son. He claimed, "If God has an idea of himself, there is really a duplicity; because [if] there is no duplicity, it will follow that Jehovah thinks of himself no more than a stone."²⁰ In sum, the Son is "God's perfect idea of God." He is the Word of God and the wisdom of God since knowledge, reason, and wisdom are the same as God's perfect idea of himself.²¹

Edwards identified the Holy Spirit as the divine act of love between the Father and the Son.²² Relying on 1 John 4:8, Edwards argued that the Godhead subsists in love. If we have love dwelling in us, we have God dwelling in us (1 John 4:12), and "that love is God's Spirit" (1 John 4:13).²³ Edwards believed that 1 John 3:23–24 reinforces this view: love is the sure sign of the Spirit's presence in the believer. And 1 John 4:16 "confirms not only that the divine nature subsists in love, but also that this love is the Spirit: for it is the Spirit of God by which God dwells in his saints."²⁴

Edwards opined that both the Spirit's name and work support the conceptualisation of the Spirit as the "pure act and perfect energy." Scripture often uses the word "spirit" to describe "disposition, inclination or temper of the mind," and thus "when we read of the Spirit of God, who we are told is a spirit, it is to be understood of the disposition, temper or affection of the divine mind" which in sum is love.²⁵ The Spirit's threefold economic office "to quicken, enliven and beautify all things" also evidences his immanent trinitarian activity.²⁶ Such a work can be performed only by the "eternal and essential act and energy of God," and since all "holiness and true grace and virtue" is resolvable into love, the Spirit must be the divine act of love that communicates divine love to the creature.²⁷

Edwards furnished further scriptural support for his identifying the indwelling of love with the indwelling of the Spirit, including Phil 2:1, 2 Cor 6:6, Rom 5:5, 15:30, Col 1:8, and Gal 5:13–15.²⁸ He also pointed to the biblical metaphors used for the Spirit, including the dove, oil, and the river of life, arguing

¹⁹ Paul Helm, "Introductory Essay" in Jonathan Edwards, *Treatise on Grace, and Other Posthumously Published Writings* (ed. Paul Helm; Cambridge: Clarke, 1971), 20.

²⁰ Edwards, *Msc.* 94, 262.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 259–60.

²² John Owen shared this conception of the Holy Spirit (*The Works of John Owen Vol. 3* [ed. William H. Goold; London: Banner of Truth, 1965], 64–92). See Jonathan Edwards, "Miscellany 1047," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 20, The "Miscellanies" (entry Nos. 833–1152)* (ed. Amy Plantinga Pauw; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 389.

²³ Edwards, *Discourse on the Trinity*, 121.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 122.

²⁵ *Ibid.* See also: Jonathan Edwards, "Miscellany 146," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 13, The "Miscellanies" (Entry Nos. a-Z, Aa-Zz, 1–500)* (ed. Thomas A. Schafer; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 299; *ibid.*, *Msc.* 396, 461–62.

²⁶ Edwards, *Discourse on the Trinity*, 123.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 125. Edwards offers no explanatory comment on these texts except for Gal 5:13–15.

that each alludes to divine love.²⁹ He then asked why the Spirit is excluded from Paul's salutations at the beginning of his epistles and why there is no mention of the Holy Spirit's love for believers or love for the other two persons of the Trinity in Scripture. He concludes that it is because the Spirit is himself the divine love, as expressed both immanently within the Trinity and economically towards believers.³⁰

Edwards succinctly summarized his doctrine midway through the *Discourse*:

And this I suppose to be that blessed Trinity that we read of in the holy Scriptures. The Father is the Deity subsisting in the prime, unoriginated and most absolute manner, or the Deity in its direct existence. The Son is the Deity generated by God's understanding, or having an idea of himself, and subsisting in that idea. The Holy Ghost is the Deity subsisting in act or the divine essence flowing out and breathed forth, in God's infinite love to and delight in himself. And I believe the whole divine essence does truly and distinctly subsist both in the divine idea and divine love, and that therefore each of them are properly distinct persons.³¹

In other words, the Trinity consists of God, his understanding (or idea), and his love.³² Although the three are distinct, they are co-eternal and equal in honour, both as to their common essence and as to their peculiar roles within the Trinity. The Father's honour is that he is "the author of perfect and infinite wisdom." The Son's honour is that he is that perfect and divine wisdom. Together they are the source from which excellency proceeds, and the Spirit's honour is that he is that excellency.³³

2. The Historical Context of Edwards's Doctrine

Having briefly overviewed Edwards's doctrine and its philosophical underpinnings, we now set the doctrine in its historical context, noting continuities and discontinuities with the stream of orthodoxy that preceded it. Although dispute remains as to whether Edwards had access to Augustine's work, it is clear that Edwards's model of God, his understanding, and his love had close affinities with Augustine's psychological triad.³⁴

²⁹Ibid., 126–129. See also Jonathan Edwards, "Miscellany 98," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 13, The "Miscellanies" (Entry Nos. a-Z, Aa-Zz, 1–500)* (ed. Thomas A. Schafer; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 265; *ibid.*, Msc. 226, 347.

³⁰Edwards, *Discourse on the Trinity*, 130–31. See also: Jonathan Edwards, "Miscellany 223," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 13, The "Miscellanies" (Entry Nos. a-Z, Aa-Zz, 1–500)* (ed. Thomas A. Schafer; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 346.

³¹Edwards, *Discourse on the Trinity*, 131.

³²See also Jonathan Edwards, "Miscellany 259," Edwards, *Discourse*, 130–31. See also: Jonathan Edwards, "Miscellany 223," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 13, The "Miscellanies" (Entry Nos. a-Z, Aa-Zz, 1–500)* (ed. Thomas A. Schafer; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 367.

³³Edwards, *Discourse on the Trinity*, 135.

³⁴William Danaher surprisingly claims that Edwards did not have direct access to Augustine's writings (*The Trinitarian Ethics of Jonathan Edwards* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004], 29). Danaher provides no substantiation for this claim. What is clear is that Edwards had access to Augustine through Cotton Mather, *Blessed Unions* (Boston, 1692), 46–48. See Edwards, *Works Vol. 13*, 256n1; Gerstner, *Jonathan Edwards: A Mini-Theology*, 30.

2.1. Augustine

Crucial to Augustine was the fact that the Father and the Son are of the same substance or essence.³⁵ Thus in the economy of the Trinity the actions of the three are inseparable. Augustine writes: “[N]ot only of the Father and Son, but also of the Holy Spirit; as there is equality and inseparability of persons, so also the works are inseparable . . . The catholic faith does not say that God the Father made something, and the Son made some other thing; but what the Father made, that also the Son made, that also the Holy Spirit made.”³⁶ In other words, while the persons of the Trinity remain distinct their operations are inseparable.³⁷

In responding to the Arians who relied upon scriptural texts that describe the Son as being less than the Father, Augustine adopted the Aristotelian distinction between the *substance* of a thing and its *accidents* (incidental characteristics).³⁸ Some things, such as those cited by the Arians, are said about God's *relations* (the relations between the persons of the Trinity) and not about his *substance*. It is only what is said about God's substance that is said about each person of the Trinity and of the Trinity itself.³⁹ Importantly, however, what is true of God's substance is true of each person. Each is fully God and therefore fully possesses God's character and essence. Moreover, neither on their own is less nor greater than the three together. Augustine could write, “When the equal Son, or the Holy Spirit equal to the Father and the Son, is joined to the equal Father, God does not become greater than each of them severally; because that perfectness cannot increase. But whether it be the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit, He is perfect, and God the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit is perfect; and therefore He is a Trinity rather than triple.”⁴⁰

In seeking to describe the Trinity, Augustine resorted to a number of illustrations from everyday life. In Book 8 of “On the Holy Trinity,” he introduced the triad of love: “he that loves, and that which is loved, and love.”⁴¹ In Book 12, he presented the triad of wisdom, rational knowledge, and animal knowledge. In Book 10, he provided what he considered to be the most “exact” illustration: memory, understanding, and will.⁴² And in Book 9, he provided the illustration closest to Edwards's own illustration: the mind, knowledge, and love.⁴³ As Studebaker has noted, Augustine used the mental triads in no less than five

³⁵ Saint Augustine, “On the Holy Trinity,” in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Series 1* (ed. Philip Schaff; London: T&T Clark, 1980), 3:21–122. See Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 200–208.

³⁶ Saint Augustine, “Tractates on John,” in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Series 1–7* (ed. Philip Schaff; London: T & T Clark, 1980), 7: 132–33.

³⁷ Saint Augustine, “Sermons on Matthew,” in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Series 1* (ed. Philip Schaff; London: T&T Clark, 1980), 6:262. See also: Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2004), 187–88; Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 67–71.

³⁸ See Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 191.

³⁹ Augustine writes, “Whatever, therefore, is spoken of God in respect to Himself, is both spoken singly of each person, that is, of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and together of the Trinity itself, not plurally but in the singular” (“Trinity,” in *NPNF1*, 3:92).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 3:101.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 3:124. See discussion in Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 283–85.

⁴² Augustine, “Trinity,” in *NPNF1*, 3:134. See discussion in Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 308–15.

⁴³ Augustine, “Trinity,” in *NPNF1*, 3:127–28.

different forms and put them to use to illustrate numerous points.⁴⁴ Moreover, Augustine himself acknowledged the ineffectiveness of the mental triad as an illustration of the triunity of God.⁴⁵

Augustine described the Holy Spirit as “a certain unutterable communion of the Father and the Son,” “the gift of both,” and the “mutual love, wherewith the Father and the Son reciprocally love one another.”⁴⁶ In seeking to justify this designation of the Spirit as “mutual love,” Augustine gave the following Scriptural defence:

[W]here the Holy Spirit is called Love, is to be found by careful scrutiny of the language of John the apostle [1 John 4:7, 19], who, after saying, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God,” has gone on to say, “And every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.” Here, manifestly, he has called that love God, which he said was of God; therefore God of God is love “Hereby,” he says, “know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.” Therefore the Holy Spirit, of whom He hath given us, makes us to abide in God, and Him in us; and this it is that love does. Therefore He is the God that is love. Lastly, a little after, when he had repeated the same thing, and had said “God is love,” he immediately subjoined, “And he who abideth in love, abideth in God, and God abideth in him;” [1 John 4:16] whence he had said above, “Hereby we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.” He therefore is signified, where we read that God is love. Therefore God the Holy Spirit, who proceedeth from the Father, when He has been given to man, inflames him to the love of God and of his neighbor, and is Himself love. For man has not whence to love God, unless from God; and therefore he says a little after, “Let us love Him, because He first loved us” (1 John 4:7–19). The Apostle Paul, too, says, “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us” (Rom 5:5).⁴⁷

Augustine’s scriptural justification for the conception of the Holy Spirit as the divine love is quoted at length here simply to demonstrate its affinity with Edwards, particularly in its use of 1 John 4 and Rom 5:5. If Edwards was not directly reliant upon Augustine, he was certainly drinking from the same trinitarian stream.

2.2. The Threeness-Oneness Paradigm

The majority of commentators accept the influence (direct or indirect) of Augustine’s trinitarianism upon Edwards. Amy Plantinga Pauw, for example, writes that in his *Discourse* Edwards followed the Augustinian tradition and “brought together Augustine’s understanding of the Son and the vocabulary of philosophical idealism.”⁴⁸ Danaher agrees, noting that Edwards followed the Augustinian tradition but

⁴⁴ Studebaker, “Social Augustinian Trinitarianism,” 275–76.

⁴⁵ Augustine, “Trinity,” in *NPNF1*, 3: 200–201.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 3:93, 215.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 3:216–17.

⁴⁸ Pauw, *Supreme Harmony of All*, 12–13.

reinterpreted it through the lens of his own philosophical idealism.⁴⁹ This is relatively incontrovertible.⁵⁰ Far more controversial is the authors' claim that the Augustinian psychological model is one of two distinct Trinitarian models running throughout Edwards's work.⁵¹ They argue that Edwards blended together a Western Augustinian psychological model of the Trinity emphasising the oneness of God with a social model following Richard of St Victor and emphasising the plurality of the Godhead.⁵²

Basic to their argument is the view that Edwards's theory of divine excellency and concomitant rejection of divine simplicity is incompatible with Augustine's psychological model.⁵³ For Pauw, divine excellency requires a "genuine trinitarian sociality" because it requires loving consent.⁵⁴ Danaher agrees, noting that the psychological model is "unable to account for interpersonal relations of love among the three persons of the Trinity."⁵⁵ The problem with this view is that it misreads Edwards's doctrine of divine excellency and overlooks the Augustinian framework in which it was developed. This is apparent when we consider a passage from "The Mind," an essay to which Edwards refers in Msc. 117, and which Pauw and Danaher cite in support of their thesis:⁵⁶

As to God's excellence, it is evident it consists in the love of himself. For he was as excellent before he created the universe as he is now. But if the excellence of spirits consists in their disposition and action, God could be excellent no other way at that time, for all the exertions of himself were towards himself. But he exerts himself towards himself no other way than in infinitely loving and delighting in himself, in the mutual love of the Father and the Son. This makes the third, the personal Holy Spirit or the holiness of God, which is his infinite beauty, and this is God's infinite consent to being in general.⁵⁷

Here we clearly see that God's excellence is his love for himself which is manifested in the mutual love between the Father and the Son which is itself the Holy Spirit—God's infinite consent.⁵⁸ Far from being

⁴⁹ Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 17. Also see Stephen J Nichols, *An Absolute Sort of Certainty: The Holy Spirit and the Apologetics of Jonathan Edwards* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2003), 27; Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 33–40.

⁵⁰ Although Strobel writes, "calling Edwards 'Augustinian' is unhelpful for meaningful categorization" (Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 66). This is largely due to the incompatibility of Edwards's recasting of personhood through perichoresis.

⁵¹ For a similar view, see Sang Hyun Lee in Edwards, *Works Vol. 21*, 11.

⁵² See Pauw, *Supreme Harmony of All*, 10–11.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 57–89; Amy Plantinga Pauw, "One Alone Cannot Be Excellent': Edwards on Divine Simplicity," in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian* (ed. Paul Helm and Oliver Crisp; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 115–25; Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 67–84.

⁵⁴ Pauw, *Supreme Harmony of All*, 84–85.

⁵⁵ Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 67.

⁵⁶ For reliance upon Msc. 117, see Pauw, *Supreme Harmony of All*, 84–85; Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 71.

⁵⁷ Edwards, *The Mind*, 364.

⁵⁸ See also Edwards's sermon "The Work of the Ministry is in Saving Sinners," in Jonathan Edwards, *The Salvation of Souls* (ed. Richard A Bailey and Gregory A. Wills; Wheaton: Crossway, 2002), 163–64.

a distinct social model of the Trinity this is Augustine's mutual love model.⁵⁹ Indeed, as Caldwell has noted, "excellency, as the consent of a plurality within a unity (subject, object, and consent), shows a striking resemblance to the mind-knowledge-love triad."⁶⁰ This is evident again in Msc. 571 where we see that the "society" or "family" of which Edwards speaks is not the Father, the Son, and the Spirit in a relationship of mutual love but rather the Father, the Son, and believers all having communion in the Holy Spirit.⁶¹ Again, in the *Discourse*, Edwards insists that the Spirit is neither the subject nor the object of love: "God is never said to love the Holy Ghost, nor are any epithets that betoken love anywhere given to him."⁶² Instead "the love wherewith the Father loveth the Son is the Holy Spirit."⁶³ It is thus clear that Edwards did not develop a distinct social model of the Trinity. Instead the social language that he utilised in his discussion of divine excellency relates to his adoption and development of Augustine's mutual love model of the Trinity and his particular conception of the person of the Holy Spirit.

Second, Pauw and Danaher's claim that Edwards rejected divine simplicity is suspect at best. Pauw argues that the "notion of divine simplicity was never truly incorporated into his theology" on the basis that it is inconsistent with his notions of excellency, harmony and consent.⁶⁴ But this overlooks a number of specific affirmations of simplicity in Edwards's writings.⁶⁵ Moreover, as Studebaker has shown, it misses the crucial role that simplicity plays for Edwards both in the eternal generation of the Son and the Spirit and in the identification of the divine persons with the divine essence.⁶⁶

Pauw and Danaher's insistence that Edwards rejected simplicity is based more upon their imposition of the threeness-oneness paradigm than on anything that Edwards actually wrote. Oliver Crisp remarks, "It would be anachronistic to think his conception of the Trinity, like that of much modern theology, involved casting off the divine simplicity of a previous age."⁶⁷ This brings us to the question of whether the paradigm itself is a legitimate one to apply. It has its roots in the nineteenth-century work of French theologian Theodore de Régnon and, as Studebaker has observed, has fallen out of favour

⁵⁹ Studebaker, "Social Augustinian Trinitarianism," 281; Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 68–69. Pauw has subsequently acknowledged that the mutual love model is pervasive in Edwards's Trinitarian thought and that this could have been more clearly stated in her book ("A Response from Amy Plantinga Pauw," *SJT* 57 [2004]: 487).

⁶⁰ Caldwell, *Communion in the Spirit*, 37n70.

⁶¹ Jonathan Edwards, "Miscellany 571," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 18, The "Miscellanies"* (entry Nos. 501–832) (ed. Ava Chamberlain; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 110.

⁶² Edwards, *Discourse on the Trinity*, 140.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁶⁴ Pauw, *Supreme Harmony of All*, 69; Pauw, "Divine Simplicity," 115–16.

⁶⁵ Edwards, *Discourse on the Trinity*, 113; Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. 1, Freedom of the Will* (ed. Paul Ramsay; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 377; Jonathan Edwards, "Miscellany 135," *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 13, The "Miscellanies"* (Entry Nos. a-Z, Aa-Zz, 1–500) (ed. Thomas A. Schafer; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 295. See discussion in: Oliver Crisp, "Jonathan Edwards on the Trinity," *JES* 4, no. 1 (2014): 24–26.

⁶⁶ Steven Studebaker, "Supreme Harmony or Supreme Disharmony? An Analysis of Amy Plantinga Pauw's 'The Supreme Harmony of All': The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards," *SJT* 57 (2004): 483–84. See also Sang Hyun Lee in Edwards, *Works Vol. 21, 22–23*; Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 39, 60–61.

⁶⁷ Crisp, "Trinity," 26.

among contemporary patristic scholars and systematicians.⁶⁸ Moreover, it misrepresents Augustine by adopting a narrow reading of his trinitarianism (failing to observe the richness and diversity of models that he employs) and assuming that he worked within a Neoplatonic framework.⁶⁹ While the paradigm has proven popular among modern social trinitarians, there is little if any justification for imposing it on Edwards since he appears to have worked squarely within the Augustinian tradition. His use of social terms should be read within that context and viewed as modifications of preexisting Augustinian notions.

2.3. Divergence from Augustine

The preceding discussion should not be taken to suggest that Edwards agreed entirely with the Augustinian tradition. He diverged from it in a number of important respects, three of which we consider here.

2.3.1. *Edwards's Use of Idealism*

While Augustine developed his psychological model using the Aristotelian categories of *substance*, *accidents*, and *relations*, Edwards discarded this metaphysical framework in favour of philosophical idealism. This enabled him to avoid some of the difficulties associated with Augustine's trinitarianism such as the de-personalising of the persons of the Trinity by virtue of their being understood merely relatively (in terms of origin) and not absolutely.⁷⁰ Danaher notes that this marginalised traditional aspects of personhood such as "agency, or the capacity to will and consent to being an action."⁷¹ By contrast, Edwards conceived of personhood in terms of self-consciousness meaning that a person was a "dynamic and relational state of being" rather than an individualistic entity.⁷² This created new problems to which we will return, but it also addressed one of the long-standing concerns with Augustine's model.

2.3.2. *Edwards's Bridge between the Immanent and Economic Trinity*

A corollary of the static conception of trinitarian relations is that Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity was, in the words of Catherine LaCugna, "largely cut off from the economy of salvation."⁷³ The same cannot be said of Edwards's doctrine, for he was convinced that God's trinitarian relations *ad extra* (externally) reflected his trinitarian relations *ad intra* (within the Trinity).⁷⁴ Edwards writes, "'Tis fit that

⁶⁸ Studebaker, "Social Augustinian Trinitarianism," 274–75; Michel René Barnes, "Rereading Augustine's Theology of the Trinity," in *The Trinity* (ed. Stephen T Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 152–53.

⁶⁹ For continuing debate on this, see Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 13–41; Barnes, "Rereading Augustine's Theology of the Trinity," 145–47, 174–76.

⁷⁰ See Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 199, 461; Douglas F. Kelly, *Systematic Theology: Volume 1* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2008), 525–26.

⁷¹ Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 27.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 33.

⁷³ Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 102; cited in Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 199.

⁷⁴ See Robert W. Caldwell, "The Holy Spirit as the Bond of Union in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards," *R & R* 12, no. 3 (2003): 47–51; Sang Hyun Lee in Edwards, *Works Vol. 21*, 31–34.

the order of the acting of the persons of the Trinity should be agreeable to the order of their subsisting.”⁷⁵ Thus, just as “[g]lory belongs to the Father and the Son, that they so greatly loved the world,” so “there is equal glory due to the Holy Ghost, for he is that love of the Father and the Son to the world.”⁷⁶ Indeed, just as the Holy Spirit is the bond of love and communion between the Father and the Son, so is he the bond of love and communion between God and his people.⁷⁷ For Edwards, there was no disconnect between the internal relations of the Trinity and the great history of the work of redemption.⁷⁸

2.3.3. *Edwards’s Discussion of Perichoresis*

As we have seen, Augustine insisted that each member of the Trinity is fully God and therefore fully possesses God’s character and essence. In places, Edwards appeared to reject that view in favour of understanding God’s attributes to be shared by the persons of the Trinity on the basis of mutual indwelling (*perichoresis*).⁷⁹ In the *Discourse*, Edwards writes, “the Father understands because the Son, who is the divine wisdom, is in him. The Father loves because the Holy Ghost is in him. So the Son loves because the Holy Spirit is in him and proceeds from him. So the Holy Ghost, or the divine essence subsisting in divine love, understands because the Son, the divine idea, is in him.”⁸⁰ In other words, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not wise and loving independent of each other. Rather “their relations to each other constitute who they are.”⁸¹ This is in stark contrast to Augustine, who insisted that, “the Trinity, which is God, is not so to be understood . . . as that the Father should be the memory of all three, and the Son the understanding of all three, and the Holy Spirit the love of all three; as though the Father should neither understand nor love for Himself, but the Son should understand for Him, and the Holy Spirit love for Him.”⁸²

On its face, Augustine and Edwards appear to have taken directly opposing sides on this issue although it is possible that Edwards was much closer to Augustine than at first appears. In Miscellany 308, when seeking to avoid teaching that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct beings, Edwards argued that it was the divine essence that understands, and therefore “the Father understands, the Son understands, and the Holy Ghost understands, because every one is the same understanding divine

⁷⁵ Jonathan Edwards, “Miscellany 1062,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. 20, The “Miscellanies”* (entry Nos. 833-1152) (ed. Amy Plantinga Pauw; New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 2002), 431.

⁷⁶ Edwards, *Discourse on the Trinity* 135–36.

⁷⁷ Jonathan Edwards, “Miscellany 571,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. 18, The “Miscellanies”* (entry Nos. 501-832) (ed. Ava Chamberlain; New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 2000), 110. Also see Nichols, *An Absolute Sort of Certainty*, 35.

⁷⁸ For a discussion of Edwards’s concern with the history of redemption and his proposed magnum opus on the topic, see George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 481–89.

⁷⁹ See discussion in Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 34.

⁸⁰ Edwards, *Discourse on the Trinity*, 133. See discussion of Sang Hyun Lee (in Edwards, *Works Vol. 21*, 26–27).

⁸¹ Pauw, *Supreme Harmony of All*, 74. Strobel states it starkly: “In contrast to seeing the Father as the only person in whom the divine attributes obtain [he position of the anti-trinitarians], Edwards posits that the divine attributes actually are the Son and the Spirit!” (Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards’s Theology*, 34).

⁸² Augustine, “Trinity,” in *NPNF1*, 3:215.

essence.”⁸³ This is much closer to Augustine's view that each person fully possesses God's character and essence.⁸⁴ It is unclear, however, whether Edwards would still have affirmed this view by the time he wrote the *Discourse*. Kyle Strobel has recently argued that Edwards's thought radically changed during the writing of the *Discourse*. He moved from a standard view of the Son and the Spirit appropriating understanding and will from the divine essence to the view that understanding and will were the subsistences themselves. This, Strobel suggests, was due to Edwards's recognition that understanding and will are personal actions which cannot be predicated of an essence.⁸⁵ In so doing Edwards grounded personhood in perichoretic union rather than seeing it as something received by the divine persons from the divine essence.⁸⁶ If this is correct, Edwards did indeed utilise personhood and perichoresis in a novel way which represented a significant departure from Augustine.⁸⁷

3. Possible Weaknesses in Edwards's Doctrine

This final part considers possible weaknesses in Edwards's doctrine both as it stands within the Augustinian tradition and in the innovations that Edwards made.

3.1. The Inherent Danger of Trinitarian Analogies

Both Augustine and Edwards were very fond of Trinitarian analogies. In addition to his favoured analogy of the mind, understanding, and love, Edwards also drew on the image of the sun: the Father is as the substance of the sun, the Son is its brightness, and the Spirit is its rays.⁸⁸ The problem with these as with all other illustrations is that they are inadequate and misleading.⁸⁹ Gregory of Nazianzus rightly pointed this out in the fourth century: “I have failed to find anything in this world with which I might compare the divine nature. If a faint resemblance comes my way, the more significant aspect escapes me, leaving me and my illustration here in the world.”⁹⁰ For example, the sun analogy gives the impression that the incomposite nature of God has a composition like that of the sun and that only the Father exists as an actual being.⁹¹ Gregory wisely concludes, “I resolved that it is best to say ‘goodbye’ to images and shadows, deceptive and utterly inadequate as they are to express the reality.”⁹²

⁸³ Jonathan Edwards, “Miscellany 308,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. 13, The “Miscellanies.”* (Entry Nos. a-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500) (ed. Thomas A. Schafer; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 392.

⁸⁴ Augustine, “Trinity,” in *NPNF1*, 3:216.

⁸⁵ Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 42–43.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁸⁷ See also Crisp, “Trinity,” 35–39.

⁸⁸ Edwards, *Discourse on the Trinity*, 138. See also *idem*, “Miscellany 362,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. 13, The “Miscellanies.”* (Entry Nos. a-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500) (ed. Thomas A. Schafer; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 434.

⁸⁹ Wayne A Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 1994), 240–41.

⁹⁰ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius*, Oration 31.31, p. 141.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Oration 31.32, p. 142.

⁹² *Ibid.*, Oration 31.33, p. 143. In a similar vein, Turretin writes, “These [images] seem to afford some resemblance to the Trinity, though very obscure as they always labor under a great dissimilitude. Thus they ought

Edwards's favoured analogy of the mind, understanding, and love is extremely problematic. As W. G. T. Shedd has noted of the analogy as it appears in Augustine, it illustrates "the trinity of the Divine essence, but fails to illustrate the substantiality of the three persons."⁹³ This is because only the mind is a substance while knowledge and love are merely two activities of it. Thus, while the mind is substantial enough to know and love "an *activity* of the mind is not substantial enough to possess and employ the attributes of knowledge and love. We cannot say that the loving loves; or the loving knows; or the knowing loves."⁹⁴ As Robert Letham has observed, if the illustration is effective, it "would prove modalism, not orthodoxy."⁹⁵ Edwards's use of philosophical idealism might overcome Shedd's objection as it relates to the generation of the Son, but it is hard to see how it addresses problems with the substantial (and personal) nature of the Spirit. We return to this below.

One point of contrast between Augustine and Edwards is the relative weight that they placed upon the illustrations. Augustine acknowledged them to be "inadequate"⁹⁶ and was alert to their tendency towards modalism.⁹⁷ As Letham and J. N. D. Kelly observe, he was well aware of their limitations.⁹⁸ Edwards, on the other hand, believed that his analogy provided ontological evidence for the existence of the Trinity.⁹⁹ This makes the problems with the analogy all the more troubling.

3.2. The Personhood of the Spirit

Edwards was writing in an age of anti-Trinitarian sentiment and so was keen to emphasise the distinct personhood and deity of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁰ His understanding of the Holy Spirit as the bond of love between the Father and the Son or the "personal energy . . . divine love and delight [that] proceeds from both"¹⁰¹ presented difficulties here because it gives the impression that the Spirit is an abstract quality rather than a distinct person. Edwards anticipated just such an objection in the *Discourse*: "One of the principal objections that I can think of against what has been supposed is concerning the personality of the Holy Ghost, that this scheme of things don't [*sic*] seem well to consist with that, [that] a person is that which hath understanding and will."¹⁰²

Edwards's answer is rooted, as we have seen, in the doctrine of perichoresis. The Holy Spirit understands because the Son, who is the divine idea, is in him: "God loves the understanding and the

to be proposed soberly and cautiously, not for the purpose of convincing adversaries, but for confirming believers and showing them the credibility at least of this great mystery" (*Institutes Vol. 1*, 3.25.4).

⁹³ W. G. T. Shedd, in *NPNF1*, 3:126n2.

⁹⁴ Shedd in *ibid.*, 3:133n3.

⁹⁵ Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 196.

⁹⁶ Augustine, "Trinity," in *NPNF1*, 3:126.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3:222.

⁹⁸ Letham, *Holy Trinity*, 197; J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (5th ed.; London: Black, 1985), 277–78.

⁹⁹ Edwards, *Msc. 94*, 262. See Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 33.

¹⁰⁰ See Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 28.

¹⁰¹ Jonathan Edwards, "Miscellany 143," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. 13, The "Miscellanies."* (*Entry Nos. a-Z, Aa-Zz, 1-500*) (ed. Thomas A. Schafer; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 298.

¹⁰² Edwards, *Discourse on the Trinity*, 132–33.

understanding flows out in love, so that the divine understanding is in the Deity subsisting in love.”¹⁰³ We return to the difficulties with Edwards's doctrine of perichoresis below. For now, we simply note the remarkable lengths that Edwards is forced to go in order to follow through with his argument. He asserts that the human will includes consciousness and that while it cannot properly be said of the human will that it is seeing or understanding, it “may truly and properly [be] said so in God by reason of God's infinitely more perfect manner of acting.”¹⁰⁴ It is unclear why the perfection of an action renders that action a substance or infuses it with personality. Edwards does not expand, and the argument here is very condensed. Shedd's point (made in reference to Augustine's doctrine) that “no psychology, ancient or modern, has ever maintained that the agencies of a spiritual entity or substance are themselves spiritual entity or substances” is compelling.¹⁰⁵ If Edwards's response is simply that God's manner of acting is completely unlike ours, then the analogy is rendered nugatory. Edwards concludes his discussion by acknowledging that he does not “pretend fully to explain how these things are” or to be able to explain “the Trinity so as to render it no longer a mystery.”¹⁰⁶ He is of course right to make such a concession, but he should not use it to justify a mystification of the Spirit which goes beyond what Scripture requires.¹⁰⁷

Even if one accepts Edwards's response based upon perichoresis, it does not fully resolve the difficulties created by the psychological analogy since the personality of the Spirit depends not just upon whether a consciousness can be predicated on the Spirit but also upon whether he interacts as a distinct person with the Father and the Son. As Danaher notes, the characteristics of personhood which Edwards accepts, understanding and will, “manifest themselves more clearly interpersonally rather than intrapersonally, in acts of self-donation rather than self-reflection.”¹⁰⁸ Edwards's conceptualisation of the Spirit leaves room only for intrapersonal manifestation of these fundamental characteristics.¹⁰⁹

3.3. The Weaknesses Inherent in Edwards's Idealism

Paul Helm has identified two fundamental problems with Edwards's use of philosophical idealism to argue for the Trinity. First, his underlying premise that, where a person has an idea of a non-material object, that object comes into existence, is highly doubtful. Helm writes, “A person does not have to be in a fright to have an idea of fear.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰³ Ibid., 133. See discussion in Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 63–64.

¹⁰⁴ Edwards, *Discourse on the Trinity*, 133–34.

¹⁰⁵ Shedd in *NPNF1*, 3:126n2.

¹⁰⁶ Edwards, *Discourse on the Trinity*, 134.

¹⁰⁷ Space precludes us from a detailed examination of Edwards's exegetical defence of his doctrine. It is sufficient to note that 1 John 4:7–16 is the key text and that Edwards's exegesis of v. 12 is unconvincing. First, it is not clear whether the genitive modifier, αὐτοῦ (his), is subjective or objective, although the former is contextually more likely. Second, the fact that union with God is effected by the Spirit and results in the indwelling of God's love does not mean that the Holy Spirit is that love. It simply does not follow and further evidence is required. See I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 216–22.

¹⁰⁸ Danaher, *Trinitarian Ethics*, 35.

¹⁰⁹ For a different reading of Edwards on the personhood of the Spirit, see Caldwell, “Bond of Union,” 43–47.

¹¹⁰ Paul Helm, “Introductory Essay,” in Edwards, *Treatise on Grace, and Other Posthumously Published Writings*, 21.

Second, Helm argues that Edwards's theory is implicitly tri-theistic: "If a perfect idea of x entails that x exists then Edwards has proved too much—not the second person of a trinity of persons but a second *theos*."¹¹¹ It appears that Edwards anticipated just such an objection and sought to clarify his thought by insisting that the person begotten "is another infinite, eternal, almighty, and most holy and the *same* God, the very *same* divine nature."¹¹² As Pauw observes, it is almost as if Edwards had to "correct himself mid-sentence in order to avoid asserting more than one God."¹¹³

Edwards sought to provide a fuller response to the claim that idealism necessarily results in an infinite number of divine persons in Msc. 308. He argued that God generated the Son by understanding his own essence, not by understanding the Son. Therefore the Son is himself the understanding of that essence. So when the Son understands himself, he understands the Father since he is himself the essence of the Father and of the Holy Ghost. Therefore, the Son's idea is not outward, creating a new person, but circular within the Godhead since he is himself the understanding of the essence of the Father. Edwards writes, "After you have in your imagination multiplied understandings and love never so often, it will be the understanding and loving of the very same essence, and you can never make more than these three: God, and the idea of God, and the love of God."¹¹⁴ The argument is very condensed at this point, and his reasoning does not follow. It is not clear why the Father's perfect idea of himself generates a second person while the Son's perfect idea of himself does not. Edwards's argument that the Son is himself the essence of the Father and therefore his idea is of himself does not follow since exactly the same could be said about the Father's perfect idea of himself—after all they are both of the same divine essence. Ultimately, Edwards's response is unconvincing. This may be due to the brevity of his argument, but without further development Edwards's case for the Trinity from the perspective of philosophical idealism is far from compelling.

3.4. Edwards's Use of Perichoresis

In our discussion of Edwards's use of perichoresis, we noted that it was not entirely clear whether Edwards diverged from Augustine on the matter of whether each person of the Trinity possesses all of the divine attributes in and of themselves. If Edwards did make the radical claim that has been suggested, then he is adopting a very unusual conception of perichoresis with far-reaching consequences.

East and West are united in the view that each person of the Godhead is fully God possessing all the attributes of God. As Robert Reymond observes, "the three Persons taken together are not to be regarded as a greater divine being than any one of the Persons viewed singly," and "any one of the Persons viewed singly is not to be regarded as a lesser divine being than when the three are viewed together."¹¹⁵ The doctrine of perichoresis was not intended to undermine this. Gregory of Nazianzus used it to explain the relationship between the divine and human natures of Christ, and Hilary of Poitiers developed it to explain the distinct yet inseparable relationship of the three persons of the Trinity.¹¹⁶ In the eighth century John of Damascus wrote,

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Edwards, *Discourse on the Trinity*, 116 (emphasis added).

¹¹³ Pauw, *Supreme Harmony of All*, 53.

¹¹⁴ Edwards, *Msc. 308*, 393.

¹¹⁵ Robert L Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Nelson, 1998), 321.

¹¹⁶ Kelly, *Systematic Theology Vol. 1*, 489.

The subsistences dwell and are established firmly in one another. For they are inseparable and cannot part from one another, but keep to their separate courses within one another, without coalescing or mingling, but cleaving to each other. For the Son is in the Father and the Spirit: and the Spirit in the Father and the Son: and the Father in the Son and the Spirit, but there is no coalescence or commingling or confusion. And there is one and the same motion: for there is one impulse and one motion of the three subsistences, which is not to be observed in any created nature.¹¹⁷

Perichoresis is a means of explaining how the three persons of the Trinity eternally coexist and coinhere, each person being involved in what the other is doing. It is not a means of asserting the ontological interdependence of the Trinity for the purpose of making up what is lacking in each person's possession of the divine attributes. This undermines the aseity of the persons and results in just the sort of commingling and confusion that John of Damascus warned about.¹¹⁸ If this was what Edwards intended to teach (which as we have observed is rather doubtful), it is highly regrettable.

4. Conclusion

Jonathan Edwards's trinitarian thought was firmly rooted in his Augustinian heritage. His central model of God, his understanding, and his love developed Augustine's own mutual love model, and contrary to Pauw and Danaher, there is little evidence of Edwards's developing a separate social model alongside this. Nevertheless, Edwards did depart from Augustine in a number of areas.

First, in his use of philosophical idealism, he resolved some of the difficulties associated with Augustine's psychological model, most notably the de-personalisation of the persons of the Trinity and the disconnect between the immanent and economic Trinity. Unfortunately, problems remained, notably concerning the personhood of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, Edwards's idealism gave rise to problems of its own associated with the possibility of infinite generation within the Godhead. Recent decades have seen a resurgence of interest in the work of Edwards, both in scholarly and popular spheres.¹¹⁹ Given that Edwards's Trinitarian thought is the fountain of his entire theological programme, it is important to be aware of some of its difficulties.¹²⁰

Second, Edwards did not exercise the same caution as Augustine did in his use of Trinitarian analogies. While Augustine used a multiplicity of illustrations and noted their inherent limitations, Edwards favoured the psychological triad giving little attention to its modalistic dangers. We need to be careful not to fall into the same trap today. In seeking to expound the Trinity and make it more tangible,

¹¹⁷ John of Damascus, "De Fide Orthodoxa," in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Series 2* (ed. Philip Schaff; London: T&T Clark, 1980), 9:17.

¹¹⁸ Along similar lines, Crisp writes, "[T]his has to do with an intrinsic attribute of divine personhood being provided to one divine person by another divine person. This is very odd indeed. For it implies that one divine person is something very like a part or constituent of another, or (at least) that one divine person partially composes another. But none of these things can be true of divine persons because they are not parts of one another and are not parts of God—on pain of denying the doctrine of the Trinity as well as the doctrine of divine simplicity" (Crisp, "Trinity," 41).

¹¹⁹ John Piper has been hugely influential at a popular level: John Piper, *God's Passion for His Glory: Living the Vision of Jonathan Edwards* (Leicester: IVP, 1998).

¹²⁰ Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 23–24.

it is tempting to rely upon human analogies, but this urge must be resisted. The nature of God as Trinity is so outside of our own creaturely experience that resort to any human analogy is bound to lead us into theological heterodoxy. It is much better simply to reiterate the confessional formulations of the Trinity which have been affirmed by the church down through the centuries.

Third, Edwards proposed a model of perichoresis in his *Discourse* which carried a danger of commingling the persons of the Trinity.¹²¹ It is a potent reminder of the need to avoid either separating or commingling the persons of the Trinity. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct yet inseparable persons; neither ontologically inter-dependent for their possession of the divine attributes nor separable in their operations.

Edwards's teaching on the Trinity, as a restatement of orthodox Augustinian thought, served the church well during a time of great doctrinal heterodoxy, but as this article has sought to show, it was not without its own problems. This should caution us about the importance of vigilance as we seek to expound the Trinity,¹²² remembering with Augustine that "in no other subject is error more dangerous, or inquiry more laborious or the discovery of truth more profitable."¹²³

¹²¹ As Crisp notes, advocates of an Edwardsian view need to take up the constructive theological task of explaining how his doctrine of perichoresis avoids a commingling of the persons (Crisp, "Trinity," 41).

¹²² The past few years have seen a welcome revival of interest in the doctrine. See the following popular works: Peter Sanlon, *Simply God* (Nottingham: IVP, 2014); Sam Allberry, *Connected: Living in the Light of the Trinity* (Nottingham: IVP, 2012); Michael Reeves, *The Good God: Enjoying Father, Son and Spirit* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012); Tim Chester, *Delighting in the Trinity: Why Father, Son and Spirit Are Good News* (New Maiden, Surrey, UK: The Good Book Company, 2010). This has gone some way to addressing the serious lacuna which Robert Letham identified in contemporary evangelicalism some twelve years ago: Robert Letham, "The Trinity—Yesterday, Today and the Future," *Them* 28, no. 1 (2002): 35.

¹²³ Augustine, "Trinity," in *NPNF1*, 3:19.

Jonathan Edwards and God’s Inner Life: A Response to Kyle Strobel

— Gerald McDermott —

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Abstract: This article surveys the state of Edwards studies today, focusing particularly on its philosophical theologians who have zeroed in on Edwards’s doctrine of God. It addresses current debates over dispositionalism, reviews a new book by Kyle Strobel, and criticizes recent uses of analytical philosophy in analyzing Edwards’s doctrine of God.

The greatest living Lutheran theologian, Wolfhart Pannenberg, once remarked that the only two Christian groups of enduring significance in the twenty-first century would be Roman Catholics and Protestant evangelicals. His prophecy seems to be coming true. The Protestant mainline loses numbers by the minute as it steadily drifts further and further from orthodoxy, and the great Eastern orthodox churches have fallen victim to Europe’s birth dearth and Islamist persecution in the Middle East. The Christian world grows only because Roman Catholics and evangelicals (when Pentecostals are included) continue to have babies and evangelize.

Christian Theology: Catholic and Evangelical

Where is this Christian world going theologically? To answer this question we must look to the theologies of Catholics and evangelicals. After a brief flirtation in the middle of the last century with Karl Rahner, orthodox Catholics are realizing he was too indebted to the Enlightenment.¹ Instead they are turning to the theological riches of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Benedict XVI. Evangelicals have a much shorter history and a shallower field of theological reflection. They have been given more to action than to theory. They can point to far more evangelists than to theologians. Carl Henry is beginning to get the respect he deserved fifty years ago but rarely received, and there is now a handful of evangelical theologians (N. T. Wright, Kevin Vanhoozer, Alister McGrath, William Abraham, Miroslav Volf) read by professional theologians and thinking Christians outside

¹R.R. Reno, “Rahner the Restorationist,” *First Things* 233 (May 2013): 45–51.

the evangelical world. John Wesley's theological work was almost as important as his organization of a massive network of churches, but his capacious but diffuse thinking has not had much impact on systematic theology since his era.

Edwards: Arguably Evangelicalism's Greatest Thinker

The same cannot be said for Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758). Arguably, his was the greatest theological mind the nearly-three-centuries-old evangelical tradition has produced. The 26-volume Yale edition of his *Works* (73 volumes total, counting the 47 digital volumes) is one measure of his greatness. That he received more mention than any other figure in the 3-volume *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience* is another. In North America his intellectual vision has influenced thinkers in a wide range of fields beyond those of his most immediate interest—not only philosophy and theology but also ethics, history, aesthetics, literature, cultural criticism, and psychology. In the last decade, thinkers in Europe have begun to engage Edwards and to be influenced by him.

We are now in the midst of an explosion of studies on Edwards. By 2010 more than four thousand secondary books, dissertations, and articles on Edwards had appeared, and most of these have been written during what has been called “the Edwards renaissance” that began with Perry Miller's biography of Edwards in 1949.² Conferences on America's theologian abound; in 2003 alone there were nine. Edwards Centers have sprung up in South Africa, Australia, Hungary, Poland, Benelux, Germany, Japan, and Brazil.

The Debate over Dispositional Ontology

As publications abound, so do specialties. While many books in the first few decades of the Edwards Renaissance felt the need to cover the wide variety of Edwards's interests even while focusing on one, more books in the last two decades have enjoyed the luxury of devoting themselves nearly exclusively to one. This has been the case for recent Edwardsean philosophical theologians who have been trained principally under the penumbra of analytical philosophy in Britain in close or indirect relation to evangelical philosopher of religion Paul Helm. He and Oliver Crisp edited *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian* in 2003, containing a landmark essay by Stephen Holmes (St. Andrews, Scotland) claiming that Princeton's Sang Hyun Lee's ascription of “dispositional ontology” to Edwards was flat-out wrong.³ This was the idea that for Edwards both God and humans are dynamic inclinations to relate to others and thus increase their being. Holmes asserted that this implied that God had unfulfilled potential, which would violate the traditional notion that God is simple and thus only one eternal act. It is not clear that Holmes accurately represented Lee's portrayal, for Lee insisted that God as disposition does not add to his actuality and that his increase in being was eternal and not in time, therefore without the gradual self-realization of process theology. Since that original salvo, there has been a spate of books and articles from others in this British school—mostly from Crisp himself but also from John Bombaro and now Kyle Strobel—arguing about what Edwards did with divine simplicity,

²Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Sloane, 1949).

³Stephen R. Holmes, “Does Jonathan Edwards Use a Dispositional Ontology? A Response to Sang Hyun Lee,” in *Jonathan Edwards: Philosophical Theologian* (ed. Paul Helm and Oliver D. Crisp; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 99–114.

dispositionalism, and the Trinity, but all allied in their conclusion that Lee's depiction of Edwards's philosophical theology was mistaken.⁴

Strobel's Argument

Now Strobel is arguing not only that Lee's project (far more influential among Edwards scholars in the United States) was wrongheaded because it presented Edwards as more of a philosopher than theologian, but also because it suggested that Edwards's God is dispositional in his very being. Instead, says Strobel, "Edwards's use of 'disposition' . . . is being predicated not of his essence but of his will."⁵ More on that in a moment.

Strobel's basic thesis is that "Jonathan Edwards's theology has an internal coherence, forged in the context of his Trinitarian theology and exposition of God's nature as persons in beatific-delight."⁶ This thesis has four components. First, Edwards spoke of God "in terms of Trinitarian *personhood* rather than an abstracted divine essence."⁷ According to Strobel, the early Edwards (seen in Miscellany 308) spoke of the divine persons participating in the divine essence, but then shifted during the writing of the *Discourse on the Trinity* (1729–30) to the position that the persons constitute the essence: "In the *Discourse*, Edwards has developed an allergy to talking about the divine essence as 'having' understanding and will, now describing the Father generating and spirating subsistences of understanding and willing."⁸ Edwards from that point on, he says, treated the divine essence as the "spiritual substance" of God and "the divine persons as instances of that spiritual substance, existing as persons in perichoresis—subsisting, it should be noted, as the personal predicates of understanding and will."⁹ Generally, then, after 1730 Edwards was "not interested in talking about the divine essence as such."¹⁰

Second, the three divine persons for Edwards are not persons in their own right but only through communion with the other two. "This is the 'twist in the plot,' as it were . . . the Father is not a person without the Son or the Spirit."¹¹ The three are persons only by perichoretic coinherence in the other two.

Third, Strobel says that Edwards analyzed the processions within the Trinity in terms of the beatific vision, which he terms "personal beatific-delight The Father gazes upon the Son and the Son upon the Father, not in a detached fashion, but with delight (the Spirit's spiration)."¹² Strobel argues that Edwards's use of the beatific vision marked a new turn in the Reformed tradition. Turretin, he argues, had ignored Christ's role, and Owen the Holy Spirit's, in this "happifying" (Edwards's word) vision. Edwards pushed even further, past Aquinas, by insisting that the beatific vision can begin now, before death.

⁴Kyle C. Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology: A Reinterpretation* (T&T Clark Studies in Systematic Theology; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013).

⁵Ibid., 89.

⁶Ibid., 225.

⁷Ibid., 161, emphasis in original.

⁸Ibid., 43.

⁹Ibid., 48.

¹⁰Ibid., 241n34.

¹¹Ibid., 28.

¹²Ibid., 4.

Fourth, Strobel argues that this depiction of the Trinity is Edwards's archetype for creaturely knowledge of God. Humans participate in God's own understanding (the Son's particular domain) and love (the Spirit's), which is another way of saying that the redeemed also dwell perichoretically in the three persons, just as the three are persons only by their perichoretic dwelling in one another. According to Strobel, personal-beatific-delight grounds God's external emanation of that life: "To redeem the elect, God provides his own self-knowledge and self-love, that they may partake of his personal beatific-delight."¹³

Strobel claims this four-fold thesis is Edwards's "inner logic," the "engine of his theology," the "metanarrative" and "ground and grammar" of his theology.¹⁴ In proposing it, he says he is "rejecting all other contemporary categorizations of Edwards's trinitarian thought," which tend to grasp only "one or two facets" of it and thereby offer a "truncated image" of it or "undermine [its] conceptual structure and unity."¹⁵

Strobel rejects Lee's portrayal of divine dispositionalism in God's being, claiming that "Edwards's use of 'disposition,' in reference to a *property* of God's *nature*, is being predicated not of his essence but of his will."¹⁶ Strobel quotes a letter in which Edwards says "the word 'nature' is not used only to signify the essence of a thing, but . . . That *property* which is natural to anyone and is eminently his *character*."¹⁷ Hence, Strobel reasons, Edwards distinguishes nature, which would include will, from essence or being. Furthermore, Strobel reasons, the idea that God is dispositional in his being would contradict the Reformed tradition's conception of "immutability, simplicity and *actus purus*."¹⁸

Does Edwards Really Distinguish between God's Being and Will?

Let me address first Strobel's distinction between the divine being and will, and then his denial of disposition in the being of Edwards's God. First, the context of Edwards's letter was his denial that the Holy Spirit communicates the essence of God to us in a manner that would make us little deities, just as our receiving the heat and light of the sun does not mean we become "sunned with the sun, or [become] the same being with the sun, or [become] equal to that immense fountain of light and heat."¹⁹ Edwards was denying that in union with Christ we become one in essence or being with God; he was not distinguishing between one part of God (his will) and another part (his being). Besides, such a distinction would violate the very simplicity that Strobel invokes. Furthermore, Edwards uses "nature" (which Strobel thinks refers to will as opposed to essence) and "essence" interchangeably in the very *Discourse* that is Strobel's principal source: When "God . . . views his own essence . . . [t]his representation of the divine nature and essence is the divine nature and essence again."²⁰ In the first part

¹³ Ibid., 203.

¹⁴ Ibid., 2, 6, 12, 76.

¹⁵ Ibid., 29–30.

¹⁶ Ibid., 88, emphasis in original.

¹⁷ Ibid., 90, emphasis in original.

¹⁸ Ibid., 88.

¹⁹ WJE 8:640. WJE stands for the Yale edition of the *Works of Jonathan Edwards*.

²⁰ WJE 21:116.

of the statement God's being is called his "essence," and in the last part it is called "divine nature and essence." The two terms are treated as synonyms.

Was Edwards's God Dispositional?

What of Strobel's denial that Edwards's God is dispositional in his being or essence? Are he and others in this "British" school right,²¹ especially when they insist that Edwards never suggested self-enlargement of God's being, which was another one of Lee's claims? One need only look to one of Edwards's last masterpieces, his *End for Which God Created the World*, which fulfills the British school's oft-repeated criterion, from Holmes on, that we should privilege published works over passages from writings not intended for publication. The *End* is full of statements that favor Lee rather than Strobel on these points. Edwards wrote of "a disposition to [pouring forth light] in divine *being*," of God's works showing his "excellencies" that consist in "the *disposition* of his heart," and that there is "a diffusive *disposition* in the nature of God."²² There is no clear difference in Edwards's usage here or elsewhere between God's being or essence on the one hand and his "heart" or "nature" on the other. Hence the text of the *End* seems to show a clear Edwardsean conception of God as dispositional in his being and not merely his will.

The *End* also speaks of God's self-enlargement. Edwards writes there that "in some sense, [there is] a multiplication" of "the infinite fullness of all possible good in God." This "external stream" flowing from God is "an increase of good." God "as it were enlarges himself in a more excellent and divine manner" than can be imagined. God is like a fountain, whose emanation is "as it were an increase, repetition or multiplication of" that fountain of good.²³

Divine Simplicity

Strobel is convinced that God could not be dispositional in his being because that would violate divine simplicity, which Edwards also affirms. As Strobel and others in the analytic tradition see it, simplicity means that God is pure actuality without unrealized possibilities. Since a disposition by nature implies the potential to be or do something tomorrow that the disposition is not or is not doing today, Edwards must not have thought of God as dispositional in his being. Edwards scholars, however, are left with a question: Why then did Edwards speak so clearly in the *End* about God's power remaining "dormant" before the creation, and other divine perfections being "eternally dormant"?²⁴

²¹ Of course, there are exceptions. Some scholars in the Americas have questioned whether Lee has over-emphasized dispositionalism and ignored the places in the corpus where Edwards kept using the concept of "substance," though in a modified manner, throughout his career. But the most pointed challenges to dispositionalism have come from scholars who were trained in Britain—Holmes, Crisp, Bombaro, Strobel.

²² WJE 8:433, 422, 434, my emphases.

²³ WJE 8:432, 433, 461, 433.

²⁴ WJE 8:429, 527.

Scholars Changing Their Minds

This and similar statements by Edwards are starting to change minds of some scholars who had been wary of Lee's dispositionalism. For example, in his new book *Jonathan Edwards on God and Creation*, Crisp concedes that for Edwards in the *End* God is indeed a disposition who enlarges himself. Crisp adds that this is not a violation of divine simplicity because all of these increases took place in eternity before they were played out in time, and so do not involve any absolutely new acts. They are new only virtually. God self-enlarges in time, but—in Edwards's words—only “as it were.”²⁵ All this notwithstanding, Strobel's analysis of the Trinity and its processions as persons as the archetype for the work of redemption, is actually helpful. He reminds us of Edwards's dissatisfaction with the static metaphysics of substance that ill befits the dynamic God of the Bible. Strobel weaves together the four strands of his thesis with an intensity and particularity that bring their interrelationships into new focus. But are the four strands really new?

Precedents

Decades ago Wallace Anderson had already pointed to Edwards's preference for persons over static substance: “God's goodness [for Edwards] is not grounded in the absolute unity and simplicity of his being, but belongs to him only as he constitutes a *plurality* involving relations.”²⁶ Lee himself wrote, “The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in everything that each of them is (knowing, loving, and the self-repetitions thereof) and is disposed to, appears to be what Edwards means by the divine essence.”²⁷ Lee had also suggested that this preference was rooted in “the *perichoresis*, or the inter-dwelling, of the three persons of the Trinity.”²⁸ And a host of scholars have discussed the inner life of the Trinity as the archetype of creaturely experience of God. Robert Jenson, for example: “In Edwards . . . the roles of Jesus and his Father and their Spirit in our history, and the roles of those three ‘persons’ in God's own reality, intersect with each other to make but one divine history. Of a metaphysical break between God's triune history with us and God's ‘own’ immanent being, Edwards knows nothing.”²⁹ William Danaher's recent volume on Edwards's ethics resounded with the themes that ethics is participation in the inner divine life and that the Trinity conditions everything Edwards said about God and humanity.³⁰

A Shift from Essence to Persons?

Strobel does give more detailed attention to some of these things than some of the scholars just mentioned. But what of the accuracy of the first element of his four-fold thesis—that Edwards “push[ed]

²⁵ Oliver D. Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards on God and Creation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 37–56.

²⁶ WJE 6:84, my emphasis.

²⁷ Lee, Editor's Introduction, WJE 21:21.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, WJE 21:26.

²⁹ Robert Jenson, *America's Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 93.

³⁰ William J. Danaher Jr., *The Trinitarian Ethics of Jonathan Edwards* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004).

away from discussions of the divine essence to focus on the divine persons"?³¹ Strobel argues that after 1730 Edwards conceived of the divine essence *as* persons, and preferred not to speak of God's essence or being apart from the persons. Is this really true?

Not quite. The shift from essence to persons or essence *as* persons in Edwards's writings was not as clean as Strobel suggests. In an essay on the equality of the persons of the Trinity written after 1740 (hence rather late in Edwards's theological development), Edwards distinguished the divine essence from the persons' relations, as if all of these somehow co-exist: "The Son derived [*sic*] the divine essence from the Father, and the Holy Spirit derives the divine essence from the Father and the Son."³² In his many proofs for God's existence, even as late as *Freedom of the Will* (1754), Edwards speaks of God's "being"—which he usually treats as another synonym for "essence"—without a word about divine persons.³³ In the *Nature of True Virtue*, also late (1755–56), Edwards's three monikers for the deity are "God," "Being of beings," and "Being in general," without any mention of divine persons. So while Strobel may be right that Edwards *also* speaks of persons without essence after his early period, this move from essence to persons was never a final break with essence.

Personal Beatific-delight

So Strobel brings focus to what are familiar themes in Edwards studies and provides helpful specificity to most if not all. His analysis of Edwards's treatment of the beatific vision is more systematic than that of past studies, and the particular way in which he connects that vision to redemption is insightful. This alone can be considered a contribution to Edwards studies. Yet a word must be added about the new term he has coined for this: "personal beatific-delight." It is confusing. "Beatific" means "making blessed; imparting supreme happiness or blessedness."³⁴ In some places Strobel uses "beatific" in ways that imply it means "related to vision,"³⁵ which would fit his larger meaning—vision by persons that brings delight. But the actual meaning of "beatific" makes the new term redundant (personal imparting happiness-delight) and omits the key element of vision.

Perhaps this imprecision in terminology is related to another problem—that this book is a bit too close to its original form as a dissertation. Like fledgling PhDs who sometimes try too hard to distinguish their theses from similar works, Strobel denounces the work of most other Edwards scholars, claiming no less than eighteen times that this or that scholar has "failed." Studebaker, Helm, Crisp, Pauw, Stout, Schweitzer, Ramsey, McClenahan, and McClymond have all "failed" to see this or that, and so have misrepresented Edwards. Lee and Marsden were "misguided."³⁶ Studebaker is said to have "failed" three times in one sentence.³⁷ McClymond "[reads] more like a rant," provides "incredibly

³¹ Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 196.

³² WJE 21:147.

³³ See, e.g., WJE 1:181.

³⁴ *Oxford English Dictionary*, 1971.

³⁵ Strobel, *Jonathan Edwards's Theology*, 145, 150.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 18, 76.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

outdated information,” and is “completely ignorant of patristic scholarship.”³⁸ But this book, we are told, “provides the coherence and elegance other interpretative models have lacked.”³⁹

Crisp on Divine Simplicity

A recurring theme in the debates between the British and American schools of Edwards studies (though, truth be told, there are exceptions on both sides of the Atlantic) turns on the philosophical concept of divine simplicity. We have seen above that Strobel thinks simplicity rules out dispositionalism in God’s being for Edwards—as his mentor Holmes had argued in his famous 2003 essay that launched this last decade’s debate. We have also seen that Crisp now sees dispositionalism in Edwards’s notion of God’s being. He thinks Edwards resolved the apparent incoherence by his notion of God’s acts in eternity. But Crisp is now using simplicity to challenge Edwards himself—in his doctrine of God. He charges that Edwards violated that aspect of simplicity that posits that God has no parts. Crisp says that when Edwards distinguishes different attributes for each divine Person (the Son as the image and knowledge of God, the Spirit as the love and joy of God, et al), he violates simplicity and renders his doctrine of God “incoherent.”⁴⁰

Different Kinds of Coherence and Simplicity

It seems to me that there is a problem with this new use of analytic tools on Edwards. The tools themselves—various understandings of coherence—are useful in efforts to bring clarity to theology. But as Colin Gunton, who was trained in this tradition, noted, “What we mean by reason is by no means straightforward or agreed.”⁴¹ The same could be said for coherence and simplicity.

Paul Hinlicky distinguishes between philosophical and theological simplicity. Philosophical simplicity originated in ancient Greek thought and was developed by Plotinus in his *Enneads*. It has to do with potentiality and actuality, parts and wholes, and therefore is about God’s inner being. Theological simplicity, on the other hand, speaks of God’s relationship to his creation and is not about God’s nature in itself. According to Hinlicky, theological simplicity is a rule of speech, not an ontological insight. It directs us to the unique and incomparable creator God, not to doctrinal formulations, and reminds us that God is independent of and sovereign over all because he is the creator of all. It is guided by the logic of biblical narrative, not the logic of a particular philosophical understanding of simplicity. It uses the same rules of inference, but applies them to a particular narrative, not to a concept developed in abstraction from that narrative. It begins with the divine plan of a Trinity of Persons to actualize a history of redemption. This shows us that theological simplicity is an iconic complexity from which we are to derive a theological logic.⁴²

³⁸ Ibid., 230–31.

³⁹ Ibid., 232.

⁴⁰ Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards on God and Creation*, 191; see also *ibid.*, 11, 113–16.

⁴¹ Cited by Crisp, “On Analytic Theology,” in *Analytical Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology* (ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Michael C. Rea; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 43.

⁴² Paul R. Hinlicky, *Divine Complexity: The Rise of Creedal Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 173–79.

Therefore theological coherence will be different from philosophical coherence. That does not mean it need be any less clear. But it does mean that it will not confine the inner mysteries of God's being to the constraints of a narrow conception of simplicity that is alien to the shape of biblical narrative. Eleonore Stump, trained like others in analytic philosophy, criticizes traditional analytic philosophy's "left-brain" narrowness and recommends the "right-brain" skill that comes from taking stories, especially biblical stories, seriously. For example, she says, analytic discussions of evil need to bring the story of Job into their philosophical reflections.⁴³

So is Edwards's doctrine of God incoherent? Well, it does not cohere with the philosophical simplicity described above. But it coheres well with theological simplicity because it depicts with clarity a sovereign God who in one eternal act created a world and history of redemption. That this God is irreducibly plural with Persons of different attributes does not conflict with his pure actuality and oneness. For in the biblical story the three Persons are also the one God of complex unity.

A Problem in Edwards's Doctrine of God

This does not mean there are no problems with Edwards's doctrine of God. His intermittent use of the concept of essence threatened to suggest a quaternity rather than Trinity. And, as Strobel rightly suggests, Edwards's more dominant pattern of starting with the Persons rather than the essence, was more elegant and—yes—more coherent.

Edwards's Recognition of the Right Kind of Coherence

Analytic philosophy of religion is rightly concerned with clarity, logic's search for valid inferences, and coherence. But just as Aristotle said that there is a different "degree of precision in each kind of study which the nature of the subject at hand admits," so too there are different kinds of coherence.⁴⁴ Should a theology of the Trinity be coherent with a concept of simplicity that is imported from an alien philosophical system, or with a narrative of God's saving action in creation? Edwards lived before the days of G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell, but he seemed to understand the need for philosophers of religion and philosophical theologians to strive for what Stump calls "breadth of focus."⁴⁵ He warned that overconfidence in certain conceptions of divinity can limit vision, especially when metaphorical language is avoided, as is the wont of some analytic philosophers.⁴⁶ Therefore limiting our conception of God to a kind of coherence that does not cohere with the biblical story can have the result of domesticating God. This is not to retreat from logic to mystery whenever logical inferences rule out a theological claim. It is a call to derive logical inferences from the biblical story of redemption rather than from ancient Greek presumptions of what God can and cannot do.

⁴³ Eleonore Stump, "The Problem of Evil: Analytic Philosophy and Narrative," in *Analytical Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology* (ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Michael C. Rea; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 251–64.

⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (trans. Martin Ostwald; Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1962), I.3,1094b.

⁴⁵ Stump, "The Problem of Evil," 252.

⁴⁶ Michael Rea says the "analytical style . . . avoid[s] substantive (non-decorative) use of metaphor and other tropes whose semantic content outstrips their propositional content." Rea, Introduction to Crisp and Rea, *Analytical Theology*, 5.

This is why Edwards himself points to biblical narrative: “Hence revelation is the surest guide in these matters.” It may also be why he urged “a variety of expressions” be used to depict the glory of God.⁴⁷ As Stump advises, philosophical theologians should use a variety of methods. Perhaps they should also recognize that a logic that starts with the biblical narrative will give new meaning to coherence, and do a better job of unveiling Edwards’s vision of the beautiful Trinitarian God.

⁴⁷WJE 8:462, 527.

That Their Souls May Be Saved: The Theology and Practice of Jonathan Edwards on Church Discipline

— Jeremy M. Kimble —

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Abstract: A great deal of research has been done on the life and theology of Jonathan Edwards. However, there is a dearth of interest as it pertains to Edwards’s ecclesiology. As such, while certain moments in Edwards’s ministry dealing with excommunication have been dealt with, there is a need to look not only at the cases he oversaw, but also the theology that undergirded that practice of discipline. Setting Edwards in his historical context and looking specifically at both his ecclesiology and his doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, this article demonstrates how these doctrines coincided for Edwards to form a practice of church discipline that was exacting and rigorous in relation to many of his contemporaries in whose churches discipline was largely on the decline.

Piety in early American religious life was a preeminent concern and shaped the policies and practices of early colonial life. As Bezzant notes, “The Puritan experiment in the New World was more than a Calvinist adventure in pure doctrine. At heart, it was founded on a pious vision for pure worship, which was constrained by pure congregational life.”¹ In order to maintain and preserve this kind of holy living, observance of a rigorous ecclesiastical discipline was consistently maintained. While the practice of church discipline contains both high and low points in American life, one era of special interest to examine in tracing its application and effectiveness is the Great Awakening, particularly in the ministry and context of Jonathan Edwards.²

¹Rhys Steward Bezzant, “Orderly But Not Ordinary: Jonathan Edward’s Evangelical Ecclesiology” (PhD diss., Australian College of Theology Melbourne, 2010), 1. Bezzant’s work has recently been revised and published as *Jonathan Edwards and the Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). This essay cites it in prepublication form, as the author was kind enough to share the dissertation manuscript prior to the book’s publication. (Editor’s Note: See Jeremy Kimble’s review of Bezzant, *Jonathan Edwards and the Church*, in this issue of *Themelios* in the “History and Historical Theology” section.)

²For examples of more thorough studies of church discipline in early American life see James F. Cooper, *Tenacious of Their Liberties: The Congregationalists in Colonial Massachusetts* (Religion in America; New York:

Edwards, the renowned theologian and pastor of Northampton, has received a great deal of scholarly attention, and deservedly so. Often referred to as America's greatest theologian, Edwards's contributions to metaphysics, soteriology, revivalism, the Trinity, and a host of other topics, makes him a figure worthy of study. However, as Sweeney observes, "Despite his lifelong labors in pastoral ministry, Edwards' doctrine of the church has gone largely unnoticed by scholars."³ While work has been done in this area since Sweeney's publication,⁴ more specific investigations are merited, particularly in the area of church discipline. Edwards's context was unique, particularly as he found himself within a time of revival and then sought to handle matters of discipline from within that context. As such, this article demonstrates that Edwards's practice of church discipline was quite exacting and rigorous in relation to much of his historical context in which church discipline was largely on the decline. This is due to his ecclesiological and soteriological beliefs, which became more pronounced in the midst of revival.

In treating this subject, we first observe the historical context of seventeenth and eighteenth century colonial America—particularly New England—to better understand the beliefs and practices of ecclesial discipline that preceded Edwards. This gives us a better idea of how he fits within his context. We then analyze the ecclesiology of Edwards, offering a clearer picture of both his view and practice of church discipline. Finally, we note in what ways, if any, Edwards's practice of church discipline relates to his views of soteriology, specifically the perseverance of the saints.

1. Historical Context

The early settlers of New England sought to exact a fairly strict practice of church discipline,⁵ though, unlike in Calvin's Geneva, there was a separation of church and state in the enacting of disciplinary measures.⁶ Most churches in Massachusetts Bay followed similar standards for censuring their members in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In 1644, John Cotton explained that church discipline represented the "key of order." Such a key "is the power whereby every member of

Oxford University Press, 1999); Gregory A. Wills, *Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South, 1785–1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

³Douglas A. Sweeney, "The Church," in *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards* (Sang Hyun Lee; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 167.

⁴See, for example, Bezzant, "Orderly But Not Ordinary"; Amy Planting Pauw, "Jonathan Edwards' Ecclesiology," in *Jonathan Edwards as Contemporary: Essays in Honor of Sang Hyun Lee* (ed. Don Schweitzer; New York: Lang, 2010), 175–86; Krister Sairsingh, "Jonathan Edwards and the Idea of Divine Glory: His Foundational Trinitarianism and Its Ecclesial Import" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1986).

⁵For general discussion of church discipline and deviance leading up to and in colonial New England, see Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *The Precisianist Strain: Disciplinary Religion and Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism to 1638* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Kai Erikson, *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance* (2nd ed.; Allyn & Bacon Classics; Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2005).

⁶This is generally true, though for a time in 1638 the Massachusetts General Court was encouraged to order fines, imprisonment, banishment, or further for whoever stood under excommunication for more than six months without seeking restoration. This lasted only a brief time as pastors, such as John Cotton, asserted that connecting civil power to the church would bring only corruption. See David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Harvard Theological Studies 54; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 133–36.

the Church walketh orderly himself . . . and helpeth his brethren to walk orderly also.”⁷ In 1648, Puritan minister Thomas Hooker explained the necessity of church discipline: “[God] hath appointed Church-censures as good Physick, to purge out what is evil, as well as Word and Sacraments, which, like good diet, are sufficient to nourish the soul to eternal life.”⁸ Hooker explained that church members must watch over one another, “each particular brother (appointed) as a skillful Apothecary, to help forward the spiritual health of all in confederacy with him.”⁹ Disciplinary practices helped to ensure that the Puritans stayed on their godly paths.¹⁰

Throughout the first three generations in New England, Puritans consistently emphasized discipline. However, churches could discipline only full members. During the founding years of the colonies this posed no problems, “as most everyone who made the journey across the Atlantic became members. However, as full membership declined during the second generation, congregations had to confront the growing number of residents who fell outside the power of church discipline.”¹¹ This was a distinct dilemma, since in the first generation a document in Massachusetts had been ratified (1646–1648), known as the *Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline*. Led by John Cotton, local churches adopted this treatise as a sort of ecclesiastical constitution. Regarding discipline, this document asserts,

The censures of the church are appointed by Christ for the preventing, removing, and healing of offenses in the church; for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren; for the deterring others from the like offences; for purging out the leaven which may infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honor of Christ, and of his Church, and the whole profession of the gospel; and for preventing the wrath of God.¹²

Thus, according to the *Cambridge Platform*, ministerial responsibilities included examining candidates for membership, receiving “accusations brought to the Church,” preparing disciplinary cases, and pronouncing “sentence with the consent of the Church.”¹³

⁷ John Cotton, *The Keyes to the Kingdom of Heaven* (London: Simmons, 1644), 87.

⁸ Thomas Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline* (London: Kessinger, 2007), 33.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ This section derives from Monica D. Fitzgerald, “Drunkards, Fornicators and a Great Hen Squabble: Censure Practices and the Gendering of Puritanism,” *Church History* 80, no. 1 (2011): 41–42.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹² *The Cambridge and Saybrook Platforms of Church Discipline, with the Confession of Faith of the New England Churches, Adopted in 1680; and the Heads of Agreement Assented to by the Presbyterians and Congregationalists in England in 1690* (Boston: Marvin, 1829), 54–55. For helpful background on the Cambridge Platform, see Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd*, 93–120.

¹³ Cooper, *Tenacious of Their Liberties*, 25. Fitzgerald (“Drunkards, Fornicators and a Great Hen Squabble,” 46–47) notes, “Congregations censured men and women for a wide variety of sinful behaviors. This included: dishonoring the Sabbath, child or spousal abuse, lack of deference, immodesty, absence from church, stealing, false witness, cursing, contempt for church, idleness, witchcraft, entertaining sin, lying, fornication, and drunkenness. Censure represented the only judgment or punishment Puritans could instigate against one another within the church; they could not fine, jail or execute a sinner. An accused sinner could be found innocent, forgiven, admonished, suspended from the Lord’s Supper, or excommunicated. An admonishment, suspension, or excommunication would hang over the sinner until the congregation determined that the sinner had adequately confessed and repented.”

First and second generation Puritan ministers emphasized the importance of church discipline for maintaining a holy community. If the church did not recover or “purge out” the sinner, he could “infect” the whole community, whence God could send his wrath down on the town in judgment. “Maintaining social order was critical for a godly community, and ministers argued that every Puritan had a responsibility for personal piety and public duty.”¹⁴ Thus church discipline was not the sole domain of pastors. Every stage of the disciplinary process depended heavily upon lay participation. Disciplinary measures in churches revolved around a system of lay “collective watchfulness,” where members of the congregation agreed to oversee the moral behavior of fellow congregants, resulting in the enactment of discipline if necessary.¹⁵ “Failure to exercise ‘watch’ over a fellow churchgoer represented breach of covenant—itsself a grave, punishable violation—with the wayward sheep, whose soul stood in danger, and with the church, which stood to suffer corruption should sin seep in undetected and remain unpunished.”¹⁶ This procedure, followed by the lay people, was an application of their understanding of Matt 18.

However, by the end of the seventeenth century, a gradual decline in the practice of church discipline was evident.¹⁷ “Many churches exercised church discipline only in the most obvious of cases in the 1720s and 1730s, a development that in part reflected a decline in commitment to mutual watch.”¹⁸ Part of this decline in rigorous discipline may be attributed to the adoption of the Halfway Covenant by a number of New England congregations, particularly Solomon Stoddard, Edwards’s grandfather. This covenant allowed the children of full members who had not experienced conversion to enjoy partial church membership.¹⁹ Under this covenant all halfway members assumed the benefits and responsibilities of mutual watchfulness incumbent upon those engaged in church covenant, but did not enjoy the privileges of voting or participation in the Lord’s Supper—though Stoddard later retracted this restriction and allowed halfway members to participate in communion as a “converting ordinance”—until they experienced conversion and became full members. “Hailed as a perfect compromise, the

¹⁴ Fitzgerald, “Drunkards, Fornicators and a Great Hen Squabble,” 46.

¹⁵ So Cooper, *Tenacious of Their Liberties*, 127, who notes, “Just as concern for the offender’s soul outweighed a desire for punishment in disciplinary decisions, so the maintenance of church purity still superseded the members’ heightened concern with individual privacy or ‘reputation.’ Church discipline maintained its unique status as the only institution that in public assembly probed into the most personal details of a member’s life.”

¹⁶ Ibid., 36. See also Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966), 221.

¹⁷ So Rhys Bezzant, “Ordered Ecclesiastical Life,” unpublished paper (sent via email in January 2012), 2: “From the end of the seventeenth century, the practice of excommunication was severely challenged. The establishment of the Dominion of New England after 1684 with more intrusive royal control, and the pursuant royal charter of 1691 guaranteeing religious toleration to all Protestants, were signs of seismic shifts in New England polity.” However, E. Brooks Holifield, “Peace, Conflict, and Ritual in Puritan Congregations,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23, no. 3 (1993): 568, notes that between 1690 and 1729, 159 ecclesiastical trials are recorded among seven congregations. Thus one must look at this matter geographically, and for our purposes it is important to note that the church in Northampton under Solomon Stoddard saw a dramatic decrease in the number of disciplinary cases in his later ministry. See Emil Oberholzer, *Delinquent Saints; Disciplinary Action in the Early Congregational Churches of Massachusetts* (Columbia Studies in the Social Sciences 590; New York: AMS, 1968), 261–62.

¹⁸ Cooper, *Tenacious of Their Liberties*, 195.

¹⁹ For a thorough study of the Halfway Covenant, see Robert G. Pope, *The Half-Way Covenant: Church Membership in Puritan New England* (Wipf & Stock, 2002).

measure thus brought the children into the covenant and under the disciplinary ‘watch’ of the church without corrupting church purity.”²⁰ Mutual watchfulness, however, began to become less important and thus, while not universal, the practice of discipline came into decline at least partially due to increased laxity in ecclesiology. It is important to keep this background in mind as one considers the views and practice of church discipline as seen in the ministry of Edwards.

2. Edwards’s Ecclesiology

Before looking specifically at Edwards’s view of church discipline, it is crucial that one understand his ecclesiology, which more broadly explicates the foundation of his viewpoint. For Edwards it is important to note that his ecclesiology was rooted in his doctrine of God. Bezzant writes, “The work of Father, Son and Spirit provides the grammar within which Edwards’s doctrine of the church can be viewed.”²¹ Further, Edwards’s conflation of the themes of the immanent and the economic Trinity, which became a key component of Edwards’s theology, serves our understanding of his ecclesiology well. His dynamic and ordered conception of Trinitarian relations is seen in the dynamic yet ordered life of the church. Schafer likewise asserts that any effort to understand Edwards’s doctrine of the church as a part of his system of thought must begin with the question, “Why did God create the world?”²²

Edwards answered this question briefly in the following way: “That which more especially was God’s end in his eternal purpose of creating the world, and of the sum of his purposes with respect to creatures, was to procure a spouse, or a mystical body, for his Son.”²³ One may note, particularly from Edwards’s essay *The End for Which God Created the World* that the triune God created the universe ultimately for the emanation of his own glory, and Edwards would argue that this is also for the good of the creature.²⁴ The church is the point in the created realm wherein the glory of God became prominently visible.²⁵ In this way, Edwards linked his ecclesiology with his understanding of the Trinitarian God.

Early in his career Edwards described the church more generically as “the body of Christ, [the] mystical body of Christ.”²⁶ However, in May 1741, at the height of the Great Awakening, Edwards began to define the church more specifically: “the church of Christ is the whole society of true saints”; further, in April 1744, he maintained that the church “is that company of men that is by the grace of God effectually

²⁰ Cooper, *Tenacious of Their Liberties*, 91.

²¹ Bezzant, “Orderly But Not Ordinary,” 59.

²² Thomas A. Schafer, “Jonathan Edwards’ Conception of the Church,” *Church History* 24, no. 1 (1955): 52–53.

²³ Jonathan Edwards, *The Miscellanies: Entry Nos. 1153–1360* (ed. Douglas A. Sweeney; The Works of Jonathan Edwards 23; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 178 (no. 1245).

²⁴ “Basic to Edwards’ understanding of the nature of the church was his belief that God has ‘elected’ the church *in Christ* for God’s own glory.” Sweeney, “The Church,” 169 (emphasis original). See also Schafer, “Jonathan Edwards’ Conception of the Church,” 54.

²⁵ See Michael James McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 452–53.

²⁶ Jonathan Edwards, “Living to Christ and Dying to Gain,” *Sermons and Discourses, 1720–1723* (ed. Wilson H. Kinnach; The Works of Jonathan Edwards 10; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 566. See also Jonathan Edwards, *The “Miscellanies”: Nos. 501–832* (ed. Ava Chamberlain; The Works of Jonathan Edwards 18; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 336 (no. 710), wherein he says, “The church is Christ mystical.”

called out from this fallen, undone [world] and gathered together in one in Christ Jesus, through him to worship God and have the peculiar enjoyment of him.”²⁷ Therefore, the church, according to Edwards, includes within its (true) membership only those who are born again, who have died to their old ways and risen with Christ through faith to a new pattern of life.

Stoddard and Edwards, thus, had their differences when it came to a proper ecclesiology. Stoddard maintained that whether or not someone had experienced a saving work of the Holy Spirit was not necessarily discernable by others. Because the saving work of the Holy Spirit could be undetectable, Stoddard taught that persons who agreed with the doctrines of Christianity and were moral in their conduct could be part of the church and partake of communion, whether they professed such a saving work or not.²⁸ Edwards, however, believed that only true believers were part of the church, and as such only they should partake of the Lord’s Supper:

In order to men’s being regularly outward members of the Christian Church, they should be visible Christians, or visibly Christians. Now by being visibly Christians nothing else can be understood but being in appearance Christians, appearing really Christians, true Christians. When we say ‘true Christians in appearance,’ it can’t be understood that it is meant that he should appear so to a prejudiced, and weak, and unfair uncharitable judgment . . . Nor . . . that he should appear so in the eye of every particular man . . . Therefore to be a visible Christian is to appear to be a real Christian in the eye of a public Christian judgment and to have a right in Christian reason and according to Christian rules to be received and treated as such.²⁹

Edwards was calling for a regenerate communicant membership, particularly when it came to partaking of the Lord’s Supper. Edwards ultimately disagreed with his grandfather regarding the Lord’s Supper, teaching that those who come to the Table ought to do so with a personal profession of saving faith.³⁰

In this sense Edwards was not calling for an arduous process whereby the potential communicant is subjected to congregational questioning and the articulation of a conversion that followed a particular pattern; but neither was he willing to allow “halfway members” the same rights and privileges as that of true saints.³¹ By preserving its strengths and adapting its expression, Edwards brought new life to New England ecclesiology. Bezzant argues that while Edwards was indeed “not ordinary” in that he emphasized individual affections and immediate conversion, he was nonetheless “orderly” in his conception of the church as God’s ordained instrument for carrying the gospel to the world. Rather than return to an outdated Old Church model, Edwards brought the old and the new together into a synthesis that addressed the concerns of his day.³² Thus it is crucial to note in Edwards’s ecclesiology,

²⁷ Sweeney, “The Church,” 168–69. Sweeney is citing here from unpublished sermons on Rev 22:16–17 and Col 1:24 respectively.

²⁸ Solomon Stoddard, *The Doctrine of Instituted Churches Explained and Proved from the Word of God* (London: Ralph Smith, 1700), 18–22.

²⁹ Jonathan Edwards, *The Miscellanies: a-500* (ed. Thomas A. Schafer; The Works of Jonathan Edwards 13; Yale University Press, 1994), 412 (no. 335). See also *Ibid.*, 415 (no. 339).

³⁰ Alan D. Strange, “Jonathan Edwards on Visible Sainthood: The Communion Controversy in Northampton,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 14 (2003): 98.

³¹ This trajectory of ecclesiological views in early America is described well in *ibid.*, particularly 100–106.

³² See Bezzant, “Orderly But Not Ordinary,” 210.

specifically relating to church discipline, an emphatic strand of belief in regenerate church membership that is derived from his views of God and the make-up of the church.

3. Edwards's View of Discipline

Though not the most thoroughly treated area by Edwards, it cannot be maintained that Edwards was prompted to form his doctrine of excommunication after the failures of later awakenings; rather it seems he thought through this issue early in his pastoral ministry. In November 1722 Edwards asserted regarding excommunication, "So excellently is this sort of punishment contrived that when it is just it is exceedingly to be dreaded as a punishment from heaven." He continues, "And thus it is that whosoever sins are justly retained, are retained in heaven. . . . What man doth is only for himself, to keep himself free from sin; but the punishment is Christ's, who is the sole head of the church."³³ In October 1730 Edwards stated, "They that are regularly and justly excommunicated, they are bound in heaven; the wrath of God abides upon them."³⁴ Edwards goes on to assert that one can be restored and that a church can even be mistaken in a disciplinary case, but the church has the authority of Christ to rule in such matters according to Matt 16:19.³⁵ In 1733 Edwards spoke regarding discipline in a treatise concerning the visible church. Here again Edwards took up Matt 16:19 to demonstrate that what is bound and loosed in the church is also done in heaven, and when someone is excommunicated, "they are cast out of God and are treated by him as those that have proved treacherous and unfaithful to him."³⁶

Another major source that allows us to better understand Edwards's view of discipline is a sermon entitled "The Means and Ends of Excommunication."³⁷ Edwards preached this sermon on July 22, 1739, and it is based on 1 Cor 5 as well as 2 Thess 3:6. Based on these texts Edwards asserted that as a church they are called to cleanse out the old leaven, which refers to "visible wicked men."³⁸ As such, excommunication consists of "being cast off from the enjoyment of the privileges of God's visible people."³⁹ This includes four key privileges: "first, from the charity of the church; second, brotherly society; third, fellowship of the church in worship; fourth, internal privileges of visible Christians."⁴⁰ Edwards explicates these four points throughout much of the sermon.

³³ Edwards, *The Miscellanies*, 13:172 (no. q). Specific dates for these three Miscellanies come from Schafer, "Editor's Introduction, WJE, 13:92, 107; Chamberlain, "Editor's Introduction," WJE, 18:45.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 13:528 (no. 485).

³⁵ See *ibid.*

³⁶ Edwards, *The "Miscellanies,"* 18:259–60 (no. 689). Edwards interestingly ties this understanding of excommunication in with the perseverance of the saints. He asserts, based on Ezek 3:20, that people can have the appearance of righteousness, but may at a later time fall away from the faith. This is not a loss of salvation, but a revelation of who these kinds of people really were all along. See *ibid.*, 18:260–61.

³⁷ Jonathan Edwards, "The Means and Ends of Excommunication," in *Sermons and Discourses, 1739–1742* (ed. Harry S. Stout and Nathan O. Hatch; The Works of Jonathan Edwards 22; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 69–80. The next section analyzes the disciplinary issue that this sermon addresses. At this point we are looking solely at Edwards's understanding of the doctrine.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 22:70.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 22:71. This severity is somewhat tempered in that Edwards believed, "excommunication is used for that end [of ultimate restoration], that we may thereby obtain their good" (*ibid.*, 22:74).

First, those who suffer excommunication are barred from the charity of the church. Edwards maintains that the church can no longer “look upon them as saints or worshippers of God,” and as such the excommunicant is cut off from the benevolence and good will of the church.⁴¹ This would have been a distinct punishment to those in need of monetary support coming from the church, but Edwards admonishes the congregation to not deprive these people of love, in hopes they will repent.

Second, excommunicated members are removed from brotherly society. Edwards states, “God’s people are not only to avoid society with visibly wicked men in sacred things, but, as much as may be, avoid them and withdraw from them as to that common society which is proper towards Christians.”⁴² More specifically he asserted, “And particularly we are forbidden such a degree of society with them, or appearance of associating ourselves with them, as there is [in] making them our guests at our tables or being their guests at their tables; as is manifest in the text, where we are commanded to have no company with such, no not to eat.”⁴³ Thus we see that Edwards rigorously applied 1 Cor 5 in a way that carried into societal relationships.

Third, excommunicated members lose fellowship with the church. Edwards gave particulars regarding what this lost privilege entails and asserted that those under discipline can have no fellowship with the church in baptism, the Lord’s Supper, prayers, or singing God’s praises.⁴⁴ While an excommunicant cannot join in public worship Edwards does exhort members of the church to commit the person to prayer and so include him in this way in hopes that he will eventually be restored. Finally, Edwards maintained that those who are excommunicated are removed from the internal privileges of visible Christians. He argued that such people are cast out of God’s sight, much as Cain was, and thus they are not “in the way of those smiles of providence” as the visible church is.⁴⁵

Edwards then dealt briefly with 1 Cor 5:5, which speaks of handing one over to Satan. He asserted that it is reasonable to suppose that God is willing to make the devil the instrument of “those peculiar severe chastisements that their apostasy deserves.”⁴⁶ Those under excommunication deserve more severe chastisement than the unsaved, according to Edwards, and thus are delivered to Satan for the

⁴¹ Ibid., 22:72.

⁴² Ibid., 22:73.

⁴³ Ibid. This is consistent with a note Edwards makes regarding 1 Cor 5:11 within his Blank Bible. He maintains, “The Apostle doubtless means not only eating at the Lord’s Table, but at any table, by the manner of expression, “No not to eat,” or “No not so much as to eat.” The Apostle would not express himself so of eating at the Lord’s Table, which is the highest act of communion; but he evidently speaks of some lower act. And that ’tis a common eating will further appear, if we consider that it was the manner of the Jews at that time to abstain from eating with those that they looked upon as unclean. Therefore they would not eat with the Gentiles, as Galatians 2:12. And so they would not eat with publicans and sinners. Hence they found so much fault with Christ for eating with them (Matthew 9:11 and Mark 2:16). But Christ commands that excommunicated persons should be unto us ‘as an heathen man and a publican’ [Matt 18:17].” See Jonathan Edwards, *The “Blank Bible”* (ed. Stephen J. Stein; The Works of Jonathan Edwards 24; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 1041.

⁴⁴ Edwards, “The Means and Ends of Excommunication,” 22:76. Interestingly, while this section of the sermon appears to rule out every aspect of public worship from those under excommunication, in a later sermon Edwards allows for the preaching aspect of the service to be heard by such people. See David D. Hall, ed., *Ecclesiastical Writings* (The Works of Jonathan Edwards 12; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 299–300. It is possible that Edwards’s view on such matters changed over time, but he was always consistent with fencing the Table.

⁴⁵ Edwards, “The Means and Ends of Excommunication,” 22:76–77.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 22:78

destruction of the flesh, “so we may well suppose either that God is wont to let Satan loose, sorely to molest them outwardly or inwardly, so by severe means to destroy the flesh and humble them.”⁴⁷ He maintains that God can use this time to bring the sinner back in repentance or to further harden them, “yet whether it shall prove the destruction of the flesh and the eternal and more dreadful destruction of them, is at God’s sovereign disposal.”⁴⁸ While the church declares ministerially the binding and loosing of all such persons, God is ultimately sovereign over the matter.

Edwards concluded this sermon noting three particular aims involved in the practice of church discipline.

First. That the church may be kept pure and God’s ordinances not defiled. This end is mentioned in the context: that the other members themselves may not be defiled. ’Tis necessary that they thus bear a testimony against sin.

Second. That others may be deterred from wickedness. That others may fear.

Third. That they may be reclaimed, [that their] souls may be saved. [After] other, more gentle, means have been used in vain, then we are to use severe means to bring ’em to conviction and shame and humiliation, by being rejected and avoided by the church, treated with disrespect, disowned by God, delivered to Satan, his being made the instrument of chastising them.

This is the last means, with concomitant admonitions, that the church is to use for the reclaiming those members of the church that become visibly wicked; which, if it be’nt effectual, what is next to be expected is destruction without remedy.⁴⁹

Thus Edwards had the good of the church and of the one under discipline in mind when he considered and practiced excommunication. One of the most intriguing themes in this sermon is how much attention Edwards gave to the ethics of love and how much he expected of his congregation in terms of their own acts of love in interactions with those being disciplined outside of church.⁵⁰ Edwards’s hope in this difficult practice of church discipline was that sinners would be turned from the error of their ways while under judgment and repent and that others may be deterred from sin and persevere in their faith.

4. Edwards’s Practice of Discipline

While Edwards’s views regarding church discipline were not necessarily innovative, it is of interest to note how he applied this doctrine in actual church cases, particularly in relation to the time of the Awakening. There are in fact no disciplinary cases noted in Edwards’s early ministry, though this certainly changes in the 1740s as a number of members fell under disciplinary measures. Sweeney concludes that it is no coincidence that Edwards worked hardest to align Northampton’s polity with

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 22:78–79.

⁵⁰ Ted Rivera, *Jonathan Edwards on Worship: Public and Private Devotion to God* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010), 64–65: “Given the sometimes severe Puritan excesses in this regard, Edwards must be recognized as comparatively restrained in the official exercise of church discipline, in that we have extant only one excommunication sermon. This was the first excommunication to take place at Northampton in 28 years, dating back to the ministry of Edwards’ grandfather, Solomon Stoddard.”

his doctrine of the church beginning in the 1740s, the height of the Awakening. By the dawn of the decade, he feared that many in his own congregation were hypocrites, and that number only expanded in the heat of the revivals. Thus discipline began to play a more pronounced role in Edwards's pastoral ministry around the time of the Awakening in 1740–42.⁵¹

At this point in his ministry it is important to note that Edwards was engaging in discipline not only at a corrective level, but also in a formative sense. Rivera observes that with virtually every sermon, Edwards was about the work of church and community discipline: "One could not sit in the pews when Edwards preached, over the course of any sustained period, and avoid 'discipline' on not merely external matters such as Mrs. Bridgman's drunkenness, but respecting such inward matters as hypocrisy, greed, lust, and supremely the hardness of an unconverted heart."⁵² Thus as Edwards practiced church discipline in a consistent manner throughout this time, it should not have come as a shock to his church who heard him continually preach in a "disciplinary" manner.

In relation to actual disciplinary cases, the first is in 1738 as Edwards's attention is drawn to a Mrs. Bridgman, whose continued drunkenness was known to the community. In July Edwards preached a sermon of censure from Deut 29:18–21 dealing with the nature of hypocrisy. In this sermon Edwards asserted, "That those that go on in the sin of drunkenness under the light of God's word are in the way to bring God's fearful wrath and a most amazing destruction upon themselves."⁵³ Edwards actually called Mrs. Bridgman to "stand forth and distinguish herself" during this sermon, noting all the means of grace that have been available to her in the church as well as the fact that she had been admonished both in private and in public. Edwards warned her "in the name of Jesus Christ the great head of the church and judge of the quick and dead and in his presence and in the presence of the holy angels . . . to forsake this wicked practice and to be thorough and final in your reformation." If she refused to comply, Edwards declared, "I do now this day in the name of God solemnly denounce unto you that God will not spare you."⁵⁴

Due to an apparent lack of repentance, Edwards was compelled to preach a follow-up sermon on July 22, 1739, entitled "The Means and Ends of Excommunication," outlining his justification to proceed with the first excommunication in Northampton since 1711. Though not named, the target of his exposition was once again Mrs. Bridgman.⁵⁵ Stout refers to this incident with Mrs. Bridgman as "the first in a spate of excommunications that occurred at Northampton during the Great Awakening."⁵⁶

In June 1740 he led in the founding of a local committee to consider matters of difficulty that would arise in the church, which, in effect, institutionalized his concern to promote the purity of the church.⁵⁷

⁵¹ See Sweeney, "The Church," 187.

⁵² Rivera, *Jonathan Edwards on Worship*, 66. Examples of such sermons can be found in Patricia J. Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor: Religion and Society in Eighteenth Century Northampton* (American Century Series; New York: Hill and Wang, 1980), 130–34.

⁵³ Jonathan Edwards, "482. Sermon on Deut. 29:18-21 (July 1738)," in *Sermons, Series II, 1738, and Undated, 1734-1738* (Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University, 2008), 482.

⁵⁴ See *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ See *Ibid.* See also Bezzant, "Ordered Ecclesiastical Life," 4.

⁵⁶ Stout, Introduction to "The Means and Ends of Excommunication," 22:66.

⁵⁷ Much of the following summary of Edwards's disciplinary cases is derived from Sweeney, "The Church," 187–88. Sweeney derives some of this information about disciplinary cases from several works not currently published. These include the following: "Records of the First Church of Christ," Northampton, book 1, 25, Forbes

Edwards became increasingly concerned with church “order” in Northampton, as socially inappropriate behavior and speech mushroomed during the Great Awakening.⁵⁸ The following month he publically shamed another parishioner, Hannah Pomeroy, for breaking the ninth commandment in reproaching her neighbor. In August 1741, he excommunicated Pomeroy due to the fact that she would not repent. In 1742, Edwards persuaded his congregation to renew its corporate covenant, pledging again to “seek and serve God” by practicing Christian charity.⁵⁹

In February 1743, he acted as a consultant in the rebuke of Bathsheba Kingsley, an itinerant minister from Westfield who claimed immediate revelations and subsequently neglected her wifely duties in the pursuit of a preaching ministry.⁶⁰ Kingsley was ultimately admonished to fulfill her duties in the home instead of,

Almost perpetually wandering about from house to house and very frequently to other towns under the notion of doing Christ’s work and delivering his messages . . . often disobeying her husband’s commands in going abroad . . . and taking her husband’s horse to go to other towns contrary to his mind . . . Mrs. Kingsley has of late almost wholly cast off that modest, shamefacedness and sobriety, and meekness, diligence and submission that becomes a Christian woman in her place.⁶¹

Her husband was also reprovved and encouraged to take better care of his wife, given the reference to her emotional frailty encoded in the description of her “weak vapory habit of body” and her “continual tumult like the sea in a storm being destitute of that peace and rest in God that other Christians enjoy.”⁶²

In June 1743, Edwards excommunicated another parishioner, Samuel Danks, for fornication and contempt of the authority of the church.⁶³ Although little is known of this case, it appears that Danks would not submit to the church’s discipline in relation to his sexual conduct and, as such, came under excommunication.

Library, Northampton Massachusetts; “Copy of a Covenant, enter’d into and Subscribed, by the People of God at Northampton . . . on a Day of Fasting and Prayer for the gracious Presence of God in that Place. March 16, 1741, 2,” Edwards Collection, Andover–Newton Theological School; “Some Reasons briefly hinted at, why Those Rules Exod. 22:16 & Deut. 22:28–29, relating to the Obligation of a man to marry a virgin that He had humbled, ought to be esteemed, as to the substance of them, as moral & of perpetual Obligation; with Hints of Answer to Objections,” Edwards Collection, Andover–Newton Theological School (on the Hawley/Root fornication case of 1747/48).

⁵⁸ So Stout, Introduction to “The Means and Ends of Excommunication,” 22:66.

⁵⁹ For further commentary on this process of renewing the covenant, see Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor*, 150–54.

⁶⁰ See Jonathan Edwards, “Advice to Mr. and Mrs. Kingsley, February 17, 1743,” in *Church and Pastoral Documents* (The Works of Jonathan Edwards Online 39; Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University, 2007).

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid. Interestingly Edwards maintains that Kingsley’s itinerant prophesying and mystical revelations are to be channeled but not stifled, although Edwards will sternly rebuke Moses Lyman for a similar expression of charismatic license shortly after this. So Bezzant, “Ordered Ecclesiastical Life,” 5.

⁶³ Northampton Church Records, Book 1, 25. This source was found in Stout, Introduction to “The Means and Ends of Excommunication,” 22:66, fn. 7.

The most infamous of Edwards's church discipline cases came in 1744 with the "Bad Book Affair."⁶⁴ The case was one of the reasons Edwards's Northampton pastorate came to an end. A number of young men in Edwards's congregation (ages 21–29) had been passing around a midwifery manual and subsequently using its contents to taunt young women of the congregation. According to testimony, such behavior had been occurring for as long as five years.

When Edwards learned of this lascivious behavior, he brought the matter before the church. In March, Edwards preached a sermon on Heb 12:15–16 as a way of introducing the scandal to the church. At a meeting after the service, he laid the situation before the members and obtained permission to investigate the matter. A committee, consisting of some of the most prestigious men in town, was appointed to conduct the inquiry. After a subsequent Sunday service, he read a list of names of certain youth who were to report to his house for a time of investigation.⁶⁵ In a tactical error Edwards did not distinguish between the witnesses and the offenders, and, as such, cast a shadow of suspicion on the innocent, raising the ire of several prominent families. The town was in an uproar, and Edwards sought to defend his actions by noting that this was a public offense and that it was his duty as pastor to see to it that order and purity were maintained. The case, in his mind, was one of scandal, and it needed to be dealt with. Edwards connected this incident with his continued struggle over "hypocrites" coming and partaking of the Lord's Supper. Edwards was convinced that he could not offer the offenders the Lord's Supper in that they were living contrary to a life of godliness. Eventually the leaders of the group were compelled to offer public confessions,⁶⁶ but the damage to Edwards's pastorate was done.⁶⁷

The final two cases of church discipline in Edwards's ministry in Northampton were issues of fornication dealt with from 1747 to 1749. First, Edwards was involved in the excommunication of Thomas Wait for fornication and denial of paternity in February 1747. Not only did Wait refuse to confess his sin, he also publicly denied fathering Jemimah Miller's child and maintained that Miller's word should not be accepted as true without corroboration. The church, however, sided with Miller, and

⁶⁴ This summary is derived mainly from George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 292–302; Ava Chamberlain, "Bad Books and Bad Boys: The Transformation of Gender in Eighteenth-Century Northampton, Massachusetts," in *Jonathan Edwards at Home and Abroad: Historical Memories, Cultural Movements, Global Horizons* (ed. David William Kling and Douglas A. Sweeney; Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 61–81. See also Jonathan Edwards, "Documents Relating to the 'Bad Book' Case," WJE 39.

⁶⁵ "All but one of the boys on the list were church members, most having joined during the 1734–35 Connecticut Valley Awakening" (Chamberlain, "Bad Books and Bad Boys," 63).

⁶⁶ Chamberlain notes that when the committee met to interview the accused, the youth "compounded their offense by speaking contemptuously of the committee's members and playing childish games during its proceedings, thus bringing upon themselves the further charge of contempt of authority." Thus, as it relates to later confessions, Chamberlain maintains that of the three extant confessions, two address the charge of contempt of authority alone, and only one boy confessed to the original offense of "lascivious speech." See *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Bezzant, "Ordered Ecclesiastical Life," 6: "It also appears that Edwards's own frustration with the youth has colored his responses, those very young adults about whom he had written so glowingly just a few years earlier in the revivals when they had shown such spiritual promise." Bezzant notes that several of these young men were converted and shepherded by him during the Awakening, and thus his disappointment and frustration was exacerbated by this event.

thus Wait was excommunicated, though his appeal against the censure was accepted and later brought before a council.⁶⁸

The second case involved Martha Root and Elisha Hawley, a young military officer and grandson of Solomon Stoddard.⁶⁹ Root claimed that Hawley was the father of her illegitimate child (the survivor of a set of twins). Hawley was part of one of Northampton's wealthiest and most prominent families. While the Hawley and Root families had settled the matter of Hawley impregnating Root privately (with a large sum of money and an agreement they would not marry),⁷⁰ soon after Edwards felt compelled to interfere and wrote a letter stating that the couple should be married. Hawley was to undergo excommunication if he did not confess his sin and determine to marry Root, and thus Hawley appealed his case to a council of ministers. The ministers of Hampshire, however, voted that it was not Elisha's duty to marry Martha and told Hawley that he was subject to his own conscience. He was told to confess his sin of fornication, which he seemingly did since his name is on later church records. This episode may have been more painful for Edwards since the Hawley boys were converted under his tutelage and had shown such signs of promise during the Awakening but now sorely disappointed their pastor and mentor.

"In short, Edwards labored long and hard on the purity of the church, especially in the wake of the revivals. He preached quite often on matters of discipline."⁷¹ Although Edwards may be viewed in contemporary terms as being rigid and mean-spirited, he sought to persuade people to repent of known public sin so that they might be restored. One example of this is the disciplinary course taken against the notorious itinerant James Davenport, in which Edwards played a major role and eventually led to Davenport's recantation and resettlement in the ministry.⁷² Also, in a noteworthy letter to Elnathan Whitman, dated February 9, 1744, Edwards pled for liberty of conscience in order to reclaim straying parishioners. When some members of Whitman's church absented themselves from Sunday worship in order to hear New Light preachers, Edwards counseled patience and understanding rather than harsh measures more suited to "contumacious offenders."⁷³

Yet while noting his desire to persuade, Edwards was unrelenting in his pursuit of a pure church, exacting a strict ecclesial discipline.⁷⁴ This is seen in the cases previously examined, as well as his dealings in 1749 with the communion controversy at Northampton. Though not a disciplinary case *per se*, it is directly connected to the issue of discipline in that Edwards sought to maintain a boundary around the Lord's Table that would include true believers only in partaking of the elements. Those excommunicated would be excluded from the Table. In answer to a question regarding whether someone must express

⁶⁸ Jonathan Edwards, "To the Reverend Robert Breck," in *Letters and Personal Writings* (ed. George S. Claghorn; The Works of Jonathan Edwards 16; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 221–22.

⁶⁹ Much of the summary of this case comes from Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor*, 164–66.

⁷⁰ Chamberlain, "Bad Books and Bad Boys," 74: "Elisha's brother Joseph was a young attorney eager to make a reputation for himself, and with his assistance Elisha went to great lengths to avoid accepting any financial or moral responsibility for the child." Root, as a result of this action, brought a civil suit against Hawley and was given a monetary settlement of £155.

⁷¹ Sweeney, "The Church," 184.

⁷² Claghorn, "Editor's Introduction," WJE, 16:11. See also Edwards, "Letter to the Reverend Eleazer Wheelock," 16:145–46.

⁷³ See Edwards, "Letter to the Reverend Elnathan Whitman," 16:127–33.

⁷⁴ Edwards's own practice of censuring women for drunkenness and men for fornication was out of step with his own context. See Fitzgerald, "Drunkards, Fornicators and a Great Hen Squabble," 66, 79.

saving faith and repentance in order to be admitted to the Lord's Supper, Edwards answered in the affirmative.⁷⁵ Following Jonathan Mitchel, Edwards argued that this laxity in obtaining a profession of faith from congregants coming to the Table "will not only lose the power of godliness, but in a little time bring in profaneness, and ruin the churches, these two ways. (1) Election of ministers will soon be carried by a formal looser sort. (2) The exercise of discipline will, by this means, be impossible. And discipline falling, profaneness riseth like a flood."⁷⁶ One can see from such a statement that Edwards's view of discipline and the Lord's Supper was shaped by a robust ecclesiology, consisting of regenerate membership. This view demonstrates why Edwards focused so vigorously on conversion, progressive sanctification, and perseverance in the faith.

5. Edwards's Discipline in Relation to His Soteriology

It seems clear from Edwards's discussion of excommunication thus far, that if a church acts in accord with truth, the person that comes under such discipline is shown to be an unbeliever and in need of repentance. Edwards also asserted that after one's conversion there is "much need of persons' care and diligence to persevere," and this communal aspect of caring for one another's spiritual growth is a "proper and decreed means of perseverance."⁷⁷ Elsewhere he averred,

Universal and persevering obedience is as directly proposed to be sought and endeavored by us, in Scripture, as necessary to salvation [and] as the condition of our salvation, as faith in Jesus Christ; and a wicked man may properly be exhorted directly to strive to break off his sins and resist his temptations, and to bring himself to a thorough willingness, and fixed resolution and disposition of mind, utterly to have done with gratifying his lusts, or allowing himself in any way of sin; with that to enforce it, that if he doth, he shall have eternal life. And he would do prudently, and according to the direction of God's Word, in directly attempting of it and immediately setting about [it], in beginning to deny himself, and resolutely resisting the temptations as they come.⁷⁸

While neither of these sections from Edwards mentions church discipline specifically, it is evident that he took the perseverance of the saints quite seriously, believed the congregation to be involved in the process of helping one another to persevere, and that the wicked must repent of their sins and endure in God-given obedience. Thus Edwards implicitly connected discipline and perseverance.

Along these lines Edwards commented that there were people in the NT churches who, after their admission into membership, fell into offensive behavior. The apostles gently exhorted some of these people, while others who had behaved themselves in an overtly scandalous manner were spoken of in explicit language to expose their wickedness. "The apostle Paul, in his epistles to the Corinthians, oftentimes speaks of some among them that had embraced heretical opinions, and had behaved themselves in a very disorderly and schismatical manner, whom he represents as exposed to censure, and to whom he threatens excommunication." He continues and notes, "upon occasion of so many offenses of this kind appearing among them that for a while had been thought well of, he puts 'em all upon

⁷⁵ Edwards, "An Humble Inquiry," WJE, 12:338.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 12:340.

⁷⁷ Edwards, "Perseverance. Assurance.," 13:475.

⁷⁸ Edwards, "Condition of Salvation, Universal and Persevering Obedience," 13:532–33.

examining themselves, whether they were indeed in the faith, and whether Christ was truly in them, as they and others had supposed.”⁷⁹ Again, Edwards explicitly connected conversion, excommunication, and perseverance.

In referring to excommunication as a punishment, as evidenced by 2 Cor 2:6, Edwards argued that even though discipline is not designed by men “for the destruction of the person that is the subject of it, but for his correction . . . yet ’tis in itself a great and dreadful calamity, and the most severe punishment that Christ has appointed in the visible church.”⁸⁰ And even though the church is to seek only the good of the person under discipline and their recovery from sin, “there appearing upon proper trial no reason to hope for the person’s recovery by gentle means,” it is at God’s sovereign disposal whether it shall be “for a person’s humbling or their dreadful and eternal destruction, as it always is one or the other.”⁸¹

Edwards believed, “The church is to have a greater concern for their [the excommunicated] welfare still than if they never had been brethren, and therefore ought to take more pains to reclaim them and to save them by admonishing them and otherwise than they are obliged to take towards those that have been always brethren.” He continues,

That consideration—that he has been a brother heretofore, and that we han’t so finally cast him off from that relation, but that we are still hoping and using means that he may be such an one—obliges us to concern ourselves more for the good of their souls than of those that we never had any concern with, and so to pray more for them and take more pains with them by admonishing them.⁸²

Edwards saw a significant role for church members in reclaiming the excommunicant, who had been a part of the church and seemed regenerate. In discipline, the church must pray for, admonish, and work for the good of the excommunicant’s soul, in hope that the person would repent and persevere in faith.

Edwards’s understanding of conversion, discipline, sanctification, and perseverance—as well as who could partake of the Lord’s Supper—is rooted in his understanding of visible sainthood. Solomon Stoddard saw visible sainthood as distinct from real sainthood, whereas Edwards believed that visible sainthood should, as much as possible, approximate real sainthood. In other words, Stoddard reasoned that since only God knows who the elect are, ministers should give all who say they believe in Christian doctrine and lead moral lives the benefit of the doubt and receive them as true believers. Edwards argued that only those who can credibly testify to the church’s leaders that they know the Lord and are walking with him should be considered true believers. “Stoddard’s practice led to most of the town being admitted to communion. Edwards’s position would have excluded more of the town than did Stoddard but not as many as were excluded under the old practice of requiring a narrative of grace that could withstand close congregational scrutiny.”⁸³ Thus Edward sought a verbal profession of genuine conversion coupled with ongoing, outward godliness as evidence for one’s genuine, saving faith.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Edwards, “An Humble Inquiry,” 12:237.

⁸⁰ Edwards, “The Means and Ends of Excommunication,” 22:70.

⁸¹ See *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, 22:74.

⁸³ Strange, “Jonathan Edwards on Visible Sainthood,” 116–17.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 122.

When revival came to Northampton in 1735 and in 1740–1742, during the Great Awakening, it never ceased to concern Edwards that many clergy and laypersons identified the presence of true revival with a person having had a moving religious experience and being able to relate the same “loudly and at length to others.” Edwards witnessed that many who claimed to have been religiously affected continued to lead lives that were manifestly lacking in love to God and neighbor. Incidents like the “bad book” affair, the reluctance of the congregation in regards to proper ministerial oversight in discipline, along with the abiding factional warfare among the residents of Northampton gave Edwards pause in this regard. He was convinced that if true religious affections were present in a person, then the same would manifest itself in “Christian practice.” He saw significant shortcomings in this regard, which caused him to require more evidence of visible sainthood than merely having participated in the revivals. Edwards wanted those who came to communion to be able not only to testify to the grace of God in their lives, but also in a way that made it clear that their claim of an inner saving work of God’s Spirit demonstrated itself in outward godliness. “Edwards wanted those coming to commune, in other words, to have good grounds for believing that they were truly regenerated and continually walking with the Lord. He wanted some assurance of salvation manifested on the part of those coming to communion.”⁸⁵

Edwards’s aims in church discipline—that the church may be kept pure, that others may be deterred from wickedness, and that the sinner might ultimately be reclaimed—revolve around Edwards’s understanding of conversion, sanctification, and perseverance.⁸⁶ Edwards expected to be able to determine with a fair amount of clarity who had undergone regeneration and expected to see Christian growth and perseverance. For those who falter in an unrepentant manner, he believed that discipline must be maintained to promote correction and purity. This also explains why Edwards went to such great lengths—even to the point of losing his pastorate in Northampton—to protect the purity of the Lord’s Supper, seeing to it that only visible Christians were partaking of the elements.⁸⁷ Discipline, for Edwards, was a crucial means by which he sought to judge whether someone was truly converted and persevering in their faith as should be expected of a Christian. As such, the function of discipline was crucial to Edwards’s ministry in maintaining a regenerate church membership and calling for the perseverance of the faithful.

This understanding of discipline and soteriology held by Edwards is also consistent with his ecclesiology. Schafer notes the continuity of Edwards’s ecclesiological vision in relation to the eschatological reality that is to come:

This unity of the Church’s life is manifested in its fellowship on earth, its destiny in heaven, and its triumph in history. Edwards’ doctrines of excellence and virtue provide a foundation for the fellowship of the saints, both here and hereafter. . . . The destiny of the saints is a perfect, yet increasing, mutuality and communion with one another in love. . . . God’s end in creation is realized inwardly in true virtue but outwardly in the

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 122–23.

⁸⁶ These ends of excommunication are found in Edwards, “The Means and Ends of Excommunication,” 78–79.

⁸⁷ A number of works seek to analyze the reasons Edwards was voted out of his church in Northampton. For a helpful popular level explanation see, Mark Dever, “How Jonathan Edwards Got Fired and Why It’s Important for Us Today,” in *A God-Entranced Vision of All Things: The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards* (ed. John Piper and Justin Taylor; Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 129–44.

‘progress of the work of redemption.’ The Church, heavenly and earthly, is the kingdom of God.⁸⁸

The church should be increasingly what it will be in God’s consummated kingdom and what it already is in Christ. With this particular ecclesiological vision, Edwards longed to see a people progressively conformed to the image of Christ. Discipline was a natural corollary of such a view, as Edwards labored to present a bride to Christ that was unblemished and without spot or wrinkle.

6. Conclusion

Hall observes that the problem of authority in Edwards’s ministry was not simply a matter of ecclesiastical procedures. Early and late in his career, according to Hall, he struggled to curb a temperamental impulse to judge and exclude others, an impulse he justified as essential to the life of the church and the work of the ministry. Perhaps because of the reactions this impulse provoked, he seems consistently to have imagined himself as surrounded by enemies and in ordination sermons of the mid-1740s likened ministers to Christ in their suffering. But he could also evoke the triumphant Christ and “promise final victory to those who ‘maintained the exercise of discipline in the house of God.’”⁸⁹ In his *Farewell Sermon* Edwards spoke of such a victory for himself at the day of judgment where the townspeople of Northampton would acknowledge the legitimacy of his pastoral care.⁹⁰

Such a conclusion seems to be more of a negative analysis than is necessary, though one can certainly understand the difficulty to respond to Edwards’s scenario in an overly gracious manner. Edwards may have struggled with an impulse to judge others, yet while more consistent in his discipline than many of his contemporaries, he sought to exercise this practice in a fairly gracious manner, always with a mind to persuade the excommunicant to repent of their sin. Understanding ecclesiology and soteriology as he did, with convictions formed deeply in Scripture, it seems natural that Edwards would treat church discipline with such seriousness, as the eternal lives of his people were potentially at stake.

⁸⁸ Schafer, “Jonathan Edwards’ Conception of the Church,” 55–56.

⁸⁹ Hall, “Editor’s Introduction,” WJE, 12:82.

⁹⁰ Edwards, “A Farewell Sermon,” 25:463–81.

John Henry Newman (1801–1890) in His Second Century

— Kenneth J. Stewart —

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Abstract: In the current fascination of younger evangelicals with the ethos of both Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, John Henry Newman (1801–1890) has become something of a ‘poster child’. The autobiographical and polemical writings of this celebrated convert to Rome (largely reflecting the first half of his career) enjoy ongoing popularity; these are taken to ‘define’ the man. Yet what this current fascination tends to overlook is that across the twentieth century Newman has been taken up as the theme of critical and ecumenical inquiry. Critical scholarship stops well short of the overly deferential attitude to Newman, all too characteristic at the present time. This article surveys this ongoing discussion of Newman up to our time.

A thought, popularly attributed to John Henry Newman, is often bandied about these days.¹ Enter the words ‘To be deep in history is to cease to be Protestant’ in any worldwide web search engine, and prepare to be deluged.² The well-known Christian philosopher Francis Beckwith utilizes this provocative sentiment when explaining why he recently left evangelical Protestantism for the Roman Catholicism of his upbringing.³ Such ‘soundings’ go some distance to explain why no modern historical figure’s name is as often invoked as that of John Henry Newman (1801–1890) in evangelical Protestantism’s current fascination with Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.⁴ This man of the nineteenth century has become an iconic figure for the kind of ‘reluctant’ Protestants who find themselves steadily more restless with the perceived shortcomings of evangelical Protestantism. And as it is

¹The author records his gratitude to Dr Andrew Atherstone of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, for commenting on an earlier version of this essay.

²40,700 references to this sentence appeared when the writer conducted an online search on February 2, 2014.

³Francis J. Beckwith, *Return to Rome: Confessions of an Evangelical Catholic* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009), 73. Beckwith stands apart from the myriads (both Roman clergy and others) online. He, at least, can trace the Newman statement to its origin in *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London: Tooley, 1845).

⁴So, for example, Michael Harper, *The True Light: An Evangelical’s Journey to Orthodoxy* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997), 162; Christian Smith, *How to Go from Being a Good Evangelical to a Committed Catholic in Ninety-five Difficult Steps* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 39.

for Newman, the Oxford fellow and clergyman who forsook Canterbury for Rome in 1845, so also for his books. Among the restive sort of Protestant, no piece of literature is alluded to as often as Newman's autobiographical *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (i.e., 'a defense of his life'), published in 1864.⁵

Soon after Newman's demise in 1890, the curious could read edited selections of his early *Letters*.⁶ They could digest an incisive treatment of the dawn of the movement with which Newman had been so closely associated in his Anglican years.⁷ They could also take in hand a two-volume biography composed by Wilfrid Ward,⁸ who utilized many materials pre-selected for this purpose by Newman himself. This then was John Henry Newman in his own and others' words in the first century of his influence. Critics there were, to be sure. But the loudest voices were Newman himself and the circle of admirers whom he left.

This essay concentrates on Newman literature produced *since* 1933. For when that year dawned, it had been a century since Newman and a circle which included John Keble, E. B. Pusey, and R. H. Froude had, by launching a series of pamphlets, commenced what came to be called the 'Oxford' or 'Tractarian' movement. This series had eventually extended to Tract 90 in 1841, after which the Anglican bishop of Oxford intervened to forbid its continuation. By 1845, Newman, the most visible member of this circle, had resigned his posts as fellow of Oriel College, Oxford and rector of that city's St. Mary's Church, and been received into the communion of the Church of Rome. Newman's doing so then—rather than at some later point—had been precipitated by the sudden re-affiliation to Rome of a young man who had been part of a semi-monastic community over which he had presided at Littlemore, a village near Oxford. In truth, Newman paved the way for this student's precipitous action by his own increasing orientation to Rome, which was reflected in the religious life of his Littlemore community.

Newman's high profile as an Oxford don, an Anglican clergyman, and rising author gave notoriety to his re-affiliation to Rome. For the balance of his life—in which he wrote prolifically in support of the Catholic cause and for which efforts he was named a Roman cardinal in 1879—Newman was the Englishman about whom observers differed and frequently differed strongly.

Here we recount and interpret the changing appraisals of John Henry Newman in the *second* century since the movement that he helped to launch came to public attention. The essay makes no claim to be exhaustive but seeks to treat a fair array of literature in a representative way. We proceed by grouping works produced since 1933 into epochs and then offer some concluding remarks.

1. At the 1933 Tractarian Centennial

By 1933, Newman had been dead for over forty years. Even the number of those of a younger generation who could claim any personal acquaintance with him was in steady decline. And yet, five

⁵ Illustrating the current demand for his *Apologia*, in January 2014 Amazon.com was selling twenty-two English language editions (many of which were reprints-on-demand).

⁶ Edited by his sister Anne Mozley, *Letters and Diaries of J. H. Newman* (London: Longmans Green, 1890).

⁷ R. W. Church, *The Oxford Movement: Twelve Years 1833–1845* (London: Macmillan, 1891).

⁸ Wilfrid Ward, *Life of J. H. Newman* (2 vols.; London: Longmans Green, 1912). Wilfrid Ward was son of W. A. Ward, a former close associate of Newman.

⁹ One might include in this grouping also Wilfrid Ward, ed., *Kingsley versus Newman: 1864–5* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1913; repr. 1931). The volume brought together in one volume the controversial exchanges between the two men in the 1864–1865 period, best known of which is Newman's *Apologia*.

publications appeared in connection with that centenary year, which were motivated by some ‘personal factor’.

Edmund A. Knox (1847–1937) author of *The Tractarian Movement: 1833–1845*,¹⁰ was the retired bishop of Manchester and an outspoken evangelical. He had studied in Oxford two decades following Newman’s defection to Rome, become a fellow of Merton College, and entered a long and distinguished ministry in the Church of England. As a bishop holding evangelical principles, he was a stalwart in opposing the Anglo-Catholic revision of the *Book of Common Prayer* in the 1920s. Of still greater relevance was the sobering fact that the youngest of his six children, a distinguished scholar, Ronald A. Knox (1888–1957), had spurned the evangelical upbringing provided in his home to embrace first the Anglo-Catholic expression of Anglicanism and eventually the Roman communion. A second son, Wilfrid L. Knox (1886–1950) also academically gifted, also brought parental disappointment by embracing Anglo-Catholicism.

But far from Edmund Knox’s book of 1933 being a kind of an exposé of Tractarianism, the careful reader finds that it is instead a thoughtful intellectual history of Newman and his circle which explored the strong affinities of the English Tractarians with their French Catholic contemporaries, the ultramontanist party.¹¹ Each party in its own way was seeking to exalt the primacy of religious authority over the authority of the modern state; each saw dangers in the expansion of popular democracy. Knox portrays Newman and the Tractarians as Romantics.¹²

By contrast, the Anglo-Catholic party (as the Tractarian movement had come to be known) used the 1933 centenary to celebrate the attainments of their movement which had persisted and steadily grown in strength, despite Newman’s 1845 secession to Rome.¹³ The celebratory volume, produced for that year under the editorship of Oxford professor Norman P. Williams, bore the somewhat ostentatious title *Northern Catholicism: Studies in the Oxford Centenary and Parallel Movements*.¹⁴ Though the title was taken by at least one reviewer as an indicator of a kind of pretension (i.e., it was advancing a claim that Anglicanism exercised a wide sphere of influence analogous to that of Rome or Eastern Orthodoxy), there was more substance to this implied claim than the American reviewer would grant.¹⁵ At that near-zenith stage of the British Empire, Anglo-Catholicism had been able to extensively replicate its emphases wherever Anglicanism had extended itself across the Empire.

¹⁰ Edmund A. Knox, *The Tractarian Movement: 1833–1845* (London: Putnam, 1933)

¹¹ Knox acknowledged that Wilfrid Ward (see n. 8) had earlier developed this theme in *W. G. Ward and the Catholic Revival* (New York: Longmans, 1912), ix.

¹² It is fascinating to ponder the review of this 1933 volume by Principal John MacLeod of Edinburgh in *Evangelical Quarterly* 5 (1933): 209–11.

¹³ The very large-scale celebration observed at the 1933 centenary has recently been explored by Andrew Atherstone in ‘Evangelicals and the Oxford Movement Centenary’, *Journal of Religious History* 37, no. 1 (2013): 98–117.

¹⁴ Norman P. Williams, *Northern Catholicism: Studies in the Oxford Centenary and Parallel Movements* (London: SPCK, 1933).

¹⁵ Thomas Kelly Rogers, review of *Northern Catholicism*, *Anglican Theological Review* 16 (1934): 231–33.

Frank L. Cross,¹⁶ who would be associated with the Anglo-Catholic movement throughout his long academic career, produced in that same centenary year an insightful overview of Newman.¹⁷ Most striking from a writer who stood in the stream of Anglicanism which traced its origin to the movement of the 1830s was the readiness of the author to question the historical accuracy of Newman's *Apologia* of 1864. Cross believed that it was Newman's sense of having been severely rebuffed in the furor generated by his *Tract 90* in 1840—rather than a sustained line of reading and reflection (as his *Apologia* suggested)—which by 1841 set Newman on the trajectory which eventually saw him received into the Church of Rome in 1845. The furor generated by the release of *Tract 90*, on Cross's reading, put Newman in the position of being an exile within the very Anglican communion in which he had been raised and to which he had given the better part of twenty years.¹⁸ When a rising Anglo-Catholic scholar such as Cross, writing empathetically about his subject, was ready to take such a revisionist line, something of real significance was underway.

In 1933 the striking volume *Oxford Apostles* appeared, which, despite its title, was chiefly centered upon Newman.¹⁹ The author, Geoffrey Faber (1889–1961), wrote as a distinguished Oxford graduate and as the grandnephew of J. H. Newman's fellow traveler to Rome, the hymn writer Frederick W. Faber (1814–1863). It was a matter of historical record that Faber, a devoted follower of Newman both while at Oxford and in his re-affiliation to Rome, received brusque treatment from Newman in the years following. Skillfully written by one who became the co-founder of a publishing house bearing the Faber name and with a dash of irreverence towards the hallowed memory of his subject, the volume attempted an account of Newman's career which took seriously a number of unresolved conundrums. Faber, influenced by Freudian psychology, took particular interest in Newman's prolonged and unrelenting relationship with his mother, his claimed determination from age fifteen to follow a life of celibacy, his overwhelming preference for male company (long before his re-affiliation to Rome), his recurring tendency to have severe health crises when confronted by great tasks, and supremely his self-absorption. Faber strongly implied the existence of dark psychological forces at work in the Tractarian hero. In modern parlance, we might call *The Oxford Apostles* a piece of psycho-history. Faber was, at the same time, a good scholar and a lucid writer.

This work understandably aggravated Newman loyalists, so within a year there appeared from the pen of the rising young Catholic historian Christopher Dawson (1889–1970) a kind of rejoinder entitled *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement*.²⁰ Dawson, no less than Faber had a 'pony in the race'. If Faber wrote influenced by the conviction that Newman inspired his grand-uncle into secession from the Church of England only to treat him shabbily afterwards, Dawson—himself an adult convert to Rome from

¹⁶ We remember Cross (1900–1968) today chiefly for his editing the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957). In 1933 he was the librarian of Pusey House, the Anglo-Catholic house of study at Oxford, founded in 1884. Cross went on to become Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in 1944.

¹⁷ Frank L. Cross, *John Henry Newman* (London: Allan, 1933).

¹⁸ Cross, *Newman*, 132, 133.

¹⁹ Geoffrey Faber, *Oxford Apostles* (London: Faber, 1933). The work is still in print from its original publisher.

²⁰ Christopher Dawson, *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1934). The work was reissued with a fresh introduction in 2001 from the London publisher, St. Austin Press.

Anglo-Catholicism—was determined to ‘buff’ Newman’s reputation back to a restored luster.²¹ It is not too much to call Dawson’s work ‘defensive’. Yet its literary merits were such that Dawson’s book was reprinted in 2001.

2. Mid-Century Contextual Studies

The decades following the 1933 centennial were not characterized by quite the same high interest in Newman and the movement he had helped to found. Yet the flame was kept alive by two notable volumes.

Henry Tristram, a twentieth-century member of the Birmingham Oratory, the monastic residence which had been presided over by Newman until his passing in 1890, assembled for publication a collection of materials from Newman’s own hand. These all had bearing on aspects of Newman’s life and were published in 1956 as *John Henry Newman: Autobiographical Writings*.²² Here, at very least was hard evidence of a kind sometimes remarked on by Newman biographers: Newman was a man who was very solicitous as to how he would be portrayed by biographers and had marked the way for them by an extensive pre-selection of materials. Of special interest in the volume is Newman’s little-known ‘Autobiographical Memoir’ of 1874, which relates the story of his life in markedly different fashion from that of his rather stylized *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* of 1864. While the latter told Newman’s life up to his re-affiliation to Rome in 1845 with a view to rehabilitating his tattered reputation in the eyes of English Protestant readers, the ‘Autobiographical Memoir’ told the story as Newman wished it to be passed on to readers of a later time. Notably, Newman’s debt to the evangelicalism of his youth (a prominent part of the *Apologia*) was largely omitted in the later account.²³

A striking development in the next year (1957) was the release of Owen Chadwick’s insightful volume, *From Bossuet to Newman: the Idea of Doctrinal Development*.²⁴ Chadwick elaborated the story of how, in the post-Reformation period, Catholic apologists such as Jacques Bossuet (1624–1704) had labored to maintain the traditional claim that the Roman Catholic Church had sustained an unbroken doctrinal conformity with the church of the earliest centuries. Catholic apologists such as Bossuet therefore maintained that innovation and declension in doctrine was the unique legacy of Protestantism. Newman, on the other hand, while a young Protestant scholar had maintained the opposite, namely, it was Rome that had clearly declined from an original, less encumbered stance towards Christian doctrine. Protestantism *had* been warranted in making a fresh appeal to Scripture and the Fathers at the Reformation. Yet in the 1840s, he reversed himself by coming to hold that while Catholic doctrine had indeed undergone a kind of ‘evolution’, this was consistently of a defensible and organic type. Chadwick’s book of 1957 succeeded in putting the question of doctrinal development back on the ‘menu’ of Protestantism as it had not been for half a century.

²¹ Dawson refers explicitly to Faber’s ‘psychological’ approach in introducing his own work (*The Spirit of the Oxford Movement*, vi).

²² Henry Tristram, *John Henry Newman: Autobiographical Writings* (New York, Sheed and Ward, 1957).

²³ On the marked differences between the two accounts, see Kenneth J. Stewart, ‘Newman versus Newman: The *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1864) and later *Biographical Memoir* Compared’, *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 26, no. 1 (2008): 57–67

²⁴ Owen Chadwick, *From Bossuet to Newman: The Idea of Doctrinal Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957).

3. At the Approach of the Centenary of the Release of Newman's 'Apologia' (1864)

As with the year 1933, the year 1964 was seen as especially significant as it marked the centenary of the original release of Newman's autobiographical sketch of his life up to 1845, the *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*. There came from the press a series of volumes which consciously related to the approach of this centenary mark. The trend was signaled as early as 1961 when Oxford University Press began to issue the *Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, a series eventually reaching thirty-one volumes.²⁵ The editorial lead for this project was taken by C. S. Dessain, the archivist of the very Birmingham Oratory established by Newman in 1848.²⁶

In rapid succession appeared a two-volume biography by the English writer Meriol Trevor. Herself a successful author of children's literature and various historical novels, Trevor had converted to Catholicism in 1950 and turned to the subject of Newman as had other such converts, such as Dawson (above) with *Newman: The Pillar of the Cloud* (1962) and *Newman: Light in Winter* (1963).²⁷ On the strength of the acclaim which this biography generated, Trevor was shortly to be involved in editing a short collection of essays published in 1965: *Newman: A Portrait Restored; An Ecumenical Evaluation*.²⁸ Here Roman Catholic and Church of England contributors collaborated and assessed Newman in a fresh way. This took into account, both, of the century which had passed since the first release of the *Apologia* and the fact that the Second Vatican Council (where Newman's ideas were receiving fresh attention) was in process in the years 1963–65.²⁹

In these same years, an individual already named, Owen Chadwick, was joined by another, in producing volumes in which Newman and the Tractarian movement were set in context by samplings of its literature. This was achieved by providing anthologies of the writings of Newman and those associated with him up to his re-affiliation in 1845. Chadwick, for his part, assembled representative excerpts from the writings of the Tractarians (very largely culled from the ninety *Tracts for the Times*). This volume, *The Mind of the Oxford Movement*,³⁰ enables one to observe—without any necessary access to the original *Tracts* (eventually bound in four volumes)—just what were the opinions of the Tractarians regarding the Church of England in her relation to the state, the relation of her episcopate to the original apostles, and the meaning of her sacraments.

²⁵The series reached a completion in 2008.

²⁶From Dessain's editorial labors also emerged the compact biography *John Henry Newman* (London: Nelson, 1966). Of its third edition (1980), Newman scholar Owen Chadwick said, 'it is the unadorned survey of one who is the most recent master of its subject' (in *Newman: A Short Introduction* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983], 79).

²⁷Meriol Trevor, *The Pillar of Cloud* (New York: Doubleday, 1962); idem, *Light in Winter* (New York: Doubleday, 1963)

²⁸John Coulson, A. M. Allchin, Meriol Trevor, eds., *Newman: A Portrait Restored; An Ecumenical Evaluation* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1965).

²⁹In this volume, the second chapter, 'The Via Media: An Anglican Revaluation' by A. M. Allchin, asked the very interesting question of how much of Newman's earlier Protestantism had been taken with him into the Roman communion. Allchin answered his own question by affirming that Newman's thought was still extensively Protestant after his re-affiliation.

³⁰Owen Chadwick, *The Mind of the Oxford Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

Eugene R. Fairweather's *The Oxford Movement* resembles Chadwick's work but with fewer, extensive excerpts.³¹ This anthology concentrated not so extensively as the prior volume on samplings from the periodic 'Tracts for the Times' (commenced in 1833) but from independent theological writings produced by those in sympathy with the movement which sponsored the Tracts. Writers included Isaac Williams, Robert Wilberforce (son to William, the advocate for the abolition of slavery), and W. G. Ward, whose re-affiliation to Rome had preceded that of Newman himself.

Finally, mention can be made of a helpful volume which, though actually published in what we will treat as our next chronological period, reflects the author's research late in this mid-century period. William Robbins's *The Newman Brothers: An Essay in Comparative Intellectual Biography* attempted the evaluation of John Henry Newman through extended comparison with his younger brother, the equally-gifted Francis Newman (1805–1897).³² The younger Newman, after sharing in adolescence the evangelical commitment acknowledged also by John Henry Newman, performing brilliantly at Oxford, and serving for a time as a missionary to Syria in connection with the early Plymouth Brethren movement, nevertheless turned in the latter half of his life to religious liberalism and eventual Unitarianism. Through the eyes of Francis, John Henry Newman was something of a 'prig' who was extremely self-absorbed. Yet in John's eyes, his younger brother Francis, who was drifting steadily from orthodox Christian belief, personified the secularizing tendency of their era which the established Church of England seemed powerless to arrest.

4. Newman in the Era of Vatican II

It is an intriguing fact that Newman only 'came into his own' (so to speak) within the Roman communion through the vehicle of the Second Vatican Council, sessions of which were held each autumn at Rome in 1962–1965. Until that era, Newman's view that the Roman communion had been party to an extended legitimate evolution of Christian doctrine from the age of the Apostles forward received no official approbation by Roman theologians. There had, in fact, been steady Roman Catholic apprehension regarding Newman's theological position from the time of his reception by Rome. His treatise of 1845 *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* was—at the time of his reception—understood to be incongruent with Catholic doctrine. There had been no actual change in this assessment by the early twentieth century.

However, this was precisely the trajectory followed in the collaborative work of 1967, *The Rediscovery of Newman: An Oxford Symposium*.³³ Newman was being 'rediscovered' in multiple senses: (1) there was fresh attention given to the influences contributing to the development of his thought; (2) there was assessment offered of Newman's influence (as a Catholic) in three regions of northern Europe as well as upon English Nonconformity;³⁴ and (3) there was a concluding essay which explored

³¹ Eugene R. Fairweather, *The Oxford Movement* (Library of Protestant Thought; New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

³² William Robbins, *The Newman Brothers: An Essay in Comparative Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966).

³³ John Coulson and A. M. Allchin, eds., *The Rediscovery of Newman: An Oxford Symposium* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1967). It is important to note that it was not the volume of 1967 but of 1964 that had established the precedent of Roman Catholic-Protestant dialogue regarding Newman.

³⁴ Especially worthy of comment are the contributions by Protestants Gordon Rupp and Hubert Cunliffe-Jones.

the belated influence of Newman upon the Second Vatican Council—now concluded three quarters of a century after his death. The author of the latter essay, Cuthbert Butler, credited Newman's theological posture with being a contributing factor in the Council's enlarged attention to biblical theology as a counterweight to dogmatic theology, and to the role of the whole people of God in assessing the boundaries of the faith as a counterweight to the nineteenth-century ultramontane insistence on papal infallibility and the dominant role of the hierarchy.³⁵

The *Rediscovery* volume was by no means the only indicator that fresh interest in Newman was emerging in that post-Vatican era. By 1969, the American Roman Catholic historian Marvin R. O'Connell (then already known for his study of sixteenth-century Counter-Reformers) had produced *The Oxford Conspirators: A History of the Oxford Movement 1833–1845*. This book constituted the first full attempt to describe the birth of the movement (and Newman's place in it) since the 1933 work of the Anglican evangelical E. A. Knox (described above). It was certainly the largest work of its kind written to that point by any American writer. Yet a perceptive reviewer questioned whether the industrious O'Connell, who wrote in confessional solidarity with Newman, the Roman Catholic convert, had actually added to the record.³⁶

In this same period Nicholas Lash of Cambridge University revisited the theme earlier highlighted in Chadwick's 1957 study *From Bossuet to Newman*. Lash's volume was *Newman on Development: The Search for An Explanation in History*.³⁷ This valuable study, which deserved to circulate far more widely than it did, had as its especial strength an analysis of the reception (or resistance to reception) of Newman's thought within Roman Catholic theology across the first half of the twentieth century. This mixed reception had come about in large part through the appropriation of his thought by French representatives of Catholic Modernism which gave rise in the minds of conservative Catholics to a kind of guilt-by-association for Newman.³⁸ Only after mid-twentieth century did the Roman communion consider his thought more dispassionately.

Two other works which emerged in the post-Vatican II era showed that evangelical Protestantism was also re-examining the Tractarian movement and its period. Peter Toon's insightful *Evangelical Theology: 1833–1856; A Response to Tractarianism* (1979) shed fresh light on how Anglican evangelicals responded to Newman and his movement in the years preceding *and* following his reception by Rome.³⁹ Names with which we ought to have been much more familiar, such as William Goode (1801–1868), emerge in this volume as the doughty champions of the evangelical Protestant position, which by this period in the nineteenth century had grown exponentially within the Church of England. As if to make more accessible some of the controversial literature of the era highlighted by Toon, Elizabeth Jay provided a 1983 anthology of writers from this period, *The Evangelical and Oxford Movements*.⁴⁰ The

³⁵ In Coulson and Allchin, eds., *The Rediscovery of Newman*, 236–44.

³⁶ Geoffrey Bromiley, review of M. O'Connell, *The Oxford Conspirators*, *Christianity Today* 13, no. 21, (1969): 26.

³⁷ Nicholas Lash, *Newman on Development: The Search for An Explanation in History* (Shepherdstown, WV: Patmos, 1975)

³⁸ Chapter 7, 'Newman's *Essay on Development* in Twentieth-century Theology.'

³⁹ Peter Toon, *Evangelical Theology: 1833–1856; A Response to Tractarianism* (London, Marshalls: 1979). It is worthy of mention that in this same period Toon produced a valuable short study: *The Development of Doctrine in the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979).

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Jay, *The Evangelical and Oxford Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

book featured excerpts from Tractarian (Oxford) writers Isaac Williams, John Keble, J. H. Newman, and E. B. Pusey, as well as their critics Francis Close and William Goode. The Jay anthology provided a real service in making accessible what had long been very hard to access.

Some credit has already been paid to the significant contribution to Newman scholarship made by the Cambridge historian Owen Chadwick. How fitting then that when Oxford University Press wished to commission a small volume for its 'Short Introduction' series, it turned to Chadwick. The 1983 volume of 83 pages is not a biography but an introduction to Newman's thought.⁴¹ A synopsis and evaluation is provided for each of Newman's major writings, and the volume closes with an annotated guide to further reading. This little volume perfectly illustrates what is meant by the Latin phrase *multum in parvo* (much in small space); it provides an ideal point of departure for those just beginning Newman studies.

Also worthy of mention is a volume produced by the then-chaplain of Keble College, Oxford, Geoffrey Rowell: *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities in the Catholic Revival in Anglicanism* (1983).⁴² As one of the foremost modern Anglo-Catholic authorities on Newman and the Tractarians, Rowell here provided deft interpretations of the significance of the three primary Tractarian leaders of the 1830s: Keble, Newman, and Pusey. Rowell helpfully analyzes Newman's growth in understanding the development of doctrine, encapsulated in his work of the same name in 1845. By 1986, Rowell edited a fine compendium of essays reflecting an academic conference held at Oxford in 1983 to mark the 150th anniversary of the Oxford movement: *Tradition Renewed: The Oxford Movement Conference Papers*.⁴³ The range and quality of presentations from an international range of Protestant as well as Roman Catholic contributors show this volume to represent a kind of high-water mark of ecumenical consideration of Newman and this movement up to that time. A healthily critical perspective is in evidence in many essays, with Newman and his circle subjected to searching analysis from all points of the theological compass.⁴⁴

5. Associated with the Centenary of Newman's Death (1990)

As at the centenary of the launch of the Tractarian Movement (1933) and of the initial release of the *Apologia* (1864), so also the approach of the centenary of Newman's passing served as a stimulus to writers. Yet the release of Ian Ker's *John Henry Newman: A Biography* (1988) was heralded as a development of much greater moment.⁴⁵ Ker, then in the U.S.A. at the University of St. Thomas, Minnesota, and later of Oxford University's Blackfriars Hall, had established himself as one of the

⁴¹ Owen Chadwick, *Newman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983; repr., 2010).

⁴² Geoffrey Rowell, *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities in the Catholic Revival in Anglicanism* (Oxford University Press, 1983). In November 2013, Rowell completed a term as Anglican Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe, commenced 2001.

⁴³ Geoffrey Rowell, *Tradition Renewed: The Oxford Movement Conference Papers* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986).

⁴⁴ Note especially the chapters of S. W. Sykes and S. W. Gilley, 'No Bishop, No Church! The Tractarian Impact on Anglicanism'; Peter Toon, 'Anglicanism in Popish Dress'; Gordon Wakefield, 'A Mystical Substitute for the Glorious Gospel'; and W. S. F. Pickering, 'Anglo-Catholicism: Some Sociological Observations'

⁴⁵ Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

world's leading authorities on Newman and his thought.⁴⁶ His massive biography of 745 pages had taken full advantage of the serially published *Letters and Diaries of Newman* which had been issuing from the press since 1961. To its credit, this biography spent two-thirds of its pages on Newman's Anglican phase to 1845 (an approach which makes it possible to recognize continuities between Newman the Anglican and Newman the Catholic). And yet it may be asked whether Ker's very 'immersion' in the literary remains of his subject—such that one reviewer could speak of the volume as providing 'Newman on Newman'⁴⁷—did not deflect the biographer from securing the necessary critical distance from his subject. The same author in the centenary year published a volume of essays: *The Achievement of John Henry Newman*.⁴⁸ Freed from the need in writing biography to concentrate on chronology, these essays focus on five select aspects of Newman as educator, philosopher, preacher, theologian, and writer and synthesize the contributions of his career by theme.

In the same centenary year, the recognized Newman authority Owen Chadwick released a volume of essays: *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement: Tractarian Essays*.⁴⁹ Though some of the chapters had been written as recently as 1987, the book taken as a whole was a kind of a 'gathered harvest' of Chadwick's writings on Newman—some from as long before as 1954. The essay, which provided the book with its title, 'The Spirit of the Oxford Movement', had originally prefaced Chadwick's 1960 anthology of Tractarian writings, *The Soul of the Oxford Movement* (above). Chadwick's aim in that centenary year was to make available essays which—because scattered across a range of periodicals inaccessible to most—would be otherwise unobtainable. In this writer's opinion there is no writer on Newman and Tractarianism who represented such a balance of empathetic interpretation and critical distance as does Chadwick. This era was 'crowned' by a highly impressive compendium of essays, edited by Ian Ker and Alan G. Hill, *Newman after a Hundred Years*.⁵⁰ Here a collaboration of Protestant and Roman Catholic contributors⁵¹ drew attention to Newman's stature as a man of literature, as a former university head, as a patristic theologian, and as a source of influence on the Second Vatican Council.⁵²

6. In a New Century

After the space of a decade, there appeared an important new treatment of Newman which was notable in several respects: Avery Dulles's *John Henry Newman* (2002).⁵³ Dulles, like his subject, had

⁴⁶ This college within Oxford was of medieval foundation, was suppressed in 1538 under the Henrician Reformation, and re-established in 1921. It of course did not exist in the early Victorian Oxford of Newman's day.

⁴⁷ Andrew F. Weisner, review of I. Ker, *John Henry Newman: A Biography, Currents in Theology and Mission* 17, no. 4 (1990): 312–13.

⁴⁸ Ian Ker, *The Achievement of John Henry Newman* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990).

⁴⁹ Owen Chadwick, *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement: Tractarian Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁵⁰ Ian Ker and Alan G. Hill, eds., *Newman after a Hundred Years* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990).

⁵¹ Notably, the volume embraced the contributions of non-Anglican Protestant writers (as well as Roman Catholics), including Colin Gunton, Kings College, University of London. Among notable Anglican writers were Rowan Williams (later Archbishop of Canterbury) and S. W. Sykes, Cambridge University.

⁵² The latter essay, on Newman and the Second Vatican Council, was provided by Nicholas Lash, whose 1975 volume *Newman on Development* has been commented on above.

⁵³ Avery Dulles, *John Henry Newman* (New York: Continuum, 2002).

been raised as a Protestant and embraced Catholicism in his adulthood. The author (1918–2008), a distinguished Jesuit theologian associated with Fordham University, New York, was also (like Newman) raised to the cardinalate at an advanced age.⁵⁴ But as an outworking of these affinities, Dulles, laid stress not on the biographical aspects of his subject's career (which had been related many times over) but on the development of his theological thought. Dulles was one of the Catholic participants in the 'Evangelicals and Catholics Together' initiative of 1994, and his elevation as cardinal had taken into account that and other involvements. His treatment of Newman accordingly stressed the way in which he had taken with him, into Catholicism, emphases such as the need for scriptural exegesis, the ultimate superiority of Scripture to tradition, and the legitimate role of biblical criticism. Newman's distinctive emphases, when eventually disseminated, assisted his new communion to come to terms with non-Roman Christianity and the changed situation of the twentieth century. Newman was, on such an accounting, a facilitator of a later post-WWII ecumenism.⁵⁵

Within a year, Yale University Press released a massive work which has managed to alter the landscape of Newman studies for the foreseeable future. I refer to Frank M. Turner's *John Henry Newman: The Challenge to Evangelical Religion*.⁵⁶ Here, in massive detail, Turner—a renowned intellectual historian—had the temerity to challenge Newman's own heavily stylized account of his pilgrimage from his evangelical youth, into a sacramentalist Anglicanism and into the embrace of Rome. According to Turner, Newman's autobiographical writings—while they portrayed the trajectory of his life as a battle against political and theological liberalism—intentionally obscured his underlying opposition to evangelicalism (whether within or beyond the Church of England). On such an understanding, the stylized *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* of 1864 was a determined effort by Newman to rehabilitate his reputation as an alleged Protestant traitor in the minds of an evangelical Protestant public which he all the while genuinely disdained. A careful reading of the Turner volume raises many of the questions earlier posed by the Victorian writer Charles Kingsley, who because he alleged that Newman had long concealed Roman Catholic sentiments while still a minister of the Church of England, provoked Newman to write his *Apologia* of 1864. The Turner volume creates in the mind of the reader the lingering impression that Newman's 'persona' was one which he carefully cultivated during his long life and that this 'preferred' reading of his life and career has lived on into the century beyond his departure.⁵⁷

Two anthologies close our survey of Newman literature since 1933. The first, *The Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman* (2009),⁵⁸ provides a most helpful survey of Newman's career by Sheridan Gilley and some very fine overviews of Newman's thinking about various theological themes.⁵⁹ Yet one is struck in reflecting on the range of contributors to this anthology that *The Cambridge*

⁵⁴ Avery Dulles was the son of John Foster Dulles (1888–1959), the secretary of state under Dwight D. Eisenhower. Avery Dulles was elevated to the cardinalate in 2001, above the age of 80 years.

⁵⁵ Dulles, *Newman*, 25, 68, 130

⁵⁶ Frank M. Turner, *John Henry Newman: The Challenge to Evangelical Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002). The present author reviewed this work in the *Calvin Theological Journal* 38, no. 2 (2003): 414–17.

⁵⁷ See the rousing, affirmative review of the Turner volume by Tristram Hunt, 'Cardinal Spin', *The Guardian* (3 January 2003), <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/jan/04/biography.philosophy>.

⁵⁸ Ian Ker and Terrence Merrigan, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2009.

⁵⁹ Keith Beaumont, review of I. Ker and T. Merrigan, *The Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman*, *Catholic Historical Review* 97, no. 1 (2011): 159–60, noted the uneven quality of its chapters.

Companion has taken a step backwards from the pioneering efforts made between 1964 and 1990 to make the scholarly discussion of John Henry Newman trans-confessional. *The Cambridge Companion* is an overwhelmingly Roman Catholic collaboration produced by theological writers who give scant attention to historical factors.⁶⁰

Finally, there is the interesting volume *The Oxford Movement: Europe and the Wider World* (2012).⁶¹ This volume seeks to do again, 85 years later, what was attempted in the 1933 volume, *Northern Catholicism*: to demonstrate the trans-national and trans-oceanic influence of that movement with which Newman's Oxford but pre-Roman Catholic years were so actively intertwined. While the 1933 volume, compiled while Britain still maintained an Empire, had more of a global scope, the 2012 volume is more concerned with the Oxford Movement's influence within the United Kingdom (there are chapters on Wales and Scotland) and Britain's former Australian colony as well as on the Continent, where various affinity movements are found to have existed across the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

7. Contemporary Significance

We have now considered the last 80 years of publication on John Henry Newman and the movement he helped to launch. We have, in effect, been considering the movement's *second* century. If we would ask what fuelled ongoing Newman investigation through this second century, an adequate answer would need to include at least four factors.

First, since the massive publication project that has put in print all Newman's letters and diaries, researchers have had more material than ever to work with. Newly unearthed documents have enabled old questions to be seen in new light.

Second, there has been the gradual recognition that the percolation of Newman's ideas throughout the world of Catholic thought has made him a significant contributor to the outcomes of the Second Vatican Council. The growing acceptance of Newman within the Roman Catholic communion had by 2010 led to his 'beatification' and may yet eventuate in his 'canonization'.⁶²

Third, it is important to note the extensive (though not dominant) part played in this 'second century' of Newman studies by writers who, like him, were converts to Roman Catholicism. Christopher Dawson, Meriol Trevor, and Avery Dulles may not have utterly dominated this second century of Newman inquiry, yet each can be seen to have had a pivotal influence in their distinct eras. Each, in his or her own way, worked to 'rehabilitate' Newman, lest he vanish from consideration.

⁶⁰ See the trenchant remarks on this imbalance in Simon Skinner, 'History versus Hagiography: The Reception of Turner's *Newman*', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 61 (2010): 784. Two modern anthologies produced since 1980, mentioned above—*Tradition Renewed* (ed. Rowell) and *Newman After a Hundred Years* (ed. Ker and Hill)—are by contrast exemplary in their trans-confessional and interdisciplinary perspectives.

⁶¹ S. J. Brown and Peter Nockles, eds., *The Oxford Movement: Europe and the Wider World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). The present author reviewed this volume in *Themelios* 38, no. 3 (2013): 493–95.

⁶² 'Beatification' is a standing granted by the Pope after the death of a saintly individual that permits the individual's veneration. Within a diocese, country, or religious order, the deceased person may be spoken of as 'blessed'. Cf. F. L. Cross, ed., *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 145. A deceased individual, once 'beatified', may also be declared by the Pope to have entered eternal glory; their name is thereafter inscribed in the catalog of saints. Cf. Cross, ed., *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 230.

Aggregately, and finally, there is the plausible assertion that this man and this movement's influence are greater in its second century than in its first. Professor David Bebbington claimed as much in *Holiness in Nineteenth Century England*.⁶³

Our essay began by noting that restive Protestants have taken up the study of Newman with considerable 'gusto' in recent decades; in so doing they have joined a considerable company of other Newman admirers. Yet it needs to be said that too much of the current evangelical fascination with Newman is tinged with serious romanticism. It is the Newman of the *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*—the one who claimed to 'outgrow' his evangelicalism—which has been the focal point of so much adulation. But this fascination, inasmuch as it has ignored the more probing consideration of Newman which has characterized so much of the last 80 years, is surely in danger of lapsing into a kind of 'hagiographic' acclaim. Now when we see the same hagiographic focus on a Charles Spurgeon or a Jonathan Edwards or a seventeenth-century Puritan luminary (and are led to believe that each was 'incomparable'), we understandably demur and demand to know why we have not been shown a fuller, less idealized picture.

Just so, a fuller attention to the available literature pertaining to Newman's 'second century' will help us to view him more honestly, more critically, and more sanely. Newman was, beyond question, a self-absorbed person, determined to be remembered by posterity on terms he would dictate. His now-famous treatise on *The Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845) was viewed with as great suspicion in his adoptive Roman communion as in the Church of England from which he was departing. As we now know, this is the individual whose *Apologia* (1864) is recognized to have been a clever re-telling of his early history designed to permanently rehabilitate his tattered reputation within England. For decades to come, Newman was viewed in his adoptive communion as a kind of Anglican 'fifth-columnist'. Today, we are more aware than ever before of how Newman, the Roman Catholic, preserved definite Protestant attitudes and predilections which over time leavened his adoptive communion. He steadily distanced himself from fawning Catholic ultramontanists who sought always to 'bid up' papal power to the detriment of regional and individual liberties. It is this 'complex' Newman, rather than a 'one-dimensional' Newman that ought to be receiving serious attention today.

⁶³David W. Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth Century England* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000), 28. This assertion needs to be balanced by the assessment of those, such as W. S. F. Pickering, who claimed that Anglo-Catholicism was seriously in disarray ('Anglo-Catholicism: Some Sociological Perspectives', in *Tradition Renewed* [ed. Geoffrey Rowell; Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1986]), 153–72.

PASTORAL PENSÉES

Laboring in Hopeless Hope:
Encouragement for Christians
from Ecclesiastes

— Eric Ortlund —

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Abstract: The book of Ecclesiastes diagnoses humanity’s tendency to link the value of human life with permanent accomplishment in our work. As a wisdom text, Ecclesiastes warns its readers that this approach leads to hatred of life as we realize that, from an “under the sun” perspective, we gain nothing permanent in all our labor. The wisdom of the book of Ecclesiastes rather associates the value of human life and work in its status as a gift from God, irrespective of what we accomplish. Qohelet also explains why God has so disposed the present order of things that human beings labor much, but without permanent accomplishment. This article attempts to articulate Qohelet’s wisdom for living within the present age so that we can fully engage with and enjoy God’s gifts of life and work.

Ecclesiastes is hardly the first book a pastor would turn to for encouragement. The author does not obviously address the ministry of the gospel, and when he does address a subject, he seems to have difficulty finding anything positive to say beyond a recommendation to enjoy the present (e.g., 2:24). In spite of this, I believe that Ecclesiastes contains profound resources for those laboring in ministry. The central encouragement of this book for pastors is found in its disassociation of the value of work from the visible results of that work. Instead of assessing the worth of our ministries in terms of measureable results, Qohelet identifies the value of our work in its status as a gift from God.¹ I believe this conclusion is highly counter-intuitive, under-appreciated in our own context, and has radical im-

¹“Qohelet” is the Hebrew word for the main speaker in the book (1:2, 12; 7:27; 12:9–10). A persuasive case can be made for understanding Qohelet as a literary persona through which an otherwise anonymous author can speak to us. See Michael Fox, “Frame-narrative and Composition in the Book of Qohelet,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 48 (1977): 83–106. While most commentators understand the epilogue to recommend Qohelet’s thought to the son training in wisdom, Tremper Longman has interpreted it as a criticism of and warning about Qohelet’s teaching to the son (see *The Book of Ecclesiastes* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 276, 80–81). I interact with Longman’s interpretation and offer an alternative in Eric Ortlund, “The Gospel in the Book of Ecclesiastes,” *JETS* 56 (2013): 697–99.

plications for our ability to endure and flourish in the rigors of full-time ministry.²

Qohelet's route to this conclusion is, of course, anything but easy. He is not gentle with his readers; he consistently tries to puncture our illusions about our ability to control our lives. But it is only after we surrender these illusions that we can rejoice with him. I say this because each *carpe diem* passage in the book is joined without interruption to a passage describing life's vanity:

1. 2:15–21 with 2:24
2. 3:9–11 with 3:12–13
3. 3:16–21 with 3:22
4. 5:1–16 with 5:17
5. 8:10–14 with 8:15
6. 9:1–6 with 9:7

Qohelet's call to joy is, in other words, deliberately difficult to hear. Every time I have taught this book, in both undergraduate and graduate settings, at least one student has had a theological "allergic reaction" to the text: they have dug in their heels and insisted that the biblical book of Ecclesiastes cannot *possibly* say what it appears to be saying. Although I believe Ecclesiastes does cohere theologically with other OT wisdom books and the whole Bible, a reaction like this is understandable and even a good sign that the text has hit its mark.

It seems to me that Qohelet's proverb in 7:3 applies as much to the method of his book as it does life as a whole:

טוֹב כְּעֵס מְשֹׁחַק כִּי בָרַע פְּנִים יֵיטֵב לֵב

Better vexation than laughter,
for by sadness of face is the heart made glad. (7:3)³

Only after we have been truly vexed, only after we see our illusions for what they are and mourn their passing, only after we fully acknowledge our place in a creation subjected to frustration, only then can we rejoice. But those who do not join the wise in the house of mourning (7:4) will never grow out of that brittle, vulnerable joy that can turn to hatred of life when our expectations for our lives are disappointed (2:18). Jacques Ellul most appropriately says that, in reading Ecclesiastes, we are like the camel that must pass through the eye of the needle, taking nothing with us. Only when we pass through can the true adventure of life and ministry begin.⁴

We will focus primarily on the first three chapters of the book in this article. Qohelet gives us his thesis and basic conclusion about life in 1:2 and then narrates three searches he made as king in order to show how he reached this conclusion. In ch. 3, Qohelet echoes his thesis from ch. 1 but in a more positive way. Let us follow him through the eye of the needle.

² Two other recent articles that do an excellent job reading Ecclesiastes on its own terms and applying its message to modern ministry are Jason DeRouchie, "Shepherding Wind and One Wise Shepherd: Grasping for Breath in Ecclesiastes," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 15:3 (2011): 4–25, and Robert McCabe, "The Message of Ecclesiastes," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 1 (1996): 85–112.

³ Unless otherwise noted, all English translations are my own.

⁴ Jacques Ellul, *Reason for Being: A Meditation on Ecclesiastes* (trans. J. M. Hanks; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 116. Although Ellul's book is not a prominent conversation partner in recent commentaries on Ecclesiastes, it is the single most helpful work I have read on Ecclesiastes.

1. “Vanity of Vanities”: Qohelet’s Motto (1:2–3)

The central claim Qohelet tries to convince us of is 1:2:

הַבֶּל הַבְּלִים אָמַר קֹהֵלֶת הַבֶּל הַכֹּל הַבְּלִים הַבֶּל

Vanity of vanities, says Qohelet:

vanity of vanities, all is vanity. (1:2)

One does not have to read far in literature on Ecclesiastes to learn that the central word in this verse, *הַבֶּל* (*hebel*), has been translated in many different ways. In my opinion, the traditional rendering of “vanity” is best, but not in the sense of something being empty or insubstantial. Qohelet clearly does not think life is insubstantial or empty: nowhere else in the canon can you find a warmer recommendation to enjoy work and eating and drinking with your friends.

Rather, “vanity” means something like “failing to achieve its purpose” or “disappointing one’s expectations.” For instance, in 8:14, Qohelet calls *הַבֶּל* that the righteous suffer the fate of the wicked and that the wicked suffer the fate of the righteous. This situation is not insubstantial or meaningless or enigmatic; it is incongruous.⁵ It defies all reasonable expectation. Qohelet makes the same kind of complaint when he faces up to the fact that the death awaiting the fool also awaits him, a wise man (2:15). That two opposite kinds of lives would end in identical ways is, for Qohelet, disproportionate and absurd; and it makes his wisdom appear to be vain (at this stage in his journey, at least).⁶ The same note is struck when Qohelet points to the incongruity of his laboring for years to build his empire (2:4–9) only to leave it to someone else who might throw it away (2:19–21). Similarly, Qohelet bemoans how God sometimes gives wealth but does not allow the recipient to enjoy it (6:2; see further 3:19; 4:4, 8, 16; 5:9). *הַבֶּל* points to the incongruities, absurdities and irrational contradictions in life, things that are contrary to all reasonable expectation. This is the “vanity” that Qohelet laments.

Hardly anyone would disagree that our lives are subject to incongruities. But Qohelet insists that our lives are entirely incongruous—“vanity of vanities” is a superlative genitive—and that these incongruities cannot be quarantined to one part of our lives (“all is vanity”). As Michael Fox says, these inconsistencies “are intractable distortions . . . that warp the larger pattern rather than fading into it.”⁷

Qohelet’s question in the next verse is even more provocative. It summarizes the basic question he asked of life that drove him to the conclusion of 1:2.

מִה־יִתְרוֹן לְאָדָם בְּכָל-עֲמָלוֹ שְׂיַעֲמַל תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַשׁ

What profit is there for man in all his labor

in which he labors under the sun? (1:3)

The word translated “profit” here (*יִתְרוֹן*) is derived from the verb *יתר*, which means “to be left over.” The noun *יִתְרוֹן* means either “profit” or “advantage.” It is as if Qohelet is asking, “At the end of the day, when all the gains and losses have been calculated against each other, what remains? What permanent gain do we have to show for all our years of scurrying around in our work?” The implied answer is nothing. We tell ourselves we are making a mark, making the world a better place, but the

⁵I am relying here on Michael V. Fox, *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up: A Rereading of Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 30–42.

⁶Michael V. Fox, “The Meaning of *Hebel* for Qohelet,” *JBL* 105 (1986): 420.

⁷*Ibid.*, 66.

imprint of our lives is quickly washed away. It is simply a matter of time before any evidence that we lived on earth and worked is wiped away. This is the point of vv. 4–7: if the natural elements, which have existed so much longer than any human life, cannot produce any permanent change in the world, what makes us think we can? This is the ultimate הֶבֶל for Qohelet, the “vanity of vanities.” The amount of sweat and tears we put into our life’s work, when compared with the end result of that labor, could not be more incongruous.

Three qualifications immediately need to be made. First, in claiming that הֶבֶל infects all of life, Qohelet is not saying everything is bad. As mentioned above, Qohelet loves life. He insists only that these good things are inescapably subject to הֶבֶל. Second, Qohelet is not a cynic. He will never tell us to stop working entirely or stop expecting certain results from our work. He insists only that our expectations, however reasonable, will not always obtain. Similarly, Qohelet never says that obedience to God does not matter. He never recommends folly over wisdom or rebellion against God over the fear of the Lord, but he does labor to convince us that even wisdom and piety are not free from הֶבֶל.⁸ Third, Qohelet restricts his claims to what is *under* the sun, not above. Certainly God is not subject to הֶבֶל. This perhaps makes the implied answer to the question of 1:3 a little easier to stomach: Qohelet is claiming that, from an earthly perspective, it is a matter of time until we are forgotten and whatever impact our work had is erased.⁹ Of course, this naturally raises the question of the meaning and permanence of our work from an “above the sun” perspective. We will consider this question, but not yet, for doing so might unintentionally distract from the hard truths we need to learn from Qohelet.

Despite these qualifications, we are only three verses into this challenging book, and already we are feeling the sting of the goads of the wise (12:11). It is natural, at this point, to ask how Qohelet reached such a radical conclusion. There is, after all, hardly anything comparable to Eccl 1:2–3 in the rest of Scripture or comparable ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature.¹⁰ As it turns out, Qohelet himself explains his journey to this position in 1:12–2:26 by narrating three investigations he made. Qohelet’s reflections on these searches are no easier to hear than his claims in 1:2–3. But it is necessary to follow him to the end so that we can receive that joy which, although still subject to הֶבֶל, is not ruined by it.

2. Qohelet’s Three Searches (1:12–18; 2:1–11, 12–26)

Qohelet’s first search is described in 1:12–13: it concerns “everything that is done under heaven,” i.e., Qohelet comprehensively examines human activity, institutions, and behavior. For such a broad search, the conclusion comes quickly: “I saw all the things that are done under the sun, and behold, everything is vanity [הֶבֶל] and chasing after the wind” (v. 14). The next verse gives Qohelet’s reason for this conclusion:

מְעֻת לֹא-יֻכַל לְתַקֵּן וְחֶסְרוֹן לֹא-יֻכַל לְהַמְנוֹת

What is twisted cannot be straightened,
what is lacking cannot be counted. (1:15)

⁸ Ibid., 426.

⁹ Ibid., 423.

¹⁰ Ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature comparable to Qohelet tends to be more obviously cynical. See the long quotations and relevant discussion in Fox, *Time to Tear Down*, 11–14.

There is an irreducible twisting or disjointedness to life under the sun, which we cannot rectify—so Qohelet claims in the first clause of this verse. The second clause implies not just that we do not have all the pieces we need to put the whole picture together but that we do not even know how many pieces we are missing.

Reading Ecclesiastes can be a strange experience because one often wants to argue with the shocking things Qohelet says, but the more one engages with Qohelet’s argument, the more difficult it becomes to keep disagreeing. I doubt many of us drive to work in the morning consciously thinking that the next eight hours will be spent chasing the wind. But on the other hand, who can deny the disjointedness against which we struggle in our work and relationships? And surely each one of us has had those surreal moments when we face the profound limitations of our understanding of ourselves, our situation, and our world—and, further, that surreal sense that we cannot even identify what we are missing? But if that is the case, it becomes difficult to avoid Qohelet’s claim in v. 14. Given this twistedness, how can our work escape the contamination of הֶבֶל? Given the limits on our understanding and our ability to control our lives, how could it be otherwise? Our ambitions and goals will always outstrip what we can produce, and whatever we do produce will not last long. In an important sense, from an “under the sun” perspective, we are chasing the wind. And this is the case even though God himself has given us this work to do (v. 14). Unfortunate a business as it may be, everything done under the sun is given to man by God.

Things do not get better in the final three verses of the chapter, in which Qohelet reflects on his own investigation in vv. 12–15. After stating that he was in a position to make the sort of claims he did (vv. 16–17a), he calls his investigation yet one more act of wind-chasing (v. 17b). Qohelet’s recognition of vanity is itself subject to that vanity. Verse 18 gives the reason for this: as Qohelet increased in wisdom (v. 16), so the level of pain and stress and frustration in his life increased. When I teach Ecclesiastes, I tell my students that if their degree from Briercreech makes their lives easier, then the institution has failed them. Growth in wisdom necessitates deeper levels of pain because the twistedness, the disjointedness, the frustration of creation becomes all the more evident.

In 2:1–3, Qohelet makes a second, more restricted search, this time confining himself to what is good for human beings in whatever time they have (v. 3). It is as if Qohelet, soured by the world and its activity as a whole, turns to the finest and most noble things in life. His list of accomplishments in vv. 4–9 is truly impressive, but already in v. 1 Qohelet gives us advance notice that this second investigation terminates, as the first did, in vanity. We see why in vv. 10–11, where Qohelet reflects on his accomplishments. He begins positively by saying in v. 10 that he gave himself over to enjoying his work and that his heart rejoiced in all his labor. This is his portion or inheritance (חֵלֶק) from his life’s work. In one sense, Qohelet’s second search succeeded because he was able to “look upon god” (רָאָה בְּטוֹב), or, as most translations have it, “enjoy himself.” Note that Qohelet remains within himself in v. 10, speaking of his own involvement in his work. This perspective changes in v. 11: Qohelet stands back and considers his accomplishments in themselves. When he does this, his joy evaporates as he relegates all his work to הֶבֶל and wind-chasing (v. 11, without profit or permanent advantage יִתְרוֹן) again, strongly recalling 1:3). There seem to be two reasons for this conclusion. First, the amount of joy Qohelet received from his work was not enough in itself to redeem the years of toil it required. By analogy, I found my doctorate a satisfying experience, but the quality of that satisfaction is in no way adequate to the years of toil and late nights that it cost to produce a manuscript now collecting dust in the basement of a university library. The disproportion between effort and satisfaction in result is

vanity, according to Qohelet's use of the word. Second, to whatever extent the mention of "profit" or "advantage" recalls ch. 1, one must ask how long the achievements of vv. 4–9 will last. Qohelet has enjoyed his life's work, but nothing permanent has been gained.

Qohelet retreats even further in vv. 12–23, turning to investigate wisdom and folly. (We should not forget both the practical and the moral/theological dimensions of these words in OT wisdom literature.)¹¹ Qohelet's conclusion is unambiguous and without qualification (v. 13): wisdom is better than folly and sin. In fact, Qohelet uses the word *יִתְרוֹן* again to describe the contrast between the two, implying that there is a permanent gain in wisdom, as absolute as the difference between light and darkness. The sorts of reservations Qohelet registers against all human activity (1:12–15) and satisfying accomplishment in work (2:1–11) are not applied here. But that does not mean that wisdom provides an escape from vanity because the same fate befalls both foolish and wise and both are forgotten forever in the grave (vv. 15–16). Lives completely different in their moral character end in exactly the same way. However wise one is, one dies just like a fool. In this sense, pursuing wisdom is pursuing the wind (v. 16).

Qohelet tells us his reaction to his discovery of the vanity of wisdom in vv. 17–23: he came to hate life (v. 17) and everything he worked for (v. 18). The incongruity between Qohelet's vast labor and his leaving it to another who may squander it after his death turns the labor into something hateful for Qohelet (vv. 18–21). He cannot believe he spent so many years working for something that passes out of his hands so quickly (vv. 22–23). Then, without warning, Qohelet goes on to tell us there is nothing better for us to do than eat and drink and enjoy our work as from the hand of God (v. 24). Given what he has just said about hating life and despairing over his work, this verse feels abrupt. Has Qohelet given up? Is he being ironic? Or is Qohelet resignedly recommending pleasure because he is out of options, like a condemned man enjoying his last meal?

We are, at this point, at the center of the eye of the needle. In order to pass through, let us recall that Qohelet's three searches are narrated to the reader as past events. Qohelet no longer hates life. He is telling us how he used to so that we can avoid his mistake. I cannot help but wonder if Qohelet demanded too much of life. After all, is giving your life's work to another really a "great misfortune" (v. 21)? Surely that is a bit of an overreaction. In Qohelet's three searches, he seems to be putting infinite demands on finite things, asking them to satisfy him in ways they were never intended to. We are not much different: we expect some permanent gain under the sun for our work (1:3) and then are bitterly disappointed when life fails our expectations. Qohelet is counseling us not to identify the value of our work with permanent and stable results that we can secure. The value of our work is rather found in its status as a gift directly from God. Life under the sun is subject to incongruities and flagrant inconsistencies that we will never understand, much less untangle. But we should enjoy life under the sun anyway for no other reason than that God gives it to us (vv. 25–26). Qohelet is telling us to avoid his mistake and avoid trying to manipulate our *הַבְּלָה*-existences to achieve permanent results. Just enjoy what God gives you. In a profound paradox, the "recognition of the absurdity of human life requires nothing less and nothing more than exhausting every present moment as God's gift."¹²

Let us try to sketch more concretely what living this paradox day by day actually looks like. We all enjoy things we do not deserve, and each one of us lacks things we might legitimately expect to have.

¹¹ See further the fulsome description of wisdom and those possessing it in Bruce Waltke, *Proverbs 1–15* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 53–55, 94–107.

¹² William Brown, *Character in Crisis: A Fresh Approach to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 148.

This incongruity is inescapable. Qohelet's counsel to us is not to try to figure out why this is so, as if from survivor's guilt. We are rather to enjoy our lives as a gift from on high, almost—if you will excuse the phrase—as if they come out of nowhere. Enjoy your work or a vacation from it, and don't look beyond it. Don't try to understand how you might keep the life you have or how it may be taken from you. Accept it for what it is: a good, vain thing.¹³ God wants us to enjoy life without forgetting that such enjoyment is colored by הַבְּלָה, remembering that our God-given enjoyment of life does not unlock life's secret or give us a way out of הַבְּלָה.¹⁴

Furthermore, do not set your hopes on leaving a permanent mark on the world (or your denomination) through your work, or you will burn out.¹⁵ Only God knows the end result of your work, not you. Just enjoy working on what is at hand.¹⁶ Minister to others with everything you have (9:10) without worrying about the end result or being envious (4:4) of the pastor down the road who has a bigger church and more money at his disposal and flashier services, but who is not very spiritually minded (this, too, is הַבְּלָה). God has apportioned all manner of absurdities under the sun. Leave the results of your work with God and keep your eye on the plow in front of you. Since God has placed mastery outside of our reach, simply enjoy each good thing as it comes.¹⁷ It is our illusion of mastery—and our identification of the value of our work (and our lives) with this mastery—from which Qohelet seeks to deliver us.

This is the path to true engagement with life colored by vanity. In Jacques Ellul's striking words, "In order to be prepared to hope in what does not deceive, we must first lose hope in everything that deceives."¹⁸ As a seminary professor with an incurably bookish bent, I personally find it deeply liberating to disconnect the value of my teaching and writing from visible results. It is a relief to me to admit that I cannot produce the results I want in my students; that is God's work. With regard to publishing, it has been my observation that paradigms in OT studies last around 50 years; articles published in the 1960s and 1970s are already beginning to look like antiques. Soon my work will be an antique as well. If I set my hopes on making a visible impact on the state of professional biblical studies, I may very well become so frustrated that I start to hate the work. This is true even if I succeed, for (if I am honest) I will have to admit that my influence will fade quickly. Qohelet liberates me from that despair to enjoy each day of teaching, simply and as nothing else than a gift. And God's word becomes rich and sharp in a way it never would if my only goal were to be an influential professional scholar.

It would be easy to translate these reflections for someone pastoring full-time: instead of worrying about how big your church is compared to others or how impressive the services are or how many compliments you receive, enjoy the counseling appointment you have this afternoon or the half-hour you have carved out for sermon preparation. God himself is giving these gifts directly to you, and he does not give them to everyone.

An additional aspect of Qohelet's most paradoxical way of encouraging us is seen in 9:7–10, a passage very similar to 2:24–26. In this later passage, Qohelet again tells us to enjoy our lives and our work to the hilt, "for God has already approved of your work" (כִּי כָבַר רָצָה הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂיךָ) v.

¹³ Ellul, *Reason for Being*, 109.

¹⁴ Ibid., 109.

¹⁵ Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 149.

¹⁶ Ibid., 150.

¹⁷ R. K. Johnston, "Confessions of a Workaholic': A Reappraisal of Qoheleth," *CBQ* 38 (1976): 21.

¹⁸ Ellul, *Reason for Being*, 47.

7). The word “already” is most striking. I take Qohelet to be saying that before we achieve what we want in our work (if we ever do), God is already smiling on us. God is pleased with us irrespective of what we do or do not accomplish. To use a somewhat different framework, God is pleased with our lives irrespective of our works. God simply smiles and gives us these gifts. That is the value of our work: the status as gifts according to grace, not visible results we can give back to God.

3. “A Time for Everything”: God’s Purpose in the Frustration of Creation (3:1–15)

So far, we have focused on Qohelet’s understanding of **הַבִּלְבָּל** and the paradoxical way in which **הַבִּלְבָּל** puts us in a position most securely to rejoice in God’s gift of life and work. But we have not said much about God’s involvement in his frustrated creation. Qohelet addresses this question in a most interesting way in 3:1–15.

Qohelet begins with the beautiful poem in vv. 1–8. These lines echo, at a number of levels, the language and imagery of 1:3–11, but in a more positive way: instead of the wind wearily blowing past one more generation that cannot produce anything new, we now see an appropriate time for everything. An order emerges in which God makes everything beautiful in its time (v. 11). Even if Qohelet is not retracting his thesis about **הַבִּלְבָּל** in these verses, the gloom and pressure of chs. 1–2 is lifting.

Qohelet goes further in v. 11 by claiming that God has put **עוֹלָם** in our hearts. The word generally refers to a very long time, whether past or future;¹⁹ sometimes it shades into “timelessness” and is best translated as “everlasting” or “for all time” (e.g., Eccl 12:5; Isa 40:28). This is, of course, something of a strange thing to say. The translation of the word and the sense of the line have been taken in very different ways.²⁰ I think “eternity” best captures the sense, although I am not entirely happy with that rendering because it may call to the mind of Western readers certain philosophical ideas not present in the OT. Nevertheless, the contrast with specific times in the immediately preceding clause indicates that Qohelet is thinking of something beyond time.²¹ The first clause in v. 11 obviously recalls the times for appropriate action in vv. 1–8. As a result, both the first clause of v. 11 and vv. 1–8 form a context for understanding the claim that God has put **עוֹלָם** in the heart of man. I take Qohelet to be saying that, as we move through those differing seasons of our lives that God has appointed for us (vv. 1–8), we sometimes get a hint of a far greater order of which individual seasons are only a small part. We are struck by what the missionary and martyr Jim Elliot, quoting Wordsworth, called that “sense of something far more deeply interfused.”²² We who are bound in time grope after some comprehensive, “above the sun” view of reality, outside of time. Qohelet is saying that God has put this impulse within us (v. 11a)—and not only that but that God simultaneously frustrates this impulse and prevents our grasping comprehensively God’s work in the world and his ordering of human time (v. 11b).²³ Under

¹⁹ HALOT 798–99.

²⁰ See Fox, *Time to Tear Down*, 210–11, for a discussion of various proposals. Fox argues against reading “eternity” because he says any impulse toward eternity “is irrelevant to this passage and foreign to the book.” In my opinion, this is an overly hasty conclusion. Fox’s own reading changes (without textual support) the MT’s **הָעוֹלָם** to **הָעֵמָל**, “labor,” and interprets the verse in light of 8:17. But this seems to render the verse jejune.

²¹ C. L. Seow, *Ecclesiastes* (AB 18C; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 163.

²² Elisabeth Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty: The Life and Testament of Jim Elliot* (1958; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 102, quoting Wordsworth’s poem “Tintern Abbey.”

²³ Brown, *Character*, 144–47.

divine provocation, we continually reach for something God himself has blocked off. Because of this, there is nothing better for us than to accept our place in time and enjoy our works and lives, for this is a gift directly from God (vv. 12–13).

But why has God done this? Qohelet answers in v. 14: so that we might fear before him. This is not cowering before an inscrutable dictator. In OT wisdom literature, “the fear of the Lord” is a summary statement for a relationship with God (among many references, see Prov 1:7; Job 1:1). In other words, God has put eternity in our hearts but bound us within time, all in order to drive us to himself. He is at work in all of human history (3:11; 7:13–15; 8:17), but in such a way that we cannot change anything he does (v. 14) or even understand what he is doing, regardless of our yearning to do so (v. 11). We are aware of something beyond time that God prevents us from finding so that, bereft of any bird’s-eye view of reality, bereft of any comprehensive, consistent grasp of the whole, we turn to God in love, reverence, and obedience. This is God’s purpose in subjecting his creation to **הַבְּלָה**. Denied any kind of God-like mastery over or even understanding of our lives, we can turn to God as God and not just someone to give us what we want.

Qohelet makes a final tantalizing claim in v. 15: “God will seek what is pursued.” Again, it is not entirely clear what this means. Many take the clause negatively in the sense that God keeps the useless round of events on its ever-circling course.²⁴ Seow more plausibly understands the clause to mean that, while humans have no permanent gain from all their labor, God seeks the things we lose. God takes care of the things we cannot hold on to.²⁵ But if so, do we ever see them again? This brings us to the subject of God’s judgment of all things and the conclusion of this article.

4. Conclusion: God’s Approving Judgment

Qohelet mostly restricts his claims to life under the sun, but the book of Ecclesiastes as a whole does not: the spirit returns to God who gave it (12:7), and the book ends by affirming that God will bring everything into judgment, good or evil (12:14). This implies that the smallest details of this absurd, fleeting, warped, good existence matter to God and will be evaluated in the eschaton.²⁶ Speaking from a broader biblical perspective, we can say that that final day will manifest the true character of each one’s work (1 Cor 3:13–15), and what was absurd and without any permanent gain under the sun will be shown to have eternal value, through the working of the Holy Spirit. Because of this, we can labor and minister now in ignorant hope, eagerly awaiting that day when the sun falls from the heavens (2 Pet 3:10), creation is made new, and our great Savior comes to reward those who once labored in vain but will then enter into the joy of their master (Matt 25:21).²⁷

²⁴ See, e.g., Fox, *Time to Tear Down*, 213–14.

²⁵ Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 165–66.

²⁶ Derek Kidner, *The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes: An Introduction to Wisdom Literature* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1985), 103. Doubtless some commentators will balk at the idea of an eschatological judgment in Ecclesiastes, but given the ways Qohelet has complained about a lack of justice in the world (e.g., 8:11), one wonders when else this comprehensive judgment could happen.

²⁷ Readers interested in further considering this issue are directed to Luther’s reading of Ecclesiastes, as summarized in Robert Kolb and Charles Arand, *The Genius of Luther’s Theology: A Wittenburg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 119–20.

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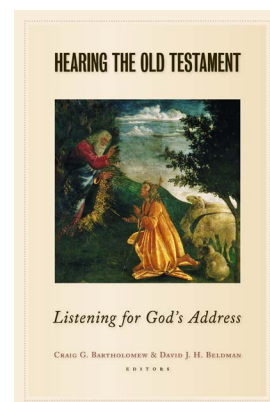
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— OLD TESTAMENT —

Craig G. Bartholomew and David J. H. Beldman, eds. *Hearing the Old Testament: Listening for God's Address*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. xviii + 475 pp. £21.99/\$32.00.

As its subtitle indicates, *Hearing the Old Testament* offers an approach to interpreting the Old Testament that aims at *Listening for God's Address*. The book contains sixteen essays divided into four sections, with each section building on those preceding. The first section offers a single programmatic essay by Craig G. Bartholomew outlining the Trinitarian hermeneutic adopted throughout, which is grounded in the claim that “[f]or Christians ‘God’ is the starting point from which everything else is to be understood. And in Christian thought the doctrine of the Trinity specifies the meaning and reference of ‘God’” (p. 7). According to Bartholomew, a Trinitarian hermeneutic recognizes the authority of the OT and “attend[s] to [its] discrete witness” (p. 12), while also acknowledging its place in a larger canon culminating in the NT. Moreover, such a hermeneutic is both confessional and ecclesial, and it “opens up the feast of Scripture with its endless possibility of fecund, theological interpretation” (p. 19).



Part II includes eight methodological essays that further clarify the types of tools and methods that are consonant with the book's Trinitarian hermeneutic, beginning with a historical survey of OT interpretation by Al Wolters (ch. 2). An essay on philosophy, again by Bartholomew, calls interpreters to give greater attention to their philosophical presuppositions (ch. 3) and advocates an epistemology rooted in Christ, who is “the clue to [both] theology and philosophy” (p. 61). Addressing modern literary approaches to the OT, David J. H. Beldman highlights various features of Hebrew narrative and poetry (ch. 4), while Tremper Longman III discusses challenges to the historicity of the OT (ch. 5), concluding with some observations on “the art of biblical history” (p. 115). Mark J. Boda calls interpreters to observe biblical-theological trajectories, noting both continuity and discontinuity (ch. 6), and Stephen G. Dempster explores the implications of the canon and canonical shaping for hearing OT texts (ch. 7). Finally, Christopher J. H. Wright considers how the OT may be read in light of “the ultimate mission of God for the redemption of humanity and creation” (p. 184; ch. 8), and M. Daniel Carroll R. examines its ethical framework (ch. 9).

The six essays in Part III apply these approaches to the OT text. Gordon J. Wenham covers the Pentateuch (ch. 10), Iain Provan the historical books (ch. 11), J. Clinton McCann Jr. the Psalter (ch. 12), Bartholomew the wisdom books (ch. 13), Richard Schultz the Major Prophets (ch. 14), and Heath Thomas the Minor Prophets (ch. 15). (Unfortunately, this division results in the exclusion of the Song of Songs and Lamentations, which perhaps could have been treated alongside the Psalms.) Each of these authors gives some attention to major scholarly debates, the message of the text itself, and the relationship between the Testaments, but the essays vary widely in both format and content. Whereas the bulk of Wenham's essay is devoted to a book-by-book exploration of the Pentateuch, Provan focuses on describing various features of biblical historiography, illustrating his points with examples from the OT historical books. Moreover, while Schultz discusses ways in which the Major Prophets have been misheard and offers suggestions for a “hearing therapy” (p. 347), Thomas traces four major themes through the Book of the Twelve. In general, literary, biblical-theological, and canonical perspectives

dominate, but other approaches may be found as well. For example, Provan interacts significantly with Wright's chapter on mission (esp. pp. 269–70), and Bartholomew applies psychological analysis to Ecclesiastes and Job (pp. 312–16, 322–24). The volume concludes in Part IV with an essay on preaching by Aubrey Spears (ch. 16), which advocates a recovery of spiritual interpretation, drawing on the fourfold sense of Scripture popular until the modern period.

Not everyone will agree that the OT should be read through the lens of a Trinitarian hermeneutic or on what that should entail, and the essays in Part III reflect the struggle of discerning how such an approach works out in practice. Wenham picks up on Trinitarian "hints" in the creation narrative (pp. 237–38), McCann cautiously assesses the relationship between the messianic psalms and Jesus (pp. 284–85), and Schultz notes references to God as "Father," the coming Messiah, and the work of the Spirit in the Major Prophets (pp. 335–36). However, for the most part, Trinitarian reflection is rather subdued in this section.

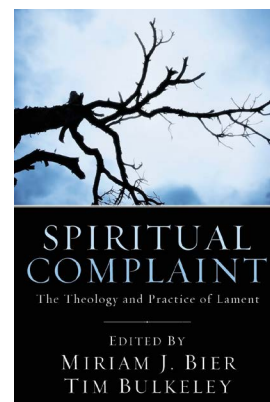
Nevertheless, *Hearing the Old Testament* is invaluable for its effort to break through the divide between the academy and the church, marshaling the best scholarly resources to help the contemporary people of God better discern God's voice addressing them through the OT. The methodological essays provide theoretical clarity about what is involved in the task of interpreting the OT with an ear open to "listen for God's address," and they offer practical tips, drawing attention to the kinds of questions readers should ask of the biblical text. Moreover, the exegetical studies present informed, penetrating, and theologically rich readings of Scripture, providing significant fuel for pastors who seek to bring the living word of God in the OT to bear on the needs of their ecclesial contexts.

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Miriam J. Bier and Tim Bulkeley, eds. *Spiritual Complaint: The Theology and Practice of Lament*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013; Cambridge: James Clarke, 2014. xvi + 280 pp. £22.80/\$33.00.

This is a volume containing a variety of literary pieces, each related in one fashion or another to the mystery of suffering and the life of faith. It arose out of a colloquium sponsored by the Laidlaw-Carey Graduate School in New Zealand. The fourteen contributors to the volume are a distinguished international lot, with the majority of them connected professionally with Australia and New Zealand. The two editors are Old Testament scholars, which helps account for the emphasis on Old Testament and related matters among the contributions. The book is dedicated to the victims of the earthquake that struck Christchurch, NZ, in February 2011.

The first piece is a sensitive, modern lament for Christchurch by Colin Buchanan. It is followed by contributions arranged in four parts: "Foundations," with seven essays related to laments and complaints in the Old Testament; "Reflections," with two essays exploring the relationship between lament and Christian worship; "Explorations," with four essays engaging the modern application of lament in multiple cultural settings; and "Refraction," with a single,



autobiographical essay employing the persona of the Shulamith in the *Song of Songs* to depict painful experiences in the modern state of Israel.

There is much here to provoke thought and reflection. The “Foundations” essays deal with lament/complaint traditions in the Old Testament. Tim Bulkeley explores whether Jeremiah confesses, laments, or complains as responses to suffering. Three different essays (Elizabeth Boase, Donald P. Moffat, and Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer) discuss the differences between lament and penitence in the Old Testament. One (Will Kynes) shows intertextual connections between Job and Ps 22. Another sheds light on the book of Lamentations through examination of its fourth chapter (Miriam Bier). Perhaps the densest of the essays analyzes metaphors for the enemy in Job from a socio-cognitive approach (Carlos Patrick Jimenez). The author takes time to define his method as well as to apply it.

In the “Reflections” section Robin Parry, an acknowledged expert on Lamentations, wrestles with the book’s use in Christian worship. His essay is a fine example of a practical theology at work, based on a serious, theological engagement with Scripture. The second essay by Colin Buchanan suggests ways in which laments can be incorporated into Christian liturgy.

The “Explorations” section covers wide territory. The first essay (Alistair MacKenzie) connects biblical and Western lament traditions to those of the Māori in Aotearoa. The second (Jeanette Mathews) proposes that the laments can be understood and appropriated in modernity via the performance concept of “framing.” Some examples of lament poems of the Karen people (i.e., Burmese refugees) are presented. The third explores laments in public spaces in modern settings (Elizabeth Boase and Steve Taylor). This entry offers an intriguing discussion of concerts presented by U2 in places where disasters had struck. A fourth (Stephen Garner) lists the ways that new media may allow for public expression of lament, while acknowledging such opportunities may have a dark side.

The one piece (Yael Klangwisan) in the “Refraction” section poetically adopts and adapts the first-person voice that a reader encounters in Old Testament laments. The incorporation of texts and personae from the Song of Songs, along with the mixing of genres, makes for jarring reading, but that seems part of the intent.

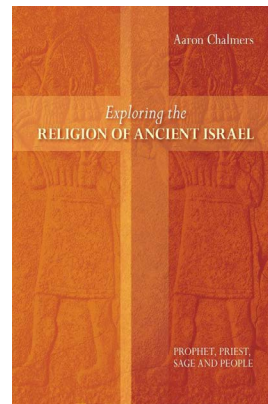
Given its range of presentation and topics, the volume can engage a reader in multiple ways. Biblical scholars will be impressed with the review and analysis of Old Testament texts. For example, anyone interested in the book of Lamentations has two excellent essays to digest (Bier and Parry) and those interested in how, or to what extent, the Old Testament moves over time from lament traditions to those of penitence have three essays to compare. Those interested in modern ways of expressing lament to God will find both compelling description and insightful, multi-cultural analyses.

The volume and readers would have been helped by an examination of ways in which New Testament writers deal with the lament tradition they inherited in their Scriptures, or don’t, as the case may be. The book becomes a one-sided presentation of the biblical material when there are seven essays in the “Foundations” section, all oriented to Old Testament texts. An essay, for example, on the place of Ps 22 in the Passion narratives or one on the cry of the martyrs in Rev 6:10 would go well in this volume. That said, there is much to be thankful for in this volume, drawing together as it does, insights from both the biblical text and contemporary reflection on the practice of lamentation.

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Aaron Chalmers. *Exploring the Religion of Ancient Israel: Prophet, Priest, Sage and People*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2012. xvi + 160 pp. \$30.00.

Seminary teachers are in constant need of new, well-informed, and informative textbooks. Whereas valuable introductions to the Old Testament, the history of Israel, or its ancient Near Eastern backgrounds are available, there are probably fewer textbooks that could be assigned for a course specifically on the *religion* of ancient Israel. In this context, Aaron Chalmers's work is a welcome addition as a resource of this kind. In accordance with a format already used for other IVP Academic titles in the "Exploring" series (e.g., "Exploring the Old Testament"), this relatively short book contains five chapters following a simple but attractive layout. The main text is written in two columns and clearly divided according to a detailed outline; it is accompanied by many interesting textboxes and illustrations (i.e., drawings or photographs). Each chapter addresses simple and practical questions. For instance, where were prophets to be found? How did someone become a prophet? What did a prophet do? The result is a series of chapters that can easily be assigned as reading to students. Moreover, the characteristics that one expects of such a book are a combination of clarity and up-to-date information, and this is, in my opinion, exactly what Chalmers offers us here. With the exception of one surprising reference to Wikipedia (p. 16), the bibliography is representative of the current scholarly discussions and contains well-chosen titles. In addition, students will appreciate that each chapter ends with a selection of a few titles for further reading.



More importantly, the approach adopted by the author proves to be an efficient one: he has chosen to introduce the reader to ancient Israel's religion by describing what we know of the main actors involved in it. Thus, after a brief review of the "sources for reconstructing the social and religious world of ancient Israel" (pp. 6–14), each chapter is devoted to a group of "characters" such as priests, prophets, wise people, and common people; the book also includes an excursus on the religious role of the king. I confess that my initial reaction was to wonder if this approach would be too restrictive—would not important aspects of Israel's religious activities be ignored by focusing on people? But the actual content of the book convinced me that this is a fine strategy. With discussion of sanctuaries, teraphim (household gods), high places, terracotta figurines, the Ugaritic Baal cycle, "Asherah," and Israelite tombs, among others, there is hardly an important sub-topic that is bypassed. (That said, some of them are addressed rather quickly, and it seems to me, for instance, that the chapter on priests could have included a development on the different types of sacrifice in Leviticus and their ANE parallels.) Another advantage of the book's approach is that it allows the author not only to expound well-known topics but also to highlight less-explored ones, for example, the training of the prophets, the presence of female prophets in Israel, and the role of the wise in Israelite society.

Obviously, any synthesis on the religion of ancient Israel depends on the use of the available sources, including the biblical text, and the current diversity among scholars about the reliability of the Old Testament inevitably leads to different reconstructions. Chalmers's own perspective is middle-of-the-road, neither maximalist nor minimalist, in that he regards the biblical text as a valuable source of information and takes it seriously into account, but does not ignore the current scholarly debates in the field of biblical criticism and integrates some results of the latter into his own reconstruction. Predictably, some readers more conservative than he will have reservations when the text does not seem to be regarded as the final authority on some matters. For instance, according to the author, what the

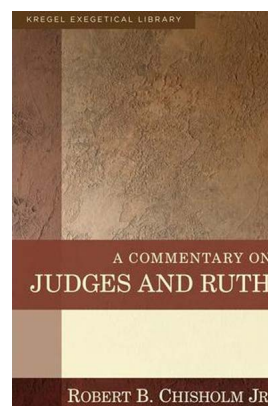
Deuteronomist claims about non-Levites appointed as priests by Jeroboam I (1 Kgs 13:33) needs to be viewed with a certain degree of suspicion, though he takes this as possibly authentic information (p. 18). Similarly, he downplays the implications of 2 Chr 26, where King Uzziah is punished because he tried to offer incense, for the reconstruction of the king's role in religious matters, on the grounds that it is a late and post-exilic text (p. 90). There are, however, only a very few places in the book where the author distances himself from what the texts say. On the other end of the spectrum, more critical scholars will doubt that Leviticus is a source for pre-exilic Israel, in contrast with the author's perspective (p. 37n10; note that most competent linguists will agree with him, since Leviticus is written in Classical Biblical Hebrew and not in Late Biblical Hebrew). These scholars may feel that he uncritically uses many Old Testament passages as a source for his historical reconstruction since he makes an extensive use of the Bible and trusts it far more often than not. One cannot please everybody, and it is inevitable that some readers will disagree on some points. However, I think that most knowledgeable readers will regard the vast majority of the content as a reasonable and accurate description of the current state of knowledge. In my view, even professors who have a higher view of Scriptures than the author would benefit from using his book to teach, not only because this disagreement concerns only a handful of points, but also precisely because doing so would create an opportunity for them to discuss these issues with their students rather than ignore the critical debates. In fact, this work is such a fine example of a textbook written with admirable teaching skills, bringing together so much information in a short space without losing clarity, that it would merit being read by a far wider readership than only students.

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Robert B. Chisholm Jr. *A Commentary on Judges and Ruth*. Kregel Exegetical Library. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013. 688 pp. \$39.99.

This commentary by Robert Chisholm Jr., a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, is one of the first entries in the Kregel Exegetical Library, a new series of commentaries published by Kregel (this is the second entry after Allen Ross's *Psalms*). Kregel has not published a preface for the series, but it appears that it will be written by conservative evangelical scholars and will be for pastors. Chisholm is a good choice to write this volume, as he has published extensively on Judges, Ruth, and Old Testament narrative.

The introduction for Judges includes material on literary structure, date of the text and events (dating is evidently an important topic for Chisholm, as he dedicates 20 pages to the topic), the main themes of the book, the role of judges and women in the book of Judges, the narrative structure of Judges, opinions of other commentaries on the book, and guidelines for preaching the book. He suggests that Judges has three main purposes: (1) a defense of YHWH's reputation that had been endangered by Israel's disobedience; (2) a warning to Israel of assimilating its environment (though Chisholm does not use the term, this is what Daniel Block helpfully calls the "Canaanization" of Israel); and (3) a demonstration of the need for talented and righteous leaders. He argues that the book has a strong anti-Benjamin and anti-Ephraim agenda with a slightly pro-Judah perspective (although that positive stance about Judah



is qualified in many ways). The section on the role of women is particularly helpful, as Chisholm shows the changing role of women in the book as Israel sinks deeper into its sin.

Chisholm begins each pericope with a translation (very similar to Chisholm's NET Bible translation), narrative structure, which consists of his description of each clause (such as sequential, consequential, initiatory, focusing, supplemental, and contrastive), and textual notes (in footnotes). This section occupies a considerable amount of space (about 20% of the text for each pericope). Chisholm's clause descriptions could be a helpful guide for those who do not know Hebrew, but it will take work for some readers to interpret his terminology and know how it will help them understand the text better (Chisholm briefly explains his terminology on pp. 81–86; a footnote to the much longer descriptions in his book *From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999] would have been helpful). This kind of discourse analysis seems to be becoming more prominent in commentaries (for example, see the new Zondervan series *Hearing the Message of Scripture*), but the current diversity within the field of discourse analysis will make it difficult to standardize its findings and make it accessible for pastors.

The introductory section on Ruth follows a similar format. Chisholm argues that the book of Ruth demonstrates God's concern for the needy, the importance of loyalty and kindness, the reward for "those who are faithful in their God-given relationships" (p. 564), and David's divine election.

After a brief look at the literary structure of each pericope in Judges and Ruth, Chisholm spends the majority of his time working through the text in standard commentary style. He concludes each pericope with a section entitled "Message and Application," which was the highlight of the book for me. While many commentary series that portray themselves as being for preachers fall short of that goal, this commentary clearly succeeds in helping pastors preach the text. For each pericope Chisholm traces for the reader how he moves from the story to an exegetical idea that summarizes the main point of the text. For example, part of the exegetical idea for the Samson pericope is that "God was at work among his people, even when they were insensitive to his presence. He accomplished his purpose through unwise Samson, though Samson failed to understand his role as God's deliverer and was motivated by personal gratification and vengeance, not some sense of higher calling" (p. 434). Chisholm then draws a theological principle that is applicable to all the people of God throughout history: "God is always at work among his people, even when they are insensitive to his presence" (p. 434). Finally, Chisholm presents various ways that a pastor could preach the text, including aspects such as sample sermon titles ("A Sovereign God Can Win with His Hands Tied Behind His Back" [p. 435]) or summarizing in a paragraph what a sermon might contain. This detailed work demonstrating how to move from the text to a sermon is excellent.

Overall, the commentary is a helpful work for explaining the books of Judges and Ruth. The greatest problem with the book, in my opinion, can be seen when Chisholm's work is contrasted with another recent commentary on Judges by Barry Webb in the New International Commentary on the Old Testament series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012). Webb is far weaker in the application category, but his discussion of the text is more organized and readable. Chisholm becomes somewhat too encyclopedic in categorizing various views (although he very rarely refers to anything not written in English) and his prose jumps around without finding the smooth flow that Webb exhibits.

While Chisholm's may not be the best commentary for explaining the text (I would recommend the commentaries by Block and Webb), it surpasses other commentaries in showing how to apply Old

Testament narrative to today's world and will provide much helpful direction not only for those wishing to preach Judges and Ruth, but also for those wishing to teach any Old Testament narrative.

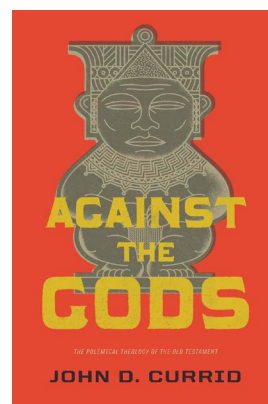
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John D. Currid. *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2013. 153 pp. \$17.99.

In this 'introductory work' John Currid examines one aspect of the relationship of the Old Testament to ancient Near Eastern literature, what he terms 'polemical theology,' that is, biblical writers using 'thought forms and stories that were common in ancient Near Eastern culture, while filling them with radically new meaning' (p. 25). After 'A Brief History of Ancient Near Eastern Studies' (ch. 1), chapter 2 explains 'The Nature of Polemical Thought and Writing,' then each of the nine subsequent chapters presents an example.

Clear cases of 'polemical theology' are evident in Hebrew poetry when 'biblical authors take well-known expressions and motifs . . . and apply them to the person and work of Yahweh' (p. 25, see ch. 11, 'Canaanite Motifs'). However, Currid concentrates on narratives. Discussing creation accounts, he assumes the composer of Genesis knew ancient literature (p. 44) and consciously opposed it. Genesis 1 is not an adaptation of foreign myths, a demythologisation, as widely supposed. Whereas the ancient Near Eastern texts 'are legendary stories without determinable basis in fact as history,' Gen 1–2 is 'historical narrative' (pp. 43, 44), yet within it there is clear polemic against the theogony and polytheism of others. The similarities listed on p. 55 between the biblical and the Babylonian reports of the Flood have led many to assert the Babylonian versions underlie the Hebrew. (Irving Finkel, *The Ark before Noah: Decoding the Story of the Flood* [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2014], is the most recent.) Others disagree, notably Gerhard von Rad, and the author claims the biblical narratives are true, whereas the others have 'some kernels of historical truth . . . pagan authors distorted fact by dressing it up with polytheism, magic, violence and paganism. Fact became myth' (p. 61). The biblical texts were written partly to discredit those versions. Babylonian Flood poems have famished, quarrelling gods afraid of the flood, who gather like flies over the survivor's sacrifice, whereas in the biblical account God is in control and savours the aroma of Noah's offering. Currid might have added that God's rainbow was the sign he would never send another Deluge; the Babylonian goddess Ishtar swore by her blue bead necklace that the Flood should never be forgotten.

In considering 'Joseph, the Tale of the Two Brothers, and the "Spurned Seductress" Motif' (ch. 5), Currid makes the significant statement, 'parallels and similarities between two stories do not necessarily determine the genre or historicity of either story. There is no reason one cannot be myth and the other historical narrative' (p. 68, following James K. Hoffmeier). That is especially relevant to 'The Birth of the Deliverer' (ch. 6), the motif of the abandonment of a baby and its rescue and rise to eminence. Moses' birth is the biblical specimen, Sargon of Akkad's Birth Legend in Babylonian another (which is often taken as the source of the Exodus text), and the Egyptian myth of Horus and Seth a third. Limiting himself to a few ancient examples prevents Currid from noting how common the motif is—even down



to Superman! Surely it is widespread because it is known to happen! Reality is visible in both Sargon's and Moses's biographies: riverine dwellers could entrust the infant to a reed basket to float away on the water where someone with business at the bank might find and adopt the babe. At maturity one out of many foundlings could rise to power.

In the case of Moses's birth, the Egyptian myth of Horus offers such parallels that the author can say, 'connection between the two stories is tight and clear' (p. 83), and, 'the writer takes the famous pagan myth and turns it on its head in order to ridicule Egypt and to highlight the truth of the Hebrew world-and-life view' (p. 86). This raises the question of how well-versed in Egyptian, Babylonian, Hittite, Ugaritic and other traditions biblical writers may have been and how likely their audiences were to recognise the allusions. Would they be apparent to only a few highly educated Israelites? The Egyptian 'Book of the Heavenly Cow' has the god Re pronouncing, 'I am that I am' and two modern Egyptologists concluded the Egyptians borrowed the Hebrew epithet for God in Exodus 3, a conclusion Currid endorses after careful discussion of the divine name which he supposes the Hebrews knew long before Moses' time and then forgot while in Egypt (ch. 8). Yet we may wonder if there need be any association.

Comparisons can be made too easily, however. While the use of Moses' staff in the Pharaoh's court may have had a polemical nuance, countering the symbolism of the staff in Egypt, the similarity is weakened when we observe the Hebrew word is not necessarily 'of Egyptian origin' (p. 112), for it has a cognate in Babylonian attested well before Moses' time. An uncertainty runs through the book: did Hebrew writers consciously create their texts to counter those of other cultures, or was that a secondary aspect? Having composed their narratives, did they see similarities and so arrange their material to emphasise the differences? How can a factual basis be distinguished from polemic?

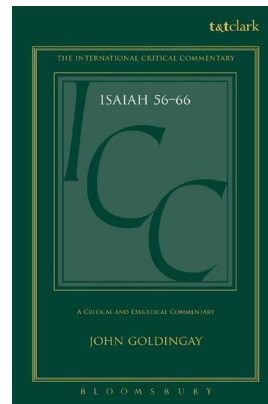
Some misunderstandings need correction. In the Sargon Legend the hero was not put in a basket 'in the rivers' (p. 78) only 'in the river', nor does a gardener rescue him 'out of the goodness of his heart' (p. 78), but 'while drawing water'. Sargon does not become a 'demigod' (p. 86). The Babylonian Noah did not save himself because of bravery and human wisdom; the creator god Enki/Ea saved him because of his piety (p. 58).

John Currid's book is welcome for exploring this subject and showing the need for further investigation to establish the unique aspects of the Old Testament.

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John Goldingay. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 56–66*. The International Critical Commentary. London: Bloomsbury, 2014. xxviii + 527 pp. \$100.00.

This volume continues John Goldingay's work in this series, following on his two volumes on Isa 40–55. The structure of the commentary follows the standard pattern of the series, beginning with an introduction (pp. 1–58) and then the commentary proper. In the commentary each segment begins with translation and notes, followed by an introduction to the segment, the comment section, and a conclusion. One of the helpful features of the comment sections, especially when the segment is a long one, is that the verse or verses being commented upon is/are printed again at the beginning of the comment. Explicitly theological reflections are usually found in the conclusions. In this reviewer's judgment the absence of any indices is a major flaw, especially in a work as full and detailed as this one is. One glaring typographical error is the header at the top of the pages on 61:1–9 (pp. 286–318), which is printed as 60:1–9.



The introduction, which incorporates materials from several of his articles, is a great pleasure to read. It is so both because of its engaging style, but also because Goldingay does not take the overly technical approach of many commentary introductions. He eschews any recapitulation of the multitudinous attempts that have been made to reconstruct the history of the text and instead looks at the various ways in which the text may be read: (1) a redaction-historical reading, (2) a sociological reading, (3) a textual reading, (4) a poetic reading, and (5) a post-colonial reading. Although Goldingay's approach is not polemical, he is very incisive concerning the inadequacies of the first two ways of reading the material. He shows that in both cases the results of great effort expended have been largely indeterminate. In his view, in spite of all this labor, we still do not know the author(s), the precise setting, or the way in which the material was compiled. He does believe that it was composed during the first century after the return from exile and that probably several prophets were involved, but he concludes that this information is not very helpful in interpreting the text. The third way of reading is to interpret the text as it is presently structured. He sees it as a five-part chiasm culminating in 61:1–9 and says that in his judgment the most fruitful approach to understanding the material is in the light of this structure (p. 20). The fourth method of poetic reading is helpful in its insistence on interpretation that is genre-sensitive, although it seems a bit detailed for the level of reader who would be likely to consult this series. However, it is not quite clear why a post-colonial reading has been singled out for special attention in the final section. Given the plethora of strategies for reading the Bible that have been put forward in recent years, it seems that a review of several of these and the way their application would affect our reading of this text might have been more helpful. It is interesting that Goldingay specifically avoids a theological reading, saying that such a reading too often involves imposing viewpoints from outside (p. 27). But surely this is a *theological text*, and to avoid reading it in that light and for that purpose is to overlook the very purpose of the writing. As for imposing viewpoints from outside, surely a post-colonial reading is that above all things.

In contrast to the introduction, the commentary itself is very densely written. It seems to this reviewer that only the very rare person would work through large sections of the material. Rather, it seems most likely that it would be consulted as a reference volume. Each section is very complete: the textual notes are detailed both in the discussion of the issue and in the number of sources referred to

concerning the issue, and the introductions consider matters of literary structure, word usage, and etymology in great detail. The comments are also very detailed. For instance, the comments on the eight verses of 56:1–8 cover 24 pages. The conclusions show considerable variety in length and depth of coverage. The conclusion to the discussion of 56:1–8 is about four and a half pages in length; whereas the conclusion on 61:1–9, the apex of the chiasm, and arguably as important as 56:1–8, if not more so, is only two and a half pages long. Overall, the conclusions will be satisfying to those who seek for the theological significance of what has been said, but as just noted, there is great variety in the depth of these reflections.

The observation of the chiasmic structure of the material and the interpretation of it in the light of that structure is surely one of the great strengths of this work. Goldingay is quite correct in his comments about the tension that the structure introduces. The author/editor is unwilling to allow his hearers/readers to bask in the certainty that God's light will dawn upon them, bringing their former oppressors to serve them and worship with them (chs. 60–62). Instead, he takes them back to the reality that unless the Divine Warrior somehow undertakes for them (63:1–6 [59:15b–21]), their characteristic sin and unbelief will doom them to destruction (63:7–66:17 [56:9–59:15a]). God does not merely intend to bless them; he intends to purify them for the sake of the nations (66:18–24 [56:1–8]).

To this extent, Goldingay's interpretation is very helpful. The place where he is ultimately unsatisfying to this reviewer is that he does not pursue his reading strategy far enough. One of the reasons for this is his unwillingness to grant genuine predictive prophecy. Thus he is unable to appreciate the true force of the chiasmic structure. He recognizes that the B-B' element (56:9–57:15b; 63:7–66:17) is about the need for spiritual restoration of the people. (The introduction of the "new heavens and earth" in 65:17–25 raises a question about where the conclusion of the book actually begins, but that is beside the present point.) He also recognizes that the C-C' element (59:15b–21; 63:1–6) stands between the former element and the succeeding (or preceding) one (60:1–22; 61:10–62:12). But he is unable to show convincingly how the work of the Divine Warrior accounts for the change from the utter darkness of 59:9 and the alienation of 64:5 to the light of 60:1 and the wedding of 62:5. How does Zion become the City of God? It is only through a fundamental change of character effected by the Warrior. Who is this Warrior? The answer is found in 61:1–9, the apex, and thus the most important point of the structure. He is the Anointed One, and his work will change the people from the seared garden of chapter 1 into "oaks of righteousness" (61:3). It is this change of character brought about through the work of the Messiah that will draw the nations to Jerusalem to learn the *Torah* of God (2:2–5; 66:18–24). But Goldingay, unwilling to grant that 61:1–9 is truly climactic in the sense of culture-changing truth, handles the passage in an almost off-handed way, suggesting that Jesus Christ appropriated it for himself although it did not actually point to him. If not to Jesus Christ, then to whom? Goldingay does not want to impose theology on the text, but he is unwilling to go where his own understanding of the text's structure would logically take him. This person is the goal of all that has been said. Who is he?

In spite of my dissatisfaction on the point just mentioned, the strengths of this commentary far outweigh its weaknesses. The author manages to steer past the excesses of critical commentaries of the past that concerned themselves with minutiae of historical and textual reconstruction, and he

renders sensible and sensitive readings of the text as it stands. His judgments on questionable issues are judicious and well-reasoned. Scholars and students will find this commentary a very valuable resource.

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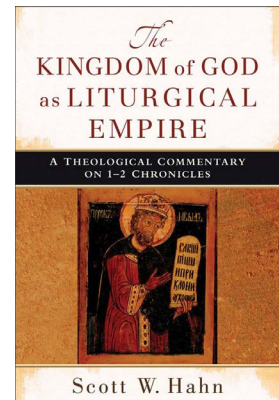
Scott W. Hahn. *The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire: A Theological Commentary on 1–2 Chronicles*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. 240 pp. \$26.00.

Scott Hahn offers a distinctive perspective on the context, theological content, and purpose of the scroll of Chronicles by presenting his thesis that the Chronicler's primary focus was a desire to reestablish liturgical worship of Yahweh in the Jerusalem Temple upon the return of the Israelite exiles. He reasons that the Chronicler viewed history as working up to the moment of the Davidic Covenant and the resulting Temple-Kingdom Age under his son Solomon, and that future history is working to restore this age through liturgy.

Hahn approaches his commentary by dividing the text of Chronicles into seven sections (i.e., genealogies, rise of David, the Davidic Covenant, beginning of the Temple-Kingdom Age, rise and reign of Solomon, division of the kingdom, and the exile and return) and clarifies the overall message of the Chronicler for each section individually and explaining how each section fits in with the overall message of Chronicles as a whole. Additionally, Hahn includes a subheading at the end of each section describing how it has influenced Christianity and been interpreted and applied. His technique provides a sweeping view of Chronicles, allowing the broader message of each major division to be accessible to the reader without losing him or her in the details.

According to Hahn, the Chronicler writes with an emphasis on covenant, liturgy and sacrament. The Chronicler's work is not one of simple historical retelling, but of "biblical theology being practiced at a very deep level" (p. 6). Typology and pattern are used to interpret Israel's history, and liturgy is key to "orient the prayer and worship of the people toward repenting for sin and seeking atonement" (p. 7). The biblical themes of covenant, *qāhāl* ("assembly"), *ma'al* ("trespass"), and liturgy are of particular importance to Hahn's understanding of the Chronicler's worldview, with the Davidic Covenant and the Temple-Kingdom Age of Solomon as the pinnacle of Israelite worship. The cyclical pattern of the failures and successes of the Judean monarchs serve as warnings and examples for the future establishment of the Israelites in Jerusalem.

Of particular interest is his chapter on the genealogies of 1 Chr 1–9. He argues for a closer inspection of these often overlooked chapters, understanding them to be a carefully crafted genealogical list that displays "the Chronicler's covenantal understanding of history as he traces Israel's heritage through individuals who spoke with God and entered into covenant with him—Adam, Noah, Abraham, and finally David" (p. 18). According to Hahn, the genealogies do not simply provide a historical-genealogical list of the people of Israel, but are instead fashioned as an "overture" (p. 19) that presents the worldview of the Chronicler and serves as the platform for his presentation. Hahn's use of extra-biblical evidence and Jewish literature is helpful to explain how the original audience of Chronicles would have understood



the often subtle messages that are missed by many modern readers unaware of the traditional stories of several of the individuals listed (e.g., Adam).

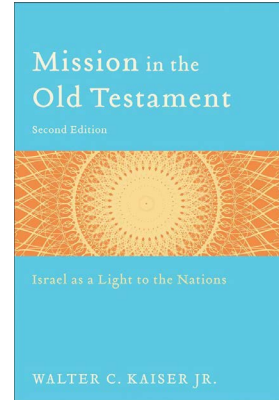
Hahn understands Christian liturgy to be the “fulfillment of the temple liturgy” (p. 102), but he does not qualify his statement with particulars as to how readers should interpret his position. It appears from his chapter entitled “Liturgy and Empire” (ch. 5) that he is referring to the “prescribed” manner of worship, which he describes thusly: “there is never anything ad hoc or improvisational about the worship of the living God; no substantive element of the liturgy is left to the subjective creativity of individual worshippers or the community. The God of the Chronicler, like the God of Exodus, is a God who demands to be worshipped in a manner that he prescribes” (p. 129). He quotes Gary Anderson (*Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel* [JSOTSup 125; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991]) to support his thesis that prayer was mostly “a carefully prescribed cultic act” (p. 129). Although Hahn refers to the liturgical acts of prayer, sacrifice, and sacrament as prepared activities, he is also clear to emphasize the necessity that thanksgiving, joy, and gladness accompany them as part of worship. He describes the liturgical worship of the Temple Era to be “both performative and formative . . . pedagogy and mystagogy” (p. 134), and he argues essentially that creation itself is liturgical.

Scott Hahn’s Catholic background is evident in his commentary, but not so much that it excludes the attentive scholarship of readers from all denominational backgrounds. In the areas where he presents characteristically Catholic theology, such as Marianism and a parallel of Mary to the Ark of the Covenant, he does not dwell on these topics but rather mentions them as topics he considers worthy of further study. Perhaps the most distinctive theme is his overall emphasis on prescribed liturgy which, although it was strongly evident in the Temple-Kingdom Age, may be overstated as to the role of its fulfillment in the Christian church. It has the potential of discouraging more spontaneous forms of prayer and worship, and may also imply a perspective on the supersession of Israel. Thus, *The Kingdom of God As Liturgical Empire* serves as a good resource for delivering the basic historical message of each major division of the scroll of Chronicles, yet the sections on how each division is interpreted within Christianity are distinctively Catholic.

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Walter C. Kaiser Jr. *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. xx + 108 pp. £11.99/\$16.99.

Walter Kaiser Jr., President Emeritus of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, wrote *Mission in the Old Testament* to challenge the idea that mission is a New Testament development and that Israel was involved in mission only centripetally, that is, attracting people to Yahweh by living out their unique relationship with him. From the first chapter, Kaiser claims that centrifugal mission was always God's plan, and he announces that "the first Great Commission mandate of the Bible" (p. xix) can be found in Gen 12:1–3, where God promised to bless Abraham and bless all peoples through him. God's promise of blessing, which also appears in the creation accounts of Gen 1–11, is one of the key themes that make up his promise-plan to the world.



Chapter 2 outlines God's plan during the patriarchal and Mosaic eras. God's promises of blessing through Abraham and his seed—both the plural "succession of representatives" and Christ who is "both part of that succession and the final consummation" of it (p. 12)—reveal God's missionary intent. Similarly, God's self-revelation at the time of the exodus ensured that the Egyptians would "know" him and that his name would "be proclaimed in all the earth" (Exod 9:14, 16). The "mixed multitude" (Exod 12:38) that joined the exodus indicates that many Egyptians came to know Yahweh as he overthrew their gods. By establishing his covenant with Israel and setting them apart as his treasured possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation (Exod 19: 4–6), God intended that they actively represent him to the nations.

Chapters 3 and 4 introduce God's work in and through the Davidic king, with its "saving implications for all men and women everywhere" (p. 24), and outline three psalms that issue a universal call to know and worship Yahweh. Kaiser observes that the promise to David in 2 Sam 7 shows remarkable verbal correspondence with the Abrahamic covenant, including its promise of a "seed" whose kingdom would last forever. Brief expositions of Pss 67, 96, and 117 highlight God's design to bless the nations and, in Kaiser's view, his requirement that his people proclaim salvation—what he sees as the Old Testament equivalent of "bring good news"—to the nations (p. 32).

Chapter 5 introduces a series of Gentiles—Melchizedek, Jethro, Balaam, Rahab, and Ruth—who came to know Yahweh as God, and devotes considerably more space to "the missiological implications of the healing of Naaman" (pp. 40–49). The prophets, as messengers of Yahweh to the nations, are examined in chapters 6 and 7. Kaiser believes Isaiah uses "Servant of the Lord" collectively and corporately to refer to the Messiah and the people of Israel (pp. 56–57) and requires the nation to act missionally, bringing justice to the nations, and being a light for the Gentiles. Chapter 7 chiefly discusses the missionary vision of the book of Jonah and briefly touches the work of Amos, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah.

The final chapter shows how Old Testament thoughts on mission influenced New Testament practice. Paul's liberal quotations from the Old Testament when teaching and writing demonstrate his conviction that preaching the gospel to the Gentiles "had always been at the heart of all that God had wanted to do and that he had called Israel and all believers to do" (p. 81).

Kaiser's book requires some comments and critique. When the first edition appeared in 2000, I had hoped it would add to the sparse literature on the Old Testament and mission. I came away then with mixed reactions that remain after reading the second edition. While clearly showing that God was

concerned with non-Jewish humanity from the beginning, the book provides scant evidence that Israel was active in centrifugal mission. No one, for instance, was actually *sent* to reach any of the Gentiles mentioned in chapter 5, and serious questions can be raised about Balaam's relationship with Yahweh. And while more psalms could have been mined to show that the nations should (and will) worship Yahweh, they don't actually entreat anyone to *go*.

The lack of proof that mission in the Old Testament is centrifugal highlights the need to develop the centripetal side of the story—Israel's role as an ethical model for the nations. (See Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God* [Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006], for the arguments, particularly page 331, where he acknowledges that mission in the Old Testament "includes both centrifugal and centripetal dynamics.") Though Kaiser's is an introductory book, more about prophets' sermons to and lawsuits against the nations would have been helpful. And while the second edition has been marginally expanded in a few points, it remains light in its review of scholarly literature. (David Bosch, Chris Wright, and others who hold contrary positions remain unmentioned.)

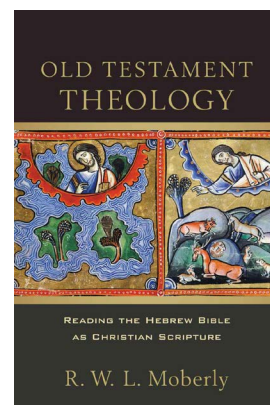
Kaiser has apparently bypassed depth to address those who are encountering the Old Testament and mission for the first time and need to know that God's promise to bless the world and bring salvation through his "seed" stretches back to Abraham and before. This is a worthy task, for God is truly a missionary God and the whole of Scripture—while not always explicitly sending people out—is a missional book that should be read in the light of this promise.

Mission in the Old Testament could be used as a supplementary text in mission and Old Testament courses. Local churches and individual Christians beginning to search for their role in the *missio Dei* will find it a good introduction and springboard for further study. Teachers and group leaders will appreciate the study questions for guiding discussions.

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R. W. L. Moberly. *Old Testament Theology: Reading the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 352 pp. \$34.99.

The title of Moberly's most recent work, *Old Testament Theology*, is both deceptive and provocative. It defies the genre of most Old Testament theologies, which seek to summarize the contents of the Old Testament. The subtitle, *Reading the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture*, better describes the book and is vintage Moberly. Taken together the two titles suggest that the primary task of Old Testament theology for Christians is to carefully read the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture. Certainly, such a move dramatically reduces the size of his text as compared to the voluminous works of most Old Testament theologies. The book is a collection of eight exegetical essays focused on key texts throughout the Old Testament. Many of the essays are significant reworkings of previous writings. Yet not only do they represent new research, the chapters together contribute towards the argument of the book. Moberly writes for non-specialists so pastors, theologians, and students will benefit from this work.



While the book is not a comprehensive treatment of the Old Testament, Moberly manages to read texts within each of the main canonical units and treats topics of significance. The first chapter explores the nature of monotheism in the Old Testament based upon a reading of the *Shema* in Deut 6:4–9. The second chapter addresses the difficult topics of election and *hērem* through a study of Deut 7. In the third chapter Moberly examines Exod 16 and the topic of manna as it relates to spiritual disciplines and formation. Chapter 4 revisits the thorny theological question, “Does God Change?” through a close reading of Jer 18:7–10; 1 Sam 15:29; and Num 23:29. Chapter 5 does not focus on a particular Isaianic text but rather traces the theme of exaltation through the book of Isaiah and how these Scriptures are fulfilled in Jesus. In Chapter 6 Moberly critiques interpretations that argue Jonah’s disappointment in Jon 4:1–3 is due to unfulfilled prophecy, and instead suggests that it is due to a misunderstanding of divine mercy. Chapter 7 provides a close reading of Pss 44 and 89 with particular attention towards the existential contradictions of divine promise and human disappointment in the face of suffering. In Chapter 8 Moberly explores the nature of wisdom in Job 28 through reading it in light of the prologue in Job 1:1–2:10. The book concludes with an epilogue where he outlines his methodological and theological concerns through reflections on the preceding essays. Moberly explicitly states that he views the canon as a normative “grammar” (p. 284) for the reading of texts, and that Old Testament theology is born out of the imaginative interplay between the world of the text and the world of the reader.

I am rarely effusive in my book reviews, but in this case I believe the praise is warranted. *Old Testament Theology* is a brilliant work. It reflects not only mature thinking, but is also clearly written. Moberly is clearly the best practitioner of the theological interpretation of the Old Testament today. This discipline prioritizes reading the Bible as the Church’s Scripture rather than for historical or other concerns. While inquiries into method are important, Moberly is right to propose that the task of Old Testament Theology *is* the reading of the Old Testament for the church today. He does not blur the distinctions between interpreting the world behind the text, the world of the text, and the world in front of the text and acknowledges the contribution of each for theological interpretation. Moberly is clear that “Christian reading needs to be attentive to the meaning of the text in its pre-Christian frame of reference; on the other hand, it must simultaneously take with full seriousness the recontextualization of the material in a frame of reference not originally its own” (p. 30). Moberly’s expertise is on display in the rigor by which he engages the ancient text and contemporary concerns, and by the delicate manner he interweaves them. As such, this work serves as a model of biblical interpretation, Christian theology, and preaching.

Moberly’s brilliance lies in his ability to be exegetically unconventional while at the same time theologically conventional. He demonstrates that biblical scholars and skeptics of the Bible over-intellectualize the text by pressing it into categories or dichotomies unknown to its authors and tradents. For example, Moberly demonstrates that the *Shema* need not be cast in either terms of monolatry or an Enlightenment monotheism, but rather Deut 6 calls for an exclusive monotheistic allegiance to God. He does not eschew difficult topics such as election and *Hērem*, which moderns find so revolting, but shows how Christians can appropriate them today. In his treatment of manna in Chapter 3, to name another instance, Moberly models how Christians are to read the Bible as a two-Testament canon. He exegetically defends and expounds a lesson of divine sustaining grace from Exodus 16 with pastoral insight. While most readers fall into theological pitfalls when broaching this topic, Moberly examines the texts describing “God repenting” and unfulfilled prophecy, and relates them to the issue of God’s sovereignty with sobriety and skill.

One complaint about this book is that I found his chapter on Isaiah and Jesus a bit uninspiring. Perhaps this is due in part to his choice not to focus on a particular text but rather a theme. In addition, it seems to me that at times his decisions about what constitutes a canonical reading appear to be quite arbitrary. He gives significant attention to the canonical shape of texts as in the case of Job 1–2 and Job 28, and yet in his treatment of Jonah and Psalms 44 and 89, he does not find their canonical placement largely significant for meaning. Regardless of these quibbles, Moberly offers an outstanding model for reading the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture.

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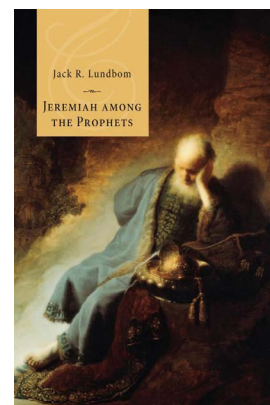
Jack R. Lundbom. *Jeremiah among the Prophets*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012; Cambridge: James Clarke, 2013. xii + 154 pp. £17.50/\$19.00.

Since completing his 2,200-page, three-volume Anchor Bible commentary in 2004, Jack Lundbom has produced a series of short books on Jeremiah. The present ‘modest introduction’ aims to be ‘a representative discussion of material contained in the biblical book of Jeremiah’ (p. ix). Its twenty short, footnote-free chapters each display an aspect of Jeremiah’s message for a lay audience.

A few distinctive elements feature—in no fixed order—in most of the book’s chapters, beginning with a focus on context. This may consist of cultural and biographical context, depicting Jeremiah’s experience in its Israelite social setting; wider historical context, focusing on the international politics that were to shape Judah’s destiny; or literary context, sometimes consisting of citations from Mesopotamian or Greek documents, but usually pointing to relevant OT parallels. For example, Jeremiah 5 is set up by an extensive retelling of Genesis 17–18 (pp. 26–27); Jeremiah 20:14–18 is prefaced by a study of Job 3 and 10 (pp. 58f.); Jeremiah 27–28 is preceded by a survey of prophetic symbolic actions from Elijah to Ezekiel (pp. 91–95). This can feel indulgent at times, but it does have the effect of deeply rooting Jeremiah in time and place. Even when in exegetical mode, Lundbom is always trying to find the time, place and historical circumstances that make the best sense of each unit of text.

Lundbom’s second distinctive element is his presentation of the text. Almost every chapter contains extensive quotations in his own translation. The treatment this text receives harks back to Lundbom’s commentary, focusing on rhetorical devices, formal structures and setting in Jeremiah’s life. It is not systematic, however: in one chapter we might find a detailed discussion of compositional criteria (pp. 32–33); in another, rhetorical criticism applied to assign speakers to a passage (pp. 37–39); and in another, a textual reconstruction (pp. 60–61). On this level the book reads like a sampler for Lundbom’s approach to Jeremiah. It is peppered with small details and suggestions which reflect his decades of work in this prophet. Readers will not always agree with Lundbom, but this is beside the point of the book, which is to provide a broad-brush sketch.

The third element of each chapter is a retelling of Jeremiah, sometimes emerging through the exegesis, sometimes appended as a summary or conclusion. I personally found this the least satisfying



aspect of the book. Lundbom tends to be more interested in locating oracles in Jeremiah's ministry than in the unfolding logic of the finished book, and this makes his retelling rather flat and theologically sparse. For example, the oracles against the nations are thoroughly sampled and described, but their placement in the book is not discussed and the reason they were uttered in the first place is touched on in merely ten lines (pp. 89–90). Lundbom does make some nice connections, as in his integrated reading of chs. 19–20 (pp. 52–56); but on the whole his interest in historical setting leads him to break up units and comment on the parts in isolation rather than looking for the editorial logic of their arrangement. Theological sparseness is another result of this approach. For example, Lundbom's parsing of God's rebuke in Jer 15:19–20 as a piece of honesty designed to lower the people's defences (p. 51) seems more rhetorical than theological; again, Lundbom's discussion of Jeremiah's laments (pp. 37–44) seems more interested in dating each oracle than in reflecting theologically on their characteristic blurring of voices. He does break the mould in his chapter on Jeremiah 30–33, however, providing some thoughtful reflection on the newness of the new covenant (pp. 116–17).

Instead of isolated reflections on the prophet's overall message and theology, the 'big idea' of Jeremiah is conveyed through the unfolding logic of Lundbom's book, which is organised around the successive 'books' Lundbom judges Jeremiah to have produced. (Lundbom's views on colophons in Jeremiah and the window they open onto the growth of the book are set out in the last chapter.) Jeremiah's 'first book' (Jer 1–20) tells the story of a prophet who remembers Israel's idyllic beginnings (Jer 2); urges repentance (Jer 3); announces destruction from the north (Jer 4–5); shows Jerusalem's unpardonable state (Jer 5); explains why covenant-breaking Judah must be exiled (Jer 7, 26); laments for the nation (Jer 8–9, 14); mourns with the nation (Jer 14–15); is persecuted by the nation (Jer 19–20); but was chosen for this task (Jer 20). In his 'second book' Jeremiah carries God's wrath to every nation (Jer 25 + 46–51); he triumphs over the false prophets (Jer 27–28); he shows that the future lies with the Babylonian exiles (Jer 24, 29); by contrast, the faithless king and people in Judah will have no future (Jer 34–35); after the nation's collapse there will be a future restoration marked by a new permanence (Jer 30–31, 32); and so Jeremiah looks to a better future in an attitude of prayerfulness (Jer 32). Finally, the 'third book' is completed by Jeremiah 37–44, where the final narrative of Jerusalem's fall presents Jeremiah as a symbol, both in his sufferings and his preservation by God.

It is this overall vision of Jeremiah, distinctively Lundbom's, and conveyed in an easily read 150 pages, which is the book's greatest asset.

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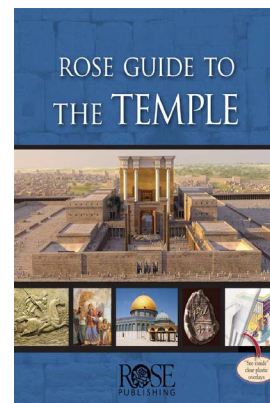
Randall Price. *Rose Guide to the Temple*. Torrance, Calif.: Rose, 2012. 144 pp. \$29.99.

The *Rose Guide to the Temple* (*RGT*) manages to provide a readable survey of the biblical temple(s) that synthesizes a wide variety of information, from archaeological and historical to biblical and theological—and all richly illustrated with diagrams, photographs, paintings, timelines and overlays. *RGT*'s author, Randall Price, earned a ThM from Dallas Theological Seminary and a PhD in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Texas (his dissertation was on the temple as an eschatological motif), and has written several temple-related books already, including *The Coming Last Days Temple* (Eugene: Harvest House, 1999), *The Battle for the Last Days Temple* (Eugene: Harvest House, 2004), and *The Temple and Bible Prophecy* (Eugene: Harvest House, 2005).

The first section, labeled “God’s Sanctuary Before the Temple,” overviews the temple within the history of salvation, with subsections on the temple before time, and on pre-temple sanctuaries in the Bible. The second section deals with the First Temple, rehearsing the biblical account as well as providing an explanation of the threefold structure of the temple complex, along with the furnishings within each area. It also includes subsections on the temple in the life of God’s people, the destruction of the temple, archaeological discoveries, and temples in the ancient Near East. This last subsection highlights the ‘Ain Dara temple which, as many scholars have noted, contains structural and stylistic affinities with Solomon’s temple. An overview of the Second Temple is covered in the book’s third section, which rightly distinguishes between Zerubbabel’s temple and that of Herod. This section also contains a unit on archaeological discoveries that notes nine interesting finds, including *miqva’ot* (ritual immersion pools) and the “place of trumpeting” stone (from which priests would signal the Sabbath). Section Four, “The Modern Temple,” reviews the history of the Temple Mount after the temple’s destruction in 70 AD, along with the present-day politics pertaining to it; other subsections explore the historical significance of the open and sealed gates of the Temple Mount, the future temple, Qumran’s *Temple Scroll*, and the New Jerusalem. After the endnotes, the book contains a bibliography and general index. It also includes a foldout poster by *National Geographic* of a digital model of the Herodian Temple Mount and (on the other side) the Temple Mount through time.

In our estimation, where *RGT* exceeds expectations is in the opening section on God’s sanctuary before time, inasmuch as it offers a biblical theology of the temple. This thematic introduction sets the book apart from other works of this sort, which typically remain within the bounds of explaining and illustrating the architectural features of the temple and the symbolism of its furnishings. For example, Price rehearses some of the parallels between the garden of Eden and the tabernacle that suggest that the former was seen as an archetypal sanctuary—a point that is commonplace in scholarship yet not often conveyed at a popular level.

This same strength, however, leads also to the work’s main disappointment: the temple *as a theme* receives inadequate development into the New Testament. In relation to the church, Price writes, “The apostle Paul uses the sanctity of the temple to teach that the bodies of believers as the church itself is [*sic*] holy because God’s presence (as the Holy Spirit) dwells there, and therefore it must not be defiled by sinful acts” (p. 5). Elsewhere he discusses the indwelling Spirit as making possible “a spiritual application” to the believer’s body and to the church “as a ‘temple’” (p. 15). Needless to say, these statements are somewhat understated when compared to the reality proclaimed in apostolic teaching, that the New



Testament church—comprised of both Jews and Gentiles—forms a temple of the living God, each saint a chosen and precious stone, with Christ as the chief cornerstone, and all fitly joined together by the outpoured Spirit. Also, while in the “Future Temple” subsection Price offers a chart on both symbolic and literal interpretations of Ezekiel’s temple vision, his application is restricted to the latter—not to mention that this subsection comes *after* the subsection on the “Temple Mount Today” (with timelines up to the present day), effectively precluding any real correlation of Ezekiel’s temple with the church.

Our evaluation is, of course, mitigated in that a work of this genre is expected to be more concerned about the Dome of the Rock than it is about probing ecclesiology. Nevertheless, when one comes to appreciate the extent to which the NT presents Jesus as the Davidic temple-builder who is building his church as the greater reality to which the temple “made with hands” foreshadowed (see Mark 14:58; John 2:19; 1 Cor 3:16–17; Paul’s profound use of Lev 26:12 in 2 Cor 6:16–17; Eph 2:19–22; 1 Pet 2:4–10), then *RGT*’s omission is at the least a missed opportunity—especially so given its opening biblical-theological section.

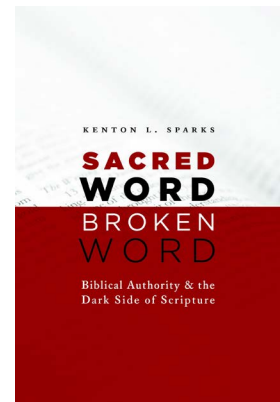
Notwithstanding this criticism, Price is to be commended for his broad and thorough exploration of all things temple-related and for clearly incorporating Christ and the gospel message throughout the work. Keeping in mind that illustrations are by nature subjective, *RGT* is a useful resource for better understanding that temple whose beautifully adorned buildings the disciples had once pointed out in wonder to Christ.

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Kenton L. Sparks. *Sacred Word, Broken Word: Biblical Authority and the Dark Side of Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. xii + 180 pp. £12.99/\$20.00.

Kenton Sparks, Professor of Biblical Studies and Provost at Eastern University in Pennsylvania (USA) and author of *God’s Word in Human Words: An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Scholarship* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), has written this book for “confessing Christians” to expound for them a position about the Bible: being the product of fallen human beings, it cannot help but err—not only in matters of fact, but also in ethics and theology. Sparks doesn’t tell us more about his intended audience; I have envisioned them as perhaps undergraduates in his classes or the classic “intelligent layperson.” I will evaluate it accordingly.

The book has 13 fairly short chapters, and space prevents me from laying out his case in detail. His initial contention is that we should approach the Bible believing that “Scripture is good, not only because it offers what is good, but also because it provides the remedy for where it is not so good”; this should lead to “a hermeneutic of respect rather than suspicion” (p. 11). However, the notion of the fall of humankind assures us that “human beings are beautiful but also broken in a way that does not permit us to wholly separate what is beautiful from what is not” (p. 20), which means that “the Bible actually falls *within* the fallen order that we seek to understand” (p. 22, italics original). He goes on to engage the old question of whether the human nature Jesus assumed was fallen or not, siding with those who answer fallen. From this



he concludes that it was therefore possible for Jesus to err, including on matters of faith and practice: specifically, he cites with approval the claim of Howard Marshall that “Jesus, in his parables, assumed a doctrine of hell (as an abode of horrendous, eternal torment) that is not wholly compatible with a Christian theology of love and compassion” (pp. 26–27, citing I. Howard Marshall, *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004], 66–69). Sparks offers no suggestions for other topics on which he believes Jesus to have erred.

Many of his points arguing that “a thoughtful reading of Scripture suggests that it is neither wholly consistent nor error free” (p. 32) are familiar territory: he cannot harmonize the different accounts of Judas’s death; there are a number of cases “where the biblical and scientific evidence do not cohere” (p. 33); and so on. But these are mere skirmishes; his real point is that Bible writers erred on moral matters, such as the commands to destroy the population of the Holy Land (e.g., Deut 20:16–18). For further examples, he lists Gospel texts where Jesus “negates or reverses the law” of Moses (p. 67); the endorsement of slavery; the “very low view of women at points” (p. 71); and the way the New Testament “throws ethnic slurs at Cretans” (p. 71).

Sparks warrants his approach with a highly compressed history of epistemological thought, the trends of which he labels “tacit [i.e., unreflective] realism” of the ancient period; “reflective realism” associated with Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas; “modern realism” of the late medieval through Enlightenment periods; and, in the post-modern period, “anti-realism” and “practical realism.”

Sparks does not wish to jettison Scripture. Rather, he thinks we must use it in a way that takes account of its brokenness. This will involve, among other things, respecting tradition (which is vaguely defined as to its extent and to its critical role) and following the “trajectory of God’s voice” (p. 114). This “trajectory” is not always the same as chronology: for example, he finds the attitude of Genesis 2 toward marriage to be “somewhat healthier than Paul’s advice (based on his limited perspective) that we forego marriage in anticipation of Christ’s imminent return (1 Corinthians 7)” (p. 115).

In assessing this work, it is hard to remain brief, since there are so many unexamined assumptions and debatable assertions on every page. Let me group key argumentative difficulties I found under a few headings.

First, he oversimplifies the options, and this tactic is pervasive. For example, he organizes the Christian world as “very conservative” and “very liberal,” with the in-betweens being those “who are laboring to take Scripture seriously while admitting that doing theology is far more complicated than simply quoting the Bible” (p. 6). And who wouldn’t want to be in that sensible middle, “moderate,” group? But this classification is far too coarsely cut to do anything like justice to the complexity of the different interpreters! Speaking as someone who fancies himself to be laboring in light of complications, I did not find myself, or most of the people I know, in any of his categories.

Along with this I find an argumentative tactic that has plenty of emotive force but no critical validity: attributing the follies of the worst adherents of a view to *all* adherents of that view. For example, he denounces the idea of biblical inerrancy as “*biblicism*, so called because its adherents believe that an inerrant Bible gives them foolproof access to the fundamentals of Christian doctrine and Christian living” (p. 28, italics original). Similarly, he cites an American colonist (actually, a secondary source purporting to quote the colonist; more on his problematic use of secondary sources below) who justified annihilating a group of Native Americans, apparently on the basis of the commands to destroy the Canaanites. He never even tries to show that such silliness and wickedness are *inherent* in the positions he doesn’t like.

Second, I find very little hesitation when Sparks asserts the sense of any biblical passage, and this is ironic in light of where he thinks he fits in the epistemological history. Surely a “pragmatic [or critical?] realist,” of all people, should say, “Here is how I read this text, and here is my warrant for reading it that way.” He is aware of this principle in theory (ch. 13), but it plays no practical role in his actual use of biblical texts. This is especially egregious in the places he is finding difficulties: he makes no allowance for the distinction between “I cannot see how to resolve this” and “this is unresolvable.” For example (just one out of many), “The Bible says human beings were created on day 6 of a six-day creation process, and science that tells us human beings were created through a complex evolutionary process that took millions of years” (p. 35). Now, any genuine “pragmatic realist” is aware that both of these statements are *interpretations*, which might or might not be supportable, or even qualifiable. Why not at least acknowledge that? And then when he writes of “the many Bible texts that explicitly or implicitly support slavery,” or “regard women as property or as second-class citizens, in some cases forbidding women to speak in public worship” (p. 7), the uninitiated reader would never get the idea that there is plenty of material on these matters challenging this blunt interpretation. To mention no others, why does he not refer to leading specialists in OT law and ethics such as Gordon Wenham and Christopher Wright—if for no other reason, to argue against them?

The fact that Sparks cites “ethnic slurs” being hurled at Cretans, apparently referring to Titus 1:12, reveals more about his sensibilities than about the biblical text. He doesn’t mention the general opinion that the “prophet of their own” Paul quotes is likely the revered poet Epimenides of Crete; nor is there any room for the likely use of sarcastic humor, which the addressee is supposed to sort out (as in the irony of a Cretan saying that Cretans are always liars). It becomes hard to take Sparks seriously.

I could go on. A final illustration of Sparks’s problematic approach comes from page 85, where we read that in 1 Cor 11:14–15, “the Apostle Paul incorrectly assumes that ‘nature itself’ proves that men should have short hair and women long hair.” I don’t blame him for not knowing that the exact words of Paul, “nature itself teaches,” appear in Aristotle’s *Poetics*, and is there apparently an idiom for “it is a matter of common observation,” without any claim about the “natural” order of things. (See discussion in C. John Collins, “Echoes of Aristotle in Romans 2:14–15: Or, maybe Abimelech was not so bad after all,” *Journal of Markets and Morality* 13.1 [2010]:147–48, <http://www.marketsandmorality.com/index.php/mandm/article/view/112/106>). But it would have been sounder for Sparks to follow the standard advice in such cases, namely, to express some hesitation about his reading and to await fuller light.

The brevity and generality of his survey of epistemological history is not of itself a problem for the purposes of his book. However, he has not been careful in grouping people into his categories: e.g., it requires some justification to relegate William Lane Craig, Richard Lints, and J. P. Moreland to the “modern realism” category with no nuance (p. 76n6), and this matters since it apparently allows Sparks to ignore any counter-arguments people like these might offer. I suspect he intends his “practical realism” to be similar to what others call “critical realism,” associated with figures such as Michael Polanyi, though he doesn’t explain this. It is ironic that he appeals to “recent work in cognitive psychology” to warrant his approach, when that work tends to reflect a fairly simple modernist realism (Sparks does not address that). But more importantly, I would have expected from him a stance toward his own arguments that was more self-aware about his assumptions. But, as I have noted, he asserts things about biblical texts with all the certainty of the modernist; and he rarely acknowledges other views, except occasionally to dismiss them.

Third, I should have thought that the conclusion that Jesus erred might trigger a reevaluation of the whole position, along the lines of an incident in the Sherlock Holmes story “The Priory School.” Watson cries, “Holmes, this is impossible.” Holmes replies, “Admirable! A most illuminating remark. It *is* impossible as I state it, and therefore I must in some respect have stated it wrong.” A solid book such as John Wenham’s *Christ and the Bible* (3rd ed.; Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009) would help.

Finally, in the places where I have checked Sparks’ use of secondary sources I have found it unreliable if careful attention to the primary source would undermine his case. For example, he claims (seemingly following someone else) that Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho* (§§18–21) “can easily be understood as saying: Scripture’s discourse *is adapted to and reflects* human sinfulness” (p. 52, italics added). But this is a bad misreading of Justin’s point: Justin contends that the aspects of the Mosaic law that were peculiar to Israel and not for Christians were instituted *by divine appointment* because of the people’s sins; in no way do they “reflect” sinfulness on the part of the Lawgiver.

Sparks insists several times in the book that John Calvin considered the cosmology of Genesis mistaken (e.g., pp. 34, 38–39, 50, 53). He bases this on Calvin’s comment on Gen 6:14, using the Calvin Translation Society’s version, where Calvin wrote, “Moses wrote everywhere in a homely style. . . . Certainly in the first chapter [of Genesis] he did not treat scientifically the stars, as a philosopher would; but he called them in a popular manner, according to their appearance to the uneducated *rather than according to truth*” (p. 34n3, Sparks’s italics). Now most readers of Calvin in context would suppose he was contrasting a popular description of the stars with a scientific one, and not really calling the popular one “untrue” in the strictest sense. And someone who wants to read Calvin the way that Sparks does should check the English against the Latin, in which case he will find that the last clause makes the contrast crystal clear: the words “according to truth” render *ex re-ipsa*, “according to the thing itself” (which is what a “scientific” description aims for). Calvin is indeed not calling the popular account “untrue”; Sparks (or his secondary source) has not read Calvin well at all.

On page 116 Sparks cites from Andrew Dickson White’s *History of the Warfare of Science and Theology in Christendom* (published in 1896) as if it is sound historiography, which left me wondering whether he knows that most professional historians of science and religion (e.g., Colin Russell, David Lindberg and Ronald Numbers) hold this work in contempt. Perhaps Sparks disagrees with these specialists, but it is a blemish not to acknowledge their judgment.

Now I have not checked all of his secondary sources, but these cases show why I have little confidence in his work. I think it unlikely that any of the church fathers whom Sparks enlists to contend that Christ’s human nature was in some sense “fallen” would have countenanced being used as support for the idea that Jesus could have erred.

I must finish. I agree with Sparks that *some* (but by no means *all*) efforts to justify morally difficult things such as slavery or the war on the Canaanites are too facile, but I also think he has treated these matters too superficially himself (oddly, the very speech-act approach that he rejects would help, as I see it—but I will develop that elsewhere). So I would write over this book, *abusus usum non tollit* (“abuse does not take way proper use”).

I come back to the question of the intended audience. Since it seems to be aimed at non-specialists in the Bible, I have to wonder at the form Sparks chose for presentation. Why not *show* the reasoning behind the conclusions, and thus instruct people in good critical thinking? Why not acknowledge seriously, and preferably address with respect, the counter-arguments to his own views? But Sparks has given us very little that is an actual practice of *persuasion*.

If someone were to insist that I use this book constructively, I suggest a class on the role of critical thinking in religious conviction, in which the other main text would be C. S. Lewis's *Christian Reflections* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967). I would assign students to analyze one or two of Sparks' arguments for critical strength, noting the argumentative errors they encounter. Then, with Lewis's help, the students would treat the subject in a rigorous manner. Sadly, this is what Sparks has not done, and thus the book is a wasted opportunity at fostering conversation.

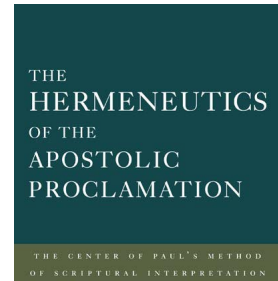
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— NEW TESTAMENT —

Matthew W. Bates. *The Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation: The Center of Paul's Method of Scriptural Interpretation*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012. 408 pp. \$69.95.

That the Old Testament Scriptures play a central role in the development of Paul's theological discourse is obvious. The logic that undergirds Paul's specific employment of the OT Scriptures is, however, not nearly as clear. Is there any fundamental coherence between Paul's theological commitments and his scriptural interpretation? Some of the most recent and influential proposals have answered this question in the affirmative. One thinks, for example, of Richard B. Hays who has suggested that Paul's scriptural interpretation is indebted to a specific narrative about Israel's Messiah as well as Francis Watson who, quite differently, has argued that Paul's scriptural citations must be understood as Paul's own reading of the Pentateuch as a sequential and antithetical narrative of unconditional promises and conditional stipulations. While Bates applauds recent attempts to find coherence between Paul's hermeneutics and Paul's theology, he argues that scholarship has failed to see Paul as a distinctly Christian interpreter of the OT and has, therefore, neglected the way in which early Christian authors such as Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, and others interpret the same OT texts and thereby provide important insights into how Paul interpreted the Scriptures. Likewise, scholars have underplayed Paul's explicit statements regarding his own method for scriptural interpretation. Bates' primary argument is that "Paul received, utilized, and extended an apostolic, kerygmatic narrative tradition centered on certain key events in the Christ story as his primary interpretative lens—a narrative tradition that already contained a built-in hermeneutics" (pp. 56–57). This apostolic and kerygmatic narrative is the center of Paul's thinking and provides the coherence for his employment of Israel's Scriptures.

In chs. 2–3 Bates argues that Paul's interpretation of the OT must be situated within Paul's kerygmatic hermeneutic which is found in "protocreedal" texts such as 1 Cor 15:3–11 and Rom 1:1–6. Paul declares that these statements provide the content of early Christian proclamation and center upon a coherent narrative regarding Christ's death, resurrection, exaltation to heaven, his apostolic appearances, and his commissioning of the apostles to extend the gospel to all nations. This tradition is explicitly spoken of as in accordance with, or promised by, the OT Scriptures, and therefore, "The result



MATTHEW W. BATES

is that Paul himself testifies that his scriptural hermeneutic is grounded in Christocentric protocreedal narrative sequences that can be identified as both kerygmatic and apostolic in nature” (p. 60). The tradition is kerygmatic because it forms the content of early Christian proclamation, and it is apostolic since Paul claims that he and many other Christian missionaries proclaimed the tradition. This apostolic kerygmatic tradition is the center from which Paul generates his innovative reading of the OT. Thus, for Bates it is a mistake to give hermeneutical priority to a certain trope such as allegory or typology given that rhetorical conventions subordinate arrangement and expression to invention. In other words, these tropes “are better viewed not primarily as first-stage generative techniques for Paul, but rather as subsequently chosen verbal vehicles that were carefully selected to achieve a rhetorical style” (pp. 116–117). Bates then examines some Pauline texts, including 1 Cor 10:1–13, 2 Cor 3:12–18, and Gal 4:21–4:31, in order to demonstrate that the apostolic kerygma is the hermeneutical framework that generates Paul’s readings of the OT and that Paul subsequently uses the tropes of typology and allegory to convey his new interpretations of the OT.

In chs. 4–5 Bates seeks to remedy the lack of attention given to situating Paul’s scriptural hermeneutic within early Christian exegesis by demonstrating Paul’s use of “prosopological exegesis,” a technique that was widespread in the early church, and was used to explain “a text by suggesting that the author of the text identified various persons or characters (prosopa) as speakers or addressees in a pre-text, even though it is not clear from the pre-text itself that such persons are in view” (p. 183). Bates marshals numerous sources to show how non-Christian rhetoricians, Philo of Alexandria, and Justin Martyr employed this technique by placing words or speeches in “the mouth of a character in order to evoke an emotive response” (p. 198). Prosopological exegesis is employed when the identity of the speaker of the divinely inspired text is not obvious, thereby enabling the interpreter to resolve the tension of the speaker’s identity by assigning the words to an appropriate speaker. Bates suggests that a handful of important Pauline texts should be understood according to this exegetical technique (e.g., Rom 10:6–8; 10:16; 11:9–10; 15:3, 9; 2 Cor 4:13). For example, Bates argues that the difficult verses of Rom 10:6–8 can be understood more precisely when it is recognized that Paul is employing prosopological exegesis. Against the framework of the apostolic kerygma, Paul assigns the words of Deut 9:4 and 30:12–14 to “the Righteousness of Faith” who testifies to Christ’s death, resurrection, and announcement of the gospel. Paul interprets the words of the character “Righteousness of Faith” by his interpretive summaries that construe the speech according to the apostolic kerygma (e.g., “this refers to Christ being brought up from the dead” in 10:6b). Thus, Paul understands the voice of Deuteronomy as speaking “in the character of the future Christ, who then from within this dramatic setting could speak about” the events of Christ (p. 333). Bates provides copious evidence that the church fathers employed the same technique in a way that was also indebted to the apostolic kerygma.

Bates has made a valuable contribution to a topic within NT scholarship that many, I would presume, feel is currently overworked. Bates is well-versed in ancient Hellenistic rhetorical conventions and early Christian exegesis, and this enables him to situate Paul’s scriptural interpretation in its historical and theological context. While I often wanted to see more of the pay-off in terms of overall meaning for reading Paul in light of the technique of prosopological exegesis, this insight does have the potentiality to lead to fresh exegetical observations. Likewise, his insistence upon the apostolic kerygma and the protocreeds as the center that generates Paul’s reading of the OT enables one to find the glue that holds together Paul’s hermeneutics with his theology. While his proposal may not have the simple

elegance, clarity, and total explanatory power of some of the more well-known articulations of Paul's interpretation of Scripture, the contributions just mentioned should give the work lasting significance.

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Michael F. Bird, ed. *How God Became Jesus: The Real Origins of Belief in Jesus' Divine Nature*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014. 236 pp. £10.26/\$16.99.

How God Became Jesus responds to Bart Ehrman's book *How Jesus Became God* (HarperOne, 2014). The two books were published concurrently earlier this year. Five New Testament scholars contribute to *How God Became Jesus*: Michael F. Bird, Craig A. Evans, Simon J. Gathercole, Charles E. Hill, and Chris Tilling. They critique Ehrman's argument in chapters that correspond to his work. The result is clear deconstruction of Ehrman's work and an effective argument in favor of historic orthodox Christology.

For readers unfamiliar with early Christology, this book is an informative introduction to the subject. With chapters on ancient notions of divinity, Jesus's own self-understanding, ancient burial traditions, early church Christology, problems with Ehrman's interpretive categories and exegesis, and ancient orthodoxy and heresy, this relatively short work covers a lot of important subjects.

Ehrman argues for an "evolutionary" approach to early Christian belief in the divinity of Jesus. He claims that the process began with a human Jesus who eventually became "divine." Jesus was adopted as the Son of God either at his resurrection (what Ehrman calls "exaltation Christology") or at his baptism (according to Ehrman's interpretation of the Gospel of Mark) Later on, Ehrman argues, Christians began to see Jesus as a pre-existent being (perhaps an angel) who became human (what he calls "incarnation Christology"). This supposedly late view can be seen in the Gospel of John. Throughout, Ehrman conceives of divinity in Greco-Roman terms (with a sliding scale between human and divine beings). Bird argues that this is better conceived in relation to Jewish ideas of divinity. In other words, the early Christians did not think that Jesus was like a Roman Emperor or hero who joined the divine pantheon after his death. They appropriated their beliefs about Jesus within the framework of Jewish monotheism. He appeals to the "Early High Christology Club" (which includes scholars such as Hengel, Bauckham, and Hurtado) for support. He also appeals to the Bible itself as well as other ancient sources, such as Celsus, Philo, *Sefer Zerubbabel*, *2 Maccabees*, and *3 Enoch*, to demonstrate that Jesus's story (especially as a crucified and risen Messiah) was unique, and that "Jewish beliefs about intermediary figures were not necessarily interchangeable with Greco-Roman beliefs about semidivine figures" (p. 27).

Ehrman also suggests that evidence from the "tunnel period" (ca. 30–50 CE), found as quotations or allusions in the New Testament documents, supports his development theory. But Gathercole argues that this is not the case and concludes, "the evidence does not enable us to plot a gradual development in the early Christians' view of Jesus" (p. 96). Gathercole discusses the "christologies" of the Synoptic Gospels wherein is found instances of Jesus acting and speaking in ways that are only appropriate for God himself. Gathercole also discusses New Testament passages which might contain pre-literary formulae



associated with the tunnel period, providing helpful interpretations contrary to Ehrman's. Gathercole's case is further strengthened by his alternative account of Jesus's post-resurrection exaltation. Jesus's identity and nature are not changed. Rather, it is a new moment in salvation history. Jesus takes up a new activity (giving the Spirit), and has a new relationship (as Lord over the church). In addition to these, Jesus is established as the Lord over the cosmos. Gathercole states that this final "change" is "the result of new conditions of salvation history that have meant a change *in the cosmos* more than in Jesus" (p. 115).

Of the ten chapters in this book, the chapters by Gathercole and Hill are the most compelling. They are scholarly and informative. More than that, they effectively demonstrate the weakness of Ehrman's arguments through the application of their own expertise. Hill makes a very strong case against Ehrman's use and understanding of the ancient evidence. His chapters alone are worth the price of the book, and by themselves demonstrate the vulnerability of Ehrman's project. Hill argues that Ehrman's certainty about his developmental Christology "rests not on historical study but on a predetermined chronological grid that is not historically provable. . . . He presents it as a conclusion, but it is actually a presupposition" (p. 181).

One of the strange, if unsurprising, points Ehrman makes in the epilogue of his book is that the Christians who believed Jesus was both God and man not only won the historical battle, they excluded dissenting views. Their abuse of power even led to anti-Semitism. Hill, who undermines this claim, responds by noting, "Apparently the lesson we are supposed to draw from these examples of exclusivist-tending behavior is that it should cast doubt on the legitimacy of their beliefs" (p. 154). Since this does seem to be one of the intended effects of Ehrman's argument, it is good that Hill speaks to it, and draws into question the idea that Jewish persecution was connected to orthodox Christology.

The chapters by Evans and Tilling also prove to be helpful responses to Ehrman. Evans decidedly undermines Ehrman's ideas about Roman and Jewish burial traditions, and makes a strong case in favor of Jesus being buried (by a member of the Jewish council) after his crucifixion. Tilling makes the important point that the Apostle Paul understood the church's relation to Jesus in the same way that Israel understood her relationship to YHWH. This relational "way of knowing" contributes to our sense of the early Christians reverencing Jesus as God. Tilling also brings Ehrman's interpretive categories into question by highlighting his "disputed reading" of Galatians 4:14 (in which Ehrman suggests that Paul thought Jesus was an angel) and makes this his "*interpretive key* for Paul's entire Christology!" (p. 122). Bird's contributions to the book both set up and conclude the work nicely. His content is very helpful to the uninitiated reader. However, he moves in and out of an informal style in a way that can be jolting to serious readers.

The idea for this project is superb and certainly serves the church well. Bart Ehrman has become well-known for his popular-level books. He is probably the most famous American agnostic/atheist Bible scholar. He writes very well, and his arguments are clear. It is possible that his work will have broad influence. Bird states, "Ehrman is worth addressing, since his skill as a textual critic is widely acknowledged and his showmanship as a public intellectual can hardly be denied. Such a pity then that he is almost always wrong!" (p. 8). So *How God Became Jesus* is just the sort of response we need. These

scholars have not only shown Ehrman's argument to be rather weak and misguided, they have also provided evangelicals a strong and reliable affirmation of the historic Christian faith.

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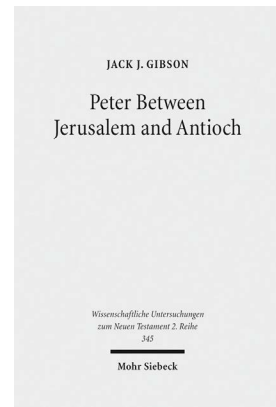
Jack J. Gibson. *Peter between Jerusalem and Antioch*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2.345. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013. xiii + 340 pp. £79.00/\$112.00.

This monograph is the “slightly revised” edition of Gibson’s dissertation at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. It stems from Gibson’s long-standing interest in the confrontation between Paul and Peter in Antioch, and seeks to understand why Peter withdrew from table fellowship with the Gentiles as recorded in Gal 2:11–14.

Gibson states in Chapter 1 that he believes it was not vacillation or other commonly held reasons that explain Peter’s withdrawal from table fellowship with Gentiles. While the pre-Pentecost Peter denied Christ out of fear for his own life, Gibson argues that the “Peter of Acts is a very different figure from the Peter of the Gospels” (p. 140). Other social-historical reasons are then presented to explain Peter’s behaviour, the catalyst being the message from the “men from James” (Gal 2:12), which he argues warned of “rising violent nationalism in Judea and the effect that it could have upon the Jerusalem church if it became widely known that a chief Christian leader was eating with the Gentiles” (p. 284). In so arguing, Gibson develops the propositions of R. K. Jewett, “The Agitators and the Galatian Congregation,” *NTS* 17 (1971): 198–212, which are echoed in the works of scholars such as Bruce, Betz, and Witherington. Gibson attempts the very difficult task of arguing that what others considered plausible is indeed the explanation for Peter’s withdrawal in Antioch.

To defend his assertion that in Antioch Peter would not have withdrawn due to personal fear, chapters 2–3 compare the Peter of the Gospels with the Peter of Acts, focusing on his motives and growth. Chapter 2 is a succinct distillation of a large body of material, characterising Peter from the Gospels as one who “often acts in a misdirected manner” (p. 284). Rather than lacking courage, Gibson suggests Peter’s mistakes and his betrayal of Christ were due “primarily to a lack of understanding of how a faithful disciple is expected to act” (p. 284). While the chapter has strengths, I found this extremely charitable assessment of Peter’s mistakes to be unconvincing. This is a significant concern because Gibson’s conclusions rely heavily upon the “consistency of Peter’s character” (p. 284).

Chapter 3 examines the Book of Acts to continue the characterisation of Peter, arguing that Peter, though consistent in character, was at Pentecost given a “Spirit-inspired understanding” of the truth that precluded him from erring as he had in the Gospels. Quoting Perkins, Gibson boldly claims, “Any failures shown by the apostle during Jesus’ lifetime have been eradicated by his Post-Resurrection transformation” (p. 140). Such an absolute transformation (not of character, but of understanding) undergirds Gibson’s argument that Peter “would not” (p. 285) have compromised the gospel by vacillating out of concern for himself (p. 285). The “consistency of character” argument seems a flawed one, however, not only because it requires and then generates a most charitable estimation of Peter, but



because it assumes that people act consistently. King David and others teach us that God's people have good and bad days, and Paul's scars for Christ (Gal 6:17) are a sober reminder that if Peter was afraid of persecution, it was reasonable.

Chapter 4 delves into the first-century world of Roman and Jewish relations to argue that the broader social factors, especially the persecution on the horizon for Christians in Jerusalem, provide the most plausible motivation for Peter's withdrawal from table fellowship. The chapter has value as a historical study of Roman-Jewish-Christian relations in the first-century A.D., but again the possibility that Peter compromised his principles under social pressure or for fear of reprisal, albeit after Pentecost, is not made implausible by Gibson's arguments.

In Chapter 5 Gibson's conclusions assume the best of Peter and acquit him of the strongest charges of failure or weakness, but I wasn't persuaded for a number of further reasons. Firstly, Gibson's conclusions are difficult to reconcile with Paul's rebuke. Paul considered Peter fully culpable—he had compromised the gospel in a hypocritical and fearful way (2:12–13). He stood condemned (2:11). While it is hypothetically possible that Peter's actions were well-intentioned and merely ignorant of their effects (pp. 274–75), that Paul refrained from mentioning Peter's noble intentions was a most unfortunate and uncharitable omission. It is only if Peter was culpable in the full sense that Paul's condemnation of him for his "hypocrisy" seems reasonable. We need not concur then with Gibson that Paul's rebuke was "extraordinarily harsh" (p. 244).

Secondly, the context of Galatians suggests Peter made a similar error to those whom Paul was addressing. Regardless of the high profile of the messenger (whether the Apostle Peter or even an angel from heaven, 1:8), believers were to resist the immense pressure to turn to a different "gospel" (1:6) or to live to please men rather than Christ (1:10). They were to "stand firm" (5:1–2), refusing to buckle under pressure from Judaisers who were urging Christians to follow Jewish practices (6:12). Peter's failure would thus be an important high-profile case study. That is, "if even the Apostle Peter could compromise under pressure, you too are vulnerable." In my view, Gibson's interpretation of 2:11–14 would have benefited from far more attention to the context of Galatians itself. In the index, there are only 26 citations from the surrounding five other chapters of Galatians, compared with over 100 citations from Matthew alone, suggesting the fundamental assistance for interpretation offered by Galatians itself was overlooked in favour of many sources much further removed from Galatians 2.

While I was not persuaded by Gibson's argument, his work contains many good insights into the Petrine material in the Gospels, the Book of Acts, and Galatians. A further strength is its portrayal of the hostile social setting in which Jews and Christians lived.

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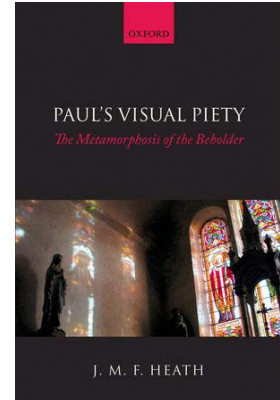
Jane Heath. *Paul's Visual Piety: The Metamorphosis of the Beholder*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. xiii + 312 pp. £69.00/\$125.00.

This is a significantly revised version of Heath's Cambridge PhD thesis. In it, she seeks to demonstrate that Paul operated with a "visual piety" that he understood had the power to transform relationships—both with God and with one's neighbour. As such, Heath is aiming "to place St Paul on the map of Visual Studies, not only for scholars of visuality, but also for scholars of the Bible" (p. 10).

The book is divided into three parts. Part one situates her study in the context of the discipline of visuality. In this, Heath explores the underemployment of visuality as a discipline in biblical studies and argues for its potential significance. Part two of the book examines Greco-Roman and Jewish visual cultures, particularly where these are relevant to Paul. Finally, part three, the bulk of the book, examines Paul's letters. Her focus here centres on the connection between *transformation* (or metamorphosis) and *beholding*. She does so through the lens of 2 Cor 3:18: "We all, with unveiled face, beholding in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being metamorphosed into the same image, from glory to glory, as from the Lord, the Spirit." This functions as the key text since in it Paul brings together the two themes of transformation (metamorphosis) and visuality (beholding). In this section of the book, Heath examines the verse in its literary context of 2 Corinthians, and also in its relationship to Romans. The two letters suggest comparison due to their resonances in language, themes and vocabulary (e.g., the verb μεταμορφώ occurring only in Paul in 2 Cor 3:18 and Rom 12:2).

Heath's essential argument is that we should give more interpretive weight to Paul's visual language. The contention of 2 Cor 3:18 that the one who beholds in a mirror (κατοπτριζόμενοι) is transformed must not simply be reduced to hearing or reading the gospel. Nor can this *transformation by beholding* concept be explained as simply a mystical encounter or ethical renewal. Rather, this beholding must maintain its innately *visual* character. The importance of this overtly visual beholding is found elsewhere in Paul. So, he directs the Corinthians' gaze to his own flesh as a place where Jesus's death is made manifest and his life as a place where Jesus's life is revealed (2 Cor 4:10). In Romans, he points his readers to Jesus's blood displayed on the ἰλαστήριον (Rom 3:25) and describes Abraham as "beholding his and Sarah's necrotic flesh" (p. 241). These examples "provide visual points of focus for the reflective Christian to contemplate as markers in his or her world" (p. 241). These images focus on the Christian's encounter with death and through "Paul's teaching, the Christian eye learns to contemplate such deathly appearances in terms of Jesus' own death" and of the life to come (p. 242). Heath contends that this mode of reading Paul actually lays a foundation for later developments in "Christian asceticism and the cult of relics" (p. 242).

This conclusion regarding how Paul may be seen as a right foundation for these later practices, I think, highlights my central concern with Heath's overall thesis, namely that she downplays the connection between the visual motif in Paul and his proclamation of the gospel. So, while Paul does, indeed, direct his readers' gaze to his own body in 2 Cor 4:10, he immediately puts this in the context of his *speaking* (4:13). Similarly, he also applies visual language to the *hearing* of the gospel in 4:1–6. So, the *proclaimed* (see 4:2, 5) gospel is *veiled* because unbelievers' minds are *blinded* so they cannot *see* (with their minds) *the light* of the gospel. Thus, there is a blending of aural (proclamation) and visual (blinding) imagery that suggests a more complex relationship than Heath argues for.



Nevertheless, this is a stimulating and helpful study that explores an important but underdeveloped theme in a creative, fresh way. Too often it seems that studies on Paul offer either prosaic restatements of traditional readings or creative interpretations that have little or no connection with the text itself. Heath, however, offers a genuinely creative study that arises from Paul's own words and has highlighted an important but vastly underexplored theme. As such, her work demands a wide reading, particularly among those working in the field of Pauline studies.

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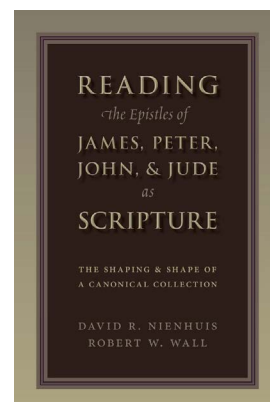
David R. Nienhuis and Robert W. Wall. *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude as Scripture: The Shaping and Shape of a Canonical Collection*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. 314 pp. \$30.00.

In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in the relationship between the concept of canon and the interpretive task. This discussion typically takes place in the field of Old Testament studies, leaving much of the New Testament terrain untouched. As interpreters have begun thinking about the canon of the New Testament, many of the studies have focused on the Gospels, Paul's letters, or the book of Revelation. Missing in this analysis is sustained attention to the collection of Catholic Epistles (CE). These letters are often considered not only "general" but also generic. At best, they are a catchall category of writings that are "non-Pauline." In scholarly treatments, they are often "offered up as the leftovers of the NT" (p. 8) when one is finished feasting on the Gospels and Paul.

Dissatisfied with this approach to the CE, David Nienhuis and Robert Wall seek to offer an alternative account of the shaping and shape of this section of the New Testament canon. Both teach at Seattle Pacific University and have written extensively on the New Testament canon. Drawing on their previous work, they enter the fray of New Testament canon studies at perhaps its most contested point.

The shape of their collection of chapters has three main parts. Part One introduces the nature of canonical collections and outlines the hermeneutical features of their approach (pp. 3–69). Representing the bulk of the book (pp. 71–243), Part Two provides an introduction to each letter in the CE, grouped by author (James, Peter, John, and Jude). Here they sketch the canonical portrait of each author, discuss the reception of each writing, and offer a brief commentary and theological summary of the letter. In Part Three, Wall and Nienhuis adumbrate the "unifying theology" of the CE as a collection (pp. 247–72).

A clear contribution of this volume is its treatment of the CE as a coherent literary unit. The "central core" of their study is "the insistence that the Catholic Epistles collection is in fact a canonical collection and not a random grouping of 'other' or 'general' letters that emerged from communities not founded by the Apostle Paul" (p. xvi). For them, the CE collection represents "the final redactional act of the church's canon-constructing endeavor" (p. 17). This collection, then, is effectively the "final piece of the canonical puzzle" (p. 17). For Nienhuis and Wall, "the CE collection is revealed to be the pièce de résistance that determined the ultimate form of the NT canon" (p. 17). In this regard, it is the "final



brushstroke of canonization, without which the masterwork of the NT would have been incomplete” (pp. 17–18).

Many assume straightaway that these letters are only “generally” related, but Nienhuis and Wall insist that their juxtaposition in this collection and in relation to the other New Testament groupings yields both literary and theological fruit. They “challenge the critical consensus regarding the theological incoherence of the CE collection” by arguing that “the canonical collection of four witnesses, James, Peter, John, and Jude (‘the Pillars of Jerusalem’), be read together as the interpenetrating parts of a coherent theological whole” (p. 10).

To present this “unifying theology” of the CE, they utilize Tertullian’s articulation of the Rule of Faith as their rubric (i.e., God, Christ, Community of the Spirit, Discipleship, and Consummation in a New Creation, see pp. 72–73, 100–101). At first this seems like an unnecessary imposition. However, Nienhuis and Wall connect the “canonical logic” of the collection to the theological presentation of the Rule, showing how each of these themes develops across the CE. In this analysis, “themes introduced by James are elaborated by 1 Peter, a witness which is then completed by 2 Peter, even as 2 Peter is linked to 1 John, which is epitomized by 2 John, qualified by 3 John, and concluded by Jude” (p. 250). For them, this logic “apprehends a collection held together like a link of chains” (p. 250). For example, in their presentation of the “shape of the canonical collection,” Nienhuis and Wall consider the role of James as an introduction and Jude as a fitting conclusion. They argue that 2 Peter serves as a kind of literary and theological anchor for the entire collection, and they analyze the interrelationship between these letters and the narrative framework of the book of Acts.

To give a specific example, they argue that the CE collection complements the Pauline corpus but also guards against misinterpretation of Paul’s major theological assertions (e.g., “justification by faith”). In this way, the CE function “strategically to curb the church’s tendency to read and use Paul’s witness as its canon within a canon” (p. 73). Peter and James, in particular, acknowledge that “Paul’s message is easily misunderstood if it is not framed by the larger biblical witness of prophets and apostles” (p. 145). Nienhuis and Wall do not argue that these letters necessarily correct Paul, but rather that they actually safeguard the “deeper logic of the Pauline gospel” (p. 155). The emphasis in the CE on the need for a faithful life of imitating Christ critically informs Paul’s emphasis on faith in Christ alone for salvation (p. 155; cf. 2 Pet 3:15–16). Having access to both of these collections (“Pauline” and “Pillars”) enables a reader of the New Testament to receive a proper understanding of the gospel. The canonical context, then, “invites a reader’s attentiveness to the constructive (and not adversarial) character of the interplay between these two epistolary collections” (p. 165).

This volume also advances the methodological discussion about what a “canonical approach” to the New Testament might look like. Wall and Nienhuis consistently seek to relate the “historical shaping” of the collection (pp. 17–39) to its “final shape” (pp. 40–69). This connection outlines a method that is able to relate how the canon formed to how it functions. Their understanding of canon leads them to focus not on initial composition but on “canonization,” the moment these writings formed collections. This, for them, is the means by which biblical writings function as scripture for later generations of readers (e.g., see pp. 11, 33, 41, 48, 97). A community of readers values these letters together as “scripture” because they recognize and affirm their collective “aesthetic quality.” For them, this is a central “criterion for canonicity” (pp. 11–15, 249–50). Readers in the church eventually recognized that the CE collection functioned well together as a unit and thus received and transmitted it as an authoritative set of scriptural writings. As a coherent and interconnected seven-letter collection of writings from the

Jerusalem apostles and Jesus's brothers, the CE helped complete the shape of the New Testament canon as a whole.

Any type of canonical analysis is fraught with critical definitional decisions and interpretive assumptions. Some will object to the dismissal of historical-critical consensus, while others will ask whether any of these interpretive insights are still valid if these letters are not seen as late and pseudonymous works. Some will argue that original authorship should remain a controlling factor in exegesis. Still others will want to associate inspiration and canonization more closely with initial composition rather than reception within the community. Further, many will not accept their analysis because they will reject its premise. However, this particular aspect of the volume is part of its value. Nienhuis and Wall outline the methodological issues, provide critically informed rationale for their approach, and then implement it and outline its consequences for the exegesis and theology of these letters. Indeed, they intend their volume to come alongside Brevard Childs' *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) to form "the basis of a canonical introduction to the NT letters" (p. xv).

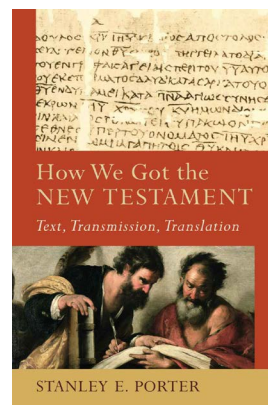
Accordingly, this volume represents a substantial treatment that will need to be taken into account in further studies of the New Testament canon. Wall and Nienhuis' work here will aid anyone seeking to construct a canon-conscious interpretation of these rich but sometimes relativized letters.

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Stanley E. Porter. *How We Got the New Testament: Text, Transmission, Translation*. Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 240 pp. \$21.99.

This book is an edited version of the author's full notes for the Hayward Lectures, given in 2008 at Acadia Divinity School, Nova Scotia. Porter addresses three areas in three large chapters, as indicated in the subtitle of the book.

In chapter one ("The text of the New Testament"), Porter assesses recent calls to replace the traditional focus of NT textual criticism—recovering the original text—and considers matters such as a history of how the text was copied. He also provides a useful coverage of the history of the printed text of the Greek NT. In this chapter Porter discusses the 'unwarranted sensationalism' of Bart Ehrman's *Misquoting Jesus* (New York: HarperOne, 2007), as well as his misleading conclusions derived from supposed theological motivation as a motive for the variants that occur in the manuscripts (see *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* [Oxford: OUP, 1993]). It is to be hoped that Porter soon tackles the issues raised and conclusions drawn by Ehrman in his recent book on pseudonymity in early Christianity including the NT (*Forged: Writing in the Name of God* [New York: HarperOne, 2011]). Although not spelled out in detail, Porter also calls for the focus of editions of the Greek NT to be on individual manuscripts, not the eclectic search for the original reading at every point, although how this would be achieved (and what the aim of this would be) is not entirely clear to me.



The second chapter reviews how the NT was passed on, from earliest times to the publication of ‘the major codexes’ and beyond, including the formation of the NT canon. Porter adds his own proposals regarding how all the various kinds of manuscripts which testify to the text of the Greek NT might be better classified and play their proper role in the task of tracing its transmission.

The third chapter deals with the translation of the NT, a subject not often linked so closely with the other two. Porter shows how the early versions and later translations have a part to play in relation to the previous two topics, as well as offering a description and assessment of the theories and practices involved in translating the NT. All of this is set in the framework of current (especially English) translations of the NT. In the conclusion to the book Porter summarises the ground covered and reiterates some of his proposals in relation to the three topics discussed in the main chapters.

As hinted above, there are a few questions left for the reader. Perhaps the critique of Ehrman’s *Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* could have included the issue of whether the copyist of a manuscript was responsible for a variant or encountered it in his exemplar and just reproduced it. If this is unknown (as it mostly is), how can the supposed motivation of the copyist be related to a debate current when it was written, if we don’t know when it was introduced? The variant might have originated much earlier.

The notion of an edition of the Greek NT based on actual manuscripts sounds like a return to facts, rather than our concocted editions based on all known manuscripts but having no actual reality in antiquity, so far as we know. However, it is not clear to me what would be involved, nor does the idea commend itself. All ancient texts have varieties of manuscript attestation, and Porter rightly agrees that our aim should be to recover the ‘original’ as closely as possible. Perhaps it is my lack of understanding, but I don’t see how an edition comprised of actual manuscripts is a better option than one based on all known manuscripts. However, Porter may be able to expand on this in future publications.

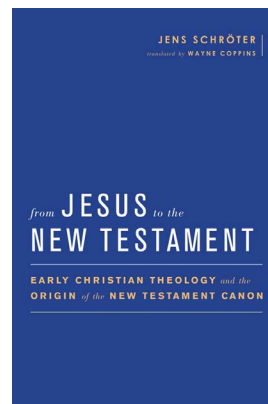
One feature of the discussions of some areas in Porter’s book, and in much of the literature referred to, is how authors often strongly advocate points of view, despite admitting that the available evidence is slight and the issues quite complex. I wonder if more light might be shed on such topics if we sat a little loose to conclusions that are based on scanty evidence, and acknowledged that while one point of view might be the most likely one, it would be unwise to be too confident about the conclusions drawn because we know so little about the whole area. Such methodological questions might be dealt with in relation to such complex issues as those treated in this book, and in relation to issues like the Synoptic Problem.

As we would expect, Porter’s description and analysis is accompanied by fairly full references. His descriptive sections are clear, and the proposals regarding all three areas are stimulating. I found the book to be a good guide through the maze of sometimes-complex areas including text critical methodologies, and Porter’s expertise in papyrology and linguistics (at least) is evident in his grasp of the issues, description of others’ views, and assessment of a whole range of suggestions in various areas. I would heartily recommend this book to specialists and non-specialists alike, as they ponder the issues surrounding “how we got [and get!] the New Testament.”

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Jens Schröter. *From Jesus to the New Testament: Early Christian Theology and the Origin of the New Testament Canon*. Translated by Wayne Coppins. Baylor-Mohr Siebeck Studies in Early Christianity. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013. xiv + 417 pp. \$59.99.

This study, originally published as *Von Jesus zum Neuen Testament* (Mohr Siebeck, 2008), is the inaugural volume in the new series Baylor-Mohr Siebeck Studies in Early Christianity (series editors are Wayne Coppins and Simon Gathercole). The purpose of the series is to make German research available in English translations in order to facilitate increased dialogue between German and English scholars. Schröter's volume is a collection of essays and articles that were written between 2000 and 2006 and have been edited so that they coordinate with one another around a common theme, namely, "the question of what the Christian understanding of reality is founded on and how this understanding, which has its foundation in the writings of the New Testament, can claim a place in the discussion of the interpretation of reality" (p. xiii).



The book is divided into four parts. Part one deals with methodologies and theories of history. Schröter takes the reader on a helpful survey of some of the seminal thinkers dealing with the science of history, including Johann Gustav Droysen, Paul Ricoeur, Max Weber, F.C. Baur, Friedrich Strauss, and others. In these chapters, Schröter is largely concerned with challenging positivist (and naïve) conceptions of history that assume that historical accounts provide direct access to the past. On the contrary, "Every historical text is therefore simultaneously an interpretation of the events that it transmits. It does not mediate a direct access to the past but one that is guided by the perception of its author" (p. 25). For Schröter, history is always "perspectival" in nature (p. 23), meaning it is conditioned by *both* the author of the historical account and the modern interpreter of that historical account (p. 34).

On one level, Schröter's analysis is certainly correct—historical study is not a neutral affair, free of the interpreter's own perspective and reconstruction of meaning. However, at times Schröter leaves the reader with some uncertainty about whether (or to what degree) the historical claims of early Christian writings really do connect to actual events. For instance, after a very helpful rebuttal to criticisms about the authenticity of Paul's speech at the Areopagus in Acts 17, he then states, "This is not, of course, to claim that Paul actually delivered or would have delivered a speech such as that in Acts 17" (p. 46). Instead, the speech is "a configuration of the historian Luke" (p. 46). Thankfully, Schröter applies this same approach to the claims of historical criticism. Whenever critical scholars try to bore beneath the text to uncover what "really happened," he argues that such a reconstruction is also conditioned by the scholar's own perspective and thus "does not lead to 'actual historical fact'" (p. 30).

Part two of the book begins an analysis of early Christian traditions found in the Gospels, Paul, and Luke. Schröter begins by analyzing the earliest Jesus traditions we have, focusing largely on the Q tradition and the isolated sayings of Jesus in Paul. He then offers a critique of the more radical scholars (e.g., Strauss and Bultmann) who claim that the Gospels have no historical value at all, and suggests instead that the Gospels must be critically examined to see what their value actually is. At this point, Schröter uses the Gospel of Mark as a test case and offers a helpful defense of its historical value, commenting on its historical consistency, plausibility, and even geographical accuracy. But, again, he is quick to qualify this defense of Mark's historical value, "This is by no means to say that the events in Galilee took place as they are depicted by Mark" (p. 122). Elsewhere he is even more to the point,

“It becomes clear that they [the Gospels] are narratives that are based on a *combination* of historical memory and myth” (p. 130, emphasis his).

Still in section two, Schröter spends two chapters on the law and Christology in Paul, and two chapters on Luke-Acts, particularly on Lukan Christology. These chapters mark a decided shift from discussions of historicity to discussions of early Christian theology (except portions of chapter ten which focus on Luke as historiographer). The material in these chapters is helpful, insightful, and well engaged with both modern and earlier scholarship. However, the place of these chapters in the overall argument of the book is less than clear. At this juncture, the reader is reminded of the fact that these chapters were once distinctive articles and were not originally written to appear in the same book. Sure, all these topics broadly play a role in the development of early Christianity, and can rightly be placed under that large umbrella, but they seem somewhat out of place within the structure of the book.

In section three, Schröter enters into more formal discussions of the New Testament canon. He provides a very helpful summary of the major issues in the development of the canon, ranging from the usage of the term, to discussions of how the Gospels were (or were not) cited in the Apostolic Fathers, to the usage of various apocryphal writings, including the *Gospel of Peter*, *Gospel of Thomas*, Egerton 2, and the *Gospel of Mary*. His chapter on the canonical history of the book of Acts is particularly helpful, and he even covers its appearance in major canonical lists and significant papyri and codices. My only significant disagreement is with Schröter’s assessment of the state of the New Testament text during this time period. Along with Ehrman and Parker, he characterizes the transmission of the text as “astonishingly free” (p. 268) and argues that the Jesus tradition was “a free and living tradition” (p. 265). A fundamental problem with Schröter’s analysis is that he makes no distinction between literary productions that happen to use (and perhaps reform) early Christian tradition, such as P. Egerton 2, and the *copying* of books by early Christian scribes. These are two different literary phenomena. When it comes to the latter, there is little evidence that scribes were as loose with the text as Schröter implies. This issue cannot be resolved here, but I refer the reader to the collection of essays in C.E. Hill and M.J. Kruger, eds., *The Early Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: OUP, 2012).

The fourth and final section of the volume addresses the unity of the New Testament writings and whether they produce a coherent, unified theology. In order to address this challenge, Schröter distances himself from what he regards as two extremes. On the one hand, we cannot, like Wrede, do away with the canon and replace it with a historical-critical reconstruction. On the other hand, we cannot, like Stuhlmacher, exaggerate the unity of these writings and appeal to theological dogma like the doctrine of inspiration. How, then, do we solve the problem of contradictions and disagreements in the New Testament? Schröter ends up offering a “canonical interpretation” of early Christian writings where the limits of the canon are honored because it represents the faith deposit of the early church, and, at the same time, the critical problems with the individual books are still recognized. This *via media* is achieved by the belief that “one must distinguish between the historical status and the canonical status of the New Testament texts” (p. 331). Although Schröter does not make the connection, his view ends up being very similar to that of the “canonical criticism” model of Brevard Childs and, to some extent, James Sanders. As such, he leaves the reader with a lack of clarity regarding what real authority these books can really bear for the church.

As a whole, Schröter has left us an interesting and worthwhile volume exploring the nature of early Christianity and the New Testament canon. While I have a number of disagreements throughout, it is a well-argued and well-researched study that all scholars of the New Testament should read.

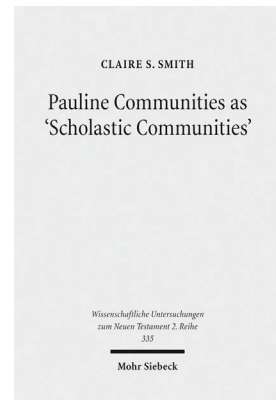
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Claire S. Smith. *Pauline Communities As 'Scholastic Communities': A Study of the Vocabulary of 'Teaching' in 1 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2.335. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012. xiv + 555 pp. £94.00/\$160.00.

This revised doctoral dissertation, supervised at Moore Theological College, Sydney, presents a development of Edwin Judge's largely neglected 1960–1961 thesis that Christian communities were characterized by a greater focus on 'learning' or moral training than on corporate cultic or 'religious' practices. (His work has recently been reprinted: E. A. Judge, 'The Early Christians As a Scholastic Community: Part I and II,' in *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Essays* [ed. James R. Harrison; WUNT 2.229; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010].) Smith adopts a very different approach, but nonetheless reinforces Judge's essential conclusions. She examines 'teaching' as a semantic domain in 1 Corinthians and the Pastoral Epistles, in order to establish the practice and contribution of teaching in these communities—although not its content. This is not, then, a theological study; rather, it is descriptive, focusing on how this particular vocabulary may reflect emphases and patterns of ecclesiastical practice.

In choosing these letters, Smith does not assume a homogeneity between them, but seeks to compare the findings in each. The methodological weaknesses identified by James Barr of those word studies that focus on etymology, history of usage, or otherwise assume a word's continuity of meaning despite being located in differing contexts or genres, are described, but expressly avoided. In large measure this is achieved by investigating similar words together (identifying degrees of synonymity, antonymity and complementarity), limited to nine semantic domains; by noting when a given word does and does not have connotations of teaching/learning (e.g., λέγω, 'I say,' may or may not refer to teaching); and by limiting the study to four broadly contemporaneous texts).

The main body of the study consists in nine distinct chapters, each focusing on a different group of 'teaching' words (66 different words in toto, overwhelmingly verbs), thus: 'core-teaching' words (e.g., διδασκαλία, διδάσκω); 'speaking' words (e.g., λέγω, λαλέω); 'traditioning' words (e.g., γράφω, παραδίδωμι); 'announcing' words (e.g., εὐαγγέλιον, εὐαγγελίζω, κηρύσσω, μαρτυρέω); 'revealing' words (e.g., φανερόω, φανερός, ἀποκαλύπτω, ἐνδείκνυμι); 'worshipping' words (e.g., προσεύχομαι, προφητεύω, διακρίνω); 'commanding' words (e.g., θέλω, παρακαλέω, παράκλησις, παραγγέλλω, βούλομαι); 'correcting' words (e.g., ἐλέγχω, νουθετέω, παιδεύω); and 'remembering' words (e.g., γνωρίζω, τύπος, μνημονεύω, μιμητής). A section of reflection concludes each chapter, noting key findings and drawing out similarities or differences within or across the target texts. Almost 100 pages are devoted to 11 appendixes, categorizing the occurrences of each word in terms of addresser/ee, register, purpose, consequence, distinctive contribution, etc.



Although a few distinctives are noted, mostly between 1 Corinthians and the Pastoral Epistles, these tend to be downplayed as probably situationally explicable. However, the greater frequency of 'traditioning words' in 1 Corinthians than in the Pastoral Epistles is noted as unexpected. This contrasts with the traditional view that the Pastoral Epistles depict a greater concern for the establishment and maintenance of a body of teaching against the significant challenge of false teaching. However, little is concluded from this finding. Rather, the similarities are considered to be of greater significance. This shared focus contrasts with the practices understood within the voluntary associations and mystery religions, which have very little focus on education.

Although it is recognized that Judge's description of 'scholastic' communities creates problems, Smith nonetheless adopted it in the title of her monograph; however, the descriptor 'learning communities' is recognized as a more accessible alternative. Text-focused study was not the goal of these communities. Rather, the focus was on character formation in contexts where 'texts' were largely oral/aural, rather than written, and where close, authoritative relationships invited the imitation of modeled lives, and not merely attendance at formal discourse. This impinges, of course, on the range of physical contexts for educational activities. None of this relegates the role of God as the prime teacher and revealer, the supreme source and authority. As a consequence, the human teacher would do well to model ongoing learning, rather than be seen as one who has mastered, and therefore hands down, a fixed and acquired curriculum.

In terms of our understanding of early church practices, it is perhaps surprising that such a small subset of epistles in the Pauline corpus reveals so many words that focus on the activity and contribution of teaching. By comparison, these letters, indeed the wider Pauline corpus, reveal far less in regard to the early church's practices of worship, mission or social action. Furthermore, where we do find reference to these, and other, activities, they often presuppose a context in which they are being taught. That is, 'educational activities' shaped all aspects of community life. It is important to weigh, however, to what extent the focus on teaching in these letters is descriptive of an early Christian focus on education or was expressly intended to correct a lack of emphasis on this.

In view of present day views of pedagogy, it would also be interesting to explore in even greater detail the relationship within these texts between teaching and learning, especially in terms of formation. How significant is it that so many of the words focus on the dissemination, rather than the acquisition of learning? To what extent might contemporary church communities focus additional energy on educational activities that are not teacher-centred, are rather more relational, and perhaps more effective in Christian formation than traditional, didactic methods?

The conclusions of this study eloquently justify a return to exploring Judge's argument from a number of additional perspectives. This is a prestigious monograph series, and the study thoroughly deserves its place within it.

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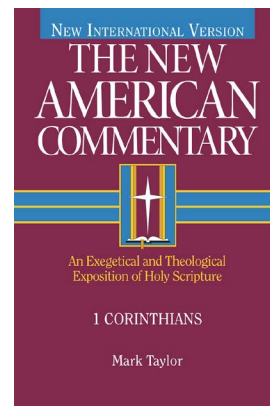
Mark Taylor. *1 Corinthians*. New American Commentary 28. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2014. xvi + 419 pp. \$24.74.

Mark Taylor, professor of New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, enhances the abundance of literature available on 1 Corinthians with his recent expositional commentary. With this work Taylor intends a helpful resource for the church. He says, “I have written primarily for the church with the goal of producing a clear exposition of the text. I have not attempted to solve every exegetical problem, but I have tried to provide the reader with interpretive options and a lucid presentation of the argument and theological themes of the letter” (author’s preface). This review will explore whether he has accomplished his goal by revealing areas of strength and weakness in his commentary.

Taylor’s robust understanding of 1 Corinthians produces two significant contributions. First, I highly commend Taylor’s work as a guide for interpreting NT texts. His commentary demonstrates sound exegetical practices and offers insightful biblical-theological observations, culminating in a rich exposition of the text. For instance, when dealing with 1 Cor 1–3, Taylor demonstrates many parallels between chapters one and three which suggest that they should be included in the same unit. Taylor argues that Paul’s method is to make a propositional statement in chapter one and then invert it in chapter three. In 1:18–25 the cross is foolishness to the lost, but in chapter 3 the world’s wisdom is foolishness to God. In chapter one the way to become wise is to become a fool in the world and in 3:21 believers should disregard the wisdom of this age. In chapter 1 the Corinthians were claiming to belong to certain apostles, but in chapter 3 the apostles actually belong to the church. Taylor’s attention to this phenomenon in 1 Cor 1–3 greatly helps the reader keep Paul’s larger argument in view. Many other examples of sound exegesis and insightful biblical-theological observations appear throughout the book (e.g., see his discussion of love as Paul’s “crowning exhortation” in 1 Corinthians on p. 429).

Second, Taylor succinctly explains many difficult passages within 1 Corinthians. For example, after discussing three possible views of the phrase “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman” (7:1b), Taylor draws his reader’s attention to Paul’s main point in the passage: “Paul warns of ‘immoralities’ and emphasizes the obligations of spouses within marriage” (pp. 165–66). Later in 1 Cor 11 Taylor concisely describes what Paul means when he explains that a woman should cover her head *because* “woman is the glory of man” (11:8b). This reason for a head covering has perplexed commentators throughout the centuries, but Taylor helpfully summarizes, “The veiling of the woman has to do with the fact that she is man’s ‘glory.’ The purpose of the veil, then, is that people should not gaze on that which is man’s glory in worship since the focus is on God’s glory” (p. 262). In other words, first-century Christian women must wear head coverings so that they do not draw undue attention to themselves or mankind in general; instead, believers must glorify God in worship.

I now turn to two areas of weakness. First, sometimes (perhaps for the sake of brevity) the author fails to recognize or discuss possible views of controversial subjects. For instance, the perfect (τὸ τέλειον) is “undoubtedly” (p. 316) the final consummation of all things. Unfortunately, however, Taylor does not discuss other possible interpretations of the identity of the perfect including the completion of Scripture, the formation of the canon, or the maturity of the church. These other views, held by reputable scholars, are not even discussed in one footnote (in contrast, Rosner and Ciampa



have one lengthy paragraph, Fee has three pages, and Garland has five pages). Instead, the author's understanding is assumed to be the only one possible. In an earlier discussion about the meaning of not even eating with disciplined believers (5:11b), Taylor discusses whether the phrase means removal from the Lord's Table or "exclusion from all private meals" (p. 141) without considering the alternative option of exclusion from eating with them in public/social gatherings (including at the Lord's Table, the market place, and idol temples). Later, when discussing the "silence of women" in chapter 14, Taylor again fails to discuss at least one possible view. Some suggest that a woman's silence refers to absolute silence in church gatherings (e.g. John Fish, "Women Speaking in the Church: the Relationship of 1 Corinthians 11:5 and 14:34–36," *Emmaus Journal* 1 [1992]: 215–52), which might be the natural way a modern person would read this text. Other views are more likely in my opinion (and the overwhelming opinion of scholarship), but some mention of this view seems necessary.

Second, although normally lucid in his writing, Taylor *occasionally* fails to demonstrate his own views clearly on controversial subjects. For instance, his understanding of eternal security is unclear at times. When writing about those who "will not enter the kingdom" (6:9–11), Taylor exclaims, "Paul's warning is not hypothetical but real. Those who persist in such behavior exclude themselves from the kingdom of God" (p. 149). Taylor does not clarify, however, what he means by "exclude themselves" or explain how the Corinthians might do so. The reader is left to speculate: the Corinthians might exclude themselves by disobedient behavior that results in *either* losing their salvation *or* revealing their false faith. Later, while commenting on the possibility that one might be ἀδόκιμος ("disqualified") in 9:27, Taylor leaves the impression that many who initially profess Christ prove later that they were never true believers: "It is certainly the case that there are many in the church who profess faith in Christ but who do not possess genuine faith" (p. 224). In summary, examination of Taylor's exegesis of 9:27 demonstrates his belief that some professing believers reveal through their actions that they are not genuine. His interpretation of 6:9–11 might be explained in the same way, but his comments on that passage allow for the *possibility* that believers lose their salvation by acting like unbelievers.

Other examples of a lack of clarity occur in his discussions about the mode of tongues speaking (i.e., foreign or angelic languages or unintelligible utterances, etc.) and about a man who commits immorality sinning against his own body. Taylor's personal conclusions about these issues are either missing completely or intentionally obscure. To be fair, however, Taylor's concise summaries of the multiplicity of views of controversial subjects in 1 Corinthians are *normally* well-done and offer much insight for the reader even if his own views are not always present.

Overall, Taylor accomplishes his goals of producing a clear exposition of 1 Corinthians and providing interpretive options for exegetical problems. The strengths of this commentary far outweigh its weaknesses, and any pastor or Bible teacher looking for a good mid-sized commentary will enjoy it immensely. Taylor has produced a helpful resource for the church, and I recommend this book to every person who desires a better grasp of the meaning and important themes of 1 Corinthians.

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Ryan Donald Wettlaufer. *No Longer Written: The Use of Conjectural Emendation in the Restoration of the Text of the New Testament, the Epistle of James as a Case Study*. New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 44. Leiden: Brill, 2013. xii + 205 pp. £81.00/\$133.00.

This provocative and stimulating monograph, originally a doctoral dissertation done under John Kloppenborg’s supervision, makes a strong, sustained argument that some places in the NT manuscripts (MSS) are so defective that a scholarly conjecture is needed to restore the wording of the original text. This view is not new, though its heyday was centuries ago when the database for the NT text was but a fraction of what it is today.

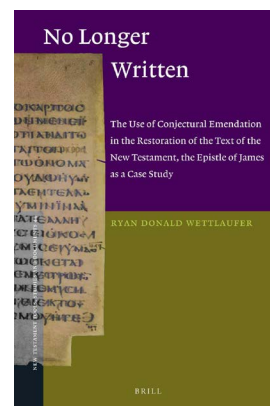
The book has two main sections: Theory (the need and rationale for conjecture), with three chapters (pp. 3–78), and Practice (pp. 79–184), which focuses on five conjectural emendations in James covered in four chapters (conjectures in 3:1, 4:2, 4:5; and two that the author rejects, in 1:1 and 2:1).

Wettlaufer opens his monograph by defining conjectural emendation as “the act of restoring a given text at points where all extant manuscript evidence appears to be corrupt” (p. 3). He gives no further definition. This is a surprising omission, since the definition of conjecture is key to his entire project. But one person’s conjecture is another person’s minimally attested reading. Wettlaufer never thinks of patristic writings, let alone ancient versions, as part of the material evidence to be included when assessing whether a reading is really a conjecture. Yet later he quotes Bruce Metzger and Bart Ehrman on what conjecture means: “*the amount of evidence for the text of the New Testament, whether derived from MSS, early versions, or patristic quotations, is so much greater than that available for any ancient classical author . . .*” (p. 16, quoting *The Text of the New Testament* [4th ed; Oxford: OUP], 230, emphasis added by Wettlaufer).

In the first chapter, the author argues that conjectural emendation is a necessary part of classical textual criticism. This is true, but the dearth of data, especially early data, is the primary reason for it. The average classical Greek author has fewer than 20 copies of his or her writings still in existence. Further, the earliest extant copies for such an author come well over half a millennium after the original was written. But the NT is not like this at all.

The NT boasts of tens of thousands of handwritten copies (in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and several other languages) as well as over a million quotations by the church fathers. Nothing in the Greco-Roman world even comes close. Other ancient texts present scholars with a dearth of evidence; NT scholars enjoy an embarrassment of riches. And yet, even with the discovery of the papyri in the last 150 years, not a single *newly discovered reading* has commended itself to the majority of NT scholars as authentic. The papyri tend to support old readings, but in no place (except perhaps one) have they supplanted the readings that were already known. The fact that the papyri—collectively covering about half the NT—offer virtually no new *authentic* readings is telling against the possibility that somehow the autographic wording has been lost. If it had been, would we not expect to find more than one place where the papyri and only the papyri got it right?

In his second chapter, the longest in this section, Wettlaufer gives three arguments against conjecture: “some overestimate the witness of the extant manuscript base, some misestimate the influence of faith in textual criticism, while some underestimate the necessity of even trying to restore the text of the New



Testament” (p. 14). I agree strongly with his second and third points, but his first—the only positive argument for conjecture—is the weakest.

Here the author says that the primary reason scholars reject conjectural emendation is because of the abundance of MSS (p. 16). But that’s only partially true. He cites Westcott and Hort, yet ignores much of their argument: “in the New Testament *the abundance, variety and comparative excellence of the documents* confines this task of pure ‘emendation’ within so narrow limits that we may leave it out of sight for the present . . .” (p. 17, italics added by Wettlaufer). Two sentences later he declares, “Popularity is no necessary indicator of truth.” True—yet that is not what these scholars, or more recent scholars, are saying. It is the abundance, age, quality, and variety of witnesses that argue against the need for conjecture—not just the abundance, and not just Greek MSS.

In this chapter, the author’s best argument, *prima facie*, is this: “It is surprising, in fact, how often the accepted text actually depends on only a handful of extant manuscripts” (p. 29). Citing a study by Maurice Robinson, Wettlaufer notes that there are 30 places in the NA27 in which “the reading accepted as authentic in that edition was supported by but a single manuscript” (p. 30; Wettlaufer lists only 29). This is a far smaller number than I expected. If there are only 29 or 30 places where the authentic text is found in but one MS, it would seem that the chances of *no* witnesses to the original reading would have to be significantly less than this. This statistic, then, actually hurts his case. Further, almost all of these 29 instances have more witnesses than just one.

On one or two occasions the author has misread f^1 or f^3 to mean one witness (the ‘*f*’ means *family* and includes several Greek MSS). Once or twice he assumed that *sine acc.* in parentheses meant that the reading was not exactly the same as what the allegedly lone witness had. But *sine acc.* means “without the accent,” and is thus not a genuine textual variant. Wettlaufer also did not recognize the *pc* as meaning *pauci*—i.e., a few other Greek MSS. In total, almost two thirds (19 of 29) of alleged single-witness authentic readings have *more* than one witness.

Not only this, but when one examines other apparatuses, the remaining ten instances are reduced to *four*. And of those four, only one affects the meaning of the text in any significant way. If there are but *four* places in which the standard critical text is based on only one witness, the statistical probability that conjectural emendation is needed for *several* passages in the NT is greatly diminished. In short, cumulative arguments are decidedly not on Wettlaufer’s side.

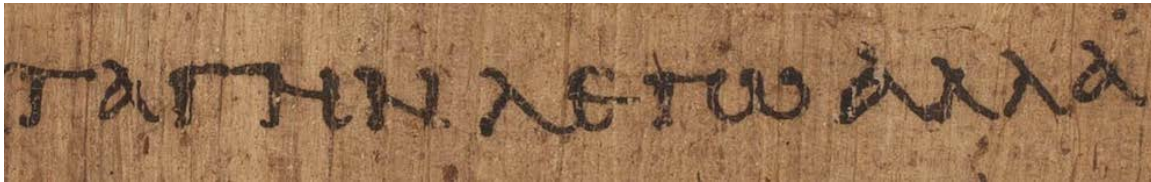
In the final section of chapter two, the author mentions the recent trend among some notable textual critics (chiefly, Ehrman, Parker, and Epp) to get away from even attempting to recover the autographic text. He adds, “When textual criticism had the straightforward goal of recovering a single original text, conjectural emendation was simply one way to attain that goal” (p. 58). This is a significant point. To the extent that modern textual critics have thrown in the towel after trying to reconstruct the autographic text, this very despair serves conjectural emendation well. If the data are really so minimal that we simply cannot reconstruct the original from the existing witnesses, conjectural emendation may provide a way forward. But the question of whether the situation is really that bleak is a different matter. Many textual critics continue to believe that the original wording is to be found somewhere among the surviving witnesses.

His third chapter offers some safeguards on abusing conjecture. Here the author gives some decent controls over making a conjecture: it must fit in the immediate and larger context, must not be counter to the author’s linguistic usage, and must not resolve a problem that exists only for modern students.

Wettlaufer begins his section on practice with rationale for using James as a case study: “Of all the texts in the New Testament it is probably the epistle of James that bears the most potential for sound conjectural emendation” (p. 81). He speaks without further discussion of an “initial period of rejection,” when James was copied and preserved less than other NT texts (p. 81). We will address the reception history of James at the end of this review.

Rather than discuss each of the three conjectures that Wettlaufer accepts for James, we will focus on just one as representative of his approach. In his treatment of Jas 3:1 he notes that although the “traditional text” explains the rise of the others, it itself is inadequate. Why? Because reading the verse as “Not many of you should become teachers . . . since you know that we will receive a greater *judgment*” means that teachers will be *judged*. The author argues that the normal meaning of κρίμα (“judgment”) cannot be softened to “scrutiny.” Thus, Jas 3:1 is out of sync with the following verses which instruct the readers to curb their tongues, but not to be silent, and that *only* teachers, in this reading, would be judged.

What reading does he offer instead? “Do not become *garrulous* teachers” The authentic reading was πολύλαλοι instead of πολλοί, in this case, and it fell out very early on via haplography: ΠΟΛΥΛΑΛΟΙ→ΠΟΛ(ΥΛΑ)ΛΟΙ→ΠΟΛΛΟΙ (p. 97). Wettlaufer admits, “It is not the neatest example of haplography, but it is precisely the type of messy mistake to which the earliest untrained scribes were prone” (p. 97). Yet, in early majuscule script, the alpha looks less like the lambda than Wettlaufer’s capital letter illustrations reveals. For example, in P⁴⁶ (c. 200 CE), here is a representative line with three alphas and three lambdas:



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Photographed by CSNTM.

Although it is possible that an early scribe overlooked the ΥΛΑ and wrote πολλοί instead of πολύλαλοι, it is less likely in the earliest period, precisely the time that Wettlaufer thinks the error must have occurred.

There are other problems with this conjecture. First, it is not really a conjectural emendation—at least, according to the definition of Metzger and Ehrman, viz., a reading not found in Greek MSS, versions, or church fathers—since it is found both in fifth-century and ninth-century patristic citations.

Second, Wettlaufer’s proposed emendation (not new with him, as he notes) actually introduces problems that, in my view, are bigger than all those that he solves. This is seen in v. 1b: “since you know that we will incur a greater judgment.” There are two issues here—the first person plural verb and the comparative adjective. If Wettlaufer’s conjectural emendation is correct, two other emendations would be needed to fix the problems still remaining in the text. First, the μῆζον would need to be seen as an early scribal corruption, but Wettlaufer never comments on this; thus, the problem of the “greater” judgment implying a lesser judgment for all still remains. Second, λημψόμεθα is still a problem if the conjectural emendation is adopted: The “we” is referring back to διδάσκαλοι and as such it does

not alleviate the problem that teachers, including James, would incur *greater judgment*. Paraphrased it could be rendered: “Do not become garrulous teachers, for even we who are teachers, even if not garrulous, will incur a greater judgment.” The first person verb will not allow for the interpretation that Wettlaufer claims for it, since *all* teachers then would *still* incur judgment, just as in the traditional text. For Wettlaufer’s conjecture to work, he would *also* have to emend the verb to either second person or third person: “*you* will incur [λήμψεσθε] greater judgment” or “*they* will incur [λήμψονται] greater judgment.” Wettlaufer seems to recognize this problem when he mistranslates the verse as “do not become garrulous teachers or receive a greater judgment!” (p. 99). In this paraphrase, he illegitimately treats λημψόμεθα as though it were λήμψεσθε. In the end, although Wettlaufer’s conjectural emendation is ingenious on many fronts, it ultimately leaves the text with more exegetical problems than it solves, and *requires two more emendations* in order to satisfy all the problems that Wettlaufer mentioned.

In the last chapter of this section, the author finally offers his reconstruction of the transmissional history of James—but as an *assumption* which he needed to demonstrate. He assumes that only *one* archetype was produced from which all copies of James were ultimately derived (pp. 183, 184).

This is the Achilles’ heel of Wettlaufer’s method. When he speaks of classical texts for which conjecture is a necessity, he does not note that for many, if not most, classical texts a direct line of descent can be constructed from the available evidence. Sometimes there are two archetypes that all extant witnesses go back to. But there are rarely multiple archetypes. But is it really likely that only one archetypal MS of the autograph of *James* was made? Wettlaufer’s mention of Isho’Dad’s and the Old Latin Speculum’s reading for Jas 3:1, and Severian (late fourth/early fifth century) as following a text that is not found in extant MSS for Jas 4:5, illustrates the very thing that Wettlaufer seems opposed to, viz., that there is more than one archetype of James from which all MSS were ultimately derived. Further, he never discusses the reception history of this letter except to say that it was “rejected” in the second century. To be sure, that seems to relate to James’s *canonical* status in many quarters, but this does not mean that it was not read or copied. The very prospect of it being rejected by some presupposes that there were several copies circulating in the second century. Do all these go back to a single defective archetype?

One of the arguments that the author repeatedly mentions is that since our earliest MSS often deviate from each other in significant ways, there must be many gaps in the MS record in the earliest period. True enough, but this does not help his view of a single, defective archetype for James from which all witnesses derived. The variety of early witnesses shows that more than one archetype was circulating in the early period.

Those who accept conjectural emendation for this letter need to address the reception history of the epistle and give some plausible hypothesis for the single archetype view. Or else they need to show that even if there was more than one archetype, the corruption of the text in certain places is one that is *likely* to have been repeated in more than one early MS. (Wettlaufer’s argument for corruption of the autographic text of Jas 4:5 is his strongest case, but his explanation for *how* the corruption came about is his weakest, as even he admits.) Unless this is done, the chances that all of the first-generation copies of James made the same mistake must be judged exceedingly remote. And it is this factor that has, often unstated, caused NT scholars to reject conjecture, even if the reading has a certain attractiveness to it.

The proliferation of relatively good copies (though none exactly corresponding to the originals) from an early period offers the most likely scenario. And to the extent that this is true, along with the likelihood that later scribes would at times consult more than one exemplar, the necessity for conjectural

emendation decreases commensurately. Wettlaufer has made out as good a case as can be made for conjectural emendation in the NT, but in the end his view creates more problems than it solves and does not stand up to the most likely reception history of James.

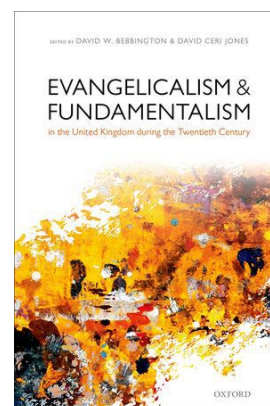
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— HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY —

David Bebbington and David Ceri Jones, eds. *Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in the United Kingdom during the Twentieth Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. vx + 409 pp. \$150.00.

It is common for scholars to suggest that Protestant fundamentalism is a mostly American phenomenon that has had minimal influence within the United Kingdom. In recent years, a number of historians have challenged this assumption. Furthermore, as in North America, in the British Isles the lines between evangelicalism and fundamentalism are not always easy to draw. For this reason, in 2008 and 2009 a group of British historians, sociologists, and theologians participated in the Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in Britain Project (EFBP) to discuss the relationship between the two movements. *Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in the United Kingdom during the Twentieth Century* represents the published proceedings of key papers that were written in conjunction with the EFBP.



Editors David Bebbington and David Ceri Jones open the volume with an introduction that explains the purpose of EFBP, offers some initial interpretations of key terms and timelines, and briefly summarizes the contents of each chapter. Part I includes two chapters on British precursors to fundamentalism (pre-1920s). Geoffrey Treloar discusses the British contributors to *The Fundamentals* (1910–1915), though he neglects the contribution of British Baptist pastor John Stock. Neil Dickson focuses on the work of Thomas Whitelaw, a conservative dissenter among Scottish Presbyterians. Dickson suggests Whitelaw was a proto-fundamentalist, though he died in 1917 before the movement came to its maturity.

Part II includes five chapters that examine the beginnings of British fundamentalism during the interwar years (ca. 1919–1939). Andrew Atherstone argues that some Calvinistic Anglican evangelicals embraced fundamentalism, though most never owned the fundamentalist label. Martin Wellings examines the formation and early history of the Wesley Bible Union, one of the few self-consciously fundamentalist movements during this period. Bebbington examines Baptist fundamentalism, a phenomenon that arose largely in response to ecumenism within the Baptist Union. Tim Grass suggests that the Brethren, though dispensational (a hallmark of early fundamentalists), were actually more evangelical than fundamentalist, while Linda Wilson argues that women often played a key, albeit non-clerical role in promoting British fundamentalism. John Maiden suggests that a key difference between fundamentalists and evangelicals was the more militant anti-Catholic rhetoric of the former. These chapters more than any other demonstrate that Britain experienced its own fundamentalist controversies during the same period as the more famous denominational melees in North America.

Part III includes four chapters that discuss the later twentieth century. Ian Randall and Alister Chapman focus upon two key evangelical leaders who gravitated away from fundamentalist roots and encouraged the growth of evangelicalism in Britain: Billy Graham and John Stott. Derek Tidball argues that Free Methodism represents one movement that transitioned from a more fundamentalist heritage to a more evangelical identity. Scholars will note that these same trends were evident among postwar evangelicalism and fundamentalism in North America. David Goodhew suggests that new church plants in York since 1980 are evangelical, but not fundamentalist, though among the contributors he offers the most idiosyncratic interpretation of fundamentalism by associated it with religious violence. By Goodhew's definition, virtually none of the subjects treated in *Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism* would qualify as fundamentalists—including self-confessed fundamentalists.

Part IV focuses upon national variations of fundamentalism. Andrew Holmes examines W. P. Nicholson's ministry in Ulster; Nicholson was a precursor to the more famous (and avowedly fundamentalist) Ian Paisley. Kenneth Roxburgh discusses mild fundamentalism within Scotland, which was dominated by a more moderate evangelicalism, while Jones examines fundamentalism and evangelicalism in postwar Wales. Martin Lloyd-Jones, who is difficult to categorize, was the key figure among Welsh conservative Protestants.

Part V includes theological reflections on British evangelicals and fundamentalists. William Kay discusses the oft-debated topic of the relationship between fundamentalists and Pentecostals, repeating the common (and overly simplistic) notion that fundamentalists care more about doctrine while Pentecostals focus more upon experience. Rob Warner's chapter includes a helpful comparison of the confessional statements of various evangelical ministries, demonstrating their tendency to become more conservative over time. Stephen Holmes examines theological continuity and discontinuity between evangelicals and fundamentalists. According to Holmes, fundamentalists are Princetonian inerrantists while evangelicals normally are not, fundamentalists are more separatist and anti-Catholic than evangelicals, and fundamentalists are less open to theological innovation and departures from premillennialism than their evangelical counterparts. In the final chapter, Bebbington and Jones expound some common themes that emerge in the book, determining that evangelicalism and fundamentalism are not identical movements.

Historians will note that six figures loom large in the background of this book. First, many of the contributors draw upon the interdisciplinary approach of the Fundamentalism Project that was convened in America between 1987 and 1995 under the leadership of Martin Marty and Scott Appleby. Unlike the Fundamentalism Project, however, these scholars focus their attention on conservative Protestants, for the most part avoiding attempts to relate Protestant fundamentalism to similar movements in other religious traditions (Goodhew's chapter is an exception). Second, the contributors closely follow David Bebbington's definition of evangelicalism and George Marsden's understanding of fundamentalism. These two historians are undoubtedly the most influential recent interpreters of these traditions over the past generation. Finally, most of the chapters interact with James Barr and Harriet Harris, two British scholars who closely associate fundamentalism with evangelicalism. Nearly all the contributors to this volume reject or significantly nuance the Barr-Harris thesis.

Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism in the United Kingdom during the Twentieth Century is a significant contribution to an understudied but important theme in British religious history. Nearly all of the essays reflect a high caliber of scholarship. The attempt by the historians to examine theological, social, and denominational factors influencing fundamentalism and evangelicalism is refreshing;

these movements simply cannot be explained adequately when social historians and intellectual historians work in isolation from one another. The theological chapters are informative, if perhaps more impressionistic than the historical chapters.

Many contributors argue that it can be difficult to clearly draw the line at times between fundamentalists and evangelicals in Britain. Lloyd-Jones is a clear individual example of this phenomenon, while the Brethren and many more conservative British Baptists illustrate it on a larger scale. In the second edition of his classic work *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, George Marsden suggests the category of “fundamentalistic evangelicals” to describe militantly conservative evangelicals who nevertheless demonstrate more theological diversity and greater hesitancy toward ecclesial separation than self-confessed fundamentalists. Marsden applies this category to key leaders in the early Religious Right and the conservative dissenters who gained control of the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1980s (*Fundamentalism and American Culture* [new ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006], 229–57). Perhaps this terminology could provide some explanatory power to Lloyd-Jones and others who defy simplistic categorization.

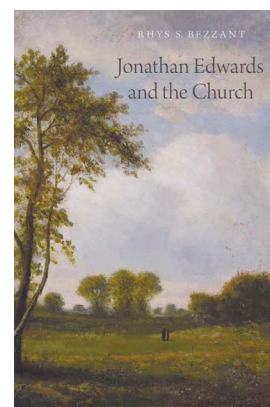
Bebbington and Jones have edited an important work that should inspire scores of subsequent monographs, essays, and theses. Unfortunately, Oxford University Press has priced the volume out of the reach of most scholars. A book this significant deserves a quality paperback volume that can be more widely read by scholars and especially the graduate students who will build upon its insights and further our understanding of modern conservative Protestantism in the British Isles.

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Rhys S. Bezzant. *Jonathan Edwards and the Church*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. 314 pp. £30.52/\$49.95.

With all the recent scholarship devoted to Jonathan Edwards, it is a wonder that there would be any kind of gaping holes in the coverage of his doctrinal content, even taking into account his extensive corpus of writings. To be sure, there are still areas in Edwards studied that need to be covered in greater detail, but it is surprising to think that there has been a genuine neglect of an extensive study of Edwards’s ecclesiology amongst scholars. This, however, is no longer the case due to Rhys Bezzant’s recent work *Jonathan Edwards and the Church*. The author gives a telling account of Edwards’s ecclesiology that is “orderly but not ordinary” (see Chapter 6).

Bezzant is the Dean of Missional Leadership and Lecturer in Christian Thought at Ridley Melbourne. The author works diachronically through the years of Edwards’s pastoral leadership, supplying an understanding of his ecclesiological development. Alongside of this analysis Bezzant also offers helpful systematic formulations addressing the nature and significance of Edwards’s doctrine of the church. This approach supplies the reader with an exploration of several of Edwards’s major writings and sermons, with an eye to their ecclesiological implications.



In regards to the thesis of this work, Bezzant maintains that for Edwards, “The church is not an afterthought in the otherwise individualistic plans of God, but is the focused domain where God’s promises, presence, and purpose are to be discovered” (p. ix). More specifically, Bezzant claims that Edwards held fast to “fundamental Protestant convictions while creating space for fresh expressions of church life” (p. xi). This renewal in ecclesial life came about through various means, such as revivals, itinerancy, concerts of prayer, missionary initiatives, and doctrinal clarification.

The first chapter sets Edwards in his historical context, noting several key features regarding the New England ecclesiological order. Dating back to the Reformation, debates raged regarding the relationship between the church and state, and within the Puritan context of New England a new concern arose concerning the membership and disciplinary procedures of the church. With the rise of articles establishing New England ecclesiology, such as the Saybrook Platform and the Half-Way Covenant, Edwards sought to bring about an “ecclesiological recalibration.” Bezzant avers, “Not only did Edwards face the challenge of providing for the already-conflicted Puritan church in New England renewed clarity, stability, and unity, but he had to do this in the midst of revivalist fervor and new fissures within the received polity” (p. 11). As seen throughout this work, Edwards always sought to balance and find the good in two diverging strands of ecclesiological thought.

The majority of the book concentrates on tracing Edwards’s ecclesiological development in a chronological fashion, asking at each juncture what his writings contribute to this topic (chapters 2–4). Within each chapter the author focuses on several of Edwards’s major writings or sermons, explicating from each their overall ecclesiological content. As one traces these writings diachronically, one can see that during the period of the revivals (mid 1730s to the early 1740s) Edwards centers his attention on the church as the necessary framework for understanding and channeling spiritual ardor. The latter part of his ministry coalesces around the international and eschatological shape of his ecclesiology (p. 257). After this treatment of Edwards’s works, Bezzant offers a synthetic summary of his ecclesiology, centered on three specific areas: worship, discipline, and polity. It is here the reader sees not only a theological summary of the previous chapters, but also the practical ways in which Edwards’s ecclesiology shaped the actual life of the church. The work concludes with a chapter summarizing how in fact Edwards’s ecclesiology is rooted in Reformed tradition, and yet innovative in developing an evangelical ecclesiology with “revivalist tendencies at its core” (pp. 256–57).

This is an outstanding work on a topic that has not received the attention it rightly deserves. Bezzant is right to highlight the work of Schafer, Sweeney, Plantinga Pauw, and Hall throughout his books, as these writers have contributed to this topic in meaningful ways. The author, however, certainly goes beyond them in this monograph, and at points diverges with their scholarship, suggesting Edwards was a pastor-theologian with a robust evangelical ecclesiology.

One great strength of this work is the way in which Bezzant outlined the New England historical context whilst also focusing so readily on Edwards’s original writings. With this dualistic focus, Bezzant was able to highlight to a great degree the ways in which Edwards’s ecclesiology developed in his own mind, but also in relation to the constraining forces of society and church tradition. As such, the reader experiences theological vigor alongside of a nearly biographical approach that produces a robust depiction of ecclesiology that shaped several generations in America.

Bezzant sheds light on several facets of Edwards’s life and career throughout the work. Perhaps one of the more surprising to the average reader would be his accounting of Edwards’s dismissal from his church in Northampton. Many may argue that Edwards was ejected from his pastorate due to his

attempt to reestablish an ossified, authoritarian form of leadership that simply did not comport with his present milieu. Bezzant argues, to the contrary, that the real issue was his biblical understanding of the church and the way in which he sought to see the gospel transform church and society in very specific ways. This is the case, as Edwards's ecclesiology was shaped by a certain eschatological understanding, which gave rise to a particular view of church life and the pursuit of virtue.

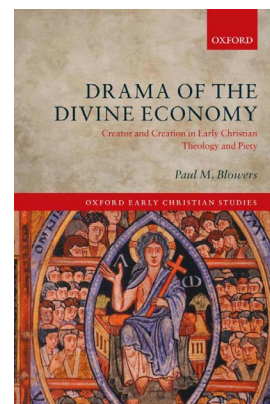
Bezzant's work is an outstanding example of how one can delve into historical theology, offering up both biographical insights as well as astute theological promulgations. It also demonstrates that ecclesiology should not be thought of as a mere secondary doctrine; rather ecclesiology should be seen as connective tissue, demonstrating how the various loci of theology are intimately linked. Pastors, scholars, and seminary students alike will benefit greatly from this work, one that is truly a contribution to the field of Christian scholarship.

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Paul Blowers. *Drama of the Divine Economy: Creator and Creation in Early Christian Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. xvi + 424 pp. \$160.00.

Although there are numerous studies that analyze various aspects of early Christian theologies of creation—such as cosmological models of the God-world relation, the development of the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, and early Christian interpretations of Genesis 1–2—what Paul Blowers achieves in this recent book is unique. Instead of restricting himself to a specific aspect or expression of early Christian theology on creation, Blowers widens the scope of his study and provides a panoramic view of what he refers to as the “early Christian vision of creation” (p. 5). Patristic theological reflection on this vision, as he argues throughout the book, cannot be isolated from further reflection on the identity and action of the Creator, the drama and experience of salvation, and the “performance” of Christian faith in liturgical, sacramental, ethical, and ascetical practices. The comprehensive approach that Blowers pursues, then, is meant to illustrate the interconnected nature of these various themes in early Christianity and their “pastoral function” in shaping Christian identity and practice (p. 5).

Following a very thorough outline of the book's contents in the introduction, chapters two and three analyze both Greco-Roman and Hellenistic-Jewish approaches to cosmology and cosmogony as important backdrops for early Christian theology. Blowers dismisses any attempt to analyze early Christian thought according to a strict Hellenic/Hebraic distinction, and argues that both streams provided both inspiration and material for critique. The Greco-Roman cosmological tradition, for instance, not only offered a philosophical sparring partner for early Christians, but also served as an inspirational stimulus for Christian theological reflection through themes such as teleology, creationism, and the “first principles” of the universe. Similarly, while Hellenistic-Jewish cosmology ultimately fell short of the Christian doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, it also bequeathed important exegetical insights to later Christian theology, such as the mediatorial role of wisdom and the “double creation” interpretation of Gen 1–2.



In chapter four, Blowers examines the “narrative framework” that typified the theology of creation in the New Testament and how that framework was appropriated in the second and third century as theologians began to appeal to a “Rule of Faith” in establishing normative doctrinal positions against the competing worldviews of Marcion and the Gnostic traditions. Importantly, what was at stake in these competing understandings of Creator and creation was more than a doctrine of creation. In the same way that early Christian cosmology was embedded within the larger drama of salvation and informed Christian practice, so too the cosmological schemes of Marcion and the Gnostics were intertwined with alternative narratives of salvation and competing liturgical, sacramental, and ethical practices (p. 96).

Chapters five and seven, the “dual centers of gravity” (p. 8) for the book, offer a survey of patristic interpretations of important scriptural texts—chapter five focuses on patristic readings of Gen 1–3 and chapter seven on the Psalms, wisdom literature, Isaiah, and the New Testament. In his analysis of Christian interpretation of Genesis, Blowers argues that the common distinction between “literal” and “spiritual” senses proves unhelpful and, in its place, makes a genre distinction between “analytical” and “doxological” literature. Even in the more precise “analytical” commentaries, however, Christians did not hesitate to interpret the Genesis account of creation in light of a Trinitarian understanding of God and the broader scriptural narrative of salvation, nor was their engagement with Genesis divorced from Isaiah’s prophecy of new creation or the New Testament’s testimony to the role of Christ in creation, thus contributing to what Blowers describes as a *theologically* literal interpretation. While the illustrations given show interpretive disagreements, they also reinforce Blowers’s central claim: early Christian theology of creation was not a “tidy intellectual or exegetical evolution driven by questions of cosmogony or philosophical cosmology,” but emerged rather as Christians perceived that “Scripture was in an extensive conversation with itself, as it were, about the relation of Creator and creation” (p. 241).

Chapters six and eight each deal with specific theological themes in the doctrine of creation. In chapter six, Blowers analyzes the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* and various Christian attempts to reconcile the eternal Creator with a temporal creation through the framework of a “simultaneous” and “double” creation, focusing especially on Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, and Maximus the Confessor. Chapter eight, meanwhile, makes a compelling argument that early Christian theology not only affirmed the mediatorial roles of Christ and the Holy Spirit in creation, but also shaped its understanding of creation through the various aspects of the Son’s salvific work: his birth, baptism, miracles, death, descent into hell, resurrection, and ascension. This chapter does an excellent job at reinforcing one of the book’s main themes, that the doctrine of creation was not simply a doctrine about “beginnings” or “ends,” but about “the triune Creator’s whole *strategy* . . . in the great ‘middle’ or ‘history’ of creation” (p. 307).

Until this point in the book, Blowers has been primarily focused on analyzing the place of creation in the exegetical and theological framework of early Christianity, but in chapter nine, entitled “Performing the Faith,” he returns to its place in Christian practice. Once again, this chapter does not offer a comprehensive account of its subject, but does provide a very helpful overview of the “pastoral function” of a theology of creation in the discipline of contemplation, liturgical and sacramental practice, and the formation of Christian ethics. Following this, Blowers ends the book with a short epilogue that brings the patristic reflection on creation into conversation with modern advocates of a “dramatic” approach to theology, such as Hans Urs von Balthasar and Kevin Vanhoozer.

The broad scope of the book, which is probably its most important contribution, brings with it certain methodological limitations and weaknesses. For example, other than his brief surveys of

Nyssen, Augustine, and Maximus, Blowers never gives sustained attention to the particular “vision” of an individual theologian, nor does he provide prolonged engagement with specific texts. Further, while Blowers is certainly correct in arguing that the doctrine of creation was not a “tidy intellectual development,” the doctrine did develop, often in response to specific polemical situations. For the most part, the book does not situate the theology of early Christianity in the context of such intellectual debates, chapter four being an exception.

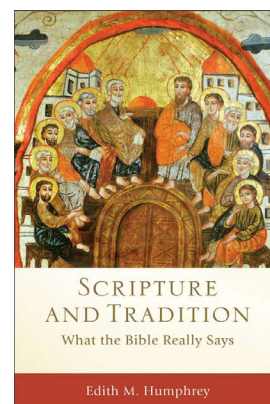
These limitations notwithstanding (no book can accomplish everything a reader wishes), Blowers’s excellent study will undoubtedly become a standard reference on the theology of creation in early Christianity. Despite its broad scope, this book is not just a survey, but also makes a compelling argument that patristic theologians developed their understanding of creation through sustained engagement with Scripture and within the broader framework of their doctrine of God, salvation, and a life of worshipful and obedient response to the Creator. This theme makes the book particularly important for contemporary (and especially evangelical) theology, which, in its debates over “origins,” runs the risk of isolating the doctrine of creation from this broader theological framework. While the steep price of the publisher will unfortunately keep this book out of most private libraries, it is to be highly recommended for advanced students and scholars of early Christianity and theology alike.

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Edith M. Humphrey. *Scripture and Tradition: What the Bible Really Says*. Grand Rapids, Baker, 2013. 172 pp. \$22.00.

The title of Edith Humphrey’s book—which began as lectures given in Acadia Divinity College, Nova Scotia in 2010—is one that beckons the reader. After all, one cannot be engaged in biblical and theological study today and be unaware of the groundswell of interest in “theological exegesis,” the interpretation of Scripture in reliance on expositions provided by revered past “doctors” of the church. Simultaneously, one cannot avoid hearing ongoing lament over idiosyncratic interpretation of the Bible within evangelical Christianity. Thus, the theme of Humphrey’s book is timely.

This Canadian-born professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is frank in admitting that the lectures reflect a quest on which she was spurred by her upbringing in the Salvation Army (a movement she still holds in esteem and to which she dedicates this book). Her upbringing left her with unresolved questions about that movement’s connection to the “church of the ages.” Her subsequent sojourn in Anglicanism—beset as it is with theological polarization—left her as perplexed as she had been one stage earlier. Did the Anglican Communion’s theological center of gravity *in fact* lie in the “faith once for all delivered to the saints?” As she witnessed irresponsible handling of Scripture in that communion, it did not appear to her that this was so. Now received into the Orthodox Church, she believes that she has found a theological footing that will not crumble. Yet, she lectures in a setting no less polarized, theologically, than one which she earlier abandoned; her PCUSA seminary allows that she may teach with an “anchor” in Orthodoxy.



The interesting introduction to *Scripture and Tradition* decries the lack of theological consensus in the modern Christian world; today's Christianity appears in many respects "rudderless." Humphrey in part faults the astonishing decline in biblical literacy in church and society. Further, as chapter I relates, the Scriptures indicate that the church of the apostolic age was concerned for the intact handing-down of the teaching of Jesus and his apostles. But, alleges Humphrey, this emphasis on handing down has been muted by various Protestant Bible translations which have tended to translate παράδοσις as "teaching" rather than as "tradition." She therefore contends that Protestantism's quarrels with medieval Catholic tradition have obscured an important principle and at a real cost. Mainline Protestantism's theological "drift" is the outworking of the forsaking of "holy tradition."

Yet if a Protestant reader would retort—to such a suggestion—that we honor this tradition supplied by Jesus and his apostles just to the extent that we honor the written Scriptures, Humphrey demurs in chapter II that "we must take care not to overvalue the role of the written Word" (p. 52). She insists that she is not seeking to disparage Scripture, but sees that a "precisionist" approach to the Bible will yield a Pharisaic literalism. She means to contend for the advantages of transmitted *oral* tradition as supplement to what is written.

But the question remains, have Jesus and his apostles indeed conveyed this to us? She demonstrates in chapter III that there were oral, unrecorded, instructions provided by Paul to the churches indebted to his missionary labors (pp. 85, 86). His written instructions regarding women in the church and regarding the Lord's Supper assume the existence of these earlier spoken communications. But we are, in acknowledging this, far from being in a position to affirm that we have any *actual* access to such unwritten instruction today. Humphrey is more enamored with the "idea" of oral tradition as interpersonal exercise than with the actuality of what might have been transmitted.

In chapter IV, she points approvingly to the example of Papias (c. 60–130), who insisted that he preferred the words of the Lord that he had received orally from eyewitnesses over the written memoirs [ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων], which Humphrey interprets as a reference to the increasingly-circulated gospels (p. 113). But the exalting of Papias in this way again begs the question of whether the kind of oral communication which his generation was evidently the last to receive from eyewitnesses, is in any equivalent sense available to us now. After her best efforts, Humphrey has not shown that it is.

Her final chapter is especially notable in that it takes up the issue of discerning which ancient Christian traditions are of divine and which of merely human origin. There is a sensitive discussion for example of the Sabbath principle; she asks whether it is not the case that our change of day is rooted in some oral instruction from Christ and the apostles which was never been recorded. There is an equally good discussion of clerical celibacy. The careful reader will observe Humphrey using post-apostolic and Patristic texts to affirm the legitimacy of practices which go beyond those explicitly mandated in the New Testament. However, the theory of theological development on which this method depends is not openly articulated. Are practices and doctrinal emphases from the second century onward *necessarily* trustworthy? It is not difficult to find examples of an opposite kind.

An admiring writer said of John Henry Newman (1801–1890) that he took with him, into the Church of Rome in 1845, very much of his Anglicanism. He was always, after 1845, some kind of amalgam of his life up to and after the year of his reception by Rome. Edith Humphrey cannot conceal and does not care to conceal her roots in evangelical Protestantism even while she commends the use of theological tradition about which evangelicalism has long been wary. She is not always fair to her past; for example, she asserts that Protestants optimistically believe that the words of Scripture are transparent in their

meaning as soon as they are read (p. 72). Yet, this is not the same as to say that she writes with animus. She has, one could say, one foot still planted in the Protestant world, as a professor in a Presbyterian seminary, and one foot in Orthodoxy, where one assumes that she would not be functioning as a theological professor. *Scripture and Tradition* has this same amalgam-like quality.

It also has idiosyncrasies. All Scripture renderings in the volume are identified as the personal translations of the author. Is this not awkward in a book that urges an expanded role for tradition? Her text still contains many asides, which, while they would have a place in a lecture hall, do not read well. Here is an interesting and a stimulating book on Scripture and tradition. But as to its sub-title, “What the Bible Really Says,” one must insist “case not proven.”

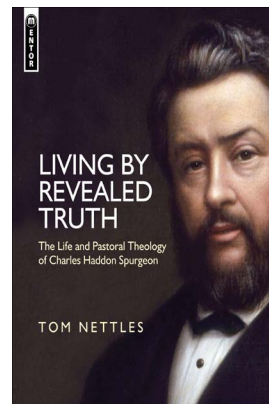
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Tom Nettles. *Living by Revealed Truth: The Life and Pastoral Ministry of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2013. 683 pp. \$49.99.

Spurgeon’s homiletical splendor captured the hearts of countless people all over the world, earning him titles such as “The Prince of Preachers,” “The People’s Preacher,” and “The World’s Greatest Preacher.” However, rarely have scholars considered him as a theologian. In fact, some have explicitly stated that Spurgeon lacks theological nuances. One recent example is Stephen Holmes, who claims that Spurgeon neglected some of the finer points of theology (*Baptist Theology* [Doing Theology; New York: T&T Clark, 2012], 55). Hence, this most recent work by Tom Nettles, a historical theologian at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, makes a bold claim by arguing Spurgeon possessed a developed pastoral theology.

Living by Revealed Truth is an extensive intellectual biography. At 683 pages it is only exceeded in length by Lewis Drummond’s more traditional biography, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1992), which has come under recent scrutiny by other Spurgeon scholars for its factual inaccuracies. Most Spurgeon biographies focus on the facts of the preacher’s life rather than his pastoral theology. Even with the recent interest in Spurgeon scholarship, outlining his theology pushes the boundaries of traditional biographies. In *Living by Revealed Truth*, Nettles argues for specific theological tendencies supported by examples from Spurgeon’s life and ministry. The amount of subjects covered in this work are extensive, thus this review will focus on a few areas that represent Nettles’ overarching methodology. This book is divided into eighteen chapters plus a preface, introduction, Scripture index, and subject index.

The first chapter, “Birth to New Birth,” describes the preacher’s birth, conversion, and baptism. This section highlights seven observable characteristics that become the skeleton on which the rest of this work fleshes out. Unlike many Spurgeon biographies that lean towards hagiography, not all of the qualities of the preacher are treated as positive. These seven elements give a balanced view of Spurgeon as a preacher, public figure, and a human being.



The thirteenth chapter, “Theology and Controversy,” may be Nettles’s most convincing case for Spurgeon’s pastoral theology. Nettles contends that Spurgeon intentionally fought his battles by using theological controversies as opportunities to defend biblical truth for the glory of God. Spurgeon’s controversies fell into three areas: 1) conflict on scriptural teachings; 2) conflict with hypocrites; 3) conflict with publications. These three categories help the reader understand and interpret the thrust behind the battles that developed through the course of the preacher’s life. An example of a theological controversy common to Spurgeon’s life is Calvinism. Because of Spurgeon’s strong desire to evangelize, the preacher was warm towards Arminians relating to their zeal for conversion and scolded hyper-Calvinists because of their idleness in evangelism. Additionally preachers who publically confessed one doctrine while ignoring it privately were not spared critique in his publications. This chapter naturally leads into an extensive section on the Downgrade Controversy.

While reading this biography, the reader will notice a clear attempt to be comprehensive in supporting claims using mostly primary source material. Nettles also highlights Spurgeon’s Baptist roots. He is portrayed as completely convinced of being a Baptist through his reading of the New Testament. However, the book balances Spurgeon’s appreciation for his denomination with a demonstration of willingness to change if a more biblical one was to be found. Perhaps the most intriguing part of Nettles’s work is how he categorizes and systematizes theological stances, thus making it easier for readers to follow and allowing for interaction. Although the preacher may not have had an explicitly stated theology, this work makes a convincing argument that Spurgeon had a coherent pastoral theology that drove all of his actions.

I offer slight critiques in three areas. First, this biography has the tendency to praise Spurgeon’s decisions. One area where this occurs is in the explanation of Spurgeon’s lack of formal education. Nettles ultimately concludes that young Charles made his decision not to go to college because of his love for God and his cause. While plausible, there maybe other factors that played into the decision. Decisions are generally not quite that simplistic. Perhaps the unfortunate incident in which Spurgeon missed an important meeting with a college principal may have disheartened him. Secondly, there has been a recent resurgence in Spurgeon research that has led to significant findings in regards to the preacher’s life and thought. Nettles’s preface acknowledges Peter Morden, Arnold Dallimore, Lewis Drummond, Patricia Kruppa, and Ian Murray, but not Christian George. More importantly, the author does not significantly interact with these recent resources.

Living By Revealed Truth is an essential biography for any student of Spurgeon. Not many historians have acknowledged that he had a distinct developed theology; even fewer have attempted to organize it. Whether or not one believes in a Spurgeonic theology, serious scholars must interact with this work. Nettles’s tome attempts to cover a vast amount of Spurgeon’s theological tendencies and seriously engage with the preacher’s life and theological beliefs, yet this work remains easily accessible for all. Biographers have seldom ventured to describe Spurgeon’s theological influences in nineteenth-century Victorian England, and a minority of biographers account for his North American influence. In addressing an area that is rarely touched, this latest research unearths a significant gem from the trove that is Charles Spurgeon.

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Dane Ortlund. *Edwards on the Christian Life: Alive to the Beauty of God*. Theologians of the Christian Life. Wheaton: Crossway, 2014. 208 pp. \$18.99.

Dane Ortlund's *Edwards on the Christian Life: Alive to the Beauty of God* is the latest installment in Crossway's excellent series devoted to unpacking the spiritual lives of prominent theologians. While Jonathan Edwards has been the subject of significant academic reflection in recent years, he is often popularly known only as the preacher of *Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God*. Ortlund aims to correct this hackneyed perspective by describing Edwards's expansive vision of the beauty of God. Seeing what Edwards saw will help us "draw nourishment from the same rich soil of divine beauty that made Edwards's own life so abundantly fruitful" (p. 18).

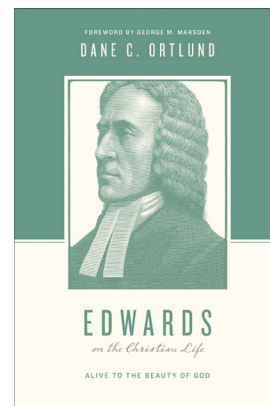
Ortlund argues that *beauty* is the organizing theme of Edwards's theology of the Christian life: "Sinners are beautified as they behold the beauty of God in Jesus Christ. That is Edwards's theology of the Christian life in a single sentence," for it is the beauty of God that "more than anything else, defines God's very divinity" (p. 24). While divine beauty is to be seen in the symmetry, diversity, and intricacy of the created world, these are only refractions of the pure light of the *holiness* of the triune God. Ortlund writes, "here is the genius of Edwards's understanding of God and of the Christian life. The moral *is* the aesthetic. The holy *is* the beautiful" (p. 25, emphasis original). Divine beauty is to be supremely apprehended in the resplendent glory of Jesus Christ, for *beauty* and *glory* are synonymous terms in Edwards's vocabulary. But divine beauty is not only to be seen, it is to be reflected in God's image bearers. Human beings, renewed by the transforming work of saving grace, are the supreme instance of the beauty of God displayed in creation.

It is the sovereign work of God's grace in the new birth (ch. 2) that makes a person alive to true beauty—a decisive transformation that "changes us by getting down underneath even the very level of our desires and changing *what we want*" (p. 43, emphasis original). Christians, alive to the beauty of God, are characterized by love—a love that has its origin and substance in God's own intratrinitarian love (ch. 3). The believer's experience of divine love is the essence of the Christian life and the root from which all other virtues grow. Ortlund focuses especially on Edwards's emphasis on love, joy, and gentleness as evidence of genuine conversion.

Scripture (ch. 6) is the primary, concrete means for sustaining this love, joy (ch. 4), and gentleness (ch. 5). Thus, for Edwards, the Bible is "the single most crucial means through which the Holy Spirit beautifies sinners" (p. 110). Ortlund highlights how Edwards also saw the crucial way Scripture shapes the Christian's communion with God and dependence in prayer (ch. 7), especially as one ponders God's delight in giving good gifts to his people, "the greatest of which is himself" (p. 115).

The Christian life, however, is one of pilgrimage amid both misery and hope (ch. 8). It is a life of obedience that, as Edwards describes, overflows from a heart alive to beauty (ch. 9). The pilgrim life requires that Christians attend to the state of their soul (ch. 11) while being wary of the wiles of their adversary (ch. 10). The greatest hope of the Christian is the promise of eternal life with Christ, "a summing up of all possible joys in heaven," for as Ortlund argues, "*Christ is not a part of the joy of heaven; every joy in the universe is a part of Christ*" (p. 173, emphasis original).

Without diminishing the importance of Edwards, Ortlund's final chapter examines four weaknesses: Edwards's tendency to neglect clear application of the gospel to believers, his inadequate doctrine



of creation, his occasionally excessively creative use of Scripture, and his overly negative view of the unregenerate. In each instance, Ortlund encourages his readers to discerningly “swallow the meat and pick out the bones” (p. 177).

Edwards on the Christian Life is wonderfully accessible, winsomely written, and marshals a wealth of Edwards’s work. The chapters coherently unfold as answers to twelve questions posed in the preface about the Christian life—each chapter exploring different manifestations of Edwards’s vision of divine beauty. Ortlund masterfully draws from the many riches of Edwards’s writing (sermons, theological works, correspondence, and personal reflections), and his knowledge of the chronology avoids the dangers of misappropriation and helps to bring into focus developments in Edwards’s thought. He often carries the warp of Edwards’s argument across several chapters (e.g. “Charity and its Fruits” in the chapters on love, joy, gentleness, and obedience), giving the reader a sense of the depth and concern of Edwards’ preaching ministry. The reader also benefits from Ortlund’s clear explanations of complex Edwardsian concepts such as beauty (pp. 24–25) and intratrinitarian love (pp. 56–57).

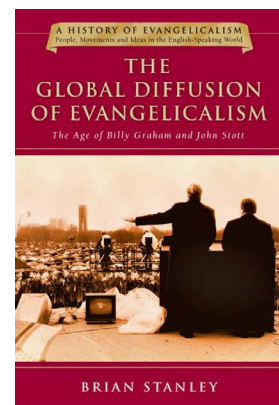
Most importantly, the book is full of pastoral insight and practical wisdom. Ortlund rightly calls for an urgent recovery of Edwards’s teaching on the new birth (ch. 2). He also focuses extensively on the importance of gentleness for the Christian life (ch. 5), a virtue severely neglected in contemporary discipleship. Ortlund frequently illustrates Edwards’s concepts with anecdotal experience, and each chapter challenges the reader to consider and apply Edwards’s discoveries. He models charitable treatment of Edwards, while not being afraid to point out places where this hero should not be followed. This delightful book will provide a lasting service to the church, introducing Christians to the rich legacy of Jonathan Edwards—the Christian life as a life of beauty.

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Brian Stanley. *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Billy Graham and John Stott*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2013. 247 pp. \$24.00.

Brian Stanley’s *Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism* offers the assessment that “Evangelical expressions of Christianity were by 2000 far more prominent within the world Christian movement than they had been in 1945” (p. 235). This claim will not surprise readers of *Themelios*. It has been reported for some time that evangelical Christianity is globally on the ascent. Yet we will have two main questions regarding Stanley’s assessment: *first*, what (and who) were the primary means by which this global ascendancy advanced and *second*, what does this global “reach” of evangelicalism mean for the future direction of this expression of Christianity? Stanley, professor of World Christianity in Edinburgh University, is an author we have learned to respect on the basis of his earlier writings such as *The World Missionary Conference: Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

Recently, Mark Noll has argued that for more than a century American evangelical Christianity has been leaving its own imprint on emerging forms of world Christianity (*The New Shape of World*



Christianity [Downers Grove: IVP, 2009]). Stanley, while affirming this North American role in the expansion of evangelicalism, shows how simultaneously extensive British evangelicalism's influence was in this same expansion. Having done so, he demonstrates how in recent decades evangelical influences—instead of flowing *from* Western Europe and North America *to* the rest of the globe (as formerly)—have come to flow from “everywhere to everywhere.”

Stanley's focus is upon the post-WWII world; he allows that for both Britain and America, the pre-war decades had been times of “sifting” for evangelical communities. Great strides had been made in making Christianity a global faith in the pre-1914 period. Yet the inter-war period was an era in which western Christianity was unsettled both at home and overseas by the advance of theological liberalism. The shaking of confidence in the Scriptures, the advancing of the idea that Christianity could now, at best, enter into dialogue with the great religions of the world, and pro-independence agitation in the colonies combined to undermine the certainty which had undergirded earlier missionary effort. Thus, the end of war in 1945 found the missionary efforts of the historic denominations needing a new justification: they now opted instead for strategies of “development.”

And yet, on both sides of the Atlantic, the 1940s marked a period of renewed evangelical energy. The story of the American resurgence heralded by the founding of the National Association of Evangelicals (1943) has often been highlighted because it provided a springboard for the launch of post-war international initiatives including Youth for Christ, Campus Crusade, the Greater Europe Mission and broadcast ministries such as Trans-World Radio. In the same decade, as Stanley shows, the British discipleship ministry, Scripture Union, began to devolve leadership of its international ministries into the hands of Christian nationals. SU took these steps foreseeing that the political independence of Britain's former colonies would require this. During this same era, the British Inter-Varsity movement had replicated itself in North America and the Antipodes. In the post-war period it replicated itself in the developing world under the umbrella of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (1947).

To all this was added in the postwar years the international ministry of evangelist Billy Graham. His ministry on five continents—while not the primary factor in the rapid proliferation of global evangelicalism in the post-war period—was symptomatic of and an accelerating force in it. Global evangelical networks emerged not only through Graham's crusades, but also through his organization's financial support for the launch of the World Evangelical Fellowship (1951) and eventual congresses on evangelism at Berlin (1966) and Lausanne (1974). These shadowed the existence of the doctrinally comprehensive World Council of Churches (founded 1948). In sum, deliberate strategies and initiatives pursued in the three decades after WWII helped to bring the global evangelical movement to the current ascendancy.

Yet Stanley's treatment encompasses a second broad issue: the “what,” i.e., what is to be the future posture of this global evangelicalism? Stanley contends that transatlantic evangelicalism's existence presupposed the existence of older, less vital forms of Christianity; it has also stood in reaction to the anti-supernatural tendencies unleashed by the Enlightenment era. By contrast, the evangelicalism of the majority world has not generally stood apart from long-existing, less vital forms of Christianity; it has not either stood in reaction to the Enlightenment's corrosive effects. As he puts it in closing this work, “The battle for the integrity of the gospel in the opening years of the twenty-first century is being fought not primarily in the lecture rooms of . . . seminaries, but in the shanty towns, urban slums and villages of Africa, Asia and Latin America” (p. 247).

To these differences of historical context, Stanley properly adds the challenges currently facing Western evangelicalism in Britain and North America: the expanded role of hermeneutics, ferment over gender and sexual ethics, and the emergence of “post-conservative” evangelicalism. As for the “majority world,” various expressions of Pentecostalism and articulations of the gospel’s relation to social justice have played an ever-larger role. Strong differences of opinion, having come to the surface as long ago as the Lausanne Congress of 1974, were still alive and well when the World Evangelical Fellowship convened its large-scale congress at Cape Town (2010).

For such reasons, the old transatlantic evangelicalism cannot permanently stand “at the helm” of things, for networks of evangelical influence now extend from “everywhere to everywhere.” Stanley demonstrates this by pointing to the influence upon the global mission agency, Operation Mobilization, of themes from the 1930s East African Revival. This reviewer, while pondering Stanley’s description of this trend, received a missionary newsletter reporting that Christian literature for West Africa is now being printed in India. Old conceptions of unidirectional missionary influence are now past their “sell-by” date.

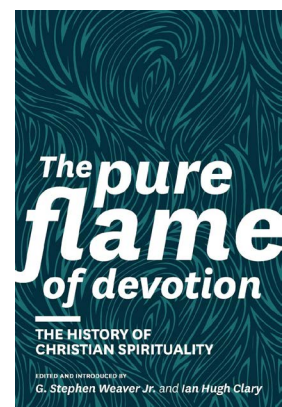
Today’s global evangelicalism is thus a bigger and more diverse family than almost any of us can fairly describe. Within the editorial limits imposed on Stanley, he has masterfully surveyed this movement. Some readers will be forced to reflect on the question of whether the boundaries of today’s evangelical world are exactly as Stanley has drawn them. Yet here is a “must-read” for denominational leaders, mission directors, theological educators, and pastors.

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G. Stephen Weaver Jr. and Ian Hugh Clary, eds. *The Pure Flame of Devotion: The History of Christian Spirituality*. Dundas, Ontario: Joshua, 2013. xxii + 517 pp. \$44.99.

In recent years, scholarly interest in Christian spirituality has rekindled among evangelicals. Michael A. G. Haykin, professor of church history and biblical spirituality and director of The Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has been a key voice in this discussion. It is fitting for Haykin to be honored with a *festschrift* entitled *The Pure Flame of Devotion: The History of Christian Spirituality*. The editors, Stephen Weaver and Ian Clary, are pastor-scholars who studied with Haykin. Their collection of essays provides a model for examining spirituality through both historical and theological lens unto the end of personal and pastoral application.

The first introductory essay summarizes Haykin’s biography. The chapter recounts his commitments to Marxism in his early life, and it traces his movement from his conversion in 1974 to his role as a respected church historian. In the second introductory essay, Sean Lucas provides a segue into the heart of the book. He exhorts his readers, particularly pastors, to view church history as a pastoral discipline. Church history consists of both theological and cross-cultural components; as such, it offers much wisdom for the pastor in his service to Christ and his body.



Following the introduction, the book is divided into four primary sections: Patristics and Medieval, Reformation and Puritan, Evangelicalism and Modern, and Baptists. In the first section, Dennis Ngien provides a survey of the Spirit's role in our worship as seen in Basil of Caesarea's *De Spiritu Sancto*. Keith Goad's chapter explores Gregory of Nazianzus's doxological theology, which focused on a magnificent vision of God that the church could both understand and experience. David Hogg examines the Christocentric piety in the prayers of Anselm of Canterbury, while Francis Gumerlock reports on the belief in the fire of doomsday in the early medieval era.

In the second section, Carl Trueman investigates Martin Luther's understanding of spirituality and how it manifests itself in his preaching. Mark Jones engages Calvin's particular understanding of Christ's humanity in Hebrews and how Calvin's Puritan heirs, specifically John Owen, Thomas Goodwin, Stephen Charnock, and William Gouge, compared in their understanding of Christ's humanity. Malcolm Yarnell describes the spirituality of European evangelical Anabaptists during the sixteenth century, while Erroll Hulse inspects William Perkins's use of application in preaching based upon his *The Art of Prophesying*. In the final chapter of this section, Crawford Gribben surveys John Owen's poetry and piety and his influence on each of these in history.

The third section leads off with Peter Beck's assessment of Jonathan Edwards's view of the Christian life as understood through his firm commitment to spiritual disciplines. Sharon James examines the holiness teachings of the 1800s, using Elizabeth Prentiss and Frances Ridley Havergal as case studies. Fred Zaspel provides a beneficial survey of B.B. Warfield's spirituality that exhibits a deep sensitivity to the supernatural truth of the gospel. Kenneth Stewart closes the section with a practical and stimulating exploration of the frequency of the administration of the Lord's Supper as seen in the lives of John Erskine and John Mitchell Mason.

In the final section of the work, Joel Beeke expounds the theme of perseverance in the life and teachings of John Bunyan as one aspect of Baptist spirituality. Robert Oliver considers the spirituality of an unfamiliar individual in church history, Edmund Ludlow, who acted as a signatory of the death of Charles I in 1649. Austin Walker analyzes Benjamin Keach's *The Glory of the New Church* as a model for corporate spirituality. Nathan Finn provides a brief appraisal of the similarities between the spirituality of Jonathan Edwards and Andrew Fuller, concluding that the former influenced the latter, while Tom Nettles depicts the piety of James Petigru Boyce, emphasizing the priority of the Word and the Spirit in growing the saint in conformity to Christ. Donald Whitney portrays the spirituality of Charles Spurgeon as one that was "consistent, vibrant, [and] gregarious" (p. 429); it began with his relationship with God and was carried forward by Spurgeon's practice of spiritual disciplines. In the section's final chapter, Douglas Adams examines the progression of Thomas Todhunter Shield's spirituality, which should be remembered for his commitment to separation from the world and the practice of prayer and evangelism. Clint Humfrey closes the book with a brief summary of Haykin's academic experience and spiritual practices. He shows how Haykin serves as a model of uniting the intellect and spirituality, just as many saints of old.

The Pure Flame of Devotion addresses a variety of historic individuals, especially pastors. As such, pastoral implications and applications fill its pages, and these should be considered carefully. Positive and negative exhortations challenge the reader in their quest in the Christian life, which can be strengthened through a growing understanding of spirituality. The book also demonstrates numerous common themes across the history of Christian spirituality. Saints of old committed themselves to Scripture, prayer, and the spread of the gospel. These, likewise, should be the commitments we desire

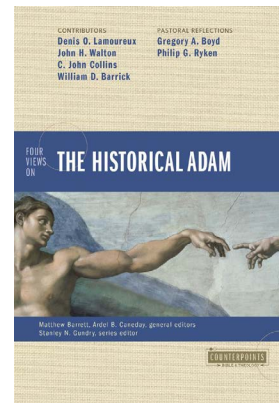
to renew in our own lives upon reading this book. Overall, *The Pure Flame of Devotion* ably explores a number of different individuals representing diverse backgrounds that reflect Haykin's own research interests. The book merits close attention by scholars of spirituality and it should help pastors and students see the value of church history as a pastoral discipline.

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— SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND BIOETHICS —

Matthew Barrett and Ardel B. Caneday, eds. *Four Views on the Historical Adam*. Counterpoints. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013. 288 pp. £12.99/\$19.99.

This book contains an “Introduction” that lays out issues that are important in the discussion of the historicity of Adam, four contributors who interact with each other's views, and two pastoral responses. Only one contributor and one pastoral response makes a strong case for the historicity of Adam according to the way the biblical account presents the creation of Adam. The other participants, to one degree or another, argue in such a way that allows for the process of evolution to be included in the discussion of the formation of human beings. Thus one walks away from reading this book with the impression that very few within the evangelical world believe that Gen 2 presents the way God actually formed Adam. The challenge for these views is that evolution and the presentation in Gen 2 are incompatible with each other.



Denis Lamoureux sets forth the Evolutionary Creation View. This view assumes that biological evolution is true and that the debate whether Adam really existed is over. The evidence for evolution is overwhelming, which leads to the conclusion that the Adam the Bible presents never existed. Evolutionary creation asserts that God created the universe and life, including humans, through an ordained, sustained, and intelligent evolutionary process. Humans descended from pre-human ancestors, and the image of God and human sin were mysteriously manifested at some point of the evolutionary process. Several times Lamoureux asserts that the Holy Spirit makes statements about how God created when in fact Lamoureux believes these events never happened. He says this about how God created the universe in Gen 1, about how God created life in Gen 1, and about how God created Adam in Gen 2. Real history in the Bible does not begin until Gen 12, which means that Gen 2 cannot be accepted as literally true. But it is not a problem that God makes statements that never really happened because God accommodated himself to the ancient view of the world as a three-tiered system. The purpose of Scripture is to reveal spiritual truth, not biological truth. Thus, even though Jesus and Paul refer to Adam as an historical figure, we know that Adam did not really exist.

It is disturbing to read that the Holy Spirit makes statements in the Bible that in fact never happened. In other words, the Bible asserts things that are wrong. This is justified through a false view of accommodation: God accommodates himself to the false views of the biblical authors concerning their primitive view of the universe to reveal spiritual truth. Accommodation, however, should not be

used to justify error; otherwise, God becomes a God of falsehood (for an excellent discussion of these issues, see James W. Scott, “The Inspiration and Interpretation of God’s Word, with special reference to Peter Enns: Part 1; Inspiration and Its Implications,” *WTJ* 71 [2009]: 129–83). Also, the fact that Jesus and Paul taught that Adam was a historical figure when he really never existed has implications for one’s view of Christ and for Paul’s theological statements about Adam and Christ. Doubt is cast not just on the biblical account of Adam but on the biblical presentation of the origins of death, suffering, and decay. The result of this approach is that anything we do not like in Scripture, or that does not fit into current, acceptable views, can be reinterpreted. Others argue in similar ways for homosexuality. Science, they would argue, has confirmed that homosexuality is genetic, a view which was not known by the biblical authors. Therefore, they were operating with a false sense of homosexuality when they wrote statements that condemned homosexuality. The statements in Gen 2 about God’s design for marriage cannot be taken in a literal way because it is not real history. Therefore, we do not have to take at face value the statements in the Bible about homosexuality. In the evolutionary creation view we do not have to accept the clear statements of the Bible about the creation of Adam in Gen 2.

John Walton argues for an archetypal view of creation. He believes Adam and Eve were real people in a real past. However, the Bible does not give scientific information about human origins, but is concerned about Adam and Eve’s function as archetypes for all humanity. Thus Adam and Eve may or may not be the first humans or the parents of the entire human race. Walton argues this view on the basis of ancient Near Eastern (ANE) accounts. If the text of Scripture is not addressing material origins, there is no biblical claim being made about the process of human origins. Thus the description in Gen 2 of how Adam and Eve were created is not significant for understanding the process of the creation of Adam and Eve. The important thing is what is being taught about the function of humans based on their roles as archetypes. Walton also sees this view expressed in the New Testament. He argues that his view does not promote evolution, but offers a biblical and theological interpretation that would allow evolution.

Walton’s view operates with false dichotomies. There is nothing mutually exclusive about the biblical account presenting both how God formed Adam and Eve and how they functioned as archetypes. There is a false dichotomy between science and history, where the biblical account is basically removed from scientific discussions of origins. Walton comments that the Bible should not predetermine scientific outcomes of origin (p. 113). Notice he does not say interpretations of the Bible should not predetermine the outcome, but that the Bible itself should not predetermine the outcome. This means that the Bible should not be used to argue against evolution. The same dichotomy continues into the discussion of the New Testament. Walton argues that Paul accurately reflects the text of Genesis that Adam was formed first, but then he immediately states that no claims are being made about how humanity was formed! Walton’s view also leads to the conclusion that the Bible presents events that never actually happened.

C. John Collins presents the Old Earth Creation View, which allows for the biblical account of Adam but does not require that the biblical account be accepted if someone is convinced by evolution. Collins tries to carve out parameters of “right thinking” within the context of evolution, which consist of certain beliefs that must be accepted based on the biblical account. These beliefs include that humankind is one family with one set of ancestors for us all; God acted specially (supernaturally) to form our first parents; and our first ancestors, at the headwaters of the human race, brought sin and dysfunction into the world. Evolution is able to fit into this scenario as long as God supernaturally acts upon a hominid to set him apart as the first man. If science concludes that the current DNA situation could not have

been produced by one original couple, but requires thousands of individuals, then Adam can be viewed as the chieftain of the tribe. Such a scenario does not necessarily contradict Gen 2:7 because Collins allows for a symbolic interpretation of this text based on comparisons of Gen 2 with ANE accounts and a definition of historical that sees Gen 1–11 as only presenting a historical core. Thus the details are not all that significant. Collins argues against a literal approach to Gen 2, and prejudices his case against a literal approach by calling it “literalistic.” Thus, “dust” in Gen 2 can be taken in a symbolic way. Such a hermeneutic is not able to present a credible case for the way Gen 2 describes the creation of Adam, even if Adam is viewed as historical.

William Barrick presents the Young Earth Creation View that argues for a historical Adam who was created in the way Gen 2 describes his creation. God took actual dust from the ground, formed a human being from it, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. God took a rib from the side of Adam and created Eve. These two were the first human beings, and from them all humanity has descended. Genesis 1–11 is no different than Gen 12 or the rest of Genesis, so the same hermeneutical methodology should apply to both.

In the first pastoral response Gregory Boyd argues that even though he is “inclined” toward the view that Adam was a historical figure, he does not view the historicity of Adam as central to the orthodox Christian faith. He asserts that we should interpret large portions of the Bible in a nonliteral way even if the original author intended his writings to be taken literally. Such an approach virtually abandons authorial intention and gives free reign to the interpreter to reinterpret portions of the Bible that are problematic to the interpreter. Philip Ryken, on the other hand, shows how the historicity of Adam is essential to Christian life and doctrine. He shows how moral evil and natural evil go back to the fall. He points out the importance of our unity in Adam and that there is no room for human beings coming from different lineages. And finally, he connects Paul’s argument in 1 Cor 15 for the resurrection to the reality of Adam’s physical body so that eschatology is connected to ontology.

One easily gets the impression from this book that very few evangelicals either believe in, or are willing to argue for, the way the Bible presents the creation of Adam. It appears that most evangelicals have already accepted evolution as the paradigm of how God formed this world or are willing to accommodate their approach to evolution so that the Bible must be interpreted to allow for evolution. Many of the participants deny this fact, but the “Introduction” to the book demonstrates the impact of Francis Collins and BioLogos, the goal of which is to get the evangelical church to accept evolution. Evolution is the paradigm driving the exegesis of Gen 2. Thus, three of the four contributors allow evolution to have a significant place in the discussion of the formation of Adam. In this way the book is not balanced. The view that argues for the biblical account and does not allow for evolution presents a young earth understanding, which is viewed with disdain by many within the evangelical world (this comment is not meant to disparage Barrick’s presentation). Why not present an old earth view that argues against evolution and for the biblical account? Why not have someone participate who argues for the literary framework view of Gen 1 but then argues against evolution and for the biblical account in Gen 2? Such presentations would also present a hermeneutical approach to Gen 2 that is not against a proper use of the word “literal” to describe the historical events of Gen 2. The hermeneutical issues surrounding the interpretation of Gen 2 are vital for the future of evangelicalism. Some will read this book and see a bright future, but others will read this book and conclude that the hermeneutics

presented by most of the views in this book are inadequate to uphold the biblical account and will be concerned about the consequences for future generations.

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Kevin DeYoung. *Taking God at His Word: Why the Bible Is Knowable, Necessary, and Enough, and What That Means for You and Me*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2014. 138 pp. £8.99/\$17.99.

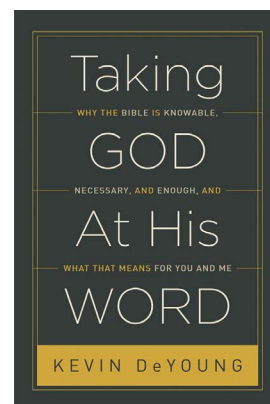
A growing practice even in evangelical circles is to look down on a high view of Scripture. To elevate the doctrine of Scripture, some urge, is to misperceive the nature of the Bible and is the result of a distorted depth perception that mistakenly prizes devotion to the written word over interaction with the living Word, Jesus himself. In this volume, pastor Kevin DeYoung aims to give readers a different line of sight by arguing that a high view of Scripture is actually the only means by which we can see God, ourselves, and the world with clarity.

DeYoung begins with an extended reflection on Ps 119 and 2 Pet 1:16–21. These strategic biblical passages share a high estimation of written revelation. The psalmist expresses fervent devotion to God’s laws, commandments, and statutes with language that conveys a longing to lift up and exult in the word of God (pp. 11–25). Peter likewise demonstrates that the gospel is worthy of trust because of the trustworthiness of the “prophetic word” and the apostolic testimony (pp. 27–44). In these opening chapters, DeYoung seeks to establish the value and validity of God’s revelatory words.

In the center of the book, DeYoung devotes a chapter each to four of Scripture’s attributes: “God’s Word Is Enough” (sufficiency), “God’s Word Is Clear” (clarity), “God’s Word Is Final” (authority), and “God’s Word Is Necessary” (necessity). For DeYoung, reflecting on these characteristics is “eminently practical” because “counselors can counsel meaningfully because Scripture is sufficient. Bible study leaders can lead confidently because Scripture is clear. Preachers can preach with boldness because their biblical text is authoritative. And evangelists can evangelize with urgency because the Scripture is necessary” (p. 92).

Following these chapters, DeYoung asks the question, “What did Jesus believe about the Bible?” (p. 95). For him, this one question “must undeniably shape and set the agenda for our doctrine of Scripture” (p. 95). Reflecting on John 10:35–36, he argues that Jesus viewed his Bible as an “unbreakable” one (pp. 95–110).

DeYoung ends his volume with a discussion of 2 Tim 3:16, the *locus classicus* for a doctrine of Scripture. Here he explains that his entire reflection flows from the headwaters of this passage. He writes, “Everything in the Bible comes from the mouth of God. Sufficiency, clarity, authority, and necessity—they must all be true if 2 Timothy 3:16 is true, and they would all be false if 2 Timothy 3:16 were a lie” (p. 111). In this way, “there is no more important verse for developing a proper understanding of Scripture” (p. 111). DeYoung concludes by highlighting Scripture’s ability to transform readers, its origin in God the Spirit, and its powerful practicality in the life of the churches (pp. 116–24).



DeYoung's volume as a whole will help sympathetic readers carve out a conceptual space in their thinking deep enough for a high view of Scripture. There is an educated impulse that regards the language evangelicals use of Scripture as "bibliolatry." We should worship God, not a book. DeYoung implicitly addresses this sentiment from the outset. He simply takes a walking tour through the poetic rhetoric of Ps 119, a text he calls a "love poem" (p. 11). DeYoung highlights the emotive language that the psalmist uses to express his relationship to God's word (affection, love, longing) and also to those who set themselves up against it (anger, zeal, fury). His point is that because the Psalmist himself adopts this disposition when speaking about God's words, commandments, and statutes, it is not *de facto* bibliolatry for believers to take their cues from the psalmist when they characterize the Scriptures.

Accordingly, DeYoung's aim is "to get us to fully, sincerely, and consistently embrace" this disposition (p. 16). All of his arguments are designed to convince the reader "that the Bible makes no mistakes, can be understood, cannot be overturned, and is the most important word in your life, the most relevant thing you can read each day" (p. 16). In this way, "Psalm 119 is the explosion of praise made possible by an orthodox and evangelical doctrine of Scripture" (p. 16). Later in the book, DeYoung shows that Jesus himself echoes the psalmist's striking disposition toward the Scriptures (see pp. 106–07).

Any articulation of a doctrine of Scripture that seeks to unpack "what the Bible says about the Bible" (p. 23) will raise a number of interpretive issues. DeYoung notes that this focus raises questions of canon and explains that his book is not an apologetic or historical defense of Scripture. This is a helpful clarification, but because he presents "a doctrine of Scripture derived from Scripture itself" (p. 23), the *hermeneutical* question of canon is actually foregrounded. That is, when Scripture "refers to itself," what exactly is in view *for the biblical writer*? Further, is there any sensitivity to the fact that a biblical text will function differently when read in its literary context than when it forms a part of a doctrine of Scripture? There is a definitional imperative here that is often neglected in popular bibliology.

Typically, throughout DeYoung's volume, the phrase "God's Word" refers to the sixty-six books of the Protestant canon. However, when he discusses biblical texts, there is sometimes a blurring of the distinction between God's speech in a narrative, a literary corpus (e.g., the Law), and the Bible as a whole. There are a number of places where the transition from "God's revelation in words" to "the Bible itself" happens very quickly (p. 12). For instance, Ps 119 speaks of the "Law" and also of "God's words" in the form of statutes, commands, and precepts. DeYoung notes that there are "different shades of meaning" for each concept, but that they "all center on the same big idea: God's revelation in words" (p. 12). In the next sentence, though, DeYoung identifies the subject of the psalm as "the Bible itself" (p. 12). In Ps 119, the sense of "God's Word" as the two-testament Bible of the church is not present on any reading. Some verses seem to speak of the "law of the Lord" as a literary entity, but even here, the referent is most likely the Law (i.e., the Pentateuch). The same tension shows up when DeYoung talks about texts like Heb 4:12 (p. 51) and Rev 22:18–19 (pp. 53–54). DeYoung helpfully exposit these passages, but in none of them does the "word of God" have the sense of the Bible as a whole.

This is a subtle but significant issue because many objections to a high view of Scripture begin at just this point. DeYoung clearly demonstrates the value of these passages for a doctrine of Scripture. However, utilizing a text that speaks of the Pentateuch or refers to divine discourse in a narrative requires a bit of theological work. Making this move in a careful and appropriate way is one of the most crucial tasks of bibliology. In the book, DeYoung mostly assumes this link rather than explains it. For instance, he notes that "God's verbal revelation, whether in spoken form or in redemptive history (i.e., the Bible), is unfailingly perfect" (p. 18). When discussing 2 Tim 3:16, DeYoung hints at the issue when

he describes the Bible as “the sacred writings of the Old Testament, which Paul first of all had in mind, and the inspired writings for the new covenant church, which Paul understood himself to be issuing (1 Thess 2:13) and Peter understood to be in the process of being written down (2 Pet 3:16)” (p. 118). A more robust discussion of this particular nuance would help readers grapple with the hermeneutical glue that binds together the biblical building blocks of an evangelical bibliology.

The target audience for this book is those who know and love the Scriptures, and who would like to grow in these pursuits (p. 25). Recognizing this feature of his work, DeYoung aims his final exhortation at just these readers. With pastoral verve, he pleads, “Don’t forget what you know and have already learned. Don’t lose sight of who you are. Stay on track. Keep on going” (p. 112). “This,” DeYoung concludes, “is God’s never-changing instruction to us: stick with the Scriptures” (p. 113).

DeYoung’s pastoral urgency acknowledges the value of Scripture for the life and ministry of the believer, and his conversational tone will enable his reflection to reach a broad audience. While this volume is certainly not the last word on the doctrine of Scripture, it provides a glimpse into the riches that an evangelical articulation of God’s Word can offer to those looking for a clear line of sight into God’s work in the world.

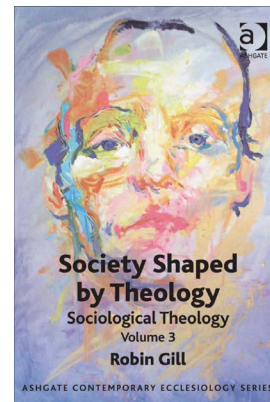
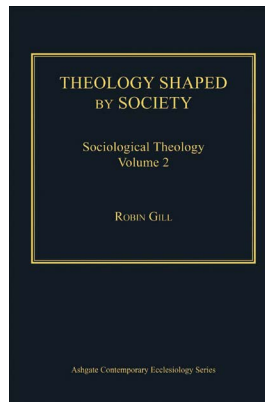
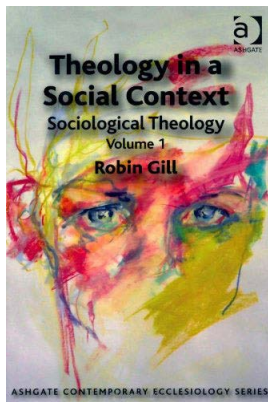
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Robin Gill. *Theology in a Social Context: Sociological Theology, Volume 1* [TSC]. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012. pp. 240. £19.99/\$39.95.

Robin Gill. *Theology Shaped by Society: Sociological Theology, Volume 2* [TSS]. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012. pp. 219. £19.99/\$39.95.

Robin Gill. *Society Shaped by Theology: Sociological Theology, Volume 3* [SST]. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012. pp. 252. £19.99/\$39.95.

For more than half a century Robin Gill has negotiated the scholarly interface between sociology and theology. This trilogy brings together his work as an Anglican academic. The two initial volumes, he says, can be read in “stand alone” terms. But this review restricts itself to a brief overview of the three volumes.



Together they constitute Gill’s systematic account of his “theological social system”, his “sociological theology”. They collate a lifetime’s work of substantial breadth and depth, a testimony to the care and persistence of its academic and clerical author. Gill’s three volumes hang together as a considerable academic contribution.

In negotiating the “borderland” between theology and sociology, Gill incorporates insights from the sociology of knowledge into his *theological* reflections. His succinct summary of his purpose is to “explore the possibility that theology, even theology in a modern pluralist society, may at times be socially significant. That is to say, that its influence may sometimes extend beyond the restricted confines of academic theologians and even beyond the confines of the academic community as a whole” (*SST*, p. 33).

This is “tongue in cheek” humour to explain his work. “Even” and “may” in the phrases: “*even* theology”, “its influence *may* sometimes extend beyond” and “*even* beyond”, show us his winsome hope *as a Christian academic and scholar*. He draws attention to the “restricted confines” of theology, which is itself nested within the academic community’s “confines”. We perceive him confronting an academic culture lacking true openness. His work expresses the hope that his analyses will be appreciated *beyond* the academic context in the wider society, *even* “out there” *in the parishes* of the Church of England. He “*even*” hopes that his *sociological theology* will cross the divide from theology into sociology itself! This humour concides with Gill’s conviction that *sociological theology* should be an integral part of every ordinand’s intellectual formation. Here is a work fired with a many-sided hope arising from a self-conscious Anglican in his contribution to university, church and society. This same attitude binds the three volumes together as one work.

When Gill, in the “Afterword” of the third volume, is summing up his efforts, he concedes “that my project is far from complete” (*SST*, p. 229). This comes hard on the heels of his culminating chapter about theology’s task in fomenting the public virtues of “solidaristic compassion” where he commends the difficult task of extending care to those living with HIV. “Theological Virtues in the Public Forum” compares HIV prevention programmes with the challenges Jesus issued by healing lepers. The basic concepts of *sociological theology* are expounded in the belief that this new (sub-) discipline must strive to make such a compassionate contribution. Many situations in this suffering world cry out for “solidaristic compassion”, and academic disciplines like sociology and theology, in their examination of the various dimensions of all kinds of human endeavour, need to see themselves so constrained and “under continual construction”. The “incompleteness” of Gill’s project is part of his recognition of the dynamic human reality that confronts these disciplines. Those who theorise “theological virtues” may better rise to challenges of human suffering with assistance from *sociological theology*.

Gill’s perspective on caring articulates his response to the gospel’s challenge to confront, overcome and turn away from cruel and deeply harmful “stigmatizing and shaming [of] people who cannot undo their condition” (*SST*, p. 226). His incisive exposition of New Testament healing stories seeks to bring into sharp relief the persistently negative communal processes that “compassion, care, faith and humility” must confront and overcome.

The discussion is necessarily “academic”, in the form of arguments presented as well-crafted essays, in style not unlike what is required in university coursework. That is no criticism. Gill has been reading and re-reading the formative textbooks of his under-graduate and graduate study back in the 1960s and 1970s. He remembers their stimulus and writes with sensitivity to his readers, assuming that we may gain greater clarity of his views if he explains how he then saw and responded to the challenges of prominent scholars. In that sense the three works are tied together by an autobiographical theme which strengthens their contribution. More recently he has confronted the views of John Milbank and Stanley Hauerwas, with whom he clearly disagrees. Gill repeatedly reiterates strong dissent from “radical orthodoxy” particularly in Milbank’s strident negativity toward social science.

Nested within Gill's narrative is his account of the genesis of his own theoretical arguments and concepts. We cannot cover that here. Let's put it in short-hand: his inter-disciplinary effort is framed by the impact upon his reflections of both J. A. T. Robinson (1919–1983), author of *Honest to God* (London: SCM, 1963), and C. Wright Mills (1916–1962), author of *The Sociological Imagination* (Oxford: OUP, 1959). His recurring emphasis is upon sociology's interface with theology, and the less-than-clear-cut theological response to the intellectual challenge of those viewing religion and theology with a "sociological imagination". Gill writes as pioneer in border territory knowing full well that some residents on both sides of the dividing line between sociology and theology view it as a "no go" area, perhaps even a bewildering wasteland, or they may even deny its existence. Milbank apparently views it as a fantasyland or a deadly bog. But *Sociological Theology* chronicles Gill's persistent sojourn in that scholarly realm.

Gill's negotiation of the borderland between theology and sociology as well as the concepts and insights he derives from the sociology of knowledge requires a more complex analysis than can be given in this brief review. Suffice to say he raises important and critical questions including those about sociology's long-standing commitment to "secular" assumptions. The data collected *about* religion raise facts that are undeniable, and sociological analysis needs to avoid being skewed by ideological or even theological weasling. This is a point about empirical research that will need further clarification from a critical examination of Gill's arguments and analyses.

Overall, the 3 volumes are well written, an enjoyable chronicle of an Anglican academic's odyssey in the secular academy. He happily identifies himself, together with David Martin and Peter Berger, as a group of *Christian* sociologists of religion, who

stumbled on the necessity of sociology as a natural extension of our immersion in theology and as a way of sorting out what were to us urgent issues about religion, social understanding, and human betterment We were, and remain, mistrustful across the board rather than liberals across the board. For us the proper work of a sociologist is to sniff cautiously at *everything*, sociology included. (*SST*, p. 3, quoting David Martin)

Gill's account of how *sociological theology* has emerged provides his exemplar of how theological knowledge is formed in and by its relation to society. *Sociological theology* must challenge taken-for-granted realities, his own included. By taking up the task of identifying the processes by which social reality has been and continues to be objectively constructed, issues that arise within the borderland between sociology and theology can be given their due.

Theology in a Social Context (vol. 1) takes up themes he developed in his very first book *The Social Context of Theology* (1975). In fresh and easy-to-follow language, Gill's retrospective and self-critical documentation presents corrections to previous over-reactions, misunderstandings and misreadings of data. He also identifies his own faulty arguments put forward with those with whom he disagreed as he tried to promote deeper reflection on the value of sociology for theological reflection. He does not forget that it was his Birmingham MSocSc supervisor Bob Hinings who made the salient suggestion about "*applying sociology to theology rather than just to parochial work*" (*TSC*, p. 3).

He remains alert to important transitions in his thinking. The "applied" contribution of sociology is not just about discerning how social action can be formed in line with some theological "ideas", say, in the programmes of an Anglican parish trying to implement its "mission statement". Hinings' suggestion meant applying sociological concepts to theological concepts and insights in order to discern how it *qua discipline* is part of a "socially constructed reality". This "academic" (rather than merely "applied")

refocusing of the relationship between these two disciplines led Gill to the sociology of knowledge and the work of Karl Mannheim (1893–1947). His roughly-hewn philosophy of science is discussed in the opening chapters of *Theology Shaped by Society* (vol. 2), when he examines the social structure of theology, and this leads to a view that is central to the entire project: “Theology: A Social System” (Chapter 5). In such terms Gill’s sociological theology promotes empirical sociological fieldwork as an important source for theological reflection. In his earliest work, a 12-page essay “British Theology as a Sociological Variable” (1974), the use of the term “variable” is critical for his understanding of explanation in sociology (*TSS*, Chapter 3—“Explanation in Sociology and Theology,” pp. 41–59). Gill’s sociological authorities—Berger and Mannheim—provide him with a theoretical view of how science confronts reality’s diverse and immanent variability. In any scientific explanation, the dependent variables are related to the independent. But what in one study can be considered an independent variable may be in other studies viewed as dependent and vice versa. Berger affirms this view of scientific explanation with his sociological account of religious phenomena. And this is also why, within social scientific inquiry, appeals to the transcendent are necessarily excluded (*TSS*, p. 47). The critical problem however with this stated exclusion of the transcendent is that it involves an *immanent* belief in the self-sufficiency of scientific explanation that actually *transcends* scientific explanation. This is a problematic dogma that must be examined further in any critical examination of Gill’s *sociological theology*. With Berger and Martin, Gill is united in a Christian professional aspiration to “sniff cautiously at *everything*, sociology included” (*SST*, p. 1, quoting David Martin).

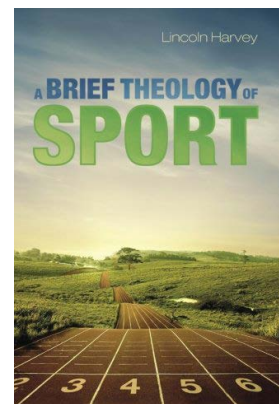
Robin Gill’s work vigorously promotes a deeply self-critical approach, not just to sociology, not just to theology, not just to the relationship between them, but to living the Christian life. In his *sniffing* at various sets of data, and his academic disciplines more generally, it is clear he is averse to claiming dogmatic finality for his theoretical insights. We are left with the following critical questions: is he suggesting that the method of sociological scepticism is a religiously neutral strategy? Should *sociological theology* be considered as a specifically *Christian* contribution to sociology?

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Lincoln Harvey. *A Brief Theology of Sport*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2014. xxi + 130 pp. £19.99/\$17.00.

In an age when over one billion people are expected to engage with the World Cup tournament, there is a shocking lack of significant monograph-length theological reflection on the sporting phenomenon. Lincoln Harvey’s book *A Brief Theology of Sport* fits into just such a gap.

Harvey begins his book with a section on “Historical Surroundings,” providing a context for connecting sport and religion, and more or less relying on major historical studies such as Allen Guttman’s *Sports: The First Five Millennia* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004) and William Baker’s *Playing with God: Religion and Modern Sport* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007). Left out of this beginning discussion is mention of Johan Huizinga’s foundational text *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon, 1955). This omission is significant because Harvey offers



three grounding propositions, propositions which were evident in Huizinga's work: "sport [play for Huizinga] is universal," "religion is universal," and "historically, sport and religion are intertwined" (pp. 5–8).

Having established the historical basis for the linkage of sport to religion, Harvey moves on to give a brief but lucid overview of the sport/religion relationship. This understandably begins in chapter two with a brief consideration of sport in classical Graeco-Roman culture. He then narrows the field of observation to a particularly Christian history of sport, and devotes chapters to sport within the contexts of the Early Church, the Medieval Catholic Church, the Puritan movement, and modern "Muscular Christianity."

More serious students of the history and philosophy of sport may find these early chapters a rehash of other works, a fact which Harvey himself acknowledges. Still, this should not be seen as a drawback as the first section provides an excellent introduction to the church's tenuous relationship with sport.

The second portion of the book is a series of "Analytical Soundings" which use the doctrine of creation as a springboard for inquiring about the nature of human existence and the play phenomenon found in sport. Our existence, says Harvey, is "unnecessary but meaningful"—a fact which he draws out of our creaturely contingency (p. 83). Likewise, Harvey finds the autotelic nature of sport, as a subset of the broader play phenomenon, as its essential characteristic. These parallel fundamental characteristics lead Harvey to declare sport as "a liturgy of the creature's contingency" (p. 101).

Following the logic of autotelicity, Harvey reflects back on the historical attitudes towards sport in the first part of the book and suggests that the reason why the church has not handled sport well is that it has denied the fundamental nature of sport as an autotelic activity. To deny the fundamentally free nature of sport is to instrumentalize it, to force it to adopt a *telos* that is extrinsic to itself. When we do this, says Harvey, we violate the very essence of play and sport ceases to be sport. This has a broad range of implications for how the church engages sport. According to Harvey, sports ministries and missions are questionable instrumentalizations of sport.

While likely to resonate with the nature of sportspersons, Harvey's "analytical" notes make certain assumptions about the nature of sport and its place in society, which are contestable in the broader sports studies context.

Harvey's conception of "pure" sport seems to be both idealistic and isolationist. And though he does briefly acknowledge this, he maintains that sport is at its best when it is unsullied and entirely separated from the rest of life. But this definition of autotelicity is idealistically rigid; it doesn't leave room for negotiating the complexity of human motivation, and it isolates sport from the rich social contexts in which it arises. Sport, like theology, isn't done in a vacuum.

Additionally, more of a discussion about the underlying metaphysics of sport is warranted, especially since Harvey's thesis rests so heavily on connecting sport to play—a connection which, though strong enough to make his case, at times lapses into ambiguity with his somewhat interchangeable use of the terms. It seems it would have been less of a leap to advance *play* as that celebration of radical contingency, rather than sport specifically.

Finally, the necessity of divorcing sport from worship is unclear *especially* in light of our creaturely status. Harvey's picture of sport as a liturgy of human life is a beautiful one, but it loses liturgical force when it is understood only as a sort of celebration. It seems to fall back into a dualism, which while recognizing and celebrating the bodied activity of sport, fails to understand that same bodied activity as kinesthetic and *embodied* and thus as a means of knowing. We don't engage in sport in order to gain

knowledge, but as Jaco Hamman has pointed out, play nonetheless is a way of knowing and expressing knowledge (“Play,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology* [ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011], 47), and sport—much like the liturgy of the church—is a structure with a logic and moral force of its own that shapes and forms the fullness of what Gabriel Marcel has called our incarnated beings. As such, it *must* be placed in the category of worship, in as much as we bodied creatures are called to constitute our contingent, reliant selves as *living sacrifices* (Rom 12:1).

This does not fall prey to instrumentalization as Harvey fears. Harvey advocates a radical contingency, the complete subsistence of our very being in the person of Jesus Christ, but this is precisely the reason sport can’t be bracketed off from the rest of our liturgical selves. Harvey is right that we shouldn’t try to use sport—as Robert Johnson and Hugo Rahner have suggested—to get closer to God (pp. 91–93). Rather, sport *becomes* worship as we comport ourselves with the help of the Spirit as “living sacrifices” in light of the ongoing “mercies of God.” In this way sport is very much a part of the greater litany of life.

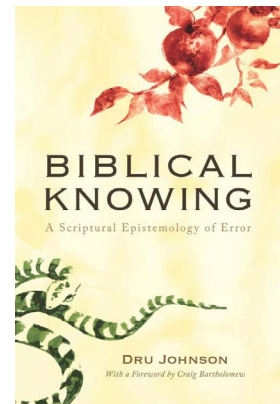
Sport fans of all kinds will benefit from Harvey’s deep insights about the nature of sport and its place in human life. His liturgical understanding of sport, though titled as “brief” is theologically rich. And while his proposal to de-instrumentalize sport is not a new one in the philosophy of sport conversation, it is a unique and original contribution in its specifically theological orientation that seems likely to fulfill Harvey’s goal of inviting other theological scholars onto the “field of play” with him.

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Dru Johnson. *Biblical Knowing: A Scriptural Epistemology of Error*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013. xxi + 242 pp. £19.00/\$29.00.

In this recent monograph, Dru Johnson has taken up an interesting and important project—that of exploring how epistemic concerns are portrayed in Scripture with the end of laying “the groundwork for a biblical theology of knowledge” (p. xv). Interestingly, in order to do that, the author focuses particular attention on clear cases in Scripture of error in the process of coming to know. He is interested in errors that occur when the characters are initially positioned well to acquire knowledge, yet they fail in the process in some obvious way that leads to failure to know or grasp what they should have. His justification for this approach seems to be that patent cases of error clarify and illuminate the proper process of coming to know that is exemplified in cases in which the process is carried out properly and successfully.

In the first chapter, Johnson attempts to clarify the kind of error that he will be scrutinizing in the biblical texts and the method he will be using in this investigation. Chapters 2–5 are where he does most of the work of tracing out the biblical portrayal of coming to know, focusing especially on Genesis 2 and 3 (chapters 2 and 3 respectively), as well as selected narrative passages elsewhere in the Pentateuch and historical books of the Old Testament (chapter 4) and three of the New Testament Gospels (chapter 5). What emerges very early is a pattern of human knowledge acquisition that involves dependent listening



to and following the instructions of an authoritative guide. Failure to listen to the right guide results in a derailment of the process of discovery.

Of particular interest is the author's take on the fall of humanity in Genesis 3. Rather than taking the primary error of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 to be their desire for autonomy, Johnson maintains that the text puts the emphasis on their voluntary shifting of their trust from the voice of God through Adam to the voice of the serpent. Failure to listen to the correct voice becomes a recurrent theme in the history of God's people as that history unfolds in the Scriptures.

Chapter 6 is devoted to an attempt to establish the claim that Michael Polanyi's epistemology of science is commensurable with the biblical epistemology that the author has laid out in the previous chapters, with the end of showing that this biblical epistemology is not restricted to religious epistemology, but applies to all knowledge. In this chapter, Johnson integrates a cursory but insightful consideration of Old Testament wisdom literature and New Testament epistolary with respect to epistemological concerns.

In chapters 7 and 8, Johnson considers contemporary analytic epistemology and the relatively new analytic theology movement respectively. He concludes that analytic epistemology as represented by the four particular sorts of theories he surveys (the traditional account of knowledge as justified true belief, naturalized epistemology, virtue epistemology, and Reformed epistemology) is unduly narrow, fails to capture the epistemology that is derived from the biblical narrative, and is thus not serviceable to theology. His brief examination of analytic theology in the light of a concise and focused survey of current biblical scholarship concerning knowing in Scripture and his own consideration of epistemologically significant biblical texts in previous chapters leads to the strong suggestion that analytic theology is ill-conceived given the pervasiveness of the phenomenological depiction of the epistemic process throughout the Bible. Such a challenge to the project of analytic theology is not surprising given the author's conclusion concerning analytic epistemology in the previous chapter.

The final chapter is a reflection on some of the significant implications of the author's findings in this study for the work of theology, preaching, teaching, discipling, and counseling. Particularly significant is Johnson's emphasis on accountability within the church for the epistemological aspects of all these activities and on the necessity of participation in the life of Christian discipleship for knowing. In drawing the study to a close, Johnson relates the most significant feature of the biblical epistemology that he has developed to church life:

Counseling, discipleship, and even the application portion of preaching all share this as common: humans need someone outside of themselves to guide them. . . . [E]pistemological process in Scripture envisions a community of people who counsel, disciple, and coach one another because they cannot know themselves, each other, or God well without such external help. (p. 218)

I found Johnson's case for the general pattern of the process of acquiring theological knowledge based on his biblical-theological investigation appealing and generally convincing (though not in all the details). Less convincing was his case in chapter 6 for his claim that the biblical pattern that he had identified is generalizable to cover all knowing. While there is continuity between the epistemological theory that Johnson draws from Scripture and Polanyi's epistemology of science, it is far from obvious that either is broad enough to cover all that must be covered in a general theory of knowledge. The author seems to hold the dubious assumption that scientific knowing is paradigmatic for all knowing.

Regretfully, though I found Johnson's work to be valuable for provoking thought and for its insight into some epistemologically significant biblical passages, I must report that it was a frustrating read on multiple levels. Unfortunately, the book is littered with writing errors (e.g., typos, missing words, grammatical errors, etc.) and infelicitous word choices. There are instances of redundancy, the most bothersome of which is on pp. 124–25, where there are two paragraphs (separated by a third) that cover pretty much the same ground, adumbrating what will follow in the remainder of the chapter. Furthermore, there are crucial junctures where the author's thinking is insufficiently developed or not clearly articulated, making it difficult or impossible to follow and evaluate his reasoning. For example, he frequently asserts that knowing is a process, not a state, yet fails to give an adequate reason for thinking so. As far as I can tell, the only argument he gives for the claim that biblical knowing is a process rather than a state is in chapter 2 in a section entitled "Is the man's knowledge instantaneous?" (pp. 31–33). Johnson is considering the depiction of Adam's coming to know his proper mate under God's guidance, a process that begins with God's having Adam name the animals. His argument is found in three successive paragraphs:

But in Genesis 2, man comes to know by enacting a process, through indwelled participation. By indwelled participation, we mean that if something can be known in Genesis 2, it appears to be divulged through performing some action. Because this act of knowing is a process, it is inherently bound in place and history, not the metaphysical abstractions of space and time, which appear as inextricable features of creaturely knowing. Participation in the act of knowing ends in discrete points of illumination, of revelation: Such as "Eureka!" . . . Enacting the process appears to create an expectation that something will be revealed. It involves a longing for a settlement, which means that knowing involves an initial conflict that seeks resolution. . . .

. . . Because he is embodied, knowing has an analogical facet so that man can know that he is on a path to knowing his proper mate. The man is aware that he is on the way to knowing his proper mate ("But for the man, he did not find a fit helper for himself" 2:20b) and embodying the process. . . .

Awareness that one is on a path to knowing speaks to the non-stative nature of knowledge: that it is ripe with hope and expectation that must come to fruition in some recognizable way. This awareness of one's location within the epistemological process renders confidence that one is moving towards the goal, which is knowing. (pp. 32–33)

We should note three things briefly about this argument. First, while the narrative might well lead the reader to the expectation that Adam is on a path of discovery leading to the revelation of his proper mate, it doesn't seem at all clear from the text that Adam is aware that he is. Maybe he is; maybe he isn't. Second, and more importantly, what Johnson notes about the "epistemological process" is perfectly consistent with Adam's coming to know, where knowing is a state rather than a process. The argument is a *non sequitur*. Third, we see here an example of a recurrent inconsistency. In the excerpt above, Johnson construes knowing as the end or goal of the process rather than as the process itself. This is quite consistent with the claim that knowing is a state. Oddly, throughout the book, even where Johnson asserts that knowing is a process rather than a state, he continually reverts to the language of "coming to know." This suggests that the real concern in Scripture is with the process of acquiring knowledge rather than with depicting knowledge itself as a process, the author's claims to the contrary notwithstanding.

Finally, I should note that there is a troublesome carelessness in Johnson's critique of analytic epistemology that will make it unlikely to convince any epistemologist of that ilk. For example, his discussion of the nature and epistemological role of propositions on pp. 155–66 is hopelessly confused. At different times, he confuses propositions variously with affirmations, beliefs, and states of affairs. At other times, it isn't at all clear what he has in mind when he uses the term "proposition." At one point, he claims that "there is no informational content to a proposition" (p. 160), clearly failing to recognize the view held by many analytic philosophers that a proposition *is* the informational content of a declarative sentence as well as of certain speech acts (e.g., assertions, denials) and propositional attitudes (e.g., beliefs, hopes, and doubts).

Furthermore, the author misconstrues analytic epistemology's project of seeking an adequate analysis of the concept of propositional knowledge. I'll cite just three examples. We get a sense that something is askew in his representation of analytic epistemology early in the discussion in the following obscure sentence: "So too, the broadness of epistemological reality, biblical or otherwise, cannot be explained by a narrow study of propositions in predicate relationships as if they represent and can generalize to the entanglement of broad realities . . ." (p. 155). A clearer example can be found in the author's discussion of the traditional analysis of knowledge as justified true belief (which he calls "TAK"): "Like other epistemological models TAK vests itself in the notion that knowledge is fundamentally analyzable through propositional examination. Because of that vesting in propositional analysis, the TAK has little flexibility to engage the breadth of reality to be known" (p. 169).

This reviewer is no friend of "TAK." However, it should be clear to anyone who is acquainted with analytic epistemology that propositional examination or analysis is not generally taken by proponents of TAK (or of any other form of analytic epistemology, for that matter) to be a key component of knowledge. Similarly, after considering what he takes to be the four main kinds of analytic theory of knowledge, the author writes: "In these four models, knowledge is primarily concerned with reconciling our rationality by propositional analysis and so we find them fundamentally wanting" (p. 179). As far as I can tell, this claim (if it even makes sense) does not aptly apply to *any* instance of the four kinds of analytic epistemology that Johnson canvases since none of them takes propositional analysis to be a necessary condition for knowing.

Of course, analysis of knowledge is not the only project of analytic epistemologists, though one might get that impression reading Johnson's treatment. Moreover, this project is not necessarily at odds with the biblical depiction of how we acquire theological knowledge since the latter is concerned with the process of coming to know, not with what knowledge is essentially. As Johnson himself notes, in analyzing the concept of knowledge analytic epistemologists "are doing something distinctly different from what we see in Scripture" (p. 180). They are concerned to answer two different questions. But it doesn't follow that there is a conflict. It would have been better, perhaps, to have considered how analytic philosophers are treating the question of knowledge acquisition rather than how they have treated the question of the nature of knowledge.

There is much more to say, but we must conclude. In short, while Johnson's project is one of great importance, and I applaud his effort, the book went to press prematurely.

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Andrew T. Lincoln. *Born of a Virgin? Reconceiving Jesus in the Bible, Tradition, and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. xii + 322 pp. £25.00/\$35.00.

Andrew T. Lincoln, Portland Professor of New Testament Studies at the University of Gloucestershire, is well known for his work on John and the Pauline Epistles. His new work on the virgin birth traditions is carefully researched and will likely open up a lively discussion for years to come.

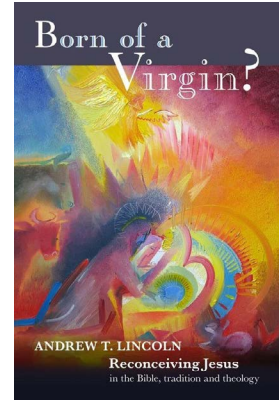
Lincoln makes it clear that he is writing from a faith-based tradition and that the belief that Jesus is fully human and fully divine is a “non-negotiable element of Christianity’s ‘scandal of particularity’” (p. 18). Lincoln’s position on the “virginal conception” may well fall within the parameters of the Church of England (pp. 300–301), but are certainly contradictory to traditional views, such as those propounded in the Apostles’ Creed and the even earlier Old Roman Creed (or Symbol).

Lincoln begins in chapter one by making a case for a re-evaluation of the traditions concerning the “virginal conception” and then progresses to examine the literary, historical, hermeneutical, and theological issues concerning this issue. Lincoln argues that there are at least two views of Jesus’s conception found within the New Testament: 1) the “virginal conception” as referred to in Matthew (1:21–23) and Luke (1:27–38); and 2) his conception through the natural sexual union of Mary and Joseph (“born of the seed of David according to the flesh,” Rom 1:3; “son of Joseph,” John 1:45). He maintains that Matthew consistently refers to a virginal birth, but that Matthew’s wording conveys merely a special empowerment by God (similar to Philo’s use of “begotten of God”), not a miraculous birth. Lincoln proposes that the book of Luke, on the other hand, contains both traditions: in some passages Jesus’s birth was a virginal conception and in others it occurred from normal sexual relations between Mary and Joseph. He sees this latter tradition displayed in phrases that speak of Jesus coming from the “line of David” (Luke 1:27; 2:24; 18:38, 39) or being “the son of Joseph” (3:23). However, it should be noted that the phrase ὡς ἐνομίζετο “as supposed” in Luke 3:23 implies a question as to whether Jesus was indeed Joseph’s son.

We doubt whether these birth traditions are as contradictory as Lincoln suggests. First, at least as far back as the second century, Church Fathers argued that Mary was also from the line of David; and second, based upon adoption practices of the Jews, Jesus could legitimately be called the “son of Joseph.”

Lincoln also points out the recurring charge, largely by Jewish sources, that Mary was impregnated by a Roman soldier named Panthera, and that the angel’s message to Joseph was meant to encourage him to marry her anyway. However, this tradition developed later and can credibly be viewed as an attempt by early Jews to discredit Christian beliefs.

An interesting part of the book is Lincoln’s description of the traditions of miraculous births surrounding other prominent figures in the Greco-Roman world. Lincoln argues that these myths were created to enhance the reputation of these people (e.g., Romulus and Remus; Alexander the Great; Augustus Caesar) and that the biblical authors acted in a similar fashion when describing Jesus’s birth. However, none of the Greco-Roman traditions developed during the lifetime of these important people—they were later developments. The traditions concerning Jesus’s “virginal conception” appear to have arisen during his lifetime when people could indeed confirm it. It is also very likely that each of the Greco-Roman miraculous birth tropes developed after the biblical traditions and not before.



It was also surprising in such a careful working through the evidence by Lincoln that the nature of the sources were not evaluated more fully. For example, it is not surprising that sources from a later point in the Greco-Roman period contradict the biblical text, since by then Christians were being persecuted and their beliefs ridiculed. Furthermore, it seems odd that such an outrageous claim of a “virginal conception” could have had proponents so close to Jesus’s birth that it would have been mentioned in two of the Gospels and somehow became the majority position—unless there was some truth behind it.

Lincoln believes that a “virginal conception” would undermine Jesus’s incarnation. He argues that it would have been impossible for Jesus to be fully human if he did not have a human father to supply the Y chromosome (pp. 261–62). And yet the biblical account does not portray either Adam, who was created without having parents, or Eve, who was fashioned from only Adam’s genetic material, as demi-gods; the biblical accounts picture them as fully functioning human beings.

The context of Heb 2 makes it very clear that Jesus partook fully of “flesh and bones” (2:14) just like we have and was put through testing just like we are (2:18), so that we could have a merciful high priest. But does Heb 2:17 demand that his bodily make-up be exactly like ours? The phrase *κατὰ πάντα* “in every respect” must still allow for Jesus’s true identity as God-Man (which Lincoln himself affirms) with both natures perfectly united in one person.

We wonder if some of the statements implying or even clearly stating a “virginal conception” are quite so easily dismissed: Matt 1:18, “before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit”; Matt 1:20, “for the child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit”; Matt 1:25, “he kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a son”; Luke 1:27, Mary is called a “virgin” twice; and Mary’s own question in Luke 1:34, “How can this be since I am a virgin?” Lincoln argues that Matthew’s use of the phrase “the child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” refers to merely “empowering by the Holy Spirit.” However, in the Lukan accounts we have two birth narratives side by side, Elizabeth’s and Mary’s. Of these two narratives, the former appears to be adequately described as an “empowering by the Holy Spirit” to have a son, since Elizabeth was beyond childbearing years; this narrative is significantly different than how Mary’s conception is described. Thus we believe Matthew’s account describes something more than merely a supernatural empowerment.

We also are not convinced by Lincoln’s use of the Isa 7:14 in his discussion of Matt 1. There are several phrases in this passage that suggest Mary is more than simply a “young woman”; in addition, by the New Testament time the word *παρθένος* had narrowed down in meaning to “virgin” (see Matt 1:25; Luke 1:27, 34; etc.).

While we have pointed out what we consider to be areas of weakness in the book, Lincoln’s discussions are thought provoking on a number of points. First, Lincoln is correct in noting that the “virginal conception” is not frequently mentioned in the New Testament, but that does not necessarily mean that it is an unimportant concept. Several other issues or concepts are mentioned only infrequently in the New Testament, yet they carry great significance: divorce (Matt 5, 19; Mark 10; 1 Cor 7), tongues as a spiritual gift (Acts 2; 1 Cor 12–14), and the great commission (Matt 28:19–20). Second, Lincoln makes an interesting argument that Jesus could have been sinless without a virginal conception. Finally, Lincoln reminds Christians that it is necessary to think through the incarnation given the scientific advancements in our understanding of human reproduction.

Thus even though one may disagree with Lincoln's conclusions, he provides a very coherent and stimulating discussion.

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Paul K. Moser. *The Severity of God: Religion and Philosophy Reconceived*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 237pp. £18.99/\$29.99.

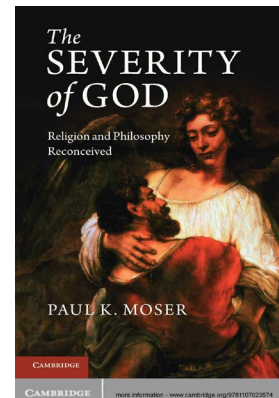
Dr. Paul K. Moser has written an extremely important book for both students of philosophy and theology, which seeks to explain how the problem of divine severity is compatible with the existence of a God who is worthy of worship. Moser is specifically confronting the issue of “why—a God worthy of worship would allow human life to be as severe or rigorously difficult as it actually is, at least at times” (p. 4).

In chapter 1, Moser discusses his Gethsemane epistemology model. Moser has defined Gethsemane epistemology as a model that “requires human responsiveness and volitional conformity to God.” A proper Gethsemane model seeks God's perfect will first, even though the standards or requirements might seem rigorous (p. 30). Obviously, Moser's epistemological method is founded on Matt 26:36–46. A volitional position is required for humanity to receive God's redemptive power. Moser notes that humans will never be able to fully understand God's specific purposes for allowing evil and suffering in the world, but they may be able to find sufficient comfort in the message of the cross, and recognize the severity of Christ's death that took place on Golgotha (p. 35). Expecting a severe God is something that Christian theists should anticipate. As Moser rightly says, “Theologians and philosophers of religion speak often of divine ‘love,’ but they talk much less frequently, if at all, of divine severity toward unrighteousness” (p. 38).

In chapter 2, Moser describes severity and flux. What this essentially means is that because life is always changing and is momentary, it can seem extremely terrible at certain points. By interacting with philosophers such as Thomas Nagel, Moser argues that divine agape love “can serve as a potential constant or stabilizer in the flux, even if humans must struggle to receive it and to manifest it for others” (p. 83). Christians must live with tension in this life, but try and take comfort in divine agape that makes life worth living.

Chapter 3 discusses why human beings often have misguided expectations for God, if he exists, to provide enough evidence for his existence. According to Moser, human beings must be willing to participate in “divine corrective reciprocity” in order to come into a justifiable belief in God (p. 89). Moser does not believe that natural theology provides worthwhile evidence for the existence of a God worthy of worship. He suggests that, “natural theology is inadequate and dispensable relative to the evidential standard and resources for the God worthy of worship” (p. 123). This then obviously affirms Moser's agape-oriented epistemology that is founded upon Jesus's attitude in Gethsemane.

In chapter 4 Moser considers the role of severity in salvation. Moser specifically interacts with the apostle Paul's discussion of salvation. As he notes: “Many interpreters have neglected the role in Paul's



soteriology of active human faith in God” (p. 149). This chapter focuses mainly on the role that human beings have in receiving freedom, by becoming obedient in the heart towards God, and on the role of submitting one’s will to God’s perfect moral character (p. 165).

In chapter 5, his strongest chapter, Moser discusses what his Christ-shaped philosophy entails. Moser suggests that: “A distinct Christian philosophy would be neither purely rational nor purely empirical nor purely argumentational in form. Instead, it would accommodate the subversive Christian message that the outcast Galilean ‘Jesus is Lord’” (p. 167). This is a very helpful definition. Moser goes on to elaborate that a Christian philosophy must not empty the power from the cross of Christ (p. 181). Christian philosophy must join “Gethsemane union with a religious epistemology oriented toward the Spirit of God and Christ” (p. 183). What Moser offers Christian philosophers and theologians in this section is invaluable. Christians should value philosophy and theology and should not try to divorce these two branches.

In summary, Moser provides an interesting account as to why Christians should expect God to allow divine severity within this life. Moser sees a divine struggle between Jesus and God taking place in Gethsemane. Jesus volitionally submitted to God’s will in Gethsemane in light of the severity of the cross, and this is now what every human being is invited to partake in as well. We must not resist Gethsemane, but rather submit to God’s perfect will.

Moser does not see any hope in natural theology, presuppositional apologetics, or Reformed epistemology, and decides to offer a new epistemological model that is compatible with his view of free will. Readers will most likely find Moser’s Gethsemane epistemology appealing if they lack confidence in the benefits of natural theology, presuppositional apologetics, and Reformed epistemology. However, it is unlikely that Moser’s Gethsemane epistemology will seem that useful for those who are not convinced by his libertarian view of the will. Although Moser should be commended for offering a new Christian epistemology, his Gethsemane epistemology is too narrowly focused. For example, why should one view Gethsemane epistemology in a more superior light than, say, natural theology, presuppositional apologetics, or Reformed epistemology? Natural theology has explicit scriptural warrant (Rom 1:20; Ps 19:1), while presuppositional apologetics and Reformed epistemology base their schools of thought on concepts that can be defended biblically. So why should we favor the Gethsemane model? Moser never really says, and there lies the biggest weakness of *The Severity of God*. There is just too much ambiguity in what Moser proposes. Does he completely solve the problem of divine severity? It’s hard to say. Is his Gethsemane model a worthwhile Christian epistemology? It seems to be, but much depends on the biblical convictions of the reader. Moser’s writing is very technical and unclear at points and that may explain why his book struggles to answer many of the questions that he poses.

This work is probably best understood in light of Moser’s other books, *The Elusive God: Reorienting Religious Epistemology* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008) and *The Evidence for God: Religious Knowledge Reexamined* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010). However, *The Severity of God* still provides an excellent introduction into Moser’s Gethsemane epistemology and his Christ-shaped philosophy. There is no doubt that Moser operates outside a Reformed worldview. However, there are still treasures to be gleaned from his book, and I would recommend that students of theology and philosophy to engage with what he has to say.

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Michael Northcott. *A Political Theology of Climate Change*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. ix + 335 pp. £19.99/\$30.00.

Michael Northcott is the UK's leading Christian environmental ethicist, with a number of highly regarded and popular books on the subject going back twenty years. *A Political Theology of Climate Change* has been seen, at least in some quarters, as his *magnum opus* although, as he is not yet 60, it is presumably and hopefully not also his ultimate opus. It is substantial, hugely erudite, readably written and immensely sophisticated. It also, to my mind, has one serious flaw, to which I shall return.

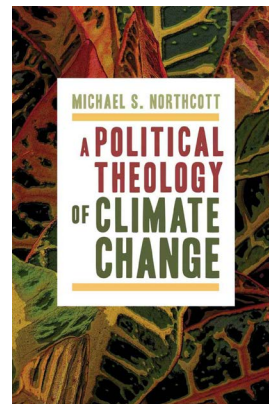
Northcott's strength is his ability to combine comprehensive familiarity with the scientific evidence with theological sophistication and a deep understanding of intellectual history. All of these are on show in the book's opening chapter outlining "the geopolitics of a slow catastrophe". The chapter offers a detailed, well-documented and chilling account of the prospect and impact of anthropogenic climate disruption. One Ministry of Defence source Northcott quotes claims that by 2036 nearly two thirds of the world's population will live in areas of water stress. Other sources give hardly more succour. The chapter, indeed the whole book, teems with predictions of this nature that should give even the most jaded reader a sense of the immense environmental, political and social problems we face within a generation or two. Sceptics will claim that Northcott fails to grant sufficient attention to human capacity to mitigate, modify and adapt, and that therefore the repercussions may not be as apocalyptic as he makes out. Even if this is so, however, and there is probably some merit to the criticism, it doesn't change the substance of Northcott's case.

That case is far more profound than simply a diagnosis of impending eco-apocalypse. Because the current process of climate disruption is anthropogenic, Northcott argues, it takes us back to pre-modern "cultural territory" where the idea that humans and their climate (indeed, the whole natural environment) were intimately linked was universally accepted. Once upon a time it was taken for granted that how we lived shaped the natural world, which in turn shaped our own possibilities. Humans understood themselves as part of creation, albeit with unique responsibility for its care and protection.

This worldview was broken up in the early modern period by the Copernican and Cartesian revolutions. Humans were displaced from the rest of creation, estranged and isolated from a natural world that became inanimate, an object of experimentation and exploitation largely independent of human concerns. People might forecast the rain but they didn't make it. "To be modern," Northcott writes, "is to deny that the weather is political" (p. 46).

Herein lies our main problem. This "seminal split" between the worlds of nature and culture "tears apart the fabric of metaphysics and morality" so that when faced with the challenge of climate change—in which the weather is thoroughly political—the categories available "in modern moral philosophy" are simply not adequate (p. 199). It is Northcott's contention that only political theology is up to the task because it situates "culture in creation, and politics in the geography of the nations" (p. 8).

The first few chapters of the book replay this conundrum from different angles. Chapter 2 reframes the question by focussing on coal, Chapter 3 takes on oil as a way of analysing our techno-fixation, and Chapter 4 carbon trading (or "indulgences" as he puts it). There is much fascinating detail on show throughout, from health warnings about the use of coal that date back to 13th century London to an



informed discussion of the various ideas for geo-engineering our way out of problems, some of which, like injecting huge quantities of sulphates into the atmosphere or covering glaciers with polyethylene-aluminium sheeting in order to increase the earth's atmospheric/surface reflectivity, verge on insane.

Northcott is not totally against all such measures and some, such as the burial of burned biomass, or "biochar", as a means of sequestering carbon dioxide, are promising and deserve a hearing. However, such fixes really miss Northcott's central point. Because the human technological developments that have engineered the coming climate crisis are grounded in deep conceptual errors concerning the human and the natural, the techno-solutions intended to re-engineer our way out of this crisis will fail unless they also attend to those errors.

Northcott's solution lies in nations as an antidote to the "anomic borderlessness" and "corporate and imperial agencies of industrial capitalism" (pp. 304–5). In this at least he concurs with Roger Scruton in the latter's *Green Philosophy*, which argues for environmental activism to rediscover nationhood and local identities. Countering the familiar point that nations are essentially modern, artificial, "social constructs" with no distinct moral character or mandate to serve the common good, Northcott insists that a proper understanding of nationhood recognises its moral, even providential, potential. Only nations can produce an authoritative inventory of greenhouse gases, can nudge citizens through appropriate pricing of energy and taxation, and can restrain large multinational fossil fuel corporations.

Northcott does not imagine nations acting instead of other agents. On the contrary, the book concludes by explaining how the "messianic communitarianism" embodied in the church and also in the "contemporary growth of dissenting citizens" must work to develop practices and networks, which shape national activity (p. 305). Overall, it is a persuasive case, although, as noted, not one without problems.

Northcott makes a convincing case that the modern cognitive severance of nature from culture has caused, or at least enabled, this crisis. Yet plenty of pre-modern societies have managed to commit ecocide without having the benefit of Copernicus, Bacon, Descartes, or Locke giving them the conceptual tools to do so (see for example the works of Jared Diamond). The Greenlandic Norse, Central American Maya and North American Anasazi, not to mention various Polynesian Islands, have managed to deforest, overhunt, overfish, overpopulate, over-consume, soil-erode, or over-extract their way to oblivion. Perhaps the problem is not as complex as Northcott imagines. Perhaps human greed, stupidity, short-termism, and malignity are enough. No doubt, intellectually severing who we are from where and when we are helps. And no doubt therefore, reconnecting those severed ideas—re-embedding human culture within nature, technological and economic solutions with moral lifestyles and ethical frameworks—will help. But the real problem is even deeper.

The impact of evolution on our ideas of race offer an analogy. After Darwin, it became easier for people to dehumanise other ethnic groups, just as after Bacon and Descartes it became easier for them to devastate the natural environment. In both instances there was now a (pseudo-) scientific justification for their activities. But Darwinism no more invented racism than early moderns did ecocide. The human ability, indeed tendency, to devalue and then abuse the other goes about as far into our origins—the core of our 'original sin'?—as it is possible to go.

Northcott would not, I imagine, demur but if this pessimistic conclusion is right, it buries the problem even deeper within human nature than even this fine book locates it.

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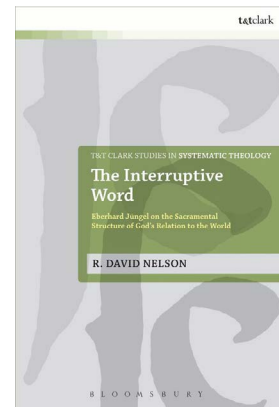
R. David Nelson. *The Interruptive Word: Eberhard Jüngel on the Sacramental Structure of God's Relation to the World*. T&T Clark, 2013. £65.00/\$120.00.

Eberhard Jüngel remains one of the most important German Lutheran post-Barth theologians. We are indebted to John Webster's long-standing interest and engagement with Jüngel for raising his profile among British students of theology. One of Webster's former doctoral students has now published the fruits of his research, focussing primarily on Jüngel's theology of sacraments. David Nelson thus adds another dimension to the growing body of English language volumes on the work of this notoriously complex theologian. It is pleasing to report that Nelson not only renders Jüngel's thought in an accessible manner, but engages with an area of his theology which is relatively unexplored.

For any familiar with Jüngel's writing the central motifs here will already be well rehearsed. Jüngel's rigorous intellectual pedigree draws upon Luther, Barth, Heidegger and, most importantly Fuchs. His theology is rooted in the Barthian language of event, but most often this is expressed in relation to language. God comes to the world in a word-event of encounter; words do not simply signify reality but embody it. As God comes to speech in this word-event the continuity of our existence is interrupted and made new. For Jüngel this leads to a distinctively ontological understanding of Luther's doctrine of justification by faith, and lies at the heart of his understanding of God's relationship to the world in and through Jesus Christ. In essence this is Barth's language of revelation as 'event' baptised in Heideggerian existentialism mixed with Fuch's new hermeneutics.

In his introduction, Nelson traces these influences, among others, correctly situating Jüngel within the broadly Lutheran tradition. The book then divides into four parts. The first section examines the sacramental character of the word of God. Here the basic contours of Jüngel's thought are carefully outlined. Much of the material here comes from Jüngel's earlier work, including his magnum opus *God as the Mystery of the World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983). Nelson concludes the section by rehearsing criticisms previously expressed by Webster and Thiselton. There is a tendency for Jüngel to assert that only language that is commandeered by God in his coming to the world is 'true' language. This raises the question of the status of everyday language. Is this simply redundant? Is the regular use of words to refer to reality really subservient to the 'higher' use to which God makes use of them in coming to the world?

Part two examines Jesus Christ as the one true sacrament, another recurring theme in Jüngel. One of the most interesting sections here analyses Jüngel's dispute with an Augustinian hermeneutics of signification. It is argued that, while in ordinary language words acts as signs, pointing to an external reality, the same cannot be said when referring to the word of God. This word does not simply point



beyond itself to God; to do so is to posit an ontological gap between the word and its content. This renders the word of God susceptible to human critique and reason while potentially conceiving of God as 'wordless and dumb abstract majesty' (p. 64). The hermeneutics of address correct this; God is encountered in his very being as he comes to speech in the word. In this way Jüngel understands that any understanding of sacrament must begin with the unique place of encounter and revelation, the person of Jesus Christ.

Part three examines the way in which Jüngel articulates the sacramentality of the church. Here Jüngel's proposal is distinctively Protestant. The church's sacramentality does not derive from a continuity of historical priesthood, but is grounded in the encounter with the risen Christ in the events of preaching, baptism and the Lord's Supper. These are events which interrupt our existence; the sacramentality of the church is punctiliar rather than continuous.

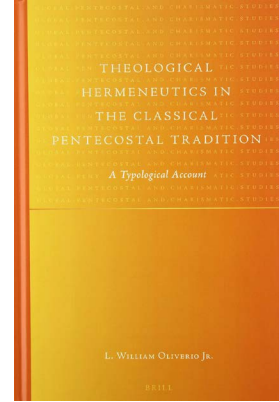
The final part focusses on the sacraments of baptism and communion. This is the distinctive contribution of this book, yet, strangely the least satisfying. There seems to be some discontinuity in Jüngel's limited writing specifically on the sacraments. This is, in part, due to some later writing in which he seems to shift his position in a way not dissimilar to Barth's late shift in his theology of baptism. The major criticisms of Jüngel's scheme are well rehearsed, and Nelson follows these through well. Firstly, by placing so much emphasis on Jesus Christ as the preeminent sacrament, there is a tendency to play down the sacramental significance of the church's action in baptism and communion. Secondly, by focussing almost exclusively on the interruptive character of the word of address, Jüngel finds it hard to develop a theology of the everyday reality that is interrupted. In other words, a theology of encounter struggles to articulate the relationship between event and the on-going vicissitudes of existence. What is the relationship between event and history? What is clear from Nelson's account is that Jüngel's later writing in *El Ser Sacramental* (Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme: 2007) does indeed seek to articulate this. Nelson does look at this in some detail in chapter 12, but the conclusion still seems to fall back on older critique. Perhaps it is hard to integrate this later work with the thrust of much of his work. Yet one has the impression that Nelson's engagement with this later writing was quite a late discovery in the writing of a thesis and the overall conclusion does not quite do justice to the shift noted in Jüngel's thought.

Overall this is an important and lucid account of an influential theologian whose own writing is not easy to read. Nelson does us a great service in outlining the sacramental aspects of his writing, hitherto largely bypassed in the literature. I suspect that a later edition may address my concerns, but as a resource for students of German theology after Barth this is a useful addition to the literature. More generally, for preachers looking for a theology of preaching in relation to baptism and the Lord's Supper, Nelson is a good guide into a stream of theology with which not all will be familiar.

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L. William Oliverio Jr. *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition: A Typological Account*. Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies 12. Leiden: Brill, 2012. xvii + 383. £141.32/\$225.00.

This book is the first comprehensive account of the history of Pentecostal theological hermeneutics. Works in Pentecostal theological method and hermeneutics appeared over the past decade. Premier examples are Amos Yong's *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2002) and Kenneth Archer's *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty First Century: Spirit, Scripture, and Community* (London: T&T Clark, 2004). Oliverio's book adds the history of Pentecostal hermeneutics to this field of scholarship. More than a chronology, however, Oliverio categorizes the strategies of Pentecostal hermeneutics into four types: 1) the Original Classical Pentecostal Hermeneutic, 2) the Evangelical-Pentecostal Hermeneutic, 3) the Contextual-Pentecostal Hermeneutic, and 4) The Ecumenical-Pentecostal Hermeneutic. Henry May's typological interpretation of the four forms the Enlightenment took in America inspires Oliverio's approach to categorizing the history of Pentecostal hermeneutics.



Chapter one identifies the late-nineteenth century roots of Pentecostalism: Wesleyan-Holiness, American Revivalist/Radical Evangelicalism, the Keswick movement, and the dispensational and premillennial eschatology of John Nelson Darby. The constellation of beliefs and practices that came to a unique shape in early Pentecostalism arose from these religious and theological movements.

Chapter two describes the theological hermeneutics of the first generation of Pentecostals. Four principles grounded their hermeneutic: 1) the authority of the Bible, 2) the restorationist or Latter Rain motif, which shaped their view of their place in history, 3) the doctrinal grid of the four/fivefold Gospel, and 4) a pragmatic realism, which supported the direct correspondence they saw between their reading of the Bible and their religious experience. Oliverio situates this account in light of other interpretations of early Pentecostalism. Investigations of the thought of Charles F. Parham, William J. Seymour, Charles H. Mason, and Garfield T. Haywood provide the basis for Oliverio's account of early Pentecostal hermeneutics. Oliverio makes the important, perhaps controversial, point that the interplay between biblical interpretation and experience was not unidirectional, but dynamic. The early Pentecostals formally affirmed the authority of the Bible and that their experience flowed from the pages of Scripture. In reality, however, their charismatic experience shaped their approach to and interpretation of Scripture.

Chapter three details the development of Pentecostal hermeneutics in the years between the World Wars. Oliverio argues that Pentecostal theology should be understood more as a theological trajectory that emerged from nineteenth century Evangelicalism than from early-twentieth century Fundamentalism. Thus, the early Pentecostals embodied the trajectory of American Evangelicalism that emphasized spiritual experience and piety. By the time that the early Pentecostals needed to formulate doctrine and theology, however, Fundamentalism was the dominant manifestation of the evangelical tradition. The Pentecostals readily adopted the Bible doctrines approach to theology and literal biblical exegesis popular among the Fundamentalists. Yet Oliverio maintains that the return to their theological predecessors in the evangelical tradition was not just a retrograde return to roots, but an innovative process of resourcing tradition and constructing a new and a hybrid theological tradition.

Chapter four covers changes in Pentecostal hermeneutics from the post-World War II era to the present day, which closely correspond to the post-fundamentalist evolutions in biblical hermeneutics among Evangelicals (e.g., Neo-Evangelicalism). The key difference between the literal hermeneutics of the Fundamentalists and the Neo-Evangelicals is that the latter draw more positively, though cautiously, on the critical methods of biblical studies. The basic belief in biblical authority for understanding God and all of human experience, however, remains the same. Oliverio also details the diversity of hermeneutical strategies among contemporary evangelical-Pentecostal theologians. They are Pentecostal versions of the Protestant evangelical emphasis on the authority of Scripture. Theological method assumes access to the authorial meaning of the biblical texts, which in turn serves as the foundation for first biblical theology and then systematic theology.

Chapter five charts the emergence of postmodern Pentecostal hermeneutics. The effort by Pentecostal theologians to account for the role of cultural context in ascertaining and creating meaning from texts is central to this hermeneutical approach. Scholars such as Timothy Cargal and Kenneth Archer argue that the uncritical adoption of the modern and historical-critical methods among Pentecostals takes them away from the theological insights of early Pentecostalism, fails to recognize the influence of social and cultural place on interpretation, and ultimately prevents the formation of *Pentecostal* readings of the Bible and theological perspectives. Oliverio covers James K. A. Smith's creational-hermeneutic, the narrative and communitarian methods of John Christopher Thomas and Kenneth J. Archer, and Amos Yong's Trinitarian-pneumatological hermeneutic.

Chapter six describes the emergence of an ecumenical approach to theology among Pentecostal scholars in the late-twentieth century. Key figures that nurtured an ecumenical orientation are David du Plessis, Ernest S. Williams, and Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. Representatives of the ecumenical-Pentecostal approach include Frank D. Macchia, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Simon Chan, and Koo Dong Yun. Oliverio convincingly argues that the contemporary ecumenical approach to theology is in continuity with the early Pentecostal movement, which emphasized charismatic spirituality that included believers from diverse Christian traditions. It stands in discontinuity, however, with the institutional form of Classical Pentecostalism that emerged and became dominant through the twentieth century. Classical Pentecostalism ignored its theological roots and regarded itself as an end-time renewal of the Spirit. The ecumenical-Pentecostal hermeneutic rejects the Classical Pentecostal contempt toward tradition. Moreover, it recognizes Pentecostalism as a tradition and engages in a positive and critical conversation with historical and contemporary Christian traditions.

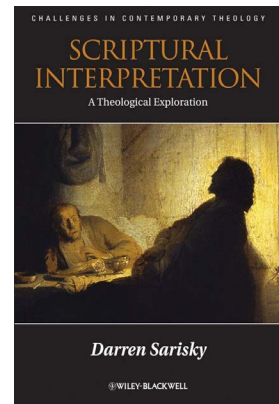
Oliverio's book is immensely readable for a revised dissertation (Marquette University, 2009). It makes the important argument that Pentecostalism did not simply borrow the theological categories of its Holiness and Reformed predecessors. The early Pentecostal theological hermeneutic—centered on the four/five-fold Gospel, the restorationist motif, biblical authority, and pragmatic realism—created a new theological tradition. The book effectively charts the development and diversification of theological methods among historical and contemporary Classical Pentecostals. One drawback is that the focus on the Classical Pentecostal tradition means that the figures within the broader Charismatic movement are not treated. For instance, Kilian McDonnell is a key figure in the Pentecostal and Catholic ecumenical

dialogues. Because, however, he is a Roman Catholic the chapter on the ecumenical-Pentecostal hermeneutic does not discuss him at length.

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Darren Sarisky. *Scriptural Interpretation: A Theological Exploration*. Challenges in Contemporary Theology. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013. xvi + 276pp. £65.00/\$102.95.

This revised Aberdeen dissertation follows in an increasingly long line of theological retrieval projects—attempts to bring the insights of the Church Fathers to bear on contemporary social and theological issues. In this case, Sarisky is concerned to remediate inadequate modern accounts of biblical interpretation primarily through a retrieval of the insights of Basil of Caesarea, in conversation with two modern theologians: Stanley Hauerwas and Rowan Williams. Sarisky contends that if we are going to attend to interpretation properly, we need to correctly (that means theologically) construe four interrelated areas: readers, the biblical text, the act of reading, and reading’s ecclesial location, or what Sarisky calls “hermeneutical space” (p. 2).



Chapter 1 presents Basil’s theological anthropology. Human beings are created according to the image of God and our end is to know the creator. In our fallen state, we need salvation, which occurs in three stages. First, *purification* involves the putting off of sinful practices and ways of thinking. Second, *illumination* denotes the striving toward that for which we were created—knowledge of God and conformity to his image. Finally, *participation* is the ultimate goal, and represents the fulfillment of the life of faith: full conformity to and fellowship with God (p. 50). We become who we are only through conformity to God, which is ultimately eschatological. The issue of *time* is essential for Sarisky’s account of readers and reading. Humanity is to attain the paradigmatic perfection of angels as their end, but only in the course of time, and ultimately only at the eschaton (pp. 41–42). What it is to be human, and thus a reader, is to have a *telos* that takes time to attain.

Basil’s ontology of Scripture (Chapter 2) comes out in his understanding of Scripture’s role in human life. The ultimate goal of Scripture is to help us become like God (p. 73); its aim is to instruct people on the journey of faith. As an instrument of the Spirit, it “adjusts” to people at all stages of their Christian life (pp. 79–80). In the end, it is the primary source for knowledge of God “at this point in the drama of redemption” (p. 88).

If the end of the lives of readers is as described in the first two chapters, then two things follow, according to Sarisky. First, “the theological profile of interpretation mirrors that of the overall journey of human beings.” Second, “Not just any reading will do: simply put, reading ought to aim for knowledge of God” (pp. 90–91). Chapter 3 focuses on salvation as the primary context within which reading is done. Basil presents biblical interpretation as a dying and rising, a putting off of the old self and a putting on of the new (p. 92). In reading we cast off false notions of God and other besetting sins and, by the aid of the Spirit, draw close to God.

Chapter 4 presents the church as a chief means through which readers can receive the divine *paideia* of Scripture. Through an extended treatment of *On the Holy Spirit*, Sarisky describes how Scripture reading is an ecclesial practice for Basil. For example, the liturgy rightly orients Christians and aids them in their understanding of Scripture. Moreover, the church is the context in which people are formed, so that they might become right readers of Scripture (p. 127).

The next four chapters bring Basil into conversation with Hauerwas and Williams. Chapter 5 addresses Hauerwas' critique of modernity's notions of personhood and identity and his narrative-centered counter-proposal. Modernity ignores that human identity is shaped by an inherited narrative (p. 141). Hauerwas counters this view by defining human identity in terms of the biblical narrative. Christians, for example, embrace their true humanity within the eschatological community of the church. This is where they are formed and continue to live out their story. Thus human beings have a purpose, a trajectory, and an end. While there is overlap between Basil and Hauerwas, the latter is less concrete in his understanding of the *telos* of humanity and deploys less theological language to depict humanity (and thus human readers of Scripture).

Rowan Williams is the interlocutor in the next two chapters. In Chapter 6, Williams's view of Scripture as (1) a text (like every other text) betraying power struggles—intratextually and extratextually—and (2) a script that readers perform (pp. 162–65) is rejected by Sarisky since it subordinates Scripture to general categories, and makes it harder to account for Scripture on its own terms or theologically. In Chapter 7, Williams's view of Bible reading as performance is examined. Scripture puts readers in contact with events like the cross and resurrection of Christ that generate ever new understandings of reality. These understandings are always partial and open for revision, but they do constitute the meaning of the text. Readers are given freedom and responsibility to act upon the range of possibilities and questions that Scripture opens to them. While for Basil time was the duration in which we made incremental progress toward knowledge of God, for Williams, time only destabilizes human knowledge, rendering it indeterminate. It is the overemphasis on unresolved indeterminacy that Sarisky rejects.

In Chapter 8, Hauerwas returns, as Sarisky examines his view of the church as a reading community. To a large degree, Basil and Hauerwas have overlapping visions. However, the latter overemphasizes ecclesial practices and the community's embodiment of the story such that a back-and-forth movement between church and text becomes superfluous. "Given Hauerwas' theological commitments, it is not clear that he has a substantial reason to engage deeply with Scripture. . . . Being a Christian means being absorbed into the story, and these embodied versions of the story are the definitive telling of the tale" (pp. 196–97).

The book ends with Sarisky's constructive account, which by this point would be obvious to the attentive reader. *Readers* are those in the process of purification, who are called to be in conformity to and live in fellowship with God; *Scripture* is the means by which we accomplish our *telos*; *Reading* is a spiritual process that brings human beings to their end; and the *church* is the primary social context in which effective, formative Scripture reading takes place (pp. 232–33).

One worthy feature of this book is its presentation of Basil with respect to these important issues. Not only was this valuable for discussions in theological hermeneutics, but also for historical theology generally. While the treatment of Basil was illuminating and fit well within the scope of what the book was aiming to accomplish, I always found myself wondering why Williams was chosen as a dialogue partner. Indeed, he has written on Scripture and interpretation, and he is a prominent theological voice, but I could not help but think that comparing another modern writer with more overlap with Basil

would have proven more fruitful and illuminating, as was the case with Hauerwas. Williams seemed to function as little more than a foil, as many of his proposals were seen to be not just missing an element or two, but wrongheaded entirely.

No doubt, few readers familiar with recent conversations in the theological interpretation of Scripture will find this proposal earth shattering, not least because there have been a number of similar accounts by Kevin Vanhoozer, Daniel Treier, Scott Swain, Todd Billings, and others, but also because the basic conclusions are fairly traditional (i.e., Scripture is divine speech designed to shape us into conformity with God within an ecclesial sphere). Yet, the traditional nature of the conclusions might be the point exactly. Modern biblical hermeneutics generally attend to some, but not all of the dimensions Sarisky treats—and when they do, the issues are often not addressed adequately. The chief merit of this book is the summoning of an earlier (great) voice to address inadequacies in contemporary theological hermeneutics. If we are concerned with providing a theological account of the hermeneutical situation, what we find (and Sarisky has demonstrated) is that the traditional answers are often more theologically and pastorally satisfying than the modern.

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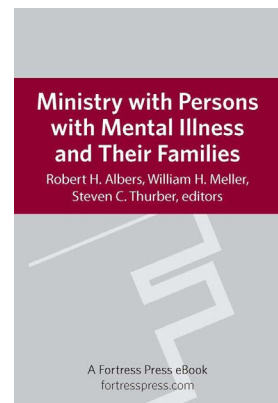
— ETHICS AND PASTORALIA —

Robert H. Albers, William H. Meller, and Steven D. Thurber, eds. *Ministry with Persons with Mental Illness and Their Families*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012. 245 pp. \$29.00.

How can Christian leaders and workers come to understand the growing population of persons with mental illness so that they can minister to them most effectively? After all, the complexities of mental illness have made this group nearly inaccessible. *Ministry with Persons with Mental Illness and Their Families* not only offers descriptions of the primary forms of mental illness, including a general discussion of medications and other forms of treatment, but it also serves as a primer on ministering to those with mental illness.

The book treats some of the most challenging and more common mental illnesses. These include depression, anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders, personality disorders, substance-use disorders, eating disorders, autism, acquired brain injury, and dementia. Many of these disorders occur in clusters; for example, alcoholism, depression, and post-traumatic distress disorder (pp. 8–9). To one unfamiliar with these illnesses, many look the same on the surface, so the authors explain the distinctive differences between various mental illnesses. The authors also correct common misperceptions, such as the notion that depression is “the common cold of mental illnesses” (p. 8). A conclusion addresses the essential but sometimes bewildering role of psychopharmacology.

In addition to being specialists, the contributors have first-hand experience of living with or loving a person with the disorder they address. Some are medical specialists in mental illnesses; others aim toward practical and pastoral care. All write to caregivers working within faith communities. The



theological perspective is broadly evangelical. But the authors demonstrate great care and sensitivity, and the book will be appreciated by all kinds of people. Readers should bear this in mind, for the book is not a theology of mental illness, although it has much to offer for pastoral care and understanding.

It will come as no surprise that many homeless people have a form or forms of mental illness. Some were once married with children, but due to their mental illness, there came a day when they no longer fit into homes with their families. Many gave up on a normal life with a job that supported them and their loved ones. They looked to churches for some type of help, but sadly, they may have been turned away or ignored by the only institution left to offer them direction. The result is that they eventually ended up on the street (p. 2).

What can pastors and churches do? First and fundamentally, “Caregivers are not trained as diagnosticians and so should refrain from acting in a diagnostic capacity” (p. 20). In fact, pastors may want to avoid therapeutic discussions entirely, for although viewing mental illness from a medical perspective may serve clinicians well, it may be an inappropriate basis for theological reflection or pastoral care (p. 44). Similarly, although pastors may believe that medical prescriptions are often unnecessary, they will want to exercise caution in raising doubts about medications and other forms of treatment.

Even though pastors and other church friends may not have adequate training to deal with mental illness, there is plenty that pastors and friends can do. Indeed, “Care giving at its fundamental level is being acutely aware and attentive” (p. 27). Usually, “people are not so much looking for answers as they are looking for understanding” (p. 28). For example, “The first and perhaps the most important task in ministry with people who have Alzheimer’s disease is to maintain a relationship and a regular schedule of contact” (p. 215). Simply being warmly present with the person or the family makes a difference. What is more, people with mental illness and those they love are impacted by disgrace shame (p. 20)—that is, blaming a person or making them feel ashamed for suffering from mental illness. A church can lift part of the burden caused by disgrace shame by accepting people with mental illnesses and their families and showing them family-like love. Crucially,

The phenomenon of denial on the part of those afflicted and those affected is directly related to nonacceptance on the part of society and religious communities who more often than not ascribe either psychological weakness or moral culpability as the cause of the illness. The hurdle of first dealing with the disgrace shame is monumental in the person afflicted as well as others who are adversely affected. (p. 21)

If reading this book gives the reader a measure of confidence and courage in helping people with mental illnesses and their families, it is worth the price of the book. Family members, close friends, and pastors may not be able to cure their loved one of mental illness; but they can care and they can support. Ministry at its most basic level is to listen well. People are helped by being heard; this is itself a powerful form of love.

Although the contributors write primarily for pastors, counselors, and other such Christian workers, the book should prove helpful to all Christian readers who want to understand mental illness so that they can help those who suffer.

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Walter Brueggemann. *The Practice of Prophetic Imagination: Preaching an Emancipatory Word*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012. 176 pp. £16.99/\$25.00.

Although Walter Brueggemann has written much about preaching, *The Practice of the Prophetic Imagination* is his first sustained work on the subject in some years. It is a culmination of his mature thinking about the Old Testament and contemporary Christian ministry, and a reflection upon his earlier seminal monograph, *The Prophetic Imagination* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001).

Among the questions that have reappeared throughout his career, one of the most challenging is the practical one: “how does the preacher today relate to the prophets of old?” At times Brueggemann has spoken as though the preacher *is* the prophet, but in this most recent work he clarifies in the opening pages that the preacher is a scribe of the prophets. The net effect of casting the preacher as scribe is to allow the preacher to act as a free imaginer like the prophets, but also to bring the preacher into a tethered relationship with the texts of Holy Scripture.

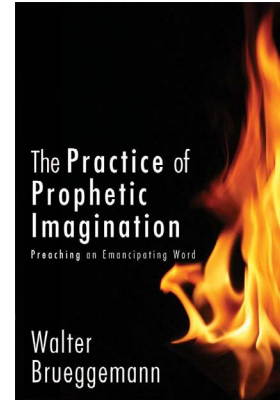
The main question, however, is how to communicate God faithfully in a culture that has set itself against God. Brueggemann makes his argument in the six chapters. His thesis, reiterated throughout the book, is that “prophetic preaching is an effort to imagine the world as though YHWH, the creator of the heaven and earth, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ whom we Christians name as Father, Son, and Spirit, is a real character and a defining agent in the world” (p. 23; cf. pp. 2, 45, 71).

Chapter 1 focuses on the narrative clash between the world of Scripture and the dominant culture in which we find ourselves today. Brueggemann grounds his thoughts in Exodus, specifically in YHWH’s rescue of the Hebrews out of a seductive, dominant narrative managed by Pharaoh. Chapter 2 describes in more detail the imaginative fodder for prophetic preaching, which Brueggemann finds most clearly exemplified in the prophetic addresses to the kings of Judah and Israel.

In chapter 3, Brueggemann begins to elucidate the broad movements within prophetic imagination. He focuses on the invisibility of YHWH in prophetic utterance, which depends largely upon the assumption that the world is a covenanted place. In chapter 4, Brueggemann identifies what he takes to be the core of prophetic anger and dismay, which is the underlying empathy of the prophet for a society steeped in anti-YHWH modes of existence. He then demonstrates the pain which YHWH himself expresses throughout the speeches of prophets.

The final movement of the prophetic utterance is depicted in chapter 5, where Brueggemann argues that it is only from within the abyss of pain and loss that the prophet can run back to promises which are deeper than the *quid pro quo* offer of Sinai, and can appeal to the God of Genesis 18, of whom it is asked, “Is there anything that is too difficult for God?” Brueggemann argues that it is only from the vantage point of that elemental question that the prophets can begin to discern a future that is itself *ex nihilo* and unforeseen.

In chapter 6, Brueggemann closes the argument by contemplating the continuing mandate for prophetic pastoral work. He argues that the pastor must “empower and enable” his congregation for two things: “to relinquish a world that is passing from us” (p. 136), and, “to receive a world that is emerging before our eyes that we confess to be a gift of God” (p. 138). Thus the preacher is construed as something of a midwife between the passing and emerging worlds in which we live.



Readers familiar with Brueggemann's work more broadly will find many familiar themes in this present work, but will be pleased to find in this particular book a complete argument, in contrast to the publications of collected essays. Those who are new to Brueggemann will find him insightful and stimulating, but may also be surprised by a number of his assumptions about the nature and flexibility of Scripture. Still, overall, the argument is tight, the exegesis is solid, and the insights are plentiful.

Unfortunately, in the final chapter Brueggemann discards his own assessment that a prophet speaks of a newness beyond what can be seen, and instead asserts that the preacher must help welcome the new moral, political, and religious world which is visibly emerging in our midst. By making such a move, Brueggemann sacrifices the insight that prophetic hope is based on a conviction that God is fundamentally doing something that is epistemologically beyond us, and in its place he seems to offer a nod to a vague cultural pluralism.

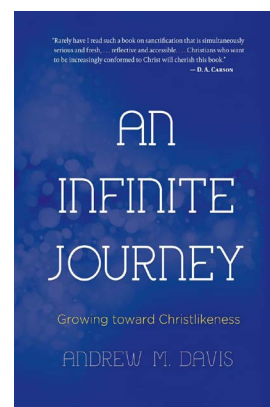
Nevertheless, no reader can put the book down without seeing new things in Scripture and gaining helpful perspectives on preaching. What we have in *The Practice of Prophetic Imagination* are the lively reflections of a man who has spent his entire career thinking about the task of preaching through the lens of the Old Testament. Brueggemann occasionally makes reference to Hebraisms such as the *piel* form of verbs and infinitive absolutes. Beyond such minor matters, however, the book is accessible to any thinking preacher, and especially seminary students.

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Andrew M. Davis. *An Infinite Journey: Growing toward Christlikeness*. Greenville, SC: Ambassador International, 2014. 475 pp. £14.99/\$19.99.

An Infinite Journey: Growing toward Christlikeness is a clear presentation of Pastor Andy Davis's pastoral teaching on progressive sanctification. Davis has been a senior pastor engaged in revitalizing a church in an urban setting for the past fifteen years. In this book, which presents a "thorough description of sanctification with all its component parts," Davis is "seeking to instruct people concerning the fullness of the Bible's teaching on Christlikeness, and to encourage people to strive daily to reach that goal" (p. 33).

An Infinite Journey cuts through much of the ongoing chatter in the law/gospel debate. Davis is a Calvinistic Baptist pastor who, like the Puritans, recognizes the majesty of God's power both to save and sanctify while still commending the reader to mortify sin through spiritual disciplines. Though there are instructions provided in this book, the process that Davis recommends to foster sanctification is not legalistic and, while elegantly simple, it is not formulaic or trite. Davis avoids the one extreme of merely calling for more grace with little concern for personal holiness. Yet he also deftly evades the other extreme of many books on spiritual disciplines which focus on checklists outlining the basic how-to of Christian living. Instead, *An Infinite Journey* reflects the mind of an engineer as Davis develops a model that functionally describes how sanctification progresses in the life of a Christian. That is, Davis tells the reader how things work according to the Bible, not prescribing a surefire method for holiness.



Davis describes his model using the letters K-F-C-A, representing the words *knowledge*, *faith*, *character*, and *action*. These four parts form an ongoing cycle that he represents as an upward ramp leading toward perfect sanctification, which is a worthy, if unattainable, goal. The cycle of progressive sanctification is, therefore, an infinite journey. As Davis describes it, the cycle begins with *knowledge*, both factual and experiential. Experiential knowledge comes through the Christian life and factual knowledge is internalized information from Scripture. Knowledge then leads to *faith*, which is the “assurance of and commitment to spiritual truth” (p. 127). For Davis, faith is essential to both salvation and sanctification. Faith then leads to the development of character. For Davis, virtue is the reflection of Christian *character*. Davis describes five elements that feed into the development of virtue: affection, desire, will, thought, and emotions. Character is subsequently reflected in *action*, which includes both internal obedience to God in pursuit of personal holiness and external obedience in at least the seven areas that Davis describes. As Christians act out their character in obedience to God, this then results in further knowledge through the study of Scripture and experiential knowledge gained through continued obedience. So the cycle continues.

Davis presents his meticulously outlined model of progressive sanctification in six sections. Section 1 is introductory in nature, explaining the need for salvation and presenting an overview of Davis’ four-part cycle. The middle four sections each present one stage in Davis’ model of sanctification. Section 6 provides a recap of the model, some scriptural examples that show the K-F-C-A cycle in practice, and some very practical instructions for applying Davis’ model. The book concludes with an exhortation to pursue the infinite journey toward progressive sanctification for the joy of knowing God.

In *An Infinite Journey*, Davis is effective in fulfilling his purpose. He has written a thorough description of sanctification, and has very carefully constructed a scriptural and compelling exhortation to holiness. The outline of this volume is easy to follow, since Davis lays out his roadmap graphically with a diagram of the K-F-C-A model. Each of the many points of Davis’ outline is very carefully supported by thorough exegesis of biblical texts from across the canon, and each chapter is saturated with quotes, references, and allusions to Scripture. In addition to the use of Scripture, Davis also provides numerous practical illustrations throughout the book that help to make this text accessible.

The most significant strength of this text is the balance that Davis brings to the discussion. By carefully balancing the importance of spiritual disciplines with the intent of a pursuit of holiness, Davis manages to avoid legalism while still providing structure and direction to an important journey.

One potential downside of this text is its sheer length. With over four hundred pages of text, reading *An Infinite Journey* is a significant investment. However, Davis has structured the book with a clear outline, short chapters, and frequent section headings that help the reader follow his careful articulation of the K-F-C-A model. Additionally, though the book is long, Davis clearly has more to say, which keeps the discussion moving; he also avoids repetition. A second weakness is the lack of an index. Davis has carefully explained many biblical texts, making the lack of a Scripture index as a quick reference somewhat disappointing. Despite this weakness, the clear outline of the book will allow the volume to be used as a reference for emphasis on a particular aspect of sanctification.

This book is the best modern book on sanctification I have read; it is likely to become a standard text on the subject for years to come. It is written at a level that is accessible to a popular audience and

yet so carefully argued and practically challenging that it would be a welcome addition to a seminary classroom or a scholar's library.

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Barbara R. Duguid. *Extravagant Grace: God's Glory Displayed in Our Weakness*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2013. 237 pp. \$12.99.

What a remarkable book Barbara Duguid has given us. Lots of books are being written on the gospel and on God's grace in recent years. Some of these are well and good but lack penetration—one is reminded but not arrested; the book is true but frothy. Others rehash the gospel formulations by others better known (Tim Keller, for example). The book therefore lacks freshness. Others are rich in exploring the gospel but feel a bit formulaic. The word of grace is reflected on but not the Man of grace. Ironically similar to the Roman Catholicism with which such book are otherwise in stark contrast, "grace" becomes almost a substance, a *thing*, a stockpile, that is lavishly given to us. And still others exult in the gospel in such a way that one is given the impression that the demands of the New Testament are somehow out of sync with the gospel of grace. The indicatives of the gospel are presented not as naturally and necessarily leading into, but as trumping, the glad responsibility of the imperatives.



And then along comes Barbara Duguid's delightful book *Extravagant Grace*. What is so striking about this book is the way rich reflection on the grace of the gospel is blended with utter realism about ongoing Christian struggle, as well as personal honesty from the author. At one point Duguid dares to admit: "I have eating problems. . . . Although I have grown substantially in this area, I am still a glutton and still prone to medicating myself with food. Today I ate many things sinfully—two bowls of cereal when one would have done; an entire, huge Cadbury chocolate bar; a lunch I didn't need; and the list goes on" (p. 204; see also pp. 162–63). Many otherwise eloquent articulations of the gospel today are presented with a kind of de-personalized slickness, not with the raw honesty we find here. This transparency gives weight to the grace being commended.

Duguid builds her book on the letters of John Newton. This is a unique and useful strategy, for Newton himself is a wise and steady guide for us all, who avoids the truncated presentations of the gospel articulated in the first paragraph above. Time and again Newton wrote to fellow strugglers and drew their eyes not mainly inward into personal improvement but rather upward to Christ and the infinite mercy of the gospel.

If Newton avoids those errors, Duguid *almost* avoids them. I must raise a few questions below about the portrait of Christian growth she paints. But the book is so unusually rich and hope-giving that I want to be appropriately circumspect in my criticism lest I send the wrong impression. This book helps us. No matter how widely believers may have read in the ever-burgeoning corpus of gospel-exulting literature coming off the presses in our generation, *Extravagant Grace* will add something fresh and enriching. Why? Because of the central burden of the book, which is also a recurring theme across

Newton's correspondence: dealing with Christian sin. Why do believers still sin so much? Duguid's thesis is that Christian growth is not essentially about improving morally but rather increasing in reliance upon Christ for our identity, however we are doing in terms of obedience. In the opening pages she provocatively writes, "What if growing in grace is more about humility, dependence, and exalting Christ than it is about defeating sin?" (p. 18). Duguid articulates a profound and neglected point in this rhetorical question and effectively draws it out throughout the book.

Individual chapters address the superiority of the heart over mere behavior in growth (ch. 1); the naiveté of newly converted Christians about how much sinfulness will remain in them throughout their lives (ch. 2); what true Christian maturity looks like (ch. 3); the crucial importance of humility in Christian growth (ch. 4); the unrealistic optimism about growth in many of our churches and the paradox of strength through weakness throughout the Christian life (ch. 5); the sovereignty of God over even our sin (ch. 6); the role of adversity in revealing to us our ongoing depravity (ch. 6); the unilateral work of God to sustain us in sanctification (chs. 8–9); the importance of patience and compassion toward sin, both ours and others' (ch. 10); the transforming nature of God's kindness and love (ch. 11); the implications of the grace of the gospel and the advantages of remaining sin (ch. 12); and the means of grace as we journey through this life to heaven (ch. 13).

Throughout, Duguid wants to free up Christians. It is *in* their weakness and messiness, not beyond it, that Christ and his grace are theirs. This insight is crucial because of the ineradicable proclivity even among believers to doubt God's love in light of repeated moral failure. Yet while the New Testament does occasionally call for self-examination, the emphasis is not self-assessment but looking outside oneself to Christ (Heb 12:2), resting in the provisions of a grace that comes to us wholly from outside us. John Newton and his disciple Barbara Duguid capture this counter-instinctual biblical truth and drive it home.

Three questions arose in my mind as I read, however, which could fall under the headings regeneration, divine anger, and hyper-Calvinism.

First, the main reason I wonder if the book succeeds in avoiding imbalance is that it seems as if regeneration and the new spiritual taste buds granted in the new birth get unhelpfully sidelined. Duguid does mention in a few places regeneration and the new impulse toward holiness that comes when the Holy Spirit sets up permanent residence within the believer (e.g., pp. 97, 129). But the general message is that the regenerate are no more capable of obeying God than the unregenerate. The mature Christian, we read, "is just as incapable of performing spiritual acts or resisting temptation on his own as he was on the day he was saved" (p. 63). Or: "at the moment of conversion [God] frees us from the spiritual power that our sin had to condemn us, but he leaves us with a sinful nature that will wage war against our new nature for the remainder of our lives" (p. 60). To be sure, we remain sinners in need of grace our whole lives long. Yet one wonders if Duguid overly mutes the decisive transformation wrought in the new birth and the animating power of the Holy Spirit, who grants both the desire and the ability to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him" (Col 1:10; cf. Phil 1:27; Eph 4:11; 1 Thess 2:12). One further wonders if Duguid has accurately presented the fullness of Newton's own teaching at this point.

Another question: is it unequivocally true that "God cannot be angry with us" (p. 210)? Duguid makes this statement in the context of rejoicing in the exhaustion of divine wrath at the cross. In this eternity-determining sense, the most ultimate one, she is surely right. But it is (in part, at least) my love for my children that causes fatherly anger to rise when I see them acting waywardly and inviting misery into their lives. Is there not a displeasure from our heavenly Father that is not only appropriate

but even testifies to his great care for us as his children? The New Testament seems to say “yes” (Heb 12:6, for example), while the message of this book appears to be “no.” This question has been hashed out in previous centuries, such as during the antinomian controversies of the seventeenth century, about which Mark Jones has recently written (*Antinomianism* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2013]). Jones reminds us that theologians have rightly distinguished between a love of *benevolence*, which cannot wax or wane, and a love of *complacency*, which can. Such nuance would have strengthened Duguid’s overall presentation.

Yet another question: is it possible to so emphasize God’s sovereignty even over sin (a truth clearly taught in the Bible) that we begin to sideline unhelpfully our own culpability in sin? I wondered at several points whether Duguid’s portrait of Christian growth may at times veer into hyper-Calvinism—by which I don’t mean a view that is really, really Calvinistic, but rather an emphasis on divine sovereignty to the neglect of human responsibility (Arminianism being the opposite error: an emphasis on human responsibility to the neglect of divine sovereignty). Repeatedly Duguid drives home the divine ordaining of our sins (e.g., pp. 101–6). This is liberating, and rarely taught today, so I am reluctant to draw attention to the potential imbalance here. But after numerous statements that God ordains all our sins one begins to feel as if something is getting lost—namely, full human responsibility. Duguid refutes the idea that sanctification is partly up to us; rather, it is 100% up to God (pp. 139–40). But it seems to me that it is better to say sanctification is 100% up to God and also 100% up to us in light of the way the Bible speaks of sanctification (1 Cor 15:10; Phil 2:12–13; Col 1:29). As Jonathan Edwards said, in sanctification “God does all, and we do all.”

I have reflected at length on this delightful book to make a broader point: broadly Reformed evangelicals have not yet settled into wide agreement about how progressive sanctification works, and specifically how sanctification relates to the gospel. Duguid’s book moves the conversation forward, and largely in the right direction, even if it is not the full-orbed answer we are looking for. Nor does Duguid present the book as such. She has a particular point to make, and makes it well: Christians still sin, and that is to be expected, and grace exists for this.

We still await, then, a truly synthesizing treatment of the gospel and sanctification—a gospel scandalous in its mercy and yet possessing a fullness that weds the gratuity of grace to realities such as regeneration and the stringent summons of Christ. In any case, *Extravagant Grace* is an important voice in the conversation. Even if a few things may be out of balance, the book as a whole should not be held at arm’s length or unduly scrutinized. The heart of what Barbara Duguid is trying to get across is ever a word in season for weak, sin-prone Christians—that is, for all of us. The great secret at the heart of the universe is divine grace: a truly extravagant grace that calms us down, gets underneath all our failures, and nestles us into wholehearted dependence on Christ not after we get better but before we ever are.

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Eddie Gibbs. *The Journey of Ministry: Insight from a Life of Practice*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2012. 182 pp. \$15.00.

A favorite genre of pastoral literature for me is the “journey of ministry and how to be a faithful pastor to the end” genre. My life has been indelibly marked by pastor-authors such as Eugene Peterson, Kent Hughes, and now many wise (if young) pastoral voices who address the topic of perseverance in ministry. I often am drawn to books and articles which teach me how to chart the challenging course of pastoral ministry with rugged gospel-determination, a theology of suffering, and with an utmost concern for personal character.

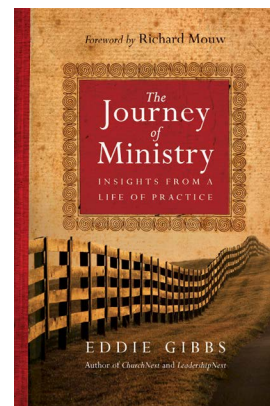
Thus, when I had an opportunity to review a book entitled *The Journey of Ministry: Insights from a Life of Practice* by Eddie Gibbs of Fuller Theological Seminary, I was encouraged. And yet Gibbs’s book swerved from my expectation. Let me begin with a weakness of the work. First, the book lacked a clear purpose. The title suggests that this book will describe the challenges and offer wisdom about professional ministry. One would expect treatments of topics such as what vocational ministry entails, what the challenges are in those areas, and what a biblical and wise way of persevering and growing in those areas looks like. Yet the book lacked treatment of such crucial matters.

Second, the book lacked a consistent metaphor. Again, the title suggests the running metaphor of a “journey.” Thematic books like this don’t require a running metaphor, but if the title suggests it, and early chapters utilize one, then the metaphor must be kept. The chapter titles start with “walking,” then “hurdlng.” So far, so good. But then we move to “dying,” then “teambuilding,” then “networking,” and so on. We are now far afield from the metaphor of a journey. These other concepts are important, but the connection to the journey motif becomes distant. One therefore wonders what Gibbs is aiming at and how he intends to get there. Are we discussing professional ministry, ministry in general (professional and lay), or are we talking about the general Christian life? This was not clear. At some points, the topic seemed very focused on the professional ministry leader. At some points it addressed the church in general. And at many points it addressed the individual believer who is simply on life’s journey as a child of God.

Finally, each chapter (and indeed, some chapter subsections) tackled topics so broad that the topic could have merited its own monograph. Massive issues of contextualization, leadership culture, and communication were given very broad-brush strokes of attention, and then the reader was whisked off into the next subject. Gibbs ought to have taken less subject matter and gone deeper, and with greater nuance. It was almost as if four different semester-long courses, which Gibbs taught at Fuller, were crammed into this book. This became frustrating and counterproductive.

Let me then move toward some commendation, which is indeed merited. *The Journey of Ministry*, while scattered in its vision, is full of good insights. The subtitle “insights from a life of practice” is indeed accurate. If you can get past the lack of focus, the mixed metaphors, and the breadth of each topic, there are gems to be found.

First, Gibbs is very basic and simple. There are no odd prescriptions of spirituality, no awkward means by which he commends pastoral disciplines. He offers straightforward advice, drawn from the Bible and illustrated with his life. Most pastoral readers will not be told anything new, but this book,



at the right time in a struggling pastor's life, could provide reminders and encouragements that will do deep soul-work.

Second, Gibbs's tone is winsome. I have never met him but from his writing he comes across as a grandfatherly character whom one would enjoy spending time around and draw wisdom from. Some of the best mentors I have had infrequently gave me new insights on ministry and life but rather constantly pointed me back to the glory of Christ, the truth of the Scriptures, and the future joy of heaven. I appreciated Gibbs's tone, and what the book lacked in incisiveness and clarity was made up for in its unassuming and organic wisdom and warmth. For instance, though the pastor's marriage was not a direct theme, the way Gibbs talked about his wife was both a challenge and a teaching on the centrality of a healthy marriage for ministry.

Third, the lack of a defined audience, pastor/lay leader/individual, actually opened the door for a wide swath of people to glean from this book. One does not have to be a pastor to identify with many of the chapters. But the educated pastor is going to have some good information on contextualization, the evolution of leadership culture in the West, the place of formal learning versus relational learning, and so forth. There is something for everyone in the book.

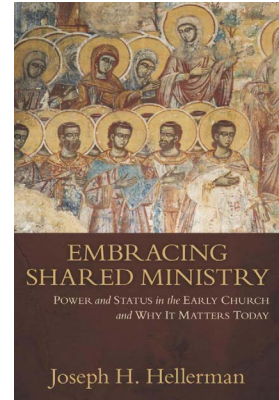
Finally, the book is very anecdotal, and thus narratival, which makes abstractions come to life. The concepts that did entail some depth of sociological and theological understanding were made simple by how Gibbs illustrated the idea with his life while also showing the import of the concept to practical discipleship. Though I often got tripped up on non sequiturs or inconsistencies in the shape of the book, the book keeps one's attention through sincere, touching, and often humorous tales from Gibbs's life.

How does this review net out? Is the book worth reading? Yes. It will be especially useful to the layperson who has a growing interest in some of the larger issues of formal ministry in a postmodern world. The person who has a need to understand the broader issues of both personal discipleship and ministry life will gain from this book. Is this for the veteran pastor who wants a very clear aim, with a depth of insight and theological profundity akin to a Puritan work? Probably not. Either way, if one's expectations are adjusted and one is focused on the sincerity and wisdom of the writer, this is a helpful introduction to life and ministry over the long haul.

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Joseph H. Hellerman. *Embracing Shared Ministry: Power and Status in the Early Church and Why It Matters Today*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013. 313 pp. \$17.99.

Joseph Hellerman, professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Talbot School of Theology and co-pastor at Oceanside Christian Fellowship, has written an academically responsible yet pastorally accessible book on church leadership. His other works bear heavily on the method and material of his current work (see *Jesus and the People of God: Reconfiguring Ethnic Identity* [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2013]; *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi* [Cambridge: CUP, 2009]; *When the Church was a Family: Recapturing Jesus' Vision for Authentic Christian Community* [Nashville: B&H, 2009]; *The Ancient Church As Family* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001]).



Hellerman's scholarly expertise in Greco-Roman sociology and ecclesiology come together as he argues that Paul (in particular) and the New Testament (in general) advocate a shared leadership model in the Christian church. Focusing especially on Philippians, he argues that the Pauline model is in direct opposition to the Greco-Roman emphasis on hierarchy and personal advancement. Hellerman seeks to "craft a biblical theology of leadership and community that will equip us to address issues of power and authority in our churches today" (p. 15). In many ways, he argues that the same sins of prestige and power have infiltrated many modern churches.

Part 1 (chs. 1–3) lays out the Greco-Roman model of leadership (e.g., civic, political, military) that would have pervaded the Philippian colony. In stark contrast to this model, Philippians presents a message of partnership, mutuality, and humility. Part 2 (chs. 4–6) examines a Biblical model of leadership directly from the Philippian epistle. This approach is explicitly "other-centered" (Phil 2:1–4) and is exemplified by Jesus Christ (Phil 2:5–11). Part 3 (chs. 7–10) applies these principles to the contemporary church. Hellerman's academic expertise is woven throughout but his pastoral sensitivity is particularly noticeable in last section.

The thesis of the book is strongly supported: shared, humble leadership is the basic model of the New Testament in regard to the character and function of pastors. By comparing the Philippian epistle to the pagan *ethos* of an ancient Roman colony, Hellerman illustrates his points powerfully. The arguments for mutual participation, humility, and partnership in both gospel proclamation and church structure are *strongly* supported by Paul's instruction in Philippians. Finally, the author's great concern is to see these principles reflected in the character of church leaders and structure of contemporary churches.

At the same time, when an argument is this compelling it only helps to sharpen it by pointing out its weakest points. First, the author calls this a "biblical theology" when, in actuality, it is a theology of shared leadership from the epistle to the Philippians. It is not technically even a Pauline theology of shared leadership. That being said, many texts in other parts of the NT and early Christian literature argue for shared leadership: the Gospels (Matt 23:8–12), Acts (14:23; 15:6, 22), other Pauline letters (Titus 1; 1 Tim 3–5; 1 Cor 12:28–29; 14:29), the general epistles (1 Pet 5), and elsewhere (1 Clement). These other points are briefly mentioned (pp. 193–96) but not adequately explained or explored (even though they often contain *stronger* arguments in regard to the thesis of "shared leadership in the church"). Therefore, a true "biblical theology" of shared leadership would prove the argument better.

I would hesitate to make too strong an objection to the author's method but it is worth mentioning. The historical and sociological approach is illustrative and powerful but affects the actual thesis

very little (in this case). Hellerman's conviction of shared leadership is based in the biblical text. The countercultural nature of such a conviction is exacerbated against the hierarchical social structures of both ancient Rome and modern society, but the content of the conviction is found in the text alone. Not only in the introductory material but throughout the book Hellerman often strays unnecessarily into the Greco-Roman cultural milieu.

Many of his stories are anecdotal. These illustrations are often poignant and powerful. In the end, however, they should not be instructive for a truly "biblical" theology. Also, they run the risk of being *too* personal when specific names and situations are easily discernible (e.g., pp. 174–78).

Finally, there are some important objections to shared leadership that one would hope to see answered. A single pastor/elder model of church teaching and leadership is prevalent in the history of the church. A single leader is often found in the OT (e.g., Moses, Joshua, etc.). The NT has a few dominant leaders (e.g., Peter, James, etc.). While these objections are easily overcome by the explicit teaching of elder plurality (as others have done), they are not dealt with in this work.

At the end of the day, the biblical evidence and model of Jesus is clear. No one human leader has all the answers, vision, or experience to lead the church. Only Jesus holds such esteem in the NT. When such a model is abandoned, unhealthy attitudes of authority are often abused to the harm of the local church. Hellerman's practical and biblical advice is a wonderful start for anyone exploring a biblical model of leadership, and the attentive senior leader who reads this work with openness will be challenged to embrace humble, communal, shared leadership rather than controlling, isolated, and dysfunctional authority.

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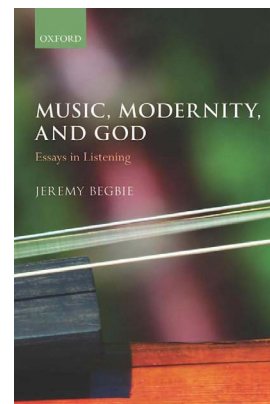
— MISSION AND CULTURE —

Jeremy Begbie. *Music, Modernity, and God: Essays in Listening*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. 261 pp. £35.00/\$55.00.

Jeremy Begbie has for many years had a unique voice in theological scholarship. Begbie's extensive training and contributions in the areas of music, the arts, and theology give him insight into discussions that most theologians and most musicians have only limited access to.

Music, Modernity, and God adds another helpful volume to Begbie's fascinating body of work. Put simply, "this book is an invitation to theologians, and to any with a lively interest in theology, to listen to music—to its sounds, to those who make and enjoy them, and to the extraordinary literature this beguiling art form has generated" (p. 1).

Modernity, Begbie argues, has been greatly influenced by music, and vice versa. Yet music and its contributions have been largely ignored in theological discussions relating to modernity, which Begbie understands to be both "a cluster of attitudes or



mindsets inextricably bound up with social and cultural practices” and a somewhat loosely defined period of history—“the modern era” (see pp. 4–5).

In many ways, this neglect of music in theological discussions is understandable, and Begbie does not begrudge theologians their typically word-focused approach. He does, however, suggest that giving attention to musical theory, practice, and language can enrich our theological explorations: “My aim is to demonstrate that the practices of music and its discourses can bear their own kind of witness to some of the pivotal theological currents and counter-currents that have shaped modernity. . . . I hope to show that the world of music is capable of yielding highly effective ways of addressing and moving beyond some of the intractable theological aporias that modernity has bequeathed to us” (p. 1).

Music, Modernity, and God offers a handful of essays designed to model this type of discourse and explore the unique contributions music can make in some fascinating areas. Chapter 2 examines John Calvin’s views on music in the life of the church, concluding that while Calvin often unnecessarily denigrated music as a mere servant of religious words, he provided some helpful concepts in seeing the relationship between these expressive realities. Chapter 3 explores key features in Bach’s compositions, showing how his approach to music interacts with modernity. Here Begbie draws out some illuminating themes from Bach’s body of work.

Chapter 4 looks at the differing views of two key French figures: the composer Jean-Philippe Rameau and the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Begbie uses this dialogue (Rameau seeing the foundation of music in the design of the universe; Rousseau seeing the foundation of music in human passions) as an opportunity to explore the concept of “natural theology,” focusing on the value of this enterprise and the importance of carefully defining “natural” in such discussions. Chapter 5 analyzes the exalted claims made by the German Romantics with regard to the nature and power of music. It then addresses the unwarranted modern suspicion of Romanticism, exploring what may helpfully be gleaned from this movement.

The book concludes with three chapters that tie these varied discussions together and present Begbie’s overall aim in providing these examples of musical/theological discourse: “In certain respects at least, music may actually be better equipped than language to allow some dimensions of the theological realities in question to disclose themselves” (p. 205). As one example, Begbie explains music’s ability to transcend spatial categories. Visually speaking, two objects cannot fill the same space—one either sees one object or the other, or perhaps a translucent blend of both. But musically, two notes can sound simultaneously and each fills all of the available aural space—not as a composite, but as unique yet interpenetrating sounds. Here is one way that music can provide a helpful model for thinking about the triune relations or the dual natures of Christ, for example.

The careful qualifications in the previous quotation (“in certain respects . . . may actually be . . . some dimensions”) are characteristic of Begbie’s argumentation overall. This caution in making assertions may strike readers as needless hedging, and certainly makes the book more tedious. Virtually every significant concept, however familiar to the reader, receives a carefully nuanced definition and in some cases a brief discussion before Begbie even begins to explore his point about theology, music, language, etc. While this does impede the flow of Begbie’s arguments, his attention to detail and precision are strengths. Many readers will prefer stronger statements and reduced technicality, but Begbie’s consistently scholarly approach provides a foundation for more popular treatments of these important yet complex concepts.

Begbie's proposal is that we take some unique features of music (shared aural space, mutually resonating tones) and "make them available" to our theological conceptualizations and discourses. As it stands, our theological language tends to adopt spatial metaphors: God is "above," God is "immanent," etc. By contrast, musical language could lend further depth and insight to our ability to think about and discuss theology, as concepts like "resonance" and "harmony" become available to the theologian *in addition to* the standard theological phrasings (p. 208).

In the end, Begbie's argument is exceedingly practical. He does not merely wish to leave us with a better understanding of the contours of modernity; he offers these essays as examples of the type of discourse that would be opened up if theologians take seriously his call to engage with music (p. 9).

What *Music, Modernity, and God* offers is an opportunity to interact with crucial theological realities in fresh ways—not denying the language and tradition in which these realities have been explored for hundreds of years, but opening new possibilities for discussion, understanding, and enjoyment.

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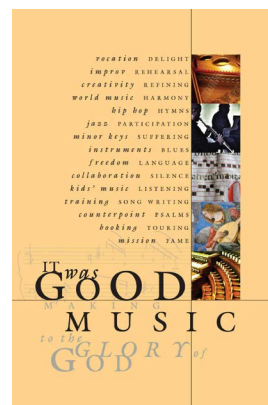
Ned Bustard, ed. *It Was Good: Making Music to the Glory of God*. Baltimore: Square Halo, 2013. 338 pp. \$22.49.

Ned Bustard has released a follow-up anthology to his earlier book, *It Was Good: The Making of Art to The Glory of God* (Baltimore: Square Halo, 2007). Bustard notes in the preface that the task of glorifying God through music is diverse, and warns the reader to expect some disagreement between the contributors' different perspectives.

The book's diversity can seem like a mixed bag to a casual observer. I was glad to see the inclusion of Charlie Peacock (I love/loved the Civil Wars, now defunct). And there are other familiar voices such as the Irish hymn writer Keith Getty. But with contributions from so many thoughtful musicians discussing their role in the making of music of all types, I couldn't help longing for my ears to be able to be as stimulated as my mind was while reading. It's the same problem I have with recipe books. Taste buds are irrelevant and long to be engaged. My ears would have loved to enjoy what my eyes were reading about.

At any rate this book bravely attempts to explore various nooks and crannies in the art of music-making from a Christian perspective. For example, the volume's thirty essays consider the necessity of delight in children's music (Katy Bowser), Jazz (William Edgar), hip hop (Shai Linne), the value of rehearsing (Tom Jennings), the dynamic of collaboration (Michael Roe), the art of listening (Mark Chambers), the role of modern hymns (Getty), the adventures of touring (Drew Holcomb), and the "music" of silence (Brian Moss). And that's just for starters. There seems to be no musical stone unturned in Bustard's world of music.

One useful tip may help all would-be readers of this book: make sure you have your laptop or iPad handy as you read since the diligent musician will be eager to explore the doors these chapters open. Over and over again, I found myself chasing down various leads instigated by the various contributors.



Curiosity led me to inquire about the lives and craft of the contributors. I searched for YouTube performances and looked up musicians who the contributors noted as influential. Whole new worlds were revealed and the value of this anthology started to sink in.

This book was also humbling to read. As a professional musician in Los Angeles for the past three decades, singing on dozens of movie scores (from *Apocalypse Now* to *Godzilla*) and recording with Bob Dylan, Chris Isaak, Harry Connick, and others, it was amazing to step into the world of musical experience and expertise of such varied and thoughtful men and women—truly a musical consortium. Our God gives gifts to men and women in all shapes and sizes, and in so doing he maximizes his glory.

Probably the most stunning and extraordinary essay was on participation by Michelle Stearns. In her chapter titled “Plays Well With Others,” she introduces the reader to an “ensemble” called *The Really Terrible Orchestra*. Yes, there really is such an orchestra. Amazingly, this orchestra of “would-be musicians” exists purely for the joy of playing together. To say that they are a novelty group would be an understatement, but apparently they have become an international sensation (just not on my radar!). At this point, I dove for my laptop as Google led me to hear and see firsthand what she was talking about. And I experienced the delight that orchestra brings, as I watched the players express themselves, without the “constraint of perfection” hanging over their heads.

As a worship leader in a local church continuously struggling for balance between perfection and “good enough,” Stearns’s contribution was a helpful reminder that music must on some level foster the aspect of delight, or it will have fallen short of its most charming and God-given potential.

I was also grateful for the interview with Keith Getty as he discussed the privilege of writing music for the church. He affirms what I have found to be true: there is no privilege for a musician quite like writing a song that helps a congregation to sing about the truth of divine things. His modern hymn “In Christ Alone,” co-written with Stuart Townend, arguably already a classic, has earned Getty the right to discuss song writing in general, and his view on the importance of melody needs to be required reading by all worship song writers who have a tendency to elevate rhythm-driven songs at the expense of a free-standing melody. As a song writer and one who leads a congregation in singing, I was challenged to seek to chain together patterns of notes that can stand alone, and fly solo, melodies that are independent of accompaniment.

For musicians, ruts are a normal (even if potentially hazardous) part of the job. The musician’s field of vision can tend to shrink, unless the musician is forced—often kicking and screaming—outside of his comfort zone. This book had that effect on me, and I trust will do the same for my fellow musicians seeking to make music to God’s glory.

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Daniel K. Darko and Beth Snodderly, eds. *First the Kingdom of God: Global Voices on Global Mission*. Pasadena: William Carey International University Press, 2014. 272 pp. £11.56/\$15.00.

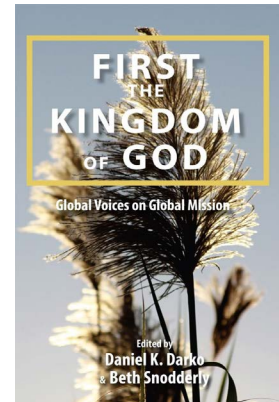
First the Kingdom of God provides a theological and practical assessment of the church's mission in the world. The editors put together an ambitious anthology. An impressive group of scholars across academic disciplines apply the gospel to a range of contemporary problems confronting the global church. In the process, they raise a number of practical questions. For instance, if the gospel and the church transcend any one context (e.g., Western culture), how might this fact shape our approach to ministry? Likewise, how does the church prioritize its mission in a world marked by globalization, ethnocentrism, and political instability?

The book integrates good theology and sound missiology. Peter Kuzmič (to whom this book is dedicated) and Timothy Tennent set the tone in the opening section. Kuzmič frames the discussion by arguing that the church fulfills its mission by being people who recognize and reflect the kingdom of God, which Kuzmič understands to be the reign of Christ in the world. According to Tennent, the church has become globalized; thus, it is now easier for people to see that the gospel is not a “theologically provincial” message whereby the “West reaches the Rest” (pp. 58–59). In short, the church's mission reflects the fact that Christ is king over all nations and cultures.

In the second and largest section of the book, a number of authors demonstrate the practical importance of “mutual interdependence in how Christians work together” in God's mission (p. 6). Mirsolav Volf's article is a highlight of the book. He examines Peter's exhortation to “honor everyone” (1 Pet 2:17, ESV). He argues compellingly that genuine respect and tolerance for others requires forms of non-acceptance, disapproval, and is based on monotheism. Next, Darko's study of Paul's mission urges cooperation in the face of social barriers and ethnocentrism, which Ruth Padilla DeBorst says undermine loyalty to Christ.

The chapters by Hwa Yung, Bruce Nicholls, and Gregory Mundis focus on the relationship between Christianity and culture. People should have “a clear sense of our own indigenous Christian identity” (p. 124). At the same time, the gospel calls into question any number of cultural presuppositions. Each essay addresses questions about contextualization. Although they contribute meaningfully to their respective topics, it is a bit difficult to see exactly how they fit within the larger framework of the book. This is likely due to the fact that most of the book's essays were “taken from a multi-lingua *Festschrift*” for Peter Kuzmič (p. 2).

Section three attempts to show what Christian mission looks like in various social settings. Corneliu Constantineanu's excellent essay unites the sacred and secular by linking justification and ethics. He claims, “by ‘righteousness’ Paul does not understand simply a vertical, legal transaction between God and people, but rather a process which necessarily involves a moral transformation in the lives of the believers” (pp. 182–83). Barry Corey examines the founding of Evangel College to show how a Christian subculture utilizes institutionalization as a means of survival. Finally, C. René Padilla argues that western culture leads some to regard theology as “datum” such that some, like the poor in Latin America, do not see the relevance of this uncontextualized message. Thus, a contextualized church requires a contextualized gospel (pp. 220–21).



The book's final section offers a timely challenge to the church. Scott Hafemann's exegesis of 1–2 Thessalonians suggests that eschatology drives ethics. Genuine conversion is a "continuing conversion" such that a vision for God's future rectification of the world sustains Christian perseverance (pp. 232–33). Christopher Wright uses Gen 18:18–19 to demonstrate the ethical content of the Abrahamic covenant and thus God's mission to the nations—the ethical distinctiveness of God's people testifies to the uniqueness of Israel's God. Finally, Ronald Sider's multifaceted argument asserts that evangelicals tend to overlook "structural" injustice because they reduce the gospel primarily to "forgiveness" for individuals at the expense of communities. He suggests a few practical ways to redress the problem.

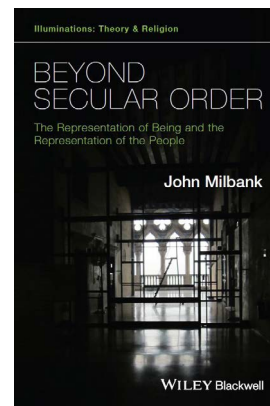
Darko and Snodderly give us a balanced presentation. The exegetical essays provide a strong biblical foundation for understanding the Church's mission. In addition, the contributors avoid giving abstract presentations to very concrete concerns. Whether one is more of an academic or a practitioner, he or she will benefit from the book's fair-minded approach. When offering criticism, the authors are constructive. Since the authors come from diverse perspectives, readers will not be able to dismiss quickly the book's arguments due to some perceived bias. These are not simply non-Westerners writing to "Western" churches. They apply theological acumen while drawing from their own experiences. In short, the editors recontextualize the debate, highlighting the global nature of the conversation of the church's mission.

Despite its obvious strengths, a few aspects of the book will detract from the editors' overall aim. First of all, readers might judge some chapters out of place within the book's overall framework. For instance, Nicholls, Mundis, and Corey do a fine job addressing their respective topics; yet, it is difficult to discern a central thesis that would bind them to the other chapters. Second, although the authors write for evangelical readers, a number of essays repeatedly focus on ministry being done by Pentecostal Christians. This could put off some readers by giving the wrong impression that the discussion is aimed for that more focused Pentecostal audience. Finally, I wish to point out that the description on the back cover does not clearly communicate what the book is about. As a result, some potential readers will bypass an otherwise constructive and recommended read.

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John Milbank. *Beyond the Secular Order: The Representation of Being and the Representation of People*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2014. 298 pages. £24.99 / \$39.95.

Beyond the Secular Order is a continuation of John Milbank's long-term project to extricate theology from the enervating grip of modernity and to restore theology to its role as the political authority in the West. Consistent with that project, *Beyond the Secular Order* makes two essential moves. The first move is to historicize the grounding ontological and epistemological presumptions of the "secular." Milbank argues that secularism arose from one particular medieval vision of theology, propagated by Duns Scotus, rather than an animus against theology, thus depriving the modern attack on religion of its intellectual oxygen. The second move is to recover an authentic union of theology and philosophy, under the supervision of authorities such as Aquinas, so that human beings can renew a vital, mysterious, and fructifying theological relation to both God and the world. In some cases this second move appears as the attempt to renew the church's theological sense for divine mystery. In other cases it can be read as an attempt to do justice to the hidden power of Thomistic theology as it was abandoned in the late Middle Ages. At any rate, Milbank makes no bones about the political agenda of his book. He wants to revert the decline of Christianity in public life by restoring the intellectual legitimacy of Christian theology over secularism. By Christianity, Milbank means a political authority in likeness to medieval Roman Catholicism. The political mires of contemporary American evangelicalism are simply a symptom of the "thinned-out version of the Catholic faith" characteristic of modern global Christianity founded in the theology of Scotus which then flowered into secularism (p. 116). In Milbank's view, if there is to be any ground for renewal, it must be found in Rome.



The argument is carried out in two sequences. In the first sequence, "Modern Ontology," Milbank sets forth a critique of modern philosophy on four fronts: univocity, representation, possibilism, and concurrence. He identifies each of these modern epistemological commitments as stemming from the theological innovations of Duns Scotus, which resulted in a fundamental shift in thinking. The rival position of Aquinas holds to equivocality, an ontology of identity, and actualism, and has been obscured of the centuries as secularism has "triumphed" over religion on every sphere, ignorant of its theological upbringing. Although we see the fruit of this inherently theological shift to univocity in modern figures like Descartes and Kant, even Heidegger, their genealogical roots are so distinctly bound to Scotus and his univocal theology that Milbank is confident in explaining the whole of modern thought on the basis of one medieval scholar. If Milbank's history is indeed correct, then the deleterious, eviscerating consequences of a supposedly autonomous secularism for the vitality of theological enterprise are sourced in the debate between Scotus and Aquinas. Contemporary theology, gradually removed from public life over the past 400 years, is suffering from a self-inflicted wound.

In the second sequence, "Political Ontology," Milbank switches the focus from the secular-theological redefinition of human knowledge to the human communities that are produced within the secular order. The first section is political also, but by foregrounding the anthropological consequences of secularism's hidden theological commitments, he puts the stakes for human community and practice front and center. Practice is as important to Milbank as theory, but will our sense for mystery and wonder in God be renewed by simply reading different books and adopting a new historiography of Western thought? Milbank seems to think this will be a sufficient force of change, just as the work of

one scholar, Duns Scotus, was single-handedly able to sponsor the most tragic intellectual and practical regime change in the history of the West. If this is the case, and if a call for renewed theological vitality can issue forth from a work as tedious as *Beyond the Secular Order*, then there is much cause to be sympathetic to Milbank's attempt.

However, *Beyond the Secular Order* offers several potential barriers for readers. Milbank's habit of name-dropping, use of Latin technicalities, as well as his commitment to philosophical jargon begins to read like pretentious idle talk, mere cleverness rather than judicious analysis. Perhaps readers will excuse this as a consequence of specializing in medieval scholasticism. His approach to the history of philosophy is to drive a tank through the philosopher's garden in order to show his audience how impoverished and disheveled the modern philosophical abode really is. Perhaps this is satisfying to those acquainted with modern philosophy, but his method does little to accommodate the horde of secular detractors that will rise up in protest.

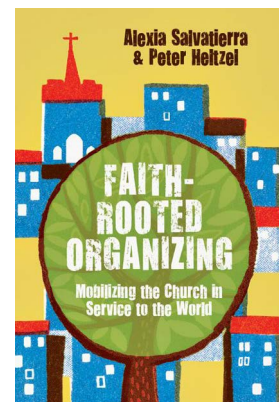
A final concern with *Beyond the Secular Order* is the question of legitimacy. The issue of authority is crucial for Milbank. It is the one issue on which an otherwise meticulous argument falters. He wants theology to be the source of authority once again, but his grounding for this restoration is Aquinas, and a particular reading and appropriation of Aquinas. But why Aquinas? Thomism is not subject to the presumptions of modernity. But why is Aquinas, on Milbank's reading, indeed correct in his theology? This is not something Milbank answers directly. Yes, Aquinas will fit the bill for Milbank's agenda, but it seems that the only way for a figure such as Aquinas to obtain the necessary authority to fulfill the role of guardian is for us to not question him. Milbank's endorsement consistently cedes authority to Thomistic Catholicism without question. Even for those who are not the allies of secularism, scientific rationalism, or modern or postmodern philosophy, it may be very difficult to agree with Milbank's political projections unless they first accept Aquinas as an authoritative doctor of the church. Yet if this is the case, then we must conclude that to get beyond the secular order requires more than genealogical historical analysis. It requires theological eugenics.

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Alexia Salvatierra and Peter Heltzel. *Faith-Rooted Organizing: Mobilizing the Church in Service to the World*. Downer's Grove: IVP, 2014. 208 pp. £9.66/\$16.00.

The phrase "community organizer" was a helpful barometer of political persuasion in the 2008 American presidential election. For many on the left, the fact that Barack Obama had served in this role in Chicago was a boon to his credibility and evidence that he understood the plight of the urban poor. For the right the term was more evidence of Obama's liabilities, a sign of his linkage to Saul Alinsky-style radicalism and lack of "real" leadership experience.

This conflict over the legitimacy of community organizing mirrors a similar debate in Christian circles. Liberal Christians usually see organizing as an ideal example of Christian social engagement, while conservatives often criticize its secular or social gospel connotations. It is within this conversation



that *Faith-Rooted Organizing: Mobilizing the Church in Service to the World* must be understood, for it is a book trying to stake out new terrain in broader debates about Christian work on behalf of the marginalized. The book attempts to convince evangelicals of their social justice obligations in the progressive evangelical vein of Jim Wallis or Shane Claiborne. But more importantly, it also casts doubt on the appropriateness of traditional secular community organization practice for Christians and offers the theologically-driven alternative model of *faith-rooted organizing*.

Authors Alexia Salvatierra (an activist from Los Angeles) and Peter Heltzel (a theologian living and working in New York) begin *Faith-Rooted Organizing* with a brief articulation of the problem to be tackled: modern community organizing has significant shortcomings for Christians because it is theologically inadequate in its assumptions and methods. In contrast, faith-rooted organizing is explicitly grounded in the beliefs and practices of Christian communities and attempts to include their various gifts that they bring to the table, “from visions and dreams, to values, to scriptures and sacred texts, to symbols and rituals” (p. 10). Each chapter builds on this general outline, typically opening with discussion of a problem in traditional secular community organizing practices and moving to historical examples and analysis of how faith-rooted models can reinvigorate or replace these established paradigms. For example, the common appeals to communal self-interest or democracy in Alinsky-style organizing should be problematic for believers: “As Christians, while we may value democracy, we cannot imbue it with a completely blind faith, nor can we ignore the biblical command to take care of our neighbor.” By contrast, faith-rooted organizing creates a culture of obligation, seeing relationships with neighbors and even those in authority not in terms of self-interest but friendship: it “aspires beyond democracy to establish the beloved community” (pp. 31–32).

Salvatierra and Heltzel have written a highly readable book that would be appropriate for leaders and laity alike. However, it is perhaps best suited for Christians working in non-profits and parachurch organizations, or pastors heading up outreach ministries for their congregations. In these roles the creep of institutional isomorphism is a constant challenge; Christian organizations gradually start mimicking the rhetoric, methods, and even the goals of powerful state and market organizational structures. This book is full of ideas for how to reinvigorate ministry initiatives with deep-rooted practices that are unapologetically Christian. The book also helpfully provides an approachable articulation of some of the limits of liberal democracy. Mainliners and evangelicals have both been guilty of uncritical appropriation of liberal-democratic tropes and language, and Salvatierra and Heltzel are to be commended for helping Christians of all persuasions think about how these ideas can be re-framed with theological imagination. This is a move that seems to be particularly appropriate for politically progressive evangelicals, who have often been deserted by both their more conservative brethren and those on the secular left. This book helps stake a practical theological claim for this “moral minority” (to use David Swartz’s term) by *embracing* this disaffected status between these two poles. If earlier progressive evangelicals were known for their critiques of the individualistic, spiritualized evangelical status quo and trumpeting of the need for “God’s politics” (to use Wallis’s later phrase), Salvatierra and Heltzel have given us a book that pushes practitioners to consider what actually separates “God’s politics” from that of this world.

The book does have some weaknesses. Salvatierra and Heltzel occasionally slip into broader descriptive categories of “religion” to discuss their perspective. This is an unfortunate move given their commitment to articulating an activism that takes the nuances of faith seriously, as well as their nervousness about the various negative consequences of Christians uncritically imbibing liberal-democratic categories (of which the creation of a homogenized, privatized, domesticated “religion” is

one, as thinkers like William Cavanaugh have shown). I also kept waiting for them to engage with Luke Bretherton's recent work on community organizing, which makes the provocative claim that Saul Alinsky actually is a helpful model for Christian political engagement within the *saeculum* (*Christianity and Contemporary Politics* [Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010], 71–87). By contrast, for much of *Faith-Rooted Organizing* Alinsky serves as a foil for the faith-rooted Christian activist. It is unfortunate that this work did not fully probe the theological possibilities or origins of seemingly “secular” organizing techniques or possible contributions of modern liberal, capitalistic orders along with their weaknesses. The book's two-page appendix on the best use of faith-rooted “serpent power” (as opposed to God's “dove power”) is an exception to this critique; I would have loved, however, to have seen this broadened into an entire chapter or two. Nevertheless, this book remains a valuable contribution to discussions of Christian social engagement and a prophetic witness to the world about the difference that Jesus makes for our politics.

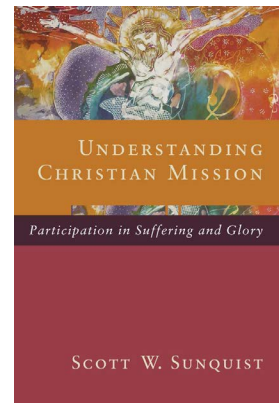
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Scott W. Sunquist. *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. xiv + 448. \$34.99.

In *Understanding Christian Mission*, Scott Sunquist, dean of the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, has written an introduction to mission that is three books in one: a wide-ranging history, a Trinitarian theology, and a practical ecclesiology of mission. Part 1, which sets the historical background for modern mission practice, contains five chapters sketching the spread of the church in the ancient and medieval world; the intertwining of mission, colonization, civilization, and commerce in the wake of Columbus' voyages; and the reconception of mission after World War II and the collapse of the colonial era of missions.

Part 2 builds a Trinitarian theology of mission that is (1) biblically rooted in the life, teaching, and ministry of Jesus and his experience of suffering and glory, (2) envisioned as “a fundamental dimension of Christian existence” that involves the whole church, and (3) is “primarily a matter of spirituality” (pp. 172–73). Acknowledging that the Trinity is “one God whose three persons have one divine will, one love, and one work” (p. 196), the author devotes a chapter to each person of the Godhead. He begins with the Bible's “story of God's love for and relationship with his creation” (p. 181), as he reasons that before we can speak of salvation, we must recognize that God is Creator, because only the Creator can redeem creation. At the heart of this approach is Jesus, “the Missionary of God” (p. 200), who is proclaimed in the New Testament, the missionary letters written about him. The active agent in mission is the Holy Spirit who, as the “communications specialist” (p. 240), uses the words of his messengers to bring life and righteousness to the world.

Part 3 completes the history and theology by formulating a missional ecclesiology. The basic message is that if “mission is part of God's very life,” it should be “the purpose of the church” (p. 273). The church should thus be a community of worship and witness for whom evangelism consists of “introducing Jesus Christ to others and inviting them to become partakers in his Kingdom” (p. 312).



This general call for the whole church to share the good news of Jesus is brought home through a special focus on three themes: urban mission (appreciating that cities are a complex mix of the sacred, evil, and hope), partnership (grounded in the Trinity, Jesus's high priestly prayer, the church as Christ's body, and apostolic missions in the New Testament [pp. 375–76]), and spirituality (demonstrated by prayer and silence, scriptural formation, community life, repentance, active service of others, attentiveness to God's Spirit, and love [pp. 400–407]).

Many books offer much. This one delivers. The historical section is both enlightening and challenging, not only because it may be the only mission history many prospective missionaries will read, but because it puts evangelical mission into perspective by taking seriously the labor of sections of the church—Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and the ecumenical bodies of the past century—that are often ignored. Our eyes are diverted from William Carey to view the Jesuits as “the first modern missionaries” who extended the use of “mission” from being the work of the Trinity to include the work of the church (p. 46), and whose spiritual activism and engagement of culture became a model copied by many Protestant missionaries. We are further stretched as Sunquist evaluates the merits of ecumenical mission theories and practices. While he recognizes that their theology has often suffered “from an ideological reductionism” (p. 147), he demonstrates that it has positively influenced many aspects of modern evangelical mission scholarship and practice.

The theological and practical sections—in line with the subtitle—remind readers that the church will participate in suffering and glory as did its Lord. While this is a call to sober thinking and action, it also proclaims, “The final word in mission is glory—not suffering” (p. 410). No matter what they experience in the world, Christians should never lose hope, because glory will surely follow.

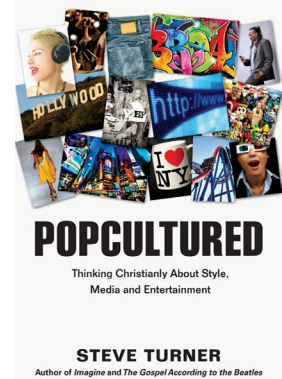
With all it has to give, the book is not perfect. Most readers will understand Sunquist's reference to “four streams of Christianity—Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Spiritual,” but find the last category problematic as it significantly crosses over the others (contra what is written on p. 165) and is made up of a strange group of bedfellows. Pentecostals link arms with “indigenous churches, unregistered churches, Muslim background churches, unbaptized believers, and culture Christians” simply because they take their authority “from the Holy Spirit more than from a particular tradition” (p. 15). Apparently, even Radical Reformers like the Zwickau prophets and Thomas Müntzer are included (p. 231). Claims to inspiration aside, some of these groups would likely not recognize the others as kin. Another claim that many readers may be uneasy with is the idea that the liturgy of the early church provided the standard of authenticity when the Scriptures were standardized (p. 28).

These issues aside, due to its breadth and depth, clarity and charity, academic rigor and spiritual warmth, I will enthusiastically recommend *Understanding Christian Mission* to my colleagues, students, and others interested in mission and the Christian faith. While accessible to laypeople, it is best suited to use as a primary text in a course on Christian mission.

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Steve Turner. *Popcultured: Thinking Christianly about Style, Media, and Entertainment*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2013. 254 pp. \$17.00.

What hath popular culture to do with Christian faith? That question doesn't sound nearly as scandalous to evangelical ears today as it might have fifty years ago, and yet it's still a provocative and complex enough question to warrant the continued publication of "cultural engagement manuals" like *Popcultured*, the latest book by a veteran of the genre, the Londoner Steve Turner. The idea that pop culture and Christian faith can and should be integrated might by now seem self-evident. Nevertheless, Turner begins *Popcultured* by making the case in ten points. Pop culture should matter for Christians, for example, because it's a gift from God; because it's pervasive and inescapable; because it's a window into the *zeitgeist* and an opportunity for conversation.



It matters because it's a mandate going all the way back to Eden, part of the cultivation task given to Adam in the beginning: "Our culture, at its best, is another way of tilling, planting, rearing and gathering in," writes Turner. "We break up the hard soil of our rational minds, plant beautiful ideas, rear the imagination and gather in more fully rounded human beings" (p. 17).

Pop culture, maintains Turner, is more important and formative than Christians often think. In our interactions with culture—which includes creating it, enjoying it and critiquing it—Christians should have both respect and discernment. Respect means dignifying "recreation" as a gift from God that is not a "waste of time" but an activity of "putting ourselves back together—re-creating ourselves" (p. 50). Discernment means going about our cultural recreation with Philippians 4:8 in mind but also the awareness that "sometimes we have to sit through some bad stuff in order to get to the good stuff," which is "as true for the Bible as it is for Shakespeare" (p. 53).

With *Popcultured* Turner presents an accessible theological overview of culture in all its variety; its fourteen chapters run the gamut from celebrity to comedy to photography and fashion, with references to everyone from George Carlin to Kim Kardashian, cultural studies theorist Stuart Hall to fashion designer Alexander McQueen. Each chapter contains helpful questions for discussion, book and website recommendations, and suggestions for action. With its widely relevant topics and accessible, non-academic tone, *Popcultured* is a book that lends itself well to Bible studies or book groups.

Two chapters are devoted to Christian approaches to movies, an area of culture of particular interest to me as a longtime film critic for *Christianity Today*. Turner discusses cinematic narrative (ch. 4) in the context of myth and redemption but challenges Christians to embrace realism rather than "cheap sentimentality" (p. 65) and to understand that redemption is sometimes "messy" (p. 66). He rightly critiques the notion that a "Christian" approach to movies necessarily means one of four things: family films, biblical epics, heroes of the faith, or movies with conversion scenes (p. 67). The Bible itself is forty percent narrative, notes Turner, and contains a variety of narrative genres (e.g., prophetic, parable) that are not nearly as didactic as most of today's "Christian" films.

Turner wants Christians to have a broader sense of where God can be found in pop culture. "The truth, if it's told well, will always endorse some aspect of the gospel," he writes (p. 75). Christians should approach something like cinematic storytelling, then, not as just another medium to dispense answers to life's various problems; rather, they should recognize that the goal of a film should be enrichment or enlightenment, the unveiling of truth.

One weakness of Turner's chapters on film, however, is that they focus almost wholly on the narrative/storytelling aspects of the medium with little engagement with the phenomenological realities of the "moving image" form. Turner's approach is the traditional one (academic film studies got their start in literature departments, after all) and the more accessible one for "Christian readings." However I would argue that cinema as a medium is a closer relative to photography than it is to literature. It's time that Christian scholars move beyond reading film "texts" in light of literary theory and start engaging them in light of Sontag, Postman, Bazin, Kracauer, Deleuze, and the like.

An overemphasis on "content" and underemphasis on "form" is one of the weaknesses of *Popcultured* generally. Though Turner cites Marshall McLuhan a few times in his discussions of advertising, McLuhan's famous maxim that "the medium is the message" could more thoroughly inform the book's understanding of how the various forms of culture not only *shape* the message but are in themselves messages. Turner grasps this, I think, and it comes out at various points in the book (e.g., his discussion of the semiotic history of blue jeans in his chapter on fashion), but some chapters left me wanting more.

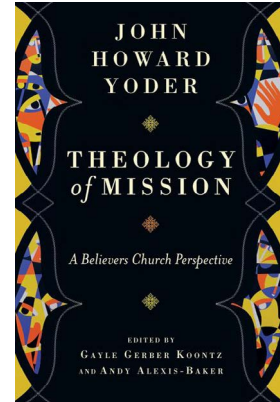
The chapter on journalism for example (ch. 5), while containing helpful discussions of bias and embedded values, could have delved deeper into the dramatic ways that technology has changed journalism and how the various new *forms* of journalism fundamentally alter the landscape. And while the chapter on technology (ch. 11) is one of the book's strongest, it seems a bit passé to consider "technology" a distinct category as much as something that necessarily grounds our understanding of *every* type of culture. I would have loved to have seen more about how social media technology informs advertising, for example, or how streaming and DVR technologies fundamentally change our approaches to movies and television.

Of course an inescapable problem in writing "cultural engagement manuals" (Christian or otherwise) is the "instantly outdated" dilemma, something that is admittedly a challenge in my own writing. Not only is the *content* of culture constantly changing, but perhaps more significantly its *forms* are. Which brings us to a meta question: is traditional book publishing really the best format for helpful explorations of cultural engagement? Does the pace of change and intensity of breadth in pop culture today require a more nimble medium for relevant commentary and guidance? Are websites, blogs, or podcasts more valuable formats for the explorations undertaken in books like *Popcultured* (or my own *Gray Matters* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013])? Quite possibly. But if a book is still one's preferred medium for thinking through the sprawling questions of cultural engagement, or if a broad-strokes introductory manual on the topic is desired, *Popcultured* is a handy, helpful, and commendable resource.

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John Howard Yoder. *Theology of Mission: A Believer's Church Perspective*. Edited by Gayle Gerber Koontz and Andy Alexis-Baker. Downers Grove: IVP, 2014. 432 pp. \$45.00.

John Howard Yoder (1927–1997) was, along with Harold Bender (1897–1962), one of the two most prominent Mennonite theologians during the twentieth century. Yoder is best known for his ethical writings, particularly his defense of pacifism and his influential monograph, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), which advanced a public theology based upon the life of Christ. However, Yoder, who coordinated missionary work for the Mennonite Central Committee in the years immediately following World War II, also taught a course on Theology of Mission from 1964–1983. The content of that course was recorded on a couple of occasions in the 1970s. In this volume, Gayle Gerber Koontz and Andy Alexis-Baker have edited a published volume of Yoder's course lectures. The book does not disappoint.



Theology of Mission begins with a summary of Yoder's mission experience and thought written by Wilbert R. Shenk, a former student of Yoder's and the leading missiologist among contemporary Anabaptists in North America. Yoder's material, based upon his lectures, is divided into twenty-three chapters that examine mission through the lens of biblical theology (with emphasis on the NT), systematic theology, the believer's church tradition (especially ecclesiology), and debates over religious pluralism and the exclusivity of Christianity. The volume concludes with two appendices: a reprint of Yoder's booklet *As You Go: The Old Mission in a New Day* (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1961) and a bibliography of Yoder's writings related to mission, evangelism, church growth, and related topics.

For readers familiar with the history of ecumenical discussions related to theology of mission, much of this material will be old hat. Yoder shows awareness of the major themes and figures in the field up to the time this material was recorded in the mid-1970s. Though the book has fewer footnotes than one might expect, readers should remember that *Theology of Mission* is based on transcriptions of Yoder's lectures. Had he revised the material himself (which he had intended to do), Yoder would almost certainly have more directly engaged a wider variety of thinkers by name. Nevertheless, he interacts with several key voices in the field. The influence of Lesslie Newbigin looms particularly large, especially in how Yoder frames his overall approach to this subject. However, Yoder does not simplistically appropriate the thought of Newbigin or any other scholar. What makes *Theology of Mission* unique is how it puts the best of missional thought in dialogue with the believer's church tradition as interpreted by Yoder.

Yoder positions the believer's church model as a balanced alternative to two influential paradigms: Christendom, which identifies Christianity with society and tends to export culture as much as it does the gospel; and Pietism, which conducts mission work through voluntary societies that can be adapted to various ecclesial commitments. In Yoder's understanding, Christendom is roughly analogous to mission work as it has historically been pursued by mainline denominations, while Pietism is more or less equivalent to the sort of evangelical mission work that commenced during the eighteenth century and has flourished ever since. In the place of these two paradigms, Yoder suggests a more churchly approach, albeit one that focuses on establishing local congregations. He asserts that these local churches should quickly mature to the point of autonomy from any sponsoring agency in the West, should emphasize the priesthood of all believers, and downplay (though not deny) the importance of

clergy, seeing themselves as missionary bodies that witness to Christ's rule through both word and deed. To use more contemporary language, Yoder critiques mainline colonialism and evangelical parachurch arrangements, arguing instead for missional free churches of baptized believers that are contextually sensitive while maintaining a uniquely Christian witness.

In many ways, Yoder's *Theology of Mission* was ahead of its time. His call for the priority of planting local churches rather than establishing outposts for parachurch organizations reflects the path many denominations—and parachurch ministries—have taken in the years since the Lausanne movement began in 1974. The same is true of Yoder's emphasis on balancing evangelism and ministries of service and mercy, also a theme highlighted at Lausanne and further developed in subsequent years. Not surprisingly, baptistic groups will especially resonate with much of Yoder's thought, even if many demur from his pacifism and do not connect with his frequent use of the Mennonites as the ideal model of a believer's church approach to theology of mission.

However, evangelical readers, including baptistic evangelicals, will also find material with which they disagree. First, Yoder hardly engages evangelical voices, with the notable exception of Donald McGavran. More important, though, some interpreters cast Yoder as an evangelical—most recently Molly Worthen in her book *Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Yet many of his views will not cohere with more theologically conservative evangelicals. Few of these will agree with Yoder's contention that missionary advance was not explicitly commanded in the Gospels or Acts, but rather came about organically (and mostly unintentionally) as believer's migrated throughout the Roman Empire. Reflecting his roots in the Mennonite tradition, Yoder's periodic discussions of justification and atonement are quite thin. Furthermore, while rejecting universalism, Yoder seems open to an inclusivist view of the fate of the unevangelized. While making some excellent points about the sensitivity necessary in witnessing to Jewish people, Yoder falls short of actually arguing that unbelieving Jews are spiritually lost if they do not trust in Jesus Christ as Lord.

Despite these shortcomings, *Theology of Mission* demonstrates that Yoder was a creative missional theologian who sought to appropriate many of the keenest insights of his era and apply them to his believer's church context. Free church evangelicals will find Yoder to be a fruitful and often forward-thinking dialog partner as they engage the broader discussions about the *missio Dei*, missional thought, and theology of mission. Scholars of Yoder will appreciate how this book adds to our understanding of Yoder's thought by introducing readers to an aspect of his theology that has heretofore remained largely unknown to those beyond his former students.

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