

BOOK REVIEWS

GALATIANS (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament)

Thomas R. Schreiner

Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010 423pp £22.99hb ISBN: 9780310243724

This new series of commentaries from Zondervan has been specifically designed to be useful to pastors and Bible teachers. It uses Greek, but does not assume the user is an expert scholar. It gives a ‘main idea’ or theme sentence for each section of text covered (a sort of medieval scholastic idea which has enjoyed a revival in recent years). It contains up-to-date analysis of scholarly debates but does not get bogged down in them. And best yet, it has visual, graphic displays of the flow of thought in each passage which (and I am trying not to feel patronised!) was considered helpful for pastors (there’s even a nice ‘computer-like’ graphic to illustrate scrolling down the outline of the book). Each section ends with ‘theology in application’ which has some suggestions for applying the text in a congregational setting, and there is a useful overview of ‘themes in Galatians,’ interestingly placed at the end of the commentary rather than the beginning. Here and there throughout the commentary there is the odd grey box excursus looking at issues such as the role of Empire in Galatians, the translation of *pistis christou*, and ‘the Law of Christ.’

Tom Schreiner, a professor at Southern Baptist Seminary in Kentucky, will be known to many for his faithful work on the theology of Paul, excellent commentaries on Romans and Peter’s epistles, and for solid topical books on the Law, so-called ‘believer’s baptism’ (i.e. baptism for adult believers *only*), perseverance, and the gender issue. He is a prolific and careful scholar whose attention to detail does not preclude an understanding of the bigger picture, and he is clearly Reformed in his theological convictions. All this makes for an edifying, rich, and very useful commentary for preachers.

I was a bit puzzled by Schreiner’s description of the covenant theology of Galatians. For example, he asserts that ‘there is no straight-line continuity between the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. Paul does not conceive of them as the same covenant.’ He also says ‘Paul does not think the addition of the Mosaic covenant constitutes a clarification of the covenant with Abraham. They are fundamentally opposed.’ But Sinai is ‘subordinated’ to the Abrahamic promise, and is a conditional law covenant. Yet there is a ‘fundamental incompatibility’ between them. However, later he claims ‘This is not to say that the Mosaic covenant was not a covenant of grace’ (the very term usually employed by Reformed theologians to speak of the ‘straight-line continuity’ of God’s saving purposes) and indeed that the law and the promise ‘are not contradictory

but complementary.’ They are incompatible, but they fit together? I was confused at this point—is he saying that the Mosaic law is a conditionally gracious, fundamentally incompatible but subordinated, complementary covenant? I also found some of his comments (on not treating the Old Testament as ‘a flat entity’ for example) helpful, but others seemed to be somewhat removed from the point Paul was making in Galatians and to push Paul’s illustrative language a little further doctrinally than may be warranted by the rest of the New Testament.

But these are controversial issues and there has always been a range of recognizably Reformed opinions on how the Mosaic Law fits in. Plus, Galatians itself is pretty complicated in places! I found Schreiner immensely stimulating when preparing to preach a series on it, but by no means the last or clearest word. All the same, this is a fine all-round piece of work which robustly defends Reformation insights into the gospel against detractors old and new (including the New Perspective on Paul), and answers many of the questions a preacher will have. I look forward to further volumes in this promising series, which is edited by Clinton Arnold and lists Richard Bewes and Paul Gardner as Consulting Editors.

LEE GATISS

Church Society, Cambridge

THE LETTER TO THE GALATIANS (The Bible in Medieval Tradition)

Ian Christopher Levy, ed. and trans.

Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2011 277pp £22.99pb ISBN: 9780802822239

Thirty years ago the historian of biblical interpretation David Steinmetz published a provocative article called ‘The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis.’ He argued that our understanding of Scripture had not been entirely helped by nineteenth and twentieth century developments in historical criticism. ‘Until the historical-critical method becomes critical of its own theoretical foundations and develops a hermeneutical theory adequate to the nature of the text which it is interpreting,’ he said, ‘it will remain restricted—as it deserves to be—to the guild and the academy, where the question of truth can endlessly be deferred.’ More light could be gained, Steinmetz claimed, by returning to some aspects of the medieval approach to the Bible.

This volume, lovingly put together by Ian Levy, is an attempt to place a variety of medieval commentaries into the hands of Bible teachers and scholars, so we can see what Steinmetz was getting at. Previously, the six commentaries translated here (in whole or in part) lay un-translated, unedited, and therefore unloved by those without the energy or enthusiasm to chase them down and read them in Latin. This promises to be just the

first volume in a new project to give us renewed access to 'The Bible in Medieval Tradition' in a way that is similar to IVP's excellent (and more Patristic-focused) *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* series edited by Thomas Oden.

Levy begins by giving us a weighty and very useful introduction to medieval methods and styles of biblical interpretation, so that we are well briefed on what to expect. He then translates the whole of the Galatians commentaries by Haimo of Auxerre and Bruno the Carthusian, and the 'Questions on Galatians' of Robert of Melun. To these complete works are added samples from Peter Lombard on Galatians 2, Robert Grosseteste on Galatians 3, and Nicholas of Lyra on Galatians 4. So the book covers the period from the ninth century to the fourteenth, and gives us an excellent idea of what medieval exegesis looks like, with helpful clarifications and historical notes from the editor (with the help of modern commentaries by e.g. Betz and Longenecker) along the way.

I put this book to the test in preparing a series of sermons on Galatians. After reading the more recent commentaries of Dunn and Schreiner, I turned to these medieval glosses to see if they would bring me further light in my preparation. I was pleasantly surprised to find that on several occasions the technical discussions in the modern commentaries were mirrored by similar discussions in the medievals. We must not assume that ours is the first generation to read scripture with critical care and diligence. I was sad not to find the absurd allegories I had been led to believe were the stock-in-trade of pre-Reformation exegetes (always nice to have a giggle when doing sermon prep). Indeed, often the older commentaries were better written, clearer, nicely illustrated (verbally I mean, not pictorially), and certainly more aware of some of the theological implications of the text than many modern interpreters who attempt to make a virtue of isolating Galatians or other portions of the Bible from the canon, not to mention the history of Christian reflection. Parts of Bruno made it into the pulpit almost unedited (and unacknowledged) because he is so readable and often pithy. It was a joy to read of 'faith alone' in Grosseteste, and that 'through grace [Christ] is both the giver of faith and its very content.'

It is disappointing that although they were not entirely unaware of Greek and Hebrew, these men worked primarily from the Latin Bible, and so occasionally their etymology or grammar is not completely trustworthy. Renaissance humanism was, after all, a great gift to the church in making us more diligent to go back to the sources. Gordon Fee says in his Galatians commentary (2007) that he wants to read Galatians 'as if the Reformation never happened.' This is naïve and impossible for us, yet if we want to have a perspective on the text which takes it seriously as God's word but which is not skewed in its approach by the massive upheavals of either the Reformation or the New Perspective on Paul (which can lead modern commentators to spin the text in particular directions) there is

surely no better way to do it than to get this well-crafted little volume. I look forward to further volumes in a promising series.

LEE GATISS
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SCIENCE, RELIGION, AND NATURALISM: Where the Conflict Really Lies

Alvin Plantinga

New York: Oxford University Press, 2011 xvi+359pp £17.99hb
ISBN: 9780199812097

The recent rise of the ‘New Atheism’ has created the impression that science is implacably opposed to faith in God. Richard Dawkins takes it for granted that religion in general, and faith in God, has no place in a world of reason and science. Alvin Plantinga, a leading Reformed philosopher presently at the University of Notre Dame, offers a robust criticism of this outlook. In a demanding and occasionally dense argument, Plantinga argues that there is a superficial tension between science and belief in God, which masks a deeper congruence. While there might seem to be some support for the idea that science undermines religious faith, a deeper level of engagement shows that they have far more in common than is generally realized. Far from providing a secure foundation for the ‘New Atheism,’ science has the potential to erode it.

This is not an explicitly theological work, although its readers will easily discern major theological themes of importance. Plantinga’s focus lies primarily on the question of the reliability of human knowledge, and his criticism is primarily of *naturalism*—here understood as the view that nothing exists except the world that is known to and described by the natural sciences. Two of Plantinga’s arguments are of especial importance, and can easily be adopted and adapted by readers of *Churchman*.

First, Plantinga argues that a theistic framework—supremely, that offered by the Christian faith—offers us a conceptual framework which safeguards the reliability (within limits) of human reason. Naturalism is obliged to regard the reliability of human reason simply as a piece of unintended good luck. The Christian doctrine of creation, in marked contrast, holds that God created a natural order governed by immutable laws, and created humans in his image, providing us with faculties that allow us to discover that order by using perception and reason. For Plantinga, this way of thinking led inexorably to the rise of the natural sciences. It is no accident, he remarks, that the ‘scientific revolution’ took place in Christian Europe.

His second argument is particularly telling, and represents a development of C.S. Lewis's famous argument against naturalism. For Plantinga, a naturalistic conception of the world, especially the belief that we ourselves are products of unguided Darwinian evolution, makes it unreasonable for us to believe that our cognitive faculties are reliable, and that it is therefore also unreasonable to believe any theories they may lead us to develop—including the theory of evolution. Although Plantinga clearly has Dawkins partially in his gunsights at this point, his real target is Daniel Dennett, a philosopher who argues that Darwinism undermines much of religion and ethics. Plantinga takes him to task for a radical lack of consistency. If indeed Darwinism does undermine religion and ethics, it also undermines human rationality—and hence any outcomes of human reason, including Dennett's own naturalist philosophy.

There is much else to note and commend in this demanding and rewarding work. For example, Plantinga's notion of 'warrant'—the evidential basis of beliefs—is highly useful for Christian apologists. Yet the present reviewer regards the permanent value of this important book as lying in its demolition of the philosophical foundations of naturalism, and its critical implications for the beliefs of the 'New Atheism.' Not an easy read, admittedly—but for those with patience and perseverance, this is a highly commendable addition to a pastor's library.

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MAXIMUM IMPACT: Living and Loving for God's Glory

Wayne A. Mack

Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010 314pp £11.99pb
ISBN: 9781596382046

Few passages of the New Testament are more familiar than 1 Corinthians 13, and any in-depth study of the passage is faced with the challenge of making this familiar text fresh and exciting. This is the challenge acknowledged and accepted by Wayne A. Mack in this new book. While conceding that 1 Corinthians 13 is a familiar passage to Christians and non-Christians alike, Mack insists that it is one of the least-applied passages in the Bible. He seeks to help his readers gain a clearer understanding of what it really means to love, and to help them understand that even the best ministry efforts are in vain if love is not at the centre. The first two chapters explain how love is essential to have any impact for Christ, while the following chapters discuss each of the characteristics of love listed in 1 Corinthians 13. Mack does an excellent job of providing the reader with

numerous examples of each characteristic from elsewhere in the Bible, helping readers to understand how the idea is rooted in wider Scripture.

Maximum Impact is not without its weaknesses, however. The book is highly repetitive—something the author even acknowledges in a few instances. Each chapter begins with a reminder and explanation of why love is essential to making an impact for Christ. While the reminders seem heartfelt, the first two chapters have already dealt with this issue, and by the eighteenth chapter the explanation of the importance of studying love is simply not needed. While the repetition is meant to encourage the reader to keep the importance of love constantly in mind, it eventually becomes a nuisance and actually detracts from the main message of the book.

Maximum Impact is also very quote-heavy; much of the book consists of long block quotes from various authors. The reader benefits by being exposed to a variety of secondary literature, but the high number of long quotes drags out the material and makes for a very slow read. Cutting down on repetitive material and long quotes would have significantly shortened the length and thus made the book more inviting to readers.

Mack makes an obvious effort to deepen the reader's understanding of 1 Corinthians 13, and tries to expose the reader to some of the more 'technical' matters of language and translation. Unfortunately, in doing so, Mack commits a number of etymological errors when dealing with the meaning of Greek words, and so the reader must approach the 'word studies' in the book with caution and critical logic. Similarly, Mack often employs a mirror-reading technique in order to recreate the historical situations of certain biblical passages, and thus states matter-of-factly that which may or may not be true about the *Sitz im Leben* of the pericope being discussed.

Despite these criticisms, *Maximum Impact* achieves its main purpose—to challenge the reader to grow in love for Christ and for people. One cannot read the book without being convicted of lovelessness and challenged to grow. The book might be most effectively read as a weekly study—looking at one chapter each week. The in-depth discussion questions at the end of each chapter would lend themselves well to this format, and this approach might make the repeated material less of a monotony and more of a helpful reminder of what was studied the previous week.

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REPUBLOCRAAT: Confessions of a Liberal Conservative**Carl R. Trueman**

Philipsburg, New Jersey: P&R, 2010 110pp £7.99pb
 ISBN: 9781596381834

If you haven't lived in the United States you may wonder why anyone would bother to write: 'It is not obvious to me from reading Scripture that God really cares one way or the other about how health care is delivered.' If you have, you will realise just how provocative a sentence that is within the conservative evangelical world in which Carl Trueman serves as Professor of Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary. Either way you owe it to your continued education as a thinking Christian to consider the thesis of this book.

In a little over a hundred generously typeset pages the reader is given a brilliant tour-de-force analysis of contemporary American politics in its connection with the contemporary evangelical church. It is a fine example of the kind of witty but serious opinion-forming essay that sadly has gone out of fashion to be replaced by plodding tomes weighed down by earnest but sprawling footnotes.

The author is a British exile in America and although most of his time is spent on American politics, many of his examples are drawn from this side of the Atlantic. His basic thesis is that 'conservative Christianity does not require conservative politics or conservative cultural agendas.' He argues that in a democracy, politics is 'more complicated than either the political parties or your pastor tell you it is.'

An outline of the chapters that follow: 1. the contemporary Left in politics (it has left behind a fine tradition of concern about poverty but become captive to special interest groups); 2. secularisation in both Britain and the United States (the way that in the US religious language masks secular attitudes, eg. in the identification of the US as central in God's purposes); 3. the influence of Fox News (too often taken by American evangelicals as politically unbiased); 4. the nature of consumerism and the free market (which must be recognised as deeply affected by idolatry, though there is no obvious alternative); 5. the superficiality and polarisation of much partisan electoral politics because of political parties and the media (unsubtle black-and-white thinking; egregious sentimentality, conspiracy theories); and finally a plea for realistic, non-utopian expectations, which included a fine, nuanced reassessment of the widespread evangelical nostrum that abortion should be the single determining factor in voting (since the Republican Party hasn't done much about it when in power anyway).

The range of reference is enormous. The quality of analysis provocative. No one will agree with everything and that is not the author's point. Above all he seems concerned to try to make us think

harder and more incisively. For Americans it should shoot to the top of your Amazon wish list. For anyone reading American political theology whether it be Jim Wallis or Wayne Grudem, this is a vital book for you to ponder. For other non-Americans, I would still make it a must buy—the subject matter so important, the analysis so well-informed and suggestive, the style so witty and impassioned, the whole such a powerful stimulant to better thinking.

JULIAN HARDYMAN

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GOSPEL CLARITY: Challenging the New Perspective on Paul

William B. Barclay with Ligon Duncan

Carlisle: EP Books, 2010 190pp £8.99pb ISBN: 9780852347331

This is a short easy to read book, introducing non-experts to the New Perspective on Paul (NPP) and its problems. The authors articulate the challenge of their book: it is from a Reformed perspective but not written exclusively for that constituency, and it deals with the whole scope of NPP which, as they point out, is an extremely diverse group from unbelievers to liberals to those verging on Reformed territory. And all that in a small book for people who are new to the subject.

This means that there are a few tensions. For example there are comments made about the NPP that would not apply to say, N.T. Wright, or words such as ‘righteousness’ or ‘saved’ used in different ways to NPP where they appear to be speaking at cross purposes. There are also a couple of times where Wright in particular has not been presented with adequate nuance. On a couple of occasions, statements are made that are meant to be in opposition to Wright, that I couldn’t help but think Wright would agree with, although possibly mean something slightly different, for instance about election.

Having said that, one does get a very good feel for quite a diverse movement and what some common threads are. There is a mostly helpful chapter devoted to Wright, in which the traditional Reformed view is put forward very clearly. In doing this they counter some of Wright’s straw men which he easily blows away. Some of Wright’s ‘breakthroughs’ are in fact old mainstream Reformed thought and this is shown to be the case. However, there are areas where Wright (and NPP generally) departs from this, regarding the three uses of the law and the nature of his covenant framework. These bits are useful for straightforward comparisons. The compelling line throughout the book, as the title suggests, is that the gospel is clear from Scripture and the NPP can obscure it and keep it in the hands of ‘experts.’

All in all a helpful starting place to get a handle on the NPP, but the potential problem is where they have in a small number of places misrepresented NPP (or Wright) which means people may be arguing against the wrong objections. Or worse, if somebody read this then Wright's *Justification: God's plan and Paul's vision*, it might make them question the good and accurate parts of *Gospel Clarity*.

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ENTRUSTED WITH THE GOSPEL: Fan the Flame

D.A. Carson, ed.

Nottingham: IVP, 2010 158pp £8.99pb ISBN: 9781844744893

This book is an edited compilation of a series of expositions on 2 Timothy given during the national conference of The Gospel Coalition in 2009. It is intended to equip young and 'would-be' pastors with Paul's wisdom to Timothy concerning ministry. Through the contributions of experienced pastors, readers are encouraged to think seriously about the pitfalls, dangers, and difficulties as well as the joyful promises of full-time pastoral work.

The book is divided into chapters that go through 2 Timothy in sections. The first exposition, 'Feed the Flame of God's Gift: Unashamed Courage in the Gospel,' by John Piper, focuses on 2 Timothy 1:1–12. In his characteristic passionate and personal style, Piper rephrases these verses as Paul saying, 'Timothy, keep feeding the white-hot flame of God's gift—of unashamed courage to speak openly of Christ and to suffer for the gospel.' Piper rightly warns that anyone who wants an easy and untroubled life should not enter ministry. In 'The Pattern of Sound Words' (2 Tim. 1:13–2:13), Philip Ryken stresses the importance of teaching the church sound doctrine, which is not merely theological speculation but 'a practical way of life.' Faithfulness to the call of gospel ministry is to trust Jesus absolutely for everything, which requires arduous work. However, ministry does not rest on our faithfulness, but on God's unwavering faithfulness to his word. In the third exposition, 'The Marks of Positive Ministry' (2 Tim. 2:12–26), Mark Driscoll presents a helpful analysis of three types of church-goers: neutrals, negatives, and positives. Positives are helpful, involved and generally a blessing to any congregation. Negatives create endless strife and quarrels. Neutrals are caught in the cross-fire and can easily fall under the influence of negatives. Driscoll drives home the need for pastors to be proactive in ordering their house and keeping a ministry positive.

In chapter 4, 'Shadowlands: Pitfalls and Parodies of Gospel-Centered Ministry' (2 Tim. 3:1–9), K. Edward Copeland laments the trend of people wanting to be ministers for 'big things and big names' without caring much for how to handle the word of truth. He rebukes selfish ambition and vanity. Ministers must be on their guard against idols in their culture and all gospel impersonators. Moreover, in this crucial eschatological time before Jesus' return, ministers must believe wholeheartedly that God will win this battle for his kingdom. In 'Preach the Word' (2 Tim. 3:10–4:5), Bryan Chapell returns to the primacy and divine inspiration of the Word of God. How a preacher understands the nature and power of the word will determine how they care for their church. Chapell reminds us that in the Scriptures, '*we hear the voice of God, see the hand of God and know the heart of God.*' Lastly, J. Ligon Duncan, in 'Finishing Well' (2 Tim. 4:6–22), shows how Paul pushes Timothy toward the finish line of completing his ministry by showing that he himself is about to finish the race. We must learn to look back at how the saints have finished the race well, in order to be inspired in the same. Duncan prays for all pastors that God's peace would be with them, despite all worldly opposition and sin, 'until the day breaks and the shadows flee away.'

This book is a much needed eye-opener for those who are thinking seriously about full-time ministry, or who have just entered this call. It will also serve pastors who have been ministering for many years. It is full of practical wisdom that will help reorientate priorities in ministry to reflect God's glory. The book can sound 'preachy' and at points emphasises the exigencies of the call to such an extent that it sounds impossible and crushing. However, given the constant return to God's graceful faithfulness, provision, and sovereignty, it is in the end quite balanced and offers a valuable, realistic picture of pastoral work.

JAVIER A. GARCIA
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TEN MYTHS ABOUT CALVINISM: Recovering the Breadth of the Reformed Tradition

Kenneth J. Stewart

IVP Apollos, 2011 300pp £10.49pb ISBN: 9781844745135

'Of all people who engage in controversy, we who are called Calvinists are most expressly bound by our own principles to the exercise of gentleness and moderation.' So wrote John Newton to a younger minister friend. And yet so often Calvinists have not heeded Newton's wisdom and are known rather for being abrasive and narrow. Whilst it is heartening to see a revival in reformed theology (so much so, in March 2009 *Time*

magazine listed new Calvinism as being among the ‘10 ideas changing the world right now’), with so many claiming the label ‘reformed’ it is vital that we are clear on what that term does and does not mean. Kenneth Stewart’s fresh and timely examination of ‘Calvinism’ is a sure guide that helps us navigate both the history and theology of the reformed tradition and provides some deeply important contemporary applications.

Stewart writes for both the reformed and those with non reformed views. So the first four myths are ones ‘Calvinists should not be circulating (but are),’ and the next six myths are ones ‘non-Calvinists should not be circulating (but are).’ In chapter one he exposes the first myth—that Calvin and Geneva determine and define the reformed movement. Stewart shows that Calvin’s views don’t trump all others, reminding us that the reformation was a multi-leadered and multi-cities work of God. Geneva was not the new Jerusalem, and Calvin was not the new Pope.

This is then teased out in his second chapter where he examines the reformers’ views on single and double predestination. Quite apart from the fact that Calvin himself seems to have fluctuated on this over time, leaders of the reformation thought differently on this issue. Thus confessional statements rather than an individual reformer’s pronouncements on this (and every) issue are what should shape reformed identity. With some excellent historical detective work, chapter three shows that the acronym TULIP was not a sixteenth century creed, but something which first appeared in the twentieth century. Understanding this will keep us from using TULIP as the touchstone of reformed theology, and therefore fragmenting when we should be uniting.

One of the areas where ‘Calvinists’ have fragmented is over the issue of revivals. Chapter four shows that although ‘hyper-Calvinists’ erroneously have a dim view of these, reformed Christians have played a key role in revivals. Indeed reformed Christians participated and rejoiced in a number of revivals in Europe and the new world before the eighteenth century. This carries over into myth number five, namely that ‘Calvinism is largely anti-missionary.’ Quite apart from the fact that many of the best evangelists and missionaries have been reformed, Stewart draws our attention to less well-known early missionary endeavours, showing that modern missions didn’t begin with William Carey.

Addressing the last five myths Stewart focuses on more specific theological issues and deftly demolishes the following: Calvinism promotes antinomianism; Calvinism leads to theocracy; Calvinism undermines the creative arts; Calvinism resists gender equality; and Calvinism has fostered racial inequality. But perhaps the best part of this excellent book is the last chapter where Stewart pulls his findings together and calls on us to ‘recover our bearings.’ By identifying six waves of the reformed movement, he calls on those of us in the current wave to admit interdependence, to be

loyal to the past and present, to avoid triumphalism, and to pursue unity and show forbearance.

Perhaps the aim of the book can be summed up in this sentence from the final paragraph: 'We need fewer angular, sharp-elbowed Calvinists who glory in what distinguishes their stance from that of others, and a lot more supporters of the Reformed faith who rejoice in what they hold in common with others.' Absolutely. This is a book which everyone interested in reformed theology, whether for it, against it, or simply thinking about it, would greatly benefit from reading.

ROBIN WEEKES

Emmanuel Church, Wimbledon

A WAY TO PRAY: A Biblical Method for Enriching your Prayer Life and Language by Shaping your Words with Scripture

Matthew Henry, ed. and revised by O. Palmer Robertson

Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2010 440pp £14.50hb

ISBN: 9781848710870

A SAMPLER FROM 'A WAY TO PRAY': Using the Words of Scripture to Enrich Prayer

Matthew Henry, updated and revised by O. Palmer Robertson

Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2010 65pp £3.25pb

ISBN: 9781848710887

PRAYERS ON THE PSALMS

From the Scottish Psalter of 1595

Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2010 152pp £3.25pb

ISBN: 9781848710955

Matthew Henry's *A Method of Prayer* is based on one brilliantly simple idea: praying in the words of Scripture. Thus we pray in the Holy Spirit as we pray the words the Spirit inspired, asking the Lord to honour his promises, and our desires are conformed to the Spirit's desires. Matthew Henry was baptised and raised in one of the churches I have the honour of serving, and I have held in my hands the Bible he had before him when writing the *Method* and his great commentary. It was therefore a great pleasure to recommend in *Churchman*, summer 2008, the new edition of the *Method* edited by Dr Ligon Duncan; and it is a great pleasure to welcome this new edition (renamed *A Way to Pray*) revised and updated by Dr O. Palmer Robertson of African Bible University, Kampala. Dr Robertson has simplified the structure and layout, modernized the language from that of the King James Version, and put the biblical references in

parentheses in the text, rather than as end notes, thus making the *Method* much easier for the reader to use. There is also some new material, such as a prayer for adult baptisms.

Banner of Truth have also published two complementary books in their 'Pocket Puritans' series. Their size means that they are easily slipped into pocket or briefcase by the busy commuter or minister, and they would make excellent Christmas gifts. The first is a sampler of extracts from *A Way to Pray*. The second is a long-buried little gem of a book: the brief and beautiful collects that were appended to every Psalm in the 1595 metrical psalter of the Kirk of Scotland, bringing the themes of each Psalm together in explicitly Christian prayers. They are translations of French prayers by Augustin Marlorat, a friend and colleague of Calvin and Beza, and one of the brave band of men sent from Geneva to pastor the French Protestant churches; he died as a martyr at Rouen in 1562. His prayers were later to nourish the persecuted Huguenots and Covenanters; as it becomes clear that Christians in Britain will face increasing persecution, may they nourish us also.

Readers may also like to visit www.matthewhenry.org, where among other resources, they can have a daily prayer from the *Method* sent by e-mail.

STEPHEN WALTON,
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PAUL UNBOUND: Other Perspectives on the Apostle

M. D. Given, ed.

Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010 210pp £16.99pb ISBN: 9781598563245

This new collection of essays seeks to 'unbind' St. Paul from the strictures of 'tradition' and 'theology,' and so allow the Apostle to be re-encountered through a variety of more contemporary approaches. The eight essays range widely, from Paul's interaction with Judaism and the Roman Empire to his views on women, ethnicity, and the economy. The authors, all distinguished North American scholars, are principally concerned to survey the current scholarly landscape rather than commend their own particular viewpoints, although the reader will occasionally detect a liberal bias (as in the assumption that Paul did not write the Pastorals).

The most impressive essay is on 'Paul and the Law' by A. Andrew Das, which gives an admirably clear and judicious account of this particularly complex (not to mention contentious) debate. Most of the other material, however, is somewhat disappointing. Three besetting sins can be identified.

Firstly, a number of the essays reveal an implicit (sometimes explicit) dissatisfaction with Christian orthodoxy—whether in its shameful alliance with capitalist economics (Paul here becomes a pioneering Christian communist betrayed by his interpreters), or in its inattentiveness to female voices (both in Paul’s churches, and in the contemporary world). The most troubling essay in this regard is that by Mark Nanos on Paul and Judaism, which so emphasises Paul’s continuing self-identity as a faithful Jew that one wonders how the Apostle could have considered all the achievements of his former life as so much ‘rubbish’ (Phil 3:8), or indeed why he five times ‘received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one’ (2 Cor 11:24).

Secondly, there is a lamentable lack of Biblical exegesis in this volume. No doubt this partly reflects the contributors’ wish to distance themselves from ‘traditional’ ways of understanding the Apostle, but when ‘Zulu nationalism in Bishop Colenso’s Commentary on Romans’ gets a lavish three-page treatment, whilst the Epistle to the Ephesians is granted one cursory name check in the entire book, one begins to question how far these much-fêted ‘other perspectives’ on Paul are securely grounded in the text of his letters. There is, it must be acknowledged, a perceptive analysis of Paul’s use of rhetoric in 1 Corinthians from Mark Given, helpfully interacting with Margaret Mitchell’s seminal study, but the other extended attempts to grapple with particular Pauline material (e.g. Gal 3:28 on ethnicity, or 1 Tim 2 on women) are rather too much in the thrall of the social sciences to attend carefully to what Paul is trying to say.

Thirdly, the guiding principle of the volume is surely open to question. How can one seek to understand Paul (let alone ‘unbind’ him) if one excludes his theology? To do so is not to liberate Paul but to lose him—the figure revealed in the pages of this book is ultimately a somewhat anaemic character, without a gospel and without a Lord. If this is ‘Paul unbound,’ it would probably be better if he were tied up again.

MARK SMITH
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NO OTHER GOSPEL: 31 reasons from Galatians why Justification by Faith Alone is the Only Gospel,

Josh Moody

Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2011

287pp

£8.65pb

ISBN: 9781433515675

Martin Luther famously called justification by faith alone ‘the article upon which the church stands or falls.’ Which explains why around the world we see churches growing and collapsing, as this cornerstone of the

gospel is proclaimed by some and abandoned by others. Moody's book (which began life as a sermon series on Galatians at College Church in Wheaton) is an important contribution to the recovery of the authentic gospel in our day. At a time when the gospel is being assumed, adjusted, and at times abandoned, we need more than ever to be asking 'what is the gospel?' This book helps us get into the Bible's answer to that question.

Moody's exegesis of Galatians is meticulous. He has a great gift for engaging with the text and its theological issues without getting too technical for the average reader. For example, at a point where Moody directly confronts the 'New Perspective,' in relation to Paul's use of Ps 143:2 in Galatians 2:16, he comments, 'People look at the context of the word *justification* in Galatians 2, table fellowship, and say that justification is about covenant markers for membership of the community. This is wrong; it is not what the word *justification* means...behind these apparently small things, such as food rituals, is the much bigger issue of how we're accepted before God, and, therefore, who we accept into God's family.' Perhaps the Reformers read Paul correctly after all. This is an urgent call to return to the God-pleasing, Saviour-exalting, Spirit-empowering gospel, and to forsake the 'different gospels' which pervade so much of modern 'evangelicalism.'

Moody's illustrations are both diverse (from the Black Eyed Peas to Arthur Miller) and fresh. And the application of the gospel of Galatians is so penetrating that it is clear that Moody has done the 'heart' work in his own life, before applying it to his hearers. Take for example his sub-headings for chapter 11 on Galatians 2:11-14 and why Peter and the rest of the Jews messed up: 'They didn't get that what you do as a Christian needs to come out of what you believe; they didn't get that what you do actually shows what you really believe; they didn't get that what you do will change what other people believe; they didn't get that what you do changes what you believe.' Brilliant.

This is a book for preachers, for bookstalls, for those who love the gospel and for those who are unclear on the gospel. Because as Luther once wrote, 'The article of justification is the master and prince, the lord, the ruler, and the judge over all kinds of doctrines; it preserves and governs all church doctrine and raises up our conscience before God. Without this article the world is utter death and darkness.'

ROBIN WEEKES

Emmanuel Church, Wimbledon

CHURCH PLANTING IS FOR WIMPS: How God uses Messed-up People to Plant Ordinary Churches that do Extraordinary Things

Mike McKinley

Wheaton: Crossway, 2010 128pp £7.99pb ISBN: 9781433514975

This short book is not an overview of church planting principles and practices; rather it is the story of one pastor, his family and their church. And it is all the better for it! Mike McKinley writes in a down to earth, self-deprecating, and humorous style. His style may not be to everyone's taste but many will find it refreshing and helpful. He tells the story of moving to a run-down and dying church and leading the work of reviving it. The story is then one of church planting by revitalising rather than planting from scratch.

The book is one of the IX Marks series and readers familiar with their titles won't be surprised to find some of the IX Marks basics like preaching, church membership, elders, and constitutions given a strong place. One of the central arguments is that these foundations need to be given attention, and more so than issues like vision statements or mission statements. I thought some of the dismissing of mission statements was superficial but this is more a book of opinions than careful arguments—and the arguments that there are, are still good ones.

The book is at its strongest in telling one pastor's story and being honest about his experiences. Honest about uncertainty, honest about slow growth, honest about marriage difficulties. Within this you are pushed to God, his grace, and his work through ordinary people. There are also some wonderful heart-warming and encouraging stories of how God worked in surprising ways within the journey.

All in all it's an easy read, covering what may be familiar territory to many, but I was very glad I read it.

GRAHAM BEYNON
Grace Church, Cambridge

THE DOCUMENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (4th Edition)

Henry Bettenson and Chris Maunder eds.

OUP, 2011 560pp £16.99pb ISBN: 9780199568987

This is a new and improved version of a popular and accessible old classic (last updated in 1999), which brings together some of the most significant documents and texts in church history. There are always things with which one could quibble in such anthologies. The editorial glosses are sometimes tendentious and not positive towards Reformed Protestantism. The sixth to the tenth centuries are under-represented (a shame not to

have some of the 'Carolingian Calvinism' of Gottschalk and Ratramnus for example). I would have liked to have seen the Thirty-nine Articles included somewhere, and at least some of the Heidelberg Catechism, Belgic Confession, or Canons of Dort (though it is interesting that the Five Points of Arminianism are included, in the section on Counter-Reformation Catholicism!). There is a section claiming to represent seventeenth century 'Anglicanism' which is basically full of Laudians, and sadly no hint of George Whitefield's impact in the eighteenth century. The church's everyday work of preaching or commenting on Scripture is almost entirely absent, but perhaps that is for a different compilation?

The new sections draw together modern material, including something from GAFCON, Katharine Jefferts Schori, Alister McGrath on Richard Dawkins, and a Roman Catholic statement about the internet. Socio-economic and 'justice' issues predominate in the more up to date selections, and there could have been more on Eastern Orthodoxy. But the editor includes material which he strongly disagrees with (e.g. Patrick Sookhdeo on the challenge of Islam) for which he is to be commended, and it is of course an incredibly difficult job to anthologise twenty centuries! Overall, more period-specific collections (such as Gerald Bray's excellent *Documents of the English Reformation*) will continue to be indispensable, but the updated Bettenson and Maunder remains a very useful repository of a broad range of standard texts from across the centuries.

LEE GATISS

Church Society, Cambridge

EVANGELICAL MILLENNIALISM in the Trans-Atlantic World, 1500-2000 **Crawford Gribben**

Palgrave Macmillan, 2011 224pp £50hb ISBN: 9780230008250

Millions of evangelicals continue to expect the final transformation of a slowly dying world, and this book is a great guide to the sheer diversity of their opinions on the subject. Crawford Gribben has already written extensively on early modern and modern eschatology. His work *The Puritan Millennium* (Paternoster, second edition, 2008), for example, is a must-read for those who are serious about engaging sixteenth and seventeenth century millennial views, and he has also written on the modern penchant for rapture fiction. This current work, however, stretches the net even further, to take in evangelical views of the expectation of an earthly golden age on both sides of the Atlantic over the last five hundred years. Six roughly equal chapters engage with the emergence, formation, consolidation, expansion, content, and dominance of evangelical millennialism. The book begins, innovatively, with a glossary. These are

usually put at the end of course, but here it is vital to be clear on various terms and -isms right from the start. Some of this material is repeated at appropriate points as the book progresses, and Gribben proves an expert commentator on the vast literature and nuanced terminology of both evangelicalism and eschatology. He is a master of every fine distinction and exegetical turn but manages to combine this with a fairly light touch in presentation.

As someone who grew up enjoying Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth* (and Nostradamus!) but has come to appreciate the amillennialism of the major Reformation confessions, this book is a powerful reminder of just how many different options I could have plumped for and still remained evangelical. It is also a somewhat humbling shock to the system as one realises that great evangelicals of the past have differed so widely on these issues, and the author sees the continuation of this as strong evidence that end-times thinking is a secondary issue in many constituencies today. Gribben is right to conclude that 'the urgent and often political prophetic enquiry of North American premillennialists can seem closer to the puritan legacy than the passivity of many of their amillennial or postmillennial cousins,' but perhaps this should prompt us to action and to recall that one doesn't have to be wacky to wonder what God is doing in the world, and when it might come to an end. It is a shame that this excellent little tour guide to the last 500 years of writing on this subject is outside the reach of many pockets.

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