

Book Reviews

Covenant Theology: A Baptist Distinctive. Edited by Earl M. Blackburn.
Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2013, 163 pp., \$18.00
paper.

In recent Evangelical scholarship, scholars have discussed much the biblical covenants. This is especially true in regard to how the covenants should be interpreted in relation to covenant and dispensational theology. *Covenant Theology: A Baptist Distinctive* is one such example written from a Reformed Baptist viewpoint. The book's main purpose is to demonstrate from Scripture and church history that Baptists, at least until recent days, have embraced covenant theology without accepting Reformed theology's commitment to paedobaptism (7-8). With the renewed emphasis on the "doctrines of grace" within evangelicalism, the authors are concerned that people will mistakenly think that there are only two options available: either paedobaptist covenant theology or a rejection of covenant theology for some form of dispensationalism. However, the authors insist on a third alternative: namely a Reformed Baptist Covenant Theology. The book seeks to describe and promote this alternative position as the biblical view.

Given its size, the book is not a complete exposition and defense of the Reformed Baptist Covenant Theology position. Its five chapters and three appendices function more as a primer than as an exhaustive defense of the authors' position. Pastors and informed lay Christians are the book's primary audience, which is why a detailed analysis of the relevant complex issues is absent in the book. The chapters and appendices were originally lectures, articles, and blog posts, all of which have now been compiled into one book in order to commend to a wider audience the authors' respective view.

Chapter 1, "Covenant Theology Simplified," by Earl Blackburn, pastor of Heritage Baptist Church in Shreveport, Louisiana, serves as an overview of the basic tenets of covenant theology. This chapter nicely describes differences between Reformed Baptists and their paedobap-

tists. Blackburn argues that covenant theology “is the view of God and redemption that interprets the Holy Scriptures by way of covenants” and that “there is only one way of salvation: by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone” (17). After an introductory discussion, Blackburn gives a review of covenant theology’s understanding of the covenant of redemption, works, and grace. He also seeks to unpack the unity and diversity of the biblical covenants as they culminate in the new covenant. Unsurprisingly, a major focus in the chapter is on how the new covenant is different from the old, especially in regard to children (50-51), thus highlighting the Baptist distinctive that each member of the new covenant is a professing believer in Christ.

Chapter 2, “Biblical Hermeneutics and Covenant Theology,” by Fred Malone, pastor of First Baptist Church of Clinton, Louisiana, describes basic and crucial hermeneutical principles to a proper interpretation of Scripture. After describing the major agreements between evangelicals and Reformed interpreters of Scripture, Malone discusses differences between a dispensational and a Reformed interpretation. Finally, he addresses the main ecclesiological differences between Reformed Baptists and Reformed paedobaptists. Throughout the chapter, Malone insists that Scripture is best interpreted within the framework of covenant theology by arguing that the OT covenants are best viewed as “progressive covenants of *the* promise fulfilled in the effectual and unbreakable new covenant” (81).

Chapters 3-5 are written by Walter Chantry, retired pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and well-known leader in Reformed Baptist circles. Chapter 3, “The Covenants of Works and of Grace,” describes and defends a traditional “covenant of works” and then sets it over against the “covenant of grace.” He contends that preaching must include both the “law and gospel,” which are reflected respectively in the “covenant of works and grace.” In addition, Chantry defends the tripartite division of the old covenant and the abiding demand of the Ten Commandments as the summary of God’s eternal moral law, first written on Adam’s conscience and later re-written on the believer’s heart. Throughout the chapter, Chantry also argues that covenant theology undergirds a consistent Calvinism while dispensational theology sows the seeds for an embrace of Arminianism (99-110). In chapter 4, “Imputation of Righteousness and Covenant Theology,” Chantry argues for the imputation of Christ’s righteousness based on the covenant of works-grace framework. In chapter 5, “Baptism and Covenant Theolo-

gy,” Chantry defends believer’s baptism over against infant baptism in order to demonstrate that even though Baptists reject paedobaptism, they ought to embrace fully covenant theology.

Three appendices conclude the book. Justin Taylor, vice-president of book publishing at Crossway, authors the first one. He answers the question “Was There a Covenant of Works?” in the affirmative. Taylor contends that without it, the gospel is ultimately compromised since the basis for the imputation of Adam’s sin and Christ’s righteousness is undercut. Ken Fryer, a staff member at Heritage Baptist Church in Shreveport, Louisiana, writes the second appendix, “Covenant Theology in Baptist Life.” With discussion of church history, Fryer does a fine job demonstrating that Baptists have embraced covenant theology despite their rejection of infant baptism. In the third appendix, “How is the New Covenant not like that which has come before?” Kenneth Puls, the editorial director of Founders Press, gives a helpful chart which contrasts the covenants in the Old Testament with the new covenant.

Given the book’s purpose, aim, and audience, the authors provide a helpful introduction to Reformed Baptist theology. If one is looking for a quick read and resource which describes this particular variety of Reformed Baptist theology, this book is a good place to begin. However, at least three weaknesses are evident.

First, as is often the case in this kind of book, a description of contrary positions are mostly unhelpful. This is especially evident when dispensational theology is in the crosshairs. The book largely discusses dispensationalism as a monolithic movement. For example, the authors appear to assume that all dispensationalists are classic dispensationalists. Thus, the book asserts that dispensational theology teaches that God operates on the basis of contingency plans since God’s original plan failed for the Jews (20), that dispensationalism denies that Jeremiah’s new covenant applies to the Church (76), and that dispensational theology sows the seeds for Arminianism (99-100). These assertions are caricatures that misrepresent the multifaceted and complex nature of dispensationalism. This misrepresentation is especially evident in light of the developments within dispensationalism. Straw man arguments ought to be avoided. They do not enhance your position; they only detract from it and they lack charity in theological discussion.

Second, although this book only serves as a primer, it makes strong assertions without substantiation on disputed points of theology: e.g. the tripartite division of the old covenant (45-47) and the continuing validity

of the Sabbath in the Lord's Day (30). On the one hand, given both the page limitations and the purpose of the book, one can understand why the authors are unable to defend many of their assertions. But, on the other hand, this reviewer thinks that the authors should have been more tentative and charitable with some of their assertions about opposing positions, especially on issues which are widely disputed.

Third, what is lacking in the book is not a description of the biblical covenants, but a sense of how the covenants progressively unfold and how each covenant contributes to the overall plan of God fulfilled in Christ. Blackburn mentions each biblical covenant, but Chantry simply conflates them into *the* "covenant of grace," especially when he discusses Old Testament covenants (92-98). Chantry argues that "when God makes a covenant it is here to stay!" (100), without attempting to engage the question of how the new covenant is the *telos*, terminus, and fulfillment of *all* of the biblical covenants? This book lacks a presentation of the beauty of God's glorious plan of redemption, how that plan unfolds in its various twists and turns, and ultimately how that plan finds its fulfillment in Christ.

In this reviewer's view, the biblical covenants are the foundation of the metanarrative of Scripture. This book tries to capture the Bible's grand story. As a result, there is a lot to commend in this book. For example, the book clearly describes and explains the position of the authors, but in the end, it left this reviewer with a lot of unanswered questions and wanting much more.

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Galatians. By A. Andrew Das. Concordia Commentary Series: A Theological Exposition of Sacred Scriptures. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014. 738 pp., \$49.99 hardback.

A. Andrew Das is the Donald W. and Betty J. Buik Endowed Chair-holder and Professor of Religious Studies at Elmhurst College in

Elmhurst, IL. His recent Galatians commentary has made yet another important contribution to New Testament Studies in general and to Pauline Studies in particular. This commentary combines rigorous exegesis with seasoned acumen to produce a work that is accessible to scholars, students, and learned pastors. Das' commentary on Galatians follows the structure of the Concordia Commentary Series. As a Lutheran confessional series, one of its goals is to provide a lucid scholarly commentary, immersed in the scholarship of a particular book, but accessible to the non-specialist. Das' work successfully accomplishes the series' goals with both scholarly rigor and pastoral sensitivity.

First, he summarizes the major introductory issues in Galatians in the opening section of the commentary (e.g., mirror-reading, the identity of Paul's opponents, the law, justification, etc.) (1-89). The introduction is long, but it does not overwhelm the reader and should be very helpful to the student and pastor. Second, Das simplifies a fairly technical discussion about the Northern versus Southern Galatians hypotheses at the beginning of the commentary (20-30). An exceptional helpful feature in this section is Das' summary of all of the major arguments for each position and his responses to them. Third, Das cites and interacts with (what he thinks is) the most important scholarship about the most important issues in the text (e.g. the law and justification in Galatians 2:11-21 [204-275]). His detailed interaction with scholarship is lucid, precise, and does not overwhelm the reader with gratuitous footnotes.

Fourth, throughout the commentary, Das provides many helpful text-critical comments on every major textual problem in Galatians. These text-critical comments offer helpful insights to scholars, students, and pastors alike. Fifth, Das provides many helpful excurses throughout the commentary without overshadowing his analysis of individual verses in their Greco-Roman and Jewish contexts. In fact, some of Das' most helpful sections in the entire commentary are his excurses that explain the social, historical, or theological content of a particular text in more detail than he is able in the exegetical sections of the commentary. To cite one example, Das devotes an excursus to social identity intercourse as it pertains to Galatians 2:11-14 (216-32), which is especially illuminating. He lists the major scholarly interpretations of the social situation at Antioch and in Galatia; he carefully responds to them, and he argues his interpretation of the situation at Antioch with clarity.

Sixth, Das interacts with relevant Second Temple Jewish texts throughout his exegetical discussions in the commentary. This is a method that

helps him set and keep Paul's argument in Galatians in his 1st century Greco-Roman and Jewish context without locking the message of Galatians in the 1st century Greco-Roman and Jewish world away from 21st century readers. Related to this, Das' discussions of the relevant apocryphal and pseudepigraphal texts, the relevant Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), and his explanation of a number of relevant, multifarious Greco-Roman and Jewish texts enlighten his explanations of the law, justification, and Paul's problem with his opponents in Galatia (337-426).

Seventh, readers of this commentary within the Protestant tradition especially owe a great debt to Das for his masterful combination of careful grammatical-historical exegesis with pastoral and spiritual sensitivities. On the one hand, his successful attempt of grounding his interpretation of Galatians within a 1st century Jewish and Greco-Roman context should enable (not limited to but especially) Lutheran and Reformed readers to avoid racist, anti-Semitic, un-historical, and incorrect readings of Galatians that still continue to argue the tired thesis that Galatians was a response to a 1st century version of Luther's Roman Catholicism. On the other hand, Das' careful grammatical-historical exegesis also attempts to show that the Reformers' expositional and polemical defense of justification by faith actually has an exegetical and historical foundation on which to stand and that Luther's justification theory originated with Paul himself and not with the Reformer (239-75).

Eighth, related to the above point, Das puts his exegetical skills on full display as he summarizes the complex post-E. P. Sanders revolutionary readings of Paul with an informative discussion of reactions to the old Lutheran interpretations of Galatians and 1st century Judaism. Beginning with scholarly contributions before Sanders (e.g., Krister Stendahl) and continuing until N. T. Wright, Das manages to navigate through the complex forest of both Sanders' sympathizers and his opponents without becoming lost within the polemical trees. Consequently, at the end of his summary of the New Perspective of Paul (NPP), which is and has been for some time the New Old Perspective (OPP), his own Lutheran understanding of the NPP versus the old Lutheran version of the OPP becomes apparent.

Ninth, page after page offers an insightful and robust exegesis of the text under discussion with a concern for understanding Galatians in its 1st century Greco-Roman and Jewish context and with an awareness of its modern day relevance. For example, Galatians 2:11-21 and 3:10-14 are probably two of the most difficult sections in the entire letter. Yet,

Das clearly summarizes the major argument of each text, states each text's contribution to the larger argument in the letter, and engages in a concise exegesis of the passages while discussing the different interpretive options in a way that both the specialist and non-specialist can grasp (e.g., see 196-275 for commentary of Gal 2:11-21 and 310-336 for his commentary of Gal 3:10-14).

Das' new commentary is a great contribution to New Testament Studies in general and to Pauline scholarship in particular. Many readers will certainly complain about Das' Lutheran reading of Paul. Others may quibble because he does not discuss this issue or that issue in more detail, and still others may complain about his exegesis of this text or that text. Nevertheless, Das' commentary is an exegetical *tour de force* that must be reckoned with by scholars, students, and pastors regardless of whether they embrace an Old, a New, or a Newer Perspective reading of Galatians! I highly recommend this work!

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Galatians. By Douglas J. Moo. Baker Exegetical Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013, 474 pp., \$. 44.99 hardback.

Douglas J. Moo serves as the Kenneth T. Wessner Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College Graduate School in Wheaton, IL. He is an established Pauline scholar, who has written several monographs—including a major commentary on Romans. His most recent contribution to Pauline Studies is his highly anticipated Galatians commentary in the competent Baker Exegetical Commentary series. This review will briefly survey the content of the commentary and highlight a few of the commentary's many insightful contributions.

In keeping with the high standard of the preceding commentaries in the Baker Exegetical series (e.g. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Romans, Ephesians, and 1 Peter to name a few), Moo's Galatians commentary combines rigorous grammatical-historical exegesis and rich theological

reflection with a strong Evangelical tone. Moo manages to do this while making his work accessible to the non-specialist.

First, Moo begins his commentary with a lucid and informative introduction (1-63). His introduction discusses important issues like the Northern versus Southern Galatian theories and the dating of the letter (2-18). One of the most insightful and preparatory parts of the introduction is Moo's discussion of selective theological themes in Galatians (31-61). For example, Moo offers a detailed and fruitful theological discussion of key Pauline themes such as salvation history and apocalyptic (31-32), the gospel (32), Christ (33-34), the Spirit (34), the law (35-37), faith in versus faith of Christ (38-47), and justification (48-61) that prepare the reader for the careful exegetical analysis and the rich theological reflection to come later in the commentary of individual texts.

Second, Moo has a widespread reputation among New Testament scholars for being a strong and careful exegete. As Tom Schreiner states in his endorsement on the back of the commentary, "Douglas Moo's expertise as a commentator is well known, and his skill is on display in this outstanding commentary on Galatians." Every single section of Galatians is carefully but succinctly explained with good old-fashioned grammatical-historical exegesis. In addition to Moo's impressive exegesis of each text in Galatians, he helpfully discusses relevant grammatical issues that affect interpretation (e.g., faith in versus faith of Christ=objective versus subjective genitive) minus gratuitous grammatical information (38-48, 160-63).

Third, Moo successfully grounds his interpretation of Galatians in its first-century Greco-Roman and Jewish polemical context. As he does this, he discusses both the relevant Old Testament and Second Temple Jewish texts that aid one's interpretation of the text in Galatians. Although, as an Evangelical scholar, Moo certainly has pastoral concerns in mind throughout the commentary, his fundamental concern is to explain the meaning of Paul's letter to the Galatians to the original audience to whom he wrote it. Moo is keenly aware of the various alternative interpretations made by various readers of Galatians throughout the history of interpretation, evident by his footnotes, his endnotes, and his bibliography, but his primary focus from beginning until the end of his commentary is to explain Galatians in light of Paul's first century social and polemical setting.

Fourth, Moo points out the strengths of certain New Perspective readings of Paul, while noting the dangers of radical Newer Perspective

readings of Paul (145-73, 201-16). Moo's understanding of the text is not eclipsed by his discussions of the readings of Paul that diverge from his own reading, but his discussions of competing views insightfully inform the reader of current issues in certain texts.

Moo's commentary on Galatians is another significant contribution from the pen of a world class Evangelical New Testament scholar. The commentary's combination of grammatical-historical exegetical rigor, rich theological reflection, and pastoral sensitivities make this work both another welcomed addition to the now famous Baker Exegetical series in the Evangelical community and a must read for scholars, students, and pastors who are working through Galatians. This work is especially a must read for pastors who approach Galatians from a traditional Evangelical faith-tradition—although all readers could profit from the commentary. Moo's detailed discussion of justification is alone worth the price of the commentary. As I write my own commentary on Galatians for the New Covenant Commentary series and as I teach and preach through Galatians in the classroom and in the church, I will look often to this fantastic addition to the Baker Exegetical commentary series. I have some exegetical disagreements with Moo here and there, but my biggest complaint about his commentary is that it sadly ends too soon. I could gladly read another 406 pages about Galatians from the pen of Moo. Scholars, students, and pastors should purchase this commentary and watch a master exegetical craftsman do his work with excellent scholarly precision and careful exegetical skill!

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Collected Essays: Keys to Galatians. Jerome Murphy'O-Connor. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012. 194 pp., paper.

Before his death in November 11, 2013, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor was one of the world's leading authorities on the writings of Paul. He served as a professor of New Testament at the École Biblique of Jerusa-

lem from 1967 until his death in 2013. In his collected essays on Galatians, Murphy-O'Connor offers his perspectives on selected neglected areas in the letter. In this review, I will summarize the contents of the book and offer a brief critical interaction.

In Murphy-O'Connor's collected essays on Galatians, he offers contributions to years of scholarship on an old (and in his view, a very old) letter. The book has 10 chapters. Since the book is a collection of essays previously delivered in lectures or published in separate journals, he does not advance a singular thesis. But each chapter develops its own thesis.

In chapter 1 (Missions in Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia before the Jerusalem Conference), Murphy-O'Connor discusses Paul's early missionary work before the Jerusalem conference (1-36). This chapter reexamines "the chronological presuppositions which, consciously or unconsciously, serve as the basis for all reconstructions of Pauline theology" (1). Here Murphy-O'Connor offers a detailed evaluation of the contributions of recent works on Paul's 14 years, which Galatians 2:1 states separated Paul's first trip to Jerusalem as a Christian and the Jerusalem conference (1).

Chapter 2 (Paul in Arabia: Gal 1:17) discusses Paul's trip to Arabia mentioned in Galatians 1:17 (37-47). In this chapter, Murphy-O'Connor reframes the question from "where was Arabia" to "what would the term Arabia have suggested to a Jew who lived in first-century Judea" (37)? Based on references to Arabia in Josephus, Murphy-O'Connor argues that a 1st century Jew would have understood Arabia to refer to the "Nabataean territory" (37-38). He further suggests that Paul went there to make converts since after his departure from Arabia, the Nabataean authorities continued to take his life (e.g., 2 Cor 11:32-33) (38-39). By means of a concise historical reconstruction, Murphy-O'Connor argues that Arabia was hostile to Paul's preaching upon his arrival due to the conflict caused by Jews and led by Herod Antipas (40-42). Accordingly, the Nabataeans would have thought Paul (a Jew) was preaching another form of Judaism. Nabataean locals would have perceived converts to Paul's preaching as a weakness to the Nabataean kingdom, which had experienced much bloodshed years earlier at the hands of Jewish force.

Chapter 3 (Names for Jerusalem in Galatians) discusses the different Greek names for Jerusalem in Galatians 1:17-18 and 4:25-26 (48-53). He argues that Paul uses different names for Jerusalem as a polemic against his opponents (50). Chapter 4 (To Run in Vain) focuses on Paul's remarks in Gal 2:2 about presenting his gospel to the apostles lest

he ran in vain (54-60). He argues that Paul's remarks in 2:2 are a rhetorical statement against the opponents who accused Paul of operating independently of the Jerusalem apostles (59).

Chapter 5 (Nationalism and Church Policy) discusses Galatians 2:9 (61-77). He argues that "Gentile hostility to Jews is the key to understanding the apparently conflicting decisions of James" (64-73). Chapter 6 (Whose Common Ground?) discusses Galatians 2:15-16a (78-87). He develops the thesis of earlier scholars that "in Gal 2:15-16 Paul attributes to Christian Jews a theological position that they should have defended, not the one they actually maintained" (81). Chapter 7 (The Irrevocable Will) discusses Galatians 3:15 (97-114). He argues that Paul's purpose in making this statement is to "clarify the relationship between the promise to Abraham and the Mosaic law by insisting that the latter cannot annul or significantly modify the former" (97).

Chapter 8 (Galatians 4:13-14 and the Recipients of Galatians) discusses Galatians 4:13-14 (115-22). Here Murphy-O'Connor argues for the Northern Galatian theory while rejecting older arguments in favor of this thesis (116). Chapter 9 (The Unwritten Law of Christ) discusses Gal 6:2. Murphy-O'Connor argues that the phrase "law of Christ" refers to Christ who is the law (143). Chapter 10 (The Origins of Paul's Christology: From Thessalonians to Galatia) discusses Paul's Christology (144-74). This chapter argues that Paul's Christology in the Thessalonian correspondence is different from that in Galatians. The difference, Murphy-O'Connor says, pertains both to Paul's own perception of the Messiah before he converted and to external conflict after he was converted (148-72).

Murphy-O'Connor was a giant (although he was very small in physical stature) in the field of New Testament scholarship. His numerous monographs and articles on Paul established him and set him apart as one of the foremost leading authorities in the field. In these essays on Galatians, he demonstrates a masterful handling of primary source material and exegetical precision in his explanation of minor points of Galatians. Although I disagree with his exegesis and conclusions at a few points, I recommend this book to New Testament scholars and doctoral students who are working in the areas of early Christian Origins or Galatians. This book features a seasoned biblical scholar's ability to use extra-biblical literature and geography to illuminate the text of Galatians. The book is well-written, saturated with precise exegetical and historical analyses, and it provides postscripts at the end of each chapter wherein Murphy-O'Connor responds to his detractors.

In addition to scholars and doctoral students, graduate students in an advanced Greek exegesis course of Galatians would profit from the book. The average pastor without formal theological training and without a working knowledge of Greek and extra-biblical literature would find very little use for this book because of its scholarly audience and its narrow scope. Murphy-O'Connor writes about narrow aspects of the letter as a scholar to scholars, and he attempts to correct (what he thinks are) scholarly misinterpretations of certain aspects of the letter.

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Illustrated Life of Paul. By Charles L. Quarles. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2014. 292 pp., \$29.99 paper.

Charles L. Quarles serves as professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC. In his new book on the life of Paul, Quarles introduces readers to the Jewish Paul, who grew up in Tarsus, studied in Jerusalem, advanced in Judaism, converted to Christianity, and advanced the gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth until his martyrdom.

Quarles provides a concise, accessible, and user friendly introductory text on the life of Paul. His work is different from many of the previous books about Paul in that he focuses primarily on his cultural context without overwhelming the reader with specialist language or with large swaths of primary literature. Instead, this presentation of Paul largely uses Acts, and certain Pauline letters, as the most important historical source, while also responsibly using Josephus and certain Greco-Roman authors to fill in the historical gaps. In addition, the book provides professional pictures of ancient sites, primary source material, and lucid comments of the topics and cities under discussion.

The book has 9 chapters. In chapter 1, Quarles provides a short introduction to the book (1-2). In chapter 2 (The Background of Saul of Tarsus), Quarles discusses Paul's Greco-Roman and Jewish background

(3-16). Chapter 3 (Damascus Road) discusses Paul's Damascus Road conversion (17-41). Chapter 4 (The First Missionary Journey) focuses on Paul's first missionary journey (42-67). Here Quarles discusses some of the content of Paul's preaching in various Gentile cities, and he offers a discussion of historical facts related to these cities that illuminate Paul's first missionary journey. Chapter 5 (The Jerusalem Conference) considers the historical significance of the Jerusalem conference (68-77). Chapter 6 (The Second Missionary Journey) takes up a discussion of Paul's second missionary journey (79-136). Chapter 7 (The Third Missionary Journey) focuses on the third missionary journey (137-92). Chapter 8 (From Jerusalem to Rome) focuses on Paul's final trip to Jerusalem, his arrest there, and his appeal to journey to Rome (193-248). Chapter 9 (Paul's Last Years) highlights Paul's final days, including a discussion of his prison letters, continued ministry in his final days, and martyrdom (249-70). Each chapter attempts to paint a picture of the historical Paul by taking seriously Acts as the most important primary historical source and secondly by appealing to relevant extra-biblical sources.

Quarles has provided a concise, accessible, and up to date book on the life of Paul for students. The book is easy to read and well written by a clear master teacher, New Testament scholar, and minister of the gospel. Quarles writes as a scholar to students and to ministers in training. The most admirable contribution of this book in this regard is the fact that Quarles takes seriously the historical reliability of Acts and the Pauline letters for reconstructing the life of Paul. Readers will clearly see throughout this book that Quarles thinks the most important historical source for reconstructing the life of Paul is the New Testament. From reading this book, students and pastors will gain confidence in the New Testament as both the word of God and as a reliable historical source.

However, I have a couple of picky criticisms about the book. First, I wonder if the book could have benefited from a chapter on historical method since the work is an historical project, written for the student and pastor instead of for the specialist, and since the extra-biblical sources, to which Quarles appeals to help his historical reconstruction of Paul, present their own host of text-critical and historical problems (e.g., Josephus). Many students who will read this book may only know enough about Josephus or Philo to be dangerous if they have any knowledge of them at all. In addition, even fewer students may have knowledge of the various Greco-Roman authors (e.g., Suetonius) whom Quarles cites along with Acts to reconstruct the historical Paul. An introductory

chapter on historical method would help the non-specialist understand both why Quarles cites extra-biblical sources alongside of biblical (inspired) material and how one ought to use responsibly ancient historical sources when engaging in historical reconstruction of inspired scriptural texts. Of course, Quarles wisely relies primarily upon the New Testament itself for his historical reconstruction. Still, I wonder if the audience to whom Quarles wrote the book would need a short introduction explaining the difficult task of historically reconstructing the life of an ancient historical figure from ancient texts.

Second, unless I have overlooked something, the book cites few references from Second Temple Jewish texts apart from Josephus and Philo. A discussion about the law in 1 Baruch, 1 Maccabees, and in other Jewish texts would have illuminated why Paul's gospel proclamation of Gentile inclusion and of justification by faith in Christ (the crucified and resurrected Lord) apart from works of law was so radical to (and was so radically opposed by) 1st century Jews and Gentiles. Based on Quarles' many publications in New Testament studies, I know that he is thoroughly saturated in the literature of the Second Temple period. This makes me wonder why he primarily relies on Josephus, Greek and Latin authors, and a few texts from the Mishnah instead of also making use of the mammoth amount of additional Jewish literature to aid his historical reconstruction of Paul, the Jew, and to illuminate even more Paul's Jewish heritage. Although Josephus and Roman and Greek historians perhaps paint a better picture of the geographical context within which Paul lived and ministered than other Jewish texts, many Second Temple Jewish texts would have provided the reader with a clearer understanding of Paul's Jewish theological framework (e.g., works of the law in Dead Sea Scroll 4QMMT, life in the law in 1 Baruch, and zeal for the law in 1 Maccabees), especially his soteriological framework.

Still, Quarles' new book on Paul gives students and pastors an excellent introductory text to the life of Paul written by an Evangelical scholar who loves the gospel and who loves the church. His book will be an excellent primary text for an undergraduate course on the life of Paul. This text will also be a good supplemental text for a seminary introductory course on the New Testament, especially alongside of a textbook that does not emphasize backgrounds. Biblical and theological students, pastors, and Sunday school teachers will greatly benefit from this text, even those who simply want to become better bible readers for the sake of their own bible study. Quarles' lucid writing style, his precision, and

his scholarly acumen make this book a gem for any bible teacher's study. In addition, the numerous maps, pictures, side-bars, and archeological artifacts within the book will shine a bright ray of light onto the ministry of the apostle Paul for many bible teachers who have transformed the 1st century Jewish-Christian missionary into a 21st century Western philosopher. Readers of Quarles' book will become intimately familiar with the 1st century Jewish-Christian missionary, who loved his Lord and who worked fiercely to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the complex Greco-Roman and Jewish world of the 1st century. As a seminary professor and as a minister of the gospel, I am thankful to Quarles for writing a book that I can now use both in the classroom and in the church!

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To Plead Our Own Cause: African Americans in Massachusetts and the Making of the Antislavery Movement. By Christopher Cameron. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2014, 172 pp., \$45.00 paper.

Among historians, the narrative is a familiar one. It's the tale of how Reformed theology helped construct the worldview of the southern planter class in the early republic, forging a devilish bond between slavery and religion, ensconcing both firmly within a rigid hierarchical society. But Christopher Cameron's new monograph suggests that the role of Reformed theology within the construction of race in America may have been more complex than often assumed.

A whole generation of black antislavery activists has been largely forgotten in the national mind, including among historians. And Cameron intends to change that. While he gives credit to and builds on the work of historians of abolitionism, Cameron contends that the roots of the movement are found in Revolution-era Massachusetts. He interacts with—and sets out to correct—the work of Richard Newman, Margot Minardi, and David Brion Davis. While these historians have all

explored various facets of abolitionism in antebellum America and the transatlantic world, Cameron indicts them for their neglect of the role of African American activists.

Cameron does a good job of explaining the racial views of New England's Puritan leaders, noting how their theology animated an evangelistic concern for the conversion of slaves. As he documents, African Americans were added in rapid number to the membership rolls of Congregational churches during the peak years of the Great Awakening. The book benefits from solid work in the primary sources. Cameron has done good work in mining a broad range of church records, pamphlets, books, and treatises from these early black abolitionists, bolstering his argument that they eventually fused Reformed theology with republican political ideology.

The book is at its strongest from chapter 2 onward. Here Cameron begins to lay out the intellectual history of black abolitionist writers, including Phyllis Wheatley and Caesar Sarter. He notes how they appropriated Calvinist categories and ideas toward a mounting critique of slavery and racial inequality in the Revolutionary period. Perhaps even more importantly, Cameron's work reestablishes a line of continuity, showing how black abolitionists were vitally significant to the evolving form of the movement and the dialectic between proponents of gradualism and immediate emancipation.

Cultural memory, as well as scholarly attention, has often focused on the roles of prominent white leaders within the abolitionist movement. However, Cameron offers a valuable corrective in that he underscores the ways in which the national abolitionist movement of the antebellum period was dependent on a longstanding tradition of black abolitionism centered in Massachusetts. While Americans may be more familiar with William Lloyd Garrison, Cameron reminds his readers that white abolitionists were heavily influenced by black leaders such as Lemuel Haynes, Prince Hall, and John Marrant.

The place of the black jeremiad is also prominent in Cameron's narrative. According to him, black abolitionists during the Revolutionary era appropriated the Puritan jeremiad for their own use. Even more precisely, he locates this with Caesar Sarter's 1774 essay on slavery, warning of God's sure wrath on the colonies for the peculiar institution. Readers interested in New England Puritanism will find much of interest here. Not only does Cameron persuasively make his case regarding the Puritan origins of the black jeremiad—a tradition in black preaching that continues today—but he also explores the broader implications of Reformed theology within these early strains of abolitionism. For example, he effectively places David Walker's famed 1829 *An Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* within this tradition, implying that

the pamphlet was not a prototype of later liberal Protestantism, but discourse that employed longstanding Reformed theological ideas.

Some readers will question Cameron's broad application of the term "Reformed theology." In fact, at times it does seem that he may have tried a bit too hard to force all kinds of Protestant theological ideas into this singular category. For example, he appears at times to miss the nuanced differences between traditional Puritan theologies of the 17th century and the diverse—and fractured—expressions of Calvinist revisions in the 18th century, especially in the New Divinity. Elsewhere, Cameron takes Puritan theological categories and asserts their presence within early black abolitionist discourse. For example, he relies heavily on the idea of covenant, contending that abolitionists relied on Puritan understandings of a covenant between God and New England to call for emancipation and abolition. However, this connection feels a bit forced at times. Warnings of divine judgment do not in themselves denote the presence of Puritan covenant theology. Besides, they have historical precedent throughout the history and development of Christian theology.

These minimal concerns aside, Cameron's book remains a valuable contribution and merits attention from a broad readership. One can also hope that it might prompt a wave of young scholars to give further attention to the ways in which theology—one might even call it a type of black theology—shaped both the experience and form of the African American religious experience. Cameron's work will be of interest not only to historians of race in early America, but should also be noted by religious historians. It reflects a promising new vista breaking in that connects theology and religion to the African American experience in the early national period.

Recent scholarship has drawn needed attention to the role race played in shaping colonial New England religion and culture. In addition to Richard Bailey's work (*Race and Redemption in Puritan New England*), *To Plead Our Own Cause*, Cameron's work, continues a welcome and needed effort on the part of scholars to understand the ways that ideas of race and religion shaped one another in colonial New England, often in ways that had lasting effects on broader American culture and society.

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In the Beginning God: A Fresh Look at the Case for Original Monotheism.
By Winfried Corduan Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2013, 368 pp.,
\$19.99 paper.

When one takes a course in a Religions Studies department of a university, chances are very good that the following narrative is taught and expected to be believed *de rigueur*: in the mists of time, homo sapiens originally believed in a kind of inchoate mystical animism which later evolved into some variety of polytheism, and at last found the apex of its development in the pinnacle of monotheism. Of course, a plain reading of the first eleven chapters of Genesis tells the opposite story.

Winfried Corduan sets out to make the case that based on historical evidence, the biblical story of the history of religion is the accurate version. Corduan critically revives the groundbreaking work of Wilhelm Schmidt's *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*. Schmidt's work argued for original monotheism, but it was basically marginalized and virtually ignored by mainstream scholarship. A significant contribution of Corduan is his analysis of the role that both presuppositions play in "objective scholarship" and how important method is in analyzing historical data and building a case.

He argues that the notion of original monotheism was never refuted but was basically rejected, because it did not fit in with the dominant *zeitgeist* of the times. Specious, but rhetorically compelling, critiques over-rode the careful detailed analysis of the historical data. In chapters 1-6, Corduan gives an overview of the "history of religions" common approach. In chapter 6, he discusses and attempts to rehabilitate the "cultural-historical" method of Wilhelm Schmidt and Fritz Graebner. He argues that the arguments that these men make in defending original monotheism were never defeated, but rather ignored because of certain scholarly assumptions and methods. Corduan does scholarship a great service by challenging the assumptions and methods of mainstream scholarship, thereby reversing the outcome of the paradigm. In chapter 9, Corduan shows how scholars like Eliade, Otto, and Durkheim attempted to skirt the historical by "demythologizing" the ancient stories.

In chapter 10, Corduan examines the stories of the great ancient civilizations of China, Egypt, African cultures, Indo-European (India), and Semitic peoples. He concludes that from the global testimony, "there appears to be ... a memory of a supreme being." The last chapter addresses the question of what has been learned from this exercise. What

are inferences for apologetics? In his own words, “We have shown that Wilhelm Schmidt’s conclusions still stand, and that, consequently, it is more reasonable to believe that the original religion of humanity was monotheism rather than some other alternatives, such as animism.”

Corduan’s status as a specialist in history of religions and comparative religions has only been enhanced by this careful and detailed work. It has been a labor of love for scholarship in general and the church in particular. Christians interested in apologetics should read this book.

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