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## BOOK REVIEWS

**A. Djaballah, *Les Paraboles Aujourd'hui: Visages de Dieu et images du Royaume*. Québec: La Clarière, 1994.**

Chefs-d'oeuvre littéraires, ces simples petites histoires de Jésus ont laissé leurs traces dans l'histoire de l'Eglise. Mais comment faut-il lire les paraboles? Faut-il leur faire subir des interprétations allégoriques sans fin, ou bien les considérer comme des illustrations des prédications? Comment retrouver le 'mordant' des paraboles à notre époque? Cette étude, qui comble une grande lacune dans le monde évangélique de langue française, fait voir les difficultés et pièges qu'il faut surmonter et déjouer pour bien interpréter ces récits pénétrants du Maître "paraboleur." S'appuyant sur une vaste littérature principalement française, anglaise et allemande, ainsi que sur des recherches littéraires et socio-culturelles modernes, le professeur de théologie systématique et doyen de la Faculté de théologie évangélique de Montréal guide le lecteur à travers le paysage riche de l'enseignement parabolique du Rabbín de Nazareth, afin de lui faire découvrir le coeur de son message.

Comme le suggère le titre, *Les Paraboles aujourd'hui: visages de Dieu et images du Royaume*, l'auteur soutient la thèse que, simples histoires à première vue, les discours paraboliques de Jésus doivent être lus dans une double perspective: d'une part, celle d'un Dieu qui, à la fois nous surprend et bouleverse nos valeurs, et d'autre part, celle du Règne de Dieu avec ses implications et ses exigences. Cette conviction est soutenue par une exégèse compétente à laquelle la majorité de l'ouvrage est consacrée. Par ce fait, ces récits sont remis dans le contexte plus large de la mission de Jésus qui, en sa personne et son ministère, nous fait rencontrer Dieu et la réalité de son Règne. Voilà donc une "théologie" qui rend les paraboles plus accessibles. C'est un plaisir de voir un auteur évangélique parler si longuement du Royaume de Dieu.

Les paraboles ont pour fonction de véhiculer des "visages de Dieu et images du Royaume" que Jésus voulait dévoiler. Il s'agit d'un moyen de communication puissant par lequel Jésus avait l'intention de se faire comprendre. C'est pourquoi Djaballah préfère dire que la parabole fonctionne comme "procédé dialogique." Procédé qui valorise la liberté de l'auditeur et l'invite à une prise de position vis-à-vis de Jésus et de son

ministère. Le côté relationnel est donc mis en valeur contrairement à la majorité des commentateurs, qui mettent plutôt l'accent soit sur le "procédé pédagogique" (intellectuel), soit sur la fonction polémique ("armes de combat" dans des situations de conflit). En ce faisant, Djaballah s'appuie admirablement sur une "nouvelle thèse" par laquelle il cherche à compléter les deux autres approches. Son approche est rafraîchissante et mérite notre attention.

Le résultat est une étude sérieuse et profondément évangélique sur les plans exégétique, théologique et pastoral. L'auteur a évidemment "fait ses devoirs", comme le montrent la bibliographie d'une dizaine de pages (très à jour) et les vingt pour cent du livre consacrés aux notes en bas de page (une riche source de renvois et de dialogues avec des interprètes majeurs de la proclamation de Jésus). Dans toute cette démarche, le pasteur n'est pas oublié. Le travail exégétique sur chaque récit se termine par des pistes de réflexion et d'application très utiles. De plus, la dernière partie de l'ouvrage nous invite (et suggère comment y parvenir!) à poursuivre notre propre démarche parabolique afin de mieux faire passer ces "visages de Dieu et images du Royaume" autour de nous. Les éditions de la Clarière (dans la collection Sentier) ont ainsi réussi à publier une excellente étude qui sera la bienvenue pour le pasteur et l'étudiant sérieux de la Bible.

McTair Wall,  
Paris, France.

**Michael Peterson, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach and David Basinger, eds., *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*. Oxford University Press, 1996, 578 pages.**

What is the character of religious encounter and how far does interpretation factor into it? Is faith responsible to the constraints of reason? How are we to think, for example, about God's existence, eternity, knowledge and power? What is the gist of the several supposed proofs for God? How forceful is the problem of evil and replies to it? How about the case for and against attested supernatural acts of God? Must our persuasion of God, if it is rational, be based on other beliefs to which we can confidently appeal?

In what way and how adequately does language concerning God refer? How may we conceive of ongoing mental operations by one whose brain matter has in death ceased functioning? How should we relate faith convictions and the enterprise of empirical research? What response is most appropriate to the plurality of faith traditions? Is God really required for moral accountability? Can central Christian tenets like incarnation and atonement be defended by logical analysis or refined by intuitive scrutiny? Welcome to some sustained deliberation on such questions.

This publication signals that its field has not only regained a strong academic profile but has become an area of burgeoning interest. The newcomer ranks every bit as worthy a reference as three other quite comparable collections on the subject (edited by Wms. Rowe and Wainwright, by B. Brody, and by L. Pojman, all of which reputable anthologies have been revised within the last decade). Sixty-two selections here serve as representative ruminations from across the history of *Western* thought in the common era as it has been applied to thirteen enduring or emerging large topics more or less related to classical theism. These are religious experience, faith and reason, the divine attributes, theistic arguments, the problem of evil, knowing God without arguments, religious language, miracles, life after death, religion and science, religious diversity, religious ethics, philosophy and theological doctrines. For each subject area a one page introduction sets the stage for at least three presentations. For every individual selection a short paragraph situates the philosopher and summarizes the overall thrust of the comments. A brief bibliography for further consultation closes out the section treating each topic.

The chosen thinkers include such medieval luminaries as Augustine, Boethius, Anselm and Aquinas, later illustrious figures like Pascal, Hume and Kierkegaard, and quite an array of recognized intellectuals from this century, right up to the present. Ancient Greek greats are not in the mix, nor are significant names from the Jewish and Islamic tradition. Continental modern and postmodern writers in the Kantian current might have been represented in larger measure. Their minimal inclusion stems no doubt from the fact that traditional theism has become increasingly a non-starter for them; still, the thrust of their dissent and critique could have received more exposure than it gets in this volume. Within each topic, however, there has been an evident attempt to provide some rather divergent approaches and outlooks, and thus orient readers to long-standing and new debates. The

selections are for the most part short enough to be quite manageable, while substantial enough to demonstrate how much room there remains for critical reflection on various profound questions.

Worthwhile in its own right, this compendium's thematic structure and content helpfully repeats the order of subjects and complements the stimulating introductory discussion supplied by the editors themselves in their own previously released but since expanded *Reason and Religious Belief* (OUP, 1991, 1997). One may sometimes judge that the God of the philosophers fails to fit the divine profile provided in Scripture rather than furthering our finite and fallible perception of those features. Even then, their musings should at least prompt more rigorous yet humble reflection on One who has called upon us to love him with our minds.

Timothy L. Dyck,  
St. Leonard, Québec.

**Thomas V. Morris, ed., *God and the Philosophers: The Reconciliation of Faith and Reason*. Oxford University Press, 1995, 285 pages.**

Twenty contemporary intellectuals including the editor relate quite candidly and clearly how their own quest for understanding has led each to integrate personal faith and philosophical rigour. Most of the accounts are very engaging narratives which identify various factors as contributing to the conviction that God is not only the One whose existence best explains the large picture of things, but also the One whose personal presence makes a world of difference to the well-being of individual humans such as themselves. What we get are revealing disclosures of people with ordinary interests and struggles. They have endeavoured to pursue pressing concerns and questions rather than simply ignore the challenge of problematic issues or accept superficial answers to them. (Thus these submissions weigh heavily against the popular stereotype of professional "lovers of wisdom." Are they not supposed to be abstract theorists who, in the interests of critical rational analysis, are constrained to remove themselves from the mundane demands of daily relational life? Is that not required if they are to address themselves in a detached, dispassionate, objective fashion to matters which

have little direct practical relevance? Are they not obliged, by the complexity of those subjects which they study, to express their reasoning in rather abstruse language? Not necessarily so, according to the appealing content and welcome style these thinkers offer us here!) Readers of this journal may have already made some acquaintance with the work of several of the contributors such as Morris, Arthur F. Holmes, George I. Mavrodes, Robert C. Roberts, Jerry L. Walls, William J. Abraham, perhaps also William J. Wainwright, William P. Alston and Merold Westphal. That may make their personally recounted journeys more enlightening in some respects than those supplied by C. Stephen Layman, Michael J. Murray, Jeff Jordan, Laura Garcia, Peter van Inwagen, Eleonore Stump, Marilyn McCord Adams, Brian Leftow, George N. Schlesinger, David Shatz and Spencer Carr. But the stories which these other, perhaps less familiar people have to tell are also appealing in what they offer for consideration.

Most of these academics were raised within a family milieu in which the Christian tradition in some form had a largely positive influence. This did not always prevent them from departing and distancing themselves. Some of the accounts are of a retained faith, others of a faith reacquired, or redirected. Only some of the experiences consciously fit an evangelical paradigm. Ecclesiastically, there is among these travellers more movement toward mainline adherence than away from it. Laura Garcia tells of how she was drawn away from Reformed Calvinistic persuasion to espouse Roman Catholicism. Brian Leftow recounts a move from Jewish roots to Christian conviction and how the latter has fuelled his philosophical appetite. George Schlesinger contrasts past involvement in orthodox rabbinical education with present participation in secular academia, while fellow Jew David Shatz, who teaches at his own orthodox alma mater, addresses how he can (and others might) resolve the tensions between philosophical engagement and religious loyalty.

Even if the stances or locations taken up will not at all always satisfy us, there is surely something to be learned from each, not least from those with whom we cannot fully identify. In the course of sharing their experience and the positions to which they have come through it, they provide us with various perspectives on what philosophy is about and how it may be honestly pursued by earnest believers in God. Along the way they pick up provocatively on a range of challenges such as those posed, e.g., by evil, hell, the resurrection, and science. A consensus emerges to the effect that

arguments prove to be of little consequence in prompting faith, but of significant weight in bolstering it. It is intriguing to see the impact of other individuals, whether close personal friends or colleagues or literary contacts like C.S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer. This book can be absorbing not just in the twists and turns of an argument, but also in what can be profitably drawn from others' encounters with adversity, anxiety, doubt, despair, and defeat. This reader expects others as well to find these journeys, while not always compelling, still engrossing and enriching.

Timothy L. Dyck,  
St. Leonard, Québec.

**William Lamont, *Puritanism and Historical Controversy*. Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1996, viii + 232 pages.**

William Lamont, Professor of History at the University of Sussex, has been a Puritan scholar for over thirty years. Three Puritans that he has extensively studied during these years are William Prynne, Richard Baxter and Lodowicke Muggleton. This work brings these three men together in order to evaluate the influence of Puritanism on the subjects of revolution, liberty, capitalism, millenarianism, witchcraft and science. Lamont's purpose in this study is to challenge some of the historiography of the past with its stereotypes, and in so doing encourage students to become better historians, and help scholars rethink some of these stereotypes.

The first three chapters give the reader three brief vignettes of Prynne, Baxter and Muggleton. These chapters are not biographies but merely sketches of significant events in their lives or important teachings they held. Lamont seeks to put them in their historical context and initiate the reader to some of the historical controversy surrounding them.

The final five chapters examine the subjects of revolution, liberty, capitalism, millenarianism, and science (witchcraft) from the lives and writings of these three men. Do these men provide us with evidence that Puritanism was an important influence on these issues not only for their time but also for later generations? In chapter five Lamont looks at Puritanism and revolution. Scholars like Michael Walzer have seen Puritanism as a

prime cause of the English Revolution. Lamont challenges this by showing that Prynne, Baxter and Muggleton all believed in the King's rule. The reason Baxter and Prynne supported Parliament for some of the 1640's was due to a fear that the papacy was trying to usurp the English king's rule. In chapter six Lamont shows that contrary to some Puritan historiography Puritans were not given to political liberty. Baxter, Prynne and Muggleton were not for freedom but for "discipline." For all these men the magistrate had a significant role in the discipline of the nation. In fact for Baxter and Prynne a person may have liberty only for True Religion, not for a false one.

In Chapter seven Lamont challenges the Weber thesis (also Tawney and Hill) that Puritanism was a major factor in the creation of capitalism. Did the "Protestant Ethic" of Calvinism produce a spiritual sanction for labour? Weber used Baxter as his chief example in support of his thesis. Lamont challenges it, first of all, by showing that Baxter was no Calvinist, and secondly, he argues that Baxter stood with "godly discipline" and not with "religion of trade." It is his "commitment to good works ... which makes him capitalism's enemy" (127). Lamont sees Puritan antinomianism as the link between Puritanism and capitalism. In Chapter eight Lamont looks at Puritanism and millenarianism. He shows that though Baxter and Prynne were not of the radical sorts of millenarians, they did, like many seventeenth-century Puritans, show interest in the Book of Revelation through such interpreters as Foxe and Brightman. Chapter nine deals with Puritanism, science and witchcraft. Lamont agrees with C.H. George that Puritanism was not a simple step to modernity. He shows that Puritans like Prynne, Baxter and Muggleton believed in such "irrational" things as millennialism, witches and visions. The Royal Society's Robert Boyle supported Baxter's belief in witchcraft. It is true that Baxter put a heavy emphasis on reason, for example in verifying true manifestations of ghosts or witches, but he still believed in them. Prynne also was very committed to reason. His historical research against the Commons claim to privilege over the King and Lords challenging Edward Coke's historiography, was an excellent piece of modern research. But he also believed in apparitions.

This work is an excellent example of good scholarly research. Lamont has used recently discovered Muggletonian documents as well as some of Baxter's later and unabridged writings which support his reading of Baxter on, for example, his view of the millennium. Lamont knows his sources and, therefore, offers some good insights on his subjects that challenge past

historiography. He also extensively uses secondary sources like Hill and Tawney throughout the work. In addition, the book concludes with a "Guide for Further Reading" that is very helpful and up-to-date. This work, however is not for novices of Puritanism. One needs to have some background in this subject in order to be helped by it.

One concern I have with this work is the choice of Muggleton as a Puritan. By Muggleton's own admission he was not a Puritan (183), and theologically he doesn't seem to fit the mould. I do recognize, as Lamont does, that the definition of Puritanism is difficult to make. Regardless of this concern Lamont's thesis is not greatly affected. A minor correction is in order: Hanserd Knollys has been shown by John Wilson (*CH*, 31), Paul Christianson (*Reformers and Babylon*) and A.R. Dallison (P. Toon, ed., *Puritan Eschatology*) not to be the author of *A Glimpse of Sion's Glory* (153). I recommend this work to all students of Puritanism and of seventeenth-century English history.

Barry Howson,  
Vankleek Hill, Ontario.

**D. A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspectives in Tension*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994. xii + 271 pages.**

I remember in my first years of ministry discussing with a friend the subject of this book. He was a thoughtful person and as a result was quite frustrated that no one could give him a satisfactory answer to this divine sovereignty-human responsibility problem. This book by Don Carson was first published by John Knox Press around the time of the discussion with my friend. (It was a reworking of his 1975 Cambridge doctoral dissertation published in 1980 and now reprinted without change with a new preface by Baker). If I had this book in hand at the time I might have given it to him. But would it have answered his concerns and relieved his frustration? Let us review the book and see.

Carson begins by telling us that the book is not so much a philosophical study of the "sovereignty-responsibility" problem, or "tension" as he calls

it, but more of a theological one. He, however, admits that he doubts whether finite human beings can cut the Gordian knot of this problem, and so his task in this book is not so much that of solving the problem but of exploring this tension and so “explor[ing] the nature of God and his ways with men” (2). In order to carry out this exploration Carson restricts himself to the study of this tension in the Gospel of John placed against the backdrop of Jewish writings and thought. Because of this, chapters two to ten (half of the book) are taken up with an exploration of the sovereignty-responsibility tension in the Jewish literature from the Old Testament to Josephus. He begins in chapter two by briefly exegeting twelve important Old Testament texts that are examples of this tension. In chapter three he does a general survey of the Old Testament showing that it teaches both that humans are responsible for their actions and that God is sovereign over them. He makes some insightful comments in this chapter concerning divine ultimacy. He also makes the important point that in the OT the tension is met “in the human obligation to acknowledge divine sovereignty with grateful humility” (35). And in conclusion to this chapter he tells us that the OT writers were not interested in this tension metaphysically but practically. Carson states: “Their concern, in short, is the practical side of the problem of theodicy. And the ultimate answers they are granted assure them that God is greater than their questions” (38).

In chapter four he briefly looks at the Septuagint to see if there are any theological changes in its translation from the Hebrew text that concern this tension. In chapter five Carson surveys the non-apocalyptic literature and finds that the tension persists but that there is an emphasis towards free-will and divine transcendence. In this literature the tension is polarizing. In chapter six he examines the apocalyptic Jewish literature where he sees human freedom strongly expressed in the direction of “merit theology” with a shift in initiative from God to humans. In chapter seven he looks at the Dead Sea Scrolls literature and notes the tension to be more like that of the OT than that of the Jewish literature already examined. Chapter eight studies the tension in the Targums and Rabbinic literature. Here he looks at the rabbinic interpretation of the twelve OT passages examined in chapter two as well as other rabbinic teachings, and finds a stress on free-will and merit theology. What he discovers, therefore, in this literature is that God is transcendent and sovereign but not sovereign in the area of salvation. In this chapter Carson also addresses the writing of E.P. Sanders on the Rabbinic

tradition. In the next chapter on Josephus Carson finds him paying lip service to divine providence but leaving personal and moral decisions to humans. Summing up his findings of the Jewish literature (not including the D.S.S.) Carson has discovered a rise in merit theology and legalism, and thus a change in the sovereignty-responsibility tension.

In chapters twelve and thirteen Carson looks at the Gospel of John. In the twelfth chapter he examines the tension under the headings of eschatology, Christology, and theodicy. He sees the sovereignty-responsibility tension expressed in Christ Who is both God and Man, and in the “already” and “not yet” aspects of the Messianic kingdom. In chapter thirteen Carson looks at this tension in John’s soteriology. He finds that John does not attempt to resolve the tension but teaches both humanity’s responsibility and God’s sovereignty. John clearly teaches that people must believe and are held accountable for their response to Jesus. On the other hand, John makes it clear that salvation is of God’s doing not humanity’s. For John humans do not have free-will with the power to the contrary and so eschews merit theology, but he also teaches that humans are not robots. Human responsibility has its purposes in John’s Gospel, and so does divine sovereignty; the former warns, the latter comforts.

In the final chapter Carson draws some theological conclusions from the Jewish literature (not including the D.S.) and the Gospel of John. He notes that the latter’s “closest conceptual antecedents are found in the Old Testament” and, therefore, its treatment of the sovereignty-responsibility tension is “distinctively Jewish.” Then he philosophically defends the tension found in the OT and in John’s Gospel by showing that “it is not necessarily logically inconsistent” (206). He does this by addressing the subjects of free-will, time & eternity, divine ultimacy, the “will(s)” of God, anthropomorphism & God’s personality, and experience & theory. He then concludes with some helpful practical observations. One is that this tension will not be resolved; the OT writers and John did not resolve it nor did they seek to, they simply accepted it. A second is that to try to resolve it merely leads to reductionism which is no resolution at all. And a third observation is that we need to realize that different passages of Scripture have different functions, and consequently emphasize one side of the tension. Therefore, it is imperative in pastoral work that the exegete keep theologically balanced as he does his work. Lastly, the Christian leader needs to be aware that the

way he handles this tension will “affect large areas of his theological understanding, evangelistic practices, and ecclesiastical methods” (222).

There are many good things one could say about this book, not the least of which are Carson’s wise and practical concluding observations concerning this tension. I found it a rich study on Jewish literature that would help any pastor to become familiar in a short time with the subjects of sovereignty, free-will, soteriology and eschatology in Jewish thinking from OT times to the days of Christ. This is important background for good exegesis of the NT. In addition, I enjoyed his (and others) theological insights into John’s Gospel. Finally, I feel that Carson has given us some helpful insight into this difficult theological conundrum. I should add that the footnotes are filled with many references for further study for those interested; unfortunately these have not been updated from 1980. For these reasons I recommend this book to pastors, theology students and professors. And I also recommend it to those who are working through this theological problem. Would my friend have been satisfied with this book had I given it to him sixteen years ago? I doubt it. But maybe it would have helped him to think about it a little more biblically. And having read the book maybe he would have come to accept the tension and leave it with God who is not against reason but thankfully above my reason in this world.

Barry Howson,  
Vankleek Hill, Ontario.

**D. F. Wright, ed. *Martin Bucer: Reforming Church and Community*.  
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, xiv + 195 pages.**

Martin Bucer, one of David Steinmetz’s “Reformers in the Wings,” was an important figure in the Reformed Church at the time of the Reformation. He is important for a number of reasons, not the least of which is his influence on other reformers including John Calvin. His significance is also seen in his contribution to Reformation ecclesiology which includes his influence on the English church in the second half of the sixteenth century. This book, edited by David Wright, senior lecturer in Ecclesiastical History at the University of Edinburgh, brings together thirteen specialists on Bucer to look at his “contribution in thought and practice to building the community

of the church" (I). Part of the intention of this book is to raise "matters of contemporary significance, such as church-state relations, Protestant-Catholic unity, and tensions between a church of true believers and a 'people's' church" (I). I found that this book does raise those matters, though it seems to me, more implicitly than explicitly. Bucer's ecclesiology gives much food for thought particularly concerning church-state relations and the state-believer's church concepts.

The contributors to this volume address a particular aspect of Bucer's ecclesiology in its historical context. Although there is some overlap in the essays, which is to be expected, each one has a distinct purpose that sets it apart from the others. Briefly, the various essays address: Bucer's ecclesiastical thoughts concerning the Roman Catholic church (Peter Matheson); his relationship between the church and the civil community (Martin Greschat); his influence on Calvin's ecclesiology (Willem van't Spijker); his ecclesiology from his two commentaries on Ephesians of 1527 & 1550,51 (Peter Stephens); his ecclesiology from his commentary on the Gospel of John of 1528 (Irena Backus); a study of his alleged transition from a Zwinglian view of the Lord's Supper to a more Lutheran one (Ian Hazlett); Bucer's desire for a unified church and a 'core-church' in Strasbourg (James Kittelson); his paedobaptist ecclesiology (David Wright); a study of his ecclesiology from his colloquies with the Catholics between 1539 and 1541 (Cornelis Augustijn); the theory and practice of church discipline in Strasbourg (Jean Rott); his ecclesiological motifs behind the 'core-church' movement in Strasbourg (Gottfried Hammann); Bucer's ecclesiological teaching and influence in England (Basil Hall); and his influence on the translations of the Psalms in English (Gerald Hobbs). All of these essays are worth reading for a better understanding of ecclesiology both for the time of the Reformation and for our time. I personally found them thought-provoking.

There are two essays that I will elaborate on which might be of particular interest to the readers of this journal. The first one is David Wright's article on Bucer's view of infant baptism. Bucer was "probably the most dedicated, and certainly the most prolific, champion of paedobaptism among the leading Reformers" (96). This was primarily due to the Anabaptist threat he faced in Strasbourg. In the 1520's Bucer believed that baptism was an outward sign and certainly not necessary for regeneration; but from the

1530's onward he affirmed baptism to be "truly a baptism of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit" (98). His defence of such teaching was the consensus and tradition of the Church from the early Fathers of the faith onward. For Bucer the sacraments "confer what they signify—the covenant of the Lord, the cleansing of sins, communion in Christ" (100). In defence of his position Bucer believed that since the offspring of believers in the Old Covenant received the sign of circumcision signifying their inclusion in the promise of salvation, "surely the new covenant could not bestow less than the old" (101). Bucer, however, also taught that because Christ blessed all the children that came to him, all children indiscriminately should be baptized by the church whether their parents were unbelievers or not. For this reason one can see why he played such a prominent role in "the development of the reformed ceremony of confirmation" (102). Bucer believed baptism for the infant was the child's integration into the body, "enrolling him as a candidate in a process of Christian formation and spiritual development" (104). In addition, universal paedobaptism provided a safety-net for the community preventing it from falling into ungodliness. Bucer was an important proponent of infant baptism in the early years of the Reformation. I believe a study of Bucer's teaching on baptism can help those who espouse believer's baptism better understand their paedobaptist brethren.

The second essay we will survey is the one by Augustijn on Bucer's ecclesiology from his colloquies with the Catholics. This is an interesting study because Bucer has been accused of teaching two very different ecclesiologies in his writings. Augustijn shows how this could have been so. From 1533 to 1545 Bucer wrote and espoused an Augustinian view of the Church which is somewhat akin to the sixteenth century Catholic view, e.g., upholding the episcopate, even the primacy of the Roman bishop. During these years he was seeking for, particularly in the colloquies with the Catholics, a unified German church. He believed this was possible by building the German church on the framework of the existing Old Church with the removal of its abuses and the introduction of some Protestant elements. By 1545 his hopes for unification were lost and his attitude changed concerning such issues as episcopacy and the value of tradition. Augustijn believes that Bucer's ecclesiology espoused between 1533 and 1545 was his central teaching on the subject. He considers his other writings which were more Protestant as an "interim ecclesiology" representing "the

church in an experimental state, when anything which proved to be useful could be brought in once the right moment came" (121). Augustijn does not see Bucer's "two ecclesiologies" in conflict with one another but consisting of the same components with different emphases. Personally, Augustijn has not convinced me that Bucer's 1533-1545 ecclesiology is central. He, himself, is not dogmatic on this point but is only suggestive. More work needs to be done in this area. However, it is interesting to see how Bucer is willing to compromise some of his Protestant convictions for the sake of unity. Maybe he hoped that once unity was attained further reform could take place?

I highly recommend this book to any scholars or students of the Reformation. The essays are between 8 and 20 pages long, well-written and well-documented. They are all in English, and in fact it is the only book in English that deals so extensively with Bucer's ecclesiology. There is a helpful bibliography at the end of the book as well. I also recommend it for those pastors who are looking for some thought-provoking reading on the church. It should be mentioned that one need not have a prior knowledge of Bucer's life and thought to benefit from this work; however, it would be helpful if one did, or at least had some knowledge of the history and thought of the Reformation. This is definitely not a study on Bucer's life and thought in general.

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**George Ella, *Law & Gospel in the Theology of Andrew Fuller*.  
Eggleston, Co. Durham: Go Publications, 1996.**

One of the hopeful signs that theology is not dead among us in these days of rampant anti-intellectualism is the appearance of books that grapple with the difficulties of systematizing the truths set forth in the Word of God. Good work is being done in this field and we need to be grateful to God for those who so assist us. Unfortunately the present work, though designed to be helpful in this way, falls far short of the objectivity that one would expect in a work with such a title, and therefore the reviewer must spend his time

in the unpleasant task of pointing out its weaknesses much more than congratulating the author on its strengths.

To properly assess Andrew Fuller's theology of law and gospel one would expect to find copious quotations from Fuller's various works. How else could this be reasonably and fairly done? Without these the reader is at sea. Ella, however, has chosen to give us instead numerous quotations (with appropriate endnotes in many instances), but quotations that are for the most part mere snippets, often a phrase extracted from a sentence with no clue as to its context. The effect of this is to make one wonder whether something is being suppressed. What Ella fails to give us by quotation he nevertheless seeks to fill out by his own descriptions of what Fuller has written, so that we must take on faith the opinions of Fuller as represented by Ella, while, of course, Ella is free to speak for himself in defending his own views. This is a method that is bound to reach Ella's conclusions, but it is not one that will commend itself to the critical reader. Let me illustrate what I mean, lest someone think that I am mistreating Mr. Ella as I accuse him of treating Fuller. Here is Ella's opening paragraph, fitted to give the reader the spirit of the whole work:

I do not presume to have sounded the death knell of Fullerism with this little book. That mock-gospel has been dead all along. Its adherents still live, however, on its carnage, but this is the way of all flesh. As Fuller says when he hyper-critically views the doctrines of grace, 'There must needs be heresies, that they who are approved may be made manifest.' The design of this book has not so much been to rescue Fullerites from their worldly philosophy, worthy though this objective might be, but rather to help Zion's pilgrims who are tempted to stray from wellcharted Bible paths by hawkers and peddlers of inaccurate maps printed by Messrs. Andrew Fuller & Co., of no fixed spiritual abode (p.11).

Unhappily, this paragraph is a fair example of much that is to follow as we will see as we enumerate some of Ella's indictments against Fuller. Ella complains that Fuller uses neither plain language nor sound reasoning. He also impugns Fuller's motives in so doing:

Pointing out Fuller's theological follies is no easy task. This is because Fuller delights in using a metalanguage of his own invention to describe theological concepts. He also uses terminologies to camouflage the fact that he is using worldly philosophical conceptions to explain Biblical truths. . . . Anyone trying to follow Fuller's use of words must invariable [*sic*] lose his meaning at some time or other. Thus this writer does not presume to have understood Fuller completely. Anyone who claims that almost every phrase and utterance he makes concerning Bible doctrines is to be understood figuratively, is bound to be misunderstood, especially as Fuller rarely explains what he means by his metaphors. Whenever I caught myself feeling that I had quite understood Fuller's explanations, I found that he was, in reality, explaining metaphors by metaphors and explaining Bible truths by explaining them away (pp.18-19).

So many things call for comment here that one hardly knows where to start. First, it was incumbent upon Ella to give some examples of what he is talking about. Can we really believe that Fuller's view of his own writing was "that almost every phrase and utterance he makes concerning Bible doctrine is to be understood figuratively?" Even allowing for the hyperbole that Ella must be using here, this is simply beyond belief as anyone can see who examines Fuller's writings. Second, to the extent that Fuller did discuss metaphorical language he was simply recognizing what language really consists of. Speaking of English H. W. Fowler has written:

Our vocabulary is largely built on metaphors; we use them, though perhaps not consciously, whenever we speak and write. . . . [Some metaphors] are dead, i.e., have been so often used that speaker and hearer have ceased to be aware that the words are not used literally (*A Dictionary*

*of Modern English Usage*, 2nd ed. [Oxford: OUP, 1965], p. 359).

As far as this is true of the Bible, Mr. Fuller laboured to make this plain to students of his generation. Third, if Mr. Ella is sincere in claiming that he was repeatedly unable to understand what Fuller is talking about, shouldn't it have occurred to him either to think that he was not an adequate author to address Fuller's theology, or, at least, to think that it was incumbent upon him to make his own restrained language reflect that fact. Yet there is little restraint shown in any of this volume. Abuse of Fuller and "Fullerites" abounds (pp. 1,19,20,23,144, etc.). This kind of methodology is fatal to sound reasoning. Fourth, though in the paragraph following the one I have quoted Ella supplies anecdotal evidence of Fuller's insincerity in his use of orthodox language, we have the anecdote in Ella's words, not in the words of his source. Yet nothing in Ella's own account justifies his conclusion that Fuller "meant a completely different thing by almost every orthodox term he used" (p.19).

Ella accuses Fuller of holding that the atonement was "made as much for a Paul as it is for a Judas." This comes in the midst of criticism of historian Tom Nettles' understanding of Fuller. Ella states:

Equally amazing is Nettles' statement that Fuller believed in the absolute efficacy of Christ's death. Fuller's basic doctrine is that though Christ's death was for all, it was only eventually applied to a particular few. As the word "efficacy" means "producing the desired effect" one wonders how effectual Fuller's atonement can be judged when it is made as much for a Paul as it is a Judas but only the former is efficaciously saved (p. 21).

As this quotation comes very close to the heart of some of Fuller's critics' complaints we need to take a few moments on it. First, Nettles is undoubtedly right in his assessment of Fuller. However obscure Fuller may have been, he made the same point on this matter repeatedly. It amounts to this: If we think of Christ's sacrifice in its sufficiency to save, we must think of it as having infinite value. If, on the other hand, we think of God's intention in giving Christ as a sacrifice, we must think of it as given for the

elect and for no others. In this view it was not made for Judas at all. Second, since Ella has read Fuller extensively, he ought to have known that he was misrepresenting Fuller in giving as Fuller's doctrine "that though Christ's death was for all, it was only eventually applied to a particular few." Are we to understand that Fuller deliberately lied? Listen to these words from Fuller himself:

If I speak of [the death of Christ] irrespective of the purpose of the Father and the Son, as to the objects to be saved by it, merely referring to what it is in itself sufficient for, and declared in the gospel to be adapted to, I should think that I answered the question in a scriptural way by saying, It was for sinners as sinners; but if I have respect to the purpose of the Father in giving his Son to die, and to the design of Christ in laying down his life, I should answer, It was for the elect only. (*Complete Works of Andrew Fuller*, 3 vols. [1845; reprinted by Sprinkle Publications in 1988], II, 707) ; *Complete Works of Andrew Fuller* [London: Henry G. Bohn, 1859], p. 321. The page number of the latter edition is henceforth in square brackets).

Here Fuller makes a distinction so important as to be decisive in understanding him. I may easily illustrate what he means from everyday life. If I were to purchase an Olympic size swimming pool for my son, someone, not knowing my intention, might well say, "That pool is sufficient for all the boys in the neighbourhood," and he would be right. But the particularity in the gift would lie not in the size of the pool, but in my intention before I purchased it to make it my sons's pool and no other's. Fuller makes this point repeatedly. He tells us "that Christ had an absolute and determinate design in his death to save some of the human race, and not others" (II, 710, [322]). Again he writes, "I consider redemption as inseparably connected with eternal life, and therefore as applicable to none but the elect, who are redeemed from *among* men" (II, 714, [324]). Finally, on this point, he says (II, 693-694, [315]) that he holds "no other meaning, that I am aware of, than that of Dr. Owen" in a passage that runs as follows:

Sufficient, we say, was the sacrifice of Christ for the redemption of the whole world, and for the expiation of all the sins of all and every man in the world. This sufficiency hath a twofold rise. First, The dignity of the person that did offer, and was offered. Secondly, The greatness of the pain he endured, by which he was able to bear, and did undergo, the whole curse of the law, and wrath of God due to sin. And this sets forth *the innate, real, true worth and value of the blood-shedding of Jesus Christ*. This is its own true internal perfection and sufficiency. That it should be APPLIED unto any, made a *price* for them, and become *beneficial* to them, according to the worth that is in it, is *external* to it, doth not arise from it, but merely depends upon the intention and will of God (II, 694 [315]. Quoted from Owen's *Works*, X, 295-296. Owen has much more along the same lines that Fuller could have used on these same pages.).

How many times must Fuller make these points for Ella to believe him? Even if Ella feels that other statements of Fuller logically entail a general atonement, he ought to follow the rule Fuller himself sought to act upon: "If a principle be proposed to us for acceptance, it is right to weigh the consequences; but when forming our judgment of the person who holds it, we should attach nothing to him but what he perceives and avows" (II, 698 [317]). If Ella had followed this rule he would have had a more balanced view of Fuller, and would have been in a better position to criticize him where he may have been vulnerable. That point is reached in Fuller's appreciation for the Grotian view of Christ's atonement. Ella sees that (pp. 67-70), but without balance he grossly overstates the case against Fuller, unable to distinguish what appealed to Fuller from what he rejected. In Fuller's zeal to defend what is now called "the free offer of the gospel," he perceived help in Grotius' idea that God had done something in the atonement which made it possible for Him to forgive all men. Wisely or unwisely Fuller attempted to add Grotius' understanding to his own unbroken commitment to substitutionary atonement. Instead, however, of treating the congruity or incongruity of this marriage, since Grotius was an Arminian, Ella proceeds to charge Fuller with the same views in a large

number of other respects: "Thus the Grotian doctrine that man's natural abilities, including his reason, are all intact and salvation comes through the best use of them is the foundation on which Fullerism and modern Liberalism is built" (p. 68). This is an awful indictment if it could be made out, and Ella should have documented it, but he did not. Instead he allows the force of his argument to rest in guilt by association. In the following pages we are again treated to bare snippets of Fuller's doctrine with one important exception, where Fuller argues for a distinction between moral and positive law (pp. 70-75). Whatever one thinks of this distinction, it is hard to see how it evidences "Grotianism" since it has been recognized by Calvinists from the time of John Calvin himself (see Calvin's *Institutes*, Bk IV, Ch. XX, 16. Cf. Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978], pp. 291-293). The truth is, Fuller never wavered in his view of total inability, though he rejected what would today be called "absolute depravity," the view that man is as bad as a personal being could possibly be.

Anyone reading Ella's book will recognize at once that Ella has done his homework in so far as that demands the reading of his author. There are copious endnotes that show familiarity with the words of Fuller in all parts of his theology. But Ella evidently has not profited from his extensive reading. Lacking the slightest sympathy with Fuller, Ella reads the worst into the most innocent statements. And this extends to those who show sympathy for Fuller as well. Michael Haykin, the editor of this journal comes in for harsh words more than once (pp. 24, 67f., 86f., 165, 167, 169, 175f.) It would not be hard, I think, to answer all of these accusations, but in the interests of space and the fact that it is salutary for editors to be humbled lest they overflow their britches, we will leave that treatment for another time.

Tom Wells.

**A. E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995, xi + 285 pages.**

This republication is a substantially enhanced release of an already worthy work first offered in 1988 through Blackwell and now seconded also to Baker. One hopes this will secure it a much deserved broader readership. The author aims expressly to introduce, explain and contextualize those ideas which were at the forefront of the European Reformation, especially as advanced in Germany by Luther, and in Switzerland by Zwingli and Calvin. McGrath succeeds admirably in all three respects. One of his chief concerns throughout is to avoid writing a merely intellectual history which pays no attention to the significant role that social surroundings played in the rise and reign of certain religious convictions. He does not regard political and economic situations as having wholly determined the content of such tenets, but does refer repeatedly to the bearing conditions had on why and how these beliefs were promoted and perpetuated.

His intentions already made clear, the opening chapter sketches the sorry ecclesiastical climate which cried out for reform, then identifies the various main currents which the movement took: Lutheran, Reformed, Radical (Anabaptist) and Catholic. One recurring observation is how the early Reformed agenda was more devoted to ethical and institutional improvement, while the initial Lutheran program focused on doctrinal concerns, especially with regard to personal salvation. Noteworthy factors which facilitated the acceptance of Reformation ideals included the printing press and civic councils which allowed religious change when it alleviated public pressures without threatening their own local or regional power base. Reformed values connecting spiritual and secular concerns reflected its more sophisticated urban origins, whereas Lutheran emphases which separated the two were conditioned by the princely rule of its milieu. This political disparity contributed to the Reformed current spreading more readily.

In the next three chapters McGrath sets the stage for the Reformation ferment by filling in its background of late medieval religion, Renaissance humanism and scholasticism. The first was marked by growing discontent with the clergy at large and the papacy in particular, within an air of confusion over orthodoxy and authority. Preoccupation with their own political, regional and nationalist interests prevented secular rulers from

enforcing the positions of a papacy whose competing influence was in decline. Humanism was concerned with how ideas were best acquired and articulated. It provided the impetus and skills to access accurately ancient biblical and patristic sources as grounds for ridding the church of deplorable practices and dubious doctrines. McGrath is careful to note the varied appropriation of humanism by Reformation figures and their communities, who shared its diverse values in limited and different measure. Tensions not immediately obvious between humanist and Reformation attitudes soon surfaced as key figures engaged others' published views. Scholasticism sought to show as comprehensively as possible that Christian theology was a coherently integrated whole. Its speculative approach was unappealing to the Reformers, but its surviving schools of thought passed on some influential theological traditions. Of special interest here is the *schola Augustiniana moderna* with whose voluntarism, anti-Pelagianism and other features Calvin had such affinity. McGrath's detailed account of all this backdrop to the Reformation includes illustrations of how existing contextual elements were utilized in the enunciation of ideas. Not surprisingly, McGrath devotes whole chapters to justification by faith, predestination, the return to Scripture, the debate over the sacraments, and Reformation views on the church. For most of these he draws out different accents among Reformers and treats the Tridentine response. Passing mention here of some emphases will do little justice to the author's breadth and depth in handling these subjects. Protestant and Roman Catholic definitions of justification differed: declarative act versus transformative process. This made for contrasting emphases on the nature of the righteousness and faith involved: external imputed status versus internal imparted condition, and simple trust versus determined obedience. This divergence prevented both sides from appreciating and applauding common concerns and convictions on the appropriation of saving grace. Here as elsewhere McGrath shows his ability to conduct doctrinal discussion in an enlightening and engaging manner, addressing a number of particulars without being cumbersome, and also attending to the factor of Luther's personal experience.

McGrath argues that, for Calvin, God's revelation of his double decree to elect some and reprobate others functioned primarily to explain contrasting responses to the gospel. But Calvin's successors, with their more

rationalistic bent for a more systematic theology, exalted predestination out of this ancillary doctrinal role to the place of controlling principle. While Lutherans as well certainly saw themselves vitally indebted to grace, a stronger sense of identity as God's chosen people fuelled greater Reformed expansion. Beyond dispute over the extent of the canon, upholding the formal principle of *sola Scriptura* involved a significant three-way disagreement over the worth of tradition. The mother church made it a second source and equal authority for doctrine while the radicals would not even consult it as a resource for interpretation. Reformation leaders struggled over the right and competence of individuals to interpret the Bible. In the end only the radicals insisted that determination of its public application not be left in the hands of officials.

McGrath's ability to elucidate unfamiliar concepts and customs is well exercised in his treatment of the disagreement, among Reformers as well as with the papal church, on the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. Different interpretive approaches prevented resolution of the dispute between Zwingli and Luther over whether Christ was present or absent in the sacred elements, leaving a breach Calvin's more nuanced view proved unable to bridge. On the nature of the institutional church, the main Reformers faced the issue of whether doctrinal corruption in their time was so grave as to justify the schism their favourite father Augustine had earlier repudiated. Calvin's version of church structure, including the Consistory charged with enforcing orthodoxy and exercising discipline, suited Genevan protocol as much as it fit a New Testament pattern. This strong form of administration abetted the successful consolidation of the Reformed church even in areas where opposition was substantial.

After describing the Anabaptist insistence on entire separation of church and state, McGrath follows with the respective political theologies of Luther, Zwingli, Bucer and Calvin, whose willingness to cooperate with their respective civil authorities has gained them the designation "magisterial Reformers." One matter taken up is the degree to which their social views involved criticism of, and compromise with, forms of secular power. The final chapter outlines some of the influence that mainstream Reformed thinking has had on subsequent history. Foremost for McGrath is the affirmation of positive involvement in public society rather than withdrawal from its culture. The Protestant work ethic has contributed to modern capitalism even if Max Weber's thesis needs some clarification and

correction. Developing Calvinist thought on legitimate resistance encouraged the advocacy of human rights against oppression. Calvin had carefully qualified views on the Bible's primary concern and the non technical way in which it refers to natural phenomena. His insights here paved the way for a pursuit of natural science unfettered by an overly literal reading of Scripture that misconstrues the divine intent for, and mode in, the written revelation.

Granted McGrath's specialization in, and confessional proximity to, the mainstream, this reviewer still wishes he had shown more sensitivity to the very different currents within the radical wing, and more appreciation for their intellectual contribution. Arguably the author, in countering the excessive emphasis on predestination among the "Calvinists," has unduly reduced its role for Calvin himself, whose commentaries (and not just his *Institutes*) also need to be consulted on this question. One subject not nearly receiving adequate attention is the Reformers' emphasis on the Holy Spirit, including Calvin's doctrine of the internal testimony. One would have liked to hear more of Bucer, Melanchthon and Bullinger. Such shortcomings and other criticisms aside, this is an excellent resource which will be of real value to instructors and novices in the field. It places plenty of scholarship plainly before the reader and points to a lot more at hand. Listings for further reading are given at the end of each chapter with a select bibliography toward the back of the book as well as a worthwhile index. Besides his lucid style which itself makes the book interesting and user friendly, seven appendices serve further to familiarize his audience with terminology, chronology and source material, both primary and secondary. McGrath is to be commended for providing us with a very fine aid to learning.

Timothy L. Dyck,  
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**Leon Morris, *The Gospel According To John*, revised ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995, xxii + 824 pages.**

The original edition of Morris' commentary on John was heralded as a major contribution, which has continued to prove beneficial to students decades later. In this revised and larger format version, which actually has 112 fewer pages, Morris updates the original work through interaction with more recent studies, mostly confined to the footnotes. This revised version now includes the NIV text, but surprisingly omits the index of Greek words found in the original edition.

The revision is so minor in this reviewer's opinion that if one has the original edition and is considering purchasing another commentary on John, it would be prudent to consider the more recent works of Beasley-Murray, Bruce, Carson, Haenchen, or Schnackenburg. If one does not have the original edition, then this is worth considering.

Randy Mann,  
London, Ontario.

**Gerhard Maier, *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Translated by Robert Yarborough. Wheaton: Crossway, 1994, xiii + 526 pages.**

Maier is probably best known for his trenchant critique of the historical-critical method several decades ago in *The End of the Historical-Critical Method* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1977). *Biblical Hermeneutics* primarily addresses the foundational epistemological issue of *how* one should hermeneutically approach the biblical revelation, focusing on issues of understanding and not rules, or issues of genre as numerous recent contributions to the field do. A good portion of this work continues in the same vein as the previous mentioned work attacking the presuppositions of the historical-critical methodology. Maier concludes by offering an alternative which he calls a "biblical-historical" approach.

Maier's work is valuable in several respects for North American readers. First, he gives insights into the German theological scene that many will be unfamiliar with, providing a helpful overview of the history of interpretation from the Enlightenment to the present. His continued critique of the

Enlightenment presuppositions which underlie the historical-critical method are still worth hearing and considering, and his alternative methodology merits further discussion. He also promotes a high regard for Scripture and its "perfect trustworthiness" while eschewing terms like inerrancy or infallibility. Finally, because Maier's discussion centres around issues related to the Bible—the interpreter's presuppositions, ways of understanding revelation, inspiration, the canon, the unity of Scripture, and its historical nature—it will probably prove of greater practical value to most pastors and students than Thiselton's works in this reviewer's opinion. I highly recommend this stimulating work!

Randy Mann,  
London, Ontario.

**J. Richard Middleton & Brian J. Walsh, *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age*. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995. 250 pp.**

This book is a follow-up to the authors' *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View* (IVP, 1984). In that stimulating earlier joint effort they presented worldviews

not as consciously formulated and systematically articulated outlooks, but rather, as underlying perceptual frameworks, visions of life founded on faith commitments. These answer four basic questions about human identity ("Who am I?"), location ("Where am I?"), predicament ("What's wrong?") and remedy ("What's the solution?"). The biblical perspective is shaped by an acknowledgment of creation by God, fallenness and redemption. But its comprehensiveness has been forfeited by the historical emergence of an accepted

dualism separating the sacred from the secular, removing spirituality from the natural, material, political, social, temporal sphere.

Under that inhibiting influence has emerged the modern orientation. It accents a species of autonomous individuals situated in a realm of resources to be possessed and exploited. Our regrettable present lack of dominance over nature can be rectified by pursued mastery of science toward a technological prowess which will bring about wealth and pleasurable

consumption. The growing awareness of bankruptcy in this reductionist view has made only more opportune and urgent the consistent cultural expression of a contrasting Christian orientation. It will in practice renounce modern idols, respect the many dimensions in life, and seek to honour creational norms. The believing community's active participation in corporate public discipleship is crucial to carrying out this endeavour.

Our writers concluded their first collaboration with counsel on how such an approach could be cultivated, directing attention particularly to the place of Christian scholarship. *The Transforming Vision* remains a helpful contribution to the cause they eloquently enunciated. The sequel picks up on the disillusionment with the modern worldview, and how this has resulted in a change of ethos. Thus, the declared agenda in this second shared venture is initially that of "describing and evaluating the emerging cultural phenomenon known as postmodernity" (p. 10). The four chapters of Part One are devoted to this task. That task is undertaken as groundwork toward "suggesting how Christians can respond to this development with cultural integrity in a way that maintains a vibrant fidelity to Scripture and brings personal and social healing" (p. 10). The four chapters of Part Two, set forth in chiasmic counterpart to the earlier chapters, are given to this latter concern.

As in the earlier book, the four worldview questions provide hubs around which the discussion may revolve. Now, however, the first pair are posed primarily in the first person plural instead of the singular, and in Part One their order is revised — location receives priority over identity. "Where are we?" is seen to bear on "Who are we?" In the postmodern shift we are no longer situated in an independent external world to which we have direct access (in a naive realism of objective knowledge), but rather in a radically pluralistic world of our own diverse socio-linguistic constructions which lacks any meaningfully unifying centre. While exposing the violence covert in modernity's reified, totalizing order, the postmodern perspective would seem to leave only a disoriented, confusing, unsatisfying theatrical hyperreality.

The self formerly regarded as autonomous turns out to be a lot less than a Promethean hero. The would-be conquering human has found itself without moorings, lacking any stable

identity, a multiphrenic Legion left in disordered moral paralysis. Fingered for our plight is not, as before, the failure yet to achieve mastery, but rather all triumphal metanarratives. These large-scale stories purport to give an all-encompassing universally valid account of reality. They really have served as a pretentious ploy to promote particular, exclusivistic power grabs oppressively propagated at the expense of others. The solution is to dismiss such claims in principle, and in practice to embrace a heterogeneous milieu of differing communal perspectives, none of which can be substantiated as proper or even permissible for all.

In presenting this picture, Middleton and Walsh are insightfully attentive to various striking cultural expressions of modern and postmodern orientations, and alert to connections and contrasts between the two. They are receptive to unpleasant but telling postmodern critiques, while remaining aware of inconsistency and insufficiency in the overall thrust of this assault. Their own analysis is made even more accessible by the skilful employment of several illuminating motifs and images.

Must not a Christian response address first whether the grand biblical metanarrative, with its story concerning what is wrong and the solution, does not also itself express a totalizing ideology, an oppressive, violence-inflicting prejudice? Our authors contend at length that the Scriptural story, leading to and centring in Jesus, manifests radical sensitivity to, and identification with, those who suffer. It also keeps in view the divine Creator's universalistic intent as invalidating any attempt by some group to exploit the story as their own property and for advantage over others. Arguably, the exposition here of the unfolding, expanding canonical account is very helpfully strong on the horizontal plane of "what is wrong?" and "what is the remedy?", but somewhat weak, thin, on the central vertical dimension of these crucial issues of the human plight and how it is overcome.

The biblical portrait of the human creature in the image of its divine Maker renders an identity both noble and humble, in conspicuous contrast to the contemporary self which tends to fluctuate between hypermodern pseudo-centred tyrant and postmodern decentred victim. The Genesis 1&2 account and other passages, conveyed to people in crisis (ancient Israel in exile), issue a calling of empowerment to service which has been paradigmatically taken up by Jesus. It remains the vocation for his own,

enabling them to be responsible agents who bear witness to the Lord's character and purpose, rather than being either greedy brokers or helpless slaves in a present-day monstrously power-hungry "Babylon."

A contemporary sense of homelessness reflects the failure of fallen human society on its own to produce a rightly directed state of affairs. As Christians we need to regard ourselves as stewards sacrificially promoting justice in support of a cultural order of shalom which befits the gift extended to us in an originally good realm. In our approach to knowledge this will mean repudiating both the realist pretense of being potentially able to see everything as it really is and the opposite insistence that we cannot aptly represent any given world outside of ourselves at all. The calling is instead to recognize our fallible, particular perspective, and from it respectfully respond to the reality before us in dynamic readiness to be transformed with it toward the final home that is still meant to be. Such an epistemology of covenantal stewardship en route, though admittedly only sketched out in this book, should be attractive for its attempt to integrate our finitude and fallenness, our place in creation and in redemption.

The closing chapter calls Christian readers to a praxis that indwells the biblical story as authoritative canonical text. But honesty requires the candid admission that certain passages are problematic in that they remain at odds, out of step with an overall Scriptural thrust. These provide an internal corrective versus desensitized presumptuous abuse of the story. The divine Author has left that larger textual narrative open-ended, awaiting our responsible, consonant yet improvising unscripted resolution of the plot. Covenant fidelity to the inscripturated narrative's overall character will demand that at points we dissent from sometimes uncensored inappropriate perspectives on the part of its human authors. The Christian community's challenge is to live out a worldview which counters injustice, oppression, consumerism, brokenness and all other elements of human departure from a right relation with God. It will take an ever fresh appropriation of Scripture's far from tame text to faithfully fulfil the role its unfolding drama summons us to act out authentically.

*BRT* readers may well find themselves (like this reviewer) unsatisfied that Middleton and Walsh do justice to the unity and normativity of a divinely inspired Scripture. On such readers they rightly put the onus of implementing an approach that will succeed in that regard while giving due attention to the untidy and dynamic aspects of the biblical narrative they

address. Even substantive disagreement with their formulation should not prevent us from gratefully incorporating the cultural and biblical discernment they do exhibit.

Timothy L. Dyck,  
St. Leonard, Québec.

**Gregory A. Boyd, *God at War: The Bible & Spiritual Conflict*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997, 414 pages.**

Most books on “spiritual warfare” seem to be light on biblical-theological content and heavy on anecdotal evidence, but this book is quite the opposite. It is in no way a “how-to” manual on engagement with demonic forces, but is instead a thorough attempt to articulate a biblical perspective on the nature and significance of the world of personal spirits that exists between God and humans. The author is a professor of theology at Bethel College and a preaching pastor at Woodland Hills Church, both in St. Paul, Minnesota. The book displays serious interaction with a wide range of literature (almost 100 pages of endnotes!) without becoming pedantic, and it is a major contribution to the study of Satan and demons. There are two major purposes that guide the book: (1) to argue that the Bible from beginning to end either assumes or teaches what Boyd calls a “warfare worldview” in which “the good and evil, fortunate or unfortunate, aspects of life are to be interpreted largely as the result of good and evil, friendly or hostile, spirits warring against each other and against us” (p. 13); and (2) to argue that the “problem of evil” must be approached from such a “warfare” perspective rather than an Augustinian perspective which posits a hidden but good divine purpose for every evil event.

Although some of the author’s exegetical or theological judgments may be questionable, it is hard to evade the force of his first main point. As he indicates, the Book of Job in itself reveals the significance of activity in the spirit world for human life on earth, and this is not the only Old Testament support for the warfare worldview. In other places the Hebrew Bible points to a world of created spirits who are adversaries of God and thus engage Yahweh in cosmic conflict. Boyd shows that this relatively modest theme

of the Old Testament was for various reasons intensified in the inter-testamental period as seen in the Jewish apocalyptic literature, and he demonstrates that this cosmic conflict is the background against which the ministry of Jesus and the coming of the kingdom of God are interpreted in the Gospels. Furthermore, the New Testament epistles assume that the Christian life is an ongoing battle against evil spirits (Eph 6:10-18). In his fulfillment of this first purpose, Boyd is to be commended for defending the biblical theology of Satan and the demons over against the rationalism of liberal scholarship and the indifference of many North American evangelicals.

With regard to the second main point, the critique of traditional approaches to the problem of evil, I am not convinced that Boyd is on target. In all fairness, it should be noted that Boyd is presently writing a sequel which will elaborate his argument on this point, so a final assessment must await that book. However, since this theme continually surfaces in this book, some comment is in order. It is one thing to say that the Bible teaches the existence of a spirit world inhabited by many rebellious beings who affect the course of world history in various ways, but quite another thing to say that those beings are "free" in a way that denies that their actions are divinely controlled. Boyd is a spokesman for one kind of "free-will theism" which argues that free creatures (visible and invisible) are responsible for evil, and thus that God is *not* in any way responsible for the existence of evil. Traditional approaches to the problem argue (rightly, in my opinion) that he is right in what he affirms about the responsibility of creatures, but wrong in what he denies about divine control of all events. I fail to see how one can read the prophetic interpretation of Yahweh's relation to Gentile powers, for example, and argue that the evil done by those powers was outside divine control.

Although Boyd's construction of a theodicy may be flawed at the theoretical level, he does in my opinion articulate some well-deserved criticisms of the way in which a more traditional view is abused at the practical level. He is surely right in arguing that the biblical response to all evil is *revolt* and not *resignation*. It is one thing to say that divine providence somehow incorporates evil, but quite another thing to say that evil events thus become good. I can think of numerous examples of Christians who have passively accepted many events because they were "the will of God", when they ought to have sought the reversal of those events.

If there is such a thing as God's "sovereign will" encompassing all events both good and evil (as Scripture seems to indicate in places like Eph. 1:11), it is also true that our task is to seek God's "moral will" and thus to oppose much that may be contained in his sovereign will. Boyd's critique of the common passivity of Christians toward the effects of sin in this world is a helpful antidote to a distorted doctrine of providence.

Although I believe that Gregory Boyd has understated the biblical description of God's control of history, he has rightly reminded us that this world is a "war zone" and that we must, in obedience to Scripture, take seriously our need to fight with God and Christ against Satan and the demons. To say that God providentially controls all of history is not to deny that history is a war between good and evil.

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**Michael Eaton, *No Condemnation: A New Theology of Assurance*.  
Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1995, ix+261 pages.**

I have been frustrated for years by what I consider a trivialization of the doctrine of assurance in my own church circles. Therefore, I opened this book with keen anticipation, only to discover new levels of frustration. This is not to say that the book is not worth reading — it is useful and stimulating, especially in the earlier parts — but it is to say that some of the conclusions of the author are novel in the extreme and only seem to reinforce the trivialization of this doctrine.

Michael Eaton is a Baptist pastor in Nairobi, Kenya, and this book is a revision of his doctoral thesis at the University of South Africa. His roots are in the Reformed tradition, although this book is in large measure a critique of the typical Puritan-Reformed approach to assurance. There are many similarities between his approach and that of R. T. Kendall (*Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*), who indeed wrote the "Foreword" to Eaton's book.

The essential thesis is that “developed Calvinism” (especially in its Puritan-inspired forms), like the Arminianism which it rejects, is guilty of a legalistic approach to soteriology in the area of assurance. The typical Reformed doctrine assumes that sanctification (as an evidence of regeneration) is a necessary factor in assurance, which has resulted in a high degree of introspection and a low degree of assurance, given the partial nature of progressive sanctification. In its Puritan form, this is coupled with a high view of the Law as the standard of the Christian life, and thus with a legalistic approach to assurance.

The first half of the book argues for a non-legalistic view of the Christian life, in which the believer deliberately lives by the prompting of the Holy Spirit and Christ’s command to love, and thus fulfills the Law “indirectly” or “accidentally.” The topic of Paul’s attitude toward the Law is much discussed in contemporary scholarship, with no unanimity in sight. Eaton interacts with some of this current scholarship, but his primary concern is to compare Paul (especially in Galatians) with Puritan-Reformed views of the Law in the Christian life, and in my opinion he makes a good case for his contention that Paul has been misread by the Puritan tradition. It appears that while assurance was for many of the Puritans a labourious duty, it was for Paul a simple fact rooted in the gift of the Spirit.

However, the second half of the book is much less convincing and is not entailed by the first half. Even if Eaton is right in his contention that new covenant sanctification is to be defined apart from the Law, it is still the case that several New Testament texts seem to say that assurance of personal salvation is connected to new covenant sanctification as seen in continuing faith and obedience to Christ. Eaton deals with those texts by postulating a radical dichotomy between being saved and being obedient, or to put it another way, between entering the kingdom of God and inheriting the kingdom of God. Accordingly, the biblical texts which have normally been understood to imply that true faith is continuing faith evidenced by obedience, and that there is no final salvation apart from such faith, are reinterpreted to apply to an eschatological judgment of believers which does not concern their actual salvation. He argues that this judgment of Christians may even be designated biblically in terms of “tasting Gehenna” and that the “fire” of 1 Corinthians 3:15 may be “purgatorial” in nature (pp. 206-207).

There is insufficient space here to respond in detail to Eaton’s innovative treatment of the New Testament warnings and admonitions. I am

unconvinced by his exegesis of specific texts, and it seems to me that he fails to take seriously the fact that there is such a thing as “temporary faith” (Luke 8:13) which falls short of saving faith even though it gives impressive outward evidence (cf. Matt. 7:21-23). If that is the case, then assurance cannot be grounded simply in an *act* of faith, but must be connected (as in 1 John, for example) to continuing faith demonstrated by obedience.

There is a need for a biblically-shaped theology of assurance, but this book does not seem to provide it. The Puritan approach does seem to lead to a degree of introspection and moralism which is foreign to Pauline theology, but the solution is not to drive a wedge between assurance and sanctification as Eaton does.

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**Stanley J. Grenz, *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics*.  
Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997, 397 pages.**

When Stan Grenz had just begun his teaching career and found himself teaching ethics with little formal training for the task, he asked a noted Christian ethicist about the possibility of doing a second doctorate under him, but he received the counsel that he should write a book instead. This book is the fulfillment of that advice. Grenz, who is a professor of theology and ethics at Carey/Regent College in Vancouver and a prolific author, seeks to provide here an evangelical approach to ethics which can undergird the attempt to deal with specific issues. If you want detailed answers to particular ethical dilemmas, this is not the place to look; but if you want a stimulating proposal for a general ethical perspective, then this is worth examining.

The book begins by setting Christian ethics within the larger framework of philosophical ethics and then devotes four chapters to a survey of the perspectives which contribute to the context in which we think about ethics.

This sketch of the historical background begins with the various strands of Greek philosophical ethics, moves on to a survey of biblical teaching on ethics, proceeds with a look at model Christian proposals (Augustine, Aquinas, Luther/Calvin), and concludes with an overview of contemporary Christian views of ethical theory. All of this is followed by Grenz's development of his own approach, which can be described as "comprehensive love" rooted in the life of the Trinity and worked out in Christian community. This pattern of divine love comes to us through the narrative of Scripture, which gives us the story-line of God's loving and gracious action on our behalf, and the appropriate imitation of this pattern is made clear to us through the combination of Word and Spirit (as opposed to an overly objective focus on the Word alone or an overly subjective focus on the inner witness of the Spirit alone).

This book is impressive for both its breadth and its depth, and it addresses fundamental issues of ethical theory which evangelicals often ignore as they rush into debates about specific (and admittedly urgent) issues without a clearly worked out theory that can be applied to those issues. As such, it is an important contribution to the life of the contemporary evangelical church. There are some issues which I would like to see addressed in more detail. For example, I would appreciate a bit more precision and detail in the description of exactly how Scripture functions as a basis for ethical conclusions. In particular, how do we utilize those parts of Scripture which are not narrative? If biblical imperatives are not to be treated as a detailed and comprehensive law-book, how exactly are those imperatives to be treated? I would also appreciate a bit more interaction with those evangelicals who have been attempting to define the kind of moral absolutism which is found in Scripture. Does the Bible point to the non-conflicting absolutism of a John Frame, or the graded absolutism of a Norman Geisler, or the ideal absolutism of an Erwin Lutzer? Or does it point in some other direction? Aside from a passing negative reference to graded absolutism, there is little in the book which engages this important debate.

In the end, although I would appreciate some of these additions to the book, what is in fact here is very stimulating and useful in our attempt to understand what it means to live as bearers of God's moral image in this world. Stan Grenz is clearly one of the most influential evangelical

theologians of our day, and this addition to his impressive list of books is one to be taken seriously.

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**Andreas J. Köstenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin, eds., *Women in the Church A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995, 334 pages.**

All who have an interest in the debate on the role of women will want to read this work. This contribution is one of the most extensive interactions with the text and interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in the past few decades, and is destined to be at the forefront of the ongoing debate for many years, due to the scope of its interaction with the literature and because of the originality of the research. Eight contributors provide extensive interaction with the text from a variety of perspectives within the compass of the seven chapters and two appendices.

S. M. Baugh contributes the opening essay, wherein he examines the evidence for the claims of egalitarians, particularly the Kroegers in *I Suffer Not a Women* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), that Ephesus was a bastion for women's rights. Baugh's article proves to be a frontal assault on the hypotheses of the Kroegers as he systematically provides evidence from the primary materials (over 4,000 inscriptions are available) to prove that Ephesus never adapted an egalitarian ideology. He argues contrary to the Kroegers that there were no women magistrates in Ephesus in the first century, nor did women have positions of significant religious authority. Baugh also carefully exposes the anachronistic and conjectural basis of the egalitarian arguments for a "feminist" culture in Ephesus.

In the second chapter, T. David Gordon examines the genre of 1 Timothy. Central to his discussion is whether the occasional nature of the letter denies its applicability to our present situation. What should be of concern to all, is the ease with which this argument can be used to avoid passages of Scripture which are offensive to some, such as those dealing with

homosexuality. At issue then is the authority of Scripture. He correctly argues that all occasional letters contain norms underlying the specific instructions that are applicable to future generations, including those in 1 Timothy 2:9-15.

Chapters three and four contain the studies by Baldwin and Köstenberger that I previously discussed in a review of the Kroegers' book (*BRT* 7:1-2, 1997, p. 117). Of special note is the inclusion in appendix two of the ancient Greek texts with an English translation (not by Baldwin), of every occurrence of ἀϋθεντέω, the highly disputed verb of 1 Timothy 2:12. Köstenberger's article also includes the Greek texts with an English translation, of the 48 extrabiblical occurrences of οὐδέ linking two infinitives as in 1 Timothy 2:12. The inclusion of these primary sources makes this a valuable work regardless of one's position in the debate.

Thomas Schreiner contributes a chapter devoted to a dialogue with scholarship on the text. In stark contrast to the Kroegers' work, which failed to interact in any meaningful way with opposing views, this is an outstanding piece of interaction with opposing perspectives and the text. One should note that Schreiner eschews the typical complementarian and egalitarian designations for the labels "historic view" and "progressives" respectively. There is much to commend here, and the critiques of this chapter will have to be considered by all egalitarians if the debate is to truly progress without the same old hackneyed arguments simply rehearsed. On the difficult crux of 1 Timothy 2:15, one should also consult Köstenberger's recent article (*Bulletin for Biblical Research* 7, 1997, 107-144), where he argues Paul is exhorting women to adhere to their God-ordained sphere involving their marital, familial, and domestic responsibilities and they will not make themselves vulnerable to Satan.

Robert Yarbrough's important contribution tackles the thorny but vital issue of hermeneutics head-on. While some will find the overview of the history of interpretation unnecessary, it sets the present debate in its philosophical context, and provides the background for his critique of the hermeneutical approach of egalitarians such as F. F. Bruce, among evangelicals. Yarbrough also gives a fine critique of the popular egalitarian argument from slavery in Galatians 3:28. Harold Brown in the final chapter, also takes up the relationship between 1 Timothy 2 and Galatians 3:28 and the issue of the role of the authority of Scripture for those who pit these two verses against each other. One issue related to Galatians 3:28 that is not

addressed is that of patriarchy, and one should consult the fine discussion of the role of patriarchy by Guenther Haas (*JETS* 38:3, 321-336), who argues that it is not an evil which God tolerated. This is contrary to feminists, who use this in their progressive hermeneutic to argue for its abolishment with the coming of Christ and its attendant implications for the headship of men in the home and church.

In appendix 1, Daniel Doriani gives a helpful historical overview of the interpretation of 1 Timothy 2. His most significant contribution may very well be his argument that 1 Timothy 2:14 actually speaks of an ontological difference between men and women which accounts for Eve's susceptibility to deception. He notes the movement even by complementarians away from this view and this is another area where the traditional complementarian arguments of the past two decades are reexamined. Thus Doriani argues and Schreiner concurs in his article, that 2:14 presents an argument from nature, while 2:13 presents the argument from decree, and both are tied to creation. This will undoubtedly be one of the most controversial arguments in the book, although it has received possible support from social science studies on the differences between men and women. It should be noted that not all the contributors necessarily concur on this point.

Several of the authors note that they were formerly egalitarians but were convicted by the biblical evidence and lead to the complementarian position. This book is a substantial contribution in addressing the arguments of egalitarians, and advancing the arguments in new ways, and if read and used, could lead to many others making such a transition. Those who choose to ignore it will be the poorer for having done so.

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**Roy Clements, *Introducing Jesus* , 2nd ed.; repr. Eastbourne, East Sussex: Kingsway Publications, 1996, 159 pages. ISBN: 0-85476-321-X.**

Ever since the Apostle John wrote his gospel in the first century Christians have recognized the importance of literature for evangelism and Christian nurture. Christians know full well that God the Holy Spirit doesn't need to

use such an instrument, but graciously he does. And in recent days he has been pleased to use with great blessing books like C. S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity* and Jim Packer's *Knowing God*. Roy Clements' *Introducing Jesus* may not be in the same league as these two modern classics, nevertheless it is a superb tool for sharing one's faith.

Since 1979 Clements has been pastor of Eden Baptist Church in Cambridge, a flourishing work in the heart of that university town. Apparently Don Carson regularly attends the church when he is in Cambridge doing research. Drawing him and hundreds of others every Sunday, including numerous students, is the high calibre of Clements' preaching—preaching that is well reflected in this book, which started life as a series of sermons in the mid-1980's.

Clements takes as his subject matter the seven main teaching sections of John's gospel—"seven conversations," Clements calls them (p. 13)—and opens up for us: the vital need of being born again (John 3); the emptiness of life without a relationship with Jesus (John 4); Jesus' deity (John 5); what it means to believe in Jesus (John 6); the controversial claim by Jesus that he *alone* is the One who gives light, unassailable truth, and genuine freedom (John 8), and eternal life (John 10), and that he *alone* is the way to God (John 13-14); and finally, the gift of the Holy Spirit (John 16). The last two chapters are both drawn from the same "conversation," what is known as the "Farewell Discourse," John 14-16.

The Epilogue (p. 155-159) refuses to let the reader put down the book unchallenged. Through a series of questions Clements powerfully presses home the claims of Christ upon the reader's heart and mind. But Clements does not merely leave such questions to the end. All along he has been seeking to challenge and engage the reader. For instance, in the middle of discussing the way in which the Holy Spirit convicts men and women that their thinking is wrong and they need to change, he asks whether or not the reader is at that very moment experiencing "inward pressure...towards Christian commitment." Well, Clements suggests, "it could be that the Holy Spirit himself is challenging you, calling you to repentance and faith" (p. 146-147).

Or dealing with the conversation of Jesus with the Samaritan woman in John 4, Clements has this to say about the woman:

A loathsome old piece of laced mutton pathetically courting the favours of any man drunk enough or desperate enough to want her. ...Her self-respect was in tatters. Why else would she choose to come to this isolated travellers' well at the hottest time of the day, except to avoid the embarrassment of being shunned by all those respectable neighbours of hers?

She would give anything to relieve the depression that haunted her. She felt so insecure, so lonely. But most of all she felt so dissatisfied.... Is that how you often feel? (p. 30).

This is strong stuff, but it goes right to the heart of the modern malaise.

There is much here for the believer as well. As John Stott says in his "Foreword": "Some readers will surely be brought by the Holy Spirit to faith in Jesus. Others will have their faith clarified and strengthened. None of us can fail to be enriched" (p. viii). In a word, this book is strongly recommended for Christians as well as those outside the fold.

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**Faith Cook, *William Grimshaw of Haworth*. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1997, xvi + 342 pages. ISBN: 0-85151-732-3.**

The reader will, I hope, permit an exuberant start to this review: this is an absolutely superb treatment of a leading figure in the revival that swept British society on both sides of the Atlantic in the eighteenth-century. It is, in short, a gem of a biography. Certain individuals of this era, like John Wesley, who once said of Grimshaw that a "few such as him would make a nation tremble" (p. 273), have been more than amply written up in biographical studies and historical monographs. Others, though equally important, have been more or less forgotten. It was not until the late Arnold Dallimore, for instance, wrote his classic two-volume biography of George Whitefield a few years ago that justice was finally done to the man who was

probably the greatest evangelist of the entire eighteenth-century. This study of William Grimshaw (1708-1763) by Faith Cook performs a similar role for this Christ-exalting Yorkshire preacher.

An “ungodly cleric”—the title of chapter 2—when he went to the village of Todmorden as the parish curate, Grimshaw was converted there in 1741 after much soul-searching and pondering of a couple of Puritan classics by Thomas Brooks and John Owen. Roughly a year after his conversion he had moved to nearby Haworth, famous in our day for being the home of the nineteenth-century Brontës, but which Cook depicts as “a barren wilderness,” largely devoid of the life-transforming message of the gospel. When Grimshaw arrived at the parish church, there were but twelve who regularly came forward for the Lord’s Supper. By the summer of 1747 that number had risen to the astonishing figure of twelve hundred (p. 66, 149-150)!

Understandably, the account of this marvellous outpouring of the Holy Spirit occupies a number of chapters in the book (see especially chaps. 6, 8, 9). It makes for tremendous reading, especially when coupled with the reflection that Grimshaw’s God yet lives and his arm is yet powerful to save. Yet, Cook shows us the cost that it exacted on Grimshaw: a punishing, physical toll on his bodily strength (p. 271-272, 287) and persecution, at times violent and brutal (see especially p. 123-137). But Grimshaw counted all the hardship he suffered for Jesus, his dear Redeemer, as nothing in light of what Christ had done for him (p. 176).

In the final analysis, this is what made Grimshaw’s ministry so effective: his desire to live entirely for Jesus and spend “every moment to God’s glory” (p. 182). Not that Grimshaw ever felt he achieved this desire this side of Glory. John Wesley’s concept of sinless perfection, Cook ably shows, was something foreign to both Grimshaw’s thought and experience (p. 185-186, 236-240, 265-267). But it was his constant aim, and Cook’s account of how this aim unfolded through his earthly life and ministry makes so much of late twentieth-century western Evangelicalism look like utter wimpishness! May God use books like this one to challenge us to a fresh and radical commitment to Christ and his Kingdom.

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**Hatch, Edwin, and Henry A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the other Greek Versions of the Old Testament (including the Apocryphal Books)*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998, pp. xxvii + 1860. ISBN: 0-8010-2141-3**

This tool, indispensable for any serious study of the biblical text and originally published in three volumes by Oxford (1897-1906), reprinted in two once by Akademische Druck and Verlagsanstalt (Graz, Austria) in 1954 and five times by Baker (Grand Rapids, Michigan) between 1983 and 1991, is now issued in a Second Edition in one volume by Baker with an "Introductory Essay" by Robert A. Kraft and Emanuel Tov and a "Hebrew/Aramaic Index to the Septuagint" by Takamitsu Muraoka. The latter replaces Appendix IV, "Hebrew Index to the Entire Concordance," in the third volume produced by Redpath in 1906 and is also published separately (in paperback—see following Book Review). The "Introductory Essay" is both helpful and useful, providing a history of concordances of the Greek Versions of the Old Testament, evaluating the concordance of Hatch and Redpath, and suggesting directions for future improvements and concordances. A system of bullets, squares and triangles inserted in the text better identifies additions and corrections which were appended originally to the second and third volumes in lists. A clear list of "Abbreviations and Symbols" also enhances the concordance's usefulness. The text is otherwise unchanged.

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**Muraoka, Takamitsu, *Hebrew/Aramaic Index to the Septuagint: Keyed to the Hatch-Redpath Concordance*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998, pp. 160. ISBN: 0-8010-2145-6.**

In 1906, Edwin Hatch's successor, Henry A. Redpath, completed the "Oxford Concordance to the Septuagint" by issuing a third volume offering four appendixes: (1) a concordance of proper names; (2) a concordance of the Hebrew text of Ben Sira (newly discovered at that time); (3) a concordance of newly published Hexaplaric materials; and (4) a comprehensive reverse Hebrew-Greek index. The latter listed each Hebrew headword and the column and page number in the main concordance to check to find the Greek equivalents. This was extremely awkward and labourious to use. There appeared in the early 1970's *An Expanded Hebrew Index for the Hatch-Redpath Concordance to the Septuagint* by Elmar Camilo Dos Santos (Jerusalem: Dugith). This handwritten publication provided the Greek equivalents and the number of occurrences thus making the reverse index much easier to use. The same task had been performed a year or two earlier by Muraoka's wife Keiko, but the work was unpublished.

Muraoka has built upon his wife's work; his index is far more than a replacement for the original Hebrew-Greek index in which the Greek equivalents are explicitly given along with their frequencies of occurrence. First, by means of a small set of symbols, he offers a critical and partial revision of the Hebrew and Aramaic lexemes listed by Hatch and Redpath as the source text which a given Greek lexeme is rendering. Second, while Hatch and Redpath gave equal value to the uncials Alexandrinus, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and the Sixtine Edition of 1587, Muraoka has applied modern principles of textual criticism, exercising judgment between variants. Third, Muraoka supplies, although Hatch and Redpath did not, Hebrew and Aramaic equivalents for Greek words in apocryphal books including all relevant information from his *Greek Hebrew/Aramaic Index to I Esdras (Septuagint and Cognate Studies 16: Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1984)*. Fourth, data from new manuscript discoveries has been taken into account. Finally, the mode of referencing used by Hatch and Redpath has been retained as well as the manner adopted by them for vocalising and analysing Hebrew and Aramaic words, particularly the verbs. Thus continuity is maintained and the concordance is not used as a forum for applying a newer linguistic understanding.

This addition does deserve constituting the work as a Second Edition! It greatly enhances the concordance as a tool for analysing how the ancient translator interpreted and understood the text by making it possible to quickly discover his characteristics, habits, and approach to the task of translation. This is key in the often tricky task of using this most important tool in Scripture study: the Septuagint.

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**John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, pp. xviii + 755. ISBN: 0-8028-2534-6**

Professor Oswalt's commentary on the whole of Isaiah is now complete with the publication of this volume. The binding, dust cover, and external size of the book differ from that of the first volume (*The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986]), but the internal format and printing style remain the same. The author offers his own translation, handles grammatical, lexical and textual matters in footnotes, briefly discusses the literary structure of each section and its relation to the whole, and then comments verse by verse.

While matters of introduction are dealt with in the first volume, Oswalt does devote some fourteen pages in the second to discuss further the relationship of chapters 40-66 to 1-39. Here he strengthens his case for reading the entire book as written by a single author—the Isaiah of the late 700's and early 600's B.C. The fact that Isaiah addresses a historical situation other than his own in these chapters calls for a supernatural view of prophecy and revelation and at the same time does not require that Isaiah clearly grasped the exact identity of the Suffering Servant or the circumstances and time of which he spoke (1 Pet. 1:11). Oswalt believes that the theme of servanthood ties 40-66 together (*The Vocation of Servanthood: 40-55* and *The Marks of Servanthood: 56-66*) and unites 40-66 with 1-39

(A Call to Servanthood: 6 and The Basis for Servanthood: 7-39). This provides in a remarkable way a comprehensive understanding of the entire prophecy.

The translation provided by Oswalt follows the model of formal equivalence and even adheres as closely as possible to word order in the Hebrew; nonetheless it is generally not so stilted as to be difficult to understand. This approach suits a study tool very well.

The footnotes address responsibly variations in the history of the transmission of the text noting particularly contributions from the Dead Sea Scrolls, but covering all the ancient versions. Grammatical and lexical questions of a technical nature are handled here making use of newer tools such as B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* as well as traditional works. It is not surprising, then, to see a large number of references to D. Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, OBO 50/2 (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), a magisterial work which treats selected problems in the text so exhaustively.

There appears to be, however, a failure to interact with Barthélemy in his discussion of particularly difficult problems, both in the commentary as well as in the footnotes. A couple of examples arising from sections I examined in detail will illustrate the point. Oswalt renders Isaiah 50:11a as "Behold, all of you who kindle a fire, who gird on flames." Without doubt *mÿ'azzÿrê zîqôt* in MT, rendered "gird on flames," is difficult. Oswalt discusses the ancient versions but does not refer here to the discussion in Barthélemy. He explains his strange translation "gird on flames" to mean that a person fastens a torch to themselves so as to have hands free, possibly for defence. Barthélemy, however, suggests that what is involved is getting a fire going by surrounding embers or sparks with combustible material. Standard Hebrew Lexica and indeed other occurrences support such a meaning for *'azar* (Piel). While *zîqôt* is rare in Biblical Hebrew, occurrences in Ben Sira and the Dead Sea Scrolls indicate that 'burning embers' or 'sparks' fits as well or better than 'flames' and is not merely medieval usage as Oswalt seems to think (p. 330). It is easy to see that Barthélemy's proposal fits the context better than that of Oswalt and requires no emendation of the Masoretic Text.

One more example is instructive. In the First Stanza of the Fourth Servant Song (52:13-15) a number of knotty problems confront the exegete. The Hebrew word rendered "marred" by the King James Version is given as "disfigurement" by Oswalt and as "anointing" by Barthélemy. Oswalt notes

that 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> adds a final *yod* to מ שחת in MT prompting some to read it as “I have anointed” and here he cites Kutscher and Barthélemy for support. In fact, however, Barthélemy’s proposal is based on reading מ שחת as a noun from the common root ח שח (‘anoint’). Thus his exegesis is based on MT and only supported in an ancillary way by 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. He concludes that vv 14-15a are probably best translated as follows:

(14) Comme beaucoup furent atterrés à ton propos, ainsi sa prestance (sera l’objet d’) une onction surhumaine et sa distinction (sera l’objet d’une onction) dépassant les mortels, (15) ainsi il fera l’aspersion de nations nombreuses... (D. Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament*, p. 394).

Here one can see that Barthélemy does full justice to the “as...so...so” construction plainly marked by the Hebrew of v. 14 whereas the first “so” is completely omitted by Oswalt in order to make his interpretation work. Barthélemy also renders *yazzeḥ* according to the normal meaning “sprinkle” (adequately handling the problems of syntax) while Oswalt opts for “startle”—an option that is essentially the counsel of despair. The point of the verse is that the Priestly Anointing of the Servant is so beyond what is common among men, that he brings cleansing to all the nations. This is what causes the astonishment of many.

In Isaiah 53:12, Oswalt adopts readings from Qumran against MT twice and acknowledges analysis by Barthélemy for the second of these. It appears, (perhaps wrongly?) then, that Oswalt has checked Barthélemy on matters textual, but has not adequately interacted with the detailed exegetical excurses in Barthélemy who seldom leaves any stone unturned in the entire history of interpretation. Admittedly his work would be easier to use were it in English.

As a general rule, Oswalt interacts extensively and widely with other commentators and scholars, particularly with those such as Westermann and Whybray, who are not of the common evangelical mould. This is both commendable and helpful and reflects a real search for truth in seeking to understand the text. In dealing with the identity of the Suffering Servant, he interacts as well with Jewish Interpreters, who hold that the Servant is the

nation Israel and argues persuasively for an interpretation that is Christian and Messianic. Perhaps as he discussed those passages where the Servant is on the one hand Israel, and on the other hand an individual, he might have explored more fully the way in which the king represented the nation and stood for the nation in ancient Israel. Note for example how the king, the speaker in almost all the Psalms, rapidly shifts between ‘I’ and ‘we’ (e.g. Pss. 44, 60, 66). This could be a fruitful way of explaining how the Servant is (obedient) Israel and yet not the disobedient nation. Nonetheless, the arguments advanced by Oswalt for an interpretation that is Messianic and finds fulfilment in Jesus Christ are helpful, solid and devotional.

Oswalt’s exegesis is bold and advances our grasp of Isaiah in many places; perhaps in certain cases, the advance in interpretation is not as fully worked out as is possible. The traditional translation of 53:12, for example, is, “Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong” (so KJV; similarly NASB, NIV, and commentators like E. J. Young). According to this translation, the servant is among many who are victors. As a J. A. Motyer notes, this is anticlimactic (J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* [Downers Grove: IVP, 1993], p. 442). Motyer, following others, prefers to translate “I will apportion to him the many, and the strong he will apportion as spoil” (*Ibid.*). This gives to the Servant the many he has redeemed as spoils of his triumph. Oswalt chooses, however, another approach rendering, “Therefore, I will apportion for him among the many, and with the mighty he will divide spoil” (p. 399). He sees the Servant at the forefront, dividing spoil with the victors. Oswalt’s exegesis is an advance in that he renders the word *rabbim* (as does Motyer) as “many” and not “great” as in the traditional translations (KJV, NASB, NIV). It is inconsistent to render the same word by “many” in v. 11b and 12c and by “great” in v. 12a. Oswalt also demonstrates better exegetical skill in preferring to render *b* in v. 12a as “among” and not as a *beth essentiae* (as in Motyer: “the strong he will apportion *as* spoil”). An analysis of the verb חלק followed by the preposition *b* admittedly shows no standard use, but the spatial sense opted for by Oswalt is a hundred times more probable than the rare *beth essentiae*. Oswalt also takes את in v. 12a as the preposition “with” and not as marking “the mighty” as the direct object of the verb “divide.” *Pace* Motyer (pp. 442-443), an exact parallel such as Prov. 16:19 shows that reading “the mighty” as the direct object is not a better interpretation. Oswalt’s advance, however, could be more fully worked out. Since the controlling idea of the paragraph is “the one and the many” it is better to render עצומים in v. 12ab as the “numerous” rather than

as the "mighty." One would then translate v. 12a, "Therefore, I will divide a portion to him among the many and he will divide spoil with the numerous." The thought of the passage is that just as the one has borne the sins of the many, so the victory of the one is shared (both by Yahweh and by the Servant) with the many. The central idea of the one and the many is better preserved and the resultant translation and theology accords better with the New Testament; indeed it is probable that this text is the background for Paul's thought in Romans 5:15-19).

The archaeology and history of the Ancient Near East are brought to bear effectively in elucidating the text (cf. commentary on Isa. 46). The commentary is helpful for pastors as well as for scholars. During the course of evaluating this work I preached on Isaiah 50 and found help of a practical nature alongside the scholarly explanation of the text. I found fresh insights even in the discussion of familiar texts like Isaiah 53. Oswalt points out that the only metaphor is that of the lamb: this metaphor illustrates both the lostness of the people of God and at the same time the sacrificial work of the Servant's atoning death. Oswalt's commentary is unashamedly Christian in its interpretation and applications. Attention is also given to the New Testament use of Isaiah.

The commentary is not only exegetical, but also theological. Here the discussion is helpful in areas such as the person and work of the Messiah, but mediating in eschatology. His approach to Isaiah 60 may illustrate the point. He positions at one end of the interpretive spectrum Alexander who argues that only the new Israel of the church is intended. At the other end he places Whybray who argues for a material interpretation of the imagery. Oswalt argues for a middle position: the material "is addressed to the faithful in Israel, both at the time of the first coming of the Messiah and at the time of his second coming" (p. 537). They show Israel's final destiny as the restored people of God in whom the reality of God's salvation is displayed to all the earth" (p. 534). This approach lacks the depth of *When The Kings Come Marching In* by Richard J. Mouw or the perspective of biblical theology provided in the writings of N. T. Wright (e.g., *The New Testament and the People of God*). Isaiah 60 is the basis for John's Vision of the Heavenly City in Revelation, begun by the first advent of the Messiah and revealed at the second. True historical Israel is at the heart of things for the New Jerusalem which began with believing Israel. But Isaiah 60 talks about

Israel's daughters and sons coming to her from the nations, about the nations coming to her light. This is more than just a return of Jews from diaspora. It is the inclusion of the nations within the one people of God described in the New Testament.

In this volume Oswalt offers almost 20 pages of bibliography to supplement the twelve pages of Select Bibliography in the first volume. There is also a special bibliography for 52:13-53:12. Excurses address special topics and problems. Indices are provided for Subject, Authors, Scriptures and Hebrew Words greatly enhancing the usability of the work. Both the work of the author and that of the publisher demonstrate great care, resulting in few errors. In a couple of instances Oswalt has confused Kethib as Qere and vice versa (p. 285 n.4; 286 n.8). When analysing the grammar of the phrase "by his knowledge" in 53:11, Oswalt has confused what is objective and what is subjective (p. 403). Such problems, however, are rare.

We desperately need exposition of the Old Testament that is rooted in the culture, history and language of the Ancient Near East, faithful to the original text, is thoroughly Christian in interpretation by keeping the whole biblical theological story in view, and offers pastoral and spiritual insight as well as academic acumen. Oswalt has achieved a nice balance and I for one am grateful to have this work on my shelf beside works such as those of E. J. Young and more recently J. A. Motyer. The church is greatly indebted to him for this valuable work and should not hesitate to invest in long term projects of Christian scholarship like this—which appear to be removed from the battlefield—but in the end, build it up in the most solid way possible.

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**John Calvin, *Providence*. Laurel, MS: Audobon Press, 1996, 29 pages.**

It is safe to say that the doctrine of Gods' providential dealings is a neglected truth in both the world and in the church today. This little pamphlet, *Providence*, is an excerpt from Book 1, Chapters 16-18 of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* first published in 1536 by John Calvin. The booklet first defines providences, then gives fourteen practical

applications arising from the doctrine and concludes with the issue of the wicked and evil and the sovereignty of God. Providence will prove to be a good introduction to both the doctrine itself and to Calvin's *Institutes*.

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**John Thornbury, *David Brainerd Pioneer Missionary to the American Indians*. Durham, England: Evangelical Press, 1996, 305 pages.**

Perhaps no one single life has had a greater influence on the Christian missionary enterprise in the last two hundred and fifty years than that of David Brainerd. From William Carey (India) to Jim Elliot (Auca Indians) the life of this unusually gifted and godly man has left its imprint. So it was with much anticipation that I read this recent biography from the pen of John Thornbury, a pastor in Pennsylvania. Like his earlier essay in *Five Pioneer Missionaries*, Thornbury brings alive one, who though dead, still speaks.

I highly recommend David Brainerd. It is immensely readable, enjoyable and challenging. Brainerd's life is placed in the much larger, international scene of the Spanish, French, and English rivalry for the North American continent. The American Puritan theological heritage is evaluated, as is the contemporary events of the Great Awakening. Brainerd's life is also seen in the context of the dual cultures of the New England white population and the native American peoples.

Into that larger setting is this record of the short, but fascinating life of a godly missionary. *David Brainerd* is a very honest biography. Beset with a melancholy temperament that plagued him all his life, orphaned at fourteen, expelled from Yale before graduating, experiencing intense periods of loneliness, and ultimately dying of tuberculosis, Brainerd's life proved the grace of God in salvation and His sufficiency in all situations. What drove this man was his all-consuming desire to know God and to enjoy and glorify Christ Jesus.

His missionary career was short—four and a half years. Yet in God's gracious sovereignty, revival came to the Indians at Crossweeksung. A

Christian church and community were formed. The evangelist-missionary became a pastor to his dear people. Then, in God's strange providence, at the height of all this, Brainerd dies at twenty-nine years of age.

David Brainerd is a must read for every serious-minded Christian. This book demonstrating his life will cheer you and challenge you, stretch you and sanctify you, humble you and encourage you. Thornbury concludes his book with these words, "This is a life that sets a high standard for the pursuit of a devout walk with God. It calls people away from the world which tempts with its charms and enticements. It beckons the Christian pilgrim to leave his own selfish pursuits and go out into the highways and byways to compel people to turn to God."

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**Clinton E. Arnold, *The Colossian Syncretism*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996, 312 pages.**

The Colossian Syncretism is a scholarly attempt to identify and explain the "philosophy" (Col. 2:8) that was infiltrating the church at Colossae. A crucial clue in helping to solve the problem is the phrase "the worship of angels" (Col. 2:18). Arnold postulates a syncretism involving both pagan and Jewish elements. His methodology stresses "the utilization of local and primary evidence wherever possible for the illumination of terms and concepts characteristic of the philosophy. Thus, inscriptions and archaeological evidence from Phrygia, Lydia, Caria and Asia Minor as a whole will be investigated and employed when appropriate."

The Colossian Syncretism is a gold mine of primary sources. Yet, it will take diligence to work your way through this book. For those who do, they will be rewarded with a clearer and deeper understanding of the book of Colossians.

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**Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1 - 24*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1997.**

This first volume is part of the *NICOT* series and is a first-rate piece of work in every way. Professor Block studies the text of Ezekiel at various levels, from a literary standpoint, from the viewpoint of prophetic form, from its relationship to the rest of the canon, and in a practical way (reminiscent of John Broadus' commentary on Matthew) in its relationship to application (he calls this last section "theological application"). It is clear that Block is a very sensitive exegete of the text and has read deeply from the secondary literature. His vantage point, however, is not simply that of a stage to reply to liberal viewpoints, but to carefully and humbly explain the authoritative text of the Word of God. In accomplishing this task he leaves no stone unturned to get at the meaning of the text. As a result we have a commentary that will endure for generations and be most profitable to pastors and students of Scripture. Praise the Lord for such gifts.

I can take exception to only one thing, and that is Block's understanding of the relationship of Ezekiel to fulfilment under the new covenant. For him the literal interpretation of the text is primary, and he notes that were we to ask Ezekiel how he understood prophecies of the last day that he would affirm a literal standpoint. In the last analysis, "Ezekiel's own understanding of his oracles must be determinative in our interpretation" (p. 56). This is a strange comment. I was not aware that Ezekiel ever interpreted his oracles for us. We all have the same access to Ezekiel's text that he did but we do not have access to Ezekiel's thinking about the oracles God delivered to him, at least not on the basic hermeneutical level that Block suggests. Such suggestions amount to a cul-de-sac in the task of interpreting Ezekiel, or any prophet, for that matter.

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**Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.**

This new commentary is a part of the Old Testament Library series. Although Nelson tells us that the book as a canonical unit can be understood as a self-contained and coherent literary whole, he says that “hardly any of the material it preserves is of the sort that can be directly used for historical construction” (p. 2, 3). These “traditional tales display a folkloristic character” (p. 3, i.e., they have the same value as folk “lore”) and a strong etiological inclination” (etiology is a code word for non-historical explanations to children as to why some object is present, that is, for example, the parent uses a made-up piece of folklore to explain the twelve stones on one side of the Jordan. The stones exist but the story of the miraculous crossing is not historical. This is a favourite ruse of liberal theologians to explain away the miraculous). On p. 10 he notes that such narratives were told in order to help people come to terms with a landscape full of ancient city ruins.” He notes that, “Only the geographical lists and boundaries can be considered as credible historical sources.” His conclusion: “It should come as no surprise, therefore, that Joshua’s account of a large-scale invasion of Canaan cannot be supported by the archaeological evidence” (p. 3). To the contrary, note Bimson, *Redating the Exodus and Conquest* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1981), who challenges this understanding in great detail and with superb method.

Apart from its modernistic assumptions about reality (I have cited only a small portion of his approach), what kind of commentary does Nelson give us? The results are not much different. In chapter one, for example, we read not only Nelson’s analysis of the four speeches which comprise the unity of the chapter, but he also believes that the historian used the speeches of authoritative characters in order to gain the appearance of greater objectivity as well as to guide readers into “adopting a particular theological interpretation of Israel’s history” (p. 29). Finally, some of the books “internal ideological tensions” began to emerge in the first chapter, in particular, the view of the conquest which has Yahweh do nearly everything (chs. 3-4, 6), and what Nelson calls the “hard realities of human combat in partnership with the divine warrior” (chs. 8, 10 - 11; p. 32). For liberals the book of Joshua betrays two (or more) contradictory viewpoints which the author(s) attempted to merge into one, giving us, on the one hand, a conquest asserted to be “complete and the enemy total[ly] exterminated”,

while, at the same time, we hear that both alien nations and unpossessed land remains (p. 12).

Such views of the text of the Word of God can not be either informative (profitable for teaching) or edifying (for instruction in righteousness). With all the powerful learning at their command the liberal commentators such as Nelson give us wood, hay and stubble.

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**Mark A. Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1997, 335 pages.**

The study of history, especially church history, is considered by many to be nothing more than a necessary evil. An evil that would best be ignored if possible, or at least tolerated with reluctance in the extreme. This is understandable to a degree when one considers that most historical narratives, church included, are nothing more than a sterile chronology of dates, places and events. Most history texts tend to strip the flesh away from the bone, so to speak, leaving only a stark unappealing bone mass. Thankfully, Mark A. Noll's latest contribution to the field of church history takes this tendency into account, placing face and figure over a dry skeleton.

Two things make this book noteworthy. First, Noll chose to examine his topic from a Christian perspective rather than from the rubric of the Church. Noll has astutely observed, the discussion of Church history is often clouded by one's ecclesiological tradition. Inevitably, this places an unintentional bias on the treatment of various epochs and events. By taking the high road and discussing history first as Christian, Noll escapes much of the confinements placed upon historians by their expressions of faith and includes some key turning points in Christian history that would otherwise be missed. Noll has chosen twelve pivotal moments that marked a key fork in the unfolding of the divine drama. He readily admits that there are others that could be included and hopes that this work will stimulate further inquiry.

Second, Noll has intentionally written this chronicle with a wider audience in mind. While historians may find the assorted accounts sketchy due to the brevity of the presentation, it nevertheless treats the background material of various moments accurately. It is geared towards the non-professional historian and the first year student. While providing the reader the necessary background information to understand the context in which an event took place, Noll does not inundate the senses with extraneous detail. Each chapter is focused and remains consistent to Noll's chief goal. That goal is to demonstrate the significance of the past and how it directly impacts on the world today.

Anyone interested in exploring the 2,000 year history of the Christian faith would be well advised to add this delightful gem to their personal library. While certainly not exhaustive, it is an excellent place to begin.

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