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BOOK REVIEWS

***Who is the Holy Spirit? Biblical Insights into His Divine Person.* By Malcolm B. Yarnell III. Hobbs College Library. Nashville: B&H, 2019, xviii+137pp., \$19.99.**

Malcolm Yarnell provides a foundational study on the person of the Holy Spirit. Surveying “six grand vistas of Biblical revelation” (p. 1), Yarnell equips pastors and Bible teachers to worship the Spirit for who he is. In so doing, Yarnell not only equips pastors and teachers to worship the One who gives life, but also prepares them to equip churches for the same.

Let me begin with a brief overview, which will be followed by further reflections. The first scriptural vista, or chapter, Yarnell surveys is Genesis 1. Rejecting arguments that depersonalize the reference to the Spirit in 1:2, Yarnell argues that the Spirit is mysterious, the mover, and mighty. Mysteriously, the Spirit “simply is when nothing else is” (p. 7). Similar to the eagle in Deuteronomy 32, who hovers over his nest, the Spirit is the mover in creation who hovers over the waters “guiding his creation and protecting it” (p. 10). Third, Yarnell focuses on the Spirit’s might over all of life through other Scripture references that build upon the wording of Genesis 1:2.

Next, Yarnell explores the sovereignty of the Spirit in his interaction with the first kings of Israel. Studying 1 Samuel 10-19, Yarnell highlights the Spirit’s deity, sovereignty, and lordship. In the anointing of Saul, the activity of the Spirit is tightly related to the activity of God; there is an “essential unity of the Spirit with God” for the author of 1 Samuel (p. 23). Sovereignly, the Spirit freely chooses to empower and depart from individuals, as he does with Saul after his sinful actions and unwillingness to repent. In chapter 19, the Lord and the Spirit are used interchangeably, demonstrating the Spirit’s lordship.

Third, Yarnell explores why the Spirit is called holy through an examination of Psalm 51. Noting the context of David’s adulterous and murderous wickedness, Yarnell explains how the holiness, or pure otherness, of the

Spirit means that the sinner “can appeal to nothing within himself” to be made right with God but must instead confess his sin and God’s holy character (p. 43). When David describes the holiness of the Spirit, he speaks of the Spirit’s “deity as well as an indicator of divine transcendence and of moral purity” (p. 45). The holiness of the Spirit “changes those he loves by breaking their hearts and coming to live in them” (p. 54).

Turning from the OT, Yarnell examines the person of the Spirit through three aspects of NT teaching. First, in relationship to Christ, Matthew’s Gospel presents the Spirit as the conceiver of Christ in the incarnation, the commissioner of Christ who anoints Christ for ministry at Christ’s baptism, the companion of Christ who empowers Christ for his ministry of teaching, healing, and exorcism, and the equal of Christ in that both are fully God. To encounter Christ (and also the Father) is to also encounter the Spirit. The convert is only converted to confess Christ as Lord by the work of the Spirit (pp. 75-76).

Second, John’s Gospel presents the Spirit in his relationship with others. Tracing the Spirit’s relation to the Son and the Father, Yarnell demonstrates the Spirit’s sovereignty, transcendence, and eternity. He explores the person of the Spirit in light of the language of paraclete and concludes, “[T]he personal nature of the Spirit means that he is concerned with you, not merely from the frightening perspective of his transcendent otherness, but from the comforting perspective of his intimate nearness” (p. 95).

Yarnell’s final chapter surveys who the Spirit is to believers through an exegesis of Romans 8. For believers, the Spirit brings salvation and adoption into a “familial relation to Christ with God” (p. 112). Yarnell’s focus on worship stands as the culmination of the chapter: that the Spirit “indwells us and unites us with the Son and with the Father ought to drive us to worship God. [He] takes us out of our fallen state and places us in the family of God” (p. 113).

As Yarnell acknowledges, his approach to studying the Spirit is rare (p. xv). Contemporary controversies over the Spirit’s work in soteriology, Spirit baptism, and the Spirit’s gifting have resulted in scholars addressing the Spirit’s activity more than his actual person. While Yarnell acknowledges these controversies (pp. 24, 61-62, 98-99, 110-112), he carefully notes that such does not diminish the person of the Spirit. For example, regarding Spirit baptism, he notes that various understandings of the timing of Spirit baptism come from “equally fervent believers” (p. 61). Instead of rehashing the debate, he chooses to exegete Scripture and seeks consensus where

controversy exists. Specifically, Spirit baptism points to the importance “for all orthodox believers that life with Trinity—the one God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—remains necessarily an indivisible event” (p. 62).

While evangelicals have often hesitated to build their pneumatologies on the OT for fear of reading more into the OT than is there, fully one half of *Who Is the Holy Spirit?* is dedicated to exegeting his person in the OT. Because of higher critical methodologies, biblical scholars often hesitate to claim that various OT passages directly refer to the work of the Holy Spirit. In contrast, Yarnell is unafraid to assert that the reader catches a glimpse of the movement of the mysterious Holy Spirit in Genesis 1 because of the larger canonical context (pp. 8, 9, 11). He argues effectively that references to the Spirit in 1 Samuel (p. 23) and Psalms (p. 49) are references to the third person of the Trinity and thus that they should inform any canonical understanding of the Spirit’s person.

Such readings are unsurprising given Yarnell’s presuppositions. Both the divine authorship of the Scriptures in their entirety and the larger witness of Scripture and of the church inform the interpretation of each passage (pp. 1-2). For those who accept these presuppositions, Yarnell’s work will prove particularly valuable in informing why the Spirit is worthy of worship. For those who are more skeptical of Yarnell’s high view of Scripture or of such theological readings of OT passages, Yarnell’s method is worthy of consideration. His demonstration of the consistency of Scripture regarding the person of the Holy Spirit provides an apologetic for both his methodology and his assumptions.

Foundationally, Yarnell’s book successfully advances his goal “to encourage worship . . . of God *as* Spirit” (p. 3). Yarnell’s exploration of the person of the Spirit in the life of David is particularly instructive. Contrasting David with Saul, Yarnell notes how the Spirit did not depart from David yet abandoned Saul despite both having sinned. The reason? While “Saul engaged in a long, drawn-out attempt to justify himself . . . David was driven by a passion to be right with God once again” (p. 42). The chapter in question culminates with Yarnell asking the reader:

Consider your personal confession and your personal petition. First, do you understand how great the Lord God is? Unless you see that God is the source of all that is good and right and holy, of all that is perfect, you will not perceive anything else correctly. . . . [D]o you really know how

horrible of a person you truly are? Will you beg God to place his Holy Spirit in your life such that he will never leave you?

Yarnell's desire for readers to know, respond to, and rightly worship God through the Holy Spirit informs the entire project and equips each pastor and teacher for worship.

Bruce Ashford describes Yarnell as "perhaps the greatest living Baptist theologian" (p. i). I agree. His previous volumes on theological method, the royal priesthood, and the Trinity have substantively advanced the academic and theological discussion of each of the respective subdisciplines. Yarnell's thinking is characterized by a relentless textual focus that more speculative theologians would be wise to consider. In this work, Yarnell seeks to apply his text-driven method to a new audience: pastors and Bible teachers (p. 2). While Yarnell does address theological controversies regarding the Spirit, he largely sidesteps such disputes in favor of attempting to equip pastors and teachers to worship the Spirit. Toward that end, he is largely successful. Yarnell has the rare gift of being a true theological academic who also knows how to equip pastors.

Still, minor weaknesses in Yarnell's work can be noted as he addresses this audience. Specifically, while the well-educated pastor or Bible teacher will rejoice and worship with Yarnell in the Spirit's glory, Yarnell's significant use of Greek and Hebrew transliteration will prove an obstacle to some. Providing additional resources such as discussion questions to accompany each chapter would have further equipped readers to lead classes and congregations to worship the Spirit. Additionally, given that Yarnell elsewhere has described the book of Acts as the Acts of the Holy Spirit, the limited engagement of Acts in this text is surprising. Finally, slightly more interaction with some of the debates regarding the Spirit's activities (especially as it relates to the gifts, the timing of Spirit baptism, and the irresistibility of the Spirit's work in salvation) would no doubt prove helpful to church leaders as they wrestle with such questions. However, given the concise nature of books of this type, it is understandable that Yarnell did not have room to address these additional matters.

Because of its focus on Christian worship and the Spirit's person, *Who Is the Holy Spirit?* should be required reading for pastors and teachers. This book will strengthen their love for the Spirit and help them to better understand his work. Yarnell successfully moves our discussion of the Spirit beyond simply what the Spirit does and helps each reader to understand

who the Holy Spirit is in light of the canonical teaching. Yarnell rightly closes challenging the reader to consider “who is the Holy Spirit to you?” so that each may worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

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***The Atonement: A Biblical, Theological, and Historical Study of the Cross of Christ.* By David L. Allen. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2019, xviii+334 pp., \$34.99 paper.**

Allen is the distinguished professor of preaching and director of the Southwestern Center for Expository Preaching, holding the George W. Truett Chair of Ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Allen begins with the claim, “The doctrine of the atonement of Christ is the heart of Christianity. The cross of Christ is the heart of the apostles’ preaching. Christians—those who bear the name of Christ—are not only a people of the Book but also a people of the cross” (p. xvii). This is not only uncontroversial but the literature on the subject is, Allen notes, “nothing less that staggering” (p. xvii). The author intends this book to make the literature accessible, to provide a summary and overview of the important doctrine.

The author asserts, “The gospel itself centers around the cross of Christ. In what is unarguably the key NT text stating the gospel in the clearest of terms, Paul writes: ‘[T]hat Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures’ (1 Cor 15:3–4)” (p. 1). Thus, as Allen asserts several times, the gospel does not center on the cross alone but on the cross and resurrection.

After the Introduction, the book is divided into nine chapters, beginning with definitions of terms and concepts. From the Old Testament, the author makes a compelling case that forgiveness and atonement have always been substitutionary—an animal dies instead of the sinner. He argues that the “NT authors build on that foundation, demonstrating the prophetic fulfillment in the Gospels and doctrinal development in

the letters” (p. 51). His multiple pages of quotations of NT texts make an undeniable case for substitutionary atonement. The atonement is a work of the Trinity and is an act rooted in divine love.

In “The Intent, Extent, and Application of the Atonement,” Allen asserts that “most Christians of any theological persuasion would accept” that the purpose of the atonement is God’s “plan to deal effectively and finally with human sin so as to redeem and forgive sinners, reconcile them to Himself, and deliver them from sin’s penalty, power, and ultimately its presence” (p. 149). On the extent of atonement Christians disagree; Allen argues confidently for unlimited atonement.

Allen argues “The Nature of the Atonement” can be summarized “in the following way: Christ substituted Himself for the sins of all people, living or dead; He died in their place bearing their sin” (p. 188). A penultimate chapter addresses “Special Issues Concerning the Atonement,” a list of ministerial questions the author has encountered. Finally, the book ends with an excellent summary of the development and diversity of views of atonement, “Historical Theories of the Atonement.”

This is an excellent resource, providing an accessible, non-technical, and readable survey of an essential Christian doctrine. In response to contemporary challenges to substitutionary penal atonement, Allen argues from the Bible and history in support. He is clearly well-versed in the subject, engaging the literature from a variety of eras and traditions, presenting his positions in a clear manner. No one who reads the book will be unsure of the author’s convictions.

There are, however, claims that could perhaps be clearer. For example, Allen writes, “Only at the cross do we learn who God is; only at the cross do we learn who Jesus is; only at the cross do we learn the sinners we are; and only at the cross do we learn what redemption and salvation are all about” (p. 22). Surely this is hyperbole. Then, on 1 Cor 15:3–4 (cf. Acts 18:1–18), Allen observes that “Paul’s message was ‘Christ died for our sins.’ Notice carefully that Paul is saying that this is what he preached pre-conversion, not post-conversion” (p. 95). It seems from the context that Allen means Paul preached this message to people not yet converted, not that Paul preached it prior to his conversion. Finally, Allen claims, “The first explicit mention of a covenant in Scripture is God’s covenant with Abraham in Gen 12:1–3” (p. 146). Since the word “covenant” does not appear in Gen 12, it would be best not to call it an “explicit mention.” Further, Gen 6:18 and 9:1–17 explicitly mention covenant. Perhaps Allen

means the first redemptive covenant is the one God made with Abraham. He also asserts, “The other covenants explicitly mentioned in Scripture are the Mosaic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the new covenant... Of these four covenants, the only one that has specific reference to God’s plan of redemption for humanity is the new covenant” (p. 146). But in Gal 3:8 Paul declares that the gospel was announced to Abraham and quotes Gen 13:3. Surely the promise to bless all nations is an explicit reference to God’s plan of redemption.

Allen is to be praised for producing a work that will be helpful to scholars, students, pastors, and laypeople. This book is highly recommended.

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***Draw Near: The Heart of Communion with God.* By Scott Aniol. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020, lx + 90 pp., \$15.00 paper.**

In this little book, Scott Aniol, associate professor of church music and worship at Southwestern Seminary, beautifully pictures the Christian life as one characterized by authentic worship, genuine abiding, and faithful communion with the Triune God. In doing so, Aniol enables us to see afresh the importance of drawing near to God, the priority of sharing with other believers in corporate worship and community, as well as the significance of regularly partaking of the Lord’s Supper.

Building on Heb 10:22, Aniol expands on the exhortation to “Let us draw near.” He notes that the idea of drawing near is a translation of a term that means more than just a casual coming toward something. This exhortation to draw near means coming to the one, true, and living God. Throughout the book of Hebrews, the author compares the idea of drawing near to Old Testament worship practices as indicated in terms like “holy place,” “the veil,” “high priest,” “sprinkling,” and “cleansing.” Drawing near, Aniol maintains, is the essence of worship, the heart of communion with God.

Aniol provides wise theological framing of his subject, focused on the worship of God the Father, through Jesus Christ the Son, and enabled and

energized by the Holy Spirit. The book is built around eight perspectives on the meaning of communion with God, including “the call to,” “the basis of,” “the meaning of,” “the heart of,” “the strengthening of,” “the fruit of,” “the threat to,” and “the recovery of communion with God.”

Recognizing that worship is central in the existence and continuation of the church as presented in the New Testament, Aniol extends the trajectory of thought found in the writings of W. T. Conner, the Southwestern Seminary theologian who so greatly influenced the Southwestern community and Southern Baptist life during the first half of the twentieth century. Finding themes of continuity between the Old and New Testaments, Aniol uses the book of Hebrews as a bridge to find elements of Christian worship that are similar to those found in the Old Testament.

He highlights the centrality of the Christological orientation that forms and informs New Testament believers. Readers are led to see that the risen and exalted Christ gives a new depth and content to the worshiping community. Moreover, the church’s worship is influenced by the Holy Spirit. Fitting and acceptable worship can only be offered by and through the Holy Spirit. Building on these priorities and the continuity of the Scriptures, Aniol emphasizes the importance of community, including the proclamation of the Word of God, the importance of *koinonia*, and the celebration of the Lord’s Supper.

Each reader will find portions of this book that are more applicable for his or her own Christian journey. I personally found Aniol’s emphasis on the Lord’s Supper to be quite valuable. The Supper provides a vivid reminder for believers of the One who provided our redemption and who is coming again. The celebration of the Supper is central to the church’s worship and thus should be a regular and frequent occurrence for the believing community, providing enablement and guidance for our shared worship of the triune God, leading to fellowship, service, ministry, and outreach. In doing so, the church is reminded that it does not exist merely for itself but for the world. Aniol encourages believers to reflect on their call to discipleship, recognizing that the church has a missionary task that is not optional.

While thoroughly practical and pastoral, readers will find guidance that is shaped by Scripture and deeply informed by theological conviction, leading to paths of faithful Christian living designed to honor and exalt our majestic God. In all of these things, we find implications for Christian fellowship and unity, enhanced discipleship, and a winsome witness before

a watching world. Believers will be refreshed, renewed, strengthened, and encouraged by reflecting on the thoughtful insights offered in this fine work, which I am happy to recommend.

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***The Doctrine of the Bible.* By David S. Dockery. Second Edition. Fort Worth, TX: Seminary Hill Press, 2020, 140pp., \$15.99.**

The most important doctrine for American evangelicals in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has been that of Scripture. Having taught the doctrine of revelation in the churches and in the academy (at the master's and doctoral levels), I have long required an accessible introduction to the doctrine of Scripture. Sadly, nothing satisfactory has been available since the original and increasingly rare edition of this book was published in flimsy paper form in 1991. Happily, this significant introduction to the most important doctrine in contemporary evangelicalism has been republished in a more attractive and durable format in 2020 with a few changes to address recent scholarship.

David Dockery originally sought “to provide a careful overview of the important themes related to a doctrine of Scripture” in order to “help people in the churches better understand the nature of the Bible so we can better understand and obey its message” (pp. 1-2). Rooted among Southern Baptists, who regard themselves a “People of the Book,” Dockery agreed to reissue the text in light of recent changes to “plausibility structures” in Western culture and the ongoing need to “strengthen the convictions of God’s faithful people” (p. 6). Dockery fulfills his aim in a most satisfactory way.

The ecclesial and academic success of this book rests in large part on its digestible chapters, readable style, and comprehensible presentation. Nine chapters consider the Bible in relation to its source in divine revelation; its focus upon Jesus Christ; its divinely impressed attributes of self-witness, divine-human authorship, and inspiration; as well as its relationship to its human recipients as truthful and dependable, as text and canon, in its use

and interpretation, and in its authority. Each chapter begins with a helpful glossary of important terms and concludes with referential endnotes. While indices are not included, a helpful up-to-date bibliography is.

Dockery is fully aware of various intra-evangelical debates regarding the Bible. However, as one ensconced within the Southwestern Seminary tradition of gentleman theologians, he expresses himself not through polemic but through careful evaluation, biblical balance, and positive reinforcement of the truth. For instance, the first chapter draws a holistic picture of the Bible that fits judiciously within the broader Christian tradition as well as his own community. He affirms the theological basis of Scripture as the Spirit-inspired Word of God (pp. 9-25). A second instance occurs in his touching upon the debate over whether biblical truth is primarily personal or propositional. Aware of the alternatives, Dockery serenely concludes biblical truth is both propositional and personal (pp. 16-17). A third instance, among others, occurs when he adopts a "Christological model" for Scripture. Using orthodox Christology, which states Jesus Christ is fully divine and fully human, as an analogy, Dockery argues Scripture comes entirely from God through its fully engaged human authors (pp. 35, 51-62).

While each chapter is filled with such evangelical wisdom, certain chapters providentially address critical issues that are challenging church and academy today. For instance, Dockery reminds his readers, "Jesus Christ is the central figure of the New Testament and the focus of the Christian faith" (p. 28). But Christ is not merely a New Testament figure, for he himself taught the apostles to engage in a new method of reading the Old Testament, "a Christological reading" (p. 29). Through our Lord's Christological method, the church learned that Jesus himself is the hinge between the Old and the New. "Christ is not merely a model for our view of the Bible or its interpretation. He is the main theme and goal of our study of Scripture. The focus is on Jesus" (p. 36). This "Christocentric perspective" centers the Bible hermeneutically. Jesus Christ, in his "exalted lordship," set "the pattern" in the early church, and we would do well to keep the worship of Christ and the preaching of his gospel in focus (p. 111).

An outworking of this theme occurs in the chapters on the canon and its interpretation. While evangelicalism has, since this book's original publication, settled on formally identifying Scripture as the inspired and thus inerrant Word of God, it has not always successfully remembered Scripture's hermeneutic unity is integrally bound with that claim. But

because Dockery believes the Bible is inspired by God the Holy Spirit, he also believes the Bible must be read as a unity centered on God's incarnate Word (pp. 20-21). The interpretive model proposed by Dockery comes from the Bible itself (pp. 112-15), builds on historic Christianity's contributions (pp. 116-19), and engages with contemporary hermeneutics. Rather than surrendering to the singular sirens of modernist hubris, Dockery argues there is a *sensus plenior* in the text greater than "what was possibly intended or known by the author" (p. 119). Fully cognizant of the difficulties provided by the two cultural horizons of author and reader, he carefully crafts ten guidelines of interpretation, giving a salient example of how the Bible's "fullest meaning is found in the Lord Jesus Christ" (p. 120-21).

Whether speaking of the Bible's origin, transmission, or reception, Dockery never allows us to forget the entire Bible is the Word of God "breathed out by God" (cover). Scripture comes to us as a grace of divine revelation (p. 10) through the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New. Across the millennia, Scripture remains the Word of God because it was inspired by, preserved in the church by, and is illuminated to contemporary hearers by God the Holy Spirit. This dependable written Word of God authoritatively points our minds and hearts toward the Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God. Evangelicals in general and Southern Baptists in particular should thank Seminary Hill Press for proposing and publishing a second and sorely needed edition of this now classic and still necessary theological introduction to the doctrine of Scripture.

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The Flourishing Teacher: Vocational Renewal for a Sacred Profession.
By Christina Bieber Lake. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2020, 240
pp., \$22.00 paperback.

Christina Bieber Lake is the Clyde S. Kilby Professor of English at Wheaton College, a Flannery O'Connor scholar, and a seasoned academic who has written a volume that deserves to be read annually by anyone

who teaches in a formal academic setting. Dr. Bieber, as her students call her, is witty, wise, and experienced. She knows the agonies, ecstasies, and grind of the teaching life.

In *The Flourishing Teacher*, the author saves readers the pain of discovering for themselves twelve “Things About the Scholarly Life I Learned the Hard Way.” To do so, she takes readers on a journey of the academic year from “the month-that-shall-not-be-named” (August) to the end of the following summer. Bieber Lake is no Pollyanna. She admits that the academic year is a long slog, and that journey is sustained by passion. “Most of us,” she affirms, “went to graduate school because we had a deep passion for our discipline, a passion that typically translates into a desire to share that passion with other learners. We became teachers because we wanted to profess our love and persuade others to join us in it” (p. 7).

The evidence for her passion for students, her subject matter, and her craft surfaces on every page. For example, every year she begins her preparation for the “spiritual marathon” that is the academic year by retreating to some beautiful destination with only her planner, *Sacred Ordinary Days: A Liturgical Day Planner*, and a roster of her students for the upcoming semester. There she prays for her students because she realizes that “Although we are not primarily ministers of the gospel in our classes, we must never lose sight of the fact that it is souls that we are caring for when we teach” (p. 10).

There are real gems in this book. For instance, Bieber Lake has helpful tips about the first day of class. Instead of the blah, blah, blah, yada, yada, yada of reading the syllabus to the class, she offers alternatives that help form the class into a learning community from the beginning. Another example is her life-saving counsel about how to say “no,” which, if heeded, will preserve faculty members from that perennial temptation to overextend themselves.

Bieber Lake is brutally honest about the life of an academic. In “The Cruellest Month” (April) of the year, she helps us prepare for the Lenten season and the realization of our brokenness and need for repentance. And surely even our best teaching deserves repentance. It is during the chapter for that month that she offers her favorite examples of how to get out of teaching ruts. Some of them are grand gestures like decorating the classroom and giving a highly dramatized lecture. Others are less grand, but potentially as effective, such as turning off the lights in the classroom and reading a poem by flashlight and asking students to make

their comments about the poem in the darkness. She has a “soul shelf” in her personal library, where she keeps those volumes that help to sustain her through the journey. Browsing that shelf with her during the academic year is worth the price of the volume.

Bieber Lake is the academic daughter of her estimable mentor at Emory, the late Elizabeth Fox-Genovese. Those who knew “Miss Betsey” and her work will recognize the legacy of intellect, wit, and snarkiness in the work of Bieber Lake. And since snark is the *lingua franca* of the academy, this vernacular will be welcomed by readers of *The Flourishing Teacher*. But don’t be fooled by the acerbic style. This is a profound work of reflection, advice, and wisdom from someone who has worked very hard to hone her craft and will help sagacious readers do the same.

Read this book from cover to cover when you get it. Then read it month by month the first year. Then read it once a year. It’s that good!

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***The Story Retold: A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament.* By Gregory K. Beale and Benjamin L. Gladd. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2020, xvii+538pp., \$55.00.**

Gregory K. Beale, J. Gresham Machen Chair of New Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary, and Benjamin Gladd, associate professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary, first conceived *The Story Retold: A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament* approximately a decade prior to its publication. They initially envisioned a textbook that would take both the story of Scripture and biblical theology seriously. The final product has more than exceeded their original goal. The authors have produced a biblical-theological introduction to the NT that looks at every major NT passage in the light of the OT.

The intended audience is primarily college students with some familiarity with the Bible. Nevertheless, *The Story Retold: A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament* is remarkably accessible, even for students with limited exposure to the Bible.

One important aim of the authors is to survey the NT writings giving special attention to their retelling of the story of redemption, a grand narrative that follows the general pattern of creation, fall, and redemption. This story, which according to Beale and Gladd is both Israel's story and the church's story, began in the Garden with Adam and Eve (Gen 1-3) and will culminate with the arrival of the new heaven and earth (Rev 21-22). Seeing a continuity between the Testaments, then, the authors suggest that one must read the NT while also listening carefully for the voice of the OT. Beale and Gladd's approach of integrating the OT into the NT by incorporating the story of redemption is unique compared to most NT introductions in two specific ways. First, the majority of introductions explore the distinctive contribution of each NT writing *separate* from the OT (most NT introductions do not even include a chapter on the OT's influence on the NT). Second, they focus on relevant historical, cultural, and sociological features tied to the NT.

The book contains twenty-eight chapters. In chapter one, Beale and Gladd present the storyline of the entire Bible, a grand story that includes God's dealings with humanity to bring about his divine redemption. The authors return to this storyline throughout their work, seeking to trace its incorporation by each NT author into his writing(s).

In chapter two, the authors discuss the use of the OT in the NT through quotations, allusions, and concepts (pp. 18-23). Beale and Gladd provide a helpful presentation of the diverse ways in which the NT writers employ OT quotations and allusions (pp. 23-30), including direct fulfillment, indirect or typological fulfillment, analogy, symbol, abiding authority, prototype, and irony. They demonstrate that one should not understand most NT uses of the OT as examples of prophetic fulfillment.

The third chapter provides a brief introduction to the Gospels. The authors discuss basic issues in preparation for chapters four through seven, which examine the Gospels in greater detail. Additional chapters that review major genres such as history and epistle would have been helpful.

The longest portion of the book surveys each NT writing. Each chapter contains four subsections. Subsection one summarizes basic historical (e.g., authorship, date, purpose) and literary matters (e.g., outline, genre). In regard to issues of historical background, Beale and Gladd follow closely D. A. Carson and Douglas Moo's *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).

In the second subsection (Biblical-Theological Themes), the authors

focus on one or two significant themes or passages within the NT writing under discussion and briefly discuss its tie to the history of redemption. For example, in their survey of Acts, Beale and Gladd highlight the link between Joel's prophecy of the Spirit (Joel 2:28-29) and Pentecost (Acts 2) (pp. 154-155), as well as the theme of the Word of God as presented in Genesis (Gen 1:28; 2:16-17; 3:1-7) and Acts (Acts 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20) (pp. 155-156). By identifying the biblical-theological connections, readers are able to grasp the important links between the Testaments.

Beale and Gladd's discussion of biblical-theological themes is followed in subsection three by a survey of the major sections of the NT writing. At the beginning of each major section, the authors isolate a particular thread that runs from the OT to the NT text under examination. For instance, in their discussion of Acts they see the expansion of God's glory as an important thread that runs from the OT into the NT (pp. 156-78). In addition, within this subsection Beale and Gladd incorporate Genesis 1-3 or some aspect of Israel's history or experience into the NT passage. The authors also include more than 285 images (e.g., paintings, sculptures, photos) that illustrate how biblical events have been portrayed throughout history, such as *Job and His Wife* (Dürer), *Belshazzar's Feast* (Rembrandt), and *The Prophet Zacharias* (Michelangelo).

In the last subsection, Beale and Gladd explore each major section of a NT writing, seeking to identify some textual or conceptual relationship to the OT. For example, they discuss the Passover behind Jesus's death in the fourth Gospel (p. 149), the Israelites' grumbling in the wilderness behind Phil 2:14 (p. 293), and the Egyptian plagues behind the trumpets in Rev 8:6-9:1 (pp. 478-479).

Beale and Gladd have written a commendable work. They illustrate well the unity between the Testaments, the reoccurrence of the story of redemption, and the role of the OT in informing the NT. A careful reading of *The Story Retold: A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament* will result in a theologically rich reading of the NT.

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***Baylor Annotated Study Bible. New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha.* Edited by W. H. Bellinger Jr. and Todd D. Still. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2019, 1992 pp. + maps, \$49.95.**

Following five years of coordinated and dedicated effort, the *Baylor Annotated Study Bible (BASB)* is now available for personal and classroom use. This significant project was capably guided by Bill Bellinger, who serves as chair of the Department of Religion and W. Marshall and Lulie Craig Professor of Bible at Baylor University, and Todd Still, who serves as dean and William M. Hinson Professor of Christian Scriptures in the George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor. These two fine scholars and capable leaders are to be commended for their oversight and editorial work.

The *BASB* is a joint project between Baylor University Press and Tyndale House Publishers. In addition to the handsome green and gold hardcover edition, which reflects the Baylor colors, this new study Bible is also available in a leathertouch green and gold, as well as chestnut brown. The two-column biblical text is quite readable, though the margins are rather narrow. The publishers have used high quality paper; the dark print on each page provides a consistent look from the front matter to the back. Based on the 1989 *New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)*, the annotations are found at the bottom of each page in a smaller, but readable, font. I think that most will agree that the overall appearance is quite attractive.

Every study Bible project has a particular focus and is aimed at a distinctive group of readers. The *BASB* focuses on the literary and socio-historical aspects of the biblical text. The contributors have given attention to the literary flow of Scripture, noting connections with other biblical and literary works. The intercommunication and echoes between the biblical books are a noteworthy feature found in large sections of the study notes. The consistent quality of the literary observations throughout the notes provides the real strength for this publication.

The targeted readership seems to be a wide range of moderate Protestants. The contributors to the *BASB* represent various theological perspectives, including progressives, moderates, as well as evangelicals. The inclusion of the books of the Apocrypha probably reflects a generous attempt to connect with non-Protestant readers, even though no study notes accompany the Apocrypha, which has been placed at the back of the volume next to the nine instructive and helpful maps. The back matter also includes a detailed timeline with an emphasis on biblical backgrounds, a carefully designed

glossary, as well as a select concordance, with definitions, for the NRSV.

Representative participants in this project include well-known scholars such as N. T. Wright, Alan Culpepper, Richard Hays, Scot McKnight, John Barclay, Walter Brueggemann, Mikeal Parsons, Bruce Chilton, and Joel B. Green; highly regarded pastors such as Howie Batson and Duane Brooks; well-respected administrators such as Robert Sloan, Randall O'Brien, and David Lyle Jeffrey; and influential laypersons like attorney Mark Lanier. Most of the contributors have some connection to Baylor, including a number of the writers who currently serve as faculty members in Baylor's religion department or at Truett Seminary.

Modified aspects of historical and sociological critical approaches characterize the study notes on the Pentateuch and throughout the Old Testament. For example, three Isaiahs and two Zechariahs are assumed when discussing the authorship of these two OT books. The late date of 167 B.C. is proposed for the Book of Daniel. It is suggested that Acts might be a second-century document. The possibility that some of the Pauline writings, or those attributed to Peter, are pseudepigraphic is acknowledged.

Those looking for a more consistent, conservative evangelical approach to the interpretation of Scripture will need to look in the direction of the *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, the *ESV Study Bible*, or the *CSB Study Bible*. This observation is not to say, however, that many portions of the *BASB* commentary are anything less than orthodox or evangelical, particularly on the New Testament side. It should also be observed that many features of the *BASB* are superior to the *New Oxford Annotated Bible* and the *Harper Collins Study Bible*, which are both based on the NRSV and are also written with a broad mainline Protestant readership in mind.

Unlike the NIV, ESV, or CSB volumes noted above, the introductions prepared for each of the 66 canonical books are quite brief. While providing insights regarding the literary features of the biblical text, the introductions generally do not help the reader navigate critical or historical issues related to author, date, or theological contribution.

Those hoping to find outlines for each biblical book will be disappointed. Often the persons who contributed the comments for the introductory sections are different from those who provided the study notes for the same book, resulting in a sense of unevenness for readers. There are no feature articles on important themes, topics, or issues.

While thoughtful contributions can be found in the study notes for each book of the Bible as well as in each representative section of Scripture,

readers, no doubt, will make their own choices regarding favorite sections as they work through the *BASB*. I particularly appreciated the work on Ezra, Nehemiah, Psalms, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Titus, James, 2 Peter, and 1, 2, and 3 John.

Having been given the privilege of serving as co-editor of a major study Bible project, which also had a five-year timeline before reaching publication in 2017, I am aware of the amount of effort required and the time invested to bring a project of this magnitude to completion. I have also contributed to a handful of other study Bible projects, and I recognize the challenging task of trying to say something substantive and helpful within a limited word count. The task of directing 70 or more contributors toward a similar goal and outcome is certainly not easy. Thus, even with the concerns that have been noted, I want, once again, to commend Professor Bellinger and Dean Still, as well as Carey Newman, who directed the effort for Baylor University Press, for their guidance for, and years of investment in, this major project.

David S. Dockery



***Finding the Right Hills to Die On: The Case for Theological Triage.* By Gavin Ortlund. Foreword by D. A. Carson. Wheaton: Crossway, 2020, 176 pp., \$17.99 paper; *When Doctrine Divides the People of God: An Evangelical Approach to Theological Diversity.* By Rhyne Putman. Foreword by David S. Dockery. Wheaton: Crossway, 2020, 320 pp., \$24.99 paper.**

Spend some time online perusing blogs and articles shared on social media and you are likely to stumble across writers who, with confidence and conviction, label other Christians as *heretics* or *false teachers*. Sometimes the descriptions are apt, as they refer to people who, for example, deny the Trinity and thus clearly fall outside the bounds of orthodox Christianity. Other times, however, the accusation of “heresy” refers to an area where Bible-believing, orthodox Christians disagree over doctrine or practice, such as the *ordo salutis*, speaking in tongues, or the ministry of women in the church.

What happens online rarely stays online, and unnecessary division can

easily spread to churches, where pastors and lay leaders find themselves in controversies concerning Christian leaders they may associate with or whose works they recommend. Whenever I see labels like “heresy” and “false teaching” being overused, I’m reminded of the great philosopher Inigo Montoya: “You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.”

These controversies raise an important question: What constitutes false teaching? How do we know the difference between areas in which we may “agree to disagree” or areas in which the compromise is so dangerous as to obscure the gospel or the central tenets of the Christian faith? What do we do when doctrine divides people who love Jesus, believe the Bible, and agree on the fundamentals of the faith?

Two recent books, in different ways and with different audiences in mind, seek to provide helpful context and counsel on these questions. The first is Gavin Ortlund’s *Finding the Right Hills to Die On: The Case for Theological Triage*. Ortlund’s book is concise and accessible, designed for discussing the analogy of “theological triage” introduced by R. Albert Mohler, Jr. Triage assumes prioritization in medical contexts. A doctor on the battlefield cannot treat every wounded soldier simultaneously; he or she must rely on a process to determine which injuries receive first treatment.

Ortlund uses the concept of triage in the context of theology to make two points. First, doctrines have different kinds of importance. “Some hills are worth dying on,” Ortlund writes. “Others are not.” Second, triage assumes that some needs are more urgent than others. “The more demanding the issues, the more you have to make hard decisions.”

Building on this concept, Ortlund presents four categories of doctrine. First-rank doctrines are *essential* to the gospel itself. Second-rank doctrines are *urgent* for the health and practice of the church such that they frequently cause Christians to separate at the level of local church, denomination, and/or ministry. Third-rank doctrines are *important* to Christian theology, but not enough to justify separation or division among Christians. And, finally, fourth-rank doctrines are *unimportant* to our gospel witness and ministry collaboration (p. 19).

Ortlund offers the Trinity as an example of a first-rank doctrine, baptism as a second-rank doctrine, and the timing of the events surrounding the return of Christ as a third-rank doctrine. In personal correspondence with Ortlund, I asked about Calvinism (a doctrinal divide not addressed in his book), and we agreed that Calvinism and Arminianism would be a

third-rank doctrine when the debate remains focused on the narrow soteriological distinctions. This means people could have multiple views even within the same congregation or among the church leadership. In some cases, however, the focus may widen into a range of cultural and practical issues that flow from Reformed theology or revivalist impulses as a whole, and thus shift the debate toward the second-rank category. This explains why some denominations have grown up around different soteriological positions and the cultural and ecclesial practices that follow from them.

Ortlund not only establishes a ranking for these doctrines, but also helps us develop an appropriate mentality for each: courage and conviction in holding to first-rank doctrines, wisdom and balance concerning second-rank doctrines, and circumspection and restraint for third-rank doctrines (p. 95). Although he relies on the triage analogy to help the church avert unnecessary division, he also warns against “doctrinal minimalism,” which could lead us to underestimate how closely connected some doctrines are to the gospel. “Secondary” doctrines may not be first-rank, but they still make a difference in “how we uphold the gospel” (p. 47). They may *picture* the gospel, *protect* the gospel, or *pertain* to the gospel in important ways (pp. 57-58).

Some have pushed back on the idea of theological triage, which, like all analogies, breaks down at certain points. Further, why should we assume that we are the rightful doctors treating doctrinal error? Aren't we all likely to be “infected” with some level of theological error of which we remain unaware? Do we dare rank the commands of Jesus to us, as if some are more important than others? Might this become a clever way of excusing or justifying wrong belief or behavior?

Critics of theological triage make salient points, and the analogy is not without its problems. Still, the fact that the apostle Paul speaks of the gospel as being “of first importance” (1 Cor 15:3) while giving freedom for Christians to agree to disagree on other topics (Phil 3:15; Rom 14:1) shows that, at some level, he understood that certain doctrinal disputes matter more than others. Theological triage is an analogy that, while not perfect, helps us guard the unity of the church while we passionately “contend for the faith” (Jude 3)—a faith, we should remember, that includes the importance of church unity. Our Lord prayed for unity, and His apostles pursued it. We must not sacrifice the pursuit of unity for a pursuit of purity when it comes to second- or third-rank doctrines.

Rhyne Putman's book, *When Doctrine Divides the People of God: An*

Evangelical Approach to Theological Diversity, is much longer (313 pages) with a more ambitious goal. Putman also interacts with the “theological triage” analogy. Doctrinal taxonomies or dogmatic ranks have long been part of the Reformation tradition, he writes, in which “foundational doctrines are given greater weight and authority in a theological system, while other doctrines take a place of secondary or tertiary importance” (p. 204).

Putman’s aim goes beyond explaining and applying this analogy. His is a larger task: developing a theological method that “explores the nature of doctrinal diversity from a distinctly evangelical point of view.” To that end, he hopes to address “big-picture questions about the nature of doctrine, the sources of theology, and the processes by which we develop doctrine” (p. 29).

Likewise, Putman’s questions are more expansive. On page 30, he asks: “How do Christ-followers with similar convictions about Scripture and the gospel come to such drastically different points of view in matters of faith and practice?” “What should otherwise like-minded Christians do about the doctrines that divide them?”

The first part of the book answers the initial question, giving readers greater understanding of the reasons we approach the task of biblical interpretation and application differently. We read imperfectly (as fallible interpreters), we reason differently, we *feel* differently (here is where Putman makes his most unique contribution—helping us understand the role of emotions in Bible interpretation), and we come to the text with different biases.

Not surprisingly, Putman recommends reading deeply and widely in the broader Christian tradition in order to see that even as we are “both aware of our interpretive fallibility and committed to the truthfulness of God’s word, we should at least contemplate why other Bible-believing Christians throughout history have come to opinions contrary to our own” (p. 167).

A theme that runs through the second part of Putman’s book is the need for personal humility and forbearance with others. Forbearance requires us to give people space who have not come to a firm conclusion on these matters. Not all pastors on the spectrum have spent adequate time assessing disputed topics, and they should not be forced to take sides prematurely. Withholding judgment on a topic may be wiser than rushing to a conclusion (pp. 198-199).

Personal humility requires us to recognize our fallibility. It does not mean we loosen our convictions or throw up our hands in frustration.

Humility comes from acknowledging our own limitations. “The frailty of human interpretation should give us pause from interpretive pride and theological arrogance,” Putman writes (p. 266). Similarly, Ortlund observes that “the greatest impediment to theological triage is not a lack of theological skill or savvy but a lack of humility. A lack of skill can simply be the occasion for growth and learning, but when someone approaches theological disagreement with a self-assured, haughty spirit that has only answers and no questions, conflict becomes virtually inevitable” (p. 147).

I heartily recommend both of these books to students. Ortlund’s work will be more accessible to lay leaders in the church who have not benefited from seminary training. Putman’s deeper dive into these issues provides a larger foundation for further thought and reflection. Both are well-written, well-reasoned, and well-structured, providing a solid contribution to a topic of utmost importance for the church today.

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***Lost in Wonder, Love, and Praise: Hymns and Poems.* By Justin Waincott. Eugene OR: Resource Publications, 2019, 114 pp., \$15.00 paper.**

Across the ages, the leading pastors of the Christian church have quite often been poets who also wrote many of the hymns of the church. I have long thought this was something we need to regain and have urged students preparing for the pastorate to give attention to poetry—reading and writing it. Surely attention to and care for words, which poetry requires and nurtures, is beneficial to those whose business it is to care for souls by tending to the Word and words used to proclaim it. Therefore, I was delighted to see this new book, written by a pastor-poet.

The book is divided into two sections labelled “Hymns” and “Poems.” The first section contains about 40 hymns including metrical psalms, additional stanzas to well-known hymns, and completely new hymns. Each one is provided with suggested tunes commonly used with well-known hymns, which makes it easy to incorporate these into corporate worship.

Many evangelicals have forgotten the church's practice of singing the Psalms, so these new metered Psalms are quite welcome. I have used some of them in events I have planned, and they have been well-received. For full disclosure, Justin Wainscott is one of my pastors. But, that just means I have had the privilege of seeing some of these poems emerge and make their way into the hymnody of our church. When we wanted a baptism hymn but could not find a strong one, Justin composed "Baptized in Union with Our Lord," which is now a staple for our church. I have also deeply appreciated his additional stanza for the Gettys' "He Will Hold Me Fast," which I have become so accustomed to that I forgot it was an added verse. These hymns are helpful for private devotion as well as corporate worship.

The second section of the book contains over 50 poems on a wide range of topics including motherhood, family, everyday life, and baseball, as well as theology and Christian living. Coming from the wide range of life, these poems represent the range of emotions from simple pleasures to love, joy, wonder, lament, contemplation, and rebuke. Reading good poetry like this helps you to be more human as you explore your own soul with the poet. He helps you to recognize these same emotions within you, often drawing out what is within you and giving it voice. Reading these poems helped me to wonder anew, to rejoice, to ponder more deeply, to express my grief, and to rise in hope.

I warmly commend this book of poems and hope it will also encourage other pastors to consider the soul-crafting value of poetry.

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