



themelios

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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

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EDITORIAL

The Underbelly of Revival? Five Reflections on Various Failures in the Young, Restless, and Reformed Movement

— D. A. Carson —

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Not long ago, a friend wrote me asking questions about what he called “the underbelly of revival.” Here in the US, and to some extent elsewhere, we have witnessed a significant movement of (mostly young) Christians who have sometimes been tagged “the young, restless, and Reformed.” In part, this movement is embodied in such organizations as Together for the Gospel, Desiring God, The Gospel Coalition, 9Marks, and Acts29; in part, it surfaces in many local churches in many countries. My friend, however, drew attention to the sad litany of the last few years: squabbles, accusations of inappropriate behavior, adultery, burnout, and more. We need not attach names and events to these things; most of us know about them, and all of us can imagine them or have seen them elsewhere. So my friend posed the questions,

But it makes us wonder . . . whether the thrill and euphoria of being part of something that feels like revival may serve to dull the senses in some. Has the “success” of this movement some call “Young, restless, Reformed” blinded many of us to ministry’s true nature? Has the perceived fruitfulness clouded the vision of some (many?) to some of the things that matter most? Have some of us grown lax and flabby? Are we making silly presumptions based on perceived “success” in ministry in recent years?

Two prefatory things must be said. *First*, the word “revival” embedded in these questions is used a bit loosely. Mercifully, it is not used in the sense common in some Southern states where it often serves as the near equivalent of “evangelistic meetings” (as in “Last month we held a revival”). It is closer to the more historic sense of a special movement of God’s Spirit that brings with it deep conviction of sin, fresh contrition and fresh holiness, and concomitant zeal for God’s Word and God’s glory—a special movement that may be as short as a few hours or as long as many years, and may result in thousands being renewed, and more thousands being converted. Some of the characteristics of revivals have not been particularly strong in this “young, restless, and Reformed” movement.

Second, it must be said that some observers would be very happy to see the movement sputter out, especially if it could die in shame. There is no glee quite so mean as that which harbors an “I told you so” delight at the failures of a movement that God has blessed. But my interlocutor does not belong to these critics; he is not among the heirs of the critics of the New England awakening that took place at the time

of Jonathan Edwards, critics who could find only things to criticize but who could not see the glory. Rather, he belongs to the movement itself and wants to learn the hard lessons as well as the happy ones.

In what follows, I offer five brief reflections called forth by my correspondent's questions.

(1) The failures that have taken place during the past few years were not the sorts of things that could happen only when a movement is flourishing. Flawed leadership, immorality, bullying, and dissensions are frequently found in churches and organizations with no history of remarkable growth, with no sign of extraordinary blessing from God. Long before the young, restless and Reformed movement started, I witnessed churches that had to dismiss their senior minister because he had committed adultery. I saw a dear friend abandon his wife of twenty-nine years and his highly influential expository ministry because he chose to "come out" and declare himself a homosexual. Certainly I observed some remarkably sad and barren church splits.

During the lean years in Québec before 1972, before the Lord began to pour out remarkable blessings on the church, it would not have been true to say that although the churches were small and struggling they were all mature, sanctified, and passionate about the gospel. We did not have to wait until the period of growth and vitality (growing from about thirty-five churches to just under five hundred in eight years) before we witnessed moral failures.

In at least some cases, it may be that the growth in numbers of serious Christians brings with it a corresponding growth in the number of moral failures, without the proportion of failures being any higher. We do well not to talk ourselves into an assumption that revival *must* have an ugly underbelly that would not exist if the revival were not there.

(2) The scope and intensity of the blessings of a fruitful movement nevertheless do frequently have a bearing on this ugly underbelly, whether in perception or in reality, and this in at least four ways:

First, when many good things are happening, a calamitous failure stands out and draws attention to itself. In a time of spiritual declension and no growth, should a minister embezzle funds or sleep with someone other than his spouse, he will draw local attention to his failure, but the failure will not attract national comment. But if the minister is publicly identified with an expanding and vital ministry, not only will his failure draw much more widespread attention, but inevitably some pundits will start speculating (or pontificating!) on the intrinsic weaknesses of the movement.

In South Korea, the church saw spectacular growth during much of the twentieth century, attended by such things as the "prayer mountain movement." Many, many leaders had suffered for Jesus, and their constancy and faithfulness won a great deal of admiration. Twenty-five years ago, when citizens were asked to rate the three principal religions—Buddhism, Catholicism, and Protestantism (a large majority of the latter being Reformed evangelicals)—the preference, in order, was Protestantism, Catholicism, and Buddhism. Nevertheless the very success of the movement led not a few to substantial triumphalism. All it took was a handful of public scandals, and the damage was done. Today church attendance has shrunk by about 15%, and in recent polls Buddhism comes first, then Catholicism, and Protestantism ranks last.

Second, once fruitful movements and even revivals are well established, they frequently breed a naive optimism. It's not as if anyone would come right out and say, "God is transparently at work here; what can go wrong?"—yet something of that optimism prevails and overlooks the reality that the flesh still wars against the Spirit and that the devil still prowls around as a warring lion and as a messenger of deceit. In other words, the very revival that brings a renewed consciousness of sin and therefore a better grasp of the cross also breeds in some people a blissful assumption that things are going very

well, and therefore they let their guard down in a way they would not do if ministry were perennially discouraging.

Third, a movement that is genuinely from God may display such blessing that at least some people are attracted to the blessing who are not really drawn to God. When the church suffers under persecution, there are relatively few spurious conversions or nominal Christians. But when things seem to be going swimmingly, the church is likely to attract more people who want to go along for the ride. In this sinful world, any church can become infested with a few hypocrites; in times of blessing, the attractiveness of hypocrisy becomes proportionately stronger. Hence an Ananias and Sapphira want a reputation for holiness and generosity more than they want to be holy and generous. I have read scholarly studies that have shown that nine months after the height of the revivals in Kentucky in the nineteenth century, there was a statistically significant uptick in the number of illegitimate children who were born. It is not hard to imagine. The intimacy bred by people who were getting right with God spilled over into more general intimacy, and intimacy often breeds intimacy, including sexual intimacy.

Fourth, matters may become worse if the blessings of a genuine movement from God tempt ministers and other Christian leaders to become less careful, less discerning. When people are eager to join the people of God and identify with them is precisely when *more* discernment is needed, not less. When the power of the Spirit is evident, there will always be some folk who want to throw money around and take the part of Simon in Acts 8, and therefore there will be a need for a Peter to tell him, “May your money perish with you” (Acts 8:20).

Of course, some observers treat these dangers as so sweeping and unavoidable that they think we should be suspicious of revivals and other movements with ostensible blessings beyond the ordinary. Bigness is intrinsically suspicious; in Schumacher’s phrase (though he applied it to another realm), “Small is beautiful.” Shall we be similarly suspicious of the astonishingly rapid growth of the church in Jerusalem? The abuses that called forth the discernment of Jonathan Edwards did not tempt this prince of a theologian to deny the powerful transforming work of the Spirit of God. Revival blessings demand not cynicism, but discernment.

(3) Usually great movements of God call forth remarkable leaders. The Reformation was led by Reformers with great and diverse gifts; the early British missionary movement called up William Carey and others; the Evangelical Awakening was largely led by Howell Harris, George Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley, and the many others they trained.

Shall we conclude that in each case what triumphed was a rather nauseous celebrity culture?

Clearly the dangers of celebrity culture must not be ignored or minimized. Some preachers and other leaders seem to feed on approval and fame. This can happen at any level, of course, including the local church, but the scale of applause (and criticism!) in a large movement makes the temptations more blatant. Worse, such leaders and movements may, wittingly or unwittingly, seduce countless numbers of Christians into thinking that “real” or “vital” or “powerful” or “truly spiritual” Christian life is all about the big event, the larger-than-life leader. The result is such a massive distortion of Christian life that we turn with gratitude to the insight and wisdom of Michael Horton’s recent book, *Ordinary: Sustainable Faith in a Radical, Restless World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014). So when some celebrity ministries implode, this is no more than what we should expect: “they will not get very far because . . . their folly will be clear to everyone” (2 Tim 3:9).

Even here, however, we should be careful in our analysis and with our labels. Celebrity culture is nothing new. In his day, Paul had to oppose certain celebrity preachers: he called them “super-apostles”

(2 Cor 10–13, esp. 11:5). But what made them super-apostles (and, equally, “false apostles,” 2 Cor 11:13) was not the size of their ministries or the reach of their influence (for on that ground, Peter and Paul would both stand condemned), but their lust for power and not service, their preaching of a triumphalist Jesus and not the Jesus of the cross, their blatantly boastful accounts of their spiritual experiences in order to enhance their reputations over against Paul’s fear that people would think too highly of him (2 Cor 12:6b). Paul treats such people with severity, demanding that the church in Corinth remove them from leadership and influence. One must not forget, however, that this same Paul treats very differently those who preach the truth faithfully, even if their motives leave something to be desired: “But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice” (Phil 1:18). And even here we are doubtless dealing with a spectrum. Paul is convinced he must correct Peter, but shall Peter be written off for pastoral and theological mistakes (Gal 2:11–14)? May not Christian leaders disagree sharply on how to handle a John Mark?

In other words, while we rightly identify the dangers in celebrity culture and grapple with the negative effects they have on a God-given revival, our analysis must not prove so shallow and sweeping that we happily condemn faithful preachers who happen to be more fruitful than we are. There is a kind of condemnation of celebrity culture that seems to be seeking a kind of celebrity over its own insight.

(4) Yet although the evils of celebrity culture surface in just about every generation, there is one element in revivals and other movements of God that probably accelerates them. When rapid growth takes place, it is easy to promote people too rapidly. In his provocative book *Indispensable: When Leaders Really Matter* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012), Gautaum Mukunda establishes what he calls his “leader filtration theory.” In most industries and organizations, he argues, leaders are “filtered”: they are tested, scrutinized, battered a little, and they learn a great deal as they slowly rise through the system. A few leaders make it through “unfiltered,” and these “extreme leaders” tend to be either geniuses or wackos. I’m not sure this analysis is always accurate, but what is obvious is that when a movement is expanding rapidly there is more opportunity for leaders to rise into positions of real power without ever having been “filtered.”

The apostle sees the danger: an elder “must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil” (1 Tim 3:7). Transparently the question of who is a “recent convert” will vary with the context. The prophet Jeremiah was a very young man when he began his ministry; so also was the apostle John. On the return leg of his first recorded missionary journey, Paul, along with his co-worker Barnabas, appointed elders in each place where they had planted a church a few months earlier (Acts 14:23), so they were appointing men who had been Christians for a few months or a year at most. But clearly it would not do, at this juncture, to appoint such recently converted men as elders in, say, Jerusalem or Antioch. When there is rapid growth, however, that is precisely what happens, as it did in Québec in the mid-70s. One tries to compensate by putting in place various accountability structures, and by ensuring there are some older, wiser heads around to ward off the worst mistakes. The same Paul who warns against the appointment of recent converts also knows that youth can be faithful and effective (1 Tim 4:12). But the dangers are transparent.

Perhaps they are exacerbated in our generation because of the rampant individualism that shapes so much of the culture. In their zeal, some plunge into evangelism and the gathering of a church without the advantages of structure, accountability, and of voices of wisdom, authority, and experience. Either they learn quickly and painfully, and begin to seek out wise counsel, or many of them burn out and

even make shipwreck of their lives and of the lives of others. In other words, Western devotion to individualism tends to draw entrepreneurs away from the church structures that often serve as an ecclesiastical filtration system. (But let us also acknowledge that sometimes what is supposed to be a system that builds leaders up and teaches them accountability merely knocks people down and discourages them, which they then use as an excuse for independence and individualism.)

In short, what begins as zealous vision sometimes slips into unaccountable and incorrigible “leadership” characterized by massive egos and substantial bullying, driven in part by painful immaturity.

(5) The astonishing range and power of the media have become so ubiquitous that it is difficult to grasp both their promise and their danger. Which of us can do anything but thank God for the ways in which gospel truth is circulating, often without expense to the end user, more rapidly and more cheaply than at any time in history—and often behind borders and barriers that cannot be breached any other way? The realities in some parts of the world are so politically sensitive that I cannot share with you distribution figures that are frankly staggering.

Nevertheless all of us are becoming aware of some of the darker sides of the digital world. Quite apart from obvious things, like readily available violence, porn, and entertainment for couch potatoes, we are beginning to reflect on friendships that hide behind digital keypads but never deal with real people face-to-face, ways of manipulating people and sales and movements by the convenient arrangement of billions of pixels, and the insidious temptation to count “friends” and “followers” and “hits” as a measure of one’s significance. Moreover, the scale and speed of the media can turn a relatively minor matter into national outrage. The media can puff people up for no substantive reason and utterly destroy them on grounds equally insignificant. So there is the challenge: how can we wisely and faithfully use the media without allowing them to destroy us?

At one level, this is nothing new; it is the scale that is new. In 1970 I was serving a church in Vancouver when what came to be called “the Canadian revival” broke out in a small town in Saskatchewan. For one reason or another I hopped across the country several times that year and had opportunity to watch the revival spread. But by the time it reached Vancouver, though it was still attracting substantial numbers, it felt phony, forced, spiritually insubstantial. I recall hearing an utterly authentic, moving, gospel-saturated testimony in the Prairies, a testimony that brought many to tears and contrition. Sadly, someone thought it was so good that he promptly talked the person who had given the testimony into flying around the country to repeat his story so that people could “catch” the revival. Pretty soon it sounded as canned as the marketing that drove it.

From this experience, and from reading of many other movements with their origin in God’s good hand of grace, I’ve come to some resolutions should God in his mercy ever place me in such circumstances again. The first and foremost is this: Don’t trust the media, and trust your own heart with respect to the temptations of the media even less. Don’t “puff” the movement: God will not share his glory with another. The second is this: Use all the spiritual and emotional energy that such a movement stirs up to train the next generation of leaders. The alternative is to focus on certain experiences, experiences that are frequently puffed by the media but that serve as a distraction from the message of the cross. That does not mean that we must not use the media to get the message across. Far from it: Paul’s “so that by all possible means I might save some” calls to us still. But it is one thing to use the digital world to circulate truth; it is another to seek our own glory through it; it is yet another to play to the media experts whose agenda is rarely that of God’s; and it is yet another to forget that, like death, the media often have insatiable appetites, a huge maw that devours people and movements with little care and

less respect. If we play to the media, the chances are, humanly speaking, that they will eventually turn around and eat us

“The underbelly of revival?” We must not think in deterministic categories, but reflect on the biblical narratives of times of great blessing, even though great evils attend them, and learn, too, from the history of the church. On each of the topics on which I have briefly reflected, there is a sort of “yes, but” element in the argument: yes, let us beware of the elixir of celebrity status, but let us thank God for gifted leaders; yes, let us not become snookered by ratings and digital reach, but let us use all lawful means to spread the gospel; and so forth. So we beg God for grace to persevere, to serve joyfully and faithfully, and to learn from any “underbelly” we stumble across that apart from the grace of God we are all undone. And we pray for one another in biblical terms: “Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Heb 13:20–21).

* * * * *

For more than five years, Alan Thompson has provided excellent service in his role as NT Book Review Editor of *Themelios*. His efficiency, good judgment, and editorial skills have been greatly appreciated. Owing to other opportunities and challenges, this is the last fascicle in which he will serve in this capacity. We will miss him.

Succeeding him is David Starling, currently serving as Lecturer in New Testament at Morling College, Sydney. Some may recognize him as the author of *Not My People: Gentiles as Exiles in Pauline Hermeneutics* in the BZ^{NW} series, or from his very recent *UnCorinthian Leadership*. He can be contacted at david.starling@thegospelcoalition.org.

OFF THE RECORD

Is It a Mistake to Stay at the Crossroads?

— Michael J. Ovey —

Mike Ovey is principal of Oak Hill College in London.

Standing at the crossroads, trying to read the signs
To tell me which way I should go to find the answer.¹

One of Augustine's earliest Christian writings is his dialogue, set in Cassiacum, *Against the Academics* (about 386). It is not, of course, against academic study as such, but against the philosophical school known as the Academics, famous for their commitment to sceptical questioning. For Augustine this was vital ground-clearing work in his nascent Christian faith. He found the scepticism of the Academics powerful and enticing in some respects, and he saw its huge significance for any kind of Christian faith, his own included. For the essence of the scepticism of the Academics was to suspend judgment and therefore to suspend commitment. And, noted Augustine, commitment is of the essence for Christian faith, for in faith I trust and believe Jesus Christ for who he says he is and what he says he does. Therefore, at some point the scepticism of the Academics makes Christian faith impossible. It kills it—hence the need for Augustine to slay some of his own inner demons in *Against the Academics*.

I want to argue that there are some important parallels between the scepticism that Augustine encountered and some contemporary ways of handling the Bible. I also want to argue that Augustine has given us something of enduring value in meeting those approaches by his analysis of what it is to make a mistake. His point is that when you are on a journey it is a mistake to remain sitting at the crossroads.

Let me begin by outlining the scepticism Augustine meets. By the time he is writing his dialogue, recognisably sceptical philosophy was some 700 years old, with its origins back in the late fourth century b.c. with figures like Pyrrho of Elis. In its developed form this is what it asserted by Augustine's time: the wise person assents only to what is definitely true; we cannot prove what is definitely true; therefore we should assent to nothing.

Why should we adopt such an apparently odd position? Well, answers Sextus Empiricus some 150 years before Augustine, this is the way to *happiness*. Sextus comments that the goal of sceptical philosophy is quietude of mind, or freedom from disturbance (*ataraxia*). To achieve this, one must deliver oneself from the existential agony of choosing between different ideas and philosophies, which requires suspension of judgement (*epochē*). To achieve suspension of judgement, one meets every argument with another argument. You do not have to believe this opposing argument or even think it probable. The point is *not* that the arguments are of equal weight but that no argument is wrong

¹Eric Clapton, lyrics from *Let It Grow*.

beyond *all* shadow of any *possible* doubt. The idea is that for every argument there is at least a *possible* counterargument, no matter how contrived or desperate. At that point you are entitled to suspend judgement and enjoy freedom from disturbance.

I encountered this sceptical technique when taking questions at a university campus in Wales on the historicity of Jesus' resurrection. The objection was that I had not shown in my talk that Jesus was not an alien who had strange powers of self-resurrection after physical death (source critics may identify a Hollywood *ET* debt here). I asked what evidence the objector had to support this. 'Oh none,' came the answer, 'but it's still a possibility.' And of course with this technique comes the claim that one must therefore suspend judgement and therefore suspend any commitment to faith in the resurrection even while admitting the evidence pointed that way—just as Augustine foresaw.

Two quick comments: Obviously this technique can look as though it is intensely intellectually rigorous. Equally obviously this is emphatically not a technique designed to find the truth. Sometimes people assume that sceptical questions are a tool for finding the truth. They are simply not designed for that. Instead the sceptical programme of questions is designed to ensure that you never have to commit to the truth because on the sceptical view your happiness lies not in commitment to something but in being free from disturbance, that is, in not committing.

But why think sceptical techniques are alive and well in the way we read the Bible? Let me take an example from the last year from the Church of England's Pilling Commission, set up to discuss the issues relating to same-sex relations and marriage. There was both a majority report and a courageous and penetrating minority report. For present purposes let us look at the majority report.

In paragraph 235 the Pilling majority tell us that the Bible is authoritative. So far, so good. However, the meat of the Pilling majority's findings is that they cannot apply or set out what the Bible teaches on the issue of same-sex relations. Let me set out the major factors cited:

1. The sincerity of different opinions must be respected.
2. The scholarship is too vast to be synthesised by the Pilling group.
3. The Bible is not clear.
4. Various members of the Pilling group have heard arguments from those they disagree with but remain unpersuaded by those arguments.
5. The Church of England lacks a magisterium to make a decisive ruling.
6. Not only is there disagreement about what the Bible says, there is disagreement about the hermeneutical approaches we should bring to the Bible.

It is factor 3 that is most pertinent here. The Bible is, say the majority, to be authoritative, but it is also, in the judgment of the majority, not clear. Once you have judged that something is ambiguous or obscure, how can it authoritatively guide your conduct? Put another way, how does the Pilling majority's claim that the Bible is authoritative fit with its judgement that the Bible is unclear?

At this point there is all too readily an argument that runs on very similar lines to the sceptical argument Augustine faced. It goes like this: the wise scholar assents only to an interpretation of the Bible that is definitely true; we cannot prove which interpretation is definitely true beyond all shadow of doubt; therefore, we should assent to no interpretation.

At that point, of course, on the subject in question the Bible is very definitely not authoritative, for we are not using it as a basis either for acting in a particular way or abstaining from acting in a particular way. The statement that one treats the Bible as authoritative has no practical effect. It is purely decorative.

This approach need not be confined to the issue of same-sex marriage or relations. All the theological disciplines are festooned with odd theories here and there. One of my favourites is that it is a misinterpretation of the Gospels to say Jesus ever really existed; rather Jesus never existed but was created as a myth by people on hallucinogenic mushrooms. But let us ask about this theory precisely the killer question that Sextus Empiricus advocates sceptics should ask of any theory: can we 100% guarantee that no evidence whatsoever will ever emerge that supports this theory?² It is pretty hard to claim nothing will ever emerge that could not possibly be construed by someone as supporting the mushroom theory. One hundred percent guarantees like that are not possible for humans to make. That in turn means that the magic mushroom theory cannot be dismissed. And since this theory is that there is no historical Jesus, how can I make a commitment to him? For I might be wrong—there is an alternative explanation which I cannot completely disprove.

Now how does Augustine help? Amongst other things he contrasts two different theories of what it is to make a mistake: (1) Error is taking as true something that is false.³ (2) Error is always seeking and never finding.⁴

The first version of what counts as a mistake is very much that of the sceptics: it prizes the notion that we must not commit to what is false, and therefore to what might be false, and hence we must not commit to anything at all. Similarly, this is the version of mistake implicit in the Pilling majority: we must not commit to an interpretation that is uncertain, and unclear passages can give only uncertain interpretations.

Augustine certainly sees the force of saying we must not commit to what is false. But his second account of mistake (Error is always seeking and never finding) opens the door to a subtler and more extensive understanding. After all, if the aim of the game is actually to find something and I spend all my time searching, I still haven't found what I am looking for. I am in the same position as the person who has found the wrong thing: neither of us has the right thing.

Later in the dialogue Augustine develops this line of thought in terms of a journey. Imagine you are on a journey to somewhere, Kalamazoo, say: you come to a crossroads. One sign indicates a road leads to Kalamazoo. Imagine you now employ sceptic interpretation: can you be sure 100% this was put up by someone with knowledge? Was it put up by someone who wants to see Kalamazoo cut off from civilised visitors? Was it put up by someone as a postmodern ironic comment on authoritarian authorial statements? On a consistent sceptic basis you cannot exclude these possibilities, and since you do not commit to what might be false, you cannot take the road. You stay sitting at the crossroads. You never arrive at Kalamazoo. That means you are in the same position as someone who actually did follow a false signpost: neither of you are in Kalamazoo.

We can apply Augustine's thinking to the sceptical claim that says 'Do not commit to an interpretation because the Bible is unclear.' A vital observation is that one thing this suspense of judgement means is that we have not actually obeyed what the Bible says. I am, so to speak, always sitting at the crossroads claiming I cannot be sure what the right interpretation is. And since I have no interpretation, I end up in fact not obeying.

² He also notes we can put the killer question round the other way: can I guarantee 100% that no evidence whatsoever will ever emerge that disproves my theory. Again, humans cannot do this since it would require omniscience to give such a guarantee.

³ *Error mihi videtur esse falsi pro vero approbation (Against the Academics, I.11).*

⁴ *Nam errare est utique semper quaerere, nunquam invenire (Against the Academics, I.10).*

Jack Nicholson, playing the role of Colonel Jessup in *A Few Good Men*, famously shouts 'You can't handle the truth.' It is a painful moment in the film, and it is painful to contemplate as we think about the interpreter of the Bible who resolutely sits at the crossroads without interpretative commitment. For such an interpreter has a technique that means that she or he never has to handle the truth as such. The Jessup line is understandably iconic. But the less famous close to his speech is even more unnerving: he explains why his audience cannot handle the truth: 'You don't *want* the truth.' Ultimately that becomes the question about the sceptical technique when applied to biblical interpretation: do we prefer to sit at the crossroads because we do not want to arrive? And is that why we chose to use that particular technique, precisely because it is a seemingly impressive way of never arriving?

Bye-bye Bible? Progress Report on the Death of Scripture¹

— Robert W. Yarbrough —

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Abstract: A trio of recent books raises important questions on how Scripture is handled in halls of (certain kinds of) learning and how such handling affects Scripture's perceived truth and message. One of these books' titles conveys the thrust of all three: *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies*. That is, scholarly study ("biblical studies") has too often robbed Scripture of the respect it deserves. This essay explores and assesses these books, one by Harvard-trained Hebrew scholar Michael Legaspi and the others by the renowned New Testament scholars Ulrich Wilckens (emeritus, University of Hamburg) and Klaus Berger (emeritus, University of Heidelberg). It concludes that it is not Scripture from which there is need to take leave; the problem is with faulty approaches to reading it.

Every decade or so, at least, sees the rise of a fresh learned movement promising to rewrite the book on the Book. That is, the Bible regarded as the word of God will finally be debunked conclusively. This is an impression often cultivated by the media; actually the conviction that Scripture needs debunking because so much of it is bunk is as ancient as the Scriptures themselves. The good news contained in Scripture regarding God's sure promises of redemption has always found dedicated opponents. OT prophets were executed by their own countrymen. Jesus and his early followers found their saving message a tough sell; the crucifixion of Christ was not a sign of fame and popularity.

In the wake of biblical times, the bitter critique of the pagan philosopher Celsus (ca. a.d. 180) is an early, fairly full example of a negative judgment on Scripture's substance, and one that anticipates many criticisms still current today.² Particularly contemporary is Celsus's contempt, not only for the

¹Public lecture given at Regent College, Vancouver, BC, on July 21, 2014. My thanks to Bessie Li for constructive observations on an early draft. Editor's note: Yarbrough recently contributed two related articles to *Themelios*: Robert W. Yarbrough, "The Embattled Bible: Four More Books," *Them* 34 (2009): 6–25; Yarbrough, "Should Evangelicals Embrace Historical Criticism? The Hays-Ansberry Proposal," *Them* 39 (2014): 37–52.

²See *Celsus on the True Doctrine: A Discourse against Christians* (trans. R. Joseph Hoffmann; New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

holy writings of the Christians, and the Jews too for that matter, but for Christians and Jews themselves. Despite such skepticism (and Celsus is the tip of an iceberg), early Christians generally upheld a high and robust view of God's Word written, as Michael Graves has recently demonstrated.³ More broadly one could think of the history of heresies arising over the centuries. They amount to a series of assaults on Scripture and its truth. One could also think of the critiques, implicit or explicit, of confessional Christian faith and the Book on which it is based represented by its rivals through history and around the world like Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, to name just four.

A curious feature of church history in the West over the last 200 years or so is that theological leadership and pastoral training have increasingly fallen into the hands of figures and schools of thought that reject the Bible's veracity.⁴ I have in mind here especially Germany's universities and theological faculties and then the ripple effects of this in Britain and North America. In his 2012 book *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit: The Idealistic Logic of Modern Theology*,⁵ Gary Dorrien has shown how important Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher, and Schelling have been and continue to be for mainstream Protestant theology. Dorrien argues that even Karl Barth tacitly endorses this heritage, so that his theological protest against it fails to find traction and supports the liberal heritage Barth reacted against.

Dorrien's "modern theology," by which he means mainstream Protestant and post-Protestant theological discourse, has found it compelling to dance to the piping of select German philosophers rather than the purported "thus says the Lord" of the OT or Christ's "Verily, verily" in the NT. Over the last couple of centuries, movements like the Tübingen school, the history of religion school, the so-called first quest of the historical Jesus, and Bultmann's demythologizing hermeneutic traced a progressively lower view of the Bible's truthfulness. In more recent times there was the myth of God incarnate debate in the 1970s and 1980s, the rise of postmodernism with grandiose claims to have done away with all absolutes, and the Jesus Seminar climaxing in the late Robert Funk's book *Honest to Jesus*,⁶ which announced the end of creedal credibility insofar as it rested on biblical testimony. Prominent among influential Bible detractors today is Bart D. Ehrman, a NT scholar at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Others like Princeton University's Elaine Pagels have weighed in, speaking for thousands of their colleagues worldwide.

In July 2014 the prestigious Society of Biblical Literature unveiled its "Bible Odyssey" website, showcasing the results of the latest biblical scholarship for the benefit of the world. Scrolling down, the first featured link asks, "Does the Bible Relate to History 'as It Actually Happened'?" (scare quotes conjuring up the memory of discredited historian Leopold von Ranke). The stated answer: "'History' is an inappropriate designation for biblical narratives, but the stories nonetheless convey important truths."⁷ In other words, the Bible is generally not true, historically speaking, though we who know the truth apart from the Bible may be able to spot affirmations of what we know to be true in the Bible. This essentially articulates what Langdon Gilkey expressed in the early 1960s when he reminded Western

³ Michael Graves, *The Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture: What the Early Church Can Teach Us* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014).

⁴ For both critique and defense of the history, see Roy A. Harrisville, *Pandora's Box Opened: An Examination and Defense of Historical-Critical Method and Its Master Practitioners* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014).

⁵ Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Reviewed in *Them* 37 (2012): 552–56.

⁶ Subtitled *Jesus for a New Millennium* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996).

⁷ Nicola Denzey Lewis, "Does the Bible Relate to History 'as It Actually Happened'?" <http://www.bibleodyssey.org/tools/bible-basics/does-the-bible-relate-to-history-as-it-actually-happened> (accessed July 7, 2014).

colleagues that the hegemonic “we” of the university decides questions about God and truth without regard to what the Bible might have to say about such things.⁸

In this essay I want to make the simple suggestion that despite the Western post-Christian and sometimes anti-Christian rhetoric pervasive in much scholarship and media coverage of it, it is not yet time to say bye-bye to the Bible as a truth-telling book in a comprehensive sense, not just here and there but in all God intends to affirm in it rightly interpreted.

In a sense this is not a new claim. Voices from within the disciplines of biblical scholarship have protested criticism’s excesses repeatedly from the start of the “critical” movement in the late 1700s. Lessing (not a biblical scholar but influential over many biblical scholars) was opposed by the not unlettered Hamburg pastor John Melchior Goetze.⁹ F. C. Baur found his scholarly equal in J. C. K. von Hofmann¹⁰ and later Lightfoot, Westcott, and Hort in England. Troeltschian historiography was ably addressed by Adolf Schlatter.¹¹ Bultmann’s potpourri and synthesis of earlier hermeneutical trajectories (like that of Baur and Harnack) were clearly identified and confessionally corrected by fellow NT scholar (and Nazi adversary¹²) Martin Albertz.¹³ In recent years Martin Hengel¹⁴ and Paul Minear¹⁵ expressed consternation at the pretensions and miscues of “critical” learning and called for more responsible scholarship.

Moreover, going back to Old Princeton, American confessional stalwarts (e.g., B. B. Warfield) and later explicitly evangelical voices (like scholars at institutions including Wheaton College, the early Fuller Seminary, and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) took up the gauntlet of what they viewed as unfounded critical outlooks.¹⁶ Evangelical scholarship sought to work out handling of the data that was more responsible both historically and theologically. This effort continues today, some of it chronicled in *Themelios*.

⁸ Langdon Gilkey, “Cosmology, Ontology, and the Travail of Biblical Language,” *JR* 41 (1961): 194–205.

⁹ See, e.g., K. R. Hagenbach, *History of the Church in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (trans. John F. Hurst; New York: Charles Scribner, 1869), 1:108, 282–88. Lessing’s criticisms of Goetze were regarded by later critics as devastating. But Hagenbach comments, “It is difficult to present a connected theological system of Lessing. Indeed, he had none” (288).

¹⁰ See Robert Yarbrough, *The Salvation Historical Fallacy? Reassessing the History of New Testament Theology* (History of Biblical Interpretation Series 2; Leiden: Deo, 2004), ch. 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, ch. 2.

¹² See, e.g., Victoria Barnett, *For the Soul of the People: Protest against Hitler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 93–94. For refusing to cooperate with the Gestapo and for employing non-Aryan (i.e., Jewish) women in the Berlin church college over which he had jurisdiction, Albertz was sentenced to 18 months in prison. Albertz collaborated with Bonhoeffer against the Reich as early as 1935 (*ibid.*, 132).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 299–316.

¹⁴ See, e.g., William Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, vol. 3: *From C. H. Dodd to Hans Dieter Betz* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 317.

¹⁵ Paul Minear, *The Bible and the Historian: Breaking the Silence about God in Biblical Studies* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002).

¹⁶ To give just one example from a Wheaton New Testament scholar, see Merrill C. Tenney, “Reversals of New Testament Criticism” (Carl F.H. Henry, ed.; *Revelation and the Bible: Contemporary Evangelical Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958 / London: The Tyndale Press, 1959), 353–67.

But these conflicts will never be resolved and done with. Learning (or the pretense to learning) progresses, and each new generation must work out its response both to old paradigms and new proposals. At the present time three books, each from very different angles, make similar arguments with deep learning and conviction. Below I wish to call attention first to a book by Michael Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies*, 2011.¹⁷ Legaspi argues that biblical scholarship as currently constructed should no longer be the gatekeeper of the meaning of the Bible for those who read it as Holy Scripture, a legitimate undertaking in his view. I then look at two books by German NT scholars. The first is Ulrich Wilckens, *Kritik der Bibelkritik. Wie die Bibel wieder zur Heiligen Schrift werden kann*, 2012.¹⁸ The second is Klaus Berger, *Die Bibelfälscher. Wie wir um die Wahrheit betrogen werden*, 2013.¹⁹ Wilckens and Berger are internationally famous NT scholars who late in their careers are speaking out against the destructive hermeneutical tendencies of the exegetical guilds to which they belong.²⁰

1. Michael Legaspi, The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies

This book appears in the series Oxford Studies in Historical Theology. Its central character is the OT scholar Johann David Michaelis (1717–1791). The story it tells regards the place of Scripture in eighteenth-century Germany. The Bible was co-opted by government via the universities to promote not theological and salvific ends but political, civic, and social ones.²¹

Michaelis and contemporaries like Johann Gottfried Herder and Immanuel Kant did not openly advance an “aggressive heterodoxy” but promoted a use of the Bible that was “amenable to new intellectual projects” (ix). They did not directly attack the Bible but shrewdly undermined it. Theirs was “a conservative progressivism that took the cultural obsolescence of confessional Christianity for granted and aimed at the creation of an irenic social order based on reason, morality, and the growing power of the state” (ix–x). A result was the creation of “the academic Bible,” a book “oriented toward the social and political goals of the conservative Enlightenment” (x).

Chapter one of the book “argues that the Bible in the West ceased to function as catholic [small c] scripture in the period following the Reformation and that, as a result, biblical scholars turned increasingly toward the Bible as *text* to rehabilitate it” (x). In other words, rather than view the Bible as God’s Word to sinners for world redemption, they began to treat it as a mere husk with perhaps no such saving message at its core. We might contrast such a regard for Scripture with Jesus’ claim in John’s Gospel that Moses’ writings point to him (John 5:46), or Paul’s statement to Timothy that Scripture can make one “wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” and ultimately “complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:15, 17). The Bible as understood by Christ and the apostles, first the OT and eventually the NT, was not an academic compilation but a redemptive one. Germany in the Enlightenment era moved in an opposite direction. (Students of the era will know that there were

¹⁷ Michael Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁸ Ulrich Wilckens, *Kritik der Bibelkritik. Wie die Bibel wieder zur Heiligen Schrift werden kann* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Theologie, 2012).

¹⁹ Klaus Berger, *Die Bibelfälscher. Wie wir um die Wahrheit betrogen werden* (München: Pattloch, 2013).

²⁰ Parenthetical references in the following three sections refer to pages in the corresponding book.

²¹ What Legaspi shows regarding Michaelis has precursors in the work of Spinoza: see Jeffrey L. Morrow, “Historical Criticism as Secular Allegorism: The Case of Spinoza,” *Letter & Spirit* 8 (2013): 189–221.

precursors to this in the form of Deists in England, scholars like Richard Simon in France, and other movements.)

Chapter two tells how Göttingen in Germany became a center in the study of the Bible in this new sense. This came about through incorporating it into scholarship of the humanities. Chapter three describes how, parallel to the study of ancient Greek and Rome, study of ancient Israel emerged. This resulted in “a critically reconstructed antiquity fully intelligible to modern ideals” (xi) rather than a collection of writings testifying to the saving work of God and affording entrée to relationship with him in the context of the heritage of biblical faith. The OT was about a dead-and-gone past, not a book like that extolled by the Psalmist, the Torah (law), which was his life-giving delight and meditation day and night (cf. Ps 1).

Chapter four details how Michaelis worked at presenting the Bible “embedded in a deep and dead past before it could be operated on and, ultimately, revived” (xi). He achieved the feat of making the Bible seem corpse-like in part by stressing the teaching of Hebrew. For Luther and Calvin the original languages had breathed fresh life into Scripture; now those languages were used to try to bury the Book. Michaelis also relativized “religious interpretive frameworks,” promoting instead a normative academic framework that would crowd out the religious. In some ways this marks the beginning of German philosophers being given the lead in providing the hermeneutical matrix that determines Scripture’s meaning (on this more below).

Chapter five marks the success of Michaelis’s program to read the Bible aesthetically, as literature, “allowing scholars to operate independently of scriptural frameworks for understanding the Bible” (xi). By transforming prophets into poets, for example, “foretellers of Christ” became “poets of personal passion” (xi).

Chapter six describes how Michaelis remade the all-important Moses. “Michaelis denied that the Old Testament . . . had any kind of direct relevance or authority in modern life.” This quite contradicts how figures like Christ and Paul understood Moses, to say nothing of Irenaeus and Augustine, or Luther and Calvin, or countless practicing Christians worldwide today. Michaelis used the scholarly tools “of history and philology to remake the biblical tradition, to see the value of biblical figures by new, nonconfessional lights” (xi–xii). The effect was to cast Moses in Stygian darkness. The well-known anti-Semitism of much German biblical scholarship and idealist philosophy has roots in this era.²²

Legaspi reflects on the implications of his findings for study of the Bible today. Clear understanding turns, he writes,²³

on the way that the problematic relation between the scriptural and academic Bibles is ultimately negotiated. The two are opposed to one another, but I believe it is necessary to reconceive the nature of this opposition. Too often it has been seen, unhelpfully, as an expression of stale antitheses between reason and faith, history and revelation, the secular and the sacred. The history of modern biblical criticism shows that the

²² See, e.g., Anders Gerdmar, *Roots of Theological Antisemitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann* (ed. Hava Tirosh-Samuels and Giuseppe Veltri; Studies in Jewish History and Culture; Leiden: Brill, 2009). For the outcome generations later, as well as lamentable rootage in Luther, see, e.g., Christopher Probst, *Demonizing the Jews: Luther and the Protestant Church in Nazi Germany* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

²³ Quotations in this and the next four paragraphs are from *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies*, 169.

fundamental antitheses were not intellectual or theological, but rather social, moral, and political. Academic critics did not dispense with the authority of a Bible resonant with religion; they redeployed it. Yet they did so in a distinctive form that has run both parallel and perpendicular to church appropriations of the Bible. (xii)

In other words, the academic Bible ran parallel to the scriptural Bible in being viewed as visionary, authoritative, and worthy of attention. But it also ran perpendicular, on a collision course with the Bible's call to repentance and faith in the crucified and risen Christ.²⁴ The scriptural Bible summons the reader to heed God; the academic Bible is a domain for the exercise of scholars' methodologies and certainties drawn from sources other than the Bible.

In his conclusion, Legaspi sees a place for both approaches to the Bible, but with careful delineation by both parties. He grants "the moral seriousness of the modern critical project and, to a modest degree, the social and political utility of the academic Bible." He also grants "the intellectual value of academic criticism."

Yet he thinks that it "has become clear . . . that academic criticism in its contemporary form cannot offer a coherent, intellectually compelling account of what this information is actually *for*." True, "there is value in the social and moral by-products of academic criticism, in things like tolerance, reasonableness, and self-awareness." Yet "these rather thin, pale virtues seem only thinner and paler when compared to the classic virtues associated with the scriptural Bible." Legaspi notes that, in the Bible of the church, "instead of bland tolerance" there is "*love* that sacrifices self; instead of agreeable reasonability, *hope* that opens the mind to goodness and greatness that is not yet fully imagined; and instead of critical self-awareness, *faith* that inspires and animates the human heart."²⁵

By comparison, "academic criticism tempers belief, while scriptural reading edifies and directs it. In this sense, they work at cross-purposes. Yet each mode presumes the value of knowledge." In the end, Legaspi states somewhat hauntingly,

perhaps the two are closest . . . when in the brief moment before thought recognizes itself, the mind wavers between words that have suddenly become strange, and knowledge that is a choice between knowing what the text said and knowing what the words might be saying. It is a choice, at such a moment, between the letter that has been revived, and the letter that never died.

I take "the letter that has been revived" to be an interpretation of the academic Bible in keeping with contemporary dictates. I take "the letter that never died" to be Scripture as the living and active word of God, "sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb 4:12 ESV). I take Legaspi's point to be that we *should* say bye-bye to the Bible as a monolith, whether the errant ancient book requiring reinterpretation by scholars zealous to inject into the Bible each generation's evolving social ideals, or the divine oracle gaining nothing from scholarly investigation of it. When the Bible is merely demoted to a wax nose suiting either iconoclastic or fideist ideologies, it might as well be shelved.

At the same time, we live in a time where Western criticism has been permitted more say about God's Word in Christ's church than it deserves. Criticism has not so disproved Scripture's truth as to

²⁴ Repentance is highlighted as a road too seldom traveled by biblical scholars in Harrisville, *Pandora's Box Opened*, 350.

²⁵ Italics in original.

discredit the traditional reverence shown to Scripture in the church. It is fully justified for Christians, not only on faith but also on empirical grounds (to say nothing of christological warrant), to preach, teach, worship, and live in line with the guidance of Scripture, despite the negative verdicts on the academic Bible viewed by scholars as a cadaver for their thought experiments. For they conduct their probes not solely on the basis of facts or reason as they claim but rather informed by convictions and ideologies, often hidden, that too often predetermine their own work.

The next two books I will mention strengthen Legaspi's claims.

2. Ulrich Wilckens, Kritik der Bibelkritik. Wie die Bibel wieder zur Heiligen Schrift werden kann (Critique of Biblical Criticism: How the Bible Can Again Become Holy Scripture)²⁶

Ulrich Wilckens, born 1928, is well-known for critical commentaries on Romans²⁷ and John's Gospel.²⁸ He also wrote a multi-volume NT theology. On the back cover of the third part of volume one of that theology, it promises that volume three will present "a critical, methodologically new orientation" to the discipline. "The history of historical criticism of the Bible will itself be subjected to historical criticism." This book appeared in 2012.

The book, while important, is disappointing. Joel White of the Freie Theologische Hochschule, Gießen, Germany points out how "the small remnant of conservative biblical scholars in Germany" including himself eagerly awaited the book.²⁹ On the positive side for White is that fact that Wilckens affirms "the historicity of the resurrection, the atonement, and NT ethics . . . as the revelation of the character of God."³⁰ White points out that this "is already a revolution when viewed against the background of mainstream German scholarship."³¹ But White concludes: "It is just not the revolution" that many were hoping for.³²

Two things weaken the book. One is that it leaves untouched most of the contestable consensus claims of NT scholarship as regards, for example, pseudepigraphy of most of its contents. By that I mean, for example, that Wilckens continues to support the view that the four Gospels were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, nor were many of the NT letters written by their purported authors. The cogency of the NT throughout history for many has lain in its appearance of preserving eyewitness or first-generation testimony. Wilckens does nothing to defend the notion that those who wrote the NT actually had empirical grounds for their historical assertions.

The other disappointment is that Wilckens's positive proposal is so thin, covering just 54 pages. This too-brief section appears under the heading "How can the historically interpreted Bible become Holy Scripture again?" It touches on noble and worthwhile subjects, but as a positive alternative to the

²⁶ Translation of all citations from Wilckens and Berger in this essay are by Robert Yarbrough.

²⁷ This three-volume work is available in a one-volume student edition: *Der Brief an die Römer* (2d ed.; Neukirchener: Neukirchener/Patmos, 2014).

²⁸ *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (18th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000).

²⁹ Review in *BBR* 24 (2014): 138.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 139.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

critical consensus, the section is so laconic and limited as to come off lame. The concluding appeal to God's love in Christ as what will renew study of the OT and NT (170) is especially vague and toothless. I am reminded of what Nobel Laureate and anti-apartheid activist Nadine Gordimer wrote. She died on July 14, 2014, at the age of 90. One of her memorable and wise quotes about apartheid government was this: "You can't change a regime on the basis of compassion. There's got to be something harder."³³ Wilckens needs something with more hermeneutical steel, and I might add more gospel light, than his positive proposal contains.

Where the book shines, however, is in the first 100 plus pages. We find here an eight-point summary of "the history of historical-critical exegesis." Potted histories of this often tell the story in a triumphalist way, from the point of view of the skeptical mainline today. In that approach a narration moves from some early pioneers of anti-creedal Christianity, like Reimarus and Semler and Lessing, to synthesizers of post-Christian convictions like F. C. Baur and D. F. Strauss, to movements credited with destroying the Bible's historical claims like the history-of-religion school, to the twentieth century with its succession of hermeneutical approaches in Bultmann's wake and his extreme skepticism toward the Gospels and plain denial of Jesus' bodily resurrection. Since about the 1960s biblical hermeneutics has moved in so many directions that terms like methodological diversity or pluralism are used. It might be more accurate to say anarchy. Almost anything may be and is supported from the Bible by someone somewhere these days.

Wilckens is not afraid to say that something is deeply flawed in where we have arrived. There is, he thinks, a sense in which Scripture *is* holy, and there's no necessary reason why scholars must attack its hallowed status and message as they have and do. So he exposes the skeletal background of the history of biblical criticism in eight moves.

1. *The rise of historical biblical criticism in the time of the Enlightenment.* Like Legaspi, Wilckens notes the political push at this time to make the Bible a socially unifying force through the universities, which provided pastors for the churches and so indirectly had great influence over society. But Wilckens also performs the immense service of owning up to the *assumptions*—not proven truths but dogmatic assertions—informing this push. He lists five fundamental convictions of scholars in this era, convictions that are still in place for most scholars working in biblical studies fields today: (1) The many miracles in the Bible including those worked by Jesus must be disputed and denied by every reasonable Christian. (2) Foremost among the miracles that must be and were denied is the resurrection of Jesus. (3) The same unsparing criticism applied to Christ's resurrection was applied to the biblical assertion of the saving power of Christ's death in place of sinners who may be saved by trusting in him. (4) Jesus was a moral ethical teacher, the greatest in the history of humankind, whom to follow required the repudiation of all morals based on authority outside the individual. (5) The church is no longer necessary for the Christian, and more importantly there is nothing binding about its doctrines for the Christian's faith, nothing normative in its directives for the Christian's life, and nothing authoritative about its leaders for the church's members.

This is the beginning of bye-bye to the Bible in the Western university, which in Europe's state church systems was tasked with mediating the knowledge of the now-discredited, very unholy Bible to ministers, churches, and society as a whole.

³³ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/10967194/Nadine-Gordimer-Ten-inspiring-quotes.html>. Accessed July 15, 2014.

2. *The development of this critical trajectory in the nineteenth century.* Wilckens notes the effect of F. C. Baur and D. F. Strauss by around 1850, and how already by this time pastors in Germany had to give up hope of finding help for their preaching from “critical” exegesis, because the radical historical reconstructions being proposed by scholars could not support any longer a Christian understanding of the biblical texts.

3. *Nineteenth-century biblical scholarship in the context of the reigning German idealist philosophers* (Kant, his successors Fichte and Schelling, Hegel, and finally Nietzsche and his nihilism). Wilckens does not say that liberal theology followed Nietzsche but that it lacked the resources to resist the implications of his destructive social vision. Nietzsche had more impact in the culture than the gospel message did, in part because theologians and Bible scholars no longer believed much less proclaimed the Christian message.

4. *The convictions and effect of F. D. E. Schleiermacher, recognized today as the father of Western Protestant liberalism.* Schleiermacher dissolves Christianity into personal subjectivism, rejects the OT as binding or even relevant, agrees that the four Gospels have no historical value, and values Jesus only as the example of the true human living with the awareness of oneness with God. The Christian task is not to trust and follow him as the risen Son of God but to feel God like Jesus our model did. This is not and never was Christianity, historically speaking, as J. Gresham Machen pointed out years ago in his classic volume *Christianity and Liberalism*.

5. *The radical criticism of the Bible in the second half of the nineteenth century and its incorporation into liberal theology.* This is largely a cameo of the history-of-religion school and its leading thinker Ernst Troeltsch, who saw himself as a disciple of Schleiermacher.

6. *Opposition to the biblical criticism of liberal theology as well as attempts to “overcome” it.* Names or movements here include the Erlangen school with its salvation-historical outlook associated with J. C. K. von Hofmann, Adolf Schlatter, curiously Albrecht Ritschl (who in my opinion doesn’t belong in this section at all), Theodor Zahn, and Martin Kähler. Wilckens closes with the observation of how compromised conservative interpretation became because it felt it had to spend so much time matching up with and vanquishing liberal exegesis. It lost its way to Christian explication of the Bible’s message for the church by making its mission the correction of liberal interpretation in the academy. It is at this point I think Wilckens does least justice to Adolf Schlatter, whose scholarship was always prized by Bible-believers at various levels because it opened up Scripture’s message so profoundly.

7. *Roman Catholic exegesis before and after the Enlightenment.* There was official rejection of Protestant liberal hermeneutics, but seeds were sown that have by now enabled erosion in Catholic convictions about the Bible among its own biblical scholars.

8. *The tumult that arose between the World Wars—and that in many respects has not subsided today.* Wilckens treats the state of faith, liberal and conservative, among scholars during World War I, the rise of dialectical theology and Karl Barth after the war, and Rudolf Bultmann and his influence. The outcome of dialectical theology by the 1960s was, according to Wilckens, that it did not succeed at replacing liberalism with something more compelling. In fact, the 1960s saw a return to many of the convictions that reigned in the 19th century.

To summarize, Wilckens shows that after 200 years of what he calls *Bibelkritik*, scholarly interpretation has not arrived at agreed-on results but is currently in a time warp: “Presently, to a great extent the theologian of the history-of-religion school, Ernst Troeltsch [1865–1923], has become the leading light of a new and growing rearticulation of nineteenth-century liberal theology in the twenty-

first century” (114). Wilckens sees the current state of biblical scholarship, the methods that it prizes, and the assumptions that inform it, in need not of simple reform but of *Überwindung* (overcoming)—the whole approach needs to be scrapped and revamped. He seems to indicate that if positive-minded Protestant and Catholic scholars could get on the same page, they might together be able to “overcome” “the heritage of the Enlightenment in the entire tradition of historical criticism of the Bible” (115). But he does not think this is going to happen.

Wilckens shows, then, that he is to a large degree breaking ranks with the discipline he supported all his life because it has not illumined the Bible but rather suppressed and scrambled its message by applying alien and unfounded ideologies in its interpretation. He shows the intellectual and spiritual bankruptcy of how the Bible has been handled. And in an important respect he agrees with Legaspi: the need is not to bid Scripture as God’s Word farewell but to quit allowing its message to be dictated by interpreters hostile to that message and seeking to use the Bible to promote primarily political or moral or ideological ends, whether positive or negative.

3. Klaus Berger, *Die Bibelfälscher. Wie wir um die Wahrheit betrogen werden* (Bible Falsifiers: How We Are Being Robbed of the Truth)

You can’t tell a book by its cover. But the dust jacket comments on this book, some of them composed by the author, are telling. The book is billed as “an angry reckoning.” Berger, born 1940 and emeritus professor at the University of Heidelberg, is ticked off. Why? On the back cover of the book’s dust jacket we read:

Biblical research is swarming with thought-policing, ignorance, and philosophical fashions that are about as plausible as fairy-tales. Worse, as a result theologians unwittingly further the agenda of atheists. They block the way to saving faith. Berger argues: Jesus was no mere do-gooder, no faith-healer or gentle wisdom teacher. He was rather living God who has become part of our history. This book gives the reader access to a Jesus of Nazareth who brings both perspectives into view: his human and his divine nature.

The book, twice as long as Wilckens’s, begins with a lengthy introduction. The basic drift: “Two hundred years of intense and intelligent biblical research has desolated our churches” (9). Berger with much sarcasm and sometimes bitter humor serves up an exposé of the German biblical studies enterprise in those universities that provide pastors for the churches.

This is not an academic book but a deeply informed popular-level one. His introductory section calls attention to errors and pretensions in what he calls “liberal exegesis.” Among sample errors are the claims (1) that Jesus’ followers expected his imminent return but were wrong, and (2) that John the Baptist was not a witness of or to Jesus. Regarding John’s (non-) witness, Berger interacts with Gerd Theissen, another German NT scholar, who argues that point. Berger details and destroys Theissen’s argument. Berger makes this programmatic observation about how Theissen handles the many NT passages that suggest John the Baptizer *was* a witness to Jesus: “A hermeneutic of mistrust literally devours the [historical] reports” (30). In some ways that describes the whole book: in dozens of cases Berger applies the logical skepticism to the writings of his colleagues that they apply to the Bible.

Berger also makes the point already seen in Wilckens: German scholars like Bultmann worked hard to give university interpretation of the Bible normative, “scientific” status. They succeeded; in Legaspi’s term they have established an “academic Bible.” But Berger asserts,

the price for this [in the twentieth century] was that the philosophical anthropology of Martin Heidegger became the gate through which all theology had to pass. That has expanded today so that psychology, sociology, religious theory, and political ethics are made into vehicles for theology. It’s no different than how Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century made Aristotle’s philosophy the hermeneutical framework for theology. These are all noble efforts intended to strike blows for liberation, but in reality they clamped theology into new and entirely godless systems. (35–36)

Berger points out how scholars in both Protestant and now Catholic traditions feel free to deny the teachings of the historic Christian faith by denying what the Bible asserts. He cites NT scholar Rudolf Pesch as an example of a Catholic who denies the Virgin Birth. Had Berger published more recently he might have added the detailed study by British evangelical NT scholar Andrew Lincoln, who argues similarly.³⁴

Since even evangelicals, who have long been upholding the historic Christian view of Scripture’s truthfulness, are now arguing against its clear assertions, Berger’s dramatic-sounding statement in his introduction gains plausibility. The same destructive approach to the Bible and ultimately the Christian faith observed in leading university and Protestant circles

is gaining entrance and traction in the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox communions. But this means that this very strange science will soon take on a visible, global-political character. Before the Christian communions of the West collapse from their own inner weakness, like the churches of North Africa did centuries ago under Islamic pressure, my book is intended as an urgent appeal for a particular kind of Reformation: a reformation of the so-called historical-critical liberal exegesis. (10)

After Berger’s long introduction, the bulk of the book (43–296) is a section called “the demolition [*Zerstörung*] of the New Testament.” One finds here nine subsections, listed here to give a more definite feel for Berger’s argument:

1. The demolition of Christianity in the classroom and from the pulpit
2. The most important errors of liberal exegesis
3. The preliminary assumptions of the opponents [of Scripture’s truth]
4. Manipulation of the passion texts
5. Ruthless secularization
6. The domestication of the apostle Paul
7. The infancy narratives as a playground for radical biblical criticism (Jesus’ childhood like the passion narratives are full of legends; Mary was not a virgin; Bethlehem was not Jesus’ birthplace; there was no fleeing to Egypt by the holy family)

³⁴ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Born of a Virgin? Reconceiving Jesus in the Bible, Tradition, and Theology* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2013). Cf. the review in *Them* 39, no. 2 (2014): 367–69.

8. Rewriting history at will (Jesus was married; no hell but universal redemption; Jesus did not institute the Lord's Supper; Jesus did not pray the Lord's prayer)
9. How did this exegesis ever get started?

Throughout these nine sections, Berger cites scholars who hold these views and interacts with them, sometimes citing documentation he thinks shows them wrong, sometimes using other means to demonstrate the unworkableness of their position.

Berger's last section treats the future of exegesis and explores what it would take for things to possibly ever change. The section includes presentations of the gospel message as Berger understands it and even prayer to Jesus Christ.

It is obvious that Klaus Berger does not wish to say bye-bye to the Bible but to encourage fresh reading of and belief in it that will connect people with God in a redemptive way. Berger's growing disgust over the years with how the Bible is treated in the German Protestant church and by his university colleagues is not the full story of his notoriety; he had more than one of his 60 doctoral students refused university positions because of their Christian convictions. One was a Catholic woman in the late 1960s; another was evangelical NT scholar Armin Baum just a couple of years ago. To express his displeasure Berger left the German Protestant church in 2006 and returned to the church he was baptized in, the Catholic church. He also became a Cistercian brother.

In a final word at the end of his book, Berger summarizes his problem with historical criticism in Germany and then where he thinks things are headed in this world for lived-out faithfulness to Christian Scripture. Here's the problem summarized:

The historical-critical exegesis of the last 200 years has smashed all the china in the house of Christianity right down to the last flower vase. This is evident to anyone able and willing to see. It has led many theology students to abandon their study and provided people with cheap justification for leaving the church. It has promoted atheism and not united the church but splintered it even more. It has showcased the critical mentality and presumably converted no one to Christianity. So it is effective, but not productive—like an acid used for cleaning out toilets. (345)

Here's his projection of where things are headed:

If I'm not mistaken, the retired Pope Benedict's volumes on Jesus pursue a goal that is not far from this book: spring cleaning in a church that is about to enter hard times. What that means in New Testament terms: open heart surgery on the church. The archbishop of Chicago furnishes commentary here, as Francis Cardinal George wrote: I expect to die in bed, my successor will die in prison and his successor will die a martyr in the public square. (346)

4. Conclusion

Bye-bye to Scripture? In this essay we have found agreement among a trio of scholarly statements. It is not Scripture from which there is need to take leave; the problem is with faulty approaches to reading it. Klaus Berger has left us with a rather chilling projection of what may happen to public leaders who do not follow the trend to say what the culture says they ought to say about the Bible and its teaching.

An American Catholic writing for the *National Catholic Register*, Tim Drake, did a little research on the Francis Cardinal George quote that Berger cites. Berger did not misquote the Chicago archbishop, but the quote did go on. Tim Drake tracked it down. I wish to close by citing what George said in full.³⁵ This is not to encourage us to become Catholics, though worse things could happen, but to remind us to count the cost of discipleship, if God's Word is as true to reality as we confess, and to encourage us to seek and find the right side of history as we live out either a higher or a lower view of the Bible—and we all have to decide. What I mean by the right side of history will become clear from Cardinal George's original statement delivered in autumn 2012.³⁶

I expect to die in bed, my successor will die in prison and his successor will die a martyr in the public square. His successor will pick up the shards of a ruined society and slowly help rebuild civilization, as the church has done so often in human history

God sustains the world, in good times and in bad. Catholics, along with many others, believe that only one person has overcome and rescued history: Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of the Virgin Mary, savior of the world and head of his body, the church. Those who gather at his cross and by his empty tomb, no matter their nationality, are on the right side of history. Those who lie about him and persecute or harass his followers in any age might imagine they are bringing something new to history, but they inevitably end up ringing the changes on the old human story of sin and oppression. There is nothing "progressive" about sin, even when it is promoted as "enlightened."

The world divorced from the God who created and redeemed it inevitably comes to a bad end. It's on the wrong side of the only history that finally matters.

The books examined above suggest that the right side of history is a view of the Bible, and the Triune God who gave it, that knows better than to bid these sacred realities farewell.

Evangelical thinkers can rejoice that Legaspi, Wilckens, and Berger (with inspiration from Cardinal George) concur in so many ways with perennial evangelical objections to aspects of mainstream approaches to Scripture. It remains for us to move forward with renewed confidence in the veracity and persuasive potential of the Book in study and in ministry, alert to learn from but not intimidated by skeptical voices, whether from the mainstream sources addressed in the three books above, or from mainstream imitators that sprout anew from time to time in our own ranks.

³⁵Tim Drake, *National Catholic Register*, <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/tim-drake/the-myth-and-the-reality-of-ill-die-in-my-bed> (accessed July 17, 2014).

³⁶<http://www.catholicnewworld.com/cnwonline/2012/1021/cardinal.aspx> (accessed July 18, 2014).

Three Reflections on Evangelical Academic Publishing¹

— Andrew David Naselli —

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Abstract: In light of John A. D’Elia’s *A Place at the Table* and Stanley E. Porter’s *Inking the Deal*, this article shares three reflections on evangelical academic publishing. (1) Evangelical scholarship is a gift to evangelicals for which they should be grateful. (2) Evangelical academics should aim to be academically responsible more than being academically respectable. (3) Evangelical scholarship is ultimately about glorifying God by serving Christ’s church.

I recently read two books back-to-back that provoked me to think about my philosophy of publishing:

1. John A. D’Elia. *A Place at the Table: George Eldon Ladd and the Rehabilitation of Evangelical Scholarship in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. xxvi + 271 pp.
2. Stanley E. Porter. *Inking the Deal: A Guide for Successful Academic Publishing*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010. xi + 191 pp.

I recommend both books to fellow evangelical academics but with some caveats. (By “evangelical academics,” I refer to those who are evangelicals in a theological and not merely a sociological sense² and who serve in the academic world, especially professors who teach exegesis and theology.) The books precipitated three reflections on evangelical academic publishing.³

Before I share those reflections, five qualifications are noteworthy:

¹Thanks to friends who examined a draft of this essay and shared helpful feedback, especially Mike Bird, Don Carson, Nathan Finn, Wayne Grudem, Scot McKnight, Dane Ortlund (who originally encouraged me to write this essay), Owen Strachan, Justin Taylor, and my colleagues at Bethlehem College and Seminary, particularly Jason DeRouchie, Travis Myers, John Piper, Tom Steller, and Brian Tabb. Thanks also to John D’Elia and Stan Porter for cordially and critically corresponding with me after I shared a draft of this essay with them.

²Cf. Andrew David Naselli, “Conclusion,” in *Four Views on the Spectrum of Evangelicalism* (ed. Andrew David Naselli and Collin Hansen; Counterpoints; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 209–10.

³This focuses specifically on *publishing*. About sixteen years ago *Themelios* published an essay on evangelical scholarship in general: Graham Cole, “The Evangelical and Scholarship—Personal Reflections,” *Them* 24, no. 1 (1998): 3–12.

1. This isn't a review article, nor do I comprehensively summarize and evaluate each book.⁴ Here is the gist of each book: (a) D'Elia focuses on Ladd's motivation for his publishing strategy as an evangelical academic. He traces Ladd's life primarily with reference to that one issue. (b) Porter gives practical and philosophical advice about academic publishing to two groups of people: those whose publishing career is primarily future (i.e., students who aspire to be academics as well as young academics) and veteran academics who are currently stagnant in their publishing.

2. The two books both address academic publishing, but they are very different. By addressing them together, I am not suggesting that Stanley Porter is a modern-day parallel to George Ladd.⁵

3. I don't have sufficient credentials to share vast amounts of wisdom about academic publishing. (a) I didn't earn a PhD from a prestigious secular university (more on that in §3.3.1 below). (b) I'm green. I'm only thirty-four years old. So God willing, most of my publishing is forthcoming. (c) Although I've written some books and articles and reviews, I haven't published multiple books and articles with the most academically prestigious university presses and theological journals.⁶

4. My target audience is two groups: (a) my evangelical academic peers and (b) those who aspire to be scholars, especially PhD students.

5. This is a personal reflection, so it is somewhat autobiographical.

So on to those three reflections on evangelical academic publishing.

1. Evangelical Scholarship Is a Gift to Evangelicals for Which They Should Be Grateful

Evangelicals should be grateful for evangelical scholarship. It is a gift from God.

Before noting the scholarly contributions of George Ladd, Stanley Porter, and others, it is important to begin by clarifying what scholarship is, especially with reference to publishing.

1.1. What Is Scholarship?

In America *scholarship* typically refers to high-level academic study or achievement, and *scholar* refers to a distinguished academic. I'm not a scholar, but I've worked closely with many scholars and have a good idea of what one does.⁷ The British historian Carl Trueman explains that in England, unlike in America, academics do not call themselves scholars; that is a title that others give to only the most accomplished academics:

[T]he title 'scholar' is not one that you should ever apply to yourself, and its current profusion among the chatterati on the blogs is a sign of precisely the kind of arrogance and hubris against which we all need to guard ourselves. Call me old-fashioned, but to me the word 'scholar' has an honorific ring. It is something that others give to you

⁴Cf. Steven E. Gump's review of Porter's book in *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 42 (2011): 539–44, and Owen Strachan's review of D'Elia's book in *Them* 35 (2010): 163–65.

⁵My reading of D'Elia's book did not influence how I read Porter's book. I read Porter's book first and wrote out my thoughts before reading D'Elia's book. I'm treating them in reverse order in this article since (1) Ladd preceded Porter and (2) D'Elia's book was published before Porter's.

⁶See <http://www.andynaselli.com/publications>.

⁷E.g., I recently spent eight years working as D. A. Carson's research assistant, six of them full-time.

when, and only when, you have made a consistent and outstanding contribution to a particular scholarly field (and, no, completion of a Ph.D. does not count).⁸

I learned the kind of true and noble scholarship that Trueman commends from a thoughtful fundamentalist theologian. In 2008 Kevin Bauder wrote a series of twelve short essays on scholarship in his seminary's periodical.⁹

Bauder argues that earning a PhD provides scholarly training but does not make one a scholar: "The Ph.D. is to scholarship what a driver's license is to NASCAR. Finding a scholar who hasn't earned it would be pretty difficult, but simply possessing the degree is merely a step along the way toward scholarship. To put it bluntly, I've known many a dim bulb who claimed a Ph.D."¹⁰

Nor does simply publishing make one a scholar: "Granted, scholars *do* publish, but not all publication is scholarly in nature. Scholars *as scholars* do not write for popular readers."¹¹ Nor does serving as a professor automatically make one a scholar: "Most professors are not scholars and some scholars are not professors."¹²

Scholars advance the academic conversation through publications for the scholarly community based on specialized research: "their goal is to persuade other scholars. Whatever popular writing a scholar may print is simply irrelevant to her or his standing as a scholar."¹³ "Scholarly writing is careful, meticulous, dispassionate, and usually quite tedious for the general public. Like it or not, however, such writing is what shapes the thinking of the academy, and whatever shapes academic thinking will sooner or later find its way into the popular mind."¹⁴

This doesn't mean that scholars do not write popular-level books and articles. Bauder notes that two scholars he has known and observed

⁸ Carl R. Trueman, "The Way of the Christian Academic," *Them* 33, no. 3 (2008): 6. Cf. D. A. Carson, "The Scholar as Pastor: Lessons from the Church and the Academy," in *The Pastor as Scholar and the Scholar as Pastor: Reflections on Life and Ministry* (ed. David Mathis and Owen Strachan; Wheaton: Crossway, 2011), 71.

⁹ I share the gist of these essays in the rest of this section for two reasons: (1) I think Bauder is correct, clear, and concise; (2) this "reflection" article is autobiographical, and Bauder has significantly influenced my view of scholarship. Bauder's series is titled "Fundamentalism and Scholarship," and I've compiled the essays into a single PDF at <http://andynaselli.com/kevin-bauder-fundamentalism-and-scholarship>: Kevin T. Bauder, "Part One: Not Me," *In the Nick of Time* (January 4, 2008): 1–3; Bauder, "Part Two: What Is a Scholar?," *In the Nick of Time* (January 11, 2008): 1–3; Bauder, "Part Three: Hazards of Scholarship," *In the Nick of Time* (January 18, 2008): 1–3; Bauder, "Part Four: Does Fundamentalism Need Scholars?," *In the Nick of Time* (January 25, 2008): 1–3; Bauder, "Part Five: Does Fundamentalism Have Scholars?," *In the Nick of Time* (February 1, 2008): 1–3; Bauder, "Part Six: How Do We Get Scholars?," *In the Nick of Time* (February 8, 2008): 1–3; Bauder, "Part Seven: To Make a Scholar," *In the Nick of Time* (February 15, 2008): 1–3; Bauder, "Part Eight: The Scholarly Life," *In the Nick of Time* (February 22, 2008): 1–3; Bauder, "Part Nine: Models of Scholarship," *In the Nick of Time* (February 29, 2008): 1–3; Bauder, "Part Ten: Scholarship and Separatism," *In the Nick of Time* (March 14, 2008): 1–3; Bauder, "Part Eleven: The Dual Responsibility of a Christian Scholar," *In the Nick of Time* (March 21, 2008): 1–3; Bauder, "Part Twelve: The Christian Scholar's Christian Responsibility," *In the Nick of Time* (March 28, 2008): 1–3.

¹⁰ Bauder, "Part One: Not Me," 2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³ Bauder, "Part Two: What Is a Scholar?," 2.

¹⁴ Bauder, "Part Eight: The Scholarly Life," 2.

also engaged in popular writing, and in both cases their writings were enormously persuasive. The power of their popular work, however, derived from the depth of study and thinking that they did in order to produce their scholarly work. They did not become scholars by publishing persuasive, popular books. Rather, their popular books were persuasive precisely because they were already engaged in the work of genuine scholarship.¹⁵

Christian scholars in particular not only *may* but *should* write popular-level works in order to serve Christ's church:

Christian scholars are responsible to expound the faith for the people of God. Christian teaching includes many matters that are difficult to grasp, and God's people are not greatly edified by affirming a faith that they do not understand. Christian scholars have the duty to explain the faith so that ordinary Christians are able to comprehend it and to respond rightly. . . . [T]heir primary role within the churches is to use their gifts in support of pastoral ministry.¹⁶

Scholarship is a noble and necessary calling.¹⁷ So what attitude should evangelicals have toward evangelical scholarship? It is a gift to evangelicals for which they should be grateful.

1.2. Grateful for Ladd's Publications

George Ladd (1911–1982) earned his PhD at Harvard University in 1949, and he later taught at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, for thirty years. In addition to many articles and reviews, he wrote fourteen books. He is one of the most prominent evangelical NT scholars of the twentieth century since he blazed a path for evangelicals to critically and respectably engage with the highest levels of scholarship.

In a 1984 survey that Mark Noll sent to members of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) and the Institute for Biblical Research (IBR), Noll asked, "Please list the three individuals, living or dead, who have exerted the dominant influence on your scholarly work. You do not have to share the conclusions of these individuals but they should be the ones whose work influences you most." For ETS members, the number one individual was John Calvin. Number two was George Ladd. For IBR members, number one was George Ladd.¹⁸

So I was eager to read the first book-length biography of Ladd.¹⁹ It's a riveting story that I could hardly stop reading.

¹⁵ Bauder, "Part Nine: Models of Scholarship," 2.

¹⁶ Bauder, "Part Twelve: The Christian Scholar's Christian Responsibility," 2–3.

¹⁷ Bauder, "Part Four: Does Fundamentalism Need Scholars?," 2. For more on evangelicals and scholarship, see Mark A. Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in America* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991); Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); Noll, *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011). For an accessible introduction to what it takes to become a Bible scholar, see Ben Witherington III, *Is There a Doctor in the House? An Insider's Story and Advice on Becoming a Bible Scholar* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011).

¹⁸ Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 221–22.

¹⁹ John A. D'Elia, *A Place at the Table: George Eldon Ladd and the Rehabilitation of Evangelical Scholarship in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Ladd has influenced most academics through his NT theology.²⁰ But my first exposure to him was in classes where professors who held to traditional dispensationalism severely criticized Ladd for his (a) already-not-yet view of the kingdom of God and (b) posttribulationism.²¹ Overall, I've come to find his arguments for both of these positions compelling, and my respect and gratitude for his work have increased.

1.3. Grateful for Porter's Publications

Stanley Porter (b. 1956) earned his PhD at the University of Sheffield in 1988, and he currently serves as president, dean, *and* professor of New Testament (yes, you read that correctly) at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario.²² "I moved through the ranks," Porter explains, "from instructor to professor and even research professor, before becoming head of my own academic institution by the time I was forty-five."²³ Porter is an academic publishing "insider" since he served as the senior academic editor for Sheffield Academic Press and has authored or edited dozens of academic books and hundreds of academic articles and reviews. He is the most published living NT scholar I know of; his *curriculum vitae* should come in hard cover.²⁴ Porter has already contributed enormously to NT studies and beyond.

So I was eager to read his thoughts on academic publishing. If anyone is qualified to write such a book, he is. I'm glad I read his book. It's helpful, insightful, and motivating.

My first exposure to him was reading his published dissertation, an incredibly dense and erudite argument for verbal aspect theory in the Greek of the NT.²⁵ And ever since then, I've noticed that he is the author or editor of publications on just about every significant area of NT studies. The breadth of his publications is remarkable.

1.4. Grateful for Publications by Other Evangelical Academics

Ladd and Porter are just two examples of *hundreds* of evangelical academics in the last seventy-five years who have made significant contributions to scholarship.²⁶ Many evangelicals have diligently

²⁰ George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (ed. Donald A. Hagner; 2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993). Noll's 1984 survey also asked, "List the five academic books which have had the greatest impact on your own scholarship or the direction of your academic work. Again, you do not have to agree with these books, but they should be ones that exerted a formative influence on your work in biblical studies or theology." For ETS members, the number one work was John Calvin's *Institutes*. Number two was George Ladd's *Theology of the NT*. For IBR members, number one was George Ladd's *Theology of the NT* (Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 224).

²¹ See, e.g., George Eldon Ladd, *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952); Ladd, *The Blessed Hope* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956); Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom: Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959).

²² For more about Porter, see <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/faculty/core/stanley-e-porter>.

²³ Stanley E. Porter, *Inking the Deal: A Guide for Successful Academic Publishing* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 2.

²⁴ See https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/faculty-cv/PorterS_CV.pdf.

²⁵ Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament: With Reference to Tense and Mood* (Studies in Biblical Greek 1; New York: Lang, 1989). Cf. my attempt to summarize it: Andrew David Naselli, "A Brief Introduction to Verbal Aspect Theory in New Testament Greek," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 12 (2007): 17–28, http://andynaselli.com/wp-content/uploads/2007_verbal_aspect.pdf.

²⁶ E.g., see Walter A. Elwell and J. D. Weaver, eds., *Bible Interpreters of the Twentieth Century: A Selection of Evangelical Voices* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999).

earned their PhDs and then gone on to produce publications that have significantly influenced hundreds of thousands of people—including me.

Some of these evangelicals have influenced me to the core of my being. These include John Piper (DTheol, University of Munich, 1974), D. A. Carson (PhD, University of Cambridge, 1975), Wayne Grudem (PhD, University of Cambridge, 1979), Douglas J. Moo (PhD, University of St. Andrews, 1980), Thomas R. Schreiner (PhD, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1983), and Mark Dever (PhD, University of Cambridge, 1992). And the list goes on.

Evangelical scholarship is a gift to evangelicals for which they should be grateful. Evangelical academics who write informed, responsible works for pastors and lay people (in addition to more technical writings) are a gift to Christ's church (more on this below in §3.3.2).

2. Evangelical Academics Should Aim to Be Academically Responsible More Than Being Academically Respectable

2.1. Ladd's Apparently Idolatrous Quest for Academic Respectability

Before describing Ladd's quest, I should explain two words in this section's subheading:

1. *Apparently*. I include the word "apparently" because we cannot infallibly know Ladd's heart. (a) It is hard enough to discern your own motivations for why you do certain activities. It is more difficult to discern someone else's motivations, even when you speak with them face to face. That difficulty multiplies when that person lived in a previous generation and you never interacted with him personally. (b) People are complex. They can have multiple motivations, and there are all sorts of complicating factors involved. One of Ladd's driving motivations was missional: he wanted everyone in the world to hear the gospel. His historical context was very different from evangelical academics today; he was reacting to cultural and academic disengagement.²⁷ And he was a broken man, which is related to his upbringing, family dynamics, personality, and many other factors.

2. *Idolatrous*. Many theologians such as Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Jonathan Edwards have pointed out that idolatry is behind all sin. More recently, Tim Keller penetratingly defines idols from multiple angles:²⁸

²⁷ For a recent study of America's academic milieu in the 1950s, see George M. Marsden, *The Twilight of the American Enlightenment: The 1950s and the Crisis of Liberal Belief* (New York: Basic, 2014)."

²⁸ Timothy Keller, *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope That Matters* (New York: Dutton, 2009). See endnotes 116–17 (pp. 202–3), which cite Luther, Augustine, Calvin, and Edwards, and endnote 5 (pp. 178–79), which begins, "The use of idolatry as a major category for psychological and sociological analysis has been gaining steam again in the last fifteen years in the academic world." See also David Powlison, "Idols of the Heart and 'Vanity Fair,'" *Areopagus* 2, no. 1 (1991): 2–21; Powlison, "Revisiting Idols of the Heart and Vanity Fair," *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 27, no. 3 (2013): 37–68; Brian S. Rosner, "The Concept of Idolatry," *Them* 24, no. 3 (1999): 21–30; Rosner, "Idolatry," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner; Downers Grove: IVP, 2000), 569–75; Rosner, *Greed as Idolatry: The Origin and Meaning of a Pauline Metaphor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); Christopher J. H. Wright, "The Living God Confronts Idolatry," in *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2006), 137–88; G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2008); Julian Hardyman, *Idols: God's Battle for Our Hearts* (Leicester: IVP, 2010); Brad Bigney, *Gospel Treason: Betraying the Gospel with Hidden Idols* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2012).

The human heart is an “idol factory” [that] takes good things like a successful career, love, material possessions, even family, and turns them into ultimate things. Our hearts deify them as the center of our lives, because, we think, they can give us significance and security, safety and fulfillment, if we attain them.²⁹

An idol is something we cannot live without.³⁰

We think that idols are bad things, but that is almost never the case. . . . Anything can serve as a counterfeit god, especially the very best things in life.³¹

[An idol is] anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give. A counterfeit god is anything so central and essential to your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living. . . . If anything becomes more fundamental than God to your happiness, meaning in life, and identity, then it is an idol.³²

Idolatry is not just a failure to obey God, it is a setting of the whole heart on something besides God.³³

While I enthusiastically affirm that evangelical scholarship is valuable, it is all too easy for evangelical academics to make their scholarship an idol. Humans have been turning good things into idols ever since Adam and Eve fell. So if a Christian wife can make her husband an idol or a Christian pastor can make his church an idol or a Christian man can make his job an idol, it shouldn't be surprising that an evangelical academic can make their scholarship an idol. That's apparently what George Ladd did.

D'Elia's well-crafted biography focuses specifically on how Ladd responded to what Ladd perceived as a crisis:

In Ladd's estimation, evangelicals had stopped publishing scholarly literature that was worthy of consideration by the great universities. . . .

How did George Ladd attempt to rehabilitate evangelical scholarship in America? His evolving strategy can be divided into two main elements. [1] First, Ladd sought to raise the level of discourse within evangelicalism—to improve the quality of its scholarly content. He was disciplined—at times obsessed—in his study of the Bible and of critical works from scholars across the theological spectrum. . . .

[2] But there was an external component to his strategy as well. Ladd believed that, in order for evangelical scholars to be accepted as equals in the best institutions and societies, he and others like him had to earn their way in and prove their worthiness to participate. To this end Ladd submitted articles to prestigious journals, joined the academic organizations that would have him, and had his magnum opus printed by a publishing house outside the evangelical world. He encouraged the brightest of his

²⁹ Keller, *Counterfeit Gods*, xiv.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, xv.

³¹ *Ibid.*, xvii.

³² *Ibid.*, xvii–xix.

³³ *Ibid.*, 171.

students to pursue doctoral work themselves, mentored them in their studies, and supported their applications to universities around the world. Ladd devoted his life to this two-pronged strategy for rehabilitating modern evangelicalism both in content and in image.³⁴

D'Elia explains, "The purpose of this book is to examine the *motivation* for George Ladd's contribution to evangelical scholarship." Ladd was on "a *quest* to create a work of evangelical scholarship that the rest of the world could not ignore."³⁵

Ladd worked tirelessly on his magnum opus. When Harold J. Ockenga was corresponding with Ladd in 1949 about teaching at Fuller Theological Seminary,³⁶ Ladd explained what he hoped to make his "chief contribution": "a scholarly history of the Kingdom of God."³⁷ "At one point," D'Elia recounts, "he was so frustrated with the competing demands of research and sleep that he threw a book against the wall of his home with such force that it left a gaping hole. Ladd allowed the hole to remain there for years as a monument to his passion for excellence in scholarship."³⁸ But later developments raise questions, as D'Elia shows. Was this passion entirely healthy? Did it point to undue concern for how seriously non-evangelical scholars would regard his work?

After working on his magnum opus "for more than a decade" (and dreaming of it for much longer), "Ladd felt that he had finally arrived" as a scholar when Harper & Row, "a publisher outside the evangelical world," published it.³⁹ It released in 1964 with the title *Jesus and the Kingdom*.⁴⁰ Ladd built his entire career on this book, and he eagerly waited to see non-evangelical scholars nod in approval that he did first-class work that they could not ignore.

But Norman Perrin became the instrument that dashed Ladd's dreams. Perrin was a British theologian who had recently become a professor at the University of Chicago and who had just the year

³⁴ D'Elia, *A Place at the Table*, xi.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, xviii (emphasis added).

³⁶ On the history of Fuller Seminary, see George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995). This story reads like an engaging novel filled with unexpected turns. Marsden attempts to write as an unbiased historian though he is sympathetic with Fuller Seminary, which asked and funded him to write the book (xviii). The 1995 paperback edition adds a new preface in which Marsden recounts his visit to Bob Jones University in the early 1990s and distances himself from such "conservatives" who "have seen the volume as aiding their cause" (xii–xiii). Fuller Theological Seminary was new evangelicalism's theological think-tank, and Marsden's history provides a window through which to view its development.

³⁷ Quoted in Owen Strachan, "Reenchanted the Evangelical Mind: Park Street Church's Harold Ockenga, the Boston Scholars, and the Mid-Century Intellectual Surge" (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2011), 144. Strachan has updated his dissertation into a book that should release in fall 2015: Owen Strachan, *Reawakening the Evangelical Mind: Harold Ockenga, the Cambridge Scholars, and the Rise of the Neo-Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming).

³⁸ D'Elia, *A Place at the Table*, 122–23.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, xix–xx, 126. While the publisher was considering whether to publish the manuscript, Ladd wrote to a friend, "if Harper's will not take it, I am going back to the preaching ministry" (*ibid.*, 124).

⁴⁰ George Eldon Ladd, *Jesus and the Kingdom: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964).

before published his dissertation on the kingdom of God.⁴¹ Perrin reviewed Ladd's book in the journal *Interpretation*, and in the first major non-evangelical published review, Perrin severely criticized Ladd for shoddy scholarship and showed no respect for Ladd as an academic peer but instead shunned him as an outsider.⁴²

Perrin's review *devastated* Ladd:

Ladd received his copy of Perrin's review in May of 1965, when he had been away from Fuller [on sabbatical] for almost a year. David Wallace, Ladd's former student and the first Fuller graduate to earn a PhD, was in Basel on his own sabbatical and was visiting Ladd with several friends when the review arrived. The impact of that first reading was evident immediately. According to Wallace, Ladd was "stricken right down to the core" and "on the edge of being manic and out of control." He "had a strange look in his eyes, as though he had been mortally wounded," and paced the room with his guests still there, no longer aware of their presence. Wallace recalls that Ladd repeatedly said that "he was an academic failure" and "a scholarly wipeout." Wallace tried to console him by encouraging him to wait for other reviews, but his words "had absolutely no effect on him." When Wallace left Ladd in his Heidelberg apartment that evening, he remembers thinking that his teacher and mentor looked "destroyed."

That same day Ladd wrote to Dan Fuller . . . still in some shock from Perrin's review: "I am being forced to rethink my entire program of scholarship . . . [because] my noble ideal of trying to achieve a sympathetic interaction with other circles of theology is a fool's dream." It "is very obvious," Ladd complained, "that my major life work (which this book embodied) is a complete failure." Within just a day or two after his first reading of Perrin's evaluation, Ladd was already interpreting it as a death blow to his goal of earning a place for evangelical scholarship in the broader academic world. It is no exaggeration to say that this was the turning point for Ladd's life and career; his already fragile emotional makeup was damaged beyond repair as a direct result of this single review.⁴³

Ladd returned to Fuller Theological Seminary "a broken man, drinking heavily, bitter over his treatment by Perrin, humiliated—at least in his eyes—in front of his friends and colleagues, and suddenly unsure of the direction his career should take."⁴⁴ Most of the other reviews of his magnum opus were favorable, but he couldn't shake Perrin's review. He wrote at least 100 letters "to scholars all across the theological spectrum, telling them of his unfair treatment at the hands of Norman Perrin."⁴⁵ He descended "into a time of bitter depression and alcohol abuse from which he would never fully recover.

⁴¹ Norman Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus: A Discussion of the Theological Views on the Subject from Schleiermacher Onwards* (New Testament Library; London: SCM, 1963).

⁴² Norman Perrin, "Against the Current," *Int* 19 (1965): 228–31. See the analysis in D'Elia, *A Place at the Table*, 136–40.

⁴³ D'Elia, *A Place at the Table*, 140–41.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 147; cf. 223n134.

In the aftermath of the review Ladd lashed out indiscriminately, even at friends who tried to console him, and decided to abandon the quest that had driven his career from the earliest days.⁴⁶

The idol for which Ladd had apparently devoted so much energy left him in despair:

The last fifteen years of Ladd's life [1966–1982], while giving the appearance of being productive, saw the man tumble through a process of emotional, physical, and spiritual disintegration. The gambles he had made during the course of his academic career had failed to pay off, and he found himself on the one hand a towering figure in the world of evangelical scholarship, while on the other a failure at reaching the only real goal he had ever set for himself. He would not set the world of mainstream biblical scholarship on fire. For all of Ladd's intents and purposes his quest was over; he was left with a far smaller and more parochial audience than he had sought at the start of his career. As a result, this final chapter in Ladd's life was marked by an overwhelming sense of surrender—of his quest for acceptance, of his familial relationships, and even of his longest-held friendships—to the darkest impulses of his character.⁴⁷

Ladd's academic quest was so single-minded that his wife, Winnie, and his two children, Norma and Larry, were lifelong casualties. His relationships with his wife and children were strained at best because he neglected them; he prioritized fulfilling his academic quest over his responsibilities as a husband and father.⁴⁸ After a six-month sabbatical in 1961, Ladd returned to Fuller Theological Seminary "impaired": "With his marriage and family in increasing disarray, his work took on even greater significance for his self-image. The relationships closest to him were failing, but he could still—in his eyes—*prove his worth by creating quality scholarship*."⁴⁹ "The union between George and Winnie had been an increasingly unhappy one, and in these final years it functioned as a marriage in name only. . . . By the 1970s the situation had deteriorated to the point that Ladd was making plans to divorce his wife, a serious matter in the world of conservative evangelicalism."⁵⁰ In 1970, David Hubbard (then president of Fuller) and Daniel Fuller (then dean of the school of theology) reviewed Ladd in light of rumors and complaints about his drinking problem, and "Ladd abruptly asked whether he could divorce his wife without losing his position on the faculty. Hubbard informed Ladd that a divorce under these circumstances would be grounds for dismissal, and they argued the point for some time."⁵¹ Ladd's wife later suffered some strokes; in 1977 "Ladd maintained his speaking schedule while Winnie was ill, and she passed away while he was at an out-of-town speaking engagement."⁵² The next year "he assembled a gathering on Fuller's campus" to announce "his engagement to be married to a 'Miss Proctor,' but the wedding never took place."⁵³

⁴⁶ Ibid., xx.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 149–50.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 11, 16, 35–36, 84, 94, 150, 155, 162.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 94 (emphasis added).

⁵⁰ Ibid., 150.

⁵¹ Ibid., 162.

⁵² Ibid., 171.

⁵³ Ibid.

The story of George Ladd is sad. He seems to tragically illustrate how an evangelical academic can place such a premium on academic respectability that it becomes an idol.

2.2. Porter's Encouragement to Pursue Academic Respectability

Before I share how Porter encourages scholars and aspiring scholars to pursue academic respectability, it is important to understand Porter's book on its own terms. Porter's publisher is Baylor University Press, and his audience is academics. Porter explains in the second sentence of his introduction that his book "is expressly designed and written for you who wish to become successful academic authors especially in the areas of biblical studies, theology and religion, and the arts and humanities."⁵⁴ Porter is not addressing specifically *evangelical* academic authors but *all* academic authors in those fields.

Nevertheless, since Porter is well-known as a NT scholar, I suspect that a disproportionate percentage of his readers are young, aspiring NT scholars and that many of those readers are evangelicals. My main concern about Porter's advice is with reference to those readers. I recall the line in C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* where King Lune tells his son Corin, "Never taunt a man save when he is stronger than you: then, as you please."⁵⁵ I certainly don't intend to *taunt* Porter but instead to respectfully supplement what he wrote and push back in a few places. From what I know about Porter, he would agree with much of my pushback in §§2.3 and 3.3 and would probably say that he did not articulate those viewpoints because it was not the purpose of his book. Nevertheless, I'm concerned that evangelical academics may read Porter's book and adopt it as a holistic approach to their academic publishing. So this article makes a few of my concerns more explicit.

A motif in *Inking the Deal* is that a primary goal of academic publishing is to *make a name for yourself*. Note especially the phrases I've italicized in the following excerpts:

If . . . you are interested in how to begin to publish successfully in the academic market, and possibly even to *establish a widespread, well-earned, and deserved reputation for yourself* as an acknowledged expert in your field, then I have written this book to try to help you.⁵⁶

At the beginning of my career, I was looking for an opportunity to contribute to such a project *so as to get my name known . . .*⁵⁷

As *your scholarly reputation* grows, you will probably receive other opportunities to deliver scholarly papers by invitation. You may be invited to give a paper at a conference organized around a particular theme, or you may be the featured speaker at a given conference. These invitations provide tremendous opportunities both to *develop your scholarly reputation* and, more importantly, to use the occasion to prepare a manuscript for presentation.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Porter, *Inking the Deal*, 1.

⁵⁵ C. S. Lewis, *The Horse and His Boy* (The Chronicles of Narnia; New York: HarperCollins, 1954), 216.

⁵⁶ Porter, *Inking the Deal*, 2 (emphasis added).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 35 (emphasis added).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 38 (emphasis added).

I have given over a dozen conference papers in each of several years. I was very busy writing on average one publishable paper a month, but the experience was also very rewarding and helped to *advance my research profile*. My policy, at least for a while in the early days of my career, was to initiate and accept every scholarly paper-giving opportunity that I could. I could not sustain this, but *it started my career on the right track*.⁵⁹

Once *you become known* as a scholar who can produce the goods on demand, other invitations will come.⁶⁰

I say “yes” to virtually every project I am asked to contribute to. Now, I may take it a bit further than others do, but there are many good reasons I have for doing so—besides the obvious one that I continue to *build up my publishing profile*.⁶¹

In *Inking the Deal*, this motif of making a well-deserved name for yourself is a controlling factor for calculating how to live as an academic. The greater your scholarly name recognition, the better.

This motif could mislead some impressionable, aspiring evangelical scholars. I presume that Porter means that academics should prize a good reputation in the sense of Prov 22:1a (“A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches”) or Eccl 7:1a (“A good name is better than precious ointment”).⁶² Like a carpenter or baker or business executive, an academic earns a reputation on the basis of their integrity and the quality of their work. And ideally more opportunities come to those with “a good name.”

2.3. Pursuing Academic Responsibility over Academic Respectability

Evangelical academics should aim to be academically responsible more than being academically respectable. Nine qualifications are noteworthy:

1. This is what I mean by academic respectability and responsibility: (a) *Academic respectability* is a status that academics achieve when others (especially fellow academics) deeply admire them for their scholarly work. There are various degrees of academic respectability. (b) *Academic responsibility* is a characteristic that academics maintain by doing quality work with integrity. There are various degrees of academic responsibility. For evangelical academics, academic responsibility is a characteristic that they maintain by faithfully doing quality work with integrity for the glory of God by serving Christ’s church (more on this in §3).

2. It is possible to pursue both academic respectability and responsibility, but academic responsibility has priority. The general rule is that the more academically responsible you are, the more academic respectability you should receive. Academic respectability is not inherently bad (recall Prov 22:1a; Eccl 7:1a), but evangelical academics would be wise to focus primarily on pursuing academic responsibility over shrewdly strategizing about how to increase their academic respectability. I don’t mean to commit the fallacy of the excluded middle since it’s possible for faithful evangelical academics to do both. But evangelical academics must proceed cautiously when consciously strategizing about pursuing academic respectability. It is far more important to pursue academic responsibility. “The point of Christian

⁵⁹ Ibid., 138 (emphasis added).

⁶⁰ Ibid., 147 (emphasis added).

⁶¹ Ibid., 158 (emphasis added).

⁶² Scripture quotations are from the ESV.

scholarship,” concludes Mark Noll, “is not recognition by standards established in the wider culture. The point is to praise God with the mind. Such efforts will lead to the kind of intellectual integrity that sometimes receives recognition. But for the Christian that recognition is only a fairly inconsequential by-product.”⁶³ I think that both Ladd and Porter would agree with this principle.⁶⁴

3. The ethics of how an academic pursues academic respectability is essentially a matter of motivation. This is a piercing diagnostic question for evangelical academics with reference to their publishing: *What is your motivation for pursuing academic respectability?* Is it so that non-evangelical scholars will listen more carefully and respectfully to conservative evangelical teachings and that you might even persuade them? Is it to increase the prestige of your institution or denomination or movement? Is it to increase the likelihood that prestigious universities will accept your graduate students into their PhD programs? Is it to advance your research profile so that you can climb the academic ranks and perhaps secure a teaching post at a more prestigious school? Is it to earn respect that you desire from certain people?

The issue is not merely whether an evangelical academic writes for (a) non-evangelical academics, (b) evangelical academics, or (c) evangelical lay people. An evangelical academic could write for any of those three groups with a motivation that honors God or does not.

4. Evangelical academics should not give undue weight to the importance of non-evangelicals giving them a place at the table. One of Ladd’s motivations was that he desperately wanted non-evangelicals to view him as a respectable scholarly peer, to give him a place at the table. How does that goal sound in light of 1 Cor 1:18–2:16? “The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing” (1 Cor 1:18a). “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:14). Merely affirming what the Bible teaches can itself be sufficient warrant for non-evangelical academics not to grant an evangelical academic a place at their table.⁶⁵

5. Evangelical academics can sinfully seek academic respectability *inside* evangelicalism or within certain “tribes” of evangelicalism. Ladd apparently gave undue priority to academic respectability *outside* evangelicalism, but “seductive applause” may come from

the conservative constituency of your friends, a narrower peer group but one that, for some people, is equally ensnaring. Scholarship is then for sale: you constantly work on things to bolster the self-identity of your group, to show it is right, to answer all who disagree with it. Some scholars are very indignant with colleagues who, in their estimation, are far too attracted by the applause of unbelieving academic peers, yet

⁶³ Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 248.

⁶⁴ Porter affirmed this in an email to me on August 11, 2014 after he read a draft of my essay (quoted with his permission): “I am advocating a well-earned respectability that comes from hard work, perseverance, taking the tougher path, etc., etc., rather than opting for the soft option and the accolades that often go with that. This respectability does not necessarily mean approval by others. I believe that responsibility goes hand in hand with respectability—you are right—and I clearly do not think that getting the approval of non-evangelical scholars should be prioritized.”

⁶⁵ E.g., in today’s cultural climate, merely affirming what the Bible teaches about homosexuality can be enough to lose one’s “place at the table.” On academic intolerance in the name of tolerance, see D. A. Carson, *The Intolerance of Tolerance* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012).

these indignant scholars remain blissfully unaware of how much they have become addicted to the applause of conservative bastions that egg them on.⁶⁶

6. Evangelical academics can be guilty of thinking that their value as persons is based on what they have published and what publications they are currently working on. And that could lead them toward the sort of sad fate that Ladd suffered. “Scholars have a tendency to define the value of persons according to their intellectual contributions. This attitude has no place in Christian scholarship.”⁶⁷ It can lead to undue pride or even arrogance. Carl F. H. Henry asked precisely the right question: “How on earth can anyone be arrogant when standing beside the cross?”⁶⁸

7. Evangelical academics should prioritize living in a way that honors God above academic respectability. Jesus asked, “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?” (Mark 8:36). He might ask academics, “What does it profit an academic to publish prestigious books and lose his wife and children?” Ladd apparently sacrificed his wife and children (and character) on the altar of academic respectability. He seemed to care more about what non-evangelical academics thought of him than the devotion he owed his closest family members. Academic responsibility includes living in a way that honors God. An evangelical academic must balance all of their responsibilities in a healthy way before the Lord. (For more on this, see §3.3.3 below.)

8. It can be beneficial for evangelical academics to responsibly interact with non-evangelical scholarship. (a) Evangelical academics may learn from such interaction. For example, some non-evangelicals do superb philological, text-critical, and historical work. (b) Some destructive scholarship asks good questions but offers bad answers. To engage such work may redirect it. (c) Interacting intelligently and calmly with non-evangelical scholarship, even if it does not convince many (or even any) non-evangelicals, may provide a model for evangelical PhD students and others who are wavering. (d) More broadly, such interaction contributes to some elements of the ongoing Christian apologetic task.

The academic publishing strategy that Porter advocates may be precisely what God calls some evangelical academics to do. My wife, Jenni, and I don’t think that God has called me to focus on working primarily with academically prestigious publishers like Porter has. But I say that with deep respect for what Porter and those like him have accomplished. I have friends who faithfully live in that academic world, and I thank God for them.⁶⁹ We should be grateful for scholars who have the opportunity and ability to do what we cannot. God has called these evangelical scholars to a more scholarly vocation. They faithfully interact with scholars from other religious viewpoints at professional conferences such

⁶⁶ Carson, “The Scholar as Pastor,” 89–90.

⁶⁷ Bauder, “Part Twelve: The Christian Scholar’s Christian Responsibility,” 3.

⁶⁸ Quoted in D. A. Carson, *Basics for Believers: An Exposition of Philippians* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1996), 58.

⁶⁹ E.g., two are members of my church in Minneapolis, Bethlehem Baptist Church: W. Edward Glenny (professor of New Testament studies and Greek at the University of Northwestern in St. Paul) and Daniel M. Gurtner (professor of New Testament at Bethel Seminary in St. Paul). Another example is Robert A. J. Gagnon (associate professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary), who has been ruthlessly honest with the biblical and extrabiblical data regarding homosexuality while engaging scholarship at the highest levels (see especially Robert A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* [Nashville: Abingdon, 2001]).

as the annual one for the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL).⁷⁰ Personally, I find it more stimulating and edifying to attend the ETS and IBR conferences, but I affirm the value of interacting with non-evangelical scholarship at conferences and in print.

9. Pursuing academic respectability by interacting with non-evangelical scholarship may seduce evangelical academics to compromise. They may compromise truth in order to have “a place at the table.” But our goal is not to have “a place at the table” at any price. It is to be academically responsible, which for evangelicals entails being doctrinally faithful.

I first learned the distinction between being academically respectable and academically responsible from a “novel” that D. A. Carson and John Woodbridge coauthored.⁷¹ In this fictitious account, Professor Paul Woodson (i.e., *Woodbridge + Carson*) writes letters to Timothy Journeyman as Timothy progresses from college to seminary to serving as a rookie pastor. After Timothy transfers from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School to Yale Divinity School, Dr. Woodson writes this:

At the risk of sounding pedantic (though realizing I sometimes come across that way), I doubt very much that evangelicals are wise to pursue academic respectability. What we need is academic responsibility.

There is a world of difference. Elevating academic respectability to the level of controlling *desideratum* is an invitation to theological and spiritual compromise. I do not find Jesus angling to become a member of the Sanhedrin in order to gain a more public voice; I do not find Paul pursuing academic respectability in the categories of his day, for then he could not have written the kinds of things he did about rhetoric (e.g., 1 Corinthians 2:1ff.). Academic *responsibility* is something else. This means that we pursue integrity in debate, that we eschew harangues, that we seek to give an answer to everyone for the hope that is in us, that we persuade people with the truth. Academic respectability, in my vocabulary, has too much self-interest in it for me to trust it; academic responsibility, on the other hand, calls me to discipline and work. . . .

If God were to call you to a life of scholarship, then pursue academic responsibility with your whole heart—not as a new god, but as an offering to God. It may well then be that your work will influence your times and make a difference in the intellectual climate. At very least you will then serve the interests of some younger scholars coming along behind, who will model themselves after you and learn the way of discipleship as scholars. Pursue academic responsibility, and trust God to work out the details of who hears you and what influence you have. Responsible scholarship has far more potential for discovering and buttressing truth and for winning people’s minds than mere respectability anyway. If instead you take the lower road and pursue mere academic respectability, you may gain more plaudits from the world, but it is far more doubtful that you will have the approbation of Heaven. Once in a while there have been scholars who have gained both; it is doubtful if they have ever done so by pursuing respectability.⁷²

⁷⁰ For how the SBL views biblical scholarship, see Frank Ritche Ames and Charles William Miller, eds., *Foster Biblical Scholarship: Essays in Honor of Kent Harold Richards* (Biblical Scholarship in North America 24; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), especially the eight essays in “Part 1: Fostering Biblical Scholarship” (3–133).

⁷¹ D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, *Letters Along the Way: A Novel of the Christian Life* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1993), http://s3.amazonaws.com/tgc-documents/carson/1993_letters_along_the_way.pdf.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 174, 176 (emphasis in original); see 173–78, 200–207.

That is why Andreas Köstenberger, one of Carson's former PhD students, wrote a book in order "to discharge a burden: pleading with zealous young theological students not to sacrifice their scholarly integrity for the sake of attaining academic respectability. My message to these individuals is that believing scholarship is not only possible but in fact is more virtuous than critical, unbelieving, or supposedly objective academic work."⁷³

And that is why Carson warns,

Beware the seduction of applause. . . . [I]t can come from an academic direction. To be seduced by applause means that for you it becomes more important to be thought learned than to be learned. The respect of peers who write erudite journal articles becomes more immediately pressing than the Lord's approval. Obviously there is no grace in simply irritating academic colleagues, in confusing contending for the faith with being contentious about the faith. Yet if it becomes more important to you to be published by Oxford University Press or Cambridge University Press than to be absolutely straight with the gospel, if you shy away from some topics for no other reason than that these topics are unpopular in your guild, then you are in the gravest spiritual danger.⁷⁴

I had to wrestle with this right out of the gate when I tried to find a publisher for my PhD dissertation on Paul's use of the OT in Rom 11:34–35. A prestigious European monograph series agreed to publish it on the condition that I revise it so that I didn't argue that the prophet Isaiah was the sole author of the book of Isaiah. It was tempting to do that. I almost rationalized to myself that it wasn't entirely crucial that I include that argument for my main thesis to stand, but the argument was significant enough that my thesis would be weaker without it. So I decided to go with a less prestigious publisher (though still a good one).⁷⁵ I don't regret it.

Evangelical academics should aim to be academically responsible more than being academically respectable. This directly relates to my third and final reflection.

3. Evangelical Scholarship Is Ultimately about Glorifying God by Serving Christ's Church

Evangelical scholarship is not about establishing your reputation as a respected scholar. Ultimately, it is about glorifying God by serving Christ's church. That should have implications for an academic's attitude toward popular-level books.

3.1. Ladd's Attitude toward Books for Evangelicals

In Ladd's first decade as a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, he became well-known among evangelicals as the NT scholar who refuted dispensationalism and defended historic premillennialism. But he was not passionate about writing those books and articles. He wrote them out of exasperation.

⁷³ Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Excellence: The Character of God and the Pursuit of Scholarly Virtue* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011), 24.

⁷⁴ Carson, "The Scholar as Pastor," 84–85.

⁷⁵ Andrew David Naselli, *From Typology to Doxology: Paul's Use of Isaiah and Job in Romans 11:34–35* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012).

He was frustrated that he had to (a) address such petty issues at all and (b) postpone research and writing for what he really cared about, namely, writing his magnum opus. And this magnum opus would have two distinctives from his previous books: (1) rather than targeting evangelical academics or evangelical lay people, it would target non-evangelical academics, and (2) rather than having an evangelical publisher, it would have a secular publisher.

On June 28, 1952, Ladd wrote a letter to Harold Ockenga, then president of Fuller Theological Seminary. The faculty had planned to contribute to a book on the inspiration of the Bible, a controversial issue at the time on which evangelicals needed clarity. But Ladd wrote to Ockenga in order to explain why the project derailed again. This portion of Ladd's letter reveals his philosophy of evangelical academic publishing:

One of the greatest contributions to Evangelical Scholarship which the Seminary can make is the production of monographs which will gain the recognition of technical scholars of all schools. I think you will agree with the Committee that few of the productions of the Faculty have been of this magnitude. Witness to this fact the failure to gain recognition of any of the major publishing houses. We have, to be sure, "arrived" so far as a good part of the Evangelical world is concerned, but hardly so far as American Biblical Theological Scholarship as a whole is concerned. We are not producing articles which are appearing in the standard theological journals to any appreciable degree. We seriously question the strategy of asking men to lay aside projects which are aimed in this direction and which would bring general scholarly recognition to the Seminary, for a project whose result is at best uncertain.⁷⁶

"Ladd's work in moderate and liberal circles was designed to build the stature and respectability of evangelicals beyond their parochial borders and to help them regain their place in the world of ideas."⁷⁷

All of Ladd's books prior to his 1964 magnum opus target evangelicals. In a letter that Ladd wrote in 1963, this is what he calls those books: "*only a by-product of my more important studies*, which involve interaction and dialogue with the broad stream of Biblical criticism."⁷⁸ D'Elia adds, "The engagement with dispensationalism had been a detour at best, but in reality it was more of a negative distraction."⁷⁹

3.2. Porter's Attitude toward Academics Who Do Not Share His Academic Publishing Philosophy

Porter argues, "The nature, type, and number of publications in recognized monograph series and prestigious refereed journals are what truly establish a research profile."⁸⁰ So Porter recommends that scholars say "yes" to virtually every invitation to contribute to monograph series, prestigious journals, and professional conferences.⁸¹ "I am a bit obsessive-compulsive," he admits, "and so I am obsessed with

⁷⁶ D'Elia, *A Place at the Table*, 41.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 127 (emphasis added).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Porter, *Inking the Deal*, 9.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 9, 142, 147, 157–60.

the challenge of writing and publishing one more thing, especially in a new area.”⁸² How does Porter feel about academics who do not share his academic publishing philosophy?

3.2.1. *Porter’s Attitude toward Academics Who Write Popular-level Books*

Porter shows little respect toward academics who write popular-level books:

Writing this book does not *necessarily* mean that I do not have respect for those who write for a popular audience (I do have an opinion, but that’s another story). The criteria for publishing popular writing, however, have much more to do with finding subjects that are hot at the time, knowing the right people in the publishing business, timing the market, *dumbing down the content of one’s work, and then dumbing it down again*. Most of all, whereas it may pay you well as an author, it makes little to no contribution to the advancement of knowledge and understanding of a subject. If you are interested in learning how to write for the popular book market, or the popular press, I suggest that you . . . forget your most challenging and provocative ideas, develop a slick prose style, and cultivate your media image. If, instead, you are interested in how to begin to publish successfully in the academic market, and possibly even to establish a widespread, well-earned, and deserved reputation for yourself as an acknowledged expert in your field, then I have written this book to try to help you.⁸³

Once scholars have written popular-level books, they cross the line and lose Porter’s respect. Popular-level books are “ephemeral” and a waste of time and effort:

[L]et me mention a regrettable downward spiral occurring in some academic areas. The unfortunate movement is the inclination to downgrade a subject area to the level of popular interest, either as part of a career move or in response to populist (and monetary?) pressures. In many fields, there is a tendency for a young scholar to make an initial academic contribution and then to revert soon after to publishing popular-level treatments of the subject. There are, of course, some justifiable reasons for writing popular works of this sort, but much of the time it marks *the passing of a point of no return regarding serious scholarship*. A series of popular treatments, one after another, can easily result in a scholar becoming a popularizer, and serious and lasting scholarship is the victim. The justification that the “person on the street” needs high-quality exposure to such work is no justification at all when we notice that such curiosity is never satisfied but always demands more such treatments, not for knowledge’s sake (otherwise intellectual levels would be elevated) but simply out of prurient interest. Another consequence is that it is often hard for such a person to make the hard return to scholarly research, to say nothing of *the time and effort wasted on such ephemeral publications*. Such publications often do not even stay in print long enough to be reviewed, and even if they are, they appeal to the lowest common level of knowledge and do not advance scholarship. I must admit that I have written several popular volumes. It is wonderful to have the adulation and recognition that often accompany such efforts—one such book of mine was sold for movie rights and made

⁸² Ibid., 158.

⁸³ Ibid., 1 (emphasis in original).

into a documentary for public television!—but this is to be *cursed by the commonplace*. Certainly such efforts should not be encouraged or rewarded by such things as tenure or scholarly recognition.⁸⁴

Academics who regularly write popular-level books “have sold out”:

One of the odd things about recent scholarship in some fields is that there is a small number of guru figures whose names are commonly known but who may not be that expert any more (if they were to begin with), since *they have sold out* to writing trade books or writing for very popular audiences or even writing on anything and everything that comes along, whether they have a legitimate or worthwhile opinion or not.⁸⁵

Popular-level books have “little lasting value”:

There are some who believe that popular appeal is the measure of success. I seriously doubt that this is true, because very little of the popular so-called scholarship is really innovative or creative scholarship. It is instead usually a summary of received opinions, often toned down for more general consumption, and it *has little lasting value*.⁸⁶

Popular-level books have virtually no scholarly value. They are barely worth adding to an author’s *curriculum vitae*:

I divide the publications [on my *curriculum vitae*] into the following categories: authored books, edited books, journal articles, chapters in books, dictionary and encyclopedia articles, Web site articles and protocols, translations, book reviews, and conference papers and lectures. *You can add a section for popular-level publications, if you wish*. This list essentially reflects the order of *decreasing importance . . .*⁸⁷

Porter seems to present two broad categories of publication: academic and popular-level. Porter prefers the former: “I personally focus on writing hard-core academic articles that appear in technical journals or books, and books in monograph series that mostly only academic libraries can afford.”⁸⁸ This may give readers the impression that he places all other types of publication in the popular-level category, especially since he does not define what he means by popular-level publications but merely contrasts them with academic-level publications. Although Porter does not make this explicit, I presume that he has in mind not evangelical academics who write books that are accessible for the church but rather academics who sacrifice academic integrity for money by playing to the cynical popular-level publishing culture.

Porter is not entirely against popular-level books since he has written some himself. And it is important to remember that *Inking the Deal* is explicitly about academic publishing. But it is not difficult to understand why evangelical academics might wonder, “Does Porter have a category for academics strategically and nobly writing for the church and not for the scholarly guild?” Porter surely must have such a category since he has written such publications himself, but it is difficult to reach that conclusion

⁸⁴ Ibid., 19 (emphasis added).

⁸⁵ Ibid., 141 (emphasis added).

⁸⁶ Ibid., 154 (emphasis added).

⁸⁷ Ibid., 172 (emphasis added).

⁸⁸ Ibid., 1.

solely on the basis of reading *Inking the Deal*, where his attitude toward academics writing popular-level books is overwhelmingly negative.

Nothing Porter writes in *Inking the Deal* explicitly demonstrates that he is a Christian who writes to serve the church. Everything he writes could come from the pen of an academic atheist. This is not to say, of course, that Porter does not desire to serve the church through his publications, but readers would not discern that from *Inking the Deal*. Again, it is important to evaluate *Inking the Deal* for what it is (see the opening two paragraphs of §2.2 above). My concern is that evangelical academics not read this book as a holistic approach to their publishing strategy. The target audience is academics in general, not *evangelical* academics.⁸⁹

3.2.2. Porter's Attitude toward Academics Who Do Not Publish Much

Why do some academics not publish much? “The first reason that I have uncovered,” Porter shares, “is that the scholar is simply lazy. There are all sorts of factors that may contribute to this laziness, but, at the end of the day, such a scholar simply is not interested enough—because of holding a secure position or whatever—to get motivated enough to do anything of significance.”⁹⁰ Porter is definitely right about *many* academics; they simply need to work with more diligence and discipline.⁹¹ But he doesn't present a category for academics who have good reasons for not publishing much.

Porter is a publishing machine, and he doesn't expect other academics to match his prolific output. But he has high publishing standards for what being an academic entails, and he reveals his attitude toward academics who do not publish much:

The ones who really do not want me to reveal what I am about to write are your fellow academics *who would prefer to sit on the sidelines and enjoy their comfortable, nonpublishing academic lives.*⁹²

There is probably some truth to the notion that only 20 percent of the scholars in a profession produce about 80 percent of the significant published scholarship. I would

⁸⁹ After reading a draft of my essay, Porter shared this feedback with me via email on August 11, 2014 (quoted with his permission): “You are right that I did not address my *Inking the Deal* to evangelicals in particular, but I think that that is one of the problems that I have with many of my fellow evangelicals—not that so much writing is so consciously and overtly evangelical in orientation but that it tries to claim (or appears to try to claim) to be the same kind of scholarship and to make the same contribution. I have also written some popular things that have been well-received (books, study Bible commentaries, etc.), but am still able to do what I think is solid work in a wide range of settings. Regarding some of the popular writing that others may generate, I think the enduring contribution of such writing to the church is probably minimal—as we witness in much of what goes on in contemporary evangelical church life—but that is really beside the point. My book was not really trying to address that particular issue—but simply the one where some people wish they were doing more, find it hard to do so, have a variety of second-best options for them, and then wonder why they have not accomplished more of what they really wanted to. I am not necessarily saying that writing for popular markets is always second best—but it is if the person could have done first-rate scholarship but never does and never figures out why they didn't.”

⁹⁰ Porter, *Inking the Deal*, 161.

⁹¹ See the manuscript for Scot McKnight's motivating talk “The Professor as Scholar: Exiled to Eden,” Address for All-Faculty Colloquium at North Park University, 2005, <http://wp.production.patheos.com/blogs/jesuscreed/files/2014/08/ExiledEden.pdf>.

⁹² Porter, *Inking the Deal*, 4 (emphasis added).

have thought that most graduate schools would want their students to aspire to more than *mediocrity*, however.⁹³

I am constantly amazed at how many young scholars will beg off on publishing opportunities because they say they are too busy. *Too busy with what?* I interpret this to mean that they are *unwilling to give up a few hours of edifying television or jogging or paintball in order to secure a publication*—often one that even pays a little money.⁹⁴

Porter also thinks little of professors who become academic administrators:

There is an unfortunate tendency for a number of scholars whose careers stall somewhere around associate professor level—because they probably recognize that they may not readily achieve full professor and that they certainly will not receive the kind of academic fame and renown that they believe that they deserve—to slide over into academic administration. This is virtually always represented as a promotion, or an important career shift, or an answer to a call to an equally productive task. *Let's not kid ourselves.* The vast majority of such “scholars” (*I use the term guardedly*) are admitting that *they cannot cut it as major players in the academic and intellectual world, and so they shift to an area where the working hours are saner, the intellectual pressures are lighter, and they can have power even if they do not perform well in terms of contribution to scholarship.*⁹⁵

Porter is surely on target for *some* professors who become administrators. But is there not a category for academics whom God has gifted at administration and whom God has called to serve him that way?

3.3. Glorifying God by Publishing What Serves Christ's Church

3.3.1. Writing for Evangelicals

Ladd thought that writing for evangelicals was not nearly as important and strategic as writing for the broader academic world. That attitude has spread among evangelical academics. I've observed it in evangelical academics a generation later.

Some years ago I invited an evangelical scholar who teaches at a leading evangelical liberal arts college to contribute to a book I was editing. A large evangelical publisher would publish the book. The professor replied with kindness and warmth but respectfully declined my offer, noting that he was working on a monograph for a prestigious academic publisher. The professor added, “Moreover, I am more and more in my scholarship trying to commend evangelical, orthodox, historic Christianity to those outside the camp rather than join in-house disputes.”

I understand that strategy and respect that God calls some evangelical scholars to excel at it. For example, I thank God for evangelical academics like Kevin Vanhoozer (who is not the professor I refer to above). I'm so grateful that I'm on the same “team” as Vanhoozer. He engages with non-evangelicals brilliantly and winsomely. That's valuable. There's a place for that. It can be strategic for evangelical

⁹³ Ibid., 56 (emphasis added).

⁹⁴ Ibid., 146 (emphasis added).

⁹⁵ Ibid., 168 (emphasis added).

academics to work with academically prestigious publishers like Cambridge University Press or Oxford University Press.

Some evangelical academics shrewdly adopt a both-and approach: sometimes they write primarily for evangelicals, other times primarily for non-evangelicals, and sometimes for both at the same time. Not every evangelical academic is gifted at this degree of diversity.⁹⁶ In other words, if some evangelical academics write almost exclusively for non-evangelical academics and if others write almost exclusively for evangelicals, there should be no problem with that if (a) neither group despises the other and (b) they preserve the ultimate goal, namely, that evangelical scholarship is ultimately about glorifying God by serving Christ's church.

So should evangelical academics adopt Ladd's attitude toward publishing for evangelicals? No. There is something much bigger than making a name for yourself or even making a name for evangelicalism. God is making his manifold wisdom known to the angels "through the church" (Eph 3:10). Publishing for the church is a delight because serving the church is a way to glorify God.

Where does an attitude like Ladd's come from? My guess is that evangelical students pick it up from evangelical academics whom they deeply respect as well as from being in non-evangelical academic environments, especially while earning their PhD. I've heard several professors at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School lament that some of their brightest students graduated with a master's degree and then discarded doctrines like the Bible's inerrancy while working on their PhDs at prestigious universities. Ben Witherington testifies,

I have seen young Christian scholars, striving so hard to be recognized not merely in their school but in their guild, that they completely lose focus on what led them to pursue such a calling in the first place. Sadly, I have even seen young conservative scholars largely give up their orthodox faith in order to be better accepted by other scholars and colleagues whom they admire.⁹⁷

The educational landscape looks very different now than it did when Ladd was a student at Harvard. Ladd didn't have many (if any) options to pursue a high-level PhD from an evangelical school. Nor did men like John Piper and D. A. Carson a generation later. But today it is very different. There are several evangelical schools with robust PhD programs in which students can get every bit as good of an education as they can outside evangelicalism.

In the introduction to this article, I qualify, "I didn't earn a PhD from a prestigious secular university." I earned two PhDs, but in the secular world those degrees aren't terribly impressive. In God's providence my first PhD is a theology degree from Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina. And I'm not embarrassed; I'm grateful for that school. My second PhD is in New Testament exegesis and theology from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. My mentor was D. A. Carson.⁹⁸ From the standpoint of prestige in the evangelical academic world, going from BJU to Trinity was like going

⁹⁶E.g., N. T. Wright, one of the most influential biblical scholars today, writes with exceptional skill at all three levels.

⁹⁷ Ben Witherington III, *Is There a Doctor in the House? An Insider's Story and Advice on Becoming a Bible Scholar* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 83. Cf. G. K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008), 20–21.

⁹⁸ Carson was one of Porter's professors for his MA at Trinity, and he later served as Porter's external examiner for his PhD dissertation at Sheffield. Carson accepted Porter's revised dissertation as volume 1 of the Studies in Biblical Greek series that he edits (Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the NT*).

from high school to Harvard. But Trinity is still an *evangelical* school; it's not Cambridge or Oxford or Harvard or Yale or Princeton or Duke. And I'm not embarrassed about that either. I am thoroughly satisfied with my formal education, and I don't think I lost out on much at all. And one attitude I'm grateful I didn't pick up along the way is that writing for a primarily evangelical audience is a waste of time.

3.3.2. *Writing Popular-Level Books and Articles*

I warmly affirm the value of writing works at the highest academic level—the sorts of books and articles that Porter has written. No argument there at all. I also agree with Porter that many popular-level books have very little value because they are not grounded in solid research. Publishers are increasingly publishing books not based on the merit of their content but on what will sell.⁹⁹

But the “academic publishing only” approach is an emperor wearing no clothes. John Piper testifies about this after earning a DTheol from the University of Munich in Germany:

What I saw in the theological educational system and state-church life in Germany confirmed most of what I did not want to become. Here were world-class scholars, whom everyone on the cutting edge in America were oohing and ahing over, teaching in a way that was exegetically nontransferable, insubordinate toward the Scriptures, and indifferent to the life of the church. I attended university classes where nineteen-year-old ministerial students were soaked in every form of faddish criticism, while the tools for mining the gold of Scripture were untouched and the taste buds for enjoying its honey were unawakened. . . . [T]he exegetical methods I saw in Germany could not come close to the theological and methodological goldmine that I had found in seminary. I used my Fuller-taught method of observation and analysis to research and write an acceptable dissertation, and then left Germany as quickly as I could. I did not have to work hard to protect myself from this system. I saw it up close, and from the inside, and found early on that this global king of biblical scholarship had no clothes on.¹⁰⁰

Ultimately the point of evangelical scholarship (as with anything else) is to glorify God. And producing publications with academically prestigious publishers is not the only way for evangelical academics to glorify God.¹⁰¹ Ultimately, they glorify God by serving Christ's church. This includes writing technical academic works, *and* it includes more accessible works that people without advanced formal training can understand. Popular-level (and semi-popular-level) books and articles are not a

⁹⁹ Scot McKnight wrote this to me in an email on July 26, 2014 (shared with his permission): “Publishing has changed dramatically. Publishers never asked about platform in my early years; nor did they have as much in-house review—they farmed out manuscripts to professors to judge the merits of a book (I read probably 20 manuscripts for publishers in my early years at TEDS; then they went internal, and it made a huge difference). Now Publishers want to know what will sell, and if it sells, they'll publish it (not all, of course, but that's the general drift).”

¹⁰⁰ John Piper, “The Pastor as Scholar: A Personal Journey and the Joyful Place of Scholarship,” in *The Pastor as Scholar and the Scholar as Pastor: Reflections on Life and Ministry* (ed. David Mathis and Owen Strachan; Wheaton: Crossway, 2011), 41–42.

¹⁰¹ I wish that in *Inking the Deal* Porter would have at least expressed the attitude that Paul does with reference to singleness and marriage: “I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another” (1 Cor 7:7).

waste of time for academics. Evangelical academics are uniquely qualified to serve Christ's church by sharing God's truth in a way that God's people can understand.

I appreciate the attitude of I. Howard Marshall, an evangelical New Testament professor at Aberdeen University since 1979 (emeritus since 1999):

I have also tried to write on a level that would be helpful to people in the church; sometimes one has to write things on an academic level and that is what counts in the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), but at the same time it seems to me that those of us who are Christians studying the Bible have a very strong responsibility towards the church to produce what will be helpful particularly to preachers, and also to the church generally.¹⁰²

I also appreciate how Ben Witherington III embraces a both-and approach to writing for both the academy and the church:

The question is: What sort of scholar do you want to be? Do you want to be a scholar who is mainly capable of talking to other scholars in your field? Or do you feel called to a broader ministry, writing for [1] laypeople and [2] students as well as [3] scholars? I have personally tried to engage at all three levels of writing, but it takes skill to write with clarity at all levels of discourse. Blessed are those who know both the possibilities and the limitations of their writing gifts and callings.

. . . [I]f I were teaching mainly in secular universities, a good deal of my publishing would *not* be viewed as "serious scholarly work," even though such an evaluation would be wrong and unfair—and frankly pejorative. . . . I have known situations where a person was denied tenure not because he had not done some "serious academic publishing," but because he had *also* done more popular level writing.

. . . Research by a Christian is never done just for its own sake, or even just to advance knowledge in a given field. It is done in service to the Lord *and to his church*.¹⁰³

I thank God for the many evangelical academics who have written academically informed popular-level books and articles that God has used to change my life. In §1.3 above, I mention that God has used John Piper, D. A. Carson, Wayne Grudem, Douglas J. Moo, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Mark Dever (among others) to strongly influence me. They initially influenced me through their popular-level books. I am grateful that they didn't (and don't) follow Porter's advice in *Inking the Deal* in this respect.

For example, here is how Tom Schreiner recently exhorted a room full of evangelical academics:

We can begin to do our scholarship for the sake of the scholarly community instead of for the glory of God and for the good of the church of Jesus Christ. Satan is very clever. He can take a good thing like scholarship and turn us away from ministering to the church. I'm not saying that every scholarly endeavor has to be immediately relevant to what is happening at church. Most churches wouldn't understand a dissertation on textual criticism. But such work must still be understood as a ministry to the church of Jesus Christ. Samuel Tregelles, the great textual critic, viewed his work "in the full belief

¹⁰² Carl R. Trueman and I. Howard Marshall, "Interview with Professor Howard Marshall," *Them* 26, no. 1 (2000): 49. For an explanation of the RAE, see Porter, *Inking the Deal*, 7–9.

¹⁰³ Witherington, *Is There a Doctor in the House?*, 82–83 (emphasis in original).

that it would be for the service of God, by serving His Church.” I believe that the best scholarly work is needed for the sake of the church. I have seen bright young people from our churches attracted to what is contrary to Scripture because they believed that scholarship contradicts what we teach. So, we want to teach our students that the best scholarship, the most persuasive scholarship, demonstrates the beauty and the truth of the biblical message. We can get distracted, though, by desiring the praise of the scholarly community instead of thinking of the edification of the church. Jesus indicted the Pharisees of his day with words that have always spoken very powerfully to me by saying in John 5:44, “How can you believe? While accepting glory from one another, you don’t seek the glory that comes from the only God.” If we seek the praise that comes from our peers, we will no longer seek the praise that comes from God. And when that happens, we are no longer serving God and the church of Jesus Christ but ourselves.¹⁰⁴

After finishing my PhD at Trinity, I had some options to teach full-time. But instead I spent four years working full-time on the *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*.¹⁰⁵ Its audience is as general as the target audience for the NIV itself: the English-speaking world. The main reason I agreed to give four years full-time (and a fifth year part-time) of my life to this project is that my work with the *NIV Zondervan Study Bible* may influence more people than the rest of my other publications combined. It is a worthy, strategic cause. And God willing I plan to contribute more popular-level and semi-popular-level works in the future if I sense that it would glorify God by serving Christ’s church.

3.3.3. *Shalom*

In §3.2.2 above, I quote Porter remarking, “I am constantly amazed at how many young scholars will beg off on publishing opportunities because they say they are too busy. *Too busy with what?* I interpret this to mean that they are *unwilling to give up a few hours of edifying television or jogging or paintball in order to secure a publication*—often one that even pays a little money.”¹⁰⁶

“Too busy with what?” One of my gifted and godly friends illustrates an answer to that question. After much thought and prayer, he recently asked to be released from a highly desirable publishing opportunity: writing a detailed exegetical and theological commentary for a well-known publisher on the book of the Bible that is his primary area of expertise. He declined for good reasons. “Too busy with what?” Too busy with other important responsibilities: (a) loving and leading his wife like Christ does the church; (b) investing in his six children (three of whom he and his wife recently adopted) to bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord;¹⁰⁷ (c) investing in his students by shepherding

¹⁰⁴ Schreiner delivered this at a reception on November 19, 2013 in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society. I am quoting from Schreiner’s manuscript (shared with his permission).

¹⁰⁵ Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming in fall 2015. It has completely fresh content from new contributors. D. A. Carson is general editor; the associate editors are T. Desmond Alexander, Richard S. Hess, and Douglas J. Moo; and as the assistant editor, I’ve managed the project and helped copyedit all of the notes and essays for content and style.

¹⁰⁶ Porter, *Inking the Deal*, 146 (emphasis added).

¹⁰⁷ Porter is a remarkably disciplined and prolific author and editor. I don’t want to take anything away from that. He has done this while serving full-time as President of McMaster Divinity College since 2001, and shortly before that he served for six years as a head of department in a growing theology and religious studies department in a British university. But perhaps one of the reasons for (1) his attitude toward other academics who don’t pub-

them outside of class and giving them high-quality instruction in class; (d) serving his local church, especially by using his teaching gifts each week; (e) serving other churches in the United States and internationally; and (f) working on other strategic publications. And he plans to write a commentary on that book of the Bible in due course.

We need *shalom*. “*Shalom* experienced,” describes Tim Keller, “is multidimensional, complete well-being—physical, psychological, social, and spiritual; it flows from all one’s relationships being put right—with God, with(in) oneself, and with others.”¹⁰⁸

We are finite creatures, so we can only do so much. And not every academic is wired to be a publishing machine: “God assigns hugely different gifts,” D. A. Carson observes, “so that one of the things this book must not do is give the impression that there is only one legitimate path to working out pastoral and scholarly vocations.”¹⁰⁹ Not everyone can say “yes” to every single invitation to write a book or article or review or conference paper. There are more important things in life than publishing. Praise God for fellow evangelical academics who are publishing machines, but that is not what God calls every evangelical academic to be.

More importantly, it may not be wise stewardship for every evangelical academic to focus single-mindedly on publishing more and more and more. “I believe,” shares Dane Ortlund, “academic publishing easily becomes a sort of soul-nicotine that gets us up out of bed in the morning and makes us extremely productive but which is not functioning out of spiritual health.”¹¹⁰ When you stand before the Lord, he is not going to ask you how many academic books and articles you published—though your faithfulness as a *responsible* academic will certainly be part of the equation. What you will want to hear is simply, “Well done, good and faithful servant. . . . Enter into the joy of your master” (Matt 25:21, 23).

4. A Closing Prayer

Thank you, Father, for evangelical scholarship. It’s a gift to your people, and we’re grateful for it. Thank you for gifting us with such a wealth of published books and articles, especially compared to what was available just 75 years ago.

For us Christ-followers who are academics, would you help us aim to be academically responsible more than being academically respectable? Save us from ourselves—from our vanity and pride. Give us grace not to be seduced by “a place at the table.” Help us care most about what you think, not what other scholars think. We want to work heartily and sincerely as for you, not other people. Help us not to idolize our work. We want to be good stewards. Give us grace to work hard without being lazy or overworking.

And would you help us always remember that our scholarship is ultimately about glorifying you by serving Christ’s church? We want to use the gifts and training you’ve given us to make much of you. We want to build up the body of Christ, for whom your

lish nearly as much as he does and (2) his lack of putting publishing in perspective to more important responsibilities like rearing one’s children is related to his personal context: in the providence of God, Porter did not marry until his mid-thirties, and he has no children.

¹⁰⁸ “Shalom,” in *NIV Zondervan Study Bible* (ed. D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming).

¹⁰⁹ Carson, “The Scholar as Pastor,” 73.

¹¹⁰ Email to Andy Naselli, July 18, 2014, shared with the author’s permission.

Son died. We want to spread a passion for your supremacy in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Participants in What We Proclaim: Recovering Paul's Narrative of Pastoral Ministry

— William R. Edwards —

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Abstract: Many have written on the difficulties of pastoral ministry, backed by research into the demise of those who become discouraged in the work. These studies provide useful descriptions and helpful insights into the culture of ministry and how it might be changed. Much of this recent work, however, lacks deeper reflection on the biblical-theological themes that frame life in ministry and provide categories through which its difficulties must be understood. This article explores the framework for suffering in ministry through Paul's letters, focusing on his correspondence with the Corinthians, with the aim of recovering the rich redemptive-historical narrative of ministry that is grounded in Christ's death and resurrection.

The American church has conducted a substantial amount of research into the health of its pastors since the start of the twenty-first century. Alarming statistics have been amassed suggesting all is not well.¹ The general consensus is that over the past thirty to fifty years much has changed in ministry with the result that “pastoral leadership does not seem to offer the promise of a life well lived.”² This appears evident from the large numbers of those leaving the ministry within the first five years, with some statistics indicating a fourfold increase since the 1970s.³ The mainstream media has

¹ As noted in *Resilient Ministry*, such statistics may be found at multiple websites, yet the research methods through which they were obtained are often unclear. Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2013), 297n1. For an example, see Bo Lane, “Why Do So Many Pastors Leave the Ministry: The Facts Will Shock You,” *expastors.com*, accessed April 22, 2014, <http://www.expastors.com/why-do-so-many-pastors-leave-the-ministry-the-facts-will-shock-you/>. It should also be noted that some of these statistics have been questioned. See Jackson W. Carroll, *God's Potters: Pastoral Leadership and the Shaping of Congregations* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 162–69.

² L. Gregory Jones and Kevin R. Armstrong, *Resurrecting Excellence* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 24. Various studies conclude that social change over the past two generations have greatly altered ministry experience. See Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, *Pastors in Transition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 3; Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry*, 12; Bob Wells, “Which Way to Clergy Health,” *pulpitandpew.org*, accessed December 14, 2013, <http://pulpitandpew.org/node/834>.

³ Jones and Armstrong, *Resurrecting Excellence*, 24; Paul Vitello, “Taking a Break from the Lord's Work,” *New York Times*, August 1, 2010, accessed December 14, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/02/nyregion/02burnout.html>.

taken note too, with an article in the *New York Times* concluding, “Members of the clergy now suffer from obesity, hypertension and depression at rates higher than most Americans. In the last decade, their use of antidepressants has risen, while their life expectancy has fallen.”⁴ Studies indicate that many in ministry are unhappy and would leave for some other line of work if they could.⁵

As desperate as this sounds, action has been taken to address these troubling trends. The Lilly Foundation funded a ten-year project, “Sustaining Pastoral Excellence,” distributing grants totaling in the millions of dollars to 63 different organizations, with the aim of conducting research to better understand the negative conditions of pastoral ministry and develop strategies for positive change.⁶ These organizations represent the breadth of the American church, from mainline and evangelical Protestants to Roman Catholics.⁷ As a result of their work, a number of book-length studies have been published, which both describe common reasons for the difficult climate of pastoral ministry and prescribe potential remedies for improving its environment.⁸

Although operating with diverse theological commitments, the use of the social sciences ties these various studies together. Each explores the habits and practices of pastors in their various traditions with the guiding question of what defines and sustains excellence in ministry, utilizing qualitative research methods in the analysis of data to develop their descriptions and reach their conclusions.⁹ These studies prove helpful in many ways, noting commonalities in experience that coalesce into themes that frame life in ministry, which need to be examined and of which churches and pastors need to be aware.¹⁰ The hopeful expectation through all of this work is that “a new narrative about ministry is coming into being,” one that replaces the discouraging narrative of irrelevance, ineffectiveness, and mediocrity.¹¹

These studies inevitably include a measure of biblical and theological reflection. The primary focus, however, is the research into the immediate causes that make pastoral ministry uniquely difficult in our current setting. So while biblical notions of excellence in ministry are considered, the data gathered on contemporary experience is at the heart of the analyses. While valuable in bringing to light particular

⁴ Vitello, “Taking a Break from the Lord’s Work.”

⁵ Carroll, *God’s Potters*, 160.

⁶ Holly G. Miller, “Sustaining Pastoral Excellence: A Progress Report on a Lilly Endowment Initiative” (Durham, NC: Leadership Education at Duke Divinity, 2011), 3–7; available at http://pastoralexcellence.com/pdfs/Final_SPE_Report2011.pdf (accessed April 22, 2014).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁸ For a list of these resources, see Miller, “Sustaining Pastoral Excellence,” 28–29. One study of note not listed but also receiving a grant as a part of this Lilly Endowment initiative is Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry*, referenced above. Of the studies listed, this is the only one originating from evangelical and reformed institutions, based on participants in cohorts graduating from Covenant Theological Seminary, Reformed Theological Seminary, and Westminster Theological Seminary. See Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry*, 265.

⁹ Miller, “Sustaining Pastoral Excellence,” 7–11. For an example describing the methodology used, see Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry*, 265–69.

¹⁰ For instance, Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie identify five themes that arose in their research: spiritual formation, self-care, emotional and cultural intelligence, marriage and family, and leadership and management. (*Resilient Ministry*, 16).

¹¹ Craig Dykstra, “On Our Way: The Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Initiative” (Plenary Address, Indianapolis, Ind., May 11, 2011), available at <http://pastoralexcellence.com/pdfs/DykstraPlenaryAddress.pdf> (accessed April 22, 2014).

difficulties that our present ministry culture may create, this approach potentially overshadows deeper biblical-theological descriptions that are at the core of the hardship ministers face in every age.

The aim of this article is to explore the biblical-theological framework for suffering in ministry that all pastors will endure as they faithfully proclaim Christ. In particular, Paul's letters will be examined with special attention given to his correspondence with the Corinthians, which is rich with descriptions of his own experience, not only as an account of his life in ministry, but as a pattern for all those who follow. The premise in what follows is that the current need is not so much to develop a new narrative for pastoral ministry, but to recover the rich biblical-theological narrative of ministry found in Scripture that is grounded in Christ's death and resurrection.¹² In doing so, the hope is to see beyond the specific struggles faced today, to the larger story common to all in ministry throughout these last days, stretching from Christ's resurrection until his return, so that those entering the work of ministry will do so with a narrative informed by the gospel they are called to proclaim.

1. Maintaining the Matters of First Importance in Ministry

In various places Paul presents what appears to be a rather grandiose view of his ministry, such as when he describes his "insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations," a mystery that, he says, was "made known to me by revelation" (Eph 3:3–5).¹³ He boldly envisions his labors in relation to great OT prophets, going so far as to compare himself to Moses, leaving the clear impression that his is the greater and more glorious work (2 Cor 3:11–13). These portrayals, on first read, may seem to imply an exaggerated sense of self-importance.¹⁴ It is not, however, Paul's self-perception that leads to this exalted view of his ministry. Instead, Paul understands that the greatness of the age ushered in by Christ's death and resurrection exalts his work. It is not his contribution that brings distinction. This grand and decisive epoch of redemption attributes greatness to Paul's own labors in ministry.¹⁵

Paul concludes his first letter to the Corinthians with a reminder of what he refers to as the matter "of first importance" in the gospel he preaches: "that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3–4). Death and resurrection together constitute the focal point of the gospel he proclaims. Yet in reading Paul, this climactic moment of redemption is not simply the summary of Paul's message.

¹² Some of the studies referenced identify these themes of death and resurrection, but as stated above, the emphasis remains on contemporary experience with minimal biblical or theological development. This is evident, for instance, in Jones and Armstrong, *Resurrecting Excellence*.

¹³ Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the ESV.

¹⁴ Calvin notes this, describing how Paul "boasts that he 'begat' the Corinthians 'through the gospel' [1 Cor 9:2];" and that "in many passages he not only makes himself a co-worker of God but also assigns to himself the function of imparting salvation [1 Cor 3:9 ff.]" John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. John T. McNeill; trans. Ford Lewis Battles; 2 vols.; LCC; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 4.1.6.

¹⁵ Geerhardus Vos describes Paul as "arguing from the glory of the message to the distinction of the bearer" (Geerhardus Vos, "More Excellent Ministry," in *Grace and Glory* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1994], 85).

Jesus' death and resurrection is of first importance as the event that inaugurates a new era of redemption, which then serves as the setting for all he endures in ministry.¹⁶

According to Paul, Christ's death and resurrection displays God's "plan for the fullness of time" that has now entered history (Eph 1:9–10). Therefore, he can confidently say that upon us "the end of the ages has come" (1 Cor 10:11), because of "the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim 1:10–11). In every description of ministry, Paul remains fully alert to this time in which he labors. It emboldens his proclamation: "Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2). Regarding Paul, Ridderbos notes that, "before everything else, he was the *proclaimer of a new time*, the great turning point in the history of redemption, the intrusion of a new world aeon."¹⁷ Paul is urged on in the work, and urges others through his preaching, because Christ's death and resurrection have brought about this age of salvation in which he now serves.¹⁸

Thus, what Paul identifies as the matter of first importance in the message he proclaims is maintained as the matter of first importance for his entire ministry. Christ's death and resurrection is not simply the great past redemptive event he points back to as he preaches. Christ's death and resurrection shapes his entire conception of ministry. Through it Paul proclaims the coming of an age within which his ministry takes place, a redemptive epoch of which his ministry is truly a vibrant part. Paul understood, as Vos says, that "the servant is, as it were, made part of the wonder-world of salvation itself."¹⁹ Ministers of this gospel do not tell the story of salvation as if standing at a distance, but instead are made participants in the unfolding drama of the last days inaugurated by Christ's death and resurrection. According to Ridderbos, "Paul's preaching itself is taken up into the great eschatological event."²⁰ His ministry is also a part of God's redemptive provision, inseparable from this age of fulfillment.

These eschatological themes, therefore, are integral to the framework of, and thus essential to endure faithfully in, the work of ministry. Narrowly viewed, eschatology may be approached as an area of study concerned with distant events and consequently largely fruitless for practical ministry. In considering the above, however, its concern is not so much with obscure matters but with the great mystery revealed in Christ's death and resurrection. The great end has now truly begun. Jesus himself is "the beginning, the firstborn from the dead" (Col 1:18). All gospel ministry must maintain this outlook. To quote Vos again, "The joy of working in the dawn of the world to come quickens the pulse of all New Testament

¹⁶ See Richard B. Gaffin Jr., "Life-Giving Spirit': Probing the Center of Paul's Eschatology," *JETS* 41 (1998): 575, where he says, "His resurrection is not an isolated event in the past but, in having occurred in the past, belongs to the future consummation and from that future has entered history."

¹⁷ Herman N. Ridderbos, *Paul and Jesus* (trans. David H. Freeman; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1977), 64 (emphasis original).

¹⁸ For a fuller description of this redemptive-historical framework, see Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1991), 36–41; and John Murray, "Structural Strands of New Testament Eschatology," *Kerux: The Journal of Northwest Theological Seminary* 6 (1991): 19–26.

¹⁹ Vos, "The More Excellent Ministry," 87.

²⁰ Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (trans. John Richard De Witt; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 47.

servants of Christ.”²¹ Or at least it should, and only will when these “last things” are maintained as the “first thing” in ministry. In this sense, eschatology, rightly conceived, is always protology for the pastor. The *eschatos* is *protos* for Paul. The end begun with Christ’s death and resurrection is always of first importance, and must be as we consider the work of ministry.

When this perspective is lost, so is the larger story for our ministry. Bereft of such a vision, we are left simply with the things immediately before us, our work defined primarily by our current activity rather than the age of consummation that has now come. Apart from a rich biblical eschatology, the pastor’s attention will be confined to his own labors while missing the grand narrative that gives them any significance. When this occurs, the tasks of ministry become wearying in their repetition: sermons to prepare and worship to order with the approach of each Sunday, more counsel to offer possibly with little hope of change if experience proves true, meetings with elders that focus primarily on pressing needs. David Hansen laments how in the work of the pastor, “Theology’s venerable already not-yet has become what needs to be done today and what can be left until tomorrow.”²² The immediate pressures and demands of pastoral ministry may cause us to lose sight of this final epoch of redemption in which we serve. And without this larger story, the burdens of ministry may quickly become unbearable and the source of great discouragement.

2. A Portrayal of What Is Proclaimed

However, it is not simply that Paul has the privilege of serving at the inauguration of this new age. The work of Christ that ushers in this day of salvation also serves as the pattern for his ministry. His life portrays what he proclaims. This is evident at the inception of Paul’s call, heard in Jesus’ words spoken to Ananias, where he says, “I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name” (Acts 9:16). As Ananias relays Jesus’ words, it is unclear if this particular statement was conveyed to Paul at this point. Surely all enter ministry unaware of how the message they bear will so deeply mark their own lives.

On first read, Jesus’ comment may sound vindictive, possibly a form of punishment for Paul’s previous persecution of the church. Yet Paul interprets all of his sufferings as indicative of the Savior he serves. It is not about Paul. It’s about Jesus. Paul is not suffering for his past sins, but as one compelled by Christ’s love, who died that “those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised” (2 Cor 5:14–15). Therefore, he is willing to “endure everything for the sake of the elect” (2 Tim 2:10). He can even say that he is “filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church” (Col 1:24). Every experience in ministry is interpreted through Christ’s death and resurrection, as an integral part of the ongoing drama of redemption as it plays out in these last days, which includes his own life.

Paul vividly describes his apostolic ministry in 1 Cor 4:9: “I think that God has *exhibited* us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a *spectacle* to the world,

²¹ Vos, “The More Excellent Ministry,” 90. Elsewhere, Vos states, “All eschatological interpretation of history, when united to a strong religious mentality cannot but produce the finest practical theological fruitage” (Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, 61).

²² David Hansen, *The Art of Pastoring: Ministry without All The Answers* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994), 20.

to angels, and to men.”²³ The Greek word translated as spectacle is θέατρον, also the word for theater.²⁴ This depiction clearly captures Paul’s image, not of what he is called to do in ministry, but of what God intends his ministry to be in this world. His life is to show the very things that he tells, to portray what he proclaims.²⁵ Each instance of suffering he endures is set in a truly cosmic story that centers on Christ’s death and resurrection, visible before heaven and earth, to both angels and men.²⁶ And Paul views his ministry as part of a final act, “last of all,” as a concluding display that captures in his own experience the climactic elements of the entire story.²⁷

The question is whether something equally dramatic can be said for those who serve in ministry after the age of the apostles. Is such a description also true for those who minister today? Should every pastor see himself as part of this final act whose life, similar to Paul, will portray what he proclaims? Clearly the apostles had a unique function, commissioned by Jesus himself to serve as the foundation for the church (Eph 2:20). They had a once for all role that is not to be repeated. Surely, however, if Christ’s death and resurrection forms the foundation in this way, the same will characterize all ministry built upon it.²⁸

This is particularly seen in 2 Tim 1:8–12 where Paul offers himself as an example to Timothy, that he too is called to “share in suffering for the gospel,” and similarly describes the setting of Timothy’s ministry as his own: “the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” Significantly here, Paul identifies himself not first as an apostle, but as a preacher, and then also as a teacher, which he says, “is why I suffer as I do.” In other words, Paul’s experience is not so much a function of his apostolic office as it is of the age to which his ministry belongs. Timothy’s labors share this setting, and so do all who serve in ministry since

²³ Emphasis added. The ESV translates ὅτι as a causal conjunction with “because” in the last clause: ὅτι θέατρον ἐγενήθημεν τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ ἀγγέλοις καὶ ἀνθρώποις. However, it may be better understood as a complement in apposition to what he’s just stated. As such, Paul is not providing the *reason* that they are exhibited as those sentenced to death, but emphasizing the *role* they play as apostles in being exhibited in this final act as a spectacle or as theater. See G. G. Findlay, “St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians” in *The Expositor’s Greek Testament, Apostles, Romans, First Corinthians* (ed. W. Robertson Nicoll; vol. 2 of *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 801.

²⁴ The only other two instances of θέατρον in the NT are found in Acts 19:29, 31 in the account of the riot in Ephesus. There, θέατρον refers to the physical structure, the place of assembly. Here the word has the sense of the show one sees at a theater (BAGD 353c).

²⁵ Plummer makes a similar point in reference to Gal 3:1, noting, “Paul views his gospel ministry . . . as the parading of Christ crucified before the eyes of fallen humanity.” As such, he says, “The *conveyor* of the message pictures the *content* of the message” (Robert L. Plummer, “The Role of Suffering in the Mission of Paul and the Mission of the Church,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 17, no. 4 [2013]: 8, 11).

²⁶ Purves writes, “while ministry is local . . . each local act is part of a cosmic work of God’s redemption that plays out on a scale that is so immense we cannot get our minds around it” (Andrew Purves, *The Resurrection of Ministry* [Downers Grove: IVP, 2010], 151).

²⁷ Vos argues Paul’s use of “last” is a clear eschatological reference, stating, “certainly this cannot mean that they are the most recent examples” but that “it relates to their place in the final tribulation impending” (Vos, *Pauline Eschatology*, 10).

²⁸ In considering this question, Barnett concludes, “the ministry of the new covenant was not confined to the generation of the apostles, but continues until the Lord comes,” also noting, “the apostolate is not the only ministry that has been ‘given,’” referring to Eph 4:11 where prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers are likewise mentioned (Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997], 49, 320).

Christ's appearing. Pastors today not only may, but must understand that their lives will likewise portray what they proclaim, because they too are participants in this final act initiated by Christ's death and resurrection.

3. Ministry Will Always Manifest the Same Story

Paul develops this theme of death and resurrection as the framework for pastoral ministry most thoroughly in his second letter to the Corinthians.²⁹ He defends the character of his ministry among them, weaving through the whole the implications of what he has established as the matter of first importance in his prior epistle. In his exposition of Christ's resurrection in 1 Cor 15, he has already made application to ministry in verses 30–32, describing the threat he continually faces, characterizing it as death, saying, "I die every day!" Yet it is not his own personality or disposition that constantly pushes Paul into the fray despite the danger. His continued boldness has its basis in the resurrection. There is no gain, he says, "If the dead are not raised." Paul takes up this theme at the start of 2 Corinthians, describing "our affliction" as sharing "in Christ's sufferings" (2 Cor 1:4–5).³⁰ He returns to it repeatedly as he describes how a ministry that faithfully represents Christ will always manifest the story of his death and resurrection.³¹

Paul concisely describes this pattern as it is replicated in his own experience in 2 Cor 4:7–18. Referring to the gospel that is centered in the risen, glorified Christ, he says, "But we have this treasure in jars of clay, *to show* that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us." Again, as in 1 Cor 4:9 mentioned above, Paul understands his own frailty, weakness, and suffering as the very setting in which the resurrected Christ is most clearly seen. He then provides a list that captures how this is exhibited in his own life: "afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken, struck down, but not destroyed" (2 Cor 4:9). Each is an occurrence of death, yet always coupled with resurrection.

This is evident later in the passage as Paul continues to juxtapose these two dimensions of his experience in ministry. He describes a "wasting away" that is accompanied by ongoing inward renewal (2 Cor 4:16). The pattern is death and resurrection. He speaks of a "momentary affliction" along with "an eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor 4:17). Again, it is death and resurrection. There are the things "that are seen" which he describes as "transient," but alongside them are "the things that are unseen" which are "eternal" (2 Cor 4:18). Here Paul pictures one age that is passing away, brought to its terminus in Christ's death, but the presence of another age that, though unseen, commences with Christ's resurrection. Paul understands that in ministry, he will embody both death and resurrection as his life is set within this

²⁹ In his commentary on the first chapter, Hughes writes, "This is, indeed, a theme which provides a key to the whole epistle" (Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962], 20).

³⁰ Both Barnett and Hafemann portray Paul as presenting a pattern of replication as he describes the relationship between Christ's sufferings and his own afflictions. See Barnett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 67; Scott J. Hafemann, *2 Corinthians* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 63.

³¹ For a thorough treatment of this theme in 2 Corinthians, see Kar Yong Lim, *The Sufferings of Christ are Abundant in Us: A Narrative Dynamics Investigation of Paul's Sufferings in 2 Corinthians* (LNTS 399; London: T&T Clark, 2009).

new epoch of redemption, at the intersection of these two ages, both continuing concurrently for a time, the one characterized by death and the other by new life.³²

This leads to another essential aspect of this pattern that must be noted. As Paul explains the dimensions of death and resurrection in ministry, they are not experienced sequentially but simultaneously. In other words, Paul does not describe an experience of death that is then followed by an experience of resurrection. They are not separate moments or distinct occasions. Both are present at the same time.³³ This is seen clearly in 2 Cor 4:10–11, where Paul provides the key interpretive framework for these contrasting features that characterize his life in ministry. The whole of his experience is condensed in these words: “*always* carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may *also* be manifested in our bodies.”³⁴ He continues, “For we who live are *always* being given over to death for Jesus’ sake so that the life of Jesus *also* may be manifested in our mortal flesh.” It is not first death and then resurrection. The pattern is *always* death and *also* resurrection.³⁵

Paul is not describing occasional moments but the consistent pattern that frames his conception of ministry as grounded in Christ’s death and resurrection. According to Gaffin, “Paul’s mortality and weakness, taken over in the service of Christ, constitute the comprehensive medium through which the eschatological life of the glorified Christ comes to expression.”³⁶ In other words, resurrection moments in ministry only occur when accompanied by experiences that may rightly be characterized as death. But likewise, there is no experience of death that will not also include the life sustaining power of Christ’s resurrection for those who serve him. Paul’s experience is not truly understood until this is grasped, nor will ours be unless we similarly interpret life in ministry as a display that always includes the simultaneous show of Christ’s death and resurrection. In fact, this is the very thing our ministry is to manifest. In what appears to be sure and certain death comes resilient life, not because of our strength, but in the midst of our great weakness, because Jesus has risen from the dead.

³² As Hafemann notes, “it is precisely this tension between the present and the future in Paul’s eschatology which enables him to interpret his own suffering and deliverance in terms of the decisive eschatological events of the death and resurrection of Christ” (Scott J. Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990], 67).

³³ Gaffin notes this dynamic on several occasions. See Richard B. Gaffin Jr.: *Resurrection and Redemption* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1987), 52; “The Usefulness of the Cross,” *WTJ* 41 (1979): 233–34; “The Holy Spirit and Eschatology,” *Kerux: The Journal of Northwest Theological Seminary* 4 (1989); “Life-giving Spirit,” 587–88.

³⁴ The Greek text reads τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, which may be translated as “the dying of Jesus.” Hughes comments, “νέκρωσιν here retains its proper significance of an actual *process*, of dying,” as opposed to “a *state* of deadness” (Hughes, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 141n12 [emphasis original]). This captures how Paul envisions the intimacy of the replication of Christ’s sufferings in his own experience. Belleville claims that Paul’s word choice “stresses the ongoing nature of the process,” reflecting what Paul says in 1 Cor 15:31, “I die every day,” again emphasizing the immediate connection Paul identifies between his experience and Christ’s suffering and death (Linda L. Belleville, *2 Corinthians* [The IVP New Testament Commentary Series; Downers Grove: IVP, 1996], 121–22).

³⁵ In v. 10, the construction in Greek is πάντοτε . . . ἵνα καί, relating the constant experience of bearing Jesus’ death with the corresponding purpose that Jesus’ resurrection life may also be immediately exhibited in and through it. Note the emphatic use of καί. So too in v. 11, where rather than πάντοτε, Paul uses a synonym, ἀεί, similarly followed in the next clause by ἵνα καί with the same sense, that the continual death-like experience he endures in service to Christ becomes the proximate setting for the display of Christ’s resurrection.

³⁶ Gaffin, “The Usefulness of the Cross,” 233–34.

4. The Redemptive Purpose of This Pattern

Paul, however, is not portraying suffering simply as an inescapable mark of ministry. Hardship is not to be stoically embraced merely because it is a necessary, though unfortunate, part of this age. There is a redemptive purpose to this pattern. God himself intends to further accomplish his plan of salvation, both in Paul and those he serves in ministry, through all he endures.³⁷ Therefore, Paul can honestly document every instance of adversity without falling into despair. Paul catalogues his sufferings in various places: “afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger” (2 Cor 6:4–5). He records what apparently remained vivid in his memory: “Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea” (2 Cor 11:25). Such things are not to be forgotten, nor can they be. Yet *how* they are remembered is all-important.

Paul provides an example of how he recalls such memories as he relays to the Corinthians one particular instance of affliction he endured in Asia (2 Cor 1:8–10). Although he does not describe the detailed circumstances, he captures the experience well: “we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself” (v. 8). But he continues by explaining the purpose of this experience, saying it “was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead” (v. 9). Surely this is true in all such occasions. Each incident must be interpreted as an opportunity to forsake self-reliance, as a reminder that there is nothing life-giving in this mortal body but only in Jesus risen from the dead. Paul remembers all of his sufferings this way, as occasions God provides to see displayed the power of the resurrection as he once again encounters his own weakness.

This catalogue of examples is not only a reminder for Paul. It is also an important aspect of his ministry to others. After describing this pattern of death and resurrection that God intends Paul’s life to manifest, he tells the Corinthians, “For it is all for your sake, *so that* as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God” (2 Cor 4:15). This is the last of four purpose clauses Paul strings together, each introduced with ἵνα, stretching from 2 Cor 4:7–15.³⁸ Each conveys the divine intent Paul identifies in their experience of weakness and suffering in ministry: first, *so that* it might be clear the power originates from God and not themselves (v. 7); second, and most central, *so that* the resurrection-life of Jesus would be evident as their lives are sustained in suffering (vv. 10, 11); and finally, *so that* it might function as an effective witness to the Corinthians and a means God uses to extend his grace to them (v. 15). In this way, Paul provides a compact apologetic for the direct relationship between suffering and his apostolic office. It shows him to be sent by God (v. 7), as witness to Christ’s death and resurrection (vv. 10, 11), in response to which the Gentiles receive grace to God’s glory (v. 15).

As the life of Jesus is portrayed against the backdrop of Paul’s suffering, it is seen by those he serves in ministry. And Paul continually provides an interpretation that centers others on Christ, making it clear that his letters are to be read not as the story of Paul and his ministry, but the story of Christ’s death and resurrection as exhibited in Paul and his ministry. Of course, the same must be true for all

³⁷ Hafemann states, “Through his experience of suffering and sustenance, Paul mediates the knowledge of God to the world by embodying Jesus’ death and resurrection” (Scott Hafemann, “A Call to Pastoral Suffering: The Need for Recovering Paul’s Model of Ministry in 2 Corinthians,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 4, no. 2 [2000]: 26).

³⁸ On purpose clauses, see Ernest DeWitt Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek* (reprint ed.; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1994), 85–86.

ministry built on this apostolic foundation. It is never to be a story about me and my ministry, but the story of Christ's death and resurrection exhibited in me and my ministry. This is what others are to see. We are to play within our ministry a supporting role in this greater story that focuses others on Christ.

This must shape all of our expectations. Ministry itself never enlivens. It will always expose weakness and make one weary. The glorified Lord Jesus, however, enlists those who are weak, who belong to this passing age, in order to demonstrate the power of the resurrection and the age to come that begins in him, the firstfruits, who has passed from death to life. For this reason, as James Denney has said, "To wear out life in the service of Jesus is to open it up to the entrance of Jesus' life."³⁹ Only Jesus enlivens. The minister must never rely upon his own resources, but on the risen Lord himself. Both the minister and those he serves must learn to identify this pattern of death and resurrection, how our own experience is inseparably wed to redemptive history, with the purpose that we might look to Christ for life, and that others might be led to do the same.

Although suffering features prominently in ministry, with Paul we can have great confidence. "We do not lose heart," he says, even though "our outer nature is wasting away" (2 Cor 4:16). More so, Paul says, "we are always of good courage" (2 Cor 5:6, 8). Paul can express himself this way only as he embraces the larger story his ministry is intended to manifest, centering on Jesus' death and resurrection. As Lim observes, "The story of Jesus appears to be the master story behind Paul's understanding of his suffering," and "It is this story that Paul wants his life and ministry to tell, and it is this story that he wants this community to embrace."⁴⁰ This provokes an important question for those engaged in this work: What story do I want my ministry to tell?

Could there be another narrative at work when I lose heart and find myself constantly discouraged? Of course, suffering is always suffering. Possessing the correct theological system, including the vibrant role of eschatology, does not diminish the experience of hardship. It is hard. Paul himself speaks of the daily pressure and constant anxiety he experiences (2 Cor 11:28). Weakness is always truly experienced as weakness. This, however, leads to despondency when our focus remains inward, which magnifies the suffering in such a way that keeps us from seeing any deeper purpose in what we endure. When this occurs, we have likely lost the storyline, leaving us with our narrow circumstances without the larger redemptive-historical framework providing the interpretation that constantly directs us to Christ.

5. Ministry That Tells Another Story

The larger danger, of course, is when ministry begins to tell an altogether different story. As mentioned above, Paul describes his weakness and sufferings as *θέατρον* (1 Cor 4:9). His life in ministry is portrayed as a kind of theater. Yet the show is not intended to draw attention to Paul. In contrast to some, he says, "what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord" (2 Cor 4:5). For this reason, Paul commends his ministry with patterns that most clearly display Christ's death and resurrection: "by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger," all of which are "acts" that show forth death; yet also "by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; by truthful speech, and the power of God," which show forth resurrection life (2 Cor 6:4–7). This is the show, so to speak, that must go on.

³⁹James Denney, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (The Expositor's Bible; Cincinnati: Jennings & Graham, n.d.), 163.

⁴⁰Lim, *Sufferings*, 35–36.

In commending this pattern for ministry, Paul also provides a critique of those he calls “false apostles” (2 Cor 11:13).⁴¹ Their ministry puts on an entirely different kind of show. Paul describes them commending themselves by reference to themselves (2 Cor 10:12). In so doing, they become the story. Paul ironically gives them the rather theatrical title “super apostles” (2 Cor 11:5; 12:11), with what appear to be greater exploits and leaving an impression that far surpasses any he’s made.⁴² Yet, their ministry in effect simply draws attention to what’s immediately on stage, focusing others on nothing but their own presence and accomplishments.

Those Paul criticizes are likely Judaizers.⁴³ However, in this instance, he does not contend with the particulars of their teaching. Instead, Paul exposes other features of their ministry that contrast with his own. Most prominent is their boast in the flesh (2 Cor 11:18). It is a form of ministry that, in effect, seeks to make a good show of this present age. Paul confronts the same among the Philippians, contrasting himself with those who put confidence in the flesh (Phil 3:2–4). Also, he warns the Galatians about “those who want to make a good showing in the flesh” (Gal 6:12). Although the immediate form in this case was the requirement of circumcision, Paul’s broader concern, and more significant point, is that this show is one-dimensional and self-referential with its incessant focus on, as Paul repeatedly cites, the flesh. In other words, its concern is worldly and singularly directed to what is of this age.⁴⁴ Their ministry, in effect, presents a story devoid of Christ’s death and resurrection. Paul’s ministry, however, displays this new epoch of salvation that has entered history in Christ, which is the drama that faithful ministry must follow. Absent this, the actors on stage become the primary attraction rather than Jesus, crucified and raised.

Paul presses the point, describing how the show of these “super apostles” actually proclaims “another Jesus” and presents “a different gospel” (2 Cor 11:4). The θέατρον that is ministry will always convey a certain message. Theirs creates dissonance with the matters of first importance in Paul’s gospel. As Savage notes, rather than proclaiming Jesus as Lord, “By their self-exalting behavior, they are effectively

⁴¹ Hughes notes Paul’s ironic use of ὁ ἐρχόμενος in his description of these false apostles, since “‘he that cometh’ is the direct antithesis of the title of apostle, which means ‘he that is sent’” (Hughes, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 377).

⁴² There is disagreement about the identity of the “super apostles.” Hafemann believes the reference is to the original apostles, or “pillar apostles,” as the standard of teaching with which Paul compares his own against the “false apostles” of v. 4 and v. 13 (Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, 429–31; cf. John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* [trans. John Pringle; vol. 20 of *Calvin’s Commentaries*; reprint ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 343). However, while Hodge agrees, he notes that others, including Beza, see the description as ironic (Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* [repr.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980], 256). This appears to better fit the immediate context and the note of sarcasm in the comparison that follows as Paul describes his lack of skill in speaking and humbling himself in contrast to these others (Barnett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 507; Belleville, *2 Corinthians* 275–76; Denney, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 320; Hughes, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 379–80).

⁴³ See Barnett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 33–35, 42–43; Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, 33–34, 428; Hughes, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 356–58.

⁴⁴ Once again, Paul appears to employ a strong sense of irony as he, in effect, calls the Judaizers worldly in their application of the Mosaic law. Paul classifies them with the Gentiles, equating circumcision and uncircumcision, both being no more than indicators of this age. Neither “counts for anything,” Paul says, “but a new creation” (Gal 6:15).

preaching ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν.”⁴⁵ Paul’s ministry draws others’ attention to the triumphal procession of Christ, with Paul humbly led as one of the conquered (2 Cor 2:14).⁴⁶ Instead, this other expression of ministry attempts to portray itself in triumph.

This challenge, of course, is not limited to the age of the apostles. A persistent temptation in ministry is to make a good show in this present age. A central premise in Paul’s ministry, however, is that his life will exhibit the features of the gospel he tells. Christ’s death is the climactic judgment against this age, against the flesh. It is a story about what is passing away, as well as of that which has come, through Christ’s resurrection that sustains him in all of his suffering and even allows him to rejoice in it (Col 1:24–27). Faithful ministry in this age, therefore, will always include this dynamic of death and resurrection. Suffering must not be seen as an indicator that something is wrong with ministry. In fact, apart from suffering, an altogether different gospel story is told. Back to our earlier question: What story do I want my ministry to tell? A subtle danger in ministry is to proclaim the message of Jesus’ death and resurrection, while expecting to live out a story that, though it may include some difficulties and occasional hardship, primarily shares a script with this world, exchanging the theme of death and resurrection for another storyline more appealing to this age.

Although the particulars of what Paul’s opponents advocated may be foreign to the church today, these deeper issues will always remain the same. Those in ministry, therefore, must take Paul’s assessment of these false apostles to heart. We are no less prone to commend our flesh, measuring ourselves in relation to the personality, intelligence, and skills of others, delighting in the places we excel and despairing of our usefulness when we don’t. We also desire for others to be attracted to our presence through our performance in the tasks of ministry, as if the stage was ours rather than the setting for the death yet resurrection of Jesus to be displayed through us. We feel the pressure to put on a show of sorts that will produce some enlivening effect in others. We delight when our strengths are exhibited, not our weaknesses, and to that extent veil the power of God in the gospel and instead encourage others to place their confidence in us. These are ways that we, to use Paul’s words, “want to make a good showing in the flesh” (Gal 6:12). The perennial temptation is to adopt the metrics of this age as the measure of ministry rather than the pattern of Christ who suffered before entering his glory.

6. An Example from among Paul’s Company of Pastors

The lure of this age is evident not only in Paul’s opponents. There is also a danger for those closest to Paul as seen in an example from his company of pastors. In various places through his letters, Paul includes the names of those serving alongside him. Some are more familiar, such as Timothy and Titus. There is also Silas, who features prominently in Acts, where we also find Mark, Aristarchus, Erastus,

⁴⁵ Timothy B. Savage, *Power through Weakness: Paul’s Understanding of the Christian Ministry in 2 Corinthians* (SNTSMS 86; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 157.

⁴⁶ Although Calvin and Hodge note that the meaning of θριαμβεύοντι ἡμᾶς in 2 Cor 2:14 is to “triumph over us,” they, as Hodge says, agree with the majority of commentators, who “modify the sense of the word” so that it speaks of “the triumph of a Christian minister in the service of Christ” (Hodge, 44; see also Calvin, *Corinthians*, 157–58). More persuasive, however, are those who maintain the clearer meaning and see the relation to the broader theme in Paul’s portrayal of ministry, not as triumphant, but as a demonstration of Christ’s triumph. Paul’s ministry demonstrates not his triumph in Christ but that Christ has triumphed over him, leading him to die to himself as he follows Christ in this world (see Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, 106–12; Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit*, 31–34; Barnett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 138).

Gaius, Tychicus, and Trophimus, who are mentioned too in Paul's letters.⁴⁷ Others include Epaphras and Archipus.⁴⁸ Of course, Luke must be included, and mentioned twice with Luke is another individual, Demas, whom Paul also lists as one of his "fellow workers" (Col 4:14; Phlm 24). Yet Paul refers to Demas once again in 2 Tim 4:10, where he reports, "Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica." This brief statement is powerfully descriptive when placed in the eschatological framework that provides the vision for Paul's life in ministry.

Although there is no evidence that Demas began to teach anything contrary to the gospel Paul proclaims, his apparent abandonment of his call to ministry indicates, at least in his case, a failure to grasp the bearing of this gospel upon his own life in ministry.⁴⁹ Whatever reasons Demas may have given for his departure, Paul identifies the deeper source as a love for "this present world." The Greek text reads, τὸν νῦν αἰῶνα. This same construction is found in 1 Tim 6:17, where it describes the "rich *in this present age*," and in Titus 2:12, calling believers to "godly lives *in the present age*." Paul's use of this wording, τὸν νῦν αἰῶνα, is instructive. It is not a simple matter of Demas's love for the physical world that is at issue. Paul's chief concern is not with a basic worldliness that stands in contrast to a focus on more important spiritual matters. Paul is describing, instead, Demas's identification with "this present age" as opposed to the new age that has arrived with Christ. Once again, the eschatological drama is all-determinative.⁵⁰

No doubt, Paul personally feels the impact of Demas's decision to leave, evident as he expresses his desire for Timothy to come to him and as he mentions the departure of others to various places of ministry (2 Tim 4:9–11). Paul's primary concern in regards to Demas, however, is not interpersonal. Though Paul has described him as a "fellow worker," what distinguishes Demas is not his standing with Paul but his standing in the midst of these two ages. Paul has just reminded Timothy that his faithfulness in the tasks of ministry must be motivated by Christ's "appearing and his kingdom" (2 Tim 4:1). Likewise, this is true for Paul himself, as he describes the nearness of his own departure, implying his impending death, as one who has "loved his appearing" (2 Tim 4:8). The contrast with Demas is unmistakable as just afterward he is described as "in love with this present age" (2 Tim 4:10).⁵¹ And the evidence of his love for this present age, more so than Christ's appearing and the age to come, is his departure as he abandons his ministry alongside of Paul.

Surely Demas did not begin his ministry anticipating this outcome. There is no sense that his intentions were false as he served alongside the apostle Paul. The reasons for the shift, however, can be surmised from the context as, once again, Paul describes his own experience in ministry. Paul is at this point in prison (2 Tim 1:8; 2:9). As he recounts the course of his own life since his encounter with

⁴⁷ For Silas, see Acts 15–17. For Mark, Acts 13:13; 15:37–38; Col 4:10, 2 Tim 4:11. For Aristarchus, Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2; Col 4:10; Phlm 24. For Erastus, Acts 19:22; 2 Tim 4:20. For Gaius, Acts 19:29; 20:4; Rom 16:23. For Tychicus, Acts 20:4; Eph 6:21; Col 4:7; 2 Tim 4:12; Titus 3:12. For Trophimus, Acts 20:4; 21:29, 2 Tim 4:20.

⁴⁸ For Epaphras, see Col 1:7; 4:12, Phlm 23. For Archippus, Col 4:17, Phlm 2.

⁴⁹ There are others Paul mentions who do begin to teach contrary to Paul's gospel. Most notable in 2 Timothy are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who began teaching the resurrection had already taken place (2 Tim 2:16–18). Also see Hymenaeus and Alexander in 1 Tim 1:20 and Phygelus and Hermogenes in 2 Tim 1:15.

⁵⁰ Vos references 2 Tim 4:10 as an example of Paul's "historico-dramatic conception of the two successive ages" (Geerhardus Vos, "Eschatology of the New Testament," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation* [ed. Richard B. Gaffin Jr.; Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1980], 28).

⁵¹ Knight notes that 2 Tim 4:8 and 10 contain the only two instances of ἀγαπάω in the Pastoral Epistles (George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles* [NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992], 464).

Jesus on the road to Damascus, he reminds Timothy of his “persecutions and sufferings” (2 Tim 3:11). At the conclusion of his ministry, Paul says that he is “already being poured out” (2 Tim 4:6). Demas too was there to witness these things, and likely experienced a measure of the same sufferings in his association with Paul. Yet evidently Demas lost sight of what sustained Paul’s ministry in this present age. Vos describes Paul’s awareness of the “invisible background” to his ministry, “that at every step his presentation of truth was accompanied by a ministry from heaven conducted by the Christ of glory.”⁵² Without this in view, all that remains is the world before us, and it appears as though Demas decided to make the most of it, or at least hoped to find some comfort in it, rather than endure the suffering associated with the call to gospel ministry.

Reading through 2 Timothy, there is a sense that Paul may have had similar fears for Timothy. This final letter is full of encouragement that can also be read as a warning, both to Timothy as well as to all who are called to ministry. Hints of Paul’s concern are found as he prays for Timothy and recalls his tears (2 Tim 1:3–4). He exhorts Timothy not to be ashamed but to “share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God” (2 Tim 1:8). Paul recounts Timothy’s past faithfulness, following not only Paul’s teaching, but also, he says, “my persecutions and sufferings” (2 Tim 3:10–11), calling him to “fulfill your ministry” (2 Tim 4:5). There is no indication that Timothy wavered, but at this point Paul could have no more confidence than he had previously in Demas.⁵³ Will Timothy continue in ministry, motivated by a love for the Lord’s appearing, or will he leave his call in love with this present age? Only the conclusion of his ministry will tell.

For this reason, we must take the same warning to heart. Paul had numerous companions in ministry. Not all proved to be faithful to the end. Barclay’s sentiment is surely correct when he says, “We think of Demas, not to condemn, but to sympathize, for so many of us are like him.”⁵⁴ Truly, to rephrase Paul, no temptation has overtaken any that is not common to all in ministry (1 Cor 10:13). In pastoring those who suffer, we too will bear a measure of their burdens, multiplied across the congregation, while also enduring many other hardships that are unique to ministry.⁵⁵ As we do, the constant temptation is to search for solace in this present age, turning to this world for some measure of comfort. Yet, as learned from Demas, we cannot love this present age and also remain faithful in ministry.

Paul presents his apostolic ministry as another example, foundational for all those who follow. Although his assessment may appear largely negative in his many descriptions of suffering, he understands this as the sign that the present age is passing away. The appearing of Christ is what brings him constant encouragement. And Paul has both appearances of Christ continually in view:

⁵² Vos, “The More Excellent Ministry,” 99–100.

⁵³ A comparison may also be drawn between Demas and Mark. Paul’s reaction appears similar. As a companion to Paul and Barnabas, Mark too had abandoned the work which drew a strong response from Paul who then did not believe Mark was fit to take with them in the future (Acts 13:13; 15:38). In 2 Tim 4:11, however, Paul tells Timothy, “Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry” (see also Col 4:10). Although in the earlier episode Paul may well have described Mark in similar terms to Demas, there remains the possibility of repentance and restoration.

⁵⁴ William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (revised ed; The Daily Study Bible Series; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), 214.

⁵⁵ Hafemann contends, “pastors should not be surprised when God’s leading takes them into deeper waters of suffering than those experienced by their people,” and that “the life of the pastor will normally be characterized by a quality (quantity?) of suffering not usually expected in the lives of those gifted for other equally important roles within the church” (“A Call to Pastoral Suffering,” 32–33).

his first appearing that has inaugurated this new era of salvation and serves as the basis of Paul's call (2 Tim 1:8–9), but also another appearing, "that Day" which will bring this present age to a close and consummate the age to come for which Paul longs with anticipation (2 Tim 4:7–8).⁵⁶ These are the fixed points that orient Paul's ministry. Christ's first appearing is characterized by humiliation, and Paul therefore expects to experience the same. Christ's second appearing, however, is characterized by exaltation which Paul awaits, now empowered by Christ's resurrection to faithfully fulfill his call. This is the epochal framework, focused on Christ, that sustains Paul in ministry. Likewise it is the vision he holds before his fellow workers. Paul exhorts Timothy, and all those who would follow, "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering" (2 Tim 2:8–9). Always in view is "the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim 2:10).

7. Conclusion

The missionary Lesslie Newbigin recounts a question he was frequently asked concerning his ministry in the non-Western world: "Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the gospel in India?" Newbigin developed a standard reply that captured his great hope: "I believe in the resurrection of Jesus and therefore the question does not arise." He proceeds to explain, "The gospel is news of a fact" and regarding a fact you cannot be pessimistic or optimistic. Instead, "you have to ask a different question: 'Do you believe it or do you not believe it?'"⁵⁷ Although personal experience may give rise to pessimism and leave us cynical about the church, the greater reality of the resurrection allows us to maintain confidence in all we endure. The focus, therefore, must not be narrowed to our circumstances in ministry. Instead we must be continually oriented to the fact of Jesus' death and resurrection as the object of our faith, always maintained as the matter of first importance.

Recent studies into the decline of pastoral ministry may provide accurate descriptions along with immediate reasons for the demise of many who become discouraged in the work. Such conditions should be addressed. Yet to be truly understood, these experiences must be placed into a much larger setting in which Christ remains central. Although current features may vary and create unique stresses that differ from previous generations and other cultures, the underlying narrative for all ministry remains the same. Those in every age who faithfully preach this Christ will manifest his death and resurrection as participants in what they proclaim. If this is missed, so too will be the significance of the suffering we endure: that the gospel of Jesus' death and resurrection might be displayed against the backdrop of our own moment in redemptive history.

In his work *The Resurrection of Our Lord*, William Milligan reminds us, "The Living Lord is with us, who once knew every such disappointment as we experience, and every such cause of despondency as weakens us; who once sighed over the stubbornness of men more deeply than we can sigh, and shed more tears for those who refused to listen than we can weep. Yet he triumphed; and he comes to us now that he may communicate to us his joy of victory."⁵⁸ Such was the vision of the Apostle Paul, and the same must be shared by all whose ministry is built upon this foundation once laid, that we might rejoice even as we long for his return.

⁵⁶ Paul uses ἐπιφάνεια, "appearing," in reference to both Christ's first coming in 2 Tim 1:10 as well as his second coming in 2 Tim 4:8, providing the bookends for his own ministry, from call to consummation.

⁵⁷ Lesslie Newbigin, *Mission in Christ's Way: Bible Studies* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1987), 15–16.

⁵⁸ William Milligan, *The Resurrection of Our Lord* (New York: Macmillan, 1917), 222.

The Gradual Nature of Sanctification: Σάρξ as Habituated, Relational Resistance to the Spirit

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Abstract: Possessing a helpful explanation of the slowness of spiritual change can be encouraging to Christians who are not growing spiritually as quickly or consistently as they might have hoped. While the classic Christian obstacles of “the world, the flesh, and the devil” provide general categories for explaining the slowness of change, this article proposes a relational understanding of “the flesh” as resistance to the Holy Spirit that offers an explanatory framework for the gradual nature of sanctification.

Both Scripture and Christian experience testify that spiritual transformation in Christ can be, and often is, a lengthy process. While physical healing and demonic deliverance may occur instantaneously, character change—the emerging fruit of the Spirit—is typically slow in coming.¹ That spiritual change occurs over time can be seen in Jesus’ call to make disciples of himself “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19–20; cf. 7:24; 11:29).² Paul testifies that he has “learned to be content in whatever circumstances” (Phil 4:11 NASB) and that we all “are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another” (2 Cor 3:18; cf. Col 3:5; Rom 6:19; 2 Cor 7:1; Eph 4:22, 31; Phil 3:12–14). And Peter indicates this progressive process by urging his audience to “make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control . . . For if these qualities are yours and *are increasing* . . .” (2 Pet 1:5–8).

Of course, most Christians are experientially attuned to the gradual nature of spiritual change and have often come to peace with it, one way or another. For many of us ongoing struggle with sins of

¹ Wesley thought that “entire sanctification” could occur at the moment of conversion but often was delayed until a crisis moment later in the believer’s life. See, for instance, Melvin Dieter, “Wesleyan View,” in *Five Views on Sanctification* (ed. Stan Gundry; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 9–46. Many in the holiness movement taught that sanctification had both instantaneous and progressive aspects. See Edith L. Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism*, Volume 1 (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1989), 42–43.

² All Scripture citations ESV unless otherwise noted.

commission looms large in our experience, and there is often a striking lack of change when it comes to sins of omission—for instance, the lack of joy, peace, patience, and love. Those outside the church often infer from the apparent spiritual immaturity of Christians that Christianity itself does not possess any unique resources for moral or spiritual development. For instance, Friedrich Nietzsche poignantly addressed the Christians of his day, “if your belief makes you blessed then appear to be blessed! Your faces have always been more injurious to your belief than our objections have! If these glad tidings of your Bible were written on your faces, you would not need to insist so obstinately on the authority of that book.”³

The question that arises is “Why?” Why is spiritual change so slow? Or to put it the other way around, why are longtime saints often recalcitrant to change? This question is especially troubling for those who sincerely desire change and who are regularly engaged in the means of grace prescribed within their Christian communities. When one is doing what one has been taught to do and yet joy, peace, and freedom from sin do not consistently follow, there is often confusion and frustration as well as disenchantment and cynicism (either with one’s particular church or one’s theological tradition or with Christianity altogether). If not confusion, frustration, disenchantment, and cynicism, perhaps worse is pretense and self-deception as a means to deal with the apparent lack of growth. Given the existential fall-out from the experience of the gradual nature of sanctification, an honest and realistic explanation of the slow nature of growth is pastorally crucial.⁴

1. The Easy Answer: Sin

Of course, the easy explanation as to why Christians struggle to make progress in holiness is sin. The trouble with this bald answer is that it leaves many believers thinking that the real culprit behind their lack of growth is their own personal sins, understood as willful disobedience, and therefore, that the solution is increased willpower on their own part. “Why don’t I grow?” Answer: “I need to try harder.” While effort of a sort is certainly called for in the Christian life (e.g., 2 Pet 1:5), this superficial diagnosis of the sin-problem results in effort directed at the attempt to curb mere behavioral disobedience by means of willpower alone.⁵ This places persons on a trajectory leading away from deeper dependence on God’s grace and the Spirit’s sanctifying work. Indeed, from this point of view sanctification by the Spirit is reduced to Aristotelian virtue formation.⁶ That is, the way to make progress in the Christian life is merely to attempt to behave in virtuous manners and refrain from vicious, or sinful, behavior in hopes that one’s inner life will eventually align itself with one’s behavioral choices. Such autonomous formation either leads to self-righteousness (for those who can pump up the requisite willpower) or self-condemnation and despair (for those with less stamina to get their wills going in the right direction).

³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits* (trans. R. J. Hollingdale; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 235.

⁴ The need for an explanation is pressed when it is not just the explanation of one’s own lack of sanctity but also the lack of sanctity within one’s Christian community.

⁵ See John Coe, “Resisting the Temptation of *Moral* Formation: Opening to *Spiritual* Formation in the Cross and Spirit,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 1:1 (2008), 54–78.

⁶ N. T. Wright discusses some of the differences between Aristotelian virtue formation and Christian virtue formation in *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2012).

2. A More Complex Answer: The World, the Flesh, and the Devil

A more complex analysis of the situation is to say that the obstacle to the Spirit's sanctifying work is not sin *simpliciter* but the world, the flesh, and the devil understood as three distinct manifestations of sin each of which functions as a barrier to spiritual progress.⁷ For our purposes here, we might think of the "world" as institutions, societal structures, values and beliefs of our fallen human order that distract, distort, and discourage spiritual transformation. We might think of the "devil" as representing the "fiery darts" and "schemes" of the demonic realm that seek to spiritually debilitate Christ-followers. And we might think of the flesh as human dispositions to sin. It is important to note that this understanding of flesh (σάρξ) does not see the physical body itself as inherently sinful. Rather, this is what has been called an "ethical" understanding of Paul's usage of σάρξ and therefore refers to the ingrained tendencies of fallen persons to sin that remain after conversion.

When it comes to explaining the difficulty of spiritual growth, having the world, the flesh, and the demonic as part of one's explanatory repertoire aids in providing a deeper analysis of the challenge Christians face in their spiritual progress and helps do away with the tendency to reduce sin to mere behavioral disobedience. This is true especially if one takes seriously the way in which these three manifestations of sin interrelate and become entangled within individual and corporate life.⁸ No doubt many Christ-followers are stuck in their sanctification due to deeply ingrained sinful dispositions—their flesh—that are regularly enticed by the world and affirmed by the demonic.

3. The Priority of the Flesh

While dealing with the interrelated nature of the world, the flesh, and the demonic is an important project, understanding the nature of the flesh is fundamental to that discussion. There is good reason to think that the influence the world and the demonic have on human persons is ultimately dependent on persons' characterological vulnerability (i.e., the flesh) to worldly and demonic influences. For instance, Christians are to present themselves as living sacrifices, not conformed to the pattern of this world, but instead being transformed by the renewing of their minds (Rom 12:2; cf. John 16:33). It would appear that a mind that is being renewed would aid one in resisting spiritually destructive, worldly patterns, which suggests that dealing with the flesh is in some sense fundamental to resisting the world. For example, the destructive, materialistic consumerism rampant in Western culture will only conform one to that pattern if one is already open to finding one's identity and meaning outside of Christ. Another way of thinking of this is that it is difficult to conceive of someone who has made "no provision for the flesh in regards to its lusts" (Rom 13:14) but who nevertheless struggles mightily with the consumerism and materialism of current Western society. Alternatively, it is easy to conceive of a Christian who has isolated himself from the spiritually destructive influences of contemporary society, but who nevertheless still struggles mightily with ingrained sinful dispositions. Indeed, the desert fathers and mothers of the fourth and fifth centuries testified that fleeing the city did not extinguish inner temptation. The flesh undergirds and makes possible struggles with the world in a way that struggles with the world do not necessarily undergird and make possible struggles with the flesh.

⁷For a helpful primer on the world, the flesh, the devil, and their interconnectedness, see Clint E. Arnold, *3 Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 32–37.

⁸Ibid., 36.

The same priority of the flesh holds true when it comes to the demonic. In Eph 6, putting on the “full armor of God” is the means to “stand against the schemes of the devil” (Eph 6:11; cf. Jas 4:7). To “put on” truth, righteousness, faith, and the like would mean that the Christian is having some success in making no provision for the flesh (Rom 13:14). In other words, it appears that if the flesh is being dealt with successfully, the world and the demonic get little traction in the Christian’s life. One reason that Jesus, for instance, was ultimately unencumbered by the world and the devil is that he did not walk according to the flesh.⁹ So while our fleshly inclinations are often entangled with and influenced by the world and the demonic, there appears to be a practical priority to dealing with the flesh as a means of undermining the influence of the world and the demonic.

4. A First Take on Flesh: The Inclination-to-Sin View

If the flesh is prior to the world and the devil in this sort of way, then getting clear on the nature and dynamics of the flesh becomes even more crucial for Christian sanctification. The difficulty, of course, is that σάρξ is “one of the most challenging words in Paul’s theological vocabulary.”¹⁰ Of the 91 times the term appears in the Pauline materials, there is a range of usage spanning various neutral senses of the term (e.g., the physical body as in 1 Cor 15:39) to morally negative senses (e.g., Gal 5:16–17).¹¹ This negative or “ethical” usage of σάρξ occurs anywhere from 25 to 30 times in Paul’s letters depending on how one interprets several difficult passages.¹² While there has been considerable controversy regarding how best to understand the ethical use of σάρξ, one straightforward understanding is that σάρξ involves a habituated tendency to sin. Let us call this initial view of σάρξ the inclination-to-sin view. On the inclination-to-sin view, σάρξ is simply understood as the human inclination to sin behaviorally that has been ingrained in a person’s character and that continues to exert an influence after conversion.¹³ For instance, David Clark defines σάρξ as “the aspect or quality of corruption in fallen human nature that

⁹ This is not to deny that Jesus was incarnate in a real human body. It is instead to deny that Jesus experienced sinful tendencies as habituated character traits.

¹⁰ Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 343.

¹¹ For an overview of Paul’s usage of σάρξ, see L&N, xiv–xv; Eduard Schweizer, Friedrich Baumgartel, and Rudolf Meyer, “*sarx, sarkikos, sarkinos*,” in *TDNT* 7:98–151; James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 62–70; I. Howard Marshall, “Living in the ‘Flesh,’” *BSac* 159 (2002): 387–403. For a succinct overview of Paul’s different uses as well as some discussion of the disagreements of how to categorize those uses, see Douglas J. Moo, “‘Flesh’ in Romans: A Challenge for the Translator,” in *The Challenge of Bible Translation: Communicating God’s Word to the World* (ed. Glen G. Scorgie, Mark L. Strauss, and Steven M. Voth; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 366–72.

¹² This count is claimed by Moo, “‘Flesh’ in Romans,” 367.

¹³ In this paper I will largely stay clear of the debates regarding whether or not regenerate Christians still have *sarx*. It seems obvious that there is a sense in which Scripture makes clear that *sarx* has been crucified and another sense in which *sarx* needs to be “put to death” (Col 3:5; Gal 5:24; 6:8; Rom 8:13; 13:14). On this issue, Richard J. Erickson writes, “This in fact is an apocalyptic dualism which proleptically views the regenerate Christian as already ‘in the Spirit’ and under the rule of God by faith while still living a ‘fleshly’ existence in this present age. The solution to the tension thus created is the continual putting to death of the flesh and its works” (“Flesh,” *DPL* 306). For the alternative view, see Walter Russell, “Does the Christian have the Flesh?” *JETS* 36 (1993): 179–87.

impels each person toward committing sin” and that “inclines all humans toward sinful acts.”¹⁴ Similarly, in addressing the conflict between the Spirit and the flesh in Gal 5, Douglas Moo writes, “it is a conflict between God’s Spirit and the impulse to sin, an impulse that no longer rules in the believer but still exerts influence that must be resisted.”¹⁵

It is important to note that these scholars do not maintain that σάρξ is *nothing but* an inclination or impulse to sin. For example, Moo writes elsewhere, “σάρξ is placed in opposition to the Spirit, and their relationship is described in terms of a struggle between two powers (see 5:17 esp.).”¹⁶ Indeed, it is this more relational dimension of σάρξ as opposition to the Spirit that this article seeks to develop. For without this deeper level of analysis, one’s understanding of σάρξ can easily be left at the overly simplified inclination-to-sin view. A chief problem with leaving our view of σάρξ at such a level of analysis is that it does not allow a penetrating explanation of the slowness in overcoming sin. For if σάρξ is merely deeply habituated desires and inclinations to sin, then it would seem that the righteous desires produced by the indwelling Spirit of God would easily overpower fleshly desires. Since they often do not, some additional explanation is required. But without a deeper analysis of σάρξ, it appears the only solution to overcoming fleshly desire is to avail one’s self more fully of the Spirit’s empowerment through the means of grace and/or to utilize that empowerment more effectively in making choices to refrain from sin. In other words, the answer to the question of why Christians are not growing more readily is that they are not trying hard enough. They are not turning frequently enough to the Spirit (sowing to the Spirit), and they are not refraining intensely enough from giving into the flesh (sowing to the flesh). On the view that σάρξ is the mere inclination-to-sin, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the slowness of spiritual change is due to ingrained habit and therefore a lack of willpower to break those habits. While habit and the utilization of willpower is certainly a significant part of spiritual growth, understanding human inclination to sin (i.e., σάρξ) as ultimately rooted in relational resistance to the Spirit provides a more penetrating explanation of the gradual nature of sanctification.

5. A Second Take on Flesh: The Relational Resistance View

The relational resistance view maintains that σάρξ is not simply ingrained inclinations to behaviorally sin, but more fundamentally ingrained inclinations to resist the Spirit of God and to live autonomously from his life-giving presence. Christ-followers do not come into the Christian life with merely habituated sinful desires, dispositions, and their resultant sinful behaviors (the deeds of the flesh), but more profoundly Christ-followers bring with them the habituated, idolatrous proclivities of their pre- and post-conversion attempts to live autonomously from God. So, this view is sensitive to the fact that while Christians do need to turn more frequently to the Spirit’s empowerment and thereby refrain from sin, such acts of submission to the Spirit are complicated by habituated relational resistance to the Spirit. To put the point another way, what stands in the way of progress in holiness

¹⁴David K. Clark, “Interpreting the Biblical Words for Self,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 18 (1990), 312, 315. Clark concludes his paper by defining flesh as “the inclination to sin per se” (316). In this article I argue *not* that σάρξ does not include an inclination to sin, but that inclinations to sin are ultimately inclinations to find life in one’s own power apart from God. Again, the critique is that such a view of σάρξ needs to be taken further, not that the view is incorrect as it stands.

¹⁵Moo, *Galatians*, 354.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 344.

is not merely σάρξ understood as the Christian's habituated desire to sin, but σάρξ understood as the Christian's habituated desire to be one's own god. To make no provision for the flesh, then, is to put to death ingrained attempts to utilize one's natural resources to live apart from God and instead to engage in practices of deepening dependence on the nourishment available by the Spirit, which brings forth the fruit of the Spirit. This means that the choice to "stop" rebelling and "start" depending is not ultimately a willpower issue. Rather, it is an interpersonal issue. In particular, it is an issue that involves coming to a greater trust/faith in the love and goodness of God as well as despairing of the attempt to find life apart from God.

So, the central claim of this article is that, at bottom, σάρξ is human resistance to the empowering, transformational presence of the Holy Spirit. Such resistance brings about desires to find life outside of God from which emerges, when those desires are acted upon, sinful deeds that reinforce the entire sin dynamic. Resistance to the empowering, transformational presence of the Holy Spirit presupposes that the Spirit's presence is meant to be empowering and transformational (i.e., sanctifying) and that the human agent has the capacity to either receive or resist (i.e., quench or grieve) the Holy Spirit.¹⁷ While these two assumptions will be largely taken for granted in this article, I try to state them in a more formal way below. For now, it is important to make the case that σάρξ includes the notion of human resistance to the empowering, transformational presence of the Spirit. Four passages that express this relational dimension of σάρξ are Gal 3:1–3; 5:16–21; Rom 8:1–16; and 1 Cor 3:1–5. While a detailed exposition of each of these passages is not possible here, a brief overview of each will provide some credence for the relational view of σάρξ.

5.1. Galatians 3:1–3

First, in Gal 3:1–3 Paul's juxtaposition of Spirit and flesh is a juxtaposition of trust in or dependence on the Spirit's resources ("having begun by the Spirit") versus a trust in or dependence on one's own autonomous, natural resources ("are you now being perfected by the flesh?"). As James Thompson notes regarding this passage, σάρξ is "the locus of natural human desire" and "refers to the natural human condition apart from the empowering work of God's Spirit."¹⁸ In other words, σάρξ—one's natural, autonomous, merely human resources—is all that one has apart from the advent of the new era in Christ and the Spirit. Paul exhorts the Galatians to choose to live in accordance with the empowerment of this new era and to "not submit again to the yoke of slavery" (5:1). On this view, σάρξ is not inherently evil in that σάρξ is the God-given, albeit severely limited, natural human resources that are available to finite human persons. What becomes spiritually problematic about these limited human resources is that prior to conversion persons put their confidence in them rather than in God, which is to be enslaved to sin (cf. Eph 2:1; Phil 3:2–11). In Gal 3, even after conversion, Christians can return in some measure to putting confidence in their own merely human attempts—as if unregenerate—to find life outside of God.¹⁹ What needs to be noticed here is that σάρξ is the attempt to find life (perfection) on one's own apart from dependence on the Spirit.

¹⁷ For a helpful treatment of this interpersonal model, see William P. Alston, "The Indwelling of the Spirit," in *Divine Nature and Human Language* (ed. William P. Alston; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 121–150.

¹⁸ James W. Thompson, *Moral Formation according to Paul: The Context and Coherence of Pauline Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 143.

¹⁹ This interpretation of σάρξ is consistent with Gordon Fee's view, though Fee seems to overly downplay the continued struggle with the "mortally wounded" σάρξ after conversion. See Gordon Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the*

5.2. Galatians 5:16–21

Galatians 5:16–24 brings further insight to this dynamic by indicating that the choice between dependent trust (“walking in the Spirit”) and independent distrust (“gratify the desire of the flesh”) is rooted in opposing desires (5:17). We need not see these opposing desires as a conflict of two dimensions of the individual person—one dimension that desires to sin and another dimension that desires not to sin. Rather, Paul clearly identifies one side of the conflict as what the Spirit desires.²⁰ The Spirit meaningfully indwells the Christian as a testifying presence (e.g., Gal 4:6) and thereby desires to strengthen and fill the individual Christian with his presence resulting in transformation (cf. Eph 3:14–19; 5:18). So the Spirit desires to empower the Christian for fruitful living, and yet, this desire of the Spirit is in opposition to the fleshly desire of the Christian to find life independently of the Spirit. Thomas Schreiner writes regarding 5:17, “the desires of the flesh are implacably opposed to the things of the Spirit. Nonetheless, the continuing desires of the flesh are not the whole story. Believers are also indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit within them impels them to righteousness, so that believers have powerful desires for goodness as well.”²¹ No doubt believers have “powerful desires for goodness” because the indwelling Spirit “impels them to righteousness.” But it is more to the point to say that Paul has in view that the Spirit has his own desire that the believer become fruitful, and it is this desire of *the Spirit* that is in opposition to the Christian’s fleshly desire. As Schreiner clarifies, “the flesh and the Spirit are diametrically opposed to one another.”²² Since the Christian still desires to attempt to live in autonomy from the Spirit (Gal 3:3; 5:16), trusting in his or her own resources (i.e., gratifying the desire of the flesh), it is evident that what the Spirit desires is in opposition to the person’s fleshly desire to live in autonomy.²³ And, as Paul makes clear, it goes the other direction as well: the person’s fleshly desire is in hostile opposition to the desire of the Spirit. The conflict is not as simple as a dimension of one’s self that desires to be righteous and a dimension of one’s self that desires to sin. Such an analysis sets us on the track of seeing a lack of willpower as the culprit behind meager growth. Rather, there is a dimension of one’s self that is opposed to the Spirit’s presence and work in one’s life. And the Spirit is opposed to this dimension of one’s self that desires autonomy from the Spirit. Richard Longenecker writes, “[B]ehind the individual believer Paul sees two ethical forces that seek to control a person’s thought and activity: the one, the personal Spirit of God; the other, the personified ‘flesh.’”²⁴ Hence, the conflict for the Christian in Gal 5 is not a conflict of his desires to sin as opposed to his desires not to sin. Rather, it

People of God (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 126–39. Thomas Schreiner also takes this interpretation: “The term ‘flesh’ here is used in the technical Pauline sense, referring to reliance on the old Adam, the unregenerate person” (*Galatians* [ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 184).

²⁰It is assumed here that the verb ἐπιθυμῶ in the first clause of Gal 5:17 is implied in the second clause of verse 17. For arguments to this effect, see Moo, *Galatians*, 354 and Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (rev. ed.; NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 249.

²¹Schreiner, *Galatians*, 343.

²²Ibid., 340 (see also, 343–44, 352–52).

²³It is significant that the “desire of the flesh” in Gal 5:16 is a singular desire (ἐπιθυμίαν). Moo writes, “The somewhat unexpected singular ἐπιθυμίαν focuses attention on the single basic direction that characterizes the ‘desire’ or ‘intent’ of the flesh” (*Galatians*, 353).

²⁴Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (WBC 41; Dallas: Word, 1990), 245. Longenecker understands “to keep you from doing the things you want to do” (Gal 5:17) as “the flesh opposes the Spirit with the desire that people not do what they want to do when guided by the Spirit, and the Spirit opposes the flesh with the desire that people not

is a relational conflict between trusting the Spirit with his intention to bring about fruit (i.e., walking in the Spirit) and trusting in one's autonomous desire to find life apart from the Spirit. In this vein, Robert Jewett defines σάρξ in Gal 5 as "Paul's term for everything aside from God in which one places his final trust."²⁵ Or, as Oliver O'Donovan puts it, "Whether it appears as law or as license, the ultimate fact about life according to the flesh is that it is a refusal of life in the Spirit."²⁶ So, we see here that σάρξ—or the desire of the flesh—is fundamentally a relational resistance to the Spirit.²⁷

5.3. Romans 8:1–16

This understanding of σάρξ as relational resistance coheres well with Paul's discussion in Rom 8. As Rom 8:6–7 has it, "For to set the mind on the flesh [φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός] is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot."²⁸ In Rom 8, σάρξ is an orientation of the mind that is opposed to submission to God. R. J. Erickson understands the sense of σάρξ surfaced here as "rebellious human nature."²⁹ Erickson writes,

[Paul's peculiar use of σάρξ] is a dualism between flesh and spirit in the sense of flesh as an independent reliance on one's own accomplishments over against a spirit of dependence on God and submission to his rule (see esp. Rom 8). . . . Dependence upon human value systems and institutions for securing power and position, as well as libertinistic self-indulgence as a means of attaining "life" (Jewett), are likewise manifestations of a rebellious independence from God's promised provision of life and personal worth through faith in Christ. Ironically, then, by trusting in the "flesh" one attains not life but death.³⁰

do what they want to do when guided by the flesh" (246). For a similar interpretation, see Dunn, *Theology*, 481–82. For a listing of other interpretative options, see Moo, *Galatians*, 354–56.

²⁵ Robert Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings* (AGJU 10; Leiden: Brill, 1971), 103.

²⁶ Oliver O'Donovan, *Resurrection and the Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 13.

²⁷ Moreover, Gal 5 demonstrates that the deeds of the flesh stem from the desires of the flesh. That is, Christians sin because they desire to sin. Sin is not to be analyzed as mere behavioral disobedience, but rather a behavioral disobedience that stems from the desire to find life outside of God. But it is fair to ask one's self, "Why do I desire to find life outside of God? What do I think I will find outside of him?" It looks like Christians are looking for something—pleasure, comfort, control, escape—on their own apart from God. Thus, the flesh at bottom is a trusting in our own ability to make life work rather than a trust in God that he is faithful to care for us according to our true needs. This view can be located in Longenecker, *Galatians*, 244–48 and Fung, *Galatians*, 248–52.

²⁸ John Owen has a helpful treatment of enmity towards God in his *On the Mortification of Sin in Believers* in Kelly M. Kopic and Justin Taylor, eds., *Overcoming Sin and Temptation* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2006), 41–140.

²⁹ See Erickson, "Flesh," 303–6.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 306.

This “independent reliance” on one’s own resources in the place of “dependence on God and submission to his rule” expresses the idolatrous nature of σάρξ—“the flesh is hostile to God” (Rom 8:7).³¹

For the Christian, to put “confidence in the flesh” is at the most profound level a refusal to place one’s confidence in the Spirit and receive life from him. As Paul makes clear, the Christian is no longer “in the flesh” but “in the Spirit” (Rom 8:9). Nonetheless, according to verses 13–15, the choice to live according to the Spirit, putting to death the deeds of the body, is not automatic for the Christian. Commenting on this passage, I. Howard Marshall writes,

Just as sin can control people and make people to do wrong, so also the Spirit can control people and make them do what is right and good. . . . Despite all this believers still sin—as they know from personal experience! So what is wrong? Evidently the control of the Spirit is not automatic. Paul has to remind believers not to live in obedience to their sinful nature but to kill their sinful desires by the Spirit. It seems that believers have some kind of freedom to decide which master they will follow; the Spirit sets them free to live by the Spirit, but they must make the decision to submit to the Spirit.³²

This “freedom to decide which master they will follow” emphasizes the relational nature of σάρξ in that it is not a choice regarding whether to behaviorally sin or not, but a choice regarding whether to submit to or resist the Spirit. The σάρξ does not identify those dimensions of myself that merely want to behaviorally sin, but those dimensions of myself that want little or nothing to do with God.³³

5.4. 1 Corinthians 3:1–5

This is where 1 Cor 3:1–5 sheds a helpful light on how σάρξ functions when it comes to spiritual growth:

But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh [σαρκίνοις], as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh [σαρκικοί]. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh [σαρκικοί] and behaving only in a human way [“walking like mere men” NIV]? For when one says, I follow Paul, and another, I follow Apollos, are you not being merely human?³⁴

³¹ Craig Keener defends a similar reading of Romans 8 from a consideration of ancient Greek and Roman philosophy. See his “‘Fleshly’ Versus Spirit Perspectives in Romans 8:5–8,” in *Paul as Jew, Greek, and Roman* (ed. Stan E. Porter; Pauline Studies 5; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 211–30.

³² I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 321. In reference to the Spirit-flesh dynamic of Rom 8, Dunn writes, “these two powers remain competing realities within the experience of the believer’s current embodiment” (*Theology*, 480; cf. 478–80).

³³ Moo writes of Romans 8, “The natural human condition is to be ‘in the flesh,’ that is, to be fundamentally determined by the perspective of this world in contrast to the world to come . . . Christians, because they are still in this world, must strive to avoid falling into such patterns of thought and activity (8:12:13; 13:14) . . . As long as we live in unredeemed bodies (cf. 8:10–11), the flesh will remain an aspect of being human that will seek to pull Christians back into the sinful habits of the old realm” (“‘Flesh’ in Romans,” 372–73). The point here is to stress that “the sinful habits of the old realm” are habits of life that arise in opposition to God—as replacements for life in him. So, the “pull back” is not just a pull to former behaviors but also a pull to an orientation of the self that seeks to find life outside of God.

³⁴ Paul’s usage of σαρκίνοις and σαρκικοί in 1 Cor 3 is morally negative, according to Dunn, *Theology*, 65.

Here Paul utilizes the metaphor of an infant's digestive system to illustrate the impact of the flesh on spiritual maturity (cf. Heb 5:11–15). The idea is that just as an infant is not “yet able to receive” (1 Cor 3:2 NASB) solid nourishment and must sustain growth on milk, so too the Corinthian Christian who is “still of the flesh” is not yet able to receive the solid nourishment by the Spirit (i.e., words taught by the Spirit, 1 Cor 2:13) and must sustain her growth on a sort of nourishment fit only for spiritual infancy.³⁵ The problem with this picture is that the Corinthian Christians need to move beyond their infancy and yet the only way to mature is to be able to receive deeper nourishment from the Spirit. What Paul makes clear is that *σάρξ* stands in the way of the Corinthians' reception of this deeper nourishment and here again *σάρξ* amounts to the attempt to live in a “merely human” manner apart from God's resources. Specifically, the example Paul addresses is the Corinthians' attempt to find value, meaning, and significance through comparing themselves to one another based on whom they follow (Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or even Christ, 1 Cor 1:11–12). Paul's diagnosis of the Corinthians' problem is that they were trusting in the “wisdom of men” instead of the power of God (2:5). Again, there is nothing wrong with trusting in the wisdom of human persons unless one is doing so as a replacement for trust in God. It is an idolatrous, relational resistance to the Spirit that leads to the lack of receptivity to the Spirit's transformational resources. The Corinthians are attempting to be “perfected by the flesh,” to use Paul's Galatians' terminology (Gal 3:3).

Based on these brief treatments of Galatians 3 and 5, Romans 8, and 1 Corinthians 3, at the most fundamental level *σάρξ* operates on a relational plane.³⁶ As George Ladd put it, flesh refers to “humanity as a whole, seen in its fallenness, opposed to God.”³⁷ The temptation to return to *σάρξ* and the experience of the desires of *σάρξ* are ultimately the temptation to return to strategies to live as if one is one's own god and the subsequent experience of desiring to fill one's self apart from God.³⁸ Of course, this relational resistance to God and the desires to live apart from him become habituated and reinforced by the idolatrous deeds they manifest. Indeed, the deeds of the flesh can become so ingrained in an individual or community's lifestyle that the underlying relational resistance recedes into the background. Nonetheless, on this understanding of *σάρξ* every behavioral sin is ultimately rooted in a lack of trust in God's love and goodness.

³⁵ As Morna Hooker puts it, the Corinthians do not grow as “the result of their own inability to digest what he is offering them.” Quoted in Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 126.

³⁶ For another helpful statement of this view, see Wilber T. Dayton, “The New Testament Conception of the Flesh,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 2 (1967): 15–16.

³⁷ George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (ed. Donald A. Hagner; 2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 515.

³⁸ Thompson is helpful here: “While Paul assumes that those who belong to the old aeon, including those who want to return to it, are enslaved to the power of desire, his imperatives indicate that the community has been rescued from evil powers and now has the potential to choose an alternative power. Accompanying this rescue is the gift of the Spirit (3:2; 4:4–6), which empowers the community to keep the moral demands. . . . Thus Paul does not speak of virtue when he lists the attributes of believers, but the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ (Gal. 5:22). This view corresponds to comments elsewhere about the divine agency at work in believers (cf. Phil. 2:12–13). Believers must nevertheless ‘walk in the Spirit’ (5:16), be ‘led by the Spirit’ (5:18), and crucify the flesh with its desires (5:24). The role of the Spirit in the moral life and the insistence that the community live by the Spirit continue a theme from the earliest catechesis (cf. 1 Thess. 4:8). Only those who have the Spirit are capable of overcoming the passions. When they yield to the divine empowerment, they ‘do the good to all, especially those of the household of faith’ (Gal. 6:10).” Thompson, *Moral Formation according to Paul*, 143; cf. 152–53.

6. *Four Theses of Sanctification and the Role of the Flesh*

Where does this view of *σάρξ* leave us regarding our initial question: Why is spiritual growth so slow? In order to put forward an answer to this question, it will be helpful to situate this relational view of *σάρξ* in the following four theses of sanctification:

Thesis 1. The Spirit transforms persons by bringing his loving presence and meaning to bear on the structures of human personality (beliefs, affections, desires, etc.).

Thesis 2. The flesh is at bottom resistance to the Spirit through the refusal to “receive” the Spirit’s loving presence and meaning and instead put one’s confidence in one’s own autonomous resources.

Thesis 3. This fleshly resistance becomes deeply embedded in embodied humans, reinforced by cultural practices, and promoted by the demonic such that to “put to death” fleshly patterns of life is terrifyingly difficult.

Thesis 4. Since the Spirit’s transforming power is his loving presence and meaning, he does not force himself or coerce persons but waits for their resistance to resign (cf. 1 Cor 13:4–5: “love is patient, love is kind. . . . It does not insist on its own way”).

While I do not have the space to argue for each of these theses, I take it that at least theses 2 and 3 have been adequately defended in this paper. In the absence of the required defense of each of these theses, allow me to quote at length from Abraham Kuyper’s *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, in which he nicely summarizes a view of sanctification (and the flesh) that is consonant with these four theses:

And, dwelling in the elect, He [the Spirit] does not slumber, nor does He keep an eternal Sabbath, in idleness shutting Himself up in their hearts; but as divine Worker He seeks from within to fill their individual persons, pouring the stream of His divine brightness through every space. But we should not imagine that every believer is instantly filled and permeated. On the contrary, the Holy Spirit finds him filled with all manner of evil and treachery. . . . His method of procedure is not with divine power to *force* a man as though he were a stock or block, but by the power of love and compassion so to influence and energize the impulses of the feeble will that it feels the effect, is inclined, and finally consents to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. . . . This operation is different in each person. In one it proceeds with marvelous rapidity; in another, progress is exceedingly slow, being checked by serious reaction which in some rare cases is overcome only with the last breath. There are scarcely two men in whom this gracious operation is completely the same. It may not be denied that the Holy Spirit often meets serious opposition on the part of the saint. . . . And the Holy Spirit bears all this resistance with infinite pity, and overcomes it and casts it out with eternal mercy. Who that is not a stranger to his own heart does not remember how many years it took before he would yield a certain point of resistance; how he always avoided facing it; restlessly opposed it, at last thought to end the matter by arranging for a sort of *modus vivendi* between himself and the Holy Spirit? But the Holy Spirit did not cease, gave him no rest; again

and again that familiar knock was heard, the calling in his heart of that familiar voice.
And after years of resistance he could not but yield in the end³⁹

There is much to appreciate, it seems to me, about Kuyper's statement. What is most interesting for the subject matter of this paper is Kuyper's comment regarding "exceedingly slow" spiritual progress, which he attributes to the Holy Spirit often meeting "serious opposition on the part of the saint." Kuyper maintains that since Christians resist the Spirit's work and since the Spirit does not force his transforming presence on them, the result is that sanctification is slowed. My claim is that understanding *σάρξ* as relational resistance, a view that Kuyper appears to share, is what ultimately explains why sanctification is often slow in coming.

7. *Why Is Spiritual Growth So Slow?*

The question we come to, then, is how this understanding of *σάρξ* aids in the explanation of the slowness of spiritual change. What follows are three concluding implications of a relational view of *σάρξ* for the gradual nature of sanctification.

First, understanding *σάρξ* as relational resistance places the locus of spiritual change in the category of personal trust or distrust of God rather than behavioral obedience or disobedience to God. Or, to put it differently, behavioral obedience or disobedience is always at bottom an issue of relational trust or distrust (cf. John 15:10). What makes spiritual growth challenging—and therefore, often slow—is that it requires persons to learn to trust, love, and depend on God in ways that they have previously learned to trust, love, and depend on themselves. Learning to trust, love, and draw life from another person—especially God—is far more complex than learning various strategies of strengthening one's willpower. It is analogous to growth in a marriage relationship. If it were merely a matter of consistently engaging one's spouse in certain ways (e.g., date nights, clear communication, sacrificial service) and refraining from activities that undermine the relationship (e.g., deception, workaholism, outbursts of anger), marital growth could, in principle, come about quite easily and rapidly. The problem is that a husband (or wife) can be consistently engaging his spouse in the right sort of ways and refraining from activities that undermine the marriage and nonetheless still lack trust, love, and dependence on his spouse. Just as we cannot reduce a marriage relationship to the activities that foster marital growth, we cannot reduce relationship with God to the willpower necessary to consistently engage the means of grace and refrain from sin.

Second, part of the reason why growing in trust is such a challenge is that relational resistance to the Spirit has been operating in humans up until the time of conversion and to varying degrees post-conversion. This means that the ways humans have learned to depend on their own autonomous resources apart from God have been deeply habituated. Perhaps most significant is that the earliest years of human life, during which time relational patterns are deeply embedded in the human personality, were all spent in idolatrous resistance to the Spirit.⁴⁰ The doctrine of original sin entails that even in

³⁹ Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (trans. by Henri De Vries; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 529–30, italics original.

⁴⁰ For a helpful discussion of this point, see John H. Coe and Todd W. Hall, *Psychology in the Spirit: Contours of a Transformational Psychology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2010), 285–87. It is also worth noting that while there are many ways that humans seek to find life outside of God, one of the primary ways humans learn to live without God is through both healthy and unhealthy attachments to significant human others. The earliest of these human relationships are also the context in which persons first learn to trust and depend on others to meet vital human

the womb human persons are seeking to find comfort, pleasure, soothing, nurture, etc. apart from God's loving presence and, in some sense, in place of his presence. Walking according to the σάρξ—understood as dependence on one's own autonomous resources apart from the Spirit—has been a long-term strategy for Christ-followers (cf. Eph 2:1–2). Moreover, this strategy has, in its own limited way, worked for persons such that to let go of it and trust in something else is terrifyingly difficult. This makes some sense of why Christ-followers are going to have to die to the very ways of being that helped them survive before coming to Christ (cf. Col 3:5; Gal 5:24; 6:8; Rom 8:13; 13:14). Erickson writes, “But the “death of the flesh” is abhorrent to a person and can only be endured by virtue of God's promise to have already endowed humanity with resurrection life in Christ (cf. Rom 5:12–21). To die this death, and to “put on” Christ, is to place oneself again, as once in Eden, under the protection and provision of God, to become dependent and trusting.”⁴¹

Lastly, understanding σάρξ as relational resistance opens the door to the psychological fact that we can relationally resist another person even while apparently seeking out that other person. For example, it is quite easy to “listen” to someone speak affirming words to you while thinking of something else you would rather be doing or negating the meaning of the person's words through self-talk that undermines what the person is communicating. In either case, the relational presence of the other—the meaning of the other—does not have its impact even though there is some sort of interpersonal exchange. In an analogous way, Christ-followers can draw near to the Spirit—through prayer, worship, Scripture, communion, and other means of grace—and nevertheless fail to receive all of what the Spirit has on offer. We are, like the Corinthians, “not yet able to receive it” (1 Cor 3:2 NASB). This helps explain why spiritual growth is slow even when one is partaking of the prescribed means of grace. C. S. Lewis poignantly writes,

I say my prayers, I read a book of devotion, I prepare for, or receive, the Sacrament. But while I do these things, there is, so to speak, a voice inside me that urges caution. It tells me to be careful, to keep my head, not to go too far, not to burn my boats. I come into the presence of God with a great fear lest anything should happen to me within that presence which will prove too intolerably inconvenient when I have come out again into my “ordinary” life. I don't want to be carried away into any resolution which I shall afterwards regret. For I know I shall be feeling quite different after breakfast; I don't want anything to happen to me at the altar which will run up too big a bill to pay then.⁴²

Lewis articulates the push and pull of relational dependence which further complicates the Christian's growth in dependence on God.

needs. How this attachment process goes for human persons in childhood has been shown to influence how one will experience their later attachment to God. Hence, another complicating factor in the Christian's growth in dependence on God is one's early relational history. See *ibid.*, 234–60.

⁴¹ Erickson, “Flesh,” 306.

⁴² C. S. Lewis, “A Slip of the Tongue,” in *The Weight of Glory: And Other Addresses* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 185–86.

8. Conclusion

Some Christians find themselves discouraged in their Christian lives due to the slowness of change. Non-Christians often decry the truth of Christianity due to the perceived lack of maturity on the part of Christians. It has been argued here that one resource to help explain the slowness and lack of growth is a relational view of *σάρξ* that takes seriously the relational dynamics that exist between the human person and the indwelling Spirit of God. On this view of *σάρξ*, it turns out that sanctification is not fundamentally a matter of increased willpower in engaging the means of grace, but rather, choices to place one's self in positions of growing trust in and dependence on the person of God. While such choices certainly involve willpower, the intentionality of the choice is attuned to the need to die to autonomy and to grow in greater trust and dependence. Christians come to their spiritual lives with long-standing and complicated stratagems to depend on self-rule rather than God's rule, and these stratagems are deeply embedded in their characters such that even when Christians draw near to God through prayer, worship, meditation on Scripture, and other disciplines there is, as Lewis puts it, "a voice inside me that urges caution." This means that while there is a way forward in Christian growth, this way forward will often take a fair amount of time. As Kuyper wrote, "It may not be denied that the Holy Spirit often meets serious opposition on the part of the saint."⁴³ Or, as Paul puts it, "I am in the pains of labor until Christ is formed in you" (Gal 4:19).

⁴³ Kuyper, *Work*, 530.

PASTORAL PENSÉES

Keeping Eschatology and Ethics Together:
The Teaching of Jesus, the Work of Albert Schweitzer,
and the Task of Evangelical Pastor-Theologians

— Stephen Witmer —

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Abstract: Jesus and the authors of the New Testament consistently link *how* Jesus' followers are to live (ethics) with *when* they live (eschatology). Yet again and again in modern theology, this link has been severed. Eschatology has been reinterpreted, discarded, or demythologized. This article shows that, surprisingly, the severing of ethics and eschatology is present in the work of Albert Schweitzer. Further, it is argued that no one is better placed than evangelical pastor-theologians to recover and proclaim the New Testament's fruitful, hope-giving connection between the Christian's eschatological identity and moral life. This is a matter of great importance for the church.

The NT was written by pastor-theologians—men who thought and wrote about God within the context of Christian commitment and for the purpose of addressing pastoral questions and concerns. One particularly important example of this connection between theology and pastoral concern in the NT is the strong link between eschatology and ethics. By 'eschatology,' I mean the teaching of the NT writers that the last days have arrived in an inaugurated sense and will be consummated at the end of history, and by 'ethics' I refer broadly to NT instruction on how Christians should live. The authors of the NT closely connect the 'when' and the 'how' of Christian existence; the Christian's eschatological identity shapes how he or she is to live in the present. In other words, theology (in this particular case, eschatology, the truth that God is bringing to completion his work in history) is tightly bound up with pastoral, ethical teaching.

In linking ethics and eschatology, the NT writers were following in the footsteps of Jesus, whose ethical instruction was closely connected to his eschatological preaching. Given this connection between Jesus' ethics and eschatology, it is striking to note that again and again in modern theology scholars have attempted to *sever* the link by reinterpreting, discarding, or demythologizing Jesus' outmoded

apocalyptic eschatology (i.e., his theology) and retaining his teaching (i.e., his ethics).¹ This approach is often associated with the nineteenth-century liberal lives of Jesus, but one of my aims in this essay is to demonstrate that a similarly radical severing of eschatology and ethics is present in the work of Albert Schweitzer, ironically the scholar most often credited with putting the nail in the coffin of the liberal lives of Jesus. I will explore and critique this surprising divorce in Schweitzer's work between Jesus' eschatology and the modern application of Jesus' ethics and argue, in opposition to Schweitzer, for the importance of *preserving* the close link between Jesus' eschatology and ethics, his theology and his pastoral concern. For Jesus, as with Paul and the other NT writers, eschatology and ethics were thoroughly enmeshed, so that it is not possible to take over the latter without the former. I'll conclude by reflecting upon the implications of my thesis for contemporary pastor-theologians.

1. The Problem of Holding Together Jesus' Eschatology and Ethics

1.1. Nineteenth-century Approaches: The Reduction of Eschatology to Ethics

For many nineteenth-century liberal scholars, Jesus was a thoroughly non-eschatological figure, an ethical teacher more than anything else.² For these scholars, defining the relationship between Jesus' eschatology and his ethics essentially entailed reducing the former to the latter. The coming of the kingdom of God meant the universal extension of Jesus' ethic of love and did not involve a supernatural act of God. For Albrecht Ritschl, the kingdom of God was essentially ethical—it was a human, this-worldly attempt to do God's will. On this liberal view, Jesus functioned mainly as an example of ethical action.³

Adolf von Harnack in his *What Is Christianity?* suggested that Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God embraced 'two poles,' one in which the kingdom was the future, external rule of God, and the other in which the kingdom was present and inward. Harnack argued that Jesus simply took over the former of these modes of thought from his contemporaries and that it was therefore not central to his thinking. It was, in Harnack's words, the 'husk' of Jesus' thought. The 'kernel' of Jesus' teaching was his own original conception that the kingdom is an inner, present reality. According to Harnack, Jesus' parables reveal this:

The kingdom comes by coming to the individual, by entering into his soul and laying hold of it. True, the kingdom of God is the rule of God; but it is the rule of the holy God in the hearts of individuals; *it is God Himself in His power*. From this point of view everything that is dramatic in the external and historical sense has vanished; and gone, too, are all the external hopes for the future.⁴

¹J. Christiaan Beker has highlighted this trend with particular clarity. See, e.g., J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 44–45.

²See Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1st ed.; New York: Macmillan, 1961), 205.

³See Anthony Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 288.

⁴Adolf Harnack, *What Is Christianity?* (2nd ed.; New York: Putnam's Sons, 1908), 60–61, emphasis original. See also Hoekema, *Bible and the Future*, 289–90. Cf. W. G. Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of its Problems* (London: SCM: 1978), 178: 'And in this respect Harnack associates himself, on the one hand, wholly with the liberal view of Jesus by admitting, indeed, that Jesus expected his imminent return, but by regarding as the real content of Jesus' thought faith alone in the present inwardness of God's kingdom and by

The problems of this nineteenth-century liberal approach to Jesus are obvious. For one thing, the view of Jesus as merely an ethical teacher is manifestly untrue to the Gospels, in which Jesus' apocalyptic teaching is prominent and central, not a discardable 'husk.' Moreover, the liberal reduction of eschatology to ethics leaves unexplained Jesus' death. If Jesus' teaching on the kingdom was merely about the promotion of love, why would anyone have wanted to kill him?⁵ For the purposes of the present discussion, the important point is that, for liberal scholars such as Ritschl and Harnack, the message of Jesus himself was, at its core, an ethical, *non-eschatological* message. Eschatology and ethics in Jesus' teaching and life were not held together because eschatology was reduced to nothing more than ethics.⁶

1.2. Albert Schweitzer on Jesus' Eschatology

The historical interpretation of Jesus began to change decisively toward the beginning of the twentieth century, with a new emphasis on the importance of interpreting Jesus within the Jewish eschatological milieu of his day.⁷ Albert Schweitzer is central here. His interpretation of Jesus as an eschatological figure, following the earlier work of Johannes Weiss, was a major step forward for NT studies in terms of understanding Jesus.⁸ Schweitzer argued for 'consistent eschatology,' that is, the view that for Jesus, the kingdom of God was wholly future and wholly supernatural. On Schweitzer's reconstruction Jesus expects the end of the world within his own lifetime.⁹ In fact, when Jesus sends out the twelve (Matt 10), he anticipates that the Son of Man will appear *before they return*. When they do return after all, he continues to expect the dawn of the Kingdom in the immediate future.¹⁰ This imminent expectation explains Jesus' feeding of the five thousand; it is an anticipation of the imminent messianic feast, not a 'miraculous feeding.'¹¹ After the return of the twelve, Jesus eventually comes to realize (as he reads Isaiah) that, whereas earlier in his ministry he had expected God to bring the pre-messianic Affliction upon both him and his followers, in fact God is going to bring the Kingdom *without*

assuming that the disciples at a very early time abandoned Jesus' way of thinking in favor of a mere hope for the future.'

⁵ For this point, cf. Stephen Neill and N. T. Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861–1986* (2d ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 145; Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 208.

⁶ George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 279–80 describes more recent approaches of the same sort.

⁷ Of course, not all NT scholars took this route of interpreting Jesus eschatologically. William Wrede, also writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, interpreted Jesus as a non-apocalyptic Galilean prophet and emphasized the later church's theologically motivated writing of the gospels. The Jesus Seminar is the modern heir of Wrede's project. For a good overview of the contrasting approaches of Wrede and Schweitzer and their modern successors, see N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God 2; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 3–27.

⁸ For an account of Weiss and Schweitzer's position over against what had preceded them, cf. Kümmel, *The New Testament*, 226–44.

⁹ Albert Schweitzer, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God* (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1985), 167.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 165–66.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 166–67. The latter interpretation of the meal grew up, according to Schweitzer, only after later Christians had lost the understanding of Jesus' imminent expectation of the Kingdom.

the general Affliction. God will bring the Kingdom through the death of Jesus alone. This is why Jesus goes up to Jerusalem. He intends to force the arrival of the end of the world through his death.¹²

However, Jesus is wrong in his expectation that his death will bring an end to history, and he dies heroically but mistakenly. The famous passage in *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* states Schweitzer's position clearly:

Soon after that comes Jesus, and in the knowledge that He is the coming Son of Man lays hold of the wheel of the world to set it moving on that last revolution which is to bring all ordinary history to a close. It refuses to turn, and He throws Himself upon it. Then it does turn; and crushes Him. Instead of bringing in the eschatological conditions, He has destroyed them. The wheel rolls onward, and the mangled body of the one immeasurably great Man, who was strong enough to think of Himself as the spiritual ruler of mankind and to bend history to His purpose, is hanging upon it still. That is His victory and His reign.¹³

Schweitzer's historical-critical conclusion with regard to Jesus' eschatology was in direct conflict with the liberal, nineteenth-century approach to Jesus. While the liberal scholars excised eschatology from their historical understanding of Jesus and made his ethical teaching central, Schweitzer argued that Jesus *must* be understood eschatologically. His historical-critical agenda was thus to promote an understanding of Jesus as one who was *different* than contemporary expectations and approaches.¹⁴ Schweitzer famously noted that the liberal lives of Jesus often made Jesus into the image of their author, and claimed that 'at the present day the Germanic spirit is making a Jesus after its own likeness.'¹⁵ Rather than reconciling Jesus with the current cultural milieu, Schweitzer sought to demonstrate the *otherness* of Jesus by placing him within his first-century apocalyptic setting.

1.3. Albert Schweitzer on Jesus' Ethics

Schweitzer's radical reassessment of the place of eschatology in Jesus' life and teaching required an equally thorough rethinking of Jesus' ethics. For Schweitzer, Jesus' ethics must be understood within the larger context of his eschatological views.¹⁶ Jesus' ethical teaching centers on the now-then contrast between his present (in which God's kingdom is not here) and his imminent future (when the kingdom will arrive). Jesus' ethics are therefore 'interim ethics,' instituted and intended only for the short period of time prior to the Parousia.¹⁷ Schweitzer describes the relationship between Jesus' eschatology and ethics this way: 'If the thought of the eschatological realization of the Kingdom is the fundamental factor in Jesus' preaching, his whole theory of ethics must come under the conception of repentance

¹² Ibid., 169.

¹³ Schweitzer, *Quest*, 371.

¹⁴ Cf. Simon J. Gathercole, 'The Critical and Dogmatic Agenda of Albert Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*,' *TynBul* 51 (2000): 261–83.

¹⁵ Schweitzer, *Quest*, 309. Gathercole ('Critical and Dogmatic Agenda,' 266) notes the importance of this theme to *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*.

¹⁶ Schweitzer, *Mystery*, 52, emphasis original. Schweitzer claims that the ethical proclamation is 'conditioned' by Jesus' eschatological view of the world.

¹⁷ Ibid., 39. Cf. John Wick Bowman, 'From Schweitzer to Bultmann,' *ThTo* 11 (1954): 161–78.

as a preparation for the coming of the Kingdom.¹⁸ Importantly, Schweitzer understands repentance not only as turning from sin in the past, but also as moral renewal and the fulfillment of positive ethical requirements.

In this period of preparation, ‘Service is the fundamental law of *interim-ethics*.’¹⁹ Service does *not* represent the morality of the kingdom of God;²⁰ rather, service and suffering are intended for this age only as preparation for reigning in the kingdom of God. Schweitzer’s view of Jesus’ teaching is that the kingdom of God itself, when it comes, *transcends* good and evil: ‘all moral criteria are to be abolished. The Kingdom of God is super-moral.’²¹ In fact, Schweitzer calls this hyper-ethical understanding of the kingdom the ‘indispensable assumption’ for the historical understanding of the ethics of Jesus. It is important for several reasons. For one thing, it underlines the fact that ethics is not to be an end in itself, nor is it capable of slowly bringing in the kingdom of God, as humans pursue morality (this was the liberal view). Rather, the kingdom of God requires a supernatural act that conditions ethics.²² Moreover, interim ethics determines Jesus’ view of the law, because in Jesus’ view the imminent kingdom will be super-legal and super-ethical. The law is therefore important insofar as it points toward the new morality taught by Jesus. Furthermore, Jesus sees no practical importance in laying out a view of obedience or disobedience to the State—the end is about to come and the State will soon pass away. The ‘ethics’ taught by Jesus are really his instruction to the disciples on how to survive the final woes and the assertion of Satan’s power that will precede the imminent end.²³ Even the Sermon on the Mount is to be understood as interim-ethics.²⁴

1.4. The Separation of Eschatology and Ethics in Schweitzer’s Dogmatic Agenda

It is evident even from this brief review of Schweitzer’s understanding of Jesus’ ethics that eschatology and ethics *in Jesus’ teaching* are very closely linked with one another. Schweitzer’s major historical-critical contribution is to demonstrate that Jesus was an eschatological figure and to show that Jesus’ eschatology and ethics were closely joined.

However, there is an irony at the core of Schweitzer’s work on Jesus, eschatology, and ethics. While Schweitzer’s *historical-critical* agenda was to interpret Jesus as an eschatological figure and understand his ethics in light of his imminentist eschatology, Schweitzer took a radically different position with regard to the *dogmatic* issue of what Jesus’ eschatological views mean for the present. As Simon Gathercole has penetratingly observed, Schweitzer’s ultimate aim in *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* was ‘to destroy dogmatically what had been re-established critically.’²⁵ Gathercole convincingly argues that one of the reasons Schweitzer structured his *Quest* around the central figures of Reimarus,

¹⁸ Schweitzer, *Mystery*, 53, cf. 49–50.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 58.

²² *Ibid.*, 57. On the other hand, Schweitzer thinks Jesus taught that moral renewal could *hasten* the coming of the kingdom, and that this effect of moral renewal is a key link between Jesus’ ethics and modern ethics. On this, see below.

²³ *Ibid.*, 50–51.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

²⁵ Gathercole, ‘Critical and Dogmatic Agenda,’ 263.

Strauss, and Weiss is that all three figures sought (like Schweitzer himself) to demonstrate that Jesus' eschatological worldview could not be carried over into a modern view of the world. In the memorable phrase of John Wick Bowman, we have in Schweitzer 'the anomaly of *a scholar who does not belong to his own school of thought*.'²⁶ It is this paradoxical relation of historical-critical agenda and dogmatic agenda in Schweitzer's work that I wish to explore. Why was Schweitzer driven to destroy dogmatically what he had sought to establish critically? How did he attempt to preserve the value of Jesus for his day? And was his project of preserving ethics and discarding eschatology ultimately successful?

One of the fundamental reasons for the remarkable difference between historical-critical and dogmatic agendas in Schweitzer's writings is his view that Jesus believed in an imminent Parousia. In other words, Jesus' eschatological (theological) error is what forces a wedge between Schweitzer's historical-critical and dogmatic agendas. For Schweitzer, Jesus' error in expecting the imminent end of the world is *central* to the history of Christianity: "The whole history of "Christianity" down to the present day, that is to say, the real inner history of it, is based on the delay of the Parousia, the non-occurrence of the Parousia, the abandonment of eschatology, the progress and completion of the "de-eschatologising" of religion which has been connected therewith."²⁷

The important question is: if Jesus was *wrong* in his expectation of an imminent end of the world, how can he be relevant to the modern world? This was a question to which, by his own testimony, Schweitzer gave a great deal of thought. He devotes an entire chapter of his autobiography to the question. And he reports that, 'As my two books on the life of Jesus gradually became known, the question was put to me from all sides, what the eschatological Jesus, who lives expecting the end of the world and a supernatural Kingdom of God, can be to us. My own thoughts were continually busy with it while at work on my books.'²⁸

I see two main ways in which Schweitzer seeks to make the 'eschatological Jesus' (the 'mistaken' Jesus) relevant to the modern world. First and most importantly, he is forced to drive a wedge between Jesus' eschatology and ethics, because (in his view) Jesus' eschatology is mistaken. Although Schweitzer uses a different terminology than Harnack's kernel and husk—that of the 'mold' and the 'casting'—he reverts to a solution similar to Harnack's. Schweitzer readily admits that Jesus combined an outdated eschatology with a profound ethic:

The error of research hitherto is that it attributes to Jesus a spiritualizing of the late Jewish Messianic Expectation, whereas in reality He simply fits into it the ethical religion of love. Our minds refuse at first to grasp that a religiousness and an ethic so deep and spiritual can be combined with other views of such a naïve realism. But the combination is a fact.²⁹

These words are revealing: according to Schweitzer, Jesus' view of an imminent end of the world is 'naïve realism.' In his autobiography, Schweitzer lays out his way of handling Jesus' combination of a 'deep and spiritual' ethic with 'naïvely realistic' eschatological views. 'And so we must reconcile ourselves to the fact that Jesus' religion of love made its appearance as part of a system of thought that anticipated

²⁶ Bowman, 'From Schweitzer to Bultmann,' 165, emphasis original.

²⁷ Schweitzer, *Quest*, 360.

²⁸ Albert Schweitzer, *Out of My Life and Thought: An Autobiography* (New York: Holt, 1959), 51.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 37. Cf. 54: 'The late Jewish view of the world, centered in the expectation of the Messiah, is the crater from which the flame of the eternal religion of love bursts forth.'

a speedy end of the world. We cannot make it our own through the concepts in which he proclaimed it but must rather translate it into those of our modern view of the world.³⁰ Schweitzer also speaks of the preacher working his way ‘up through the historical truth’ of Jesus’ teaching ‘to the eternal’ significance of that teaching.³¹ In the second edition of *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Schweitzer also addresses this problem. Here, he eschews the attempt to separate out the transitory from the permanent elements in Jesus’ worldview because he thinks such an attempt will detract from the greatness and unity of Jesus’ thought. Rather, Schweitzer finds it necessary to ‘translate’ the ‘basic thinking of that world-view into our own terms.’³² However, although Schweitzer speaks here of ‘translating,’ his imagery elsewhere of the ‘mold’ and ‘casting’ and his reference to Jesus’ death as ‘destroying’ his worldview suggests that his project is not simply a matter of translation. It is, in fact, about breaking free of Jesus’ antiquated Jewish apocalyptic worldview while retaining Jesus’ ethical teaching.

Schweitzer’s solution to the problem raised by Jesus’ imminentist eschatological views is to understand Jesus’ spiritual and ethical teaching as essential and his eschatological expectation as non-essential. That is, Schweitzer’s dogmatic solution is *to separate ethics from eschatology*.

We of today do not, like those who were able to hear the preaching of Jesus, expect to see a Kingdom of God realizing itself in supernatural events. Our conviction is that it can only come into existence by the power of the spirit of Jesus working in our hearts and in the world. The one important thing is that we shall be as thoroughly dominated by the idea of the Kingdom, as Jesus required His followers to be.³³

Schweitzer’s historical-critical agenda of establishing a thoroughly eschatological Jesus collides head-on here with his dogmatic agenda of applying Jesus’ ethic to the present. The trouble is that, on Schweitzer’s view, Jesus’ ethic is profoundly eschatological—it is an interim ethic, established for a short period of time until the end arrives. But if this is the case, how can Jesus’ ethic be in any sense applicable to the modern world? Schweitzer admits that a key difference between Jesus’ ethics and modern ethics is that Jesus’ ethics are ‘oriented entirely by the expected supernatural consummation,’ whereas modern ethics are ‘unconditional’ in that they do not look forward to a supernatural act in history.³⁴ His solution is to find a deep unity between Jesus’ ethics and modern ethics—he locates this unity in the ‘eternal inward truth’ of Jesus’ ethics, which is ‘indeed independent of history and unconditioned by it, since it already contains the highest ethical thoughts of all times.’³⁵ This claim is important. Here it is clear that, in moving to the level of that which is ‘independent of history and unconditioned by it,’ Schweitzer has been forced to separate eschatology and ethics. He has taken back dogmatically the important connection he had previously established historically and critically in Jesus’ thought.

³⁰ Ibid., 53.

³¹ Ibid., 55.

³² Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (2d ed.; Minneapolis, Fortress, 2001), 48.

³³ Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, 54. Notice here the problem is that Jesus expects ‘supernatural events,’ and such events are unacceptable within a modern worldview. This indicates that what is driving Schweitzer’s rejection of Jesus’ eschatology is both Jesus’ mistaken imminentist belief and, perhaps more basically, Jesus’ supernatural worldview.

³⁴ Schweitzer, *Mystery*, 57.

³⁵ Ibid., 56–57.

If this all sounds strangely like the liberal Christianity which Schweitzer took to task on a historical-critical level, that is because Schweitzer is actually very close to liberal Christianity at this point. In a remarkable passage in his autobiography, Schweitzer *allies* himself with liberal Christianity: ‘even if . . . liberal Christianity has to give up identifying its belief with the teachings of Jesus in the way it used to think possible, it still has the spirit of Jesus not against it but on its side.’³⁶ Jesus, according to Schweitzer, formulates no doctrine and does not think dogmatically. Rather, Jesus sets up ethics as the center of religion. Schweitzer then goes a step further. ‘Further than this, the religion of love taught by Jesus has been freed from any dogmatism which clung to it by the disappearance of the late Jewish expectation of the immediate end of the world. The mold in which the casting was made has been broken. We are now at liberty to let the religion of Jesus become a living force in our thought, as its purely spiritual and ethical nature demands.’³⁷ In other words, it is *Jesus himself* who, through his mistaken eschatological views, breaks apart eschatology and ethics. His eschatology is a broken mold, best discarded.

This passage in Schweitzer’s autobiography echoes something Schweitzer had written years earlier in *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*. Schweitzer concludes that book by claiming that, ‘With his death [Jesus] destroyed the form of his *Weltanschauung*, rendering his own eschatology impossible.’³⁸ According to Schweitzer, this destruction of eschatology is actually *a great virtue*: ‘Thereby [Jesus] gives to all peoples and to all times the right to apprehend him in terms of their thoughts and conceptions, in order that his spirit may pervade their “Weltanschauung” as it quickened and transfigured the Jewish eschatology.’³⁹ In other words, Jesus’ error concerning the end of the world is *freeing* for theology, which is no longer ‘bound to graze in a paddock.’ Theology now ‘is free, for its task is to found our Christian view of the world solely upon the personality of Jesus Christ, irrespective of the form in which it expressed itself in his time. He himself has destroyed this form with his death.’⁴⁰ Jesus’ death, in Schweitzer’s view, frees his (eternally true) ethics from his (mistaken) eschatology.

And yet, although the ‘mold’ of Jesus’ mistaken eschatological worldview must be thrown away, Schweitzer sees two enduring values in the fact that Jesus’ world-affirming ethic of active love is set up within this world-denying, imminentist worldview. First, the apocalyptic worldview offers a necessary antidote to the modern Christian tendency to ‘externalize Christianity’—to make it about what we do, and about ‘busy service for the Kingdom of God.’ The teaching of love within a worldview expecting the imminent end of history leads modern Christians to affirm the world, but to do so from a position of ‘spiritual freedom from the world’ and in the strength of the ‘spirit of the Kingdom of God.’⁴¹

Second, Schweitzer boldly argues that the very reason that Jesus’ ethics are similar to *modern* ethics is because they are ‘absolutely dependent’ on Jesus’ eschatology.⁴² Schweitzer’s argument is that Jesus taught that the supernatural kingdom of God would be hastened by reason of religious-moral renovation⁴³ and this is what distinguished Jesus’ eschatology from the eschatology of his age.

³⁶ Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, 58.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 58–59.

³⁸ Schweitzer, *Mystery*, 158.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁴¹ Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, 55.

⁴² Schweitzer, *Mystery*, 71–72.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 63, 65.

Instead of passively waiting for the kingdom, Jesus taught his followers to bring it to pass through moral renovation. Jesus' mistaken eschatology gradually faded, but there remained an ethical worldview 'in which the eschatological persisted in the form of an imperishable faith in the final triumph of the good.'⁴⁴ As the supernatural, eschatological element faded, it gave way to the idea that the prerequisite moral renovation actually *is* the kingdom. Therefore, Jesus, by connecting the coming of the kingdom with moral renovation, established a worldview of 'ethical eschatology,'⁴⁵ one which Schweitzer sees as quite modern.⁴⁶

The second way in which Schweitzer connects the 'eschatological Jesus' to the modern world is by focusing on Jesus' personality and will. This is explicit in the short 'Postscript' to Schweitzer's early work *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*. According to Schweitzer, the aim of this book is 'to depict the figure of Jesus in its overwhelming heroic greatness and to impress it upon the modern age and upon the modern theology.'⁴⁷ Schweitzer voices concern that the 'heroic' has disappeared from the modern worldview, from modern Christianity, and from the modern conception of Jesus. His solution: 'We must go back to the point where we can feel again the heroic in Jesus.' People must encounter the heroic personality of Jesus, for it is in this encounter that the heroic in modern Christianity and in the modern worldview can be restored. This focus on Jesus himself is notable—by drawing attention to his heroic personality rather than his teaching, Schweitzer can bring Jesus directly into contact with the modern world while bypassing Jesus' erroneous belief in the imminent Parousia.

This same theme is struck in Schweitzer's autobiography: 'Even if the historical Jesus has something strange about Him, yet His personality, as it really is, influences us much more strongly and immediately than when He approached us in dogma and in the results attained up to the present by research. . . . The true understanding of Jesus is the understanding of will acting on will.'⁴⁸ In the second edition of *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Schweitzer again emphasizes the importance of the will: 'The ultimate and deepest knowledge of all things comes from the will.' For Schweitzer, Jesus 'cannot be an authority for us at the level of understanding, but only at the level of the will.'⁴⁹ In a letter dated December 24, 1910, Schweitzer wrote, 'He is my Lord in spite of the fact that inwardly I stand free in relation to his ideas and opinions. He is my Lord through the great and pure will in which my will finds its way and becomes brilliantly simple.'⁵⁰

2. Assessing Schweitzer's Dogmatic Separation of Ethics and Eschatology

I want to offer here four critiques of Schweitzer's dogmatic separation of eschatology and ethics in bringing Jesus into contact with the modern world.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 72.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 67.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 71, 162.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 174.

⁴⁸ Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, 55–56.

⁴⁹ Schweitzer, *Quest* (2d ed.), 482.

⁵⁰ Cited in James Carleton Paget, 'The Religious Authority of Albert Schweitzer's Jesus,' in *Scripture's Doctrine and Theology's Bible: How the New Testament Shapes Christian Dogmatics* (ed. Markus Bockmuehl and Alan J. Torrance; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 85.

2.1. A Historical-Critical Problem

First, the fundamental problem with Schweitzer's project is a historical-critical problem. Schweitzer's view that, for Jesus, the end of the world was certainly to occur within his own lifetime is deeply mistaken. This claim is central to Schweitzer's reconstruction of Jesus' life and also forms the basis of his reading of Jesus' 'interim-ethic.' Beyond that, it is one of the main factors leading to Schweitzer's dogmatic separation of ethics and eschatology: the 'mold' of Jesus' agreement with 'the late Jewish expectation of the immediate end of the world' is broken by his death because his death proves his error, and the 'casting' of his eternal ethic of love is therefore free to be embraced within the modern worldview. What is striking, given the centrality of Jesus' expectation of the imminent end within Schweitzer's reconstruction, is that Schweitzer mainly asserts this view of Jesus rather than arguing for it.⁵¹ Matthew 10 is the central passage upon which Schweitzer bases his claim that Jesus believed the end was imminent.⁵² Matthew 10:23 is particularly important here: 'When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.'⁵³ Based on verse 23, Schweitzer conceives of Jesus' instructions to the twelve in Matt 10 as intended only for the brief period before the coming of the Son of Man, not for the time after Jesus' death.

But Schweitzer's understanding of Matt 10 is unconvincing for several reasons. For one thing, it seems highly unlikely that Matthew, writing some years after Jesus' claim in 10:23, would have recorded the claim if he understood it to indicate that Jesus had been in error. Matthew certainly demonstrates no embarrassment regarding Jesus' claim. Moreover, Jesus' words in Mark 13:32/Matt 24:36 suggest it would be unlikely that he would claim definite knowledge of the imminent end of the world: 'But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.'⁵⁴ The parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matt 25:1–13) indicates similarly that the time of the Bridegroom's return is unknown.⁵⁵ In interpreting the rest of Jesus' eschatological sayings, these passages must be given due weight.

One important interpretive question regarding Matt 10:23 is whether Jesus' reference to the coming of the Son of Man is necessarily an *eschatological* reference. Witherington suggests that it is possible to interpret Matt 10:23 in an entirely non-eschatological sense. He argues that Matt 11:19 ('the Son of Man came eating and drinking') indicates that in Matt 10:23 Jesus may refer simply to his rejoining of the disciples after their mission, rather than to the Parousia.⁵⁶ While numerous other references in Matthew to the coming of the Son of Man are clearly eschatological (e.g., Matt 16:27; 24:27, 30, 39; 25:31), many of these passages explicitly note that the coming will be with the angels and in glory. Matthew 10:23

⁵¹ Schweitzer claims that it requires 'hazardous and sophisticated explanations' to force the New Testament texts concerning the imminent end into agreement with the teaching that Jesus could not commit an error (*My Life and Thought*, 57) but he does not support this claim with any arguments.

⁵² See Schweitzer, *Mystery*, 48–50. Ben Witherington III, *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1992), 39, says, 'Largely on the basis of [Matthew 10] alone Schweitzer argued that Jesus expected the parousia of the Son of Man . . . before his disciples had completed their preaching tour of Galilee.'

⁵³ Scripture quotations are from the ESV, unless otherwise noted.

⁵⁴ Cf. Hoekema, *Bible and the Future*, 117–18.

⁵⁵ Cf. Witherington, *End of the World*, 36–37.

⁵⁶ See *ibid.*, 40–41.

does not make these explicitly eschatological references. Moreover, the comparable reference to the coming of the Son of Man in Matt 16:28, given its narrative location immediately before Matt 17:1–13, most likely refers to the transfiguration as an anticipation of the eschatological coming of the Son of Man, not to the eschatological event itself. For these reasons, Witherington's proposal is possible. If he is correct, his interpretation rules out Schweitzer's reading of the passage.

I incline however, toward seeing an eschatological reference in Matt 10:23, given the other eschatological contexts of references to the coming of the Son of Man in Matthew and the similarity of Matt 10:16–23 with the eschatological material in Mark 13:9–13.⁵⁷ But this certainly does not prove Schweitzer's 'imminent' reading. On the contrary, Jesus' charge to the twelve should be understood as encompassing the *continuing* mission to Israel until the Parousia.⁵⁸ In favor of this interpretation are the following points. First, Matt 10:16–22 seems to describe an extended period of time rather than merely the short missionary trip upon which the disciples are immediately embarking. For example, in these verses, Jesus predicts the appearance of the disciples before governors and kings.⁵⁹ Second, in Matt 10:18 Jesus says his disciples will bear witness before the Gentiles, but in his instructions for the immediate, short-term mission of the twelve, he forbids the twelve from going to the Gentiles (10:5). Again, this indicates that 10:16–22 refers to events beyond the immediate trip the twelve will make. Third, the fact that in Matthew we don't read of the return of the twelve (contrast Mark 6:30) increases the likelihood that Jesus is referring not merely to the immediate mission of the twelve, but also to the continuing mission to Israel. Matthew is not interested in describing merely this one, immediate mission of the twelve.⁶⁰ Fourth, Jesus' address to his disciples in John 13–16 provides an example of Jesus speaking to his original disciples while also having in mind those who will come after them (14:16; cf. 17:20). It seems to me that this is what is happening in Matt 10.

Much more could be said with regard to Matt 10, but the points raised here are sufficient to refute Schweitzer's interpretation of Matt 10:23, his linchpin passage. There are, of course, other 'imminence' passages⁶¹ but in none of these does Jesus unambiguously teach the imminent appearance of the Son of Man.⁶² For instance, Witherington and others have argued well that Mark 9:1 and parallels do *not* unambiguously refer to the Parousia, but may well refer to an event during the ministry of Jesus.⁶³ The most likely referent, in light of the narrative location of Mark 9:1, is the transfiguration.

Schweitzer's failure to argue for this key element of his understanding of Jesus—Jesus' expectation of an imminent end of the world—is repeated in the work of one of his modern successors, Bart Ehrman. In his 1999 book *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium*, Ehrman argues for a view of Jesus quite remarkably similar to that of Schweitzer. Ehrman, like Schweitzer, sees Jesus as an apocalyptic

⁵⁷ Ibid., 41, points to the source- and redaction-critical study of Scot McKnight, who concludes that the original setting of Matt 10:23 was eschatological.

⁵⁸ Cf. Hoekema, *Bible and the Future*, 118–19.

⁵⁹ Cf. Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1992), 254.

⁶⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 245.

⁶¹ The passages mentioned by Ehrman, *Apocalyptic Prophet*, 18, 160–61 are Mark 8:38–9:1; 13:30; 13:33–37; 14:62; Luke 12:39–40//Matt 24:43–44; Luke 12:45–46//Matt 24:48–50; Matt 25:13; Luke 12:36.

⁶² See the treatments of these passages in Hoekema, *Bible and the Future* and Witherington, *End of the World*.

⁶³ Witherington, *End of the World*, 37–39.

prophet who thinks the world will end within his own lifetime.⁶⁴ For Ehrman, as for Schweitzer, Jesus' ethical teaching must be understood within the larger context of his belief in the imminent end of the world. According to Ehrman, Jesus

did not propound his ethical views to show us how to create a just society and make the world a happier place for the long haul. For him, there wasn't going to *be* a long haul. The judgment of God was coming soon with the arrival of the Son of Man—and people needed to prepare for its coming by changing the way they lived. Preparation for the Kingdom—*that's* what ultimately lies at the heart of Jesus' ethics.⁶⁵

Jesus' belief in the imminent end of the world is an important part of Ehrman's depiction of Jesus. It is therefore disappointing to find that he does not argue that Jesus thought the end was imminent but simply *asserts* it. He cites some important NT passages⁶⁶ but never even attempts to prove that his way of interpreting these passages is the correct way.

Schweitzer's mistaken view that Jesus expected an imminent end to the world means that his entire formulation of Jesus' interim-ethics is flawed. Although he correctly saw that for Jesus eschatology and ethics were closely connected, he erred profoundly in how he attempted to fit them together.

2.2. A Mistaken Discarding of Jesus' Eschatological Worldview

My second critique of Schweitzer's separation of ethics and eschatology is that it simply does not work to take over Jesus' 'eternal religion of love' while discarding Jesus' eschatological worldview. When we correctly interpret passages like Matt 10 as non-imminentist, we are no longer confronted with Schweitzer's understanding of a mistaken Jesus. Instead, the picture of Jesus that emerges from the Gospels is of one who proclaims the already/not-yet kingdom of God and who teaches ethically from within this eschatological framework. In Jesus' own understanding, his life, ministry, death, and resurrection bring the kingdom of God (Luke 11:20) in an inaugurated sense, even though it remains to be consummated (see the parable of the mustard seed in Luke 13:18–21). God has asserted his reign decisively, though not yet finally. He has defeated Satan (see Paul's words in Col 2:15), although that defeat must yet be fully implemented (Rom 16:20). Christians live between the 'already' and the 'not yet' and both of these matter profoundly for ethics.

When we examine Jesus' ethical instruction and the ethical instruction of the rest of the NT, we see that it is very closely connected with eschatology.⁶⁷ George Ladd has said this well: 'There is an inescapable unity between eschatology and ethics. Ethics are eschatological, for life must be lived in this age with a view to the eschatological consummation. However, eschatology is ethical, for it will see the

⁶⁴ Ehrman (*Apocalyptic Prophet*, 160) claims, 'Jesus appears to have thought that this coming judgment of God through the cosmic Son of Man is imminent. It is right around the corner. In fact, it is to happen within his own generation. The stress on the imminent end is independently attested in all our earliest sources.'

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 162. Later Ehrman writes: 'Jesus' teaching of what we might call "ethics" was advanced to show people how they could be ready' (*ibid.*, 177).

⁶⁶ *Cf. ibid.*, 18, 160–61.

⁶⁷ *Cf.* Wayne Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 174–88, where Meeks examines the ways 'in which the varieties of eschatological consciousness among the early Christians affected their moral dispositions.' Meeks concludes that, amidst the variety within the Christian writings of the first two centuries, it is possible to discern 'a controlling conviction that the defining point for the responsible and flourishing life lies in the divinely appointed future moment' (188).

perfect accomplishment of the pure will of God.⁶⁸ There are numerous examples throughout the NT of this unity between eschatology and ethics. To take an obvious one, it is clear that the motivation for the beatitudes of Matt 5 is eschatological. ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God’ (Matt 5:8). If the eschatological promise is not real or if God is unable to act in power to fulfill the eschatological promise, the motivation for obedience is severed. The same is true with the eschatological sanctions (e.g., Matt 6:1, 14–15). In Paul’s letters, eschatology and ethics are profoundly and consistently connected. To take one example, the ethical exhortations of Rom 12:3–13:10 are bracketed by the call not to be conformed to this ‘age’ (12:1–2) and the reminder that the eschatological ‘day’ is at hand (13:11–14). Ethics and eschatology are closely interwoven here.

In light of the unity between eschatology and ethics in the NT, J. Christiaan Beker’s comment is apropos: ‘Our manner of treating the future apocalyptic of the NT in purely aesthetic terms or as an ornamental husk that adds poetic beauty rather than theological substance to our Christian convictions is both morally dishonest and intellectually shallow.’⁶⁹ Schweitzer correctly argues for the inextricable link between eschatology and ethics *in Jesus’ teaching*, but then seems to naively believe that the two can be separated after Jesus’ death. What results is nothing much more than a reversion to liberal theology. Holmström has seen this clearly: ‘Schweitzer’s consequent eschatology entails a consequent liberal Christology; his formal championing of eschatology actually becomes a liquidation of eschatology; his ethics remains a moralism which is even farther removed from true Christianity than was Rischl’s ethicism.’⁷⁰

It should be said that, on this score, Bart Ehrman’s work is even less satisfying than Schweitzer’s. Ehrman *sidesteps* the crucial question of whether Jesus can be relevant for our day given that his ethical teaching is based on a mistaken understanding.⁷¹ Although Schweitzer goes badly wrong in his attempt to bring Jesus over to today, at least he addresses the issue head on. By contrast, Ehrman offers nothing more than a vague response: ‘Many people—Christian and non-Christian alike—think of Jesus as a great moral teacher whose ethical views can help produce a better society for those of us who are determined to make our lives together as just, peaceful, and enjoyable as possible. On one level, I think that’s probably right.’⁷² Ehrman does not explain how this can be the case given that his own portrayal of Jesus’ ethics is that they are radically world-denying.

2.3. A Mistakenly A-Historical Emphasis

A third critique of Schweitzer’s separation is that, while the historical-critical work of Schweitzer emphasizes the importance of history, Schweitzer’s *dogmatic* agenda evidences a deeply a-historical emphasis. Marcus Borg has seen this clearly: ‘Schweitzer argued for a radical separation between historical research and theology: what Jesus was like as a figure of history is irrelevant to the truth of Christianity which, for Schweitzer, is grounded in the present experience of Christ as a living spiritual

⁶⁸ Ladd, *Presence of the Future*, 296.

⁶⁹ Beker, *Paul’s Apocalyptic Gospel*, 13.

⁷⁰ Quoted in Hoekema, *Bible and the Future*, 292.

⁷¹ Ehrman, *Apocalyptic Prophet*, 244: ‘Some people, possibly lots of people, would claim that if Jesus was wrong, he can no longer be relevant. That claim can probably be disputed on theological grounds. But that is a different project from the one I’ve undertaken in this book.’

⁷² *Ibid.*, 162.

reality.⁷³ Schweitzer's a-historical emphasis manifests itself in two ways. First, Schweitzer, in arguing that Jesus was mistaken concerning the time of the end of the world, expresses no concern regarding this error, since 'knowledge of spiritual truth is not called upon to prove its genuineness by showing further knowledge about the events of world history and matters of ordinary life.'⁷⁴ Schweitzer's claim that Jesus could be in error on such a fundamental matter as the time of his return and the end of the world and still totally trustworthy in matters of 'spiritual truth' is unconvincing, in large part because God's consummation of history *is* a spiritual matter, not simply a matter of 'world history.' But it also suggests that, for Schweitzer, historical claims are less important than spiritual claims. This is certainly not the view of the NT (e.g., 1 Cor 15:14–19).

A second evidence of Schweitzer's a-historical dogmatic approach is his emphasis, noted above, on Jesus' *personality*: 'The true understanding of Jesus is the understanding of will acting on will.'⁷⁵ By emphasizing Jesus' personality, Schweitzer bypasses historical considerations and seeks to bring Jesus directly into contact with the modern situation. This seems, in important respects, to anticipate the later approach of Rudolf Bultmann.⁷⁶ Interestingly, Bultmann too was influenced by the work of Johannes Weiss⁷⁷ and understood Jesus and early Christianity as holding an imminentist eschatological view.⁷⁸ Recognizing that the eschatological hopes of Jesus and the early Christian community were not fulfilled, Bultmann poses a question very similar to the one asked by Schweitzer before him: 'is it possible that Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom of God still has any importance for modern men and the preaching of the New Testament as a whole is still important for modern men?'⁷⁹

Bultmann's solution is well-known: the early Christian eschatology must be *demythologized*. Bultmann explicitly differentiates his program from one that would 'retain the ethical preaching of Jesus and abandon his eschatological preaching.' Instead, Bultmann seeks to find the deeper meaning of NT eschatology 'concealed under the cover of mythology.'⁸⁰ For Bultmann, the deeper meaning communicated through NT eschatology is the insecurity of the present in the face of the future⁸¹ and the call to be open to God's future, which is imminent for each of us.⁸² Bultmann writes in his *Theology of the New Testament*, 'The essential thing about the eschatological message is the idea of God that operates in it and the idea of human existence that it contains—not the belief that the end of the world is just ahead.'⁸³ According to Bultmann, the process of demythologizing Jesus' eschatology has begun

⁷³ Marcus. J. Borg, 'An Appreciation of Albert Schweitzer,' in *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), vii–ix.

⁷⁴ Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, 57.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 55–56.

⁷⁶ Carleton Paget ('Religious Authority,' 82) also notes that Schweitzer's view that the historical investigation of Jesus could not 'energise the present' shares similarities with the work of Barth and Bultmann.

⁷⁷ Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1958), 11–13. Bultmann is not so complimentary of Schweitzer; cf. page 13.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 31.

⁸³ Quoted in Ladd, *Presence of the Future*, 21.

in the NT itself in the writings of Paul and especially John. In Paul and John it becomes clear that Jesus Christ *is* the eschatological event and that to respond in faith to the preached Word of God is to live an eschatological existence.⁸⁴ Eschatology therefore is interpreted in radically existential terms. Schweitzer's a-historical dogmatic emphasis on the 'personality' of Jesus and the will of Jesus acting on the will of his followers anticipates Bultmann's own radically a-historical project.

2.4. Schweitzer's Replacement of Jesus' Eschatology with His Own

Finally, a fourth critique of Schweitzer's dogmatic separation of eschatology and ethics is that Schweitzer, after discarding Jesus' eschatology, establishes *his own eschatology* in its place. Ironically, Schweitzer's contemporary translation of Jesus' ethics results in a Jesus who looks very much like Schweitzer.⁸⁵ As Beker has noted, Schweitzer transposes Jesus' apocalyptic into his own philosophy of 'reverence for life.'⁸⁶ One of the key passages here is found in Schweitzer's autobiography: 'The essence of Christianity is an affirmation of the world that has passed through a rejection of the world. Within a system of thought that rejects the world and anticipates its end Jesus sets up the ethic of active love!'⁸⁷ Schweitzer's description of Christianity's 'affirmation of the world' sounds very much like his own philosophy of 'reverence for life,' a view he came to quite suddenly in 1915 while traveling by canoe through a herd of hippopotamuses on an African river.⁸⁸ Schweitzer believed that as his philosophy of 'reverence for life' was increasingly accepted, it would lead people away from 'uncivilization' and toward true civilization. 'Sooner or later there must dawn the true and final Renaissance which will bring peace to the world.'⁸⁹ This, then, for all practical purposes, is Schweitzer's own modern eschatology—the universal acceptance and resultant peace of his own philosophy of 'reverence for life.' But this is far removed from the biblical gospel and the message of Jesus. Jesus' robust eschatology of divine intervention has been watered down into an over-optimistic dream that sounds quite like the liberal nineteenth century theology and is difficult or impossible for those living in the twenty-first century to accept. It certainly does not seem that, in the years since Schweitzer published his autobiography, humankind has moved any closer to the universal adoption of his 'reverence for life.' On the contrary, there seems to be less reverence for life than ever.

In conclusion, it seems to me that what Schweitzer gained in terms of his understanding of the historical Jesus, who held together eschatology and ethics, he lost in bringing Jesus to bear on the modern world. His breakthrough in understanding the historical Jesus was to connect eschatology and ethics. But his great dogmatic reversal in applying Jesus to the modern context is to give up on the

⁸⁴ Bultmann, *Mythology*, 81. Cf. also Rudolf Bultmann, *History and Eschatology: The Presence of Eternity* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), 151–52.

⁸⁵ The irony is due to Schweitzer's censure of the liberal scholars for making Jesus in their own image.

⁸⁶ Beker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel*, 101. Schweitzer's philosophy of reverence for life taught that every human being should affirm his own will to live, and accord every other living being the same reverence for life that he has for himself. Goodness is understood as the preservation, promotion, and development of life. 'A man is ethical only when life, as such, is sacred to him, that of plants and animals as that of his fellow men, and when he devotes himself helpfully to all life that is in need of help' (Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, 158–59).

⁸⁷ Schweitzer, *My Life and Thought*, 55.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 160.

connection between Jesus' eschatology and ethics, letting eschatology go as a non-essential, 'outward form' of a Jewish worldview.

3. Implications for Contemporary Evangelical Pastor-Theologians

Of the many implications that could be drawn for contemporary evangelical pastor-theologians, I'll highlight three.

First, it is crucially important for evangelical pastor-theologians with a biblical understanding of NT eschatology to engage in the study of NT ethics. If Schweitzer's dogmatic project is indeed mistaken, and Jesus' eschatology and ethics are necessarily closely linked, then it follows that true teaching about Jesus' ethical instruction must be set firmly within the eschatological context of the NT. Holding firm to this context has huge benefits. The eschatological context of Christian ethics promotes humility since it is clear that the conclusion of world history is ultimately an act of God, not of human effort. At the same time, the eschatological context of ethics promotes hope since present ethical activity is pursued within the context of God's own future activity.⁹⁰ Beker has argued that, with the surrender of early Christian apocalyptic thought in the first centuries of Christianity, ethics lost its main future motivation and became 'an ethics of excess, superabundance, and condescension.'⁹¹

Those who despise, eschew, reject, or demythologize this eschatological context cannot properly understand, teach, or practice NT ethics. As Craig Hill has said, 'Those who would reject Jesus' eschatology while upholding his ethic have no idea what they are up against. Eschatological demands require eschatological commitments and eschatological resources.'⁹² But NT scholars within the secular academy have already rejected the eschatology of the NT. At a general session of the 1999 SBL meeting on 'The New Millennium: The Origins and Persistence of Biblical Apocalypticism,' the following question was posed: 'How is it that an archaic world view, forged in ancient Jewish circles, and exported into the world by the early Christians, has persisted into our own time—indeed into the Third Millennium?'⁹³ The language and tone of the question indicates an assumption that the eschatological worldview must be discarded or demythologized. My contention is that when this happens, the ethics brought over to the modern day are not truly Jesus' ethics. The academic ethicists have discarded the eschatology. There is no group better positioned to hold together Jesus' theology (eschatology) and pastoral concern (ethics) than evangelical pastor-theologians who are committed to the truth of God's word and Jesus' worldview and to working out the relationship between Jesus' eschatology and ethics.

Second, it is crucially important for evangelical pastor-theologians to engage in the study of NT ethics because of their ecclesial location. The eschatology of the NT clearly has to do with the church, not merely with the individual. No one has seen or said this more clearly than Richard Hays:

[T]he whole vision for New Testament ethics developed in [*The Moral Vision of the New Testament*] calls for a fundamental transformation of the church. To do New Testament ethics as I have proposed requires far more than the reconceptualization of an academic

⁹⁰ For these points see Beker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel*, 86.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁹² Craig Hill, *In God's Time: The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 198.

⁹³ Cited in Gathercole, 'Critical and Dogmatic Agenda,' 283.

discipline; it requires the recovery of the church's identity as the eschatological people of God, prefiguring God's healing transformation of the world.⁹⁴

If Hays is correct, there is no group better placed to do NT ethics than evangelical pastor-theologians, whose theological and ethical reflection occurs within the church and for the church.⁹⁵ If the church is to recover its identity as the eschatological people of God, it will need this kind of theological recovery project to be led by those who are devoted to the church, attentive to its needs, and committed to its future.

The third implication for contemporary pastor-theologians concerns *how* they are to conceive of, and move forward with, their pastoral and theological task. Marilynne Robinson has described preaching as 'parsing the broken heart of humankind and praising the loving heart of Christ.'⁹⁶ I would add that, in addition to 'parsing' and 'praising,' the pastor has a responsibility to pursue the obedience of God's people to Jesus in response to the gospel (cf. among many texts Matt 28:19–10). And the parsing of brokenness, the praise of Christ, and the pursuit of obedience will be most fruitfully undertaken where there is a biblically rich and informed understanding of the eschatological identity of God's people. Richard Hays, although he speaks specifically of Paul in the following quote, captures this well:

The church community is God's eschatological beachhead, the place where the power of God has invaded the world. All Paul's ethical judgments are worked out in this context. The dialectical character of Paul's eschatological vision (already/not yet) provides a critical framework for moral discernment: he is sharply critical not only of the old age that is passing away but also of those who claim unqualified participation already in the new age. To live faithfully in the time between the times is to walk a tightrope of moral discernment, claiming neither too much nor too little for God's transforming power within the community of faith.⁹⁷

The pastor-theologian who wants to help God's people negotiate the tensions of life in the 'already-not yet' will think and teach and preach to God's people about their eschatological identity and how they are to live in light of that identity.⁹⁸ NT ethics should not be conceived of as the teaching of a set of timeless truths, but rather as helping God's people to live out their eschatological identities in light of God's end-time work through Jesus Christ.

⁹⁴ Richard Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 469.

⁹⁵ For helpful reflection on the role of the pastor-theologian, see the forthcoming book by Gerald Hiestand and Todd Wilson, *The Pastor Theologian: Resurrecting an Ancient Vision* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), as well as the materials on the website of The Center for Pastor Theologians (<http://www.pastortheologians.com>). An earlier version of this paper was delivered at a gathering of the Center for Pastor Theologians, and I'm thankful for the comments received.

⁹⁶ Marilynne Robinson, *Home: A Novel* (New York: Picador, 2009), 50.

⁹⁷ Hays, *Moral Vision*, 27.

⁹⁸ See Stephen Witmer, *Eternity Changes Everything* (London: The Good Book Company, 2014), for my attempt to do this at a level accessible for ordinary Christians.

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— OLD TESTAMENT —

Peter Adam. *The Message of Malachi*. Edited by J. A. Motyer. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove: IVP, 2013. 124 pp. £8.99/\$16.00.

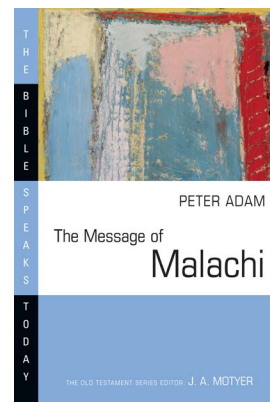
Peter Adam is Vicar Emeritus at St Jude's Carlton, Melbourne, and was formerly the principal of Ridley College, Melbourne. He is the author of *Speaking God's Words: A Practical Theology of Preaching* (Vancouver: Regent College, 2004) and *Hearing God's Words: Exploring Biblical Spirituality* (NSBT 16; Downers Grove: IVP, 2004). In the book under review, he takes standard conservative views of the book of Malachi and its author, the prophet Malachi. He dates the book broadly against the general background of Ezra and Nehemiah, that is, somewhere between 460 and 400 BC. This is in contrast to Andrew Hill's view of 500 BC and Eugene Merrill's view of 480–470 BC, although Adam does not discuss alternative views.

As is true of the Bible Speaks Today series generally, this book focuses on application. In the introduction, Adam lists three ways that Malachi applies today (pp. 14–15). First, since the prophecy opens with the message of Yahweh's love, Adam derives the principle that “at the heart of God's people, the church, must lie a deep, radical, and overwhelming conviction that God loves them.” He later proposes that the first sin named in the book, doubting God's love, leads to all the others (p. 35). Second is the teaching that “the greatest sin of God's people is . . . sin against God” as opposed to being against ourselves or others (p. 14). Third, the prophecy addresses the situation of God's people trying to straddle the fence by refusing both to reject God and also to serve God wholeheartedly, choosing rather to occupy “neutral territory” (p. 15).

Also in the introduction, he lists three priorities of his exposition (pp. 16–19). The first is to show the OT to be prophetic preparation for Christ. In his discussion of 1:2–5, for example, Adam derives the application that “the overwhelming and convincing proof of God's love is that he has not dealt with us as our sins deserve, but has had mercy on us in Christ Jesus and his atoning death” (p. 46). A second priority is to call attention to the OT as “training in godliness and ministry” (p. 17). And the third priority is to remember that Malachi addressed the corporate people of God (pp. 18–19). Adam first sounded the alarm against individualism in an earlier book, where he stated that “the gospel itself has been distorted into a message for individuals. . . . God's love for the individual is a consequence of the gospel, not the heart of the gospel” (*Hearing God's Words*, 26–27). Here in his work on Malachi, he makes the point that our first question of application should not be “What is God saying to me?” but “What is God saying to us?” He follows this principle throughout the work as he strives for “corporate application” (e.g., p. 41).

As for controversial verses, Adam devotes four pages to Mal 1:11 (pp. 65–68), which he literally renders, “For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering.” After citing several attempts to make sense of the verse (including universalism), he correctly takes it as having a future reference (see NIV, ESV, HCSB).

Another difficult passage is 2:10–16. Adam sees the theme of these verses as Judah's faithlessness, especially to fellow Judahites, contrasting with Yahweh's faithfulness to his people and their unity in



him, their Father and Creator. Judah's faithlessness has shown itself first in their profaning the Lord's temple by marrying foreign idolaters (Adam clarifies that this is about holiness and not racism, pp. 84–85). The next act of faithlessness Malachi denounces is divorcing “the wife of your youth . . . your companion and your wife by covenant” (Mal 2:14–15). Adam's next point is that God loves marriage and hates divorce: “It is because God knows the good power of marriage that he hates its destruction” (p. 88). The Lord's message in the controversial v. 16 is rendered by Adam as “I hate divorce.” That is the reading of Adam's default translation, the 1984 NIV, and he apparently sees no problem with it. However, the fact that there is a problem is indicated by the reading of three recent translations, including the 2011 NIV: “‘The man who hates and divorces his wife,’ says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘does violence to the one he should protect’” (see also ESV and HCSB). There is no question that God disapproves of divorce; the question is one of translation, namely, identifying the subject and object of the verb “hates.” Adam leaves this issue unaddressed. But in answer to his question, “What should we think about divorce?,” Adam states, “we should hate *the kind of* divorce found here in Malachi, in which wives were dismissed simply because husbands wanted to marry other women” (p. 89, emphasis added). He then refers (without taking a position) to “many Christians today” who consider that the NT allows divorce for various reasons. His bottom line is that “it remains a serious sin to divorce your wife in order to marry an unbeliever; in such situations, it is clear that God hates divorce, and we too should hate such divorces” (p. 90).

One place in Adam's work where we might wish for “corporate application” is his study of 3:6–12, the famous passage on “robbing God.” He has several helpful things to say here, but in the end several questions are left unanswered. For example, if “it would be a disaster for a poor righteous person to think that their poverty represented the curse of God” (p. 107), was the divine call to “put me to the test” applicable only to the situation in Malachi?

In spite of some minor gaps, the work of Peter Adam packs a great deal of application into a small package and offers the student or teacher much insightful guidance in applying the lessons of this important, concluding book of the OT.

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Mercedes L. García Bachmann. *Women at Work in the Deuteronomistic History*. Edited by Monica J. Melanchthon and Louis C. Jonker. Society of Biblical Literature International Voices in Biblical Studies 4. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013. xvi + 413 pp. \$74.95.

Mercedes L. García Bachmann is Professor of Old Testament at the Instituto Universitario ISEDET in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She specializes in Pentateuchal and Deuteronomistic History (i.e., Joshua–Kings) as well as feminist hermeneutics. Additionally, Bachmann has authored several articles in both English and Spanish.

The present book is a revision of Bachmann’s 1999 doctoral dissertation completed at Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, Illinois. The book covers a wide range of topics related to women laborers in the ancient Near East (ANE) and biblical texts, particularly from the Deuteronomistic History. She divides her work into an introduction and eight chapters.

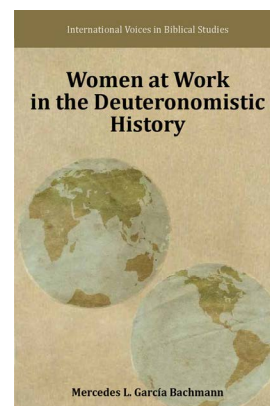
In the introduction, Bachmann provides an overview of women in the Hebrew Bible. At the heart of her research is an emphasis on women who “perform some task and immediately vanish from the story” (p. 2). The controlling presupposition for the book is that the biblical authors highlight male urban elites while marginalizing the working class, particularly women laborers. Furthermore, she suggests that Israelite society contained sub-cultures of power whose values often violated weaker sub-cultures. Thus, Bachmann maintains that various societal injustices occurred when the ideology of upper-class men made demands upon lower-class women: “At a time when society starts to recognize that women carry a heavier economic and social burden than men do, that women do not share equally in decision making, and that women are all too often subject to violence and humiliation, theology is called to take up those it has so far forgotten” (p. 15). Bachmann uses the remainder of the book to substantiate this claim.

The methodology of studying women laborers is the focus of chapter 1. Bachmann describes her methodology as an exegetical approach that combines socio-historical, ideological, and feminist criticisms (pp. 17–18, 46). Attention is given primarily to the Deuteronomistic History because of the extensive narratives yielding “a sample of terms [for women laborers] inserted in believable contexts” (p. 23).

Chapter 2 is a history of research that examines a variety of approaches to lower-class women: feminist/gender studies, biblical studies, social-scientific studies, studies on labor, and studies on slave, semi-free, and “unfree” workers (pp. 57–78). By Bachmann’s own admission, the sub-categories examined are not all treated equally or successfully. Thus the reader is left dissatisfied in several areas, a verdict conceded by Bachmann when she attributes her lack of research to insufficient funds for interlibrary loan articles and limitations on the availability of Internet resources (p. 78).

With chapter 3, Bachmann surveys socio-economic conditions within the ANE. She accomplishes this in two parts: an overview of characteristics within agrarian societies and an analysis of themes related to slavery and indentured servitude. With regard to agrarian societies, she concludes that family households, urban centers, the rise of labor forces, and the establishment of a state worked together to enforce a “hierarchy within the hierarchy,” each with their own set of social mores (p. 90).

The next chapter discusses women with unknown occupations who were subjugated to a master. Chapter 4 is divided into two sections, the first focusing on female slavery in the Hebrew Bible (i.e.,



indentured servants, dependent women without paternal protection, and captive women), while the second studies the use of *'mh and šphh* (two Hebrew synonyms for “maid”) as an ideological debasement of one’s honor. Similarly in chapter 5, miscellaneous women laborers are the focal point. Bachmann discusses several community roles dominated by women: midwifery, nourishing children and animals, making tools, manufacturing textiles, making music, and bartering.

Chapters 6 and 7 are somewhat related to one another for highlighting dependent women with specific roles in Israelite institutions. In the former chapter, emphasis is given to the occupations of women within the royal household as recorded in the Deuteronomistic History. The research is guided by the questions: “What is the social location of X?”, “How is she portrayed” by the Deuteronomist?, and “How much can be known about her occupation?” (p. 237). In the latter chapter, Bachmann identifies the role of prostitutes and sex workers in the ANE, non-Deuteronomic books, and the Deuteronomistic History. Chapter 8 functions as a conclusion to the book by reassessing the social location of female labor in the Deuteronomistic History.

In sum, Bachmann seeks to bring attention to women laborers through a multifaceted methodology. Throughout most of the first five chapters, Bachmann summarizes and repackages information gleaned from other social-scientific and feminist works which address women laborers in the Hebrew Bible. Despite the title of the book, women laborers in the Deuteronomistic History do not actually take center stage until chapters 6–7. Even as she states her preference for the Deuteronomistic History due to its “believable contents” over and against the putatively fragmented Pentateuchal texts, the irony is that Bachmann devotes ample space to discussing women laborers within the Pentateuch—precisely the section of the Hebrew Bible she deems unsuitable for her research parameters (p. 23).

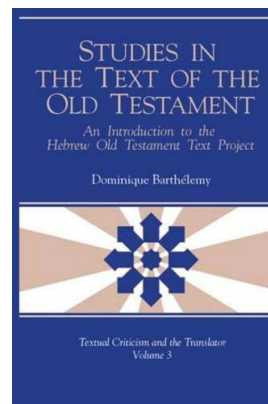
Many evangelicals generally view the methods employed in Bachmann’s work as secondary or tertiary for study of the Hebrew Bible. This highlights the need for evangelicals to engage these methods, but unfortunately, she is not successful in consistently balancing exegetical work with socio-historical, ideological, and feminist criticisms. Thus her work will not garner support among evangelicals for the methods that she utilizes. Moreover, her methodological focus on women laborers insinuates that the biblical authors heightened the degree of separation between elite, patriarchal society and lower class women laborers. Although she never explicitly states that the biblical authors were misogynists, there are hints of such a view in her emphasis on obscure and overlooked women as opposed to elites within the Hebrew Bible.

Even with these weaknesses, Bachmann brings to the forefront insights generally overlooked by most scholars of Deuteronomistic History (see chs. 6–7). Her study of specific texts with women laborers (e.g., Rahab in Joshua 2) reveals valuable sociological and ideological aspects of the lower class within ancient Israel as portrayed in the Deuteronomistic History. It is in this vein that Bachmann adds to the growing body of research into the roles of women in the Hebrew Bible, especially the Deuteronomistic History. From a methodological perspective, however, other works can provide better examples of interdisciplinary study of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Thomas B. Dozeman, ed., *Methods for Exodus* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010]).

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Dominique Barthélemy. *Studies in the Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*. Translated by Joan Cook and Sarah Lind. Textual Criticism and the Translator 3. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012. xxxii + 688 pp. £79.00/\$79.50.

Jean-Dominique Barthélemy, formerly Old Testament professor and Vice Chancellor at the University of Freiburg, Switzerland, was a renowned scholar on the text of the OT. Until his death on February 10, 2002, he was a member of the United Bible Societies' (UBS) translation committee of the Hebrew OT Text Project, which the UBS started in 1969. However, he is probably better known for his work entitled *Les Devanciers d'Aquila* (Leiden: Brill, 1963; English title *The Predecessors of Aquila*), in which he proposed that the Greek Minor Prophets scroll found at Naḥal Hever in 1952 was a recension of the Septuagint/Old Greek text that had been undertaken to bring it more in line with the Proto-Masoretic text. The present work is an English translation of the introductions that appeared in the first three volumes of Barthélemy's French edition of *Critique Textuelle de l'Ancien Testament* (Fribourg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982–1992).



The book begins with an excellent introduction to the work of the Hebrew OT Text Project by James A. Sanders that highlights its history and several crucial issues of OT textual criticism, such as what the aim of OT textual criticism is and when a text becomes canonical. Even if one disagrees with the conclusions of the committee, these are nonetheless the issues that confront every OT textual critic.

Chapter 1 provides an extended history of textual criticism from Ismael al-Ukbari (ca. AD 840) to J. D. Michaelis (1717–1791). It leaves out, however, some ancient text-critical efforts such as those from Qumran, scribal corrections of the temple scrolls that Emanuel Tov has noted (*Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* [3rd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012], 28), possible text-critical work on the Proto-Septuagint/Old Greek text, Origen's Hexapla, and Jerome's work on the Latin Vulgate. Nevertheless, Barthélemy's history of textual criticism clearly portrays the considerable work undertaken by scholars who produce various translations and critical works. A large part of Barthélemy's history focuses on Richard Simon (1638–1712), who fostered a more positive view of textual criticism after Bernard Spinoza's work had cast aspersions on it. Simon brought a careful, reasoned approach to text-critical questions that addressed the same questions as his predecessors while at the same time attempting to honor Scripture as the word of God. Barthélemy correctly argues that Simon played a pivotal role in advancing the study of textual criticism within Christian circles, even if scholars typically do not agree with Simon's findings.

The second chapter explains in detail the thirteen text-critical criteria used by the Hebrew OT Text Project committee, which are generally agreed upon by OT textual critics. Barthélemy labels as a fourteenth, unofficial criterion the committee's stance on conjectural emendation. He explains that, because their task was primarily to deal with textual versus literary issues in the manuscripts, the committee rejected suggestions that were solely conjectural, thereby reinforcing their aim to achieve the oldest assessable reading of the text.

These two chapters, which constitute Part I of the book, provide an important resource in understanding the goals and methods of textual critics throughout history. Its helpful explanations

about textual analysis and canonization make it an excellent resource for those studying OT textual criticism.

In Part II, Barthélemy explains first that, rather than starting totally anew, the committee decided to build upon the text-critical foundation already laid in five popular translations: the Revised Standard Version (RSV); La Bible de Jérusalem (BJ); the Revised Luther Bible (RL); the New English Bible (NEB); and La Traduction Œcuménique de la Bible (TOB). After briefly describing the histories of these five translations, Barthélemy provides the committee's conclusions regarding each. By using popular Bible translations already in existence, the committee was able to determine the actual influence that textual criticism has had on the general public.

Their thorough evaluation of each of these five translations is recorded in the second half of Part Two. Barthélemy's clear method of describing the stages of the committee's work provides in essence a "how-to" manual. He lays out each step of the process, allowing his readers to appreciate the vast amount of time and effort involved in ensuring that the Bible we read today is the most accurate that can be achieved at present. In lieu of simply presenting the committee's findings, he guides readers through the process itself so that they might be able to do their own research. Barthélemy then concludes his discussion by noting that, even though the research of the committee was the most extensive to date, there is still much more to be done. He encourages others to build upon their work.

Part III, the longest section of this book, discusses the ancient witnesses. Barthélemy has composed a vast and valuable description of the primary source materials for textual criticism. This thorough list of manuscripts provides key information about each, such as where and when the manuscript was discovered, where it may now be accessed, and what Scripture(s) it contains. This is likely the most thorough, annotated list collected up to the present time.

Emanuel Tov regards the introductions from the French version of this book as "almost a complete introduction" to OT textual criticism ("The Biblia Hebraica Quinta: An Important Step Forward," *JNSL* 31 [2005], 3n10). This important work, finally available in English, should be included in the personal library of anyone aiming to pursue OT textual criticism.

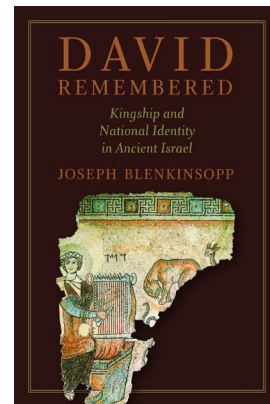
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Joseph Blenkinsopp. *David Remembered: Kingship and National Identity in Ancient Israel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. xii + 219 pp. £17.99/\$26.00.

In this study of how the figure of David was remembered and taken up by exilic and post-exilic Israel through to the beginning of the Christian period, Joseph Blenkinsopp aims to fill a gap left over from his earlier volume, *Judaism, The First Phase: The Place of Ezra and Nehemiah in the Origins of Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009). His particular goal here is to explore how the memory of David and his dynasty impacted the policies pursued by the Jewish people and developed their visions of the end time. These two elements are clearly linked with one another in that attempts to restore some form of Davidic dynasty by political means might also be understood by those involved as faithfulness to the promise of a future for David's house. Although Blenkinsopp recognises that his study could address a range of other issues which emerge from these central questions, he is careful to retain his focus on the memory of David throughout. Of course, since his concern is only with the memory of David, he makes no investigation of the historical roots of this tradition reaching back into the books of Samuel. For this investigation it does not particularly matter whether or not these are reliable traditions, since he is only concerned with how they were taken up and adapted. One might therefore understand this as a study in reception history, though it is a reception that starts within the OT itself.

Given his goal of covering the reception of David across a fairly extended period, it is not surprising that Blenkinsopp arranges his material chronologically, beginning with the collapse of the dynasty in the events that immediately led into the exile and then tracing this through to the time of Jesus. His previous writings—including commentaries on Isaiah and Ezra-Nehemiah, as well as his earlier work on Judaism—mean that he has a detailed exegetical foundation on which to base this study, though he here engages with a much wider range of texts. In structuring this material chronologically, he follows the mainstream of critical study of the OT, devoting one chapter to a period and, for the most part, to its principal text. So, Isa 40–55 is the work of Deutero-Isaiah in the latter stages of the exile whilst Isa 56–66 comes from after the exile. He similarly divides Zechariah into three segments, with chs. 9–14 representing material from a time after Zechariah 1–8, whilst some texts from other prophets (Isaiah, Amos, Micah) are also treated as additions from the same period. What is perhaps more surprising is that, although he recognises both Jeremiah and Ezekiel as prophets active in the post-exilic period, neither receives a sustained treatment of their own, though both make considerable use of the memory of David. Blenkinsopp does draw on Jeremiah and Ezekiel in reconstructing the events immediately after the fall of Jerusalem, but the work would have been improved by a more detailed treatment of them both, especially given the attention devoted to various parts of Isaiah and Zechariah. Similarly, although Blenkinsopp traces the memory of David through the canonical literature, he gives only passing attention to the apocryphal literature and Qumran. Admittedly, the Apocrypha is mostly interesting for this theme because of its relative absence, but some further exploration of this would have been helpful.

These gaps in content do not devalue the work that has gone into the rest of the book, and one is frequently struck by the breadth of knowledge of both the biblical text and wider historical sources that Blenkinsopp is able to engage. This is especially so given the divisions that normally exist in theological faculties between OT and NT studies. He is candid about points where we lack the knowledge to make clear affirmations but is also willing to put forward proposals at various points that might explain the



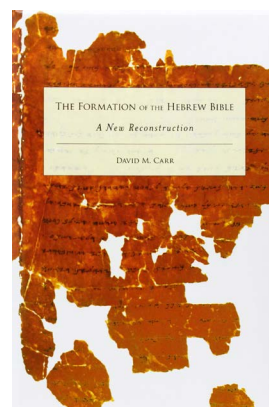
information we do have. Not all of these are equally persuasive, but they always reflect a judicious weighing of the data we can access. Even if some of his suggestions were to be rejected, they would not affect the clear evidence for the tenacity of the memory of David as something that shaped the politics of Judah in its resistance to various imperial powers (e.g., Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome) while also providing hope for a future that transcended current experience. For example, he ponders the possibility (p. 63) that Jehoiachin's elevation by Babylon (2 Kgs 25:27–30) might have been grooming him to return to Jerusalem as a client king, though nothing in the text indicates this directly. It is a plausible suggestion, but other possibilities should be considered—for example, it could be a means of discouraging unrest among the exiles.

In sum, although there are points where I would express some reservations, this is an important study of a crucial theme which is here studied in its own right and not simply as background to the study of the NT. It deserves a wide reading.

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David M. Carr. *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. vii + 524 pp. £47.99/\$74.00.

Carr's monograph both synthesizes and builds upon his previous works (especially *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008]), using documented cases of transmission history as a methodological control to reconstruct growth in biblical texts. Carr works through a historical-critical framework that gives central attention to orality, memory, scribal traditions, and development of later material around previous "blocks" of material (e.g., an Abraham tradition that was later bridged to independent traditions of origins in Gen 1–11). His work consists of three parts: a methodological discussion (chs. 1–4), an analysis of the transmission history of the Hebrew Bible from the Hasmonean to the Neo-Assyrian periods (chs. 5–11), and an investigation into the possibility of textuality in the early monarchical period, that is, the time of David and Solomon (chs. 12–17). His discussions regarding the importance of the Neo-Assyrian era for textuality and potential existence of early monarchical texts distinguish him from a large number of scholars (mainly European) who assume that most of the Hebrew Bible was written no earlier than the Persian period. Carr's methodology and arguments represent a balanced and credible position within critical scholarship for the Hebrew Bible's formation, which broadly evangelical readers can approach, mine, and weigh with rich results, even when they might disagree with Carr's dating or reconstruction of texts. .



In Part I, Carr provides evidence of a writing-supported process of memorization and performance for the transmission of the Hebrew Bible. Not all texts were facilitated through writing-supported memorization, only "long-duration literature . . . deemed by a certain group to be a heritage to be transmitted from one generation to another by performance and memory" (p. 34). The results of previous studies of variants in "long-duration texts" (e.g., Homeric epic, Gilgamesh, lexical lists, Egyptian

instructions, and biblical texts) revealed that oral-written transmission produces “non-graphic” variants different from purely oral or “graphic copying” processes (e.g., semantic substitutions, shifts in order, presence or absence of conjunctions and minor modifiers [pp. 26–34]).

For Carr, the implications of a writing-supported memorization process for the Hebrew Bible illuminate the difficulty of identifying authorial intention in many variants and thereby results in “far less data” in the extant text(s) for any “hypothetical reconstruction” of its pre-history (p. 36). This calls into question the reliability of certain criteria used to identify sources within the Pentateuch/Hexateuch (e.g., traditional/neo-Documentarians and the multi-layer approach of European scholarship), as well as the ability to linguistically date portions of the biblical text using diachronic markers of “early Biblical Hebrew” versus “late Biblical Hebrew” (pp. 103–44). Rejecting both extremes of total reconstruction or complete abandonment of the critical enterprise, Carr seeks a “methodologically modest form of transmission history” for the Hebrew Bible that focuses more broadly around “partial hints” of textual production grouped into historical periods (i.e., Hasmonean/Hellenistic, Persian, Neo-Babylonian, Neo-Assyrian). These profiles can only provide an incomplete outline of the Hebrew Bible’s formation (pp. 144–49).

In Part II, Carr moves backwards from the earliest documented stage for the formation of the Hebrew Bible, the Hasmonean period (i.e., the era for which actual *manuscript evidence* exists for its various books), to earlier and more conjectural periods (where textual boundaries become increasingly blurred through the material’s transmission history). Carr finds that the Hasmonean monarchy promoted itself as “defenders, collectors, and restorers” of ancient texts and had the power and means to establish a scribal center oriented toward transmission of pre-Hellenistic Hebrew writings (e.g., by expanding sections of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Ezra, Esther, Judges); however, they did not create new authoritative texts (pp. 153–67). The profile of Hellenistic textuality tended toward “Priestly” concerns which coordinated sections of the Pentateuch, Qohelet, Psalms, and diaspora tales (e.g., Aramaic Daniel, Tobit, Esther, and Dan 7–12). Also, structural arrangement of material in prophetic books appears detectable (e.g., Isa 1–39; the Hebrew precursor of LXX Jeremiah; the Twelve; Ezekiel). Looking further back, the Persian period was characterized by a scribal impetus toward promoting the past “prophets” and the Pentateuch. This was achieved through various combinations of Priestly and non-Priestly compositions of Pentateuchal traditions, expansions of Haggai, Zech 1–8, and the edges of Isaiah, along with additions to the Nehemiah and Ezra rebuilding narratives.

Strikingly and against scholarly trends, Carr does not see strong evidence of much creation of literature during the Persian period. The beginnings of textual creation, though, can be glimpsed in the breakdown of state-sponsored institutions (e.g., the Temple, palace scribes) in the Babylonian exile. Carr draws on trauma studies to buttress his argument that the exile was the impetus for development of pre-monarchical stories of origins as found in a post-Deuteronomistic Hexateuch and a Priestly “counterwork” to it (pp. 255–303). However, this period exhibits more scribal coordination of earlier texts than direct creation of new ones. Moving further into the pre-exilic period, Carr settles on the Neo-Assyrian period as the most likely location for major swathes of text production. Here, Israelite engagement with Neo-Assyrian dominion—whether explaining reasons for dominion (e.g., portions of Amos, Micah, Hosea, Isaiah), subverting royal ideology (e.g., Deut 13; 28; Exod 2; Gen 11:1–9), or celebrating its demise (e.g., Nahum, “Josianic” portions of Deuteronomy–Kings)—is a major marker of text production in the eighth–seventh centuries BC.

Part III extends the discussion into the possibility of early monarchical textuality. Carr believes that early monarchical material exists in the Writings portion of the Hebrew Bible. Since non-Torah/Prophets material (e.g., royal Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Songs and perhaps Qohelet) was marginalized in the exilic/post-exilic period, they were less stabilized and more prone to forms of updating. While Carr has no theological stake in dating texts to the early monarchy (p. 8), his reconstructions present a challenge to scholars who contend that most or all of the Hebrew Bible was produced largely whole cloth in the Persian or Hellenistic periods. He also creates greater room for discussion of early monarchical material in texts traditionally linked with David and Solomon—though with the caveat that the greater the distance from the final text tradition, the more uncertain such reconstructions become.

To be sure, Carr's work is an erudite synthesis of scholarly work from across continents and disciplines. Methodologically, one of its greatest strengths is the attempt to provide a control on the reconstruction of a text's pre-history. Carr provides a much-needed corrective to Documentarians and multi-layer non-Documentarians who seek to use a divine epithet, keyword, or phrase as the main criterion for delineating strands or determining textual dependence between texts. If his picture of memory-facilitated scribal transmission is accurate, then each diachronic method should refine its procedures to account for this reality.

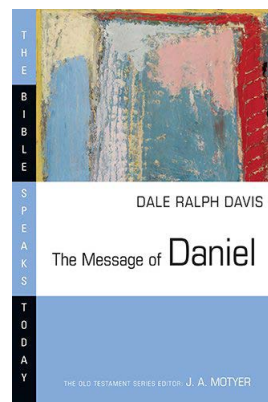
Carr's contribution is an initial synthesis of his previous research, and it remains to be seen how well his transmission-historical method or his empirical test cases relate to the unique formation of the Hebrew Bible. Nevertheless, Carr's well-researched book is essential curriculum for advanced students of Hebrew Bible/OT as well as scholars across multiple specializations.

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Dale Ralph Davis. *The Message of Daniel*. Edited by J. A. Motyer. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove: IVP, 2013. 169 pp. £9.99/\$18.00.

Dale Ralph Davis was previously professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi (USA). He has also authored, among numerous other books, a guide to preaching from narrative texts (*The Word Became Fresh: How to Preach from Old Testament Narrative Texts* [Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2006]). His work replaces the earlier volume in The Bible Speaks Today series by Ronald S. Wallace (1991). Davis's popular-level commentary begins with an introduction to the book of Daniel and then moves to a chapter-by-chapter exposition. As indicated by the title, Davis focuses on the message of Daniel rather than detailed verse-by-verse analysis.

The author takes a standard conservative position on the date of the book, placing it at approximately 530 BC. He is not unaware, though, of the "dominant stream of scholars" (p. 15) who place the final composition around 165 BC. He lists five "major problems" (pp. 16–21) that he sees with that view, under the headings of *language* (both the Hebrew and Aramaic dating from an earlier period), *time* (documents from Qumran that are too close to the alleged late date), *propriety* (some contents that do not fit a late date and make a supposed editor



“inept” or “stupid”), *psychology* (“quasi-prophecy” would give only “quasi-comfort”), and *presuppositions* (a denial of predictive prophecy and of Yahweh’s ability to predict the future in detail). That makes for a nice summary of conservative arguments, though scholars holding to the critical consensus would respond to some of the objections using an earlier dating for the court stories of chapters 2–6 than for the apocalyptic of chapters 7–12. Davis also covers in his introduction the structure of Daniel and its general purpose. As for a brief summary of the message of Daniel as a whole, Davis calls the book “a realistic survival manual for the saints” (p. 26).

For each chapter of Daniel (or sub-chapters in the cases of Dan 9 and 11), Davis provides a brief summary of the content and focuses on the theology and modern applications from the text. He often brings in theological parallels with other Scriptures. Each chapter concludes with a short, pithy summary (“So we can meet ‘burning fiery furnace’ with three other words: old rugged cross,” p. 58). Any technical matters are relegated to footnotes, which are on occasion somewhat lengthy, but always informative. For example, a note of fifteen lines deals with the thorny issue of Darius the Mede. Davis here accepts the influential suggestion of D. J. Wiseman that Darius the Mede is another name for Cyrus. He is obviously well-read in the technical literature despite the somewhat homiletical style of the exposition. For the heavily controversial section of Dan 9:24–27, Davis gives a fair representation of various views and puts forward, “at the risk of displeasing most everyone” (p. 134), his own view and even his own translation.

Davis writes in an engaging style that makes frequent use of alliteration (“reveals,” “rescues,” “rules,” p. 24), catchy phrases (“the scope of the hope,” p. 129), anecdotes (a newspaper story about a woman who ate dirt, p. 59), humor (the “miracle” of Dan 6 is “a squeaky clean politician,” p. 82), and colloquial language (“all-fired,” p. 105). The reader will find here many gems of wisdom. I will give two as illustrations:

Evil can never manufacture enough glue to keep itself together; it has no lasting cohesion, the dissension always seems to surface. (p. 103)

The gifts of God are not excuses for sloth but demands for sweat. (p. 126)

Davis’s views on eschatology raise the most possibility for controversy, but his discussion is general enough and his tone generous enough to welcome any reader with divergent views to explore the subject further. Davis rightly avoids dogmatic claims about eschatology, and he is careful to lay out alternative viewpoints. His views fall within the evangelical mainstream for taking the second of the four kingdoms as Media-Persia and linking Dan 9:26 to the crucifixion of Christ. He does not mention, though, some of the conservative writers who have argued that the four kingdoms are Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece (e.g., John H. Walton, “The Four Kingdoms of Daniel,” *JETS* 29 [1986]: 25–36).

While this commentary is an easy read, on occasion the “folksiness” of the style can be distracting. Some students of theology might prefer more detailed examination of the theology and less application and anecdotes. But pastors will find here a wealth of illustrations and hints for how to preach the book of Daniel. Davis’s book could well form the basis for a small-group Bible study, whether for students of theology or lay people in a church. As one who is working on a detailed commentary of Daniel, I found help for my own exegesis, particularly in the footnoted material but also in the applications and

theological musings. Davis has produced a helpful work on Daniel that represents well the message of the book.

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John Anthony Dunne. *Esther and Her Elusive God: How a Secular Story Functions as Scripture*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014. 158 pp. \$20.00.

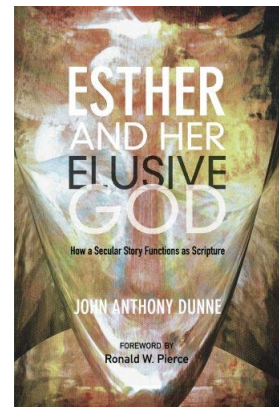
Esther and Mordecai: heroes or villains? Were they models of piety and faithfulness, or did they assimilate into their cultural context? Should we emulate their character and their response to the pagan Persian culture they were forced to live in? Or, is this a life they chose?

Even asking the question seems absurd for most Bible readers. However, John Anthony Dunne argues that the story of Esther is a “secular story” that portrays its main characters in a much more negative light than is often thought. Dunne is currently pursuing a doctorate on Paul’s understanding of suffering in the book of Galatians. In his spare time, he wrote a book on Esther (pp. xi–xii).

In Part One, Dunne discusses Esther as “a secular story” by outlining the ways in which Esther and Mordecai have assimilated into Persian culture (ch. 1) and essentially neglected their Jewish religious heritage (ch. 2). In the Greek translations of the story, oftentimes these very details are modified in order to portray the characters in a more positive and faithful way (ch. 3). In Part Two, Dunne reflects on the role that Esther plays in the canon (ch. 4) and in the church (ch. 5). In these last chapters, Dunne seeks to show the effect that Esther’s unique narrative has had on readers.

Unsatisfied with the way Esther is often presented, Dunne aims “to provide the church with an alternative to the popular understanding of the story” (p. xi). To explain, Dunne outlines the standard take on Esther’s story: “God remains hidden in the story, never mentioned of course, but many believe his presence is implied, assumed, suggested, or (paradoxically) emphasized on every page” (p. 1). To this interpretation, Dunne counters, “Yet does such an approach really do justice to the story?” (p. 1). For him, the dominant interpretation of Esther is “much more in line with the later Greek translations of the story than the original Hebrew” (p. xi). Arguing that Esther is “the chief narrative of the Old Testament in terms of literary skill, story-telling, and subtlety,” Dunne works with “the assumption that Esther is a misunderstood story” (p. 3).

He explains that the oddities of the Esther narrative are either “neglected” or “adjusted.” The heart of Dunne’s characterization of the book is that “the typical view of Esther and Mordecai fails to account for a number of important factors” (p. 17). These factors include the omission of any mention of God, the lack of concern for the land of Israel, and the very different religious vocabulary used by the characters. Further, Esther and Mordecai seem to be presented as ethnic Jews who are not particularly connected to the religious elements of Judaism. An experienced reader of the OT will immediately sense a difference in style and content when reading the book of Esther.



Dunne's explanation for these oddities is that "Esther is a secular story," in the sense that "the people of God portrayed in Esther appear to have experienced a decline in faith and religious adherence to the God of their ancestors" (p. 3). For Dunne, this effect is due ultimately "to the result of *assimilation*, the undoing of Israel's commission to be 'set apart' from the nations" (p. 3, emphasis original). The missing pieces of Esther (God's name, prayer, etc.) all point toward "the secularity and assimilation of God's people. And yet, this unfaithful people experienced such an incredible deliverance—attended by multiple 'coincidences'—that we will ultimately be led to conclude that the elusive God of Esther was steadfast and faithful, preserving his people though they did not deserve it" (pp. 4–5).

Dunne here attempts a difficult task. He wants to engage the reception history of Esther at the academic level, but he also wants to translate these findings for a broad audience. In this vein, he succeeds in writing a brief and accessible entry point into this approach to Esther's narrative (the main text is only 130 pages). While engaging in text-critical details in one chapter, he analyzes VeggieTales and the ordering principles behind the *Chronicles of Narnia* in the next. This results in a readable book that will allow a broad audience to encounter his provocative analysis.

Negative judgment of the book of Esther or its characters is not necessarily novel. Historical-critical scholars typically deny the historicity of the book, question the details and plausibility of the narrative elements, or conclude that the book is a work of fiction designed to function completely outside the context of the canon. Dunne does not focus on these types of arguments (e.g., he opts not to comment on the historicity question [pp. 5–7]). His primary purpose is to investigate the narrative itself and grapple with the way it has been received (and modified!) by its readers.

In analyzing this reception history, though, Dunne perhaps overplays the notion of Esther being a "secular story." Dunne asks throughout the book how a "secular story" like Esther could "function as Scripture." Some places he calls it a "seemingly secular story" (p. 11). Most of the book, though, builds a "cumulative case for the assimilation and secularity of *the characters*" (p. 11, emphasis added). More direct reflection on the hermeneutical difference between the secularity of *the characters* and the secularity of *the author's narrative* would clarify the nature of Dunne's arguments. He has shown that the figures Esther and Mordecai are presented as secularized Jews living in a foreign land. However, the case remains to be made that the Esther narrative is itself a "secular story."

One of the reasons this distinction is necessary is because it will affect how one perceives and handles the book of Esther as a whole. For instance, in the chapter on "Esther & The Canon" (pp. 95–110), Dunne asks, what place does it have in the canon, given the secularity of the story? This way of raising the question, though, only highlights the above-mentioned definitional issue. In other words, a pressing question is: *in what way* is the *story* secular? If the secular portrayal of the characters is a feature of the author's compositional strategy, then the narrative (story) itself should not necessarily be classified as secular. The primary reason that sensitive readers of the book experience unease at the story (as evidenced by the neglect or adjustment mentioned above) is precisely because the biblical author has guided them down this path. For example, we would not know that Esther and Mordecai were forgetting Passover unless it was shown to us at strategic moments in the narrative. To give another example, the author himself is the one who casts Mordecai in the guise of Haman at the end of the story. The author has strategically selected these elements in order to produce this effect on readers.

As Dunne notes, the critique of Esther and Mordecai is implicit and skillfully done. Noting this aspect of the narrative prompts the question: How would we know that they are "secular" *except* for the compositional strategy and the canonical context within which we encounter the book? Is it also

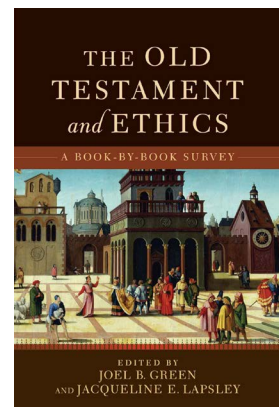
possible that the canonical context itself is what allows us to see the surprising secularity of Esther and Mordecai in its starkest contrast (i.e., the book's relationship to Daniel and Ezra-Nehemiah)? Thus, it seems possible to affirm the core of Dunne's insights into Esther's narrative while maintaining the hermeneutical impact of its location within the Hebrew Bible.

Because the option of ignoring or downplaying the oddities and difficulties of Esther is inadequate, those who disagree in part or on the whole with Dunne's take on the book will need to offer alternative explanations that deal adequately with the narrative's textual realities.

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Joel B. Green and Jacqueline E. Lapsley, eds. *The Old Testament and Ethics: A Book-by-Book Survey*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 240 pp. \$19.99.

A collection of essays originally published in the *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), this book makes some of the most pertinent articles available to students, pastors and laypeople. The contributors teach at a variety of institutions, but the editors note that they all consider the Bible normative for faith and ethics today. Although contemporary culture and issues are not identical to those in OT times, the contributors believe that the Bible gives guidance for moral formation and ethical reasoning that Christians should strive to follow. In addition, this book seeks to provide a needed corrective to the misappropriation and mishandling of Scripture in relation to ethics by way of flawed methodology or ignorance.



The excerpted articles fall into discrete book-by-book and topical sections.

The book begins with a few articles that address OT ethics as a whole, and then moves to articles that examine each OT book as well as the Apocryphal/Deuteronomical books in terms of the major ethical issues addressed. The topical portion of the book highlights various themes and their relationship to OT ethics, including biblical accounts of creation, the Dead Sea Scrolls, exile, priestly literature, law, poetic discourse, and the Ten Commandments.

The comprehensive treatment of each OT book, including all of the Minor Prophets in separate sections, gives a wholeness and comprehensiveness when compared to solely theme-based books such as Christopher J. H. Wright's *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004). When looking only at overarching ethical themes, one runs the risk of missing the texture and complexity present in each individual book, as well as the possible tension between various OT books on certain ethical issues. As a result, this book is a helpful corrective to this tendency. In addition, the individual essays clarify that more is going on in the OT than simply theology and history, as each contributor has an ethical agenda and viewpoint and brings different questions to the text. For instance, L. Daniel Hawk's essay argues that the book of Joshua does not actually make the Israelites out to be ethnically superior to Canaanites, but showcases the humanity and sinfulness of both groups within the bigger ethical picture (p. 67).

However, this diversity of authorship and method also leads to a lack of canonically sensitive summaries, both in the OT overall and specifically for the section on the Prophets. Further, some concluding comments would have been helpful to reflect back on the introductory discussion on methods for relating the OT to Christian ethics. In addition, the various contributors' focus on asking ethical questions of the text sometimes leads them to make incomplete or unwarranted claims. For example, David A. DeSilva's essay on the Deuterocanonical/Apocryphal books notes that they appear to suggest that the ends justify the means (p. 143), which would contradict the OT witness on this matter. Similarly, Bruce C. Birch claims that there is no "single, unified ethic" in the OT (p. 20). Yet without this, readers are left wondering about the reasons that this book should be written or read in the first place. Without defining what is meant by normative through Scripture, some of the foundational presuppositions of the various contributors open up the possibility that Scripture itself is not completely normative.

Thus, the multi-author nature of this book has both strengths and weaknesses. While different approaches are healthy and necessary, individual contributors do not always identify which hermeneutical method they are using. Often, it is hard to compare ethical results between entries because the approaches used are too dissimilar. However, the variety of ethical grids also exemplifies different options of how to ask ethical questions of a text, even when it may seem initially that no ethical usefulness can be found. Even if the reader disagrees with the ethical conclusions of the authors, the individual discussions in this book will be profitable and provocative. In the end, the book reflects the ethical diversity found within the OT itself, with a variety of authors working with different methods, but seeking the same purpose and in harmony with each other overall.

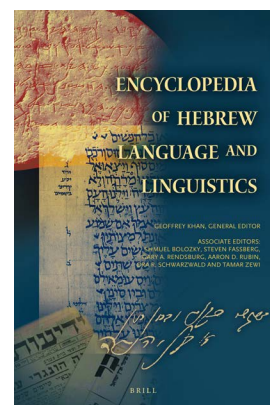
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Geoffrey Khan, ed. *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*. Leiden: Brill, 2014. £950.00/\$1,330.00.

Brill's *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics* (EHLL) is a monumental work. It has two stated aims: (1) to bring together the varied research on different periods of Hebrew into one reference tool; and (2) to bring study of Hebrew into line with the discipline of general linguistics. This latter aim is important since the study of Hebrew has tended to lag behind in proper linguistic analysis. Brill intends to update the online edition of EHLL on an annual basis, ensuring currency.

The articles vary in length from 200 words to over 10,000 words. They cover a wide spectrum of topics, not all of which will be of use to scholars that focus primarily on Biblical Hebrew. For example, the articles 'Castilian Spanish, Hebrew Loanwords in' and 'Bumper Stickers' are interesting and exemplify the reach of EHLL in discussing Hebrew, but few biblical scholars will find them of practical use.

The contributors are drawn from many quarters of scholarship and parts of the globe, making this a good collaborative effort. However, this strategy has not avoided parochialism in some articles.



For example, the article 'Biblical Hebrew, Late' by Avi Hurvitz showcases his approach to the issue of diachrony in Biblical Hebrew. The alternative model proposed by Ian Young, Robert Rezetko, and Martin Ehrens-vård is mentioned only to critique it negatively, rather than to explain it. This means the article gives a largely one-sided view with little conceptual scope that would give the reader an ability to make independent judgements. Since the subject matter is still very much a live topic, this is an unfortunate feature. One hopes that the annual updating to the online edition might provide more airtime to alternative views.

One curious article is Alviero Niccacci's essay on 'Consecutive Waw'. It includes a discussion of prevailing opinions of the form and function of the *wayyiqtol* and *weqatal* verbs, and then offers a different perspective, namely that the consecutive *waw* attached to Hebrew verbs is actually part of the verb itself. This is a curious conclusion, given the connection of these verbs to forms without the consecutive *waw* (e.g., the jussive). So although the article covers a range of opinion, the position settled upon is somewhat idiosyncratic. Nonetheless, the means of determining this idiosyncrasy is contained within the article itself.

There is, however, some excellent material explaining a range of approaches, especially in the articles relevant to Biblical Hebrew. For example, John Cook's article 'Actionality (*Aktionsart*): Pre-Modern Hebrew' is a little over 2000 words, and provides an excellent tour of both situation aspect and phasal aspect. Cook provides a history, an explanation, and multiple examples of both these forms of actionality. These then complement his other article on 'Aspect'. Similarly, Ahouva Shulman's article on the 'Jussive' is an excellent reference, as is Scott Noegel's 6251-word treatment of 'Polysemy' (i.e., the case of a sign having multiple but related meanings, such as the word 'home').

On the whole, the articles are informative and detailed, as one would expect of a significant reference work as this. Occasionally one might find a topic under an unexpected heading. For example, there is no entry for interjections, but these can be found treated briefly under 'Exclamation: Biblical Hebrew'. This is largely the result of trying to bring the study of Hebrew into conformity with Linguistics, so the unexpected headings are still logical. There is also considerable scope for serendipitous discovery, which is useful for the Hebraist with little exposure to linguistic theory.

The articles are pitched predominantly at a technical level, so they are not exactly the kind of thing to give as reading for beginners in Biblical Hebrew. However, *EHLL* is a great resource for those planning and teaching modules at the intermediate and advanced levels, and as set readings for those modules. One of the strengths of *EHLL* is that each article contains an excellent bibliography, providing scope and specific direction for further reading. The articles on Biblical Hebrew also encompass not just morphology and syntax, but historical developments, literary influences, and orthographic discussion. Thus, one can find such articles as 'Alphabet, Origin of', 'Canaanite and Hebrew', 'Aramaic Influence on Biblical Hebrew', 'Paleography of Hebrew Inscriptions', and 'Dead Sea Scrolls: Linguistic Features'.

EHLL is a welcome resource in the study of Hebrew language. Being published by Brill, the cost may be prohibitive for individuals. However, institutional access is a must for college and seminary libraries.

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Tremper Longman III. *Old Testament Essentials: Creation, Conquest, Exile and Return*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2014. 215 pp. \$18.00.

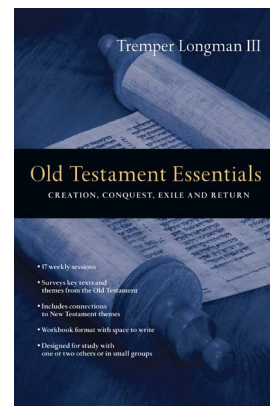
Old Testament Essentials by Tremper Longman III is designed for individual or small-group study, and the format is similar to the other volumes in the *Essentials* series, originally designed by Greg Ogden. It offers seventeen chapters in a workbook format with space to write between the many well-crafted study questions.

Each chapter begins with a “Looking Ahead” section, which lists a memory verse (e.g., Gen 1:1–2), the Bible study passage (e.g., Gen 1–2), and the title of the reading (e.g., “God Creates the Cosmos”). The next heading, “Bible Study Guide,” asks basic questions that engage the reader with the content of the passage. Then follows the “Reading” in which Longman does what he is well-known for—summarizing the major themes of a given Scripture portion (sometimes a whole genre or corpus) in light of the broader theological context of the Christian canon in a way that is simple and concise. After this is the “Reading Study Guide,” which asks questions that engage with the previous reading as it relates to life or to a given passage. Then there is approximately a page devoted to “Anticipating the New Testament,” often followed by a few engaging questions focused on bridging the Testaments, and another page devoted to “The Ancient Story and Our Story,” which summarizes the life application and includes a transition to the next chapter. Finally, each chapter concludes by recommending (usually two) resources for “Going Deeper,” which appropriately shows partiality towards the *NIV Application Commentary* series and to Longman’s own popular-level publications on the OT (e.g., his *How to Read* series).

The “Reading” portion of each chapter is where Longman’s expository strengths are most evident, especially in the chapters dealing with subjects that are Longman’s specialty (e.g., psalms, wisdom literature). Occasionally Longman will broach a debated issue, such as the date of the exodus (p. 68), but he points readers elsewhere since the *Essentials* series is not designed as a technical introduction. Although the series officially employs the NIV as a default Bible translation, Longman frequently opts for the NLT (e.g., pp. 16, 19, 32, 77), presumably due to his work as one of the senior translators for that project.

There are, of course, a handful of areas that could be improved. First, there may be a pedagogical flaw in suggesting memory verses from the NT in a curriculum that purports to teach the OT. For example, assigning 1 Cor 1:27–29 for a Bible study on Isaac and Jacob (Gen 25–36) is potentially counterproductive since it fails to promote OT literacy and may inadvertently minimize the authoritative message of the OT text. This would appear to be a missed opportunity in about one-third of the book (i.e., five chapters out of seventeen).

Second, Longman’s comments about law and ritual (in chs. 8–9) need some clarification, in my view. He works with the commonly used categories of “moral,” “ceremonial,” and “civil” as a heuristic for interpreting the law (pp. 97, 99, 101), even though they would make little sense to an ancient Israelite (in which moral matters can be ritual matters and vice versa) and are not explicitly employed in the NT. Furthermore, Longman writes concerning OT sacrifices: “Their only significance is that they anticipate the sacrifice that would really matter, namely Jesus” (p. 113; see also p. 11), which seems to imply that these sacrifices have no significance by themselves. However, it is important to explain that



in ancient Israel, the ritual system primarily served to purify sacred space and objects so that God would remain present in the midst of his people (see J. H. Walton, “Equilibrium and the Sacred Compass: The Structure of Leviticus,” *BBR* 11 [2001]: 295–99). Thus, one would do better, in my opinion, to show how God is revealed through these and how God specifically relates to the ritual categories of space, status, and time in contemporary Christian experience (cf. Rom 12:1; 1 Cor 3:16–17; 5:6–13; 6:19–20; 2 Cor 2:14–17; 6:14–18; Eph 2:11–22; Heb 10; 1 Pet 1–2; etc.).

Third, one might dispute some passing remarks in the book. For example, is “household idols” really the best translation for the Hebrew term *teraphim* (p. 49)? Was a man really “permitted” to have more than one wife in the biblical period (p. 95)? Was Jericho actually “the most powerful and dangerous of the Canaanite city-states” (p. 118)? Was “crying out” in Judges the same thing as “repentance” (see pp. 130, 132, 139)? Finally, there are a few infelicities of English grammar (pp. 76, 137, 138) and a few editorial oversights (pp. 115, 131, 204).

Despite these relatively minor caveats, *Old Testament Essentials* offers helpful curriculum for small group leaders and Sunday school teachers because so many Christians today “do not know what to do with the Old Testament,” even though they may “love the Bible” (p. 9). Longman does a huge service to the body of Christ by packaging scholarly content on the OT in a way that is accessible to everyone and facilitates Christian discipleship. As someone who teaches OT Survey four or five times per year and also as one who facilitates small-group Bible studies on a regular basis, I look forward to promoting and employing this book in my own teaching contexts.

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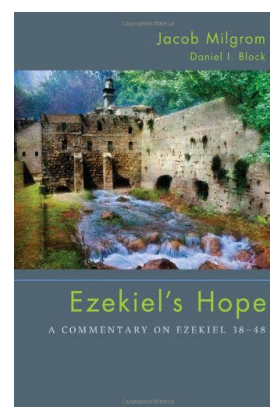
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Jacob Milgrom and Daniel I. Block. *Ezekiel's Hope: A Commentary on Ezekiel 38–48*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012. xxiv + 314 pp. \$37.00.

Ezekiel is an enigmatic book, with the final chapters among the most difficult to understand. This commentary provides insight into these chapters by offering the following distinguishing features: (1) a holistic reading; (2) insights from Jewish exegetes; and (3) a conversation with the second volume in Daniel Block’s commentary, found in the New International Commentary on the OT series (*The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25–48* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998]). Unfortunately, Milgrom passed away in 2010, before he could finish the book. The Milgrom family subsequently asked Block to bring Milgrom’s work to publication.

Milgrom uses an exegetical approach to read Ezekiel which he describes as “holistic” (p. xv); that is, he reads the text with a focus on its final form. This is similar to the approach of Moshe Greenberg, who actually invited Milgrom to complete his series of Anchor Bible commentaries on Ezekiel (*Ezekiel 1–20* and *Ezekiel 21–37* [Garden City: Doubleday, 1983, 1997]). Within this approach, Milgrom’s assumption is that Ezekiel and/or his tradents is/are the author(s) of the book (p. xv). Any perceived shift in theology within the book of Ezekiel is not attributed to the work of a later redactor but because different circumstances have caused Ezekiel “to change his



mind” (p. xv). One example is found in Milgrom’s discussion of God’s presence which changes “from an anthropomorphic *kābôd* enthroned between the cherubim, to a ubiquitous presence, *miškān*” (p. 262). I wonder, however, if the prophet does not change his mind, but is rather developing and magnifying the *kābôd* after the pattern in the tabernacle (Exod 40:34–35) and temple (1 Kgs 8:10–11).

The second distinguishing feature of this commentary is its insights from medieval Jewish scholarship. Milgrom’s main conversation partner is Block (as discussed below), but he also adduces ideas from the Targums, Eliezer of Beaugency, Radak, Rashi and Joseph Kara. Milgrom does not interact in depth with the Jewish scholarship, but the insights are often interesting. Observations from Jewish interpreters include exegetical details; for example, why is it stated prematurely that the sanctuary is within the *tērûmâ*? Eliezer of Beaugency suggests it stresses that “the temple is no longer in Jerusalem” (p. 252). Insights also include metaphorical meanings; for example, why are the animals included as part of the banquet, although they are not found on Israel’s mountains nor mentioned as victims for YHWH’s banquet? The Targum (followed by Rashi, Kara, and Eliezer of Beaugency) suggests they represent “kings, rulers, and governors, all of them mighty men, rich in possession” (p. 28).

In contrast to most commentaries, the third distinguishing feature is that Milgrom uses Block’s commentary as his main discussion partner. As Block notes, the commentary “is presented as a conversation between the two of us” (p. xix). Milgrom refers to Block so often that the latter’s NICOT volume is simply referred to with page numbers in square brackets. It is almost as if Block’s commentary was the starting point for Milgrom’s. That is not to say, however, that Milgrom agrees with Block on every point. For instance, Milgrom argues that Block’s rendering of *haggērîm* as “proselytes’ must be rejected out of hand, since there is no religious conversion in the Hebrew Bible” (p. 243n76). It is intriguing to see the interaction between two scholars from different faith backgrounds who both work so closely with the biblical text. But it is an overstatement to describe this interaction as “an interfaith dialogue” (as claimed on the back cover of the book) since Milgrom’s Jewish convictions and Block’s Protestant Christian views do not explicitly surface in the commentary.

A few strengths and a weakness of this commentary should be highlighted. As expected given Milgrom’s detailed understanding of the Law, where there are discrepancies between the Law and Ezekiel’s reinterpretation, these are helpfully discussed in great depth. Another strength is the ten excurses found throughout the commentary, covering topics such as “The Leadership Groupings” (pp. 167–77), “Ezekiel, the New Moses?” (pp. 214–18), and “The Mosaic Torah and Ezekiel Compared” (pp. 219–20). Finally, although basic, the twenty-one figures help to clarify the accompanying descriptions. One weakness of this commentary, however, is the suggestion that the temple at Delphi was the primary influence for Ezekiel’s visionary temple. Milgrom presents seven parallels between the temple at Delphi and Ezekiel’s temple (pp. 44–53), but I am not convinced that Ezekiel would have been familiar with the temple of Apollo, and even if he was, that he would use it as a blueprint for a temple of YHWH.

Overall, this is a welcome addition to the body of commentaries on Ezekiel. Block’s NICOT commentary remains the gold standard for Ezekiel. Apart from Block’s, I would recommend others before Milgrom’s (e.g., Iain M. Duguid, *Ezekiel* [NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999]; or at a more devotional level, Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Message of Ezekiel: A New Heart and a New Spirit* [BST; Leicester: InterVarsity, 2001]). But for those who are interested in insights from medieval Jewish scholars and from this influential, contemporary Jewish scholar, Milgrom’s commentary is indispensable. It may

be more suited for graduate students and scholars, though, since it is filled with transliterated Hebrew, not all of it translated.

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Ronald E. Osborn. *Death before the Fall: Biblical Literalism and the Problem of Animal Suffering*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2014. 195 pp. \$25.00.

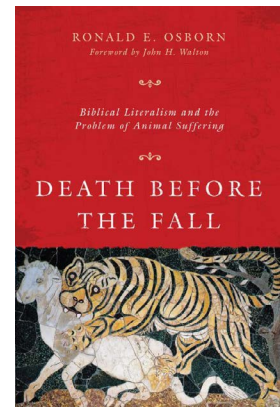
With vivid prose and an engaging perspective, Ronald Osborn addresses the problem of animal suffering for Christians, whether of creationist or evolutionary persuasions. The book is tendentious (in the best sense of that term), arguing both for and against particular positions with passion and verve, yet it does not in the end come to a clear or unambiguous position on its primary topic, namely, animal suffering.

There are two prongs to Osborn's argument, which make it, in effect, two books, or at least a book with two purposes, and two audiences. Part 1 (nine chapters) attempts to help conservative Christians move out of narrow literalism in their reading of the Bible's creation narratives (by "literalism" he means an approach to the text that assumes a simple correspondence between what the Bible says and concrete realities in the external world); this approach tends to be associated with a young earth and the flood as the explanation for the fossil record.

Osborn is uniquely qualified to address this sort of literalism, since he was raised in the Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) church. It was the founder of the SDA church, Ellen G. White, who popularized the view that flood geology (and not deep time) decisively explained the current fossil record (this having been revealed to her in a vision, in which she claimed to have actually observed the flood). This interpretation of the fossil record, along with its assumption of a young earth and the lack of evolutionary descent, informed the hermeneutics of William Jennings Bryan, the famous prosecutor in the so-called Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925 (Bryan had read SDA literature on this topic). To this day, many in the SDA church are principled defenders of young-earth creationism.

Even for readers who do not count themselves among those who read the Bible this way (like myself), there are some informative chapters in Part 1. These include chapter 2 ("Unwholesome Complexity"), which shows how certain creationist readings end up tying the reader into interpretive knots, and chapter 6 ("The Enclave Mentality"), which is perceptive about absolutism and the demonization of the other often found in fundamentalism. I was particularly taken with the author's characterization of the anxiety of a literalist reading of Scripture as "a high-stakes game of Jenga" (p. 45), where if one touches one of the bricks near the bottom the entire theological edifice might collapse.

But it is in Part 2 (consisting in five chapters) that Osborn finally gets to the advertised topic of the book, namely, animal suffering. He explains that the critique of literalism in Part 1 "is to a large extent prolegomena" to Part 2, which addresses "the theodicy dilemma of animal suffering and mortality," which he notes is a problem for both creationists and evolutionists (p. 19).



Just as Osborn's background in the SDA church equips him for addressing young-earth creationism, so his approach to the problem of animal suffering is informed by having grown up in Zimbabwe as a child of missionary parents, which included many visits to a game reserve. He mentions his awareness of the presence of predatory animals (e.g., crocodiles, jackals) and describes witnessing lions eviscerating a fresh kill with the smell of blood in the air. The world of the game reserve was "deeply mysterious, untamed, dangerous, beautiful and good" and "the danger was part of its goodness and beauty. . . . Herein lies the central riddle of this book" (p. 13). Although Part 2 contains five chapters, the tension evident in the above quote is embodied in the contrast between chapters 12 and 13. So this review will focus on these chapters.

Chapter 12 ("God of the Whirlwind") explores the vision of the book of Job, where animal predation is part of the world God celebrates. In response to Job's complaint about his sufferings, God describes in his first speech an untamed, non-human world that includes suffering and death (Job 38–42). Not only does God send rain on a land where no human lives (Job 38:26–28), but God provides food for lions and ravens (Job 38:39–41) and commands the eagle to build her nest on high, from which she delivers prey to her young, who "suck up blood; and where the slain are, there she is" (Job 39:27–30). Those are the closing words of God's first speech to Job, and I have often thought it is no wonder that Job was struck silent, at a loss for words at such a gruesome image. Yet Osborn is right in emphasizing that God is here delighting in animal ferocity.

This delight continues in God's second speech, where the creator boasts about Behemoth and Leviathan. Given the mythic overlay of these beasts, I would not reduce them to known animal species, as Osborn does; he wrongly confuses Behemoth with the second beast (pp. 153, 157), presumably because he uses the NEB, which has "crocodile" for "Behemoth." But his point is well taken that these dangerous beasts are paraded by God as part of a world he is proud of. Predation and danger do not constitute "natural evil" in the book of Job (and in many of the psalms, I might add, as well as in the writings of the church fathers).

With chapter 13 ("Creation & Kenosis"), Osborn explores the other side of his tension, namely, that it does not seem satisfactory to simply affirm the goodness of animal mortality and predation, given the very real suffering evident in the animal world. He calls this a "deep scandal" (p. 157) and so turns to the theological notion of *kenosis* to address this problem. In the end, his claim is that Christ's self-emptying and death was for the redemption of all suffering, even that which predates human evil.

I find it difficult to evaluate this chapter since it contains important insights, including that God's sovereignty works in and through creation. Yet the chapter is often theologically confused, such as when Osborn identifies open theism (a theory of God's power as generous and inviting) with *kenosis* (a theory of God's suffering with and for the world). Similarly, when Osborn asserts that "God creates as he redeems and redeems as he creates" (p. 160), I would instead want to maintain that God's generous power evident in creation (which does not require God's suffering) is distinct from God redemptive action to reverse the fall (which certainly requires God's suffering). I fully agree with Osborn that the *kenosis* of the cross opens our eyes to see the realities of good and evil; but when he states, "When Christ cries 'It is finished' on Easter Friday the creation of the world is at last completed" (p. 165), I must dissent. Otherwise creation and fall are indistinguishable, and God is not a good Creator.

In the end, this book is a strange mixture of great insights and contradictory proposals. Should we accept the testimony of Job (and the Psalms and church fathers) that God views animal predation as good? Or do we go with our instincts that this is all "natural evil" requiring redemption? Perhaps

Osborn will take time to think through these issues and write more on the topic. It certainly sets an agenda for my own theological explorations.

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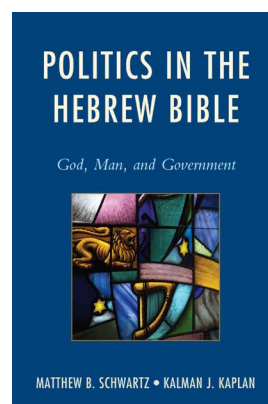
Matthew B. Schwartz and Kalman J. Kaplan. *Politics in the Hebrew Bible: God, Man, and Government*. Lanham, MD: Aronson, 2013. xiv + 204 pp. £22.95/\$38.00.

The aim of this volume is to glean insights from the Hebrew Bible for a healthy and just politics. Both authors, professors at Wayne State University and the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine, respectively, argue from a Jewish perspective for the unique contributions of that scripture to political values and behaviors and to domestic and foreign policy. They believe that the lessons to be drawn from that particular religious tradition are universal in application.

The book is divided into three parts. The first contains the Introduction and the opening chapter. The Introduction presents their conviction that the orientation toward politics in the Hebrew Bible is different from what many in the West now hold. To exemplify this dissimilarity, the book juxtaposes the thinking of three classical thinkers who have informed political philosophy (the Greeks Plato and Aristotle, and the Roman Sallust) to the rabbinical voices of Maimonides, Abravanel, and Samson Raphael Hirsch. The latter three attempted to relate politics to a life in obedience to Torah and to what they perceived were relevant biblical narratives. Throughout the rest of the volume, in their exposition of biblical passages, Schwartz and Kaplan will appeal continually to these and other rabbinic sources, as well as to the Mishna, Midrash, and Talmud.

Chapter One explains the three fundamental “organizing principles” that set the biblical perspective apart. First is its “individuation” and “differentiation” as over against “uniformity” and “conformity” (pp. 19–25). That is, the Hebrew Bible accentuates the worth and potential of each person and people, instead of imposing unity and homogenous ideals. The second principle is what Schwartz and Kaplan call “organic morality” (pp. 25–31). Unlike the Greeks who sought an “abstract equilibrium” (p. 30) based on philosophical categories often dominated by a fatalistic determinism before their gods, the Hebrew Bible emphasizes ethical responsibility and divine remedies to human predicaments. The third and most significant point is “hope against fear toward the future” (pp. 31–38). The Greeks constantly worried about how change might threaten their desired social stability, whereas the Hebrew Bible entrusts what lies ahead to the sovereign Creator.

The second part of the book proffers illustrations for each of these three principles in successive chapters. Each chapter is broken down into two subsections, each employing seven relatively brief expositions of the events and characters of biblical stories to suggest implications pertinent to contemporary politics. Chapter Two (individuation/differentiation) speaks to the social order and to leadership in government. Chapter Three (organic morality) discusses domestic and societal relations. The fourth chapter (hope for the future) deals with morale and mission and then foreign policy.



Part Three is comprised of a short conclusion that reviews the authors' arguments. *Politics in the Hebrew Bible* closes with two appendices—the first a chronology of the biblical era, the second a glossary of classical and Jewish terms and personages. There is a brief bibliography and a subject index.

What is impressive in this work is the breadth of narratives that the authors utilize, forty-two in total. In addition, Schwartz and Kaplan continually bring in illustrations from Greek, Roman, European, and United States literature and history to inform their expositions, whether for contrast or support. These allusions are more anecdotal than technical. Correspondingly, there is almost no interaction with scholarly biblical research (Jewish or otherwise). The discussions flow from surface readings of the biblical narratives and do not entertain alternative construals. *Politics in the Hebrew Bible*, in other words, is not an academic publication, but rather a resource for lay readers.

Some points are well taken, such as the extensive treatment of the Jubilee legislation to warn against unconstrained wealth accumulation and to underscore the foundational importance of socioeconomic equity for all. The virtues to be learned from some biblical characters and the vices of others to avoid also are helpful reminders for leadership. Political commentary can be interesting, as the authors associate biblical stories to issues such as appeasement (King Ahaz of Judah and his Assyrian policies in 2 Kgs 16; Isa 7). Other connections are perhaps more questionable. For example, David's interaction with and Solomon's eventual execution of Shimi ben Gera (2 Sam 16; 1 Kgs. 2) generate reflection from Schwartz and Kaplan on how to deal with (and maybe eliminate) dissenters.

The distinctive and consistent Jewish point of view might prove interesting to *Themelios* readers who may be unacquainted with Jewish interpretations and sources. Although there is much that can be appreciated in this work, this reviewer considers the treatment of the biblical text and its implications to be of variable value. Not all of the proposals are convincing or morally compelling, but their "organizing principles" do find some resonance in the stories and merit attention. Although with caveats, Schwartz and Kaplan's volume can be commended for the effort to relate the Hebrew Bible to modern-day social, political, and economic life.

For those readers interested in academic treatments of the nature of politics in the Hebrew Bible, other recent publications can serve as supplements and correctives to *Politics in the Hebrew Bible*. J. Gordon McConville renders close reading of biblical texts and robust interaction with biblical scholarship in *God and Earthly Power: An Old Testament Political Theology: Genesis–Kings* (London: T&T Clark, 2006). Less technical, but also well-informed in biblical research and drawing extensively on other disciplines, is Joshua A. Berman's *Created Equal: How the Bible Broke with Ancient Political Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). In the book *In God's Shadow: Politics in the Hebrew Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), Jewish political theorist Michael Waltzer explores the variety of sociopolitical arrangements described in the Hebrew Bible from his unique perspective. Like Schwartz and Kaplan, these three scholars (in varying degrees) contrast the biblical vision with those of surrounding cultures, whether Mesopotamian, Egyptian, or Greek. They, too, opt for the received text as the focus of their discussions. None appropriate the Hebrew Bible as directly to contemporary society as *Politics in the Hebrew Bible*, but their reflections are beneficial for a deeper appreciation of God's design for a more just world.

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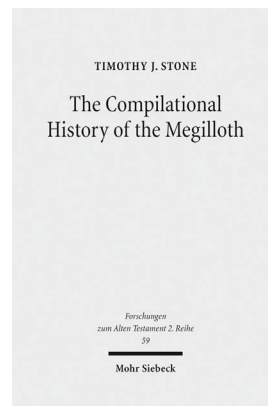
Timothy J. Stone. *The Compilational History of the Megilloth*. Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2.59. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013. 258 pp. \$94.00.

What are the Megilloth, and what difference does the history of its compilation make? The Megilloth are the “five small scrolls” (i.e., Ruth, Esther, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Lamentations) in the third section of the tripartite Hebrew Bible referred to as the Writings. The issue of how these scrolls came to be grouped together is related to the wider question of when and how the Writings began to be considered in relationship to one another. Some think that the OT canon was not closed until after the time of Jesus, and this view is often accompanied by the idea that the Writings are a random collection into which later rabbis sought to introduce meaningful organization.

In the present book, Timothy Stone makes a historical and exegetical case for the view that these five small scrolls were intentionally grouped together into a meaningful arrangement as the canon was being formed and that “the tripartite canon was likely closed within mainstream Judaism sometime considerably prior to the end of the first century C.E.” (p. 3). Stone builds on the work of Brevard Childs, Roger Beckwith, Julius Steinberg, Christopher Seitz, and others. He first discusses the issue of “Canon and Compilation” (ch. 1), contending that “[c]anonization is not a dogmatic judgment passed down from above, but rather one at work in the canonical process” (p. 13). Using the assembling of the Twelve Minor Prophets into a meaningful whole and the strategic arrangement of the Psalter as points of comparison for what he argues about the five small scrolls, Stone develops “compilational criteria” that he employs to analyze the relationships between the five small scrolls: 1) catchwords at the end or beginning of juxtaposed books; 2) framing devices such as inclusios; 3) superscriptions; and 4) thematic considerations (p. 33). Discussions of the collection and arrangement of the Writings follow, and these set up the exegetical probes Stone uses to test and confirm his theories. Ruth and Esther receive chapter-length treatment, and then the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Lamentations are sounded before Stone summarizes his findings.

Stone helpfully sets out three theses that outline his project (p. 9). I will shorten these theses further, allotting only one statement for each. First, the tripartite canon of the OT was closed well before the end of the first century AD. Second, there are only two main arrangements of the writings before the eleventh century AD (after which orders proliferate): those found in *Baba Batra* 14b and the MT. Third, the five small scrolls are purposefully arranged (with slight variations) and sit in the middle of the Writings, preceded by a wisdom collection, followed by a national-historical collection.

I am enthusiastic about the confirmation Stone provides for an early closure of the OT canon and the purposeful arrangement of those books. His project is a stimulating contribution to the pursuit of canonical biblical theology. As intriguing as his suggestions are, however, and as much as I agree with him that the canonical context of a biblical book should influence its interpretation, I hold vastly different conclusions on the meaning that results from consideration of the canonical context of books such as Esther, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes. Stone’s view is that the canonical context of the book of Esther results in the conclusion that Hadassah (the character named Esther) is “an assimilated Jew who has forgotten Israel’s God” (p. 173). Privileging other canonical material, I would see Hadassah as a model of biblical femininity, a faithful Jew who trusts God and makes the best of a bad situation. This



example illustrates the inevitably subjective, perspectival nature of the necessary task of looking beyond the boundaries of a particular biblical book for wider canonical context.

In summary, Stone proposes a chiasmic structure for the organization of the five small scrolls:

Ruth
 Song of Songs
 Ecclesiastes
 Lamentations
Esther

Ruth is positive, Esther negative; the best Song is matched by the worst. At the center of the chiasm stands Ecclesiastes, the only book in the collection that “lacks a main female character” (pp. 206–7).

Some of the interpretive conclusions Stone draws, such as the idea that Mordecai and Esther are made to appear in a negative light by virtue of the way their actions differ from those of Daniel and his friends in Dan 1–6, seem speculative and unwarranted. I remain unconvinced that the author of Esther intended his audience to derive a negative conclusion about Esther and Mordecai because their circumstances were different than those of Daniel and his friends.

This point about authorial intent leads to a wider difficulty with the project of deriving meaning from the arrangement of the biblical books—and I say what follows as one who seeks to do canonical biblical theology and believes that English translations should adopt the tripartite order of the books of the OT. In my view, the biblical authors were “carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:21), with the result that the final form of what they wrote should be regarded as inspired by the Holy Spirit. With this, the controlling concern in interpretation is what the Spirit-inspired biblical author intended to communicate. So unless it can be shown that the author of Esther, for instance, consciously composed Esther to be read against the backdrop of Dan 1–6 and as a foil to Ruth, intended meaning is being attributed to someone other than the biblical author. It seems impossible to establish that an inspired prophet such as Ezra was responsible for the arrangement of the canonical order of the books, though there is strong evidence that Ezra may have done just that. If we cannot be certain that the Spirit inspired a prophet to organize the books into meaningful arrangement, then it seems we are considering the history of the reception and interpretation of the books and their arrangement rather than interpreting the intended message of the biblical author(s).

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James W. Watts. *Leviticus 1–10*. Historical Commentary on the Old Testament. Leuven: Peeters, 2013. xxx + 567 pp. £74.00.

A major challenge facing any Leviticus commentator is overcoming (mis) conceptions of dry irrelevancy that people (including some scholars) harbour towards the biblical book. In this latest addition to the Historical Commentary on the OT series, James Watts succeeds admirably. Watts is professor and chair of the department of religion at Syracuse University. The core of his work over the last twenty years has been in the field of rhetorical criticism, and in particular, its application to the texts and contexts of the Pentateuch. The fruits of those labours are here applied to the text of Lev 1–10. The resulting commentary has much to commend itself.

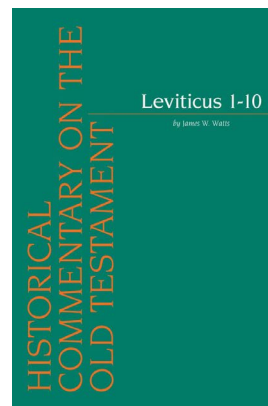
The introduction is detailed, yet eminently readable, and serves to bring readers quickly up to speed with the current (and often complex) state of Leviticus scholarship. Particularly helpful is Watts's survey of various approaches that have been canvassed in recent times. Everything from compositional and literary analyses to ideological criticism and ritual theory is considered (pp. 40–86). Each hermeneutic is judiciously weighed. Watts, of course, argues for a rhetorical approach and proceeds to outline its particular application to Leviticus (pp. 89–133). Again, this overview offers an initiation to readers unfamiliar with his method. In short, Watts suggests that Leviticus was primarily written to be *heard*, not read, and that it was shaped to persuade. This means Leviticus ought to be read with different sensitivities, which has implications for everything from translation of ritual terms (pp. 4–8) to the structure of the book (pp. 15–20). Accordingly, Watts notes that his interpretation “contradicts many of the findings of its predecessors” (p. 89).

That conclusion is borne out in the commentary proper. For each chapter, a translation of the text is followed by an “Essentials” section which presents an overview of content, context, and rhetoric. Then, under “Exposition,” significant textual, theological and historical issues are discussed. Finally, a verse-by-verse “Exegesis” section explores lexical and syntactical features in depth. The method employed serves to keep the whole in view while working on the details. It is this continual interaction with the broader purposes of the text that constitutes one of the major strengths of the commentary. For Watts, the ever-present question is: “Who is trying to persuade whom of what?” (p. 122). How the ‘bits’ contribute to the persuasive aims of the whole is continually borne in mind.

By taking the final-form text seriously, Watts challenges many source-critical ‘givens.’ For example, in his discussion of chapters 4–5 he highlights the rhetorical effect (and artistry) of paronomasia in relation to the offerings prescribed. His conclusion, in contrast to prevailing views, is that “[t]his play on multiple meanings and nuances of the same root words undermines the claim that P’s vocabulary . . . consists of precisely defined technical terms” (p. 302). In this way, Watts’ rhetorical analysis regularly shows itself capable of generating novel insights and of challenging the status quo.

Another notable feature is the commentary’s engagement with a broad range of scholarly and ecclesial positions. Watts draws upon critical and conservative scholars alike and is sensitive to a diversity of Christian and Jewish readings of the book. The commentary thus presents a rounded appraisal of current scholarship as well as providing helpful insights into the text’s reception history.

However, a couple of weaknesses need to be noted. The first is relatively minor. Readers wanting to follow up the wider argument behind Watts’ treatment will find themselves frustrated at times by the



imprecise referencing system utilised. In some instances works are referred to without page numbers (e.g., p. 264).

A second issue is more serious. Watts, to his credit, works hard to isolate the rhetorical setting of Leviticus, rightly arguing that this is essential groundwork for discussing persuasive purpose (p. 88). He concludes that Leviticus's primary function was to bolster the power claims of the Aaronide dynasty in postexilic Yehud (pp. 91–132). Therefore, in line with much critical scholarship the text is viewed as a product of the early Persian period. As a result, various aspects, such as the tabernacle, are understood as ciphers for postexilic realities, namely, the temples of Jerusalem and Mt. Gerazim (p. 105). Watts' reconstruction understandably shapes his interpretation and so perhaps limits its value for readers who would challenge his dating of the text.

The larger issue at stake is whether (proposed) rhetorical function can be used to determine a text's provenance. Even if it were conclusively demonstrated that Leviticus was used for a postexilic agenda, it does not necessarily follow that such appropriation was in line with the intent of the text. It is equally possible that such use represents a communicative 'misfire.' Particular utilisation does not conclusively demonstrate that a text was written for that purpose or during that era. The complexity of the issue remains somewhat under-addressed.

Furthermore, this reading of Leviticus requires one to see it as being little more than a thinly veiled political manifesto. For instance, in relation to priestly dues, Watts states that the "rhetorical structure effectively buries the rules for priestly prebends in the aural equivalent of contractual fine print" (p. 385). The theological implications, particularly in relation to the text's function as divine discourse, are not discussed. Thus some readers may find the interpretation a 'thin' appraisal of the text and one that reflects more postmodern ideology than original intention.

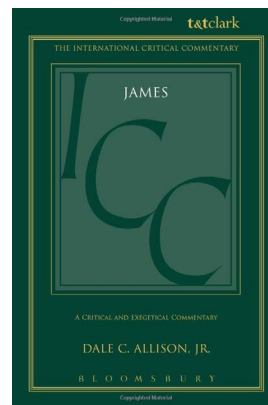
Nevertheless, Watts has produced a masterful and well-written exposition of Leviticus 1–10, even if one does not subscribe to his proposed provenance. The level of detail may make it unwieldy for preachers, although insights into how the text functions rhetorically will prove useful. For scholars and graduate students, however, the commentary is indispensable. I for one am eagerly awaiting the second volume.

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— NEW TESTAMENT —

Dale C. Allison Jr. *James*. International Critical Commentary. London: T&T Clark, 2013. xlix + 790 pp. \$130.00.

Dale C. Allison Jr., Richard J. Dearborn Professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, is well known for his breadth of landmark scholarship. His work spans the three-volume International Critical Commentary on Matthew with W. D. Davies (*An Exegetical and Critical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew* [London: T&T Clark, 1988–1997]), a critical commentary on *The Testament of Abraham* (CEJL; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), and *Constructing Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), to name but a few. These and numerous other works uniquely equip Allison to tackle the complicated issues that surround the epistle of James. Its affinities with traditions of Second Temple Judaism, obvious interface with Jesus traditions, and notoriously muted distinctive Christian features are well-served by the patient, meticulous, and cautious thinking of this veteran scholar. Readers will find this commentary encyclopedic in what it covers and judicious in what it does not. Though one may find much with which to disagree, the reader will find a wealth of carefully sifted material to consider in one's own judgments. Perhaps it may be in points of disagreement where one finds works such as this so valuable.



After leafing through a thirty-eight page bibliography, one encounters an extensive introduction (109 pages) that considers conventional subjects with some unconventional conclusions. Allison seems to take nothing for granted and is open to consider any viable option. He opts against James of Jerusalem as the author of this letter, in part because of its alleged familiarity with Romans and 1 Peter. This, he posits, would require a date not before 100 CE. Many will find difficulty in proving James's familiarity with those letters as well as using the uncertainties surrounding the date of a work such as 1 Peter as points of reference. For Allison, then, James is a pseudepigraphon—a work not written by James himself, but written in his name. Allison rehearses traditional explanations for why one would write in the name of James, such as gaining authority, perceived affinities with James, borrowing James's reputed rapport with diaspora Jews, and James's pious reputation as "James the Just."

Perhaps the most innovative contribution of this commentary is the author's assessment of the setting of James (pp. 32–50), where Allison arrives at a number of noteworthy conclusions. Among these is his advocacy for a non-Christian readership. That is, James's notoriously thin explicitly Christian teachings may be deliberately muted so as to lend to its dissemination among non-Christian Jewish readers (pp. 36, 39–41, 47). Contrary to other theories (e.g., Moulton and McNeile), Allison sees the author's motivation rooted in persuasion rather than proselytizing.

For Allison, James "represents Christian Jews who did not define themselves over against Judaism" (p. 43). This is a "group that still attended synagogue and wished to maintain irenic relations with those who did not share their belief that Jesus was the Messiah" (p. 43). They did so in this letter by consciously omitting "potentially divisive Christian affirmations" (p. 43). This is difficult to maintain. Similarly, attributing to James a desire "to promote tolerance for and understanding of his own group" (p. 45) finds a James more amiable than has traditionally been seen. Despite these and other queries, the value in such discussions is that it seeks to address the difficult distinction between Judaism and Christianity.

Allison underscores the difficulty, even impossibility and sometimes impropriety, of making such a distinction.

The introduction to the commentary addresses other matters beyond setting. The LXX, extracanonical Jewish traditions, popular Hellenistic philosophy, Jesus traditions, and other early Christian traditions and texts all figure into James's sources. As a genre, Allison carefully describes James as a "paranetically oriented early-Jewish diaspora-letter" (p. 74). As such it employs literary features (p. 81), such as catchwords, wordplays, assonance, consonance, alliteration, parallelisms, aphoristic style, and antithetical formulations. Though the structure lacks a clear linear coherence, Allison nonetheless observes generalizations about its organization around certain repeated topics. These include coping with trials and temptations (1:2–8, 12–18; 5:7–10), the fate of the rich and poor and the problem of partiality (1:9–11; 2:1–13; 4:13–5:6), the necessity of doing works (1:22–27; 2:14–26; 3:13–18), caution regarding speech (1:19, 26; 3:1–12; 4:11–12; 5:12), and reflection upon and encouragement regarding prayer (1:5–8; 4:2–3; 5:13–18; p. 78).

Allison avoids constructing a "theology" of James and instead presents a set of "leading ideas" he finds in the letter (pp. 88–94). Topics here include theology (proper) alongside Christology. The former contains nothing distinctively Christian, he observes, while the latter is eclipsed by the theocentric nature of James. Also discussed are the Law, "Practical Teaching," and Eschatology. Allison observes that though eschatology is present in each section of the letter, it is largely undeveloped and almost incidental, presuming such things about the Lord's return (5:7–9), final reckoning (2:12–13; 3:1; 4:12; 5:9), and salvation for the righteous (1:12, 21; 2:5; 4:10; 5:20) are shared beliefs between the author and readers. Overall, however, James's "eschatology is wholly in the service of ethics" (p. 94).

A feature of this commentary, unique among the ICC volumes, is Allison's attention to reception history. At the outset (pp. 99–109) the author provides some generalizations regarding the reception history of James, spanning from Origen through Luther and even to Alcoholics Anonymous (p. 109). In the commentary proper each text unit begins with a discussion of the history of interpretation and influence prior to formal exposition. The approach is similar to that of Ulrich Luz's ground-breaking work on the reception history of Matthew in that, for example, it notes how Jas 1:1 was appealed to in debates over British Imperialism (p. 118). The majority of the commentary, however, is steeped in historical critical scholarship at its finest. Space prohibits any extensive treatment of respective texts, save to say what is characteristic throughout: Allison provides a carefully reconstructed text, presents extensive footnotes for the key secondary and primary literature, offers a balanced presentation of the major views on a particular verse, followed by an extensive and detailed explanation of his own conclusions.

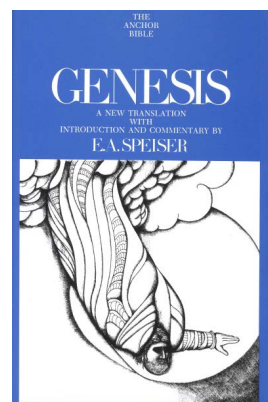
This commentary is simply a treasure-trove of critical thinking, careful reasoning, and judicious appropriation of complicated issues. It leaves few stones unturned, and offers reasonable explanations for the conclusions it draws. For readers of this journal, some of his conclusions seem striking: he dates the letter to the late first century; he claims that it is not written by James, but written in his name. The value for pastors and theological students lies not in the need to adopt these or other conclusions, but in careful consideration of *how* such conclusions are deduced. Allison is transparent about his method throughout, and by careful reading of the means by which he reaches even the most difficult conclusions the student of God's Word is forced to think carefully about their own methods of interpretation. In this respect the commentary is a valuable dialogue partner; a tool not to be pillaged for its conclusions but read for its reasoning. In his painstaking work in James, Allison has left yet another landmark of

scholarly acumen for the benefit of the reader willing to engage with the most complicated of critical matters and reach their own conclusions.

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Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries: Old Testament, Apocrypha, and New Testament. Accordance Bible Software. Altamonte Springs, FL: Oaktree Software, Inc., 2012. \$1,499.

The Anchor Yale Bible—a major critical commentary series covering the OT, NT, and Apocrypha—is now available in digital format on Accordance Bible Software. According to the current general editor John J. Collins, this series “aims to present the best contemporary scholarship in a way that is accessible not only to scholars but also to the educated nonspecialist.” The contributors include male and female scholars from diverse theological perspectives and faith traditions, including Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish. Each volume includes an introduction and the author’s translation of each passage within the book. The contributors typically follow the translation with detailed “notes” on text-critical and linguistic issues and “comments” on the structure, meaning, and theological contribution of each passage.



The length, organization, and quality of these commentaries vary significantly from volume to volume. Some are 40–50 years old and reflect critical methods and interpretations that few if any current commentators would share. Mitchell Dahood’s three-volume Psalms commentary (1965–70) is particularly notorious for relying significantly on Ugaritic cognates in his translation and interpretation. His exegesis and translation are also highly uneven and unreliable. For example, at Ps 2:12 Dahood does not translate the command נִשְׁקוּ-בֶרֶךְ (“kiss the son”) and includes no explanation for this decision. While Dahood appeals to alleged parallels with the Baal Cycle for most psalms, he makes no reference to extensive NT quotations of key passages such as Pss 2:7; 8:4–5; 16:8–11; 110:1. Similarly, E. A. Speiser’s commentary on Genesis (1964) focuses almost exclusively on JEDP source criticism, Hebrew morphology, and Semitic parallels and offers little help to modern interpreters. Alternatively, many of the OT volumes are leading exegetical commentaries on their respective books, such as Jacob Milgrom on Leviticus (3 vols.); Michael Fox on Proverbs (2 vols.); C. L. Seow on Ecclesiastes; Francis Andersen and David Noel Freedman on Hosea, Amos, and Micah; Jack Sasson on Jonah; and Andrew Hill on Malachi. The eight volumes on the Apocrypha (1–2 Maccabees, Wisdom of Ben Sira, etc.) are some of the strongest (and only) full-length exegetical commentaries on these Jewish texts.

While still somewhat uneven, the commentaries on the NT are stronger overall than those on the OT. Very good or outstanding volumes include Craig Koester on Hebrews; Luke Timothy Johnson on 1–2 Timothy and James; Joseph Fitzmyer on Luke (2 vols.), Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Philemon; and Joel Marcus on Mark (2 vols.). Raymond Brown’s two-volume commentary on John (1966, 1970) was considered the authoritative exegetical work on the Fourth Gospel for a generation and is still very insightful. Evangelical readers may be pleasantly surprised to find that the volumes on Ephesians (Markus Barth), Colossians (Barth and Helmut Blanke), 2 Thessalonians (Abraham Malherbe), and 1–2 Timothy (Johnson) assume or defend Pauline authorship. Alternatively, the volumes on Titus

(Jerome Quinn), 1 Peter (John Elliott), and 2 Peter (Jerome Neyrey) argue for or simply assume the pseudonymous authorship of these books. J. Massyngberde Ford's commentary on Revelation (1975) is the weakest of the class, although Yale has recently released a replacement volume by Koester that should in time be available as a paid add-on for Accordance users.

There are several advantages to owning the Anchor Yale Bible commentary series digitally on Accordance (see further the review of Accordance 10 Ultimate Collection in *Themelios* 38.3 [2013]: 453–55). First, on Accordance, the 87-volume set costs roughly one third of what it does in print—\$1,499 versus \$4,458. The Accordance version also retails for nearly \$500 less than the same commentaries on Logos (reviewed in *Themelios* 34 [2009]: 226–27). Second, the Accordance set is compact and portable, unlike its print counterpart. The print volumes take up approximately eleven feet of shelf space, and it is challenging to fit more than one or two in a backpack or briefcase. In contrast, Accordance users may access this massive collection anywhere on Mac, Windows, iPad, and iPhone. Third, Accordance digital commentaries offer enhanced usability over print commentaries. Users may type in a Scripture reference to instantly navigate to the relevant translation and commentary. Additional search options include *title* (key words in a book title or section heading); *English content*; *Scripture* (references anywhere in the commentary body); *Greek/Hebrew content*; *transliteration*; *translation*; *manuscripts*; *bibliography*; *authors*; *captions* (for maps, illustrations, and tables); and *page numbers*. For example, a search for the translation “rectify” yields sixteen instances where J. L. Martyn distinctively renders δικαίω and related terms in his Galatians commentary. A bibliography search indicates that eighteen of the twenty-six NT volumes cite Joseph Fitzmyer, while only one (Romans) refers to G. K. Beale. Caption searches for Palestine or Jerusalem lead users to relevant maps (*Mark 1–8*, ix; *Acts*, 190) that would be difficult to find going volume by volume with the print edition. Users may also create a custom group of commentaries to enable a single search within that group for a particular Scripture or keyword. This allows the pastor preparing a sermon or the student working on an exegesis paper to locate the most relevant pages in his favorite commentaries with one simple yet powerful search.

Most commentary sets on Accordance are grouped together as modules spanning the entire OT or NT. However, due to the size of this collection, Accordance released the Anchor Bible OT commentaries in four smaller modules arranged according to the English canonical ordering—Genesis–Deuteronomy, Joshua–Esther, Job–Song of Songs, Isaiah–Malachi. This limits the ability to search all OT volumes at once, as is possible in sets like the New International Commentary on the OT and Word Biblical Commentary. The NT volumes are grouped in two modules—Anchor Bible NT and Anchor Bible NT (alternate vol.), which includes only Fitzmyer's more recent *First Corinthians* commentary (reviewed in *Themelios* 34 [2009]: 225–26). The Greek and Hebrew content searches in Anchor yield minimal results since these volumes typically use transliteration, though such searches are quite valuable in other Accordance modules such as Hermeneia and the New International Greek Testament Commentary.

In conclusion, the Anchor Yale Bible series is of decidedly mixed quality but includes many serviceable or superb commentaries that offer readers fresh translations, substantial bibliographies, and careful yet critical analysis of the biblical text. Accordance Bible Software makes this major commentary series more affordable, portable, and usable to users and will particularly interest biblical scholars and graduate students.

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Herbert W. Bateman IV. *Interpreting the General Letters: An Exegetical Handbook*. Edited by John D. Harvey. Handbooks for New Testament Exegesis. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013. 315 pp. \$29.99.

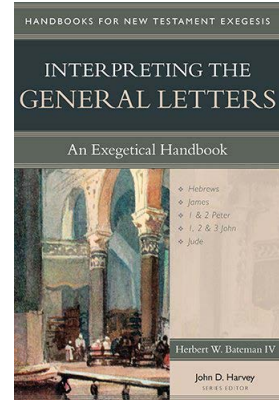
Herbert Bateman IV is the founder of the Cyber-Center for Biblical Studies, where he also serves as Professor of New Testament and research administrator. Bateman is the author of *A Workbook for Intermediate Greek* (Kregel, 2008) and editor of *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews* (Kregel, 2007). Much of his scholarly work has focused on the general epistles and in particular the book of Hebrews. Bateman's scholarship and pastoral concern certainly are evident in this volume of the Handbooks for New Testament Exegesis series.

According to Bateman, this book “intends to shape the way people think and go about studying and communicating” the general letters (p. 13). Both the content and design of the book provide the reader with a reproducible model for interpreting a passage as one moves into exegesis and then from exegesis to exposition. The overarching structure, as I see it, is threefold. The first three chapters address the background items of literature, history, and theology. Chapters four through six set forth Bateman's nine steps for interpreting a general letter. Finally, chapters seven and eight provide helpful tools for moving forward with the approach. The book concludes with a brief, but helpful, glossary.

For the purpose of this review, I will briefly summarize Bateman's nine steps (chs. 4–6). Steps 1–3 are set under the heading “Preparing to Interpret the General Letters” (ch. 4). Step One is to translate the Greek text. Step Two demonstrates how one can identify interpretive issues with the passage in view (comparing English versions, understanding translation theory, rendering Greek idioms). Step Three is essentially a 20-page primer on textual criticism. Steps 4–6 are grouped as “Interpreting Passages in the General Letters” (ch. 5). These three steps address deeper issues such as developing a structural outline, interpreting the style, syntax, and semantics of the text, and Greek word studies. Steps 7–9 fall under the heading “Communicating the General Letters” (ch. 6), addressing exegetical communication, proclaiming the central idea of the text, and communicating homiletically.

One omission from this installment in the Handbooks for New Testament Exegesis is a series preface. If one were to pick up this book and was not familiar with this series, the intended audience that the editors are trying to reach would not be self-evident. Based on the book's content (e.g., the depth to which Bateman goes concerning the identification of Greek clauses and the field of textual criticism), the audience seems to be those with at least some advanced theological study. Further, Bateman rightly points out that textual criticism and creating structural outlines are both a science and an art (p. 173), but must one be trained in these areas in order to incorporate them into the exegesis of a text? Bateman does not answer this question but is quick to point to the subjectivity of each area.

Related to the above point, in an attempt to cover many broad areas of NT study, Bateman had to limit his treatment of certain topics. One obvious drawback of this approach comes with his treatment of textual criticism. A twenty-page crash course in this highly specialized field of NT study does not approach a sufficient treatment of the topic. His discussion is detailed and well balanced, but, in my opinion, the reader needs much more than what is provided in order to accomplish the steps expected from this chapter. While I commend Bateman for attempting to make this field more accessible to his audience—and while I do not have any specific critique of the content he does include—I fear that a minimal understanding of this field and its practice could do more harm than good.



A valuable feature of this handbook is that Bateman frequently illustrates the interpretive implications of the method. He does not merely include short, pithy examples along the way but rather deepens the reader's understanding of the method by supplying extensive examples from texts in the general letters (e.g., five pages on the style of Hebrews, a seven-page exegetical outline of 3 John, and eight pages on the theme of wisdom in James). At every turn of the page, Bateman reinforces the integral role of the literary context as a starting point for interpreting and proclaiming a text. Another valuable portion of the book is the list of resources for further study and Bateman's "Guide for Choosing Commentaries" (both which are gems for college and seminary students).

If you are looking for a one-stop shop for interpreting the general letters, then this is your book. Overall, Bateman has produced a readable, accessible, and informative handbook. His nine steps are presented in such a way that they can be applied to any passage from the corpus of the general letters (and many of them can be replicated with other passages in the NT). He writes meticulously on every topic, but his approach is also intensely practical. I commend Bateman for his depth and erudition. His contribution to this series should be a welcome addition to the library of a seasoned pastor or seminary student.

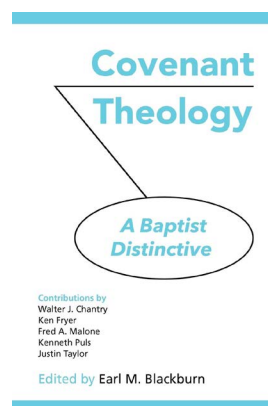
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Earl M. Blackburn, ed. *Covenant Theology: A Baptist Distinctive*. Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2013. 163 pp. \$18.00.

Recently within evangelical theology, there has been a fair amount of discussion on the biblical covenants, especially in regard to how the covenants are best interpreted in relation to covenant and dispensational theology. This book is one such example written from a Reformed Baptist viewpoint. Its main purpose is to demonstrate from Scripture and church history that Baptists, at least until recent days, have embraced covenant theology without accepting Reformed theology's commitment to paedobaptism (pp. 7–8). With the renewed emphasis on the "doctrines of grace" within evangelicalism, the authors are concerned that people will mistakenly think that there are only two options available: either paedobaptist covenant theology or a rejection of covenant theology for some form of dispensationalism. But, as the authors insist, a third alternative is available, namely a Reformed Baptist covenant theology, which this book seeks to describe and promote as the more biblical view.

Given its size, the book is not a complete exposition and defense of their position. Its five chapters and three appendices function more as a primer. It is written primarily for pastors and informed lay Christians, so the depth of discussion on these difficult issues is absent. Originally the chapters and appendices were lectures, articles, and blog posts that have now been compiled into one book in order to commend to a wider audience their specific view.

Chapter 1, "Covenant Theology Simplified," is written by Earl Blackburn, pastor of Heritage Baptist Church in Shreveport, Louisiana. It overviews the basic tenets of covenant theology, and it nicely



describes where Reformed Baptists differ from their paedobaptist brethren. In a summary statement Blackburn argues that covenant theology “is the view of God and redemption that interprets the Holy Scriptures by way of covenants” and that “there is only one way of salvation: by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone” (p. 17). After an introductory discussion, Blackburn gives a review of covenant theology’s understanding of the covenant of redemption, works, and grace. As Blackburn does so, he also seeks to unpack the unity and diversity of the biblical covenants as they culminate in the new covenant. Not surprisingly, a major focus is on how the new covenant is different than the old, especially in regard to children (pp. 50–51), thus highlighting the Baptist distinctive that each member of the new covenant is a professing believer in Christ.

Chapter 2, “Biblical Hermeneutics and Covenant Theology,” is written by Fred Malone, pastor of First Baptist Church of Clinton, Louisiana. As the title suggests, this chapter describes basic hermeneutical principles crucial to a proper interpretation of Scripture. After describing where most evangelicals agree in their interpretation of Scripture, Malone then discusses differences between dispensational and Reformed interpretation before finally addressing the main ecclesiological differences between Reformed Baptists and Reformed paedobaptists. Throughout the chapter, Malone insists that Scripture is best interpreted within the framework of covenant theology by arguing that the OT covenants are best viewed as “progressive covenants of *the* promise fulfilled in the effectual and unbreakable new covenant” (p. 81).

Chapters 3–5 are written by Walter Chantry, retired pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and well-known leader in Reformed Baptist circles. Chapter 3, “The Covenants of Works and of Grace,” describes and defends a traditional “covenant of works” and then sets it over against the “covenant of grace.” He contends that preaching must include both the “law and gospel,” which are reflected respectively in the “covenant of works and grace.” In addition, Chantry defends the tripartite division of the old covenant and the abiding demand of the Ten Commandments as the summary of God’s eternal moral law, first written on Adam’s conscience and later rewritten on the believer’s heart. Throughout the chapter, Chantry also argues that covenant theology undergirds a consistent Calvinism while dispensational theology sows the seeds for an embrace of Arminianism (pp. 99–110). In chapter 4, “Imputation of Righteousness and Covenant Theology,” Chantry argues for the imputation of Christ’s righteousness based on the covenant of works-grace framework. In chapter 5, “Baptism and Covenant Theology,” Chantry defends believer’s baptism over against infant baptism and by doing so he seeks to demonstrate that even though Baptists reject paedobaptism they ought to embrace fully covenant theology.

Three appendices conclude the book. Justin Taylor, vice-president of book publishing at Crossway, authors the first one. He answers the question “Was There a Covenant of Works?” in the affirmative. Taylor contends that without it the gospel is ultimately compromised since the basis for the imputation of Adam’s sin and Christ’s righteousness is undercut. Ken Fryer, a staff member at Heritage Baptist Church in Shreveport, Louisiana, writes the second appendix, “Covenant Theology in Baptist Life.” From church history, Fryer does a fine job demonstrating that Baptists have embraced covenant theology despite their rejection of infant baptism. In the third appendix, “How is the New Covenant not like that which has come before?” Kenneth Puls, the editorial director of Founders Press, gives a helpful chart that contrasts the covenants in the OT with the new covenant.

Given the book’s purpose, aim, and audience, the authors provide a helpful introduction to Reformed Baptist theology. If one is looking for a quick read and resource that describes this particular variety of

Reformed Baptist theology, this book is a good place to begin. However, at least three weaknesses are evident.

First, as is often the case in this kind of book, the descriptions of contrary positions are mostly unhelpful. This is especially evident when dispensational theology is in the crosshairs. The book predominately assumes that all dispensationalists are of the classic variety (which they are not!). So, we are told, dispensational theology teaches that God operates on the basis of contingency plans (p. 20) since God's original plan failed for the Jews. Or, dispensationalism denies that Jeremiah's new covenant applies to the church (p. 76), or that dispensational theology sows the seeds for Arminianism (pp. 99–100). These charges are both unhelpful and false, especially in light of developments within dispensationalism. Straw man arguments ought to be avoided. They do not enhance your position; they only detract from it. Worse yet: they lack charity in theological discussion.

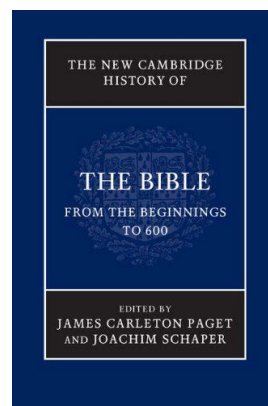
Second, even though this book serves as only a primer, it makes strong assertions on disputed points that require much more defense. For example, one needs to demonstrate the tripartite division of the old covenant (pp. 45–47) or the continuing validity of the Sabbath in the Lord's Day (p. 30), not simply assert it. To be charitable, given the size limitations and purpose of the book not all of these thorny issues can be discussed. But one would like to see more humility in argumentation, especially on these issues that are widely disputed.

Third, what is lacking in the book is not a description of the biblical covenants, but a sense of how the covenants progressively unfold and how each covenant contributes to the overall plan of God fulfilled in Christ. Blackburn mentions each biblical covenant, but Chantry simply conflates them into *the* "covenant of grace," especially when he discusses the OT covenants (pp. 92–98). Chantry argues, "when God makes a covenant it is here to stay!" (p. 100) without ever wrestling with how the new covenant is the *telos*, terminus, and fulfillment of *all* of the biblical covenants. What is lacking is the beauty of God's glorious plan of redemption and how that plan unfolds in its various twists and turns, and ultimately finds its fulfillment in Christ. The biblical covenants indeed are the backbone of the metanarrative of Scripture, and this book tries to capture something of the Bible's grand story. There is a lot to agree with in this book, and it is at its best in describing its own position, but in the end, it left the reviewer with a lot of unanswered questions and wanting much more.

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James Carleton Paget and Joachim Schaper, eds. *The New Cambridge History of the Bible: Volume 1: From the Beginnings to 600*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 979 + xxvii pp. £125.00/\$190.00.

This volume revisits and updates the 1975 publication of *The Cambridge History of the Bible* by presenting “state of the art” research into the Hebrew Scriptures, the NT, and their reception by both Christians and pagans through the period of Late Antiquity (p. xii). The volume contains 37 chapters divided into five parts: “Languages, Writing Systems and Book Production”; “The Hebrew Bible and Old Testaments”; “The New Testament”; “Biblical Versions Other than the Hebrew and the Greek”; and “The Reception of the Bible in the Post-New Testament Period.” A comparison of this work with the 1975 edition reveals significant developments in biblical research, an increasing tendency toward scholarly specialization, and a growing recognition of the importance of reception history for understanding the biblical texts. The increasing specialization is reflected in the present work’s more than doubling the amount of chapters contained in the original volume (37 compared to 18).



Jan Joosten shows how ongoing study of the Greek language has proved that both the majority of the Greek OT and the NT uses a non-literary, low register style of Greek that is close to vernacular Greek (ch. 2). Writing and book production in the ancient Near East was time-consuming, costly, and often thought of as being connected to the sacred and numinous (William Schniedewind, ch. 3). Larry Hurtado and Chris Keith show how the production and use of books occurred within private social, and often religious, networks (ch. 4).

One of the more notable differences between the 1975 and 2013 edition is the latter’s expansion of the Hebrew and OT section from four to twelve chapters. This is due, in part, to the increasing amount of research devoted to the Pentateuch, more attention devoted to the use of Scripture in distinct social settings, and recognition of the importance of Qumranic and rabbinic biblical exegesis. Ulrich shows how research on the biblical manuscripts contained at Qumran have demonstrated the “accurate reproduction of each book and occasionally the creative revised edition of some books” (p. 90). Jonathan Campbell (ch. 11) provides a nuanced treatment of the interpretation of Scripture at Qumran and argues that the most distinctive aspect of their interpretation of the Bible “is the pervasive underlying sectarian message pertaining to the community’s position as the sole locus for the continuance of God’s covenant with Israel” (pp. 264–65). One of the more interesting and yet difficult (due to the obviously hypothetical nature of many of his proposals) chapters is Joachim Schaper’s “The Literary History of the Bible,” which seeks to trace the literary pre-history of the biblical texts and their relation to discrete historical and social experiences (ch. 6). John Barton’s chapter on OT canon formation sagely notes that one’s answers to canon formation will depend upon whether canon is defined as books that have high/scriptural status or an official list of Scripture to which no more can be added (p. 152). John Collins shows how the so-called OT apocryphal works shed significant light on exegetical methods for interpreting the Bible (ch. 8). Increasing attention to the interaction between scripture and social location is nicely demonstrated in Robert Hayward’s essay where he shows how temples played a significant role both in housing and ensuring the reading and recitation of sacred and classical works (ch. 14): “Constructed and ordered according to a divine plan, the temple housed divine writings deposited in its most holy place: thus

sacred writing and temple on earth embody heavenly realities, preserved indeed by priestly guardians, but made present in time and space for all Israel to know, observe, and repeat” (p. 344).

The NT section contains only four chapters (canon, text and versions, NT apocryphal writings, and use of the OT in the NT), but each of them provides a valuable introduction to the state of the question that can serve as helpful orientations for scholar and student alike. If I may interject a personal note, David Parker’s essay on “The New Testament Text and Versions” will undoubtedly make its way into my teaching of textual criticism. John Elliott’s study of apocryphal writings demonstrates how some early Christians interpreted and filled gaps within the earliest Christian writings. While Elliott notes that these texts may seem crude and naïve to many twenty-first-century persons, “their creation, enduring existence and undoubted popularity show that Christianity was vibrant, popular, and, above all, successful throughout the dark ages of the second century and beyond” (p. 469).

The longest section of the work, however, containing fourteen essays, is devoted to the reception of the biblical text. Rather than focusing on individual interpreters (e.g., *The Epistle of Barnabas*, Justin, Irenaeus), James Carleton Paget provides an overview of interpretation of Scripture in the second century (ch. 24). In this fascinating chapter, Paget explores how the early Christians respond to pagan and Jewish critics, how they seek to create a biblical culture or *paideia* through co-opting reading strategies and exegetical methods, the creating of schools and worship assemblies as the settings for the use and interpretation of Scripture, and how the rule of faith came into existence. Many of the chapters demonstrate the extent to which the reading practices of the early Christians were indebted to rhetorical techniques and methods (e.g., Origen: pp. 615–17). Individual chapters are devoted to Origen (ch. 26), Eusebius (ch. 27), Jerome (ch. 28), and Augustine (ch. 29) due to the belief that these interpreters “embod[y] the concerns of a particular age” (p. xiv) and as a result of their incredible influence on biblical interpretation. Frances Young shows the difficulty and impropriety of making strong distinctions between an Antiochene school of exegesis and an Alexandrian school (ch. 32). Earlier treatments of early Christian exegesis were, according to Young, wrong to focus “on methodology rather than traditions of identifying the reference” (p. 751).

My concluding thoughts on this work are twofold. First, the volume succeeds in demonstrating the vibrancy and the complexity of contemporary biblical scholarship. New literary methods and developments, new manuscript and archaeological discoveries, more highly nuanced treatments of the reception of the Bible and the early Christians’ reading strategies, increased awareness and study of the social settings, uses, and production of the Scriptures—all of this, combined with increasingly highly specialized scholarly research, makes a volume like this a necessary resource for every biblical scholar. Second, the volume stands in and continues the legacy of the humanist return to the sources as the origins of biblical criticism (see J. Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism*, pp. 117–36). While this enterprise is indisputably indispensable for biblical interpretation, readers may need to remind themselves of the purported theological subject matter of the biblical texts.

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Benjamin A. Edsall. *Paul's Witness to Formative Early Christian Instruction*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2.365. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck: 2014. 2014. xiii + 297 pp. £79.00/\$110.00.

This is a lightly revised version of Edsall's doctoral dissertation at Oxford, supervised by Professor Markus Bockmuehl. It is the search for a "stable musical theme" of early Christian teaching, and if present, the extent of it. The title is deliberate. Edsall does not seek to identify all early Christian teaching, but Paul's "witness" to initial or formative teaching. To do so he must determine both what was taught and when it was taught.

Edsall begins by identifying problems with previous attempts to identify early Christian teaching. Form-critical studies incorrectly assumed the unity of the early church and its teaching. More recent studies, specifically James Dunn's *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (3rd ed.; London: SCM, 2006), instead find diversity, with no unified *kerygma* or catechetical framework, and only a single unifying belief in Jesus as risen Lord. While Edsall finds some agreement with this view, the common body of teaching is greater than this minimalist account allows.

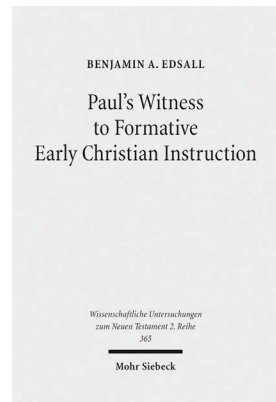
The body of the book has three parts. Part One explains the methodology. Guided by ancient communicators' use of their audience's expected knowledge (ἔνδοξα), Edsall proposes three appeals or indicators of what Paul assumed his audience would know: (1) explicit reminders of Paul's teaching, (2) direct appeals, and (3) implicit appeals to audience knowledge. The choice of letters and methodological issues related to their differences are discussed, and the possible complicating roles of co-senders, secretaries, and letter carriers are persuasively sidelined.

Part Two addresses formative teaching in churches Paul established by identifying the three proposed types of appeal in 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians, devoting a chapter to each type and a summary chapter comparing the findings from the two letters (chs. 5–8). The results show a substantial overlap in Paul's initial teaching in both cities.

Similarities include the monotheistic understanding of the one true God as Father of both believers and Jesus; Jesus as Christ and Lord who died "for us", was raised by God, and will come again as judge; and the Holy Spirit as present in Paul's preaching, and as a gift and bestower of gifts to believers. Continuity is also found in Paul's self-portrayal; moral/ethical topics, particularly, opposition to idolatry, sexual immorality and greed; communal structure and worship; apocalyptic cosmology and eschatology, including the *Parousia* of the Lord and the resurrection of believers; and in individual and community identity, as ἀδελφοί in an ἐκκλησία, called to be holy.

Similar elements of Paul's teaching are put to different uses in the letters, which demonstrates their fundamental importance and suggests these elements were part of a broader "symbolic universe" in Paul's initial teaching. Conversion was not acceptance of just a few new propositions. It involved embracing this symbolic universe, which despite its Jewish roots, required Jews and Gentiles to shift core beliefs and practice. The relative lack of the notions of "justification" and "participation in Christ" is explained by the *ad hoc* nature of the letters.

Part Three seeks to identify the relationship between Paul's initial teaching and formative instruction in churches he did not establish, from his letter to the Romans. Edsall finds that Paul anticipates a remarkable continuity with the wide-ranging ἔνδοξα of the Thessalonian and Corinthian



churches. However, Paul's detailed discussions of how the death of Jesus "works", faith and the Law, the relationship of Israel and the church, and his moderate "ecumenical" tone show that Paul expected differences between the τύπον διδαχῆς (Rom 6:17) and "his gospel" (Rom 2:16; 16:25, "my gospel").

There is much to commend this study. It is clearly structured and easy to read. The method adopted seeks to ask questions of the text in a disciplined way in order to shed light on the historical situation behind the text, and the premise that effective communication starts from what is already known is insightful. In this light, the extent to which Paul assumes familiarity with a range of Christian teaching in all three audiences is striking, and his ready use of theologically rich language and titles, compressed statements of truth, and references to Scriptural narratives and people is particularly thought provoking.

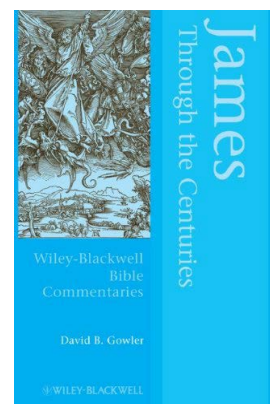
Some might question the book's suggestion that Paul revisited aspects of his initial teaching in his letters because of his earlier "miscommunication" (p. 101). The force of Paul's phrase "my gospel" in Romans and its relation to the Romans' "pattern of teaching" (p. 186) is also open to question, in light of similar statements elsewhere (2 Tim 2:8; cf. 2 Cor 4:3; 1 Thess 1:5; 2 Thess 2:14) and Paul's insistence there is only one gospel (1 Cor 15:3–11; Gal 1:6–9). It is also possible that the limited Pauline corpus adopted in the book influences the discussion at this point (cf. p. 192).

Nevertheless, the book convincingly demonstrates that previous attempts to identify early Christian teaching have been too pessimistic and minimalistic. Instead, there is "remarkable continuity" between the three communities in "core" matters that comprise a comprehensive symbolic universe that was different from both Jewish and Gentile mindsets, such that "the convictions Paul believed himself to share with his Roman readers do resemble a musical theme of surprising fullness and complexity" (p. 227).

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David B. Gowler. *James through the Centuries*. Wiley-Blackwell Bible Commentaries. New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014. 360 pp. \$80.00.

I have rarely read a commentary with such pleasure. In fact, it is tempting to leave the review there, but that would not do justice to this volume in a developing series. The author spends a fair bit of his introduction explaining the purpose and methodology of this commentary, and it proves time well spent as the book reads just differently enough from a standard commentary as to need explanation. Gowler, and the series editors, are not seeking to do standard historical-critical exegetical commentaries, the like of which are commonplace and growing these days. Instead, he seeks to gather and place in dialogue (following Bakhtinian dialogic interaction, p. 3) the history of interpretation on each passage, whether in art, poetry, philosophy, preaching, or other sources. Unlike the Ancient Christian Commentary series (IVP), this commentary is not tied either to one era, nor is it tied to written sources that are placed contextless next to each other as simple quotes. That alone sets this into a highly unique niche in the field, as it acknowledges that interpretation occurs in many settings, not simply through scholarly dialogue, and so it acknowledges the popular and cultural appropriation of the texts. In an age when we are realizing



the privilege given to written sources and certain forms of argumentation, this commentary fills a much-needed void in the history of interpretation.

This book follows standard commentary format of an introduction and subsequent unpacking of the text in verse order. The introduction sees to establish the way of reading the book through explaining the methodology and introducing some interpreters, but also illustrating the methodology by using historical interpretive voices and images to answer the question of authorship, exploring the identity of “James of Jerusalem” in the NT and outside. The book then breaks the text of James into larger sections (e.g., 1:1–11, 12–27; 2:1–13, 14–26, etc.), following the standard verse breaks, but within each section examines the text in 1–4 verse segments. There are some editorial choices, such as treating 3:13–4:12 as one section entitled, “The Fruits of Wisdom versus Friendship with the World,” while 5:7–11 stands as the shortest independent chapter and 5:12–20 remain together, implying that Gowler views all of vv. 12–20 as functioning as a conclusion (although he does not make that explicit). Within each larger section, the shorter verse exposition is broken into sections: a brief introduction to the “ancient literary context” (which is the best place for determining Gowler’s stance as he gives a brief summary of the intent of the passage and some modern commentators), and then the two stages of “interpretations,” the “ancient and medieval” followed by the “early modern and modern” (which begins at the Reformation). Within these sections, Gowler consistently shows the interpretations of his chosen “Key Interpreters” (introduced in pp. 8–19), but also any number of other interpreters and interpretations, such as engravings, paintings and poetry, placed according to their appropriate eras. The artwork in particular creates a dialogical effect, as one examines the various pieces next to each other to see the varied depictions.

The greatest strength of this book is the great variety it offers, and in particular Gowler’s effort to bring in materials and artwork “not readily available” (p. xv). He handles the art criticism invitingly, making the verbal scholar in me realize what a field has been missed. While I regret not seeing Milton’s depiction of the incestuous relationship of Satan, Sin, and Death in the text at 1:13–15, the depth and breadth of introduced works is a delight. Even more helpful is the way in which Gowler consistently introduces new authors and artists, giving them a context and a backstory that places their interpretation within their lives and their wider historical context, recognizing that each person works from a context. In so doing, Gowler reinforces his interpretive method introduced in his section on Bakhtin (pp. 3–5). One that struck me profoundly was reading of “Hus’s most poignant use of James 1:2–4,” written “as Hus was preparing to be burned at the stake” (p. 68). When faced with that context and his subsequent excerpt, no longer can “count it all joy when you face trials of any sort” simply refer to failing to find a convenient parking space. By giving the authors’ contexts, we are forced to take their words all the more seriously.

The other great strength of the work is his choice to include extended excerpts whenever quoting someone, such that we read their words in their own setting, not simply the most relevant and zippy quotes. As such, the potential for misunderstanding them is reduced (never eliminated, unfortunately), and the chance for a dialogue is increased. That is balanced, however, by the book’s greatest weakness. By dealing with each author segment by segment, the book reads in quite a choppy manner, with no sense of flow other than that of chronology. This results in some repetition as we go over the verses, in say 2:1–7, over and over again in the different authors, picking up each one’s emphases, wherever they may lie in those verses (pp. 144–61). More disconcerting, though, is the apparent lack of dialogue, as each author is introduced and examined and then set aside for the next, without connection or

continuity. It falls to the reader, therefore to imagine the dialogue between these various authors and artists, for Gowler seeks to present them in as neutral a way as possible.

The only other critique I would present is that this book, which seeks to ensure the presence of marginalized voices (see pride of place given to Frederick Douglass and Elsa Tamez alongside Augustine, Luther, and Kierkegaard as key interpreters), still manages to heavily prioritize Western readings and art. I would have been highly curious to read from African or Asian scholars and artists and their appropriation of this text in their church and scholarly life, but their voices remain strangely silent, even while liberation and feminist voices are highlighted and given priority. Granted, one book cannot cover everything, but I was surprised by this near-silence in a book that seeks to elevate the marginalized.

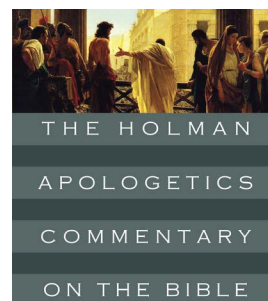
Overall, however, this book does a remarkable job of bringing to light interpretations that have long been sidelined. Gowler retains his own voice throughout, but also opens worlds of art, theatre, and poetry that have intersected with this little book, revealing that perhaps the history of the reception of James has not been as neglectful as some of us fear. Gowler writes in an engaging manner, drawing us into the lives and work of those who have wrestled with the text of James, and the reader leaves this book refreshed intellectually to deal with the challenges James presents us, but also confronted pastorally with the relevance of this practical text. This book should be on the shelves of academics and pastors, and used regularly by both.

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Jeremy Royal Howard, ed. *The Gospels and Acts*. The Holman Apologetics Commentary on the Bible. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2013. 812 pp. £24.62/\$39.99.

This is a welcome volume, the first in a series which will cover the whole Bible. The aim of the series is not to provide full commentaries, but to identify particular passages which raise questions and to answer those questions. The present book on the Gospels and Acts is substantial, running to approximately 800 pages: Michael Wilkins' treatment of Matthew covers 192 pages; Craig Evans' on Mark to 128, Darrell Bock's on Luke to 172; Andreas Köstenberger's on John to 136. Bock also treats Acts in 130 pages.

The volume does much more than address problems of a narrowly historical nature. The authors consider questions from a much broader sphere of apologetics. There is interaction with Mormon interpretation of particular statements, as in the discussion of whether Matt 5:48 assumes the potential for humans to become gods (p. 57), and of whether there was a sexual union between God and Mary according to Matt 1:18 and John 1:18 (pp. 22, 510). There is also interaction with Islam (p. 22), and with Catholic views of purgatory (in relation to Matt 5:26) and the perpetual virginity of Mary (in the comment on passages about Jesus' brothers and sisters). Christological issues raised by Jehovah's Witnesses are touched upon in the treatments of, for example, Matt 4:1 and of course John 1:1 (cf. also Acts 1:9–11). There are also matters of philosophical interest, such as whether God can do absolutely anything (p. 129): does 'with God all things are possible' (Matt 19:26) mean that God can 'make a square



The Gospels and Acts
General Editor: JEREMY ROYAL HOWARD
MICHAEL WILKINS - Matthew • CRAIG EVANS - Mark
DARRELL BOCK - Luke, Acts • ANDREAS KÖSTENBERGER - John

circle' or—to use the example common among British philosophers—cook himself a breakfast too big for him to eat? Also addressed are claims made among new atheists about the morality of Jesus and God (pp. 439, 528). Köstenberger addresses naturalistic interpretations of the feeding of the five thousand in John 6. More straightforward questions which might be raised by Christian readers include those of why Jesus as the sinless son of God might be a candidate for baptism (p. 42), or what is meant by the imperative 'do not judge,' given that Christians are called to be discerning (p. 61).

Overall, the individual commentaries are skilfully done. There is a consistently high quality of discussion across the four authors and five books which is impressive. There are some peculiar interpretations, such as the idea that the impulse for Herod's disturbance in Matt 2:3 was the large size of the Magi's entourage and the resulting impression that invading forces would come from the east to assist the installation of the Messiah as king. In other cases, one could of course add further potential solutions, such as John Wenham's explanation of Mark's 'at (the time of) Abiathar the high priest' (Mk 2:26), namely, that this means something like 'in the liturgical/literary section about Abiathar the high priest' (cf. Mark 12:26; Rom 11:2). There are also some editorial glitches (such as a reference to "Licona, Location 5666", and the use of the Greek letter *pi* for papyrus number references). These are minor matters, however. In general, the book is sound. It is not a weakness of the book that the authors have different views on certain questions, such as the number of temple cleansings, on which Wilkins and Evans for example seem to disagree. Individual commentators also leave questions open: on the differences between the Matthean and Lukan Sermon on the Mount (p. 50) and genealogies (p. 371), Wilkins and Bock respectively supply the evidence for several different possible solutions without pronouncing definitively on which may be correct.

More importantly, perhaps, it would have been helpful to have more effective cross-referencing. In some places, an issue is discussed helpfully but ignored elsewhere; for example, the Luke commentary is the only place to have a substantive discussion of the 'Messianic secret' (p. 409), which is not really touched upon in the parallel sections. There are elsewhere some cross-references (e.g., pp. 155, 222, 234, 272), but some are not particularly helpful; for example, the kingship of Herod in Matt 2:1 and of Antipas (a tetrarch) in Mark 6 are not of the same kind (cf. p. 241). The comment on Matthew's 'blood of Zechariah, son of Berachiah' (p. 153) has a helpful cross-reference, but it is odd that the issue is treated more substantively in the *unproblematic* Synoptic parallel in Luke 11:51. This place is also indicative of a further structural weakness: the Matthew commentary has about three-quarters of a page on this issue, and Bock has about a page and a half. Surely here, it would be better simply to have a single, substantive discussion rather than one long discussion and one shorter but still long-ish comment. The same applies to the numerous analogous situations, as one sees the same problem arising in the discussions of, for example, the listings of the disciples (2 pages in Matthew, and a page in Mark and in Luke), and of the Gadarenes/Gerasenes (a short comment on Mark 5:1, a substantial paragraph on Matt 8:28, and over a page on Luke 8:26). The eschatological discourses would have especially benefited from a single, focused discussion.

Similarly, it would be helpful to have more "further reading" supplied on particularly difficult issues, given that the commentary form and the scope of the volume's coverage of all four Gospels and Acts mean that the treatment of difficulties will inevitably be quite brief. For example, on the issue of the timing of the return of Jesus, the reader could be guided to A. L. Moore's *The Parousia in the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1966) or S. S. Smalley's 'The Delay of the Parousia' (*JBL* 83 [1964]: 41–54).

One final observation. Perhaps more could have been done positively and constructively in this volume. Most of the comments are concerned with answering objections, and this was what the authors were requested to do by the series editor at Broadman and Holman. The back cover reports, ‘The authors were provided an index that identified verses known to be relevant to the topics of apologetics and biblical reliability. They restricted their comments to these verses, plus any others that they recognized as germane Typically, each commentary note begins by stating the challenge or challenges regarding the text at hand The contributors take each challenge seriously and seek to describe viable solutions’ Occasionally, however, the authors are more positive, as for example in Bock’s comments on Luke 1:1–4 and the ‘we’ passages in Acts, and those of Evans on Mark 15:21. Perhaps more could have been done to supply positive evidence for the reliability of the gospel tradition and the coherence and authenticity of the Gospels. Whether this kind of material should be included, however, may depend on how broadly or narrowly one defines the apologetic task.

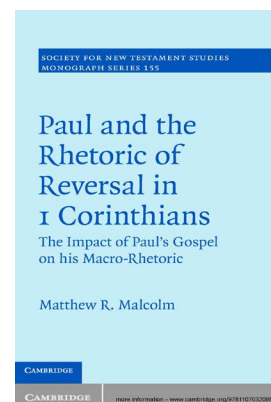
These criticisms, however, do not take away from the fact that this is an extremely helpful book which will be very useful for students and indeed almost any Christians. I recommend it heartily and look forward to future volumes.

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Matthew R. Malcolm. *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reversal in 1 Corinthians: The Impact of Paul’s Gospel on His Macro-Rhetoric*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 155. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. xvi + 305 pp. £60.00/\$99.00.

The letter of 1 Corinthians is greatly discussed within New Testament scholarship. One of the matters that needs resolution is its arrangement and central theme. In other words, is there any particular reason as to why Paul begins with wisdom, proceeds to sexual immorality, then on to weak and strong brothers, the use of spiritual gifts, and then concludes with the resurrection? Is he addressing the greatest needs at Corinth first, or is there some reason as to why he has arranged the letter in this way? Several scholars have seen these issues within 1 Corinthians to be unrelated while others find a continuity of thought. Matthew Malcolm proposes that it is the nature of Paul’s preached message that accounts for the movement from cross and sacrifice to resurrection. He believes that this provides the better explanation over appeals to Greco-Roman rhetoric or Jewish literary methods.

Malcolm’s argument proceeds in the following manner. In his first chapter he presents the message of reversal. It was something that was found within ancient Jewish sources such as portions of the OT like Psalms and Daniel. It continues, however, within intertestamental literature such as Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, 2 Maccabees, *1 Enoch*, Philo, and Josephus. Malcolm then proceeds to show that this continues within Christian literature such as the Gospel of Mark, Acts, in Paul’s biography, and in letters such as Romans, 2 Corinthians, Philippians, and Colossians. This theme is found clearly in 1 Cor 1–4 and then in 1 Cor 5–14 in which the believer lives out the cross. First Corinthians 15 then provides the



promise of reversal. With this as a backdrop, Malcolm concludes that Paul is calling the Corinthians to change from playing the role of the boastful ruler and to take the place now of the cruciform sufferer.

In the second chapter, Malcolm compares his viewpoint of the macro-rhetoric of 1 Corinthians in relation to other scholarship. Some other Corinthian scholars such as L. L. Welborn do not see 1 Corinthians as a unity. Others such as Jean Héring and Walter Schmithals do not see a unified literary coherence in 1 Corinthians. Still other scholars such as Harry Gamble, Gerhard Sellin, and Robert Jewett believe that there is evidence of an editor within the final composition of the epistle. By appealing to *First Clement*, a letter that used ideas from 1 Corinthians, Malcolm convincingly dismisses the objections of these scholars. He then proceeds to consider those scholars who have seen unity within 1 Corinthians from the perspective of Greco-Roman letter forms, rhetorical criticism, and pastoral rhetoric. He also addresses those who view the letter from a unified situation behind 1 Corinthians and a theological unity. In this part of the chapter he refers to many well-known scholars within 1 Corinthian studies such as Winter, Witherington, Rosner, Mitchell, Fee, Schrage, Bailey, Hurd, and Thiselton. Malcolm rightfully agrees that Paul's theological background provides the response to the situation that is at Corinth. He particularly emphasizes that Paul's theological heritage has been renegotiated in the light of the Christ event. This development propels further the discussion of theological unity within the letter.

In the third chapter, Malcolm examines the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians. He sees John Chrysostom as providing a valuable model to illuminate a socio-historical background behind 1 Corinthians. The author also finds Chrysostom as helpful for the modern reader to understand Paul's pastoral evaluation of the situation at Corinth. As a result of examining Chrysostom's writing, Malcolm concludes that the situation involves boastful, obsessed, human autonomy that needs to be countered with the standing of being in Christ. It is a helpful perspective for understanding Paul to consider Chrysostom's viewpoint. While Chrysostom was a student of Paul and a preacher of 1 Corinthians, it is less clear why Chrysostom would be particularly considered over other interpreters from the early church.

Malcolm then moves on within his next chapter to examine 1 Cor 5–14. By examining the ethical matters within these chapters in relation to other Pauline sections (cf. 1 Thess 4; Gal 5:19–23, 2 Cor 12:20–21; Phil 3:17–4:9; Rom 1; 12–15, etc.) and disputed Pauline sections (Col 3–4; Eph 2, 4–6; Pastorals), Malcolm finds that Pauline ethics progress generally from correcting passionate desires such as sexual immorality, greed, and impurity, to interpersonal service and love within the church. He claims, "Those who are brought into union with Christ in his bodily accomplishments are called to offer their bodies selflessly to God through Christ, and participate lovingly within the body of Christ" (p. 169). Throughout the chapter Malcolm engages with those who have investigated Pauline ethics such as Burrige, Countryman, Furnish, Hays, Horrell, Klawans, Lohse, Meeks, Rosner, Schrage, and Thompson. He rightfully finds that 1 Cor 1–4 exerts influence within 1 Cor 5–14. The ideas of the cross found within 1 Cor 1–4 are now applied ethically to sexual immorality, greed, and bodies that belong to the Lord. He also agrees that Jewish themes from the Torah can be found throughout these chapters within Paul's writing.

Finally, Malcolm considers 1 Cor 15. In this chapter, he examines the micro-rhetorical flow and the macro-rhetorical function of the resurrection discussion. Both Chrysostom and Calvin express consternation as to why Paul places the resurrection last within this epistle. Malcolm finds Paul returning to the dual reversal ideas as found in 1 Cor 1–4. He advances the idea that the writing is enlightened by the culturally recognizable ideas of celebration of the present body and the assumption of the inferiority

of the dead. These can be found within first-century Stoicism, Epicureanism, and inscription evidence. He then argues that Paul is reversing these ideas, challenging the Corinthians who are denying the resurrection of the body. Paul places this chapter last because it is the ultimate denial of the Christian perspective.

Malcolm's approach is in contrast to the topically organized approach in the chapter advanced by Holleman, Garland, and Johnson, the conventional rhetorical approach proposed by Watson, Thiselton, and Wegener, and the chiasmic organizational approach proposed by Welch, Hull, and Bailey. Malcolm concludes that the resurrection functions as a climax to the macro-argumentation of the epistle since it is the ultimate expression of the gospel.

Paul and the Rhetoric of Reversal in 1 Corinthians contributes significant data to the question of the coherence and arrangement of the epistle. It rightly accentuates how Paul's message of the crucified and risen Messiah provides a key theme for considering the arrangement of the entirety of the letter. It also rightly encourages a theological and pastoral consideration of the letter. It will be of great interest to those working in Pauline theology, Corinthian studies, and rhetorical studies.

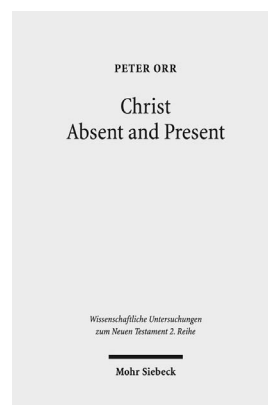
It would be helpful if Malcolm had drawn further conclusions about the influences upon Paul within this letter. Some scholars view Paul as being more influenced by Greco-Roman thought, Jewish thought, or Christian thought. While Malcolm sees Paul's *kerygmatic* message of Jesus crucified and resurrected as critical for the epistle, he does note substantial overlaps with Jewish and Greco-Roman thought. Some further development of the relationship between Paul's kerygma and Jewish and Greco-Roman thought would enhance a good study. Further work also on the cross and resurrection would further support the claim that this is indeed the macro-structure of the letter.

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Peter Orr. *Christ Absent and Present: A Study in Pauline Christology*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2.354. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014. x + 259 pp. £79.00/\$112.00.

The present monograph constitutes a revision of Orr's PhD thesis, completed at the University of Durham under the supervision of Prof. Francis Watson. Orr's primary thesis is that the absence of Christ in Paul's theology represents an important characteristic of the apostle's Christology. Orr notes that the important emphasis on Christ's presence in Pauline studies—particularly with respect to ecclesiology and pneumatology—often outweighs the parallel reality of Christ's absence. If the exalted Christ continues to have a unique and particular bodily existence, then this will impact the way we understand both his presence and absence. Consequently, Orr seeks to highlight the emphasis in the Pauline corpus on Christ's absence, and then attempts to show how that theological distinctive impacts the way in which we understand Christ's presence.

In lieu of the standard literature review, Orr opens his study with a comparative analysis of the way in which Albert Schweitzer and Ernst Käsemann understand the Pauline emphasis on Christ's



absence and presence. Orr's analysis pertains primarily to the way in which each scholar understands Paul's conception of the exalted Christ. Schweitzer's exegetical analysis leads to a description of the exalted Christ as located exclusively in heaven, while Käsemann focuses more prominently on Christ's ongoing, Spirit-mediated presence. Orr notes that a missing dynamic in both Schweitzer and Käsemann is a sustained focus on the "experiential absence between Christ and believers" (p. 40). Orr provides a careful reading of both Schweitzer and Käsemann, and the two scholars provide an interesting foil for this aspect of Pauline studies. However, while Orr notes that the intent of this analysis was only to provide an entry point into his own discussion, the study would have benefitted from a stronger connection between this opening analysis and the following exegetical material.

The strength of Orr's study lies in the extensive exegetical analysis that constitutes the rest of the monograph. Orr develops his thesis by developing three distinct aspects of Christ's absence. He begins by outlining the role of Christ's absence within Paul's theology through a discussion of Phil 1:21–26 and 1 Thess 4:15–17. Orr's examination of Phil 1 provides a particularly insightful discussion of the distinction between being in and with Christ. The second aspect of Orr's analysis of Christ's absence consists of a discussion of the nature of Christ's exalted bodily existence, which focuses primarily on 1 Cor 15 and, to a lesser extent, Rom 8. Readers will find Orr's engagement with Dale Martin, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, and M. David Litwa to be both fair and insightful. Orr's basic conclusion is that the exalted Christ maintains a unique and distinct bodily existence. This emphasis on the exalted Christ's bodily existence provides the catalyst for the third aspect of Orr's analysis, namely a discussion of Christ's bodily absence. Here Orr surveys 2 Cor 5:6–8 and Phil 3:20–21 to demonstrate that Christ's absence is indeed bodily. Orr again provides a nuanced discussion of the texts, but it remains unclear why 2 Cor 5:9—which also contains the essential language of presence (ἐνδημέω) and absence (ἐκδημέω)—was not included in the analysis. Given the unique nature of this language in the Pauline corpus it would have been beneficial to see how this final occurrence might affect Orr's broader thesis.

The last major section of Orr's study seeks to draw out the implications of his extended analysis of the bodily absence of the exalted Christ. If Christ is indeed absent bodily, then in what ways can his presence be known? As a way in which to answer this question, Orr provides three examples of distinct modes of Christ's presence in the Pauline corpus: (1) epiphanic, (2) dynamic, and (3) bodily. In Orr's terminology, Christ's epiphanic presence describes the way in which Christ remains present in the world as an object of human sense-experience. Here Orr works closely with Paul's argument in 2 Corinthians to show the way in which the apostle mediates Christ in his gospel ministry. Perhaps the most significant weakness at this stage of Orr's study is the persistent dichotomy that he attempts to develop between Paul's proclamation and embodiment of the gospel. Both of these aspects of Paul's ministry serve as important foci in the argument of the letter. In contrast to this first mode of presence, Christ's dynamic presence reflects the way in which Christ is present through his own activity. Importantly for Orr, however, this activity is always mediated. Christ is simultaneously absent and active. Lastly, Orr's discussion of Christ's bodily presence pertains to those texts in the Pauline corpus in which Christ appears to maintain an embodied existence in the world (1 Cor 12:1–31), in the believer (Rom 8:9–10), and in the church (1 Cor 10:1–16). In reality, this third category is actually a subset of Christ's dynamic presence, as Orr argues that Christ's ongoing somatic presence is simply one of the ways in which the absent Christ is mediated by the Spirit.

Despite certain exegetical disagreements, Orr's thesis demonstrates a careful and engaging analysis of the scriptural texts with which he interacts. It is clear from Orr's consistent line of thought that

the absence of the exalted Christ is an essential component of the Pauline corpus, and an important corrective in our understanding of the function and nature of Christ's presence in the apostle's wider theology. Orr's monograph represents an important contribution to the wider scholarly conversation about Paul's Christology.

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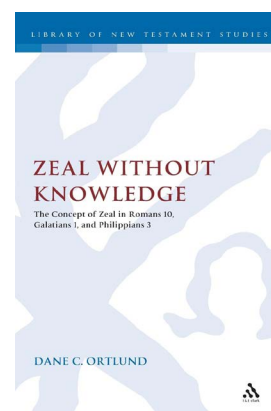
Dane C. Ortlund. *Zeal without Knowledge: The Concept of Zeal in Romans 10, Galatians 1, and Philippians 3*. Library of New Testament Studies 472. London: T&T Clark, 2012. xv + 215 pp. £62.15/\$120.00.

The last four decades have witnessed an upheaval of seismic proportions in the academic study of Paul. The New Perspective on Paul has challenged settled exegetical opinion and proposed new approaches to Paul with far reaching implications. It is fair to say that the initial shock of the New Perspective has subsided. Contemporary exegetical and thematic studies of Paul's letters have begun to reexamine some of the assumptions and conclusions that have proven so influential in recent Pauline studies.

Dane C. Ortlund's published dissertation, *Zeal without Knowledge*, is one such study. Ortlund's primary conversation partner is James D. G. Dunn, who has argued that the zeal that characterized Paul's Jewish contemporaries and to which Paul so vigorously responded was "ethnic or social" rather than "ethical or moral or theological" in character (pp. 1–2). Ortlund concludes that Dunn has effectively proposed a false antithesis. For Paul, "zeal" was both "horizontal" and "vertical" (p. 2, *et pass.*). At the same time, Paul does not ascribe equal weight to these dimensions of "zeal." For Paul (as for the OT writers and Second Temple literature), "zeal is generally that which pleases God and expresses obedience to God's will—not that which, in the first instance, distinguishes from gentiles" (p. 5). It is not that there is no "horizontal" component to "zeal" in Paul. It is that this horizontal component is "secondary" and not "primary" in the apostle's letters (p. 5).

After a brief discussion of how scholarship since Stendahl has understood "zeal" in Paul (pp. 6–23), Ortlund explores how the OT (pp. 24–61) and such Second Temple literature as the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, and Josephus (pp. 62–114) employ this motif. The OT writers, Ortlund concludes, understand human zeal primarily in terms of "intense fervor for Yahweh" (p. 59). While "corporate set-apartness" was necessarily implied in Israel's obedience to God, it was nevertheless "not in the foreground" (p. 59). The Second Temple literature, Ortlund observes, maintains this emphasis, although not without "something of a horizontalizing of zeal"—the locus of zeal falls increasingly upon "the law" or "piety" or "the Jewish nation" (p. 113).

Ortlund then proceeds to address "zeal" in Paul's letters (pp. 115–65). He offers a compelling justification for restricting his discussion to three texts—Rom 10:2 (9:30–10:3), Gal 1:14, and Phil 3:6 (pp. 115–16). It is in these three texts in particular that Paul most clearly reflects upon his former zeal in Judaism, and does so in conjunction with "several key Pauline themes beyond the references



to zeal” (p. 115). Helpfully surveying the thicket of exegetical questions that have arisen in connection with Rom 9:30–10:2, Ortlund concludes that, for Paul, Israel’s zeal is her “ardency to keep Torah” (p. 136). Paul’s critique of that zeal lies not so much in Israel’s “failure to discharge the law” but in her “success,” that is, pursuing the law in “ignorance of, and refusal to submit to, God’s righteousness freely available in Christ” (pp. 135–36). Ortlund further argues that Paul’s former zeal for the “traditions of his fathers” (Gal 1:14) was a zeal especially directed towards authoritative “oral traditions” (p. 142). Even so, Paul does not represent that former zeal primarily in terms of “Jewish set-apartness” (pp. 146–47). The structure and content of Gal 1:11–16 show that Paul’s “concerns” are largely “vertical” (p. 146). Similarly, Paul’s representation of his former Jewish zeal in Phil 3:6 is in predominantly moral or ethical terms (pp. 150–62). While Dunn correctly observes the Jewish character of Paul’s former zeal, he nevertheless fails to grasp the primarily Godward orientation of that zeal (pp. 164–65).

In summary, *Zeal without Knowledge* is a balanced, perceptive, and irenic study of “zeal” in the letters of Paul. Whether or not Ortlund’s characterization of Dunn’s project as “ha[ving] set forth the ‘horizontal’ and the ‘vertical’ in inverse proportion to the way these dimensions worked in Paul’s theology” is an adequate one, one can only appreciate Ortlund’s textual demonstration that Paul understood Jewish “zeal” overwhelmingly in reference to God (p. 175). Ortlund is also correct to say that such a conclusion need not militate against recognizing the specifically Jewish character of this zeal and the ethnic separatism that it often spawned.

Ortlund is an engaging writer. His use of the spatial terms, “horizontal” and “vertical,” to set the terms of his project is well-defined, thoroughly documented, and consistently applied. On occasion, however, he employs terms that could benefit from further definition. The “form / essence” distinction, for example, is employed on several occasions, parallel to the “horizontal / vertical” distinction (cf. p. 175). A fuller explanation of that distinction and more precise explanation of its application to the questions under review would have strengthened the work.

In summary, *Zeal without Knowledge* demonstrates the ongoing exegetical viability of traditional and evangelical readings of Paul. It is also willing to learn from positions with which it differs. If only for these reasons, *Zeal without Knowledge* has made a valuable contribution to the study of Paul in the post-New Perspective landscape.

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C. Marvin Pate. *Apostle of the Last Days: The Life, Letters, and Theology of Paul*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013. 320 pp. £14.15/\$22.99.

Paul's letters cover a remarkable variety of situations and topics. Interpreters have frequently sought a key to Paul's theology which could enable us to make sense of the various details in light of a fundamental core. C. Marvin Pate, professor of Christian theology at Ouachita Baptist University, argues that such a "center" or hermeneutical key is found in Paul's apocalyptic inaugurated eschatology. In his earlier work, *The End of the Age Has Come* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), Pate explored the eschatological structure of Pauline theology according to various themes. In *Apostle of the Last Days*, Pate applies the same basic framework to each individual Pauline letter (Pate accepts the Pauline authorship of the 13 canonical letters).

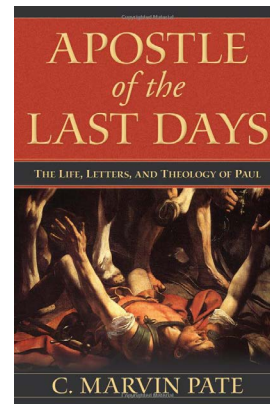
In his introduction, Pate categorizes the various eschatologies in Paul's milieu according to a three-part schema. (1) Consistent eschatology, a common view in Judaism, saw the kingdom of God as an entirely future reality. (2) Realised eschatology, the view of Hellenistic-syncretistic religion, the Roman imperial cult, and "Merkabah" or visionary Judaizers, saw the age to come as fully available now. (3) Inaugurated eschatology saw the kingdom as having begun and being available now but awaiting a final consummation ("now but not yet"). This is the view of Paul and non-Merkabah Judaizers, the difference between them being their view of the place of the law vis-à-vis faith in receiving the kingdom. Pate's thesis is that "the conflicts Paul encountered in the cities of the churches he founded and wrote to erupted as he presented his apocalypse of Christ in the face of the various eschatologies delineated above" (p. 26).

In chapter 1, Pate argues that Paul's conversion, call and message, as described in Gal 1, Rom 1 and Acts, were all driven by an apocalyptic inaugurated eschatology. Paul's apocalyptic message had four key components: Jesus is the Messiah; his death and resurrection inaugurated the new age; salvation is entered into by faith (not obedience to the law); and the Gentiles are called to salvation.

Pate then examines each of the letters of Paul in turn, comparing with Acts and engaging with scholarly discussions along the way. Chapter 2 discusses the eschatologically driven character of Galatians. Paul argues primarily against non-Merkabah Judaizers (with the imperial cult also in the background). He insists that because the new age has dawned in Christ, the law of Moses has completed its divine purpose and justification is now available through faith in Christ, not the law.

1 and 2 Thessalonians are driven by the conflict between Paul's "now but not yet" eschatology and other (Jewish and non-Jewish) eschatologies (ch. 3). 1 Thessalonians emphasises the "now" aspect by equating the sufferings of Jesus and Christians with Messianic end-times woes. 2 Thessalonians emphasises the "not-yet" aspect, urging the Thessalonians to keep living faithfully in the world. Pate follows Moo in rejecting the idea of a "secret rapture" in 1 Thess 4:13–18.

1 and 2 Corinthians are driven by the conflict between Paul's inaugurated eschatology and the realized eschatologies of Hellenistic-syncretistic religion and Merkabah Judaizers (chs. 4–5). Paul reminds his readers that the new age and the resurrection is not yet fully realized; it is only available now through the cross of Christ. Thus, for example, suffering is still a normal part of Christian experience, and believers must still resist the temptation to commit immorality.



In ch. 6, Pate argues that Paul's argument in Romans is designed to refute the realized eschatologies of Hellenistic syncretism and the imperial cult, the consistent eschatology of non-Christian Judaism, and the inaugurated eschatology of non-Merkabah Judaizers.

The letter to the Philippians is a challenge to live in the overlap of the ages by embracing Christ-like living and suffering and to look forward to the new age (ch. 7). This challenge is issued in the face of the realized eschatology of Merkabah Judaizers and the Roman imperial cult.

In the face of Merkabah Judaizers who insisted that obedience to the law of Moses brings about a mystical experience of the age to come, reinforced by Hellenistic religion and the Imperial cult, Paul insists in Colossians that Christians are fully caught up to the throne of God through Christ (ch. 8). In Philemon eschatological thinking is implicit (ch. 9). The dawning of the new age in Christ has relativized socio-economic status, which allows Paul to call for the release of a slave.

Ephesians espouses an inaugurated eschatology to strengthen the church in the face of Hellenistic religion and the Roman imperial cult (ch. 10). The struggle against God's heavenly enemies is not complete, and so Christians are also involved in a spiritual battle. Nevertheless Christians have already received many spiritual blessings and can be confident in God's ultimate victory.

Chapter 11 argues that the Pastoral Epistles presuppose an inaugurated eschatology and are written against various other, mostly realized, eschatologies (including a Philonic form). The Pastorals do not capitulate to the surrounding Greco-Roman ethic as many scholars claim, but rather issue a call to live rightly in the overlap of the ages and to endure messianic sufferings while awaiting Christ's return.

Chapter 12 summarises Paul's theology as a whole. God is viewed primarily in apocalyptic terms as the one who will judge the world and bring about the coming age, and is already active in doing so. Other theological themes in Paul's letters should also be understood as primarily eschatological: Christology, pneumatology, anthropology, soteriology, ecclesiology and of course eschatology itself.

Pate has successfully demonstrated that eschatology is vitally important for reading Paul's letters and understanding his theology, and has produced a broadly persuasive conservative evangelical reading of each of the thirteen Pauline epistles using his eschatological framework. I particularly appreciated Pate's discussion of the often unacknowledged and unexplored similarities and connections between eschatological themes in the undisputed and disputed Pauline epistles.

Pate's claim that eschatology is the "center" of Paul's theology, however, seems to be an overreach. The person of Christ, for example, is often portrayed simply as the agent or instrument of Paul's eschatological agenda, rather than as the Lord to be known and loved in his own right. The claim that eschatology is the "center" also leads to some unresolved questions. For example, according to Pate, the primary difference between Paul's framework and the non-Merkabah Judaizers' framework is not strictly eschatological at all; rather it involves the respective roles of the law of Moses and justification by faith within otherwise closely related eschatological frameworks. Perhaps the statement which Pate makes on page 14 (but does not emphasise) more accurately summarises the situation: "justification by faith, wedded with eschatology" is the "substructure of Paul's letters" (cf. Käsemann).

There are a few minor quibbles: some overly-generalised statements about scholarship (e.g., "most Pauline scholars today believe . . .", p. 16); Bible references which did not appear to back up the statements being made (e.g., using Rom 1:16–17 and 5:12–21 as examples of the position of the Judaizers, p. 169); and numerous signs of hasty and/or incomplete editing (e.g., repetition of slabs of text such as on pp. 31–34).

These reservations aside, Pate has provided a thorough, rich, and detailed exploration of the eschatological themes in Paul's letters. With its wealth of material, the book would be valuable as a mini-reference work to be consulted for eschatological themes as part of preparation for reading or teaching any of the thirteen Pauline epistles.

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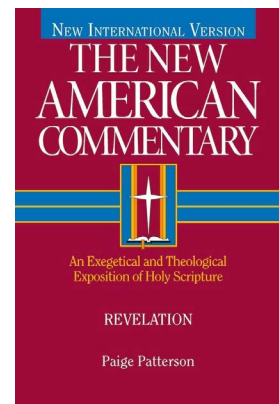
Paige Patterson. *Revelation: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2012. 411 pp. \$23.98.

Paige Patterson, President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, stands among the most influential American evangelicals of the last century. *Revelation* is his fifth full-length commentary, his first to be published in almost thirty years.

Although Patterson distances himself from traditional dispensationalism—his “position is that the dispensations are notoriously difficult to identify” and that “they constitute an imposed grid that has no specific support from Scripture” (p. 41)—he nevertheless interprets Revelation from a futurist position (pp. 29–30) that is both premillennial and pretribulational (pp. 35–36). In the commentary's introduction Patterson argues that John the apostle authored Revelation in AD 95 (pp. 18–23). He believes that Revelation fits the genre of “a prophetic circular letter which not infrequently makes use of apocalyptic imagery . . .” (p. 25), and he understands Rev 1:19 to be “the key” (pp. 32–34) that unlocks the book's three-part outline: Rev 1 covers John's vision on Patmos; Rev 2–3 covers the church age; and, Rev 4–22 covers the future “era following . . . the age of the church” (p. 34; cf. p. 71).

As he works through the first three chapters Patterson explains, “the angels of the churches” are probably human pastors (pp. 72, 79, 84); Jesus' promise to keep the Philadelphian congregation from “the hour of trial” is “substantial evidence . . . that the church is removed prior to the [seven-year] tribulation” (p. 133); and when Jesus threatened the seven churches with loss of reward, Jesus was warning them of losing only some rewards in heaven, not of losing out on their heavenly reward (pp. 134, 145; cf. p. 255).

Most of Patterson's interpretational decisions in Rev 4–22 are typical of a pretribulational futurist. He teaches that the scroll contains “the events of the period of the tribulation” (p. 167); the three sets of judgments are “sequential” yet somewhat “overlapping” (pp. 176, 299); the first horseman is the Antichrist (p. 179); the 144,000 in Rev 7 “literally represent 144,000 Jewish people” (pp. 193–98); the trumpet judgments describe literal calamities that could include meteors, volcanoes, and/or nuclear missiles (p. 210); Rev 11 refers to the last half of the tribulation when there will be a literal rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and two literal prophets who come from the numerous post-rapture converts (pp. 238–45); the “radiant woman” of Rev 12 symbolizes “the 12 tribes of Israel” (p. 261); the two beasts in Rev 13 refer to two literal individuals—the Antichrist who is “primarily political” and possibly “of Gentile origin” as well as the false prophet who is “essentially religious” and possibly “of Jewish origin” (p. 273); and



the 1,000 years prophesied in Rev 20 “should be taken literally” (p. 355). Throughout his commentary Patterson most often supports his perspective with three other pretribulationists: W. A. Criswell, Robert Thomas, and John Walvoord.

Patterson’s *Revelation* has several strengths. First, his theological position is solidly conservative, and his tone is gracious. While pointing out that “how the Apocalypse is interpreted is a second-order issue” (p. 36), Patterson consistently affirms first-order issues (pp. 31–32). He presents Revelation’s “exalted Christology” (pp. 68, 94, 165), its numerous implicit and explicit references to the Trinity (pp. 156, 174, 200, 252), its emphasis on the substitutionary atonement (pp. 61, 203, 269), its affirmation of eternal punishment (pp. 294, 342, 358), and how it teaches the necessity of faith alone in the explicit name of Jesus (pp. 128, 360).

Second, though the references are often little more than informational, Patterson interacts with various ancient interpreters more than a hundred times. He most frequently shares the perspectives of Irenaeus, Oecumenius, and Tertullian.

Third, prior to his exegesis of Jesus’ seven letters, Patterson gives about three pages of helpful background on each city. So, while the commentary on each chapter in Rev 4–22 averages thirteen pages, Patterson spends seventy pages explaining Rev 2–3. These seventy pages give this commentary its greatest value.

Finally, based on his experience of preaching three times through Revelation (p. 9), Patterson offers frequent advice to pastors on preaching—preaching Revelation (pp. 45–47), preaching with pathos (p. 234), and preaching both grace and judgment (pp. 236, 304). He also shares helpful thoughts on worship (pp. 160, 253), the sin of tolerance (p. 113), the practical dangers of Gnosticism (p. 159), and dealing with “signs and wonders” and demonic encounters (pp. 282, 347, 350).

This commentary, however, suffers from a few significant weaknesses. First, from the first sentence of the book (p. 17), it’s clear that Patterson’s writing style is verbose and a bit melodramatic. His interpretive discussions can run on. See, for example, his four-page explanation of “the teaching of Balaam” that ends inconclusively (pp. 103–6) or his five-page discussion of the textual variants in Rev 5:9–10 (pp. 169–73).

Second, Patterson regularly advances or dismisses interpretations for which he provides no footnote. He also seems unaware of key interpretive possibilities and key inconsistencies in his own positions. A few examples will suffice. He claims that Rev 14:8–13 has increasingly led interpreters away from an apocalyptic understanding of the book, yet he doesn’t offer a single example of an interpreter who has changed (p. 290). He dismisses postmillennialism because its proponents vary so widely in their understanding of Revelation’s details (p. 37), yet he never offers a single footnote to explain how the varieties within postmillennial interpretation are worse than the varieties of interpretation within other systems. Patterson never mentions the possible connection between the four horsemen and the Olivet Discourse (pp. 175–82), he never offers a fourth option that “the radiant woman” in Rev 12 could refer more generally to the people of God (p. 260; even though a footnote on the next page takes that very position), and he never acknowledges that someone can understand Rom 9–11 as teaching hope for ethnic Israel without leading to either a pretribulationist or a premillennial position (pp. 38, 196, 240). As for inconsistencies, when he argues against posttribulationism for its inability to explain millennial repopulation (p. 41), Patterson seems completely unaware of his own position’s difficulty to explain how “tribulation saints” will remain non-glorified after witnessing the glorious second coming.

Because of this commentary's relatively weak interaction at crucial points, it will likely "preach only to the choir" on second-order issues.

Finally, the systemic weakness of Patterson's commentary is its mutually exclusive—yet inconsistently applied—understanding of literal-versus-figurative interpretation. Patterson's hermeneutic is rooted in J. D. Pentecost's oversimplified viewpoint that "when the Old Testament is used in the New it is used only in a literal sense" (p. 38). So, he refuses to symbolically interpret the virginity of the 144,000 as spiritual faithfulness (pp. 288–89), yet he understands the great prostitute as a symbol for the last days' religio-political world empire and her unfaithfulness as "spiritual adultery" (p. 318). Just before he interprets the locust plague as symbolic of spiritual torment (pp. 217–21), Patterson openly admits, "Even if one follows essentially a literal interpretation, the language is highly poetic and figurative" (p. 213). Patterson should have opened the commentary with clear definitions of crucial hermeneutical terms such as *literal*, *allegorical*, *symbolic*, *typological*, *figurative*, and *allusive*.

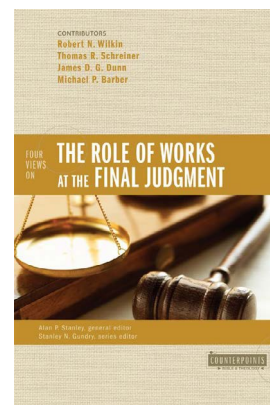
Compared with other premillennial interpreters, Patterson's *Revelation* lacks the thoroughness of Robert Thomas (WEC; Chicago: Moody, 1992–1995), the succinctness of Robert Mounce (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), and the practicality of James M. Hamilton (Preaching the Word; Wheaton: Crossway, 2012). Nevertheless, I'm glad to have it on my shelf, and I've already made profitable use of it, especially its thorough background descriptions of the seven cities in Rev 2–3.

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Alan P. Stanley, ed. *Four Views on the Role of Works at the Final Judgment*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013. 234 pp. \$17.99.

The "four views" here represented are those of a proponent of non-Lordship salvation (Robert N. Wilkin, Executive Director of the Grace Evangelical Society), a Calvinist (Thomas R. Schreiner, professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary), a biblical scholar wary of exegesis steered by systematic interests (James D. G. Dunn, Emeritus Lightfoot Professor of Divinity at Durham University), and a Catholic (Michael P. Barber, Professor of Theology, Scripture, and Catholic Thought at John Paul the Great Catholic University). The work's editor introduces and concludes the volume with summaries of the issues and positions and a call for graciousness and understanding in the midst of disagreements.

Robert Wilkin is at significant odds not only with the other three contributors, but also (in his own words) with both Calvinists and Arminians, the latter category here said to include Roman Catholics, Orthodox, and "many types of Protestants" (p. 26). Crucial for his understanding are texts in John's Gospel that promise eternal life to those who "believe." Insisting that the texts say nothing about a need for perseverance (the present tense of the verbs goes unnoted) or obedience, and taking the belief in question to mean intellectual agreement (no "commitment" is required [p. 49]), Wilkin finds here a guarantee of eternal salvation regardless of the subsequent conduct and even beliefs of the one who (at least for the moment) "believed." Convinced on this point and, hence,



that no biblical text, rightly interpreted, can contradict it, Wilkin provides inventive explanations for the myriad of texts that appear to speak differently. The “Great White Throne Judgment,” at which unbelievers are judged and condemned, is here distinguished from the appearance of believers before the “Judgment Seat of Christ,” where rewards, not eternal life, are said to be the issue. Of the unfaithful servant who (according to Matt 24:51) was “cut in two” and assigned a lot “with the hypocrites,” with “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” Wilkin explains that he will be “*verbally* cut up at a future judgment,” and that “weeping and gnashing of teeth” refers to “grief and pain” occasioned by the loss of rewards, not that of eternal life (pp. 35–36). The unfaithful servant “cast . . . into the darkness” in Matt 25:24–30 is said to be excluded merely from “the joy associated with ruling with Christ”; no threat to salvation is intended (pp. 37–38). Suffice it to say that the distinctive interpretations given to these and a host of other texts are unique to his particular variety of dispensationalism and that the pastoral implications of setting aside the texts’ more obvious meaning are unsettling.

Other contributors all insist that perseverance in faith and obedience is required of those who will enter eternal life. Thomas Schreiner ably represents the Calvinist position, affirming both that salvation is a gift of God’s grace to those who believe, and that grace, so given, is effective in transforming the lives of believers so that they (necessarily) produce “good works.” These (divinely empowered) works can thus rightly serve as “the necessary evidence and fruit of a right relation with God” (p. 97), even though that relationship itself (and, with it, the gift of salvation) is granted by grace and received by faith.

Two emphases emerge from James Dunn’s contribution. First, salvation is a *process*, beginning with the justification of the ungodly but not ending until the believer is acquitted at the final judgment. A number of passages in Paul’s writings, Dunn believes, clearly indicate that fulfillment of the promises of salvation that attend initial justification is in fact conditional upon perseverance in faith and obedience, and that apostasy is a real danger to which converts may succumb. (Schreiner disagrees, claiming that God’s elect cannot fail to persevere and that scriptural warnings of apostasy are precisely God’s means of keeping them *from* apostatizing.) Put differently, we may say that while initial justification grants to the ungodly the status of being righteous, acquittal at the final judgment will be granted only to those who have themselves (enabled, to be sure, by God’s Spirit; Dunn speaks of Paul’s language as “synergistic” [p. 132]) produced righteous deeds. (Here Schreiner agrees that human beings must choose and act rightly, but maintains that it is God who “causes them to will and to work for his own good pleasure” [p. 153].) Dunn stresses, secondly, the danger that, in reducing all that Paul says to a coherent scheme, we may fail to do justice to the different emphases in his letters.

Michael Barber, in keeping with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, speaks of salvation both as a gift of God’s grace and as a reward for good works, while insisting that the works that merit salvation are accomplished by Christ, who lives within the believer: God, with whom “all things are possible,” renders their works meritorious (p. 162). Wilkin sees this position as legalistic, Schreiner as making works the basis rather than merely the criterion for salvation, and Dunn as the product of blending scriptural passages without taking sufficient account of their distinctive emphases. The chapter ought in any case to enable Protestant readers to better grasp Catholic teaching.

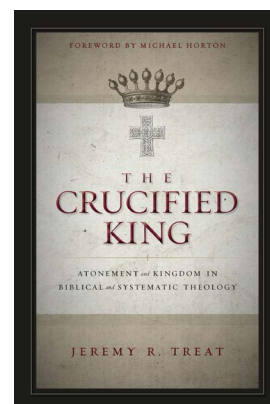
This Protestant reader is appreciative of Schreiner’s attempt (following Calvin, to be sure) to demonstrate Scripture’s coherence on a crucial point of doctrine, yet wary (with Dunn) of imposing a pattern on Scripture that distorts the clear meaning of relevant texts. In short, the book is as valuable

for its illustration of different approaches to Scripture as for its lively presentation of differing views on the topic at hand.

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Jeremy R. Treat. *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014. 305 pp. \$26.99.

Every once in a while a book comes along, and we think, “This book should have been written before, for it so clearly and compellingly answers a question being asked in contemporary scholarship.” Jeremy Treat’s revised dissertation written under Kevin Vanhoozer at Wheaton College is that sort of book, for he shows that the kingdom and the cross don’t belong to different universes but are part of the same story. Thus, the cross isn’t ancillary to the kingdom but integral to the coming of God’s kingdom, for the kingdom would not be actualized apart from Christ’s work on the cross. Treat’s work is quite impressive, for he demonstrates his skill in both biblical and systematic theology. The first half of the book makes the case from the standpoint of biblical theology and the second half by employing systematic theology. I don’t have any major criticisms of the book, so a brief tour of some the places visited follows.



When God created Adam and Eve, he invested them with authority so that they were to rule the world for God. Though Adam and Eve were commissioned to the rule the world for God, they squandered their rule because of their sin. Genesis 3:15 reveals, however, that such rule would be restored through the crushing of the offspring of the woman. Hence, the notion that the kingdom would become a reality through the cross appears in the earliest pages of the biblical story. Similarly, the covenant with Abraham, by which the kingdom would come, demonstrates that the kingdom will be actualized through the cross, for the new covenant, which is itself a fulfillment of the covenant with Abraham, is established through the blood of Jesus.

Treat also emphasizes that the kingdom of God will become a reality only through a king. To be more specific, it will come through a Davidic king. The Davidic covenant is the means by which the promises articulated in the covenant with Abraham will become a reality. The narrative of David’s life, however, reveals that suffering is the pathway to glory so that humiliation precedes exaltation. David functions as a type and pattern of the greater king to come, and hence David’s life and rule point forward to the manner in which the kingdom will break in upon the world: the suffering and exaltation of Jesus the Christ.

The suffering servant of Isaiah also shows that kingdom and cross are mutually enriching, that the two are friends instead of being enemies. Isaiah emphasizes that the new exodus and the new creation (which are two different ways of speaking of the reign of God, Isa 40:9; 52:7), are accomplished through the atoning and substitutionary work of the servant of God (Isa 52:13–53:12). In Isaiah’s story, the suffering of the servant isn’t a sideshow unrelated to the redemption of Israel and to the breaking in of

the kingdom. On the contrary, his suffering is indispensable, for if there is no suffering, then there isn't a new exodus nor is there a new creation.

Treat also considers the relationship between the kingdom and the cross in the Gospel of Mark. The polarization between the cross and the kingdom tends to surface in the study of the Synoptic Gospels, and hence Treat's analysis of Mark is vital to his thesis. Clearly, Mark is all about the coming of the kingdom; the kingdom permeates the Gospel from the beginning to the end. At the same time, the kingdom is intertwined with the cross. From the outset of the Gospel the passion narrative is foreshadowed, and through irony and other devices Mark features Jesus as the king. What stands out is that he is the crucified king, the suffering king. The kingdom becomes a reality through the one who is crucified and risen. Of course, the kingdom isn't limited to the cross, for it was also present in Jesus' ministry: his healings, exorcisms, preaching, and presence. We must beware of reductionism that sees the kingdom's presence only in the cross. On the other hand, Treat rightly says that the kingdom is established at the cross; the cross is the central and defining moment in redemptive history. The cross, he aptly says, is the center of history; it is the means (along with the resurrection) by which the new age arrives. The kingdom, on the other hand, is the purpose of the history; it is where history is going. But the kingdom will not come without the cross.

Treat also emphasizes that Jesus was the king at his baptism and throughout his ministry. Hence, it is mistake to think that Jesus was crowned as king only after his death and suffering. Instead, he also reigned in his humiliation so that there is both exaltation *in* humiliation and *after* humiliation. The death of Christ, then, is both a priestly act and a kingly act; the offices of Christ shouldn't be segregated from one another, as if his death is restricted to Jesus' priesthood. Jesus death for sinners was a kingly death.

Treat's discussion of *Christus Victor* and penal substitution is also illuminating and helpful. Once again, he pleads against an either-or, as if we have to choose one over the other. Instead, they are constituent parts of Christ's atoning work. Treat argues, rightly in my judgment, that Christ's victory over evil powers is rooted in and based upon his penal substitutionary sacrifice. Because Jesus paid for the sins of those who belong to him, Satan can no longer accuse them before the Father. They no longer fear death because the sting of death has been removed. Hence, Christ is victor (the kingdom comes!) through (not apart from!) penal substitution.

All of this means that the kingdom that is present today is a cruciform kingdom. The kingdom is revealed in the suffering and love of the people of God in this present evil age. The power of the Spirit manifests itself in the foolishness of the cross. Here Treat provides an insightful and stimulating discussion of Jurgen Moltmann's theology, for Moltmann emphasized the cruciform nature of the kingdom. He stands out among systematic theologians in seeing the centrality of the kingdom and in emphasizing its cruciform nature. Unfortunately, however, Moltmann in making this move argues against God's kingship, and Treat demonstrates that such a move counters the biblical witness and also fails to understand the nature of God's kingdom.

Many other insights are found in this perceptive book that can't be rehearsed here. We are reminded by Treat of the danger of holding onto a false dichotomy. We are all prone to see one pole of a truth and in doing so to diminish another theme that is equally important. At the same time, Treat doesn't simply insist that both kingdom and cross are central. He explains *how* they relate and locates both themes in the biblical storyline. He goes on from there to explicate their role in systematic theology. Treat's work,

then, functions as a model for others. We can be grateful for a sterling example of doing theological interpretation of scripture on a matter that concerns both the academy and the church of Jesus Christ.

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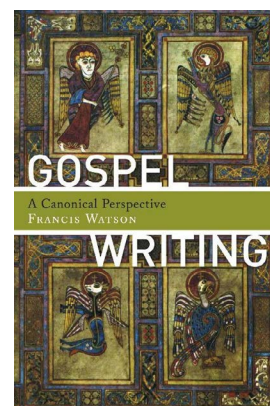
Francis Watson. *Gospel Writing: A Canonical Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. \$48.00. xiii + 665 pp. \$48.00.

The research chairholder in biblical interpretation at the University of Durham is well known for meticulously researched scholarly works, presented with detailed and complex argumentation. Having focused particularly on Paul and on theological hermeneutics in past books, he turns his attention here to the origins of canonical treatment of the four Gospels with no less careful analysis.

Each chapter could form a stand-alone essay worthy of publication in its own right. Watson's attention ranges all the way from Augustine and other harmonizers, to Lessing, Reimarus and early source critics, to Q, M, L, the Gospel of Thomas and other apocryphal Gospels or Gospel fragments, to the difference between East and West in creating canonical constructs, to Origen's spiritualizing hermeneutic as a solution to contradictions among the Gospels, to images, symbols and liturgy in support of the fourfold Gospel. But the sum of the parts adds up to the thesis that a fourfold Gospel with all of what Watson is happy to call contradictions need not be obliterated by turning it into a unified harmony, which inevitably does violence to the data, nor be viewed as a collection of merely human and conflicting documents. Instead, the creation of the canon both celebrates and places limits on early Christian diversity.

It is impossible to do justice to Watson's detail in even one of his chapters in the scope of a short review. All I can do is take some soundings that demonstrate strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, it seems that Watson too easily moves from the weakest links in an alternate hypothesis to the conviction that he has rebutted the entire hypothesis. Some attempts to harmonize apparently discrepant Gospel data prove unconvincing and even silly, so therefore the task can never be undertaken responsibly. A few key agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark do not fit the Q-hypothesis well, so therefore it has been demolished. Some very slight differences between the fragments of the Egerton papyrus and its Johannine parallels might make more sense as preceding rather than following John, so therefore we have evidence for a pre-Johannine source. A few sayings of the Gospel of Thomas may be earlier than their canonical counterparts and a few other unparalleled sayings may be authentic, so therefore Thomas provides evidence of a Christian Sayings source predating the Synoptics that is not Q.

Phrasing things this baldly does not do justice to the complexity of Watson's argumentation, but precisely because he does go into so much detail with his textual samplings to support his various hypotheses, he has no space left to demonstrate that they are representative of the much larger whole from which they are excerpted. Having worked through much of the same material myself with more breadth though in less depth, I am doubtful if he has disproved the viability of harmonizing discrepant



data, overthrown Q, shown that Luke consistently depends on Matthew and Mark only, or found evidence from Thomas and Egerton for different pre-Synoptic and pre-Johannine sources.

The strength of this volume, however, lies in a different direction than each of these individual, sometimes iconoclastic hypotheses. Even if Watson has somewhat overstated the diversity of the canonical Gospels and the similarities of the non-canonical ones to the canonical, a robust diversity (that does not have to be phrased in terms of contradiction) nevertheless does remain. Bible readers who do not puzzle over the unparalleled choice to canonize *four* accounts of Jesus' life (with three of them containing a fair amount of overlap and one markedly different) are just not thinking historically. In an age in which most of the self-identified Christian world divides itself into followers of Augustine (the apparent contradictions are resolvable and we must do so to defend Scripture) and those of Reimarus (the problems are insoluble and we should therefore demote the Gospels' authority), Watson defends a third, *via media*: we must recognize the distinctiveness and significance of the Christian canonical choice to preserve a fourfold Gospel, with all its diversity. And yet the early Christians overall still drew boundaries, rejecting the almost limitless pluralism of the pagan world surrounding them, not unlike the rampant pluralisms of our day.

In lieu of a conclusion, Watson ends his tome with seven theses (and their elaboration) on Jesus and the canonical Gospel. (1) The early church's reception of Jesus was a dynamic process attested particularly in the diversity of the four Gospels. (2) The "historical" Jesus can be known only as mediated through this diversity. (3) The earliest stages of Gospel formation involved a complex interaction between oral tradition and written sources. (4) Differentiation between canonical and non-canonical Gospels was not based on criteria inherent in the texts themselves. (5) The felt-need of creating a canon attests to the ongoing production of Gospels and their diverse usage in the various Christian communities of the day. (6) Because there was a time before canon consciousness began, historians must distinguish between pre-canonical and post-canonical eras and not assume attitudes to what came to be canonical and non-canonical were the same in each era. (7) The formation of the canon combined historical, theological and hermeneutical perspectives without pitting any of those categories against any of the others. After all of Watson's more specialized theories about the origins of and relationships among the various Gospels and their sources, these theses can seem anticlimactic. But they are all valid, even if all of the ways Watson applies them along the way may not prove equally convincing.

This book is not for the faint of heart. Even someone very familiar with the contents of, and similarities and differences among all of the early Christian Gospels will need to go back to those texts again and again to follow Watson's arguments and evaluate his claims. His command of the reception history of the issue of a canon, from earliest days to the present, is nothing short of astonishing. Yet there are some troubling omissions. All the evidence of a growing canon consciousness prior to Irenaeus is missed out (on which see esp. Charles Hill). Most of the data that show the probably late and redactional nature of what Watson finds "early" in Thomas seem to have been marginalized. And to argue that whenever Luke removes something from Matthew's five great blocks of sermonic material, he is saving it up for use elsewhere, explains nothing, unless one can show repeatedly (not just once or twice) how Luke could have viewed the relocation as superior.

Other readers, however, may demur. More than most reviews, this one can scarcely substitute for a careful reading of the book itself or for repeated, close interaction with the texts Watson scrutinizes.

And that exercise, irrespective of anyone's specific agreements and disagreements with his proposals, can only be salutary.

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— HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY —

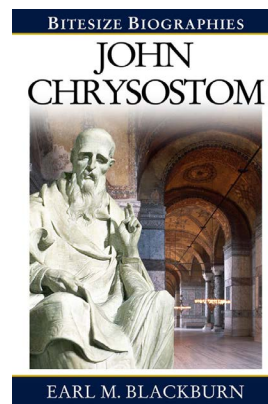
Earl M. Blackburn. *John Chrysostom*. Carlisle, PA: Evangelical Press, 2012. 127 pp. \$9.99.

Sometimes biographers ruin a good story in the telling. They try to cram every detail of the subject's life into the book and address every theory about his life, conspiracy or otherwise, that has ever been proposed. This approach often leads to biographies that are informative but not enjoyable. Thankfully, Earl Blackburn has avoided that pitfall in his biography of *John Chrysostom*. The purpose of this biography is to give readers a view of a major figure in church history in a manner which both delights and instructs. This book deserves full marks on that score.

John Chrysostom has all of the major components of a historical biography. It gives a historical background to his life and ministry, outlines his youth, and traces the major epochs of his ministry. Blackburn outlines Chrysostom's rise to be the Bishop of Constantinople and shows the ways his ministry impacted both the contemporary setting and church history. The book outlines the structure and basic content of Chrysostom's teaching and theological writings. Additionally, at the end of the volume, Blackburn offers fifteen lessons for the reader to learn from this historical exemplar.

This book is a well-researched text written so as to be accessible to a broad audience, which includes laypeople. It is eminently readable, conveying the message well. This is the sort of biography that is edifying to read. In 120 pages, the reader can get a glimpse in one of the most famous exegetical, expository preachers from the Patristic era. Blackburn demonstrates the significance of Chrysostom's approach to Scripture. His high view of Scripture shaped his character, driving to godliness when the political potential and vast wealth that came along with the See of Constantinople were available to him. It is plain from this biography that Chrysostom was a man of the Word who saw Scripture as central to the Christian life. In the chapter on Chrysostom's preaching and theology, Blackburn summarizes fourteen principles from Chrysostom's book, *On the Priesthood*. These principles repeatedly emphasize the centrality of Scripture in the life of a minister of God.

Chrysostom was engaged in fulfilling the Great Commission. According to Blackburn, "He was able to persevere and endure his dark trials because, among other things, John was kingdom-minded and most desirous for the conversion of the heathen to Christ" (p. 73). Chrysostom organized the evangelization of the nomadic Goths, considered barbarians by the cultured Greeks. Then, to demonstrate the power of the gospel across cultures, Chrysostom had a Gothic convert speak, in his native tongue, from the pulpit to the dismay of the aristocratic congregation. The gospel and its power to save were paramount over merely human interests.



In a biography written in a popular style, there is often a temptation toward hero worship. This book, however, is not hagiographic. Though Blackburn does not invest much space critically evaluating Chrysostom's role in various political issues of the day, he does point out several times where Chrysostom lost his temper or was overzealous in solving a problem. Chrysostom, as described by Blackburn, is human, but a virtuous human. Chrysostom's faithfulness came despite the opportunity to live ostentatiously as a bishop in the capital of the Roman Empire. In our day and time when news stories focus on moral failures of ministry leaders, it is good to read the story of someone who served faithfully until the end of his life.

This book is not an academic biography. It lacks the scholarly apparatus that makes following Blackburn's research possible. This lacuna becomes a weakness at a few points where Blackburn cites Chrysostom or another scholar's work but does not give all the necessary information to track the quotation down. However, such an apparatus would have likely interfered with the main purpose of this book, which is to tell the story of *John Chrysostom* well and winsomely. In this case, the benefit is worth the cost. The more significant weakness is the lack of a list of books for further reading. As Blackburn invested significant time in his writing and research, a short bibliography of the best books by and about John Chrysostom would have been a welcome addition. Hopefully future titles in the Bitesize Biographies series can supply a short list of recommended reading.

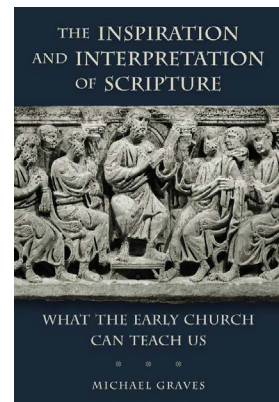
Blackburn should be commended for authoring an excellent book. John Chrysostom is a biography that communicates clearly, speaks truthfully, and feeds the soul. This is the sort of book that a student, pastor, or scholar can savor over a cup of coffee at the close of a long day's work.

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Michael Graves. *The Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture: What the Early Church Can Teach Us*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. viii + 201 pp. \$24.00.

Imagine a student at an evangelical college picking up a copy of Origen's *Homilies on Genesis*. Coming to the seventh homily, our student might feel relieved to learn that Sarah's desire to banish Ishmael from Abraham's household was not a result of jealousy on behalf of her son. However, she would undoubtedly be surprised to discover that this banishment was actually a symbolic enactment of Paul's warnings against being overtaken by the flesh. For, as Origen explains, Ishmael is the flesh and Isaac is the spirit and Sarah, as virtue, sought to prevent the flesh from playing with the spirit so as to avoid corruption (Origen, *In Gen. hom.*, 7.2–3). After this student reads this passage and many, many more like it, who could blame her for feeling frustrated at Origen's apparent disregard for the historical context of Genesis or confused at his need to draw a spiritual lessons from seemingly insignificant details?

For a student (or non-student) such as this, I can hardly imagine a better book than Michael Graves's *Inspiration and Incarnation: What the Early Church Can Teach Us*. In this book, Graves sets out to make early Christian writers more intelligible to their modern readers by explaining how many of their



interpretive practices arose naturally from their belief in the divine inspiration of the Bible. To do this, he identifies twenty assumptions about the nature and use of Scripture that can be understood as logical entailments of the Christian belief in inspiration, and he divides these assumptions into five categories, devoting a chapter to each category: (1) Usefulness, (2) The Spiritual and Supernatural Dimension, (3) Mode of Expression, (4) Historicity and Factuality, and (5) Agreement with Truth.

Some of what Graves identifies as entailments of inspiration for his patristic subjects will be familiar to evangelical Christians today who also believe in an inspired Bible. For example, on the basis of 2 Tim 3:16–17, evangelicals would heartily agree that divine inspiration entails the “usefulness” of the biblical text. And yet, as Graves explains in his second chapter, it is this same belief in Scripture’s usefulness that informed the patristic practice of drawing spiritual meaning from textual details and of resorting to allegory when a literal reading of a biblical text seemed to yield no spiritual benefit, practices with which evangelicals may feel less comfortable. Other entailments will feel less natural to modern readers. For example, the patristic practice of discovering multiple “senses” or levels of meaning in the biblical text is often criticized by modern evangelicals, but Graves shows that this practice was justified by theologians such as Origen and Augustine through an appeal to divine inspiration.

When writing a book on the “patristic” perspective of anything, one always runs the risk of portraying the diverse collection of Church Fathers as if they spoke with one voice. Thankfully, Graves does not fall into this trap. While he does think that we can identify beliefs that enjoyed wide agreement among patristic writers, he does not mute the areas of disagreement. For example, he claims that the “general tendency in the early church was to see freedom from factual error as an entailment of biblical inspiration,” even while admitting that Origen did not always consider the Gospels to be historically accurate and that Tertullian appeared rather unconcerned with the factuality of their narrative arrangement (p. 91). Similarly, in discussing the general patristic assumption that “Scripture does not deceive,” Graves recounts a dispute between Jerome and Augustine regarding Paul’s dispute with Peter in Antioch. Jerome, following Origen, argued that this dispute was merely a deception on the part of the apostles, who both understood God’s welcoming of Gentiles and were simply attempting to teach the Galatians a lesson. Augustine rebuked Jerome for this interpretation, fearing that any admittance of deceit in Scripture would completely undermine its trustworthy character (pp. 113–15).

I should mention a few areas of concern I have with the book. First, despite the heuristic advantage of describing these twenty assumptions about Scripture as “entailments of inspiration,” it was not clear to me that some of them so naturally evolved from a belief in the inspired nature of the biblical text. For example, Graves argues that early Christians considered individual words themselves to be pregnant with meaning and that this could be discovered through a study of their etymologies. Yet, he also provides evidence that this assumption can be traced to a philosophy of language as divinely given that was widespread in the ancient world. While belief in the divinely inspired character of Scripture may have contributed to the validity of etymological interpretation in early Christianity, it would seem that this philosophy of language was the most basic premise of that practice. A similar argument could be made regarding the belief in the riddle-like and enigmatic nature of biblical language.

Second, Graves’s critical engagement with the practice of patristic exegesis is to be commended for taking the voices of the past seriously, but his ongoing evaluations of his sources can sometimes subject them to the measure of modern sensibilities with little justification. For example, he ends the book by arguing that the diversity of patristic interpretations should lead us to embrace a “toleration and even appreciation” for diverse interpretations today (pp. 143–47). He finds it worrisome when

ecclesial bodies attempt to exercise restricting authority over the views of their members, since no human authority is infallible, and he argues that scriptural authority ultimately resides between God and the individual Christian. Many readers will find this reasonable enough, but it is a conclusion that sits at odds with many of book's subjects, who often resisted heretical readings by insisting on a *regula fidei*.

These concerns notwithstanding, there is much to be praised in this book. Graves succeeds admirably in the clarity of his communication and demonstrates deep familiarity with the primary material he surveys. Above all, I think this book succeeds because of its sensitivity to the modern context of its readers. As the Armerding Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at Wheaton College, Graves is uniquely qualified to bridge the gap between contemporary and ancient readers of the Bible and to reflect on how patristic belief and practice can inform us today. Many evangelicals would like to draw on early Christian readings of the Bible but doubtlessly feel frustrated with how foreign it can feel to read patristic texts and little has been done to rectify this problem.

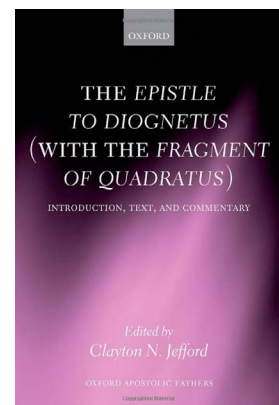
Despite the proliferation of academic studies on patristic interpretation and the fresh translation of ancient commentaries in recent years, few books have been written that explain the logic and assumptions animating these interpreters in a way that will make them intelligible to contemporary Christians. *The Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture*, along with John O'Keefe's and R. R. Reno's *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), goes a long way in filling the need for such an introduction. For anyone wishing to venture into the strange world of patristic biblical exegesis, I highly recommend Graves's book.

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Clayton N. Jefford, ed. *The Epistle to Diognetus (with the Fragment of Quadratus): Introduction, Text, and Commentary*. Oxford Apostolic Fathers. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. x + 281 pp. £100.00/\$185.00.

While many Evangelicals have paid a great amount of attention to NT texts, fewer have considered the value of a set of writings known as the Apostolic Fathers. When we do pay attention to these writings, the *Epistle to Diognetus* and the *Fragment of Quadratus* are the least considered. The *Epistle to Diognetus* is one of the earliest apologies within Christian literature. It has been described as a literary gem. J. B. Lightfoot, the great Anglican bishop, even called the *Epistle to Diognetus* the noblest of early Christian writings. Despite its literary beauty, it is an often forgotten witness for how the NT was interpreted within early Christianity.

Part of the difficulty with the study of the *Epistle to Diognetus* is the great amount of uncertainty about introductory matters. It is uncertain who the recipient was. Was it Tiberius Claudius Diogenes, who was a procurator of Alexandria at the end of the second century? Was the recipient the archon Diognetus, the son of Apollonius? Was Diognetus a



fictional name as there were so many with this name at that time in history? Since the *Epistle* was found within the writings of Justin Martyr, was it related in any way to this well-known Christian apologist?

The authorship of the *Epistle to Diognetus* is also in question. The author describes himself as a mathētēs, the Greek word for disciple, signifying that he was a disciple of the apostles. Some have proposed that Apollos was the author. Many other potential authors have been set forward: Clement of Rome, Quadratus, Marcion the heretic, Apelles the student of Marcion, Aristedes of Athens, Theophilus of Antioch, Hippolytus of Rome, Pantaenus from Alexandria, Lucian of Antioch, Ambrosius, and others.

It is also unclear as to whether the *Epistle to Diognetus* was one or two documents. There appears to be a sudden shift between chapters ten and eleven which has led scholars to believe that two letters have been sewn together. Connected to the question of integrity is that of purpose. Is it a letter, which it has been called traditionally, even though there is no greeting or thanksgiving? Furthermore, can it be a letter when there is not an indication of the author's name or the date when it was sent? Is a better possibility that it is an apology? Could chapters 10–12 have been a homily or a fragment of a homily added to the letter or apology?

The date is uncertain as well with a wide suggestion of dates. Dates range between 117 and 313. While there are several scholars who date the *Epistle* between AD 150 and 225, the majority of scholars date it to 200. Clayton Jefford, however, rightly considers the *Epistle* to be an apology and dates it within the mid to latter half of the second century. There is some similarity with the later apologies, and thus this may be one of the first early apologies written during the latter half of the second century.

Jefford addresses each of these issues and others such as structure, theology and theme, relationship to Scripture, and historical trajectory within the first section of his work to the *Epistle to Diognetus*. Although this section is considered the editor's introduction, it is a lengthy section of 126 pages, comprising nearly half of the overall book. The introduction is replete with references to past and recent scholarly discussion on the *Epistle to Diognetus*.

After surveying options referring to the author and recipient, Jefford states that the resolution to most of these issues cannot be clearly determined. He does conclude on the matter of the text of the *Epistle* that the core materials were given orally first in an unknown setting. A later author then recorded this. It is possible that Clement of Alexandria edited the *Epistle* later. He added chapters 11–12 and then inserted several hymnic sections within chapters 1–10; Logos Christology influenced these additions. The *Epistle* thus exhibits the influence of a vibrant faith community.

While Jefford draws conclusions, they are appropriately tempered. He rightly acknowledges the struggles that scholars have had with the *Epistle* such as lack of an extant ancient manuscript with only a few transcriptions and much scholarly disagreement. He, however, helpfully chooses to make proposals rather than leaving matters in ambiguity. While his conclusions are tentative, Jefford has made a significant contribution to scholarship by making proposals and drawing reasonable conclusions that are in agreement with the evidence that is given.

Besides addressing these introductory matters, this volume also provides a fresh English translation of these two documents. The Greek text is placed on the left page with the English translation on the right facing page. As a result, it makes translation comparison easy. Several other factors distinguish the translation. It is gender inclusive and contains some movement between the use of the singular and plural forms of second person verbs and pronouns. Reference is made to major translations within the footnotes.

Each verse within the *Epistle to Diognetus* also has a comment. Several of these comments are lengthy filling a few pages. There are also lengthy discussions of critical issues and key interpretive questions.

Jefford's volume is especially important for English speakers as it ends the drought of commentaries on this apology. The last great English commentaries on this work were written in the mid-twentieth century by Blakeney (1943) and Meecham (1949). Others like Ehrman, Hill, Bockmuehl, and Lona, have commented significantly in English about the *Epistle* within their recent writings on the Apostolic Fathers, but they have not produced a text and commentary on the *Epistle*. Commentaries on the *Epistle* can be found by the French scholar Marrou and the German scholars Brändle, Lona, and Wengst in the latter half of the twentieth century, but there is no full-length study comparable to this volume in English in recent times.

Those who are students and scholars of the Early Church and Patristic theology will be highly interested in this book. Those who are interested in the influence of the NT upon the followers of the apostles will be interested as well. Some who are looking for a more detailed discussion on the *Fragment of Quadratus* may be disappointed as there are only a few pages devoted to this.

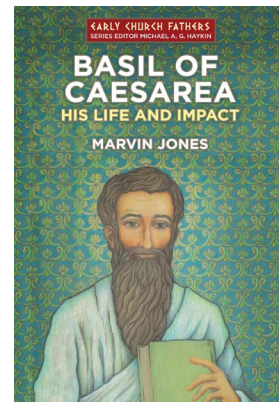
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Marvin Jones. *Basil of Caesarea: His Life and Impact*. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2014. 175 pp. \$11.99.

At one time, evangelical pastors and many lay Christians knew the Church Fathers. Their religious family tree was valued and the writings of their ancestors, though sometimes debated, were studied. For most Christians in the twenty-first century, sadly, that day is long past. However, Christian Focus Publications has provided a remedy for learning about and understanding those spiritual giants of the early church by publishing this new series of books. In his series preface, series editor Michael Haykin gives a stirring apology for studying the ancient fathers that should whet the appetite of every reader.

Marvin Jones, who earlier wrote a dissertation on Athanasius, now goes a few years beyond the Nicene champion to give a rich and lively account of Basil of Caesarea (c. 330–79), one of the three Cappadocian Fathers. Jones introduces his character to the reader via a passionate exchange between a Roman Prefect of Emperor Valens and Basil. In this exchange, the Prefect demands Basil cooperate with Arian bishops, which he asserts that other orthodox bishops are doing, and threaten “confiscation, banishment, torture, death” if met with rejection. Basil refuses to compromise and ends the meeting with his classic statement, “Perhaps you have never met with a [true] Bishop” (p. 21).

From there, Jones elaborates on the complex historical aftermath of Nicea (p. 325), the multifaceted tensions of Trinitarian, Arian, and semi-Arian dispute, Basil's early life and education, his lifelong friendship with Gregory of Nazianzus, his conversion to Christ through the human instrument of his sister (Macrina), the conversion of his brother (Gregory of Nyssa), and his developing theology. Basil,



Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa would become the foremost contributors to the biblical formulation of orthodox Trinitarianism. These areas are covered in the first two chapters.

Chapter three explores Basil's ascetic life of "solace in the desert" and his development of "coenobitic," or communal monasticism. Jones insightfully explains the misconceptions of monasticism and how Basil, through his understanding of the visible church, reformed the legalistic and self-centered practices of Anchorite monasticism into something God-centered and spiritual.

Undoubtedly, Basil's most important work is his contribution to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit regarding the Trinity. The Council of Nicea laid the foundation for Trinitarian Christology, but much confusion and misunderstanding persisted among the orthodox about the Person of the Holy Spirit. Basil was initially unclear in his biblical understanding of the Spirit's place and role within the Trinity, but controversy forced him to acquire a correct exegetical interpretation. He built upon Athanasius and laid the biblical foundation that resulted in that formulation of doctrine bequeathed by the Council of Constantinople (381). Jones deftly chronicles Basil's maturity and indispensable influence upon orthodox Trinitarianism in chapters four and five.

Chapter six is given over completely to Basil's *Hexaemeron*; his nine-sermon exposition of the six days of creation (Genesis 1). This is Basil's last published work before his death in 379. With precise exegesis, Basil unfolds each day of creation as a *literal* twenty-four hour span of time (Heb. *yom/day*). Strangely enough, he preached these sermons during Lent of 378. Basil's rebuttal of allegorical interpretation of Genesis 1, needs to be heard again.

Previously, chapters two, three, four, and six, conclude with practical "Contribution[s] to Evangelicalism." These segments transport glorious biblical and theological truths from the groves of academia into the arena of gospel and church ministry, and into the work-a-day world of individual Christians. Nevertheless, the book's final chapter entitled "Basil speaks today," continues to furnish encouraging pastoral and practical applications. Jones lists Basil's primary contributions under two headings: ecclesiastical and theological, concluding with "theology meets doxology in the ecclesia" (164). How simple and biblical, yet profound!

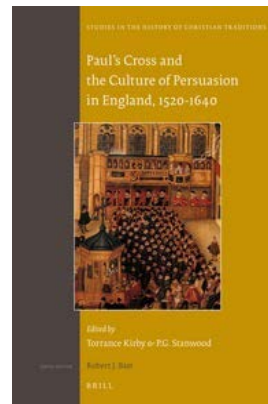
This reviewer notes one small caveat regarding the Anomoeans, a radical form of Arianism founded by Eunomius (c. 350). Jones minimizes the influence of Eunomius's views saying they were "no longer a factor" (47) after the Council of Constantinople in 381. On the contrary, they continued to exert considerable influence in the Eastern capital and among the Danubian tribes of Germany. John Chrysostom, the twelfth bishop of Constantinople, contended fiercely with the Anomoeans after his elevation to the bishopric in 398. Their anti-Trinitarian teachings quietly lingered through the centuries until they were reborn as The Watchtower Bible Society (later The Jehovah's Witnesses) in 1872. This heresy continues to plague the world and Christ's churches today, which makes the study of Basil's writings more necessary.

Basil of Caesarea is a thoroughly researched, well written book about a great but mostly unknown servant of Christ who powerfully shaped the face of biblical and orthodox Christianity (i.e., Trinitarianism). Though Jones employs various technical terms, he skillfully explains them to the instruction and edification of the reader. *Basil of Caesarea* is a must-read for serious-minded evangelical pastors and seminarians.

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Torrance Kirby and P. G. Stanwood, eds. *Paul's Cross and the Culture of Persuasion in England, 1520–1640*. Studies in the History of Christian Traditions 171. Leiden: Brill, 2014. 519 pp. £154.00/\$199.00.

Paul's Cross was an open-air pulpit in the north-east corner of the precincts of St Paul's Cathedral, London. This pulpit was one of the most influential venues in the emerging public sphere of early modern England and therefore one of the most important contacts between government and people, a platform on which official religious policy was often represented, and occasionally criticised. Thousands would attend the weekly two-hour sermons that contributed significantly to the formation of a national religious identity. The prospect of preaching there could elicit mixed emotions in the clergy. A dagger was thrown at one preacher, another was shot at, and even the thought of mounting the steps could induce a shudder in John Foxe: "where I shall, like some ape among courtiers, be greeted with grimaces, or howled off by the hisses of the mob."



This volume is a collection of twenty-four papers delivered at a conference held at McGill University, Montreal in 2012. Together with Mary Morrissey's *Politics and the Paul's Cross Sermons, 1558–1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) it makes an important contribution to our understanding of the role of Paul's Cross in this period of upheaval and more broadly to the importance of the sermon as the central means of communication and persuasion in early modern religious culture. It also reminds us of the proximity of the book trade, with the Stationers' Company and many booksellers located in or near the churchyard. A symbiotic relationship existed between preachers and booksellers, the sermons echoing the latest print, and in turn being amplified by the presses.

Among the highlights is John Wall's fascinating report on the Virtual Paul's Cross Project. This interdisciplinary endeavour allows the visitor to its website to savour the experience of hearing a sermon at Paul's Cross (the website is at vpcp.chass.ncsu.edu and a visit is highly recommended). Sophisticated architectural, visual, and acoustic modelling allow users to experiment with different positions in the churchyard and witness the preacher compete with bells, birdsong, and barking dogs as well as the murmur of the crowd under a threatening November sky. Scholars have learnt much from this model. It reveals, for example, that audibility was good almost anywhere in the yard due to the architectural setting, with sound reflected from the surrounding buildings. Wall is insistent that this is not an attempt to recreate a particular historical event. Indeed, the sermon chosen, John Donne's Powder Treason sermon of 1622, was actually preached indoors due to inclement weather, but one does gain a better sense of what it would have been like to attend Paul's Cross. The performance of the sermon also affords valuable insights into Donne's timing and delivery.

Richard Rex contributes a study of Paul's Cross amidst the religious changes of the 1530s, a time of political tension and increasingly vigorous attempts by the crown to control the pulpit. Paul's Cross was used to announce the marriage to Anne Boleyn, to proclaim the royal supremacy, and in the campaign against idolatry. Rex shows that Thomas Cromwell's handing control of the pulpit to John Hilsey opened the way for a roster of evangelical preachers. After the Act of Six Articles, however, evangelicals became wary of exposing themselves to harassment from their conservative opponents in such a public forum. Conservatives, it seemed, had similar reservations so that it was a dubious honour to preach there. Rex has managed to untie some particularly difficult bibliographical knots and provide a more accurate dating for some of the Paul's Cross sermons preached in this decade than that given in the pioneering

work of Millar MacLure. This will help us to read these sermons in their proper context and better understand how the preachers spoke into that context.

David Neelands investigates Richard Hooker's sermon at Paul's Cross. Little is known about this sermon though Hooker's biographer Izaak Walton, writing long afterwards, foregrounds this occasion as a crucial event, the young Hooker setting out his stall as an anti-Calvinist controversialist. Neelands questions Walton's account, arguing from contemporary documents that Hooker's sermon did indeed deal with the matter of predestination but with rather different emphases than those found in Walton's narrative. He suggests that Walton embroidered his account with details from Hooker's later work, the *Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie*, such as the attribution to God of antecedent and consequent wills. Neelands argues that Hooker laid out a moderate Reformed view on predestination; that he did so at the behest of Bishop John Aylmer, an exile in Zurich during Mary's reign who had there come under the influence of Peter Martyr Vermigli and Heinrich Bullinger; and that Hooker preached his Paul's Cross sermon in 1581 in the context of a campaign to answer the 'Bragg' of the Jesuit Edmund Campion who had complained that Calvin had made God the author of sin. This is a highly plausible reading of the sources that is sensitive to context and that provides a more nuanced interpretation of Hooker's views than some that are available.

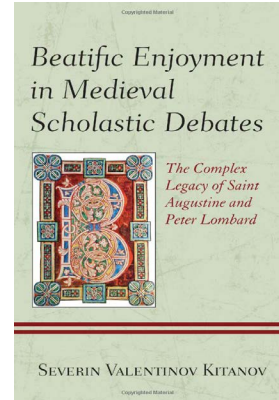
Many of the contributors offer fresh readings of individual sermons or preachers such as John Fisher, Richard Smith, John Jewel, and William Barlow. Brad Littlejohn's analysis of the deeper issues underlying the dispute between Richard Bancroft and John Penry is excellent. So too is Jeanne Shami's study of John Stoughton which reveals the subversive uses to which the Song of Songs could put in the critique of royal marriage policy. Taking a more wide-ranging approach, Mary Morrissey challenges conventional wisdom about the function of the Jeremiad.

This review can give only a taste of the fare on offer in this volume. The standard of contributions is generally very high. There are a few problems with internal cross-referencing by chapter number, seemingly due to rearrangement of the table of contents, but as the chapter author is always identified, this will not cause difficulty. This collection will be of immense value to anyone interested in preaching in early modern England and will be worth consulting by those with wider interests in the religious culture of the period.

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Severin Valentinov Kitanov. *Beatific Enjoyment in Medieval Scholastic Debates: The Complex Legacy of Saint Augustine and Peter Lombard*. New York: Lexington, 2014. xix + 285 pp. \$100.00.

The doctrine of the beatific vision became a hallmark feature of medieval theology. One of the more curious features of the debates surrounding this doctrine is the focus on anthropology. As the discussion developed, one might argue that the actual doctrine of the beatific vision was choked out by an over-inflation of anthropology and ethics. Rather than focus on the beatific vision as such, debates focused the conversation elsewhere, sparring over the seat of enjoyment (intellect or will) and the various implications of those decisions. Kitanov takes this narrative a step further by tracing these debates through various commentaries on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. This focus is not arbitrary. Kitanov argues that Augustine introduced the notion of beatific enjoyment into theology, and builds on this to argue that Augustine's distinction between enjoyment and use is his primary gift to the medieval discussion. The reason this distinction becomes so prominent is because of Lombard's appropriation of it in his *Sentences*, and the primacy of his text propagated this distinction far and wide in medieval disputation. The commentaries on the *Sentences* served to establish the distinction between enjoyment and use as fundamental to the notion of the beatific vision. This not only helped to guide a certain understanding of eternity, but more importantly, oriented the discussion around anthropology, as theologians attempted to describe what it meant to enjoy and desire.



In his *De Doctrina Christiana*, Augustine develops his distinction between enjoyment and use. Kitanov notes that the enjoyment/use distinction connects Augustine's ontology with his ethics, such that it addresses how the human person can subjectively relate to the objective order of reality. This connection with ethics will be carried through into the medieval debates. To enjoy or use something appropriately is to relate to reality as it was meant to be related to. Only God is meant to be enjoyed and not used. The problem is that fallen persons enjoy God's creation and seek to use God to fulfill themselves. This is not to say that there is not enjoyment in God's creation, or that all enjoyment that is not aimed solely at God is somehow idolatrous. Rather, it is within our enjoyment of God that we can enjoy ourselves, others and God's world. It is only as we come to know and love things according to God's own purpose and design that we come to enjoy properly. This distinction created the contours for medieval debate. How one enjoys God, what it means to enjoy something, as well as the nature and contingency of this enjoyment, become key points of debate. Lombard, therefore, baptized this distinction for medieval theology by giving prominence to the distinction for his *Sentences*. By organizing his *Sentences* according to Augustine's distinction, he made it one of the most important distinctions for medieval theology.

In order to address the various debates and issues that arise with this distinction, Kitanov works his way through medieval commentaries on Lombard's *Sentences*. This can be, at times, tedious, but his thoroughgoing narration of the debates bears fruit in several key areas, showing a broad knowledge of the major questions at play. Kitanov starts with Augustine and then turns to Lombard's appropriation of his work. Turning to the commentaries, he sets up the issues of the debate with a broad canvassing of the thirteenth-century discussion. The remainder of the volume sits in the early fourteenth-century, meandering through the object and psychology of beatific enjoyment, enjoyment of the Holy Trinity,

and the potential contingency of beatific enjoyment. Kitanov concludes with a look at the late Middle Ages, showing how some of these debates play out in later literature, and offers a summary of his work.

Overall, Kitanov does an excellent job of addressing the major issues and players in the debates. His method of rolling through sources can be hard on the reader, making this volume best suited for historical theologians with a particular interest in either this topic or time period, but it would also serve as a helpful resource for researchers looking into related topics (freedom, eschatology, sanctification, etc.). The cost and depth of the volume will make it difficult to use in classroom settings, but for upper-divisional graduate research and scholars, Kitanov's work will prove to be an incredibly helpful resource.

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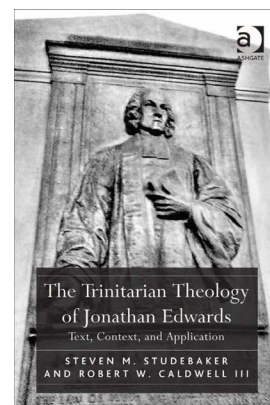
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Steven M. Studebaker and Robert W. Caldwell III. *The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards: Text, Context, and Application*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012. 241 pp. £65.00/\$119.95.

Advancing Trinitarian theology is on the rise in the early part of the twenty-first century. One example of this theological trend in the area of constructive or systematic theology is the first annual Los Angeles Theology Conference (2014), wherein the conference's inaugural theme focused upon the doctrine of Trinity. Historical theology is no exception to these trends, and Ashgate Publishing, through the immense scholarly efforts of Steven Studebaker and Robert Caldwell, capitalizes on current interest by distilling America's greatest theologian's thoughts on Trinity.

The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards: Text, Context, and Application features three parts (perhaps fittingly!). Part I judiciously reprints the most important segments of Edwards's Trinitarian essays, such as *Discourse on the Trinity* and *Treatise on Grace*, to argue that because Edwards operated on a basic framework of an Augustinian mutual love concept of Trinity, his concept of Eastern-economic Trinity is none other than the externalization of Western-immanent Trinity (p. 101). This thesis, which is rehashed throughout the subsequent chapters, is grounded in Part I through detailed analysis of the distinction between God's inner-Trinitarian glory *ad extra* and *ad intra*.

Part II deals with the historical context in two measures. First, Edwards is placed in the wider development of the doctrine within Christian tradition. This historical survey compares Edwards with Augustine, Aquinas, St. Victor, and Bonaventure. Second, by locating Edwards in the eighteenth-century context, the authors shed light on the Reformed tradition that he inherited over against the Enlightenment challenges that Edwards was facing in his day. I find Studebaker and Caldwell's discussions on "rational defense of Trinity" (pp. 137ff.), especially Edwards's employment of *prisca theologia*, to be intriguing, albeit not compelling enough to label Edwards as a "Reformed participant in the Enlightenment" (p. 140). It might be more appropriate to view Edwards as an Enlightenment participant whose DNA is encoded in Reformed genetic instructions. Be that as it may, I ultimately concur with the authors' assessment that "more continuity exists between the Trinitarian theology of Edwards and the Reformed tradition" (p. 146), yet that it did not "stifle innovative attempts to update the [Reformed] doctrine for an



enlightened audience” (p. 152). Edwards, in many places within his vast corpus, has certainly articulated traditional dogma with the Enlightenment apparatuses that were available to him.

In Part III, Studebaker and Caldwell draw out how Edwards incorporated the doctrine of Trinity in his preaching and applied it to Christian life. As a seminary professor, I find chapters 7 and 8 particularly helpful in training ministers, because these examples provide a model of how students of theology can incorporate classical doctrines in their respective ministries. However, chapter 9 will raise some eyebrows amongst evangelical admirers of Edwards, since interpreting him as Panentheist (p. 193), even if valid, may open a door to associating Edwards with Process theologians, Unitarians, and Universalists. I think that Chapter 10, which describes the relationship between Edwards’s views on Trinity and eschatology, is a clever way to end this book. The authors have essentially argued that Edwards’s Trinitarianism is based on the mutual love model, yet his view correlates the Latin tradition of Immanent Trinity via *ad intra* as well as Economic Trinity *ad extra* that typifies the Greek tradition.

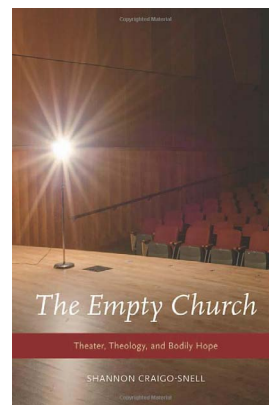
Overall, Studebaker and Caldwell have exhibited comprehensive knowledge in the field of current and ever growing Edwardsean scholarship with the high quality research in their footnotes. As fascinating as they are, I do not yield to all of the authors’ interpretations of Edwards (e.g., degrees of Edwards’s involvement in the Enlightenment projects and supposed Panentheism); nonetheless, their arguments demonstrate keen awareness of the theological issues involved, and are made with attention to meticulous details, which, in my opinion, ought be commended. While there are sections of this work that may be too technical for a non-specialist, any interested person who has read one or more introductory books on Jonathan Edwards should be able to work through this one. The hardback edition, unfortunately, is priced at upwards of \$120, which is probably more than what most people (excluding the die-hard fans) would like to spend on a book for their personal library. That said, every research library should keep a copy of this volume in circulation. If anyone wishes to learn what Edwards said about classical doctrine of Trinity in the Enlightenment context, and how he incorporated that doctrine into his personal life and pastorship, without a doubt I can recommend this publication.

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— SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND BIOETHICS —

Shannon Craigo-Snell. *The Empty Church: Theater, Theology, and Bodily Hope*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. xii + 208 pp. £46.00/\$74.00.

Why church? That's the question driving this latest work by Shannon Craigo-Snell, professor of theology at Louisville Seminary. In answering this question, Craigo-Snell brings church into conversation with theater. Her goal in doing so is not just to use theatrical performance as an illuminating analogy for church, but also to draw on performance as an analytical tool for exploring what church is and why we should care. Many Christian theologians and ethicists have utilized theatrical analogies for Christian doctrine and life, and especially noteworthy for Craigo-Snell are John Calvin, Karl Barth, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Francesca Murphy, Nicholas Lash, Frances Young, Tim Gorringe, Max Harris, Samuel Wells, and Kevin Vanhoozer. A weakness that weaves its way through some works by these authors is a limited understanding of theatrical performance, which truncates the potential for theater and performance to provide analytical insight for theology. *The Empty Church* succeeds where similar interdisciplinary efforts fall short by paying closer attention to characteristics of performance (such as event, interaction, and doubleness) and by listening closely to influential figures in theater such as Constantin Stanislavski, Bertolt Brecht, Augusto Boal, and Peter Brook.



For Craigo-Snell, church is “a disciplined performance of relationship with God in Jesus Christ, mediated by Scripture, in hope of the Holy Spirit” (p. 5). Church is neither a place nor a people; it is an event. Church is not a static thing, but an interactive, relational performance encompassing all of life, although public worship holds central importance. The first chapter lays the groundwork for this performative approach toward church, bolstered by performative anthropology, performative epistemology, and performative hermeneutics. To the extent that life itself is a performance—an unfolding of interactive events characterized by doubleness—it makes intuitive sense to talk about church using the language of performance. Many reject this performative approach because it seems to imply pretense, but Craigo-Snell clarifies that the inherent tension between a performer and her role(s) does not necessarily entail hypocrisy or lack of authenticity. This tension is naturally at play on multiple levels as we perform church, such as repeating routine behaviors or recognizing the distance between our real and ideal selves and performances. As such, the Spirit enables the church to become what it eventually will be as we perform our relationships with God and each other.

In chapters 2–5, Craigo-Snell explores four ways of performing church that come into focus by interacting with theater. First, Craigo-Snell brings Russian director Constantin Stanislavski and Ignatius of Loyola into conversation to show how we perform church through bodily affections, and how liturgy cultivates our affections by involving our bodies. She makes a strong argument, but it could have been even stronger by drawing on the work of James K. A. Smith, who contends that liturgies are embodied, storied performances shaping our imaginations and desires. Second, Craigo-Snell brings Brazilian director Augusto Boal and liberation theologian Letty Russell into conversation to highlight the importance of role switching within our performance of church. Gaining critical distance from our personal and ecclesial roles and imaginatively identifying with different roles can liberate fitting

performances that might otherwise ossify into oppressive patterns. Third, Craigo-Snell interacts with German director Bertolt Brecht and womanist theologian Delores Williams to explore the power of alienation from the way things are. Sometimes, we need to make foreign something familiar in order to realize its incongruity with the gospel and to reorient our performance toward faithful witness. Finally, Craigo-Snell puts English director Peter Brook and theologian Karl Barth into conversation to demonstrate how at the heart of church is the “discipline of emptiness.” Although she diverges from Barth’s methodology, Craigo-Snell deeply appreciates his criticism of religion in all its anthropocentric hubris, and maintains that our performance of church should “be a self-critical reminder of our own limitations, a check on our pretensions, and a curb to the arrogance of religion” (p. 124). Just like Brook’s “empty space,” the empty church is a work of clearance that allows the invisible to become visible, motivating performers to embody hope and to accept our “wildly unequal” partnership with God (p. 137).

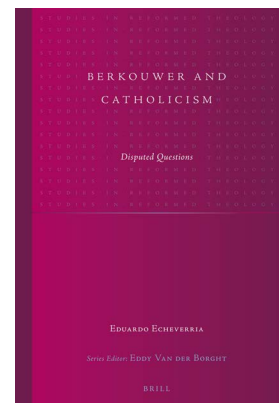
Overall, *The Empty Church* demonstrates the fruitfulness of engaging the performative phenomena of church rather than the abstract concept of church. In unfolding her thesis that church is an interactive performance mediated by Scripture, however, I was surprised by the paucity of biblical engagement. Perhaps in addition to putting into conversation a theatre director and theologian in each chapter, Craigo-Snell could have added a biblical author. This would have added authority and depth to what is a self-described “theology from below,” which raises red flags for some readers. Despite this shortcoming, *The Empty Church* is a refreshing and welcome contribution to the “theatrical turn” in theology and ethics, which supersedes a narrative approach by taking embodiment seriously and attending to the drama of everyday life. Why church? Because it is through this body and in this life that God is making all things new.

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Eduardo Echeverria. *Berkouwer and Catholicism: Disputed Questions*. Edited by Eddy Van der Borght. Studies in Reformed Theology 24. Leiden: Brill, 2013. xiii + 507 pp. £151.00/\$245.00.

This ecumenical theological dialogue is moderated in a way that provides a nuanced example of a kind of Protestant-Catholic rapprochement. We will introduce the participants, briefly outline the content, and describe some prospects for further dialogue.

The first conversation partner is Gerrit Cornelis Berkouwer (1903–1996), a Dutch Reformed theologian who taught Dogmatics at the Free University of Amsterdam from 1945–1974. His thinking was rooted in the theology of Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) and Herman Bavinck (1854–1921) and the philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd (1894–1977). Berkouwer’s lifelong preoccupation with Roman Catholicism yielded more than seven scholarly works on various aspects of its dogma and practice. Berkouwer was an official observer at Vatican II (1962–1965), to which he devoted two book-length studies.



The second conversation partner is the Roman Catholic Church through papal encyclicals and other documents.

The moderator, Eduardo Echeverria, is a son of the Roman Catholic Church. The author graduated from Trinity Christian College (Palos Heights, IL), with a philosophy major and a thorough acquaintance with neo-Calvinism through its leading thinkers. He went on to study at the Free University of Amsterdam, earning his doctorate in philosophy. Echeverria is a professor of philosophy and theology at the Sacred Heart Major Seminary (Detroit, MI), and is a self-described evangelical Catholic.

The book's general thesis is that "Berkouwer's ecumenical engagement with Catholicism raises *the fundamental question of what is an evangelical, catholic, and orthodox* theology of the faith of the Church. This book is . . . a historical theological study of Berkouwer's changing theological assessment of Roman Catholicism, especially with regard to Scripture and tradition, doctrinal development, Marian doctrine, and the relationship between the ecclesiastical magisterium and theologians" (p. 12, italics original).

First, we learn about the influence upon Berkouwer of Catholic *nouvelle théologie*, which, under John XXIII and Vatican II, promulgated the distinction between truth and its formulation. It was Berkouwer's commitment to a "hierarchy of truths" that enabled him to challenge significant differences between the Catholic and Protestant traditions while affirming their degree of unity with respect to the foundation or center of the Christian faith. The moderator also guides a discussion between Berkouwer and Vatican I regarding the twofold order of knowledge of faith and reason (*duplex ordo cognitionis*).

Foundational to the dialogue was Berkouwer's reconfigured view of *sola Scriptura*. Rather than pit Scripture against tradition or the church, he sought to understand how Scripture, tradition, and the church's teaching office are intrinsically and necessarily related in theological interpretation. Who speaks for the whole church in the name of the church? Berkouwer helps us move beyond the impasse of "either the Bible or the church [as] the final authority" (the principle of *sola Scriptura* is neither anti-tradition nor anti-ecclesiastical). But his fatal mistake, according to Echeverria, lay in failing to affirm the Church's teaching office in its role as interpreter of Scripture. This flaw flows from his unclarity about the nature and status of propositional truth, and his protest against epistemological objectivism. Both of these prevent him from accounting satisfactorily "for the universal, objective, perduring, and materially identical teaching of the historic Christian faith and thought" (p. 393).

The heart of this study involves the theme of doctrinal development, which entails the relation between truth and history, doctrinal continuity and discontinuity, and authentic and inauthentic development. The central issue is the relationship between the unchangeability of the truth of dogma and the historical conditionedness of its formulations. Authentic doctrinal development involves "noetic progress"—progress not in revelation, but in our understanding of revelation. Echeverria observes that Berkouwer failed to provide an adequate account of the substantial identity of dogma over time (pp. 470–71). This failure, we would observe, was not incidental but systemic in Berkouwer's new phase.

This volume shows clearly that both Protestants and Roman Catholics face (or ought to face) the same challenges of triangulating the authority of Scripture, of tradition (confessions), and of the church. Protestants should acknowledge that the Reformation's *sola Scriptura* never entailed the rejection of ecclesiastical (authoritative) tradition/confession. In some sense Jesus Christ has entrusted to the church (and therefore not to the individual believer) the authority to formulate doctrine in expressions that function as the normed norm (*norma normata*).

Protestants should become personally informed about changes within Roman Catholicism flowing from Vatican II. Cultural threats confronting Christians in the secularized West compel Protestants and Roman Catholics to lock arms, even if they don't hold hands. Shedding stereotypes is a necessary prelude to conquering the tribalism on both sides that fails to respect the "other" who has become our fellow traveler.

To apprehend this conversation accurately, however, requires knowing that Berkouwer's altered theological positions, including his reassessment of Roman Catholicism, were confronted and critiqued vigorously by his Reformed contemporaries, both in The Netherlands and in North America. One theological sympathizer, Hendrikus Berkhof, observed that Berkouwer's thinking was in constant motion, and his method shifted along with his thinking, from (1) an initial commitment to the absolute authority of Scripture, to (2) a focus on the redemptive content of Scripture, and finally to (3) a focus on the existential intent of Scripture.

Berkouwer's shift was rooted not in his theological assumptions regarding ecclesiology or the nature of dogma, but in his revised doctrine of Scripture. This is relevant for two reasons, involving first the book's thesis and then prospects for future ecumenical dialogue.

First, Berkouwer's theological shift facilitated the very rapprochement being celebrated in this book. His openness to the "form/content problematic" in his doctrine of Scripture (specifically, in his views of organic inspiration and infallibility) served to open the way for his conversation with the heirs of Vatican II. Listening competently, then, to this historical-doctrinal conversation requires readers to be familiar with the substantive critiques of Berkouwer's theological shift furnished by theologians in his own tradition. These include the penetrating (Afrikaans) study by F.W. Buytendach (Amsterdam: Bolland, 1972) and the analysis by one of Berkouwer's own students, Carl W. Bogue, *A Hole in the Dike* (Cherry Hill, NJ: Mack, 1977). Bogue criticizes the very feature of Berkouwer's theology that lies at the heart of this volume: "The form-content distinction provides Berkouwer with a ready-made vehicle for ecumenical dialogue where 'hang-ups' with past formulations may be politely set aside to clear the way for 'fresh' insights on old problems. Nowhere has this been more visible than in Berkouwer's discussions with and about Roman Catholic theologians" (pp. 8–9).

The second reason why readers must evaluate Berkouwer's altered doctrine of Scripture suggests a way forward. Echeverria concludes with an invitation to travel the road paved by Berkouwer's writings, "so as to come to ecumenical partnership with the Catholic Church in the search for full communion" (p. 488). This is somewhat confusing, however, in light of the author's earlier, rather far-reaching judgment that "Berkouwer's dogmatics, especially evident in his criticism of natural theology, his understanding of faith and reason in the Catholic tradition, suffers from the weakness of abandoning the scholastic tradition" (p. 12). This abandonment included Berkouwer's rejection of any philosophical foundation for theology. "In short, the intellectual weakness of Berkouwer's thought is his anti-metaphysical and anti-scholastic tendency, having accepted in some sense the project of the dehellenization of classical Christian orthodoxy" (p. 12).

Perhaps, then, we might offer a substitute invitation. Given these three realities—(1) Echeverria's own criticisms of fundamental flaws in Berkouwer's epistemology, which had also been identified and evaluated by critics in Berkouwer's own tradition; (2) the partial affinity for Thomas Aquinas in post-Reformation scholasticism and in Herman Bavinck; and (3) the contemporary recovery of the inheritance of Reformed scholasticism—it seems more helpful to view Berkouwer's approach as a methodological and theological detour, so that we can find our way ahead by returning to the important

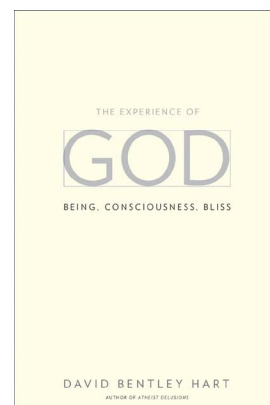
(but surrendered) discussion of prolegomena, in terms of categories potentially shared by both Roman Catholicism and scholastic Protestantism.

The author defends the correct claim that “Berkouwer’s ecumenical engagement with Catholicism raises *the fundamental question of what is an evangelical, catholic, and orthodox theology*,” but because a number of critics, including the author himself, have identified serious problems involving both the evangelical and the orthodox qualities of Berkouwer’s theological engagement, perhaps the time has come to invite a different partner to join the conversation.

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David Bentley Hart. *The Experience of God: Being, Consciousness, Bliss*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013. ix + 365 pages. £9.99/\$17.00 (paper).

David Bentley Hart’s somewhat misleadingly titled *The Experience of God* is a brilliant and necessary contribution to contemporary discussions about the existence of God and the relationship between faith and science, against the backdrop of a rhetorically virulent, intellectually thin, but culturally influential “New Atheism.” The book can be described as a three-pronged refutation of naturalism, the underlying metaphysics of atheism. Hart’s stated objective is to distill the classical definition and descriptions of God shared by all major religious and metaphysical traditions—orthodox Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Hinduism, Bahá’í—in order to show how misguided and confused are atheist attacks on God. The underlying objective of the book is to show that naturalism, the metaphysical conception that the universe is a closed system, reducible to physical entities and interactions, is self-refuting, incoherent, and ultimately “indistinguishable from pure, magical thinking” (p. 17) and superstition (p. 16).



With characteristic flair, Hart argues that the case for believing in God is, inductively, much more forceful than the case for naturalism, if one is to do justice to the “thereness” of being, the reality of conscience and intentionality, the operations of reason, and of the human desire for truth, goodness and beauty. In fact, these are, as he belabors to show in Chapters 3 to 5, the most basic evidences for the reality of God.

In chapter 1 (“‘God’ Is Not a Proper Name”), Hart rehearses the classical theistic conception of God. We are reminded that God is not some discrete super-being sitting on the same ontological level with contingent reality, but “the infinite fullness of being, omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, from whom all things come and upon whom all things depend for every moment of their existence, without whom nothing at all could exist” (p. 7; Acts 17:28), but also “infinite consciousness, infinite bliss . . . in whom we find our only true consummation” (p. 41). In sharp contrast with this conception, atheism and naturalism—atheism’s metaphysical grounding—are irredeemably incoherent, constituting a “fundamentally irrational view of reality” (p. 16). Hart pulls no rhetorical punches in calling naturalism “the quintessential expression of heroic irrationalism: a purely and ecstatically absurd venture of faith” undertaken in an ultimately meaningless life. (p. 19).

In “Pictures of the World” (ch. 2), Hart briefly describes and comments on the architecture of the antique, medieval and early modern universe. We are reminded of the birth of the scientific method, its scope and limits, and of how it came to be conflated with “mechanical philosophy” and a materialist metaphysics. This has meant the bracketing out of formal and final causes as irrelevant and ultimately illusory. While the point is not original, Hart laudably reiterates that the much-discussed conflict is not between faith and reason or religion and science, as atheists would have us believe, but between two irreconcilable ‘pictures of the world’: theism and naturalism.

Chapter 3 (“Being”) is an excellent introduction to and synthesis of traditional metaphysics. We are reminded that God is the necessary being who donates existence to every finite being, and who therefore illumines the very possibility of existence, which naturalism absurdly takes for granted. Hart defends the notion that God, as perfect actuality and fullness of being, is simple, teasing out the implications concerning divine eternity, impassibility and immutability. The picture that emerges is that of God as a perfect being. On this point, we can anticipate that the book will attract readers who will question whether this perfect being is indeed identical to the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” and of Jesus Christ, particularly when the issues of freedom and prayer are under discussion.

In chapter 4 (“Conscience”), the reader is offered a dizzying ride through extended arguments against physicalist accounts of the human mind and consciousness. Familiarity with the philosophy of mind and cognitive science is casually assumed. Hart perspicuously analyses and ultimately refutes reductionist conceptions of the mind and consciousness underpinned by a materialist ontology and conception of nature. Among some of the insoluble difficulties that consciousness poses for a materialist model of the mind are: the qualitative dimension of experience (a sophisticated elaboration on the notion of *qualia*), the operations of reason and its dependence on semantic content, and intentionality or the mind’s directedness. Hart’s focus is on the significance of the argument from (the mystery of) consciousness for a proper understanding of God. Constructively stated, consciousness is a powerful pointer to God as the ultimate coincidence and fullness of being and consciousness.

Chapter 5 (“Bliss”) contains a series of observations on epistemology, ethics and aesthetics offered as part of the book’s overall aim to demonstrate theism’s rational and explanatory superiority over naturalism. Reason, argues Hart, operates on the basis of a “rational appetite” or longing for the “comprehensibility of things” in the hope of attaining understanding and discerning meaning. *We desire* to know because reality is, on a theistic framework, knowable, “transparent to thought.”

Particularly devastating are Hart’s remarks about the illusory nature and impossibility of naturalist morality. Again, Hart unravels the logic of evolutionary, “adaptationist” ethics, and shows the groundlessness of all ethical imperatives in a materialist paradigm. In contrast, on a theistic understanding, the desire to do good, which Hart clarifies is present in all people, religious or unbelievers alike, is “a confession of a natural longing for God” (pp. 254, 274), the essence and source of moral good.

Another line of attack on naturalism is the existence and nature of beauty. Hart poignantly speaks of the glorious uselessness and prodigality of beauty. Naturalism is again shown to be incapable of judiciously accounting both for beauty itself and human experience of it. The desire for and movement towards beauty is nothing less than a desire for and a movement towards perfect beauty and the experience of disinterested bliss, which are to be found only in God.

In the distinctly quotable last chapter (“Illusion and Reality”), Hart rehearses the main arguments against materialism and popular atheism, and offers more penetrating comments on the limits of science and scientific knowledge. Atheism is described as little more than a therapy, an “emotional sedative” (p.

305) to ease the sense of despair one is bound to experience in what is ultimately an utterly meaningless world. In this last chapter Hart also issues timely warnings concerning potential social, cultural, and political outworkings of materialism, pointing to the most telling examples modern history can offer. The book ends with an apology for contemplative prayer. If “knowledge of any reality is to be sought out in terms appropriate to the kind of reality it is” (p. 318), and since God is the ultimate personal reality, Hart argues that prayer is the true ‘empirical’ means of knowing and experiencing God.

Some critical comments may be in order. In terms of style, Hart’s prose is, on the whole, delightful, and enlivening, even if there is a good measure of repetition that might have been eliminated by a stronger editorial hand. At times, the rhetoric is, as we’ve come to expect by now, overindulgent and excessive. While much of modern atheism fully deserves Hart’s jabs, we may doubt whether some of the comments on analytic philosophy, intelligent design and inerrancy are indeed warranted. These may be particularly questionable in light of Hart’s advice for critics of any idea to “try to understand the strongest possible formulations of that idea, as well as the most persuasive arguments in its favor” (p. 8).

As for its substance, the abundance of cogent arguments against materialism and atheism, and the many piercing observations on science and the limits of scientific inquiry will surely prove immensely useful in apologetic endeavors. Equally instructive and stimulating is his erudite exposition of classical theism. The lack of Trinitarian and Christological references in the book should therefore come as no surprise to those who appreciate the author’s declared aims and methods. Still, some readers will wonder whether Christianity is indeed faithfully represented here, when there is no mention of the Trinity and of Jesus Christ. Moreover, one may point out that some of the descriptions of God as Perfect Being, Consciousness, and Bliss are, demonstrably, in tension with biblical depictions of the “God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob” and of Jesus Christ. To be fair, however, these will not be misgivings about Hart’s project specifically, but about classical theism more generally.

Therefore, even if some of the arguments may require a Trinitarian reworking and a better attunement to the biblical material, David Bentley Hart’s book will have taken us far in the right direction, as far as the apologetic task is concerned. For that we can be most grateful.

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Christopher M. Hays and Christopher B. Ansberry, eds. *Evangelical Faith and the Challenge of Historical Criticism*. London: SPCK; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. xiv + 241. £17.99/\$26.99.

Evangelical Faith and the Challenge of Historical Criticism is a collection of essays written by a rising generation of biblical scholars who self-identify as evangelicals while adopting the methods and results of historical criticism to varying degrees.

The editors state that the purpose of the book is not to discuss inerrancy nor to offer an apologetic for a “traditional” evangelical method of interpretation. As a matter of fact, it is rather the opposite: the book is meant to demonstrate that one can hold on to “essential” evangelical doctrines while accepting historical-critical scholarship. Thus it explores ways in which evangelicals can or might have to adjust and adapt their theology—especially its fundamental doctrines—in the light of current critical theories. It is an appeal to evangelicals not to be afraid of the broader academy and to get involved in its scholarly efforts. In this regard, this book joins hands with likeminded publications by authors like Mark Noll, Peter Enns, and Kenton L. Sparks.

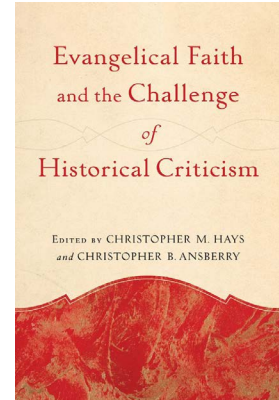
The book’s argument is developed through seven thematic studies framed by two programmatic methodological essays. Each topical essay addresses a key issue over which, historically, evangelical beliefs have collided with modern scientific and historical-critical positions. Following the same basic pattern, they begin with presenting the critical viewpoint on their topic and continue with discussing its potential theological implications. They purport to explore the extent to which evangelical doctrines would have to be modified if critical views were to be true, and assess whether that would strike at essentials of the faith or not. This framework allows the authors to introduce, corroborate and illustrate the family of hermeneutical approaches they are propounding under the name of “faithful criticism,” something they see as the necessary pendant to what they call a “critical faith.”

“Adam and the fall” seeks to demonstrate that rejecting entirely the historicity of Gen 2 and 3 does not undermine Christian orthodoxy. Looking especially at Rom 5, the authors first deny the traditional doctrines of original guilt and original sin, especially in their federal form. They also argue that ancient authors (including Paul) held to time-bound opinions that modern readers do not have to adopt. Finally, they claim that Paul’s argument in Romans 5 does not require a historical Adam at all, since its point is to “highlight the magnificence of the salvific ramifications of Christ’s singular righteous act” (p. 44).

“The exodus: fact, fiction or both?” takes stock of the lack of historical evidence for the event of the exodus and seeks a way to preserve its Scriptural and theological value. To overcome the antithesis history vs. myth, Ansberry proposes to use the concept of “cultural memory,” which understands such narratives as “repositories of shared memories that shape the identity and beliefs of the group” (p. 67).

“No covenant before the exile? The Deuteronomistic Torah” considers the issues raised by historical-critical views concerning the origins and composition of the Deuteronomistic materials. It argues that the Ancient Near Eastern view of authority allowed for pseudepigraphy, a practice that allowed later generations to hear the voice of the putative author speak to them as it was reapplied to their own contemporary circumstances. Thus Moses’ basic teaching (*traditum*) of strict monotheism continues to speak through the subsequent, multi-layered and ongoing *traditio*.

“Problems with prophecy” offers a re-definition of the nature of biblical prophecy that makes room for inaccuracies of predictive prophecy (due to the limitations of human language and man’s



free decisions) and *vaticinium ex eventu* (prophecy after the fact). Prophecy is defined as “an organic, creative word moving toward an ultimate goal,” seeking to express God’s redemptive purposes for the world, a task for which human language is insufficient.

“Pseudepigraphy and the canon” looks first at the issue of the authorship of the Pentateuch and Isaiah, and then at the authorship of the Fourth Gospel and the disputed Pauline epistles. Pseudepigraphy is presented as the “*necessary and faithful*” method of appropriation and reapplication of the message of ancient authors. Divine condescension means God would have used historically conditioned forms and conventions to get his message across, including documents actually intending to deceive the readers concerning their actual authors.

“The historical Jesus” looks at the debated issue of how Jesus actually portrayed himself as the messiah or divine Son of God. The essay argues that it is appropriate for *faith* to accept Jesus as messiah and divine, whatever his *historical* self-awareness and self-portrayal might have been. Next follows a discussion of the issue of the miraculous that recognizes their role in our belief in the deity of Christ, the virgin birth and the resurrection being *sine qua non*s.

“The Paul of Acts and the Paul of the epistles” focuses on the perceived discrepancies (or contradictions) in chronology (especially between Gal 2 and Acts 11, 15) and theology. The essay seeks to identify some of the underlying concerns and presuppositions that influence scholars in their interpretation and judgments on these issues. Thus hermeneutical, methodological and exegetical considerations have a significant impact beyond mere historical reconstructions.

It is impossible to address the strengths and weaknesses of each essay, though, to be fair to the authors and to provide a more concrete and precise picture of the book, it would need to be done. We must limit ourselves to the central purpose and argument of the book. (Editor’s note: see further Robert Yarbrough, “Should Evangelicals Embrace Historical Criticism? The Hays-Ansberry Proposal,” *Them* 39 [2014]: 37–52.)

One can only agree with the authors’ desire to see more evangelicals and fundamentalists study and engage critical scholarship while retaining a truly evangelical faith, refusing to leave the field of historical studies to radicals. We must also commend their effort to do so constructively, wanting to be open to the truth, wherever it is found and even if it challenges one’s convictions. And who would contend with their wish to let Scripture in its (God-)given form mold us and our thinking rather than to let our human-derived preconceptions determine what it must be and say? Finally, we must admire their courage and audacity in not shying away from some of the most vexing, debated and heated issues.

However, the “*via-media-between-two-extremes*” presentation, though striking, is too simplistic, hence and thus misrepresents reality. In this regard, the claim that the *Church* seems to be driven “towards the Scylla of sincere but anti-intellectual sectarianism and the Charybdis of rigorous but apostate criticism” (p. 205) is simply not correct. There are various scholarly options available already, including educated and open-minded conservative evangelical ones.

Another weakness is the decision not to engage critical scholarship itself in a critical way, and thus not to raise the problems inherent to that type of approach, especially at a hermeneutical, methodological, and epistemological level. Granted, this is not the point of the book, and it would have made it longer and more complex. But such elements need to be included in order to advocate a substantial engagement with critical scholarship rather than what may appear to some to be sheer capitulation—even for non-specialists. It would furnish their readers with a broader and fuller picture

of what is involved and at stake, something necessary to make informed decisions. As it is, the book might on the contrary reinforce extremes.

As a rule, it is better to interact with the best representatives of opposing and alternative positions when making an argument. By mentioning almost exclusively extreme or uninformed fundamentalist responses to critical scholarship in contrast to their proposal, the authors expose themselves to the accusation of using boogeyman or straw man tactics here. This is true no matter how common such opinions might be in pulpits and pews.

A framework and tool set supplemented this way would be more effective in attaining the editors' stated goal, at least because it would help lower the fear factor and increase the desire to join in the fun. It would enlarge the vista for evangelicals to contemplate and compare legitimate ways to cultivate their faith with intellectual integrity.

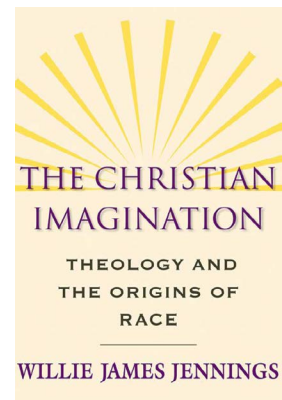
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Willie James Jennings. *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011. x + 366 pp. £16.99/\$27.50 (paper).

Jennings, Associate Professor of Theology and Black Church Studies at Duke Divinity School, argues that contemporary Western Christianity suffers from a “diseased social imagination” (p. 6): it is “enclosed in racial and cultural difference, inconsequentially related to its geography, often imaginatively detached from its surroundings of both people and spaces, but one yet bound to compelling gestures of connection, belonging, and invitation” (p. 4). “Race” is a deleterious mutation thoroughly embedded within the doctrinal logic of modern Christianity. Hence, “Christian theology now operates . . . without the ability to discern how its intellectual and pedagogical performances reflect and fuel the problem, further crippling the communities it serves” (pp. 6–7).

Jennings analyzes this pathology in four “social performances” of theology that exemplify—and in several instances, actively contributed to—the racial conditioning of church life in general and theological scholarship in particular. They illustrate the claim that when “race” was created by colonial European theologians, missionaries, and churchmen, orthodox Christian theology itself was altered: the ostensibly ideal scholastic “tradition” (Alisdair MacIntyre) became a “traditioned imperialist modernity” (p. 71). Chapters 1–4 examine cases in the Roman Catholic and Protestant history of conquest and missions in which theological ideas were deployed to conceive of and promote novel evangelization, discipleship, and Bible translation practices. Each shows conditions whereby “race”—a discourse that positions the concept of whiteness as central and naturalizes separatistic arrangements within an institutional order—has come to constitute the status quo in the theological academy and the church alike.

Theologically, Jennings contends, this process depended upon late medieval European Christians' use of a supersessionist hermeneutic, enacted, e.g., in the culmination of the *Reconquista* in fifteenth-century Spain. It was church leaders, theologians, and other intellectual elites who first conferred



theological legitimacy upon—and continued to contribute to the advance of—the nascent nation-states’ projects of colonization and consumption, in the name of the church’s divine commission to bring salvation to the nations. In so doing, the doctrines of creation and Christology (among others) were revised, albeit “not the creedal substance . . . but the way in which [Christianity’s doctrinal] logic would be performed” in the new worlds (p. 71).

Jennings locates the root error in the forcible subjugation, dispossession, and removal of non-European peoples from their homelands. Displacement inflicted on them an incalculable loss of identity, which (in Jennings’s account) is fundamentally tied to the land. Trafficked as commodities, they could not resist their captors’ essentially docetic, ascriptive acts: reclassifying them with objectifying categories and monetary value gauged by proximity to whiteness, the entire enterprise allegedly justified by conversions to Christianity. The racial “formation of human identity in modernity . . . the reconfiguration of bodies and space [was performed] as a theological operation . . . heretical in nature, bind[ing] spatial displacement to the formation of an abiding scale of existence” (p. 24).

Jennings then sketches connections between past and present, observing numerous ways that the power relations historically expressed and engendered by the paradigms of race and “whiteness” continue to function today in theological scholarship (chapter 5, “White Space and Literacy”), in society (chapter 6, “Those Near Belonging”), and in the world interconnected by globalization. In the former chapter—challenging the positive accounts of Lamin Sanneh and Andrew Walls—the Bible translation and biblical literacy movements, print capitalism, and theological knowledge-production are linked to a largely intact hegemonic system: “Christian theology is trapped in the revised universalism that feigns the legitimation processes of ancient orthodoxy while being deeply committed to the literary supremacy and ‘universal human genius’ of the languages of the central literary powers—French, English, Italian, German (and sometimes Spanish)” (p. 232), such that “the center/margin realities of world literature deeply penetrate [theologians’] evaluations” (p. 233). The point Jennings stresses is that “Christian theology and segregationalist mentalities” are firmly entrenched within “a style of imagining social reality” that is “diseased . . . in the kind of community imagined—its scope, character, and materiality. . . . [These] thwart the formation of Christian community beyond the strictures of nation, language, and peoples” (p. 233).

Thus, the first part of the book addresses the question, “How is it possible for Christians and Christian communities to naturalize cultural fragmentation and operationalize racial vision from within the social logic and theological imagination of Christianity itself?” (p. 208). The final chapters outline a solution to the “interrupted social imagination” (p. 7). The “Christian-colonial way of imagining the world” (p. 209) ultimately expresses “loss of [the Christological] horizon and embodiment” of Christian doctrine (p. 106). To recapture a vision “more faithful to the God whose incarnate life established and establishes the contours, character, and content of Christian theology” (p. 10), “place” is thematized to reconstruct separatistic modernist schemes (racial, ethnic, and national identities) by way of Christology. The overall tenor of Jennings’s proposal is seen in the following excerpt (pp. 248–49):

A Christian doctrine of creation is first a doctrine of place and people, of divine love and divine touch, of human presence and embrace and of divine and human interaction . . . seeing place in its fullest sense. . . . One of the first factors in rendering the Scriptures impotent and unleashing segregated mentality into [Christians’] social imagination was the loss of a world where people were bound to land. Through this loss the complex revelation of God’s relation to land and people fell on deaf ears. The moment the land is

removed as a signifier of identity, it is also removed as a site of transformation through relationship. . . .

The right transformation [entails] Christian faith receiving its heretofore undiscovered identities, which are found only through interaction with the social logics of language, landscape, and peoples. The right relationships . . . invite new patterns of life woven through and by means of the deep structures of Christian faith slowly opened through ongoing interpretation and struggle. Those relationships involve deep joining, the opening of lives to one another in love and desire. . . .

[M]issing [from the colonial-era church] was the central social reality that constituted a new people in the body of Jesus—their joining to Israel, and the power of that joining on the social imaginary of Christian life. If Christian existence stands on nothing greater than the body of one person, then . . . the only way for Christian communities to move beyond cultural fragmentation and segregated mentalities is to find a place that is also . . . a new person that each of us and all of us together . . . possibly, can become.

In Jennings's explication of the story of Jesus and Israel, "Jesus did not seek to destroy kinship, to undermine its defining power rooted in story, memory, and cultural practice. Rather, he drew it to a new orientation, a new determination" in himself (p. 264). "To follow Jesus' own trajectory" would result in "an advent of a new form of communion with the possibility of a new kind of cultural intimacy between peoples that might yield a new cultural politic" (p. 265). "These disciples of Jesus love and desire one another, and that desire . . . is the basis of their ethical actions in the worlds of allegiances and kinships . . . issu[ing] in a new network that transgresses life-threatening and life-diminishing boundaries" (pp. 274–75).

Practically, broader conversations are required—between academic disciplines; "between those deeply involved in the formation of space and those concerned with identity formation;" and "between Jews and Christians" (pp. 293–94). Such exchanges would consider "the reconfiguration of living space that might promote more just societies," which, if undertaken, would convey "a compelling new invitation to life together" (p. 294).

Narrating "the origins of race" is an ambitious task. While the sample size is small, Jennings's commentary constructs a multifaceted portrait of the development of racial logic within highly complex sociopolitical, intellectual and material processes. His recounting of the leading role played by the institutional church, theologians, and missionaries in justifying worldwide conquest and consumption and in constructing the fragmented modern world performs the valuable function of ideology criticism. It also strengthens his critique of the MacIntyrean and Milbankean models of Christian tradition.

This is a highly original study, "considering concepts, Christian doctrines, and events together that . . . have not been thought together" (p. 10). It is also erudite, appropriating insights in disciplines beyond the usual purview of evangelical theological scholarship (postmodern philosophy; postcolonial theory; critical social theory; cultural studies; and colonial-era political history, church history, and missionary practice). In a study of this extraordinary breadth, it is inevitable that readers will encounter matters of interpretation with which they disagree, and others requiring more argumentation to be persuasive. Several instances of this follow below.

Historically, "race" took distinctive forms in differing locales; it thus admits of more than one construal and method of analysis. This narration of its invention in Iberian Christian colonial expansionism needs to be weighed alongside J. Kameron Carter's assignment of this responsibility to

Kant (*Race: A Theological Account* [Oxford: OUP, 2008]) and other accounts (e.g., Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996]). Other details indicate a conflationary approach to the analysis of race, sometimes running counter to the evidence cited (e.g., the description of Linnaeus's taxonomy, p. 193).

The argument that "race" turns upon the use of "supersessionist" theological beliefs also calls for refinement. Given the existing theological literature addressing the relation of Israel and the church employing differing construals of supersessionism, the sense that Jennings works with is rather loose, especially in his interpretation of Scripture. Other historical examples also are required to sustain this claim, since the Spanish *Reconquista* is not applicable to the development of "race" in northern European countries or in their colonies.

More importantly, compared to his extensive interaction with the Christian intellectual and theological tradition, historical studies, and contemporary theorists, Jennings's direct engagement with Scripture is limited. In this reviewer's perspective, his treatment of group identities assigns too high a value to land as such. This is not to diminish the horrendous, highly consequential character of the historical practice of imperialism, enslaving and displacing African peoples on a mass scale, many of whom died *en route*. It is, rather, to note that a close, extended reading of Scripture as the basis for developing a Christian doctrine of creation leads to a quite different paradigm of the interrelations of God, people, and land (e.g., Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* [Downers Grove: IVP, 2004]). Any estimate of the factor of land must reckon with the biblical depiction of God as Creator and Owner, such that even his own people are but "tenants" whose residency within a designated territory is not a natural birthright but a gift of grace, a blessing that remains contingent upon trust and obedience (Lev 25:23). A thicker canonical description is required to do justice to the distinctiveness, depth, and coherence of the Scriptural discourse, which is the norming norm for the construction of Christian doctrine.

Relatedly, in this account, theological anthropology and ecclesiology are not clearly delineated. "Race" belongs to the former, while Jennings's appropriation of Christology is properly ecclesiological. His program for addressing the racially fragmented social world that Christians and their neighbors inhabit would benefit from further clarification.

Nonetheless, on the whole, Jennings's specification of the paradigm of "race" (and "whiteness" within it) *qua* ideology is far more substantive and illuminating than other biblical, theological and historical-theological accounts presently available. His account of the active role (beyond mere complicity) of theologians, churchmen and practitioners in its creation and maintenance provides a bracing dose of sober realism. Finally, his call to Christians to move beyond voluntary racial and ethnic self-segregation, to follow Christ in "loving and desiring" and enfolding others—is provocative and inviting. As such, this study is highly recommended.

Note: This review draws on material from my forthcoming book: Elizabeth Y. Sung, *Humanity Beyond "Race": A Scriptural, Sociological, and Theological Account*.

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Arie Leder and Richard A. Muller, eds. *Biblical Interpretation and Doctrinal Development in the Reformed Tradition: Essays in Honor of James De Jong*. Grand Rapids: Reformed Heritage Books, 2014. 338 pp. \$25.00.

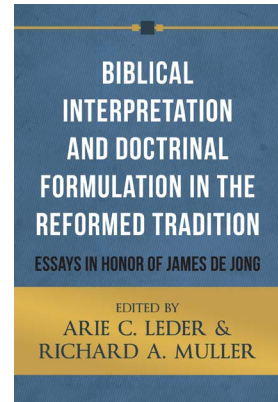
A good deal of noticed and influential scholarly work has been done on the dogmatic output of Reformed Orthodoxy (including Puritanism) in the last generation or so, as can be seen in some of the contributions to the currently-agitated question of Antinomianism. In the same period there has been a parallel though narrower stream of work giving attention to the exegetical labors of members of the same group. This seems to have caught less attention, perhaps because the acids of criticism have bitten deeper into biblical studies than in dogmatics, or (an opposite reason) perhaps because conventional evangelical and conservative exegesis has recovered some of the trajectory of Puritans and others already.

But since the groundbreaking *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation*, edited by John L. Thompson and Richard A. Muller (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1996), this narrower and slower stream of work has been flowing steadily. For example Muller's extensive piece "Scripture and the Westminster Confession" in Richard A. Muller and S. Ward, *Scripture and Worship, Biblical Interpretation and The Directory for Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2007), and his pieces on the debate on vowel points and on Henry Ainsworth and Protestant exegesis in *After Calvin* (Oxford: OUP, 2003). Examples of other work are Jon Balsarak, "There will always be prophets': Deuteronomy 18:14–22 and Calvin's Prophetic Awareness" and John L. Thompson, "Reformer of Exegesis? Calvin's Unpaid Debt to Origen" in *Calvin—Saint or Sinner?* Ed. Herman J. Seldenhuis (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), and no doubt much more.

In the book under review Arie Leder and Richard Muller have edited a volume in honor of James De Jong, former professor and president at Calvin Seminary, and brought together a number of works which feed this exegetical stream. The following contributions are noteworthy for their variety:

- Richard A. Muller, "An 'Immeasurably Superior' Rhetoric: Biblical and Homiletical Oratory in Calvin's Sermons on the History of Melchizedek and Abraham";
- Al Wolters, "Calvin's Lectures on Zechariah: Textual Notes";
- Keith D. Stanglin, "Adopted in Christ, Appointed to the Slaughter: Calvin's Interpretation of the Maccabean Psalms";
- Raymond A. Blacketer, "Henry Ainsworth, Harried Hebraiser (1570–1622)";
- Jay J. Shim, "The Interpretation of Christ's Descent into Hades in the Early Seventeenth Century";
- John S. Bergsma, "Critical and Catholic Exegesis in the Seventeenth Century Low Countries";
- Won Taek Lim, "Biblical Interpretation and Doctrinal Formulation in John Flavel's Works";
- Arie C. Leder, "Bible Commentary for the Untutored: the *Bijbelverklaring* of 1780–1795, by Jacob van Nuys Klinkenberg and Gerard Johan Nahuys."

Each of these papers manifest two features to some degree: treating the Bible as a theological document as well as an exegetical treasury; and a concern for direct pastoral application. Perhaps this is most evident in Lim's article on John Flavel.



There are also a number of other papers, more or less related to the theme of the collection. I have picked out three of the contributions for further comment.

In ch. 12, J. Mark Beech addresses the debate between Bishop Bramhall and Thomas Hobbes on freedom and necessity. He gives a good account of the debate itself and its literary fall-out. What he does not do are two things: he does not contextualize the debate sufficiently theologically, nor does he help the reader much with its terms. One might easily gain the impression that to have a scholastic outlook on these issues (like the Bishop) is to have a semi-Pelagian or Arminian outlook, while to be anti-scholastic is to be Augustinian and Reformed. But this is far from the truth. Many anti-scholastics, like John Locke, were Arminian. And Arminius himself was scholastic. The Reformed Orthodox were scholastic, the biblicistic Socinians were—Socinian. What was the significance of Hobbes's materialism? It is a pity, too, that Beech could not take the opportunity for a sidelong glance at similarities—and differences—between the Reformed Orthodox and the anti-scholastic Jonathan Edwards. Though Beach's is a substantial essay from which one can learn, he does not attempt to connect it with other people and issues, but contents himself with giving some of the major points in the debate, making it seem rather self-contained.

In ch. 14 ("Herman Hoeksema Was Right") John Bolt turns another page in his on-going discussion of the 1924 hoo-ha in the Christian Reformed Church regarding common grace. That church, as I understood it, was in 1924 and to an extent still is, Kuyperian in its outlook on grace. But it turns out from Bolt's and others' researches, that in their reaction to Hoeksema, the church (or its courts) had lost sight of the distinction between general and particular grace, which Kuyper endorsed and wrote reams about. They came to hold, all the while thinking it was Kuyperian to do so, that common grace has to do not with God's undeserved gifts to the race in general, but also with the way the gospel is preached. Hoeksema demurred. It now turns out that Father Abraham was on Hoeksema's side. So among Kuyper's warring children Hoeksema was the true Kuyperian, not the church as served by its authorities. Other questions regarding common grace (apart from the fudging of it with the particularity of grace), Hoeksema was prepared to chat about, as the Dutch do, but not if they became a dogma of the church, which they effectively did become. And so Hoeksema left. So by a paradox or antinomy or whatever, though Hoeksema left the court, it was game, set and match to him.

The reader should be warned, however, that the story is much more complicated than is my summary, involving *inter alia* the translation of the Dutch terms *gratie* and *genade*. In his writing *De Gemeene Gratie*, the *fons et origo* of his views on common grace, Kuyper made a point of taking *gratie* to mean 'favor' *genade* to mean 'grace'. Got it? Aha, but wait a moment. Perhaps through the effects of putting pen to paper in a cloud of cigar smoke, "Kuyper is not fully consistent with his own distinction and uses the two expressions interchangeably. We need to acknowledge that the distinction in the Dutch language may be a distinction without a difference since both *genade* and *gratie* point to the same Latin noun, *gratia*" (p. 301). So in being inconsistent Kuyper was in effect being consistent! Alice, Alice, where are you?

Bolt's conducting and refereeing of this important dispute was first-class, enlivened by amusing moments which may not have been intentional. Both Beach's and Bolt's contributions may be said to be peripheral to the main spine of this collection—that is, to be Dutch for a moment, if the connective in the title is to be interpreted as an inclusive conjunction, not exclusively. If not, then they are not peripheral, for each may be said to be concerned with doctrinal formulation.

As a final taste, we shall take a look at a more mainstream essay by Won Taek Lim, “Biblical Interpretation and Doctrinal Formulation in John Flavel’s Works” (ch. 11). John Flavel (1630–1691) was a later Puritan, having to endure the 1662 Act of Uniformity and the disintegration of Puritanism ecclesiastically as well as its running out of steam, when no doubt he had earlier expected to be a part of the state church envisaged by the Westminster Assembly (he was ordained in 1650). He spent nearly all his subsequent life in Devon, and was minister in the port of Dartmouth from 1656 until ejected six years later. Granted limited toleration, the likes of Flavel became free to preach again, under tight conditions.

He seems to have been a textbook Puritan; learned, devoted to books and people, prepared to suffer for principle’s sake, tireless as a preacher and painstaking as a pastor in expounding and applying the word of God to a variety of circumstances. He ended up dying of a stroke. His published books tell the tale, titles such as *A New Compass for Seamen, Navigation Spiritualized, Tidings from Rome, or England’s Alarm, A Saint Indeed: A Treatise on Keeping the Heart* and *The Heavenly Use of Earthly Things*. There were also grander treatises, such *The Mystery of Providence* and *Pneumatologia: A Treatise of the Soul of Man*, published posthumously. His practical and pastoral theology was quite different from the evangelical moralism of today.

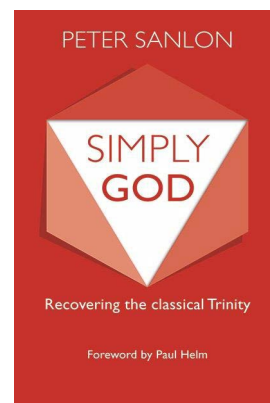
To begin with, the application of Scripture was *theological*. Flavel had the Westminster Confession as an overall framework (even though it was never embodied in English law), and he did not try to re-invent or supplant it. Rather in his ministry he used Scripture to draw out what may be called local theological inferences and applications for seafaring Dartford. The applications all arose from theological propositions drawn from Scripture, and though sometimes ingenious the applications were never fanciful. Won Taek Lim does a fine job in depicting this excellent proponent of biblical exegesis and doctrinal construction.

Obviously this is a valuable book for those working in the history of Reformed exegesis, besides being (as I hope to have shown) a good read.

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Peter Sanlon. *Simply God: Recovering the Classical Trinity*. Nottingham: IVP, 2014. 240 pp. £11.99.

Peter Sanlon, a minister in the Church of England, has written a volume commending the God of classical Christian theism to a non-specialist audience. What makes this work different from the plethora of other Trinity studies presently on the market is the prominent consideration Sanlon gives to God's simplicity and the attendant doctrines of divine eternity, immutability and impassibility. Without these doctrines firmly fixed in one's mind it is difficult to ensure that one understands the Trinity in a consistently monotheistic and non-process fashion. In the eras of the early, medieval, and Reformation church, theologians were keen to keep their accounts of God's triunity in close connection to the truth of his simple unity. Sadly, such is no longer the case and as a result we have witnessed a gradual weakening and distortion of the classical doctrine of the Trinity. Sanlon's volume marks a return to that older venerable approach to the triune God of the Bible and the Christian tradition.



The book opens with an orientation explaining what it means to engage with God and speak about him (ch. 1). The remainder of the study is divided into two parts with Part 1 (chs. 2–5) exploring issues related to God's simplicity and unity of being. Besides simplicity, Sanlon discusses divine eternity (ch. 3), omnipotence (ch. 4), impassibility and immutability (ch. 5). Part 2 (chs. 6–9) explores matters more formally Trinitarian such as God's love and threeness in Scripture (ch. 6) and church history (ch. 7) as well as how to relate the doctrine of simplicity to God's relationality (ch. 8).

The author begins his study with the fact of God's incomprehensibility. God is not a being who is merely greater than his creatures by degrees so that to know him we need only to extend or enlarge our creaturely categories of being. God isn't like us, simply existing somewhat higher up the chain of being. Sanlon explains, "The difference between God and his creation is not one of scale; it is a difference of order" (p. 25). Thus, if we are to speak about God at all we must rely upon his accommodated revelation in Scripture. "If we—finite created beings—are to understand a communication from the infinite Creator, there must be an accommodation to our natural limitations" (p. 38). Sanlon further details the way the Bible itself deploys analogical and metaphorical language to describe God inasmuch as creaturely language is insufficient to adequately capture him as he is in himself (pp. 39–44). This twin emphasis upon divine incomprehensibility and accommodated revelation furnishes a helpful outlook for grappling with the high doctrines discussed in the body of the work.

As for divine simplicity, Sanlon regards it as indispensable to a truly Christian way of thinking and speaking about God. "The simplicity of God," he remarks, "is the most fundamental doctrinal grammar of divinity" (p. 58). Indeed, "without it our attempts to describe God's attributes become idolatrous" (p. 61). Sanlon explains, "Simplicity means that God is identical with his attributes and, consequently, each attribute is identical with each other attribute" (p. 61). He ably defends the coherence of this strong version of the doctrine and carefully answers various objections to its biblical veracity. In the end, he commends simplicity as crucial to guarding the goodness and otherness of God. This argument seems basically correct, though it might have been more compelling if Sanlon had provided greater explication of why denying the strong classical version of simplicity leads to idolatry. Specifically, it does so because it makes God depend for the fullness of his being on that which is not God and so ascribes absoluteness

to something more ontologically basic than God's essence, thus rendering God an unworthy object of our highest praise and adoration.

Sanlon's discussion of God's love and immutability is intriguing. Following the implications of simplicity, he stresses that God does not *have* love, as if it were something he possessed in addition to his essence, but that God *is* love (p. 125). This means that God's love "is as reliable and powerful as God himself" (p. 126). Simplicity also means that God's love is not in conflict with his wrath. In God these realities are ontologically identical. "[L]ove and wrath are how the saved and unrepentant experience the same reality of God from their differing situations" (p. 127). Sanlon further contends that God does not experience his love as a passion that ebbs and flows. Rather he loves impassibly inasmuch as he is perfectly actual in all that he is. This is a consequent of simplicity's claim that all that is in God is God and immutability's claim that God does not undergo changes in his being.

The discussion of the Trinity in Part 2 is not quite as crisp or as theologically convincing as the discussion in Part 1. In order to show that both simplicity and Trinity must be held together, Sanlon plies the argument that only a trinitarian God can be perfectly loving since a full experience of love requires one share it with other persons. He insists, "The simple God who is love can be perfect love only because the simple God is three fully divine persons" (pp. 147–148). He further elaborates, "Perfect, infinite love cannot actually be experienced by an infinite being who is only one person. Such a 'love' would actually be a form of selfishness. Only the trinitarian God can be perfect love" (p. 163). But why is this so? While Sanlon is certainly right to emphasize intra-Trinitarian love, this is not all that needs to be said about love in the Godhead. There are aspects of God's self-love that are not formally other-oriented, such as God's perfect and infinite love of his own goodness. In loving the divine essence the three persons do not love something really distinct from themselves. Yet this is surely not a selfish or less-than-perfect love, is it? Sanlon carries his argument about the other-oriented character of true love so far as to suggest that God would not have been truly loving if he had not shared his infinite love with other beings (p. 184). This seems to undermine the divine aseity that is capably defended elsewhere in the volume by making God's full actuality of love depend upon the existence of creatures.

In my estimation the author misses an opportunity to provide a substantive discussion of how simplicity and Trinity relate positively. Rather than pursuing his somewhat dubious "love" argument, he could have explained how simplicity requires the real ontological identity of God's personal relations with his essence. Sanlon comes near this when he writes, "The simple God is three persons, who are perfectly God and perfectly relational" (p. 198). Also, he could have explained how it is that divine simplicity entails that the three persons in the Godhead are nothing but subsistent relations and that the relations are not accidents that qualify the persons. That is, he could have explained how the persons themselves are simple as persons. But no such discussion is offered. The result is that simplicity appears to sit somewhat awkwardly alongside Trinity, relying merely on the "love" argument to hold them logically together. My few criticisms notwithstanding, Sanlon's book is one of the best popular presentations of difficult doctrines such as divine simplicity and impassibility I have seen. His patient explanation of theological method is also highly valuable. On the whole, *Simply God* is a wonderfully instructive volume that is sure to benefit a wide array of readers.

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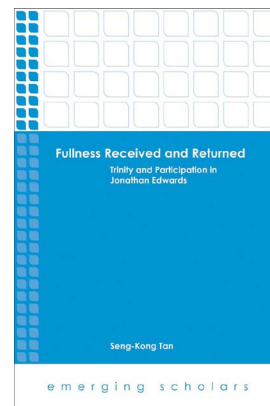
Seng-Kong Tan. *Fullness Received and Returned: Trinity and Participation in Jonathan Edwards*. Emerging Scholars. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014. vii + 445pp. £46.99/\$69.00.

Seng-Kong Tan has produced one of the latest volumes in the “Emerging Scholars” series, the new dissertation line by Fortress Press. Tan completed his dissertation at Princeton under George Hunsinger. This is now the fourth book in the past three years seeking to provide a theological analysis of one of Edwards’s most fundamental doctrines. What Tan hopes to accomplish with this volume is to reveal the contours of Edwards’s Trinitarian theology through the emanation-remanation (*exitus-reditus*) motif in his thought. In doing so, Tan sets out to provide a theological orientation to Edwards’s thought in parallel to Sang Hyun Lee’s more philosophical development.

Tan develops the structure of the emanation-remanation schema in Edwards’s doctrine of God, and then shows how this development gives him the contours for God’s economic activity. The bulk of Tan’s exposition focuses on Christology, where he addresses the hypostatic union, communicable attributes, and union with Christ, turning, at that point, to the Spirit specifically where he focuses in on the notion of participation in Edwards’s thought. Throughout this volume, Tan addresses the intricacies of Edwards’s Trinitarian thought, revealing how Edwards’s analysis of Theology Proper unfolds into the economy where his theology of participation takes on the Trinitarian contours noted above. This participation is advanced through the categories of “grace” and [divine] “nature,” with a particular focus on the communicable attributes of the Spirit.

Tan’s work is provocative at parts, seeks to place Edwards broadly in the tradition, and is an attempt to orient the broad movement of Edwards’s theological analysis. These are all, certainly, positives for a monograph, especially one on Edwards. Tan attends to several key aspects of Edwards’s doctrine of God that have been either ignored, or not adequately developed prior to his work. Furthermore, throughout the volume there are engagements with the tradition, showing Edwards to be addressing fundamental questions of the Church that his forebears meditated upon before him. That said, there are several major drawbacks to the volume that I outline here.

First, Tan’s reading of Edwards is a-historical. This should not be taken to mean that he fails to interact with Edwards’s context, he certainly does. But, in a move like Sang Lee, Tan reads Edwards’s variegated corpus as if it is one established system of thought. There is no weighing between the genres of Edwards’s work (i.e., between his sermons, published works, and notebook entries), nor is there a real sense of discernment in the progression of his thought. There has been a lot of work done on this already within the field, so there is no really good reason for neglecting it. But this neglect leads to my second frustration. Tan could have avoided many of the downfalls of this volume by interacting with more Edwards scholars and less of the tradition. It is unclear how helpful it is to provide random comparisons all across the tradition with no obvious upside for the volume itself (minus the point I made above). Rather than serving the volume by helping to highlight Edwards’s view, these forays into the tradition read like the real purpose of the book itself. In other words, this book reads as an exercise in proving one’s knowledge of the tradition and obscure Latin technical terms rather than an exercise in Edwards’s systematic thought. As a clear example, the endnotes are longer than the actual chapters, some of which double the chapter in size (the vast bulk of which add nothing to the actual argument). As a dissertation, it is understandable that a student would use the endnotes to prove his ability to interpret



broadly in the tradition, but as a published monograph it is gratuitous and unhelpful. It would have proven much more useful to have chosen two or three key figures to compare Edwards's view against (e.g., Augustine, Aquinas and Owen), where lines of continuity and contrast could have been brought into the text at times, but as it stands, the comparisons read as random points of arbitrary contact.

Third, and this is more specifically related to being a book about Edwards, it is frustrating that Tan seems to ignore, for the most part, the secondary literature on Edwards. This is particularly true with the literature that has been published in the last five years, much of which relate directly to his work. But even beyond that, one is left wondering how Tan's project relates to other, similar projects within Edwards studies. There are a handful of helpful engagements with other positions in the field, and Tan's own observations are helpful in that regard, but there are simply too few of these throughout the book. In the past several years there have been three other volumes that cover almost identical ground to Tan's (even though they had differing objectives): Oliver Crisp's, *Jonathan Edwards on God and Creation* (Oxford: OUP, 2012); William Schweitzer's, *God Is a Communicative Being: Divine Communicativeness and Harmony in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); and my *Jonathan Edwards's Theology: A Reinterpretation* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012). By choosing to focus on the tradition rather than the field of Edwards scholars, Tan's work is somewhat aloof to insights that would have proven helpful.

These three downfalls make Tan's book difficult to recommend. There are simply too many points where it is unclear if a particular view is Edwards's mature view, because Tan does not bother to weigh the corpus. Where there should be an engagement with other views in the secondary literature, the reader almost always finds an engagement with conversation partners that add little to the argument. Rather than comparing Edwards with conversation partners he did not have, over issues he was unaware of, it would have proved much more fruitful to compare his own reading against the secondary literature (and against the development of Edwards's thought). Overall, therefore, this will be a helpful volume for Edwards scholars to utilize to compare their own doctrinal analysis of Edwards's writings. For students new to Edwards's thought, there are too many other volumes that do not fail at these points that would prove more helpful.

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— ETHICS AND PASTORALIA —

Rob Bentz. *The Unfinished Church: God's Broken and Redeemed Work-in-Progress*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2014. 172 pp. \$11.99.

No one complains that people in hospitals tend to be ill. That is what hospitals are for. Why then are people dismayed to find the church filled with the spiritually broken? Rob Bentz's new book is a challenge to rediscover the purpose of the church. It is "a gathering of broken people" seeking spiritual wholeness in Christ (p. 16).

However—and this is the crux of Bentz's book—the church must be a community where people are finding the spiritual nurture they need. *The Unfinished Church* is a plea for congregations to embrace this calling, offering a three-part vision for caring communities.

Part 1 (called "The Foundation") contains two chapters. Here Bentz defines the church. It is a community of redeemed individuals called to minister redemption to one another. The problem? "Many of us tend to find the 'one another' and 'each other' passages, so prevalent throughout the New Testament, to be mere suggestions" (p. 17). The solution? "A healthy church, at its core, is a group of redeemed Christ followers . . . living in authentic, honest, forgiving, grace-giving community" (p. 54).

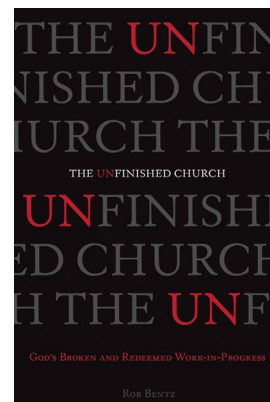
Part 2 ("The Construction") comprises chapters 3 through 7. Here we find the meat of the book. The framing chapters of this section describe the *diversity* (ch. 3) that congregations should embody, and the *unity* (ch. 7) that such assemblies should nurture. With regard to diversity: "The church that Jesus is building is an eclectic, intriguing, quirky, diverse mess of humanity" (p. 62). With regard to her unity: "Unity is the result of a great deal of heart-wrenching, God-seeking, others-forgiving effort. Jesus calls us to this immense personal and corporate challenge" (p. 140).

In between those framing chapters, Bentz unpacks three "one another" commands of Scripture that produce this sanctifying unity: "Love One Another" (ch. 4); "Encourage One Another" (ch. 5); and "Serve One Another" (ch. 6). "Love is hard. Not because we don't like the idea of love. Who doesn't? It's the *action* connected with love that trips us up. . . . To offer another person genuine biblical love is almost always messy, time-consuming, and hard work" (pp. 80–81). Bentz makes no attempt to be novel or to propose new "secrets" for more effective ministry. Nor is his book built around techniques. Instead, Bentz helps us rediscover historically orthodox insights on the church in a fresh presentation that is thought provoking, convicting, and encouraging.

Part 3 ("The Completion") contains the book's final chapter. Here Bentz comforts us that "God continues to build his church through you and me. It's a church that is now flawed and imperfect, but will one day be made perfect . . . the finished church" (p. 158).

Each chapter ends with three short resource sections. First, a section on "Church History" provides relevant citations that place each chapter within the stream of historic Christianity. Second, a "Music" section suggests songs that support a given chapter's theme. Third is a list of "Questions for Discussion." The book is clearly designed for use in small groups, and offers these helpful resources for such settings.

One caveat is needed, however. It is important that the reader recognize this is not a book about congregational care in general; it is a book to rekindle a vision for *lay* ministry within the church.



Unfortunately that focus is not stated explicitly at the book's outset, so readers might miss this point. But there is no discussion about the role of pastoral care or Christian counseling, or the place of church discipline in Christian growth. (On the oft-neglected topic of church discipline, see Eric J. Bargerhuff, *Love That Rescues: God's Fatherly Love in the Practice of Church Discipline* [Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010].) Also, while there are several passing references to the importance of worship, there is no substantial treatment of the role filled by congregational worship and preaching in Christian nurture.

Instead, this volume targets the "one another" lay ministries so desperately needed within the church. The book is clearly the fruit of the author's own ministry. Bentz is the Pastor of Small Groups at the 6,000-member Woodmen Valley Chapel in Colorado Springs. Bentz has rightly brought us the fruits of his own focus in ministry.

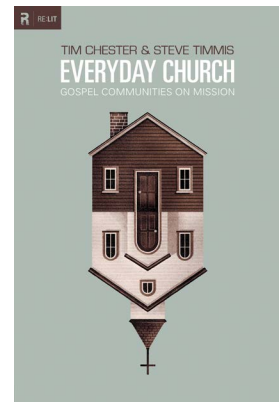
Recognizing that the target of the book is on lay ministry also explains its approach. The writing is explicitly doctrinal in its moorings, yet it is predominantly anecdotal and motivational in its presentation. The result is a work that is eminently readable and theologically sound, but it does not provide the theological rigor of a book like D. A. Carson's comparable text on the church's duty to love one another, *Love in Hard Places* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2002). For those seeking exegetical and theological rigor, its absence in the present volume will be a drawback. But for those seeking motivational rigor—which is often just as needed—this is it. Bentz's volume is a useful vision casting and teaching tool that will be helpful to many congregations.

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Tim Chester and Steve Timmis. *Everyday Church: Gospel Communities on Mission*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012. 192 pp. \$14.99.

Everyday Church should serve congregations throughout much of the world in the same way a scout serves an army: by bringing back news from what is ahead on the field of battle. Chester and Timmis, ministering in the post-Christian context of a very secular UK, are walking down paths that local churches elsewhere in the world have only recently realized they are beginning to tread. The authors encourage the reader to stop and consider what it means to live missionally in their local context when people are not culturally conditioned to think they need to attend church. In light of this, one of the emphases of the book is for readers to understand that "our marginal status as Christians in the West requires us to think differently about mission" (p. 85).

Rather than offering practical insights into missional living, *Everyday Church* stands on its own as a missional theology primer that will leave the reader pondering the implications of their study of 1 Peter and how the Word is brought to bear on mission. Different than the many "how-to" books on ecclesiology that tread the same ground but gain little traction—tell a story, give credit to God, lay out exactly how you to can have (fill in the blank) kind of church— Chester and Timmis intentionally leave their story until the end of the book. And even then, they do so with



seeming reluctance because of the dangers that pastors face in taking a “cut-and-paste” approach to local mission.

Sadly, a book about living as a Christian on mission in everyday life seems novel (as this one does), and the reader needs to ask why this is. It is not because Chester and Timmis have uncovered some lost-world secret to Christian mission. Nor have they stumbled upon an ancient technique or secret formula. The missiology presented is basic and seeks to correct a more programmatic approach to mission that has marked many North American churches. Chester and Timmis use the book of 1 Peter to help local churches see what an everyday mission might look like in their church. In this point they succeed wonderfully. Local church pastors, as well as elders, deacons, and small group leaders, will benefit from the robust theology and practical helps found in this book. Examples include the pastoral care chart on page 82 and questions for missional communities on page 149. Both help to direct people to a more biblically based connection between ecclesiology and missiology.

While *Everyday Church* doesn't provide a recipe for missional church growth, pastors and churches will be well served if the undergirding theology of mission is applied their varied contexts. While I appreciated Chester and Timmis's generally hands-off approach to specific application, perhaps the biggest weakness of the book is in not understanding the mindset of churches that are firmly entrenched in programmatic mentality that “the meetings of the church *are* the church.” In other words, how does a mid-to-large size program-driven church begin to turn the ship in order to begin to think about mission in everyday terms? *Everyday Church* seems tailored for the church plant or younger church that is able to make small adjustments in programming and ecclesial mindset that make big changes in how people view their role as the church. In older churches, with a number of programs that may work against the premise of the book, leaders may find *Everyday Church* frustratingly idealistic. They write, “You cannot program un-programmed church!” (p. 92). This leads one to wonder how they define “unprogrammed” and how churches that are programed can begin to move in an “Everyday Church” direction. While this should not discourage the pursuit of a well-formed contextual missiology, the lack of instructional help in this regard may leave some frustrated and unable to move forward in applying it to their local church context.

It is likely that congregations struggle to reach out to their non-Christian neighbors not because they disagree with doing evangelism in principle, but because it seems like such a difficult, varied task that makes it hard to know where to start. What Chester and Timmis give pastors and churches is a robust theology of mission that strikes the reader as both *realistic* and *normal*, which in turn is refreshing. One only hopes that that their writing of *Total Church* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008) and now *Everyday Church* will spawn one more book to complete the trilogy that further helps churches think about their local contexts and give even more practical ways to enact changes for the advance of the gospel in everyday settings.

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Mike Cospers and Daniel Montgomery. *Faithmapping: A Gospel Atlas for Your Spiritual Journey*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2013. 232 pp. \$16.00.

All of us have been faced with directional challenges whether driving or seeing ourselves as Christians. We have signs to follow. Montgomery and Cospers enter the conversation on the challenges that every Christian faces regarding their “spiritual atlas” that is needed to make correct biblical decisions. They provide a picture of their own confusion of directional challenges and the experiences that shaped their ministry at Sojourn Community Church in Louisville.

Faithmapping directs Christians to discern the competing voices of our culture. The cultural milieu contains mutually competing voices seeking to serve as our “reliable guide” (p. 13). The guide is the diverse voices of our culture. They suggest that with multiple guides emerges greater “confusion” (p. 13). Montgomery and Cospers establish four cycles that the church must contend against: *confusion*, *hype*, *division*, and *instability* (p. 13). Their desire is to provide a faith map for living and helping the reader move from the “familiar territory of self-centeredness” to the “glorious wilderness” of worship of God (p. 12).

The first competing message is *confusion*. The confusion that the Christian faces goes back to the Tower of Babel (p. 13). The authors say the gospel is oversimplified and has become watered down. They suggest better “definitions” on the gospel, the church, and the mission can be provided, and that these should be “sharp and clear” (p. 13). They suggest the gospel should be threefold: (1) The gospel is about Christ himself—his life, death, and resurrection, atoning for the sins of his people. (2) The gospel of sonship has to do with the adoptive nature of God’s grace, transforming us in light of our new identity as his children. (3) The gospel of the kingdom refers to the renewal of the whole world, a renewal launched through Jesus and his people, the church, and a renewal that will one day be completed when Christ comes a second time (p. 21).

Second, the church must deal with the *hype* of the culture. The authors suggest that the Christian is faced with promises from the culture that compete with the promises of God. The Christian searches for clarity for the “good life” (p. 14) and often accepts the “loudest voices” of the culture (p. 14). But the loudest voice leaves the congregation “dizzy” with a “spiritual hangover” (p. 15).

The third competing voice is *division*. Opposing trends disrupt unity and bring about opposition in the church (John 17) (p. 15). The church should pray Jesus’ prayer for unity rather than division.

The fourth competing voice is *instability*. The Christian finds little stability in the church as messages do not align with the gospel. They must wade through the various roadmaps and directional points that prevent one from the “following the ancient paths” (Jer 6:16). The Christian listens to the competing voices of “gurus, consultants, and armchair theologians” that do not help the kingdom person through the wilderness (p. 16).

The authors tackle the four cycles through three helpful sections: “The Whole Gospel” (chs. 1–4), “The Whole Church” (chs. 5–9), and “The Whole World” (ch. 10). The sections provide the Christian a careful map that will lead them to greater kingdom ministry (pp. 30–31). At the close of each chapter, other than chapter 10, the authors suggest practical helps called “Map It.” The “Map It” sections give the reader practical hands-on suggestions for their Gospel Atlas to be put into action (pp. 43–44; 67–68; 85–86; 96–99; 120, 141–142; 157; 174–175). Chapter 10 finalizes their thoughts on the kingdom value



of *grace*. Grace directs the Christian to see the gospel through their location (p. 202), their vocation, (pp. 206–7), their recreation (pp. 207–10), their restoration (pp. 210–12), and the call to multiplication (pp. 212–13).

The authors are correct to suggest that Christians face many choices on their spiritual journey. They do not provide, however, helpful distinctions from the ecclesiastical traditions which help clarify their message. Many of the book citations emerge from opposing ecclesial traditions that could unwittingly lead readers to greater confusion. Nevertheless, this wise book will provide helpful guidance for Christians as they wade through this perplexing, fallen world.

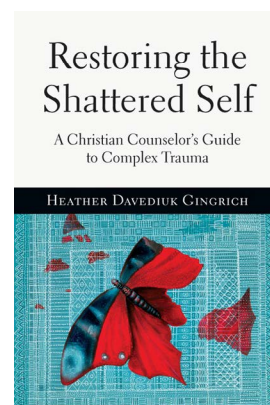
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Heather Davediuk Gingrich. *Restoring the Shattered Self: A Christian Counselor's Guide to Complex Trauma*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2013. 235 pp. \$24.00.

We live in a day when the Christian counseling world is sharply divided. There are good reasons for the concerns voiced on all sides, but if we are to reduce the level of hostilities in the field and promote greater understanding and dialogue, reading and reviewing Christian counseling books will need to be marked by a hermeneutic of grace and good will that supersedes our criticism, to love our brothers and sisters, to highlight the glory and goodness of God in their work (1 Pet 1:22), to promote the unity of the body of Christ (Eph 4:3), and to overcome divisiveness (Gal 5:20). This is easy to do with a recently published Christian counseling book on complex trauma.

The author is a professor of counseling at Denver Seminary who has done extensive counseling with Christians and non-Christians who have experienced complex trauma. Whereas posttraumatic stress disorder is due to a single traumatic event or episode—like being in war and witnessing or experiencing terrible violence—complex traumatic stress disorder (CTSD) is due to ongoing physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse for many years in childhood. Well-read in the available secular literature in this area of study, the author has developed a distinctive Christian counseling model for dealing with this kind of psychospiritual problem, and, in my estimation, this book is the best recently published Christian text available on the treatment of CTSD.

What characterizes this disorder? Those who have endured severe, chronic trauma during childhood tend to have problems with emotion regulation (having overwhelming emotion or no emotion), distortions in self-perception (extreme shame and self-hatred), problems in the perception of others (sympathy toward the perpetrator, distrust of or co-dependence on others), physical problems (pain, numbness, and medical issues), and relational difficulties (fear of intimacy). In addition, they often have some degree of dissociation, that is, the splitting of consciousness into more or less isolated components, which resist exposure and full integration into consciousness. In the most severe cases of abuse, these dissociated aspects can become discrete personalities or identities. Regardless of the degree of dissociation, Gingrich refers to these aspects as “parts of self,” and the book’s most important contribution is the detailed model of therapy she has worked out for addressing these parts and



promoting their reintegration into a unified self (though she suggests a full integration may not be possible or necessary, p. 166). Some Christians are skeptical about any kind of dissociation, particularly those who have never encountered it, but the book is thoughtful and well-documented, and for those who *have* worked with such people, reading it will be extremely helpful.

According to Gingrich, counseling with people with CTSD is marked by three distinct stages: an initial phase of trust-building that fosters a sense of safety; the second, major phase of working on dissociated memories and intense emotions, which facilitates the strengthening of the core self; and a final phase that focuses on developing new ways to live in light of the healing that has occurred, dealing with the perpetrator, and concluding the therapy relationship.

Gingrich's evangelical faith, gentleness, and humility permeate the book, likely reflective of her counseling practice. She repeatedly speaks of dependence on the Holy Spirit and our need for Jesus, the counselee's sin is never condoned, she advocates prayer (though in session, with some caution, p. 113) and the use of the Bible with Christian counsees (pp. 135, 178), and she provides many examples of how God figures into her understanding of counseling and the Christian life. Because survivors of childhood abuse often take responsibility for their abuse, Gingrich emphasizes its injustice and always refers to the perpetrators critically, which helps survivors recognize, perhaps for the first time, the wrong that has been done to them. Before concluding, however, she also provides a nuanced and balanced discussion on forgiving perpetrators. At the same time, she might have gone a little further to state that, as hard as it may be to accept, perpetrators too are created in God's image, and they also need God's grace and warrant Christian love.

Abuse survivors also often struggle with where God was during the abuse, and Gingrich wrestles wisely and sensitively with these issues (pp. 174–78). She also addresses inner healing prayer—which invites the healing presence of Jesus into memories of past trauma—and suggests it may be a helpful Christian approach for some counsees (pp. 178–80), but offers some sound cautions regarding its use. She also recognizes that demonic forces are sometimes involved with those with CTSD, but warns against abusive “deliverance” ministries that can re-traumatize already vulnerable persons.

Are there any limitations? As with most books that exemplify an “integrationist” orientation, the book's familiarity with the secular literature on the topic and its significant psychological sophistication is not matched by a familiarity with relevant theological literature and a comparable biblical and theological sophistication. Its repeated use of the Bible is more proverbial than theoretical and principled. There is little if any criticism of secular therapeutic concepts or models of therapy (even “person-centered,” p. 125). Considerable use is made of creational/common grace resources in the model—the therapeutic relationship, emotion-focused strategies, cognitive techniques—but relatively little of redemptive resources. The model would have been significantly enriched with reference to the perspectives of Creation-Fall-Redemption-Consummation; a consideration of how the atonement addresses shame, guilt, and suffering; the relevance of union with Christ, justification, and adoption for the reconstruction of the self-understandings of survivors and the integration of dissociated parts; and how the daily cultivation of one's personal relationship with Christ in meditative prayer can contribute directly to the healing process.

Because of such limitations, some more biblically oriented Christians will be tempted to reject this book. But that would be unfortunate, because of its considerable strengths. Someday, perhaps, the Christian community will compose counseling books that are characterized by sophisticated biblical/

theological *and* Christian psychological understanding. In the meantime, we need to avail ourselves of the best literature in both areas, as wisely as we can, to provide the best care for God's people possible.

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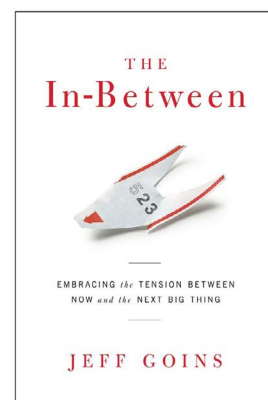
Jeff Goins. *The In-Between: Embracing the Tension Between Now and the Next Big Thing*. Chicago: Moody, 2013. 176 pp. \$13.99.

Perhaps you thought the self-checkout lane at Lowe's was the quick route from your purchase of squirrel repellent to your car, but you were wrong. Minutes later the scanner is not working properly and you have to wait on an attendant to fix the problem. Waiting. Everyone has to wait: for events, weddings, promotions, graduations, and groceries. In his new book *The In-Between*, author Jeff Goins examines waiting, the in-between time between what's past and what's next.

Goins captures the longing of our own hearts as we eagerly wait for the next big thing but miss the opportunity for what's right in front of us. He writes, "We all want a great story to tell our grandchildren. But many of us fail to recognize that the best moments are the ones happening right now" (p. 17). Written with a moving narrative about early memories of waiting, discovering that slowing down in Seville was better for his life, and fondly appreciating the full wisdom of two elderly church members, this book is sure to open your eyes wide if you are willing to slow down to take it all in.

Goins immediately confronts the tension of searching for the big story but missing what's in front of our noses in the first chapter by relaying a story about an exchange trip to Seville. Early on we meet Loli, a Spanish woman who bakes amazing *tostado*, takes her time with *Our Daily Bread* in the morning, and offers her entire house to two boys (Goins and his roommate Daniel). The frenetic pace of seeking to squeeze out every minute in Seville left Goins tired. For this reason, he writes, "Life's mundane moments—ordinary times of TV-watching (with Loli) and breakfast-eating—can be embraced as a slow, deliberate, beautiful way of life if we pay attention and see what's really there" (p. 39). In all his striving for adventure, staying at home with his host family brought more dividends than any jaunt to the nearby club for Goins. And this—the beauty in the ordinary, grace in the mundane—is at the heart of the book's message. Often, we get the picture that life is only fully lived with our necks straining toward the finish line and our last gasp of energy exerted. Yet this bewildering pace leaves us weary of seeing the in-between moments whether they be enjoying a slice of baked bread or enjoying our child's smile after a game of Chutes and Ladders.

Brimming with hope, Goins weaves together the story of when he was playing in a band and, having a few days off in NYC, visited St. Paul's Cathedral. This church "had miraculously survived the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2011—despite the fact that it was in the heart of Ground Zero" (p. 69). Hope in an unlikely place was St. Paul's Cathedral smack dab in the middle of the rubble. For Jeff, this reminder of hope between the big concerts and travel was where God was working in his life. For "God cared more about who I was becoming than what I was doing at the time" (p. 69). The realization in the seemingly quiet moments between the roaring of life's powerful engine that God is molding us in profound ways



is earth-shattering for many. Goins helps us see that there is a reorientation of our entire person, from our passions to our mindful meanderings when we slow down to relish the times in-between. Yet this happens to us through small seemingly insignificant moments.

My only main critique of the book is related to the theme of waiting in the larger stories we believe. I resonate with the author's struggle between waiting and the thing that comes next. Yet I also wonder how larger narratives like the story of Israel sojourning in the wilderness, waiting in expectation, often grumbling, relate to this major theme of seeking wisdom in the moments in between.

Throughout the book are short snippets of the lives of many people who are battling with the hopes for the future and relishing the time in-between. With wisdom and storytelling that makes you want to read it again, *The In-Between* is a wise and strengthening read.

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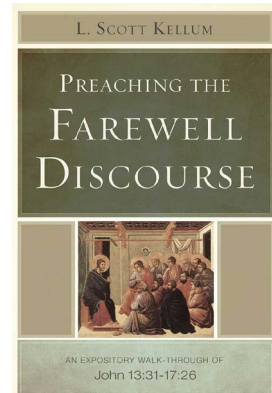
Scott L. Kellum. *Preaching the Farewell Discourse: An Expository Walk-Through of John 13:31–17:26*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2014. xii + 350 pp. \$29.99.

Occasionally an evangelical will produce a work with strong exegetical methods that also models the mechanics of preaching passages based upon these methods. Allen Ross's commentaries on Genesis and Leviticus fall within this paradigm, as well as many works of Walter Kaiser that illustrate the philosophy introduced in his *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998). Such volumes are valuable to pastoral ministry, for other congregational demands pose challenges that can tempt the shepherd to short-cut detailed exegetical work, eventually dumbing down the hard work of interpreting the text in crafting sermons.

It is therefore refreshing to find a NT scholar offering a text that intends to help the expositor of Scripture utilize exegetical and linguistic analysis to prepare sermons from the NT canon. Especially delightful is that the effort put forth focuses on narrative and discourse within one of the Gospels rather than the epistles. Scott Kellum's *Preaching the Farewell Discourse* is a unique text. It draws from the fruit of the author's doctoral dissertation, published as *The Unity of the Farewell Discourse: The Literary Integrity of John 13:31–16:33* (JSNTSup 256; London: T&T Clark, 2005).

It is evident that Kellum is text-driven rather than reader-oriented in his approach. He criticizes Gadamer's ideas, offering preachers reasons to reject postmodern literary theory: "God (the Who) inspired the Word of God (the What) to communicate to human beings (revelation). The idea of an autonomous text and the lack of propositional truth that accompany many versions of it fly in the face of the doctrine of revelation (which is why we must preach and teach the Bible in the first place)" (p. 14).

The bulk of the work focuses on isolating the controlling point of a set of verses by discerning the discourse features and relational structures within a passage. Kellum finds the "MIT" and "MIM"—his acronyms for the main idea of the passage (*text*) and the subsequent main idea of the sermon (*message*)—for each of his proposed units for the Farewell Discourse. He recognizes four units (14:1–31;



15:1–16:4c; 16:4d–33; 17). Within these he sees several subunits whose divisions are driven by both textual concerns and what is appropriate to communicate to an audience in one sermon (14:2–4; 14:5–7; 14:8–14; 14:15–27; 14:28–31; 15:1–11; 15:12–17; 15:18–16:4c; 16:4d–15; 16:16–24; 16:25–32; 16:33). The author considers John 17 as a unified whole, so as to “illustrate the possibility of preaching a much longer text than [previously shown]” in his analysis (p. 199).

Highly beneficial to the reader are Kellum’s sermon sketches. Within each subunit, the writer gives an introduction for a potential sermon on the pericope, proposes a detailed outline, inserts suggested illustrations, and provides a conclusion. For those who initially might find Kellum’s discourse analysis to be too sophisticated or time-consuming for weekly exposition, the sketches go a long way toward ameliorating such skepticism.

As preachers think through Kellum’s examples for their own preparation, they should consider that his MIT’s do not generally reflect the *tone* of the passages. Admittedly, evangelicals generally lack a consistent method of interpreting Biblical narrative while also considering tone. (Kaiser, as cited above, remains a great exception.) I was hopeful of something different from Kellum. However, two examples will suffice to support this criticism.

The author’s MIT for John 13:31–38 is, “As Jesus’ death approached, he prepared his disciples for life after his departure” (p. 85). Yet the passage *denies* the disciples the ability to do what Jesus will do shortly after their discussion (“You cannot come” in 13:33 and 36, and “now” versus “afterward” in 13:36). Jesus gives the command to love and the rebuke of Peter in contrast to the denials. The entire exchange comes within the nearer pronouncement of God glorifying himself (13:31–33), not simply within the broader context of preparing disciples (13:1–17:26). Once the reader adds that tone, he can discern that the central idea of the passage is “God’s glorifying of Jesus and the Father.” This idea will yield an MIT of, “God’s glorifying of Jesus and the Father denies the disciples their desires to seek him and to lay down their lives for him, but instead calls them to love one another.”

In this MIT, God glorifies himself *alone* as Jesus goes to the cross, the unbelieving Jews are excluded from coming to Christ, the disciples love one another (as opposed to going to the Cross), and Jesus sacrifices his life for the disciples (as opposed to one of them laying down a life for Jesus).

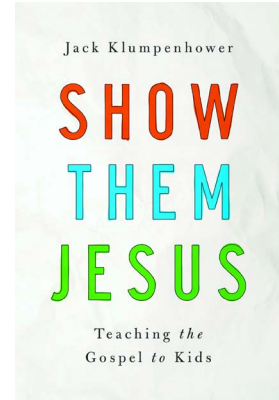
For John 17, Kellum’s MIT is, “Jesus prayed for the disciples’ protection, unity, and mission.” However, this intercessory prayer begins with a request to glorify the Son that rests on the completed work of Christ in election (17:2, 6). The MIT’s main idea is “Jesus’ intercession for the elect”; the predicate of the MIT is “intends the sanctification and unity of the believers, based on the faithful work of the Son.” By recognizing the tone of the passage, the MIM will reflect the passage’s focus on Christ’s work—“Jesus’ intercession for the church,” rather than Kellum’s focus on believers’ works—“Christians should be . . . committed to their unity” (p. 322). It seems that a lack of consideration of tone might explain also the writer’s removal of 14:1 from the exposition of the subunit of 14:2–4, and the divorcing of 14:28–31 and 16:3 from the units immediately preceding them.

These small criticisms notwithstanding, *Preaching the Farewell Discourse* is a solid resource that is highly recommended for homiletics courses and text-driven expositors of Scripture. Kellum is to be commended for a useful effort that will bring much fruit for the kingdom of God.

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Jack Klumpenower. *Show Them Jesus: Teaching the Gospel to Kids*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2014. 224 pp. \$17.99.

Jack Klumpenower has served the church well through his good work in *Show Them Jesus*. You know you have a good book on your hands when Jesus remains in the foreground from beginning to end. This is the primary theme of his writing and he stays true to this theme. The truths about Jesus' righteous life and sufferings on the cross as our substitute never fade. Klumpenower writes for two audiences at the same time: parents in the living room and teachers in the classroom. This demonstrates his wisdom, as both are crucial discipling contexts that ideally work together in harmony. Adults need to grow and be changed and then in that context turn to love and lead children. We "are called to teach the good news—all Jesus is and all he's done by his life, death, and resurrection to save those who are joined to him—and to treasure it as we work with kids" (p. 3). In sum: adults treasuring Christ in turn lead children, and by grace they too will treasure Christ.



The first five chapters of *Show Them Jesus* answer the question, "Why teach the good news?" and the remaining six chapters explain "How to teach the good news." Klumpenower challenges discipling adults to speak often of Jesus' name and work as they lead and love children. If children do not hear Jesus' name and the power of the gospel as a regular rhythm in their homes and at church, they will unintentionally separate their need for him in their life of faith from the moment of salvation. It is a great gift to children when their parents and teachers speak Jesus' name with a countenance of joy, humility, and love. Children must see worship taking place before their eyes. Living rooms and classrooms that are led by glad-hearted and hopeful adults who are marked by the gospel of Jesus Christ take the corners and edges off family devotions and classroom structure, and transform them into a rich environment of family worship and classroom joy. The aim is worship.

Children's hearts need to be trained to comprehend their deep need for the gospel of Jesus Christ for sanctification. They must learn early on that when they sin there is a place to run (avoiding despair) and when they do well there is a place to run (avoiding pride). There can be a tendency for the Christian parent and teacher to call young hearts to character-building merely by hard work merely. Klumpenower helps us understand that the net result of hard work apart from grace is moralism, and one does not need the filling or the leading of the Spirit for mere moralism. Children are born with independent hearts and they will lean towards self-sufficiency in increasing degrees as time goes by. They need Jesus before and after salvation. "For the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all people, training us . . ." (Titus 2:11–12).

A child who sees his need for Jesus, and who by grace comes to him and keeps coming will treasure Christ above all things. This child "won't have to pretend God is easily satisfied with a little churchy behavior, but he will dare to draw ever nearer to a holy God. This is because his sin and God's holiness just show him how much more he's been forgiven. They enlarge his love for Jesus" (p. 57). A child who is growing in love for Jesus will find himself thinking primarily "I don't want to break his heart" as opposed to "I don't want to break his rules" (see p. 66 for a fuller development of this point). Both are fitting statements, but one is driven by affection, which gives rise to joy—evidence of life transforming grace and the ministry of the Spirit in the heart.

Having established in the first five chapters *why* our children need to see Jesus for salvation *and* sanctification, Klumpenhouwer then helps adults know *how* to teach children Christ in the whole Bible with special guidance concerning the OT. He suggests asking a few simple questions upon reading an OT story in anticipation of Christ: “what is God doing for his people in this story . . . how does God do the same for us—only better in Jesus . . . how does believing this good news change how we live?” (p. 102). Children’s hearts are guarded against moralistic teaching while in the OT, as parents and teachers (often just one step ahead of them) themselves learn how to turn to Jesus while in the OT. We want our children to feel a little restless in the OT, which is intended to lead them to the glory of the Son and the good news he brings. “Anywhere you turn in the Bible, God’s saving work forms the backdrop. Laws, prophecies, poems—all exist within the story of salvation. The good news is the Bible’s drumbeat. To ignore it at any point is to misplay the theme song” (p. 88).

We want our children to delight in Jesus resisting pride in their good, resisting despair in their bad. On both accounts they are dependent upon the good news that Jesus has brought us, and at a personal level they are dependent upon Jesus himself. But we desire hearts that are *joyfully* dependent. A joyful heart is a worshiping heart. “We who have felt the power of the good news know that we’re most eager to obey when we’re most delighted with Jesus. Although we still struggle with sin, we’re destined to worship eternally with the best of motivations, and by God’s grace our lives today already display some of that wonder” (p. 208), and that wonder and delight in Jesus is being seen and heard by young watching eyes and listening ears.

I recommend reading this book with three different contexts in mind. First, read it for your own growth in the faith as you learn how to treasure Christ throughout the whole Bible and know the freedom of the power of the gospel to guard against despair and pride. Second, read it with your own children in mind. Keep asking the question as you read “how can I apply something I read in this chapter in my own living room today”? Third, read it with the children in your classroom in mind. You have less time with them, so it is important to take the heart of each point or chapter bringing it forward to the classroom. How might you speak of Jesus Christ and the work he has done in increasing measure that builds on itself cumulatively over time?

I heartily recommend this excellent gospel-centered book first for those who lead and train children.

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Leland Ryken, Philip Ryken, and Todd Wilson. *Pastors in the Classics: Timeless Lessons on Life and Ministry from World Literature*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. 192. \$16.99.

Few would question that reading theology and church history are necessary preparation for ministry of the Word of God. But are these genres sufficient to enable faithful ministry fulfillment? According to Leland Ryken, Philip Ryken, and Todd Wilson, literary classics focused on ministry uniquely develop a pastor for shepherding the flock. If theology “tells a minister not to enter into sexual relations with a woman in the congregation, [*The Scarlet Letter*] shows why a minister should not do so” (p. 12).

In this example and others, the authors argue that literature “can help shape the spiritual life of people in ministry” (p. 12). For readers agreeing with the logic of *Pastors in the Classics*, it is appropriate to wonder, “What books should I read?” or “How do I even read literature?” In order to address these questions the book has two main goals. First, it seeks to provide pastors with instruction in reading fiction for spiritual change; and second, it seeks to provide an annotated list of literary works involving pastoral themes.

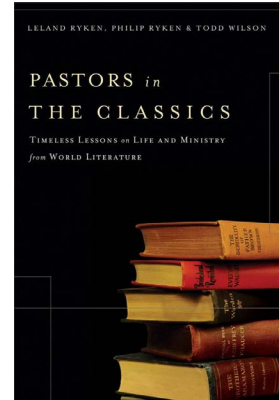
Organizationally, the Introduction instructs how *Pastors in the Classics* should be used while also explaining tips for reading well. The rest of the manuscript is divided in two: Part 1, “A Guide to Masterworks of Clerical Literature,” and Part 2, “A Handbook of Literary Portrayals of the Pastor’s Life.”

Throughout the Introduction, *Pastors in the Classics* offers several tools for careful reading. First, one must resist reducing the story to a set of propositions and should instead enter the world of the text. From here readers can evaluate their ministry from an intentionally structured vantage point. Second, the reader should critically evaluate the author’s interpretation of the world of the story. Third, readers should enjoy the artistry in the narratives selected. Fourth, to aid with the volume’s specific goal of developing pastoral wisdom, the authors include questions to help with character analysis such as, “What roles does the pastor fill in this book?” (p. 14). Finally, they encourage group discussion by pointing readers to reflection questions.

Part 1 includes brief literary and bibliographic information for each work. Additionally, included in the table of contents is a description of the one main pastoral issue related to each of the twelve titles. For instance, pastors looking to study the issue of “Scandalous Clergy,” can turn to the section on *The Canterbury Tales*. From there they can buy the novel, and read it together. While this information is helpful for finding the right work of literature, the main contribution of Part 1 is the pastoral commentary and questions accompanying each piece. One example comes from T. S. Eliot’s *Murder in the Cathedral*, which provides notes and questions on martyrdom and ministry. By utilizing Part 1 correctly, a group of pastors could pinpoint a topic they want to explore, and then find assistance in gleaning specific pastoral wisdom.

In Part 2 of *Pastors in the Classics*, readers will find 58 more titles, plot summaries, and a much briefer description of the pastoral themes present in each work. The pieces of literature in this section are not described as “masterworks,” but they are recommended from well-seasoned readers gathered by the authors.

Moving from summary to evaluation, the strengths of this work are threefold.



First, the instructions on how to read fiction are marked by clarity and precision, especially for unseasoned readers of literature. Second, the titles emerge from a vast range of ethnicities, nationalities, and eras. Thus, while many classics are present, this does not come at the expense of a multitude of perspectives. Third, the diverse questions accompanying the works in Part 1 are insightful. To illustrate the latter two strengths, consider the following examples. While interacting with Marilyn Robinson's *Gilead*, Ryken, Ryken, and Wilson prompt discussion on the sacraments. Then, in Shusaku Endo's work *Silence*, they ask pastors to consider "what idolatries make your own culture inhospitable to the gospel?" (p. 101). Finally, the section addressing a Graham Greene novel asks readers whether a "bad minister can bear good fruit" (p. 71). The multitude of pastoral themes come from a diversity of authorial voices—a Protestant woman, a Japanese man, and a Catholic American—and provide robust material from which pastors can learn and grow.

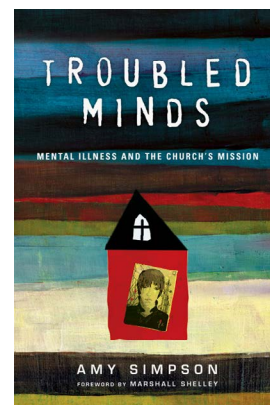
A brief word of critique will now be offered. In *Pastors in the Classics*, the authors argue that wisdom and virtue should be gleaned from wise and virtuous literature. They offer clear reasons in the four introductory pages devoted to the question. But since few in the academy share their approach to literature, few educated pastors have been exposed to the approach found in *Pastors in the Classics*. With this in mind, a more extensive argument for the authors' hermeneutic would provide a needed voice in the world of literary criticism. If pastors are more convinced that fiction can sanctify one for ministry, they will be more likely to put in the hard work of understanding great books. While this book offers a needed corrective to this problem, even more lay-level, theoretical discussion would have been welcomed. Perhaps instead of focusing so heavily on the catalogue of titles, this volume would more thoroughly serve the church by bolstering the Introduction. While Leland Ryken has certainly published elsewhere on this topic, it would be helpful to have both the theory and the catalogue in the same volume.

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Amy Simpson. *Troubled Minds: Mental Illness and the Church's Mission*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2013. 208 pp. \$16.00.

This book is the 2014 Christianity Today Book Award Winner (Hermeneutics) and also winner of a 2013 Leadership Journal Book Award ("Our Very Short List" in "The Leader's Outer Life" category). The author serves on the editorial staff of *Leadership Journal*. In declaring her writing purpose, Amy Simpson speaks to her readers' expectations. "This is not a clinical work or an academic tome. It's not a gripe session or a tirade against the Church. It's a book that the church needs because of both its practicality and its stories" (p. 19).

Regarding the book's practicality, the author's rich collection of facts, particularly those based on her personal church survey delivers. Select survey facts include: "mental disorders are the number one cause of disability in America" (p. 33), and "about one in four adults—a little more than twenty-five percent of Americans ages eighteen and older—suffers from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year" (p. 33). That means, "If your church is typical of the US population, on any given Sunday one in



four adults and one in five children sitting around you are suffering from mental illness” (p. 35). For pastors, this means that “Nearly half (44.5 percent) of church leaders are approached two to five times per year for help in dealing with mental illness; 32.8 percent are approached more frequently, from six to more than twelve times per year” (p. 99). The cold and hard facts tell us that, “Nearly 5 percent (4.8) of church leaders have asked someone with mental illness to leave the church temporarily; 3.2 percent have asked the person to leave the church permanently; 3.4 percent have sought a restraining order against the person” (p. 132). Perhaps not so surprising, “antipsychotics are now the top-selling class of drugs in the United States” (p. 34).

What about mental illness among the homeless and incarcerated? “Most reliable sources report that about 40 percent of homeless people have some kind of mental health problem, and 20 to 25 percent of homeless people have serious mental illness” (p. 92). Regarding those incarcerated, “statistics vary, but the Department of Justice itself estimates that in the United States, more than half of inmates have symptoms of serious mental illness—ranging from 45 percent of inmates in federal prisons to 56 percent in state prisons and 64 percent in local jails” (p. 92). These statistics are striking, giving us a sobering perspective on the outcasts of our society.

The author’s use of stories complements her statistical arguments. Simpson’s personal story of a parent with mental illness, the stories she has collected from others, and even the stories she uses to illustrate the various forms of mental illness will offer a different but powerful form of impact on readers. These flesh-and-blood accounts remind us that people with mental illness need help, but not always in the way most of us expect. The first and most basic help that they need is to be understood. This might seem like an impossible task for not only might they not understand themselves, even therapists may not understand their illness. In fact, many people with mental illness go undiagnosed. But that is not the kind of understanding most needed. People with mental illness want to be accepted as human beings, and to have others be willing to walk with them through the dark valleys of their lives. What is more, their families and friends will experience a form of secondary suffering. If pastors and congregations pull away from these poor souls at a time in life when they need their church most, they may leave their local church to look elsewhere for help.

Troubled Minds complements two other recent works addressing the Christian response to mental illness. R. H. Albers, et. al. (eds.), *Ministry with Persons with Mental Illness and Their Families* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012) offers descriptions of the primary forms of mental illness including a general discussion of medications and other forms of treatment, and serves as a primer on ministering to those with mental illness. John Swinton, *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God* (London: SCM, 2012), focuses exclusively on Dementia with a view to presenting a truly Christian understanding of the illness and developing authentically Christian modes of dementia care. If this reviewer were to select just one of the three books for readers who would like a first book on the Christian and mental illness, however, I would go with Simpson’s *Troubled Minds*.

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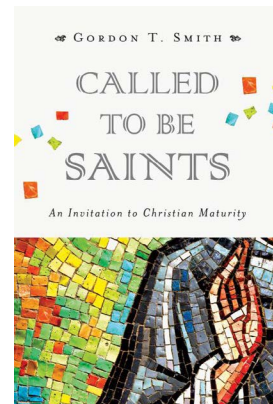
Gordon T. Smith. *Called to Be Saints: An Invitation to Christian Maturity*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2014. 256 pp. \$26.00.

Evangelical publishing houses continue to publish many books every year on spiritual formation, Christian spirituality, and related topics. Gordon Smith is one of the more prominent evangelical voices in this field. Smith, who serves as president and teaches systematic and spiritual theology at Ambrose University College and Seminary in Calgary, has made what is arguably his most important contribution to the discussion with his new book *Called to Be Saints: An Invitation to Christian Maturity*.

Called to Be Saints is an evangelical spiritual theology that is framed around the theme of our sainthood in Christ. The first two chapters set the theological tone for the remainder of the book. In chapter one, Smith discusses the need for an evangelical theology of holiness that focuses on spiritual formation while avoiding the threats of moralism, perfectionism, and Pelagianism. He also suggests five criteria for a healthy understanding of spiritual maturity: 1) Trinitarian and Christocentric; 2) salvation as the fulfillment of God's creation; 3) the interplay of sin and faith; 4) individual and communal holiness; 5) the ordinary and the mundane (including suffering). Chapter two grounds the Christian life in our union with Christ. For Smith, this doctrine is more about participation in the life of Christ than it is covenantal identification with Christ, though he explicitly distances himself from any Eastern Orthodox doctrine of *theosis*. Central to Smith's vision is the idea that moral formation is derivative of our spiritual formation. Spiritual maturity is God-centered and grace always precedes effort.

The remaining four chapters focus on themes that arise from this theological foundation. Chapter three addresses wisdom, or what Smith calls sapiential holiness. Cultivating a Christian mind leads to moral wisdom, discernment, and the proper use of gifts and talents. Chapter four focuses upon vocational holiness. Smith draws upon the Lutheran doctrine of vocation and the Neo-Calvinist understanding of cosmic redemption to argue spiritual maturity includes owning your vocations as a faithful participant in God's work of redemption and restoration. The fifth chapter discusses social holiness, or communal sanctification. Evangelism, service, hospitality, worship, teaching, and evangelism are best cultivated in a community of love that reflects the glory of the Triune God. Chapter six is concerned with emotional holiness. Following Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, Smith focuses on the work God does in gradually reshaping our affections and desires for his purposes. Corporate worship, spiritual friendships, and Sabbath are key disciplines God uses to this end.

Smith's book also includes two chapter-length appendices that are excellent and worthy of book-length treatments unto themselves. Appendix A looks at the role local congregations play in forming believers into mature saints. Smith argues the church is called to be a liturgical community, a teaching-learning community, and a missional community. Each of these three orientations plays a role in the sanctification of the church's members. Appendix B discusses spiritual maturity in Christian higher education. Again returning to the doctrine of vocation, Smith suggests ways for schools to cultivate a vibrant spirituality among students in various academic disciplines. He suggests, perhaps provocatively, that Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries should see their primary purpose as promoting sanctification among students while also promoting academic excellence. However, Smith is very clear that scholarship and spiritual maturity ought to go hand-in-hand in Christian higher education.



Called to Be Saints is a helpful work in evangelical spiritual theology. Smith writes from a perspective that is rooted in the Wesleyan-holiness tradition, but not narrowly so. He strongly criticizes perfectionist views of sanctification, denounces any sense of works-based righteousness, and draws upon Reformed and other non-Wesleyan thinkers to help him make his case. Those who have read his earlier book *Transforming Conversion* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010) will know he is also critical of decisionism, which is noteworthy for a theologian ordained in the historically revivalistic Christian and Missionary Alliance tradition.

Readers with a more Reformed understanding of sanctification should find his spiritual vision fundamentally sound, if perhaps in need of correction on a few key points. Smith's view on the centrality of union with Christ is spot on, though his virtual ignoring of our positional union while focusing on our vital union is unfortunate; the latter arises from the former. His discussion of justification and sanctification is somewhat muddled, perhaps reflecting his Wesleyan roots. His sacramentalism will not resonate with many low church evangelicals, though his emphasis on the role baptism and especially communion play in spiritual formation will be appreciated by most readers.

Because of these shortcomings, *Called to Be Saints* is probably not the best book to hand to a church member interested in this topic. However, it will prove an essential and much-appreciated resource for pastors and professors, even those who are from non-Arminian traditions.

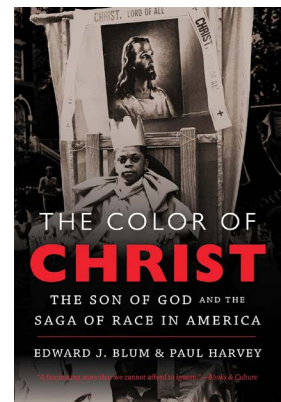
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— MISSION AND CULTURE —

Edward J. Blum and Paul Harvey. *The Color of Christ: The Son of God and the Saga of Race in America*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012. 352 pp. \$26.00.

December 11, 2013, Fox News anchor Megyn Kelly caused a media firestorm with her controversial statement that, as a matter of fact, both Santa Claus and Jesus Christ just simply are “white.” As the wider media underscored the ridiculous nature of Kelly’s comments, and her follow-up admission two days later revealed that she had only just then discovered that Jesus’ whiteness “is far from settled,” something profoundly troubling, acutely ignorant, and deeply *American* surfaced.

Kelly would have been well-served had Fox News, on her following “sick day” from work, prescribed that she read a book that had already one year earlier located her on the American scene: Blum and Harvey’s *The Color of Christ*. Written by two historians of American religious history, this book “explores the ways Americans gave physical forms to Jesus . . . and how they remade the Son of God visually time and again into a sacred symbol . . . [chronicling] a multiplicity of American dreams and visions and, by showing how Americans imagined and depicted Jesus Christ’s body, skin tone, eye color, brow shape, and hairstyle, reveal[ing] a new face of the power and malleability of race in our history” (p. 7).



The book addresses questions of precisely when people began to understand racial power differences divided by the notion of “white,” co-opting the very Son of God for this agenda, and making him into the “white” Jesus that would sanction efforts of oppression. This included the complicated reception history of the “Publius Lentulus letter” written during the medieval period, falsely purporting to be written during Christ’s lifetime, describing Jesus’ physical appearance while linking it to moral qualities (pp. 20–21). In the nineteenth century, the letter gave a fabricated history of authenticity to the idea that Christ was white, cultivating the art of white Americans to join the *white Jesus* tradition of earlier European art. White supremacy lurked. According to Blum and Harvey, it wasn’t until the civil rights era that this idea of the “white Jesus” was demolished and the “Publius Lentulus letter” shown again to be a lie, and the myth squashed. It’s apparent, however, that nobody told this to Megyn Kelly, operating in a context on the contemporary American scene where “white” still means something.

Noting the difficulty of finding any African Americans before the nineteenth century referring to Jesus as white, or by any particular color, the book highlights how depictions of Jesus increasingly emerged amid an era of dreamers and visionaries, yielding Jesus images with many different physical renderings. This was especially true in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries where a white Jesus was expressly mass-distributed, leading to a birth of the white American Christ at the same time that “being a white man was becoming a marker for political status, power, and opportunity” (p. 77). Americans were remaking the Son of God in their own image, as it were.

But it was not the whites who contained Christ. The suffering servant resonated deeply with the African American communities, especially of slaves who gravitated to Jesus’ humble his suffering and gruesome execution, as well as his glorious resurrection and ultimate victory. His story resonated with their own, and stories like Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* emerged, being fueled by the association of the suffering slave with the suffering of Christ. The volume also considers the imperialistic mentalities imposed on Native peoples, which led to very complicated relationships between Native American institutions and their missionary benefactors, as it were. As time went on, however, these different groups came to view Jesus from their own contexts; further, they viewed him as one of them in ways profoundly localized and culturally embedded. It was these expressions, in the Harlem Renaissance, say, that changed Western theology by its impact on, for example, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (see Reggie L. Williams, *Bonhoeffer’s Black Jesus: Harlem Renaissance Theology and an Ethic of Resistance* [Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014]).

But that there would be a black, or white, or Native, or Asian Jesus depicted in any context, representing the *homoousios* humanity in solidarity *with humanity* should be of no surprise. I recall the first time I saw an Easter pageant at a black church. That Jesus was *black* shocked my sensibilities. But who else would play Jesus in a black church? How else would he be represented? What else would he be?

So why does this matter? And why does it matter for evangelical pastors and leaders? It matters not merely because the history of Jesus’ rendering matters. We’ve got plenty of resources—from Larry Hurtado to Tom Wright to Michael Bird; we’ve got the actual biblical text to know that Jesus wasn’t white. We’ve got NT scholarship aplomb to show us the first century Jesus of Nazareth and what may be known about him. But this doesn’t mean that depictions of him are done, especially in various epic Hollywood imagings. From Cecil B. DeMille to Mel Gibson to Mark Burnett and Roma Downey—these aren’t going away. On some accounts of theologians, these imagings are indeed reflection at some level on the actual substance—the real Jesus.

And this is precisely why pastors and leaders should be familiar with these various cultural expositions, which themselves remain expositions rather than the real Jesus. In an essay written fifty years ago Robert Detweiler made this point (“Christ and the Christ Figure in American Fiction” in *New Theology No. 2* [ed. Martin E. Marty and Dean G. Peerman; New York: Macmillan, 1965], 297–316), arguing that controversy in American society ensues when readers equate the fictional Jesus with the Christ of Faith, the man Jesus or Christ the Redeemer. The point is well made there, and yet there is something of closer, more faithful expositions of the NT, first-century Jesus that need to be rendered. And therein, believers will find their own forms of critical, constructive, reflective commentary on this Jesus who, by the grace of God, we will find looking just like us, suffering with us, and making the way for our healing. But additionally, we will not only find him being expounded in ways that look just like us—he will also be expounded in ways that render him looking just like every tribe, tongue, nation, and people.

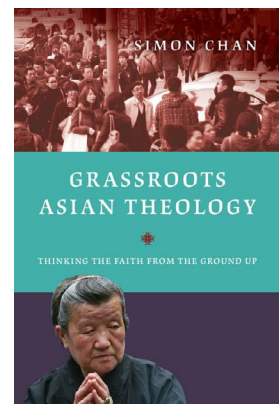
It’s for these reasons, and for a deeper sense of the injustices occurring when Jesus’ image is opted that American pastors and leaders especially ought to assimilate Blum and Harvey’s research into their understanding of race issues in U.S. history; this book has become a staple in U.S. History courses in American universities. (NB: the recent controversy from a withdrawn review in the *Economist* of Cornell historian Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* [New York: Basic, 2014], highlights that race issues in American history remain deeply misunderstood.) But *The Color of Christ* is also significant for introducing theology students to this massively significant matter when teaching Christology. The fact is that in most cultures Jesus has been imaged in various ways. These will all have varying degrees of faithfulness to the biblical text and varying depths and forms of meaning in particular communities. But it is in these various contexts, such as that of Ms. Kelly of Fox News, that the biblical Jesus stands ready to both correct, subvert, and fulfill as the true Savior of all.

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Simon Chan. *Grassroots Asian Theology: Thinking the Faith from the Ground Up*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014. 217 pp. \$22.00.

In *Grassroots Asian Theology*, Simon Chan offers the church a timely challenge. His “main focus is on how theology ought to be done” in contrast to the way that theology is typically done for non-Western contexts (p. 8). He suggests the problem with many “Asian theologies” is that their themes and emphases derive from “elite theologians” (Chan’s term), [who] tend to impose their views on the grassroots and read their contexts selectively” (p. 28). These theologians do not sufficiently consider the larger Christian community and thus suppose that their assumptions and ideas represent a particular strand of “Asian” theology. Thus, he says, “what passes as Asian theology tends to be confined to a limited number of themes and theologians” (p. 23).

Instead, Chan argues that theologizing is a community affair. Thus, Asian theology should reflect both the concerns of local cultures and the insights of the historical church. By



listening to a broader range of voices, we can avoid two common yet problematic extremes. On the one hand, he says some (in the manner of Paul Tillich) talk about abstract principles and generalities, which are more conducive to inter-religious dialogue. On the other hand, he points to Barth as typifying an approach that could easily overemphasize historical particulars. Naturally, many fear that the latter could reduce Christianity's apparent relevance to all the world's cultures.

Chan suggests a few potential organizing principles for an Asian theology. He agrees that a narrative approach is "typically evangelical," yet he claims, "A more adequate way of organizing an Asian theology is to center it in the doctrine of the triune God as the divine family" (p. 42). From this starting point, we can explain sin as "an affront on God's honor (Anselm) and an act that dishonors the family name" (p. 44). Also, "Salvation is the restoration of one's standing in the family" (p. 45). Accordingly, he concludes, the church becomes a far more central aspect of our theology. He offers other suggestions as to how this perspective helps solve various theological and missiological tensions.

Many will applaud Chan's diagnosis of a key problem facing the modern church; however, he might find less agreement when it comes to the particular way of solving the problem. Perhaps the greatest concern for this reviewer is the fact that Chan is virtually silent when it comes to the role of *exegesis* (or biblical interpretation). As a systematic theologian, he approaches the question of "Asian theology" similarly. Consequently, his presentation suggests that theology finds its orientation around the readers' questions. Although Chan is an evangelical theologian, readers could easily mistake his meaning. For instance, he says, "Scripture sets the initial trajectory for the subsequent development of doctrine in the Christian tradition. There is no separation between Scripture and tradition since Scripture is apostolic tradition" (p. 14).

Of course, Chan would affirm that one's theological answers should come from the Bible. My concern however is simply that he gives little guidance as to how the biblical author's original meaning and context should shape and even alter the questions that we ask. Might there be instances where the biblical authors provide a better starting point for Asian theology than those suggested by modern readers?

Furthermore, Chan's theological conclusions need further defense and explanation. For example, he speaks of the "triune God as the divine family." After talking about the Father and Son, he has little to say about how the Holy Spirit fits into that particular analogy. To be sure, much of the book gives sustained attention to the Holy Spirit, yet that discussion stems from a different beginning point. He notes that Pentecostalism is widespread around the world. Practically speaking, it appears that this observation grounds his proposed prescription for Asian theology. In particular, Chan's presentation seems to offer Pentecostal Christianity as the solution for a genuinely Asian theology. His defense of that thesis is cursory and underdeveloped. As a result, readers may be left with more questions than answers. According to Chan, could non-"Pentecostal" theologies be regarded as "Asian"?

In addition, a few other things may detract from the book's otherwise helpful argument. Chan continually contrasts grassroots Christians and "elitist theologians." The "elitist" verbiage has rather pejorative overtones and is not constructive for building unity between lay Christians and academic theologians who seek to serve the church. Also, some readers may be distracted by the consistent emphasis on inter-cultural dialogue. Chan denies that such dialogue is the standard for good theology; nevertheless, it is not always easy to understand his precise meaning regarding the relationship between dialogue and a sound theological method.

Overall, *Grassroots Asian Theology* is a timely and welcomed contribution to various evangelical discussions. Chan serves the church well by raising many important issues that all too easily get overlooked. He states, “For if the living faith of the people of God (the living tradition) is the locus of primary theology, it is vital that the church’s theology reflect that faith” (p. 30). He reminds us that theology is a community activity. Theologizing requires us to depend on the Spirit and listen to the local, global, and historical church. Furthermore, he challenges us to humbly reconsider how our own cultural lens influences the way we read the Bible.

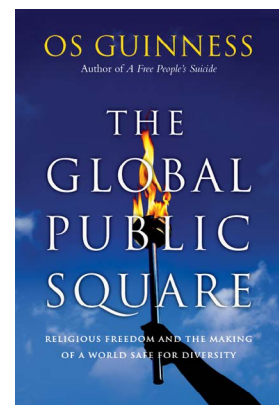
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Os Guinness. *The Global Public Square: Religious Freedom and the Making of a World Safe for Diversity*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2013. 240 pp. \$16.00.

Os Guinness’s *The Global Public Square* is a full-throated, compelling manifesto for the recognition of the central place of religious liberty, or “soul freedom,” in the contemporary world. As Guinness puts it, “Soul freedom is the inviolable freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief that alone does full justice to the dictates of our humanity” (p. 14). Contrary to the accounts of many academics and policy analysts in the twentieth century, religious adherence is increasing across the globe, and leaders in governments, churches, businesses, universities, and media outlets must come to grips with this phenomenon.

Guinness effectively points to both the short-term benefits and the long-term need for increased respect for the foundational significance of soul freedom for free societies. Soul freedom, as Guinness understands it, following leading lights such as Roger Williams, John Milton, and the American founders, comprehends the widest possible variety of belief and practice: “Soul freedom includes all ultimate beliefs and worldviews, whether religious or nonreligious, transcendent or naturalistic” (p. 29). More recent touchstones for Guinness’s argument include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Global Charter of Conscience (2012). The former serves as a constant reference for Guinness’s study, while the text of the latter is included as an appendix in the volume. Guinness closes each chapter by asking a series of recurring and penetrating questions, including, “What does it say of us and our times that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights could not be passed today?” (e.g., p. 44).

The vision that Guinness articulates and defends is that of a hearty, generous, and powerful future for the global community. And yet it is only a possible future, one fraught with danger from religious zealotry and secularist fanaticism. Guinness calls his readers of goodwill to the responsibility “to lay the foundations for what could be history’s first truly multifaith, international society of nations, and a genuinely new world order that is worthy of the global era” (p. 46). This international society must, contends Guinness, be founded upon the bedrock of soul freedom, recognizing the inherent dignity of the human person and his or her free response to the deepest convictions of the human heart. Thus, writes Guinness, “Freedom of religion and belief affirms the dignity, worth and agency of every human person by freeing us to align ‘who we understand ourselves to be’ with ‘what we believe ultimately is,’ and then to think, live, speak and act in line with those convictions” (p. 69).



One of Guinness's recurring strains is that one person's right is also the right of the other, and both together share a responsibility to recognize and exercise those rights in ways that foster community and civility. Guinness wades bravely into the treacherous waters of modern rights discourse, acknowledging the complexity of the difficulties and sharing a starting point with U.S. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, who once said, "The right to swing my fist ends where the other man's nose begins."

If *The Global Public Square* is long on principle for the truly pluralistic respect for religious liberty, it is rather short on practical guidance for adjudicating conflicts of rights claims and religious practice. At one point, for instance, Guinness describes the limits of toleration in a liberal society by observing, "Someone is free to believe in paganism, for example, but not to sacrifice an animal or another human being" (p. 70). Here Guinness helpfully distinguishes between belief and practice, the former of which cannot be circumscribed from without but the latter of which must be bounded in some kind of legal structure. There is no explicit description of any principle, however, that would allow us to distinguish why a truly liberal (free) society could not allow animal sacrifice. According to Guinness's own program, the society that respects soul freedom the most would in principle allow the greatest diversity of religious activity, stopping short of "the other man's nose," so to speak. This would include practices that many, if not most, of a population would find odious, superstitious, or otherwise disgusting or uncivilized. It is easier to see how a system of rights might disallow human sacrifice than animal sacrifice, for instance. "No free exercise for Aztecs," as William Galston of the Brookings Institution has put it. But on what principled basis are we to make such judgments?

This is not a book where one will find much guidance for making such judgments, which are in any case the subject matter of endless pages of academic debate. What one will find in this study, however, is a powerful articulation of why such serious and sustained deliberation is absolutely essential to a free and flourishing society. Thus, writes Guinness, "We are the heirs of the many centuries of determined if never fully successful experiments in freedom and justice, and we would be careless beyond all excuse if we were to turn our backs on both the present and the future, and squander such a heritage in the present generation" (p. 194). In the end, it seems, we must have faith not only in God, but in the system that respects soul freedom itself, in order for us to be responsible stewards of the modern legacy we have inherited.

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Kok, Jakobus, Tobias Nicklas, Dieter R. Roth, and Christopher M. Hays, eds. *Sensitivity towards Outsiders: Exploring the Dynamic Relationship between Mission and Ethics in the New Testament and Early Christianity*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2.364. Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen, 2014. vi + 665 pp. £114.44/\$189.00.

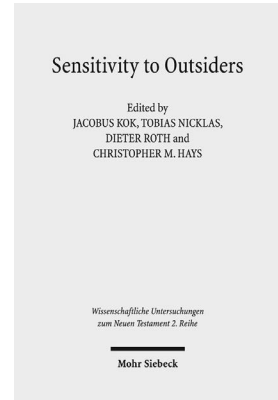
Sensitivity towards Outsiders is an edited collection of papers originally offered at the Prestige FOKUS Lectures on Mission and Ethics held at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. Taking place twice a decade, these lectures attempt to provide “cutting-edge research for the benefit of academy, church, and society by bringing developed-world and developing-world scholars together in mutual learning experiences” (p. v). The research question guiding all twenty-nine essays “centered on the role that identity, ethos, and implicit ethics played in the missionary dimension of the early church” (p. xi).

The editors of the volume note how it is a common assumption that the early Christian movement was populated by converts who had experienced an abrupt and radical change in life, such that social relationships where individuals once had been “insiders” now, as a result of conversion, were reclassified as “outsiders.” A means of accessing this new identity has been funded by the social-scientific model of Social Identity Theory (SIT). Accordingly, identity formation depends on stereotypical categories of “insider” and “outsider,” demarcation of which leads to group formation and maintenance by means of inclusive and exclusive boundary markers. Such markers functioned to keep some out (exclusive boundary markers) and others in (inclusive boundary markers).

Careful to avoid methodological oversimplification, the editors probe SIT’s assertion that identity is formulated primarily by defining oneself against the “other.” A model dependent on conflict may distort Christian identity formation by highlighting differentiation—identity *by means of* “what we are not.” The editors note the problem with understanding conversion as “always includ[ing] a radical and complete turning from one religion to another” (p. 7). Rather “the boundaries between insiders and outsiders were perhaps rather complicated, especially when considered with attention to Dialogical Self Theory” (p. 8). Dialogical Self Theory (DST) arises from a growing dissatisfaction with SIT and asks the question of whether early Christians definitively moved from one “group” into another “group” as a result of conversion. Individuals are able to hold a variety of identities together in a coherent fashion (mother, sister, daughter) and, with those identities, a number of loyalties. With this methodologically nuanced approach the essays consciously address the dynamic relationship between mission and ethics in the way early Christians “constructed and reconstructed social and theological boundaries in their attempts to *shape/direct* the readers’ thought (and actions) regarding sensitivity towards outsiders” (p. 9, emphasis original).

The first section of the volume (pp. 27–78) focuses on sensitivity toward “outsiders” in the OT and Philo of Alexandria. Ehrhard Gerstenberger and Dirk Human both consider the OT and its complex perspective regarding inclusivity and exclusivity. Gert Steyn’s essay reflects on Philo’s reading of the OT keeping in view personal relationships with outsiders.

The bulk of the volume (pp. 81–417) dedicates sixteen essays to the topic of “Sensitivity towards Outsiders, Mission, and Ethics in the New Testament.” These contributions focus primarily on the Gospels and Paul, with individual essays on Hebrews, James, and Revelation. Dieter Roth considers



missionary ethics in Q and Ernest van Eck takes up a postcolonial and social scientific reading of Mark highlighting patronage as a means of showing compassion to “outsiders.” Andreies van Aarde offers an essay on “Righteousness: Paul and Matthew,” yet focuses primarily on Paul’s notion of righteousness in Romans as indicative of God’s intervention on behalf of the poor. Heike Omerzu explores the changing relationship between mission and ethics in Luke–Acts concluding, with the aid of SIT, that in Luke, social boundaries mark believers off from others by means of in-group bias and stereotyping. Andreas Köstenberger, arguing against the notion that Johannine literature generally takes a sectarian stance toward outsiders, demonstrates the connection between mission and ethics in John’s Gospel and Letters where the focus “on love, unity, sacrificial service, and mission, grounded in the love ethic” is brought to a climax in the life and death of Jesus Christ (p. 184).

Turing to Paul, Bert-Jan Lietaert Peerbolte and the co-authored essay by Tobias Nicklas and Herbert Schlögel both take up the construction of Christian identity in the context of Pauline ethics, while Andrie du Toit considers the issue of sensitivity toward others as demonstrated in early Christian paraenetic literature of the NT in general. Abraham Malherbe considers the connection between the newly proclaimed gospel at Thessalonica and its ethical implications for how these new believers treated their neighbors. Jeremy Punt and John Dunne both focus on Galatians as a window onto mission, ethics, and identity in Paul. Dunne argues that the missional identity to which the Galatians are called (Messianic suffering) serves to distinguish “insider” from “outsider.” First and Second Corinthians are taken in turn by Ruben Zimmermann and Volker Rabens. Rabens considers whether 2 Corinthians portrays the whole world as the “in-group” with no contrasting “out-groups” from which the reconciled community are separated. He concludes there is a tension-filled reality where reconciliation between God and the cosmos has already taken place, yet Paul invites individuals to enter a new group by accepting this reconciliation and thus creating a new group identity.

Rounding out this section, David Moffitt explores how the author of Hebrews constructs the identity of his audience in the context of eschatological expectation such that Hebrews highlights the internal concerns for perseverance and purity, while implicitly silent toward outsiders. Stephan Joubert demonstrates that even James, a text purported to be sectarian, takes up a concern for the church’s missionary identity through enduring trials and the church’s missionary action through hospitality toward strangers. Finally, Christopher Rowland considers how the book of Revelation problematizes notions of “insiders” and “outsiders” as the book “challenges . . . listeners to opt for the way and the values of the ultimate in preference to the penultimate, which pretends it is ultimate” (p. 401).

Part three (pp. 421–565), “Sensitivity towards Outsiders, Mission, and Ethics in Early Church,” consists of seven essays taking up *1–2 Clement*, *Didache*, *Diognetus*, the writings of Ignatius, the *Acts of the Martyrs*, and John Chrysostom. And finally, in part four (pp. 569–635), three essays focus on contemporary implications, including mission to and provision for the poor (Christopher M. Hays), the notion of missional ecclesiology (Nelus Niemandt), and responsible global citizenship (Johann-Albrecht Meylahn).

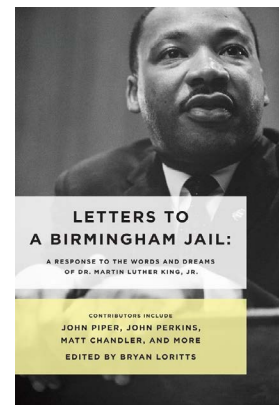
The difficulty, as is common in such volumes, is the lack of cohesiveness among the essays. The collection identifies a clear and illuminating research question (see above); however, with such a variety of disciplines (OT, NT, Early Church, Missiology, Practical Theology, and Catholic Moral Theology) and methodologies (essays take up either SIT or DST, and, in some cases, neither) the overall work lacks coherence. Yet, in the end, this is not a problem as the aim of the work is “to illustrate and explore the plurality of early Christian voices and the *dynamic relationship* between mission and ethics (inclusivity,

exclusivity, and sensitivity to outsiders or the lack thereof)” (p. 10). The juxtaposition of essays in the volume does demonstrate the “plurality of early Christian voices,” yet, to some degree, this plurality also illustrates the various concerns of modern scholarship. The introduction provides a helpful and nuanced primer on social identity and several of the essays exhibit careful exegetical sensibility in conjunction with nuanced social-scientific approaches. This collection will serve as a quality reference for interdisciplinary analysis of mission, ethics, and early Christian identity and will be especially useful to PhD students and researchers in these fields.

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Bryan Loritts, ed. *Letters to a Birmingham Jail: A Response to the Words and Dreams of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* Chicago: Moody, 2014. 240 pp. \$15.99.

In April 1963, the great American civil rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr., was unjustly thrown into jail at the hands of a malevolent system, oppressing those who dared to expose the evils of its racial iniquities. King’s exercise of his rights to decry oppression landed him in a cold jail in Birmingham. While imprisoned, he saw a headline in the local newspaper entitled, “White Clergyman Urge Local Negroes to Withdraw from Demonstrations.” Using the margins of a newspaper, King scribbled a response, which became his prophetic piece, “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” This letter became one of the most critical texts in the burgeoning American civil rights movement. Some fifty years later, a team of racially diverse evangelical ministers has come together to offer a new generation needed reflection on this historic prison epistle. Under the leadership of editor Bryan Loritts, these men compiled various chapters that formed the present book.



The book opens with a powerful chapter by the renowned racial reconciliation leader John Perkins, which reads as a personal letter to Dr. King. Rather candidly and vulnerably, Perkins shares his own story as one who was victimized by the evils of racism in our country. His testimony shatters the romanticism of those who would anachronistically Christianize American history, exposing the injustices of white oppression in our land and history, while providing readers with an optimistic hope of the power of the gospel to grant forgiveness in our hearts toward oppressors and also renew society. In the second chapter, the format of the book transitions: all subsequent chapters start with a brief letter to Dr. King (following Perkins’s lead), and then transition into the pastoral reflections of the given author of the chapter.

In the second chapter, John Piper frankly shares with King his sincere desire that the civil rights leader “had made the biblical gospel clearer” (p. 56) in his works. Piper thanks the civil rights leader for his sacrifices and moves into his own pastoral reflections on how the power of King’s theology combined with the centrality of God, Scripture and the gospel stands today as a means for experiencing genuine ethnic/racial diversity and justice. In the third chapter, Crawford Loritts Jr.—an African American pastor of a predominantly white church—speaks of his “profound debt of gratitude” (p. 74) to King and offers readers his personal “progress report” (p. 76) of what has transpired since the famous letter

from Birmingham. Loritts's stories are heart-wrenching, recounting evils of white oppression in our country and the silence of white churches in decrying racism. The ensuing chapters likewise share this sentiment, further unpacking through personal stories the evils of the past and the current blindness of the majority culture.

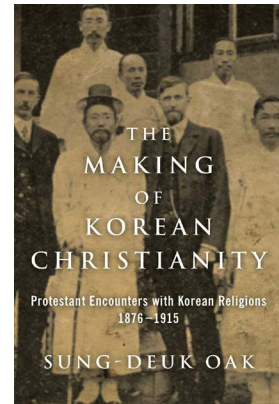
In addition to the blindness of the majority culture, the authors challenge the readers to see the impaired vision of the evangelical church. In chapter four, John Bryson observes that, "We live in an incredibly racialized society Ugly parts of American history need to be owned, acknowledged, and ought to lead us to ask for forgiveness and repent" (109). Bryan Loritts writes in the fifth chapter about how "the church of Jesus Christ has been entrenched in homogeneity" (p. 124), failing to not only see the scars of racism, but also the power of Christ to transform the church. In the sixth chapter Sandy Willson thanks King for the "trails you blazed" (p. 132) and unpacks the long journey ahead, given the current reality of racialization in our country and in our churches. Albert Tate's chapter then opens by quoting King's comment that Sundays "[on] the 11a.m. hour is the most segregated hour of the week" (p. 152) and moves to recount stories of utter blindness among his white peers in Christian college and in local church ministry. In the eighth chapter, Charlie Dates calls on readers to see how "American evangelicalism . . . is yet unrepentant of its sin of segregation" (p. 171). In the ninth chapter, Matt Chandler offers readers a theology of diversity for the church in light of the gospel of Jesus. The book closes in the tenth chapter by addressing the challenge of multiethnic ministry in light of the current context of American evangelicalism, where the homogenous unit principle (HUP) seems to have given evangelicals permission to function under *de facto* segregation.

There is much to be gleaned from this excellent book. The personal stories are sobering and the wisdom of the authors is priceless. Constructively, readers may long for more pragmatic application and theological depth. Pragmatically, the book offers little by way of systems for clergy looking for a how-to manual, which personally is refreshing to me. It is a healthy move on the editor's part to refrain from simplistic formulas, as this needs to be wrestled with by church leaders in local contexts. Theologically, the chapters will leave the readers longing for more interaction. The book could have been strengthened by including a number of additional black theologians in the evangelical tradition (e.g., Vincent Bacote, Bruce Fields, Ralph Watkins, Joy Moore, Craig Mitchell, etc.), as well as including interactions with theologies of race (e.g., J. Kameron Carter's fine book, *Race: A Theological Account* [Oxford: OUP, 2008]). That said, the book is certainly theological and aimed to stir practical application. Moody Press and editor Bryan Loritts should be applauded for this outstanding and accessible text. It is a gift to the evangelical church and hopefully a conversation-starter for having a long overdue and frank discussion in the church.

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Sung-Deuk Oak. *The Making of Korean Christianity: Protestant Encounters with Korean Religions, 1876–1915*. Edited by Joel A. Carpenter. Studies in World Christianity. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013. 437 pp. £58.50/\$69.95.

The author of this book is Dongsoo Im and Mija Im Chair Associate Professor of Korean Christianity at University of California, Los Angeles. This monograph is a slightly revised and updated version of a Th.D. dissertation submitted to Boston University in 2002. The original title reveals more succinctly the purpose of this study: “The indigenization of Christianity in Korea: North American Missionaries’ Attitudes towards Korean Religions, 1884–1910.” In revising, Oak has slightly expanded the period of inquiry. The period set forth earlier represents two landmark events: 1884, the initial arrival of Protestant North American missionaries (Henry G. Appenzeller and Horace G. Underwood) and 1910, the Japanese annexation. Readers are, however, left mystified as to what the new scope stands for.



In an attempt to challenge the traditional and wide-held understanding that “the first-generation North American missionaries and Korean Protestant Christians” were “fundamentalist destroyers of Korean religious cultures,” Oak argues that they were rather “moderate evangelicals whose fulfillment theory paved the way for the indigenization of Protestant Christianity in Korea” (p. xvii). The early Anglo-missionaries and native Christian leaders were sensitive to the indigenous culture and religions while maintaining their conservative theological identity.

The Introduction provides a brief history of research into the early Korean Protestantism. This period generally reflects theological conservatism and cultural imperialism among early North American missionaries in Korea. Over against that conventional backdrop, Oak proceeds to his main thesis.

In chapter 1, he attributes the formation of Hananim, the Korean appellation of the Christian God, to the missionaries’ adaptation of ancient Chinese and Korean folk religions that worshipped the monotheistic divine being—i.e., Shangdi of China and especially Whanin of Korea. The national birth myth of Korea, the Tan’goun legend, resembles the Christian soteriological account to some extent with Trinitarian and incarnation elements, and thus providing germane points of contact.

The second chapter delineates how the soteriological symbol, the cross, and Protestant eschatology were infused in the late nineteenth-century context of the messianic and end-time expectation of the Korean populace. Troubled by the dire situation, some Korean Christian leaders interpreted the two popular eschatological traditions (*Chönggamnok* and *kaebyök*) as precursors to the Christian messianism. The cross took on the meaning of the eschatological refugee place as envisaged by *Chönggamnok*, purportedly a fourteenth-century prophetic book that predicted the coming of a savior figure.

The third chapter addresses the matter of “spirits” in two respects. On one hand, missionaries corrected the animistic worldview and strictly forbade the demon worship (*kut*) including spirit fetishes and talismans. One of the most ostensible demarcations of Christian proselytization was to renounce and abandon these idolatrous items and to acknowledge the superiority of Christ over all other indigenous spirits. On the other hand, missionaries began to accept the supernatural reality of demon-possession, which in their home country was dismissed as a superstition of the pre-enlightenment era.

The fourth chapter recounts the early Korean adaptation of the ancestor worship into a Christianized memorial service, *Ch’udohoe*. Fervent confrontation of ancestor worship in the early mission history

provoked a series of grave conflicts at times resulting in a large-scale martyrdom. By 1897, inspired by an American memorial service, some Korean leaders began to develop a contextualized and legitimate ancestor memorial service. Without impinging on the idolatrous elements of *chosang-chesa* (ancestor worship), this new form of service alleviated the negative public portrayal of Christianity and at the same time satisfied Korean Christians of the longing for filial veneration that had been deeply cultivated by the Confucius tradition.

The fifth chapter points to the receptivity of Korean Christianity toward the Chinese Christian literary influence. The final chapter sets out to delve into the birth of one of the most distinctly Korean Christian expressions: early dawn prayer meeting. Although early morning has been regarded as an important hour for individual devotion (e.g., by Judaism, monastery traditions, reformers, and even modern Pietists), it is the early Korean Christianity that set it up as a public gathering of the local church. Kil Sŏnju, probably the most significant Korean Christian leader at the turn of the twentieth century, was responsible for institutionalizing “early dawn prayer meeting” as a daily corporate gathering which has become a norm for virtually all Korean congregations not only in Korea but all over the world.

Despite its convincing analysis of myriads of historical data, a few minor questions are in order. First, I am not entirely sure that the formation of early dawn prayer meeting is a result of Daoist influence. A more plausible case could be made on the basis of a Korean penchant for communal orientation and passionate zeal since early devotion has been a common feature in various Korean religious groups. Second, theological fundamentalism seems to be grossly misrepresented. It is not conservatism that negates the supernatural reality such as demon-possession or casting out of evil spirits, but a rationalistic worldview. Third, it might not be a moderate theological stance that was in play when missionaries searched for points of contact in indigenous religions for more effective means of evangelism but utilitarian pragmatism that allowed them to work with the existing religious frameworks. These quibbles aside, this study is a significant contribution to the topic it covers. A wealth of historical data from the turn of the last century on the formation of Korean Christianity is meticulously presented and carefully analyzed. Serious students interested in that area will have to consult with this book. An inquisitive mind will be pleasantly surprised to find many fascinating anecdotes of early missionary accounts.

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Nick J. Watson and Andrew Parker, eds. *Sports and Christianity: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. Routledge Research in Sport, Culture and Society. New York: Routledge, 2013. xiii + 314 pp. \$125.

Theologians have largely ignored sports. This is shocking in light of the prominent place of sports in contemporary culture and the ubiquity of games throughout human history. Thankfully scholars have taken notice and in the last half-decade there has been a budding interest in the relationship between sports and faith. *Sports and Christianity* seeks to analyze historical perspectives on sports (part 1) and advance the conversation by addressing contemporary issues for Christians in sports (part 2). This important book offers not only a synthesis of sport-and-faith scholarship, but also essays by several of its key players.

The first chapter, written by the editors, surveys modern scholarship on sports and Christianity and suggests further areas of research. For anyone who is new to the field of sports scholarship, this essay is a perfect place to start. The authors summarize the history of the conversation and explain the key issues involved. I am tempted to say that the first chapter alone is worth the price of the book but, then again, the book costs over \$100.

First, the authors survey the history of recent scholarship. Michael Novak's seminal work *The Joy of Sports*, first published in 1967, was the first systematic study of the sport-faith interface. Since this opening whistle, there have been several key players who have advanced the conversation; namely, Shirl Hoffman, Robert Higgs, Joseph Price, William Baker, and James Mathisen, and Lincoln Harvey.

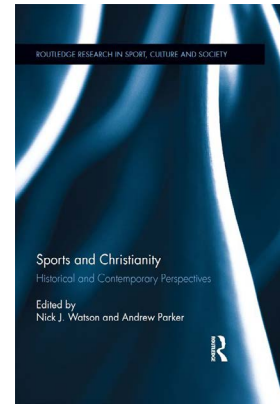
The authors then discuss the most significant topics in sport and Christianity. The place to begin is with a theology of play. In 1950 J. Huizinga clarified the unique place for play in the life of humanity. The Catholic theologian Karl Rahner then theologized the conversation by rooting humanity's impulse to play in God himself, who is the "ultimate player." To play is to enjoy God's creation in a creative and celebratory way as an end in and of itself; it is nonutilitarian. In this sense, a theology of play has the potential to combat the Greek dualism that has often pervaded Christianity.

Historically, sport and Christianity were brought together in the strongest way through Victorian "muscular Christianity" (1850–). This term refers to the Christian use of sports as a way to form character and virtue. As opposed to seeing sport as an intrinsic good, muscular Christianity approaches sport as an instrument; sport can be a classroom for morality.

Sport is more than play. Add competition, and a game becomes a contest. Competition is not necessarily incompatible with a Christian love ethic, but when taken to extremes it can have negative results. The "win-at-all-costs" culture that pervades sports today comes with a high ethical price (i.e., performance enhancing drugs).

Lastly the authors mention several suggested areas of further research in this young field, such as theological analysis of disability sport, the use of prayer in sport, and the theory and practice of sports chaplaincy. The chapter concludes with a table summarizing various data for sports and Christianity and a thirty-two-page bibliography for further research.

In chapter 2 Victor C. Pfitzner asks, "Was St. Paul a Sports Enthusiast?" After a brief survey of Paul's use of athletic metaphors, Pfitzner lays out the debate regarding whether Paul's athletic language reveals that he was genuinely following the sports of the day or whether he was appealing to the philosophical



tradition of using athletic imagery to discuss virtue. According to Pfitzner, the answer is both, and Paul specifically uses sports metaphors to subvert the triumphalistic culture from which they were borrowed.

In chapter 3 Hugh McLeod surveys “Sport and Religion in England, c. 1790–1914.” Up until the 1840s sports and religion were seen as contrary in England, but from 1850 forward sports were recognized as a potential tool for character formation and evangelism (the movement known as “Muscular Christianity,” namely because sports became a realm for forming strong godly men). Tension soon emerged between sport and faith, however, as a result of four factors: the professionalization of sports, gambling, time, and sports as a new religion. This era of sports was significant because it was the beginning of the modern world of sports.

In chapter 4 Shirl Hoffman furthers the story by showing how in America the social gospel movement used sports as a tool for morality and justice, while evangelicals began using sports largely as a means of evangelism. Hoffman argues that evangelicals have emphasized winning to the point of sacrificing ethics and morality, while at the same time focusing so much on sports as a tool that they imbibe cultural assumptions and lose the joy of sport itself.

In chapter 5 Robert Higgs proposes that sports can be analyzed by reflecting on who sports performers are and how their identities create and reflect cultural values.

In chapter 6 Nick J. Watson proffers “Special Olympians as a ‘Prophetic Sign’ to the Modern Sporting Babel.” In a fascinating and convincing essay, Watson argues two strong points: (1) professional sports are largely idolatrous, imbibing cultural values and ideologies that are ungodly, and (2) special Olympians can be a prophetic sign of God’s kingdom in the current age. In other words, special Olympians expose the worst of big-business professional sports and point towards the good in sports that is rooted in God’s created order.

In chapter 7, Tracy J. Trothen addresses “The Technoscience Enhancement Debate in Sports.” Where does one draw the line between a good enhancement and one that is unethical? Trothen approaches the question from a post-modern feminist perspective that appeals to divine transcendence. According to Trothen, sport is a type of religion, another way of experiencing the sacred. When a player is “in the zone” they are experiencing transcendence. In a more controversial argument (one that leans heavily on the panentheistic theology of Jürgen Moltmann), Trothen avers that the relational transcendental of God will lead to questioning imposed human constructs such as gender and embrace diversity in its fullness.

In chapter 8 Jacob L. Goodson offers “a virtue-centered approach for making judgments on the use of steroids within Major League Baseball” (p. 225). Baseball, according to Goodson, is a journey where the virtues developed along the way are ultimate over the goal of a World Series. This virtue-centered approach, where sacrifice and teamwork are held in high regard, offers a different critique against steroids that serve the individual over against the team. Such an approach demands a shift from Aristotle’s magnanimous man who is a self-sufficient hero to the magnanimous team, built on friendship and sacrifice.

In chapter 9 Kevin Lixey discusses “The Vatican’s Game Plan for Maximizing Sport’s Educational Potential.” Lixey demonstrates that the Catholic Church views sports as a gift from God and therefore can play the following roles in the life of the church. First, play is an antidote to apathy. Second, healthy competition helps to excel. Third, sports can be a great educational tool in forming character.

In chapter 10 Scott Kretchmar discusses the compatibility of “Hard-Won Sporting Achievements and Spiritual Humility.” Can humility and competitive sports coexist? In short, according to Kretchmar,

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sports and humility *can* coincide, although he thinks that modern sports are not the best place to cultivate humility.

So is this book worth the \$100 price tag? Should the true scholar-athlete buy the book or a new pair of Nikes? I'd say buy the Nikes, but then run as fast as you can to a good library and read this book (and especially the first chapter). It is an excellent contribution to the field.

Jeremy R. Treat

Reality LA

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