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"vita vestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo"
Colossians 3:3

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Walk by the New Age and Arena of the Spirit

Galatians 5:13-26

Scott F. Sanborn

Many of you, when you got married for the first time, may have said, “It is time to change the ambiance in our house.” As one bachelor preparing for marriage might say, “I had better get this place looking good for my bride.” Why? “Because I know the environment will affect her.”

Don’t environments affect you? Think of it. When you go to a place that is shabby and dirty and smelly, don’t you sometimes feel a bit scroungy? You might be very clean but the dust is accumulating all around you. However, if you go into a beautiful building, you could be wearing the worst of clothes and be unkempt. Yet all things are new. You are in beautiful surroundings. It awakens your senses. You are a new person.

Well, that is what we have here. Paul is introducing you to a new environment. You may not have looked at the passage this way before. You might say, “Where is the environment? I don’t see an environment in this text.” Yes, but there is an environment here. It is the environment of the Holy Spirit. He is the environment of heaven. Remember in the Old Testament when God’s Spirit came down upon the tabernacle, he came down as a cloud and filled that environment? And as a result, the Spirit was the environment of the temple and especially of the Holy of Holies. So also in this text, Paul shows you that the Spirit is an environment.

You may not have looked at this passage this way before. Instead, perhaps you thought—the Spirit versus the Flesh; those are two principles warring within me. I am a Christian. I have the Holy Spirit within me; I know that. And he is subjectively working in my heart to produce the fruits of the Holy Spirit. But I also have the remnants of sin within me and they are prodding me to sin.

This is true, even till your last breath (e.g., Gal. 5:17). But Paul is also showing you that the Spirit is your environment. And he is contrasting that to the environment of the flesh. We can see this because Paul is not just looking at the Spirit as a subjective work in your heart. He is also looking at the Spirit as an objective standard that you are to follow—an objective arena that you are called to conform yourself unto. Consider how he brackets this passage with the phrase “walk by the Spirit” in Galatians 5:16 and 25. This same language is used again in Galatians 6:16 when he says, “and those who will walk by this rule.” Hmm, walking by a rule, walking by an external standard. So when he says, “walk by the Spirit,” he is saying “walk by an external standard.” And in Galatians 6:16 where he says “walk by this rule,” he is referring to the “new creation” in the previous verse (v. 15). He is essentially encouraging you to walk by this rule—walk by the rule of the new creation in Christ Jesus. That is what the Spirit is. The arena of the Spirit that Christ has brought to you is the new creation, the kingdom of heaven that has come to you in Christ Jesus. That arena is no impersonal environment but the rich person of the Spirit filled with his own life, his love, sweet joy, and abounding peace.

He and his arena are contrasted to the flesh. If he is contrasting the Spirit as an arena to the flesh, then you know that the flesh is also an arena. Is that not true when you look at the world around you? The world around you is the arena of the flesh going to destruction. You live in two arenas if you are in Christ. You live in the arena of heaven as well as the arena of this world. You may only see this world, but by faith you also live in the heavenly places. The heavenly places are yours. They are ours together in Christ. We are before the throne of Christ above.

And there is one other passage that indicates this in Galatians—chapter 4, verses 25-26. There Paul says, “Now this Hagar is Mt. Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.” There you have two Jerusalems—the Jerusalem below and the Jerusalem above. These are two arenas, are they not? Jerusalem is a city. It is an arena, an environment.

But it is also an age. The New Jerusalem, the coming of what the prophets foretold is yours in Christ Jesus. That new environment above is yours because you have been made a part of a new age. This age goes beyond the former beggarly era, partially associated with the flesh. Yes, the heavenly arena has now been given to you more profusely at this time—the age following Christ’s death, resurrection and the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost. So we have Paul contrasting two arenas and two ages. And with it, he is telling us that we live in the tension between two ages—the flesh versus the Spirit.

Well, like looking at a drama, we have now seen the two scenes or two environments where this drama takes place, like two cities at war with one another. We have seen the two cities. We have been introduced by Paul to two cities, two countries, and two lands. And now we will come to the drama of the story. And as we do that, we will look at three things: First, what are the fruits of focusing on the flesh as an end in itself? Second, who has brought the arena of the Spirit and its fruits? And last, how does this new age go beyond the age of the Old Testament, beyond the age of the law?

The Fruits of Focusing on the Arena of the Flesh

Well, what are the deeds the flesh? Paul tells us. But why are they deeds of the flesh if the flesh is an objective arena? Because they are deeds that arise out of focusing on the flesh and the age of the flesh as an end in itself. That’s what they are. People make the world an end in itself. And thus they bicker and complain and fight over the world.

The world was not made to be this. The world was not made to be an end in itself. No. Even from the beginning when Adam and Eve were in the garden, Adam was called to look beyond the Garden of Eden to something greater. He was called to pass the test he was given in order to enter the heavenly city of God. And in that way Adam was called to recognize that all the good gifts that he possessed in the garden were but dim reflections of the goodness of God. All the beauty in that garden, was it not a reflection of the beauty of God himself who created all things? And so if that is the case, Adam was called to look beyond these things to the greater beauty, the splendid glory of God himself in heaven. If this was so of impersonal creation, how much more so of the people God made. For Adam it was Eve. Was not the communion he had with her

meant to look ahead to the singular union he might have with God himself in heaven? That is why only one man and one woman because you are only united to one God. Adam was to look to that union with her and say—I look beyond that union to the greater spiritual pleasures in body and soul I might have in the eternal life of God. Nothing in this world is greater than that which surpasses it in heaven.

But Adam was drawn to the flesh, was he not? He was drawn to see the things of this world as more important than heaven, thinking that the things of this world surpassed the glory of God. How foolish. And have we not all in him chosen to go the same way. How many of us really think and reflect upon heaven and its surpassing excellence when we consider the things of this world? Adam turned aside and we with him. All of us have turned our gaze to earth and away from heaven. And yes, you—you have said, “I’ll take your gifts, Oh God, but you I do not want.” Now if you saw a bride with her bridegroom despising her bridegroom in this way, what would you think? Or is that not what we are? We are the intimates of God, created in his image. If you saw a bride like this and you said, “Hmm, what is she like? She is like a woman who takes valentine flowers from her husband and then says, ‘Get out of my house!’” And if she could, she would kill him, deplete his bank account, buy up all the flowers in town and cuddle among them.

You are that woman. You have wallowed in the world and it will soon die and wilt around you. And then what will you have? You will have nothing, nothing but the anger and wrath of God. He will unleash his anger upon you and punish you justly, you unfaithful woman. You have committed adultery, for you have seen the object of your desire and you have chosen it, and you have shut him out. You have set your affections on the world. That is what you work for, is it not? That is what you long for. And you have forgotten him, his country, his heavenly city, longing for his coming, panting for the resurrection to come. These have not been the longings of your heart, have they? No, you have other plans. Best to see those accomplished before he comes—because they are more important to you, are they not? You have desires and longings to fulfill. And if they are not satisfied before he comes you will be deprived. You will have missed out on something great, something grand. You will have been deprived for all eternity. For eternity cannot satisfy these things for you. Eternity is not greater. Isn’t that what you’re thinking?

So when temptation comes, you buckle under, you cave in. Eternity is not greater than the things that you prize. So eternity cannot overcome them for you. But of course you do not think of eternity at that point. Your mind is on the world, on the stage of the flesh. That is more important to you, is it not?

Thus, you bicker and complain. You secretly jostle with one another for importance. You must have the object of your desire. If you bite and devour one another for the things of the world, you will be consumed by one another (Gal. 5:15). You obsess on the age of the flesh. You spew forth its fruits. It is your god. “The deeds of the flesh are evident” (v. 19), for in your immorality and sensuality you use others and make the pleasures of this age ends in themselves. With your idolatry and sorcery you seek to manipulate the Almighty to serve your interests here below. In your anger, you fume and rage over what has been denied you in this age. You do not seek your satisfaction in heaven above, but must drown your sorrows in drunkenness and carousing. And

you fight one another (v. 15) over the things of this world with your enmities, strife, and petty jealousies, yeah even with dissensions, factions, and envying (v. 21).

Paul repeats envying again in verse 26. You envy one another only because you prize too highly the things of the world. And if you obtain them, you boast about them (v. 26). You boast, “I have them; *I* acquired them.” In these things you neither love God nor one another. These vices all stem from worshipping this created arena rather than God in his heavenly home.

Paul says, “Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (v. 21). Why not? Because none of these deeds can be done in heaven. In heaven, there is no boasting. In heaven, there is nothing to envy others about. It is an arena of eternal communion. But you have lived after the flesh as if that is the end, have you not?

Perhaps, on the other hand, you have tasted the bitter pill of dissatisfaction. You are now at a point where you despair. You cannot obtain the things you want because they are behind you. And you are disappointed. You have no hope. But though you cannot obtain your desire, you hold on with bitter clenches. You will not leave the world. You will go away kicking and screaming. But you will go away nonetheless. You will not have the world you want. Oh unsatisfying world, Oh bitter pill. We have sought to devour you, Oh world, but we have been devoured by you.

Are these not the fruits of the flesh? The fruit of setting your desire on the world as an end in itself—of considering it more important than the world to come—even though you know this world is only temporary. You have made the world its own end rather than recognizing that its end is in God himself. You have failed to see that at the beginning, the good gifts of God were meant to point beyond themselves to the surpassing presence of God. And they are only excellent when they are found in him. But you have not sought him and from this have sprung your many evil deeds. How foolish Oh world, Oh world of flesh. How foolish you are. How turned in upon yourselves you are.

God’s wrath is upon this world of flesh and death—the fury of the eternal one, the one who upholds your whole life and every atom of your body. Yes, he will tear the world to pieces for it is in his hands. It will be separated from his life, from his blessing and from heaven forever. You will have the world that you want and it will go with you to judgment. You did not want God and thus he will not want you. And there is nothing you can do to reverse this—because you have already made your choice. God will not be turned aside from his wrath by anything you do, by the works of the law, by pleading, begging, not anything you can do.

The Bringer of the Arena of the Spirit

Why? Why then? Love so amazing—upon you. Why? Why did God open up his heart to you, you who despised him—you who rejected him—you who threw him out? Why did he open his heart to you? He gathered you in. He invited you to heaven. He clothed you from on high. But why? You who trust in him, where did God’s wrath go? How did it flee away? You despiser of God, you did not quench it. For you could not bear it for a moment. It would crush you. But God . . . God sent his only begotten Son. Yes, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law

(Gal. 4:4), born to bear the curse of the law, to become a curse for you in your deepest corruption and destruction. His Son, the Son who had no sin, became a curse for you—you who trust in Christ Jesus. He became man to bear the wrath of God upon men. Oh man, Oh woman and child, he came to bear your wrath, if you are in him.

But no mere man would suffice. He had to come—the eternal Son, eternal God. Only the eternal one could swallow up eternal wrath in a moment of time. A mere creature would have to go to hell forever, and forever would never end. And he would never satisfy the wrath of God. But because he was eternal God, he could bear eternal wrath in a moment of time and satisfy it for you, you who trust in him alone. Once satisfied, this wrath—once satisfied, this death could not hold him. Once satisfied, he rose from the dead (Gal. 1:1). Once satisfied, he was satisfied with the arena of the Spirit above. He was justified, no longer a curse, now declared righteous forever. What he did now can *never* be undone. God’s wrath can never swallow him again; never again can it devour those in him. He is righteous forever and they are declared righteous eternally in him.

Faith’s Possession

Lay hold of him by faith brothers and sisters. He is your refuge from the wrath of God, your only hiding place. He alone is your plea. Plead for mercy. Do not let go of his robe until he looks upon you with pardon. Cling to his robe until his robe becomes your robe, until it becomes your righteousness, until you are clothed with the clothing from on high.

It is not by any works you do. It is only through faith in Christ. In trusting, you are not looking to yourself. You are looking outward to another. You are trusting in Christ alone. You are looking to where he is seated. You are looking to heaven. You are looking to the realm of the Spirit. You are not looking to yourself. You are not looking to the worldly arena where you dwell. You are not looking to the arena of the flesh. You are setting your face towards heaven, the arena of the Spirit.

You have possessed in Christ Jesus that to which Adam only looked forward. That is yours now in him. And you have entered into heaven by the Spirit even now. Yes, you do live in this world still, but you also live in heaven. You live in two arenas. You live in two environments, two ages. But you have been crucified to this age *in Christ Jesus* (Gal. 6:14-15 with 5:6; 2:20) and now your eternal home is in heaven. Praise God, you are not under his wrath, for this world—this age that you were seeking—this world that you made your god—is dead. Christ has crucified it to you. And you have become partakers of the heavenly life above in him.

The Fruits of Focusing on the Arena of the Spirit

This is a far more excellent way. And so you have been given the life of the Spirit. Thus love one another in the Spirit. Love one another. For doesn’t hatred arise from absolutizing this age—making it an end in itself—envying others for what they have in this world? Or do you not despise others when you exalt yourself—boasting in your own possessions and power? But in Christ Jesus you all equally possess the life of the Spirit above. You can’t look down on your

brother. Therefore look to one another as if you are all in Christ Jesus. Love one another. Walk out of the arena of the Spirit. Let that environment affect you.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22). This is the life of the Spirit himself in heaven, his love, joy and peace for all the saints. He lives in you. He is at peace in heaven—no need to be impatient for mere trifles in this world. And so you are kind, good and gentle to those around you. For you do not need to use them for your ends, having your great fellowship in heaven. Instead, you can be faithful to others, serving them in Christ (Gal. 5:13). And having the surpassing riches of heaven, you can be self-controlled with respect to the lesser blessings of this age.

All of these virtues are in Christ himself in heaven. By faith, he lives in us (Gal. 2:20; 5:4, 6). With him we do not retreat from this world and its responsibilities. Instead, we live in the world in the light of the age to come, now semi-realized above in Christ.

Christ’s Spirit gives you all these fruits through his irresistible work. As such, they are called his fruits and not our deeds. They all come from heaven. They rely on the fullness of the kingdom now given in Christ. Depend on him for his grace. By faith lay hold of eternity. And by the imputed righteousness of Christ, have confidence that those fruits, imperfectly wrought within you, are rendered acceptable to heaven in Christ Jesus.

The Arena of the Spirit as the Gift of the New Age

In that arena, Christ has given you something new in the history of redemption. He has brought you into a heavenly environment. And you have actually been given a greater blessing than the blessing given to the saints of the Old Testament. Yes, the saints of the Old Testament possessed the heavenly gift as well. They possessed heaven through the Spirit. And they had the Spirit in the tabernacle and in their hearts and lives. But Christ has given you a greater abundance of the Spirit. Thus, he has given you a greater participation in the heavenly arena. Think about it. We have what the Old Testament prophets foretold. They prophesied the age of the kingdom of God. And Christ has brought it by his coming and arrival. He has brought what the prophets foretold.

Consider the day of Pentecost. What happened at Pentecost? Did not the Spirit come upon the Church in a new way? But how can this be? Were not the saints of the Old Testament regenerated by the Spirit? Of course they were. This means you possess the arena of the Spirit in a greater way. You possess heaven more profusely. You do not look to the types and shadows of this world under the law as they did. You look instead more immediately to those things which are invisible—to the heavenly gift that has been given you in fuller measure now.

You have what the prophets longed for. What David and the psalmists longed for and yearned for is yours. What Isaiah and Jeremiah anticipated—when Jeremiah foretold the Jerusalem above. And what does that remind you of? Why did Jeremiah look to this Jerusalem above? Because he was identifying with you. He was identifying with you in your cursed state under sin and guilt. Because the old Jerusalem was identifying with you in your state of curse and guilt. Because the old Jerusalem was under curse and destruction and under the wrath of God.

And what happened? Did not Jeremiah write the book of Lamentations? He lamented and wept for that city as one would weep for you in judgment. And he looked forward to a new day in which there would be a New Jerusalem, in which the curse would be taken away, in which there would be an eternal city with eternal joy, no more weeping, no more death, but joy forevermore. This has come. You have been brought to the Jerusalem above and she is free—she is your mother. Your life is there in heaven itself (Gal. 4:26). And thus Paul says, “Rejoice” (quoting Isaiah 54:1). He says, “Rejoice”—the prophets have been fulfilled. “Rejoice” because the curse separating us from the city of God has been removed. No more lamentation, but eternal rejoicing is yours in Christ Jesus for you are possessors of the New Jerusalem above even now.

You have moved beyond the earthly shadows and types to the greater reality that is now in Christ Jesus. Thus, Paul said, “neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation” (Gal. 6:15). For you are no longer under the era of the law. You have gone beyond its visible curses of types and shadows. That means you are possessors of the age to come, of the kingdom that the prophets foretold. You possess the arena of the Spirit. You are not under the law. You have come to a greater age, a greater environment in the New Jerusalem, to the full flowering of the blessed law in Christ Jesus.

Live out of that environment. Walk by the Spirit. Lay hold of his riches by faith and your mind will not be consumed by the flesh. With this heavenly gift you now possess the fruit of the Spirit. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace!” (Gal. 5:22). Joy at the New Jerusalem; peace like a gentle stream in the city of God. Thus you can live by the moral law (5:14), the Ten Commandments, in all their riches above, no longer biting and devouring “one another” (5:15, 26), but loving “one another” (5:13) as equal possessors of that age above in Christ Jesus.

To this, earthly riches cannot compare. Heaven has arrived already. The prophets have been fulfilled only to await the consummation. Joy has erupted in the city above. The angels sing—no more death, no more judgment, no more weeping. Lamentation and sorrow have fled away. For you have been brought to the heavenly city. You have been shielded from the wrath of God in Christ Jesus—in his justifying life, death and resurrection. You have been brought to all that life was meant to be, to all the riches of abundance for which you have been made. And you have been seated there together in a heavenly communion.

Oh what love is this! Rejoice! he has given himself to you. He has brought you to this heavenly city. He has seated you by his side and clothed you with his righteousness.

He is your desire, is he not?
He is your greatest joy, is he not?
He far exceeds every lover, does he not?

You must have him.
You must possess him.
You must be ravished by him.

You know that nothing else will satisfy, do you not?

You know that the world may pass away, but you must be satisfied with him.
You must be ravished by his love.

Eternity will forever satisfy your heart. For his life is infinitely vibrant. His beauty is dazzling. Pleasures in him are everlasting and boundless. Oh what depth of love is yours now. What joy is yours now! His peace floods your heart. For your hope is beyond imagination—unfathomable and full of glory in Christ Jesus.

Simeon Ashe on God's Mercy¹

Whatever we have is not merit, but bounty; the least bit of bread is more than God owes us; we can bring fagots to our own burning, but not one flower to the garland of our salvation: he that hath the least mercy will die in God's debt.²

¹ Simeon Ashe (†1662) was appointed a member of the Westminster Assembly in 1643, replacing Josiah Shute (1588-1643) who died before the Assembly convened (July 1, 1643). For his Puritan and Reformed convictions, Ashe had been ejected from his living because he refused to read King Charles I's declaration for Sunday sports from his pulpit in 1633 (a republication of the infamous 1618 Book of Sports of his father, James I). As this declaration was royal authorization of the desecration of the Lord's day Sabbath, many Puritans refused to obey the king and suffered for it. What became enshrined in the Westminster Standards anent the Christian Sabbath was anathema to the royal party (a position which, in part, contributed to the outbreak of the English Civil War). Ashe was present at the first battle of that war—Edgehill, October 1642. Here he was Chaplain to Edward Montagu, Earl of Manchester (1602-1671), who was commander of a Parliamentary regiment of foot soldiers. Ashe subsequently became rector of St. Austin's (i.e., Augustine of England, †ca. 604) in London from 1655 until his death. While supportive of the Parliamentary cause, he refused the Cromwellian Protectorate and welcomed Charles II back to England (at Breda) in 1660. Ashe was responsible for preserving and publishing John Ball's very important work on the Covenant of Grace. See the sketch of his career in James Reid, *Memoirs of the Lives and Writings of those Eminent Divines, who Convened at the Famous Assembly at Westminster, in the Seventeenth Century*; cf. also *DNB*.

² *A Treatise on Divine Contentment* (1841) 215. The work bears the signature of Ashe in "The Epistle to the Reader" and "To the Christian Reader" and is dated May 3, 1653 (pp. viii and xiv respectively).

What Should I read on Zephaniah?

James T. Dennison, Jr.

The paradigm shift in Zephaniah studies occurred in 1972. The catalyst was a Th.D. dissertation submitted to, of all places, the GTU (Graduate Theological Union) at Berkeley, California. Can any good thing come out of Berkeley? In 1972, something did and it was very good! Ivan J. Ball, Jr. was a disciple of James Muilenburg. Muilenburg had precipitated a paradigm shift in his own right when he dropped his bombshell on the playground of the higher critical (=liberal) form critics. The explosion occurred in 1968 at the annual pilgrimage of the initiates to the shrine of the critical cult-academy known as SBL (Society of Biblical Languages). Muilenburg was anointed by the devotees of this cadre to deliver the presiding “message” to the assembled flock. He delivered a block-buster entitled “Form Criticism and Beyond”.¹ Muilenburg did not resign his bona fides in the critical cult (“Not that I loved form criticism less, but I am in love with rhetorical criticism more” [with my apologies to the Bard of Avon—JTD]); instead, he suggested the loyal groupies reinvent themselves via transformation of method, i.e., rhetorical criticism arising fully formed from the head of form criticism. And voila! a new methodological fad was born. Liberalism is ever reinventing or reimagining itself in a progressive adaptation or acculturation to the contemporary philosophical fads. Hence, liberalism is never the same (save for its fundamental premises: supernaturalism is impossible; humankind is essentially good morally—it’s the environment that is evil; ‘god’ is defined as the inner geist of the elites in any culture at any time on the horizon of history); it is ever morphing itself into a mirror of the prevailing culture. And, of course, the absolute corollary of this perspective is that ‘sin’ (if the word has any meaning) is the refusal to go along with the liberal progressive agenda.

Ball’s thesis was an excellent example of the rhetorical method applied to an entire book of the Bible—the (heretofore) “wallflower” prophet of the OT, Zephaniah ben Cushi. *A Rhetorical Study of Zephaniah* (1972) was a tour de force.² Ball rescued a neglected minor prophet from the vicious scissors and paste method of traditional critical liberalism by meticulously demonstrating the literary integrity and unity of the three chapters via rhetorical analysis. “We have tried to show that each unit, whether a line, set, sub-section, section, chapter, or the book as a whole, has a definable pattern or structure and exhibits certain rhetorical features. However, each unit is also different from all the other units. Any attempt to force a uniform mold, whether of meter, parallelism, etc., upon the entire material, destroys the original integrity and beauty of the work . . . we have tried to show that at least there is a good possibility that the entire work is from the same hand, and that in its present form it exhibits a carefully constructed whole” (p. 287). Since Ball (1972), Zephaniah has been treated with more holistic respect for the artistry of its singular

¹ Published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969):1-18.

² The dissertation was published in book form by BIBAL press in 1988 (now out-of-print). The thesis remains available from UMI dissertations in a variety of formats.

author (divine inspiration notwithstanding, which Ball rejects—he is, after all, still a liberal).³ Hence, the spate of recent commentaries on this much maligned⁴ and ignored book of the Bible are rediscovering a Hebrew gem thanks to the pioneering work of Ivan Ball.⁵

More Literary Studies

While we are considering literary approaches to Zephaniah, mention should be made of other contributions in this genre beginning with Arvid Kapelrud's, *The Message of Zephaniah* (1975). While not a commentary, Kapelrud examines the book thematically with surprisingly conservative conclusions. He holds to the integrity of the work and suggests, in fairly radical fashion for a scholar of the critical academy, that Zephaniah is the sole author of the book. While not especially penetrating nor Christocentric, Kapelrud nonetheless provides a theological analysis of the prophetic imagery of the work. If his over-emphasis on an immanentistic eschatology for the prophet blinds him to the already/not yet, he still provides us with engaging comments for our own reflection and reaction.

Paul House wrote *Zephaniah: A Prophetic Drama* in 1988 when he was teaching at Taylor University in Indiana. This is a unique study of a prophetic book; in fact, it is the only study of an OT prophet which attempts to view the text as dramatic interface. House's efforts have not been well received—more's the pity. He has in fact extended the literary paradigm to a dramatic dialogue between the prophet and God (and thus arranges the book accordingly in three acts, with speakers interchanged at the margins, pp. 118-26). While I remain unpersuaded of his outline, I have benefitted from his insights which push the envelope towards what I label "prophetic narrative biography".⁶ If the "drama" of Zephaniah touches history, then it touches redemptive history supremely in the drama of the eschatological prophet who is anticipated by the 7th century B.C. seer, even as the light He bears (cpr. Zeph. 1:12) illuminates the world—Jewish and Gentile alike (John 8:12).

Susan Pearson has contributed *Zephaniah: Plagiarist or Skilled Orator?* (2011), available on the internet. This is a close reading of the prophecy using discourse analysis, while defending authorship by the historical Zephaniah, his artistry and the integrity of the work as a whole.

³ The worm is currently turning slightly in this regard, see below.

⁴ The *Dies irae* (1:14-18) makes liberal do-gooders irate.

⁵ Ball added to his dissertation on Zephaniah, the entry on "Zephaniah" in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 16:994-95, also published in 1972. Finally, he contributed "The Rhetorical Shape of Zephaniah" to a festschrift for Francis Andersen, ed. By E. W. Conrad and E. G. Newing—*Perspectives on Language and Text* (1987) 155-65. Like the full dissertation, each smaller work is suggestive, helpful and defends the unity and integrity of the whole book of the prophet.

⁶ Cf. James T. Dennison, Jr., "Prophetic Narrative Biography and Biblical Theology: The Prophet Hosea," *Kerux: The Journal of Northwest Theological Seminary* 22/2 (Sept. 2007):3-14; <http://kerux.com/doc/2202A1.asp>. Also my audio studies on Jeremiah (<http://nwts.edu/audio/JTD/LifeOfJeremiah.htm>), Daniel (<http://nwts.edu/audio/JTD/Daniel.htm>) and Zephaniah (<http://nwts.edu/audio/JTD/Zephaniah.htm>).

Finally, Ernst Wendland, who is a master of rhetorical analysis of the Hebrew OT (and the Greek NT for that matter), contributes “The drama of Zephaniah: a literary-rhetorical analysis of a proclamatory prophetic text” (in Wendland, *Prophetic Rhetoric: Case Studies in Text Analysis and Translation* [2009] 325-49).⁷ This article contains a plethora of: inclusios, exclusios, anaphora, chiasms, etc.—all articulated from the MT (Masoretic Text) and used as structuring patterns, theological shifts and prophetic literary riches.

Each of the four works above contributes to the renewal and on-going interest in this ninth of the twelve minor prophets.

Commentaries

All the modern commentary series feature an exposition of Zephaniah: Abingdon (Julia O’Brien); Anchor Bible (Adele Berlin); Hermeneia (Marvin Sweeney); New International Commentary on the Old Testament (O. Palmer Robertson); New Interpreter’s Bible (Robert Bennett); Old Testament Library (J. J. M. Roberts); Tyndale (David Baker).

The most helpful commentary for evangelicals (those who hold to the inerrancy of Scripture) is J. A. Motyer’s excellent contribution to Thomas E. McComiskey, ed., *The Minor Prophets* (1998), 897-962. Motyer provides exegesis of the Hebrew text as well as theological reflection. His structural paradigms are more thematic (English vocabulary) than textual (Hebrew MT patterns). But his attempt to place the prophecy in the light of the NT Scriptures is commendable, especially as it may assist pastors and students in sermon preparation.

Motyer is, in this reviewer’s opinion, superior to Robertson (NICOT) which is one of the evangelical alternatives. But Robertson is disappointing because he tends to be superficial, does not deal with literary patterns and structure at all (he shows no awareness of Ball’s seminal work) and uses gratuitous NT proof-texts to raise the devotional level of his remarks.

Baker is also an evangelical work, but it suffers from the besetting weakness of the Tyndale series—brevity. Granted, the aim of the Tyndale commentaries was to be up-to-date, while handy for the busy pastor/student. But brevity has its short-comings, most apparent when Baker provides some insight worth developing in depth, but has not the space to expand it. Still, this is a good choice for a “study friendly” commentary for the interested layperson.

At this point, we should notice a French commentary (part of the series *Commentaire évangélique de la Bible* [CEB]) by Brian Tidiman, *Nahoum, Habacouq, Sophonie* (2009). Tidiman is influenced by Motyer (as his footnotes indicate). However, he adds a redemptive-historical flavor that goes beyond the British scholar. His literary remarks also engage the reader with parallels and ironies which enrich our admiration for the inspired Hebrew prophet. This is a rewarding read for those with a *dictionnaire français!*

⁷ This work on Zephaniah originally appeared in the *Journal for Semitic Studies* 16 (2007): 22-67.

Julia O'Brien's treatment is also superficial, but from a liberal critical point of view. This includes the notion (basic to higher criticism) that the Jewish god was constantly being re-imaged according to contemporary circumstances. Hence, in Zephaniah, the god of the day of wrath (chap. 1) is not the god of the day of restoration (chap. 3). This notion of the deity has been contextualized according to socio-political circumstances. If Jerusalem is under threat of judgment, g^w (god of wrath) is invented or retrieved from the hoary past. If Jerusalem is singing songs of celebration, g^r (god of restoration) is projected by a post-exilic audience. The evolution of god in the minor prophets is a fabrication process—he is invented as the existential situation requires. In other words, he is a god you fit to your circumstances. Happy? the god of chapter 3; angry about 'injustice' and other left-wing causes? the god of chapter 1 suits.

While her 2004 commentary was basic higher critical fare (though her analysis is truncated and superficial, even inadequate at places), O'Brien has recently advanced the bizarre thesis that the minor prophets from Hosea to Zephaniah "were consciously edited as a preface to Zechariah" in the Persian period (539-333 B.C.).⁸ In other words, Zephaniah was re-written to serve the post-exilic agenda of a Hebrew 'Persian' propagandist. This absurdity makes mush of concrete historicity, while heralding the return of redaction criticism on the minor prophet corpus with a vengeance.

Berlin's offering on Zephaniah is brief, but thorough (albeit too expensive for 148 pages). There are some useful insights, but no Christological interest at all. In fact, Berlin takes pains to ignore the NT (which is never cited in her work). In this case, brevity is an advantage—one quickly finds what is useful in her comments without expending blocks of time to extract a potential gem. She does regard the book as a literary unity and despises the attempts to slice and dice the MT into redactional morsels. But she remains true to the critical creed when she writes: "the time of Josiah is not necessarily the time that the book was written, but it is *the time in which the book is set*" (p. 38, emphasis in the original).

Sweeney's work has emerged as the current commentary of choice. To his credit, he provides a thorough analysis of the text, helpfully measuring the MT against the troves of the Dead Sea and Murabba'at (both substantially vindicate the traditional received text of the Masoretes). He also carefully analyzes the words of each verse, traces their occurrence in the rest of the OT as well as their relationship with other Semitic languages. While he is aware of Ball's work, he is not especially interested in rhetorical or literary structural matters. His preoccupation is with the view that Zephaniah's words are crutches propping up the so-called Deuteronomistic reform of Josiah's day (621 B.C.). For the uninitiated, critical OT scholars maintain that a gaggle of priest-caste scribes gathered in the Temple at Jerusalem in the days of Josiah and invented the theology found in the book of Deuteronomy and borrowed by other OT books as well.⁹ They also succeed

⁸ "Nahum-Habakkuk-Zephaniah: Reading the 'Former Prophets' in the Persian Period." *Interpretation* 61 (2007): 168-83.

⁹ Essentially, they invent the centralization of worship in the Jerusalem Temple (there were a plethora of temple-shrines in Israel before this time). The priests were power-tripping a monopoly on approved places of worship. In addition, these 'holy ones' invent the "law of God" and put it in Moses' mouth.

in fabricating the myth of a 2nd millennium B.C. Jewish legislator named Moses, who emerges from the misty past as an heroic liberator as well as a Hebrew Hammurabi. Sweeney's endorsement of this charade is not surprising. What is unique is his contention that Zephaniah's oracles, prophecy, etc. are fulfilled in the decline of Assyria as a superpower, while Judah and Jerusalem will become "the center of nations and creation" (p. 182). In other words, Sweeney argues that Zephaniah is the seer of 7th century B.C. Jewish triumphalism in which the nation of Judah becomes the Eden of God to which all the nations will submit. No vertical eschatology here, merely the dreary horizontalism of a religio-theological fabrication bound to this world, only this world and nothing but this world. In the offing, the programme was a pitiful failure (NB: the 586 B.C. exclamation point). So what's the point of Zephaniah to the modern reader? The book is reduced by Sweeney to a time-bound projection of hope and change which crashed and burned when Babylon succeeded Assyria. But all of that result of fraud, deceit, corruption and mythical religio-theological formulation makes never you mind to Sweeney. Visions fail all the time—so what's new?! It's part of human finitude and failure and so should be expected even when hypothesizing a "G-d" (Sweeney's consistent term for the deity) who rises no higher than man himself. In other words, Zephaniah is a front-man for a religio-theological fraud.

Johannes Vlaardingerbroek's *Zephaniah* (1999) is more direct about the redaction of the book. He argues at several points that "it is certainly not Zephaniah who speaks here" (p. 214). The reason for this remark is the liberal-critical fundamentalism which defines a god of wrath as projected by the historical Zephaniah, but a god of grace as inserted by a later redactor. His commentary is filled with boring lexical minutia and long quotations (not translated into English) from German and Latin sources. The work is a labored exercise in Zephaniah's irrelevance, save to the academy justifying its own tenure. NB what he writes on p. 217 about 3:19-20: "the tone is comforting and even triumphant but not eschatological." Vlaardingerbroek is a throw-back to classic 19th century liberalism—the OT has no eschatology, even as the theology of Zephaniah has no center or consistency. We learn a great deal about Vlaardingerbroek's theological pluralism, as it is boldly imposed on the text of Zephaniah. If the goal is to make the Biblical prophet a theological and cultural pluralist, this is no more than Vlaardingerbroek's own face in *speculo Zephaniae*.

From a slightly different liberal point of view, Robert Bennett provides a decent explanation of the text of the prophet (labeled "Commentary" in the NIB). There are passé neo-orthodox smatterings sprinkled throughout his contribution, but they are incidental. What is not incidental is that Bennett is a socio-political leftist. His 'application' sections (labeled "Reflections") mirror the ideology of a subscriber to the Huffington Post, *Rolling Stone*, *The Nation*, the *New Republic* and other rags of that ilk. Bennett definitely thinks Zephaniah is relevant to the modern church/audience. He uses the prophecy as a springboard for justifying a left-of-center social, political, cultural and theological agenda. Thus, if you use Bennett, skip the left-wing political propaganda, i.e., save time and just turn the page when you come to "Reflections".

The final more recent critical commentary to mention is J. J. M. Roberts in the OTL series (*Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah: A Commentary*, 1990). While devoted to form critical analysis (by which he isolates the separate "oracles" which make up Zephaniah), he is generally

‘conservative’ about the message of the book: it dates from the pre-Reform (621 B.C.) era of Josiah’s reign; it refers to the general international malaise indicative of Assyria’s decline; and it projects the coming Babylonian judgment. The prophet offers a two-fold message of warning and hope. But when Roberts comes to the eschatological section of chapter 3, he appears to have been exhausted by his effort (or run hurriedly up against a publisher’s deadline). That is, the final pages of his commentary on Zeph. 3:14-20 are merely two in number and contain nothing of substance save the obvious sense of the words on the Biblical page. Sadly, he has passed up an invitation and an opportunity to penetrate the riches of this glorious section of the inspired prophecy.

From the more consistent evangelical point of view, two recent contributions may be noted—though neither is penetrating or insightful beyond the obvious. Richard Patterson contributes “Zephaniah” to the Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, vol. 10 (2008); and James Bruckner extracts “modern applications” in the NIV Application Commentary series (*Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, 2004). Neither of these are deep studies; do not engage the drama of the Hebrew rhetorical paradigm; and leave the reader hungry for biblical-theological meat in the place of the milk provided.

Older Works

We now venture back to older works of the post-WWII neo-orthodox biblical-theological movement. One of these is a surprising gem whose author is J. H. Eaton (*Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah: Introduction and Commentary*, 1961). For example, Eaton correctly recognizes the “new Jerusalem” motif in Zeph. 3:14-17. While his eschatology is more of the classic liberal stripe (eschatology is only of this world), he nonetheless has an uncanny sense of the transcendence of Zephaniah’s imagery. Thus, he unwittingly opens the door to an eschatological eternity. In addition, his writing style is marvelous—the commentary is a pleasure to read even where one must disagree (e.g., on p. 133, where he reads Babylonian mythology into the Biblical creation narrative).

The work by John D. W. Watts (*The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah*, 1975) is a disappointment. His efforts to re-write the prophecy via emendations, corrections and radical theological presuppositions leaves very little of value in his treatment. Peter Craigie (*Twelve Prophets, volume 2. Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 1984) pretends to be more evangelical than liberal, but in fact is the reverse. He regards Zephaniah as a thoroughly redacted work with irritating concessions to higher criticism (e.g., on 3:14-20—“there are those that claim it must have been written by a different and later hand than that of Zephaniah; they may well be right,” p. 131). There are some insights which are useful, but on the whole, the commentary lacks penetration. The same is true of another erstwhile evangelical offering by Ralph Smith (*Word Biblical Commentary: Micah-Malachi*, 1984). After a commendably succinct overview of the background to the book and critical issues to date, he all too briefly reviews the text while providing virtually no Christocentric biblical theology at all. Elizabeth Achtemeier (*Nahum-Malachi*, 1986) offers the reader standard critical analysis and kosher neo-orthodox theology. She excels, however, with “Christian” exegesis of Zephaniah 3 making several helpful suggestions via connections to the

NT. Granted, this is one on the canons of neo-orthodox biblical theology, nonetheless, it prods our creative imaginations in the service of classical, orthodox (Vosian) Reformed biblical theology. One more work deserves mention: A. Cohen, *The Twelve Prophets* (1948) (Soncino Books of the Bible series). Cohen has a knack of arranging the Hebrew text of Zephaniah on the page of his Jewish commentary in such a way that the student of Hebrew can “see” patterns emerging from the literary style of the prophet. Consulting Cohen for this reason is useful to rhetorical analysis.

Full Circle?

We began our review of material on Zephaniah by noting the paradigm shift launched by Ivan Ball in 1972. Tragically, the critical academy is presently turning back the clock to a previous critical methodology which viewed Zephaniah as a patch-work quilt of fabricated and redacted pieces. As Biblical and theological elitists, these scholars have been charged with dismantling (or deconstructing) and reassembling the text of our prophet according to their higher critical presuppositions. We noted above Julia O’Brien’s bizarre theory of a redactor from the Persian era editing Zephaniah as a preface to Zechariah. Moreover, redaction criticism of the “salvation” portions of the prophecy returns with the 2011 article “Survival, Conversion and Restoration: Reflections on the Redaction History of the Book of Zephaniah,” by Tchavdar Hadjiev in *Vetus Testamentum* 61:570-81. Reconstruction of “the authentic words of the prophet Zephaniah” through the lens of the “deuteronomistic concept” of Josiah’s reform is the task undertaken by Anselm Hagedorn (“When did Zephaniah become a supporter of Josiah’s reform?” *Journal of Theological Studies* 62 [2011]:435-75). His conclusion: “Just as most events reported of the reign of Josiah are the fabrication of a later historian . . . so is Zephaniah used to create . . . prophetic support for the theological concept of the Josianic Reform. The creation of the legendary Josiah starts early in the Hebrew Bible, where the final form of the Book of Zephaniah is one piece of the larger mosaic” (p. 475).

Liberal critics abhor the vacuum created by James Muilenberg’s address, Ivan Ball’s revolutionary work (in the case of Zephaniah) and the dramatic and holistic readings of the prophetic text. Instead, like a dog returning to its vomit, they resurrect dead and buried methodologies so as to impose their theories of Hebrew religion and ideology on the unsuspecting OT prophet (Zephaniah). This is not merely dishonest, it is blasphemous (accusing the inspired writers of being liars, fabricators, inventors, agenda-based ideologues, etc.). It is also useless madness.

For an attempt at a positive, penetrating and Christocentric redemptive-historical approach to the book of Zephaniah, see this author’s audio series here: <http://www.nwts.edu/audio/JTD/Zephaniah.htm>

THE END IN THE BEGINNING:

A BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL CATECHISM FOR YOUNG AND OLD

Exodus

James T. Dennison, Jr.

How does the book of Exodus begin?

With Israel in Egypt (in bondage)

Exodus presupposes (?).

Creation and Covenant (Patriarchal)

Why do I allude to creation behind the exodus?

Because the protological creation is renewed in the exodus.

Exodus is therefore a (?).

New creation

How is the creation motif present in the Exodus drama?¹

- a. God forms a people for himself out of the chaos of slavery
- b. God delivers this nation by means of a water ordeal (separation of the waters).
- c. God sustains this nation by heavenly food
- d. God hovers over his people in a glory-canopy

But Exodus is more than a recapitulation of creation.

Yes, it is a death-to-life drama for a nation

Why was Israel dead?

She was in bondage to slavery, without freedom, without hope.

Was Israel able to free herself from her bondage?

No, she was powerless (impotent) because bound by the cruel taskmasters of Egypt.

Who alone was omnipotent?

The Lord God Almighty who set his people free and brought them out with his mighty hand and outstretched arm.

Who was the agent of life in this drama?

The mediator, Moses, whom God had chosen—his elect servant (*ebed Yahweh* = “servant of the Lord”).

How was this elect-mediator commissioned as God’s spokesman-messenger?

By miraculous signs and wonders through the word of the Lord

What was the purpose of ten of those signs and wonders (i.e., plagues)?

To intrude eschatological judgment against the principalities and powers (idol gods) of Egypt. For example, the Nile river-god was cursed when the waters ran with blood (Ex. 7:17, 20).

¹ Cf. the author’s “The Exodus and the People of God.” *The Banner of Truth* 171 (December 1977):6-11, 32; also “The Exodus: Historical Narrative, Prophetic Hope, Gospel Fulfillment.” *Presbyterian* 8 (Fall 1982):1-12.

Why was the death of the firstborn required?

Pharaoh's refusal to hear God's word brought the curse of death upon the "strength of Egypt".

Was this death threatened to the firstborn of Israel?

Yes, even Israel's firstborn were under the threatened curse

How was the curse obviated for Israel?

By ransom

Who ransomed Israel's firstborn?

A spotless lamb

Once more, how was Israel's firstborn ransomed?

The death of a spotless lamb spared Israel's firstborn from the Angel of Death.

The blood of a lamb upon the door was the difference between life and death?

Yes

What was this night called?

Passover

Why?

Because the Angel of Death passed over the homes of the children of Israel at the sight of the blood of a lamb on the doorposts and lintel.

Who is the eschatological Passover Lamb of God?

Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 5:7)

How does his blood avail to deliver us from the terror of the principalities and powers?

His precious blood is the price of our release (our ransom) from bondage to sin.

How does he do this?

By paying the price and satisfying the debt of our sin, our bondage and our death.

Does Jesus bring a new exodus?

Yes, Jesus is the bringer of a new, eschatological exodus for the Israel of God of the end of the age (Gal. 6:16).

The exodus has been called *the magnalia Dei* of the Old Testament. What does this mean?

Magnalia Dei is Latin for "mighty acts of God" (Acts 2:11, Vulgate). The marvelous exodus from Egypt was *the* omnipotent act of God's unmerited grace in the Old Testament (cpr. Ps. 106:21 [105:21 Vulgate]). It is rehearsed in virtually every book of the Old Testament—sung in the psalms, declared in the historical books, rehearsed in the prophetic books as the template for a new and better eschatological exodus.

Does not the life of Jesus reflect the exodus paradigm?

Yes. He goes down into Egypt. He comes up out of Egypt ("out of Egypt have I called my son," Hos. 11:1; Mt. 2:15). He goes through the waters (Jordan). He goes into the wilderness for forty days and forty nights. He goes up into a mountain and delivers the law of the kingdom of heaven to the twelve, the nucleus of the New Israel (Mt. 5-7).²

What was the date of the Old Testament exodus?

1447/46 B.C.

How do you know this?

² See the author's exposition of this pattern in "The Law from the New Mount." *Kerux: The Journal of Northwest Theological Seminary* 21/1 (May 2006):42-48 (<http://kerux.com/doc/2101A4.asp>).

The Bible gives the date in 1 Kings 6:1. According to this text, the date of the exodus was 480 years before King Solomon laid the foundation for his Temple. That year was his 4th as king of Israel and is dated 967/66 B.C. Adding 480 years gives us 1447/46 B.C. for the date of the exodus.

When Moses delivered Israel from Egypt, where did he take them?

To the desert/wilderness of Sinai

What was the point of transition between the former life of slavery and the new life of sojourning?

The passage of the Red Sea (or Reed Sea)

You mean Israel's transition from death to life was inaugurated in a water ordeal?

Yes; Israel passed from death to life by entering and emerging from the Sea of Reeds

What was the purpose of this "baptism into Moses" (1 Cor. 10:2) or trial by water?

To mark the end of the old (life under bondage and death) and the beginning of the new (life of freedom and pilgrimage).

Where was Israel bound?

For the land of milk and honey (Canaan)

What was the eschatological significance of Canaan?

It was the land of eschatological rest, indicative of heaven itself.

What lay between Egypt (bondage) and Canaan (rest)?

The wilderness of Sinai (the land-in-between)

What was Israel's status in the land-in-between?

Pilgrim; sojourner; wanderer

Why is the nature of a pilgrim people to be in-between the old and the new?

Pilgrims have passed out of the old and are headed for the new. In-between, they are "between the times".

Explain this another way.

In the wilderness, Israel was between the "now" and the "not yet"—between freedom from bondage and perfect rest.

What device was provided for Israel as an emblem of their pilgrim status?

The tabernacle

Why was the tabernacle appropriate for a pilgrim people?

Because it moved (as a tent) as they moved (in their tents). A people on the move were given a portable "church".

How was the tabernacle designed?

As if it were God's home and he were inviting his people inside to his presence chambers (certainly an eschatological reflection).

Describe the tabernacle from the inside out, i.e., from God's gracious, inviting point of view.

His private room (inner sanctum) was called the Holy of Holies and was furnished with the ark of the covenant.

What was the ark of the covenant?

It was a wooden box overlaid with gold—a symbol of God's heavenly throne room.

What was on the top of the box/ark?

A lid or covering called the "mercy seat"—a symbol of God's footstool. This was topped by face-covered cherubim (who surround the Lord's heavenly glory throne); their feet rested on the mercy seat or (let us call it) the grace-covering lid.

What was inside the box/ark?

Two tablets of the law (as contained within the heart of God—upon whose heart are written all ten words of the law; thus, two complete copies of the Decalogue of Moses); a pot of manna (bread out of heaven); and Aaron's rod that bloomed (the staff of high priestly election and authorization—only one with those credentials could enter that most holy, private and intimate room).

How was God's Most Holy room kept private?

This most holy room was divided from the outside by a veil or curtain separating the all holy God from unholy sinners beyond the veil. This is the symbol of sin which bars unholy sinners from the presence of a holy God. God could not look out upon a sinful and unholy people because of the veil of iniquity and uncleanness which they possess.

Was no sinner permitted within the veil?

Yes, one—the high priest and mediatorial intercessor appointed by God to go between himself and a sinful people.

How often was the high priest allowed to enter within the veil and appear before the glory-presence of God?

On only one day a year was he permitted within the veil of separation. That day was called Yom Kippur or the day of atonement.

How was it possible for the high priest, a sinner, to pass beyond the veil?

He was required to come with the blood of sacrifice in his hands—blood to satisfy for his own sins and for the sins of the people of God. He sprinkled this blood on the mercy seat to symbolize the covering (atonement) for the sins of the people which the Lord God so graciously provided and accepted.

What other room was in the tabernacle?

The room on the outside of the Holy of Holies was called the Holy Place. In this room, the priests moved about ministering for the people on a day by day basis.

Was this room furnished?

Yes, it contained three items. First, a table with bread (sometimes called "shewbread"/"showbread" or bread of the presence of the Lord). Here were twelve loaves spread out week by week (God invites his Israel to eat in his house). Second, a lampstand (*menorah*) to provide light within the Lord's dwelling place (the Father of lights, covers himself with light as a cloak and reminds his people that he dwells in unapproachable light). Third, an incense altar constantly burning with smoke ascending to the heavens (as the prayers of God's people constantly ascend to his throne).

This room was furnished to suggest a welcome invitation for God's people to come inside.

Yes, as they looked from the outside in, they were reminded of light and bread and sweet prayer—all elements of meeting their Lord and God in home-like surroundings.

What was outside the Holy Place?

Outside this room was a courtyard with an altar for burnt sacrifice ("without the shedding of blood, there is no remission" of sin, Heb. 9:22) and a laver or wash basin for cleansing. Beyond these was the courtyard of the people where they gathered to offer their sacrifices and devotion and to draw near to their priestly mediator who would represent them before the Lord.

Review the vectors of the tabernacle for me.

From the inside out, God dwells alone, separated from a sinful people by the barrier of

sin itself. But he graciously agrees to be approached in inviting the mediator of that sinful body to come into his very living-room presence, yet not without the blood of vicarious substitution in the hands of that intercessor (lest he be destroyed). This blood, sprinkled upon the seat of his merciful grace, covers the sins of his people (but not once-for-all—only once per year) and momentarily opens the way into his sinless glory-presence.

From the outside in, the worshipping people of God look towards the holy glory of God, past the altar of burnt sacrifice, through the doorway of his outer residence furnished with food and light and sweet intercommunion, to the veil which barred their gaze by the memory of their sinful condition, with the longing hope of the day of atonement when the high priest went behind the veil with the blood of covering in his hands—covering for their sins through the grace of God.

What additional biblical-theological significance is evident in the fullness of the symbolism of the tent of assembly?

The Lord God's heavenly dwelling place is a most holy place where the veil which separates him from his people has been torn in two by the great High Priest and intercessor (Son of God) who brings poor, miserable sinners inside the eternal house of God and washes them in his own precious blood (eschatological Lamb of God) so that they may bask in the light of glory, feed from the banquet bread of his presence, delight in the cherubim guardians, finally have the law of their God written forever upon their hearts, and gather within their Lord's eternal home with the eschatological Israel of God forever and ever.

You have suggested the tabernacle was a cameo of heaven. What other eschatological or heavenly elements were revealed in the construction of the tabernacle?

Blue curtains as the blue heavens (sky); flower imagery in the decorations reminiscent of the Edenic Paradise of God; a glory-cloud enveloping the tent. All this is reflective of the majesty of heaven.

What was the meaning of the tabernacle?

It was the eschatological condescension of God.

What do you mean?

God came down to dwell among his people (in the glory-cloud). The tabernacle was a visible display of the Emmanuel presence of the covenant Lord.

Besides God's voluntary humiliation in bending down his presence to the tent of meeting, what else can you tell me about the meaning of the tabernacle?

His dwelling with his people was an identification motif, i.e., he was willing to take on their condition—a Tent Dweller with tent dwellers.

But this humiliation and identification fills the tabernacle with his glory-presence.

Yes, the Lord God embodies himself in the tabernacle—a virtual incarnation of his person-presence in the midst of his people according to the mode of their existence.

Why was the tabernacle called “the tent of meeting”?

Because God and man met there and in that meeting were united in fellowship and intercommunion.

Why is Jesus Christ the fulfillment of the tabernacle?

Because he is God the Son (second person of the ontological Trinity) who tabernacles in our midst in the flesh (Jn. 1:14)—divine and human natures joined in one person forever.

What else occurred at the tabernacle?

The sacrifices of the cult (worship of God) were observed.

What was the meaning of the blood offerings?
That our blood (death) was required by God for our sins; and the only way we could escape was through a substitute—a vicarious atonement; one in which our penalty was satisfied by the blood-death of another.

Who is the eschatological offering for sin?
Jesus Christ is our vicarious substitute. He poured out his blood as an offering for the punishment we deserve (death). His death is the eschatological (final) sacrifice and once-for-all puts an end to blood offerings.

You mean, there will never again be blood offerings in the history of redemption?
Never again after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Not even commemorative offerings of lambs and goats in the “millennial temple”?
No

Why not?
Because Jesus said, “It is finished.”

What else did Israel receive in the wilderness?
The law of God

Was the law intended to save (redeem) Israel?
No. They had already been saved from Egyptian bondage by the wonderful grace of God.

Was the law intended to condemn Israel?
It reminded them that they were under the condemnation of the law by nature insofar as by the law is the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20).

For what other reasons did God give Israel the law?
It pointed them to Christ upon whose heart the law was written in full (cf. Gal. 3:24). It also served as a rule of life or a guide to holy living (Rom. 7:12).

Was all Israel saved?
Externally yes; internally no.

What do you mean?
Outwardly, all Israel left Egypt for the promised land. They tasted the heavenly food (manna) and the life-giving water in the desert. They even received the law by the Holy Spirit (Neh. 9:20; Isa. 63:11). But their carcasses dropped in the wilderness (Ps. 95). All outward or external blessings of God’s grace could not remove the evil heart of unbelief which many of them possessed (Heb. 3:12). So God swore in his wrath that they would not enter his rest (heaven). In other words, all Israel (externally, outwardly) was not elect Israel (internally, inwardly). God’s grace is always elective even though outwardly beneficial to more than he actually regenerates.

Was Israel at Sinai a “corporate Adam”?
Israel was no more a “corporate Adam” at Mt. Sinai than David was a “corporate Adam” on Mt. Zion.

Why could neither Israel or David (or any other postlapsarian mere human) serve as a “corporate Adam”?
First, because they were not universal figures representing the entire human race (as the protological and eschatological Adam are). Second, because they are sinful entities as the protological Adam (prior to his Fall) and the eschatological Adam are not. Third, the

inspired apostle, Paul, knows only two Adams—Adam the first and Adam the last/second (1 Cor. 15:45). He recognizes no third Adam in the history of redemption.

Hence, there is no Adamic republication of the Edenic covenant of works at Sinai?

No there is not, for sinful man (or a nation of sinners) could never merit anything from God as a sinless Adam could. As Augustine declared centuries ago, Human merit perished with Adam. Or in our paraphrase of his comment:

When Adam veered and sin inhered,
Human merit disappeared.

Could Israel's works of obedience to the demands of the covenant at Sinai ever be the "meritorious ground" of retaining her life in the Promised Land of Canaan?

No, Israel could only earn God's curse by her demerits (i.e., her sins), by which God eventually expelled her from the land of Canaan when the fullness of her iniquity was reached.

What then do we say to the theory of the "typological works covenant" at Sinai?

It is an invention of eisegesis, i.e., a reading into the Bible of an idea foreign to the history of redemption, but imposed upon the Scriptures as a human theory.

And what then do we say to the corollary to this theory—namely Israel acts in accord with a "meritorious principle" by which she earns or deserves or makes herself worthy by her "imperfect" (i.e., sinful) works of the temporal blessing of life in the Promised Land?

Sadly, it is a theory which permits human (temporal) merit to be placed over against the sovereign, efficacious and precious grace of God in Christ Jesus (all merit is in him—temporal and eternal) through the gracious work of the Holy Spirit.

You mean that all blessings of God, whether temporal/earthly or eternal/heavenly come from the grace of God through Christ by the Spirit alone?

That is the teaching of the Scriptures as interpreted by the Reformed confessions.³

Was the law given at Sinai eschatologically oriented?

Yes.

How?

The law delivered to Moses came from the lips of Almighty God. The moral law (or Ten Commandments) is a mirror reflection of his own moral nature and character.

You mean that the Ten Commandments are a revelation of the moral-ethical nature of God as he has existed from all eternity?

Yes, they are as heavenly in Sinaitic revelation as they are heavenly in God's own glory-mountain in heaven. In other words, the ethical-moral nature of God as he exists eternally in heaven is reflected in each of the "ten words" at Sinai.

Then fundamentally, the Ten Commandments are heavenly or eschatological?

Yes, as God himself is heavenly and eschatological

How is the first commandment eschatological?

In the eschaton of the heaven of God's eternal dwelling, there is no other God save him alone—Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Israel was therefore invited to worship God as if they were before his heavenly glory-throne—singularly focused, particularly possessive,

³ James T. Dennison, Jr., ed., *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation* (1523-1693), 4 volumes (2008-2014). More than 125 confessions of faith appear in this collection.

one-and-only passionate. Their ethical-moral character in single-hearted devotion was to imitate the worship of those in heaven, who have no other gods before them.

How is the second commandment eschatological?

Heaven is decorated with no statues, images, idols or other man-made representations of the deity. Thus, the ethical-moral nature of God is that he is to be worshipped according to his ontological nature. He is a Spirit (not material in any sense) and must be worshipped in “spirit and truth” (Jn. 4:24). The morals of the people of God in every age of the history of redemption are to reflect the morals of the worshipping assembly in heaven. That assembly bows down to no images, icons, statues, etc. To do so in the presence of the immaterial God would be blasphemous and hellish (the damned in Hell are devoted to the image of Satan and his diabolic manifestation. There, idolatry of the creature is the eternal norm).

How is the third commandment eschatological?

The words about God, his prerogatives and the physical functions he has created are to be honored on earth as they are in heaven. No profane, obscene or vulgar remark can be heard in heaven (heaven is a place of holy, pure and perfectly sanctified speech). Heaven could not abide it as God himself would not condone it. The ethical-moral character of the tongues/language of all the people of God in every era of the history of redemption is to be eschatologically oriented—not empty or vain, but full of love and honor to the God who has created and redeemed them.

How is the fourth commandment eschatological?

Heaven is an eternal Sabbath (Heb. 4:9)—a place of everlasting rest. God’s ethical-moral nature and character sabbatizes, i.e., keeps an eternal Sabbath rest.⁴ This is reflected in the Sabbath at creation (Gen. 2:2-3) and memorialized in the one-day-in-seven Sabbath for the people of God in every era of the history of redemption. That is, the eternal Sabbath rest of heaven is mirrored in the one-day-in-seven Sabbath of God’s people. As they shall enjoy a Sabbath rest for all eternity in the Sabbath of the Lord of the Sabbath, so they reflect this precious privilege one day in seven outside of heaven. They declare that their own ethical-moral character is not shaped by work per se, nor by recreation and pleasure per se, but by the ethical-moral character of God and his Sabbath-rest arena. At Sinai, heaven’s Sabbath casts its shade upon God’s people by moral precept; but a moral precept which anticipates the consummately everlasting Sabbath of God’s glory land. Keeping the Sabbath day rest holy is living here (in principle) as we shall live in heaven (in perfection).

How is the fifth commandment eschatological?

Who is worthy of more honor and respect than the Lord God of heaven? His ethical-moral righteousness and sovereignty make him worthy of all honor. Therefore, those whom he has placed in positions of honor and authority over the people of God in every

⁴ See the author’s exposition of the Sabbath in redemptive-historical continuum here:

http://nwts.edu/media/audio/jtd/Hebrews/Hebrews_11.mp3. Handout here:

http://nwts.edu/media/pdf/jtd/Hebrews/Hebrews_11.pdf. Compare also his book, *The Market Day of the Soul* and articles: “The Puritan Doctrine of the Sabbath.” *The Banner of Truth* 147 (December 1975):6-14; “The Perpetuity and Change of the Sabbath.” In *Soli Deo Gloria: Essays in Reformed Theology*, ed. by R. C. Sproul (1976), 146-155; “Vos on the Sabbath: A Close Reading.” *Kerux: A Journal of Biblical-Theological Preaching* 16/1 (May 2001):61-70 (<http://kerux.com/doc/1601A4.asp>).

era of the history of redemption, are to be obeyed “as unto the Lord”. Can we imagine any dishonor to our superiors in heaven? Such would be tantamount to dishonoring God himself in his own home. No, rudeness, arrogance, narcissism, defiance and outright hatred of those vested with authority will not exist in heaven. Professing Christians should be leading in banishing these iniquities from their culture—familial, ecclesiastical, political, educational, recreational, etc. for precisely that is what the fifth commandment in its eschatological orientation calls us to do—young and old alike.

How is the sixth commandment eschatological?

The eschatological glory-arena is an arena of life, not death. Murderous death cannot enter into that arena. While self-defense is compatible with that arena (life preserving and protecting life), willful self-murder or homicide is not—it is the destruction of the image of God in man (cf. Gen. 9:6). God’s own moral-ethical character informs his image with life as it is in his eternal/eschatological arena. Killing (murdering) that image is the very opposite of the principle of heaven’s eternal life.

How is the seventh commandment eschatological?

For a moment, let us imagine acts of adultery or homosexuality or fornication in heaven. The very suggestion is unthinkable. Heaven is an ethical-moral arena dominated by the perfect chastity and propriety. Monogamous marriage is the model for God’s redemptive-historical relationship with his people—Israel in the Old Testament (cf. especially Hosea) and the Bride and Bridegroom of heaven (the church and Christ, cf. Eph. 5). The perfect consummate union of relationship is that “in Christ” whereby the believer and his Savior are united in the intimacy of grace, love and devotion. Imperfect unions (between sinners) are to mirror that heavenly and eschatological reality. This is why the Song of Solomon is found in the Bible. It details the joys and challenges of marital union in a fallen world, while driving the reader to the eschatological Solomon and his eschatological Shulammitte.⁵ Ethical-moral purity in human sexuality is the pattern of heaven. Could one be addicted to pornography in heaven? The question answers itself.

How is the eighth commandment eschatological?

Robbing God’s image bearer of his possessions is to assault the gifts of God bestowed upon the creature. The privilege of being stewards of the creaturely goods granted by heaven’s benevolence is inviolable—a trust to those who receive them as a token of divine common grace. The eschatological arena is a place where none steals from another. Such an act could not abide the omniscient eye of the Lord God of the gifts of that arena. Those treasures are distributed according to his sovereignty, entrusted according to his grace and preserved according to his benevolence. Stealing these is impossible in his eternal presence. All gathered in that presence will honor and preserve the gifts possessed by others in that glorious eschatological setting. Will you rob God? Then why would you rob the bearer of his divine image? You could do neither in heaven.

How is the ninth commandment eschatological?

God’s moral-ethical character is that of perfect Truth. Our Lord Jesus Christ even

⁵ See the author’s audio series on this beautiful book here: <http://nwts.edu/audio/JTD/SongOfSolomon.htm>. Also “Solomon’s Sublime Song” available here: <http://www.reformedfellowship.net/outlook/2003septemberoutlook.pdf>.

declares that he is the Truth incarnate. This is because he belongs, with his Father and the Holy Spirit, to an arena of eternal Truth—nor is there any deceit in any member of the Trinity or before their face. The lips of God’s moral-ethical creatures are to reflect his eschatological character in their witness bearing. That is, the truth of heaven is to be mirrored in the truth-telling of believers on earth. If heaven cannot abide liars and bearers of false witness, those who profess to belong to heaven even now must reflect that ‘not yet’ reality as they speak and testify in this world. Let it be on earth as it is in heaven with respect to the truth and telling the truth.

How is the tenth commandment eschatological?

“Thou shalt not covet” is the most eschatological of all ten commandments.

What do you mean?

The apostle Paul found this commandment to be the most convictingly heaven-oriented commandment of all (Rom. 7:7ff.). For he realized (as he had never before, cf. Phil. 3:6) that desiring or lusting for or delighting in himself or the things of this world (i.e., coveting) was most un-heavenly, most ungodly, most self-ish.

Why?

Paul came to understand that his internal desires (in distinction from his mere outward acts) were sinful—that his moral-ethical orientation was to the flesh and not to the spirit (i.e., to the external and earthy, not to the internal and heavenly). So that as long as his external acts were not idolatrous, obscene, Sabbath violations, disobedient to authority, murdering someone, sexually promiscuous or perverse, theft, or lying, he was in perfect (“blameless”) conformity to the commandments of the law. But the tenth commandment pierced his heart and mind with the profound realization that his thoughts, feelings, longings had to mirror God’s own thoughts, feeling, longings as if he were in the very heaven of the everlasting God. In that arena, no evil desires (coveting; cf. the old word “concupiscence”) accorded with the moral-ethical character of God eternal and heaven eternal.

In other words, the tenth commandment was a summary of all ten.

Yes. Heaven’s eschatological environment was not a place for desiring one’s self as god (idolatry), desiring to devote oneself to physical images and statues (more idolatry), desiring language unfit for God’s ears or heaven’s neighborhood (vain use of the divine name or obscene comments about the processes he has created for his glory), desiring that the Lord’s day Sabbath serve self (contrary to the eschatological Sabbath rest for the people of God), desiring to disobey and dishonor those with proper authority over one (dishonoring God and his appointed servants which is impossible in heaven), desiring the death of one’s neighbor (not valuing and preserving his/her life which is the law of heaven), lusting for sexual satisfaction outside of God-ordained parameters (sexual self-ishness does not and cannot exist in the eschaton), coveting my neighbor’s goods (theft cannot exist in heaven where all gifts belong to God and are the possession of those to whom he distributes them), desiring to exalt oneself via lies and deceit (where heaven is an arena of absolute truth), desiring the thoughts and imaginations of this world (as in heaven we will desire perfectly, before the face of our Triune Lord, the thoughts and imaginations of that heavenly world).

In conclusion, with our Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, we may say that the Ten Commandments, in redemptive-historical and biblical-theological perspective, are of this

order—“of such is the kingdom of heaven”—and that in semi-eschatological (now/not yet) dynamic, i.e., the not yet mirrored in the now; the now reflecting the not yet.

What was Israel’s response to the Ten Commandments?

Though they professed “all that the Lord has spoken, we will do” (Ex. 19:8), they profaned the law by making a golden calf and whoring after one another in perfidious idolatry and self-lust (Ex. 32:6, 25).

Did disobedient Israel receive the eschatological condemnation (NB: there is an eschatological now/not yet condemnation/judgment) of loving themselves and their pleasures more than God?

Yes, God’s just sword of death struck down thousands in token of the eschatological finality of rejecting him and whoring after other flesh and gods. Those who love self and its carnal delights shall receive the divine reward of those acts and inclinations—Hell.

But all Israel was not destroyed as a result of the golden calf incident.

Moses placed his life in the breach between God and disobedient Israel (Ex. 32:32).

How did he do this?

He offered his life for the life of the remnant people of God.

But God did not take his life.

Yes, God heard the voice of his intercession and in his wrath remembered mercy.

Back to the law of God. What are the kinds of law in the Old Testament?

In general, there are apodictic and casuistic laws.

Explain apodictic law.

It is law with no conditional clause included. That is, it is law of absolute mandate and unconditional obligation. Its imperative form is “Thou shalt not . . .” (which is common to the Decalogue); or “Cursed is . . .”.

Explain casuistic law.

It is conditional law or case law. That is, it contains the formula “if (this case occurs) . . . then (this is the consequence)”. For example: “if a thief breaks in and is killed, then no capital crime has been committed” (cf. Ex. 22:2). Case law applies to specific conditions of cases not covered by apodictic circumstances.

What are the traditional specific categories for Old Testament law?

Moral, ceremonial and judicial

Are these three categories also under the apodictic/casuistic paradigm?

Yes, apodictic unconditionality and casuistic conditionality may apply to them.

Where do I find the moral law?

In the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20; Dt. 5)

Does this law bind the New Testament believer?

Yes, because it is eschatological in orientation and thus is a permanent and eternal standard of ethical behavior.

What is the ceremonial law?

These are the laws of sacrifice for sin as well as laws regulating the Old Testament worship of God by means of an external priesthood and cultic ritual (including festivals).

Are these laws still binding on the people of God?

No, they were displaced and replaced by the perfect work of Christ, who is the eschatological sacrifice for sin and the eschatological high priest of the Israel of God of the end of the age.

What about the judicial laws?

They were given to Israel as the rule of their state or commonwealth. They were intended

to cease when that state or commonwealth ceased. In fact, there were revisions here as redemptive history progressed from theocracy (ended with the Samuel) to monarchy (ended with the destruction of Jerusalem, 586 B.C.) to the rule of the nations (ended with the destruction of the state of Israel, 70 A.D.). (While the modern state of Israel is anchored in the providence of God, it is not the creation of Biblical revelation—prophetic or otherwise. It is a secular state.)

You mean that the judicial laws of Old Testament Israel are no longer binding on judicial commonwealths in the New Testament era?

Yes, except for principles of general equity (equal justice for all) which those laws may contain, the specifics of those statutes do not bind non-theocratic states and commonwealths. They have been replaced by the common law of nations.

So, for example, it is no longer proper under the New Testament economy to execute homosexuals as the Old Testament judicial law prescribed (Lev. 20:13).

That is correct; as church and state are separate (not theocratic) under the New Testament economy, homosexuals are left to the judgment of God (1 Cor. 6:9). They are free to live their lives in this world, hopefully hear the gospel of grace, repent of their sins and be transformed by the renewing of the Holy Spirit (as all sinners are free to live their lives in this world, hear the gospel of grace, repent of their sins and be transformed by the renewal of the Holy Spirit).

How does the book of Exodus end?

With Israel at the mountain of the Lord, journeying to the Promised Land under the canopy of light and fire which marks the dwelling place of God (Ex. 40:38).

NB: In these beginning things of Exodus, we discover final things of heaven's eschaton; even as in those eschatological things foreshadowed by Exodus, we discover the protological things of the Old Testament exodus generation.

Book Reviews

K:JNWTS 29/2 (September 2014):31-39

Stephen Westerholm, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Paul*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2011. 634pp. Cloth. ISBN: 978-1-4051-8844-9. \$79.95.

This volume is superior to the *Blackwell Companion to Jesus*,¹ perhaps because it is edited by Stephen Westerholm. It is more balanced with a greater variety of contributions by conservative, moderate and more critical scholars. Westerholm describes this volume as an attempt at dialogue between biblical scholars and theologians. The first part of the companion consists in biblical studies. The second part deals with the history of Pauline interpreters and the third part revolves around the legacy of Paul. This last section covers Paul in art and literature followed by a select set of chapters dealing with theological topics in Paul and the history of their interpretation.

The first part has some useful historical studies dealing with the Pauline chronology, followed by Paul and the believers in Macedonia, Corinth, Galatia, Western Asia and Rome. This continues a chapter on the Pastoral Epistles and the portrait of Paul in Acts. These historical studies are followed by a set of chapters dealing with topics in the Pauline letters often dealt with by biblical scholars, such as Paul's gospel, his view of Scripture and Christology. With these are chapters dealing with Paul's relationship to the Jewish people and his view of the law. These are followed by a chapter on the text of the Pauline corpus and several chapters basically covering the areas of Socio-Rhetorical Criticism, rhetoric in Paul's letters, the social setting of the Pauline communities, women in those churches and Paul and Empire. The latter is really a distinct chapter written by N. T. Wright, following his political/eschatological view of Paul's relation to the empire.

In the chapter on the Pastoral Epistles, I. Howard Marshall takes the view that sections of the Pastorals were written by Paul and compiled by his later followers. The author takes this view because he is giving deference to some of the liberal arguments against Pauline authorship. One of these arguments is that Paul's undisputed letters begin with doctrine and then argue its ethical implications, whereas the Pastorals begin with an ethical perspective and then use doctrine to support it. In other words, Paul used indicative/imperative before and now the Pastorals use imperative/indicative. However, in response to this argument, we note that the theological structure of both perspectives is identical—the imperatives are fundamentally grounded in the indicative of salvation. To speak of the imperatives first and then show their grounding in the indicative grounds them as much in the indicative as stating the indicative first and then showing the results of this ground in the imperatives. In addition, this shift is only one of emphasis, that is, there are more imperative/indicative structures in the Pastorals than there are in the previous

¹ See the present reviewer's examination of this volume here: <http://kerux.com/doc/2901R3.asp>.

letters. However, they are found in the previous letters as well, e.g., “work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12-13). And the general indicative/imperative structures are found in the Pastorals. For instance, consider how the indicative precedes moral instruction in “for the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age” (Titus 2:11-12).

A second argument presented by higher critics is that the Pastorals use more adjectives and nouns than the undisputed Pauline letters. Marshall seems to concede some weight to these and other arguments in his own view. While 1 Timothy (as Marshall states) indicates that it was also intended to be read to the churches, we believe further research could be done on the how the personal address of the letter may have influenced some of its unique differences. Other factors to consider are the later date of the Pastorals at a time when Paul may have already visited Spain and the crisis that was probably brewing in the churches of the Aegean.

Numerous scholars have argued that the portrait of Paul in Acts is different from that of the epistles. In the chapter on this subject, Stanley E. Porter largely shows that many of the supposed differences are not real. At the same time, he leaves room for too much of a wedge at certain points. For example, he simply notes there is debate on whether the Paul of the epistles drew on Hebrew sources.

James Dunn authored the chapter on the gospel according to St. Paul. As usual, he argues that “gospel” (good news) is coopted from the world of Cesar and his ‘good news’. He also rightly shows that Paul probably got it from Isaiah’s prophecy about the coming of God’s kingdom. Dunn is formally correct here, but it is Dunn’s view of the kingdom that is non-Pauline. Dunn includes his mistaken understanding of justification in this chapter. He then points to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as if the church has not done justice to that doctrine. He has neglected the rich development of that doctrine found in the Reformed churches as represented in Abraham Kuyper’s book on the subject and developed in Geerhardus Vos’s article “The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit”.

J. Ross Wagner’s chapter on Paul and Scripture covers the subject in detail, though it could do more justice to Paul’s redemptive-historical and eschatological interpretation of Old Testament prophesy.

Simone J. Gathercole’s article on Christology is well informed and generally argues that Paul taught the deity of Christ. However, he concludes that Paul also taught that Christ is subordinate to the Father. Gathercole makes this brief statement without further elaboration. And this leaves open the possibility that the second person of the Trinity was eternally subordinate to the Father or possibly that the Son is a lesser divine being than the Father. The latter possibility is surely at odds with Paul’s teaching that the Son is divine, for divinity entails eternal omnipresence and thus eternal coexistence and equality with the Father. Such equality of being also implies that the Son was not eternally subordinate to the Father. The only subordination that fits with Paul’s understanding of Christology is that found in the gospels, in which Jesus Christ in relationship to his human nature alone subordinates his will to the Father.

Arland J. Hultgren's chapter on Paul and the law does not seem to this reviewer to break new ground. Hultgren claims (among other things) that for Paul Christians are no longer under the moral precepts of the Mosaic law. He does claim that Paul repeats these Mosaic precepts to show the obligations Christians have in Christ, but only because they also serve as the content of the law of Christ. Thus, he denies the organic relationship that unfolds from Moses to Christ. In support of the Reformed perspective (in which Christians are under the moral law of Moses as a rule of life), we believe that Paul recognizes that Christ kept the moral law of Moses and now Christians keep that moral law in union with Christ. In other words, the Mosaic moral law finds its organic unfolding in Christ, in whom the Christian is to live. This organic perspective of the Mosaic moral law and its relationship to Christians does better justice to the fact that Paul quotes these passages from the Old Testament itself. This can be no less true of the moral commandments Paul quotes than the prophetic passages he quotes. That is, when Paul quotes Old Testament prophetic passages, he teaches that they have been organically unfolded in Christ and so the church lives under that prophetic fulfillment and authority. So also, when Paul quotes the Mosaic moral commandments, he implies that the church lives under their organic fullness and authority.

Chapters appear on textual criticism and analyzing the text with Rhetorical Criticism. Dirk Jongkind writes a chapter on the text of the Pauline corpus, which to a non-specialist in textual criticism (such as this reviewer) appears to be a set of useful reflections in lower textual criticism. This is followed by Jean-Noel Aletti's often helpful chapter on rhetoric in Paul's letters; helpful that is in terms of his considerations on ancient rhetoric. However, Aletti must be read carefully, especially when he engages in the relationship between ancient rhetoric and modern rhetoric. Aletti claims that we must sometimes critique the soundness of Paul's rhetorical arguments for the present era. For example, Aletti states that Paul's argument in 1 Cor. 15 presumes that there is simply discontinuity between a seed and the plant that grows from it; but today we realize (from modern science) that there is continuity between them. We believe Aletti's example represents more his misinterpretation of Paul and the ancient world than anything else. In the ancient world, Aristotle argued that the seed of a plant has the form of the adult plant within it and there is no reason to believe that Paul thought differently. In fact, Paul's argument in 1 Cor. 15 presumes both continuity and discontinuity. The following verse (1 Cor. 15:39) argues for several different types of flesh, but presumes that they all have the continuity of being "flesh". Next is the comparison between earthly and heavenly bodies which have continuity in that both possess "glory" (1 Cor. 15:40). The discontinuity cannot be pushed radically or it would suggest that Paul believed that there is a radical discontinuity between stars, which he says also differ in glory (v. 41), like earthly and heavenly bodies.

Finally, Aletti also inappropriately ascribes much of Paul's rhetoric to paradox. For instance, he claims that when Paul says that Christ became poor in order to make many rich, this is paradoxical. That is, for Aletti, Paul does not explain how this is possible. So it is a paradox. However, this cannot be maintained unless we interpret Paul in an overly rigid fashion. For such statements should be interpreted in light of Paul's overall discourse, in which Christ is our substitute. He takes upon himself our poverty and gives us his riches. This is not a paradox, but

the coherent content of the apostle's gospel seen in light of the Old Testament's view of sacrifice and substitution.

This is followed by Gerd Theissen's chapter on the social setting of Pauline communities. While we believe the most helpful studies in the social world of Paul fall under the category of special introduction (dealing with social life in specific cities like Ephesus and Corinth), this general introduction is helpful in its place. Theissen has some underlying critical assumptions, leading one to believe that he thinks the text primarily arises out of the social setting rather than from the presence of God in his heavenly society. At the same time, this does not dominate his discussion and he has an assortment of social insights that can be useful when sifted through appropriately.

Margaret Y. MacDonald's chapter on women in the Pauline churches has some insights, notably those that show the equal dignity of men and women in Christ. Such equal dignity speaks against the tyrannical use of authority by men over women. At the same time, MacDonald short changes the Pauline teaching on the headship of men in which a man is called to build up a woman (1 Cor. 11:3). Paul sees harmony in these two elements (as we understand it) in his semi-eschatological perspective. That is, the heavenly union of equality (Gal. 3:28) transcends all earthly forms of authority and can exist alongside them in this age. Such coexistence allows these two elements to enrich one another in Christ—the liberty continuing under authority and the authority nurturing liberty. MacDonald's dislike of authority also shows itself in her view of Scripture. She does not even tip her hat to the authority of Paul's writings. Instead, she comes close to stating explicitly (as do some other feminist theologians) that all she is doing is using Paul to promote her own version of feminism. But why involve Paul in this? She does this (as she sees it) to influence other women who are still (for some reason or another, as she puts it) under Paul's influence. These elements suggest that this chapter does not represent the objectivity of truly historical biblical scholarship.

N. T. Wright's chapter on Paul and Empire repeats arguments Wright has made elsewhere—that Paul's rhetoric of empire was a critique of the Roman Empire and the Caesars. In Wright's version of this critique, Paul is an eschatological/political transformationist who presents a transformed this-worldly eschatology in opposition to the this-worldly eschatology of the Caesars. Such a view does not comport with Paul's transcendent eschatological perspective of the now and not yet, a view in which neither the source nor the nature of the kingdom is of this world.

The second part of this *Companion* begins with Peter Widdicombe's chapter in which he lays out the influence of Paul on Origen. He notes that Origen had an essentially Trinitarian theology. Some readers will not appreciate his standard claim that Origen followed a form of allegorical exegesis. At the same time, he notes the influence of Origen on the later fourfold use of Scripture which includes the foundational importance of historical exegesis for the other three.

In the article on Augustine, Lewis Ayres articulates Augustine's exegetical arguments for viewing the Holy Spirit as the love of God. He then relates this to Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity and his view of grace in the Christian. As medieval theologians would later articulate, Augustine believed that the Holy Spirit (as the love of God) was the love that bound the Father

and Son together in the Trinity. In terms of God's work of grace in the Christian, Augustine argued that if the Holy Spirit is love then he is the essence of that love by which the Christian loves God. Thus, when the Christian loves God he is united to God the Spirit. That is, in the Christian's love for God, it is the Spirit in him that is loving God the Spirit. Thus, it is God loving himself. We might put the two of these insights together and conclude that in loving God, the Christian is united to both the Father and the Son in their love for one another by the Spirit. That is, in his love for the Father, the Christian is united to the Son in his love for the Father. For both are loving the Father by and in the Spirit. And in his love for the Son of God, the Christian is united to the Father. For the Father also loves the Son by and in the Spirit. Thus, in their love for Father and Son, the Christian is united to the very life of the Trinity in the mutual love of the three persons of the Trinity for one another. Of course, this is true in such a way that does not bridge the creator/creature divide, but at the same time is a real union and communion of eternal life and love in God.

In the chapter on Aquinas, Matthew Levering focuses on the Christian virtues as articulated by Aquinas. He shows Aquinas's exegetical indebtedness to Paul in this articulation.

In his discussion of Luther, Mickey L. Mattox rightly indicates that E. P. Sanders and some other advocates of the New Perspective have not properly understood Luther. Mattox notes a criticism of Krister Stendahl, who argued that Luther's theology (unlike Paul's) was oriented to the introspective conscience of the West. Mattox indicates that Luther did not always view the conscience as an accurate guide to the Christian's standing before God and that the Christian is called to look outside herself (and thus outside her conscience) to the justifying verdict of Christ. And thus she is to renew her conscience (we might say) in the light of being imputed with Christ's righteousness.

Mattox also discusses Luther's distinction between the gift of God and the grace of God, spurred from Luther's conversations with Philip Melancthon in 1521. Melancthon had developed such a distinction after reflecting on Erasmus's annotations to the New Testament, according to Mattox. The distinction meant that the gift of God was something God did outside of us (namely) justification, while God's grace was something God did within us. In other words, the gift and grace were not synonymous, as if both were referring only to the internal work of the Spirit, as Roman Catholic exegetes had assumed. In his discussion, Mattox claims that Luther took this distinction in a different direction than Melancthon, arguing that Melancthon's formulation was a precursor to the later doctrine of imputed righteousness. This comment seems to suggest that Luther's doctrine was not the doctrine of imputed righteousness or its precursor. To argue this point, Mattox points to places where Luther argues that God's internal grace in our hearts and the faith it produces unites us to Christ. And in being united to Christ, we are given the gift of justification. However, we do not see how this suggests a doctrine different from imputed righteousness. For these statements of Luther could have been made by Calvin and any number of the second generation Reformers who argued for imputed righteousness. That is, Luther's statements simply indicate that he believed that the Christian is regenerated by the Spirit and so is given the gift of faith. And it is this faith that unites him to Christ. In this union, the Christian is given the gift or justification which is the imputation of righteousness. Such statements do not

imply that the vital union Christians have with Christ (by which their hearts are renewed) is the same thing as the forensic union they have with Christ (by which they are imputed with his righteousness). They simply imply that the faith Christians have by their vital union with Christ lays hold of the imputed righteousness of Christ which constitutes their forensic union with him. Even if Luther did not use these terms to describe this difference (as later theologians did), the distinction implied in them must be recognized as implicit in his theology in order to do justice to his many statements on justification as a whole. And it is certainly the case that the quotes given by Mattox do not argue that vital union and forensic union are one and the same in Luther. No such evidence exists.

In the article on Calvin, Anthony N. S. Lane discusses several issues. Among them is Calvin's principles as an exegete. These include his penchant for brevity, but also his faithfulness to Scripture. Since Calvin was content to leave detailed theological discussions to the *Institutes*, his exegetical comments could be brief. But this also helped free him up to deal faithfully with the text. Calvin was careful not to use texts for his theological agenda. There were often texts which might be thought to support Calvin's theological views which Calvin did not believe was the focus of that particular text, even though they were supported elsewhere in Scripture. In such cases, Calvin would note that this text should not be used to support a conclusion he otherwise thought correct. At the same time, Lane notes that Calvin's theology would often serve as a corrective to possible misinterpretations of Scripture. For instance, Calvin denied that passages referred to by Semi-Pelagians in favor of the possibility of losing one's salvation taught this doctrine. In this way, (we might say) Calvin recognized that Scripture must be used to interpret Scripture.

Lane placed some focus on Calvin's view of double justification. Lane uses this term to describe Calvin's view that not only are the saints justified, but their good works are also justified. That is, the taint of original sin that clings to the good works done through the Holy Spirit would keep them from being acceptable from the perfect justice of God if God did not also justify those works through the imputation of Christ's righteousness. In this way, they are made acceptable and pleasing to God. This leads the Christian to a life of faith, hope and confidence in his obedience to God. And it leads him to cling to the perfect righteousness of Christ for all things in life and death.

The *Companion* then turns to a chapter on John and Charles Wesley by John R. Tyson. Tyson ascribes their evangelical awakening to the doctrine of justification by faith and its distinction from sanctification. He does not suggest a distinction between their doctrine of justification and that of the Reformation. He does state that Charles Wesley links the doctrine of justification to sanctification—sanctification making real our justification. He also describes their view of Christian perfection in this life. They sought to argue this from Rom. 2:29, Gal. 2:20, and Phil. 2:5; 3:12-13. However, none of these texts point in this direction. If (as is the case) Galatians was written before Philippians, then Paul cannot be saying in Galatians 2:20 that he has already reached perfection while later in Phil. 3:12-13, he is still seeking to attain it. Also the point of attainment in Phil. 3:12-13 is not in this life (as the Wesleys must assume), but at the resurrection. As for Rom. 2:29, it describes the identity of all Christians and not of a select group

who have reached Christian perfection in this life. Finally, Phil. 2:5 speaks of the goal of obedience for which Christians are to strive, not something they can reach in full in this life. In addition to this, the Wesleys also argued their unique view of the witness of the Spirit from Rom. 8:16. More interesting for this reviewer was the influence of Paul's texts on the hymns of Charles Wesley and how he often personalized the singer's relationship with Christ as Paul did in Gal. 2:20.

This volume is deficient in its historical treatment insofar as it jumps from the Wesley's straight to Karl Barth. It then proceeds to recent continental philosophers where it ends its Western Christian treatment of this historical survey. Among Biblical scholars, Albert Schweitzer and James Dunn are mentioned, though they receive no treatment. And there is no discussion of any other modern attempts to unearth the coherence of Paul's thought in New Testament—studies such as we find in Hermann Ridderbos's *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* and other authors.

The chapter on Barth by Richard E. Burnett emphasizes that Barth wished to stand alongside the authors he interpreted, until he felt as if he could actually speak for the author himself. That is, Barth took a sympathetic reading of the New Testament authors rather than standing at a distance from them. While he accepted the canons of higher criticism, he believed these were only the stepping stones to contemporary exegesis. Thus, he criticized most higher critics for simply presenting historical data and then arguing what parts of Paul could be accepted for modern man and which were influenced by an alien spirit stemming from the perspectives of the ancient world. Barth on the other hand, argued that all of what Paul wrote came from an alien spirit and was relevant for the present time simultaneously. By what criteria could the modern critic distinguish the two? It should be clear from these statements that Barth was *not* a traditional Protestant theologian. For while he criticized the critics, he also believed that everything Paul wrote was governed by an alien spirit. Reading between the lines of this chapter, one detects Barth's view of Scripture—that the Bible is not the Word of God, but simply witnesses to the Word of God. That is, everything that Paul wrote was conditioned by the time in which he lived, together with its superstitions and myths. So it is not important for Barth that the New Testament record of Christ's resurrection be historically accurate. Instead, through this alien spirit, God witnesses to the Word. Somehow the Word existentially encounters you through the witness of Scripture, but the Scriptures are not themselves the Word of God.

P. Travis Kroeker writes on the interpretation of Paul among recent continental philosophers, focusing on Jacob Taubes, Daniel Boyarin, Giorgio Agamben and Alain Badiou. It is interesting that these philosophers find themselves in the continental tradition with its often world-encompassing political and historical ideologies rather than other philosophical traditions, like Anglo-American and analytic philosophy. As such, each of these writers gives a political/eschatological interpretation of Paul that is more in keeping with their continental philosophical and Jewish (in the case of Taubes and Boyarin) political perspectives. The titles of some of their books make this plain—works like *The Political Theology of Paul* (Taubes, 2004); *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Boyarin, 1994); *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (Badiou, 2003). As with other this-worldly eschatological agendas, these

philosophers mostly find their own reflection in Paul and provide little insight into his true meaning.

These treatments of Western Christian and secular thinkers are followed by other readings of Paul—those of various Jewish scholars, Eastern Orthodoxy and the African church. Daniel R. Langton gives us a gateway into modern Jewish views of Paul that have often been influenced by higher criticism. In the Eastern Orthodox treatment, Theodore G. Stylianopoulos notes that the Eastern Church did not have the soteriological debates of the Western Church. From this, he argues that Eastern Orthodoxy allowed a variety of perspectives on salvation. The claim is made that some thinkers argued for justification by faith apart from human merits. Some of this discussion sounds similar to Luther's view of justification. And the refusal of merit and not simply Paul's verbatim word "works" is encouraging and might spur some to do research in this area. However, apart from this, the language seems simply to be a repetition of Paul. It is not clear to this reviewer that any pre-Reformation Eastern Orthodox writers understood this in terms of the forensic imputation of Christ's righteousness. This is especially the case when standard Eastern Orthodox theology does not generally think in terms of merit or lack thereof, but in mystical categories. It is generally content with the view that Christ provides an arena of salvation (the church) and those who mystically enter this arena are "saved", without defining salvation in terms of a reward *merited* by Christ through his life, death and resurrection.

According to Stylianopoulos, the other emphasis in Eastern Orthodoxy is that the faith is not simply something to be understood intellectually, but is something to be lived through prayer, the liturgy and engagement in society. Again, we may think these are laudable teachings, even from the standpoint of the Reformation. However, while the Reformers recognized the existence of true believers in the Eastern Church, they believed (rightly in our view) that Eastern Orthodoxy was worse than Rome. For all of these emphases of Eastern Orthodoxy are understood within their mystical view of the liturgy and visible iconography. And this fits with their restitutionist vision of redeeming the societal structures of this age, as if returning to the original Garden of Eden. Still, this is an interesting chapter, especially for those not familiar with Eastern Orthodoxy.

Grant LeMarquand writes the chapter on African perspectives. He notes that some modern African theologians have rejected earlier colonial missionary perspectives on indigenous African spirituality. That is, earlier African missionaries during the colonial period of the nineteenth century would often critique the spiritual practices of native Africans as conducive to superstition and sinful systems of thought and action. These missionaries would note the superiority of the Christian system in leading to virtuous lives. Modern African theologians have claimed that Paul in Romans 1 critiques all systems of sin, including Christianity. If these writers are simply claiming that many within the external system and community of Christianity are condemned also by Roman 1, we agree. However, we suspect something else is at work here, possibly amongst modern liberal African theologians. If they are claiming that all in Christianity, even in their genuinely redeemed state stand condemned by Romans 1, we must disagree. Paul finds true believers justified and delivered from this wrath (Romans 3-5). In accord with this, the

false worship in Romans 1 is reversed in Romans 15 among true believers in the church of Christ.

This volume concludes with part three on the legacy of Paul. These chapters discuss Paul's legacy in art, literature and later Christian theology, including sin, the Holy Spirit, ethics and the church. Each of the chapters explores these subjects by surveying their influence on and formulation by the later church, including its artists, writers and theologians. Their influence on the broader world, including some philosophers, is occasionally explored as well. The chapters on art and literature are representative of their subjects, but are perhaps more of a showcase than a careful analysis on any particular work. Marguerite Shuster's chapter on sin surveys the subject and generally focuses on the Augustinian perspective. Ralph Del Colle writes on the Spirit. Gilbert Meilaender's chapter on ethics is interesting in that he attempts to relate Paul's ethical teachings to other ethical theories from Aristotle's ethics of virtue onward. However, he does not do justice to the priority of eschatological realization in Paul's ethics. We believe this is central to Paul's indicative/imperative presentation of life in union with Christ. Finally, Nicholas M. Healy writes on the church. He gives a helpful survey of the doctrine of the church from the early fathers to Augustine, John of Damascus, Aquinas, the later papacy, Luther, Schleiermacher and Barth. He rightly focuses on the importance of Augustine's doctrine, including his distinction between the visible and invisible church. His claim that Augustine puts more emphasis on this distinction than Paul (Does he believe Paul really held to this distinction?) should be questioned. While Paul addresses all those in his churches as those in Christ, he also makes such statements as, "But *it is* not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel" (Rom. 9:6). As many have seen, here Paul recognizes that there was a group within the visible church of Israel and these alone were the true Israel (the invisible church). Paul also warns those in his churches to remain steadfast, otherwise they will be finally lost. In other words, not all who are in the visible Christian church will be finally saved. For instance, in 1 Cor. 5:9-13 he states that immoral people such as the covetous, swindlers and idolaters should be cast out of the visible church. If these do not repent, they will be among the covetous, swindlers and idolaters who will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Thus, we may conclude that these people (once a part of the visible church) will not be found among the truly washed and cleansed (1 Cor. 6:11), the proper members of Christ's church. Thus, when Paul addresses the whole church as in Christ, he implicitly allows for the distinction that some are only in Christ visibly, while the truly believing are both in Christ visibly and *invisibly*.

Overall, *The Blackwell Companion to Paul* presents a broad range of studies on Paul, more so than most other modern works. As such it should prove to be influential in the coming years. Yet this should not make us jump whole-heartedly on the bandwagon. It must be handled critically, in spite of the fact that it is not as radical as the publisher's similar *Companion to Jesus*.

—Scott F. Sanborn

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James D. Bratt, *Abraham Kuyper: Modern Calvinist, Christian Democrat*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013. 455 pp. Paper. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6906-7. \$30.00.

Abraham Kuyper was a unique man, not only because of his erudition, but also because of his accomplishments. This biography is divided into three sections. The first section of the book covers the beginning of his life from 1837-1877.

He grew up in the Netherlands, was home schooled through the elementary grades, then went to gymnasium and finally received his doctorate from Leiden University *summa cum laude*. He converted to Christianity in 1861, after reading the book, *The Heir of Redclyffe*, by Charlotte Yonge. After this, he pastored three churches ending up in Amsterdam in a large Reformed congregation of the state church (Heerformde Kerk). After a nervous breakdown, while recuperating in Brighton, England, he became devoted to the Higher Life movement. However, by 1866, he had become thoroughly Reformed.

About this time, he became interested in politics because of the rampant materialism that he saw all around him, including the secularization of education. Behind this is the development of Kuyper's view of sphere sovereignty. That is, Christ rules all areas of life and must be acknowledged as such. Therefore, Kuyper entered politics by becoming a member of Parliament and leader of the Anti- Revolutionary Party. Ultimately, he became Prime Minister of Holland from 1901-1905.

The second section of the book covers the years 1877-1897. This is the time when Abraham develops the religious and political areas of his life. On the political side, he organized the Anti-Revolutionary Party, became its head and led it to dominance in the country. On the religious side, the liberal denominational leaders removed him from his pastorate in the state church. Consequently, in 1886, he took his congregation and joined with other congregations to organize a new denomination called the Doleantie. In 1892, they united with a group that had seceded from the state church in 1834. This group was called the Christelijke Reformerde Kerken. The united group was called the Gereformerde Kerken.

If this were not enough for one man to handle, he also organized the Free University of Amsterdam (1880) and taught systematic theology as well as other courses. At the same time, he wrote articles for the paper, *De Heraut*, and founded and wrote for another paper called *De Standaard*; he also penned a sizeable number of books.

Dr. Bratt, author of this biography and professor at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, explains the thinking of Dr. Kuyper as he interacts with other thinkers of his day. Sometimes this discussion is rather difficult to follow unless you are very well versed in the culture of the late 1800s. For me, this detracts from the pleasure of reading the book. However, I am sure the scholar who understands what various philosophers and historians were teaching would find the discussions helpful.

The third section of the book covers the years 1898 until his death in 1920. Kuyper traveled to the United States to give the Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary at the invitation of Geerhardus Vos (on behalf of the faculty).¹ At Princeton, they were worried about his making it to the seminary on time, since he was hiking in the White Mountains of New England. But he did arrive on time and gave the lectures from October 10-21, 1898 to an audience of approximately 50-60 people. These lectures are still in print for those who want to read them.² B. B. Warfield was in attendance and his comment was: “I never comprehended the epistemological revolution Kuyper had suggested” (264). From New Jersey, Kuyper went to Western Michigan and the heart of Dutch country to continue speaking. Then he traveled to Chicago and spoke to a crowd of 2,000. After he spoke in Cleveland, Ohio and Rochester, New York, he returned to the Netherlands and wrote a book about his trip.

Dr. Bratt includes Kuyper’s reflection on various subjects: death, evolution, the war in South Africa and racism. He describes his time as Prime Minister; his defeat for a second term as Prime Minister; and his trip around the Mediterranean Sea with reflections on Judaism, Islam and advice to the people of God about living in the new order of things. He includes the problems that Kuyper faced after his trip, problems both political and personal. He finishes the biography by describing the final years of Kuyper’s life and his legacy.

Dr. Richard J. Mouw, professor at Fuller Theological Seminary and author of *Abraham Kuyper: A Short and Personal Introduction*, who is also from Dutch heritage, says in his recommendation on the rear cover of this book: “At last! This is what many of us have been waiting for—a careful, detailed, and highly readable (!) biography of Kuyper in all his human complexity. Jim Bratt has given us the comprehensive study of ‘Father Abraham’ that will serve English speakers for years to come.”

I agree with these sentiments except possibly with the “highly readable” remark. And don’t confuse the term ‘Christian Democrat’ with the American Democratic Party. You will have to read the book to understand what that means (hint, see p. 268).

—J. Peter Vosteen

¹ Cf. the letter exchange in *The Letters of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. by James T. Dennison, Jr. (2005) 195-201.

² *Lectures on Calvinism*.

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Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012. Cloth. 293 pp. ISBN 978-0-310-4932-1. \$42.99.

Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament is a greatly expanded treatment of Murray Harris's earlier study of Greek prepositions in the New Testament. The Reformers knew that real exegesis is more than philology, but never less than it. Good exegesis starts with good philological knowledge. The book of Harris is correctly subtitled: *An Essential Reference Resource for Exegesis*. His treatment covers seventeen proper and forty-two improper prepositions. Examples of the latter are χωρίς and ἄνευ.

Very useful and profound is for example the treatment of ὑπέρ. Harris shows that ὑπέρ usually means 'on behalf of' or 'concerning', but that already in classical Greek there are contexts when it has the meaning 'in the place of'. This is very important for a proper understanding of New Testament texts such as John 11:50, 2 Cor. 5:14, 20 and Gal. 3:10. Here we see that the death of Christ has a vicarious and substitutionary meaning.

In two separate chapters Harris discusses the prepositions used with βαπτίζω and πιστεύω/πίστις.

Comprehensive indices to hundreds of verses and subjects greatly contribute to the usefulness of Harris's study. *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament* is a very valuable tool for exegesis for pastors and students with a workable knowledge of Greek.

—Pieter de Vries