

Book Reviews

Duke McCall: An Oral History. Duke McCall with A. Ronald Tonks. Brentwood and Nashville: Baptist History and Heritage Society and Fields Publishing, 2001, 480 pp., \$20.00.

Stoke your fire, put the blanket over your feet, curl up in your recliner, and prepare to enjoy — *an oral history*? Surely no oral history would ever qualify for “leisure reading.” The exception to that time-honored rule is this scintillating oral history by Duke McCall, an almost legendary figure in Southern Baptist life for the past five decades. Doubtless one of the keys to a genuinely good oral history is knowing the right questions to ask, thus triggering the recall of a colorful witness. Ronald Tonks should get rave reviews in this case since his questions tend to elicit some of McCall’s most colorful memories. But even the right questions would never make for an invigorating read if the interviewee were not one of the most decisive and colorful figures to cross through the Baptist Zion in recent years. McCall tells it all straight, at least as he saw it, and he is not overly concerned about political correctness or the public relations aftermath. The oral history exposes the mind and heart of McCall and as such contains not only his candid perspectives but also real insight into everything from the administration of schools to theology and churchmanship.

In the process of this volume, it becomes apparent that Duke McCall is no liberal. But, of course, he is not a

conservative either. Rather, he is a man who grew up living in the big house on the plantation, which was essentially good to him and, therefore, needs to be protected at whatever cost. Duke McCall is above all else a denominational pragmatist, and there is no theme in the book that comes through any more clearly.

Among the many rivetingly interesting aspects of the book is his assessment of the 1958 controversy at Southern Seminary. In the end, the trustees of Southern Seminary become the “guys in the black hats” who insisted on nixing McCall’s attempts to have some forgiveness and restoration. The interplay of the various personalities in the dispute and the realization that ultimately it was a classic power struggle to determine whether the seminary would be a faculty-run institution or an administratively-led seminary becomes crystal clear. Although the theological impact of this controversy was later felt by both Midwestern and Southeastern, theology had little enough to do with the confrontation at Southern.

Other interesting features include McCall’s advising Herschel Hobbs that the latter would be a fool to accept the presidency of Southern Seminary. Then McCall accepted the presidency himself. In candor, he rehearses the letter he received from Hobbs upon his acceptance of the seminary, which said, “Dear Fool, I want to congratulate you on your position in the meat grinder” (p. 99).

McCall seems to have been a good

father, and there are fabulously interesting insights into the personal life of the presidential family during the years at Southern Seminary. For example, he records the sign that his sons put up close to their property line, which said, “Trespassers will be shot on sight” (p. 113). He indicates that the *Louisville Times* got hold of the story and printed it, causing a degree of embarrassment to some, but one gets the impression that McCall viewed the incident as humorous and in a sense admired the creativity of his boys, knowing as he did that during their actual patrol the boys were armed only with air rifles.

McCall had little good to say about the Association of Theological Schools, especially in its relationship to the seminary’s 1958 controversy. On page 198 and following of the oral history, McCall documents irrefutably just how intransigent, belligerent, and unjust were the operations of the AATS (now ATS) in their dealings with the situation at Southern Seminary. Since McCall is often featured as being one who is opposed to the conservative movement (and in truth he is), it is refreshing to see such an accurate and candid portrayal of the ATS coming not from conservatives but from McCall.

McCall was no less enthralled with the WMU, and that will once again come as something of a revelation to some contemporary readers. Some of his observations about certain members of the WMU are worth recounting. Speaking of Kathleen Mallory,

who at that time was heading up the work of the WMU, he says, "She didn't care a great deal for the male of the species. If there ever was anything called 'female chauvinism,' you could have gotten some over in the WMU camp in those days" (p. 86). As a matter of fact, the WMU does not fare very well in any of the narrative regarding its relationship to Southern Seminary and the School of Social Work that was eventually begun there. Reading the contemporary accounts of journalists, you would think that Al Mohler and Southern Seminary were guilty of creating a rift in the landscape of a perfect relationship; but McCall's assessment demonstrates the degree to which such a view is nothing more than fiction.

As would be anticipated, McCall is less than enthusiastic about the current conservative movement in Southern Baptist life. The present reviewer does not agree with many of the conclusions that McCall draws. But, even if one differs with this Baptist statesman, one cannot help but be enthralled with the nature of McCall's evaluations, not all of which are entirely negative.

One of the more fascinating aspects of this oral history is that at times McCall seems to be totally orthodox in his views; whereas, at other times he appears profoundly uncritical and rather naive. On page 21 there is a fascinating incident from his boyhood regarding the time he was arraigned before his own father, Judge McCall, for speeding. He was fined twenty dollars or twenty days in jail. The younger McCall stood there speechless since he did not have twenty dol-

lars and knew that it would make no difference to his father who would insist on the twenty days in jail. To his astonishment, however, his father called him forward and then paid the fine for him. Not only does the incident give insight into the relationship between father and son, but it also served as a frequent illustration in McCall's preaching for explaining the atonement. Obviously, it would be difficult to come to any other conclusion based on this illustration but that McCall believed in a substitutionary atonement.

The former Southern Seminary president also comes down strongly in favor of pastoral authority, which he explicates at some length (p. 49 and following) and also insists that the Bible is absolutely true (p. 392). Would he waffle on that issue in response to some of the more advanced contributions of historical-critical scholars? There is evidence that McCall just never saw the problem between the two views. This is why at times he appears to be naive and undiscerning. For example, he insists on the old moderate cliché that there are "no liberals in the Southern Baptist Convention." This is repeated more than once in the book. By the same token, McCall's assessment of the Elliott controversy at Midwestern Seminary (pages 248 and following) is not only intriguing, but also incredibly undiscerning for a person who, under normal circumstances, is so very perceptive. Also, his assessment of Bill Hull, while not entirely positive, nevertheless indicates that McCall failed to discover the degree of neo-orthodoxy which was characteristic of the

rather sophisticated mind of Dr. Bill Hull.

A rather extensive section on Paul Pressler combines both insight and naïveté as McCall notes that Pressler understood the Southern Baptist Convention's functional principles as very few, but then McCall seems to follow the usual line that Pressler was making a *considerable* grab for power. He also recounts an incident on page 400 in which Paul Pressler bodily pursued him down the hall of a hotel and tried to restrain him physically from entering an elevator. Pressler has no memory of any such incident. And while the current reviewer was not present to draw any conclusion, it is clearly far beyond the usual style of Pressler to do any such thing. By the same token, some of the report that Dr. McCall offers concerning this reviewer's relationships to Dr. Criswell and to the First Baptist Church of Dallas comes up, as they say, "a few bricks short of a load." McCall even admits that he has only one source for his information, and that source conveniently is neither named nor documented in any way. McCall is wrong also about the fact that the plan was a five-year program to turn back the Convention to the faith of its fathers. Conservatives always said that it was a ten-year program. However, he is right that conservatives underestimated the time feature by one-half since it took actually nearly twenty years for the convention to turn. That figure is even more remarkable in light of maintaining any confrontation in the present environment for such a lengthy period.

On page 416 McCall observed, "It

is incredible that anybody would think a Russell Dilday or a Roy Honeycutt was a liberal." Here is another case of the "ostrich mentality" exhibited in some of the book. Roy Honeycutt in his commentary in the Broadman Commentary Series clearly took issue with historical narratives in the Scripture; and even if Dr. Dilday never wrote anything that was overtly liberal or neo-orthodox, he nevertheless placed himself squarely in that camp by those whom he defended and promoted.

These weaknesses notwithstanding, every interested Southern Baptist ought to read a book that will cast a great deal of light on the historical time period covered and provide abundant insight to the character of Dr. Duke McCall. Even McCall's own assessments of himself are often rather remarkable. These insights include perspectives that arise out of the controversy involving Dale Moody and his messages in Oklahoma in 1960–61. As McCall says of Moody, "In my view, the problem with Dale was always to get him to keep quiet long enough to let somebody else solve his problems for him. Dale would get a 'bulldog' attitude toward controversy in which he would worry the issue to death, and he could never let it die. Keeping him out of the country for a year gave the controversy time to run its course and die out" (p. 224–225). In this situation one sees Duke McCall at work and his mind at play.

Readers will probably find much with which to agree and much with which to take issue in *Duke McCall: An Oral History*. But I cannot imagine anyone, even the uninformed, who would

not find it a thought-provoking read. Those who lived through the period and have had the privilege of knowing Dr. McCall will find it to be one of the most interesting reads in many years. Suffice it to say, Dr. McCall's parents apparently knew what they had and named him well when they called him "Duke." He is, in fact, forever the Duke of Louisville.

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Preaching: The Centrality of Scripture. By R. Albert Mohler, Jr. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2002, 21 pp., \$2.00 paper.

The contents of this booklet were originally delivered as a convocation address at Southern Seminary on January 30, 1996. Using 2 Timothy 4:1–5 as his text, Mohler examines what he sees as a crisis in contemporary preaching: a loss of the centrality of Scripture. Mohler cites the judgments of Edward Farley (wrongly spelled as Parley) and David Buttrick as striking, but honest opponents of a word based ministry. Mohler ends his address with the final challenge delivered by A. T. Robertson to his students shortly before his death, that we be "mighty in the Scriptures." The little book will inspire and challenge, and it should be read by all who take seriously the challenge to "preach the Word."

Daniel L. Akin

Why I Am a Baptist. Edited by Tom J. Nettles and Russell D. Moore. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001, 257 pp., \$14.99 paper.

Tom J. Nettles and Russell D. Moore, both professors at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, edited this volume with the firm conviction that any sufficient answer to the question of why one is a Baptist must rest on a theological foundation. Not every Baptist shares this conviction. Nettles and Moore state in the Preface that their volume is offered as a corrective to a work by the same title—*Why I Am a Baptist*—published by Smyth and Helwys in 1999. Nettles and Moore contend that the contributors to this earlier volume, "a virtual 'Who's Who' of the Baptist left," (p. xv) sought to define Baptists without reference to theology—an effort that necessarily results in serious distortion.

Nettles contributed the first chapter, which serves as an introduction to the book. Referencing some of the Southern Baptist giants of the past, such as John L. Dagg, E. C. Dargan, and J. M. Frost, Nettles argued that Baptists traditionally have identified themselves by their doctrinal commitments, including the inerrancy of the Scriptures and various Baptist distinctives. Nettles noted that by the early twentieth century there was a tendency to minimize the role of theology in defining Baptist. By the 1950s this tendency had grown to such an extent that many Baptist leaders had begun to emphasize diversity and toleration to the near exclusion of doctrinal considerations

in defining Baptist.

Nettles anticipates objections to such an emphasis on doctrinal precision. For those who embody the modern proclivity to associate insistence upon sound doctrine with being mean-spirited, Nettles again appealed to prominent Baptist forefathers, such as Oliver Hart and Abraham Booth, whose lives and teaching demonstrate that one can and should hold firmly to one's doctrinal convictions while loving and respecting those who disagree. That is, it is genuinely possible to speak the truth in love. Nettles also pointed out that merely because Baptist doctrinal distinctives are not salvific in no way minimizes their importance.

In yet another series of appeals to the great Baptists of the past, Nettles acknowledged that being a Baptist is more than assenting to a set of doctrines; it is being associated with a great heritage that has produced men and women of the noblest type. Baptist convictions have sustained in the face of great difficulties those such as John Smyth, Thomas Helwys, Benjamin Keach, John Bunyan, Andrew Fuller, William Carey, Adoniram and Ann Judson, and Charles Spurgeon.

Nettles exhorts Baptists not to succumb to the modern pressures of diversity and tolerance by refusing to state their identity in clear, unequivocal, doctrinal terms. With an eye to those who misuse Baptist distinctives such as soul competency to justify doctrinal latitudinarianism, Nettles observes, "Strange that the very ideas that made Baptists strong and gave sharp and recognizable angles to the Baptist profile should be deemed

unbaptistic and destructively exclusivistic" (p. 16).

In the final chapter of the book, Russell Moore sounds forth a clarion call to conservative Baptists to assume their responsibility of proclaiming and defending the traditional Baptist understanding of the faith. Moore warns, "If there are to be any Baptists at the turn of the *next* century, we cannot concede Baptist identity to the ever-diminishing left flank of the denomination" (p. 235). Systematically elucidating the Baptist distinctives, Moore encourages conservative Baptists to stand their ground against modern departures from the faith.

Concerning baptism, Moore warns against a sacerdotal understanding of this ordinance as is popular in some Baptist circles. Likewise, conservative Baptists must continue to oppose the practices of sprinkling and pedo-baptism, both of which are practiced in some moderate Baptist churches. Nor should Baptists treat baptism as a rite of passage into adolescence—assuming that when one becomes a certain age one should be baptized, regardless of whether a genuine conversion has occurred.

Equally important is the Baptist insistence on regenerate church membership. This includes not only rejecting pedo-baptism, but removing individuals from church membership rolls when their lives indicate that they are unregenerate. According to Moore, love mandates that such persons be confronted with their sinful condition.

Conservative Baptists, Moore asserts, must also continue to advocate the separation of church and state and religious liberty. Church/state

separation means neither that Christians are disqualified from participating in the government, nor that the church is denied its God-given role as the conscience of the nation. The church is to be free to speak prophetically to the society without becoming identified with the government. Religious liberty allows Christians to be God's prophetic voice and to share the gospel message with others. Moore notes the connection between religious liberty and Christians' responsibility: "Conservatives therefore should seek religious liberty precisely because we believe in evangelism" (p. 242).

Moore argues that conservative Baptists also must continue to defend the traditional Baptist view of soul competency, which states that every individual is personally accountable to God. In light of the moderate Baptists' distortion of the doctrine of soul competency, Moore says that Baptists have a right to be suspicious of any doctrine that denies the proper role of confessionalism in Baptist life.

Moore acknowledges that even conservative Baptists will not always agree on every issue in this life. Yet they must stand united on the foundational doctrines, while striving after a greater doctrinal consensus. He calls for a unity grounded in "a common submission to a larger framework of biblical truth" (p. 244).

Between Nettles's introduction and Moore's conclusion are contributions from twenty-four "theologically engaged" individuals who tell their own story of why they are Baptists. This group is comprised of a cross-section of Baptists: three are Baptists of

other generations: three are women; four are overseas; several are involved in theological education, some as professors and others as administrators; some are pastors; some are missionaries; some are denominational leaders; some were not Baptist in their early spiritual sojourns, but eventually adopted Baptist views; some were Baptists, left the Baptist fold, and returned; several have made major contributions in the wider evangelical arena; some are Calvinists and some are not; some are dispensationalists and some are not.

Each contributor relates his/her own journey in a personal way. Denise George centers her story around the influence of her Baptist grandparents. She learned the meaning of vicarious atonement from an incident in grade school where a student took her punishment for misconduct. Fred Malone relates his spiritual journey from his being reared in a Baptist church to his affiliation with the Presbyterians for seven years to his subsequent return to his Baptist roots. Malone indicates that a lack of both in-depth Bible study and expository preaching in many Baptist churches has led to many defections—including his own. It was the study of the very Word of God of which Malone had been deprived that led him to reclaim his Baptist heritage. His experience left him with even deeper convictions than ever. He states, “My long, hard journey back to Baptist life causes me to be miserable in heart when I see other Baptists demonstrate a lack of convictions about the things that make us Baptist” (p. 134).

All of these essays are written on a

popular level and are not intended to be definitive treatments of Baptist distinctives; those exist elsewhere. They do serve as refreshing reminders that Baptists are who they are because of theological convictions, and those convictions are grounded in God’s inerrant Word. As such, this volume will be of great use in discussion groups in Baptist churches and in classrooms of educational institutions so as to introduce some Baptists to, and remind others of, their rich biblical heritage. Many thanks to these authors for exposing the modern distortions concerning Baptist identity and setting the record straight concerning what it means to be Baptist.

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Two Views on Women in Ministry. Edited by James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001, 384 pp., \$16.99 paper.

The Counterpoints series edited by Stanley Gundry has provided a valuable series of multi-views books on some of the most significant theological issues of our day on which there is no clear consensus among evangelical Christians—creation and evolution, apologetic methods, salvation, sanctification, eternal security, law and grace, miraculous gifts, the Book of Revelation, and hell. *Two Views on Women in Ministry* is another solid contribution to this series.

This volume updates and complements *Women in Ministry: Four Views*, by Bonnidell and Robert Clouse, published about a decade ago. Both books

approach the subject matter with a male and female contributor for both the complementarian and egalitarian positions. The fact that the two editors, both of whom are associated with Denver Seminary, differ themselves on this issue (James Beck the egalitarian and Craig Blomberg the complementarian) helps to assure a fair and balanced presentation of the two perspectives. The editors and all the participants are able to discuss the role of women in ministry without the rancor that often accompanies debate on such a controversial issue. The format of the book allows the editors to interact with each of the contributors at the end of their chapters, but the contributors do not interact with each other.

The egalitarian position is represented ably by Craig Keener of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and Linda Belleville of North Park Theological Seminary. Neither Keener nor Belleville could be counted as a radical feminist, and both write with a high view of the inspiration of Scripture. Keener and Belleville repeat many of the same arguments in their articles; it might have been more productive for the editors to assign some kind of division of labor in having two biblical studies scholars approach the same topic. Their argument for women in ministry (a) notes the many women whose service in a variety of ministry positions is recorded in Scripture; (b) identifies other passages of Scripture which seem to allow for women serving in ministry positions; and (c) provides alternative interpretations of Scripture passages in which a plain sense reading of the text appears to bar women from certain

ministry positions. Belleville's attempt to answer Wayne Grudem's six challenges to the egalitarian position is especially helpful. One can debate the details of their particular arguments, but on the whole Keener and Belleville present cogent and plausible arguments on behalf of their perspective. However, one may have a healthy suspicion when it is necessary to their argument to affirm, as they do, that almost all the key texts relating to women in ministry have been either mistranslated or misinterpreted throughout most of the history of the church.

The complementarian perspective is represented by Tom Schreiner of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Ann Bowman of the International School of Theology. Unlike the strong overlap between Keener and Belleville, the two complementarian articles are profoundly different in approach. Bowman's article is unfortunately very general in nature, dealing with the calling of any person to Christian service rather than to the particular topic at hand. The task falls to Schreiner to represent the complementarian perspective, which he not only articulates with clear biblical exegesis and effective arguments, but does so in a genteel and irenic spirit. Schreiner provides a classic presentation and defense of the complementarian position, with thoughtful and convincing responses to the egalitarian proposals. In particular, Schreiner offers a helpful survey of all the key Scripture passages related to male and female roles. For example, one argument that egalitarians usually make is that since wife-husband submission

and slave-master submission are commanded in the same passages, and we no longer require submission of slaves to masters because that commandment was a concession to the culture of its day, we should also revoke the requirement of wives submitting to their husbands. Schreiner points out a decisive difference, however, between these two apparent parallels that Paul makes in Galatians, Ephesians, and Colossians—marriage is ordained by God from creation, while slavery is an evil human institution regulated by Scripture.

The debate over the role of women in the church is going to increase in intensity over the decades to come. It is crucial for evangelicals to be well informed on this issue and to think carefully through its implications. This book is an excellent, thoughtful, and balanced introduction to the subject.

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More Than Just a Name: Preserving Our Baptist Identity. By R. Stanton Norman. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001, 198 pp., \$16.99 paper.

R. Stanton Norman, McFarland Professor of Theology at New Orleans Baptist Seminary, has taken the vast research from his doctoral dissertation at Southwestern Seminary and revised it in a popular and accessible format. The result is a persuasive and readable apologetic for the historic distinctives of the Baptist tradition. Norman raises the important question: what does it mean to be Baptist?

By analyzing the numerous Baptist contributions to this question over the past 300 years, Norman argues that Baptist distinctives constitute a specific theological genre: a confessional theology.

Norman argues that Baptist distinctives are shaped by four components: (1) an epistemological component, (2) a polemical component, (3) an ecclesiological component, and (4) a volitional component. That is, there is (1) a base of authority for the claims and convictions held by Baptists—whether Scripture and/or Christian experience. Though there are many shared beliefs among all Christians, Norman suggests that there is (2) a difference between Baptists and other Christians on key beliefs. These beliefs grow out of (3) a unique understanding of the church and are grounded in the reality that (4) each person is obligated to address his or her spiritual standing before God.

This very helpful volume contends that the purpose of Baptist distinctives is to articulate and preserve the unique theological identity of Baptists. Thus being Baptist is more than just a name. Baptists have been and should be known by clearly defined and historically established theological components. Norman maintains that Baptists—"are more than just defenders of religious freedom, advocates of baptism via immersion, or practitioners of congregational polity" (p. 28). He boldly claims that for a person or church simply to advocate one or two of the theological components does not designate that person or church as Baptist.

Some readers will certainly differ

with Norman's proposals, but no Baptist can ignore his careful analysis. Baptist life has too long suffered from an overdose of pragmatic approaches to church and ministry. Norman's stirring call to think theologically is welcomed, even if some might choose to nuance matters differently.

This volume is a welcomed addition to Baptist studies. Norman's claim that there is a continuous body of theological components that have shaped Baptist heritage and identity could and should bring renewed vision to the work of Baptist theologians in the twenty-first century. I gladly commend this work to theologians, pastors and students—to all Baptists seeking to understand better their heritage and identity, and to non-Baptists as well. Stan Norman is to be congratulated on this valuable contribution.

David S. Dockery
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Encyclopedia of Evangelicalism. By Randall Balmer. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2002, 654 pp., \$29.95.

The current discussion of evangelical identity and theological boundaries seems to consume almost every meeting of evangelical academic societies. While these theological discussions are crucial to the future of American evangelicalism, it might be alarming—and sobering—to all sides of the issue to browse the aisles of a typical Christian bookstore anywhere in the country. There we might discover that American evangelicalism is not

now concerned with the competing epistemologies of Carl F. H. Henry and Stanley Grenz. American evangelicals are not captivated by the competing eschatologies of Dallas and Westminster seminaries. Indeed, one might say that if there are any "leaders" of contemporary American evangelicalism, they might include prosperity evangelist Joyce Meyer, painter Thomas Kincaid, a host of Christian "boy bands," and the makers of "Precious Moments" figurines. If the bookstore's selection tells us anything, it might teach us that the quest for an evangelical theological consensus is more daunting than we might have ever feared, since contemporary American evangelicalism is bound together more by a quirky subculture than by a set of clear theological convictions.

With this context in mind, scholar Randall Balmer offers a map of the American evangelical terrain—one that tracks out evangelicals in terms of their theological commitments, their historical streams, and their "ghetto" of conservative Christian subculture with its own jargon, music industry, and pantheon of celebrities. As such, this encyclopedia seeks to compile thumbnail sketches of everything an outside observer ought to know about the movement. One can learn the role of biblical rationalist Gordon Haddon Clark in formulating an evangelical response to modernism. One can also discover that "Stryper" was a 1980s-era Christian heavy-metal band that threw Bibles from the stage at concerts. One can learn about the controversy that split the Evangelical Women's Caucus

over human sexuality. One can also learn that the Christian Juggler's Association holds a confessional statement that affirms biblical authority, the Trinity, and the need for personal regeneration. One can read about the missiological theology of William Carey—and about the southern gospel career of Andy Griffith.

The major strength of this work is its wide scope. Balmer demonstrates a basic familiarity with almost all sectors of evangelicalism—from Presbyterians to Pentecostals—in terms of theological commitments and key personalities. While the volume is rather skimpy when it comes to theology, Balmer shows remarkable familiarity with the "pop culture" aspects of the evangelical movement—aspects that some of us would rather ignore. Nonetheless, Balmer recognizes that to understand American evangelicalism one must know about the influence of the Niagara Bible Conferences of the early twentieth century, about Jimmy Carter's 1980 presidential campaign, and about the career of Amy Grant. This is perhaps the only resource in print in which a discussion of theologian E. Y. Mullins is followed by one of musician Rich Mullins.

The volume is weakened, however, by its attempt to be both an "encyclopedia" and the work of a single author. While Balmer is one of the preeminent scholars of evangelicalism, one individual simply cannot have "encyclopedic" knowledge about anything. There are some careless errors—such as defining—"Second Coming" as though it is only a doctrine held by dispensational premillennialism. The volume is furthermore weakened by

the sometimes obvious ideological biases of one who fashions himself something of a “prodigal son” of American evangelicalism. Having moved from a conservative evangelical upbringing to a more mainline Protestant stance today, having Balmer write an encyclopedia on evangelicalism is something like having Catholic renegade Garry Wills write an encyclopedia on the Vatican. Balmer often thus casually and uncritically dismisses as “fundamentalist” the more conservative wings of evangelicalism in their concerns about the theological identity of American Christianity. If one is looking for a comprehensive and fairly weighed treatment of a complex theological and sociological phenomenon, this volume will be frustrating. If, however, one is looking for a basic reference to the whirling kaleidoscope of people and places within American evangelicalism, Balmer has provided a fascinating read.

Russell D. Moore

Christ and the Future in New Testament History. By E. Earle Ellis. Leiden: Brill, 2000, xviii + 323 pp., \$110.00.

E. Earle Ellis, Research Professor of Theology, Emeritus, at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has had a distinguished publishing career, but some of his more important contributions appeared in scholarly journals which are not accessible to many interested readers. Seventeen of those articles have been reprinted in this volume, with one essay, Chapter XVIII, having been

composed for the present book. The essays deal with a broad group of themes, including The Historical Jesus, Deity Christology, and the New Testament’s use of the Old Testament. But the largest number of essays address New Testament anthropology and eschatology, theological themes to which Ellis has devoted attention for many years. It is also the case that many of his views on these issues are quite controversial and provocative, which is another reason why this volume is such an important contribution. This review will limit itself to examining several of the essays related to these themes of anthropology and eschatology.

Two chapters deal with eschatology in Luke. The first, “Eschatology in Luke,” criticizes the positions on eschatology held by Conzelmann and Bultmann. These thinkers maintained that Luke’s book is an attempt to offer an answer as to why the Parousia had not yet occurred by positing a novel salvation-historical scheme. Ellis replies that there is no evidence that the “non-occurrence” of the Parousia “was a crucial problem” (p. 117). He rejects the Conzelmann proposal that Luke substitutes salvation-history for eschatology in favor, rather, of the projects for Lukan interpretation offered by Cullmann and Kümmel.

The next essay, “Eschatology in Luke Revisited,” addresses another issue in Lukan eschatology, the question “Did his vertical eschatology represent a shift from apocalyptic categories to a Platonic dualism in which the individual ‘soul’ receives salvation at death” (120). Ellis argues that the notion that the soul survives death,

and lives either in heaven with God or in Hades (depending on whether one is saved or lost) is a Platonic notion and has nothing to do with biblical teaching. He interprets *psyche* as synonymous both with *pneuma* and *soma* (p. 124), generally to mean “life.” He further argues that the account in Luke 16 of the rich man and Lazarus is a parable, which “is no more representative of Luke’s (or Jesus’) theological viewpoint than an illustration about St. Peter at ‘the pearly gates’ is representative of the eschatology of a present day preacher” (p. 125, note 29).

One of the more important essays in the volume is Chapter XII, “The Structure of Pauline Eschatology (II Cor. 5:1-10).” Ellis argues here for the importance of the corporate existence of believers in Christ, for the “house made without hands” being a physical body which the believer receives at the Parousia, for “nakedness” being a hypothetical disembodied (intermediate) state (which Ellis rejects), and “away from the body” meaning, not the intermediate state, but “away from *this* body” and present in the Parousia in a risen body. In other words, he argues for an unconscious intermediate state (though the believer is corporately in Christ, so is not in a state of non-existence), for conditional immortality, and he calls Christians to focus eschatological attention not on “going to heaven when we die,” but on an expectation for resurrection at the Second Coming.

In Chapter XIV the author introduces us to his views on hell. He rejects the majority tradition that hell is conscious eternal punishment in favor of conditional immortality and the

annihilation of the finally impenitent. He thus joins the ranks of John Stott, Philip Edgecumbe Hughes, Clark Pinnock, and Edward Fudge in advocating the position that hell is, at best (or worst), temporary.

This reviewer takes issue with Ellis on most of the key issues raised in the paragraphs above. It seems clear that Ellis too quickly applies the label "Platonism" to those who hold to anthropological dualism. The recent work by Moreland and Rae, for instance, is not merely the resuscitation of Platonism, but is a well-argued biblical/theological statement of a position which has a huge pedigree in the church's history. Once one reassesses that anthropological point, the major defense for his understanding of an unconscious intermediate state becomes virtually moot. On that point, as well, Ellis, for all the rigor of his impressive scholarship, does not give sufficient attention to the aorist verb in Philippians 1:21-23 ("to depart, and be with Christ"), or to the force of Paul's statement, "away from the body, present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8), both of which seem clearly to call for an immediate conscious translation of the believer to the presence of Christ (corporeal presence simply will not do here). His rejection of conscious eternal punishment for the finally impenitent is forcefully argued, but is not convincing.

There are other essays in the volume which are also worth reading, especially "Reading the Gospels as History" (Chapter XVII), and "Prophecy in the New Testament Church and Today" (Chapter XV). Though this reviewer finds much to critique, there

is also much that is very helpful. One hopes that God will grant Professor Ellis strength to continue to serve the church with his scholarship for years to come.

Chad Owen Brand

1001 Ways to Introduce Your Child to the Bible. By Kathie Reimer. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002, 316 pp., \$12.99 paper.

Though the title might cause one to think that this book is about strategies and methods, it is actually something more directly useful to families: a compilation of learning activities. As such it is a great resource for family Bible times, home schooling, Sunday School and the traditional classroom. Kathie Reimer, a mother and pastor's wife, works through the Bible book by book providing meaningful activities for key points in each book, along with summaries of key people and concepts, memory verses and devotional thoughts. The learning activities obviously come from one involved in the daily task of teaching children. Each activity begins with a list of questions explaining not only the supplies needed, age range in view and time allowed but also whether or not the activity will work in a group, a school classroom or can be done in a car. These are helpful points, allowing, for example, the book also to be used as a resource for meaningful activities on road trips.

The strength and focus of this book is the learning activities. For summaries of biblical truths or stories to read

look elsewhere (e.g., the *Bible Time* and *Bible Wise* series from Christian Focus Publications). Then, this book can be used for fun activities to illustrate and bring home those truths. This book is warmly recommended as a resource for teaching children.

Ray Van Neste
Union University

The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity and Diversity. By Roger E. Olson. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002, 357 pp., \$29.99.

This volume, a concise handbook of Christian doctrine, is the latest offering from Olson, a controversial historical theologian at Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary. The work is a companion to Olson's church history, *The Story of Christian Theology*. Olson utilizes his familiarity with Christian controversies and consensuses from the patristic era to contemporary theology. The volume includes chapters on the foundational theological *loci*: prolegomena, revelation, Scripture, God, Trinity, creation, providence, humanity, Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. Under each doctrinal heading, Olson concentrates on key questions of dispute in church history, noting how these clashes helped to shape the theology of the church.

What distinguishes this volume from other treatments of doctrine is Olson's peculiar brand of "post-conservative" evangelicalism. Olson notes that the purpose of the book is

to set forth a “mediating theology” that “attempts to bridge unnecessary and unfortunate gulfs between perspectives and interpretations” in evangelical Protestantism. Of course, since Olson is the author of the book, he is able to choose the “extremes” which he will pit against one another in each doctrine. The “mediating” position always happens to be the one Olson himself holds.

This reviewer at times found himself in hearty agreement with Olson’s “middle way.” For instance, Olson endorses the increasing consensus in contemporary evangelical theology that the Kingdom of God is both “already” inaugurated and “not yet” consummated—thus transcending the thorniest disputes between dispensationalists and covenant theologians. This consensus, however, emerged from years of careful reflection on the biblical texts related to the Kingdom. Evangelicals do not hold to an “already/not yet” view of the Kingdom because it is a “mediating position” any more than the early church embraced the hypostatic union of Christ as a “middle way” between the humanity and deity of Christ. They believe these things because they are convinced Scripture teaches them to be true. That kind of scriptural foundation is the most glaring deficiency of this work. There are occasional proof texts, to be sure, but the primary support for any position is usually found in the problems it resolves, as though Christian theology could be negotiated by a particularly skillful team of United Nations diplomats.

At the most controversial of points, however, Olson refrains from taking

any position at all, except to say that those who oppose a controversial position—say, open theism or annihilationism—are “fundamentalists.” This is characteristic of a theologian who has written on the open theism debate for years without saying much more than that he is “open to open theism,” but is not finally convinced. Olson is clear about what he opposes—a conservative evangelicalism that seeks to identify boundaries of Christian orthodoxy on issues such as the knowledge of God or the everlastingness of eternal condemnation. He dismisses these “fundamentalists” without ever examining exactly why they believe these doctrines are crucial for the life and health of the church.

This volume is helpful in surveying the kind of “centered set” definition of evangelical boundaries proposed by the evangelical left. It is less helpful as a treatment of Christian doctrine. For that, liberals as well as conservatives—and all the “mediating” positions in between—will want a more sustained interaction with the biblical foundations of Christian theology.

Russell D. Moore

The Good of Affluence: Seeking God in a Culture of Wealth. By John R. Schneider. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002, x + 233 pp., \$24.00.

Aside from Christian Reconstructionists and Prosperity Gospel advocates, it is unusual to find Christians writing about economics who actually think capitalism is a good thing. Theologians from Ron Sider to Craig

Blomberg have issued jeremiads condemning the capitalist system and accusing most of those who are its beneficiaries of being substandard Christians in their understanding of and use of wealth. And those are the “evangelicals”! Liberationists and revisionist theologians are willing to reconsider restoring hell to the *loci* of theology, just so rich Westerners can be cast there to atone for their greed. John Schneider thinks it is time re-evaluate all of this, and this book is his contribution.

This book appeared a few years ago in a different incarnation as *Godly Materialism* (IVP, 1994). Originally Schneider planned only to revise that book, but this volume is actually almost a whole new work, though it follows some of the same outline as the previous volume. He begins with an endorsement of a comment made by Michael Novak: “We are going to see a spiritual revival in this country, and it’s going to be led by rich people” (p. 4). Rejecting both the “wealth-negative” perspective of “prophetic (or radical) Christianity,” and the naïveté and pandering of the Prosperity Gospel people, Schneider argues that all other things being equal, God wishes his people to be filled with a cornucopia of good things, including material blessings, and that market economies are the best way to ensure the greatest amount of wealth for the largest number of people.

This professor of theology at Calvin College ably subjects the work of the prophetic Christians (Sider, et al.) to a withering critique, while marking out an exegetical and theological defense

of his position. This reviewer is convinced that Schneider wins the debate hands down. But there are some issues that are either troubling or not convincing. One, the author develops the notion of “Delight” as a sort of subplot for his book. God delights in himself, and wants us to delight, and so provides good things for our delight. While this may be the case, it is not clear that this is at the heart of why God blesses his people in Scripture. Rather, he blesses them so that they can continue to serve him and be a blessing to others. The notion of delight, while aesthetically pleasing, does not seem to be at the heart of Scripture’s concern with material blessing, as Schneider argues. Schneider also tends to refer to the earth as “sacred” (p. 52). While he does not use this notion to defend a radical eco-theology (as in, for instance, Kaufman and McFague), the use of the term is nonetheless troubling. The book also gives too much of a nod in the direction of narrative theology, and so has an occasionally strong postmodern tinge to it. At the same time, the author’s interpretations of the Old Testament narratives in defense of his position are often profound.

Criticism aside, this is a very good book, and stands as an antidote to the muddled meanderings of Sider, Blomberg, and the Liberationists. This ought to be one of the first books Christians turn to in attempting to understand work, wealth, and stewardship of resources in our world today.

Chad Owen Brand

Mesopotamia and the Bible. Edited by Mark W. Chavalas and K. Lawson Younger, Jr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002, 395 pp., \$29.99 paper.

This edited book is unique and a valuable asset for biblical studies. Since the contributors are scholars who are evangelical, it is easy to assume from the title that this book is a background book for the biblical text or an apologetic connecting the historicity of the biblical text with Mesopotamian sources. On the contrary—the book is designed to present to biblical scholars current research and data about Mesopotamia (also Syria and Anatolia) by experts in the field.

The essays were initially presented at the 1995 meeting of the Near East Archaeological Society in Philadelphia, PA. The papers were presented in a panel entitled “Syro-Mesopotamia and the Bible.” The editors decided to expand the original eight papers and bring the total to fourteen contributions.

The essays are arranged in chronological order from the third millennium BCE to the Neo-Babylonian Period. Although some of the authors addressed their field in relation to the biblical text, all focused their paper topics on their expertise and research interests. The essays can be divided into four groups: history of research, 3rd millennium, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age. In each group, approximately half of the authors discuss their topic in the context of biblical studies while the others present an historical overview.

The first two essays present an his-

tory of research, “Assyriology and Biblical Studies: A Century of Tension,” by Mark W. Chavalas and “The Quest for Sargon, Pul, and Tiglath-Pileser in the Nineteenth Century,” by Steven W. Holloway. Both essays discuss the development of Assyriology in relation to biblical studies. The next two essays focus on Mesopotamia in the 3rd millennium. Richard E. Averbeck’s essay, “Sumer, the Bible, and Comparative Method: Historiography and Temple Building,” discusses the history of Sumer in relation to the Bible while Mark W. Chavalas’ essay, “Syria and Northern Mesopotamia to the End of the Third Millennium BCE,” presents an historical overview.

The next groups of essays focus on the 2nd Millennium BCE. Three of the papers provided either historical overviews or discuss a particular subject. These essays are: Ronald A. Veenker, “Syro-Mesopotamia: The Old Babylonian Period”; Victor H. Matthews, “Syria to the Early Second Millennium”; and David C. Deuel, “Apprehending Kidnappers by Correspondence at Provincial Arrapha.” The last three papers deal with sites and archives from Syria and the impact these sites have on biblical studies. These essays are: “The Bible and Alalakh” by Richard S. Hess; “Emar: On the Road from Harran to Hebron” by Daniel E. Fleming; and “Voices from the Dust: The Tablets from Ugarit and the Bible” by Wayne T. Pitard.

The last set of essays focus on the Iron Age Period. These essays are: “The Rise of the Aramean States” by William Schniedewind; “Recent Study on Sargon II, King of Assyria: Implications for Biblical Studies” by

K. Lawson Younger, Jr.; "What has Nebuchadnezzar to do with David? On the Neo-Babylonian Period and Early Israel" by Bill T. Arnold; and "The Eastern Jewish Diaspora under the Babylonians" by Edwin Yamauchi.

The book is well written and is a valuable source for the recent scholarship within the field. The book provides an index of scripture reference and an index of authors, which are particularly useful resources. The book would make an excellent auxiliary textbook especially for any course dealing with the Pentateuch or the history of the early biblical periods.

Steven M. Ortiz
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Theological Seminary

Invitation To The Septuagint. By Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000, 351 pp., \$29.99.

Karen Jobes is Associate Professor of New Testament at Westmont College and Moisés Silva of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary also has taught at Westmont College and Westminster Theological Seminary. Both have devoted much of their scholarly activity to Septuagint studies and are well qualified to write this book.

The authors have acted to fill a void in Septuagint (LXX) studies by producing a comprehensive, accessible primer. No introductory level work was available to lead neophytes into the field and help them become conversant and productive. Available studies were for those already knowledgeable in the field. This book fills that gap, and also leads the reader into

further productive LXX research and study.

After an introduction advocating study of the LXX because of its relationship to the Hebrew Bible and its historical relationship to the Church, the book is divided into three parts. Part 1, "The History of the Septuagint," contains chapters on the history and transmission of the LXX, modern LXX study, and character of the LXX as a translation. Part 1 was written to be understood by the general reader and beginning student. No knowledge of Greek and Hebrew is assumed. Part 2 is "The Septuagint in Biblical Studies," and deals with the language and text of the LXX, its use in textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible, its relationship to the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament, and interpretation of the LXX. Basic familiarity with biblical studies is assumed, as is intermediate level Greek competence, yet the discussions are accessible to the general reader. Part 3, "The Current State of Septuagint Studies," traces LXX scholarship in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and discusses the primary focuses of current scholarship: linguistic research, reconstruction of the history of the text, and theological developments in the Hellenistic era. Part 3 is designed to familiarize the advanced student with the *status quaestionis*. Four appendices deal with organizations and research projects devoted to LXX study, reference works, a glossary of terms, and differences in versification between the LXX and English versions. Indexes are provided for subjects, authors, and Scripture.

The book delivers on the authors'

design. Part 1 is clear and understandable, useful to those knowledgeable in biblical studies, but accessible to those who are not. Part 2 likewise, while written for those conversant with Greek, may still be followed with profit by others. In both of the first two parts there are suggestions for further study at the end of each chapter. Following those suggestions provides the reader with access to thorough study of the subjects introduced. While it is a side effect of authorial intent, the book provides excellent orientation to textlinguistics, translation theory and practice, textual criticism, and hermeneutics. The explanation of the inherent differences in textual criticism of a text in its original language from that of a translation into another language is especially instructive for those whose text-critical work has been limited to the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament. The clear explanation of the goals and difficulties of LXX textual studies brings home forcefully to the reader the importance of the LXX to biblical studies and the massive amount of work yet to be done. The review of nineteenth and twentieth century scholarship in LXX studies demonstrates how much a few dedicated scholars can accomplish. One would hope that this work would be instrumental in bringing scholars into the field.

Providing help not available elsewhere, this book is a significant contribution to its field. The book is highly recommended for use as a textbook and as required reading for all who are involved in the scholarly study of the Bible.

Charles W. Draper

The Virgin Birth. Revised edition. By Robert Gromacki. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1974, 2002, 240 pp., \$14.99 paper.

This book is a simple, biblically saturated, theologically orthodox study of the virgin birth and other related Christological themes (e.g., Christ's sinlessness, his two natures, the genealogies of Matthew and Luke, the incarnation). Though it says on the cover it is revised and updated, there is little evidence that this is the case. In the endnotes there is only one reference that dates after 1974, and that is Machen's *Christianity and Liberalism* (the particular edition used is dated 1997). There is also a reference to Bill Gates on pages 218-19 and the Chuckwu octuplets who were born in Houston in 1998. There are no references at all to recent Christological works or movements of either liberal or conservative stripe. Still, this is a book that is well written in short, concise chapters (20 total with a brief conclusion). Gromacki says in the preface his goal is not to duplicate the classic defense of the virgin birth by Machen (*The Virgin Birth of Christ*, 1930), "but to provide a volume on a level understandable to both the interested layman and the serious Bible student." To this end he clearly succeeds.

Daniel L. Akin

Polity: Biblical Arguments on How to Conduct Church Life. Edited by Mark Dever. Washington, D.C.: Center for Church Reform, 2001, 586 pp., \$29.99.

Mark Dever, pastor of the Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington D. C. and the senior fellow of the Center for Church Reform, has edited a collection of Baptist writings on church polity. This volume is organized into two divisions. The first section contains three introductory essays written by Mark Dever, Greg Wills, and R. Albert Mohler, Jr. The second division has ten historical reprints from eighteenth and nineteenth century Baptist leaders. Dever states that the project is an attempt to rejoin and rejuvenate discussions that were of great importance for Baptists a century ago. According to the editor, the purpose is to discover "what the Bible teaches about how we as Christians should organize our lives together in churches" (p. ix).

In his introductory essay, Dever addresses the role and responsibility of the pastor in shaping the life of the church. Through a historical investigation of the responsibilities of Baptist pastors in previous centuries, he identifies the "noble task" of the pastor as the right preaching of the Word of God and the right administration of the ordinances. According to Dever, American Baptists essentially enjoyed a uniformity of doctrine during the early and mid nineteenth centuries, as demonstrated in their shared adherence to and vigorous preaching of the doctrines of grace. In addition, the ordinances of a Baptist church (baptism and the Lord's Supper) were rightly administered when these were coupled with a robust practice of church discipline. Dever contends that it was through preaching and presiding over the life of the church (as

expressed in the administration of the ordinances) that Baptist pastors of previous eras were able to shape and influence their churches in a more biblical, godly direction than that which is found in the majority of Baptist churches today.

Greg Wills undertakes two tasks in his essay. First, he discusses the important role that polity had for Baptists in all aspects of church life. Wills demonstrates that Baptists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries believed that the biblical governance of a church could advance orthodoxy, evangelism, and discipleship. These Baptists believed that "correct polity fostered true spirituality" (p. 20). Polity was thus a means through which a church communicated its convictions about doctrine, the ordinances, church membership, and church discipline. Second, Wills provides a brief biographical overview for each author whose work is included within the historical reprints section.

The third introductory essay, written by R. Albert Mohler, Jr., examines the issue of church discipline within American Christianity. The inclusion of this essay within a volume on Baptist polity suggests that the editor believes the arguments enunciated are not only *apropos* for American Christianity but, even more specifically, for Baptist life. Mohler equates the demise of the practice of church discipline to the accommodation of American Christianity to American culture. Because of this accommodation, the church has acquiesced to the moral individualism prevalent within American societal ethos. This phenomenon has in turn led to the down-

fall of the practice of church discipline, thereby precipitating the loss of effective witness and ministry. Mohler argues that the great task of the church is the reclamation of its “missing mark” that is, church discipline. Only through its recovery will American Christianity in general and Baptist life in particular regain fidelity of doctrine, purity of moral conduct, and unity of Christian fellowship.

The second division of this volume contains historical reprints of the writings of select eighteenth and nineteenth century Baptist leaders. Several of these treatises address the general topic of Baptist polity. The authors of these works are Benjamin Griffith, W. B. Johnson, J. L. Reynolds, and William Williams. The other essays address the specific doctrine of church discipline. Baptist luminaries such as Benjamin Keach, Samuel Jones, Joseph S. Baker, P. H. Mell, and Eleazer Savage wrote these. A summary of church discipline from the Charleston Association (1774) is also included. In addition to the biographical introductions included in Wills’s essay, each reprint is further introduced by a historical sketch of the author reprinted from William Cathcart’s *Baptist Encyclopedia*.

Certain readers will question the definition of polity represented within this work. Most definitions of “polity” focus on the structure of governance and decision-making within the church. The expansion of polity to encompass all aspects of church life seems a bit strained; yet, the inclusion of other ecclesiastic concepts within a discussion of polity does illustrate the organic nature of church life. The gov-

ernance of a church does in fact have immediate implications for the understanding and practice of the ordinances, church discipline, witness, and ministry.

Other readers may perceive Dever’s selection of authors and topics as rather myopic. For example, why the inclusion of only eighteenth and nineteenth century Calvinist Baptists? Did any non-Calvinist Baptists in these or later periods write on the doctrine of church polity? Further, why does a volume on church polity contain more writings on church discipline than upon the specific topic of congregationalism? Clearer delimitations and definitions for these issues would have easily alleviated these matters.

Despite these concerns, this collection is a valuable and welcomed contribution to Baptist studies. The reprints are a poignant reminder of the vitality and challenges of Baptist churches in previous eras. The inclusion of essays from contemporary Baptists with the treatises of Baptists from other eras demonstrates a continuity of concerns that have confronted all Baptists. Dever has provided a useful work that will certainly enrich current conceptions of Baptist life both in the classroom and the church. Baptists and non-Baptists alike are challenged to be thoroughly biblical in their understanding and practice of church polity.

Stan Norman
New Orleans Baptist
Theological Seminary

God and Time: Four Views. Edited by Gregory E. Ganssle. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001, 247 pp., \$17.99 paper.

Multi-views books have become immensely popular largely because they help us to get a better understanding of how different perspectives address key difficult issues. This book addresses a particularly difficult issue on which there is very little agreement among evangelicals—the relation of God and time. In this multi-view format, each of the four contributors presents his own perspective, after which each of the other contributors responds with their criticisms of that approach. The author then has an opportunity to answer the criticisms.

Paul Helm of Regent College represents the traditional divine timeless eternity or *atemporalist* perspective. The view of time advocated in this perspective is variously described as the stasis, tenseless, or “B theory” of time, in which God experiences past, present, and future events all at once in an “eternal now.” Unfortunately, although Helm should have the advantage in that the position he represents has the most advocates in classical theism, he burdens the eternalist perspective with an overly rigid view of divine immutability and impassibility. Helm’s extreme views result in at least four unhappy logical consequences: (a) Helm is willing to give up a high view of divine omniscience because in his view God cannot know indexical measures of time or distinguish what events are currently happening; (b) God does not

actually relate to persons in time, but falsely represents Himself as doing so in ways that are not literally true; (c) Helm denies creation of the world and time *ex nihilo*, but proposes the possibility of the eternity of the universe; and (d) theological problems arise from Helm's assertions that "[T]here was no time when the eternal God was not Jesus of Nazareth" (54) and "[T]here is no time in which the Son of God exists in a preincarnate form" (55). None of these four tenuous consequences is necessary to the atemporalist perspective, so Helm's insistence on them makes this approach appear much less unappealing than it normally would. Nicholas Wolterstorff of Yale advocates the opposite position of unqualified divine *temporality* with a corresponding tensed, dynamic, or "A theory" of time in which past, present, and future have ontological reality.

Two of the authors propose mediating positions between divine temporalism and atemporalism. Alan Padgett of Luther Seminary advocates the *relative timelessness* perspective in which God exists in a timeless eternity that flows from His being, but God can nonetheless respond to the temporal world. God's timelessness is relative to the measurable time of this space-time universe, but is temporally relative to the metaphysical time that flows from His nature. William Lane Craig of Talbot School of Theology proposes a novel mediating approach that he labels as *omnitemporality*. Craig agrees that God is best described as atemporal "before" or without creation but as temporal after creation, with a dynamic perspective on time.

All four of the contributors cite biblical references consistent with their perspective, but the biblical evidence alone is not so clear as to decide the issue decisively. All four contributors are analytic philosophers of some ilk, and they propose logical arguments in support of their positions. In fact, one possible flaw in the approach of all the contributors might be that they share the presupposition that the answer to the relation of God and time is comprehensible to human logic. Perhaps the answer is a mystery bound up in the eternity of God that can only be affirmed by faith.

Each of the positions is presented articulately with compelling support from logical arguments and Scripture, but none of the four positions represented in the book stands out as the clear winner. This book requires a careful reading, but it is not so technical as to be beyond the non-specialist reader. I recommend it highly as a valuable survey to aid the reader in thinking through one's own position regarding the relation of God and time that is so crucial to other related theological issues of our day.

Steve W. Lemke
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Theological Seminary

For Faith and Family. By Richard Land and John Perry. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2002, 212 pp., \$22.99.

For Faith and Family will be received with delight from students, friends, and listeners of Dr. Richard Land. John Perry is coauthor of this relatively short and easy to read book,

which serves, more than anything else, as a moral primer. (The primary voice in this volume is Land's.) It is a Christian "connect the dots" exercise which addresses the major moral issues facing the Christian community today.

In the twelve chapters Land and Perry present a series of arguments that focus on the need for the individual family to take the lead in changing America. Land sees traditional Christian families as *the* vehicle that can reclaim the high moral ground that has been abdicated to cultural elitists who have corrupted American culture.

Out of the gate the authors state that those who would choose to isolate themselves from the culture rather than engage it are wrong. They argue that the biblical injunctions to be salt and light prevent Christians from being disengaged. Land clearly believes that if Christians do not assert their worldview on America then someone other worldview will direct America's cultural landscape.

One may not agree with Dr. Land on every issue, but there will be little doubt about his own convictions. This does not mean that this work is a diatribe. Land writes from a wealth of experience. He is the current president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC). He has testified before both houses of Congress on moral issues that face our nation. He possesses degrees from Princeton, Oxford, and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

One of the particular strengths of this work is seen in Land's constant

drive to apply his ideas. As he connects the moral dots for his readers, he wants them to apply these ideas to real life situations. This drive for application is apparent in the introductory chapter, when he asks the reader, "Are you living your life believing Christ will support you in your struggles and lead you to ultimate victory over the cultural forces that stand in opposition to a Christian worldview? Or are you just hoping to make it through another day?" (p. 9)

If readers are not impressed with the logic, biblical basis, and application of Land's arguments, they will enjoy his pithy summary statements and his continual quotation of many leading Christian thinkers from the past and present. Land cites everyone from James Dobson to Francis Schaeffer, from the church father Tertullian to U. S. Representative J. C. Watts in support of his position that the family and Christian values are the only things that can change America for the better.

The book is very quotable. "Freedom without rules isn't democracy; it's anarchy" (p. 26). "America's founders believed not in freedom *from* religion, but freedom *for* religion" (p. 36). "The closer to the biblical standard a family is, the safer, wealthier, and happier its members will be" (p. 60). "It isn't easy or comfortable to hold a brother or sister in Christ accountable for their marital behavior, but it's our duty" (p. 65). "The First Reformation came about through a return to the Word of God. The Second Reformation needs to occur around the work of God in the families of the churches" (p. 87).

The ERLC president urges that families must found and form their relationships on Scripture. He also addresses important contemporary issues such as moral relativism, marital roles, sexuality, homosexuality, pornography, the Internet, abortion, and medical technology. His summary chapter shows that he is serious about Christians experiencing true revival. Land states, "If we want America to be a Christian nation there's only one way to do it—convert her citizens to faith in Christ" (p. 193). Regarding the role of government, Land has often stated that the role of the government is to provide a level playing field for everyone, and then to get off of the field. Some may object to this statement, as well as his other ideas concerning the role of government, as being overly simplistic. It is true that these issues are complex, but one does not need to have a Ph.D. in ethics to be able to discern what is morally right and wrong. It is likely that some critics will accuse the author of conceding too much to accommodationism, while others will view him as too much the separationist.

Much of what Land writes will come across as mostly common sense. But Christian common sense seems to be a rare quality in these days of moral compromise, even in the church. Every reader will benefit from the biblical answers provided by Dr. Land for today's moral questions. This work should be required reading for college students, church leaders, or anyone who desires straight answers for today's complex ethical issues.

Brent R. Kelly

Dimensions of Time: The Structures of the Time of Humans, of the World, and of God. By Wolfgang Achtner, Stefan Kunz, and Thomas Walter. Translated by Arthur H. Williams, Jr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002, 196 pp., \$30.00 paper.

The issue of the relation of God and time has evoked strong interest and numerous books in recent years. This volume, originally published in German, offers a more comprehensive and richly textured approach to understanding time than in many contemporary accounts of time. The translation from German is overall rather good, but there are a few awkward phrases. This project arose from a study group of physicists and theologians in which the three German authors participated. Wolfgang Achtner is a campus minister and lecturer at the University of Giessen, Stefan Kunz is a pastor in Bensheim, and Thomas Walter is professor of information technology at the University of Kaiserslautern.

The major thesis of the book is that the human consciousness of time has a tri-polar structure of endogenous, exogenous, and transcendent time. Endogenous time refers to the forms of time that arise from inward experience, particularly in the biological rhythms of life. Exogenous time occurs as humans interact with their environment, and is evidenced in both natural time (the cyclical patterns of nature that are often expressed in the mythology and cultic ceremony of various religious traditions) and social time (frameworks of time that are established within a society or cul-

ture). In particular, the invention of the clock in the thirteenth century revolutionized Western culture by providing a rational, linear measurement of time by which society could be organized, meeting times could be established, and work could be compensated. Transcendent time is the sense of timelessness that arises from mystical experience, prophetic foreshadowing, and epiphanic revelation. This threefold pattern of evolving human consciousness has the feel of a Hegelian dialectic, although the authors do not claim this methodology.

In explicating this thesis, the authors trace the historical development of time in human consciousness, weaving together a tapestry of widely divergent perspectives on time from biology, anthropology, ancient and medieval history, physics, philosophy, and theology. This elegant cross-disciplinary synoptic vision of time inclusive of many perspectives and traditions is the key contribution of this book. As one might expect from blending so many divergent perspectives, at times the logical connection between the views appears to be somewhat forced.

The chapter on the scientific account of time is heavily laden with technical material and mathematical formulas, and requires of its readers an advanced knowledge of contemporary physics. The narrative in this chapter is not as helpful and clear as in the other chapters.

The description of the biblical and Hebraic views of time seems to be accurate for the most part, but most evangelicals will be disappointed with

the hermeneutic method of the authors, which presupposes a weak view of biblical inspiration and is overly reliant on the documentary hypothesis. In particular, their hypothesis that the Old Testament narratives originally referenced the unnamed pre-JHWH spatial god, replaced with the time-involved JHWH by later editors, is obviously an argument from silence. At other times, insights about time are extrapolated eisegetically from biblical accounts that do not address the concept of time in any obvious way. Overall, the book is its weakest in its hermeneutics.

This is a somewhat uneven book that is capable of bouncing from shaky exegesis to profound insights. Despite its limitations, however, it provides a unique approach to the concept of time that draws together a rich blend of resources and perspectives. Anyone interested in the problem of God and time will find this to be a fascinating and informative book.

Steve W. Lemke
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Word Pictures in the New Testament, Concise Edition. By A. T. Robertson, ed. James A. Swanson. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000, vi + 696 pp., \$19.99.

A. T. Robertson was a giant of monumental proportions whose shadow still lies across the study of the Greek New Testament. Spending his entire career at Southern Seminary, he taught New Testament Greek for forty-six years and in that time pub-

lished forty-five books. He married the daughter of his New Testament mentor and Southern Seminary President, Dr. John A. Broadus. His *magnum opus*, the 1,544 page *Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, has remained in print for over eighty-five years and is still a standard work in the field. President John R. Sampey of Southern Seminary, lifelong friend of Robertson, said that the day Robertson finished his hand-written manuscript of the great grammar, the stack of pages was over three feet tall. Renowned British Greek scholar, James Hope Moulton, once told G. Campbell Morgan, himself a world-famous expository preacher, that A. T. Robertson was one of the greatest living Greek scholars, and that no one on earth exceeded him in knowledge of the Greek New Testament. Morgan wrote to Robertson on the occasion of both men's seventieth birthdays that only heaven would reveal the world-wide impact Robertson had through his writings and the teaching of Greek to over 6,000 students. President L. R. Scarborough of Southwestern Seminary wrote to Robertson's widow that he was Baptists' greatest scholar. Yet, for all his scholarship, Robertson was in constant demand as a preacher and teacher who effectively communicated the Bible to common people. Robertson said that he had always considered himself as a preacher first. The day he died in 1934, Robertson was working on a new translation of the Greek New Testament, having only completed the first few chapters of Matthew.

In his *Word Pictures*, Robertson

translated his formidable expertise into such clear language that anyone may easily access some of the riches of the Greek New Testament. Originally published in six volumes, *Word Pictures* contained clear explanations of Greek grammar and syntax, as well as much biblical background material. The six volume set is still available and is highly recommended. For this abridgment into one manageable volume, James Swanson took out the technical discussions and much of the background material, leaving the essence of the word pictures which help the New Testament come alive for the reader. The book is arranged consecutively through the New Testament, so that one uses it by looking up a particular text. Chances are excellent that any significant word is addressed. The chapter headings and verse numbers are set in bold type. Those words of the English text quoted are in bold type in brackets, and the Greek words are transliterated into English and italicized. Generous cross references are given to assist in further study. Difficult concepts are explained and colloquialisms are related to help transfer the images to modern culture. A brief, instructive introduction is provided for each New Testament book, offering essential information on matters of date, authorship, occasion and purpose, and essential content.

A. T. Robertson was one of the great New Testament scholars of his own or any other era. How proud we should be to realize that he was one of ours! Any reissuing of his works is a cause for celebration, as new generations can sit at his feet. This edition of *Word*

Pictures is highly recommended, but don't stop there—get his works from libraries and used book dealers and let this master teacher lead you into a fuller understanding of God's Word.

Charles W. Draper

Where Jesus Walked: A Spiritual Journey Through the Holy Land. By R. Wayne Stacy. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2001, xiv + 191 pp., \$16.00 paper.

The World Jesus Knew: Beliefs and Customs from the Time of Jesus. By Anne Punton. Grand Rapids: Monarch Books, 1996, 267 pp., \$12.99 paper.

These two publications each provide overviews of the Life and Times of Jesus. Both volumes are designed for a lay or undergraduate audience with the goal of providing a brief synopsis of the times of Jesus. Each author has spent many years in the Holy Land, and although their topics are presented in a basic overview, it is clear that their information is buttressed with a breadth of knowledge that is based on current research—particularly of Second Temple history, Judaism, and recent archaeological excavations. These publications place Jesus within his historical and cultural context. Their strength is that they provide the reader with how this knowledge impacts their faith and also provide clear explanations for the context of the life and message of Jesus.

Wayne Stacy's book is a companion devotional guide for Christian tourists to the Holy Land. Since the

book is designed to be used in conjunction with a study tour, it is structured around individual sites and features that a person would commonly visit on a tour of Israel. He uses these site discussions as a springboard to present topics concerning the background of the life of Jesus. Stacy is very familiar with the background material and he provides a well-balanced narrative. He freely intertwines the biblical text with these discussions.

Anne Punton's book takes a different approach as she focuses on introducing the Jewish background during the time of Jesus. This is one of the best introductory books to illustrate the Jewish background of Jesus. Punton's book has two major emphases of discussion. One of the themes is to illustrate the Jewish institutions of Jesus (e.g. the synagogue, the Jewish agricultural year, etc). The second is to provide an overview of the manners and customs during the first century A.D. (e.g., "the education Jesus Received," "the clothes Jesus wore"). The books will be particularly useful for Sunday school classes or secondary education.

Both of these books are geared toward a general audience. Both are well illustrated with black and white photos. Those who have traveled, or will be traveling, to Israel on a Holy Land or study tour would best utilize these books. Due to their specific foci, the books are not comprehensive (e.g., neither discusses in detail the trial, death, and resurrection of Jesus—although Stacy does present an overview of the Garden Tomb and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher). Both books lack appropriate footnotes and

bibliographic references to make them useful for academic use, unless they are used in conjunction with a short-term study tour of the Holy Land or as secondary texts to complement a course on the Life of Jesus.

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I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon. Holman New Testament Commentary. By Knute Larson. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000, 421 pp., \$19.99.

"The more precious your preparation time, the more essential the *Holman New Testament Commentary* is to your success. No other reference gets to the heart of the New Testament as efficiently as the *Holman New Testament Commentary*."

So says the blurb on the back of this commentary. Sadly, one cannot expect sober self-evaluation even in Christian books. This is an exceedingly lofty claim, and not surprisingly the book fails to live up to it. It is a decent commentary for the average layperson for personal study or perhaps in a Sunday School class. The series intends to walk through a basic Bible lesson on the passage providing introductory stories, summaries of key issues in the passage, a closing story, and some application. This author assesses the key issues of the passages fairly well and does not shy away from difficult theological issues (e.g., election). However, one ought not expect significant discussion of such issues. They are really just acknowledged.

The exposition often reads like a light skim of the commentaries and the use of Greek is less than careful. With the way the series is set up, there is simply not enough space given to exposition in order to be sufficient for the sort of grappling with the text required of preachers.

In summary, this series is marketed as a time-saver. Those whose calling centers on expounding the sacred text ought beware of supposed shortcuts (2 Tim 2:6, 15!). Those serving such preachers ought to beware of tempting these preachers with such shortcuts. If one is looking for a more popular level commentary to supplement one's study of the more technical ones, the works of Stott, Towner, and Liefeld would be better choices.

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