

## ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SEMINARY STUDIES

The Journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University  
4145 E. Campus Circle Drive, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104-1550, USA

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*Subscription Information:* *ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SEMINARY STUDIES (AUSS)* is published in Spring and Autumn. The subscription rates for 2017 are as follows:

Institutions	USD 42.00
Individuals	USD 24.00
Students/Retirees	USD 18.00

Price for Single Copy is USD 12.00.

Printed by Patterson Printing, Benton Harbor, Michigan

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ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SEMINARY STUDIES

Volume 55

Autumn 2017

Number 2

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**FAITHFULNESS TO CHRIST AS COVENANT FIDELITY:  
THE PASTORAL PURPOSE BEHIND THE OLD TESTAMENT  
ALLUSIONS IN THE SEVEN MESSAGES OF REVELATION 2–3**

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*Abstract*

The multivalent symbols in the seven messages of Rev 2–3 come from three primary sources: (1) the socio-historical setting of Asia Minor, (2) the opening chapter of Revelation, and (3) Old Testament allusions. It is the last of these that is of interest in this essay. Specifically, the character of these allusions displays a covenantal quality akin to the Israelite pact initiated at Mt. Sinai. While many have sought to demonstrate the covenantal background of the seven messages through shared structure, none has considered the nature of the Old Testament allusions themselves, as well as the paraenetic function they have for the recipients of the message. This article seeks to demonstrate that the Old Testament allusions in Rev 2–3 convey a covenantal character for the pastoral purpose of encouraging the churches to remain faithful to Jesus, their covenant suzerain/king.

*Keywords:* Revelation, covenant, seven messages, Old Testament allusions

*Introduction*

Scholars have demonstrated that the major elements of biblical covenants are similar to Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) suzerain/vassal treaties and land grants.<sup>1</sup> For the covenant participants, it implied a shared reign as viceroys under the king. The people identified themselves with their king (e.g., “the people of YHWH”) as his chosen or elect group. Additionally, the king promised to bless them with prosperity in a lush and fertile land wherein he could dwell with them. In the case of cultic worship, the deity would deign

<sup>1</sup>George E. Mendenhall, “Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition,” *BA* 17.3 (1954): 50–76; idem, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Biblical Colloquium, 1955); James Muilenburg, “Form and Structure of the Covenantal Formulations,” *VT* 9.4 (1959): 347–365; Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963); Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963). Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum described these two aspects of ANE covenant: “The first type is a diplomatic treaty between a great king or suzerain and client kings or vassals . . . . The second type of treaty involves a grant of property or even a privileged position of a priestly or royal office given as a favour by a god or king” (*Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012], 133).

to dwell with the people, typically in a temple. However, the stipulations of the covenant required obedience on the part of the people. Should they seek after another king (e.g., allegiance to Rome) or participate with another god (e.g., the Roman imperial cult or pagan idolatry) and thus violate the covenant, the king would be forced to take measures of punishment, which often involved removal from the land or even death. This was the relationship that YHWH had with Israel as presented in the Old Testament (OT). It was also the basis of John's pastoral encouragement and call to repentance to the seven new covenant communities of Christians in the book of Revelation.

These covenantal elements abound throughout the OT allusions used in the seven messages of Rev 2–3.<sup>2</sup> They paint a picture of covenantal blessings and curses, as well as display Christ as the churches' suzerain. In a recent article, this author argued that the OT allusions found in the seventh message to Laodicea (Rev 3:14–22) had a very distinct covenantal character to them, emphasizing Jesus's suzerain aspect of rule, the presence of God, and exile as punishment.<sup>3</sup> That was a focused study which demonstrated that the message to Laodicea utilized a covenantal backdrop *through its OT allusions*. It went beyond arguments of covenant structures typically made by those who maintain a covenantal theme in either Revelation as a whole or just the seven messages.<sup>4</sup>

This article is an attempt at a broader approach of that same study, being applied to the other six preceding messages. From such a task, one is able to glean pastoral and paraenetic motives for using covenantal OT allusions—namely, to unleash a rigorous faithfulness to Christ as well as warn against

<sup>2</sup>The generic designation “message” is purposefully used since there is not agreement as to the genre of the messages. Options consist of “letters” patterned after the Greco-Roman style (William Mitchell Ramsay, *The Letters of the Seven Churches of Asia and Their Place in the Plan of the Apocalypse* [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1904], 35–36; Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002], 104–107), something consistent with Greek oratory (John T. Kirby, “The Rhetorical Situations of Revelation 1–3,” *NTS* 34.2 [1988]: 200), “prophetic oracles” based on covenantal lawsuit patterns (Alan S. Bandy, “Patterns of Prophetic Lawsuits in the Oracles to the Seven Churches,” *Neot* 45.2 [2011]: 178–205), a “covenant treaty” (Gordon Campbell, *Reading Revelation: A Thematic Approach*, English ed. [Cambridge: James Clarke, 2012], 280), and most popularly as “imperial edicts” (David E. Aune, “The Form and Function of the Proclamations to the Seven Churches [Revelation 2–3],” *NTS* 36.2 [1990]: 182–204).

<sup>3</sup>Timothy L. Decker, “‘Live Long in the Land’: The Covenantal Character of the Old Testament Allusions in the Message to Laodicea (Revelation 3:14–22),” *Neot* 48.2 (2014): 417–446.

<sup>4</sup>See James Du Preez, “Ancient Near Eastern Vassal Treaties and the Book of Revelation: Possible Links,” *RSA* 2.2 (1981): 33–43; William H. Shea, “The Covenantal Form of the Letters to the Seven Churches,” *AUSS* 21.1 (1983): 71–84; Kenneth A. Strand, “A Further Note on the Covenantal Form in the Book of Revelation,” *AUSS* 21.3 (1983): 251–64; David E. Graves, “The Influence of Ancient Near Eastern Vassal Treaties on the Seven Prophetic Messages in Revelation with Special Reference to the Message to Smyrna” (PhD diss., University of Aberdeen, 2008); Bandy, “Patterns of Prophetic Lawsuits.”

the punishments of infidelity. This article will seek to demonstrate that these messages use the backdrop of Israel's covenant to emphasize to these churches a new covenant awareness. Some churches were in violation of their covenantal status in Christ by participating in the Roman imperial cult or other syncretistic problems. Conversely, there were some churches that experienced persecution for their extreme fidelity to Jesus. These needed encouragement and hope. And then there were others on the verge of dissension and in need of a stern warning. Based on ANE covenantal treaties and especially God's covenant with Israel, the prophetic or pastoral emphasis can be deduced by way of covenantal blessings or curses—blessings by way of enjoying the presence of God in the place God has designated (i.e., the Promised Land) or curses, primarily exile from God's presence and place.<sup>5</sup> John masterfully incorporated OT allusions in these messages to convey either the blessing for covenant fidelity to Christ or cursing for covenant breach.

Due to the size of this task and the limitations of space, the depth of investigation will not be as comprehensive as the previous study. There can only be observations of verbal or thematic links without lengthy displays of evidence to confirm the allusion.<sup>6</sup> There will also be a limit to the first

<sup>5</sup>Particularly, these allusions are thematically reminiscent of covenantal stipulations, curses, and blessings as found in the summary of Israel's covenant in Deut 27–30. Concerning the connection between ANE covenants and Deuteronomy, Meredith G. Kline said, "When suzerainty covenants were renewed, new documents were prepared in which the stipulations were brought up to date. Deuteronomy is such a covenant renewal document" ("The Two Tables of the Covenant," *WTJ* 22.2 [1960]: 140). N. T. Wright insisted, "Deuteronomy is the major work of covenant theology" (*The New Testament and the People of God*, vol. 1 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992], 261). Muilenburg said, "The Book of Deuteronomy is the covenant book κατ' ἐξοχήν." ("Form and Structure," 350). James Du Preez referred to Deuteronomy as "the Covenant book *par excellence*" ("Mission Perspective in the Book of Revelation," *EvQ* 42.3 [1970]: 154).

<sup>6</sup>The methodology for determining and assessing OT allusions espoused here is generally patterned after the works proposed by G. K. Beale, *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation*, JSNTSup 166 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998); idem, "The Use of the Old Testament in Revelation," in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Text? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New*, ed. G. K. Beale (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994); idem, "A Response to Jon Paulien on the Use of the Old Testament in Revelation," *AUSS* 39.1 (2001): 23–33; as well as Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), xi, 298; and con. the views held by Steve Moyise, "Authorial Intention and the Book of Revelation," *AUSS* 39.1 (2001): 35–40; idem, *The Old Testament in the Book of Revelation*, JSNTSup 115 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995); Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998), 153. For a helpful summary of the debate between Beale and Moyise, see Jon Paulien, "Dreading the Whirlwind: Intertextuality and the Use of the Old Testament in Revelation," *AUSS* 39.1 (2001): 5–22. As mentioned in the previous study, the categories of clear allusions, probable allusions, and possible allusions according to Beale, *John's Use*, 62–63, and an adaption of Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation: Visionary Antecedents and Their*

six messages, since there is no need to plod again through old terrain. Nevertheless, there are enough notable and obvious OT allusions, in addition to some less confident ones in the first six messages, that will help to confirm the hypothesis posed here that the OT allusions draw from covenantal themes and imagery in order to demonstrate a pastoral emphasis for the readers.<sup>7</sup>

*Old Testament Allusions in the Messages  
to Ephesus (Revelation 2:1–7)*

The initial message to Ephesus is rich with imagery and allusions from the OT. It serves as an *inclusio* with the final message to Laodicea in terms of their shared narrative of creation to new creation.<sup>8</sup> A prominent OT image in the first message is the reference to the Garden of Eden (Rev 2:7), “To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”<sup>9</sup> However, there are other subtler references to the Garden of Eden, as well as themes of temple and removal from the presence of God.

At the beginning of the message, Jesus is described as walking among the seven golden lampstands (Rev 2:1). The first mention of these lampstands occurred in Rev 1:12–13, and John provided their interpretation as representing the seven churches (Rev 1:20). This allusion in Rev 2:1 is a dual reference to both the scene in Eden and the tabernacle/temple furniture. Beale noted some significant features of this OT image. First, while the general background is from Exod 25, 37 and Num 8 (in regards to the tabernacle furniture),<sup>10</sup> the direct allusion comes from Zech 4:2, 10: “And he said to

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*Development*, LNTS 93 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 280, will again be the demarcation of allusions.

<sup>7</sup>While some messages are replete with OT imagery, others have very little. To avoid partiality, the messages will be examined in the order they appear in Rev 2–3. In addition, the allusions chosen for analysis appear from the list compiled from Susan Mathews, “A Critical Evaluation of the Allusions to the Old Testament in Apocalypse 1:1–8:5” (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1987), as well as Beale and Sean McDonough’s list in their chapter “Revelation,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 1081–1162. There are also additional allusions for consideration not cited by these two sources.

<sup>8</sup>Though not recognized as an *inclusio*, Matthijs Den Dulk is closest to this assertion (“The Promises of the Conquerors in the Book of Revelation,” *Bib* 87.4 [2006]: 516–517). For the themes of new creation in the message to Laodicea, see Decker, “The Covenantal Character,” and Beale, “The Old Testament Background of Rev 3.14,” *NTS* 42.1 (1996): 133–152.

<sup>9</sup>All Scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2001) unless otherwise noted.

<sup>10</sup>Of the significance of the lampstands and its relationship to the theme of covenant, Gordon Campbell said, “The seven lampstands (1:12–13, 20) evoke the lamps and seven-branched candlestick of Tabernacle worship (Exod 25:31, 37) described for Moses in the covenant ratification narrated by Exod 24” (“Findings, Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls: Variations upon the Theme of Covenant Rupture and Restoration in the Book of Revelation,” *WTJ* 66.1 [2004]: 74).



me, ‘What do you see?’ I said, ‘I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it’. . . . For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. ‘These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth.’” Second, the lampstands are a synecdoche “by which part of the temple furniture stands for the whole temple.”<sup>11</sup> Third and quite obvious, the presence of God was located in the tabernacle/temple. Finally, “[T]he lamps on the lampstand in Zech. 4.2–5 are interpreted in 4.6 as representing God’s presence or Spirit, which served to empower Israel (as the lampstand) to finish re-building the temple.”<sup>12</sup> What occurs in this allusion is a reference to an expanding biblical theological theme and a New Testament metaphor that God’s temple is now the church, the new covenant people of God.<sup>13</sup>

In so doing, John connected the concept of God’s presence in the temple and the Garden of Eden together in this message.<sup>14</sup> The first instance of this connection is the surreptitious concept of Jesus as “the one walking in the midst of the golden lampstands” (ὁ περιπατῶν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν λυχνιῶν τῶν χρυσοῦν). John already pictured Jesus “in the midst of the lamps” (ἐν μέσῳ τῶν λυχνιῶν) in Rev 1:13. The mention of “walking” in Rev 2:1 is a subtle addition that gives a quiet echo from Gen 3. Considering where Jesus is walking and to what or whom it refers, this is similar to God walking in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve.<sup>15</sup> Genesis 3:8 notes two important points: (1) God *walks* in his garden-temple (“God walking”; τοῦ θεοῦ περιπατοῦντος), and (2) Adam and Eve, having already sinned, are avoiding the presence of God in *the midst* of the tree[s] of the garden (“the presence of the Lord God

<sup>11</sup>Beale, *John’s Use*, 105.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Beale, “Eden, the Temple, and the Church’s Mission in the New Creation,” *JETS* 48.1 (2005): 19–24. For an extended treatment of this theme, see idem, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 201–363.

<sup>14</sup>For the Garden of Eden as a temple or sanctuary, see Gordon J. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” in *I Studied Inscriptions Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986), 19–25; Beale, *The Temple*, 66–80; idem, “Eden, the Temple,” 7–12; Daniel T. Lioy, “The Garden of Eden as a Primordial Temple or Sacred Space for Humankind,” *Conspectus* 10.1 (2010): 25–57; Lifsa Schachter, “The Garden of Eden as God’s First Sanctuary,” *JBQ* 41.2 (2013): 73–77; Richard M. Davidson, “Earth’s First Sanctuary: Genesis 1–3 and Parallel Creation Accounts,” *AUSS* 53.1 (2015): 65–89.

<sup>15</sup>Con. David A. deSilva, who believes that this is simply a statement of close proximity to elicit in the readers of Ephesus a fear that Jesus can and will carry out the threat about to be leveled (“The Strategic Arousal of Emotions in the Apocalypse of John: A Rhetorical-Critical Investigation of the Oracles to the Seven Churches,” *NTS* 54.1 [2008]: 102). This plays into the pastoral purpose of John with this kind of language, although there is disagreement as to the meaning of Jesus walking.

in the midst of the tree of paradise”; προσώπου κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ ξύλου τοῦ παραδείσου). There is even a connection between the tree of life in the Garden and the lampstand within the temple. “[T]he ‘tree of life’ itself was probably the model for the lampstand placed directly outside the ‘Holy of Holies’ in Israel’s temple: it looked like a small tree trunk with seven protruding branches, three on one side and three on the other, and one branch going straight up from the trunk in the middle.”<sup>16</sup> The similarity between this picture in Gen 3:8 and Rev 2:1 implies that “walking” is also a synecdoche referring to God’s presence with his people. However, in Gen 3 Adam and Eve were avoiding his presence, whereas in Rev 2:1 Jesus is still walking in the midst of his people.

This pleasant picture makes the resulting threat all the graver, “[R]epent, . . . If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent” (Rev 2:5). The dual threats “I will come” and “I will remove” is reminiscent of the scene of God coming to dwell/walk among his people and then removing Adam and Eve from the garden-temple for their sin in Gen 3.<sup>17</sup> This threat, clothed in OT wardrobe, produced a connection with the ensemble of Edenic references in the final promise to Ephesus in Rev 2:7. As Gordon Campbell noted, “The threat of removal hanging over the menorah (2.5) suggests the banishment of the man and his wife. By contrast the promise of renewed access to the tree of life in the paradise of God . . . points to its accomplishment in the end-time paradise-city where it is a central element of new covenant fulfillment (22.2, 14, and 19).”<sup>18</sup> While the image of the tree of life and the paradise of God is an obvious allusion in its own right,<sup>19</sup> the surrounding allusions sharpen the image and smooth the edges.<sup>20</sup> The presence of God dwelling with his people in the land, the

<sup>16</sup>Beale, “Eden, the Temple,” 8.

<sup>17</sup>Perhaps there is another similarity to Adam and Eve’s exile from the Garden of Eden to the *east* (Gen 3:24) that corresponds with the geography of Ephesus. With naught but the Aegean Sea to their west and the order of the letters’ location moving north, then east, there is a similar geographical threat to the Ephesians as well.

<sup>18</sup>Campbell, *Reading Revelation*, 276.

<sup>19</sup>However, there are some that take the tree of life to refer to Jesus’s crucifixion or cross. See Charles H. Giblin, *The Book of Revelation: The Open Book of Prophecy*, GNS 34 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 54; Colin J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 42–44. For an argument against this view, see Daniel K. K. Wong, “The Tree of Life in Revelation 2:7,” *BSac* 155.618 (1998): 215–217. Considering the many references to Eden, it seems forced to interpret the “tree of life” as a reference to something other than the tree of life found in God’s paradise in Genesis.

<sup>20</sup>There is a temptation to explain John’s temple and paradisaic imagery through means of socio-historical references of ancient Ephesus. Hemer said, “[T]his Old Testament idea was chosen and applied to the case of Ephesus because it was peculiarly applicable, because in fact it had an analogue in the Artemis cult” (*The Letters*, 42). He drew many parallels of the tree of life and paradise with the Artemisian cult (*ibid.*, 41–52). Aune correctly criticizes this assessment, calling Hemer’s presentation

prominent blessing of Israel's covenant with YHWH, is readily accessible in the message to the Ephesians. When sin or violation of the covenant occurs, exile or removal is the consequence. This threat loomed large upon the ears of the new covenant congregation of Ephesus, should they have ears to hear.

*Old Testament Allusions in the Messages  
to Smyrna (Revelation 2:8–11)*

In contrast to the message of Ephesus, that of Smyrna has very few OT images or allusions. It is also the shortest of the seven messages. However, the allusions that do appear still center upon covenantal features between YHWH and Israel. The first is only a possible allusion found in Rev 2:10 in the prediction “for ten days you will have tribulation,” perhaps evoking Daniel's ten-day food test in Dan 1:12–15.<sup>21</sup> The allusion would be fitting considering that the meat offered to idols exists in both historical contexts. It has long been thought that Daniel deemed such an act of mastication as participation in the pagan cult and therefore a clear violation of Israel's covenant treaty (Dan 1:8).<sup>22</sup> This

“unconvincing” and a “manipulation of language” (see Aune's “Forward” in *ibid.*, xxi). Historians commonly acknowledge that the Roman imperial cult had a large influence in Ephesus. For example, see Steven J. Friesen, “The Cult of the Roman Emperors in Ephesus Temple Wardens, City Titles, and the Interpretation of the Revelation of John,” in *Ephesos, Metropolis of Asia: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Its Archaeology, Religion, and Culture* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), 229–250; Giancarlo Biguzzi, “Ephesus, Its Artemision, Its Temple to the Flavian Emperors, and Idolatry in Revelation,” *NovT* 40.3 (1998): 276–290; K. Cukrowski, “The Influence of the Emperor Cult on the Book of Revelation,” *ResQ* 45.1 (2003): 51–64. For an extended treatment on Ephesus and its imperial cult, see Friesen, *Twice Neokoros: Ephesus, Asia, and the Cult of the Flavian Imperial Family* (Leiden: Brill, 1993).

<sup>21</sup>Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 242–243; Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, 2nd ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009), 122. Con. those whose focus is less on OT allusions and more on socio-historical imagery and ancient symbolism. For example, Edmondo F. Lupieri said, “Inasmuch as the number ‘ten’ is also used to designate a totality, it follows that the period in question, regardless of whether it is short or long, represents the whole of the persecution” (*A Commentary on the Apocalypse of John*, trans. Maria Poggi Johnson and Adam Kamesar [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006], 119; emphasis added). In her study, Mathews denies that this is an OT allusion at all, in “A Critical Evaluation,” 189–190. Therefore, this allusion is classified as “possible.”

<sup>22</sup>Theodoret of Cyrus said, “For those who love God do not seek after the God of all in just one place, but even in the midst of this misfortune they worshiped as if in the house of the Creator. In that place there are many wondrous moments to be found. For having been reared on the teachings of the Jews and having learned the customary service to God, they now were dwelling in a foreign land and were being forced into slavery exactly at the prime of their life. They were forced to abide under the foreign customs. But having seen the Babylonians offer defiled meat to the idols and the polluted libations at the temple, they took heed and, neglecting their own safety, rejected the king's banquet, beseeching the chief eunuch to allow them to be excused from partaking of the king's food” (*Commentary on Daniel*, 1.8), as quoted in Kenneth

resonates harmoniously with Revelation's theme of eating meat offered to idols (Rev 2:14, 20).<sup>23</sup> Daniel exhibited extreme fidelity to YHWH in the midst of foreign cultic pressure. Considering that John calls the opponents to the Christians in Smyrna "Jews" who "are not, but are a synagogue of Satan" (Rev 2:9), this is an ironic OT allusion picturing the local Jews of Smyrna as the pagan influences.<sup>24</sup>

This irony continues into Rev 2:10c–11, commanding faithfulness to the point of *death* upon which a crown of *life* is the reward and that the conqueror not be hurt by the second *death*.<sup>25</sup> The second allusion, the mention of "second death" in Rev 2:11, is questionable, as it relies upon thematic rather than verbal similarities. Some have cited the Targums to ascertain a literary source.<sup>26</sup> Beasley-Murray similarly agreed that the ancient Jews were familiar with the concept (though not the term) as an idea of eternal doom and punishment. He concluded, "The pertinence of the thought in verse 11 is clear: the church of Smyrna faces a period of trial in which some shall surely die. But to die under the wrath of man is small compared with the prospect of suffering the judgment of God."<sup>27</sup> Dulk agreed with the Targumic sources, but posited an alternate theory about the meaning of "second death" that continues the theme of expulsion from the Garden of Eden in the message to Ephesus.

[N]otions associated with creation and fall are close at hand if the subject is death and whether one will be harmed by it or not. The entrance of death into biblical history is found in Gen 2,17, where it is said of the "tree of the

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Stevenson and Michael Glerup, eds., *Ezekiel, Daniel*, ACCS OT 13 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 158–159.

<sup>23</sup>Ben Witherington III has made a strong case for the use of the word εἰδωλόθυτον as not just a reference to eating meat sacrificed to idols but "meat sacrificed to and eaten in the presence of an idol, or in the temple precincts" ("Not So Idle Thoughts about *Eidolothuton*," *TynBul* 44.2 [1993]: 237; emphasis added). Should Christians be accused of such a thing, this would be a clear violation and infidelity to the terms of the covenant.

<sup>24</sup>Schüssler Fiorenza helpfully explained the nature of the historical predicament for Jewish Christians: "Jewish Christians like John were less and less able to claim their political privileges . . . of practicing their religion in any part of the Roman empire, but . . . were exempted from obligations from military service as well as giving obeisance to the Roman religion. Under the Flavians, however, the situation of the Jewish people became more precarious . . . . If Jews were excluded from the synagogue because they were confessing Christians, such Jews could no longer claim the protection granted by Roman law to Judaism" (*Revelation: Vision of a Just World* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991], 54–55).

<sup>25</sup>Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 244.

<sup>26</sup>Many commentators suggest Tg. Isa. 65:15; Tg. Jer. 51:39, 47; and Tg. Deut. 33:6. See David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, WBC 52a (Waco, TX: Word, 1997), 168; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 245n65; Ian Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John*, BNTC 19 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 57.

<sup>27</sup>George R. Beasley-Murray, *Book of Revelation: Based on the Revised Standard Version*, NCBC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 83.

knowledge of good and evil” that “in the day that you eat of it you shall die”. Once the first human couple has eaten, however, they do not literally die that same day but are cursed and driven out of Eden. It can be little more than a suspicion in the absence of any clear evidence, but it seems possible John connected the notion of first and second death with the strange, partial death of the first human couple . . . . This implies the first death preceded living in this world. Accordingly, this first death could be the death of Gen 2,17 that Adam and Eve died upon entrance into the world (as opposed to Eden).<sup>28</sup>

While Dulk is probably correct that such a conjecture is “little more than a suspicion,” it does fit with his theory that the blessings in the seven messages are a progression of the OT’s redemptive-historical narrative of God’s people.<sup>29</sup> One can only observe the full import of the “second death” in its later fulfillment in Rev 20:6, 14, and 21:8. But that is not the concern of this article at present.

The lack of OT imagery in the message to Smyrna is not unexpected. Many question the presence of the two allusions above. In keeping with the covenantal background, there would be little reason to force the issue if the Christians in Smyrna were not in covenant violation. Quite the opposite; they were remaining faithful to Jesus in the midst of persecution. While Jesus did not promise them an immediate respite from their anguish, he reminded them of the full and final reward of the covenant yet to take place in its ultimate consummation.

*Old Testament Allusions in the Message  
to Pergamum (Revelation 2:12–17)*

While there are numerous local and historical references in the message to Pergamum (Satan’s throne, the death of Antipas, participation in idolatry, and the Nicolaitans), John also used OT imagery in the background to convey the church’s problems. This congregation is the ideal example of one that has acquiesced to the Roman cultic influences around them. The church at Pergamum not only gave an ear to the enigmatic Nicolaitans, they also allowed their teachings to infiltrate the church with “some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans” (Rev 2:15).<sup>30</sup> John likened such a grievous offense to Israel’s affiliation with Balaam found in Num 22–25 and 31. They were warned twice, implicitly and explicitly, that the sword would follow such treason to the covenant (Rev 2:12, 16), which happened to be the same method of Balaam’s execution (Num 31:8).

<sup>28</sup>Dulk, “Promises of the Conquerors,” 517. Dulk cited Frg. Tg. P (MS Paris 110) Deut 33:6, “Let Reuben live in this world and die not in the second death in which death the wicked die in the world to come.” Campbell’s take on this is slightly different in that the idea of life and death is a reference to the exodus event and even the concept of Joseph “coming back from death to life” (*Reading Revelation*, 276).

<sup>29</sup>For a similar reading of the seven messages, see *ibid.*, 275–279.

<sup>30</sup>According to Schüssler Fiorenza, the Nicolaitans were a group of Christians, who syncretized with the Roman pagan cults (*The Book of Revelation*, 116–117).

Israel's exodus from Egypt is the archetypal story for redemption and covenantal themes, such as a king over his vassals, as well as the journey from wilderness to the promised land. On that journey to the land, Israel came upon king Balak and the Moabites. Fearing the nation of Israel and her mighty God, Balak commissioned Balaam the diviner to curse the people in a way directly contrary to the covenant with Abraham (cf. Num 22:6, recalled again in 24:9, with Gen 12:2–3). However, God intervened and forced Balaam to bless Israel in the presence of the Moabite king. Though it was not plainly detailed, Balaam apparently found a way around God's initial intervention and provided Balak with advice that would cause Israel to break covenant with YHWH and curse themselves (Num 31:16). The sin was fornication, both literal with the women of Moab and metaphorical with the gods of Moab (Num 25:1–3).<sup>31</sup> As punishment, a plague killed 24,000 men (Num 25:9). The message is loud and clear: Jesus would consider assimilation or even participation with the pagan cults to be a violation of the covenant pact. Allowing groups like the Nicolaitans or a prophet like Balaam to influence the church into idolatry only leads to severe repercussions, according to the covenant terms.

If that was all of the OT imagery, such would suffice for a link with the covenantal character. However, the conquerors' rewards in Rev 2:17 contain one certain OT allusion ("manna")<sup>32</sup> and two other possibilities ("I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone.") that further relate to the Israelites' wilderness-wandering. The manna was the heavenly bread provided by God during the exodus to sustain the Israelites while they roamed in the wilderness for forty years.<sup>33</sup> According to Exod 16:35, it directly related to the promised land.<sup>34</sup> The manna's sole purpose was to sustain the people

<sup>31</sup>This seems to indicate that the mention of *πορνείω* in Rev 2:14 is both literal and metaphorical, so *ibid.*, 116. However, many opt for one view or the other. For literal sexual promiscuity, see Beasley-Murray, *Book of Revelation*, 85–87; Panayotis Coutsoumpos, "The Social Implications of Idolatry in Revelation 2:14: Christ or Caesar?" *BTB* 27.1 (1997): 25–26; Dennis E. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2001), 77. For the metaphorical view typically picturing idolatry in the LXX, see Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 188; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 250; Boxall, *Revelation of Saint John*, 60; James L. Resseguie, *The Revelation of John: A Narrative Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 91.

<sup>32</sup>Stephen S. Smalley agreed, saying, "The identity of the manna is fairly straightforward" (*The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005], 70). Of course, dealing in certainties is a dangerous enterprise where allusions in Revelation are concerned. For example, Osborne believes that the reference to "hidden manna" is just as elusive as the "white stone," though he admitted that many of the proposed interpretations for the manna are not exclusive to one another, but probably inclusive of each other (*Revelation*, 148).

<sup>33</sup>Beale poses a natural link to the manna imagery due to the Balaam reference, which also took place in the forty-year wilderness period (*The Book of Revelation*, 252).

<sup>34</sup>"The people of Israel ate the manna forty years, till they came to a habitable land. They ate the manna till they came to the border of the land of Canaan."

of God *until* they reached paradise.<sup>35</sup> In what way the manna is “hidden” is uncertain.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, the reference to manna is certainly plain.

The conquerors’ prize of a “white stone” and a “new name” is exponentially more elusive than the “hidden manna.”<sup>37</sup> Rodney Thomas summarized the dilemma, “The problem is not, as is often the case, that there is nothing with which to relate this imagery, it is the fact that there are such a great number of contemporary practices that could have possibly contributed to John’s choice to make use of this expression.”<sup>38</sup> Yet, considering the rarity of the term “stone” (ψῆφος) in the Greek OT and NT, it would appear that John expected his audience had the ability to ascertain its meaning.<sup>39</sup> Such a problem might indicate that, all things being equal, the easiest explanation is the preferred one.

Beale offered a simple understanding of the white stones in relation to the hidden manna, saying, “The ‘white stone’ also enforces the idea of the ‘manna’ as a heavenly reward, since the OT describes the heavenly manna as resembling white bdellium stones (cf. Exod. 16:31 and Num. 11:7).”<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup>Craig S. Keener went so far as to say, “[T]he manna probably symbolizes especially the new exodus and God’s promise of eternal sustenance without labor” (*Revelation*, NIVAC [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000], 126).

<sup>36</sup>Stefanovic, citing 2 Bar 29:8 and Sib. Or. 7:149, understood the hidden manna as a reference to Jewish tradition of the manna placed in the ark of the covenant and hidden that would later be recovered and distributed by the Messiah as the “bread of the angels” from Ps 78:25 in order to highlight the “contrast to eating the food sacrificed to idols” (*Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 127). Beale opts for an eschatological understanding for “hidden” in the sense that it will be revealed at the end (*The Book of Revelation*, 252). This is based on his earlier assessment that the Greek of Revelation has Semitic influences (see Kenneth G. C. Newport, “The Use of *EK* in Revelation: Evidence of Semitic Influence,” *AUSS* 24.3 [1986]: 223–230; idem, “Semitic Influence in Revelation: Some Further Evidence,” *AUSS* 25.3 [1987]: 249–256). Newport argued, “In the context of the passage and in the light of the possible Semitic influence, the verb might better be translated ‘stored up’” (“Some Greek Words with Hebrew Meanings in the Book of Revelation,” *AUSS* 26.1 [1988]: 31). Lupieri opted for a spiritual understanding wherein the manna “remained hidden from fleshly Israel” (*Commentary on the Apocalypse*, 121). Wong argued for a Christological understanding of Jesus as the manna (“The Hidden Manna and the White Stone in Revelation 2:17,” *BSac* 155.619 [1998]: 348–349). Aune provides even further options (*Revelation 1–5*, 189).

<sup>37</sup>For a comprehensive list of interpretations for the “white stone” as a symbol, see Wong, “The Hidden Manna,” 349–353; Hemer, *The Letters*, 96–104; Rodney Thomas, “Magical Motifs in the Book of Revelation” (PhD diss., University of Durham, 2007), 187–208. Of these interpretations Osborne conceded pessimistically, “It is impossible to know for certain which of these is the best source for the imagery” (*Revelation*, 149).

<sup>38</sup>Thomas, “Magical Motifs,” 187.

<sup>39</sup>Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (London: MacMillan, 1911), 39; Thomas, “Magical Motifs,” 195.

<sup>40</sup>Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 253. See also David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Fort Worth, TX: Dominion Press, 1987), 110. G. B. Caird also connected the manna with the white stone, interpreting the former

Chilton further connected the “new name” with both the “white stone” and thus the “hidden manna” in that two onyx stones were placed on the High Priest’s shoulders (Exod 28:9–12), upon which the name of the tribes of Israel were written. Conceding that these onyx stones were black, he sees this as a combination of OT imagery, where the two stones of bdellium and onyx join together in God’s paradisaal garden. “The connecting link here is the bdellium: it is associated in Genesis 2:12 with *onyx*, and in Numbers 11:7 with *manna*. Together, they speak of the restoration of Eden in the blessings of salvation.”<sup>41</sup>

The “new name” (ὄνομα καινόν) written on the stone is a loaded symbol that is later revealed in Rev 3:12 to be “the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.” Beale deduced,

Separate meanings are not to be assigned to each of these names. They all refer to the intimate eschatological presence of God and Christ with his people, as expressed most clearly by [Rev] 22:3–4 . . . Therefore, to receive the “new name” is to receive Jesus’ victorious, kingly “name . . . no one knows except himself” (19:12–16) . . . [B]elievers’ reception of this name represents their final reward of consummate identification and unity with the intimate, end-time presence and power of Christ in his kingdom . . . [Also] the “new name” is a mark of genuine membership in the community of the redeemed, without which entry into the eternal “city of God” is impossible.<sup>42</sup>

He confirmed this conclusion by noting that the source for the “new name” is Isa 62:2 and 65:15, where Israel will be called by a “new name” (ὄνομα καινόν).<sup>43</sup> The immediate context of Isa 62:2 demonstrates the results of Israel’s new name: kingly terminology (Isa 62:3), as well as marriage imagery and prosperity in the land (Isa 62:4). These are strong ANE covenantal concepts carried over to the related theme of manna. Similarly, in the immediate context of Isa 65:15, there is talk of dwelling in the land (Isa 65:9). As observed in the Laodicean message, there is a strong relationship between dwelling in the land and new creation (Isa 65:16–17).<sup>44</sup> These prophecies probably came to John’s mind with the reference to “sword,”<sup>45</sup> which was used

in reference to the messianic banquet and feasting on the heavenly bread/manna with the white stone as a “Conqueror’s ticket of admission to the heavenly banquet” (*The Revelation of Saint John*, BNTC 19 [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993], 42).

<sup>41</sup>Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance*, 110.

<sup>42</sup>Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 253–255. Rev 22:3–4 says, “No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.”

<sup>43</sup>See also E. W. Hengstenberg, *The Revelation of St John: Expounded for Those Who Search the Scriptures*, trans. Patrick Fairbairn (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1851), 153; Swete, *Apocalypse of St. John*, 40–41.

<sup>44</sup>See Beale, “Old Testament Background of Rev 3.14.”

<sup>45</sup>Du Preez connects the mention of swords with ANE vassal treaties, saying, “According to the old vassal treaties the great king had the right to bring a disloyal vassal to his senses, if need be with military force . . . Lev. 26:25: ‘I will send out the sword against you, to avenge the Covenant’ (The Jerusalem Bible). Now in Rev. 2:16 a



twice in this message (Rev 2:12, 16), as well as in Isa 65:12, “I will destine you to the sword” referring to those who forsake God in contrast to the righteous servants who possess the land and blessings of God (Isa 65:9–12).<sup>46</sup>

The cumulative result of all of these allusions is that they share common features with respect to ANE covenants. The blessing of the promised land and presence of God along with the corporate vassal rule promised to the overcomers are highly consistent with the features and function of ANE covenants. However, it was not the curses of the covenant that the OT allusions highlighted here, but rather the blessings. Pastorally, it seems John is positively encouraging repentance through the blessing of reward rather than fear of punishment.

*Old Testament Allusions in the Message  
to Thyatira (Revelation 2:18–29)*

Quite in line with the previous message’s use of the negative figure Balaam, notorious for his schemes against Israel, John epitomizes covenant fissure with the self-proclaimed “prophetess” at the church at Thyatira as the nefarious queen Jezebel, the wife to king Ahab of Israel.<sup>47</sup> In the OT, Jezebel was daughter of the king of the Sidonians and led Israel into the worship of Baal (1 Kgs 16:31). The correspondence between Israel’s Baal worship and Thyatira compromising with the Roman imperial cults could not be more appropriate. Like the previous message to Pergamum, the message to Thyatira also utilizes OT imagery to preach against religious syncretism.<sup>48</sup>

Jezebel’s affiliation and loyalty to the god Baal is infamous. Her influence not only over King Ahab but also the rest of Israel is a fitting match as John’s

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similar warning is issued by the Great King ‘with the sharp, two-edged sword’, against the unfaithful members of his vassal people in Pergamum” (“Vassal Treaties,” 39).

<sup>46</sup>However, Beale linked “sword” not with Isa 65:12, the most likely considering its immediate context, but with “the rod of his mouth” in Isa 11:4 similar to the “sword of my mouth” in Rev 2:16 as well as Isa 49:2: “he made my mouth like a sharp sword” (*The Book of Revelation*, 256). It is a strong possibility that all three references were in mind.

<sup>47</sup>There is no certainty for the identity of “Jezebel” in Rev 2:20–23. There are, however, various ways to describe her, her influence, her methods, and her teachings. In light of the mention of “her children” in Rev 2:23, Schüssler Fiorenza believes Jezebel to be the head of a prophetic school (*The Book of Revelation*, 144–145). Aune claims she is John’s “chief opponent” in this prophetic rivalry (*Apocalypticism, Prophecy, and Magic in Early Christianity* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 178). Paul B. Duff argued that Jezebel, far from Christian, used witchcraft to fool the churches in Asia minor (“‘I Will Give to Each of You as Your Works Deserve’: Witchcraft Accusations and the Fiery-Eyed Son of God in Rev 2.18–23,” *NTS* 43.1 [1997]: 116–133). Nestor Paulo Friedrich refers to this prophetess as “a local version of the prostitute Babylon (Rev. 17–18).” See “Adapt or Resist? A Socio-Political Reading of Revelation 2.18–29,” *JSNT* 25.2 (2002): 203.

<sup>48</sup>Domingo Muñoz León, “El Culto Imperial En El Apocalipsis,” *RevistB* 57.4 (1995): 223–230.

prophetic rival. The climax of the Elijah narratives is the showdown between the single prophet of YHWH versus Jezebel's 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kgs 18). Yet, even after this major victory, Elijah still feared the wrath of Jezebel. Quite ironically, though he was faithful to the covenant, he instead is the one fleeing to the *wilderness* south of Judah (1 Kgs 19:2–4). However, Elijah foretold Jezebel's doom, saying she would die within the walls of Jezreel and her body eaten by dogs (1 Kgs 21:23).<sup>49</sup> Her husband, Ahab, was said to be burned up and his progeny cut off from Israel (1 Kgs 21:21).<sup>50</sup>

To those who accompany “Jezebel” in her sexual immorality, Jesus also accused them of adultery (Rev 2:22). Marital infidelity is a customary OT expression of Israel's unfaithfulness to YHWH, with the backdrop of a covenantal marriage with YHWH as the husband and Israel as the wife (cf. Isa 54:6; Ezek 16:8–16).<sup>51</sup> Revelation 2:23 further employs other routine OT sayings. First, considering the context of threats in Rev 2:22–23a, the phrase “all the churches will know that I am he” (γνώσονται πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι) is a stock expression of retribution used once in Isa 49:23 and *thirty* times in Ezekiel, the closest being Ezek 7:6 (LXX): “you will know that I am the LORD who strikes” (ἐπιγνώσῃ διότι ἐγὼ εἰμι κύριος ὁ τύπτων). Other occasions of this phrase in Ezekiel consist of punishment by exile, “I will bring them out of the land . . . but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD” (Ezek 20:38; see also 25:4–5, 7) or promise of covenantal restoration, “My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD . . . when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore” (Ezek 37:28; see also 28:26; 36:10–11). Lastly, the reference to Jesus searching “mind and heart” is similar to “God's knowledge of ‘kidneys and hearts’ [as] a stock idea throughout biblical literature.”<sup>52</sup> This even strikes a chord with Jer 17:10, “I the LORD search the heart and test

<sup>49</sup>Such a punishment probably likens Jezebel to meat torn by beasts in the field (thus exiled outside of the walls) and must be given to the dogs, according to Exod 22:30–31. Another possible reference is to the exodus event in the final plague, where “not a dog shall growl against my people,” indicating that Jezebel had truly been cut off from the people she had come to join (Exod 11:7). There is also a hint of remnant theology in Exod 11:7 where “the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.”

<sup>50</sup>This language of “cut off” relates heavily to covenantal terminology. Positively, it is the verb of action to “cut covenants” (e.g., Gen 15:18; 21:27, 32). Negatively, it is the punishment for breaching the covenant. For example, uncircumcised males were to be “cut off from his people” (Gen 17:14). For the Feast of Unleavened Bread, eating leaven would result in “that person shall be cut off from Israel” (Exod 12:15) and “cut off from the congregation of Israel” (Exod 12:19). This use, save three instances, is the consistent threat for disobedience to the Law in Leviticus leveled seventeen times. In each case, the covenant violator is cut off from the land, the people, or the presence of God.

<sup>51</sup>For example, see Raymond C. Ortlund Jr, *God's Unfaithful Wife: A Biblical Theology of Spiritual Adultery*, NSBT 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003).

<sup>52</sup>Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 264.

the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds,” where both minds/hearts are known and deeds are repaid, as in Rev 2:23, “Who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.”<sup>53</sup>

Revelation 2:24 also reverberates with the conflict between Elijah and the prophets of Baal under the leadership of Jezebel (1 Kgs 16–21). Pollard pointed out a remnant theology evoked in the Elijah cycles that appears in Rev 2:24 with the mention of τοῖς λοιποῖς (“the rest/remaining” or “the remnant”) saying,

The λοιπός in 2:24 represents the future continuity of the church after the judgment promised upon Jezebel and her followers in 2:22–23 . . . . In Thyatira, separation is necessary because the church consists not only of the remnant, but also of Jezebel, her followers, and her children . . . . Such separation is inherent in the affirmation of the remnant.<sup>54</sup>

This is a useful parallel with the remnant theology seen with Elijah, who incorrectly believed himself to be the sole worshipper of YHWH (1 Kgs 18:4, 22; 19:10). The creation of this remnant was their affinity for refusing idol worship, much in the same way “the rest/remnant” of Rev 2:24 had refused “Jezebel’s” teachings of pagan integration.<sup>55</sup> Talbert summarized well the pastoral nature here in this message saying, “The issue was simple for John: either assimilation to pagan culture with its non-Christian basis or non-assimilation.”<sup>56</sup>

An obvious OT allusion and near quotation was the use of Ps 2:8–9 in Rev 2:26–27.

<sup>53</sup>Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 133, 135.

<sup>54</sup>Leslie N. Pollard, “The Function of Λοιπός in the Letter to Thyatira,” *AUSS* 46.1 (2008): 51, 54.

<sup>55</sup>Pollard said, “[T]he remnant in Thyatira represent determined resistance to doctrinal deviation” (ibid., 57).

<sup>56</sup>Charles H. Talbert, *The Apocalypse: A Reading of the Revelation of John* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 20. J. Nelson Kraybill similarly summarized, “Rome did not demand exclusive allegiance to the emperor or to the gods. As long as Roman subjects showed due reverence for the gods and the emperors, they were free to also worship Jesus or almost any other deity. But most Christians did not permit such reciprocity within their ranks. For them there was ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all’ (Eph. 4:5–6). That radical exclusivity set the stage for a showdown with the empire” (*Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics, and Devotion in the Book of Revelation* [Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010], 62). DeSilva used the rhetorical analysis of *pathos* to reach a similar conclusion, “The juxtaposition of arousing fear in connection with following Jezebel’s teaching and confidence in connection with distance from the same, of course, clearly serves the rhetorical goal of distancing the Christians in Thyatira from this prophetess, even potentially motivating them to put an end to her teaching within the congregation” (“Strategic Arousal of Emotions,” 103–104).

**Table 1.** Verbal Similarities of Psalm 2:8–9 with Revelation 2:26–27

Psalm 2:8–9 (ESV; LXX)	Revelation 2:26–27 (ESV)
<p>“Ask of me, and <b>I will make the nations</b> your heritage (δώσω σοι ἔθνη τὴν κληρονομίαν σου), and the ends of the earth your possession. <b>You shall break them with a rod of iron</b> (ποιμανεῖς αὐτούς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ) and <b>dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel</b> (ὡς σκεῦος κεραμέως συντρίψεις αὐτούς).”</p>	<p>“The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him <b>I will give authority over the nations</b> (δώσω αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν), and <b>he will rule them with a rod of iron</b> (ποιμανεῖς αὐτούς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ), <b>as when earthen pots are broken in pieces</b> (ὡς τὰ σκεῦη τὰ κεραμικὰ συντρίβεται), even as I myself have received authority from my Father.”</p>

Note: Bolded portions represent an exact verbal match. Underlined portions are thematic parallels.

<sup>4</sup>For insight on the very strange rendering of ποιμανεῖς for the Hebrew word מַשְׂבִּיחַ, see Steve Moyise, “The Psalms in the Book of Revelation,” in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, ed. Steve Moyise and M. J. J. Menken (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 233–234. Also see n62 below.

Taking his cues from Ps 2:7, Jesus bears the title “Son of God” only here in Rev 2:18.<sup>57</sup> This messianic notion promised to the “King on Zion” is extended or universalized to all those who conquer and persevere until the end.<sup>58</sup> They receive the right to take part in the messianic blessing of dominion or rule much like vassals (cf. Rev 20:6; 22:5). Jesus promises a similar blessing in Rev 3:21, also in line with universalization.<sup>59</sup>

There is a further link with another OT concept of “the morning star” (τὸν ἄστῆρα τὸν πρωῒνόν) in Rev 2:28. Considering Jesus’s claim to be “the bright morning star” (ὁ ἄστηρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωῒνός) just after referring to himself as “the root and the descendant of David” in Rev 22:16,<sup>60</sup> there seems to be further universalizing of the Davidic reign of Jesus conferred to the victors in Rev 2.<sup>61</sup> There are verbal, structural, and thematic links between

<sup>57</sup>Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 267.

<sup>58</sup>The author of Revelation does use Ps 2:9 messianically in Rev 12:5 and 19:15.

<sup>59</sup>Joseph L. Trafton, *Reading Revelation: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 53.

<sup>60</sup>Beale takes these Davidic and messianic references to Jesus back to Isa 11 and 60. Isa 11:1, 10 speaks of a “shoot from the stump of Jesse, a branch from his roots” as well as a “root of Jesse.” Isa 60:1–3 says “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you . . . And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness [λαμπρότητι] of your rising.” See Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1146–1147.

<sup>61</sup>Aune cogently pointed out that the reward in Rev 2:28 is about “receiving” the morning star rather than “being” the morning star. Of this distinction he said,

Ps 2:8–9 and Num 24:17 (from the Balaam narratives), “A star [ἄστρον] shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter [ὑψῶν]<sup>62</sup> shall rise out of Israel,” which may be the source for “the morning star” in Rev 2:28. Just as the Messiah will “break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces” in Ps 2:8, so also will he “crush the forehead [LXX “princes”] of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth” (Num 24:17c).<sup>63</sup> Beale explained the use of “morning” as a reference to an inaugurated messianic reign also inspired from Num 24:17, “A star will arise” (ἀνατελεῖ ἄστρον) where the verb is sometimes a reference to the morning sunrise or dawn.<sup>64</sup>

In conclusion, the allusion to Ps 2:8–9 in Rev 2:26–27 has verbal, thematic, and structural links with the allusion to Num 24:17 in Rev 2:28. These allusions work together in tandem to convey a major ANE covenantal theme: the overcomers reign with the Messiah as his vassals, ruling over the land. This corporate rule sees its messianic culmination in new creation with Jesus (cf. Rev 19:15; 22:16). With the backdrop of the Jezebel figure, there is a warning and threat for covenant violation. It could even be that the mention of dogs outside of the land in the new creation (Rev 22:15) is an intratextual link to the Jezebel narrative from Rev 2, further warning these Christians of the consequences of covenant fissure. However, like the message to Pergamum, John pastorally calls this church back from its participation with the Roman imperial cult with positive notions of covenantal blessings of a shared reign with the Messiah as his vassals.

*Old Testament Allusions in the Message  
to Sardis (Revelation 3:1–6)*

The situation and thus the message to Sardis are the most akin to Laodicea.<sup>65</sup> They have a reputation of life, though they are in actuality dead (Rev 3:1). There is no commendation save the possible “I know your works” (Rev 3:1); however, that could imply negative connotations just as easily as positive ones. Nevertheless, there are a few Christians in Sardis that Jesus found worthy because they have not violated the covenant pact (Rev 3:4).

The first possible OT allusion is the threat of Jesus coming “like a thief” (Rev 3:3) in an unknown hour.<sup>66</sup> The initial reaction is to seek out a parallel

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“The gift of the morning star must refer to the fact that the exalted Christ shares his messianic status with the believer who conquers” (*Revelation 1–5*, 212).

<sup>62</sup>The LXX translated this word as simply ἄνθρωπος (“man”). However, Ps 2:9 translated ὑψῶν (the same word as in Num 24:17) as ἐν ῥάβδῳ (“with a rod/scepter”) which does appear in Rev 2:27.

<sup>63</sup>Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 268.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 269.

<sup>65</sup>Decker, “The Covenantal Character,” 420.

<sup>66</sup>Rev 16:15 uses this same imagery, along with similar concepts of nakedness and clothing seen from the Laodicean message: “Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”

from the synoptic Gospel accounts, such as the parables of the thief and the watching servants (Matt 24:42–44 and Luke 12:35–40).<sup>67</sup> Equally, the use of a thief in the night is an apocalyptic image that is unique to Christianity.<sup>68</sup> Further, Stanley states, “The image of Christ coming ‘like a thief in the night’ works by playing *on a common stock of cultural lore*.”<sup>69</sup> In other words, the image is a common enough one that it does not necessarily have to reach back to the parables of the synoptic accounts to gain its significance.

Nevertheless, there may be a link further back in the biblical narrative right out of one of Israel’s covenantal documents—Exod 22:2–3, which reads, “If a thief is found breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there shall be no bloodguilt for him, but if the sun has risen on him, there shall be bloodguilt for him. He shall surely pay. If he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.” The law in Exod 22:2 assumed a thief would come in the evening. It instructs that the thief caught stealing at night could be killed with impunity. According to Exod 22:3, however, the opposite was true during the daytime.<sup>70</sup> The contextual or thematic links between Exod 22 and Rev 3:3 are stronger than the synoptic parables of Matt 24 and Luke 12. Paul Penley insisted,

One *context* is about waking up and the other about staying awake (stated explicitly in Mt. 24.42)—repentance versus readiness again. The distinction is minimal, but it nevertheless shows the difference between disciples who need to maintain their watchfulness (i.e. readiness) and a complacent church that needs to change her actions and remove her soiled garments (i.e. repentance).<sup>71</sup>

Compare this with the context of Exod 22 and Rev 3 and the parallels are much closer. Both passages assume the thief is breaking in at night while the victims are asleep (i.e., Jer 49:9 and Obad 1:5). And the common form in these seven messages to give a command and warning is the equivalent of a call for repentance. Although the clarification for a daytime robbery in Exod 22:3 would be more appropriate with Matthew and Luke’s theme of watchfulness, the command (“Wake up”) and warning (“If you will not wake up”) of Rev 3:2–3 is the call for repentance of the church at Sardis. Thus, Rev 3

<sup>67</sup>See Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy*, 92–117, originally published as “Synoptic Parousia Parables and the Apocalypse,” *NTS* 23.2 (1977): 162–176; idem, “Synoptic Parousia Parables Again,” *NTS* 29.1 (1983): 129–134. Also see Aune, *Revelation I–5*, 221–222. However, Paul T. Penley argued that there is a weak contextual link with the synoptic parables from Matthew and Luke, though he admits the strong verbal affinity (*The Common Tradition Behind Synoptic Sayings of Judgment and John’s Apocalypse: An Oral Interpretive Tradition of Old Testament Prophetic Material* [New York: T&T Clark, 2010], 8–10). He explained the verbal similarities on the grounds of Sardis’s history of its “impregnable acropolis” being “sacked by a surprise attack at night.” This, Penley says, weakens the verbal links but does not discount it altogether.

<sup>68</sup>Christopher D. Stanley, “Who’s Afraid of a Thief in the Night?,” *NTS* 48.4 (2002): 468.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, 485; emphasis added.

<sup>70</sup>This was the law in Greco-Roman custom as well. See *ibid.*, 475.

<sup>71</sup>Penley, *Synoptic Sayings of Judgment*, 10.

is in line with wakefulness (or repentance) as in Exod 22 rather than the exhortation of watchfulness in Matthew and Luke.<sup>72</sup>

Jeremiah eventually turned this law of Exod 22 into a simile for Israel in Jer 2:26a, “As a thief is shamed when caught, so the house of Israel shall be shamed.” This was set in the context of Israel’s idolatry (Jer 2:11–37). There is yet a further connection in Jer 2, Exod 22, and the message to Sardis. The “soiled garments” in Rev 3:4 is similar to the idolatry imaged: “Also on your skirts is found the lifeblood of the guiltless poor” (Jer 2:34).<sup>73</sup> This verse in Jer 2 continues to make links back to Exod 22 and the picture of robbery saying, “guiltless poor; [yet] you did not find them breaking in.”<sup>74</sup> From soiled garments and possible reference to child sacrifice to thieves breaking in, the links between Exod 22 and Jer 2 demonstrate a clear covenant violation, which the message to Sardis bears out.<sup>75</sup> The irony in Revelation is that Jesus assumes the role of thief in order to punish the wayward church of Sardis.

The latter two allusions are far more recognizable. Beale took the imagery of “they will walk with me in white [garments]” (περιπατήσουσιν μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἐν λευκοῖς) back to Dan 11 and 12.<sup>76</sup> This is now the second time the verb “walk” has been used in Revelation, both regarding the presence of Jesus with his people. The first (Rev 2:1) was a probable reference to the story of God walking in the Garden of Eden (see above). A similar allusion is also possible here since both Rev 3:4–5 and Gen 3 center around themes of walking in fellowship (presence of God) *and* the provision of clothing from God, as with Adam and Eve. However, Beale’s focus was on the source of the “white garments.” First, Dan 11:35 says the “wise” who “know their God” (Dan 11:32–33) will stumble *in order* to be refined and “made white” (Dan 11:35; כִּי־לֵלִי; LXX ἀποκαλυφθήναι). These “wise” ones are explicitly set in opposition to “those who forsake *the holy covenant*” (Dan 11:30).<sup>77</sup> They are in league with a king that will “profane the temple,” “take away the regular

<sup>72</sup>Nevertheless, one cannot deny the parallel of the “unknown hour” (cf. Matt 24:44; Luke 12:39–40; and Rev 3:3).

<sup>73</sup>This is perhaps a reference to child sacrifices offered to Molech, later mentioned in Jer 32:35.

<sup>74</sup>The words “blood” (דָּמָא/דָּמָא) and “breaking in” (תִּבְרַחְתָּ; LXX διορύγματι/διορύγματος) are found in both Exod 22:2–3 and Jer 2:34. See William L. Holladay, “Jeremiah 2:34b—A Fresh Approach,” *VT* 25.2 (1975): 222.

<sup>75</sup>Joel S. Burnett sets Jer 2 in contrast to the new covenant passage of Jer 31, saying, “Just as Jeremiah 2 reflects on a sad history in the land under the covenant, so Jer 31:31–34 portrays Israel’s genuine obedience to that covenant as intended from the start. Just as Jeremiah 31 offers some of the greatest hope in the book, so Jeremiah 2 offers some of its harshest condemnation” (“Changing Gods: An Exposition of Jeremiah 2,” *Rev&Exp* 101.2 [2004]: 289).

<sup>76</sup>Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 278. Mathews believed that one should not rule out the possibility of an allusion from Eccl 9:8a, “Let your garments be always white,” though she readily admitted the lack of thematic or contextual similarities (“A Critical Evaluation,” 197).

<sup>77</sup>Emphasis added.

burnt offering,” and erect the notorious “abomination that makes desolation” (Dan 11:31). Daniel 12:1, 10 is similar where tribulation precedes being “made white” (אֲבֵלֵי; LXX: ἐκλευκανθῶσιν).

Beale also contended that the link to Dan 12 is bolstered by the mention of “your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book” (Dan 12:1) similar to Rev 3:5, “The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life [οὐ μὴ ἐξάλειψω τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς βίβλου τῆς ζωῆς].”<sup>78</sup> However, a more likely referent to the removal of the book (and probably the source for Daniel’s book image) is Exod 32:32–33, “‘But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book [ἐξάλειψόν με ἐκ τῆς βίβλου σου] that you have written.’ But the LORD said to Moses, ‘Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book [ἐξάλειψς αὐτὸν ἐκ τῆς βίβλου μου].’”<sup>79</sup> This is amidst the egregious sin of the golden calf incident at the foot of Mount Sinai. Most significant is that, in the context, God promises to punish the wicked (Exod 32:34–35), honor his promise to give the promised land to Israel (Exod 33:1–2), but warns them that his presence will not follow them into the land (the express purpose for the promised land and the covenantal relationship with YHWH; Exod 33:3). This led to mass repentance among the people of Israel (Exod 33:4–6).

The message to Sardis made use of OT imagery and allusions centered upon Israel’s covenant purpose and consequences. John used it positively to speak of the reward to those faithful to the covenant being made white. Conversely, John delineated the consequences via covenantal allusions, such as blotting one’s name from the book of life and the judgment of Jesus coming like a thief in the night, both of which are related to sin, death, and the separation from the presence of God.

*Old Testament Allusions in the Message  
to Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7–13)*

The message to Philadelphia, just as to Smyrna (Rev 2:8–11), lacks an accusation and seems to have similar opponents.<sup>80</sup> In contrast to the letter to Smyrna, it contains more apparent OT allusions and mentions less about persecution. There is even a great reversal not only in one of the OT allusions,

<sup>78</sup>Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 278.

<sup>79</sup>See Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 223–225; Dulk, “Promises of the Conquerors,” 520; Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 141. Con. J. William Fuller, “‘I Will Not Erase His Name from the Book of Life’ (Revelation 3:5),” *JETS* 26.3 (1983): 301. However, the purpose behind Fuller’s article is to defend the doctrine of eternal security with Rev 3:5. He saw a theological inconsistency with the meaning in Exod 32 and John’s use in Rev 3. His argument against an allusion to Exod 32 is not convincing due to its lack of acknowledgement of the verbal identity and his sole reliance upon theological argumentation.

<sup>80</sup>Both messages mention the “synagogue of Satan,” as well as those who “say they are Jews and are not” (in Rev 2:9 and 3:9, though the order is reversed).



but also in contrast with the message to Smyrna (see below). And again, covenantal tones can be overheard in the allusions.

The first OT allusion is the mention of the one “who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens” (Rev 3:7). There is agreement among scholars that this is a clear reference to Isa 22:22, “I will place on his [Eliakim’s] shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.”<sup>81</sup> As in most of the descriptions of Jesus at the start of each message, it is probably a development from the opening vision in Rev 1:18, “I have the keys of Death and Hades.”<sup>82</sup> The “key” imagery evokes two pictures. First, it is likely attached with the “open door, which no one is able to shut” in Rev 3:8, based on thematic and verbal affinity.<sup>83</sup> Second, the key-holder is often a symbol of authority.<sup>84</sup> Similar to Jesus’s authority over “Death and Hades” in Rev 1:18, Jesus also has power over salvation and judgment.<sup>85</sup>

What is significant is the context of Isa 22. There, Eliakim is Hezekiah’s chief steward, replacing the former steward Shebna (Isa 22:15–20). The messianic suggestions are clear: Eliakim is called “my servant” (עַבְדִּי; Isa 22:20), is bestowed vestures of regal authority (Isa 22:21), is given the key to the house of David (Isa 22:22), and “will become a throne of honor” (Isa 22:23). Osborne took this reference to Jesus typologically, but offers little more than mere analogy.<sup>86</sup> Beale, on the other hand, saw more than a simple analogy and argues that the allusion is an indirect typological prophecy.<sup>87</sup> He made the comparison between Eliakim, who was head over Israel, and

<sup>81</sup>Swete, *Apocalypse of St. John*, 53–54; R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*, 2 vols., ICC 44 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920), 1:86; Caird, *Revelation of Saint John*, 51; Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 235; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 238–285; Craig R. Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 66; Osborne, *Revelation*, 187; Smalley, *The Revelation to John*, 88–89. Koester called this a paraphrase, Aune a clear allusion, and Beale a quotation.

<sup>82</sup>The textual variants here confirm this when Δαυίδ was replaced with either ᾠδου (“Hades”) or τοῦ θανάτου καὶ τοῦ ᾠδου (“death and Hades”). See Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 283–284, who calls this an amplification of Rev 1:18. For an extended list of manuscript evidence, see Brian K. Blount, *Revelation: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 73.

<sup>83</sup>Osborne, *Revelation*, 188–189.

<sup>84</sup>Keener, *Revelation*, 97–98.

<sup>85</sup>Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 284. “In 1:18 the stress is on his sovereignty over death and judgment, while in 3:7 the emphasis is on his authority over those entering the kingdom” (ibid.).

<sup>86</sup>Osborne, *Revelation*, 187–188.

<sup>87</sup>Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 284–285. He offers five points of proof. The most notable messianic link is the mention of placing the key of David’s house on “his shoulder” reminiscent of Isa 9:6, “the government shall be upon his shoulder.” Eliakim was also pictured as regal, as well as priestly, based on Tg. Isa. 22:22, Midr. Exod 37:1, and Exod Rab. 37:1.

Jesus, head over the church. This allusion, then, sets Jesus up as God's servant and typologically relates the Christians as the new covenant people of God. The image of opening and shutting a door from Rev 3:7 continues into Rev 3:8, "Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut." Beale said, "This entrance into covenantal life is also referred to as entry into the 'house of David' (v 7) and into the city and temple of God (v 12)."<sup>88</sup>

The next allusion is an example of an inversion or an inverted use of the OT.<sup>89</sup> In Rev 3:9, the Jews "who are not" will be forced to bow down (προσκυνήσουσιν)<sup>90</sup> at the feet of the true people of God in order to "learn that I have loved you." According to Beale, this "is a collective allusion to Isa. 45:14, 49:23, 60:14, and Ps. 86:9" which "collectively makes reference to the Isaianic prophecies that the Gentiles would come and bow down before Israel and recognize them as God's chosen people."<sup>91</sup> However, Revelation's use of this passage ironically inverts the players of this scene by making it appear as if those who call themselves "Jews and are not" will come and bow down before the saints at the church in Philadelphia (who are assumed to be Gentile).<sup>92</sup>

<sup>88</sup>Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 285.

<sup>89</sup>See Beale, *John's Use*, 122–123. This kind of OT allusion seemingly misuses the OT by contradicting the contextual meaning of the OT passage referenced. However, it is not so much changing the OT text itself, but rather an ironic use of the OT for its *shock value*.

<sup>90</sup>Aune described this not as worship, but "simply the traditional (oriental) expression of homage and honor, which we have chosen to translate 'grovel'" (*Revelation 1–5*, 238).

<sup>91</sup>Beale, *John's Use*, 122. Isa 45:14, "[M]en of stature, shall come over to you and be yours; they shall follow you; they shall come over in chains and bow down [προσκυνήσουσιν] to you." Isa 49:23, "With their faces to the ground they shall bow down [προσκυνήσουσιν] to you, and lick the dust of your feet." Isa 60:14, "The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending low [variants have προσκυνήσουσιν] to you, and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet." Ps 86:9, "All the nations you have made shall come and worship [προσκυνήσουσιν] before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name."

<sup>92</sup>Such a hard and fast determination of this kind of allusion here in Rev 3:9 is a thorny issue. Many contest the exact identity of the "synagogue of Satan," as well as the identity of the "Jews." A widely held view is that the so-called "Jews" in Rev 2:9 and 3:9 were part of the church itself or "within the Jesus movement who were claiming the label 'Jew' in a manner that John finds illegitimate" (David Frankfurter, "Jews or Not? Reconstructing the 'Other' in Rev 2:9 and 3:9," *HTR* 94.4 [2001]: 403). The issue is compounded when considering if the Nicolaitans, Balaam, and Jezebel are a separate opponent or one and the same with the "Jews and are not" sect. For those taking the "synagogue of Satan" and "Jews" as referencing ethnic Jews in literal, local synagogues in both Smyrna and Philadelphia, see Adela Yarbro Collins, "Vilification and Self-Definition in the Book of Revelation," *HTR* 79.1–3 (1986): 308–320; David A. deSilva, "The Social Setting of the Revelation to John: Conflicts Within, Fears Without," *WTJ* 54.2 (1992): 273–302; Mark R. J. Bredin, "The Synagogue of Satan Accusation in Revelation 2:9," *BTB* 28.4 (1998): 160–164; J. Lambrecht, "Jewish Slander: A Note on Revelation 2,9–10," *ETL* 75.4 (1999): 421–429; Steven J. Friesen,

These texts from Isaiah all have in common Gentiles bowing down to Israel or worshipping Israel's God.<sup>93</sup> The inversion makes an earth-shattering point about the nature of God's new covenant people. While under the old covenant, Israel's status as God's chosen people promised them a position of priority over the Gentiles. Now, under the new covenant, Christians are in the position of priority regardless of ethnicity. The reversal is a startling promise that the "Jews who are not" will be the ones to bow before the feet of Christians (both Jew *and* Gentile)! This allusion to bow down continues the polemical theme begun in the previous allusion from Isa 22 in order to identify both the true master (holding the key of David) and his true people (standing over those bowing down to them).

John further enhances this reversal/inversion. The message to Smyrna (Rev 2:8–11) and this message have clear similarities. They faced the same sect of persecutors ("Jews who are not"), had a "synagogue of Satan," and broke the structural consistency of the seven messages, as Jesus scolded neither as in the other five messages. However, there is a stark contrast that parallels the reversal or inversion of the allusion above. Jesus warned Smyrna of an impending ten-day persecution (Rev 2:10), likely by the "Jews who are not." Though also attacked by the "Jews who are not," Jesus conversely promised the Christians at Philadelphia deliverance from their impending persecution (Rev 3:10).<sup>94</sup> Further, it appears that they themselves will stand over their adversaries, according to the inversion of the OT allusion in Rev 3:9. Such a transposition between these two similar communities and messages helps to enhance the inverted use of the OT in Rev 3:9.

Aune accepted the above Isaianic allusions and believed that a consideration with the final OT images in Rev 3:12 lent further confirmation.<sup>95</sup> This is not the first mention of the temple, at least by virtue of synecdoche with the elements from the temple (see Rev 2:1). Wilkinson offers an attractive interpretation to the picture of the "pillar":

It may in fact be rooted in established coronational rites as practiced in ancient Israel and in a number of other monarchies of the ancient Near East . . . . If the reference to the pillar in v. 12 is understood as relating to the so-called 'king's pillar' situation in the Temple of Solomon and associated

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"Sarcasm in Revelation 2–3: Churches, Christians, True Jews, and Satanic Synagogues," in *The Reality of the Apocalypse: Rhetoric and Politics in the Book of Revelation*, ed. David L. Barr, SymS 39 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 127–144; Paul B. Duff, "The Synagogue of Satan: Crisis Mongering and the Apocalypse of John," in *idem*, 147–168.

<sup>93</sup>In each passage, the same Greek word (προσκυνέω) is used as in Rev 3:9.

<sup>94</sup>Schuyler Brown, "Hour of Trial (Rev 3:10)," *JBL* 85.3 (1966): 308–314.

<sup>95</sup>Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 238. Rev 3:12, "The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name."

with a number of Judean coronations, then the pillar analogy is not at all intrusive, but rather, yet another kingship-coronation parallel.<sup>96</sup>

This has the benefit of thematic awareness of the royal themes surrounding this message (cf. Rev 3:7, 14, 21).

While some focus their attention on whether the pillar is to be taken as literal or metaphorical,<sup>97</sup> this misses the point of the allusion as it relates to the covenantal backdrop.<sup>98</sup> God promised Israel his blessed presence, which finds its OT culmination in Solomon's temple as the house of God.<sup>99</sup> He intended this presence to take place in a special land or place (Garden of Eden or Promised Land). Thus, the mention of "New Jerusalem" has its first appearance in Rev 3:12. In this case, the believers *are* the pillar of the temple and enjoying the presence of God. In fact, this presence is a permanent one, "Never shall he go out of it" (Rev 3:12). Further, they enjoy the benefits of the new covenant blessings by prospering in the divine place that God has set aside to dwell with his people—the New Jerusalem or new creation (Rev 21:3). The temple metamorphosis from structure to people will finally conclude in Rev 21–22.

*Summary and Evaluation of the Covenantal  
Allusions in the Seven Messages*

Thus far, it has been demonstrated that, for the purposes of pastoral encouragement or warning of judgment, John used OT covenantal allusions in Rev 2–3 to reflect the suzerain-vassal relationship between King Jesus and the overcomers who reign with him. In harmony with Israel's old covenant, there are the consistent elements of enjoying the divine presence of God, along with the backdrop of the Garden of Eden, tabernacle, or temple. Also akin to the ANE covenant, the land grant and thus expulsion from the land is the primary threat against the Christians who have compromised.<sup>100</sup> This

<sup>96</sup>Richard H. Wilkinson, "The ΣΤΥΛΟΣ of Revelation 3:12 and Ancient Coronation Rites," *JBL* 107.3 (1988): 499.

<sup>97</sup>Wong, "The Pillar and the Throne in Revelation 3:12, 21," *BSac* 156.623 (1999): 299.

<sup>98</sup>Con. James Valentine, who saw this as a reference to the imperial cult, saying, "This might be an allusion to the practice of the priest of the imperial cult who, at the end of his period of service, erected his statue in the temple and inscribed his name on it. In so doing he intended to gain prolonged communion with the power of the god" ("Theological Aspects of the Temple Motif in the Old Testament and Revelation [Holy War, Judgment, Tabernacle, City, Law]" [PhD diss., Boston University, 1985], 210).

<sup>99</sup>In keeping with the themes from Isa 22:22 begun in Rev 3:7, Beale noted, "[T]he believer's permanent identification with the 'sanctuary' in v 12 is the consummation of the process that began with Christ unlocking the doors of the invisible sanctuary of salvation to them, as expressed in 3:7b–8a: ' . . . I put before you an open door, which no one can shut' (note again the Targum's interpretive paraphrase of Isa. 22:22: 'I will place the key of the *sanctuary* and the authority of the house of David in his hand')" (*The Book of Revelation*, 294).

<sup>100</sup>See M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the

threat reaches fruition in the latter portions of Revelation and the exile from new creation in Rev 21–22. To complete this examination, these results must be tested against the rest of Revelation, especially the conclusion in Rev 19–22.<sup>101</sup> For as Stefanovic rightly said, “[T]he seven messages to the churches cannot be read apart from the rest of Revelation.”<sup>102</sup> This will further inform the theological and pastoral implications that these covenantal allusions have on the presentation of Jesus, the church, and new creation.

The message to Ephesus was rife with Edenic and temple imagery. John used them as promised blessings for covenant loyalty. Not a few scholars have made the connection between the temple motif’s consummation in Rev 21–22<sup>103</sup> as well as the Garden of Eden and other similar OT parallels.<sup>104</sup> The most notable link is the “tree of life” (Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19). As if it was not obvious enough, the mention of the tree of life in both contexts identifies the New Jerusalem garden-city as the new “paradise of God” (Rev 2:7). Perfect covenant fellowship, as was experienced in the Garden of Eden (God “walking” in the Garden; Jesus “walking” among the lampstands), will be restored,<sup>105</sup> and the place that God prepared to dwell with his people will be newly created (Rev 21:1–5; esp. 3).

The mention of the lampstands coinciding with the temple imagery in Rev 21–22 is not as significant as the threat of the lampstand’s removal (Rev 2:5). While open for those who have washed their robes (Rev 22:14), the

Ancient Near East,” *JAOS* 90.2 (1970): 184–203.

<sup>101</sup>Valentine proposed a simple list that will propel the idea of the intratextual nature of Revelation: the tree of life (Rev 2:7; 22:2), second death (Rev 2:11; 21:8), rod of iron (Rev 2:27; 19:15), book of life (Rev 3:5; 20:12), Temple (Rev 3:12; 21:3, 22), and throne of Christ (Rev 3:21; 22:3) (“Theological Aspects,” 284n42).

<sup>102</sup>Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 157.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, 207–361; Robert Alan Briggs, “A Backgrounds Investigation of the Jewish Temple Imagery in the Book of Revelation” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1996), 162–171; Pilchan Lee, *The New Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation: A Study of Revelation 21–22 in the Light of Its Background in Jewish Tradition* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 239–304; Gregory Stevenson, *Power and Place: Temple and Identity in the Book of Revelation* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), 279–302; Beale, *The Temple*, 365–373; *idem.*, “Eden, the Temple,” 25–29; R. Larry Overstreet, “The Temple of God in the Book of Revelation,” *BSac* 166.664 (2009): 460–462; Dan Liou, *Axis of Glory: A Biblical and Theological Analysis of the Temple Motif in Scripture*, *StBibLit* 138 (New York: Lang, 2010), 105–134.

<sup>104</sup>Bruce Norman, “The Restoration of the Primordial World of Genesis 1–3 in Revelation 21–22,” *JATS* 8.1–2 (1997): 161–169; Paul B. Decock, “The Scriptures in the Book of Revelation,” *Neot* 33.2 (1999): 379–386; Ryan S. Schellenberg, “Seeing the World Whole: Intertextuality and the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21–22),” *PRS* 33.4 (2006): 467–476; T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 138–170; Eric J. Gilcrest, *Revelation 21–22 in Light of Jewish and Greco-Roman Utopianism*, *BibInt* 118 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 201–269.

<sup>105</sup>This theme of perfect fellowship “walking” with God may even be behind Rev 21:24, “By its light will the nations walk [περιπατήσουσιν].”

entrance into the garden-city is not only restricted for those who are unclean, detestable/abominable, and false (Rev 21:27), but there is also the mention of some “outside” (ἔξω). This is analogous to the removal of the lampstand from the presence of God—exiled outside. The one in Ephesus who has permanently lost his/her first love (Rev 2:4) is restricted from God’s presence because he/she “loves and practices falsehoods” (Rev 22:15).<sup>106</sup>

Smyrna, having far less material from the OT, experiences a bit of intratextual fulfillment. The “second death” (which some interpreted in regards to the Garden of Eden scene) was first mentioned in Rev 2:11 and is later referenced three times in Rev 20:6, 14; 20:8. The Smyrnians’ poverty and maltreatment, which was probably an effect of their covenant fidelity and would result in a further ten-day trial of persecution, is certainly overturned in Rev 21–22. That is why Jesus could say in Rev 2:9, “I know your tribulation and poverty (*but you are rich*).”<sup>107</sup> John measured their true wealth upon their loyalty to their king amidst persecution and spoke of it as a present eschatological reality later fulfilled in new creation.<sup>108</sup>

As far as Pergamum’s message is concerned, Valentine only listed the “white stone” (Rev 2:17) in his short list of fulfillments. However, he catalogued the fulfillment as a questionable “No correspondence? [*sic*]”<sup>109</sup> His uncertainty in this matter of intratextuality is understandable; nevertheless there were other OT images in Pergamum’s message he could have made use of. Perhaps there is better correspondence with the “new name” (Rev 2:17) and the royal status of the believer, specifically “a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it” (ὄνομα καινὸν . . . ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων). John likely revealed this name in Rev 3:12, wherein even Jesus has “a new name.”<sup>110</sup> But Jesus is later said to have “a name written that no one knows but himself” (ὄνομα . . . ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ αὐτός) in Rev 19:12 when he comes eventually to “rule [the nations] with a rod of iron” and has the name on his thigh “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev 19:15–16). Finally, Jesus’s threat of a sword protruding from his mouth, mentioned twice in this message (Rev 2:12, 17) as a threat for covenantal breach, is eventually wielded in judgment upon the wicked of the nations (Rev 19:15, 21).<sup>111</sup>

<sup>106</sup>Though this is not a verbatim verbal link between Rev 2:4’s “love” (τὴν ἀγάπην) and Rev 22:15’s “loves” (ὁ φιλῶν), the thematic tie is tight enough, since the theme of love is rather rare throughout Revelation.

<sup>107</sup>Emphasis added.

<sup>108</sup>Mark D. Mathews, *Riches, Poverty, and the Faithful: Perspectives on Wealth in the Second Temple Period and the Apocalypse of John*, SNTSMS 154 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 156–166. Boxall, playing on the semantic meaning of ἀποκάλυψις, said of this ironic idea, “This is a clear example of apocalyptic unveiling: what in the world’s eyes looks like poverty is revealed as true riches” (*Revelation of Saint John*, 53).

<sup>109</sup>Valentine, “Theological Aspects,” 284n41.

<sup>110</sup>Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 253.

<sup>111</sup>That this sword is said to come from his mouth (Rev 2:12; 19:15, 21) likely

Thyatira's message uses the evil OT figure Jezebel for the self-styled prophetess who brought many in that church into sexual immorality and adultery (Rev 2:20–24). The list of those exiled from the garden-city-temple, new creation, and thus God's presence in Rev 22:15 is a fitting description of the exploits of the OT Jezebel, "Outside are the dogs and sorcerers [οἱ φάρμακοὶ] and the sexually immoral [οἱ πόρνοι] and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood." Jezebel was eaten by dogs because of her affiliation with the prophets of Baal (1 Kgs 18:19), her idolatry was widely known (1 Kgs 16:31), she partook in numerous murders (1 Kgs 18:13; 21:1–26), and she schemed and lied her way into orchestrating Naboth's death in order for her husband to swindle his vineyard (1 Kgs 21). Her sorcery and sexual immorality were similarly described in 2 Kgs 9:22b, "What peace can there be, so long as the whorings [αἱ πορνεῖαι] and the sorceries [τὰ φάρμακα] of your mother Jezebel are so many?" It is possible that Jezebel is the OT backdrop of John's opponents in the first century, as well as the ideal picture of God's enemies exiled from new creation in Rev 22:15.

Perhaps the strongest intratextual link is the use of Ps 2:8–9 in Rev 2:26–27 for the blessing of the overcomers, as well as for Jesus in Rev 12:5, "She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron," and Rev 19:15, "And he will rule them with a rod of iron." This universalization of Jesus's reign continues with the conquerors' blessing of vice-regency by receiving "the morning star" in Rev 2:28. In the context of his Davidic authority and reign, John called Jesus "the morning star" in Rev 22:16, "I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

Those who did not follow Jezebel in her idolatry were referred to as "the remnant" (οἱ λοιποὶ) in Rev 2:24.<sup>112</sup> Revelation 12:17 pictures the mother of a "male child . . . who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron" having more offspring called οἱ λοιποὶ. Since this is a reference to the people of God, both uses of οἱ λοιποὶ likely have a remnant motif behind them. The final goal of the remnant is explicitly stated in the covenant terminology of

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indicates a symbolic sword rather than a literal one. Gorman said, "The scene corresponds to the *effect* of divine judgment on evil, not the *means* of judgment. This truth that the language of judgment in Revelation symbolizes God's effectively speaking evil into non-existence is perhaps most sharply represented by the vision of Jesus' victorious appearance as the Word of God on the white horse, with a sword in his mouth (19:11–16, 21). This signifies the effective word of God's judgment—the wrath of God and the Lamb—that needs no literal sword, and which a literal sword could never accomplish" (Michael J. Gorman, *Reading Revelation Responsibly: Uncivil Worship and Witness: Following the Lamb into the New Creation* [Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011], 153).

<sup>112</sup>Pollard, "The Function of Λοιπος," 50, makes a strong case that there are verbal and thematic links between the use of οἱ λοιποὶ in Rev 2:24 and "Jezebel" from the Elijah cycle of 1 Kings. He notes, "From the Hebrew Scriptures to the LXX to the Greek NT, the story of the remnant in the Elijah cycle is appropriated as a touchstone of remnant theology" (*ibid.*). It is less than coincidental that these two concepts are present in the message to Thyatira.

Exod 29:45–46a; Lev 26:12–13a; Ezek 36:28, and especially Ezek 37:27 in Rev 21:3, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and *they will be his people*, and God himself will be with them as their God.”<sup>113</sup> Additionally, right after the covenant declaration in Ezek 37:27 is the statement “Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore” (Ezek 27:28). This verse finds its intertextual connection in Rev 2:23, “And all the churches will know that I am he,” continuing the theme of covenantal presence in the promised land.

The message to Sardis had a few “names” that had not soiled themselves. Jesus promised he would walk with them in white garments (Rev 3:4–5). Being clothed in white garments, probably an allusion to Dan 11 and 12, was a blessing for those who were refined through trials and remained faithful to the covenant while others within had forsaken their sacred oath. The white garments, also examined in the similarly negative message to Laodicea in Rev 3:18, is a recurring image throughout all of Revelation (Rev 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13, 14; 19:14).

Jesus also promised them as a blessing in the same context. He swore, “I will never blot his name out of the book of life” (Rev 3:5). Books or scrolls appear frequently in Revelation. The book of life with the occasional added title “the book of life of the Lamb” was a record of the faithful who remained committed to the covenant (Rev 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27). The inclusion of one’s name in this book became the measuring rod for judgment, “And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev 20:15; similarly, 21:27). Such a means of judgment brings to light the significance of Jesus’s promise to the overcomers in Sardis “never” (οὐ μὴ) to blot out their names from this book. This reassurance is more than comforting in light of his warning to come to the unfaithful as a thief in the night, also mentioned in Rev 16:15. For the Christians in Sardis, Jesus left them with the options of loyalty and blessing or unfaithfulness and death.

The messianic universalization continues in the message to Philadelphia when Jesus, holder of the Davidic keys and opener of doors, perhaps in reference to accessing God’s presence (Rev 3:7–8), forces the enemies of this church to bow down before their feet (an inverted allusion in itself), thus bestowing upon them messianic rule (Rev 3:9). The idea of reigning with Christ is consummated throughout the end of Revelation. Twice in Rev 20, saints are promised to “reign with Christ for a thousand years” (Rev 20:4, 6). However, the complete fruition of this picture is in Rev 22:5, “They [‘his servants’ from Rev 22:3] will reign forever and ever.” Such a scene is in accordance with the suzerain-vassal relationship noted in ANE covenants.

<sup>113</sup>Emphasis added. Exod 29:45–46a, “I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God . . . .” Lev 26:12–13a, “And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people. I am the LORD your God . . . .” Ezek 36:28, “You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.” Ezek 37:27, “My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”



This message also explicitly references the temple and New Jerusalem for the first time (Rev 3:12). The complete expression of the dwelling place with God is a location with open access to enjoy God's presence, where John likened the entire garden-city to a temple. Therefore, there is no longer a need for a local enshrinement (Rev 21:22). This sacred place bears the name New Jerusalem (Rev 21:2, similarly, 10).

The final result of the cumulative evidence is that John reused every single OT allusion from Rev 2–3 as a means to convey fulfillment in Rev 19–22. John also veiled the same theme of blessing and curse in OT covenantal imagery. This confirms the assertion here that the OT allusions of Rev 2–3 were steeped in Israel's covenantal character and theology. John was casting a vision to these churches of their new covenant status before God to encourage and unleash faithfulness to Jesus. The churches should not take lightly such a standing, but it should inform these communities how to live in relationship to their suzerain. This is the paraenetic function of covenant in these messages. It sets out in covenantal ideology the simple choice these communities have. Either they could acquiesce to local pressures, assimilate with the Roman imperial cult, syncretize with the idolatry by eating meat offered to idols, and thus breach the covenant, or they could "come out of [Babylon], my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues" (Rev 18:4). They could remain faithful to the covenant pact initiated by the Lamb who had been slain, yet standing and enthroned with God (Rev 5:6). And Jesus promised them that they would receive the covenantal blessings ultimately fulfilled in new creation, should they remain faithful.

*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

## **DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SEVENTH DAY BAPTISTS AND SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS, 1844–1884**

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### *Abstract*

This paper reviews the complex relationship between two Sabbatarian denominations: Seventh Day Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists. The primary point of contact was through the Seventh Day Baptist, Rachel Oaks Preston, who shared her Sabbatarian views during the heyday of the Millerite revival. Later, after the Great Disappointment, one such post-disappointment group emerged with a distinctive emphasis upon the seventh-day Sabbath. These Sabbath-keeping Adventists, organized in 1863 as the Seventh-day Adventist Church, established formal relations with Seventh Day Baptists between 1868 and 1879 through the exchange of delegates who identified both commonalities as well as differences. Their shared interest in the seventh-day Sabbath was a strong bond that, during this time, helped each group to look beyond their differences.

*Keywords:* Seventh Day Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, Adventists, interfaith dialogue

### *Introduction*<sup>1</sup>

Seventh Day Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists share a fundamental conviction that the seventh-day Sabbath is the true biblical Sabbath. Each tradition, although spawned two centuries apart, argues that, soon after the New Testament period, the Christian church began to worship on Sunday rather than continue to observe the Jewish Sabbath. Both groups teach that the original Sabbath was the seventh day, instituted at Creation and affirmed when God gave the Ten Commandments. Each tradition developed their view of the Sabbath during a time of chaos in which religious figures sought to return to what they believed was an earlier, purer form of Christianity. In this sense, both traditions were “outsiders” in comparison to the wider religious culture, to borrow the phraseology of Paul Tillich, but because of their deep-

<sup>1</sup>I am especially indebted to Nicholas P. Miller, Edward Allen, Jud Lake, and Douglas Morgan for input on an earlier version of this piece, although responsibility for its conclusions are mine alone. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the American Society of Church History in Minneapolis, MN, on 16 April 2015. I am grateful for assistance from the staff of the Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, and the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference Archives for access to source material. Furthermore, I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their feedback.

rooted conviction of the seventh-day Sabbath they also shared a sense of being “insiders” together.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, Seventh Day Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists are not afraid to be different. Each group evolved out of a larger tradition, which was incredibly diverse and complex. Baptists and Adventists each have distinctive markers. In the case of Baptists, this marker was baptism by immersion; for Adventists it was the Second Coming. Quite often these shared values overlapped. Each demonstrated similar approaches, for example, by their high regard for and interpretation of Scripture. Characteristic of this period, according to historian Mark A. Noll, is “the persistent Protestant dilemma of supreme trust in Scripture accompanied by divergent interpretations of Scripture.”<sup>3</sup> Since Baptists, after Methodists, were the second largest religious demographic in America during the antebellum period, it comes as no surprise that Baptists, in turn, made up a significant portion of the Millerite Adventism revival. After all, William Miller was himself a Free Will Baptist.

In the chaos after the Great Disappointment, when Christ did not return on 22 October 1844, many Millerite Adventists gave up their faith altogether. Of those who remained, the largest group gravitated around Miller’s lieutenant, Joshua V. Himes, at the May 1845 Albany Conference. These believers denounced as fanatics all those who believed in visions or who advocated the seventh-day Sabbath. Many of these Millerite Adventists faced significant persecution. Some former Baptist members were driven out of their churches. Thus, Millerite Adventism imbibed of the wider “come out” movements of the 1840s, when Charles Fitch declared that the popular churches of the day, by rejecting the Advent message, had become Babylon.<sup>4</sup> In the aftermath of the Great Disappointment, and especially at the Albany Conference, a small group of Sabbatarian Adventists found themselves isolated from the main body of those remaining Millerite Adventist believers who did not renounce their faith. This clearly placed the founders of Sabbatarian Adventism as “outsiders” to the main body of Millerite Adventists.

In the wake of all this, a small group of Sabbatarian Adventists formed the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863. During this process, they

<sup>2</sup>For a helpful overview of the use of terms in relationship to anthropology and religion, see N. Ross Treat, “Insiders and Outsiders in the Study of Religious Traditions,” *JAAR* 51.3 (1983): 459–476. Paul Tillich approached the issue from a Marxist perspective; the categories of “insiders” versus “outsiders” in terms of how these two denominations related with one another, is a helpful one. See Mary Ann Stenger and Ronald H. Stone, *Dialogues of Paul Tillich* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2002), 175–177.

<sup>3</sup>Mark A. Noll, *In the Beginning Was the Word: The Bible in American Public Life, 1492–1783* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 322.

<sup>4</sup>The Pulitzer Prize-winning historian, David S. Reynolds, provides some helpful background on the “come out” movements of the 1840s in his *Walt Whitman’s America: A Cultural Biography* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 238. For Charles Fitch, see “Come Out of Her, My People,” *A Sermon, By C. Fitch* (Rochester, NY: J. V. Himes, 1843).

developed their own unique sense of identity and mission. Part of this identity included a combination of the restoration of the seventh-day Sabbath with their own unique apocalyptic framework. God’s “remnant church” at the very end of time would be distinguished by their observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. Gradually, Sabbatarian Adventists developed a growing awareness of mission, first to reach out to those who held similar values, which of course meant reaching out to similar groups. Since Seventh Day Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists both kept the seventh-day Sabbath, the question of their relationship to one another grew increasingly as a matter of concern from both traditions. Would they relate to them as “insiders” or “outsiders”? Surprisingly little work has been done to examine the relationship between these two denominations.<sup>5</sup> This paper helps to fill this lacuna, beginning with the earliest point of contact in 1844.

#### *Beginnings*

The issue of the seventh-day Sabbath was brought up by a few Millerite Adventists, most notably by the Scot, James A. Begg (1800–1868), who urged Adventists in America to study the topic in 1841.<sup>6</sup> By and large, Millerite Adventism was a one-doctrine movement. Doctrinal differences were minimized. The heyday of the Millerite revival (1840–1844) corresponded with a series of resolutions by the Seventh Day Baptists during their General Conference sessions, in which delegates resolved that it was their “solemn duty” to share the Sabbath truth with others. By June 1844, the primary periodical published by the Seventh Day Baptists, the *Sabbath Recorder*, noted “that considerable numbers of those who are looking for the speedy appearance of Christ have embraced the seventh day, and commenced observing it as the Sabbath.” They suggested that keeping the seventh-day Sabbath was “the best preparation” for the Second Coming.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup>A helpful paper examining the role of Sabbath observance between these two traditions is Miguel Patino, “Continuity and Change in Sabbath Observance between Seventh Day Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists,” (Term paper, AIIAS, 2013). The most extensive overview of this relationship is Russell J. Thomsen, *Seventh Day Baptists—Their Legacy to Adventists* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1971), which mostly focuses on the historical precursors of Sabbath-keeping, the adoption of the Sabbath through Rachel Oaks Preston, and some highlights of the “growing pains” between the two denominations (see *ibid.*, 44–55) that brought about cooperation in matters related to religious liberty; but all cooperation came to an end in the early twentieth century (see *ibid.*, 54). The most recent contribution is Stefan Höschele, *Interchurch and Interfaith Relations: Seventh-day Adventist Statements and Documents* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010), 14–19, which includes the key statements of exchange between the two denominations. Höschele notes that this is the first significant exchange by Seventh-day Adventists with another denomination.

<sup>6</sup>James A. Begg, “Letter from Scotland,” *The Signs of the Times* 2.2 (1 April 1841): 3.

<sup>7</sup>George R. Knight, *Joseph Bates: The Real Founder of Seventh-day Adventism* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2004), 78; Don A. Sanford, *A Choosing*

The earliest point of contact between Millerite Adventists and Seventh Day Baptists occurred when the Seventh Day Baptist, Rachel Oaks Preston, visited her daughter in Washington, New Hampshire. She, along with her daughter, a schoolteacher, since there were no other Sabbatharians, worshipped together with other Millerite Adventists on Sunday. According to one church member, they remembered that Frederick Wheeler preached a sermon in which he stated that all persons who confess communion with Christ should be “ready to follow Him, and obey God and keep His commandments in all things.” Afterward, Preston confronted Wheeler: “I came near getting up in the meeting at that point,’ she told him, ‘and saying something.’ ‘What was it you had in mind to say?’ he asked her. ‘I wanted to tell you that you would better set that communion table back and put the cloth over it, until you begin to keep the commandments of God.’” According to a memory statement, Wheeler stated that these words “cut him deeper than anything else ever spoken to him.” After studying the topic, he became a Sabbatharian.<sup>8</sup>

It is presumed that Wheeler, or someone from the small band of Sabbatharian Adventists who banded together soon afterward, most likely shared their Sabbatharian convictions with Thomas M. Preble, the pastor of the Free Will Baptist congregation in Nashua, only thirty-five miles from Washington. He, in turn, shared his views in the 28-February-1845 issue of *The Hope of Israel* (afterward distributed in tract form). Preble famously quipped that “All who keep the first day of the week for ‘*the Sabbath*’ are [the] *Pope’s Sunday Keepers!!* and *GOD’S SABBATH BREAKERS!!!*”<sup>9</sup>

It was Preble’s influence that, in April 1845, captured the attention of Joseph Bates, a local Millerite Adventist leader from Fairhaven, Massachusetts. He learned of the Sabbatharian Adventist group in Washington, New Hampshire, and traveled there to find answers to some of his lingering questions. Upon his return, he met his friend James Madison Monroe Hall, who asked: “What’s the news?” Bates replied, “The news is that the seventh-day is the Sabbath of the Lord our God.” He was so enraptured by the Sabbath truth that friends later reminisced that, even into old age, he would enthusiastically tell friends

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People: *The History of Seventh Day Baptists* [sic], rev. ed. (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2012), 154.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid. See also Thomsen, *Seventh-Day Baptists*, 36–43. For background on Frederick Wheeler and Rachel Oaks Preston, see Michael W. Campbell, “Frederick Wheeler,” in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, 546; “Frederick Wheeler,” *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* 11:871; W. A. Spicer, “Our First Minister,” *The Review and Herald* (RH) 117.7 (15 February 1940): 8–9.

<sup>9</sup>T. M. Preble, *The Hope of Israel* (Portland, ME: Pearson & Clemons, 1845); idem., *A Tract Showing that the Seventh Day Should Be Observed as the Sabbath, Instead of the First Day; According to the Commandment.* (Nashua, NH: Murray & Kimball, 1845), repr. in George R. Knight, *1844 and the Rise of Sabbatharian Adventism: Reproductions of Original Historical Documents*, comp. and ed. George R. Knight (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1994), 156–162.

“Oh, how I do love this Sabbath!”<sup>10</sup> Initially, Bates kept the Sabbath by himself, but in late 1850, Prudy, his wife, joined him. It appears that Preble’s tract was also influential in arresting the attention of fifteen-year-old John Nevins Andrews, who later became a stalwart Seventh-day Adventist minister and influential author of a book on the history of the Sabbath (1859). Although Bates, Andrews, and others joined forces into a Sabbatarian Adventist movement, Preble renounced his belief in the seventh-day Sabbath in 1849.

Thus, the initial point of contact for Sabbatarian Adventism came through a Seventh Day Baptist woman, Rachel Oaks Preston. Although individuals like Beggs had brought up the topic, she was the influential, yet inadvertent, catalyst that helped start a movement. Although the connection between Wheeler and Preble is unclear, it appears generally accepted by historians of both traditions that this was the birth of the Sabbatarian Adventist revival.<sup>11</sup>

Bates and Sabbatarian Adventism quickly absorbed and transformed the Seventh Day Baptist understanding of the seventh-day Sabbath. This can be seen in Joseph Bates’s tract, *The Seventh Day Sabbath, a Perpetual Sign*, originally published in August 1846. He argued that truth is progressive, and that the Sabbath (which he obtained from Preble) was new light. He worried about fanaticism, and that Preble’s emphasis about the Sabbath as connected to the original creation and the Ten Commandments was overlooked by most contemporary Christians. He shared his views in order to “save all honest souls seeking after truth.” Although this was new light for him, his arguments for the seventh-day Sabbath paralleled those used by Seventh Day Baptists.<sup>12</sup>

The transformation aspect for Bates can be seen in the second edition of his tract, published a year later, which shows that Bates had, in fact, moved beyond a Seventh Day Baptist view of the Sabbath. Bates now saw the Sabbath within an eschatological framework. “The *seventh* day Sabbath” is “to be restored before the second advent of Jesus Christ.” He tied the Sabbath to the Three Angels’ Messages of Revelation 14.<sup>13</sup> Seventh-day Adventist theologian Rolf Pöhler observes that Bates deserves the credit as the first individual to connect “the newly discovered Sabbath truth” with this notion of “present truth.”<sup>14</sup> He went even further by connecting the Sabbath to the newly developing concept that the events of 22 October 1844 actually occurred,

<sup>10</sup>For an overview, see Merlin D. Burt, *Adventist Pioneer Places: New York & New England* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2011), 68–69.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Bates argues first that the roots of the Sabbath stem from creation. See Joseph Bates, *The Seventh Day Sabbath, a Perpetual Sign* (New Bedford, MA: Benjamin Lindsey, 1846), 3–9. Second, he teaches that the Bible nowhere indicates that the Sabbath was abolished or transferred to Sunday (ibid., 9–16). Third, he examines purported texts that state the Sabbath was abolished (ibid., 16–27). Finally, he covers a smattering of topics, most important of which is the idea that the change of the Sabbath by the Pope fulfilled Daniel 7:25 as the one who changed times and laws (ibid., 27–47).

<sup>13</sup>See Knight, *Joseph Bates*, 110 (emphasis original).

<sup>14</sup>Rolf Pöhler, *Continuity and Change in Adventist Teaching: A Case Study in Doctrinal Development* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2000), 181.

not on earth, but in the heavenly sanctuary. This concept was connected to the vision of the ark of the testament (Rev 11:19). Thus, the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath was a defining feature of God's end-time or "remnant" people. From this perspective, he noted that "the keeping of God's Sabbath . . . saves the soul."<sup>15</sup> Thus, by the late 1840s, early Sabbatarian Adventists now placed the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath in eschatological terms that had clearly moved well beyond the Seventh Day Baptists. As the church grew and matured, the question was how would these two denominations relate to one another? Would they treat each other as insiders or outsiders?

### *Defining Boundaries*

Although Sabbatarian Adventists quickly moved in new eschatological directions, they found that Seventh Day Baptists, with whom they shared a common commitment for the seventh-day Sabbath, were a logical place to share their views. Initially, Sabbatarian Adventists followed through on their "come out" inhibitions from the Millerite period that viewed other denominations as those who were a part of Babylon because they rejected the Second Advent message. In the midst of persecution, they applied the parable of Matt 25 about the Bridegroom and the Ten Virgins to keep their lamps full and trimmed. When the bridegroom returned, the door was shut. Yet, as time persisted, the "shut door" turned into a partially open door by 1852. This ideology was significant because it meant that as the Seventh-day Adventist Church was formed, it was not until two decades later (1874) that the denomination would send out its first official missionary and embrace a broad mission that extended around the world.<sup>16</sup>

During the 1850s, Sabbatarian Adventists and Seventh Day Baptists defined their boundaries in different ways. Joseph Bates noted with appreciation the influence Seventh Day Baptists had upon him, but expressed concern that Seventh Day Baptists do not believe in the "testimony of Jesus," a euphemism for the latter-day bestowal of the gift of prophecy, specifically as manifested through Ellen G. White.<sup>17</sup> Yet, in this particular sense it appears that Bates was using this as a euphemism for their collective eschatology that included how they viewed the Sabbath differently. Seventh Day Baptists looked backwards, seeking to restore what was lost, whereas the Seventh-day Adventists built on this legacy, but also went farther by looking forward eschatologically. In doing so, Sabbatarian Adventists saw a progressive development of

<sup>15</sup>Knight observes that Bates always had a tendency toward legalism. See his discussion in *ibid.*, 113–114, 144.

<sup>16</sup>For the best concise summary of the development of Seventh-day Adventist missions, see George R. Knight, "Historical Introduction," in *Historical Sketches of Foreign Missions*, Adventist Classic Library (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2005 [1886]), v–xxxv.

<sup>17</sup>Joseph Bates, "The Holy Sabbath," *RH* 1.5 (7 April 1851): 57–58 (quotation on 58).

truth about the seventh-day Sabbath that did build upon the Seventh Day Baptist understanding, but went beyond it. Thus, their understanding was complimentary rather than hostile for these early Sabbatarians.

As a result, Sabbatarian Adventists like James White, who edited the earliest Sabbatarian Adventist periodicals, felt comfortable reprinting Seventh Day Baptist articles and tracts, the earliest example being in 1852.<sup>18</sup> Another significant development, later that same year, was a note by James White about the significance of *The Sabbath Recorder*. After the initial and informal contact by Rachel Oaks Preston in 1844, it was this periodical exchange, which began in 1852, that appears to have started an active dialogue through print between these two traditions.<sup>19</sup>

Despite such exchanges, relationships during the 1850s and early 1860s appeared somewhat reserved between these two religious groups. A reason for this was no doubt the attempts of early ministers like Joseph Bates, who was especially fond of evangelizing Seventh Day Baptists. In one report, he noted that a Seventh Day Baptist came up to him after one of his sermons and told him that Seventh-day Adventists had a power in their ability to evangelize others about the Sabbath that Seventh Day Baptists lacked.<sup>20</sup> This was obviously a point of pride for Bates. Thus, outreach to Seventh Day Baptists was a natural starting point for Sabbatarian Adventist evangelism. In this way, they spoke as competitors. Reports from the Sabbatarian Adventist periodical, *The Review and Herald (RH)*, contain numerous such reports about similar points of contact. Initially, for church members who largely lived in rural locales, this created a common camaraderie as they worshipped together. In some localities, Seventh Day Baptists opened their meeting houses for worship services and even evangelistic meetings.<sup>21</sup>

Yet, tensions grew during the 1850s as continued reports circulated about church members, and even a few ministers, who converted to Sabbatarian Adventism. Research suggests that such conversions were never extensive—not more than five percent of the fledgling Sabbatarian Adventist movement came from the Seventh Day Baptists—but it was still a cause for concern.<sup>22</sup> At least one Seventh Day Baptist congregation disfellowshipped a church member in 1853 for agitating their convictions about the Second Coming.<sup>23</sup> Such interactions caused Seventh Day Baptists to clarify their relationship to Seventh-day Adventists. On 28 July 1853, the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference passed a resolution to enquire about the beliefs of the

<sup>18</sup>See James White, “The Lord’s Sabbath,” in *RH* 2.10 (13 January 1852): 77–79.

<sup>19</sup>James White, “The Sabbath Recorder,” *RH* 3.6 (22 July 1852): 48.

<sup>20</sup>Joseph Bates, “Letters: From Bro. Bates. Alden, Ill., Conference,” *RH* 3.9 (2 September 1852): 69.

<sup>21</sup>Apparently the Sabbatarian Adventist minister, J. N. Loughborough, was quite fond of reaching out to Seventh Day Baptists. See, for example, [J. N. Loughborough], “From Bro. Loughborough,” *RH* 3.22 (7 March 1853): 176.

<sup>22</sup>This estimate is based upon obituaries in *RH* from 1850 to 1884.

<sup>23</sup>John M. Mills, “From Bro. Mills,” *RH* 3.26 (12 May 1853): 207.



“Seventh day [*sic*] Advent people.” In response to this inquiry James White encouraged them to read Seventh-day Adventist publications:

It is now a little more than eight years since the Sabbath was first introduced among the Advent people; and as a people, they rejected it. A few stood firm amidst violent opposition. The Sabbath cause did not advance with us but very little up to 1849. At that time it began to rise and its progress has been steady and firm till the present. . . . As a people we are brought together from divisions of the Advent body, and from the various denominations, holding different views on some subjects; yet, thank Heaven, the Sabbath is a mighty platform on which we can all stand united. And while standing here, with the aid of no other creed than the Word of God, and bound together by the bonds of love—love for the truth, love for each other, and love for a perishing world . . . all party feelings are lost. We are united in these great subjects: Christ’s immediate, personal second Advent, and the observance of all of the commandments of God, and the faith of his Son Jesus Christ, as necessary to a readiness for his Advent.<sup>24</sup>

James White affirmed that the Seventh Day Baptists were pioneer Sabbath reformers, and that their writings “have been a great comfort and strength to us.”<sup>25</sup> In response to the Seventh Day Baptist resolution, Sabbatarian Adventists affirmed that they were grateful to learn that Seventh Day Baptists were inquiring about their beliefs.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, Sabbatarian Adventists and Seventh Day Baptists developed an initial posture of respect, despite conflict generated by competition, as they dialogued and defined their relationship to one another.<sup>27</sup> Most of this dialogue continued up through the 1870s as each tradition republished articles and tracts. Despite a few contentions, groups of church members continued to worship together in some areas.<sup>28</sup> It was a point of pride for a group of Seventh Day Baptists who lived in Milton, Wisconsin, that when a Seventh-day Adventist believer died in their community that they buried him in the Seventh Day Baptist graveyard. The author wryly noted that, although buried in a Seventh Day Baptist graveyard, he continued to await the return of Jesus to wake him from the grave.<sup>29</sup> The life of this believer was apparently enough to inspire some Seventh Day Baptists from that community to subscribe to the *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*.<sup>30</sup> Thus, once again print would be the mechanism for dialogue and exchange between the two Sabbath-keeping traditions.

<sup>24</sup>James White, “Resolution of the Seventh-day [*sic*] Baptist Central Association,” *RH* 4.7 (11 August 1853): 52–53.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>S. R. C. Denison, “Proving Too Much,” *RH* 4.12 (27 September 1853): 96.

<sup>27</sup>See the unattributed note on the continuation of a journal exchange located on the back cover of *RH* 4.20 (22 November 1853): 160.

<sup>28</sup>See how R. J. Lawrence and Hiram Edson continued to hold religious meetings with Seventh Day Baptists who supported them in Hiram Edson and Horace W. Lawrence, “From Brn. Edson and Lawrence,” *RH* 4.18 (8 November 1853): 143.

<sup>29</sup>See “Obituary,” *RH* 4.21 (29 November 1853): 168.

<sup>30</sup>Cynthia Coon, “From Sr. Coon,” *RH* 4.22 (6 December 1853): 175.

The pattern of exchanging periodicals remained largely respectful, even if a bit cautious, as relations between the two movements continued through the 1850s up through the 1860s into the American Civil War. Each movement continued to uphold the seventh-day Sabbath, and Sabbatarian Adventists were especially careful to note the activist efforts by Seventh Day Baptists toward religious liberty. As early as 1854, Sabbatarian Adventists reprinted articles by Seventh Day Baptists about religious liberty issues.<sup>31</sup> James White observed that this piece was published “not because we approve of their purpose to resist by legal means the injustice and oppression, to which the observers of the Sabbath are subjected, but because it is an able exposure of the unjust character of those laws which enforce the observance of Sunday.”<sup>32</sup> It appears that the Seventh Day Baptist role in promulgating religious liberty, along with the common enemy of Sunday laws, helped to reinforce the idea that each tradition was part of a larger common cause. In doing so, Seventh-day Adventist leaders recognized that they were part of a common cause, and that they needed to put aside eschatological differences to focus on their common bond of the seventh-day Sabbath. Thus, they began to speak about each other more in terms as “insiders” in their exchange through print.

This does not mean, however, that competition ceased to exist. Some significant bumps included at least two instances where an entire congregation of Seventh Day Baptists converted to Seventh-day Adventism.<sup>33</sup> This sparked occasional protests by Seventh Day Baptist leaders. Thus, Seventh Day Baptists published an article on “The Kingdom of God.”<sup>34</sup> The article noted certain “disorganizers” who in some areas have disrupted Seventh Day Baptist congregations. Although the article does not mention Seventh-day Adventists, their leaders took it to be this way. Such individuals have “won their way to the hearts of our people,” the author opined.<sup>35</sup> Sabbatarian Adventists categorically denied the charge of disorganization. Even more sensitive was the fact that, in some instances, Seventh Day Baptists were reported to have been rebaptized. A former Seventh Day Baptist minister, D. P. Hall, who now addressed his former church members, defended himself from this charge. New believers accepted “present truth” and, in some instances, this meant that they were rebaptized. A clearer understanding of God’s law and its connection to baptism meant that “many Adventists have been re-baptized.” This was

<sup>31</sup>[Seventh Day Baptist General Conference], “Religious Liberty Endangered by Legislative Enactments,” *RH* 6.9 (10 October 1854): 65–67.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup>The congregations were in Hayfield, Pennsylvania, and Brookfield, New York. See T. H. Dunn, “The Lectures of Eld. D. P. Hall in the Seventh-day [*sic*] Baptist Church at Hayfield, Crawford Co., Pa., and their Results,” *RH* 6.23 (20 February 1855): 178–180.

<sup>34</sup>See the Seventh-day Adventist response, D. P. Hall, “Review of T. B. B., in his Article Headed, ‘The Kingdom of God,’ Published in the ‘Sabbath Recorder,’ February 8th, 1855,” *RH* 6.26 (3 April 1855): 204–205.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

not to discount the validity of the baptism of Seventh Day Baptists, but was instead a recognition of spiritual growth.<sup>36</sup>

Perhaps the most defining doctrinal differences between these two traditions centered upon what happens to human beings after death. Seventh-day Adventists followed the Millerite Adventist George Storrs, who adopted the view of the non-immortality of the soul. This doctrine was never unanimous and divided other Adventist groups after the Great Disappointment, even if Sabbatarian Adventists uniformly embraced this belief. This doctrine was resisted by Seventh Day Baptists, who emphasized it as a point of departure for the two traditions.<sup>37</sup> From the point of the American Civil War forward (at least until 1884 within the confines of this study), this remained the main area of concern.<sup>38</sup> Eschatological concerns faded to the background. This can be seen in the extensive debate between the Seventh-day Adventist evangelist R. F. Cottrell and the Seventh Day Baptist minister N. V. Hull that continued over several years during and soon after the Civil War.<sup>39</sup>

The period from 1852 up through the Civil War was a time in which Seventh Day Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists defined their boundaries. Dialogue occurred primarily through print, although church members occasionally worshipped together. The commonality of the seventh-day Sabbath was a natural bridge that caused them to increasingly speak to one another as “insiders,” even if they were still competitors. The occasional member of a congregation that converted did cause some tension. This tension found noticeable expression when the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference expressed serious concerns in 1855. Yet, this was not enough to stop dialogue. They had a common commitment to the seventh-day Sabbath. They also had a common enemy with the threat of the loss of religious liberty. Altogether, neither group felt compelled to follow the other. At times, this resulted in a further definition of boundaries, which was most dramatically seen in debates over the state of the dead.

#### *Postwar Dialogue*

Many of the patterns from the 1850s up through the American Civil War continued after the conflict. During this time, the editors from both traditions exchanged periodicals. They also republished articles. Perhaps the best example is when Seventh-day Adventists republished the Seventh Day Baptist tract, *Thoughts Suggested by the Perusal of Gilfillan, and Other Authors on the Sabbath*, by T. B. Brown. Ten thousand copies were made by the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association.<sup>40</sup> Seventh-day Adventist

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>E. Lanpheart, “The Immortality Question,” *RH* 16.5 (19 June 1860): 34–35.

<sup>38</sup>J. F. Hammon, “State of the Dead,” *RH* 27.24 (15 May 1866): 186.

<sup>39</sup>N. V. Hull, “Nature and Destiny of Man,” *RH* 30.15 (24 September 1867): 227.

<sup>40</sup>See “New Work on the Sabbath,” *RH* 33.20 (11 May 1869): 160. See also Thomas B. Brown, “Gilfillan on the Sabbath,” *RH* 33.21 (18 May 1869): 165–168; [J. N. Andrews], “Brown’s Reply to Gilfillan,” *RH* 33.26 (22 June 1869): 204.

Church leaders were similarly impressed by the publication by A. H. Lewis of his *History of the Sabbath*. Seventh-day Adventists snatched up copies. It was seen as a companion volume to an earlier volume by the same title written by J. N. Andrews.<sup>41</sup> Even Adventist prophetess Ellen G. White kept a copy in her library.<sup>42</sup>

Another pattern that continued was sharing worship services. One noticeable example of this was when, in 1867, a group of Seventh Day Baptist leaders attended the Wisconsin camp meeting. Southern Wisconsin was a center for the Seventh Day Baptists. Thus, the location of the Seventh-day Adventist camp meeting only seven miles away was a cause of concern for them.<sup>43</sup> Another similar pattern was the exchange of print. In 1868, Seventh Day Baptist leaders sent a copy of the actions from their then recent General Conference session. This triggered a positive response that in turn sparked increased dialogue between the two groups.<sup>44</sup> And finally, Seventh-day Adventists especially admired the Seventh Day Baptist work for religious liberty. The fact that Seventh-day Adventists were forced to apply for non-combatancy status during the war meant that they could not avoid politics altogether. Efforts for “Sabbath reform” were indeed a cause for concern, and only amplified by the eschatological views of Seventh-day Adventists, who believed that this was another sign of the end. Thus, religious liberty appears to have heightened other points of exchange and contact as a point of admiration.<sup>45</sup>

The patterns of print, attendance at meetings, and a mutual interest in religious liberty (along with a mutual antipathy for Sunday legislation) created the backdrop for a group of Seventh-day Adventist leaders who issued an “Address to the Seventh-day [*sic*] Baptists” in May 1868. The semiofficial resolution was drafted by James White, J. H. Waggoner, J. N. Andrews, and R. F. Cottrell. They noted their admiration for the Seventh Day Baptist Sabbath observance. “In all this our hearts are as yours,” they stated. “We have, as a people, been called to the observance of the Bible Sabbath, while deeply interested in the doctrine of the speedy advent of the Son of God. We may even add, that our connection with the Advent movement has lead us directly, and almost inevitably, to the observance of the Sabbath of the Lord.” They invited their counterparts to study the soon return of Christ and increase their zeal to keep the seventh day. Previous differences related to the nature of humans in death were not mentioned. In commenting

<sup>41</sup>[Uriah Smith], “Sabbath Agitation,” *RH* 30.20 (29 October 1867): 304. It appears that J. N. Andrews, who in 1859 had written a booklet by the same title, was especially encouraged by this parallel work.

<sup>42</sup>Warren H. Johns, Tim Poirier, and Ron Graybill, *A Bibliography of Ellen G. White’s Private and Office Libraries*, 3rd rev. ed. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1993).

<sup>43</sup>[Uriah Smith], “Editorial Correspondence, No. 2,” *RH* 30.16 (1 October 1867): 248.

<sup>44</sup>Idem, “Book Notices,” *RH* 31.20 (28 April 1868): 320.

<sup>45</sup>Idem, “Sabbath Reform,” *RH* 29.21 (30 April 1867): 252.

on this development, W. C. Gage, who served as foreman of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing House, noted the need to cultivate “fraternal feelings between . . . these two denominations being the only Christian people on this broad continent who are honoring God by defending his law and Sabbath.”<sup>46</sup>

In response, the Seventh Day Baptists noted with appreciation the Seventh-day Adventist resolution. They found this as a “matter of rejoicing to us, that through God’s good providence he has, in you, so largely increased the number of those who observed his holy Sabbath.” While the doctrine of the Second Advent did not “seem to us of such pressing importance as it does to you,” they reciprocated by sending Jonathan Allen to attend their next General Conference session. Seventh-day Adventists noted with approval “the spirit of Christian courtesy that breathes through this document.”<sup>47</sup> This move was a significant development that began a formal relationship between the two denominations that lasted a decade. It represented the first significant attempt by Seventh-day Adventists to formally exchange a delegate and, while Seventh Day Baptists had delegates from other Baptist groups, this was a unique phenomenon for them as well, at least for the period under consideration. Whereas they had a common bond, up until now a spirit of competition had threatened their status as fellow believers. Now they changed their stance to avoid competition. The formal exchange of delegates marked a new and special development between them.

#### *Exchange of Delegates*

The period of 1869 to 1879 marked a “high point” in terms of contact and exchange between the two traditions. The exchange of delegates reflected both a sense of curiosity as well as a gesture of goodwill. After the initial 1868 resolution, the Seventh-day Adventists reciprocated by forming a committee (consisting of R. F. Cottrell, J. N. Andrews, and Nathan Fuller) “to address the Seventh-day [*sic*] Baptists, and open such correspondence with them as they may deem fit.”<sup>48</sup> The resolution gave a mechanism for communication. In the meantime, an early itinerant ministerial couple, John and Sarah Lindsay, attended the 1870 Seventh Day Baptist General Conference session. They provided a warm report and encouraged others to participate.

This cooperation continued when Professor Jonathan Allen attended the 1870 Seventh-day Adventist General Conference session. Seventh-day Adventists welcomed him with the “hope” that “as far as [*is*] consistent with the difference of our views of truth, to establish fraternal relations with the only people beside ourselves who hallow the day of the Creator’s rest.”<sup>49</sup> This initial exchange of a delegate was also followed up when, for the first time,

<sup>46</sup>W. C. G[age], “The Seventh-Day [*sic*] Baptists,” *RH* 34.2 (6 July 1869): 16.

<sup>47</sup>[J. N. Andrews], “Response from the Seventh-Day [*sic*] Baptists,” *RH* 34.22 (23 November 1869): 176.

<sup>48</sup>“Business Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Session of the General Conference of S. D. Adventists,” *RH* 33.22 (25 May 1869): 173.

<sup>49</sup>[J. N. Andrews], “Our Annual Meetings,” *RH* 35.10 (22 February 1870): 80.

the Seventh Day Baptist H. P. Burdick occupied the pulpit of the Battle Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church, at the denomination's headquarters.<sup>50</sup> This was an unprecedented gesture of goodwill on the part of Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders and clearly indicated that they considered them to be fellow Christian believers. While this occasionally happened in rural areas (i.e., worshipping together), the invitation to preach at church headquarters was a clear evidence that their relationship was, in fact, now different.

**Table 1.** Seventh-day Adventist and Seventh Day Baptist Delegates

Year	Seventh-day Adventist Delegates	Seventh Day Baptist Delegates
1869	“Address to the Seventh-day [sic] Baptists” <sup>a</sup>	
1870	James White (unable to attend due to sickness), R. F. Cottrell, John and Sarah A. H. Lindsay attend unofficially <sup>b</sup>	Jonathan Allen <sup>c</sup>
1871	J. N. Andrews <sup>d</sup>	H. P. Burdick <sup>e</sup>
1872	Uriah Smith <sup>f</sup>	N. Wardner <sup>g</sup>
1873	J. N. Andrews <sup>h</sup>	Stephen Burdick <sup>i</sup> ; No delegate at the second Seventh-day Adventist General Conference session <sup>j</sup>
1874	J. N. Andrews <sup>k</sup>	L. C. Rogers <sup>l</sup>
1875	Uriah Smith <sup>m</sup> and D. M. Canright <sup>n</sup>	N. V. Hull <sup>o</sup>
1876	James White <sup>p</sup>	C. W. Whitford (president of Seventh Day Baptist College in Milton, Wisconsin)
1877		
1878	J. H. Waggoner	N. Wardner <sup>q</sup>
1879	James White <sup>r</sup>	

<sup>a</sup>See James White, J. H. Waggoner, J. N. Andrews, and R. F. Cottrell, “The Address to the Seventh-Day [sic] Baptists,” *RH* 34.7 (10 August 1869): 52–53.

<sup>b</sup>James White was supposed to attend as a delegate, but was unable to do so on account of sickness. Several Seventh-day Adventists were present, including John Lindsay, S[arah] A. H. Lindsay (John Lindsay and S[arah] A. H. Lindsay, “Report of Meetings,” *RH* 36.25 [6 December 1870]: 198), and R. F. Cottrell (R. F. Cottrell, “Seventh-day [sic] Baptists,” *RH* 36.14 [20 September 1870]: 109). Although the Lindsays and Cottrell were not official delegates, it does help to demonstrate a desire for close cooperation with the Seventh Day Baptists.

<sup>c</sup>“Business Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Session of the General Conference of S. D. Adventists,” *RH* 35.14 (22 March 1870): 109.

<sup>d</sup>J. N. Andrews, “Visit to the S. D. Baptist General Conference,” *RH* 38.14 (19 September 1871): 108–109.

<sup>50</sup>See editorial note on back page that indicates the sickness of editor, along with initials of the interim editor (W[illiam] C. G[age], *RH* 36.18 [18 October 1870]: 144).

<sup>e</sup>“Business Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Session of the General Conference of S. D. Adventists,” *RH* 37.9 (14 February 1871): 68.

<sup>f</sup>See editorial note on back page of *RH* 40.13 (10 September 1872): 104. The full report was published as [Uriah Smith], “The S. D. Baptist Anniversaries,” *RH* 40.15 (24 September 1872): 116.

<sup>g</sup>“Business Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,” *RH* 39.3 (2 January 1872): 20. Although this conference was in late 1871, it appears that the Seventh Day Baptist church considered this as a counterpoint to Uriah Smith’s earlier 1872 visit.

<sup>h</sup>J. N. A[ndrews], “Visit to the Seventh-Day [sic] Baptist General Conference,” *RH* 42.16 (30 September 1873): 124.

<sup>i</sup>See Stephen Burdick, “Report of Eld. S. Burdick,” *RH* 42.17 (7 October 1873): 133.

<sup>j</sup>J. N. Andrews noted his disappointment. See J. N. A[ndrews], “Visit to the Seventh-Day [sic] Baptist General Conference,” *RH* 42.16 (30 September 1873): 124.

<sup>k</sup>“The Seventh-Day Baptists [sic],” *RH* 44.18 (27 October 1874): 141.

<sup>l</sup>“Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Gen. Conf. of S. D. Adventists,” *RH* 44.10 (25 August 1874): 74–75. This report notes that this was L. C. Roger’s last Seventh-day Adventist General Conference session.

<sup>m</sup>See untitled news note by G. M. A[madon] on back page of *RH* 46.12 (23 September 1875): 96.

<sup>n</sup>Uriah Smith preached a sermon before the Seventh Day Baptist delegates. See D. M. Canright, “Faith and Works,” *RH* 47.1 (6 January 1876): 1–3.

<sup>o</sup>“Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Session of the S. D. Adventist General Conference,” *RH* 46.8 (26 August 1875): 59; see also N. V. Hull, “Seventh-day Adventist General Conference,” *RH* 46.10 (9 September 1875): 77.

<sup>p</sup>James White, “Seventh-Day [sic] Baptists,” *RH* 48.14 (5 October 1876): 108.

<sup>q</sup>[Uriah Smith], “The Conference,” *RH* 52.16 (17 October 1878): 124.

<sup>r</sup>See untitled news notice on back page of *RH* 54.14 (25 September 1879): 112.

In **table 1**, I have traced the exchange of delegates. What follows is essentially a summary of some of the key points made by delegates during this decade. Future delegates highlighted the polity and procedures that occurred during their respective General Conference sessions. The structure of each denomination was different, and delegates found this to be quite interesting. Seventh-day Adventists, for example, had delegates who arrived from each state conference. Seventh Day Baptists, in contrast, had only one delegate from each church, although multiple representatives could caucus together to decide about how to vote. Another significant difference in terms of polity was that the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference voted resolutions that had to be implemented at the local church level, yet Seventh Day Baptists resolutions could only be recommended and lacked any mechanism for enforcement.<sup>51</sup> The Seventh Day Baptist reports suggest that

<sup>51</sup>A helpful description from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective is J. N. A[ndrews], “Visit to the Seventh-day [sic] General Conference,” *RH* 42.16 (30 September 1873): 124.

what stood out from their perspective was the Adventists' cohesive, centralized system of organization.<sup>52</sup>

Perhaps the most interesting discussions, from the perspective of the Seventh-day Adventist delegates, concerned the internal debates by Seventh Day Baptists over "closed" versus "open" communion. This was a widely debated topic among Baptists, with the majority of American Baptists during the nineteenth century in favor of "closed" communion.<sup>53</sup> Seventh Day Baptists joined others, although there were some protests toward this stance. Such discussions predated internal discussions by Seventh-day Adventist leaders, who did not begin a serious discussion on the topic until the 1880s, after the exchange of delegates came to an end.<sup>54</sup> One wonders if perhaps such discussions may have prompted reflection by Seventh-day Adventists upon the topic, who similarly were not uniform in their approach about how to celebrate this church ordinance.

Another area of mutual interest concerned missions. This was discussed by delegates from both sides who earnestly noted their areas of growth, as well as their mutual desire to not compete with one another. J. N. Andrews, the year before he left as the Seventh-day Adventist denomination's first official missionary, noted with interest at a Seventh Day Baptist general conference session about the Seventh Day Baptist missionary presence in China.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, the energy exerted by Seventh-day Adventists to print tracts in new languages, expand their missionary reach to California, and eventually to develop a missionary presence in Europe, was keenly observed by Seventh Day Baptists. It appears that their missionary efforts were synergistic and mutually beneficial to each denomination. Furthermore, the Seventh Day Baptist, William M. Jones, who lived and operated in the vicinity of London, provided a useful point of contact for J. N. Andrews. Jones hosted Andrews on his way to Switzerland, shared with Andrews about their history, and personally gave him a tour of historic sites.<sup>56</sup>

The exchange of delegates marked a new and increased communication, as well as a "brotherly" fraternity between the two denominations. Competition was put aside so they could focus on being fellow believers, even though not

<sup>52</sup>Cf. Stephen Burdick, "Report of Eld. S. Burdick: Delegate from the S. D. Baptists to the Last Gen. Conf. of S. D. Adventists," *RH* 42.17 (7 October 1873): 133.

<sup>53</sup>David W. Bebbington, *Baptists through the Centuries* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 92.

<sup>54</sup>For an overview of the development of the Lord's Supper among Seventh-day Adventists, see Michael W. Campbell, "A Holy Spell: The Development of the Communion Service among Seventh-day Adventists" (term paper, Andrews University, 2004).

<sup>55</sup>J. N. Andrews, "Visit to the Seventh-day Baptist General Conference," *RH* 42.16 (30 September 1873): 124.

<sup>56</sup>William M. Jones, "Interesting Letter from London," *RH* 44.26 (22 December 1874): 206; idem, "Seventh-Day [*sic*] Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists," *RH* 43.26 (9 June 1874): 205.



all theological tensions were resolved. This was at least enough to facilitate a sense of continuity. Tragically, this continuity unraveled during the latter part of the 1870s.

### *Tensions*

The exchange of delegates and increased interaction between the two denominations brought up new questions about their future relationship. Any questions about a possible merger were stifled. In 1876, the Seventh Day Baptists voted a resolution that they should continue to exchange delegates, but that there should be no “consolidation of two bodies holding such opposite views concerning important doctrines.”<sup>57</sup> The feelings of good will would only go so far.

These warm feelings generated by the exchange of delegates quickly dissipated over the next year. During 1877, significant tensions developed between them. Church leaders from both traditions indicated that some “rash efforts” were made by some Seventh-day Adventists in Minnesota, western New York, and Pennsylvania—areas with high concentrations of Seventh Day Baptists. Most notorious of all was Nathan Fuller, who apparently aggressively tried to convert Seventh Day Baptists. He apostatized after news of an affair and financial problems came to light.<sup>58</sup> Similar other “rash efforts” were made, according to James White, by individuals in Minnesota.<sup>59</sup>

In response, Seventh Day Baptist church leaders published a resolution condemning such actions. This appears to have troubled James White, who affirmed the earlier 1876 resolution that the two bodies not compete with one another. They declared that no evangelism should be done in a community with an already existing congregation, and Seventh Day Baptist church leaders should have contacted Seventh-day Adventist General Conference leaders when there was a problem instead of publishing an article about it. Such an article was written to “excite prejudice” against Adventists. Over the previous twenty years, James White observed, Seventh-day Adventists maintained a respectful posture toward Seventh Day Baptists. The best timber for new church members, suggested White, was “hewn right from the forest.”<sup>60</sup>

A gap in delegates exists for the year of 1877, during which no delegates were exchanged by either denomination. The Seventh-day Adventist minister, J. H. Waggoner, did, however, attend the 1878 Seventh Day Baptist General Conference session. At that meeting, Varnum Hull read an essay highlighting the differences between the two denominations. Reflecting on

<sup>57</sup>Albert N. Rogers, *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America: A Series of Historical Papers Written in Commemoration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Organization of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference: Celebrated at Ashaway, Rhode Island, August 20-25, 1902*, 2 vols. (Plainfield, NJ: American Sabbath Tract Society, 1910), 1:206.

<sup>58</sup>D. M. Canright, “Pennsylvania and New York,” *RH* 49.17 (26 April 1877): 134.

<sup>59</sup>J[ames] W[hite], “The Two Bodies,” *RH* 50.8 (16 August 1877): 60.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*

this meeting, J. N. Andrews wished that there should be no “strife between these two denominations that are alike loyal to the law of God.”<sup>61</sup> Despite some doctrinal differences, “[i]n practice they are substantially one.” Such efforts by Andrews and others appear to have fallen on deaf ears.<sup>62</sup> The next year the Seventh Day Baptists sent N. Wardner as their final delegate to a Seventh-day Adventist General Conference session. Finally, the last delegate was James White, who attended the 1879 Seventh Day Baptist General Conference session. In this final point of contact (he died two years later), he reviewed their mutual relationship that had developed over the previous decade. Both denominations stood in “general agreement” on the “divine law” and other great Christian truths, but their principal difference remained “the immortality question.” He urged that there be “no controversy between the two bodies” and that the exchange of delegates continue. Unfortunately, this was the last official exchange of delegates between the two denominations until 1979 when the practice was resumed.<sup>63</sup>

Subsequent reports in church publications indicate that, among local church communities in some areas, Seventh-day Adventists and Seventh Day Baptists occasionally continued to worship together. Ministers from either denomination also conducted funerals. Debates continued between ministers, especially on the state of the dead.<sup>64</sup> In one instance, a Seventh Day Baptist employed a Seventh-day Adventist who lost his job due to Sabbath observance.<sup>65</sup> While there was no longer a formal relationship, with some exceptions, relations returned to earlier competitive patterns.

Despite the distance, Seventh-day Adventist church leaders continued to admire the Seventh Day Baptist stance on religious liberty. In a way, it was Seventh Day Baptists who served as a role model for the religious liberty work. Adventist church leaders regularly reported on the work of Seventh Day Baptists.<sup>66</sup> Although Adventists were reticent to get involved in such cases, during the 1880s and 1890s they did follow the Baptists’ example by actively combatting Sunday legislation and advocating for religious liberty.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>61</sup>J. N. Andrews, “Seventh-Day [*sic*] Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists,” *RH* 52.17 (24 October 1878): 132.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup>James White, “Seventh-Day [*sic*] Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists,” *RH* 54.23 (4 December 1879): 180–181.

<sup>64</sup>Cf. the debate between N. Wardner and Uriah Smith that occurred during 1880 (N. Wardner, “Death—No. 2. Reply to U. Smith,” *RH* 56.21 [18 November 1880]: 322–324).

<sup>65</sup>Geo. E. Loomis, “How We Found the Truth,” *RH* 55.20 (13 May 1880): 316–317.

<sup>66</sup>The Daniel C. Waldo case was closely followed by Adventists from 1879–1880.

<sup>67</sup>See note by editor with reprinted letter by Horatio Gates Jones ([Uriah Smith], “Religious Liberty in Pennsylvania,” *RH* 55.5 [29 January 1880]: 75).

*Summary and Conclusions*

The relationship between Seventh Day Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists from 1844 to 1884 was indeed complex as each denomination defined its relationship to the other. Each group credits Rachel Oaks Preston as the initial contact point which led to the emergence of Sabbatarian Adventism. This relationship was nurtured through print. Yet, the two denominations were too closely related to one another for this warm relationship to last very long: very early on competition between these two Sabbatarian churches soon created tension. In some instances, early Seventh-day Adventist converts came from the Seventh Day Baptist tradition; and conversely, an occasional defector resorted to the Seventh Day Baptists as a place of refuge. While this friction extends beyond the scope of this article, what is significant is that each group sought to delineate boundaries. Although they had strong ties through an important doctrine, the Sabbath, they saw other biblical teachings in a very different way. During these earliest years, particularly during the 1850s, the primary point of departure related to eschatology, but later shifted to differences over views concerning the state of the dead.

The fact that such differences existed between these two denominations should not diminish points of continuity. The observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, including the nurtured memory of the initial point of contact through Rachel Oaks Preston, continued to nurture the seventh-day Sabbath as a significant commonality. This created a strong bond. Early believers used language that they were still spiritual brothers and sisters, or fellow “insiders,” as opposed to non-Sabbatarian “outsiders.” Continued exchanges, often through print, encouraged natural curiosity. A significant turning point came in 1868, when Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders made a resolution at their General Conference session that ultimately led to the formal exchange of delegates between 1868 and 1879. Such an exchange marked a high point during this time, as they recognized their common Sabbatarian cause. They resolved not to compete with one another, and worked toward common interests, such as missions and religious liberty. In turn, the two Sabbatarian denominations exchanged ideas (and at times church members) in a complex and unique relationship. When they emphasized “commonalities” (particularly during the 1870s), they were “insiders.” However, renewed tensions eventually overshadowed such commonalities, and each denomination distanced itself from one another as “outsiders.”

**LEARNING AND UNLEARNING: A CONTEXT FOR IMPORTANT  
DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST  
UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRINITY, 1888–1898**

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*Abstract*

A close study of new documentary sources enables historians to know much more about the historical context for major developments in the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity than what has previously been written. None of the previous studies on the development of the Trinity doctrine in Adventism seem to have considered the implications of a cluster of letters written in the 1940s in which Leroy Froom, then editor of *Ministry*, and Arthur Spalding, author of the *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, dialogued with Herbert Camden Lacey about the background to this development. As the brother-in-law to W. C. White and a retired theology teacher at the time of the exchange of correspondence, Lacey recounts a series of important theological developments in Australia in the mid-1890s. Lacey's account correlates with real-time evidence from the mid-1890s correspondence between W. W. Prescott, A. G. Daniells, E. G. White, and W. C. White, as well as with Seventh-day Adventist periodicals of the time. This article discusses this important background and its implications for the historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

*Keywords:* Trinity, theological development, Seventh-day Adventism

*Introduction*<sup>1</sup>

Seventh-day Adventist scholars have sometimes observed that Seventh-day Adventists came to their view of God as Trinity rather late. George Knight rightly claims in his book, *Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs*, that most of Adventism's original founders and pioneers would not have been able to join the church today if they had been required to agree to the fundamental beliefs as currently articulated. Knight points out that most of them would not have been able to get past the second belief statement

<sup>1</sup>Material in this paper extends research that was presented briefly in two earlier articles, Gilbert M. Valentine, "A Slice of History: How Clearer Views of Jesus Developed in the Adventist Church," *Ministry* 77.5 (2005): 14–19; idem, "Clearer Views of Jesus and the Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," *Spectrum* 42.1 (2014): 66–74. The present study deepens and broadens the inquiry, exploring new correspondence and examining church periodical literature in Australia in the 1890s.

that describes the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>2</sup> The fourth belief statement on the eternal deity of Christ and the fifth belief statement on the personality of the Holy Spirit would have been equally problematic. This stark contrast between early Adventist views on the Trinity and those of later Seventh-day Adventists sparks the question, how did such a marked change in Seventh-day Adventist theology happen?

Some have suggested that it is not entirely clear how and when the transformation took place but that it did so through a slow process of development in which E. G. White played a significant role through her 1898 book, *The Desire of Ages*.<sup>3</sup> Knight notes that it was not until 1928 that LeRoy E. Froom would write the first book on the Holy Spirit from a Trinitarian perspective.<sup>4</sup> But how and why did the church develop in its convictions about the nature of God and in the way it expressed these convictions? Recent historical research enables us to know more clearly how this transformation happened. It is a fascinating story of learning and unlearning.

Three and a half years after the contentious 1888 General Conference Session in Minneapolis, MN, E. G. White noted, in a prominent front-page article in *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (hereafter *The Advent Review*), that Seventh-day Adventists “had many lessons to learn and many, many to unlearn.” This was not an article discussing evangelistic methods or forms of church organization.<sup>5</sup> Her focus and concern was biblical study and doctrinal understanding. This present paper will first discuss why Adventist pioneers were anti-Trinitarian and then note the motivations that accounted for the denomination’s change in belief. It will then explore in detail a sequence of significant but little known events from the mid-1890s in Australia. New research of this period casts important light both on the context for the Trinitarian development in the church and on the development itself, and it opens a window into the process of learning and unlearning in Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal development.

<sup>2</sup>George R. Knight, *Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 2000), 6. The list now comprises twenty-eight fundamental belief statements with a statement on “Growing in Christ” (belief statement number eleven) added at the 2010 General Conference Session.

<sup>3</sup>For example, see Richard Rice, “Adventists Finding Identity in God,” *Spectrum* 41.4 (2013): 25. E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA, Pacific Press, 1898).

<sup>4</sup>Knight, *Search for Identity*, 143. See LeRoy E. Froom, *The Coming of the Comforter: Studies on the Coming and Work of the Third Person of the Godhead* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1928). Froom devotes thirty pages to defending and explaining the personality of the Spirit (see *ibid.*, 22–53).

<sup>5</sup>E. G. White, “Search the Scriptures,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 69.30 (26 July 1892): 465–466. Further references to *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* will be abbreviated as *RH*.

*Anti-Trinitarian Antecedents*

Out of the fragmentation of the Millerite movement that followed the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844, arose the Sabbatarian Adventist movement that later became the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Some of its prominent founders shared a background of involvement in Christian Connectionist congregations.<sup>6</sup> Emerging in the early decades of the nineteenth century, Christian Connection churches formed a loosely organized “neo-restorationist” movement that was strongly anti-creedal, individualistic, anti-organization, and anti-Trinitarian. Appealing to Christians dissatisfied with the formalism and rigidity of their Baptist and Methodist Episcopalian beliefs, the movement was antagonistic to classical Trinitarianism. It seems that this was largely due to the fact that this doctrine did not fit their rationalist, nineteenth-century, “common-sense” approach to understanding Scripture. Their way of interpreting the Trinity led them to associate it with the “great apostasy” of the early Christian church, and in their desire to “restore” the authentic church of the New Testament, they believed that this heresy needed to be dropped.<sup>7</sup> The prominent founders of Sabbatarian Adventism who came from Christian Connectionist congregations brought their anti-Trinitarianism with them. Thus, many Sabbatarian Adventists viewed the classical doctrine of the Trinity as a departure from Scripture and thus adamantly rejected it.

A number of Seventh-day Adventist scholars, beginning with Erwin R. Gane in 1963, have tried to document this “sin” of “the fathers” of Adventism.<sup>8</sup> The list of “sinners” is extensive and included luminaries among the early leaders, such as James White, Joseph Bates, J. N. Andrews, M. E. Cornell, J. H. Waggoner, J. N. Loughborough, Uriah Smith, and R. F. Cottrell. These earliest Adventists were not just passive objectors to the doctrine as

<sup>6</sup>According to Henry Morrill, “several thousand” members of the Christian Connection congregations were lost to the Millerite movement in the early 1840s. See Milo True Morrill, *A History of the Christian Denomination in America, 1794–1911 AD* (Dayton, OH: Christian Publishing Association, 1912), 175–176. See also Elizabeth C. Nordbeck, “Origins of the Christian Denomination in New England,” in *Hidden Histories in the United Church of Christ*, ed. Barbara Zikmund, 2 vols. (New York: United Church Press, 1987), 2:48.

<sup>7</sup>Christian Connection congregations often drifted into Unitarianism (see *ibid.*, 2:36–37).

<sup>8</sup>Erwin R. Gane, “The Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views Present in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the E. G. White Answer” (MA thesis, Andrews University, 1963). Arthur Spalding, in reviewing the final draft of what he called his “episodic history,” *Captains of the Host* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1949), made an enquiry to Herbert Camden Lacey about his knowledge of early anti-Trinitarian Adventists and asked, tongue-in-cheek, “Did all the fathers sin?” (Herbert Camden Lacey to L. E. Froom, 30 August 1945, Center for Adventist Research [CAR], Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI). See also H. C. Lacey to A. W. Spalding, 5 June 1947, CAR.

*non-Trinitarians*; they were actively hostile to the doctrine. They were *anti-Trinitarian*. And they were hostile to any “creed” that enshrined it.

Following Gane, other scholars have not only documented the anti-Trinitarian view of early Adventist leaders, but they have also tried to account for how and why the remarkable change to the acceptance of Trinitarianism took place. These later scholars have included Russell Holt;<sup>9</sup> Froom (1971);<sup>10</sup> Merlin D. Burt;<sup>11</sup> Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John W. Reeve;<sup>12</sup> Jerry Moon;<sup>13</sup> and the present author.<sup>14</sup> These studies show that, during the decades following the late 1890s, tentative expressions of the doctrine began to appear in Seventh-day Adventist literature. These expressions became more and more confident until a fully Trinitarian statement of fundamental beliefs was published in the *1931 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination*.<sup>15</sup> In 1980, a fully-fledged doctrine of a triune godhead was voted prominently as belief statement number two in the list of the church’s carefully crafted statement of twenty-seven fundamental beliefs. This statement of beliefs was based on earlier doctrinal lists, but in 1980 it became the first list to be actually formally voted by the church—a vote that was taken at a General Conference Session in Dallas, Texas.<sup>16</sup>

#### *A Paradigm Shift*

If early Adventist leaders were predominantly anti-Trinitarian, the question raised earlier still remains: How did such a marked change in Seventh-day Adventist theology come about? How did the movement change from being

<sup>9</sup>Russell Holt, “The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: Its Rejection and Acceptance” (Term Paper, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 1969).

<sup>10</sup>LeRoy E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1971).

<sup>11</sup>Merlin D. Burt, “Demise of Semi-Arianism and Anti-Trinitarianism in Adventist Theology, 1888–1957,” (Unpublished Research Paper, Andrews University, 1996); idem, “History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on the Trinity,” *JATS* 17.1 (2006): 125–139; idem, “The Trinity in Seventh-day Adventist History,” *Ministry* 81.2 (2009): 5–8; idem, “E. White and the Personhood of the Holy Spirit,” *Ministry* 84.4 (2012): 17–20.

<sup>12</sup>Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John W. Reeve, *The Trinity: Understanding God’s Love, His Plan of Salvation and Christian Relationships* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 2002).

<sup>13</sup>Jerry Moon, “The Adventist Trinity Debate, Part 1: Historical Overview,” *AUSS* 41:1 (2003): 113–129; idem, “The Adventist Trinity Debate, Part 2: The Role of E. G. White,” *AUSS* 41:2 (2003): 275–292.

<sup>14</sup>Gilbert Valentine, *W. W. Prescott: Forgotten Giant of Adventism’s Second Generation* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 2005).

<sup>15</sup>*1931 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination*, prepared by H. E. Rogers (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1931), 377.

<sup>16</sup>“Session Proceedings: April 25, 1980,” *RH* 157.24 (1 May 1980): 22.

anti-Trinitarian to having a full but carefully honed expression of the doctrine listed prominently as number two in their statement of beliefs? All of the studies on this question have pointed to the role of E. G. White and her book, *The Desire of Ages* (1898), as playing a significant role in the process of change.<sup>17</sup> Is there more to be understood about this process of remarkable development and of E. G. White's role in that process?

Tracking this development reveals that it happened gradually and with considerable discomfort. Moon suggests that a study of Adventist literature reveals a five-stage sequence of development from anti-Trinitarian dominance (1846–1888), to a period of dissatisfaction (1888–1898). A paradigm shift then occurred (1898–1913), which was followed by a general decline in anti-Trinitarian advocacy (1913–1946) and finally a growing Trinitarian dominance (1946–1980). Moon locates the paradigm shift after the publishing of E. G. White's *The Desire of Ages* in 1898, which, he suggests, occasioned the change.<sup>18</sup>

Periodization is always an inexact exercise given the fluid nature of historical development, and paradigm shifts are never simple, straightforward events. Rather, they tend to be lengthy, messy processes of intellectual reflection, adjustment, change, and realignment. A closer study of the correspondence of church leaders of the period allows a more nuanced and a much clearer understanding of the early steps in the process of development. This article suggests that the paradigm shift—or to express it another way, the process of unlearning and relearning—should be understood as beginning a decade earlier, starting in 1888.

This paradigm shift that took place in Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the Godhead emerged out of the discussions and debates on soteriology that began in 1886, boiled over at the historic 1888 General Conference Session in Minneapolis, MN, and then flowed out across conferences and congregations. Somewhat like the Copernican Revolution, which involved a shift from a geocentric to a heliocentric understanding of the solar system, the slow historic Trinitarian shift that took place in Seventh-day Adventism gradually removed the Ten Commandments and a legalistic law-keeping from the center of Seventh-day Adventist thinking and replaced it with a focus on the person and work of Jesus. Seventh-day Adventist theology tentatively and imperfectly moved to become Christo-centric. And just as the Copernican Revolution took an extended period of time to become settled, so did the change in Adventism. Or to change to a computing metaphor

<sup>17</sup>Holt, "Doctrine of the Trinity," 25. Burt, "Demise of Semi-Arianism," 9, 10; Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 279; Moon, "Adventist Trinity Debate, Part 1," 113–129; idem, "Adventist Trinity Debate, Part 2," 275–292; Knight, *Search for Identity*, 17–32, 110–117, 152–154, 196; Whidden, Moon, and Reeve, *The Trinity*, 190–231; Valentine, *W. W. Prescott*, 119–124, 277–284; Burt, "Personhood," 17–20; Denis Kaiser, "The Reception of E. White's Trinitarian Statements by Her Contemporaries (1897–1915)," *AUSS* 50.1 (2012): 25–38.

<sup>18</sup>Jerry Moon sees the publishing of *The Desire of Ages* as the "continental divide" ("Adventist Trinity Debate, Part 1," 120).



for the purpose of illustration, what occurred in 1888 may be understood as something like the reprogramming of Adventism—a replacement of core code and the establishment of new algorithms. The new code removed bugs and framed Adventism as much more user-friendly for a new worldwide mission.

The 1888 General Conference Session initiated a radical realignment in Seventh-day Adventist soteriology. Clearer views of Jesus and the wonder of God's grace opened windows on new theological landscapes for Seventh-day Adventists. The clearer understanding of soteriology—particularly the primacy of justification by faith—struggled for recognition in Adventism during the decade following 1888. This was associated with a growing awareness by leading church thinkers during this time that the new and clearer emphasis on the atoning work of Christ and on righteousness by faith needed to be integrally linked with a more adequate understanding of the full deity of Christ. This eventually led to the undermining of anti-Trinitarianism in Adventism.

The controversy over new soteriological insights that shook the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1888 may be seen as paralleling similar developments in the early Christian church. As Maurice Wiles points out, the decisive factor in the triumph of Athanasius over Arianism during the Christological controversies of the third and fourth centuries can be attributed to a clearer understanding of soteriology on the part of the wider church. The underlying conviction strengthened in the early Christian church that the source of salvation for the believer can only be God. In its simplest form, it found expression in the affirmation that “Created beings cannot be saved by one who himself is a created being.”<sup>19</sup> Robert Gregg and Dennis Groh also point out that early Arianism “is most intelligible when viewed as a scheme of salvation.”<sup>20</sup> At the center of the scheme was “a redeemer whose life of virtue modeled perfect creaturehood and hence the path of salvation for all Christians.”<sup>21</sup> Salvation was ultimately by virtuous living. The Athanasian system clearly presented Christ as a fully divine savior (albeit with a beginning in timelessness rather than in time) in a way that Arianism failed to do. Was early Adventism, with its strongly legalistic understanding of salvation, perhaps linked to and dependent on its anti-Trinitarian semi-Arianism in subtler ways than previously realized?

#### *Sources for a New Understanding*

Scholarly studies that have looked for the sources of this theological realignment have recognized the 1888 General Conference Session as a watershed event, but, as noted earlier, they have tended to see the publishing of E. G. White's

<sup>19</sup>Maurice Wiles, *The Making of Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 95.

<sup>20</sup>Robert C. Gregg and Dennis E. Groh, *Early Arianism—A View of Salvation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), x. I am indebted to my colleague, John Brunt, for suggesting this helpful source.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

*The Desire of Ages* (1898) as the primary source and cause of the resultant change to Trinitarianism. However, this is only partially true. The preparation of *The Desire of Ages* was not a simple process of new insights and draughts of truth streaming out through E. G. White's pen. That is an oversimplified and necessarily distorted understanding. It does not adequately account for the complex reality of how E. G. White herself came to a new emphasis or how the Seventh-day Adventist community developed in its journey of faith and deepened its grasp of biblical teaching. A close reading of correspondence of the period and of the periodical literature enables a more detailed and complex understanding of the context and of the actual historical process involved. What Arthur L. White would later call a "factual concept" of the ministry of E. G. White also applies to understanding theological development.<sup>22</sup> It does not diminish confidence in the way God led in the process. A faith perspective still discerns the mystery of providence at work.

As already noted, the process of *how* the change occurred and *why* it occurred has recently become much clearer as wider correspondence sources have been given new attention. None of the standard accounts by Moon; Whidden, Moon, and Reeve; Burt; or Knight seem to have been aware of a cluster of letters written in the 1930s and 1940s. In these letters, W. C. White, Froom, then editor of *Ministry*, and Arthur W. Spalding, author of the *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, dialogue with Herbert Camden Lacey, W. C. White's brother-in-law, about the background to the change.

Lacey's story had been known and apparently quietly talked about at Elmshaven since the 1930s. In early 1936, when Lacey was teaching religion at Loma Linda, he had talked briefly with Froom during the General Conference Session of that year about Trinitarian developments in the 1890s in Australia and his own involvement in them.<sup>23</sup> Apparently, Froom had been discombobulated by the discussion, and, according to Lacey, he "was not very friendly." Soon rumors that were damaging to Lacey's reputation and questions about his orthodoxy circulated widely around the field. His brother-in-law, W. C. White, had written him about reported "startling statements" and a distressed Lacey found himself having to reply to "Brother Will," explaining what he had told Froom. Feeling somewhat betrayed, he asserted his confidence in the genuineness of E. G. White's gift and affirmed the spiritual value of her writings. He asserted to W. C. White that what he had shared with Froom had been nothing but the facts and that they should not be understood as "anything against the Spirit of Prophecy." Nevertheless, he regretted that the information shared in confidence had troubled Froom so much. Lacey, aged 65 at the time, moved once again back into pastoral work rather than continuing his teaching position.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Arthur L. White, *The Ellen G. White Writings* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1973), 13–48.

<sup>23</sup>This General Conference Session was held in San Francisco, CA, in May 1936.

<sup>24</sup>H. C. Lacey to W. C. White, 27 July 1936, CAR. Lacey was clearly hurt by the incident. "The present time of uncertainty is very harrowing, and the pain is not

By 1945, Froom's correspondence with Lacey suggests that he had come to terms with the unsettling information Lacey had shared with him in 1936. Now he was troubled by M. L. Andreasen's public claims that E. G. White was the sole source of the change in the church's Trinitarian theology and that there had been no prior discussion or Bible study by the community itself. In a collegial way, Froom now inquired of Lacey, retired in Glendale, California, seeking to understand more of the historical background to the discussions, particularly as they might have related to developments in understanding the doctrine of the eternal existence of Christ.<sup>25</sup> Two years later, in preparation for his General Conference authorized denominational history project, Arthur Spalding inquired about the same events. In both sets of letters, Lacey recounts in detail his involvement in the series of important theological developments in Australia in the mid-1890s.<sup>26</sup>

Dores E. Robinson—who served on the staff of the E. G. White Estate as a highly respected and valued assistant and who had married E. G. White's granddaughter, Ella (Lacey's niece)—was the conduit for both Spalding and Froom. His recommendation of Lacey as a reliable source provides a basis for confidence for those who suggest Lacey's account should be treated with caution. He had in some way become acquainted with Lacey's involvement. Early in 1947, Robinson had suggested to Spalding, for example, that Lacey was "the first one" he knew of "to teach the straight doctrine of the trinity," and that this had been in Australia. Robinson's introduction prompted both men to initiate correspondence with Lacey to find out more. Lacey did not deny Robinson's attribution, but he explained that the story was much more complex and nuanced than what Spalding had heard.<sup>27</sup>

Lacey had been a minister and Bible teacher in Australia, and he served as the Union Conference secretary during the events he relates. Evidence from the contemporary 1890s correspondence between W. W. Prescott, A. G. Daniells, E. G. White, and W. C. White and from the periodical literature of the period closely correlate with and confirm the general account by Lacey. Furthermore,

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lightened by the discovery that all kinds of rumors are being circulated behind your back" (ibid.). This episode highlights the difficulty that confronted the church and the risk associated with trying to communicate a factual understanding about the nature of E. G. White's work and her methods of labor. Lacey had encountered similar reactions when teaching at the Church's college in Washington, DC. Leading denominational editors expressed their sympathy and support. See F. M. Wilcox to H. C. Lacey, 5 December 1924, CAR; L. E. Froom to H. C. Lacey, 13 April 1925, CAR.

<sup>25</sup>L. E. Froom to H. C. Lacey, 8 August, 26 September 1945, CAR.

<sup>26</sup>Froom based his enquiry on discussions he had had with Dores E. Robinson rather than memories of the earlier conversation with Lacey. Apparently, Robinson was confused about the time of the events in Australia in which Lacey had been a participant, and Froom sought clarification (ibid.; H. C. Lacey to A. W. Spalding, 2 April, 5 June 1947, CAR; A. W. Spalding to H. C. Lacey, 2 June 1947, CAR. If the earlier studies mentioned above were aware of this collection, they fail to note the significance and implications of the letters.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.; H. C. Lacey to A. W. Spalding 5 June 1947, CAR.

they add important details and perspectives that now enable us to construct a much clearer and larger understanding of the flow of development. The events related by Lacey, Prescott, and Daniells unfold a fascinating back story that helps us understand why and how new perspectives on the nature of the Godhead came to be found in the *The Desire of Ages*.

It is now clear that, in Adventism, the steps toward a more orthodox Christology were accompanied in the mid-1890s by a clearer acknowledgement and recognition of the personality of the Holy Spirit. With those two theological convictions taking root in the minds of the church's thought leaders, the implications for the acceptance of a doctrine of the Trinity followed. These developments happened in a way that illustrates an important truth about the forming of Christian doctrine. Such developments in theology grow out of the experience and understanding of salvation, closer Bible study, the experience of worship, and the need for better apologetics. Such was the context for the developments in Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the nature of the Godhead.

#### *The Context of Development*

The names of A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner often feature prominently among Seventh-day Adventist writers as the agents of change in connection with the soteriological developments emerging out of the 1888 General Conference Session.<sup>28</sup> Close study of the correspondence of the period, however, suggests that the President of Battle Creek College and Education Secretary for the General Conference, Prescott, was a more creative and enduring change agent during this particular process. Following 1888, Prescott had experienced forgiveness and the richness of the grace of God in a way he had never experienced them before. In the years following the landmark 1888 session, Prescott began to seriously and intentionally rethink Seventh-day Adventist evangelism and apologetics in order to cast them in the new soteriological and more Christocentric framework. He took seriously E. G. White's 1892 challenge that "Ministers need to have a more clear, simple manner of presenting the truth as it is in Jesus."<sup>29</sup> His thinking crystalized in late 1893 in a public evangelistic program he conducted in the Independent Congregational Church in Battle Creek. In these meetings, Prescott pioneered a public presentation of Seventh-day Adventist teachings, the Sabbath, the Sanctuary, the Covenants and the law, the Advent, and the prophecies in a fresh gospel setting. One prominent citizen who attended, James Upton, remarked to W. A. Spicer that "they had heard more gospel" in the meetings,

<sup>28</sup>Two recent biographies explore the nature and extent of the contribution of these two men who helped Adventism to become more Christocentric. See George R. Knight, *A. T. Jones: Point Man on Adventism's Charismatic Frontier* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 2011); Woodrow W. Whidden II, *E. J. Waggoner: From the Physician of Good News to Agent of Division* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 2008).

<sup>29</sup>E. G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Battle Creek, MI: Review & Herald, 1892), 262.

“than they have heard for many years.”<sup>30</sup> It was a Christocentric presentation of Seventh-day Adventist theology and mission—and it represented a radical departure from a traditional approach to presenting Seventh-day Adventist teaching. During 1894 and early 1895, Prescott continued to read and reflect on what a Christocentric focus for Seventh-day Adventist teachings meant.

In mid-1895, Prescott travelled to Australia to spend almost a year “down under,” helping to start Avondale College and working with Daniells (Australian Conference President), E. G. White, and W. C. White in strengthening the Seventh-day Adventist presence in Australia and New Zealand. Just prior to leaving for the South Pacific, Prescott had accepted an assignment to write the study material for the Sabbath School lesson quarterly scheduled for use in the church in late 1896. The assigned topic was a study of the Gospel of John, but the series was to be different in an important way. Instead of taking one quarter to study the Gospel, fairly superficially, it had been decided that the whole year—fifty-two weeks of lessons over four quarters—would focus on the fourth Gospel, and Prescott would write all four quarterlies. On his month-long voyage out to Australia, the professor spent much of his time studying the Gospel of John, and the notion apparently began to develop with him that the church needed to be clearer in its convictions about the eternal preexistence of Christ and its corollary, the eternal full deity of Christ.

Not long after he landed in Sydney, Australia, in late August, he made his way to a secondhand book store and bought himself an English translation of the influential *Lectures on the History of Christian Dogma* by the German theologian, Augustus Neander.<sup>31</sup> He focused his study on chapter six, which deals with the Christological and Trinitarian controversies of the early Christian centuries.<sup>32</sup>

This doctrinal history informed Prescott’s thinking about the implications of the teaching of the fourth Gospel. By December of 1895, at the Tasmanian camp meeting, he had completed the first quarter of readings and had shown the manuscript to W. C. White to get feedback. W. C. White was impressed with the lesson manuscript because the notes opened up a new “wide field of thought.”<sup>33</sup>

In the meantime, Prescott was featured as the lead preacher at an innovative evangelistic camp meeting in the upper-class suburb of Armadale

<sup>30</sup>W. A. Spicer to W. C. White, 4 January 1893, W. C. White Folder 1, Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR), General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, MD. The meetings later shifted to the Opera House. See Valentine, *W.W. Prescott*, 86.

<sup>31</sup>Augustus Neander, *Lectures on the History of Christian Dogmas by Dr. Augustus Neander*, ed. J. L. Jacobi, trans. J. E. Ryland (London: H. G. Bohn, 1858–1882).

<sup>32</sup>Prescott’s underlined copy of the book was still on the shelves of the Andrews University Library when I studied there in the early 1980s. It was heavily underlined in Prescott’s distinctive style in the chapters dealing with those controversies.

<sup>33</sup>W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, 13 December 1895, William Clarence White Correspondence File, Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD.

in Melbourne, Australia (October 1895). There he presented his new Christocentric, gospel-centered approach to doctrine to highly appreciative audiences there. The camp meeting was an experiment located in an open space of a densely populated urban area, which was only a five-minute walk from Toorak, the city's most elite suburb. The seventy-seven family tents on the ground that surrounded the big canvas top made a decided impression on the predominantly Anglican community.<sup>34</sup> Church leaders were delighted that the meetings drew a more refined, "better class" of listener, and they were even more delighted that Prescott's distinctive preaching was ideally suited to the needs of the thoughtful and serious congregations.<sup>35</sup> As E. G. White and her son, W. C. White, sat in the audience, they were very impressed with Prescott's new Christocentric approach. "His theme from first to last and always is Christ,"<sup>36</sup> reported an awed W. C. White; his mother was certain that "the inspiration of the spirit had been on him."<sup>37</sup> Hardly a discourse was given, E. G. White wrote in *The Advent Review*, that "could be called a doctrinal sermon."<sup>38</sup> According to Daniells, "preaching Christ and him crucified" rather than traditional Seventh-day Adventist doctrinal sermons made for sermons "full of power." Twenty converts were baptized before camp ended.<sup>39</sup>

Prescott's continuing study of John informed his preaching, and it also served to be adapted particularly to meet and correct a serious misunderstanding in the surrounding, very religious, Trinitarian community.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup>James Jupp, ed., *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, Its People and their Origins* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 324. Anglicans constituted about fifty percent of the population, Catholics represented approximately twenty-six percent and Methodists made up about ten percent (W. A. Colcord, "The Melbourne Camp Meeting," *The Bible Echo* 10.46 [18 November 1895]: 364).

<sup>35</sup>Prescott noted that those who had embraced the truth were "of an unusually refined class, very intelligent and of excellent standing in the community" (W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, 20 November 1895, Miscellaneous Letters [1893–1902], ASTR).

<sup>36</sup>W. C. White to "Brethren," 21 November 1895, William Clarence White Correspondence File, E. G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD.

<sup>37</sup>E. G. White to S. N. Haskell, 6 November 1895 (Letter 25, 1895), Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD.

<sup>38</sup>E. G. White, "The Australian Camp-Meeting," *RH* 73.1 (7 January 1896): 3.

<sup>39</sup>Several leaders commented on the quality of audience that were drawn to the meetings (W. C. White to Brethren, 21 November 1895, William Clarence White Correspondence File, Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD; E. G. White to J. E. White, 18 November 1895 (Letter 83, 1895), Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD; A. G. Daniells to O. A. Olsen, 14 February 1896, O. A. Olsen Folder 2, ASTR. A compilation of E. G. White's enthusiastic reflections on Prescott's preaching can be found in E. G. White, "E. White's Observations," *Lest We Forget* 10.3 (2000): 2–5, [www.aplib.org/files/lwf/LWFFV10N3.pdf](http://www.aplib.org/files/lwf/LWFFV10N3.pdf).

<sup>40</sup>See for example, W. W. Prescott, "Abiding in Christ and Walking in Christ," *The Bible Echo* 10.47 (2 December 1895): 372–373; idem, "The Word Became Flesh," *The Bible Echo* 11.1 (6 January 1896): 4–5. In addition to utilizing their assigned family tent on the ground, Prescott had rented an office room in a nearby street so that he

Prior to the meetings, E. G. White informed her readers, it had been “commonly reported” in the suburbs around the campsite that Seventh-day Adventists “did not believe in Christ.” Some attendees had told her that they came expecting to hear nothing but “Moses and Sinai,” but instead they had heard “nothing but the plain gospel.”<sup>41</sup> Prescott’s preaching corrected things. In every sermon, Christ was preached. Daniells’s private correspondence adds more specific detail on the apologetics problem so effectively addressed by Prescott’s Christocentric preaching.<sup>42</sup>

In the months prior to the meetings, Uriah Smith’s *Daniel and the Revelation* had been sold widely by colporteurs around the strongly Anglican city. The book had developed a strong reaction among the public that Seventh-day Adventists were a semi-Arian sect that did not believe in the preexistence of Christ and, therefore, did not accept the full divinity of Jesus. Prescott’s preaching of “sound Christian doctrine” addressed this problem, and his “uplifting of Jesus,” with its strong emphasis on the full deity of Christ, “completely disarmed the people of prejudice,” reported Daniells. “The minds of the people have been completely revolutionized with regards to us as a people,” he added in a letter reporting the circumstances to the General Conference president.<sup>43</sup> If Prescott did not specifically address the Trinitarian problem in a disputatious way, he was clearly understood by his hearers to affirm the eternity and the full deity of Christ. “He . . . had all Glory with the Father,” he asserted in his sermon on the incarnation. It was a “truth that was the foundation of all truth.”<sup>44</sup> Clearly, the Christocentric approach, apologetics, and deeper Bible study were working together in a symbiotic way to bring about the clarifying and reshaping of Seventh-day Adventist thinking about the nature of the Godhead.<sup>45</sup> The desire to have the essence of Adventism correctly understood by the public on this occasion was as much a motivation as the need to understand Scripture better.

Further evidence of the subtle shift taking place in the clarifying process at this time is found in *The Bible Echo*, the South Pacific evangelistic magazine. Someone, either Prescott or *The Bible Echo* editor, was reading the Dutch

could study and have time for prayer and preparation for his heavy preaching schedule and thus produced new sermons (W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, 20 November 1895, Miscellaneous Letters [1895–1902], ASTR).

<sup>41</sup>E. G. White, “The Australian Camp-Meeting,” 4.

<sup>42</sup>A. G. Daniells to O. A. Olsen, 22 November 1895, O. A. Olsen Folder 2, ASTR.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Prescott, “The Word Became Flesh,” 4–5.

<sup>45</sup>Moon’s assertion that Seventh-day Adventists eventually changed their view of the Godhead because they came to a different understanding of the biblical texts” is true, but it is only part of the picture (see Moon, “Adventist Trinity Debate, Part 1,” 118). The need to address apologetic matters prompted the reassessment of the biblical texts both in the late 1880s (clarifying Seventh-day Adventist teaching on the law and the atonement) to avoid being misunderstood by non-Adventists and in the mid-1890s to avoid being misunderstood on the deity of Christ. See also Moon, “Adventist Trinity Debate, Part 2,” 275–292.

Reformed Andrew Murray's devotional classic, *Abide in Christ*.<sup>46</sup> Pithy extracts from Murray were used repeatedly in *The Bible Echo* as fillers at the same time as Prescott's Christocentric sermons were being published, emphasizing the Johannine figure of Christ as the Vine and disciples as the branches.<sup>47</sup> Murray's book had a strongly Trinitarian base undergirding his teaching about Christ abiding in the life of the believer through the Holy Spirit as a person. Anglican and Methodist converts at the Armadale camp meeting were convinced of the Sabbath, the State of the Dead, the Sanctuary, the Second Advent, and the prophecies, and their Trinitarian beliefs apparently stayed intact just as they had for the Anglican Lacey family of Tasmania whose daughter, May, had married W. C. White five months previously. Thus, the new converts brought their orthodox Christian beliefs with them into Adventism. Prescott's preaching would have affirmed them in the essentials of these beliefs.<sup>48</sup> Just as early Adventism had been shaped by the anti-Trinitarian Christian Connectionist convictions of its earliest converts, so now over time the movement's understanding of the Godhead would again be shaped, but this time by the Trinitarian convictions of a new generation of converts to the church.

*Further Reflection on the Full Deity of Christ*

Prescott continued his intensive study of the Gospel of John as part of his preparation of the second-quarter sequence of Sabbath School Bible study guides. This study led him to a reconsideration of the theological implications of the series of Jesus's "I Am" statements in the fourth Gospel. These insights led to a deepening conviction about the eternal deity of the Son.

Early January 1896 found Prescott in Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia—about eighty miles north of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia—

<sup>46</sup>Andrew Murray, *Abide in Christ* (Chicago: Fleming & Revell, 1895). The book had originally been published in 1888. E. G. White's personal library contains an 1895 edition.

<sup>47</sup>For samples of citations in *The Bible Echo*, see *The Bible Echo* 10.48 (9 December 1895): 381, 384; *The Bible Echo* 10.49 (16 December 1895): 388, 392; *The Bible Echo* 11.3 (20 January 1896): 24. Selections from Murray were also occasionally used in the *RH*. Uriah Smith was familiar with his work (see Uriah Smith, "Receiving," *RH* 74.41 [12 October 1897]: 647).

<sup>48</sup>E. G. White arranged for her secretaries to take shorthand transcriptions of these sermons. They were circulated around the neighborhood as tracts, and a number of them were published in *The Bible Echo*. For examples, see Prescott, "Abiding in Christ and Walking in Christ," *The Bible Echo* 10.47 (2 December 1895): 372–373; idem, "Sermons in Stone," *The Bible Echo* 10.49 (16 December 1895): 388–389; idem, "The Word Became Flesh," *The Bible Echo* 11.1 (6 January 1896): 4–5; idem, "The Faith of Jesus, The Commandments of God, and The Patience of the Saints," *The Bible Echo* 11.3 (20 January 1896): 18–19; idem, "The Law in Christ," *The Bible Echo* 11.15 (20 April 1896): 114 (this sermon ran as a series of short articles for seven weeks). In 2014, Fred Bischoff published the sermons as an online collection. See "The W. W. Prescott Armadale Sermons," comp. Fred Bischoff, 9 June 2014, <http://www.fredbischoff.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Prescott-Armadale-Sermons.pdf>.



where he shared in the pioneering of a new school, Avondale College. Although the teachers were already on hand, legal complications over the transfer of land delayed the erection of buildings and the planned beginning of classes in March. This frustrating delay led to the decision that, beginning in late March, the church leaders would convene what moderns would call a professional development program for the teachers and ministers instead of having classes for students. They called it an “institute”—a month-long general Bible and education conference. A large tent was pitched, and Prescott was the featured instructor. Participants considered matters of curriculum and pedagogy, but the meetings were most memorable for Prescott’s preaching on the Gospel of John and the divinity of Christ.

The integrating theme for Prescott’s studies on the Gospel of John was the “I Am” statement of Jesus in John 8:58, which Prescott linked with the “I Am” declaration of Yahweh in Exod 3:14. For Prescott, this now clearly established the eternal existence and the deity of the Son. He then went on to see the same theological implications in all the other “I Am” statements of Jesus in the Gospel. Christ was therefore the Yahweh of the Old Testament, fully God and coeternal with the Father.

Lacey, the twenty-five-year-old brother-in-law to W. C. White, also attended the institute meetings. He had recently returned from the United States, where he had obtained his BA degree in the classics from Battle Creek College in Battle Creek, Michigan. Appointed to teach at the new school, he had arrived in time to attend the October Armadale Camp Meeting, where he had been appointed secretary of the Australasian Union Conference and had stayed on to help Prescott and Daniells with the evangelistic meetings that had continued after the camp meeting. Now back in Cooranbong, he was also invited to speak at the institute. He and his new wife boarded with May, his younger sister, and W. C. White, and thus they became part of the extended E. G. White household around her new house, which she called “Sunnyside,” along with his stepmother and aging father, who had moved up from Tasmania to be close to their daughter. In his later recalling of the events of 1896, Lacey reported on other highly significant related factors which now enable us to see how and why this particular year becomes so significant in the development of Seventh-day Adventist theology.

Lacey explains in his 1945 correspondence with Froom that, during early 1896 and even as the institute was being held, E. G. White was working through an extensive revision process on the manuscript for her book on the life of Christ—eventually published two years later as *The Desire of Ages*.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup>Original plans proposed the publishing of the manuscript in two thematic volumes, “Christ Our Brother,” and “Christ our Sacrifice,” and these would be later supplemented by “Christ our Teacher,” and “Christ our Saviour.” The configuration finally decided on was to add *Christ’s Object Lessons* (n.p.: Review & Herald, 1900), and *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1896), as two additional volumes (W. C. White to G. I. Gibson and E. R. Palmer, 20 January 1896, William Clarence White Correspondence File, Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD).

E. G. White had personally asked Prescott to read the entire manuscript critically and she was happy that he was spending time with Marian Davis, E. G. White's "book maker," on the project.<sup>50</sup> According to Lacey, Davis was struggling with the collation and arrangement of materials for the first chapter and also the sequencing of some events in the narrative for other early chapters. Both Davis and E. G. White attended Prescott's Bible studies on John and were deeply engaged and impressed. Davis took extensive notes of the sermons, and there were a number of moments of new insight.

Davis sought further help with the editorial and book-making process, and, according to Lacey, both he and Prescott helped extensively with the difficult first chapter and also in clarifying significant parts of the harmony of the gospel events that provided the undergirding story line for the book. With the input from Prescott's preaching and his Sabbath School lessons, according to Lacey, Prescott also had a significant impact in the shaping of its teaching about the eternity of the Son. "Professor Prescott was tremendously interested in presenting Christ as the great 'I Am.' . . . Sr. Marian Davis seemed to fall for it, and lo and behold, when *The Desire of Ages* came out, there appeared that identical teaching on pages 24 and 25, which I think can be looked for in vain in any of Sr. White's published works prior to that time."<sup>51</sup> Lacey went on to

<sup>50</sup>E. G. White, "Diary," 18 February 1896 (Manuscript 62, 1896), Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD. See also W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, 10 February 1896, Miscellaneous Letters (1893–1902), ASTR. "Bookmaker" was the term E. G. White used to describe the kind of editorial assistance provided by Marian Davis, in particular. It described her work of reviewing E. G. White's letters and published articles, selecting and assembling sentences and paragraphs, and then organizing them into a coherent narrative or thematic development on a given topic in addition to her copyediting. While not generating content, the assistant contributed significantly to E. G. White's literary style and flow of thought in her major works. The work was done under E. G. White's supervision, and she took full responsibility for the completed work. For a recent helpful discussion of the role of Marian Davis, see Denis Fortin, "Historical Introduction," to the 125th Anniversary Edition of E. G. White's inspirational classic, *Steps to Christ* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2017), 10–20. Fortin suggests that "the flow of thought in each chapter and the personal appeal to the reader to a great degree reflect Marian Davis's knowledge and understanding of E. White's thoughts" (ibid., 15).

<sup>51</sup>H. C. Lacey to L. E. Froom, 30 August 1845, CAR. Lacey himself thought Prescott's interpretation to be stretched too far and that in the latter cases of the use of the "I Am" in the Gospel the statements were a simple use of the copula in the Greek. While Lacey's observation that E. G. White's "I Am" statements in *The Desire of Ages* may be the first time she develops this theme, she had referred to Jesus as "the eternal Son" on five previous occasions: three times in published articles and twice in private correspondence. See E. G. White, "An Appeal to the Ministers," *RH* 52.7 (8 August 1878): 49; idem to M. E. Cornell, 8 September 1880 (Letter 6, 1880), Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD; idem, "Search the Scriptures," *Youth's Instructor*, 35.35 (31 August 1887): 165; idem to E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones, 18 February 1887 (Letter 37, 1887), Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD. Her 1883 use of the phrase is as a citation from the first stanza of Charles Wesley's hymn, "Soldiers of Christ, Arise!" See idem, *The Signs of the Times* 9.1 (4 January 1883): 2. As Moon

explain, “Professor Prescott’s interest in the ‘Eternity of the Son’ and the great ‘I Am’s’ coupled with the constant help he gave Sr. Davis in her preparation of *The Desire of Ages*, may serve to explain the inclusion of the above-named teaching in that wonderful book.”<sup>52</sup>

Another noticeable inclusion in *The Desire of Ages* that reinforced the changing paradigm was E. G. White’s statement that Christ’s life was “original, unborrowed and underived.”<sup>53</sup> This statement was also in the context of an “I Am” statement: “Jesus declared, ‘I am the resurrection, and the life.’ In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. ‘He that hath the Son hath life’ (1 John 5:12). The divinity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of eternal life.”<sup>54</sup> The wording in this expression was a paraphrase from an 1857 book titled *Sabbath Evening Readings on the New Testament: St. John* that was written by a virulent anti-Catholic Scottish clergyman, John Cummings. This book was a part of E. G. White’s library. Cummings uses the phrase twice in his introductory chapter which is an exposition on the first chapter of the Gospel. He reflects on the text, “In Him was life.”<sup>55</sup> E. G. White adopts the expression for her reflection on the discussion between Martha and Jesus in front of Lazarus’s tomb well over halfway through her book and is used to illustrate Jesus’s power over death and that he is the believer’s assurance of eternal life. It is interesting to notice that most of the scriptural passages that E. G. White drew on to underline her new emphasis on the divinity of Jesus in *The Desire of Ages* came from the Gospel of John.<sup>56</sup>

Prescott would later cite Paul’s statement that in Christ “dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col 2:9 [KJV]) in defense of his emphasis that one cannot believe in the deity of Christ without also believing in the eternity of Christ. He believed, with Lacey, that there never was a time when the Son was not. He expressed this as Christ’s “co-eternity” with the Father. However, in an attempt to accommodate a plain reading of the Johannine subordination statements, such as the saying of Jesus, “For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself,” (John 5:26 [KJV]), he adopted the explanatory idea of eternal generation of the Son even

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suggests, her usage during the period before the 1890s reflected a “relative ambiguity” (“Adventist Trinity Debate, Part 2,” 278).

<sup>52</sup>H. C. Lacey to L. E. Froom, 30 August 1845, CAR. See also the corroborating letter, H. C. Lacey to A. W. Spalding, 5 June 1947, CAR. The general account is confirmed by contemporary records.

<sup>53</sup>E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 530.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup>The passage in Cummings reads, “Now John says nothing about the birth of Christ. . . . He at once begins by asserting the deity of Christ as God and Lord of all; and he states, ‘In Him was life,’—that is original, unborrowed, underived. In us there is a streamlet from the Fountain of Life; . . . But in Jesus was life unborrowed, underived” (John Cummings, *Sabbath Evening Readings on the New Testament: St. John* [London: Arthur Hall, Virtue and Company, 1857], 5).

<sup>56</sup>John 1:1; 8:57–58; 10:30; 11:25; 14:16–18, 26; 16:8, 12–14.

while insisting that this did not make Christ “any less” than the Father. “Cold reasoning” was inadequate to comprehend the mystery, he acknowledged.<sup>57</sup>

*The Holy Spirit as a Person*

Before the 1890s, E. G. White uses the personal pronoun for the Holy Spirit in her published work when quoting directly from Scripture. The only exception where she uses such a personal pronoun outside of directly quoted Scripture in her published work appears to be in an 1884 expository comment on the work and office of the Spirit, which she follows with a direct citation of John 16:14.<sup>58</sup> In 1893, E. G. White mentions in a short diary entry that the Holy Spirit “personifies Christ, yet is a distinct personality,” and in the next sentence continues on referring to the Spirit as “it.” The diary manuscript fragment was never sent to anyone or read by anyone other than herself or perhaps her staff.<sup>59</sup> The document may be a later filling out of her diary, a record of the general content of one of her sermons.<sup>60</sup>

The account provided by Lacey is of value because it informs us how this second strand of theological insight concerning the personality of the Spirit contributed to the development of the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of the Godhead. It had also become a significant topic of discussion in Australia in 1896. This discussion occurred in connection with the same events associated

<sup>57</sup>“Report of the 1919 Bible Conference,” 6 July 1919, ASTR, 235, 245. For a more extended discussion of Prescott and Trinitarianism, see Valentine, *W. W. Prescott*, 277–284, 324.

<sup>58</sup>“It is His office to present Christ . . . Says Christ, ‘He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you’” (E. G. White, “Man’s Obligation to God,” *The Signs of the Times* 10.14 [3 April 1884], 209).

<sup>59</sup>Merlin D. Burt suggests that this 1893 use of “personality” for the Spirit in 1893 by E. G. White corrects or at least qualifies Lacey’s claims for the significance of the 1896 discussions (Burt, “Personhood,” 19). Lacey had reported to W. C. White that he knew of “no reference up to 1896” in which E. G. White had spoken of the Spirit as a person. Clearly, he did not know of the 1884 or the 1893 examples. It should be noted, however, that the 1893 diary reference remained a private document in E. G. White’s files until 1965, when it was transcribed as “Privileges and Responsibilities of Sons of God,” 1893 (Manuscript 93, 1893), Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD, by Martha Odom and published as White, “MR No. 1487—Privileges and Responsibilities of Christians; Depend on Holy Spirit, Not Self,” in vol. 20 of *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1993), 323–325. The entry is in a preprinted 1892 diary with a printed date of 17 September 1892, but corrected to 24 September 1893, by E. G. White. I am indebted to Ron Graybill for details about the provenance of the 1893 diary entry.

<sup>60</sup>E. G. White’s diary for November and December of 1893 records a number of entries where she intended to return at a later date and give a more extended account of details of the day or of a talk she had given. See E. G. White, “Diary,” 20 November and 3, 4, and 6 December, 1893 (Manuscript 88, 1893), Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD. Stephen N. Haskell authored an article on the Holy Spirit in November that emphasized strongly the role of the Spirit as a “power” and a “spiritual force” (“The Gift of the Holy Spirit,” *The Bible Echo* 8.21 (1 November 1893): 344.

with the new emphasis on the eternity and deity of Christ. This second strand involved the beginning of a shift to understanding the Holy Spirit as a person instead of as an impersonal “it.” Again, as explained below, documentation from the 1890s corroborates Lacey’s recollections.

Following the successful camp meeting at Armadale, Prescott had stayed on to assist Daniells and his evangelistic team, conducting further meetings, cultivating the slower interests, nurturing the newly baptized members, and establishing a new church. They shifted the meetings to a hall in East Prahran, another exclusive suburb close-by. Lacey and his wife also stayed on with the team. After some weeks of further preaching, Prescott left to attend camp meetings in Tasmania and Adelaide and then returned to Cooranbong. After Prescott’s departure, the ministers in East Prahran decided to study together the ministry of the Holy Spirit each morning in their regular daily workers’ meetings. Daniells related to Prescott some weeks later that shortly after they had begun their study series, he had found, in Cole’s secondhand bookstore in Melbourne, a little volume titled *The Spirit of Christ*—published in 1888—that was written by the well-known Dutch Reformed South African author, Andrew Murray.<sup>61</sup> Daniells had read the book “with very deep interest,” asserting that its theme was “a great one” and that it was “handled in a very pleasing way.”<sup>62</sup> It seems that the book, organized as a set of thirty-one daily readings, may have served as a study or devotional guide for the workers’ meetings. The book, which has since become a Christian classic, discusses in detail the person and work of the Holy Spirit and is strongly Trinitarian. In the opening chapter Murray asserted,

It is generally admitted in the Church that the Holy Spirit has not the recognition which becomes Him as being the equal of the Father and the Son, the Divine Person through whom alone the Father and the Son can be truly possessed and known, in whom alone the Church has her beauty and her blessedness.<sup>63</sup>

Daniells remarked to Prescott, who by now had become a spiritual mentor to the Australian Conference president, that he found chapter sixteen on the Holy Spirit and Mission to be particularly helpful and wished that it could

<sup>61</sup>A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, 3 March 1896, O. A. Olsen Folder 2, ASTR; Andrew Murray, *The Spirit of Christ: Thoughts on the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Believer and the Church* (New York: Anson D.F. Randolph, 1888). The reference to the shop by name, “Cole’s,” suggests that Prescott was familiar with it and would have recognized the connection.

<sup>62</sup>A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, 3 March 1896, O. A. Olsen Folder 2, ASTR.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 20. In support of his statement, Murray cites the Presbyterian-Jewish theologian, Adolph Saphir, who makes the point that the truth about the personality of the Spirit—like other important truths clearly revealed in scripture—has “been allowed to lie dormant for centuries . . . until it pleased God to enlighten the Church by chosen witnesses, and to bestow on His children the knowledge of hidden and forgotten treasures” (*The Lord’s Prayer* [London: Thomas Nisbet, 1872], 179). This was a neo-restorationist argument that would have resonated well with Daniells and his fellow Seventh-day Adventists.

be read by every one of the Seventh-day Adventist missionaries in Australia. Daniells soon shaped his reading of Murray's book and his Bible study on the topic into a series of talks on the person and work of the Holy Spirit, which he had the opportunity of sharing with his fellow missionaries and others at the site of the new college.<sup>64</sup>

The 1896 correspondence between Daniells and Prescott corroborates the 1936 and 1940s recollection of Lacey that the topic of the personality of the Holy Spirit had become a subject of discussion among the circle of workers around E. G. White in 1896. At the Cooranbong Bible Institute in March and April, according to Lacey, he had been assigned the early morning Bible Study series, and for these he had developed a series of talks on the personality and work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>65</sup> Daniells, who arrived a little late for the institute, also presented a series of Bible studies on the Holy Spirit—a report confirmed by Anna Ingles, who wrote in *The Advent Review* that “brother Daniells conducts the study in the evening on the work of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>66</sup> Daniells, who was occasionally called away, also invited Lacey to assist him with the evening series on the Holy Spirit. Lacey, coming from an Anglican background, was a Seventh-day Adventist who considered himself “really a Trinitarian at heart,” and had developed a particular interest in teaching what he believed was the biblical perspective that the Holy Spirit was a person and a member of the triune Godhead.<sup>67</sup> Thus, the lack of recognition of the Holy Spirit as equal with the Father, as Murray had expressed it, was now being addressed in Adventism.

Lacey's recollections provide further context for the developments. In March 1894, as an official student delegate from Battle Creek College, he had attended a convention of the International Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions in Detroit. There he had met Georgia Burrus, a student delegate from Helderberg College, who would become Adventism's first missionary to India in the next year. Together they heard famous preachers, such as Hudson Taylor, A. J. Gordon, J. R. Mott, and A. T. Pierson, speaking on mission and the person and work of the Holy Spirit. They both agreed that they “had never felt the deep moving of the Spirit of God” as they had at that convention, recalled Lacey. Lacey had studied the topic on his month-long voyage back home to Australia in September 1895.<sup>68</sup> The encounter with

<sup>64</sup>A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, 3 March 1896, O. A. Olsen Folder 2, ASTR.

<sup>65</sup>H. C. Lacey to W. C. White, 27 July 1936, CAR.

<sup>66</sup>Anna Ingles, “The Cooranbong Institute,” *RH* 73.24 (16 June 1896): 378.

<sup>67</sup>H. C. Lacey to L. E. Froom, 30 August 1947, CAR. Lacey's mother had been an organist at the St John's Anglican Church in Hobart, Tasmania, when the family became Seventh-day Adventists in 1887, but continued to play for services at St John's and remained friends with the rector. Herbert and his sister, May, continued to sing in the Anglican church choir. In Leicester, England, the family had been personally acquainted with the famous Congregational preacher and author F. B. Meyer through Mrs. Lacey's music ministry (H. C. Lacey to A. W. Spalding, 2 April, 5 June 1947, CAR).

<sup>68</sup>Lacey noted to Spalding that after his E. G. White collection the most favored books in his personal library were those by holiness authors, such as the twelve volumes by A. J. Gordon, twenty-eight by A. T. Pierson, and scores of others by such noted

Daniells's second hand copy of Andrew Murray provided a timely opportunity to share his convictions in Melbourne and later in Cooranbong. They were soon agreeing that Seventh-day Adventists should begin to think of the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Godhead instead of just a power or influence. According to Lacey, there was considerable discussion amongst the ministers on the matter of the personhood of the Holy Spirit and a realization that they would need to adjust their language to accommodate this understanding. According to Lacey, Davis "was among the most interested ones," along with Daniells.<sup>69</sup> Thus, it was at the 1896 institute meetings at Cooranbong where these twin streams of the eternity and deity of Christ and the personality of the Holy Spirit converged.

#### *A Quiet Revolution*

It is clear from a close survey of both *The Bible Echo* and *The Advent Review* that the subject of Trinitarianism versus anti-Trinitarianism did not become a public subject of discussion and debate. "As to any special controversy, or agitation over the matter of the Trinity," Lacey told Froom in 1947 that he could not "recall anything serious at all." There were more urgent and more important matters of interest for Seventh-day Adventists. A current concern was over challenges to the personality of Satan. *The Bible Echo* ran a seven-part series by J. N. Loughborough on the "Personality of the Devil," during the period of the Armadale meetings. Loughborough argued against other authors, demonstrating from Scripture that Satan was not simply an evil essence of force, but a personal being.<sup>70</sup> On prophetic matters, the "Eastern Question" dominated headlines in a highly polemical way in *The Bible Echo* for this period. The European nations were feverishly preparing for war, and both Daniells and Prescott preached sermons pointing out to congregations that before their eyes, Turkey was in the process of being driven from Istanbul. The horrific Arminian massacres of late 1895 and early 1896 being reported daily in newspapers were a sign of the general collapse. The Sultan would be in Jerusalem within months and Armageddon would soon follow.<sup>71</sup> And besides

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authors as F. B. Meyers, Andrew Murray, F. W. Farrar, and A. B. Simpson (H. C. Lacey to A. W. Spalding, 2 April 1947, CAR). The library of La Sierra University in Riverside, CA, has Lacey's copy of A. T. Pierson, *The Acts of the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Fleming Revell, 1894), still on its shelves. It appears to have been purchased in 1937 and is extensively marked up in red and blue pencil. Lacey donated his library to the university in the 1950s.

<sup>69</sup>H. C. Lacey to A. W. Spalding, 5 June 1947, CAR.

<sup>70</sup>J. N. Loughborough, "The Personality of the Devil," *The Bible Echo* 10.42 (21 October 1895): 330–331. The series ran until 9 December 1895.

<sup>71</sup>"The Coming War," *The Bible Echo* 11.9 (2 March 1896): 86. Feverish Articles on "The Eastern Question" were run in *The Bible Echo* for the remainder of the year, since the topic was of "intense interest" (W. W. Prescott, "The Eastern Question," *The Bible Echo* 11.23 [15 June 1896]: 184). "The expulsion of the Turk from Europe is certain. The temporary establishment of his government with headquarters at

this, the economic depression was making life difficult for the church and for its missionaries and its members. Public debates over the Trinity would not have been appropriate or relevant. Nevertheless, the key ideas on the person and work of the Holy Spirit had taken root with the emphasis being on the practical aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit in Christian experience.

Just two weeks after the institute, on 10 May 1896, E. G. White, in her own words (not the language of Scripture), used the personal pronoun “He” to describe the Holy Spirit in a publicly issued manuscript she wrote on the “Holy Spirit in the Schools.” But then she also used “it” in a later sentence.<sup>72</sup> It took some time for Daniells and E. G. White to reprogram their long established speech and writing patterns, and often later they would refer to the Holy Spirit as “it” sometimes within the same paragraph, even after speaking of the Holy Spirit as a person. Part of this messy confusion, as Froom explained decades later, was because the language of the Authorized Version (AV) itself was not consistent. In a key passage, it used impersonal pronouns for the translation of πνεῦμα, a Greek neuter noun: “The Spirit itself beareth witness,” and “the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us” (Rom 8:16, 26). Corrections were made in the 1881 Revised Version to achieve consistency with the teaching of the rest of Scripture, but most Seventh-day Adventists still used the AV.<sup>73</sup>

The changes in Seventh-day Adventist thinking had nevertheless begun. The specific assertion that the Holy Spirit was the “third person of the Godhead” was publicly expressed by E. G. White in an 1897 letter written to ministers.<sup>74</sup> The teaching was also reflected in *The Desire of Ages*, published in 1898.<sup>75</sup> Lacey remembered the great interest with which Daniells pointed out to him and Loretta Robinson, Doris E. Robinson’s mother, this particular statement after seeing the first edition of the book. Then the following year E. G. White addressed the students at Avondale College in even stronger terms: “We need to realize that the Holy Spirit who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds.”<sup>76</sup> Further similar statements appeared in 1906.

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Jerusalem is likewise certain, as is also his final wiping out as a nation very soon thereafter” (“The Wiping Out of Turkey,” *The Bible Echo* 11.24 [22 June 1896]: 192).

<sup>72</sup>E. G. White, “The Holy Spirit in the Schools,” in *Special Testimonies on Education* (n.p., 1897), 202–212. “From the Holy Spirit proceeds divine knowledge. He knows what humanity needs to promote peace” (ibid., 31). But in the same manuscript, E. G. White would also say, “It is not commissioned to you to direct the work of the Holy Spirit, and to tell how it shall represent itself” (ibid., 29).

<sup>73</sup>Froom, *Coming of the Comforter*, 36.

<sup>74</sup>E. G. White, *Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers*, Series A, no. 10 (Battle Creek, MI: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1897), 25, 37.

<sup>75</sup>Idem, *The Desire of Ages*, 538.

<sup>76</sup>H. C. Lacey to L. E. Froom, 30 August 1945, CAR; H. C. Lacey to A. W. Spalding, 5 June 1847, CAR; E. G. White, “Extracts from Talks Given by Mrs. E. G. White at the Opening of College Hall, Avondale, and in the Avondale Church” (Manuscript 66, 1899), Ellen G. White Estate, Silver Spring, MD.



As Lacey observed, there does not seem to have been much turmoil over the quiet developments in far-off Australia. Prescott continued his Christocentric emphasis. Daniells tried to emulate him in his own preaching. Lacey taught Bible and Trinitarianism quietly at Avondale College. *The Desire of Ages* was read more and more widely and the church's patterns of thought slowly began to change until it was more common to talk of Seventh-day Adventists believing in the doctrine of the Trinity. Eventually, seventeen years later, in a tentative way, the new understanding was included in an informal summary of the "cardinal features" of the Seventh-day Adventist faith in *The Advent Review* in 1913. The unsigned statement referred to Seventh-day Adventist belief in the "Divine Trinity." It is important to notice however, that the statement was still ambiguous enough on the divinity of Christ as to be acceptable to those who were of the old view. The statement referred to Jesus as "the Son of the Eternal Father."<sup>77</sup> Within the General Conference building in Washington, DC, however, there were leaders who were increasingly aware of the need not only to clarify and restate Seventh-day Adventist theology but also of the need to make sure that other Christians and the general public had a correct understanding of what Seventh-day Adventists now believed about soteriology and Christology. Apologetics—the need to avoid being misunderstood—continued to be a driving motivation in the widening consensus on the doctrine of the Trinity in Adventism. Spicer, the well-informed General Conference secretary, reported to L. R. Conradi in the early months of World War I that the Review & Herald Publishing House had appointed a committee tasked with the work of revising the widely circulated book *Bible Readings for the Home Circle* to ensure the removal of the now inappropriate semi-Arian expressions on the nature of Christ. Urgent work had also been undertaken to revise the Arianism out of *Thoughts on Daniel*, while *Thoughts on Revelation* still needed to be addressed.<sup>78</sup>

During the 1920s, as is evidenced by the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts, the topic of the Trinity was still a very sensitive issue, with pastors being labeled either as progressives or conservatives, depending on their stance on the issue. Discomfort with Prescott's Trinitarian emphasis in these discussions arose because he was understood by some to be advocating a Unitarian perspective when he asserted that the three persons of the Godhead should not be regarded as separable beings. Others were uncomfortable because he was perceived to be advocating a classical view of the Trinity that sounded just like the dogma of Roman Catholicism.<sup>79</sup> Discussions on the topic became tense at one stage during the conference so that Daniells needed to urge calm. The stenographer was asked not to record his pastoral

<sup>77</sup>"The Message for Today," *RH* 90.41 (9 October 1913): 21.

<sup>78</sup>W. A. Spicer to L. R. Conradi, 30 November 1914, ASTR. "We lately have been attacked in publications as believing this teaching, the attack being based on *Thoughts on Revelation* which in this matter certainly does teach Arianism straight" (ibid., 4).

<sup>79</sup>"Report of the 1919 Bible Conference," 6 July 1919, ASTR, 237.

intervention. But that was about as disruptive as the topic became.<sup>80</sup> Again, in 1930, Wilcox and a committee of four church leaders were requested to draft a more formal summary statement of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs in response to a perceived need to have such a document in the denomination's yearbook. According to Froom, Wilcox drew up the twenty-two-point statement for consideration of his colleagues. It was also reviewed by F. D. Nichol before being published without any further formal consideration or approval in the *1931 Year Book*.<sup>81</sup> Froom reports Nichol as telling him that Wilcox still had to word the statement conservatively "in the hope that it might be acceptable to those who had held divergent views, especially over the Godhead."<sup>82</sup>

The recollection of Andreasen illustrates how the general church membership and the ministry generally understood the change to have occurred. A leading Bible teacher in the 1930s and 1940s, Andreasen attributed the change exclusively to E. G. White and *The Desire of Ages*. "I remembered how astonished we were," he recalled, "for it [*The Desire of Ages*] contained things that we considered unbelievable; among others the doctrine of the trinity" (he was twenty-two years old at the time and just beginning his ministry). He cited the statement about Christ's life being "original, unborrowed, underived" as being almost revolutionary.<sup>83</sup> Andreasen was unaware of the events of 1896 and the background to the writing of *The Desire of Ages*. If any church leader was in a position to correct the over-simplification represented by Andreasen's perspective, none of them did. It was very difficult and risky to appear to challenge the received orthodoxies about E. G. White's role.<sup>84</sup>

The influence of *The Desire of Ages* and other works slowly led to a broad consensus of understanding on the nature of the Trinity and helped in the delicate process of learning and unlearning.<sup>85</sup> Clearer views of Jesus and of

<sup>80</sup>Daniells urged delegates, "Now let's not get a bit nervous nor scared." He made suggestions "as to the delegates not becoming uneasy . . . and asked that [the suggestions] be not transcribed" (ibid., 245).

<sup>81</sup>*1931 Year Book*, 377–380. See Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 413–414.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>M. L. Andreasen, "The Spirit of Prophecy" (unpublished chapel talk, Loma Linda, CA, 30 November 1948), cited in Knight, *Search for Identity*, 117.

<sup>84</sup>An attempt by W. C. White to present a more nuanced view at the General Conference session in 1913 had brought a conservative reaction. Lacey's more private attempt in the 1920s and 1930s had resulted in work reassignments. See F. M. Wilcox to H. C. Lacey, 5 December 1924, CAR; L. E. Froom to H. C. Lacey, 12–13 April 1925, CAR; L. E. Froom to H. C. Lacey, 27 July 1936, CAR.

<sup>85</sup>A recent study by Donny Chrissutiantio argues that E. G. White's role was one of "guiding and directing the acceptance of the concept of the Divinity of Christ," and that she "was the most significant influence in clarifying the nature and role of each of the divine persons" ("Contrasting Views about the Divinity of Christ and their Impact on the Acceptance of the Doctrine of the Trinity in Seventh-day Adventist Theology," [paper presented at the Autumn Symposium of the Adventist Theological Society, San Antonio, TX, 19 November 2016], 16, 19, <http://www.atsjats.org/site/1/docs/2016/papers-triune-god/Chrissutiantio%20-%20Contrasting%20Views%20>

the Holy Spirit who testifies of Him changed the way Seventh-day Adventists think about the Godhead. The change, profound though it was, never seemed to have seriously threatened the unity of the church. Rather, the temperature of the discussions over the issue seemed to have stayed at a low level with an occasional localized boiling over. For example, Prescott was vigorously attacked by a fundamentalist pastor in the late 1940s over his Trinitarian views.<sup>86</sup> In the mid-1950s, debate over the nature of the deity of Christ and Trinitarian doctrine again moved to center stage following discussions with evangelical leaders Walter Martin and Donald Barnhouse. On this occasion, the issue of apologetics again became the main motivating factor in the attempt to find ways to express Seventh-day Adventist understandings more clearly and adequately both for those inside and those outside the community.

### Conclusion

Seventh-day Adventists both learned and unlearned in their reflections on the nature of the Godhead. Seventh-day Adventist theology has changed in this area for a number of reasons. It changed because the church came to understand the doctrine of salvation more clearly. It changed because church leaders came to have clearer views of Jesus. It changed because evangelists and theologians needed to help others understand Seventh-day Adventists better and in the process Seventh-day Adventists understood themselves better. It changed because successful evangelism drew into the church substantial numbers of believers who were already Trinitarian. It changed because the church studied Scripture more closely. It changed because Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would continue to lead this community into truth, toward clearer understandings of God and the wonder of God's grace. And for that we can be grateful.

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%20ATS%202016.pdf). Chrissutiantio overstates E. G. White's role. It seems more accurate to speak of her endorsing, encouraging, and amplifying a developing, clearer understanding of the deity of Christ among church leaders. Chrissutiantio cites, for example, quotations from E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1890), 36, in support of his view that she, in essence, had a clear Trinitarian understanding of the deity of Christ quite early. He fails to note the distinct echoes and themes from a Miltonian Christology that are the narrative context for such statements. See also E. G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4 vols. (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1858–1864) 1:18. A wider study of E. G. White's early Christology awaits attention.

<sup>86</sup>J. S. Washburn's vigorous public protest against Prescott's Trinitarian teaching echoed the misunderstandings of 1919. He objected to Prescott's explanation that "we cannot regard the three persons of the Godhead as separable beings, each one dwelling in and confined to a visible body, the same as three human beings," and that the three persons are "so mysteriously and indissolubly related to each other that the presence of each one is equivalent to the presence of the other." This was a "monstrous doctrine" in Washburn's view. See J. S. Washburn, "The Trinity," (1940), McEllhany Papers, ASTR, 3.

## NEO-SUBORDINATIONISM: THE ALIEN ARGUMENTATION IN THE GENDER DEBATE

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### *Abstract*

Over the last forty years, the debate over gender roles in the home, church, and society has escalated in an unprecedented way among evangelical Christians due to the introduction of an alien argumentation that grounds the permanent, functional subordination of women to men in the being of God. This argumentation—which is termed “neo-subordinationism” in this article—states that there is a prescriptive hierarchical ordering of the immanent Trinity that is recognizable through the economic Trinity. In this Trinitarian hierarchy, the Son and the Holy Spirit are said to be ontologically equal but eternally subordinated in role and authority to the Father, with the Holy Spirit also functionally subordinated to the Son (for those who accept the *filioque*). Likewise, women are ontologically equal but permanently subordinated to men in role and authority. As such, they cannot serve in certain leadership capacities in the home, church, or society. This novel argument has shifted the gender debate from discussing anthropology and ecclesiology to theology proper, a shift that has been called the “turn to the Trinity.”

This article argues that, while theology proper should inform all other areas of theological studies, reading perceived differences of gender roles into the immanent Trinity has serious systematic consequences. Thus, the equality of the Trinity should be preserved by excluding neo-subordinationism from the debate on gender roles. This is accomplished, first, by briefly reviewing the history of the gender debate with a particular focus on the emergence of modern complementarian and egalitarian perspectives and the entrance of neo-subordinationism into complementarian argumentation among evangelicals generally and Seventh-day Adventists specifically. Second, four significant problems of neo-subordinationism for Christian theology are discussed: (1) its failure to adequately account for all the canonical data, (2) its inherent logical inconsistencies, (3) its inaccurate reporting of church history, and (4) its ramifications for soteriology and the character of God. Finally, the article concludes with some recommendations for how to proceed in the gender debate without injuring intra-Trinitarian ontology.

*Keywords:* Trinity, Christology, Pneumatology, eternal functional subordination, neo-subordinationism, gender, complementarianism, egalitarianism

*Introduction*

The role of women in the home, church, and society has been an intensely debated issue within Christianity at large for centuries. Over the last forty years, however, the gender debate has escalated in an unprecedented way among evangelical Christians due to the introduction of a new argumentation by some complementarian theologians that grounds the permanent, functional subordination of women to men in the nature of the triune God. This present-day nuance of an ancient heresy, which will be termed “neo-subordinationism” hereafter,<sup>1</sup> states that there is a prescriptive hierarchical ordering of the immanent Trinity (*ad intra*) that is recognizable through the economic Trinity (*ad extra*). In this Trinitarian hierarchy, the Son and the Holy Spirit are said to be *ontologically*<sup>2</sup> equal, but *functionally*<sup>3</sup> subordinated

<sup>1</sup>Subordinationism was a heresy of the third and fourth centuries taught by Origen of Alexandria (c. 185–c. 254 CE) and, in its most extreme form, by Arius (c. 256–336 CE). Both taught that the Son is eternally and ontologically subordinate and inferior to the Father, but Arianism took this subordination further by asserting that the Son had a beginning in eternity past. See the discussion in Norman R. Gulley, *God as Trinity*, vol. 2 of *Systematic Theology*, 4 vols. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2011), 84–87, 94–96; Fernando L. Canale, “Doctrine of God,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen, Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Reference Series 12 (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2001), 142–143; Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 243–245; Norman L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology: In One Volume* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2011), 552–553. The new subordinationist conception of the Trinity discussed in this article holds some similarities and differences to this ancient heresy. As such, this article will refer to this new conception of the Trinity—frequently called eternal functional subordinationism (EFS)—as “neo-subordinationism.” This term indicates similarities to ancient subordinationism, as the two conceptions of the Trinity are alike and arguably equivalent (see the section on logical inconsistencies below). However, a distinguishing technical term is used in greater fairness to the proponents of contemporary subordinationism, or EFS, many of whom claim to reject the ancient heresy. In this light, the term also acknowledges the differing nuance that the Son is ontologically equal but eternally subordinate in role/function/authority to the Father.

<sup>2</sup>Ontology refers to the metaphysical study of the nature of being. Discussions concerning divine ontology in this article refer to the very substance/essence/nature or being of God and the relationship of his three persons, or who God is in and of himself (i.e., the immanent Trinity [the Trinity *ad intra*]). See Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 302; Kwabena Donkor, *God in 3 Persons—In Theology*, Biblical Research Institute Release 9 [Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2015], 17n49. Human ontology refers to the substance/essence/nature or being of humans.

<sup>3</sup>Functionality refers to how a person or thing operates or takes action. Thus, when divine functionality is discussed in this article, it refers to how God through his three persons acts in the world with respect to creation, redemption, and consummation (i.e., the economic Trinity [the Trinity *ad extra*]), which comes from the Greek word, οἰκονομικός [*oikonomikos*], referring to the arrangement of activities in a household [the English word, “economics” comes from this word]; for examples

throughout *eternity* in role and authority to the Father, with the Holy Spirit also *functionally* subordinated to the Son (for those who accept the *filioque*).<sup>4</sup> Likewise, women are *ontologically* equal but *functionally* subordinated to men *permanently*. As such, they cannot serve in certain leadership capacities in the home, church, or society. This novel argumentation has shifted the gender debate from a discussion on anthropology and ecclesiology to one on theology proper, a shift that has been called the “turn to the Trinity.”<sup>5</sup>

#### *Purpose and Methodology*

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that, while it is true that theology proper should inform all areas of systematics (since it is the foundation upon which the edifice of systematic theology is built), reading perceived differences of gender roles into the immanent Trinity is theologically dangerous and has serious consequences for Christianity. Thus, the equality of the Trinity should be preserved by excluding neo-subordinationism from the contemporary discussion on gender roles because of its systematic destructive impact on orthodox Christian theology. This is accomplished, first, by briefly reviewing the history of the gender debate with a particular focus on the emergence of the two primary perspectives in the post-Reformation period—complementarianism and egalitarianism. Then, the entrance of neo-subordinationism into complementarian argumentation is traced among evangelicals generally and Seventh-day Adventists specifically. Next, four significant problems of neo-subordinationism for Christian theology are highlighted in some detail: (1) its failure to adequately account for all of the canonical data in Scripture, (2) its inherent logical inconsistencies, (3) its inaccurate reporting of the history of Christian thought, and (4) its ramifications for the essential Christian doctrines of salvation and the character of God. Finally, the article concludes with some recommendations for how to proceed in the gender debate without injuring intra-Trinitarian ontology.

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of the use of οἰκονομικός, see Aristotle, [*Oce.*]; Xenophon, *Oec.*). See Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 302; Donkor, *God in 3 Persons*, 17n49. Human functionality refers to how human persons act.

<sup>4</sup>The *filioque* debate (a Latin term, meaning “and from the Son”), in brief, was an argument between the Western and Eastern churches over whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from only the Father (Eastern position) or from both the Father and the Son (Western position). The *filioque* addition to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381 CE) by the Western church was a major theological reason for the Great Schism that took place between Eastern and Western Christianity in 1054. For more information, see Gulley, *God as Trinity*, 135–138; Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *The Holy Spirit: A Guide to Christian Theology, Basic Guides to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 30; Thomas C. Oden, *Classic Christianity: A Systematic Theology* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 521.

<sup>5</sup>Alan G. Padgett, “The Bible and Gender Troubles: American Evangelicals Debate Scripture and Submission,” *Di* 47.1 (2008): 24.

*Historical Context of Neo-subordinationism in the Gender Debate*

As this discussion is entered, it is important for the reader to realize that the present-day gender debate did not suddenly emerge in a vacuum; rather, a long historical progression of events and societal changes led up to these current discussions. While slight variations of views regarding gender roles existed among pre-Reformation Christians, a significant consensus thrived during this period of Christianity. The traditional theological view espoused at that time was “simply that women should not take up leadership roles in the church or society because they are defective in some ways by their very nature.”<sup>6</sup> Though different in the details, primarily an *ontological* reason was set forth for why men were permitted to lead and women were prohibited from leading in the home, church, and society. Thus, a qualitative *ontological* difference between men and women was believed to exist, which resulted in the *functional* subordination of women to men. Yet a new understanding on gender roles began to surface during and progress after the Protestant Reformation (though the traditional view was difficult to relinquish entirely for the magisterial Protestant reformers and their followers).

The Reformation’s new understanding of the priesthood of all believers and other key theological differences between Protestant and Roman Catholic thinkers stimulated a discussion that led some to revise the previous traditional stance of an ontological difference between men and women. New argumentation was advanced by some “on the grounds of Scripture and right reason that women are called to ministry and gifted by the Spirit just as men are.”<sup>7</sup> “Although women became more involved in ministry following the Reformation, they still experienced limitations.”<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, views regarding gender roles continued to evolve, gaining further ground for gender equality.

*The Emergence of Two Differing Perspectives*

After World War II, the rise of the women’s rights movement and secular feminism in the 1960s ignited greater fervor in the debate, especially in the United States of America. “[S]ome American Evangelical scholars began to argue on a number of fronts—including biblical interpretation—for the full equality of women in the church, home, and society” both *ontologically* and *functionally*.<sup>9</sup> In the 1970s, they formed the Evangelical Women’s Caucus to further this cause. These evangelicals were referred to as “Christian feminists” or “egalitarians,” their preferred self-designation.<sup>10</sup> In 1988, egalitarians

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 22.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Nancy Hedberg, *Women, Men, and the Trinity: What Does It Mean to Be Equal?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 63.

<sup>9</sup>Padgett, “Bible and Gender Troubles,” 23.

<sup>10</sup>Richard M. Davidson, “Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture,” in *Women in Ministry: Biblical & Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister

formed a nonprofit organization named Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE), and produced their position document, “Statement on Men, Women and Biblical Equality,” in 1989, as a response to their opposition.<sup>11</sup>

Not long after the rise of the egalitarian view of gender roles, “fundamentalists and conservative Evangelicals responded to this challenge with their own arguments and publications.”<sup>12</sup> However, the pre-Reformation traditional view for which they advocated was revised due to the changing cultural views of women’s ontological equality with men. Their nuanced argument asserted that “men and women are equal in *essence*, but that in *function* women are subordinate[d]” permanently.<sup>13</sup> Thus, they revised the traditional *ontological* reason for the subordination of women by upholding the biblical, ontological equality that was argued by their counterparts, yet they continued to maintain the *permanent, functional* subordination of women to men. Since the 1970s, this group of evangelicals has been referred to as “patriarchalists,” “hierarchalists,” “traditionalists,” and, their preferred self-designation, “complementarians.”<sup>14</sup> Triggering their opposition to form the CBE (as was discussed above), complementarians organized the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) in 1987 in Danvers, Massachusetts, and published their manifesto on gender roles in 1988, which was called the “Danvers Statement.”<sup>15</sup> Out of this historical context arose the modern, ongoing gender debate between these two main groups of evangelicals.<sup>16</sup>

#### The Entrance of an Alien Argumentation

Most of the gender debate between egalitarians and complementarians prior to and during the early 1970s had focused on identifying proper hermeneutical principles that should be utilized in biblical interpretation, evaluating the roles and authority of important female biblical characters (e.g., Deborah, the five daughters of Zelophehad, Philip’s five daughters, Pheobe, Junia, etc.), and doing exegesis on key scriptural passages that seemed

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(Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 259. See also Christians for Biblical Equality, “History of CBE,” <http://www.cbeinternational.org/content/cbe-history>; idem, *Biblical Gender Equality: A Summary* (Minneapolis: Christians for Biblical Equality, 2015), 3–5.

<sup>11</sup>Davidson, “Headship, Submission, and Equality,” 284. See also Christians for Biblical Equality, “Men, Women and Biblical Equality,” 1989, [https://www.cbeinternational.org/sites/default/files/english\\_3.pdf](https://www.cbeinternational.org/sites/default/files/english_3.pdf).

<sup>12</sup>Padgett, “Bible and Gender Troubles,” 23.

<sup>13</sup>Hedberg, *Women, Men, and the Trinity*, 2; Padgett, “Bible and Gender Troubles,” 23–24; emphasis original.

<sup>14</sup>Davidson, “Headship, Submission, and Equality,” 259.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 284. See also Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, “Our History,” <http://cbmw.org/history>. The “Danvers Statement” can be found at idem, “The Danvers Statement,” <http://cbmw.org/uncategorized/the-danvers-statement>.

<sup>16</sup>Padgett, “Bible and Gender Troubles,” 22.



to address the dynamics of male-female relations (e.g., Gen 1–3, Luke 8:1–4; 1 Cor 11:2–16, 14:34–36; Gal 3:28; Eph 5:18–33; 1 Tim 2:8–15). However, an alien argumentation was introduced into the debate in the 1970s by some complementarian theologians, causing the discussion to take a surprising turn. Alan G. Padgett refers to this novel argumentation as the “turn to the Trinity.”<sup>17</sup>

George W. Knight III initiated this turn when in 1977 he published *The New Testament Teaching on the Role Relationship of Men and Women*, which espoused the complementarian perspective on gender roles.<sup>18</sup> What was novel and noteworthy about Knight’s argumentation was his usage of the economic and immanent Trinity, particularly the relationship between the Father and the Son, as an analogy for male-female relations.<sup>19</sup> Even more significant was its new understanding that the Son—though fully God *ontologically*—is *functionally* subordinate in *eternity* to the Father. Knight wrote:

The apostle Paul in his appeal to the relation of God the Father to God the Son does not regard Christ’s Sonship and resultant incarnation as implying His inferiority to the Father. Although Christ the Son’s submission is expressed in the areas of action and of incarnation (the areas of service and of the accomplishment of salvation; cf. also I Cor. 15:24–28), it is also an expression of the ontological relationship of preincarnate, submissive Sonship (cf., e.g., John 5:18–23, 30).

The ontological relationship analogous to that between man and woman, writes Paul, is that between Father and Son (I Cor. 11:3). That Christ submits as Son and as incarnate, i.e., because of certain ontological aspects, does not mean therefore that He is inferior to the Father, nor does it cast into doubt His deity. Likewise, that the woman submits as woman does not mean therefore that she is inferior or that her humanity as an image-bearer is threatened. In both cases, it is equals in relationship to one another. In both cases, one, because of His or her ‘ontological’ and ordained role in relation to the other, acknowledges headship and submits. Just as no inferiority may be asserted or assumed for Christ in His submission, so also no inferiority may be asserted or assumed for woman, and no objection may be justly made because her submission rests on her cocreated identity as woman in relation to man.<sup>20</sup>

Based on his research, Kevin Giles believes that Knight’s claim is the “first formulated . . . argument” to utilize neo-subordinationism, arguing

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 24.

<sup>18</sup>George W. Knight III, *The New Testament Teaching on the Role Relationship of Men and Women* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1977). This book built on his research in an earlier published article. See idem, “The New Testament Teaching on the Role Relationship of Male and Female with Special Reference to the Teaching/Ruling Functions in the Church,” *JETS* 18.2 (1975): 81–91.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 56. Knight wrote, “For the basis of man’s headship over woman and woman’s submission to man, the apostle Paul appeals to the analogy of God the Father’s headship over Jesus Christ, His incarnate Son (I Cor. 11:3). . . . With full authority and with *absolute* and *permanent* reasons, Paul argues for the form of this relationship between man and women” (ibid., 26; emphasis added).

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 55–56; see also 32–33.

that “just as women are permanently subordinated in authority to their husbands in the home and to male leaders in the church, so the Son of God is eternally subordinated in authority to the Father.”<sup>21</sup> To arrive at this conclusion, Knight employed 1 Cor 11:3 as the foundation for his one-to-one linkage of male-female relations to the relationship between the Father and the Son respectively.<sup>22</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:3 became the keynote passage that some complementarian writers later utilized to argue that the permanent, functional subordination of women to men is analogously connected to the eternal, functional subordination of the Son to the Father.

The publication of Wayne Grudem’s *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* in 1994 further developed and popularized Knight’s neo-subordinationism by stating, “[W]hile the persons of the Trinity are equal in all their attributes, they nonetheless differ in their relationships to the creation. The Son and the Holy Spirit are equal in deity to God the Father, but they are subordinate in their roles. Moreover, these differences in role are not temporary but will last forever . . . .”<sup>23</sup> Grudem applied this Trinitarian relationship to male-female relations when he wrote, “[J]ust as the Father has authority over the Son in the Trinity, so the husband has authority over the wife in marriage.”<sup>24</sup> Since this publication, other systematic theologies written by conservative evangelicals have followed suit, such as Norman Geisler’s *Systematic Theology*, in which he stated, “All the members of the Trinity are equal in *essence*, but they do not have the same *roles*. . . . [I]t is clear that there is a *functional subordination*; that is, not only does each member have a different function or role, but some functions are also subordinated to others.”<sup>25</sup> For Geisler, like Grudem,<sup>26</sup> this functional subordination “is not just *temporal* and *economical*; it is *essential* and *eternal*.”<sup>27</sup> Thus, he also grounded the permanent,

<sup>21</sup>Kevin Giles, “The Evangelical Theological Society and the Doctrine of the Trinity,” *EvQ* 80.4 (2008): 324, 323.

<sup>22</sup>Knight, *The New Testament Teaching*, 26.

<sup>23</sup>Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 249. Giles believes that it “was the first evangelical systematic theology to enunciate the doctrine of the *eternal subordination of the Son in function/role and authority*” (“The Evangelical Theological Society,” 325; emphasis original). However, Millard J. Erickson mentions a few other systematic theologians before Grudem—such as Charles Hodge, Augustus Strong, and Louis Berkhof—who also taught some form of neo-subordinationism (See *Who’s Tampering with the Trinity? An Assessment of the Subordination Debate* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009], 27–33). Nevertheless, Grudem’s *Systematic Theology* was probably the first evangelical systematic theology to make an analogy of authority and subordination between the Father-Son relationship and male-female relations and most certainly popularized it.

<sup>24</sup>Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 257. For more detail on the analogy he makes between the Trinity and male-female relations, see *ibid.*, 454–471.

<sup>25</sup>Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 548; emphasis original.

<sup>26</sup>See Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 249–250.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 549; emphasis added.

functional subordination of women to men in the home, church, and society by appealing to “the nature of the Godhead.”<sup>28</sup>

This neo-subordinationist conception of the immanent Trinity has even penetrated the thinking of some scholars of biblical theology. A notable example is Bruce K. Waltke’s *An Old Testament Theology*, in which he asserted that hierarchy “exists eternally in the Godhead itself, wherein the Son is always voluntarily subservient to the Father’s will and the Spirit to both. In the mystery of the Godhead, in which the three persons are one and equal, the Son obeys the Father, and the Spirit obeys both.”<sup>29</sup> This argument is utilized by Waltke to demonstrate that “[h]ierarchy in government is not the result of the Fall.” He stressed this pre-fall hierarchy in male-female relations in order to establish it as the divine prescriptive norm since the beginning of human history.<sup>30</sup>

Reformed theologians, as well as Southern Baptist scholars and seminaries, have been the primary advocates of utilizing neo-subordinationism in their complementarian argumentation.<sup>31</sup> In fact, the Southern Baptist Convention took a definitive stand in favor of the complementarian perspective on gender roles in its 2000 Baptist Faith and Message.<sup>32</sup> Even so, the neo-subordinationist argument has not exclusively remained in Southern Baptist or other Calvinist circles. Scholars of other faith traditions have adopted it

<sup>28</sup>Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 1134–1135. More recently, this neo-subordinationist conception of the Trinity has appeared in Michael F. Bird’s systematic theology, where he states, “I think that functional subordination with ontological equality is indeed consistent with historic orthodoxy” (*Evangelical Theology: A Biblical and Systematic Introduction* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013], 120). Fortunately, he argues that the Trinity should not “be used to establish the proper relations between men and women, simply for the fact that the Trinity is unique and does not translate well as a model for relations between two persons of separate genders” (*ibid.*).

<sup>29</sup>Bruce K. Waltke with Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 243; emphasis added. Differing from Grudem and Geisler, Waltke adds the important qualifier “voluntarily” to “subservient,” which arguably softens his position (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, this subservience is “eternally in the Godhead itself”—his being—and in “the mystery of the Godhead” (*ibid.*).

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.* See also 239–247.

<sup>31</sup>The reason for this strong representation of neo-subordinationism among Reformed denominations would be an interesting topic for another article. Perhaps this phenomenon is related systematically in some way to a theology of determinism regarding the eternal decrees of God that some Calvinists maintain. This investigation is beyond the scope of this article. However, it is important to realize that not all determinists subscribe to neo-subordinationism.

<sup>32</sup>See Article XVIII on “The Family” and the provided commentary on it in Southern Baptist Convention, “The Baptist Faith and Message,” 2000, <http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp>. Article VI on “The Church” states, “While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture” (*ibid.*). Cf. Erickson, *Tampering with the Trinity?*, 51; Padgett, “Bible and Gender Troubles,” 25.

despite the fact that it is out of harmony with the representative teachings of their denominations. Giles points out that “[i]n America, Australia, and to a lesser extent in England, this teaching has swamped the evangelical world. It seems to be what most Evangelicals now believe.”<sup>33</sup>

#### Neo-Subordinationism in Seventh-day Adventism

An interesting example of this rise of neo-subordinationism is that which has taken place among a few Seventh-day Adventist scholars, pastors, and evangelists.<sup>34</sup> Since the late 1800s and early 1900s, Seventh-day Adventists have affirmed the equality of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>35</sup> However,

<sup>33</sup>Giles, “The Evangelical Theological Society,” 326. A book edited by Dennis W. Jowers and H. Wayne House provided a venue for the debate over the Trinity between complementarians and egalitarians (see *The New Evangelical Subordinationism? Perspectives on the Equality of God the Father and God the Son* [Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012]).

<sup>34</sup>It should be pointed out that the majority of Seventh-day Adventist scholars still reject neo-subordinationism. Iriann Marie Hausted identifies several of these scholars and their various works on the issue, such as Woodrow W. Whidden II, Jerry Moon, John W. Reeve, Norman R. Gulley, Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, and Jo Ann Davidson (“Eternal Functional Subordination in the Work of Wayne Grudem and its Relationship to Contemporary Adventism” [paper presented at the 68th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society and the 2016 Autumn Symposium of the Adventist Theological Society, San Antonio, TX, 16 November 2016], 18–23, <http://www.atsjats.org/site/1/docs/2016/papers-triune-god/Hausted%20-%20Wayne%20Grudem%E2%80%99s%20Trinitarian%20Subordinationism%20-%20ATS%202016.pdf>).

<sup>35</sup>See the discussions in Merlin D. Burt, “History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on the Trinity,” *JATS* 17.1 (2006): 125–139; Canale, “Doctrine of God,” 148–151; Denis Fortin, “God, the Trinity, and Adventism: An Introduction to the Issues,” *JATS* 17.1 (2006): 4–10; Jerry Moon, “The Adventist Trinity Debate, Part 1: Historical Overview,” *AUSS* 41.1 (2003): 113–129; idem, “The Adventist Trinity Debate, Part 2: The Role of Ellen G. White,” *AUSS* 41.2 (2003): 275–292; Gerhard Pfandl, “The Doctrine of the Trinity among Seventh-day Adventists,” *JATS* 17.1 (2006): 160–179; Woodrow W. Whidden II, Jerry Moon, and John W. Reeve, *The Trinity: Understanding God’s Love, His Plan of Salvation, and Christian Relationships* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2002); Trinity Congress, South Pacific Division, “Consensus Statement,” in *Biblical and Theological Studies on the Trinity*, ed. Paul B. Petersen and Robert K. McIver (Cooranbong, NSW: Avondale Academic Press, 2014), 219–220. See also the older Seventh-day Adventist theology textbook for colleges prepared by the Department of Education of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, which says, “Often in theological writings, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are referred to as the First, Second, and Third Persons of the Godhead. This designation has nothing to do with position, honor, power, or authority, but is simply a variant means of identification. It has nothing to do with relationships within the Godhead or with our attitude or relation to its members” (T. H. Jemison, *Christian Beliefs: Fundamental Biblical Teachings for Seventh-day Adventist College Classes* [Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1959], 84n1). When commenting on Jesus’s subordination to the Father, the textbook points out that this submission was voluntary and limited to

some Seventh-day Adventist writers began to use neo-subordinationist argumentation borrowed from Grudem in the 1970s and 1980s to support a complementarian perspective. Others have used the Trinity to support competing models for male-female relations.

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“the period of His earthy ministry,” during which he “had taken ‘the form of a servant’ (Philippians 2:7)” (ibid., 88). Thus, Christ’s submission to the Father is said to be temporary and function, not eternal.

Additionally, see the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, in which Canale writes, “The biblical idea of the subordination of God the Son to God the Father belongs, not to the inner structure of divine reality, but rather to the sphere of the accomplishment of the plan of salvation. . . . Thus, statements that imply the subordination of God the Son to God the Father are to be understood as a result of His incarnation, the expression of His obedience to the Father. Without this subordination the Incarnation itself would not have reached its salvific purpose. . . . The functional subordination of the Son does not entail, however, an ontological dependence or inferiority of the Son. In a broad sense, the subordination of the Son to the Father can be seen as expressing the unity of the inner trinitarian life as the Godhead works out salvation in and throughout the history of the great controversy. In the Bible, therefore, no ground is found for the idea that there is an ontological subordination of the Son to the Father or that the divine reality of the Father has in any way a primacy of origin over the divine reality of the Son” (“Doctrine of God,” 126). Canale’s discussion on the “delegation of the Father to the Son” as the “counterpart” to “the subordination of the Son to the Father” within the plan of redemption is also helpful in clarifying the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of intra-Trinitarian relations ontologically and economically. See ibid., 127–128.

Additionally, note that the official twenty-eight fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church nowhere indicate any kind of hierarchy and subordination in the Trinity (see statements 2–5 in Seventh-day Adventist Church, “28 Fundamental Beliefs,” 2015, <https://www.adventist.org/fileadmin/adventist.org/files/articles/official-statements/28Beliefs-Web.pdf>). Kwabena Donkor, assistant director of the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, understands fundamental beliefs two through five “to remove any hint of subordination” (*God in 3 Persons*, 19). Also the book produced by the Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, which explains the twenty-eight fundamental beliefs, nowhere speaks of a hierarchical ordering of the Trinitarian persons. Rather, it describes the relationship between the three persons of the Trinity “as coeternal, coexistent in utter self-giving and love for one another” (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe: An Exposition of the Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* [Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, 2005], 30). Furthermore, when commenting on the “economy of function” of the Godhead, it does speak of “orderliness” and “union” and states that “different members of the Godhead perform distinct tasks in saving man” (ibid., 30–31). However, it nowhere speaks of hierarchy and subordination, but rather mutuality. As an example, it discusses the mutual participation of all three persons in the giving of the Son: “The incarnation beautifully demonstrated the working relationship of the three persons of the Godhead. The Father gave His Son, Christ gave Himself, and the Spirit gave Jesus birth (John 3:16; Matt 1:18, 20)” (ibid., 30). This same description of intra-Trinitarian relations is found in the earlier edition of the book that was published in 1988 (idem, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines*

*Role of Women in the Church Study Committee (1973)*

On 19 July 1973, “the General Conference Committee voted to establish an *ad hoc* committee on the role of women in the church,” which met at Camp Mohaven in Danville, Ohio, during 16–20 September 1973.<sup>36</sup> An argument in two of the papers shared there might have been the first in which neo-subordinationist argumentation was used in print (or at least the first to make an analogy between the Father-Son relation and male-female relations) in the modern gender debate among Seventh-day Adventists. The paper titled “The Relationship of Man and Women in the Beginning and at the End” by Gerhard F. Hasel, professor of Old Testament and biblical theology and former dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, connected the relationship of the Father as head over the Son to the husband’s relationship as head over his wife in the marriage context via 1 Cor 11:3.<sup>37</sup> While Hasel preserved the Father and Son’s ontological equality, he readily pointed out the Son’s submission to the Father. However, the exact nature of this subordination cannot be determined conclusively, because the paper lacks further clarification. Since Hasel was more egalitarian and favorable of women

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[Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1988], 23–24). Thus, it seems that the denomination rejects any notion of hierarchy and subordination in the Trinity.

A more recent confirmation that Seventh-day Adventists, as a denomination, reject notions of subordination in the Trinity was that which happened during the discussion to make changes to the twenty-eight fundamental beliefs at the 2015 General Conference session in San Antonio, Texas. During that discussion, a question was raised about the addition of Ps 101:1 to the reference list following the third fundamental belief about God the Father, as well as a minor change to the final sentence of that statement. The question inquired about the idea that Jesus is “eternally subordinate to the Father” (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (San Antonio, TX), Transcripts of the Meetings of the Sixtieth General Conference Session, 2–10 July 2015, eighth business meeting of 6 July 2015, 20, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCSM/2015/GCST20150706PM.pdf>). Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, former director of the BRI, responded to the question, saying, “As far as I can tell, such a teaching hasn’t been part of the Adventist body of beliefs, and this passage [Ps 101:1] denies the subordination” (ibid.). To view the fundamental belief changes that were proposed during this discussion, see Andrew McChesney, “28 Fundamental Beliefs Get an Update,” *Adventist News*, 14 October 2014, <http://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/28-fundamental-beliefs-get-an-update>. Lynda du Preez brought this occurrence to my attention.

<sup>36</sup>Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (ASTR), “1973 Role of Women in the Church Committee: Mohaven Documents,” <https://www.adventistarchives.org/1973-5-mohaven#.U0OAMcdO0lo>.

<sup>37</sup>Gerhard Hasel, “The Relationship of Man and Woman in the Beginning and at the End” (paper presented at the Meeting of the Role of Women in the Church Study Committee, Danville, OH, 16–20 September 1973), 18, 23, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/the-relationship-of-man-and-woman-in-the-beginning-and-at-the-end.pdf>.

in ministry throughout the paper<sup>38</sup>—as was the committee to which he presented—the subordination he had in mind was likely only functional and temporary and, thus, it may not be fully neo-subordinationist.

In this same study committee, Raoul Dederen, professor of systematic and historical theology and former dean of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, shared the paper “The Role of Woman Today: A Theology of Relationship—Man to Woman,” in which he similarly connected the Father-Son relation to male-female relations by way of what he called the “kephale-structure” in 1 Cor 11:3. He wrote,

This kephale-structure of the relationship between man and woman stands within a larger chain, or if you like it better the structure goes far beyond the relationship between man and woman. Even the relationship of Christ to God, the relationship of the church to Christ are determined by this fundamental principle of being set within and subject to an order that was instituted by God from the beginning. . . . This basic structure is the kephale-structure: the man is the head of the woman, Christ is the head of the man, God is the head of Christ. The ‘head’ is that which determines, that which leads.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup>See *ibid.*, 22–24. Hasel wrote, “In addition to the important observation that the rulership of man over woman is valid only in the sphere of marriage, it has been observed, if our careful investigation has not misled us, that the husband’s ruling function is not a part of God’s perfect creation but a result of sin. The implications of these observations are of immense significance for the task of the proclamation of the gospel of God’s remnant church. If the plan of salvation and the message of the gospel are concerned with the reproduction of the image of God in men under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth and on the basis that Christ in His life and death has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin, is it then not the responsibility of the church as God’s instrument to bring about the reproduction of the image of God in man, to restore harmony between God and man, to establish equality and unity where there is now inequality and disunity? Would this not involve among many things a restoring of and establishing of equality between men and women in such spheres of life and activity where the divine declaration of man’s rulership over his wife and the wife’s submission to her husband (Gen 3:16; Eph 5:22ff; 1 Pet 3:1ff. [*sic*]) does not apply? Furthermore, does the urgency of the task and the shortness of time not require the full utilization of all of our manpower and womanpower resources, which includes the full participation of women, also in the lines of ministerial activity? If ‘in Christ’ or in the church there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free man, neither male or female (Gal 3:28), does this oneness and equality not call for a united effort to finish the task where all, both ‘male and female’ (3:28) participate in full equality of responsibilities and privileges in all lines of work in order to hasten the coming of our beloved Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?” (*ibid.*, 24). The same thinking is expressed in his later paper, which was presented before the BRI in 1975 (*idem*, “Man and Woman in Genesis 1–3” [paper presented at the Meeting of the Biblical Research Institute Committee, Washington, DC, 29–30 December 1975], 13–14). See also *idem*, “Equality from the Start: Woman in the Creation Story,” *Spectrum* 7.2 (1975): 21–28.

<sup>39</sup>Raoul Dederen, “The Role of Woman Today: A Theology of Relationship—Man to Woman” (paper presented at the Meeting of the Role of Women in the Church Study Committee, Danville, OH, 16–20 September 1973), 10.

However, like Hasel, Dederen carefully noted that the submission of woman to man is “*limited* to the case of married women in relation to their own husbands. The issue is therefore the family order, and not an order applying to the status of the sexes or to social situations in general,”<sup>40</sup> including the context of the church, “which is a body of which Christ is *sole* head.”<sup>41</sup> As for the submission of the Son to the Father, he did not say whether it was limited to a certain context (i.e., the incarnation) and, thus, only temporary and functional, or unqualified and, thus, eternal and ontological. Thus, like in Hasel’s paper, the exact nature of the Trinitarian subordination discussed in Dederen’s paper cannot be settled definitively merely by what is written therein.<sup>42</sup> The jury is still out on whether or not the two papers make a fully

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 11; emphasis added.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 12; emphasis added. He also stated in the conclusion that the reasons for the apostolic church’s hesitancy toward “the regular participation of women in the ministry” “were not based . . . on the nature (male or female) of the three persons of the Godhead, nor on the nature of the order of creation-fall, nor on the essence of the ministry instituted by Christ” (ibid., 14).

<sup>42</sup>In an article from 1970, Dederen affirmed the ontological equality of the persons of the Trinity, when he wrote that “we must confess that the Trinity is one indivisible God and that the distinctions of the persons do not destroy the divine unity. This unity of God is expressed by saying that he is one substance. Nevertheless, in the divine unity there are three co-eternal and co-equal persons, who, though distinct, are the One undivided and adorable God. This is the doctrine of Scripture” (“Reflections on the Doctrine of the Trinity,” *AUSS* 8.1 [1970]: 16). Later he described their relationship as one “not of separation but of interdependence” (ibid.). However, when he explained the details of the relationship between the Father and the Son, he did so in terms of priority of the former and subordination of the latter: “When the apostles discuss [the Son’s] relationship with the Father they speak as if he were in some sense less than the Father, even after his resurrection. In acknowledging the priority and primacy of the Father, however, they did not deny the Son’s divinity” (ibid., 17). Whether this subordination is strictly functional and temporal or essential and eternal is not clear here either, for he explained it in seemingly contradictory ways. Note the following: “[The view of the apostles] . . . was not subordinationism, nor does it imply any inferiority of the Son compared with the Father. Christ, here, is set in the order of Deity. The willing subordination of the Son to the Father—and of the Spirit to the Father and to the Son—relates not to their essential life with the Trinity. Nor is it in any way inconsistent with true equality. It is a demonstration of the unity of purpose existing among the members of the Deity. Here the activities of one are seen to be but the carrying out of the united will. We may conclude with some that the Father has metaphysical priority, or with others that he has a primacy of order. One thing nevertheless remains certain: the NT writers have not worked out the problem with subtle refinement, but they all agree that the Father has priority and that both Father and Son are God. And they consider such a statement consistent” (ibid., 18–19). Also see his summary that “Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinguished only by their mutual relations as revealing the Deity to us. God the Father stresses the infinity, eternity and power of the Deity, the primacy and finality of God. Jesus Christ affirms the character of the divine Nature. In him we discern the nature of the divine purpose and the manner of God’s working for its realization. The Holy Spirit testifies of the intimacy of omnipotent Power, the never-failing availability of God, how close he is to



neo-subordinationist argument. Nevertheless, it is significant that both Hasel and Dederen interpreted 1 Cor 11:3 as dealing with authority and hierarchy, even though they seemed to understand these as confined to a particular time and context—the time after the fall of humanity and prior to the eschaton and only in the context marriage.<sup>43</sup>

*The Commission on the Role of Women I (1988)  
and Samuele Bacchiocchi*

Due to the aforementioned committee's favorable recommendation to incorporate more women into ministry, one Seventh-day Adventist theologian, Samuele Bacchiocchi, became very concerned with what he considered to be a "new" direction.<sup>44</sup> In 1987, he drafted a fifty-six-page paper for the 1988 Commission on the Role of Women I;<sup>45</sup> the paper opposed women in pastoral ministry and asserted Grudem's headship theology and

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each one of us at every moment. Each of them, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, enlarges our understanding of God as revealed in the Scriptures. This is why the Trinity is a relation, not a separation" (ibid., 20). It seems that he intended to confine the Father's priority and the Son's subordination to the plan of redemption and, thus, they were viewed as functional and temporal, not essential and eternal. However, one could argue that he made a more unqualified argument because of such statements as "the Father has metaphysical priority" (ibid., 18) and "Christ . . . is set in the order of Deity" (ibid.).

<sup>43</sup>In preparation for the 1985 Spring Meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee, the 1985 Role of Women in the Church Committee was established to "discuss the role of women in the church, and in particular the issue of women's ordination" in order to prepare a report for that meeting, "with an eye to presenting a further report" to the 1985 General Conference Session (ASTR, "1985 Role of Women in the Church Committee," <https://www.adventistarchives.org/1985-study-committee>). One of the four "commissioned and pre-circulated" research papers was written by Willmore D. Eva, who, while supportive of women in ministry, understood Paul in 1 Cor 11:2–16 as "advocating a conservative stand on the issue of women's role in the church" and calling upon "the hierarchical order of God to Christ to man to woman, to affirm it" ("A Biblical Position Paper: The Role and Standing of Women in the Ministry of the Church" [unpublished paper, January 1985], 37, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/a-biblical-position-paper-the-role-and-standing-of-women-in-the-ministry-of-the-church.pdf>). Nothing can be deduced regarding the nature of this hierarchy, as this is the only mention of a Father-Son and male-female connection in the paper; no explanation is given by the author.

<sup>44</sup>Gerry Chudleigh, "A Short History of the Headship Doctrine in the Seventh-day Adventist Church," *Spectrum* 42.2 (2014): 87.

<sup>45</sup>This commission was established by the 1987 Annual Council of the General Conference for continued study on the role of women in the church after the 1985 General Conference Session decision in New Orleans, Louisiana, "To take no definitive action at this time regarding ordination of women to the gospel ministry" (ASTR, "1988 Commission on the Role of Women I," <https://www.adventistarchives.org/1988-commission>; "Fifteenth Business Meeting, Fifty-fourth General Conference Session," *Adventist Review* 162.34 [11 July 1985]: 20).

neo-subordinationism.<sup>46</sup> It was crafted to reflect the content found in his 1987 self-published book *Women in the Church*, which, together with his paper, introduced Grudem's headship theology and neo-subordinationism into Seventh-day Adventism for the first time.<sup>47</sup> Bacchiocchi's book was indeed the turning point for some in Seventh-day Adventist thinking regarding neo-subordinationism in the Trinity and headship in male-female relations. Gerry Chudleigh perceptively observes,

The extensive bibliography in Bacchiocchi's anti-women's-ordination book, *Women in the Church*, lists no supporting Adventist references, and later books condemning women's ordination list none before Bacchiocchi's book. Current anti-women's ordination websites that offer publications for further study offer nothing written by Adventists before Bacchiocchi's 1987 book.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup>The relevant sections of the paper read, "The Trinity provides a perfect model of how equality in worth can coexist with subordination in functions. God the Father is the Head in the Trinity (1 Cor 11:3), but His headship does not lessen the value of the Son, because both are equally God. Some argue that the Son's functional subordination to the Father was temporary, limited only to the time of His incarnation and/or of the completion of His redemptive mission. This argument is untrue, because 1 Corinthians 15:28 clearly tells us that at the consummation of His redemptive mission, Christ who has been reigning until He subjects all things under His Father's feet, will Himself be subject to God: 'When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to everyone' (1 Cor 15:28). The Son is not of less value because of His functional subordination to the headship of the Father, since both fully share the divine nature. Similarly, a woman is of no less value because of her functional subordination to the headship of a man in the home or in the church, since both men and women are equally created and restored in the image of God (Gen 1:27; Gal 3:23). . . . The headship between man and woman is correlated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 to the headship between God and Christ: 'The head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God' (1 Cor 11:3). The latter refutes the charge that submission means inferiority because in the Trinity there is a headship among equals. Christ's submission to the authority and headship of His Father did not stifle His personality, but was the secret of His wisdom, power, and success. Similarly, a woman who accepts the leadership of a mature and caring man in the family or in the church will not feel unfulfilled, but rather will find the needed protection and support to exercise her God-given ministries" ("Divine Order of Headship and Church Order: A Study of the Implications of the Principle of Male Headship for the Ordination of Women as Elders and/or Pastors" [paper presented at the Meeting of the Commission on the Role of Women, Washington, DC, 24–27 March 1988], 14, 48, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/divine-order-of-headship-and-church-order.pdf>). Bacchiocchi quoted or referred to Grudem's writings multiple times throughout this paper.

<sup>47</sup>Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Study of the Role of Women in the Church* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1987), 76, 126–128." In the preface of the book, Bacchiocchi directly attributed his understanding to Grudem by stating, "Among the hundreds of authors I have read in the preparation of this book, two stand out as the ones who have made the greatest contribution to the development of my thoughts, namely, Prof. Wayne Grudem of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Prof. James B. Hurley of Reformed Theological Seminary" (*ibid.*, 16–17).

<sup>48</sup>Chudleigh, *A Short History*, 84.

Bacchiocchi's influential position as professor of theology and church history in the religion department at Andrews University (the flagship educational institution of the Seventh-day Adventist Church) from 1974 to 2000, led some Seventh-day Adventist scholars, administrators, pastors, and members to embrace neo-subordinationism.<sup>49</sup>

*The Commission on the Role of Women II (1989)*

The 1988 Commission on the Role of Women I deemed that further study on the role women in the ministry of the church was needed. Thus, "General Conference leadership appointed" a second Commission on the Role of Women to meet in Crandall, Georgia, at the Cohutta Springs Conference Center on 12–18 July 1989, to accomplish this task.<sup>50</sup> Several documents were written by theologians, administrators, and pastors for circulation among members of the commission with the purpose of creating more discussion and reflection on this hotly debated issue in the church.<sup>51</sup>

V. Nørskov Olsen, scholar, professor, and former president of both Newbold College in England and Loma Linda University in Loma Linda, California, drafted over three hundred pages worth of documents for the commission to review.<sup>52</sup> In these documents, he extensively connected male-female relations to the Trinity via the *imago Dei* (image of God), but in a way

<sup>49</sup>For example, Samuel Koranteng-Pipim wrote *Searching the Scriptures* in 1995, which employed the same neo-subordinationist argumentation of Bacchiocchi to prevent women from serving as pastors in the Seventh-day Adventist Church (*Searching the Scriptures: Women's Ordination and the Call to Biblical Fidelity* [Berrien Springs, MI: Adventists Affirm, 1995], 52). It is intriguing that Koranteng-Pipim recommends Grudem's writings to those who are interested in learning more about headship theology and states that they have enriched the writing of his book (*ibid.*, 53n1).

<sup>50</sup>ASTR, "1989 Commission on the Role of Women II: Cohutta Springs Documents," <https://www.adventistarchives.org/1989-cohutta-springs>.

<sup>51</sup>"The Commission's conclusions "were presented to the 1990 General Conference Session in Indianapolis, Indiana" (*ibid.*). To view the commission's report and the ensuing vote of the 1990 General Conference Session, see "1990 General Conference Session Action," *Adventist Review* 189.28 (11 October 2012): 19.

<sup>52</sup>It should be noted that at the top of each of these documents, Olsen pointed out that these were "working" papers or first drafts. For an example, see the top of the first document (V. Nørskov Olsen, "The Church in the Old Testament" [paper presented at the Meeting of the Commission on the Role of Women II, Crandall, GA, 12–18 July 1989], 1, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/documents-for-role-of-women-commission.pdf>). He desired that they not be "duplicated" in their "present form" and that comments on them be restricted to discussions of the commission (*ibid.*). Eventually, he developed these documents into three different publications. See *idem*, *Man, the Image of God: The Divine Design—The Human Distortion* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1988); *idem*, *Myth and Truth about Church, Priesthood and Ordination* (Riverside, CA: Loma Linda University Press, 1990); *idem*, *The New Relatedness for Man and Woman in Christ: A Mirror of the Divine* (Loma Linda, CA: Loma Linda University Press, 1993).

that argues against neo-subordinationism. Commenting on Gen 1:26–27, he wrote, “There is in the order of creation an analogy between the I-Thou relationship of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; and the I-Thou relationship between man-male and man-female.”<sup>53</sup> This primarily means that as “the unity of the Godhead exists in oneness of substance, nature, will, operation, majesty, etc.—implying absolute equality”<sup>54</sup>—so too, “[b]eing an image of the divine the human relatedness” of male and female “was destined to be one of [absolute] unity and equality.”<sup>55</sup> This absolute unity and equality does not equal “sameness.” Rather, it entails “complimentary or functional differences in . . . mutual fellowship.”<sup>56</sup>

To define these “functional differences” further, Olsen began with the Trinity. He noted that Scripture speaks of “functional differences” that “are exercised in complete harmony or unison, as noticed in the covenant of redemption and clearly spelled out in the biblical description of the functions of the three Persons both in the work of Creation and redemption.”<sup>57</sup> In these “various spheres of functional relationship within the Trinity a certain headship is exercised by God the Father; ‘God is the head of Christ’ (1 Cor. 11:3).”<sup>58</sup> He defined this headship in a very specific and unique way so as to avoid the idea of subordination:

Humanly speaking, even within the Trinity, headship resembles the role of a chairman, the first among equals, who are in complete accord; any directive given is rooted in a “delegated” or “representative” authority (the words “representative responsibility” are more correct than “authority”) reflecting order, oneness, and harmony (John 14–17).<sup>59</sup>

To further qualify this headship of the Father among the three persons of the Trinity, he was careful to explain that “[o]n account of the very nature of oneness and equality, the divine headship is *not authoritative*, but represents a responsibility created by love (agape) and manifested in giving and serving,

<sup>53</sup>Idem, “The Divine Oneness, Equality, and Relatedness in Functional Differences” (paper presented at the Meeting of the Commission on the Role of Women II, Crandall, GA, 12–18 July 1989), 10, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/documents-for-role-of-women-commission.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>55</sup>Idem, “Man and Woman as Relational Beings,” (paper presented at the Meeting of the Commission on the Role of Women II, Crandall, GA, 12–18 July 1989), 3, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/documents-for-role-of-women-commission.pdf>.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>57</sup>Idem, “The Divine Oneness,” 4.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 7. However, commenting on 1 Cor 11:3, he wrote, “1 Cor. 11:3 does not express a chain of command, for then it would have begun with God to Christ, Christ to man, and man to woman; instead the three categories end with God and Christ” (idem, “The Pauline Male-Female Relatedness” (paper presented at the Meeting of the Commission on the Role of Women II, Crandall, GA, 12–18 July 1989), 40, <https://www.adventistarchives.org/documents-for-role-of-women-commission.pdf>).

<sup>59</sup>Idem, “The Divine Oneness,” 9.

[*sic*] (diakonia).<sup>60</sup> “Accordingly, subordination is not the right word to express Christ’s relationship with the Father.”<sup>61</sup>

Olsen went on to assert that this Trinitarian “relatedness” “is a prescriptive model for the human situation and a part of the *imago Dei*.”<sup>62</sup> As in the Trinity, there is a “functional complementarity”<sup>63</sup> between male and female, though it seems that he restricted the “functional differences” to the context of the family and did not extend them beyond to other spheres, such as the church and society.<sup>64</sup> This male-female “functional complementarity,” according to him, entails a “headship” of the male over the female, “a super- and sub-ordination” that “is a purely functional difference, not a difference in value.”<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, it should be remembered that Olsen’s description of this headship is not “domination” or “authoritative,” but “representative responsibility” in the context of love and service, as it is in the Trinity.<sup>66</sup> In fact, he stated that the “misconceived ideas of headship, subordination, power, and authority” make up “the distorted concept of relatedness” that is the result of the fall.<sup>67</sup> Being in “unity with Christ (the Son of man, the new and perfect Adam)” renews the “inner and outward life . . . into the image of God, which embraces an imitation of the Trinitarian relatedness and the order of creation.”<sup>68</sup>

A close reading of Olsen’s analogy between the Trinity and male-female relations reveals that he applied it in two specific ways beyond the more general ways noted above. First, he connected the Father to the man and the Son to the woman via 1 Cor 11:3.<sup>69</sup> Second, he described an analogy between the “Christ-Spirit” relationship and male-female relations.<sup>70</sup> For him, this can be seen by observing the Holy Spirit’s more feminine characteristics

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 8; emphasis added. “On account of the very nature of the divine oneness and equality, identified in all aspects of existence within the Trinity (none of them would think and act differently from one another), there can never be domination in the functional activities, different as they are of necessity even within the divine realm. There is no need for authority in order to ‘enforce’ conformity or unity” (ibid.).

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>62</sup>Idem, “Man and Woman,” 7.

<sup>63</sup>Idem, “The Pauline Male-Female Relatedness,” 17.

<sup>64</sup>“Being created man-male and man-female means that in the oneness and equality of personhood there are inherent functional differences between being husband and wife, father and mother” (idem, “Man and Woman,” 4).

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 7–8, citing Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1947), 358.

<sup>66</sup>See Olsen, “The Divine Oneness,” 8–9. See also idem, “The Pauline Male-Female Relatedness,” 17, 39–40.

<sup>67</sup>Idem, “Man and Woman,” 9.

<sup>68</sup>Idem, “The Pauline Male-Female Relatedness,” 7.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 38–40.

<sup>70</sup>Idem, “The Divine Oneness,” 7.

and functions.<sup>71</sup> These feminine qualities of the Holy Spirit indicate that “[t]here is an analogy between the Holy Spirit and . . . women in their common nurturing role and the unique way in which they are the bearers and sustainers of creative powers.”<sup>72</sup> This is as far as he went in detailing this second analogy.

The significance of Olsen’s analogy cannot be commented on in detail here, for this would require an entire article of its own (or more). However, what is most important to note, for the purpose of this article, is that he, more extensively than any other Seventh-day Adventist author, employed the Trinity as a model for male-female relations. This was not to assert neo-subordinationism, but to confront notions of authority and subordination. He upheld equality with difference in the Trinity and in male-female relations.

#### Women in Ministry and Prove All Things in the Late 1990s

In 1998, an *ad hoc* committee at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary published the book *Women in Ministry*, which was egalitarian in nature and favorable toward women’s ordination.<sup>73</sup> Interestingly, the book contains one chapter by W. Larry Richards, who interpreted 1 Cor 11:3 as a prescriptive hierarchy and, thus, came quite close to advocating neo-subordinationism. In that chapter, Richards connected the Father-Son relationship to male-female relations in the following way: “Christ is under God’s authority, so the woman is under her husband’s authority.”<sup>74</sup> However, like Hasel and Dederen, he went no further to define the exact nature of the subordination of the Son to the Father, but he did note that the subordination of women to men in 1 Cor 11:2–16 is limited to the issue of authority (not ontology) and restricted to the context of marriage.<sup>75</sup> These limitations in male-female relations may suggest possible limitations in the Father-Son relationship.

Two years later, a group of complementarian Seventh-day Adventists, some of whom were scholars and pastors, prepared a book titled *Prove All Things* to counteract the influence of *Women in Ministry*.<sup>76</sup> *Prove All Things* contained two articles by Bacchiocchi and C. Raymond Holmes that utilized neo-subordinationism in the Trinity to argue for male headship and against women’s ordination.<sup>77</sup> The content of these articles is very similar to that found in Bacchiocchi’s *Women in the Church*.

<sup>71</sup>See idem, “The Divine Oneness,” 5–7.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>73</sup>Nancy Vyhmeister, ed., *Women in Ministry: Biblical & Historical Perspectives* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998)

<sup>74</sup>W. Larry Richards, “How Does a Woman Prophecy and Keep Silence at the Same Time?,” in *Women in Ministry: Biblical & Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 319.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 319, 322.

<sup>76</sup>Mercedes H. Dyer, ed., *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry* (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventists Affirm, 2000).

<sup>77</sup>See Samuele Bacchiocchi, “Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture,” in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry*, ed. Mercedes H. Dyer (Berrien

*The Theology of Ordination Study Committee (2012–2015)*

More recently, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists established a committee in 2012 called the Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC) to conduct an official denominational study of ordination and its implications for women, the findings of which would be reported at the 2015 General Conference Session in San Antonio, Texas.<sup>78</sup> Both egalitarian and complementarian Seventh-day Adventist scholars, administrators, pastors, and members from various disciplines and diverse cultural backgrounds presented papers arguing for their theological positions in the gender debate. Some of the complementarians introduced similar arguments of neo-subordinationism that Bacchiocchi used into these discussions.<sup>79</sup> A clear example is Edwin Reynolds's claim that "[t]here is no essential conflict between ontological equality and submission, for God and Christ are ontologically equal, yet Christ submits to His Father. The submission is functional, providing for

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Springs, MI: Adventists Affirm, 2000), 81; C. Raymond Holmes, "Does Paul Really Prohibit Women from Speaking in Church?," in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry*, ed. Mercedes H. Dyer (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventists Affirm, 2000), 172. See also Holmes's earlier work, *The Tip of an Iceberg: Biblical Authority, Biblical Interpretation, and the Ordination of Women in Ministry* (Wakefield, MI: POINTER, 1994), 137.

<sup>78</sup>ASTR, "Theology of Ordination," <https://www.adventistarchives.org/ordination>.

<sup>79</sup>See Stephen P. Bohr, "Issues Relating to the Ordination of Women with Special Emphasis on 1 Peter 2:9, 10 and Galatians 3:28" (paper presented at the July 2013 Meeting of the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Silver Spring, MD, 22–24 July 2013), 34–35; P. Gerard Damsteegt, "Headship, Gender, and Ordination in the Writings of Ellen G. White" (paper presented at the July 2013 Meeting of the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Silver Spring, MD, 22–24 July 2013), 12–15; idem et al., "Interpreting Scripture on the Ordination of Women" (paper presented at the January 2014 Meeting of the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Silver Spring, MD, 21–25 January 2014), 12, 16; John W. Peters, "Restoration of the Image of God: Headship and Submission" (paper presented at the January 2014 Meeting of the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Silver Spring, MD, 21–25 January 2014), 50–60; Paul S. Ratsara and Daniel K. Bediako, "Man and Woman in Genesis 1–3: Ontological Equality and Role Differentiation" (paper presented at the July 2013 Meeting of the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Silver Spring, MD, 22–24 July 2013), 1–65; Edwin Reynolds, "Biblical Hermeneutics and Headship in First Corinthians" (paper presented at the July 2013 Meeting of the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Silver Spring, MD, 22–24 July 2013), 22–23; Ingo Sorke, "Adam, Where Are You? On Gender Relations" (paper presented at the July 2013 Meeting of the Theology of Ordination Study Committee, Silver Spring, MD, 22–24 July 2013), 24. See also Bohr, "Reflections on Women's Ordination," *Secrets Unsealed Ministry Update* 2 (2012): 19; idem, "Reflections on Hermeneutics of Women's Ordination," *Secrets Unsealed Ministry Update* 3 (2014): 6–19 (he cites Grudem frequently here); Doug Batchelor, *The Trinity: Is it Biblical?* (Roseville, CA: Amazing Facts, 2003), 23–24; idem and Dwight Hall, *Strange Fire: Understanding the Hot Topic of Women's Ordination* (Coldwater, MI: Remnant, 2014), 41, 52–57 (they also cite Grudem frequently).

different role relationships; it does not express any ontological inequality.”<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, he stated that “the role relationships between Christ and His Father [are] extended from eternity past to eternity future.”<sup>81</sup> Thus, Reynolds’s view of the eternal, functional subordination of the Son to the Father was similar to those of both Bacchiocchi and Grudem.

*The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary’s Statement and the “Open Appeal”*

A final recent example of Seventh-day Adventists utilizing neo-subordinationist argumentation in the gender debate is found in the exchange that took place between two important documents that were published online less than a year before the commencement of the 2015 General Conference Session. The first was the statement, “On the Unique Headship of Christ in the Church,” produced by the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary,<sup>82</sup> in which male headship in the church was denounced<sup>83</sup> and neo-subordinationism in the Trinity was rejected.

Scripture affirms that the Son is eternally equal with the Father and the Spirit . . . Scripture also affirms the temporary voluntary functional subordination of Christ the Son in order to accomplish the salvation of humanity . . . The interpersonal relationships within the Trinity provide the ultimate model of

<sup>80</sup>Reynolds, “Biblical Hermeneutics and Headship,” 22. See also idem and Clinton Wahlen, “Women in Scripture and Headship,” *Spectrum* 41.4 (2013): 47–57.

<sup>81</sup>Reynolds, “Biblical Hermeneutics and Headship,” 23. See also Council of Adventist Pastors, which states, “Jesus’ submission to the Father extends into eternity, even after the sin problem has been resolved. . . . Not only does the Son’s submission to the Father extend into the future, it has always existed. . . . The principles revealed by the incarnation and death of God the Son—including the submission of the Son to the Father, even though both are co-eternal and both are God—have always been ‘the foundation of God’s throne’” (*The Adventist Ordination Crisis: Biblical Authority or Cultural Conformity?* [Spokane, WA: Council of Adventist Pastors, 2015], 53–54; emphasis original).

<sup>82</sup>See Andrew McChesney, “Andrews Theologians Approve Statement on Headship,” *Adventist News*, 22 August 2014, <http://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/andrews-theologians-approve-statement-on-church-leadership>.

<sup>83</sup>“According to Scripture, Christ is the only Head of the Church and the human members of Christ’s Church collectively (male and female) make up the body of Christ . . . . Neither Scripture nor the writings of Ellen White apply the language of headship in the Church to anyone other than Christ. Further, neither Scripture nor the writings of Ellen White endorse any transfer of the role of head in the home to roles within the Church body. . . . no other can be head of the Church. That is, headship in the Church is unique to Christ and non-transferable” (Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, “On the Unique Headship of Christ in the Church: A Statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary,” 9 September 2014, 4, [https://www.andrews.edu/sem/about/statements/9-19-14-updated\\_web\\_version-unique\\_headship\\_of\\_christ\\_final.pdf](https://www.andrews.edu/sem/about/statements/9-19-14-updated_web_version-unique_headship_of_christ_final.pdf)).



love and self-sacrifice for us. As such, they do not furnish a model for a top-down governmental structure for human leadership within the Church.<sup>84</sup>

A second document, an open response letter published on the *Adventist Review* website, was created by twenty-four persons who were faculty, alumni, students, and friends of the seminary with the purpose of appealing to the seminary to reconsider its statement. The letter utilized neo-subordinationist argumentation that is very similar to that of Knight and Grudem.

[I]n 1 Corinthians 11:3 Paul parallels the relationship male believers have to Christ with the relationship that Christ has to the Father, employing the concept of headship within the Godhead and between men and women in the church . . . Here the Bible teaches that headship and submission are principles of heaven belonging to the Godhead, and that on earth human beings have been created to reflect these principles because they bear the image of God. . . . [T]he headship of Christ and that of God the Father form the pattern for the headship of the man-woman relationship in the church.<sup>85</sup>

The neo-subordinationist thinking, as expressed here, is reaching beyond the authors of this open appeal letter and impacting many among the current membership of the denomination. Even so, the seminary responded to the appeal with a reaffirmation of their original statement, rejecting the appeal letter's neo-subordinationism and male headship.<sup>86</sup>

As can be seen by this brief history, Grudem's popularization of Knight's neo-subordinationism has gone a long way in penetrating the theology of many evangelical denominations, such as the Seventh-day Adventist Church by way of the writings of Bacchiocchi. This has led to a significant shift in the focus of the gender debate.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>"An Open Appeal from Faculty, Alumni, Students, and Friends of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary to Faculty of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Regarding the Recent Statement from the Seminary on the Unique Headship of Christ in the Church," 6 October 2014, 2, [http://www.adventistreview.org/assets/public/news/2014-10/242011032-Appeal-to-the-Seminary-Faculty\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.adventistreview.org/assets/public/news/2014-10/242011032-Appeal-to-the-Seminary-Faculty_1_.pdf). See Andrew McChesney, "Appeal Made Over Andrews Statement on Headship," *Adventist News*, 7 October 2014, <http://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/appeal-made-over-andrews-statement-on-headship>. A thorough comparative discourse analysis of the two documents can be found in Eun-Young Julia Kim, "A Comparative Discourse Analysis of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary's Statement 'On the Unique Headship of Christ in the Church' and the Response Statement, 'An Open Appeal,'" *AUSS* 55.1 (2017): 45–82. These two documents can also be found in print as Appendices B and C at the end of her article.

<sup>86</sup>"We, the faculty of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, respectfully reaffirm our original statement on the 'Unique Headship of Christ in the Church' which was the result of prayerful and responsible study of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy, and was voted by an overwhelming majority of the faculty in a duly called meeting" (*Adventist Review* Staff, "Statement from Andrews Seminary in Response to Headship Appeal," *Adventist News*, 13 October 2014, <http://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/statement-from-andrews-seminary-in-response-to-headship-appeal>).

### Shift of the Debate

The rapid spreading of this new neo-subordinationist view of the immanent Trinity, since its introduction into the gender debate by Knight, and its popularization by Grudem, has led many complementarians to use this foreign argumentation to prove the position that Scripture supports the permanent, functional subordination of women. This has shifted the gender debate radically from primarily arguing over gender issues to fierce debating over the nature of intra-Trinitarian relationships. Egalitarians have now found themselves forced to do more than advocate for the equality of women. Now they must also defend the equality of the persons of the Trinity.<sup>87</sup>

#### *The Theological Problems of Neo-Subordinationism*

Though neo-subordinationism postures to be a useful argument for the complementarian viewpoint in the gender debate, it carries insurmountable systematic problems for Christian theology. The rest of this article will argue that neo-subordinationism is problematic for Christian theology in four main areas: (1) its failure to adequately account for the whole of the canonical data in Scripture, (2) its inherent logical inconsistencies, (3) its inaccurate reporting of the history of Christian thought, and (4) its ramifications for the essential Christian doctrines of salvation and the character of God.

#### Inadequate Account of the Canonical Data in Scripture

Neo-subordinationist complementarians utilize and interpret a handful of biblical passages in a certain way to substantiate their supposed, eternal, functional subordination of the Son to the Father and the Holy Spirit to both the Father and the Son, and connect this intra-Trinitarian subordination to male-female relations in a one-to-one analogy. However, when one looks more carefully at the biblical texts that they employ, it is clear that questionable hermeneutics are in use. Whereas the most notable examples are addressed below, due to the limited scope of this article, a discussion entertaining every instance in which these complementarians use Scripture to argue for a neo-subordinationist viewpoint cannot be provided.<sup>88</sup> However, the key passages frequently used in neo-subordinationist

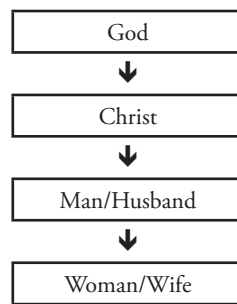
<sup>87</sup>For examples, see Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, "Equal in Being, Unequal in Role," in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, ed. Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, and Gordon D. Fee (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 301–333; Kevin Giles, "The Doctrine of the Trinity and Subordinationism," *ERT* 28.3 (2004): 270–284.

<sup>88</sup>Genesis 1:26–28 is of utmost importance in this debate on the Trinity and gender roles, but it will not be addressed here, since proper treatment of the passage would necessitate a more extensive discussion than what can be given here. Thus, this section of the article will focus on the New Testament. Some helpful discussion on this passage and its implications for other passages in the Old and New Testaments can be found in Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 15–80, 633–658; Charles Sherlock, *The Doctrine*

complementarian literature will be explored to demonstrate some of the hermeneutical problems therein.

*Is Neo-subordinationism Taught in 1 Corinthians 11:3?*

As mentioned earlier, the keynote passage that many complementarians use to suggest hierarchal order in the Trinity and in male-female relations is 1 Cor 11:3, which says, “But I want you to know that the head of every man/husband [παντὸς ἀνδρὸς] is Christ, [the] head of a woman/wife [γυναικὸς] is the man/husband [ὁ ἀνὴρ], and [the] head of Christ is God.”<sup>89</sup> There are some problems with the complementarian interpretation of this text. First, this passage does not seem to be ordered in a *hierarchal* manner from highest to lowest levels of perceived authority: God-Christ relationship, Christ-man relationship, and man-woman relationship (see **fig. 1**).<sup>90</sup>



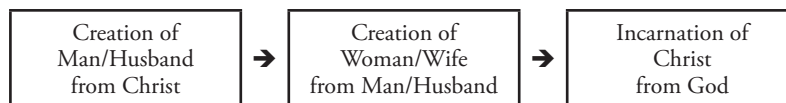
**Figure 1.** Hierarchical Reading of 1 Corinthians 11:3

*of Humanity*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 29–72.

<sup>89</sup>Translation supplied. Depending on their context, ἀνὴρ (*anēr*) can be translated as either “man” or “husband,” and γυνή (*gunē*) can be translated as either “woman” or “wife.”

<sup>90</sup>“[T]he order of the three parts of the headship statement [in 1 Cor 11:3] . . . is not conducive to creating a sense of a chain of command” (Stephen Bauer, “1 Corinthians 11 and Headship,” *Reflections on Scripture*, April 2014, 7, <http://webpages.charter.net/stephenbauer/4-1%20Cor%20and%20Headship.pdf>). It is interesting, however, to note that in order to make a neo-subordinationist argument that women should refrain from ministering in the office of pastor/elder, Gregg R. Allison completely changes the order of the text into his preferred hierarchical order: “The apostle draws an analogy between (1) the subordination of Jesus Christ, the Son, to God the Father, who is his head, or authority; (2) the subordination of every man to Christ, the Lord, who is their head, or authority; and (3) the subordination of a wife to her husband, who is her head, or authority” (*Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology, ed. John S. Feinberg [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012], 228). This rearrangement, of course, affects the intended meaning as it is given in the text.

Philip B. Payne explains that when “Paul wanted to make a hierarchical series elsewhere, he did so in a logical sequence.”<sup>91</sup> A notable example of this is found one chapter later in 1 Cor 12:28. Here, Paul plainly ranked and ordered the spiritual gifts that God appointed in the church from first to last. No such hierarchical ordering is found in 1 Cor 11:3. Rather, it appears that Paul ordered the relations *chronologically* as represented in **figure 2**: Christ-man relationship (Gen 1:26–27, 2:7), man-woman relationship (Gen 2:21–25), and God-Christ relationship (John 1:1–3, 14).



**Figure 2.** Chronological Reading of 1 Corinthians 11:3

The chronological ordering of this text points toward interpreting κεφαλή (*kephalē*) or “head” as meaning “source” instead of “authority” in the following way: “man came from Christ’s creative work, woman came from ‘the man,’ Christ came from God in the incarnation.”<sup>92</sup> This is further supported by Paul’s use of ἐκ or “from/out of” in 1 Cor 8:6 and 11:8, 12, where the source of woman being man and the source of man being Christ/God are predicated.<sup>93</sup>

However, even if Paul intended κεφαλή to mean “authority” rather than “source” (as the discussion of ἐξουσίαν [*exousian*] or “authority” in 1 Cor 11:10 may suggest), one should not interpret 1 Cor 11:3 as a support for neo-subordinationism, because the God-Christ relationship is a reference to Jesus’s life and ministry on earth. Gilbert Bilezikian argues, “[T]he passage nor its context contains any indication that this headship [of God to Christ] describes

<sup>91</sup>Philip B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul’s Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 129. See also Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says about a Woman’s Place in Church and Family*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 105–106.

<sup>92</sup>Payne, *Man and Woman*, 129. See also Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 106.

<sup>93</sup>New Testament scholar Teresa Reeve points out that κεφαλή has three primary clusters of metaphorical meanings—authority, source, and prominence/representation—and that each of these meanings is employed by Paul in various places throughout his epistles (“First Corinthians 11:2–16 and the Ordination of Women to Pastoral Ministry,” in *Women and Ordination: Biblical and Historical Studies*, ed. John W. Reeve [Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2015], 243–262). She identifies the uses of κεφαλή in Eph 4:15–16 and Col 2:18–19 as having the meaning of “source” (*ibid.*, 248–249). Thus, this metaphorical meaning was not foreign to Paul. Concerning the debated usage of κεφαλή particularly and all word usages generally, Reeve makes this very important exegetical and hermeneutical point that is often violated by those who demand that κεφαλή always—or at least in most cases—means “authority”: “it is essential to allow the context to point to the meaning of words in a specific usage, rather than insisting on interpreting every word in a rigidly unvarying way” (*ibid.*, 250).

an eternal state. In this text, Paul is referring to the relationship that prevails between God and Christ in the context of Christ's ministry to men and women within human history.<sup>94</sup> Undoubtedly, this passage exclusively addresses the context of the incarnation and cannot be understood in any eternal sense. Furthermore, though Michael F. Bird argues for the subordination of women to men, he observes that 1 Cor 11:3 nowhere grounds this relationship in the Trinity: "1 Cor 11:3 . . . does indicate that men and women should both respect their respective heads, but it does not imply that man is the head of women *because* God is the head of Christ."<sup>95</sup>

Finally, the reader must realize that 1 Cor 11:3 is a very difficult passage to interpret (especially due to the metaphorical use[s] of the controversial word κεφαλή) as evidenced by the diversity of interpretations and applications in scholarship and the lack of unanimity. Consequently, it is not fitting that neo-subordinationist complementarians should make this text the foundation of their major argument. Therefore, the complementarian usage of this text to support neo-subordinationism is unwarranted.<sup>96</sup>

#### *Does Johannine Literature Support Intra-Trinitarian Subordination?*

In addition to 1 Cor 11:3, neo-subordinationist complementarians have interpreted Jesus's statements in the Gospel of John, such as John 14:28, ". . . for the Father is greater than I;"<sup>97</sup> John 5:30, "I can do nothing on my own;" and others (e.g., John 4:34; 6:38; 14:31, etc.), as indicating that Jesus is eternally subordinated to the Father's authority.<sup>98</sup> The key hermeneutical problem therein is that these complementarians have employed a "proof-texting" methodology that has caused them to overlook the context in which Jesus made these statements—namely, the period of his incarnational ministry. He said these things in his assumed humanity. Hence, it cannot be inferred that these statements have an eternal quality. To suggest otherwise is

<sup>94</sup>Gilbert Bilezikian, "Hermeneutical Bungee-jumping: Subordination in the Godhead," *JETS* 40.1 (1997): 61.

<sup>95</sup>Bird, *Evangelical Theology*, 120; emphasis original.

<sup>96</sup>For more helpful discussion on this passage, see Bauer, "1 Corinthians 11 and Headship" 1–9; Gordon D. Fee, "Praying and Prophesying in the Assemblies: 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, ed. Ronald W. Pierce, Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, and Gordon D. Fee (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 142–160; Payne, *Man and Woman*, 113–140; Reeve, "First Corinthians 11:2–16," 243–262. These sources provide useful footnote references to both complementarian and egalitarian literature on this passage.

<sup>97</sup>All English Scripture citations are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), unless noted otherwise.

<sup>98</sup>See Wayne A. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism & Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than One Hundred Disputed Questions* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004; repr., Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 408. See the discussion in Craig S. Keener, "Is Subordination within the Trinity really Heresy? A Study of John 5:18 in Context," *TJ* 20 (1999): 39–51.

to deny the literary context of these passages.<sup>99</sup> Without this critical contextual insight, one can easily read these Johannine passages as asserting ontological inequality between the Father and the Son, which, of course, most, if not all, complementarians and egalitarians would be quick to deny. Additional clarity concerning these passages comes to light when they are balanced with other texts (e.g., John 5:18, 8:58, 10:30, 14:9, 17:5, and others), which emphasize Jesus's oneness and equality of divinity and glory with the Father prior to, during, and after the incarnation. Thus, Johannine passages that speak of the Son's subordination to the Father should be read *contextually*, as referring to the Son's unique experience in humanity during the time of his incarnation and should not be read as referring to *eternity*.<sup>100</sup>

*Is the Incarnation a Model for Intra-Trinitarian Subordination?*

Thirdly, neo-subordinationist complementarians claim that incarnation of Christ serves as a biblical example of his functional subordination and obedience to the Father's commands in eternity. Bird writes, "Because the New Testament speaks about Jesus' submission to his Father during the incarnation . . . and even postascension as God's vice-regent . . . , we have to propose that the Son's submission demonstrates something of the eternal relationships within the Godhead."<sup>101</sup> This too falls short of the scriptural evidence. The passage of Phil 2:6–11 makes it clear that Jesus was fully equal to God prior to and following the incarnation.<sup>102</sup> Additionally, the New

<sup>99</sup>Contextual analysis of the literary unit under study is a crucial step of the historical-grammatical method in the process of discovering the intended meaning in a text. Leaving out this step, can lead to theologically dangerous interpretations, such as the one being deconstructed in this article.

<sup>100</sup>See Augustine, *Trin.* 1.7.14; Jemison, *Christian Beliefs*, 87–88. Canale says, "The biblical idea of the subordination of God the Son to God the Father belongs, not to the inner structure of divine reality, but rather to the sphere of the accomplishment of the plan of salvation. . . . Thus, statements that imply the subordination of God the Son to God the Father are to be understood as a result of His incarnation, the expression of His obedience to the Father" ("Doctrine of God," 126"). For a New Testament perspective, see also Paul B. Petersen's discussions on John 17:3 and 14:28, in which he recognizes that Jesus speaks these words "from the perspective of His humanity" (*God in 3 Persons—In the New Testament*, Biblical Research Institute Release 11 [Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2015], 7–8, 17). Robert K. McIver also has a helpful article on Christology in the Gospel of John ("Some Aspects of the Christology of the Fourth Gospel Relevant to Contemporary Christological Controversy," in *Biblical and Theological Studies on the Trinity*, ed. Paul B. Petersen and Robert K. McIver [Cooranbong, NSW: Avondale Academic Press, 2014], 3–27).

<sup>101</sup>Bird, *Evangelical Theology*, 119–120. Why does one "have to propose" this?

<sup>102</sup>In Phil 2:6, the present active participle of ὑπάρχω (*huparchō*; "to exist") is used to indicate that the state in which the Son existed prior to the incarnation was that of being in the form of God. The following clause clarifies precisely that this state is equality with God (τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ [*to eivai isa theō*]) without qualification. Further clarification is given in Phil 2:7, where the present active participle of λαμβάνω (*lambanō*; "to take") is used. There the Son is said to empty himself by *taking* the form

Testament never describes the period of the Son's incarnation in terms of hierarchical subordination, but rather as voluntary, self-inflicted *functional* humiliation. Philippians 2:7–8 declare this explicitly: “. . . but [he] emptied *himself*, by taking the form of a servant, *being born* in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled *himself* by *becoming* obedient to the point of death.”<sup>103</sup> The reader should notice that the Father did not empty and humble him in this text; rather the Son emptied and humbled *himself*. Moreover, when this passage says that the Son was born in the likeness of humanity and “became” obedient, it implies that he was not in the likeness of humanity before and did not offer obedience prior to his self-humiliation in the incarnation.<sup>104</sup> Hebrews 5:8 suggests this very same idea: “*Although* he was a son, he *learned* obedience through what he suffered.”<sup>105</sup> Bilezikian pinpoints the significance of this text for this discussion:

Three remarks must be made about this text. (1) The fact that he learned obedience “although” he was a Son indicates that the nature of his Sonship excluded the necessity of obedience. He learned obedience despite the fact that he was a Son. (2) The fact that he “learned” obedience indicates that it was something new in his experience as Son. Obedience was not a mark of his eternal relation to the Father. He learned it for the purpose of ministry. (3) The fact that he learned obedience “through” what he suffered indicates that obedience was required in relation to his suffering and that it was not an eternal condition. Christ's experience of obedience was confined to his redemptive ministry as suffering servant.<sup>106</sup>

Therefore, Christ's incarnation is not an example of his eternal, functional subordination to the Father or of any sort of eternal intra-Trinitarian hierarchy

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of a servant or slave (δούλου [*doulou*]). Clearly, the Son did not function as a servant or slave of the Father prior to the self-emptying and self-humbling of the incarnation. See also John 17:5.

<sup>103</sup>Emphasis added. In Phil 2:7–8, Paul used the active aorist indicative form of both κενόω (*kenōō*; “to empty”) and ταπεινῶ (*tapeinōō*; “to humble”) to indicate that the Son (not the Father)—the nominative masculine singular relative pronoun ὃς (*hos*; “who”) in Phil 2:6, which refers back to Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ or “Christ Jesus” in Phil 2:5, is the obvious subject of those active verbs—was the one performing this action. To emphasize this further, the accusative reflexive pronoun ἑαυτὸν (*heauton*) is employed twice to function as the direct object of both ἐκένωσεν (*ekenōsen*) and ἐταπεινώσεν (*etapeinōsen*). Thus, the passage emphatically points to the Son's volition and action in the incarnation.

<sup>104</sup>Paul could have easily used the static verb of being, εἰμί (*eimi*; “to be”), to indicate that the Son's obedience was a state that was true of Christ prior to his incarnational self-emptying and self-humiliation. However, he utilized the dynamic verb of being, γίνομαι (*ginomai*; “to become”), to indicate a change process of the Son's state from not rendering obedience prior to the incarnation to becoming obedient at the time of his incarnational self-emptying and self-humiliation.

<sup>105</sup>Emphasis added. The concessive conjunction καίπερ (*kaiper*) or “although” is used to clarify the concessive nature of the participial clause ὄν υἱός (*ōn huios*; “being a son”).

<sup>106</sup>Bilezikian, “Hermeneutical Bungee-jumping,” 65.

that is essential to the Godhead. Rather, the incarnation was a profound *change* in the Son's experience!<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, the functional subordination—or humiliation rather—that he experienced during the incarnation was *voluntary* and *contextually limited* to that period of time, not extending to his existence prior to or after it. This indicates that there is no eternal, functional hierarchy between the Father and the Son, and that it is more biblically and theologically accurate to describe Christ's incarnation, not as subordination, but as *temporary, voluntary self-humiliation* that had the purpose of revealing the profound love of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—for the world (John 3:16).<sup>108</sup>

*Does Scripture Support a Unilateral Intra-Trinitarian Hierarchy?*

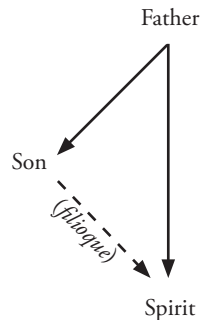
Finally, neo-subordinationist complementarians argue that an eternal, unilateral hierarchy in which the Son is *exclusively* subordinated to the Father and the Holy Spirit is *exclusively* subordinated to the Father and the Son (for those who accept the *filioque*) is presented in Scripture, as is represented in **figure 3** below.<sup>109</sup> This “one-way” hierarchy of intra-Trinitarian relationships is said to always function in this order in Scripture without exception. The same kind of unilateral, hierarchical relationship is said to be mirrored in relations between males and females. But these assertions crumble when the biblical data is analyzed carefully. This will be demonstrated by briefly evaluating (1) the triadic ordering patterns in the New Testament, (2) the economic activities of the three persons, and (3) the intra-Trinitarian relationships between the Father and the Son and between the Son and the Holy Spirit, as they are portrayed in Scripture.

<sup>107</sup>“The incarnation does make a difference. . . . Jesus' human nature counts. The incarnation simply does not mean that the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father is now lived out in human flesh as though the incarnation does not really make any relational difference. . . . In other words there is an asymmetry between the inner workings of the Trinity (*ad intra*) and the external workings (*ad extra*) of the Trinity. The latter cannot simply be appealed to in order to illuminate the former. . . . Rahner's Rule that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity must be applied with care, lest referent and meaning be confused” (Graham A. Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology, ed. John S. Feinberg [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007], 173).

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>109</sup>See Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 549; Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 249–250; idem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 47; Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 21. Some neo-subordinationist complementarians deny any mutual, functional subordination in the economic Trinity. For example, the Council of Adventist Pastors writes, “We do not read anywhere in the inspired writings about mutual submission among members of the Godhead” (*Adventist Ordination Crisis*, 62).





**Figure 3.** Unilateral Hierarchical Model of the Trinity

### No Consistent Trinitarian Ordering

First, there seems to be no consistent unilateral ordering pattern of the three persons of the Trinity in Scripture, such as the traditional ordering that is found in Matt 28:19, as well as in other passages—(1) the Father, (2) the Son, and (3) the Holy Spirit. A representative handful of primary Trinitarian texts in the New Testament is sufficient evidence to demonstrate this phenomenon (see **tab. 1**).<sup>110</sup>

<sup>110</sup>In his research on Trinitarian ordering in the New Testament, Rodrick K. Durst identifies “seventy-five triadic order passages” (*Reordering the Trinity: Six Movements of God in the New Testament* [Grand Rapids, Kregel, 2015], 68). For him, “the quantity of divine triadic instances is so profound and in such a diversity of orders that it constitutes a qualitative *matrix* of Trinitarian consciousness. Trinity is how the New Testament authors inadvertently thought and viewed reality” (ibid., 66; emphasis original). Other lists that illustrate the sheer quantity of Trinitarian passages in the New Testament can be found in Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 839–942; Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity in Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2004), 63–69; Arthur William Wainwright, *The Trinity in the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1962), 237–247. To understand this “matrix” of Trinitarian consciousness, Durst classifies each of the “triadic order” passages “according to the order of the persons named in the Trinity” (*Reordering the Trinity*, 68). He found that by “[u]sing this method, the seventy-five triadic instances found can be organized into six categories of orders, with all six used in surprisingly balanced percentages overall” (ibid.). See ibid., 69, for these percentages and 309–318 for a more comprehensive chart that includes all seventy-five Trinitarian passages. Finally, Durst analyzes each of these six patterns and determines contextually that each represents a special economic “movement” of God in the plan of redemption (ibid., 79–81; see chs. 5–10, where he discusses his contextual analysis of each Trinitarian passage in detail [ibid., 157–282]; see also Petersen, *God in 3 Persons*, 22). The key insight of Durst’s research for this present study is that this balanced variety of orderings of Trinitarian persons in the New Testament is evidence for there being no unilateral hierarchy in the immanent or economic Trinity. “There is no ranking of the three who are one God” (ibid.). See also Giles, *Jesus and the Father*, 109–110; Jemison, *Christian Beliefs*, 84n1.

**Table 1.** Ordering of the Trinitarian Persons in Scripture

Passage	Triadic Ordering		
Matt 28:19	τοῦ πατρὸς (Father)	τοῦ υἱοῦ (Son)	τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (Spirit)
Acts 2:38–39	Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Son)	τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (Spirit)	κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν (Father)
Rom 15:30	τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Son)	τοῦ πνεύματος (Spirit)	τὸν θεόν (Father)
1 Cor 12:4–6	τὸ . . . αὐτὸ πνεῦμα (Spirit)	ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος (Son)	ὁ . . . αὐτὸς θεός (Father)
2 Cor 13:14	τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Son)	τοῦ θεοῦ (Father)	τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (Spirit)
Eph 4:4–6	ἐν πνεῦμα (Spirit)	εἷς κύριος (Son)	εἷς θεὸς καὶ πατήρ (Father)
Heb 2:3–4	τοῦ κυρίου (Son)	τοῦ θεοῦ (Father)	πνεύματος ἁγίου (Spirit)
1 Pet 1:2	θεοῦ πατρός (Father)	ἁγιασμῶ πνεύματος (Spirit)	Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Son)
Jude 20–21	πνεύματι ἁγίῳ (Spirit)	θεοῦ (Father)	τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Son)
Rev 1:4–6	ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος (Father)	τῶν ἑπτὰ πνευμάτων (Spirit)	Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Son)

In 1 Pet 1:2 and Rev 1:4–6, the Father is listed first, like the traditional ordering, but the Holy Spirit is mentioned before the Son. However, Paul changed up the traditional ordering even more. In the benediction of 2 Cor 13:14, the Son appears first, followed by the Father, and then the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 2:3–4 bears this same ordering. Paul in Rom 15:30 and Luke (with Peter speaking) in Acts 2:38–39 also had the Son ordered first, but the Holy Spirit follows him directly, and the Father is mentioned lastly. In 1 Cor 12:4–6 and Eph 4:4–6, Paul completely reversed the traditional ordering by placing the Holy Spirit first, the Son second, and the Father last. Like the last two passages, Jude 20–21 has the Holy Spirit first, but the Father is listed second and the Son third. Thus, Scripture does not have a

It must be noted, however, as Giles does, that the “exact number of passages in each category can be disputed” (Giles, *Jesus and the Father: Modern Evangelicals Reinvent the Doctrine of the Trinity* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006], 109n71). This is because in “several cases members of the Godhead are mentioned more than once in the one context, and so where one begins and ends, the selected passage determines the answer” (ibid.).

unilateral, hierarchical ordering pattern of the Trinitarian persons.<sup>111</sup> Rather, all six mathematically possible orderings of the three persons of the Trinity are present in the New Testament with relatively balanced occurrences.<sup>112</sup>

#### Shared Economic Activities

Second, when one looks carefully at the economic interactions of the three persons in Scripture, it appears that the textual data significantly “blurs the lines” of the clearly defined, essential Trinitarian hierarchy proposed by neo-subordinationist complementarians. This is well illustrated by Millard J. Erickson, who points out that the Bible has a plethora of texts that speak of two or more of the persons of the Trinity functioning in the same redemptive role or accomplishing the same salvific task. He writes,

It is also interesting to observe that many of the functions of the Father that the [neo-subordinationist complementarians] consider an indication of his superiority are also attributed to the Son and in some cases to the Holy Spirit as well. The Son chooses persons to salvation (John 5:21; Matt. 11:27) as well as service (John 6:70), and the Spirit chooses to whom to give which gifts (1 Cor. 12:11). Both the Father (John 14:16, 26) and the Son (John 15:26; 16:7) send the Holy Spirit. The judgment will take place at the judgment seat of the Son (2 Cor. 5:10) and the Father (Rom. 14:10). The love from which nothing can separate the believer is both that of the Son (Rom. 8:35) and of the Father (v. 39), and no one can pluck the believer out of the hand of Jesus (John 10:28) or the hand of the Father (v. 29). The believer is indwelt by the Spirit (John 14:17), the Son (2 Cor. 13:5), and possibly even the Father (John 14:23; 1 Cor. 3:16). Both the Son and the Father give life (John 5:21), as does the Spirit (John 6:63).<sup>113</sup>

There is much more canonical data available than that which is given here by Erickson, which identifies overlapping roles and shared activities of the economic Trinity throughout salvation history. For example, in his book on the Holy Spirit, James M. Hamilton Jr. provides a near comprehensive table, which features many of the actions that are common to two or more of the persons of the Godhead in John’s gospel alone.<sup>114</sup> “Thus the position advocated by both Augustine and Calvin seems most helpful: the actions of any one of the persons of the Trinity are actually actions in which all three persons participate.”<sup>115</sup>

<sup>111</sup>Benjamin B. Warfield asks this important rhetorical question regarding the various Trinitarian ordering patterns: “If in [the Bible writers’] conviction the very essence of the doctrine of the Trinity was embodied in [the traditional] order, should we not anticipate that there should appear in their numerous allusions to the Trinity some suggestion of this conviction?” (*Biblical Foundations* [London: Tyndale, 1958], 108).

<sup>112</sup>See n110 in this article.

<sup>113</sup>Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 308. For a much fuller discussion, see idem, *Tampering with the Trinity?*, 123–132.

<sup>114</sup>James M. Hamilton Jr., *God’s Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old & New Testaments* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Academic, 2006), 56.

<sup>115</sup>Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 308. See Augustine, *Trin.* 1.5.8; 1.8.15–9.19;

### Intra-Trinitarian Reciprocity and Mutuality

Finally, there are several lines of biblical evidence that support *mutual* subordination among the persons of the Trinity in the plan of redemption, instead of a hierarchical order of authority and subordination.

*Father and Son.* First, consider the economic relationship of the Father and the Son. While there is, indeed, a temporary, voluntary, and functional humiliation of the Son during the incarnation, in which he offered obedience to the Father's will, there is also an equalizing temporary, functional "subordination" of the Father to the Son that Fernando L. Canale refers to as "delegation."<sup>116</sup> Notice the following three texts from the gospel of John: (1) John 3:35 states, "The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand;" (2) the first clause of John 13:3 reads, "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands;" and (3) the first part of John 16:15 says, "All that the Father has is mine." The Father has surrendered everything pertaining to the plan of redemption to the Son's authority, including the judgment, which determines the salvation of all (John 5:22). Canale points out that "[i]n delegating everything to the Son, the Father is binding Himself to the results of Christ's salvific mission."<sup>117</sup> This subordination or "delegation" of the Father is the precise counterpart of the Son's temporary subordination in the economic Trinity.

This mutual, functional subordination of the Father and Son is most apparent in the complex Pauline passage, 1 Cor 15:24–28. While neo-subordinationist complementarians have used this passage extensively to support functional subordination of the Son to the Father into the future of eternity,<sup>118</sup> it does not have to be read in a way that asserts such a future intra-Trinitarian reality. Instead, this passage seems to emphasize intra-Trinitarian *mutuality and reciprocity*.<sup>119</sup>

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*Tract. Ev. Jo.* 20.3; John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* 2.12.2. See also Ambrose, *Spir.* 1.3.40. *Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa* ("the works of the Trinity externally are indivisible"). Whereas the Trinitarian oneness that Augustine and Calvin asserted is shared, the metaphysical explanations with which they achieve this oneness seem to cause other theological problems. Additionally, the reality of Trinitarian oneness in action does not deny that Scripture teaches some functional differences among the three persons (e.g., only the Son became incarnated). However, these differences are clearly restricted to the time and operations of creation, redemption, and consummation, and, thus, they do not imply eternal, ontological and/or functional, unilateral subordination. For a helpful explanation of these functional differences, see Oden, *Classic Christianity*, 520–523.

<sup>116</sup>See Canale, "Doctrine of God," 126.

<sup>117</sup>*Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>118</sup>For examples, see Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 249; Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 549–559; Stephen D. Kovach, "Egalitarians Revamp Doctrine of the Trinity," *CBMW News* 2.1 (1996): 4. See also Keener, "Subordination within the Trinity," 47–49.

<sup>119</sup>Gulley also sees mutual Trinitarian submission present in this passage. He writes, "In love the Father makes all enemies subject to Christ (lifting the crucified Christ which draws all to Christ, and causes them to bow and proclaim His justice).

Martin F. Hanna helpfully maps out the mutual submission that takes place between the Father and the Son in this passage. First, “[t]he Father has put (*hupotasso*, submitted) all things under Christ’s feet (1 Cor 15:27).”<sup>120</sup> This is the “delegation” of the Father to the Son about which Canale writes.<sup>121</sup> The exception at the end of 1 Cor 15:27, that all except the Father is put under Christ’s feet, should be understood in the context of the passage’s theme: Christ’s victorious death and resurrection has resulted in the defeat of death and the grave for redeemed humanity, which will be realized fully in the eschatological resurrection. Thus, the exception clause of 1 Cor 15:27 communicates that the “submission of the Father [to the Son] is complete, but [that] He is not in submission under the feet of Christ as an enemy.”<sup>122</sup>

Second, Christ reciprocates and “submits ‘when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father’ (15:24). Therefore, ‘When all things are made subject (*hupotasso*) to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject (*hupotasso*) to Him who put (*hupotasso*) all things under Him, that God may be all in all’ (15:28).”<sup>123</sup> Now, what is the nature of this subordination of the Son and his kingdom to the Father at the end of time? This should not be understood as an *ontological* subordination. Rather, in context of the whole chapter, the Son subordinates himself as the second Adam, the representative and mediator of the kingdom of redeemed humanity. At the eschaton, he submits this redemptive *role* with its *functions* to the Father.<sup>124</sup> Nevertheless, this submission

Thus, in love, the Father makes Christ the head of all things in heaven and on earth which will continue in the age to come (eternity). The other reference [1 Cor 15:28] says that the Son subjects Himself to His Father, whom He loved to glorify when on earth. Here is an insight into the mutual magnification of each other, which is compatible with Trinitarian reciprocal love” (*God as Trinity*, 153). Reeve too sees this mutuality of subordination and suggests that this passage “must be balanced with the recognition that ‘all the fullness dwelt in Christ’ (Col 1:19) and the Father likewise places all things under Christ (Eph 1:22) and places Christ’s name above all names (Phil 2:9–10)” (“First Corinthians 11:2–16,” 250–251).

<sup>120</sup>Martin F. Hanna, “Men and Women in Church Order,” in *Women and Ordination: Biblical and Historical Studies*, ed. John W. Reeve (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2015), 299. See also the more compressed discussion in idem and Cindy Tutsch, eds., *Questions and Answers about Women’s Ordination* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2014), 33–34.

<sup>121</sup>Canale, “Doctrine of God,” 126.

<sup>122</sup>Hanna, “Men and Women,” 306n19.

<sup>123</sup>*Ibid.*, 299.

<sup>124</sup>John Calvin observed that this passage is “at first view at variance with what we read in various passages of Scripture respecting the eternity of Christ’s kingdom” (John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, 2 vols., trans. John Pringle [Edinburgh: T. Constable, 1848], 2:31). He asked, “For how will these things correspond—*Of his kingdom there will be no end*, (Dan 7:14, 27; Luke 1:33; 2 Pet 1:11) and *He himself shall be subjected?*” (*ibid.*, 2:31). He resolved this by stating, “We acknowledge, . . . , God as ruler, but it is in the face of the man Christ. But Christ will then restore the kingdom which he has received, that we may cleave wholly to God. Nor will he in this way resign the kingdom, but will transfer it

does not bring an end to the Son's kingdom, which is eternal (Ps 45:6; Dan 7:14, 27; Luke 1:33; Heb 1:8; 2 Pet 1:11). Rather, at that time, it will be shared in the Godhead forever (cf. Dan 2:44; Rev 1:6; 11:15).

Furthermore, it is helpful to understand this passage theologically in light of the reciprocal love of the Trinity and the mutual subordination and magnification between the Father and the Son that was already discussed. This harmonizes the apparent contradiction between the subjugation of everything under the Son in Eph 1:10, 20–23 so that he may “fill all in all” and the subjugation of everything under the Father in 1 Cor 15:24–28 so that “God may be all in all.” This eschatological act of the Son and the Father completes the plan of redemption and places all under the Godhead so that “the Father, Son, and Spirit as God will be all in all.”<sup>125</sup>

*Son and Spirit.* Also consider the economic relationship of the Son and the Holy Spirit. As previously noted, neo-subordinationist complementarians claim that the Holy Spirit offers a “one-way” eternal, functional subordination

in a manner from his humanity to his glorious divinity” (ibid., 2:32). To explain what Calvin meant by this, the editor of the commentary footnoted a comment by John Dick: “The mediatorial kingdom of Christ . . . will end when its design is accomplished; he will cease to exercise an authority which has no longer an object. When all the elect are converted by the truth, and, being collected into one body, are presented to the Father ‘a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;’ . . . nothing will remain to be done by the power with which our Saviour was invested at his ascension; and his work being finished, his commission will expire. . . . [S]o our Redeemer, who now sways the sceptre of the universe, will return his delegated power to him for whom he received it, and a new order of things will commence under which the dependence of men upon the Godhead will be immediate; and Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one in essence, counsel, and operation, will reign for ever over the inhabitants of heaven” (John Dick, *Lectures on Theology*, 2 vols. [n.p.: M. W. Dodd, 1850], 2:141). Thus, both Calvin and Dick connected this subordination of the Son to the Father to the consummation of Christ's mediatory ministry for humanity so that human beings can once again commune directly with all the persons of the Trinity. This makes God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—“all in all” (1 Cor 15:28). This particular discovery is dependent upon Gulley, *God as Trinity*, 154. See also Augustine, *Trin.* 1.8.15–10.21. Timothy J. Arena suggests a similar, but nuanced, explanation that focuses on Christ as the second Adam, stating that “the most plausible explanation for the subjection of [the Son in] verse 28 is that Christ is here subjecting Himself as the Representative of humanity, the ideal Man who reversed the curse of the Fall, gave life to the dead, and is restoring all things” (“Eternally Equal: A Historical, Biblical, and Theological Analysis of Intertrinitarian Relationships” [paper presented at the 68th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society and the 2016 Autumn Symposium of the Adventist Theological Society, San Antonio, TX, 16 November 2016], 34, <http://www.atsjats.org/site/1/docs/2016/papers-triune-god/Arena%20-%20Eternally%20Equal%20-%20ATS%202016.pdf>). In this way, the eschatological subordination of Christ can be read as not ontological, but merely functional. Thus, a key point of the passage is “Trinitarian mutuality” (ibid.). See also Petersen, *God in 3 Persons*, 17–18; Roland D. Meyer, “A Study of Paul's Concept of the Saving Act of 1 Corinthians 15:27–28,” in *Biblical and Theological Studies on the Trinity*, ed. Paul B. Petersen and Robert K. McIver (Cooranbong, NSW: Avondale Academic Press, 2014), 47–63.

<sup>125</sup>Gulley, *God as Trinity*, 154. See also Canale, “Doctrine of God,” 128.

to the Son (*filioque*), as well as to the Father. The New Testament shows that the Holy Spirit does indeed function in a servant role during the post-ascension and pre-*parousia* period. In this period, the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father (John 14:16–18) and by the Son (John 16:7), receives the truth content he is to give to the disciples from both the Son (John 16:13) and the Father (John 16:14–15), and is supposed to testify of and glorify the Son (John 15:26; 16:14). Thus, one could say that the Holy Spirit is functionally and temporarily subordinate to the Father and the Son during this period until his redemptive role is accomplished (though subordination does not need to be read into these passages).<sup>126</sup>

However, there is also much biblical evidence that shows that the Holy Spirit was not subordinated to the Son prior to this period of time, but that the inverse was true. As Graham A. Cole says, “So very often these days the Spirit is subordinated to Jesus in our thinking. But pre-Pentecost the incarnate Son is very much under the empowerment of the Spirit.”<sup>127</sup> In particular, during the incarnation, the Son is described as living obediently to and dependently upon the Holy Spirit. Norman R. Gulley comments, “As the Son of Man on earth, Christ was subordinate to the Holy Spirit who made His incarnation possible (Matt 1:18–20; Luke 1:35).”<sup>128</sup> After the Son’s anointing of the Holy Spirit to his earthly ministry at his baptism (Matt 3:16), he was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit, where the devil severely tempted him. In his account, Mark employs the strong term ἐκβάλλω (*ekballō*), meaning “to throw out,” to communicate the idea of the Holy Spirit “driving” or “compelling” the Son to enter into the wilderness (Mark 1:12). Furthermore, the Son’s earthly ministry was a perpetual submission to the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.<sup>129</sup> He was “full of the Holy Spirit” (Luke 4:1), who anointed and sent him to “proclaim the good news to the poor,” “to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18–19), and to “cast out demons” “by the Spirit of God” (Matt 12:28). Thus, when the Son declared in John 5:30, “I can do nothing on my own,” he was not only voluntarily, temporarily subordinate

<sup>126</sup>See Gulley, *God as Trinity*, 147–148.

<sup>127</sup>Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 150. Abraham Kuyper said, “. . . the Church has never sufficiently confessed the influence of the Holy Spirit exerted on the work of Christ. The general impression is that the work of the Holy Spirit begins when the work of the mediator on earth is finished, as tho [*sic*] until that time the Holy Spirit celebrated His divine day of rest. Yet the Scripture teaches us again and again that Christ performed His mediatorial work *controlled* and *impelled* by the Holy Spirit,” (*The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Henri De Vries [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975], 97, as cited in *ibid.*; emphasis added).

<sup>128</sup>Gulley, *God as Trinity*, 145.

<sup>129</sup>See Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 29–30, 34; *idem*, *The Holy Spirit: A Guide to Christian Theology, Basic Guides to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 6.

in function to the Father in his incarnated ministry but also implicitly to the Holy Spirit (John 5:19). Therefore, “Jesus lived under the authority of the Spirit. . . . There is a subordination of the Son to the Spirit as the Son carries out his messianic vocation.”<sup>130</sup> All of this reveals that there is “a story of successive subordinations” in the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>131</sup> “In the state of humiliation the Messiah is directed by the Spirit. In the state of glory, the vindicated Messiah directs the Spirit.”<sup>132</sup>

Furthermore, the Son is dependent on the Holy Spirit to represent him, to testify of and glorify him, and to make his presence available to his disciples during his absence between his ascension and second advent (John 14:16–19; 15:26; 16:5–8, 14). “So the Spirit is dependent upon Christ to be sent, to know what to say, and to bring glory to Christ. But at the same time Christ is dependent upon the Holy Spirit to be made spiritually present on earth while He ministers bodily in heaven’s sanctuary.”<sup>133</sup> Therefore, the submission between the Son and the Holy Spirit during the period from the ascension to the *parousia* is not *unilateral*, but *bilateral*, that is, *voluntarily* and *mutually* reciprocated between them.<sup>134</sup>

All of these representative scriptural evidences—and those not discussed due to present limitations—lead one to the conclusion that the functional subordination in the economic Trinity is qualified by being *mutually experienced* among all the persons of the Godhead and *temporally limited* to the time in which the plan of redemption is implemented for the saving of humanity (see **fig. 4**). It does not affect the ontological equality of the immanent Trinity because it is not an inner history of eternity past, nor is it carried into eternity future. Once the plan of redemption is fully consummated, the functional subordination in the economic Trinity is likewise ended (1 Cor 15:24–28).

Therefore, an exclusive, unilateral, eternal, functional subordination model of the Son to the Father and the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son is not reflected in Scripture. Moreover, the Bible nowhere connects this neo-subordinationist model of God to male-female relations. Neo-subordinationist complementarians have employed deficient hermeneutics that have provided an inadequate model for understanding the Trinity from Scripture for the purpose of buttressing their position of subordination of women to men in

<sup>130</sup>Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 171.

<sup>131</sup>*Ibid.*, 207.

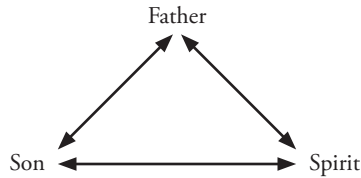
<sup>132</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup>Gulley, *God as Trinity*, 148.

<sup>134</sup>Aurelius Ambrosius (c. 340–397), or simply Ambrose, pointed out the presence of mutuality in the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit when he wrote, “The Spirit was upon Christ; and . . . as He sent the Spirit, so the Spirit sent the Son of God. For the Son of God says: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He hath anointed Me, He hath sent Me to preach the Gospel to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and sight to the blind’” (*Spir.* 3.1.1, as cited in Kärkkäinen, *The Holy Spirit*, 25).



the gender debate.<sup>135</sup> If they desire to maintain the subordination of women to men in the family, church, and society, they should attempt to do so on other biblical grounds, and not on the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>136</sup>



**Figure 4.** Mutual Covenantal Model of the Trinity

#### Logical Inconsistencies

In addition to the several biblical problems highlighted above, the argumentation of neo-subordinationist complementarians contains a number of inherent logical inconsistencies. Two of those will be discussed below.<sup>137</sup>

#### *Essential, Functional Subordination in Eternity Is Ontological Subordination*

One of these inconsistencies can be seen in the following statement by Bruce A. Ware, a representative complementarian scholar, who subscribes to neo-subordinationism:

An authority-submission structure marks the very nature of the eternal Being of the one who is three. . . . The Father possesses the place of supreme authority, and the Son is the eternal Son of the eternal Father. As such, the

<sup>135</sup>The complementarian, Robert Letham, recognizes the magnitude of grounding the subordination of women to men “ontologically in the being of God,” and how it strongly reinforces the complementarian position by essentially eliminating any past or future possibility for functional equality between men and women (“The Man-Woman Debate: Theological Comment,” *WTJ* 52 [1990]: 74). He writes, “Consequently, the headship of the man is not a punishment on the woman deriving from the fall and is not therefore something which redemption in Christ is designed to erode and to replace. It is not a past phenomenon which we have a duty and privilege to eradicate. Instead, it belongs to the future. Since it is grounded ultimately on the eternal relations of the Trinity and is native to man from creation, sin has not introduced it but spoiled and defaced it, while redemption is not to replace it but to fulfill and to purify it. It is to be embodied increasingly and progressively in this present age. . . . It will be perfected at the parousia” (ibid.).

<sup>136</sup>Woodrow W. Whidden II, Jerry Moon, and John W. Reeve agree: “We would therefore suggest that the Trinity provides no compelling clues, one way or the other, when it comes to the issue of what sort of leadership roles each gender should receive in the church. We must decide the issue on other biblical principles” (*The Trinity*, 277).

<sup>137</sup>For other logical and philosophical problems with neo-subordinationism, see Erickson, *Tampering with the Trinity?*, 169–194.

Son submits to the Father, just as the Father, as eternal Father of the eternal Son, exercises authority over the Son. And the Spirit submits to both the Father and the Son. This hierarchical structure of authority exists in the eternal Godhead even though it is also eternally true that each Person is fully equal to each other in their commonly possessed essence.<sup>138</sup>

Grudem also uses the idea of equal essence but eternally subordinate roles between the Father and the Son as the model for how husbands and wives are to relate: “Just as the Father and Son are equal in deity and equal in all their attributes, but different in role, so husband and wife are equal in personhood and value, but they are different in their roles God has given them. Just as God the Son is eternally subject to the authority of God the Father, so God has planned that wives be subject to the authority of their husbands.”<sup>139</sup>

Herein lies a major logical problem. The question must be asked of them: how can one who is permanently subordinate due to an intrinsic quality, be equal in essence to the one to whom he or she is subordinated? Adam Omelianchuk highlights this complementarian inconsistency in the context of male-female relations: “Woman is subordinated to man solely by virtue of her femaleness; this is the decisive factor that assigns her to a place of subordination. Although woman is said to be equal [to man] in her essential being, she is considered subordinate (unequal) because of her essential being. Such a contradictory conclusion is incoherent and denies that the Bible is logical.”<sup>140</sup> Applying Omelianchuk’s argument to the neo-subordinationist view of the Trinity identifies the same logical inconsistency. If the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father because of his intrinsic and essential quality of being the Son, then it follows that the Son is not equal in essence to the Father. Erickson’s reasoning leads him to the same conclusion:

If the Father’s authority over the Son and Spirit and the Son’s and Spirit’s subordination to the Father is a part of the very structure of the Trinity, so that it could not be otherwise, then this superiority and subordination are not contingent, but necessary, characteristics of each of the persons. That means that they are not accidental but essential qualities, and the essence of the Son is different from and inferior to that of the Father. In other words, invariable and inevitable differences in authority imply ontological, as well as functional, subordination.<sup>141</sup>

Thus, it is tautological reasoning to suggest that the Son is equal in essence yet eternally subordinate in function to the Father because he is ontologically

<sup>138</sup>Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, 21.

<sup>139</sup>Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 46.

<sup>140</sup>Adam Omelianchuk, “The Logic of Equality,” *Priscilla Papers* 22.4 (2008): 25.

<sup>141</sup>Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 308. Rebecca Merrill Groothuis echoes this same concern: “If Christ’s subordination is not limited to a specific project or function but characterizes his eternal relationship with God, then Christ is not merely functionally subordinate; he is by nature subordinate. Subordination is what he is, what he always has been, what he always will be. It is a matter of ontology (i.e., being), not merely of function” (*Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997], 57).

the Son, just as it is to say that women are equal in nature but permanently subordinate in function to men because of their ontological “femaleness.”<sup>142</sup> As Omelanchuk perceptively notes, such an assertion would imply that “the Bible is illogical.”<sup>143</sup>

*Where Is the Father-Son and Male-Female Connection?*

Additionally, finding an analogous connection between the Father-Son and male-female relationships in the first place is a questionable leap of logic<sup>144</sup> that is certainly not biblically warranted.<sup>145</sup> There seems to be no obvious or necessary parallel between the two. Even if the relationship between the Father and the Son correlated literalistically with human relationships, it would seem most obvious for it to be applied to those between father and son or parent and child, not between male and female. Giles identifies some additional logical issues involved with this analogy proposed by neo-subordinationist complementarians:

The Trinity is a threefold relationship; the man/woman relationship is twofold. In only appealing to the Father/Son relationship, this argument leaves out the Holy Spirit. He is forgotten. If God’s threefoldness were stressed, and it was agreed the Trinity was prescriptive of human relations, then threesomes would be the ideal! Furthermore, the Father/Son relationship is a picture of a male/male relationship, not a man/woman relationship. Most of us would not want to build on this observation! . . . It

<sup>142</sup>A tautology is a “needless or meaningless repetition in close succession of an idea, statement, or word” (“Tautology,” *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*, 2344).

<sup>143</sup>Omelanchuk, “The Logic of Equality,” 25.

<sup>144</sup>Paul C. Maxwell, who subscribes to neo-subordinationism, recognizes this by stating that “[t]he ‘analogy’ between Father-Son and husband-wife does not exactly fit. . . . The minimalistic dynamics of oneness and sameness among the relative persons do not carry over into marriage. The claim that there is an analogy between the Trinity and marriage emerges as a more seriously strange concept the more the specifics of the claim are considered. . . . The line of analogical continuity and discontinuity is drawn in such a convenient place [only a corresponding authority analogy] that it should put the clear lack of evidence, combined with the sheer hermeneutical gymnastics these appeals require, in a light of theological suspicion. There is radical discontinuity intertwined with the very terms claimed to have continuity in these sorts of appeals, which should at the very least give both camps [complementarians and egalitarians] pause to reflect on whether their appeals are biblical” (“Is There an Authority Analogy Between the Trinity and Marriage? Untangling Arguments of Subordination and Ontology in Egalitarian-Complementarian Discourse,” *JETS* 59.3 [2016]: 566).

<sup>145</sup>Cole perceptively points out that “when the NT writers want to inform the [social] consciences of their readers, they move from some aspect of the narrative of the gospel to do so. . . . NT writers emphasize imitating the historic Christ in his post-incarnation ministry, not in the inner life of the essential Trinity (e.g., Rom. 15:1–3; 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Pet. 2:21–23; 1 John 2:6)” (*He Who Gives Life*, 89). This is definitely true in the case of Eph 5:21–33. See n155 in this article.

seems the correlation between the Trinity and the man/woman relationship simply does not make sense.<sup>146</sup>

Some actually have gone as far as making the parallel between the Father-Son relationship and male-male relationships—a more logical, but biblically and theologically problematic, parallel. This has been accomplished by building on the analogy between the Trinity and sexual relations that the twentieth-century Roman Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar had established.<sup>147</sup> While Balthasar did not intend the sexualization of the Trinity (which he rejected), says neo-subordinationist complementarian Paul C. Maxwell, “in painting such a strong ontological analogy between human sexual difference and the Trinitarian relations, Balthasar may have opened an analogical door which he cannot shut.”<sup>148</sup> Indeed he has.

To illustrate what modern theologians have done with this open door, Maxwell uses an article by Gavin D’Costa in which D’Costa argues that “queer relationships are at the ontological heart of the Trinity” because of Balthasar’s “analogy between the Trinity and human gender relations.”<sup>149</sup> “Thus, queer relationships are divinely sanctioned as long as such relationships also represent an overflowing love to the wider community.”<sup>150</sup> In evaluation of D’Costa’s argument, Maxwell writes,

In a sense, it is difficult to refute D’Costa’s basic Trinitarian point: that if the Trinity is an archetype for sexual difference . . . , and if at its very heart is a male-male relationship between a Father and Son, then there seems to be a closer one-to-one analogy between a homosexual relationship than

<sup>146</sup>Kevin Giles, “CBE and the Doctrine of the Trinity,” *Priscilla Papers* 25.4 (2011): 21.

<sup>147</sup>According to Maxwell, Balthasar “wrote that the foundation for sexual difference between husband and wife should be located in the ontological relationship . . . between the Father and the Son” (“Authority Analogy?,” 566; Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 5 of *The Last Act*, trans. Graham Harrison [San Francisco: Ignatius, 1998], 91). See also Megan K. DeFranza, *Sex Difference in Christian Theology: Male, Female, and Intersex in the Image of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 201.

<sup>148</sup>Maxwell, “Authority Analogy?,” 567n69. See also Barbara K. Sain, “Through a Different Lens: Rethinking the Role of Sexual Difference in the Theology of Hans Urs Balthasar,” *Modern Theology* 25.1 (2009): 72, cited in Maxwell, “Authority Analogy?,” 567.

<sup>149</sup>See Gavin D’Costa, “Queer Trinity,” in *Queer Theology: Rethinking the Western Body*, ed. Gerard Loughlin (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 272–279, cited in Maxwell, “Authority Analogy?,” 567–568; DeFranza, *Sex Difference*, 201. Maxwell cites a few other examples (see *ibid.*, 567n72): Kathy Rudy, who additionally argues for communal sex, particularly that which takes place in some gay bars (“Where Two or More Are Gathered: Using Gay Communities as a Model for Christian Sexual Ethics,” *Theology and Sexuality* 2 [March 1996]: 81–99, cited in DeFranza, *Sex Difference*, 201); and Robert E. Gross (“Proleptic Sexual Love: God’s Promiscuity Reflected in Christian Polyamory,” *Theology and Sexuality* 11 [2004]: 52–63).

<sup>150</sup>Patrick S. Cheng, *Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology* (New York: Seabury Books, 2001), 56, as cited in DeFranza, *Sex Difference*, 202.

a heterosexual one. The point here is merely that an established authority analogy between the Trinity and marriage opens the door to granting an uncomfortable amount of theological legitimacy for queer theology.<sup>151</sup>

Indeed, modern theologians have opened the door of sexual ethics even more widely with this Trinity and human gender analogy in order to support incest, *ménage à trois*, polygamy, and communal sex, in addition to homosexuality.<sup>152</sup> Thus, “[b]y sexualizing . . . the relationality between the members of the Trinity, [neo-subordinationist complementarians] are inadvertently weakening the very sexual ethic they are working so hard to defend.”<sup>153</sup> This is not a door that neo-subordinationist complementarians would want to leave open!<sup>154</sup>

Moreover, the connection of the Son’s incarnational subordination to the Father with male-female relations entirely misses a crucial point regarding Christ’s obedience to the Father. In John 15:10, Jesus compared the obedience and love of his disciples to his commands with his own obedience and love to the Father during his incarnation. Furthermore, 1 John 2:6 states explicitly that “whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.” In other words, Jesus’s ethical life of incarnational obedience to

<sup>151</sup>Maxwell, “Authority Analogy?,” 568.

<sup>152</sup>DeFranza, *Sex Difference*, 186–239. She highlights Marilyn McCord Adams, an Episcopal priest and philosopher, who makes a case for *ménage à trois*, polygamy, incest, and homosexuality, building it on the analogy of the Trinity and human gender. See *ibid.*, 200; Marilyn McCord Adams, “Trinitarian Friendship: Same-Gender Models of Godly Love in Richard of St. Victor and Aelred of Rievaulx,” in *Theology and Sexuality: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Eugene F. Rogers Jr. (London: Blackwell, 2002), 352. Adams notes, however, that incest has a problem, namely, “inequality—the imposition on a minor who is unable to grant consent. But, given the equality and coeternality of Father and Son, incest in the Trinity does not suffer from the same weakness” (DeFranza, *Sex Difference*, 200). See Adams, “Trinitarian Friendship,” 335.

<sup>153</sup>DeFranza, *Sex Difference*, 186. She makes this comment regarding Stanley Grenz’s and John Paul II’s social models of the image of God and human sexuality, but it equally applies to the Trinity and human gender model that neo-subordinationist complementarians assert.

<sup>154</sup>Some complementarians have claimed that the egalitarian view of male-female relations opens the door for the acceptance of homosexuality and transgenderism in the Christian church. For examples, see Council of Adventist Pastors, *The Adventist Ordination Crisis*, 111–114; Koranteng-Pipim, “Homosexuality and the Church,” in *Here We Stand: Evaluating New Trends in the Church*, ed. Samuel Koranteng-Pipim (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventists Affirm, 2005), 535–563; Wellesley Muir, *Daughters of Inheritance: A New Look at Women’s Ordination* (Roseville, CA: Amazing Facts, 2010), 65–88. As has been demonstrated in this article, it is the neo-subordinationist hermeneutic, which connects male-female relations to the Father-Son relationship in the Trinity to support complementarian gender roles, that, in reality, has provided a fruitful foundation for queer, feminist, and other theologians to build their cases for the adoption of a plethora of alternate sexual practices to monogamous, heterosexual marriage—including homosexuality—in the Christian church.

God is a biblical call for *all* who claim to be his disciples to follow in his footsteps. Stanley J. Grenz with Denise Muir Kjesbo rightly point out that

the complementarian argument misunderstands [this] intent of Christ's example. Nowhere does the New Testament assert that the Son's obedience to the Father is a model of how one gender (women) should relate to the other (men). . . . Jesus' obedience to the One he called "Abba" serves as the model for how all human beings—male or female—should live in obedience to God.<sup>155</sup>

The biblical call to follow the moral example of Jesus's obedience during his incarnation is given to *all* Christians, whether male or female.<sup>156</sup> Therefore, a connection between the Father-Son relationship and male-female relations is logically inconsistent and nowhere asserted in Scripture; as such, it should not be utilized for support by either side in the gender debate.

#### Inaccurate Reporting of the Development of Christian Thought

Besides the biblical and logical problems with neo-subordinationism, the argumentation has little *orthodox* support in the historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity in Christian thought. Grudem and other neo-subordinationist complementarians claim that the "Christian church throughout history has affirmed both the subordination of the Son to the Father with respect to their roles, and the equality of the Son with the Father with respect to their being."<sup>157</sup> However, this is not an accurate description of orthodox Christian thought throughout the ages. Thus, it is important to analyze this claim by examining the thinking of early Christians on the Trinity. A few key related issues will be highlighted in this examination, but the limited scope of this article does not allow for a complete survey of the Christian tradition throughout church history.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>155</sup>Stanley J. Grenz with Denise Muir Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 153. See also Groothuis, *Good News for Women*, 57. In fact, when Paul desired to ground theologically his call for wives to respect and submit to their own husbands and for husbands to love, cherish, and sacrifice themselves for their own wives, he did not use an analogy of intra-Trinitarian relations. Rather, he did so by making an analogy between the Christ-church relation (a christological-ecclesiological, not Trinitarian, analogy) and the wife-husband relation. See Eph 5:22–31. "[T]he Bible only compares the husband's leadership role to that of Christ's in the church, not to that of the Father over the Son during the incarnation," (Whidden, Moon, and Reeve, *The Trinity*, 276).

<sup>156</sup>"I do not believe that the relation of the Son to the Father is directly relevant to the current gender role debate at all—except as a model to all Christians in our loving submission to God and to one another" (Keener, "Subordination within the Trinity," 50).

<sup>157</sup>Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 415. See Kovach, "Egalitarians Revamp Doctrine," 1.

<sup>158</sup>For a more thorough accounting of orthodox Christian tradition throughout church history, see Kevin Giles, *The Trinity & Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God and the Contemporary Gender Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity

*Proposed Theological Models for the Triune God*

The primary Trinitarian, christological, and pneumatological controversies in church history arose in the early centuries CE when the first Christians “were forced to rethink the doctrine of God they had inherited from Judaism because of Jesus’ ministry, death and resurrection and the subsequent giving of the Holy Spirit” at Pentecost.<sup>159</sup> Specifically, “[t]he more emphatic the church became that Christ was God, the more it came under pressure to clarify how Christ related to God.”<sup>160</sup> Early Christians felt a need to formulate a logical model that affirmed both the uniqueness and oneness of God (Deut 4:35, 35; 6:4; Isa 42:8; 43:11; 45:5; 46:9) and the full, equal deity of Jesus (John 1:1–3; Col 1:15–20) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7–15; Acts 5:3–4) with the Father.

Monarchianism, meaning “sole sovereignty,” was one of the first basic models proposed. The dynamic monarchianism (built on adoptionism) of Theodotus of Byzantium (who came to Rome around 190 CE) asserted that God the Father was the only supreme, eternal, self-existent God, and that Jesus “was an ordinary man, although a completely virtuous one,” who became Spirit-filled at his baptism to perform powerful miracles of God. Some of his followers believed that Jesus became divine at one point.<sup>161</sup> Sabellius (fl. c. 217–c. 220) proposed modalistic monarchianism, which “denied all distinctions within the Godhead . . . and affirmed that the Son and the Spirit were simply modes in which God appeared.”<sup>162</sup> Christianity did not adopt Theodotus’s or Sabellius’s versions of monarchianism for the obvious reason that the first rejected the full divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the second denied their distinct personhood from the Father.

Subordinationism was another basic model proposed to explain the Trinity. It excluded modalism by affirming the full personhood of the Son and the Spirit, but it “implied that the Son and the Spirit were secondary and tertiary subordinates to the one true God” ontologically.<sup>163</sup>

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Press, 2002), 21–117; Hedberg, *Women, Men, and the Trinity*, 25–48; Erickson, *Tampering with the Trinity?*, 139–168; Gary W. Deddo, “The Trinity and Gender: Theological Reflections on the Differences of Divine and Human Persons,” *Priscilla Papers* 22.4 (2008): 4–13.

<sup>159</sup>Giles, “Trinity and Subordinationism,” 272.

<sup>160</sup>Alister E. McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (Maiden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), 61, as cited in Fortin, “The Trinity, and Adventism,” 6.

<sup>161</sup>Gulley, *God as Trinity*, 83; Canale, “Doctrine of God,” 142–143; Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 303.

<sup>162</sup>Justo L. González, *A History of Christian Thought*, rev. ed., 3 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), 1:145. Noetus of Smyrna (c. 200 CE), Epigonus, and Praxeas also taught modalism in the second and third centuries, though in a less complete and sophisticated form. See Canale, “Doctrine of God,” 142–143; Gulley, *God as Trinity*, 83; Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 304.

<sup>163</sup>Giles, “Trinity and Subordinationism,” 273.

Arius (250 or 256–336 CE) is most well known for the fourth-century controversy he agitated by his extreme subordinationist theism, which asserted that since the Son is not an emanation of, consubstantial with, or a being similar to the Father, he must out of necessity have a beginning.<sup>164</sup> Thus, there was a time when he did not exist.

Contrary to Arius, Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 298–373 CE); the Cappadocian Fathers, Basil the Great (330–379 CE), Gregory of Nyssa (c. 331–395 CE), and Gregory of Nazianzus (329–390 CE); Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE); and others rigorously upheld the Trinitarian formula, μία οὐσία, τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις (*mia ousia, treis hypostaseis*; “one nature, three persons”), meaning that the Godhead was composed of one divine essence/substance/being (Greek: οὐσία [*ousia*]; Latin: *substantia* or *essentia*) in which three divine *hypostases* or persons (Greek: ὑποστάσεις [*hypostaseis*]; Latin: *personae* or *substantiae*) share equally.<sup>165</sup> They asserted that “the being/nature/essence and the works/operations/functions of the Father and the Son are one. The three divine persons are one in being and one in action. *Who they are and what they do* cannot be separated.”<sup>166</sup>

#### *The Church’s Theological Formulation for the Trinity*

In response to the controversies caused by these competing models of the Trinity (all of which are not spelled out here for the sake of brevity), the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE was called by emperor Constantine. Out of that council came a Christian creed, which was refined and expanded in 381 CE at the Council of Constantinople and reaffirmed at the Councils of Ephesus (431 CE) and Chalcedon (451 CE). It excluded both monarchianism, Arian subordinationism, and tritheism by championing the position of Athanasius that God is ὁμοούσιος (*homoousios*; Latin: *consubstantialis*)<sup>167</sup> or one “same nature” in three ὑποστάσεις or “persons.” The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not merely ὁμοίος (*homoios*) or “similar,” ὁμοιούσιος (*homoiousios*) or “similar in nature,” and certainly not ἀνόμοιος (*anomoios*) or “unsimilar” and ἕτεροούσιος (*heteroousios*)<sup>168</sup> or “different in nature.” The Son, as well as the Holy Spirit, is “of one substance with the Father.”<sup>169</sup> Thus, the basic teaching was that

<sup>164</sup>González, *History of Christian Thought*, 1:262–263.

<sup>165</sup>For an example, see Augustine, *Trin.* 1.4.7–6.13; 5.8.10. See also the discussion in Whidden, Moon, and Reeve, *The Trinity*, 138–156.

<sup>166</sup>Giles, “Trinity and Subordinationism,” 275; emphasis original.

<sup>167</sup>This is similar to the use of the “homo-” prefix in the English terms “homogeneous,” meaning “of the same kind,” and “homosexual,” meaning “of the same sex.”

<sup>168</sup>This is similar to the use of the “hetero-” prefix in the English terms “heterogeneous,” meaning “of a different kind,” and “heterosexual,” meaning “of a different sex.”

<sup>169</sup>John Norman Davidson Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (London: Longmans, Green, 1950), 215–216, as cited in González, *History of Christian Thought*, 1:267.



there is one living true God; the one true God is manifested as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit; the difference between them is only in regard to their origin as expressed in terms of relations: relationally, the Father is ungenerated [*sic*], the Son is generated, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father[;] the one God of three Persons is an absolute unity of being, consciousness, and will.<sup>170</sup>

*The Problem with the Eternal Generation of the Son  
and the Eternal Procession of the Spirit*

There was at least one biblical problem, however, with this early creedal formulation. It enshrined the eternal<sup>171</sup> begetting or generation of the Son<sup>172</sup>—based on a misunderstanding of the Greek words μονογενής (*monogenēs*) as “only-begotten” instead of “one-and-only” or “only unique” (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9)<sup>173</sup> and πρωτότοκος (*prōtotokos*) as “firstborn” instead of “supreme/pre eminent one” (Rom 8:29; Col 1:15, 18; Heb 1:6; Rev 1:5)<sup>174</sup>—as well as the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit.<sup>175</sup> Thus, the persons of

<sup>170</sup>Donkor, *God in 3 Persons*, 12. This is a summary that he provides of the orthodox Christian doctrine of the Trinity, with which he disagrees.

<sup>171</sup>The term “eternal” in this context of the Son’s generation and the Holy Spirit’s procession refers to the Greek metaphysical concept of timelessness, meaning outside of time or incompatibility with time (no succession of past, present, and future). See Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 29.3.

<sup>172</sup>The creed reads, “[We believe] in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only [Μονογενῆ] Son of God, begotten [γεννηθέντα] from the Father before all ages, [God from God,] Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten [γεννηθέντα], not made, of one Being [ὁμοούσιον] with the Father, through whom all things were made” (Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles Arand et al. [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000], 22–23). “The eternal generation of the Son is commonly defined to be an eternal personal act of the Father, wherein, by necessity of nature, not by choice of will, he generates the person (not the essence) of the Son, by communicating to him the whole indivisible substance of the Godhead, without division, alienation, or change, so that the Son is the express image of his Father’s person, and eternally continues, not from the Father, but in the Father, and the Father in the Son” (Archibald Alexander Hodge, *Outlines of Theology: Rewritten and Enlarged* [New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1878], 182). See also Origen, *Princ.* 1.2.11.

<sup>173</sup>See discussion in Petersen, *God in 3 Persons*, 14–15; idem, “Jesus—The ‘One and Only,’ or ‘Only Begotten’: The Meaning,” in *Biblical and Theological Studies on the Trinity*, ed. Paul B. Petersen and Robert K. McIver (Cooranbong, NSW: Avondale Academic Press, 2014), 29–34.

<sup>174</sup>See Gulley, *God as Trinity*, 121–129; Ekkehardt Mueller, “The Firstborn in Colossians 1:15,” in *Biblical and Theological Studies on the Trinity*, ed. Paul B. Petersen and Robert K. McIver (Cooranbong, NSW: Avondale Academic Press, 2014), 65–86.

<sup>175</sup>The creed reads, “[We believe] in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Life-giver, who proceeds [ἐκπορευόμενον] from the Father [and the Son], who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets”

the Trinity were distinguished not by authority, role, or function (as neo-subordinationist complementarians suggest), but by eternal derivation and causality—the Father is eternally ungenerated, the Son is eternally generated from the Father, and the Holy Spirit is eternally spirated (proceeds) from the Father and the Son (*filioque*).<sup>176</sup> It is important to understand that this distinction was not intended to detract in any way from the full equality of the Trinitarian persons.<sup>177</sup> Rather, it was purposed to explain God’s “threeness” in “oneness” and to defend it against monarchianism, Arian subordinationism, and tritheism. Thus, the general historical trajectory of orthodox Christianity was to fight against notions of subordinationism.

Nevertheless, the problematic formulation of Trinitarian derivation left the door open for some Christian thinkers to assert some form of subordination in the Trinity. This is due to the fact that in current logic the idea of origination—whether or not it is eternal—seems to indicate some kind of subordination.<sup>178</sup> Interestingly, some modern-day complementarians reject the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son in their published

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(Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 23). The eternal procession of the Holy Spirit “designate[s] the relation which the third person sustains to the first and second, wherein by an eternal and necessary, i.e., not voluntary, act of the Father and the Son [*filioque*], their whole identical divine essence, without alienation, division, or change, is communicated to the Holy Ghost” (Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, 189–190).

<sup>176</sup>Nonna Verna Harrison demonstrates this in the writings of Gregory of Nyssa. See “Gregory of Nyssa on Knowing the Trinity,” in *The Holy Trinity in the Life of the Church*, ed. Khaled Anatolios, Holy Cross Studies in Patristic Theology and History (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 55–61.

<sup>177</sup>See Gregory of Nazianzus, *Ors.* 29.12–17; 40.43; 42.15. Christopher A. Beeley demonstrates that Gregory of Nazianzus never saw a contradiction between the monarchy of the Father as the cause of the Son (eternal generation) and the Holy Spirit (eternal procession) and the full equality of the three persons. See *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God: In Your Light We Shall See Light*, OSHT, ed. David C. Steinmetz (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 201–217.

<sup>178</sup>Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 307–308. Gulley points out that “the Nicene concept of a shared nature (*homoousion*) between Father and Son should have been sufficient to accomplish” the defeat of Arian subordinationism (*God as Trinity*, 100). But this ultimately failed due to the assertion of the eternal generation of the Son from the Father, which “placed the Son in a subservient position to the Father, which was the same in kind (not degree) as the position of Arius (Son created by the Father in eternity)” (*ibid.*). Canale agrees that eternal generation and procession imply subordination: “Unfortunately a subtle form of Monarchianism and ontological subordinationism is preserved when the differences of the persons are explained metaphysically by recourse to the ideas of generation and procession (“Doctrine of God,” 144). See also Remwil R. Tornalejo, “Reexamining the Eternal Generation of the Son and Its Implications to the Doctrine of the Trinity” (paper presented at the 68th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society and the 2016 Autumn Symposium of the Adventist Theological Society, San Antonio, TX, 16 November 2016), <http://www.atsjats.org/site/1/docs/2016/papers-triune-god/Tornalejo%20-%20Reexamining%20the%20Eternal%20Generation%20of%20the%20Son%20-%20ATS%202016.pdf>.

writings, yet maintain neo-subordinationism.<sup>179</sup> In order to support their contemporary belief in neo-subordinationism without eternal generation, these complementarians turn to early Christian theologians, even though those theologians maintained eternal generation without subordination.<sup>180</sup> This appears to be a case of “grasping” for historical authorization.<sup>181</sup>

<sup>179</sup>See Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, 162n3; Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 254n38, 1233–1234.

<sup>180</sup>Very recently, during a panel discussion at the 68th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society (2016) in San Antonio, Texas, both Grudem and Ware verbally changed their position on the eternal generation of the Son due to pressures from the evangelical community. During their surprising announcement, they explained that they now embrace the eternal generation of the Son but are unclear as to what it means in particular. Nevertheless, it is a teaching included in the early Christian creeds, and so they have accepted it as a valid Trinitarian conception. Even so, they misuse the original intention of eternal generation, which was to defend against Trinitarian subordination, not support it.

<sup>181</sup>See Erickson’s discussion in *Tampering with the Trinity?*, 179–184. Curiously, Giles, an egalitarian who has written much to oppose neo-subordinationism, is supportive of eternal generation of the Son in spite of the modern logic pointing toward subordination (see his defense of this doctrine in *The Eternal Generation of the Son: Maintaining Orthodoxy in Trinitarian Theology* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012]), but he asserts that it excludes the idea of subordination, as did early Christian theologians (*Jesus and the Father*, 239–240). He asserts that eternal generation serves merely to differentiate the Father and the Son in their intimate, loving, and coequal relationship.

However, it seems that even if the Son is said to be generated/begotten timelessly or eternally, the logical implication of subordination in the concept of derivation or origination cannot be avoided for modern thinkers. Therefore, it seems difficult to uphold the full ontological and functional equality of the Father and Son and yet continue to maintain eternal generation and eternal procession.

Furthermore, though upheld in the Christian creeds, this teaching of derivation in the Trinity seems foreign to Scripture. Thankfully, Giles acknowledges this to some degree. He says that eternal generation is “not directly taught in Scripture,” even though he still sees it as implied there. He goes on to state that the “eternal procession of the Spirit does not seem to be mentioned at all in Scripture” (*ibid.*, 239n166). In this case, Grudem’s statement that the idea of eternal generation should be taken out of modern theological conceptions of intra-Trinitarian relationships is shared (*Systematic Theology*, 1234). Erickson agrees: “It appears to me that the concept of eternal generation does not have biblical warrant and does not make sense philosophically. As such, we should eliminate it from theological discussions of the Trinity” (*Tampering with the Trinity?*, 251). Canale also agrees: “There is . . . no ground within the biblical understanding of the Godhead for the idea of a generation of the Son from the Father” (“Doctrine of God,” 126). Thus, “[t]he procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son (John 15:26; 14:16, 26; Acts 2:33) is to be understood not in an ontological sense, but rather in a historical sense as the inner divine activity involved in sending the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as the representative of Christ’s presence, sacrifice, and ministry. In other words, the procession of the Spirit does not refer to an inner process in the makeup of the trinitarian being as classical theology came to believe” (*ibid.*, 132).

*The Main Thrust of Christian Thought through History*

A careful survey of Christian history will likely lead one to similar conclusions as those expressed here by Nancy Hedberg:

Certainly, over the years, there have been theologians who have supported functional subordination or whose views are so ambiguous it is impossible to discern their perspective on this topic. However . . . in examining the thinking of prominent theologians such as Augustine, Athanasius, Basil, John of Damascus, Warfield, Calvin, Rahner, and Barth, I have detected far more emphasis on equality of both essence and function than on functional subordination. It is difficult . . . to see how hierarchists can claim that the timeless, orthodox Christian view is that the Son is functionally subordinate to the Father.<sup>182</sup>

Erickson comes to similar conclusions, stating that “[i]t is difficult to contend that throughout its history the church has taught the eternal functional subordination of the Son (and the Spirit) to the Father.”<sup>183</sup> Nevertheless, as helpful as historical considerations may be in understanding the development of Christian thinking on the Trinity over time, in the end, these historical considerations are not authoritatively dogmatic evidences for supporting one view over the other; only Scripture should take that role. The truth is that both sides may be able to find some historical support for their differing perspectives. Even so, it is fair to say that neo-subordinationist complementarians have exaggerated the orthodox historical support for their neo-subordinationism, and that they certainly have no historical support earlier than the late twentieth century (as was shown earlier) for making an analogy of authority and subordination between the Father-Son relationship and male-female relations.

#### Ramifications for Soteriology and the Character of God

Finally, neo-subordinationism has several negative implications for Christian theology. Only a few of these can be assessed here due to present constraints. To begin this discussion, it is important to realize the profound harm done to Christian theology by neo-subordinationism that Bilezikian identifies when he says that “[a] low Christology results in a weak soteriology.”<sup>184</sup> If the implications of neo-subordinationism are advanced, they inevitably lower Christ functionally, and, arguably, ontologically (as discussed above), to the position of a mere subordinate of the Father. This lowering of God the Son logically leads to grave systematic consequences for the doctrine of salvation and the character of God, that is if one is being consistent and coherent. This is apparent in the following ways.

Firstly, Scripture teaches that only God himself could truly redeem the world from sin as the needed perfect and blameless sacrifice, since “all have

<sup>182</sup>Nancy Hedberg, “One Essence, One Goodness, One Power,” *Priscilla Papers* 25.4 (2011): 9.

<sup>183</sup>Erickson, *Tampering with the Trinity?*, 167.

<sup>184</sup>Bilezikian, “Hermeneutical Bungee-jumping,” 66.

sinned” (Rom 3:23) and since “all . . . like sheep have gone astray” (Isa 53:6). If Jesus is lowered in any way from full equality with the Father, his eligibility to serve as Sacrifice and Savior for the human race begins to crumble. Because “the redemptive power of the cross derives from the fact that the One who died on it was fully God,” Christ’s death on the cross is undermined and minimized when Christ is made merely a subordinate of the Father.<sup>185</sup> God himself must be fully and equally in Christ to pay the penalty for sin (Rom 6:23) so to reconcile the world to himself (2 Cor 5:19).<sup>186</sup>

Secondly, neo-subordinationism can deeply taint the character of God because of the way it can affect the penal substitutionary view of the atonement. Romans 3:21–26 describes the sacrifice of Christ for human sin as an expiation and propitiation (ἱλαστήριον [*hilastērion*]) that removes the sin-barrier between God and humanity, satisfies divine justice, and turns aside the wrath of God.<sup>187</sup> When Christ is understood, as the Scriptures teach,

<sup>185</sup>Ibid.

<sup>186</sup>Neo-subordinationist complementarians do not intend to do any harm to the ontological equality of the Son and the Father, but vigorously claim to uphold it. Thus, the assertion above could be viewed as an invalid concern about their view of the Trinity. However, as was discussed in the section on logical inconsistencies, making the Son’s functional subordination eternal and based on his being as Son—as does neo-subordinationism—logically lowers the Son ontologically in relation to the Father. There is no doubt that this will have significant negative impact on redemption, if this thinking is carried throughout one’s theological system.

<sup>187</sup>The verbal cognate ἱλάσκομαι (*hilaskomai*) in Heb 2:17 and the masculine nominal cognate ἱλασμός (*hilasmos*) in 1 John 2:2, 4:10 of ἱλαστήριον are also used concerning Christ’s sacrifice for sin. In both classical Greek and Greco-Roman literature, the Greek word ἱλαστήριον was indicative of an implement by which one achieves both expiation to remove what is offensive and propitiation to appease a god or ruler’s wrath. Contemporary authors of Paul largely used ἱλαστήριον substantively as a technical term to refer to the golden lid of the ark of the covenant of the Hebrew sanctuary—commonly called the “mercy seat”—which was the place where propitiation and expiation were accomplished in the Hebrew sacrificial system. Philo used ἱλαστήριον a total of six times, all of which are references to the “mercy seat” (*Her.* 166; *Fug.* 100, 101; *Cher.* 25; *Mos.* 2.95, 97). However, it may also indicate an implement of a propitiatory and/or expiatory function. Josephus uses ἱλαστήριον substantively as an object of propitiation/expiation (*Ant.* 16.179–182). Of the twenty-eight occurrences of ἱλαστήριον in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint (LXX), twenty-one of them (Exod 25:17–22; 31:7; 35:12; 38:5, 7–8; Lev 16:2, 13–15; Num 7:89) are used substantively to translate the Hebrew word, כַּפֹּרֶת (*kapporeth*), which is the Old Testament term to designate the “mercy seat” (six of the other occurrences are also connected to other parts of the sanctuary: five appearances are in Ezek 43:14, 17, 20 in reference to the side of the altar of burnt offering and one in Amos 9:1 referring to the top of the pillars in the sanctuary). The last remaining occurrence of ἱλαστήριον is in 4 Macc 17:22 in speaking of martyrdom. Importantly, ἱλαστήριον is used attributively in this passage to modify θανάτου (*thanatou*; “death”) in the context of sin, God’s wrath against that sin, a divinely provided ransom and purification through blood, and the giving up of life to achieve the ransom. Hence, a clear propitiatory and expiatory usage emerges from this passage. In the New

as being one ontologically and functionally with the Father and the Holy Spirit, the passage portrays the triune God as removing the sin-barrier on his own initiate and placating his own wrath against sin by himself through suffering the death penalty in place of humanity in the person of the Son (Rom 6:23), who was made “to be sin who knew no sin” (1 Cor 5:12). Thus, God is both the subject and object of divine wrath against sin. In this way, a rich witness is given concerning the character of God and his profound love in the plan of redemption.<sup>188</sup>

However, viewing Christ as a subordinate of the Father emphasizes his role as the object of wrath and can diminish his balancing role as the subject. In such a case, God could be regarded as bloodthirsty, demanding the life of his Son in order for his wrath to be dissuaded; and indeed he has been.

Testament, ἱλαστήριον appears only once outside of Rom 3:25 and is found in Heb 9:5. The author of Hebrews uses ἱλαστήριον substantively in alignment with the tradition of the LXX simply to indicate the lid of the ark of the covenant.

Harmonizing the use of ἱλαστήριον in Rom 3:25 with all of this data leads one to conclude that ἱλαστήριον in this text carries both expiatory and propitiatory senses. First of all, according to Isaiah 59:1–2 (LXX), ἁμαρτία (*hamartia*; “sin”) separates humanity from God. In Rom 1:18–3:20, Paul made it abundantly clear that universal sin makes all human beings worthy of a revelation of God’s wrath and judgment and deserving of the punishment of death (Rom 1:18, 32; 2:12, 19). Thus, in order for humanity to stand justified before God and experience reconciliation in their relationship with him, the sin-barrier must be expiated—removed and cleansed. The use of τὴν πᾶρεσιν (*tēn paresin*; “the passing over”), along with ἁμαρτυμάτων (*hamartumatōn*; “sin”) in Rom 3:25, clearly indicates that Jesus’s death is addressing the sin problem—to “pass over” it—thus, expiation.

Second, Rom 3:25 follows a lengthy description of the revelation of the wrath of God in Rom 1:18–3:20. In order for God to be just and demonstrate his righteousness, a key concern of Rom 3:25–26, sin cannot simply be excused. God’s wrath and judgment must be satisfied; in other words, someone must bear sin and experience God’s wrath against it. Isaiah stated in Isa 53:4 that Jesus as the suffering sin-bearing Servant was stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God. Furthermore, Paul wrote later in Rom 5:9—seemingly to expound on what he wrote in Rom 3:25, since their contents are very similar—that believers are saved from God’s wrath through Christ’s blood sacrifice. This implies that Jesus bore God’s wrath on the cross so that those who believe may escape it—thus, propitiation. In sum, Paul’s use of ἱλαστήριον in Rom 3:25 to refer to Jesus’s sacrificial death indicates that it served as an expiation of the sin barrier between God and humanity, as well as a propitiation to turn divine wrath away from humanity. Thus, the penal substitutionary view of the atonement is in view in Rom 3:21–26.

<sup>188</sup>“The deity of Christ is the full deity of the entire triune Godhead. . . . Therefore we can truthfully say that God, in satisfying His nature of loving justice, did not take His wrath out on an innocent third party or some unwilling victim. Rather, in Christ He has met the needs of justice through His own willingly given divine self-sacrifice. . . . The great truth of the Holy Trinity and the atoning death of Christ speaks eloquently that God has, in His Son, borne the penalty of sin as our substitute and made an infinitely valuable and powerful provision for the full reconciliation of the entire human race” (Whidden, Moon, and Reeve, *The Trinity*, 267). See also Woodrow W. Whidden II, “God Is Love—Trinitarian Love!” *JATS* 17.1 (2006): 118–119.

Woodrow W. Whidden II, Jerry Moon, and John W. Reeve observe that “[m]any Christians . . . have expressed deep misgivings about the whole concept of Christ offering a sacrifice of substitution to satisfy God’s nature of justice. They argue that such a view is not only morally questionable, but that it makes God resemble some angry ogre intent on taking out His wrath on an unwilling third party.”<sup>189</sup> Also, D. Glenn Butner, Jr. notes that there is “widespread concern” with such a model of the atonement because of its potential for promoting “a culture of violence against the powerless.”<sup>190</sup> The overemphasis of the Son as the object of wrath, which honors a “power structure resulting in suffering of the subordinate,” can easily be “echo[ed] in the created order in ways that harm the weak and powerless.”<sup>191</sup> Neo-subordinationism can legitimize this major objection against the biblical penal substitutionary view of Christ’s atonement. However, maintaining the ontological and functional equality of the Trinitarian persons and, thereby, keeping the balance of Christ as both subject and object of divine wrath helps to answer this objection. Therefore, as demonstrated here, neo-subordinationism can undermine the loving and sacrificial character of God.

Finally, by implication, neo-subordinationism presents the incarnation and passion of Christ as merely obedience to the authority of the Father. This has a significant impact on the way one understands the motivation of Christ in the work of redemption. Bilezikian points out that “[i]t makes a lot of difference whether God in Christ offered his life out of sacrificial love, as the Scriptures affirm he did, or whether Christ acted out of obedience because he had no choice but to subject himself to the authority of the Father.”<sup>192</sup> If neo-subordinationism indeed suggests that Christ was motivated by command (coercion) of the Father to serve as a sacrifice for the world, then a motivation of voluntary love is precluded. Thus, the cross event no longer is a demonstration of the love of God and Christ for the world, but rather a demonstration of Christ’s subordination to the Father’s authority over him. Furthermore, it excludes what is often called the “Council of Peace” or “Covenant of Redemption,” during which the persons of the Trinity unitedly designed a plan of salvation for how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit would resolve the sin problem and voluntarily assume functions or roles in the carrying out of this redemptive plan.<sup>193</sup> The idea of a covenantal council seems

<sup>189</sup>Ibid., 261. See also Whidden, “God Is Love,” 113.

<sup>190</sup>D. Glenn Butner, Jr., “Crumbling Cathedrals of the Mind: How Eternal Functional Subordination Undermines Transactional Atonement Theory,” *Preserving the Trinity* (2016): 13.

<sup>191</sup>Ibid.

<sup>192</sup>Bilezikian, “Hermeneutical Bungee-jumping,” 66.

<sup>193</sup>See Gulley, *God as Trinity*, 141–142; Warfield, “The Trinity,” *ISBE* 5:3020–3021. See also Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 121–122, 187, 207–208. For biblical evidence of this Trinitarian covenant, see Pss 2:7–9; 110; Joel 2:28–32; Zech 6:12–13; Matt 22:41–45; Mark 12:34–37; Luke 20:41–44; 22:29; Acts 2:32–36; 13:32–33; Rom 1:1–4; 1 Cor 2:7–10; 15:24–28; Gal 4:4; Eph 1; 4:4–10; 2 Tim 1:9–10; Heb 1; 5:5–10; 6:13–20; 7; 8:1–6; 10:12–17; 1 Pet 1:20;

to imply an intra-Trinitarian deliberation of some sort, but such deliberation would simply not be necessary if the Father issues commands and the Son merely obeys them.

Neo-subordinationism, then, is a significant deviation from Scripture. It offers a lowered Christology that weakens soteriology by devaluing the penal substitutionary atonement that was accomplished for humanity through the death of Christ. This, in turn, taints the character of God.<sup>194</sup> Additionally, it warps Christ's motivation of self-sacrificial love that stands behind the cross event into a mere demonstration of authority and obedience in the Trinity. This proposed intra-Trinitarian dynamic precludes any need for the Trinitarian Covenant of Redemption.

#### *Summary*

In summary, the eternal, functional subordination of the Son to the Father and the Holy Spirit to both the Father and the Son as an analogy for male-female relations is a relatively new argumentation that some complementarians have introduced to strengthen the foundation of their position on the role subordination of women to men in the gender debate. This neo-subordinationist argumentation creates some serious, unwarranted problems for Christian theology. Firstly, it fails to provide the evangelical community with an adequate Trinitarian model for all the theological, christological, and pneumatological data revealed in Scripture. Secondly, it lacks inherent logical consistency. Thirdly, it offers a different account of the development of orthodox Christian thought throughout the ages of church history from that shared by the majority of current scholarship. Finally, it also could severely undermine the atonement of Christ and mar the true character of God, if the full extent of its implications is carried consistently throughout one's entire theological system.

#### *Conclusion and Recommendations for Moving Forward*

Because of its problems and weighty implications for Christianity, one should be careful not to make a one-to-one analogy between the Father-Son relationship and male-female relations. As such, neo-subordinationism should be excluded from the discussion on gender roles.<sup>195</sup> This is not to say that theology proper should not inform one's entire theological system of faith and practice. It should, but its influence should only go as far as Scripture

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Rev 13:8. Helpful exegetical-theological commentary on some of these passages can be found in J. V. Fesko, *The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption* (Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2016), 49–124.

<sup>194</sup>For a more detailed discussion of the impact that neo-subordinationism can have on transactional theories of the atonement, see the fuller discussion in Butner, Jr., "Crumbling Cathedrals," 9–15.

<sup>195</sup>Cole is also "not convinced" that scholars should be erecting "social models for marriage, church, and society based on speculative reconstructions of the inner life of the Trinity" (*He Who Gives Life*, 91).



allows. Regarding gender roles, this entails affirming what is exegetically and canonically-theologically “discernible, demonstrable, and defensible”<sup>196</sup> from the text, namely, the full equality and “relationality”<sup>197</sup> (unity in plurality) of all humanity—no matter one’s gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, etc. (Gal 3:28)—because all bear the *imago Dei* (Gen 1:26–28).<sup>198</sup>

Thus, to move the debate on gender forward, the analogy between the Father-Son relation and male-female relations should be dropped from the debate, since there is no biblical or logical warrant for such an analogy.<sup>199</sup> Evangelicals, including Seventh-day Adventists, and other Christians, who are now involved in the discussion on gender roles, should return to the utilization of proper biblical and theological hermeneutics; conduct, once again, biblical and historical studies that explore relevant data in the areas of anthropology and ecclesiology; and avoid reading the ontology of humanity and the church into the ontology of the triune God. Finally, they should also carefully consider Bilezikian’s three recommendations.<sup>200</sup> Firstly, do not muddle with the triune Godhead; especially do not lower the majesty of Christ when Christians are called to exalt him. “If some people’s belief system requires the subordination of women, they should not build their hierarchy at the expense of Christological orthodoxy.”<sup>201</sup> Secondly, cease using the term “subordination,” which is reminiscent of Arianism, and, in its place, speak of Christ’s voluntary self-humiliation. Lastly, “[l]et us not use God to push our ideological agendas.”<sup>202</sup> It is inappropriate to read perceived differences of gender roles into the economic functions and then into the immanent relationships and being of the persons of the Trinity in order to have a stronger grounding for a complementarian position. This is making God into one’s *own* image. “Let the Father be God, let Christ be God, let the Holy Spirit be God—all three in one, ‘equal in power and glory’ for all eternity.”<sup>203</sup>

*“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all”  
(2 Cor 13:14).*

<sup>196</sup>John C. Peckham, *Canonical Theology: The Biblical Canon, Sola Scriptura, and Theological Method* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 209.

<sup>197</sup>This is a research topic that cannot be explored in this article due to present constraints. For an excellent discussion on what is meant by “relationality” and “unity in plurality,” see Sherlock, *The Doctrine of Humanity*, 29–72. See also Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 91.

<sup>198</sup>Every fallen human being still bears the *imago Dei* (image of God), even though sin has marred it to some degree.

<sup>199</sup>See Maxwell, “Authority Analogy?,” 565–569.

<sup>200</sup>Bilezikian, “Hermeneutical Bungee-jumping,” 66–68.

<sup>201</sup>*Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>202</sup>*Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>203</sup>*Ibid.*

## DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

### THE TWO WITNESSES OF REVELATION 11:1–13: ARGUMENTS, ISSUES OF INTERPRETATION, AND A WAY FORWARD

Name of researcher: Ian R. Brown  
Name of adviser: Ranko Stefanovic, PhD  
Date completed: June 2016

The narrative of Rev 11:1–13 involves two prophet-witnesses. The question of the identity of the two witnesses of Rev 11:1–13 has been answered in a variety of ways. In the history of exegetical investigation, they have been seen as two actual people, a symbol for a larger group, or even a symbol for inanimate objects. Clearly, some proposals seem more plausible than others; however, the debate remains open. Indeed, the possibility exists that a stronger case could be made for a previous proposal or that a new one could be found that is more agreeable to scholars of Revelation. The purpose of my research is to clarify the nature of the problem of identifying the two witnesses and to form a plan for finding a more satisfactory answer. In this way, my research illuminates the path beyond the current state of inconclusiveness. This purpose is accomplished through a survey of arguments that are representative of those used to support the major exegetical identifications of the two witnesses and through an examination of the broad interpretive issues that can be derived from those arguments. In short, my research aims to meet the need for a review of the literature that will more fully expose the state of the question concerning the identity of the witnesses and so offer a basis for a new investigation into that question.

The most popular identifications of the two witnesses can be divided into those that understand the witnesses literally and those that understand the witnesses symbolically. The presentations of argumentation are separated according to this division, with the third chapter concerning literal identifications and the fourth chapter concerning symbolic ones. In each chapter, the presentations begin with an extensive summary of one exposition. These summaries function as the bases for discussing other significant expositions of the witnesses that, although differing in certain ways from the main one, still represent the same broad class of identifications. Descriptions of the broad issues of interpretation that are deducible from the presented arguments are given at various points in the presentations. Issues of interpretation shared by the studied commentators are identified in the conclusions to each chapter.

The central exposition of chapter three is that by Donatus Haugg. The expositions of James Henthorn Todd, Isbon Thaddeus Beckwith, and Christine Joy Tan are also featured. All four commentators identify the witnesses as two individuals who appear in the future after the composition of Revelation. One other exposition in chapter three is that by Johannes Munck. He identifies the

two witnesses with Peter and Paul. His exposition represents those interpreters who identify the witnesses as two people contemporaneous to John. Munck's exposition receives an abbreviated treatment.

The foundational exposition for chapter four is that by Gregory Kimball Beale. The expositions of Hendrik Rijk van de Kamp and Gerhard Maier are also featured. All three commentators see the two witnesses as a symbol of God's people. One other exposition in chapter four is that by Ekkehardt Müller. He argues that the two witnesses symbolize the Bible. His exposition represents those interpreters who see the witnesses as a symbol for sacred writings. Müller's exposition receives an abbreviated treatment.

In the fifth chapter, several of the broad issues of interpretation that are described in the previous two chapters are evaluated. In the evaluation, several of them are identified as main issues in the debate over the identity of the two witnesses, because the majority of the nine representative commentators address them. Those that are less common among the nine commentators are assessed to see whether they should join the main issues in a new investigation of the identity question. Many of these are found to be relevant for further discussion of the identity question.

Small summaries of what the studied commentators have said in addressing the broad issues of interpretation accompany the evaluation. This enables one to see the argumentation from the two preceding chapters together. The argumentation is arranged by issue, rather than by commentator.

The rest of chapter five concerns how the issues that result from the evaluation can be organized into a research plan to aid scholars in treating them. Although not exhaustive, the plan, in theory, includes the issues essential for a more intimate engagement with the debate over the identity of the witnesses. The final chapter summarizes and concludes the study.

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**THE DOCTRINE OF PREVENIENT GRACE IN  
THE THEOLOGY OF JACOBUS ARMINIUS**

Name of researcher: Abner F. Hernandez  
Name of adviser: Jerry Moon, PhD  
Date completed: April 2017

*Topic*

This dissertation addresses the problem of the lack of agreement among interpreters of Arminius concerning the nature, sources, development, and roles of prevenient grace in Arminius's soteriology.

*Purpose*

The dissertation aims to investigate, analyze, and define the probable sources, nature, development, and role of the concept of prevenient or "preceding" grace in the theology of Jacobus Arminius (1559–1609).

*Sources*

The dissertation relies on Arminius's own writings, mainly the standard London Edition, translated by James Nichols and Williams Nichols. However, I also frequently consulted the original Latin edition of his works when needing to clarify some translations. Secondary sources played an important role in the narrative of Arminius's world, life, and ministry, as well as for the background of prevenient grace. I also consulted secondary sources to check, balance, and support my own reading of Arminius on prevenient grace.

*Conclusions*

Arminius placed prevenient grace rather than human free will at the center of his soteriology and developed this doctrine primarily in continuity with Reformed and Protestant theological precedents and frameworks rather than uniquely Catholic sources and views. For Arminius, prevenient grace is the working of the Holy Spirit that precedes any kind of human participation or acceptance in salvation. Prevenient grace works unavoidably, restoring, and healing human freedom of will; only then does it work in a resistible way in the working of salvation. Although there is a special connection between the internal working of the Holy Spirit and the external preaching of the Word, prevenient grace as the working of the Holy Spirit is not limited to this event. The Holy Spirit works apart from the preached word, in ways inscrutable to the human mind. The role of prevenient grace in regeneration and faith, and the relation between prevenient grace and divine foreknowledge also support the conclusion that prevenient grace is the organizing principle of Arminius's soteriology.

**TRUST AND DOUBT: PERCEPTIONS OF DIVINE INSPIRATION  
IN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST HISTORY (1880–1930)**

Name of researcher: Denis Kaiser  
Name of adviser: Merlin D. Burt, PhD  
Date completed: December 2016

*Topic*

The belief in the divine inspiration of Scripture came under scrutiny in North America during a period that stretched from the 1850s to the 1920s, as critical scholars questioned traditional hermeneutical presuppositions and conservative Protestant theologians retreated into more strict theories of inspiration. In that context, various Seventh-day Adventist leaders formulated their individual understandings of the nature, manner, and result of the inspiration of the Bible writers and Adventist visionary, Ellen G. White.

*Purpose*

The purpose of this study was to describe the views that selected influential Seventh-day Adventist thinkers held concerning the divine inspiration of the Bible writers and Ellen G. White from 1880 to 1930. In order to outline such a history of Adventist perceptions of divine inspiration, based on a study of selected individuals, it was necessary to describe each thinker's affirmations and objections, underlying sources and influences, and the historical context in which they made their statements.

*Sources*

This was a documentary study based primarily on published and unpublished primary sources produced by selected Seventh-day Adventists between 1845 and 1930. Both primary and secondary sources were used for background, historical context, and perspective. The most heavily used primary sources were periodicals, the correspondence collections of the Ellen G. White Estate, and other archives containing Adventist resources.

*Conclusions*

The study identified five general stages in the development of Seventh-day Adventist perceptions of divine inspiration. (1) From 1845 to 1883, they believed in the divine inspiration of both Scripture and Ellen G. White's writings without clarifying the particulars. Scripture was nevertheless seen as having supreme authority, being the only basis for faith and practice. (2) From 1883 to 1888, the theory of degrees of inspiration gained some influence within the denomination in the attempt to vindicate White's writings against critics. (3) That theory experienced its demise after 1888, when various people connected to *The Signs of the Times* advocated the verbal inspiration of Scripture and, in some cases, of White's writings. (4) White's return to the United States of America in 1900 and the subsequent Kellogg crisis

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urged several advocates of verbal inspiration either to modify their view or to reject her inspiration altogether. (5) After the controversy over the correct interpretation of the *tāmīd* (continual, daily) in Dan 8 and the revision of the Great Controversy in 1911, relations of the proponents of verbal and thought inspiration swayed between severe tensions and collegial cooperation. Adventist discussions about inspiration revolved primarily around perceptions of White's inspiration. Throughout her life, Ellen G. White maintained, however, a dynamic view that allowed for diverse nondominating operations of the Holy Spirit, which did not fit any particular theory of inspiration.

### TOWARD A PRIESTLY CHRISTOLOGY: A HERMENEUTICAL STUDY OF CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD

Name of researcher: Adriani Milli Rodrigues  
Name of adviser: Fernando L. Canale, PhD  
Date completed: February 2017

#### *Problem*

There is disagreement between three theological models (sacramental, functional, and ontological) of interpretation about Christ's priesthood. One clear aspect of this disagreement is the existence of different views on the relationship between sacrifice and heavenly mediation in the priesthood of Christ. These conflicting views reveal that Christian theology does not have a consensus about the nature of the priestly work of the ascended Christ, including the conception of how Christ mediates salvation through his priesthood. This problematic situation raises the question whether there is a way to resolve this conflict of interpretations.

#### *Method*

In order to indicate a way to resolve the conflict of interpretations, the present study deconstructs these interpretations of Christ's priesthood through a hermeneutical analysis of this doctrine in the light of Scripture. This deconstruction seeks to uncover the logic of each interpretation of Christ's priesthood from the perspective of the macro-hermeneutical principles of reality or ontological presuppositions assumed in that interpretation. Such perspective indicates how these presuppositions inform and impact an interpretation or theory about the priesthood of Christ. This process of deconstruction takes three steps in this dissertation: (1) a systematic outline of the interpretations of Christ's priesthood; (2) a description of the understanding of the macro-hermeneutical principles of reality assumed in each interpretation depicted in the first step and an indication of the implications for the doctrine of Christ's priesthood; and (3) an attempt to read systematically the picture of Christ's priesthood provided in Scripture, including its pointers to the interpretation of macro-hermeneutical principles of reality, and the implications for the doctrine of Christ's priesthood.

#### *Results*

With regard to the macro-hermeneutical principles of reality in the sacramental, functional, and ontological models, the research shows that the divine reality is timeless-spaceless, the humanity of Christ is a spatio-temporal instrument of the divine timeless-spaceless reality, and heaven is a timeless-spaceless environment. When the sacramental, functional, and ontological interpretations of the priesthood of Christ are read from the perspective of these macro-hermeneutical principles of reality, the results below are generated.

In the sacramental model, the priesthood of Christ refers to a Christological picture that is soteriologically concrete in spatio-temporal instruments that convey and actualize the timeless-spaceless reality of the new creation in human beings. In the functional model, the priesthood of Christ is described in a Christological language that involves sequentiality of functions (earthly cross and heavenly intercession), but it is soteriologically concrete in spatio-temporal instruments that convey/actualize the timeless-spaceless reality of the new creation in human beings. In the ontological model, the priesthood of Christ portrays a Christology that reveals, by means of spatio-temporal instruments, in our spatio-temporal world, the soteriological reality of new creation that is already concrete in God.

However, on the basis of a systematic reading of Christ's priesthood in Scripture, the research suggests an alternative view, namely, the historical model. This reading finds pointers to a different interpretation of macro-hermeneutical principles of reality, where the divine reality, the humanity of Christ, and heaven are spatio-temporal realities. In contrast to the other models, as they hold a distinct interpretation of macro-hermeneutical principles, the historical model strongly emphasizes a heavenly priesthood and intentionally interprets Christ's priesthood as spatio-temporal. This means that Christ performs a real spatio-temporal official activity in heaven, in which God is involved in the soteriological process of forgiving and transforming human beings.

#### *Conclusions*

The main conclusion of this study is that the historical model constitutes a viable alternative that points to a way out of the conflicting systematic interpretations of the doctrine of Christ's priesthood. This conclusion is unpacked in the following arguments.

First, the basic problem of the sacramental model lies in the interpretation of the macro-hermeneutical principles of reality, as it conceptualizes the divine reality and realm in terms of timelessness-spacelessness. By assuming a spatio-temporal view of divine reality, the historical model necessarily (in terms of internal consistency) outlines a different conception of the priesthood of Christ in comparison with the sacramental model.

Second, in contrast to the internal coherence of the sacramental model, the chief weakness of the functional model is the lack of consistency between its notion of the priesthood of Christ and its interpretation or assumptions regarding the macro-hermeneutical principles of reality. While the picture of Christ's priesthood in this model seems to imply a spatio-temporal view of reality, its interpretation of the principles of reality is aligned with a timeless-spaceless perspective of divine reality. In this way, the important idea of sequential actions and events in the functional model is obscured by a timeless-spaceless understanding of divine reality. With this situation in mind, the historical model stipulates that a consistent understanding of Christ's priesthood characterized by sequential actions and events requires an interpretation of the macro-hermeneutical principles of reality that presupposes spatio-temporality in the notion of divine reality.



Third, the major problem of the ontological model is that it did not modify, in a substantial way, the timeless-spaceless view of reality assumed by the sacramental and functional models. While this model is more internally coherent than the functional model, the interpretation of Christ's priesthood in the ontological model is not consistent with the picture of this priesthood in Hebrews.

Fourth, the consistency of the historical model is basically described by a focus on an official heavenly priesthood in Hebrews that implies, for instance, a real appearance before God and a real activity of intercession in the heavenly sanctuary that is supported by a spatio-temporal view of divine realm and reality. These activities allow an actual interaction between what takes place on earth (for example, human prayer) and what happens in heaven (for example, Christ's intercession).

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**UNCOVERING THE PROTOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICS  
OF GEORGE MCCREADY PRICE AND  
BENJAMIN WARFIELD**

Name of researcher: Sergio Leandro Silva  
Name of adviser: Martin F. Hanna, PhD  
Date completed: June 2017

*Problem*

This dissertation addresses the protological hermeneutical impasse between George McCready Price and Benjamin Warfield over whether biblical protology should be interpreted literally or symbolically in response to the evolutionary theory.

*Method*

To identify, compare, and contrast the protological hermeneutics of George McCready Price and Benjamin Warfield, this dissertation adopts an interdisciplinary methodology that seeks to integrate historical theology, systematic theology, and exegetical-biblical theology.

*Conclusions*

The protological hermeneutical impasse between George McCready Price and Benjamin Warfield over the interpretation of biblical protology was caused by how they applied their views on epistemology. On the hermeneutical level (where ontology, metaphysics, and epistemology inform interpretation), McCready Price held to the meaning of the biblical text interpreted through Scripture alone, and not based on external sources of protological knowledge. While Warfield held that Scripture is “the end of all strife,” he held to an interpretation of the biblical text contingent on the interpretations of nature by mainstream science.

This research indicates many similarities between these two thinkers, bringing to an end a two-decade-long misconception that Warfield’s views on science were superior to McCready Price’s views on science. In fact, they held similar views on science (i.e., its definition, task, etc.). In addition, they both agreed that: God is not timeless and he communicates with humankind through reason; “the heavens and the earth” (i.e., the entire galactic universe) might have been created more than six thousand years ago; Gen 1:2a is a description of the condition of the earth after the creation of inorganic matter and prior to the beginning of the creation week; the seventh day of the creation week is the foundation of the Sabbath (they disagreed on the actual day of observance—Saturday vs. Sunday); and they both understood the biblical flood in Gen 6–8 as a historical event.

This research also challenged the claim that McCready Price is the founder of modern scientific creationism. This idea was popularized by two historians who wanted to link McCready Price to fundamentalism—a term

generally used pejoratively—to delegitimize McCready Price’s contribution to theology and to science, and to uplift Warfield. However, this research showed that neither Price nor Warfield was a Fundamentalist.

The research also showed that the current categorization of the creationist movement in the West is obsolete and needs to be updated. The old Earth versus young Earth debate can no longer account for the views of proponents of biblical protology. The undated Earth creation movement must be included in a landmark publication.

Altogether, these findings can facilitate a renewed dialogue about the relationship between theology and science in the writings of McCready Price and Warfield, their interpretations of biblical protology, the history of the Creationist Movement in the West, and the contributions of their protological hermeneutics to contemporary Christian theology.

## BOOK REVIEWS

Abernethy, Andrew T. *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom: A Thematic Theological Approach*. NSBT 40. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016. ix + 201 pp. Softcover. USD 25.00.

*The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom* is the third book that Andrew Abernethy has published. Abernethy, a faculty member at Wheaton College and a graduate from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, has already published *Eating in Isaiah: Approaching Food and Drink in Isaiah's Structure and Message*, BibInt 131 (Leiden: Brill, 2014) and edited with others *Isaiah and Imperial Context: The Book of Isaiah in Times of Empire* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013). In addition, he published several essays and articles in journals; for example, "God as Teacher in Psalms 25" *VT* 65 (2015): 339–351, and "The People of God in Isaiah: Trembling at God's Word" *Reflections* 16–17 (2015): 27–36, which is a Festschrift for Eugene Carpenter.

Abernethy does not specify his motivation for writing this book; however, he outlines the purpose of his monograph as being a commentary on the biblical theology of Isaiah, more specifically on one theme: the kingdom of God. He also suggests that his intent is to target a different audience than does Goldingay, who writes primarily for laypeople, saying that *The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom* is intended for pastors and advanced college and seminary students. Interestingly, Abernethy does not indicate that the theme "kingdom," a unifying concept throughout the book of Isaiah, would support the view of Isaiah as the sole author rather than multiple authors, although he does say that his book is an attempt to use "kingdom" as a unifying concept (ix).

*The Book of Isaiah and God's Kingdom* is divided into five chapters, excluding the introduction and conclusion. In these five chapters, the author focuses on four features of kingdom in Isaiah: (a) God, the king; (b) The lead agents of the king; (c) The realm of the kingdom; and (d) The people of the king (2). Logically, Abernethy follows a traditional approach to thematic theology in laying out his chapters. In the first chapter, titled "God, the King Now and to Come in Isaiah 1–39," he concentrates his attention on Isa 6:24:21–23; 25:6–8; 33; and 36–37. In chapter two, "God, the Only Saving King in Isaiah 40–55," he turns his attention to Isa 40:1–11; 53:7–10, and God's kingship in other motifs in Isa 40–55. The third chapter is about "God, the Warrior, International and Compassionate King in Isaiah 56–66;" and the fourth chapter is "The Lead Agents of the King," where he utilizes the sub-titles "The Davidic Ruler in Isaiah 1–39," "The Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 40–55," and "God's Messenger in Isaiah 56–66." Finally, the last chapter, "The Realm and the People of God's Kingdom," is an overview of the entire book of Isaiah. As can be seen from these chapters, Abernethy also divides his thematic approach according to the critical division of the book of Isaiah, that is, Isa 1–39; Isa 40–55; and Isa 56–66. However, while he does not point it out specifically, his thematic theological approach shows more integration among these three sections of the book of Isaiah than he may care to admit. Abernethy sits on the fence between approaching Isaiah from the

viewpoint of critical scholars and trying to be faithful to the traditional way of doing theology (see 4–5).

The primary strength of Abernethy's book is the author's consistent focus on a primary theological theme throughout the entire book of Isaiah. In addition, the author takes time to deal with difficult passages where often the theme of God's kingdom may be disregarded, yet he gives the readers new perspectives and challenges on which to reflect. This book contains a good bibliography, indexes, and one appendix. It is well structured, which makes it easy to follow the author's development of concepts. While this book is scholarly in nature, the author targets primarily pastors and advanced college and seminary students. This audience will find a wealth of information for sermon preparation.

The author establishes his methodology in the introduction as employing both a diachronic and synchronic approach (7). He also gives an overview of his approach to biblical theology and how this applies to the book of Isaiah. Abernethy's book grabs the reader's attention in chapter one, where he gives good theological examples from Isa 1–39 that God is the king. For each example, he expands on the reasons why God is the king in Isaiah and explores some passages that have been overlooked in the support of his argument; including Isa 24:21–23 and 25:6–8. In chapter two, Abernethy shows how God is now the saving king of Isa 40–55, and proceeds in the following chapter to show that God becomes the warrior and compassionate king of Isa 56–66. Thus, in the first three chapters, Abernethy's theology on kingship is well developed, with no major challenges except for some exegetical passages where he depends too much on critical scholars to support his points. For example, he overlooks how Isaiah is employing the concept of a Davidic figure or how the servant in Isaiah is represented as divine (104, 138), pointing to a greater figure in the future.

In his introduction, Abernethy defines biblical theology (5); however, his principles are not always consistently or correctly applied in the rest of the book. In Isaiah, God uses a Davidic figure and the servant figure to reveal what God has to say about Himself. It appears that the author may have been influenced by what the critics say on certain passages; for example, he agrees that the servant in the first servant song is Israel (see 138–142). Yet, in doing so the author overlooks more recent exegetical work on this passage (and not only from conservative scholars, as he suggests). What is surprising is that Abernethy shows how some of the passages in Isaiah are used in the New Testament to refer to Jesus, but then overlooks how Isa 42:1–9 was quoted by Jesus in Matt 12 in reference to himself. Although Abernethy refers to Matt 12, he sees the servant as Israel, "God's servant Israel who brings gentle justice" (159), and not Jesus. Yet he has no problem in equating the servant with Jesus in Isa 53. Nevertheless, in both passages it is clear that the author inserts his biases based on what the exegetes have done. It appears that he is selective in choosing the passages attributed to God, in terms of God's kingdom in Isaiah, and ignores other passages that could have actually given even greater support

to his monograph. One gets the same sense with Isa 7, which Abernethy again approaches with great theological gymnastics to make his point (121–125).

My greatest concern was with chapter four, as already described in the paragraph above. Part of the problem is that Abernethy uses only one aspect of doing biblical theology, while generally disregarding other methods of biblical theology. For example, while he does not use the term, he does employ some components of the biblical theology methodology of typology. However, he is not consistent in its application to the passages observed in Isaiah. Thus, the weakest point of his monologue is found in chapter 4, and I would caution readers to approach it with an understanding of the author's presuppositions and chosen methodology.

In spite of these weaknesses, Abernethy's book is a valuable resource and an important contribution to scholarship. It contains a wealth of sources and information, and both seminary students and pastors will benefit from having it at hand for further research. This book could easily be used as a textbook at the college or graduate level and provides multiple advantages in understanding the book of Isaiah and God's kingdom from a theological approach. It is particularly helpful for readers who seek to understand the theology within one entire biblical book such as Isaiah.

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STÉPHANE BEAULIEU

Collins, John J. *Apocalypse, Prophecy, and Pseudepigrapha: On Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. x + 389 pp. Softcover. USD 34.00.

John J. Collins is the Holmes Professor of Old Testament Criticism and Interpretation at Yale Divinity School, where he has taught since 2000. He is a prolific writer and has published extensively in the area of the Old Testament and Second Temple period Judaism, and is considered one of the foremost experts on Apocalyptic literature. He has authored twenty-six academic books, edited twenty-four, and written three hundred academic articles in addition to popular church-oriented books (eleven) and articles (forty-seven). In addition to serving on several editorial boards, he has also served as editor-in-chief for the *Journal of Biblical Literature* (1989–1994), *Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism* (1994–2008), *Dead Sea Discoveries* (2003–2008), and is currently the general editor of *Yale Anchor Bible Series* (2008–present). He is a popular guest lecturer who has been invited to speak at universities in the United States of America, Europe, and Israel. He was born in Ireland and received his BA (Semitics and Classics) and MA (Semitics and Classics) from the University of Dublin and his PhD (Near Eastern Languages and Literatures) from Harvard University.

*Apocalypse, Prophecy, and Pseudepigrapha: On Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* complements Collins's *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016) and contains nineteen essays—sixteen of which have been previously published during the past fifteen years, and three which are

to his monograph. One gets the same sense with Isa 7, which Abernethy again approaches with great theological gymnastics to make his point (121–125).

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published for the first time (chs. 1, 4, and 11). This collection of essays is divided into five sections: “Apocalypse and Prophecy” (chs. 2–4), “Variations on a Genre” (chs. 5–9), “Themes in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature” (chs. 10–12), “Pseudepigrapha” (chs. 13–15), and “Ethics and Politics” (chs. 16–19). Due to the diversity in these thematic essays, this review will focus on Collins’s three previously unpublished essays in this collection.

The introductory chapter (ch. 1), “Introduction: The Genre Apocalypse Reconsidered,” is a welcome revisit of the “Form and Genres” project which attempted to define and classify the apocalypse genre (*Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, Semeia 14). In this timely discussion, Collins considers the project “in light of developments in literary theory over the last few decades” (vii) and provides insightful reflection on some of the objections, criticisms, and critiques this project has received since 1979. Of the various theoretical approaches, Collins believes the genre project would have benefited from the “prototype theory” in the sense that it “would have refined the analysis significantly” (20). This is because the “prototype theory” considers genre categories to have fuzzy boundaries, allowing texts to belong to a category by a matter of degrees (12), which allows a distinction “between texts that are highly typical and those that are less typical” (13). However, Collins does not believe this approach would have changed the project’s conclusions.

In chapter four, “Apocalypticism and the Transformation of Prophecy in the Second Temple Period,” Collins considers three distinct positions on the relationship between prophecy and apocalypticism before suggesting a fourth view which considers them “as distinct though related phenomena”—noting the “transformation of prophecy occurred in the Second Temple period” (57). He concludes the essay by noting that “prophecy was not simply a variant of older prophecy,” rather “it was a new phenomenon that entailed a novel view of the world that would have a transformative and long-lasting effect on western religion” (69).

In chapter eleven, “Journeys to the World Beyond in Ancient Judaism,” Collins focuses “on the earliest Jewish ascent apocalypses” (178), the *Book of Watchers* (1 En. 1–36), other early Enoch traditions, the dream of Moses in Ezekiel the Tragedian, and *Apocryphon of Levi*. He compares these traditions with relevant examples from Ancient Near Eastern, Old Testament, and Hellenistic literature to “examine the ostensible purposes of the heavenly travels, and reflect on the function that may be attributed to the texts describing them” (178). Based on Ancient Near Eastern precedents, Collins suggests that three fundamental themes emerge for the ascents: the “establish[ment of] authority of a revealer or a king,” the “desire for knowledge and revelation,” and “a desire for eternal life” (181). Collins notes that these themes are also seen in the earliest Jewish ascent apocalypses that show great interest in the themes of judgment and life after death. Collins concludes, “the novelty of the Hellenistic age was the spread of the belief that mortals could pass from one realm to the other,” adding “however this development is to be explained, it transformed the traditional worldview of Israel and the Ancient Near East and had enormous consequences for the development of Christianity” (197).



This collection of essays provides convenient access to some pertinent articles written by Collins during the past fifteen years and has been skillfully selected from his large body of work to create, together with his three never-before-published essays, an invaluable resource for biblical scholars, especially those in the field of early Judaism.

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JAN ÅGE SIGVARSTEN

Collins, S., C. Kobs, and M. Luddenit. *The Tall al-Hammam Excavations, Volume 1: An Introduction to Tall al-Hammam, with Seven Seasons (2005–2011) of Ceramics and Eight Seasons (2005–2012) of Artifacts*. Tall al-Hammam Excavations 1. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015. xxxvii + 362 pp. Hardcover. USD 89.50.

First in a series of volumes on the excavations at Tall al-Hammam, this is an overview of the first seven seasons (2005–2011) of excavations (and includes artifacts from an additional eighth season, 2012). Tall al-Hammam is located in the southern Jordan Valley, twelve kilometers northeast of the Dead Sea. The site consists of an upper and lower city extending over a substantial thirty-six hectare, as well as an adjacent “Megalithic Field and Necropolis.” Excavations were carried out by Steven Collins, along with Gary Byers and Dr. Carroll Kobs, and were sponsored by Trinity Southwest University.

The volume consists of four parts: “Orientation and Methodology,” “Ceramics,” “Objects,” and “Bibliography.” It begins with a “Director’s Introduction,” which lays out the overall ethos of the excavation team as well as explains the multiple ways the site is “remarkable” (xxiii). Part one begins with an introduction to the site through the lens of historical geography, in this case, consisting of geography, historical exploration of the site, biblical connections, and history of the excavation project. I would have enjoyed a discussion on the origins of the Arabic name of the tell in this section, but otherwise this chapter is very complete, especially compared with other excavation reports that minimize the importance of historical geography. One should also note that all the graphics in this volume are in color and the authors take ample advantage of this with pictures, maps, and other graphics. Chapter two is a discussion of archaeological methodology, laying out the history of methodology along with the methods used at Tall al-Hammam. This chapter concludes with an explanation of the new terminology being used for the stratigraphy of the site. Instead of using the word “stratum” and Roman numerals, the team uses the time period, along with a lower-case letter for phasing within the period (so EB3a instead of Stratum IV) (17). This idea is interesting, but could easily lead to confusion when discussing stratigraphical subphases, such as the Iron Age IIA, or other historical periods where the dating is debated. The author claims this will be less confusing when comparing sites, which again, is a good idea in theory. However, when there is no consensus on how to subdivide time periods between scholars at sites in the same area, using this terminology becomes almost impossible—

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let alone when there are greater regional differences due to historical events. Also, over time, with more information, the dating of strata changes insignificantly sometimes, but in major ways at other times.

The section on ceramics begins with a discussion of the ceramic procedures and analysis at the site. The most important part of this chapter, in my view, is the discussion of how the pottery is drawn. The excavation uses a partially digital process where the potsherds are cut, as usual, but then they are photographed and a photorealistic drawing is made digitally. The authors prefer this method, as it preserves the imperfect quality of the sherds. However, this method is insufficient because, while it preserves the destructive action of cutting the sherds, it does not take into account the overall appearance of the vessel. It is true that the imperfections of the actual sherd are preserved, but many vessels look different as a whole form. An imperfection in part of a sherd might not reflect the overall vessel and can lead to looking for incorrect parallels. The bigger issue is the appearance of the pottery drawings in this volume. While it is quite beneficial to include color photographs of some of the vessels, perhaps pictures of the color profiles could have been included as well (see 24). The other issue with the appearance is easily correctable. Only the sherd itself and not its mirror outline is drawn. Depicting this mirror image is standard for published pottery, as it gives a clearer visual of the vessel. This problem could easily be fixed digitally by doing two or three more steps in Adobe Photoshop or Illustrator. In my view, the best option for drawing pottery today involves using a 3D laser scanner and a computer program to draw pottery (Karasik, A., and U. Smilansky. "3D Scanning Technology as a Standard Archaeological Tool for Pottery Analysis: Practice and Theory." *Journal of Archaeological Science* 35 [2008]: 1148–1168). By using the 3D model, the sherd does not have to be damaged in any way and the calculations within the program allow the most accurate approximation of the vessel or sherd to be drawn, combining the concept behind hand drawings and the photorealism the al-Hammam team uses.

The following nine chapters give summaries of the excavations dating to the Chalcolithic Period, Early Bronze Age, Intermediate Bronze Age, Middle Bronze Age, Iron Age II–III, and the material excavated from the Necropolis and Megalithic Field. Each of these chapters has a period synopsis and generalizations, a regional perspective, and discussion of the architecture (if any was found) and pottery, ending with pottery plates and pictures. Unfortunately, no whole vessels were drawn for this volume, although there are small pictures of them in the artifacts section. I will review the Iron Age chapter in depth to provide an idea of these chapters as a whole.

The Iron Age II–III chapter begins with a historical and archaeological synopsis, tying in the history of Tall al-Hammam with the Southern Levant. This summary is well constructed and helps place the occupation at Tall al-Hammam in a broader context. However, a statement like the following: "Tall el-Hammam's [*sic*] first occupation in seven hundred years begins at the beginning of IA2A, and was, no doubt, related in some way to the kingdoms of David and Solomon" is hard to swallow without some kind of evidence.

What does the quoted statement mean? How is it related? Is there any textual or archaeological evidence for this? Perhaps this statement is an inefficiency of the format. It would have been helpful if the architecture discussed had been more clearly dated, IA2a, b, or c rather than IA2. Finally, I would have preferred that this and the other pottery chapters have tables or charts showing the percentage of different vessel types. This should at least be done in the following volumes.

The final section consists of one chapter on the objects from the site. After an explanation of terminology and classification systems, the following object categories are addressed: architectural objects, beads, ceramics, coins, cooking/food preparation items, cosmetic utensils, cultic objects, figurines, flints, game pieces/tokens, Roman glass, horns, jewelry, metals, roulette, scarabs, seals/stamps, shells, specialty objects, textile-related objects, tools, trade/imports, weapons, and weights. After a brief description of the object type, there is a small picture of each object accompanied by a number, designation, and chart showing where the object was found. This chapter is essentially an appendix, very handy for getting a thorough idea of finds from the site, with the anticipation of a small finds volume to come (or specialist studies of these finds incorporated into the reports on the different periods).

For anyone looking for an introduction to the site of Tall al-Hammam, this volume has value. The color illustrations, maps, and photographs are outstanding. The abundance of pottery drawings for a site so important for the Early and Intermediate Bronze Ages also has value, despite the reservations about the quality of the drawings mentioned above. However, for the site to truly have a “remarkable” impact in scholarship, archaeologists and other experts must wait for the coming volumes to see what the stratigraphy of the site actually looks like, and how the pottery published here ties in with those strata.

Charlevoix, Michigan

OWEN CHESNUT

Edwards, Ruth B. *Discovering John: Content, Interpretation, Reception*.  
Discovering Biblical Texts. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. xiv + 258 pp.  
Softcover. USD 22.00.

Ruth B. Edwards, an honorary senior lecturer at the University of Aberdeen and priest of the Scottish Episcopal Church, updates her previous edition of the book, *Discovering John* (London: SPCK, 2003), by taking under consideration the developments and emphases in Johannine studies over the last decade. The *Discovering Biblical Texts* series claims to provide readers with “comprehensive, up-to-date and student-friendly introductions to the books of the Bible” (ii), a task that Edwards fulfills with class. She provides the reader with a summary of the different responses that the book of John has received throughout Christianity, and covers issues ranging from authorship and historical setting to theological and sociological concerns raised by the Gospel. Her interaction with scholarship is eloquent and polished, and her ability to succinctly and thoroughly portray different views of a particular topic is remarkable. She follows the historical-critical method, demonstrates

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familiarity, and engages with reader-response criticism, narrative criticism, and liberationist and feminist approaches, all the while aiming to focus mainly on the theological content of the Gospel and its dynamic message.

After introducing the Gospel of John by summarizing the story of Jesus in the book and commenting on its uniqueness in relation to the Synoptics (ch. 1), Edwards explores the different ways the Gospel has been read in the past and in contemporary approaches (ch. 2). The next three chapters (chs. 3–5) cover background issues such as authorship, use of sources, and historical setting. Edwards argues that there is not sufficient evidence to convincingly identify both the “beloved disciple” in John, and the author(s), asserting that the author was most likely not an eyewitness, but probably had access to eyewitness testimonies or traditions. As to the historicity of the Gospel, she holds that the book presumably reflects a combination of historical events with added details and reinterpreted or created dialogues. It is coordinated in such a way as to convey the primary theological purpose of the Gospel in light of the author’s understanding of Jesus and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. According to Edwards, the Gospel had a broad intended audience, from Jews to Christians to Hellenists, and, though a late first-century date of publication seems most plausible, no solid case can be made in favor of a specific place of composition.

Chapters six through nine focus on the Christology of John. Edwards notably calls attention to the fact that biblical theology “is not propositional, but rather experiential and ‘narrative’” (59). Thus, Jesus’s miracles that are narrated in John and the different titles that are attributed to him reveal his unique relationship with God and suggest divinity with the intent of triggering faith. Similarly, John’s portrayal of the passion story and the glorified Jesus, as well as the highly valued prologue, provide the Christological framework of the Gospel. A brief analysis of the characters in the book of John in chapter ten shows that they are contrasted to Jesus, have “functional” roles, and, most importantly, are witnesses to Jesus.

The final two chapters discuss anti-Semitism/anti-Judaism and replacement theology, both of which the book of John has been accused of fostering. Edwards convincingly argues that these are unfounded claims, and these misuses of the Gospel can be counteracted by accurately understanding its context, nature, and purpose. After a concluding chapter in which Edwards reviews the main discussions on John and its primary achievements, two excurses are included to examine text-critical issues and problems with Richard Bauckham’s eyewitness theory.

The addition of this second excursus, not found in the first edition of the book, as well as the lengthy deliberation on the same topic in chapters three through five, reveals one of Edwards’s main concerns: the authorship and composition of John. She assesses the different arguments regarding the “beloved disciple” as the author, the apostolicity of the Gospel, and internal and external evidence in favor of eyewitnesses, and comes to the following conclusions: “the ‘beloved disciple’ cannot be convincingly identified with any specific individual from early Christianity” (32); claims to eyewitness material

are questionable; and there are insufficient grounds for identifying the author as the apostle John, son of Zebedee. Though she should be commended for her ability to interact with and assess different views and sources in such limited space, Edwards appears to give little value to considerations regarding the importance of authorship in Antiquity. While it might be true today that “a book’s value does not depend on knowing who wrote it, but on its intrinsic worth” (32), the same cannot be said with reference to a first-century historical setting. Yes, pseudonymity was fairly common, but acceptable only in certain literary genres and in certain circles. A number of pseudepigraphal narrative works, such as *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* and the *Gospel of Peter*, were clearly rejected by the early church for bearing a false name. No such censure is found with reference to the author of the Gospel of John as to compromise its widespread acceptance. The fact that Eusebius does not question the provenance of John is even more significant, because he is especially concerned with discussing the problematic works, as in the case of the *Gospel of Peter*. The external evidence for the Gospel’s composition might be late and unconvincing in Edwards’s view, but the importance of such debates in the early church for determining a book’s value cannot be overlooked.

When it comes to matters such as feminist and liberationist approaches, and claims of anti-Semitism/anti-Judaism and supersessionism, Edwards’s assessment is remarkably balanced. She is not afraid to emphasize what the text says, even if it might seem “unpopular.” For example, she points to the depiction of women in the Gospel, not in stereotypical terms and/or as subservient to men, but as sharing the faith in and devotion to Christ. She suggests that this should not lead to the methodologically dangerous practice of drawing “inferences about the proper roles for men and women in ministry from their portrayals in the Gospels” (130). While John should not be accused of anti-Judaism or supersessionism, the Gospel does denounce some “Jews” for their ungodly attitudes and practices, following the Jewish literary motif of judgment (140–141), and presents Christ in terms of “fulfillment” (154–155). In our society of “political correctness,” it is easy to read certain principles into the text and to use it for ideological purposes without truly understanding the historical context, the ancient standards, and the original intent of John. Edwards is able to masterfully uphold the message of John, critique misguided claims, and still maintain a respectful attitude towards other religions and people groups.

That being said, *Discovering John* did seem somewhat wanting in terms of “conveying [the Gospel’s] life-enhancing message, still relevant to the Church and the contemporary world” (23). Only four of the thirteen chapters were exclusively dedicated to the content, message, and theology of the book of John, and even then, the “life-enhancing message” was presented in a rather casual manner. Still, the book is a valuable resource for students becoming familiar with the world of Johannine scholarship. Written in simple and clear language, the reader is provided with a comprehensive introduction that will bring to mind new perspectives in studying the book of John. At the same

time, the reader will be taught to cherish and honor the original message of this fascinating Gospel.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

KELDIE PAROSCHI

Fantalkin, Alexander, and Oren Tal. *Tell Qudadi: An Iron Age IIB Fortress on the Central Mediterranean Coast of Israel (with References to Earlier and Later Periods)*. *Colloquia Antiqua* 15. Leuven: Peeters, 2015. xx + 242 pp. Hardcover. EUR 84.00.

In this archaeological report, Fantalkin and Tal have collected many surviving records, finds, and other relevant archeological data, publishing the results of two excavations at a small coastal site located at the mouth of the Yarkon River (now part of greater Tel-Aviv). Initially, P. L. O. Guy directed excavations on behalf of the Mandatory Department of Antiquities in 1936 and E. L. Sukenik, S. Yeivin, and N. Avigad of Hebrew University conducted more extensive salvage work from 1937–1938. Only brief reports with very limited information have previously appeared regarding this eighty-year-old project. Needless to say, all the principle investigators have long since passed away and Avigad's short summary statement ("Kudadi, Tell," *NEAEHL* 3:882), which appeared posthumously, remained the most authoritative treatment of the site until this volume appeared. Therefore, all interested scholars owe Fantalkin and Tal a debt of gratitude for what must have been an extraordinarily difficult task of gathering and reconstructing the stratigraphy, loci, records, and finds from this very old dig—not to mention having to sift through and interpret the suspect methodology utilized over two generations ago, with no participants left to consult.

The format of the book is unusually small for an excavation report, but fully serviceable and its compact (6.5 x 9.5 in) size is an unexpectedly welcome change from the often unwieldy, folio-sized volumes. To outline the contents of the book, five appendices provide specialist reports. Ran Zadok studies the origin of the name Qudadi, which is an incorrect rendering of the Arabic, and concludes that no pre-Islamic Semitic toponym was preserved. Ram Gophna and Yitzhak Paz present a small corpus of Chalcolithic, Early, and Middle Bronze pottery that was recovered from Qudadi, which demonstrates occupation of the site during these periods. Probable maritime activity at Qudadi during the Bronze Age is also discussed. Shahar Krispin examines flint tools. Benjamin Sass and Renate Rosenthal-Heginbottom give short reports on a late Iron Age-Persian earring and another from the Roman Period, respectively. The main body of the report is rather straightforward. Chapter one describes the site formation and history, including its role during World War I and the history of excavations. Chapter two covers stratigraphy and architecture. Chapter three describes the pottery and its analysis and Chapter four offers a summary and the conclusions of the authors. A bibliography and index complete the volume.

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of Neo-Assyrian Imperialistic Policies,” *PEQ* 141 [2009]: 188–206) and in Hebrew (“An Iron Age IIB Fortress at Tell Qudadi: A Preliminary Study,” in *ErIsr* 29 [Ephraim Stern Volume], eds. J. Aviram et al. [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2009], 192–205, 289\*). Both present interpretations and historical conclusions that the final report maintains.

Two clear destruction layers are noted. Not surprisingly, considering its location just north of Joppa, the ceramics at Tell Qudadi feature northern, southern, and coastal characteristics and forms. Based on the pottery, which includes Aegean imports, the excavators date the fort to Iron Age IIB, yet follow their Tel Aviv University teacher, Israel Finkelstein, and his other disciples by shifting Iron Age IIB from the period spanning the entire eighth century BCE proper to the late eighth and into the early seventh century BCE (187–195). This theory stands in opposition to the consensus view held by most historians and archaeologists familiar with this turbulent period. The recent Ramat Raḥel publications also adopt this new “low chronology” trend, which seems particularly problematic at this major Judahite site located near Jerusalem and likely based more on personal assumptions than on a reasonably viable, historical basis.

The authors attribute the fortress to Assyria, which is possible, but far from certain. Architectural similarities do exist with an Assyrian border military and commercial base at Tell Abu Salima (R. Reich, “The Identification of the ‘Sealed *kāru* of Egypt.’” *IEJ* 34 [1984]: 35, fig. 2), but not enough of the Tell Qudadi fortress remains to make conclusive comparisons. More significant is the complete absence of Assyrian pottery and finds, which greatly weaken Fantalkin and Tal’s interpretation. Moreover, the identity of Tell Qudadi’s destructive agent(s) remains conjectural. If Assyria erected the fort, the two destruction layers are intriguing and puzzling, but if a local polity, such as Israel, constructed the fort, several scenarios are possible. However, one should not speculate further. Nevertheless, Fantalkin and Tal seem to follow their Tel Aviv colleagues in ascribing various Iron Age II sites to imperial powers such as Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt rather than local polities. For example, Fantalkin argues that Meṣad Ḥashavyahu, a small fort near Yavneh Yam, was not Judahite despite the presence of Judahite pottery and its famous Hebrew ostraca.

Other scholars, including staff members from the Ashkelon excavations, have strongly contested Fantalkin’s view. Yet others, exemplified by a recent paper by Peter James, have embraced this highly questionable interpretation (“Meṣad Ḥashavyahu Reconsidered: Saite Strategy and Archaic Greek Chronology,” in *Walls of the Prince: Egyptian Interactions with Southwest Asia in Antiquity. Essays in Honour of John S. Holladay, Jr.*, eds. T. P. Harrison, E. B. Banning, and S. Klassen. CHANE 77 [Leiden: Brill, 2015], 333–370).

Responding to a 2005 lecture given by the authors, where they announced their re-dating and reinterpretation of Tell Qudadi as a Neo-Assyrian fortress, R. Kletter and W. Zwickel (“The Assyrian Building of *‘Ayyelet ha-Šaḥar*,” *ZDPV* 122 [2006]: 178) seriously question whether the surviving partial plan of the fortress and the use of bricks in its construction are indicative enough to make such a claim. I concur with Kletter and Zwickel and add another observation.

While this eighth century BCE fortress located at the mouth of the Yarkon River certainly had strategic importance for local and regional kingdoms, such as Israel under Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14:25), Judah during the reign of Uzziah (2 Chr 26:6) or a Philistine polity (198), its geo-political value and necessity for Assyria during Tiglath-pileser III's reign seems negligible. The main north-south route, incorrectly labeled the "Via Maris," passed through Aphek to the east, limiting Tell Qudadi's purpose to guarding the coast north of Joppa and monitoring shipping along the Yarkon River. In the years immediately following 732 BCE, Egypt remained Assyria's only credible foe in the region, and the impressive archaeological evidence that documents later Assyrian activity at sites, such as Ashdod and throughout the western Negeb, reinforce this supposition. While Tell Qudadi possibly served such a purpose as Assyria strengthened its hegemonic hold over the southern Levant during the seventh century BCE, other historical interpretations are *at least* equally plausible and, solely on the basis of current evidence, must not be dismissed.

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JEFFREY P. HUDON

González, Justo L. *The Story Luke Tells: Luke's Unique Witness to the Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. xi + 129 pp. Softcover. USD 14.00.

Justo L. González, retired United Methodist minister and professor of historical theology, taught at the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico and the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Georgia. González has authored several books, among which are *The Story of Christianity*, rev. and upd. ed., 2 vols. (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2010); and *History of Christian Thought*, rev. ed., 3 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987). His 2015 book, *The Story Luke Tells*, is a significant introductory text to the overall themes of Luke-Acts. It has eight chapters and a concluding section.

Chapter one surveys the unique role of Luke's narratives, stating that Luke's history is "the context of all of life" (1). Luke's unique narratives acknowledge the use of sources and chronologically situate his account (Luke 1:5). Luke gives attention to the social, political, and religious contexts of events and provides a wider scope of history. González illustrates this with the birth narratives, tracing the lineage of Jesus to Adam (Luke 3:38). Luke also incorporates the element of suspense, leaving the reader to guess the fate of the older brother in the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15), as he does in the story of Paul (Acts 28).

In chapter two, González reasons that Luke presents the birth of Jesus as a fulfillment of the birth typology of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samson, and Samuel, who were all delivered by women in unconventional circumstances. These birth typologies culminated in the birth of Jesus by a woman in one of the most unconventional circumstances of all. Other typologies in Luke include the "link between Jesus and the Passover and the liberation from Egypt" (19), the connection of Jesus the "son of God" to Adam the "son of God" (Luke 3:22, 38), and "the genesis of the first creation and the head of humanity" paralleled with the "beginning of a new creation and the head of

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a new humankind” (21). Yet Jesus is presented as the “counterpoint” (21) to these typologies by overcoming temptation and terminating the yearly sacrificial system of atonement in Israel through his death.

Chapter three focuses on the religious and social reversal themes in Luke-Acts. Religious reversals are seen in the song of Mary, where she describes how God overlooked the privileged for the lowly; in how the Gentiles seek Jesus, but He is neglected by the Jews; and in the Parable of the Great Banquet, where the privileged eschew the invitation to dine, yet the outcasts are honored. Other examples include concern for the one lost sheep over the ninety-nine, the new status of the prodigal son over the older son, and the acceptance of the tax collector over the Pharisee. Other social reversals are evident in the exalted status of Lazarus over the rich man; the prominence of the poor in Jesus’s mission statement and Beatitudes; and acceptance and commendation of the faith and deeds of the Gentiles, Galileans, Samaritans, and Hellenistic Jews. A key example of social reversal in Acts is the election of the seven deacons, possibly of Gentile origin. Jesus rising from obscurity in a manger (Luke 2:7) to glory and exaltation as a King at the right hand of God (Acts 7:54–56) completes the reversal theme.

The fourth chapter discusses Luke’s viewpoint of gender. Mary, Elizabeth, and Anna took center stage from the conception to the dedication of Jesus. A few other examples of women’s prominence include the widow of Zarephath, the healing of various women, the widow of Nain, and the commendation of the sinful woman in Simon’s house. González also suggests that Luke’s gender position is further represented by Jesus’s visit to the home of Mary and Martha, the parable of the woman with the lost coin, the description of the women in the field at the end of time, and the exaltation of the poor widow’s gift at the temple. In Acts, Luke’s perspective on gender is disclosed in the inclusiveness of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, along with the healing, persecution, and conversion of both men and women. Luke also identifies female prophets and leaders. In the Gospel, he juxtaposes Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna with the Twelve; women who were evident at the scene of the cross, at the tomb, and who were the first to declare the resurrection. Acts recognizes Lydia, Priscilla’s instruction of Apollos regarding doctrine and theology, and female converts and congregants (Acts 16:12–13).

Chapter five discusses the salvation theme in Lukan narratives. González argues that Luke, beyond the other Gospels, puts special emphasis on salvation and redemption. Definitions of “salvation,” and “redemption” are broadened to include anything from the “restoration from health, to liberation from an enemy or threat, and to the reclaiming of what properly belongs to God” (64). Thus, the proclamation of salvation through Jesus to the shepherds may have been understood as immediate salvation from the oppressive Roman government, rather than salvation from sin. González suggests salvation in Acts 4:12 may refer to healing rather than deliverance from sin.

Chapter six covers Luke’s theology on the topics of food and drink. González argues that the dinners Jesus attended always provided opportunities for teaching and ministry. The dinners in the homes of Levi, Simon, and

Zacchaeus, along with the presence of the Pharisees at some of these dinners, extended the great reversal theme. They also afforded Jesus the opportunity to speak of the hope of, and invitation to, salvation.

González assesses Luke's theology on worship in chapter seven. Zechariah is seen in the temple at the beginning of the Gospel, Jesus is presented in the temple, and his family went to worship in the temple. Jesus was at the temple at the beginning of his ministry and Jesus's disciples were in the temple worshipping after the resurrection. The *Magnificat*, the *Benedictus*, the *Gloria*, and the *Nunc Dimittis* advance the theme of worship. Communion was central to worship and provided opportunity for reading from the Scriptures. The latter was significant to worship in the absence of personal copies of Scripture. González suggests that Jesus censured legalism in his response to the critiques of his disciples' action of satisfying their hunger on the Sabbath (Luke 6:5). Also the parable of the prodigal son is a reminder that forgiveness, not self-righteousness, qualifies one for the great banquet. The Lord's Supper in Luke 22 implies eschatological implications of salvation and worship, announcing "love, justice, peace and hope" (108).

In chapter eight, González evaluates Luke's theology of the Holy Spirit. Some unique Lukan passages about the role of the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus include (a) the birth narratives (1:35, 41–42, 67; 2:25–27); (b) the influence of the Holy Spirit in the post-temptation experience of Jesus (4:14); and (c) Jesus's missional declaration (4:18). The Holy Spirit is also described as the greatest gift (11:11–13). Luke uses unique terminologies, such as "filled with the Holy Spirit" and "pouring out of the Holy Spirit," and describes the Holy Spirit as "falling on people" (114–116). In the structure of the Gospel, the Holy Spirit is central to the mission of Christ and, in Acts, he is the significant authority behind the church and its leadership. The Holy Spirit empowers leadership beyond the Twelve, opens new frontiers for ministry, breaks up social and gender stratification, and reveals sin and the future.

In the conclusion, González opines that the unfinished account of Acts is an invitation to participate in the work of mission empowered by the Holy Spirit as promised (Acts 1:8).

*The Story Luke Tells* is beneficial in preparation for an indepth study of Luke-Acts. However, there are several critiques. First, González appropriately discusses typology, demonstrating that Jesus was the antitype of some OT persons and events and, thus, the fulfillment of all OT types. However, the lumping of the typology of Jesus with other kinds of typologies and their extension beyond the biblical era may be confusing to some readers.

Second, González's hermeneutical approach seemingly limits the poor in Luke to being challenged by material poverty. His attempt to define the poor in the Gospel, based on the Lukan Beatitude account in Luke 6, does not match the reference to the poor in Luke 4. Thus, it would have been appropriate to make a distinction in the different passages based on what kind of poverty is being described.

Third, the author's openness to the interpretation of salvation in Acts 4:12 as physical healing, and not necessarily salvation from sin, seemingly fails

to consider the matter fully in context (68–72). Contrary to his argument, the context was the identity of Jesus, who had not only come to give relief from ailments, but offer eternal salvation from the consequences of sin. Also, ascribing all modern “healing” to Jesus seems to negate what Jesus himself had predicted about healing originating from other sources. All healing now cannot be attributed to Jesus’s authority, even when the healers would profess so.

A final hermeneutical challenge in González’s work is his interpretation of the “breaking of bread” in Luke 24:30; Acts 2:46–47; 27:36 (100–108). The first passage describes Jesus meeting with the two disciples at Emmaus; the second, the early church house fellowship meals; and the latter passage refers to Paul’s meal during a shipwreck. Jesus’s act of breaking bread and giving thanks does not transform the meal at Emmaus to a communion supper. In Acts 2, the breaking of bread may have included, but was not limited to, communion. In the same way, Paul’s breaking of bread in a disaster scene does not amount to communion. Further, the references to the first day of the week in Luke 24:1 and Acts 20:7 do not imply that this was the only day on which believers gathered to worship or break bread, as the author argues. Also, creating a theological link between the beginning of creation on the first day of the week to the resurrection of Jesus on the first day of the week in order to establish its importance above the Sabbath seems inconsistent with the biblical theology of the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship.

Though González’s *The Story Luke Tells* could be improved in some respects, it is a commendable introduction to the theology of Luke. Its presentation of reversal, gender, salvation, worship, and Holy Spirit themes in Luke are laudable.

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SAMPSON M. NWAOMAH

Greenwood, Kyle. *Scripture and Cosmology: Reading the Bible between the Ancient World and Modern Science*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015. 251 pp. Softcover. USD 30.00.

Kyle Greenwood, PhD (Hebrew Union College) has written a significant book on interpreting the Bible in relation to the tensions between ancient and modern cosmologies. His rank as associate professor of Old Testament and Hebrew language at Colorado Christian University and his publication of several studies on the Old Testament and its ancient Near Eastern (ANE) environment (229) make him more than qualified for this project. I appreciate Greenwood’s confessional commitment to a “high view” (29) of the divine authorship of the Bible through many human authors (9). This leads him to a “humbled” posture in presenting fruits of his “two decades” of research on “the languages, history, geography and culture of ancient Israel and its neighbors” with the goal of “reading the Bible faithfully” (11) according to its pre-Enlightenment (29) sociological (18), literary (20), and scientific contexts (22).

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The book begins with a preface, acknowledgements, list of abbreviations, and a chapter on “Scripture in Context” which introduce the major parts of the book. “Part One: Scripture and Cosmos in Cultural Context” presents a thesis on “the diverse ways” the ANE “concept of the three-tiered cosmos [heavens, earth, and seas] projects itself onto the biblical text” (29). This thesis is defended in chapters on “Ancient Near Eastern Cosmologies,” “Cosmology in Scripture,” and “Cosmology and Cosmogony in Scripture.” “Part Two: Cosmology and Scripture in Historical Context” describes how some interpreters of the Bible respond to tensions produced by scientific progress (*ibid.*). This history is surveyed in chapters on “Scripture and Aristotelian Cosmology,” and “Scripture and Copernican Cosmology.” “Part Three: Scripture and Science” presents Greenwood’s view of “an appropriate posture toward biblical interpretation in light of . . . science” (*ibid.*). This hermeneutic is presented in chapters on “Cosmology and the Authority of Scripture,” and “The Authority of Scripture and the Issue of Science.” The usefulness of the book is enhanced by a bibliography, an author and work index, a subject index, and a Scripture index (223–250).

Throughout his book, Greenwood wrestles with the thought-provoking tension that arises from his “high view” (29) of the Bible message as: “clear and unambiguous on matters pertinent to salvation,” but not on “all matters” (10). He effectively surveys many ways to affirm biblical statements on cosmology; however, he does not express confidence in any of these. For example, references to heavens, earth, and sea (25–26) may reflect an observational perspective without implying a commitment to ancient cosmology (102). However, the Bible’s use of ancient terminology and the initial Christian resistance to new scientific cosmologies (69) suggest to Greenwood that Bible writers presuppose the accuracy of ancient cosmologies (102). Similarly, while the biblical phrase “foundations of the world” is always “used idiomatically to refer to the beginning of creation” (138), Greenwood assumes that “behind the idiom . . . is the ancient notion that the earth had a literal foundation” (*ibid.*). In addition, while New Testament references to the light of the moon could be “figures of speech,” he cautions that we should not “jump to quickly to this conclusion” (145). Greenwood correctly points out that “the Bible never claims to be a scientific textbook” (202). However, he presents a debatable proposition that the Bible is “stuck between [the] two worlds” of ANE and Aristotelian cosmology (157–158).

In response to this, Greenwood recommends Galileo’s view that “if God was responsible for both Scripture and the natural world, it was illogical to conceive a world in which the two would be in contradiction. Where there were apparent contradictions, the problem was that one of the two were being wrongly interpreted” (169). For Galileo, “the Book of nature could supersede the Book of Scripture” with regard to scientific investigation (170). In addition, Greenwood supports Aquinas’s view that “Scripture may not always comport with scientific investigation” or “correct cosmology” since “God stoops” to the “intellectual status” of the Bible writers (199). At the same time, Greenwood correctly recognizes that even “our vast study of deep space

with powerful telescopes and satellites” does not enable us to “know enough to comprehend a divine explication of the universe” (202). Therefore, while “some Christians” “feel threatened by advances in science,” this “is rather unfortunate” and “ought not be” (205). “If as Scripture asserts, God reveals himself in creation, then the more we learn about his wondrous works, the more we learn about the God who fashioned them” (ibid.). “The God who created the cosmos and spoke through Scripture . . . revels in revealing himself through both” (221).

Nevertheless, Greenwood concludes that the earth-centered cosmology (which he views as presented in the Bible) has been proven wrong by the sun-centered Copernican cosmology. Further, “where the battle once raged over whether the earth was the center of the cosmos, the conflict now revolves around the issue of human origins” (212). Therefore, Greenwood surveys five ways to respond to this conflict.

First, Charles Darwin “affirmed, if unconvincingly [from a biblical perspective], that the processes of evolution were guided by the hand of God” (214). However, the other proposals are from Bible scholars who respond to Darwin’s proposal with the aim of defending the fundamental message of Scripture. (See R. A. Torrey et al., eds., *The Fundamentals: The Famous Sourcebook of Fundamental Biblical Truths* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990]). Second, Dyson Hague calls for “complete dismissal of Darwin’s theory.” Third, James Orr recommends that we “harmonize Scripture with the laws of nature” as understood by evolutionary science. Fourth, George Wright takes a mediating position, proposing that God created “several forms of plants and animals” that possess “a marvelous capacity for variation.” (217). Fifth, Benjamin Warfield proposed the concept of “mediate creation” which could be referred to as “*evolution*, . . . understood as God’s providential hand in the formation of new creatures” (219). I resonate with Greenwood’s concern that “we take care not to ignore” science “simply for the sake of standing on the inspiration of Scripture.” Instead, “we must be sensitive to all the ways God reveals himself to us, and to all the ways that Scripture and science inform each other” (ibid.). However, it would have been very helpful if he had provided more specific guidelines for evaluating these proposals.

There are many contemporary biblical scholars who propose additional biblical insights that are relevant for understanding the interaction between science and theology. For instance, biblical evidence has been presented for a two-stage creation that can harmonize with much of the current scientific understanding of the existence of the cosmos (stage one) at a time prior to the six day preparation of the habitats for life on planet earth (stage two) (Thomas P. Arnold, *Two Stage Biblical Creation* [Arlington Heights, IL: Thomas P. Arnold, 2007]). Also, there is biblical evidence that the genealogies of Genesis indicate a recent creation of habitats for life (Bernard White, “Schematized or Non-schematized: The Genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11,” *AUSS* 54.2 [2016], 205–235). The biblical record of a catastrophic flood is another way to resolve some of the tensions between biblical and scientific cosmology (Richard M. Davidson, “The Genesis Flood Narrative: Crucial

Issues in the Current Debate,” *AUSS* 42.1 [2004], 49–77). At the same time, it is important to note that many creationist scientists admit that they have not yet developed an adequate scientific flood model for integrating currently available data with the biblical record (Andy McIntosh, Steve Taylor, and Tom Edmondson, “Flood Models: The Need for an Integrated Approach,” *Creation* 14.1 [2000], 25–59).

Ultimately, the relations of biblical and scientific cosmology cannot be correctly understood unless we take seriously the message communicated through biblical cosmology. This is more than an outdated husk that can be removed in order to uncover the kernel of non-cosmological truth hidden beneath it. This insight is highlighted in three questions raised by L. Michael Morales in his review of Greenwood’s book.

“Firstly, how does one discern the line between language that is deliberately analogical and phenomenological on the one hand, and language that exemplifies a faulty science about the physical universe on the other hand?” (L. Michael Morales, review of *Scripture and Cosmology: Reading the Bible between the Ancient World and Modern Science*, by Kyle Greenwood, *Themelios* 41.2 [2016]: 303–304). Instead of a naive affirmation of ancient cosmologies, the Bible may be describing God’s creation as it appears to the human senses—which is compatible with ancient and contemporary cosmologies.

Secondly, “to what degree is [biblical] accommodation [to ancient cosmological language] a matter of navigating the tension between an audience’s limited understanding *versus* their misunderstanding?” (*ibid.*, 304). If we reject the cosmological language of Scripture because we have an alternate scientific cosmology, we may be rejecting cosmological truths that God is communicating in the language of an ancient cosmology.

Thirdly, “is it possible that the three-tiered cosmos is used purposefully in a theological, mythic, or cultic sense—and, if so, what gets lost when biblical cosmology is dismissed?” (*ibid.*). When we reject the cosmological language of Scripture we are in danger of also rejecting non-cosmological truths that are communicated through that language. While the biblical authors did not write “treatises against the scientifically naive viewpoints of their . . . neighbors” (102), Greenwood underestimates the extent to which they “engaged in a systematic correction of the pagan worldviews” (*ibid.*). (See Gerhard F. Hasel and Michael G. Hasel, “The Unique Cosmology of Genesis 1 Against Ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian Parallels,” in *The Genesis Creation Account and Its Reverberations in the Old Testament*, ed. Gerald A. Klingbeil [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2015], 9–29).

Greenwood’s *Scripture and Cosmology* provides an excellent survey of ancient cosmology, biblical cosmological language, and how interpreters of the Bible adjust to tensions produced by changes in scientific cosmology. He affirms that God speaks harmoniously through Scripture and nature when they are rightly interpreted by theology and science. Greenwood has not surveyed all of the available relevant research; this is probably because of the scope of what he aims to accomplish in his book, and because of the multitude of materials that are continually being published. Nevertheless, while written

in a way that can be digested by the general reader, this book also deserves careful attention by scholars who study the relationships between theology and science.

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MARTIN F. HANNA

Greidanus, Sidney. *Preaching Christ from Psalms: Foundations for Expository Sermons in the Christian Year*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. xx + 595 pp. Softcover. USD 33.25.

This book is the last volume of Sidney Greidanus's series on preaching Christ from the Old Testament, published by Eerdmans. The series reflects Greidanus's academic expertise, high regard for Scripture, and Reformed (Calvinist) background. Other books from this series include *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament* (1999), *Preaching Christ from Genesis* (2007), *Preaching Christ from Ecclesiastes* (2010), and *Preaching Christ from Daniel* (2012). The Old Testament is often neglected in Christian preaching due to its widely, but unjustly assumed, inferiority to the New Testament when it comes to Christian theology and practice. Some people struggle to see how the Old Testament relates to the person and work of Christ. In his series, Greidanus seeks to demonstrate that Christ, as God's self-revelation and salvation, is the very center of the Old Testament, and so should be of every sermon from the Old Testament.

In his book, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*, Greidanus provides seven sound hermeneutical-homiletical approaches from the Old Testament text to Christ in the New Testament. These methods are followed in this book, and are: redemptive-historical progression, promise-fulfillment, typology, analogy, longitudinal themes, New Testament references, and contrast (34–37). As the author observes, these approaches sometimes overlap, but the issue is “not so much to identify the precise classification as it is to find a legitimate bridge from the Old Testament text to Christ in the New Testament” (34n113). The goal of this book is to encourage preachers to preach Christ from all the Psalms (Christocentric approach), and not just to use a select few of the Psalms as preaching texts. For Greidanus, preaching Christ means “preaching sermons which authentically integrate the message of the text with the climax of God's revelation with the person, work, and/or teaching of Jesus Christ as revealed in the New Testament” (5). In other words, the author seeks to understand a psalm not only in its original historical context and the literary context of the Old Testament, but also in the context of the New Testament. The author seeks to demonstrate that there are ways to preach Christ from every psalm, and not only from the Messianic or royal psalms.

In addition to being Old Testament texts, the Psalms are viewed by some as inappropriate for preaching because they are biblical prayers, and so supposedly have originated as human words addressed to God. Greidanus addresses this and other common objections to preaching the Psalms, and provides a biblical-theological rationale for preaching Christ from the Psalms (ch. 1). He thus joins some recent trends that seek to restore the Psalms to

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their rightful place in Christian preaching (see, for example, the writings on this subject by E. Achtemeier, W. H. Bellinger, Jr., J. C. Howell, W. E. Hull, D. Macleod, J. C. McCann, Jr., and others).

Rather than spend extensive effort in discussing higher criticism in scholarship of Psalms, Greidanus does a wonderful job of giving brief practical guidelines for literary, historical, theocentric, and Christocentric dimensions of the interpretation of Psalms; this is certainly more relevant and motivating for the average reader of the book. Many readers will find the steps from text to sermon (37–45; Appendix 1) and the expository sermon model (Appendix 2) very helpful.

The main body of the book (chs. 2–23) consists of literary-theological analysis and homiletical exposition of twenty-two Psalms that *The Revised Common Lectionary* assigns for the reading in Year A of the Christian year (Pss 1, 2, 8, 22, 23, 29, 32, 47, 51, 72, 80, 95, 96, 100, 104, 118, 121, 122, 130, and 146). The author encourages preachers to choose Psalms as their preaching texts for Christmas and other Christian feast days, and not the usual biblical texts, thereby discovering new perspectives on these events. He applies the practical methods and steps of the interpretation of Psalms outlined in chapter one to each chosen Psalm, and, at the end, provides a sermonic exposition where the results of various analyses are integrated to produce a coherent and meaningful message. Moving forward from exegesis to delivering a sermon is often a challenging task. After they have gone through all of the steps of interpretation, some preachers and seminary students have difficulty understanding the significance of the gathered information, and struggle with choosing relevant information to include in their sermons. For this reason, they will greatly appreciate the author's easy-to-follow steps toward effectively bringing exegesis and homiletics together. The sermon expositions on the chosen Psalms are enriched by quotes from many renowned Psalm scholars of different backgrounds, including A. Anderson, R. Alter, J. Goldingay, D. Kidner, T. Longman III, A. Ross, N. Sarna, M. Tate, and S. Terrien. Each study of the chosen Psalms also includes suggestions for the worship service: texts for presentation slides, and a relevant closing prayer and song. Additional sermons by Greidanus (Ps 23) and his two former students, R. Faber (Pss 72 and 80) and R. Berkenbosch (Col 1:15–20), are given in the Appendix (Appendices 4 and 5).

One of the common objections to preaching Christ from the Psalms is that preachers might read Christ into a book that was not historically about Him. Greidanus disagrees with such a view. He believes that a psalm may have one meaning in its own historical context (e.g., the time of the monarchy), but it may acquire another meaning at a later stage in redemptive history. Like some previously mentioned advocates of Psalms in preaching, he maintains that the meaning of a psalm is not restricted to its original intent or use in Israel's liturgy. Thus, for example, the prayers for the Davidic king are no longer applied to the Israelite kings, since no king in Israel was ever fit to fulfill them, but instead are understood as prayers for a coming Davidic King or the Messiah. Yet, while it is possible that some Psalms acquired an

eschatological/Messianic meaning in a later historical and literary context, the notion that most Psalms originally contained the predictive element pointing to the Messiah lies at the core of the New Testament authors' view of the Psalms as prophecies about Christ (e.g., Ps 2:7 in Heb 1:5; Ps 16:8–11 in Acts 2:25–28; Ps 110:1 in Acts 2:34–35). Greidanus maintains that God's promises of a coming Messiah are not limited to the genre of prophecy, but are also found in the Hebrew narrative, apocalyptic literature, and within the Psalms. The New Testament writers recognized this in their preaching Christ from the Old Testament. Although he argues that preaching Christ from the Psalms means directing the message toward Christ in the New Testament, Greidanus seems quick to discharge the New Testament way or method of preaching Christ from the Psalms. He follows the generally accepted assumption that the New Testament authors did not interpret the Psalms in their original historical context and Old Testament setting, but rather, began with Jesus, and then chose the Psalms which reminded them of Him and "used" them to explain or illuminate His person and work (7–8). In other words, he believes that they read Christ back into the Psalms. Some readers may wonder whether Greidanus implies here that the New Testament authors were wrong in doing so, and would certainly appreciate more light on this subject. Some readers may also conclude that if we do not consider the prophetic aspect of the Psalms to be about Christ as the apostles did, then our preaching Christ from the Psalms may be reduced to comparing the message of a psalm with the message of the New Testament, and showing that they have similar and, at best, harmonious teachings. Greidanus is right in stating that the authors of the New Testament never intended to teach a hermeneutical method. Yet, to state that "today preachers cannot simply copy their way of doing so [preaching Christ from Psalms] but will have to use a responsible, modern hermeneutical method" (8) is a rather quick dismissal of the New Testament way of preaching from the Psalms. An important question imposes itself here: If preaching Christ from the Psalms involves moving forward from the Psalms to Christ in the New Testament, should we not pause, at least, to examine more closely the New Testament writers' hermeneutical-homiletical practice? If not, we may be at risk of uncritically following the modern methods of interpretation at any cost.

To do justice to the author, however, the importance of sound hermeneutics can hardly be exaggerated, because today it guards the interpreter against possible eisegesis. Far from providing a purely secular interpretation to the Psalms, Greidanus makes the Psalms come alive in the light of God's revelation in Christ. He shows how God "kept faith" with the psalmists by sending His only Son to this earth to reconcile us to Himself through Christ's death (135). Greidanus's analyses of the Psalms lead to one conclusion—that Jesus performed the saving acts and upheld the truth described in the Psalms.

This book is recommended as an excellent textbook for biblical interpretation and preaching for pastors, students, and laypersons. The author's simple style of writing, practical and clear steps, examples of interpretation of

Psalms and sermonic writing, and Christocentric focus will certainly appeal to the general readership.

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Heinz, Daniel, ed. *So komm noch diese Stunde! Luthers Reformation aus Sicht der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten*. Lüneburg: Advent-Verlag, 2016. 370 pp. Softcover. EUR 19.80.

In 2017, Protestants celebrate a very special jubilee, the quincentenary of Dr. Martin Luther's posting of his ninety-five theses about the Catholic indulgence, which is designated as the birthday of the Protestant Reformation. Innumerable books and articles have been published on Luther's life, his works, and his heritage. And this year, of course, the number is again going to increase considerably.

An interesting new perspective is given in this book edited by Daniel Heinz, written entirely in German. It deals with several aspects of Luther's Reformation from the Seventh-day Adventist perspective. The editor himself contributes five essays. As former Dean of the faculty of Theology at Bogenhofen Seminary (St. Peter/Hart, Austria) and presently head of the Archive of Seventh-day Adventists in Europe (Friedensau, Germany), he has authored books about the history of Adventists in Austria and Germany, as well as a biography of Ludwig Richard Conradi, the missionary of Europe. Added to this are numerous articles on Adventist history in Europe and other books he edited, mainly in the same field.

Another major contributor is his father, Hans Heinz, author of nine essays in this book. He is well known for his expertise on Catholic theology and Reformation history. He has published many theological articles and books, lectured for more than twenty years at Bogenhofen Seminary, and has been president of this institution for seven years.

The remaining fifteen essays are authored by other Austrian and German Adventist scholars (in alphabetical order): Thomas Domanyi, Walter Eberhardt, Johannes Hartlapp, Denis Kaiser, Dieter Leutert, Christian Noack, Rolf Pöhler, Winfried Vogel, Daniel Wildemann, and Reiner Zimmermann. The preface is written by Artur Stele.

This collection of essays moves from "Reconsidering: 'Repent, Germany, in the time of grace'" (part one), and "Evaluation: 'The Bible alone is the right lord and master'" (part two) to "Preserving: That the time of his kingdom may come soon!" (part three).

The topics dealt with include biographical aspects (Luther's vita, important journeys and places, his merits in terms of the German language, and Christian hymns), historical backgrounds (Europe and Catholicism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), Luther's view on pivotal doctrines (justification, baptism, and communion), his understanding of important Adventist teachings (the Sabbath, baptism and Anabaptists, and eschatology and the return of Christ), and implications for today's Adventist understanding



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of crucial theological issues (human liberty, assurance of salvation, faith as a result of divine love, Ellen White's appreciation for Luther, and the desire for Christ's second coming).

The articles are written in a style that is easy to understand, even for non-theologians or non-historians, and is published by the German Adventist publishing company. It is a work meant for both the Seventh-day Adventist Church member and the scholar. Most of the references point to Luther's own writings, sermons, or talks, and less to secondary sources. Many major events and minor details are presented without any further reference, likely due to the fact that there is such a vast number of modern scholarly publications on Luther's life, along with corresponding historical-theological facts. While it is interesting to have such a wide range of topics, from Luther's time to ours, from certain doctrines to more general theological attitudes, it seems to me that the following essays stand out because of their particular Adventist perspective: "Conflict or Consent—The Doctrine of Justification in Ecumenical Discourse," "The Unfinished Reformation—Luther and the Sabbath" (both by Hans Heinz), "Luther's Understanding of Christ's Return in his Time" (Johannes Hartlapp), "Hoping for Perfection—Luther and the End Time" (Winfried Vogel), "Ellen White about Martin Luther—An Adventist Recognition" (Denis Kaiser).

An alleged weakness might be the fact that a few of the twenty-nine essays are reprints of former journal articles, although they are updated and revised. While the evaluation of Luther's work, achievements, and heritage is generally appreciative, it also is a critical, but fair, description of his limits and failures. One article of the main contributor, Hans Heinz, may serve as an example. While he underlines in his essay on Luther and the Sabbath that the central question was not about the right day of rest according to the Scriptures, but rather about the authority of the Church, Heinz develops a brief overview of Luther's understanding in his earlier years (1513–1524), his conflict with Karlstadt (1524), and his sermons and interpretations afterwards (1524–1544). Evaluating Luther's explanations in the catechism, his anti-Jewish polemic, his lectures about Genesis, and his opposition to the Anabaptists, Heinz makes clear (though without verbally mentioning it) that this topic (the biblical Sabbath) was one of Luther's limits. He emphasizes that the Anabaptists were the more consequent reformers, hinting at the fact that the Reformation must ever continue—even beyond the limits set by Martin Luther himself.

This honest view on Luther is one of the great strengths of this book. It is not just another volume about this important historical character, perhaps condemning him because of his anti-Jewish polemic and his hermeneutical fallacies, or adoring him for his outstanding courage in the face of the overly powerful Roman Catholic Church and the emperor. It is a valuable contribution as a balanced evaluation.

Most importantly, it breaks ground for a new and varied Seventh-day Adventist perspective on the different aspects of Luther that are interesting,

especially for Seventh-day Adventists, their understanding of the Reformation, and key corresponding theological issues.

Seminar Schloss Bogenhofen  
St. Peter/Hart, Austria

RENÉ GEHRING

Jobes, Karen H., ed. *Discovering the Septuagint: A Guided Reader*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016. 351 pp. Hardcover. USD 39.99.

The field of Septuagint (hereafter, LXX) studies has mushroomed in recent years, with numerous articles, monographs, and collections of essays. Consequently, the book under review is a wonderful tool for intermediate Greek students interested in reading the LXX. The author/editor, Karen Jobes, is a recognized scholar in both LXX and New Testament studies. She is assisted in each section by one or more students who took her LXX courses or worked as her teaching assistants. The contribution of her nine assistants attests both to Jobes's pedagogical expertise and to the fact that the approach used here has succeeded in providing students with the necessary skills for reading the LXX.

The book begins with an introduction to the LXX, followed by ten selections from nine books covering a variety of genres, such as law, poetry, narrative, and prophecy. Each of the ten chapters begins with an introductory discussion of the biblical passage and a selected bibliography. Then comes the main section, which consists of the Greek text with various notes that include remarks on vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and translation technique (how it typically translates various Hebrew expressions). This is followed by the NETS translation (Albert Pieterma and Benjamin G. Wright, eds., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007]) of the passage. Each chapter also has a list of the LXX verses that are quoted in the New Testament. At the end of the book, there is a short glossary of technical terms and an index of New Testament LXX citations organized by order of occurrence in the New Testament.

The Greek text used in this book is that of Rahlfs-Hanhart (2006), which consists of the text of Rahlfs's 1935 edition with minor corrections. The author's choice of text is understandable, since the larger text-critical editions are either incomplete (Brooke-McLean) or partially published and still in production (Göttingen). Moreover, though the text chosen misses the more extensive text-critical notes of the other editions, it is the more affordable text that beginning students will likely buy.

This book seems ideally suited for introducing readings from the LXX in an intermediate Greek class. It is also a useful means of exposing students to Koine Greek outside of the New Testament. Nevertheless, it is important for those using this book to be aware of the fact that, since the order of the chapters follows the order in which texts appear in the LXX, and the chapters are primarily selected for genre variety, there is no obvious progression in the difficulty of the passages chosen.

On the other hand, students' interest in the LXX is certainly not limited to wanting to read more Greek, but also includes textual, hermeneutical, and

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theological issues raised by the LXX. That leads me to point out an obvious limitation of this excellent book. Discussions of issues such as textual criticism, the history of the transmission of the LXX text, or differences in translation technique in different parts of the LXX are sparse and short. However, Jobs cannot be faulted for this brevity, since this book is primarily designed as an introductory LXX reader. Rather, she deals with such important matters more extensively in another excellent book, which she co-authored with Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015). Hence, for a full introduction to the LXX, I recommend that students acquire both books.

All in all, *Discovering the Septuagint* is a wonderful way to introduce students of New Testament Greek to the language of the LXX, and by extension to the wider world of Koine Greek. It fills an important gap, and promises to be very useful.

Oakwood University  
Huntsville, Alabama

TARSEE LI

Kalleres, Dayna S. *City of Demons: Violence, Ritual, and Christian Power in Late Antiquity*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2015. xvi + 374 pp. Hardcover. USD 95.00.

Stories about demon possession and the interference of evil in the life of Christians were a part of my experience growing up in Brazil. I never underestimated the power of the devil; it is quite the opposite. My world was inhabited by supernatural forces, and I was taught that I needed to be constantly aware of them. Influenced by African religiosity and Roman Catholicism, Brazilian culture is permeated by the belief that supernatural beings are not only real, but physical, and part of the natural world. As I moved to the United States, I realized that not all Christians believed the way I did. In this “Protestant country,” I learned that demons and angels were considered less important components in our understanding of reality, and so-called supernatural manifestations should be treated as metaphors. My experience makes me resonate with Kalleres’s overview of how supernatural phenomena has been treated in the scholarship of ancient Christianity.

The methodological debate about engaging demons in antiquity is fleshed out in her introduction, where Kalleres gives an overview of how Edward Gibbon’s modernist (naturalistic) approach to history has influenced the accounts about late ancient Christianity. Having read her previously published chapter, entitled “Demon” (in *Late Ancient Knowing: Explorations in Intellectual History*, eds. Catherine M. Chin and Moulie Vidas [Oakland: University of California Press: 2014], 259–292), I found her methodological remarks in *City of Demons* less helpful than her previous works. I preferred, and would highly recommend, her discussion in *Late Ancient Knowing* as a better analysis of the subject matter than her introduction in *City of Demons*. However, her perspectives about the role of geography in shaping the ancient worldview in *City of Demons* remains a valuable contribution.

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It is common knowledge that late ancient epistemology assumed the existence of supernatural beings that interacted with humanity in the world. However, Kalleres points out that not all reading of ancient Christianity considered the existence of supernatural beings as an important component for our understanding of antiquity. In *City of Demons*, she follows the tendency of many church historians in the United States, who are deeply influenced by Peter Brown, by describing the past with a sympathetic eye. The book engages an important methodological question in historiography: whether or not a Christian historian, when encountering ancient accounts of supernatural phenomena, should report them as understood by the worldview of the ancients or by the modernist worldview. Kalleres takes the first approach of a sympathetic reading of the past.

*City of Demons* considers three cases of urban interaction between a bishop and demons in fourth century Roman Empire, highlighting the role that a city or urban landscape plays in the mapping of the world. Kalleres analyses John Chrysostom and Antioch (first part), Cyril and Jerusalem (second part), and Ambrose and Milan (third part). In the first and second parts, the description is divided in three chapters each, starting with an overview of the city landscape and how it was most likely perceived in antiquity. These chapters create the context for the two following chapters, where she describes how the respective bishops of each city (Antioch and Jerusalem) read the city space with spiritual eyes. The third part contains only one chapter, in which she uses the example of Ambrose and Milan to summarize the main points of her discussion.

In her description of the urban space, the author describes Antioch archaeologically and topographically, whereas in her description of Jerusalem she highlights how apocalyptic imagery, mirroring the examples of 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch, shaped the way Christians visualized the city. This is an important distinction, because she points out that ancient Christian's perception of a city was not restricted to present geographical conditions only, but actually encompassed God's prophetic purpose for the city as well. Thus, apocalyptic visions of urban space, in this case in Jerusalem, can be perceived in the way Cyril, the bishop of the city in the late fourth century CE, understood Jerusalem. Therefore, I believe that Kalleres's assumption that geography can help historians reconstruct theological ideologies is well established. This kind of reading follows a trend perceived in books, such as Christine Shepardson, ed., *Controlling Contested Places: Late Antique Antioch and the Spatial Politics of Religious Controversy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2014).

I commend *City of Demons* for its open-minded approach to using non-conventional aspects, such as geography, to demonstrate ancient Christian's categorization of human behavior as good (divine) or evil (demonic). As Peter Brown articulated, Christianity changed the urban landscape through its worldview by designating those places inhabited by either devils (therefore prohibited) or gods. Kalleres successfully develops this idea in her study of Ambrose. She compares the indwelling of God in the Christian body through baptism, the indwelling of God in the church through godly rituals such as baptism and the Eucharist, and the indwelling of God throughout the city as a

whole. She concludes that, of the three (body, church, and city), the sphere of most conflict, due to its transference of holiness and impurity, was between the church and the city. Thus, demons were most expected to inhabit this sphere.

Kalleres's analysis of all three cities demonstrates ancient Christians' demonology as articulated through the lens of epistemology. Space played a pivotal role in how things were understood. She points out, in chapter five (on Cyril), that ancient Christian epistemology was deeply influenced by Platonic and Stoic perspectives of physical matter and vision. I think that she could have been more detailed in all three parts, by tying together ancient epistemology and Christian demonology. This would have enriched the study and created a more cohesive text. Kalleres successfully highlights, in all three cases, the power of words and images as entities unto themselves. In antiquity, many assumed that words held the power of their subject. Thus, evil could inhabit words, themselves. Her analysis of demons in Antioch, Jerusalem, and Milan might surprise some readers, as it does not depict the demon-possessed as screaming, flying around, or contorting, as one would find in mainstream movies about demons, such as the *Exorcist*. Kalleres has demonstrated that bishops in antiquity were more worried about the power of words, and the evil that was subtly manifested in the cultural habits of the city.

With rich detail, Kalleres shows that Chrysostom, for example, considered the cultural practice of leading a bride through the city of Antioch in a wedding procession as a demonic event. The exposure of the virgin to the lustful eyes of males incited sexual desires, echoed in words and music, that Chrysostom understood as coming from the devil. These powerful, evil words would deceive and capture the minds of weak Christians and defile them. It should be remembered that cultural events like this were accepted by many Christians, Jews, and pagans as normal, non-religious episodes. For Chrysostom, herein lies the most dangerous artifice of the devil. By casting the notion that evil was normal, or even good (see the case of healing spells in Jewish synagogues), the devil would hijack the minds of Christians. For it was in the mind that the spiritual battle was waged daily. Trained eyes, such as those of Chrysostom, however, saw what carnal-minded Christians could not see. Daily activities like wedding processions or synagogue rituals were permeated with evil powers. To fight against this evil and protect their congregations, Kalleres shows that all three bishops used extensive biblical instruction and the rituals of exorcism and baptism as apotropaic remedies against evil.

Biblical instruction was powerful because words were also imbued with the divine. The struggle against evil in these three urban landscapes shows that memorization of the Creed, and portions of Scripture, was the sword of the divine Spirit against evil powerful entities. Only through the fortification of the mind with good words and proper rituals would a Christian resist the power of sin. In this mapping of the world, demons were found in mundane things like a spectacle in the theater, or in the preaching of a Jew or heretic. This highlights the fact that many Christians visualized the most dangerous kind of impurity and demon possession, not so much as a phenomenon that was clearly visible, but as subtle false doctrines creeping into their beliefs.



This conclusion indicates that ancient Christians perceived the devil as acting shrewdly. Instead of him appearing as a screaming demon-possessed person outside of the church, they would be more apt to view the devil as a duplicitous Christian elder, who is well respected in the church but secretly involved in magical incantations. This portrayal is still very relevant to how Christians today deal with so-called demonic manifestations.

Overall, I praise Kalleres's perspective as she objectively contextualizes ancient worldviews of the supernatural. Her decision to take a descriptive approach provides a valuable dataset to the reader, as it is left to the modernist to decide whether, as Chrysostom asserted, the demons indeed dwell in the hippodrome.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

RODRIGO GALIZA

Leaver, Robin A. *The Whole Church Sings: Congregational Singing in Luther's Wittenberg*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017. 206 pp. Softcover. USD 22.00.

Robin A. Leaver has made a major contribution during this five-hundred-year anniversary of the Protestant Reformation with his new book, *The Whole Church Sings: Congregational Singing in Luther's Wittenberg*. While much focus this year is rightly placed on Martin Luther's recapturing the long-lost understanding of salvation by faith, Leaver adds to the richness of Luther's contribution by documenting Luther's impressive musical talent: "The Reformation may have begun in 1517, but it can be argued that only after 1523, when the hymns first began to appear, did it really begin to take hold. . . . [and that] the Lutheran Reformation is indebted to its hymnody" (7). Reformation hymns express praise, faith, Protestant theology, and record history itself. Leaver likewise notes that "The singing of particular hymns continued to be the distinctive feature of later Reformation anniversaries, especially the centenaries of 1817 and 1917. But it was the bicentenary of 1717 that seems to have set the standard for future anniversaries" (6).

Robin A. Leaver is professor emeritus at Westminster Choir College and visiting professor at Yale University and Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland. His previous books include *Luther's Liturgical Music: Principles and Implications*, *The Routledge Research Companion to Johann Sebastian Bach*, and *Understanding Bach's Passions*. Thus, Leaver's immersion into Luther's musicianship makes him well qualified to write this book. The bibliography of his research for this present book witnesses to his thorough research. He also mentions how his idea for this book spawned: "The germ of the idea of writing this book occurred in the years when the significance of the chronological countdown to 2017 had begun to dawn on people, and preparations were beginning to be made with regard to how the half-millennium of Luther's protest in 1517 should be celebrated" (1).

Leaver then surveys published Reformation hymnody that was circulating, documenting this major aspect of the spread of Reformation theology. The printing press, such a vital part of spreading of Reformation materials, also

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made possible the vast circulation of the new Reformation hymns—even though the “development of music printing was still in its infancy and the technological problem of printing individual notes on and between the different lines of the staff had not been fully worked out. In the early sixteenth century, music was printed from woodcuts, a process that demanded time and skill to create, with an end result that was often somewhat crude” (12).

Significantly, Martin Luther wrote dozens of hymns beyond his famous hymn on Psalm 91, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God.” As already known, Luther tapped “into the familiar folk-song tradition. But the more one studies [Luther’s] stanzas, the more it becomes apparent that they were not written by a novice” (60). Not surprisingly, his theology influenced his thinking on worship, and he altered Wittenberg worship services, adding hymns he and others wrote, which expressed Reformation theology. Other worship changes, by Luther (and Karlstadt), included curtailing of daily masses with worshippers having many new hymns to learn as they now joined in singing with the choirs.

Leaver credits Luther with not only “the creation of vernacular hymnody but also of the long and rich tradition of the Lutheran chorale” (64). In 1569, Luther’s hymns were described thus:

Since the time of the Apostles, among all Meistersingers Luther has been the best and the most ingenious one; in his texts and tunes one does not find any unnecessary word. Everything flows and moves in a most lovely and smooth fashion full of spirit and doctrine; each word is a sermon of its own and reproduces its own reminiscence. There is nothing which is forced, artificial, patched together and spoiled. The rhymes are light and good, the words are polished and selective, the idea is clear and comprehensible, the melody and tune are lovely and full of heart; to sum it up, everything is magnificent and precious, full of juice and vigor, heartfelt and consoling (64).

Luther’s concern was to provide the word of God in song form for the people of Wittenberg. In the process of doing this, he developed a type of hymn that had an enormous impact on Protestant worship, including the Reformed tradition of metrical Psalms (hymnic versions of the biblical Psalms). Luther even sent letters to colleagues and friends encouraging them to create versifications of the biblical Psalms. Leaver quotes from Luther’s extant letter to Georg Spalatin (Frederick the Wise’s court chaplain and secretary):

[Our] plan is to follow the example of the prophets and the ancient fathers of the church, and to compose vernacular psalms for the people, that is, spiritual songs, so that the Word of God may be among the people in the form of music. Therefore we are looking everywhere for poets. Since you are endowed with richness and elegance in the German language, which you have polished through much use, I ask you to work with us, and turn a Psalm into a hymn, as you may see in this [enclosed] example. But I would like you to avoid any new words or language used at court. In order to be understood by the people, only the simplest and the most common words should be used for singing; at the same time, however, they should be pure and apt, and further, the sense should be clear and as close as possible to the Psalm.... I myself do not have so great a gift that I can do what I would like to see done here. So I shall discover whether you are a Heman, or an Asaph, or a Jeduthun [authors of some biblical psalms, see

1 Chronicles 25] . . . Nevertheless do this only as you have leisure, which I suspect is not the case currently. You have my *Seven Penitential Psalms* and the commentaries on them [Pss 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143], from which you can catch the sense of the Psalms (74–75).

Luther also wrote hymns on other parts of Scripture, including two on the Decalogue, and the Song of Simeon (Luke 2). Other times, he wrote hymns on biblical teaching, such as the meaning of justification, *Nun freuet euch lieben christen gmeyn*.

Many others wrote hymns on Luther's theology, such as Michael Stiefel (1486–1567), who, like Luther, was a former Augustinian monk and later the pastor in Esslingen (32). Notice his hymn, titled "On the Christian and rightly grounded doctrine of Dr. Martin Luther."

Without me you can do nothing,  
says Christ our Lord;  
the will must be moved  
by grace, according to Luther's teaching.  
It cannot move itself,  
yet help is not far;  
it will soon come to meet us,  
as I hear from Luther . . . (32).

In Nuremberg, where three successive imperial Diets were held, the Lutheran cause was promoted by publications of Lazarus Spengler and Hans Sachs—who both wrote pronounced apologias for Luther. Spengler saw Luther as the champion of Christianity and wanted his teachings to reach as wide an audience as possible. Within only a few months, he put Luther's theology into strophic verse, creating what would become a classic Lutheran hymn: "Through Adam's Fall the Whole Human Nature and Essence is Corrupted." This hymn subsequently was cited twice in the Concord Formula of 1577.

Hans Sachs wrote his own poetic apology for Luther, "The Wittenberg Nightingale"—700 lines of rhymed couplets where Luther's calls for reformation is depicted allegorically as the singing of a nightingale who announces a new day in the first lines:

Wake up! The day will dawn ere long,  
the greenwood now resounds with song.  
I hear the joyous nightingale,  
whose voice rings clear o'er hill and dale.

To you now, I must here reveal  
who is this welcome nightingale  
that sings the day, o'er hill and dale;  
'tis Luther, monk of Augustine,  
at Wittenberg he may be seen . . .

The heart of his verse presents Luther's vital salvation theology:

Here Luther teaches that we all  
the fellow heirs of Adam's fall;  
with evil passions, perverse will,  
no one can the whole law fulfil.  
Our outward walk may strict have been,

and yet our hearts are stained with sin.  
 Toward sin the heart still strongly lies,  
 which Moses clearly testifies.  
 Now, as the heart's by sin polluted,  
 and with God, man is so reputed,  
 it follows, we're all heirs of wrath,  
 accursed, doomed, to ruin's path.  
 He who feels this in his heart within,  
 has grief and torment for his sin.  
 He mourns, is anxious, in distress,  
 he knows his own sheer helplessness.  
 Then takes a truly humble place,  
 and then the day comes on, apace.  
 That means the gospel, God's own Word  
 that tells us about Christ the Lord,  
 God's sole begotten Son, who bled  
 for us, did all things in our stead.  
 Who, of himself, the law fulfilled,  
 endured its curse, its anger stilled;  
 who overcame the death eternal,  
 and triumphed o'er all powers infernal . . ." (46–47).

Sachs's final section narrates the history of the Reformation from 1517 to 1521. It is unsparing in its criticism of mass abuses, monastic rites, and customs such as pilgrimages, relics, indulgences, the pope, bishops, monks, and abbots—and their deadly treatment of the so-called “heretics”:

But now the bishops take their stand,  
 with worldly princes join the hand.  
 Who also thirst for Christian blood,  
 arrest these preachers, true and good,  
 imprison them in chains, and want  
 thus to compel them to recant.  
 Of fire they sing with threatening air,  
 to make them of God's help despair;  
 thus hedge the sheep, you may declare.  
 On some they secret vengeance wreak,  
 who fear not their pure faith to speak.  
 Some they hold fast in prison vile,  
 some punish with a sad exile;  
 and Luther's books they burn, 'tis true;  
 in many a place proscribe them too,  
 and he who in their hands may fall  
 may lose his good, his life, his all,  
 or torn be, from his household dear;  
 thus courtiers of the pope appear. (47–48).

Even women contributed to Reformation hymnody. For example, Elisabeth Cruciger (ca. 1500–1551), former nun and wife of Luther's colleague Caspar Cruciger, composed the epiphany hymn, “A Song of Praise to Christ” (77).

Leaver surveys all the Reformation hymns he could recover, describing their musicality and (helpfully) translating many of the texts into English. He also quotes extant letters from the time which help to inform the context and impact of the hymns, noting that “the speed with which the early Wittenberg hymns (1523–1526) were taken up and reprinted in such places as Augsburg, Breslau, Erfurt, Magdeburg, Nuremberg, Rostock, Strasbourg, Worms, and Zwickau is quite extraordinary” (140).

Martin Luther, as already known, connected Reformation theology with familiar vernacular melodies to help believers to learn, and also to help in understanding new worship arrangements. In his book, Leaver quotes title pages which give liturgical instructions for many of the new hymnals. He also notes that

[f]our of the preachers in the Wittenberg churches in the months when German hymnody was being introduced, 1523/24, were also authors of new vernacular hymns: Martin Luther, of course; Paul Speratus, already a noted preacher, active in Wittenberg between 1523 and 1524; Justus Jonas, dean of the All Saints Church and Foundation from 1521; and Johann Agricola, who between 1523 and 1525 was catechist and preacher while teaching biblical exegesis at Wittenberg University (137).

The book is packed with fascinating information. Leaver quotes letters, reproduces musical notation, and theologically rich texts, thereby greatly underscoring the importance of the new hymns and how music played such a major role in the sixteenth-century Reformation. In an addendum, Leaver includes Luther’s prefaces for both his first and second hymnal, “*Spiritual Hymns Newly Improved for Wittenberg*” (165–167). The feuding between Luther and Karlstadt is also informed by Leaver’s study of Reformation hymnody. The weakest part of this impressive tome is Leaver’s occasional “why” and “how” speculation of and reasons for what was happening. However, overall, the book is an outstanding and informative contribution to this Reformation anniversary year.

Andrews University

JO ANN DAVIDSON

Mueller, Ekkehardt and Elias Brasil de Souza, eds. *Marriage: Biblical and Theological Aspects*. Biblical Research Institute Studies in Biblical Ethics 1. Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2015. 289 pp. Softcover. USD 14.99.

The book *Marriage: Biblical and Theological Aspects* is the first volume “in a series of books on marriage, sexuality, and family” (xiii), published by the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Since seven out of the eleven chapters were originally published in *Le mariage: Questions bibliques et théologiques*, edited by Richard Lehmann, most of the book is just a translation from French. In fact, it also replicates the French book title. The four additional articles were written by Kwabena Donkor (ch. 1), Zoltan Szalos-Farkas (ch. 6), Ekkehardt Mueller (ch. 10), and Miroslav Kiš and Ekkehardt Mueller jointly (ch. 11).

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Unlike the French edition which divided the book into two sections, representing biblical and theological studies, the present book does not retain that division. In this version, both biblical and theological studies are intermingled. This does not necessarily demonstrate a lack of arrangement on the editors' part; the book simply seems to be structured differently, by areas of study rather than by type of approach. I detect the following division: Chapter 1: Religion and marriage; Chapters 2–4: Biblical studies on marriage; Chapters 5–6: Theological studies on marriage; Chapters 7–10: Issues on marriage—in particular, interfaith marriage (chs. 7–8) and divorce and remarriage (chs. 9–10); and Chapter 11 is a summary followed by three appendices: (a) An Excerpt from the *Church Manual* on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage, (b) Official Statements on Marriage and Related Issues, and (c) An Excerpt from the *Minister's Handbook* on weddings.

In the first chapter, Donkor, the author, contends that even though customs and laws change from culture to culture (11), a theological relationship exists between Scripture and church life, where the former plays a normative role over the latter's beliefs and practices (12–14). However, he does not insist on proving that the Bible elaborates on every detail of human life.

In the biblical studies section on marriage, Frank M. Hasel (ch. 2) develops a theology of marriage. He underlines that humans were created as sexual beings to have partnership only among two individuals of different gender. Consequently, all marriage that is not monogamic and heterosexual is a distortion of God's original plan for humanity (29). Corinne Egasse (ch. 3) provides biblical evidence to regard singleness as neither a higher, nor lesser, vocation. In other words, sexuality and spirituality are not mutually exclusive. Roberto Badenas (ch. 4) establishes that in Scripture "both the male and the female are given equal status, rights, and tasks" (75) and that conception is the biblical ideal before, and after, the fall.

In the theological studies section on marriage, both Thomas Domanyi (ch. 5) and Zoltan Szalos-Farkas (ch. 6) observe that "humans cannot be detached from sexuality" since they were created as "male and female" (102). But they point out that sexual expression is legitimate only in the context of marriage (105).

Also, both Hans Heinz (ch. 7) and Ángel M. Rodríguez (ch. 8) assure us that the term "unbeliever" in 1 Cor 7:15 and 2 Cor 6:14, respectively, refers not only to a person practicing a different religion, but also a different Christian denomination. Thus, Heinz and Rodríguez explore the delimitations of interfaith marriage. By doing a word study, Rodríguez discerns that the term *apistos* "unbeliever" in 2 Cor 6:14 is not confined to marriage, but to all permanent relations (170).

Both Richard M. Davidson (ch. 9) and Ekkehardt Mueller (ch. 11) survey the biblical data for divorce and remarriage in the Bible. The former focuses on Old Testament passages, whereas the latter focuses on New Testament passages. They concur that divorce is tolerated, but never commanded. Hence, Mueller argues that people should not look for loopholes to get out of their marriages. Concerning divorce, he stresses that the only valid reason for divorce is



fornication, because 1 Cor 7:15 refrains a believer from initiating the process of divorce. Finally, Miroslav Kiš and Ekkehardt Mueller (ch. 12) examine the origin, nature, and purposes of marriage and its relationship to church life.

In addition, this book has the special characteristic of being the first Adventist work in English that puts together a theology of marriage. Although other Adventist works, such as that of Sakae Kubo, *Theology and Ethics of Sex* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1980); and Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MD: Hendrickson, 2007), provide a theology of human sexuality, they were not the result of an international committee representing the mainstream views in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Also, Kubo's work does not interact with recent issues on marriage nor provides an exegetical examination of biblical passages, and Davidson's deals only with Old Testament passages.

Interestingly, the articles dealing with gender roles (chs. 2 and 4) agree that the Scripture presents an egalitarian view before and after the fall. While I concur with the authors (Hasel and Badenas), the use of the word "complementary" by Hasel (29), Badenas (75, 77, 98), and Zsalos-Farkas (128) should be reconsidered. At the present, sociologists call "complementary relationship" that relationship in which one partner dominates and the other submits. Thus, the term suggests a hierarchy of the sexes, something completely contrary to what the authors argue. Hence, if the idea is that of partners interchanging the decision-making power, they should use the expression "parallel relationship." In doing so, they will be in harmony with the proper argot currently used in social studies.

On the other hand, there are some hot topics completely passed over. For example, cohabitation is a big current issue, yet there is only one reference to it (201). Concerning homosexuality and transgenderism, just a few condemnatory references are found throughout the book (29, 198, 221, 266). Possibly, the editors considered it unnecessary to include articles on those topics because two other works dealing with homosexuality have been already published by the BRI (Ronald M. Springett, *Homosexuality in History and the Scripture* [Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1988]; Ekkehardt Mueller, *Homosexuality, Scripture, and the Church* [Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2010]) or because they will be included in one of the two upcoming volumes of the series.

Finally, it would have been valuable if any of the authors would have discussed whether Exod 21:26–27 justifies "abuse" as a reason for divorce, since there are a number of people who argue for the "triple As" (adultery, abandonment, and abuse) as valid reasons for divorce.

Regardless, these marginal observations do not negate the value of the book. They should simply encourage readers to look forward to the upcoming volumes, which most likely will include other, recent family issues. This book should be commended for providing an indepth analysis without using convoluted arguments. Hebrew and Greek words are transliterated and are mentioned only when necessary. In doing so, anyone (whether a theologian,

pastor, family professional, or church member) can benefit from its reading, enriching their biblical knowledge on marriage and related topics.

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Niesiołowski-Spanò, Łukasz. *Goliath's Legacy: Philistines and Hebrews in Biblical Times*. Philippika: Altertumswissenschaftliche Abhandlungen/Contributions to the Study of Ancient World Cultures 83. Translated by Maria Kantor. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016. 321 pp. Hardcover. USD 71.00.

As the title indicates, Niesiołowski-Spanò's book essentially comprises a historical-critical study of all biblical sources concerning the Philistines and their often volatile relations with Israel and Judah. In the introduction, the author describes his moderately critical stance as one which, on one hand, argues that the biblical historians compiled and redacted their works largely during the post-exilic period, but also recognizes that these same writers were "characterized by a conservative desire to preserve the early heritage." Although the author states that "the Old Testament still remains a valuable source of getting to know the realities of the pre-exilic epoch" (xi), his overall assessment is nevertheless overwhelmingly negative regarding the historical veracity of its contents, especially in regards to later texts, such as those in Chronicles, lacking parallel passages in Samuel or Kings. He suggests that the biblical Philistines "had very little in common with the historically existing people bearing the same name" and are "presented in a very anachronistic way" by the Old Testament texts. Thus, the author concludes that "one can speak of the biblical picture of the Philistines but its connection with reality is mostly indirect" (180).

The author's approach, in turn, creates a potentially serious methodological crux that becomes immediately apparent when addressing his main research question. For better or worse, apart from archaeological data, the Hebrew Bible basically comprises our best, and often sole, historical source for the Philistines from the late twelfth until the seventh century BCE. Thus, the author supplements the relevant biblical accounts with rather suspect anthropologically based analogies from much later and dissimilar cultural contexts rather than limiting his search for comparisons to archaic Greek, Anatolian, and Levantine sources. He also readily draws parallels from Israelite relations with the indigenous peoples of Canaan, even though these accounts originate from the same "highly dubious" biblical sources he rejects elsewhere, which raises the issue of historical-critical selectivity in his argumentation. Moreover, the author launches several ventures into peripheral subjects that, while interesting, shed only a modicum of light upon the subject at hand. His historical treatment of Israelite-Philistine relations, which arguably should comprise the bulk of the book, covers merely 80 pages. The brevity of attention and, more importantly, the lack of historical credibility given to biblical narratives regarding the divided monarchy is particularly apparent

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and, in my opinion, significantly weakens the usefulness of the book. There are some surprising claims, such as the author's belief that many elements from the Samson story derive from Philistine folklore, if not historical reality, a viewpoint buttressed by identifying the tribe of Dan and the Danites with the *Danuna*, one of the Sea Peoples. This example demonstrates one of the greatest strengths of the book, which is the author's careful study of biblical place names or "toponyms" and their corresponding contextual appearance(s) in the Hebrew Bible. A number of fine contributions of interest to biblical scholars are found here, such as the very interesting observations made concerning the biblical giants, specifically their relationship with the city of Hebron and their connectivity with later biblical and post-biblical literature (168–171). While not always unique, the author's observations and interpretations make interesting, if not thought-provoking, reading.

It is also important to note that the author presents his overwhelmingly text-based study with only minimal references to historical, geographical, and archaeological data and sources. This is especially apparent throughout his discussion of the various Philistine epicenters and satellite towns. Most notably, the author fails to discuss the location of Philistine Gath, a long-debated, historical-geographical question, nor does he mention the recently emerging consensus that equates this city with Tell es-Safi (Tel Zafit), based partly on archaeological data from the site (148–151). The inclusion of one or two maps to illustrate the extent of Philistia and its main population centers would have been helpful.

In the concluding section, titled "Terminology and Imports," the author presents a study of plausible to probable "Philistine" loan words imbedded in the biblical text. While not exhaustive (see, for example M. Ben-Dov, "גת—A Geographical Term of Possible 'Sea People' Origin." *Tel-Aviv* 2 [1976]: 70–73; E. Stern, *Dor: Ruler of the Seas*, rev. ed. [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000], 85–88), this annotated catalogue contains many examples of such terms potentially of benefit to specialists and demonstrates extensive cultural interchanges between the two peoples.

The bibliography is extensive and very helpfully divided into the following classified listings: (Primary) Sources, Dictionaries, Commentaries, and Secondary Literature. Apart from the brief and eclectic selection of commentaries, which omits a number of important works, the sources are well chosen. Unavoidably, a few recent papers were not included. Inexplicably absent was the important volume edited by Ann E. Killebrew and Gunnar Lehmann, *The Philistines and Other "Sea Peoples" in Text and Archaeology*, ABS 15 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2013). The production of the book is superb. Likewise, the overall editing and English rendering are reasonably well executed.

As is well known, the Philistines are a popular topic for historians of the biblical period and there is no shortage of literature, both general and technical, devoted to these famous, yet still obscure people that settled along the eastern Mediterranean coast during the twelfth century BCE. The appearance of this volume in the wake of various other treatments may raise questions of necessity. Nevertheless, *Goliath's Legacy*, despite its lacunae, is a

worthy contribution relating particularly to the Sea Peoples and offers a fresh historical-critical discussion replete with interesting observations and insights devoted to this formative period in biblical history.

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Peckham, John C. *Canonical Theology: The Biblical Canon, Sola Scriptura, and Theological Method*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. xiii + 295 pp. Softcover. USD 35.00.

John C. Peckham, associate professor of theology and Christian philosophy at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary of Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, has written a seminal work on canonical theology and the theological method of *Sola Scriptura*. It is a thought-provoking book and perhaps the most significant study to be written on *Sola Scriptura* and theological method in recent times.

Peckham tackles some difficult, yet fundamentally important, issues in doing theology and he does so with theological acumen and great skill. Peckham provides helpful guidance through a maze of different positions and theological approaches, old and new. In ten chapters, he covers the basic ground to lay out the parameters for an approach to canonical theology that has the potential to significantly stimulate the current theological debate.

In the first four chapters, Peckham competently addresses the crucial issue of canon versus community. What is the role of the canon and how is the canon established? Which has priority? The canon or the community? Peckham points out the crucial difference between what he calls “intrinsic canon” and “community approaches” and pinpoints significant implications that arise from the fundamentally different approaches. He unashamedly calls for the priority of the canon over community. Peckham proposes that “divinely appointed books are intrinsically canonical independent of extrinsic recognition” (5). The author identifies three criteria for books that possess some traits that assist in recognizing them as canonical: those “books must be (a) divinely commissioned as prophetic and/or apostolic, (b) consistent with past ‘canonical’ revelation, and (c) self-authenticating” (32). These criteria are difficult to sustain historically or scientifically and are ultimately based on faith. But they are congruent with the biblical account. Hence, he proceeds to list canonical indicators for this claim (22–47) and then addresses some historical questions related to the origin of the canon and extracanonical literature (48–68). Since no community is monolithic, Peckham repeatedly raises questions such as, “What qualifies a legitimate community to serve as arbiter of the canon and which community is adequate to determine the canon?” (55–60 and passim). These questions deserve to be taken seriously. In similar manner, the rule of faith and its value as interpretative authority is discussed in chapter five. With keen reasoning, Peckham points out the inadequacy of any communitarian approaches, even though they recently have become *en vogue*.

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In chapter six, “*Sola Scriptura: reduction ad absurdum?*” Peckham provides one of the best argued cases for the Protestant stance of *sola scriptura* in recent times. He skillfully interacts with critics of the *sola scriptura* principle and demonstrates that *sola scriptura* is neither reductionistic (it is not *solo scriptura*), nor self-defeating or viciously circular.

Peckham then attempts to put the *sola scriptura* principle to the test by tackling the theology of the Trinity in a case study (ch. 7) and by investigating the nature of divine love from a canonical perspective (ch. 10). Here he draws heavily on his substantial earlier research in his acclaimed books *The Love of God: A Canonical Model* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015) and *The Concept of Divine Love in the Context of the God-World Relationship* (New York: Peter Lang, 2014). Chapters eight and nine deal with the relationship of canonical scripture to Systematic Theology and the nature of Theopathic Language, respectively.

Peckham has given us a gold mine to explore. Throughout the book, his commitment to the divine authority of the canonical books is evident, but is never naively argued. Instead, his informed and well reasoned, canonical-biblical approach has the potential to significantly move the theological discussion forward and produce insights into the biblical-canonical text that will go far beyond confessional boundaries and traditional concepts. Whether one agrees with all his conclusions and proposals or not, no serious student of the canonical scriptures who is interested in pursuing a biblical-canonical theology will be able to do so without the proposals provided in this book. It might well become a classic that initiates a new school of thought and opens a way to a new theological ecumenism that is solely founded and grounded on the text of the biblical canon alone.

Peckham also calls for and demonstrates a pleasant humbleness in theological thinking (see his discussion 218–222), something that is strangely absent among many theologians. His own proposal is “not offered as the final word,” but remains “open to challenge and revision” (257). In light of this openness, I submit the following questions and observations, hoping thereby to advance the discussion, sharpen the focus, and reflect more deeply on several issues that need clarification.

Peckham’s claim that “divinely appointed books are intrinsically canonical independent of extrinsic recognition” (5, and passim throughout the book) raises some important questions about the canon and the text of the canonical books. Peckham claims that “not merely any prophecy is ‘canonical’ but only that which is covenantal witness to God’s redemptive event/revelation” (34n50). What is the difference between a “covenantal prophet” and an “ordinary prophet”? He claims that the process of revelation and inspiration is necessary for canonicity, but is not sufficient to explain it (cf. 38–39). For him, there are other factors that play a part in this process, such as consistency with past canonical revelation and the self-authentication of the canonical books. If later canonical books need to be consistent with earlier canonical revelation, how is progress in divine revelation and “new light” in later canonical literature related to a systematic ordering of the

canonical content? Is there a “*sensus plenior*”? Does a genuinely new element exist in later canonical books? How is this element harmonized with earlier revelation? Is the self-authentication of the canonical books the same for everyone? Is the self-affirmation of the canon limited to a minimum number of books? And if so, why? If God guided the process of the canon, why did God not guide every Christian in the same way? Why do different traditions recognize a different number of books as canonical? Peckham points out that it is no coincidence “that there is a common canonical core of sixty-six books that is accepted by nearly all self-identifying Christians” (41). And he aptly recognizes that this raises “a question for further study, relating as it does to God’s providence, etc.” (40n73). Indeed, these questions need to be studied in more depth and await further clarification.

Furthermore, what is the relationship, as Peckham sees it, between the canonical text of Scripture given in the sixty-six books of the Bible and different textual traditions that exist of those books? If the text of the canon is decisive, how are different textual variants related to the canonical text, and which canonical reading and variant should be preferred over another? This issue, too, awaits future exploration.

His remark that “Christ is also the center of the canon” (24) needs further clarification and differentiation in order not to fall into a Christ-centered criticism of the canon, or a canon within the canon, something that Peckham does not seem to support.

There is another area where Peckham seems to have overstated some conclusions or makes statements that appear to be counterproductive. He is certainly correct that there is no total neutrality in the process of interpretation and that “explicating the meaning in the text is an imperfect, complex, and continual process” (212). There is no presuppositionless interpretation of Scripture (cf. Frank M. Hasel, “Presuppositions in the Interpretation of Scripture,” in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, ed. George W. Reid, Biblical Research Institute Studies 1 [Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2005], 27–46). But to claim that “*sola scriptura* does not entail any claim to provide ‘doctrinal certitude’ or ‘unity of doctrine’” (162) seems to overstate the point and misses the fact that the canonical Scriptures are the very basis of any theological unity. If Scripture would not lead us into some theological unity, worshipping the one true God and following Him faithfully would morph into meaninglessness. Theological unity can only be achieved by Scripture alone. Why should that not be possible? Why did Jesus Christ and the apostles constantly refer to Scripture which, for them, was the basis for creating a community that was based on theological faithfulness and formed a visible entity (ecclesiology)? If we deny this fact, we rob Scripture of the ability to unite theologically, to create community, and to correct heresy. If the canonical text indeed holds priority, as Peckham correctly states (214), and if “there is a determinate meaning that the author intended to convey in the text” (211), then it should be possible, in principle, to arrive at a unified theology. To claim that “theological method will not lead to theological unity” (192) is unfortunate and seems to jeopardize his



otherwise excellent conclusions. It is often claimed that Scripture alone does not settle controversial debates like the Trinity, but it is not a deficiency or insufficiency of Scripture that prohibits theological unity. It is rather the diversity of traditions and thinking that challenges theological unity, and that needs to be brought into harmony with Scripture.

Peckham is strong in analyzing the deficiencies of various positions on the Trinity. He correctly points out that a communitarian approach and community resources are utterly inadequate in settling the Trinity debates, but he does not provide a thorough biblical argument in support of a canonical understanding of the Trinity. Perhaps this was beyond the scope of the book, but it would be helpful to explore that in the future.

In line with the above mentioned aspects, Peckham seems to envision a minimal, albeit not minimalistic, approach to canonical interpretation (219) that holds only what can be derived with confidence, “keeping in mind that certainty (interpretative and otherwise) is beyond our ken” (219). It would have been helpful if he could have been more specific in mentioning what can be derived with confidence. Unfortunately, he does not. Is certainty really out of the canonical picture? Does canonical theology evade certainty of faith? If all our findings are subject to revision, why can he be certain that his reading of the nature of the love of God is not transitory and subject to (substantial and significant) revision?

One also wonders whether “the discernible, demonstrable and defensible” canonical data that Peckham envisions is data that is shared by all, or simply by a majority, and then by whom? Peckham thinks that there might be “fewer conclusions held with confidence than one might have initially hoped” (219). But aren’t there more commonalities among believers than Peckham might be willing to admit?

One aspect that is strangely missing in Peckham’s otherwise excellent research is the question of the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of canonization, as well as in the process of self-attestation of the canonical books. This, too, might be worthwhile to explore further. There are a few books on the canon which would have added more insights into Peckham’s thesis and even strengthened some of his conclusions that are strangely missing. Among them are books by Robert Vasholz, *The Old Testament Canon in the Old Testament Church: The Internal Rationale for Old Testament Canonicity* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1990); Franz Stuhlhofer, *Der Gebrauch der Bibel von Jesus bis Euseb: Eine statistische Untersuchung zur Kanongeschichte* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1988); Theodor Zahn, *Grundriß der Geschichte des Neutestamentlichen Kanons*, 3rd ed. (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1985); Ingo Baldermann et al., eds., *Zum Problem des biblischen Kanons*, *Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie* 3 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988); Alexander Sand, *Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte, Band I, Faszikel 3a (1. Teil) Kanon—von den Anfängen bis zum Fragmentum Muratorianum* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1974). On the issue of *sola scriptura*, the following books are missing: James Barr, *Beyond Fundamentalism: Biblical Foundations for Evangelical Christianity* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), which, despite its title, does address

similar issues; John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (Philipsburg, NJ: P& R Publishing, 2010); John Whiteford, *Sola Scriptura: An Orthodox Analysis of the Cornerstone of Reformation Theology* (Chesterton, IN: Ancient Faith Publishing, 1996); Don Kistler, ed., *Sola Scriptura: The Protestant Position on the Bible* (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2009); Hans Heinrich Schmid and Joachim Mehlhausen, eds., *Sola Scriptura: das reformatorische Schriftprinzip in der säkularen Welt* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1991); Richard Ziegert, ed., *Die Zukunft des Schriftprinzips* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994); and Heinrich Karpp, *Schrift, Geist und Wort Gottes: Geltung und Wirkung der Bibel in der Geschichte der Kirche—von der Alten Kirche bis zum Ausgang der Reformationszeit* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992).

Despite these minor shortcomings, Peckham succeeds at engaging the ongoing scholarly conversation on theological method. While he describes what a thoroughgoing biblical-canonical theology might actually look like, and how it should be structured, it still is only hinted at and awaits detailed canonical exegesis and further exploration.

Peckham's greatest weakness is, at the same time, his greatest strength: "Because Scripture is afforded theological primacy by divine commission alone, there is no witness adequate to ground this primacy except God, whom we come to know through the Scriptures" (149n30). While an intrinsic canonicity cannot be proven scientifically, it is internally coherent as a concept and is unashamedly *sola fide* and, as such, fully *sola gratia*, i.e., utterly dependent upon God's grace and divine sovereignty. As such, Peckham is thoroughly Protestant in what he affirms from the canonical Scriptures and deserves a wide hearing and positive reception.

Silver Spring, Maryland

FRANK M. HASEL

Pierce, Ronald W. *Daniel*. Teach the Text Commentary Series. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2015. xvi + 213 pp. Hardcover. USD 29.99.

Ronald W. Pierce, professor of biblical and theological studies at Talbot School of Theology (La Mirada, CA), has engaged in a "close reading of Daniel" with his students at Biola University for "nearly four decades" (v). In the present volume, he shares the insights that he gained along the way, while aiming to interpret "Daniel on its own terms" (1). Pierce divides each chapter of the book of Daniel into one to three manageable sections, which add up to twenty-nine units. The author also includes four excurses labeled "Additional Insights." Together with the introduction, these sections increase the book to thirty-four chapters. The standard chapters in this volume have the same length—six pages—in accordance with the series's format. Chapters devoted to the text itself are divided into three segments: (a) Understanding the Text; (b) Teaching the Text; and (c) Illustrating the Text. Chapters also contain at least two textboxes which highlight "The Big Idea" and "Key Themes" in the selected passage.

In the introduction, Pierce affirms a sixth-century BCE date for the composition of the book of Daniel, while conceding that "internal and

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In the introduction, Pierce affirms a sixth-century BCE date for the composition of the book of Daniel, while conceding that "internal and

external evidence does not allow for rigid dogmatism” (1–2). He also supports Danielic authorship and considers the book “fully inspired and authoritative” and the narratives “historically accurate” (2). Pierce provides a summary of the criticism—from the time of Porphyry (third century CE) to the present—against the traditional date and authorship attributed to the book of Daniel, while also indicating and offering plausible responses. Pierce then interprets the four-empire schema as Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece, attributing the persecutions in Dan 7–12 to Antiochus IV Epiphanes (3–4). He presents the literary structure of the book of Daniel as twofold (chs. 1–6 and 7–12), mentions the apocalyptic genre, and reaffirms his canonical-theological reading of the text (8–9).

As readers advance into the commentary, they will quickly notice this is a visually rich volume which contains a great number of high-definition color photos that are relevant to the book of Daniel. In addition, Pierce often provides information regarding the ANE context that might relate to the message of Daniel. At times, he also points readers to the larger OT background and to pertinent historical material.

Regarding the content proper, the author differs from early Talbot scholars, who operated under the Roman view (see Charles Lee Feinberg, *Daniel: The Man and His Visions* [Chappaqua, NY: Christian Herald Books, 1981]). Pierce, instead, adopts the Greek view by dividing Media from Persia and by conceiving the transition from Greece to God’s kingdom as a “spiritual inauguration . . . at Jesus’s first coming” waiting for “its full establishment at his return” (47). It seems that the lack of consensus among those who hold the Roman view on the transition from Rome to God’s kingdom (46), along with the perception that “Greek views are not divided over systematic eschatology” (194, additional insights on 194n4), may have played a role in the formation of Pierce’s position.

Other reasons Pierce gives to support the Greek view are, for instance, that: (a) Media and Persia “appear in close proximity, . . . yet always distinctly” in the OT (103); (b) “there is no ‘king’ of ‘Medo-Persia’ in Daniel,” instead, “the kings and people of ‘Media and Persia’ are always mentioned in the plural” (47); (c) there are no “extant [ancient] texts” calling the kingdom “Medo-Persia” (47); and (d) “there was no ‘Medo-Persian Empire’” (103). Technically, such objections can be addressed from other perspectives—for instance, (a) this does not preclude some sort of alliance at the time of Daniel; (b) this word usage could be a necessity that results from such an alliance, especially in the case of a coregency; (c) this may not be sensitive enough to political propaganda and is also an argument from silence; and (d) this is a claim constructed from outside the book of Daniel (not in Daniel’s own terms).

However, Pierce’s stronger arguments for the Greek view lie in the textual and thematic links that connect Dan 2, 7, 8, 9, and 11. From the Antiochene consensus in Dan 8 and 11 (144) and then following some of these textual clues, Pierce expands the Greek view, as others have done, to other chapters. Thus, the Antiochene view is read backwards—from the end (Dan 11) to the beginning (Dan 2) of the book of Daniel. A detailed examination of

this approach would be beyond the scope of this review. But Pierce's reading suggests that those who disagree with the Greek view must examine the issue and offer better alternatives than those presently available.

Lastly, another issue closely related to the separation or alliance of Media and Persia (i.e., the choice of Greek or Roman view) is the historiography that informs the interpretation of Darius the Mede. Pierce follows the basic narrative claim of Herodotus, in which Cyrus would have subjugated Media before conquering Babylon (99). This view is also endorsed by a face-value reading of available cuneiform sources. From such a scenario, there would be no Medo-Persian conquest of Babylon nor would there be a Medo-Persian empire—not even a short-lived coregency of a Median king (Darius the Mede) with a Persian one (Cyrus). Bound by such framework and having no extant extrabiblical corroboration for the specific designation “Darius the Mede,” critical scholarship considers that character fictional. Evangelical scholars, in turn, often look for a match from a pool of options that has been limited by the historical-critical discussion. Within these parameters, Pierce mentions two of the most often cited names for Darius the Mede in recent scholarship—Gubaru and Cyrus the Great—and opts for the latter (102–103). One significant issue with these alternatives is that they are selected from a narrative that collides with canonical data since Media is mentioned in Scripture in direct connection with the fall of Babylon; cf. Isa 13:17, 19; 21:2; Jer 51:11, 28. It also collides with the book of Daniel itself, which seems to portray Media in formal, not merely cultural, alliance with Persia by the time of the demise of Babylon (see 5:28; 6:8, 12, 15; 8:20). Furthermore, the sources for such historiography are questionable. Herodotus, for instance, states that he is reporting only one of the four stories about the accession of Cyrus he is aware of (*Histories* 1.95); and the available cuneiform inscriptions may refer to deliberate distortions with political aims. Hence, they cannot be equated with factual reports without prior critical examination.

Before the twentieth century, a large number of scholars followed the basic narrative pattern of Greek historian Xenophon. Contrary to Herodotus, Xenophon speaks of a Median king who followed Astyages, named Cyaxares (II), who was also Cyrus's uncle (*Cyropaedia* 1.5.2) and who had joined forces with the Persians to campaign against the Babylonians (“Assyrians” in *Cyropaedia*). Such storyline and identification seem to be corroborated by Josephus, who reports that Darius the Mede was “known by another name among the Greeks” (*Antiquities* 10.11.4), which led many to identify Darius as Cyaxares II. After the publication of cuneiform inscriptions at the end of the nineteenth century, which seemed to support the Herodotean narrative, Xenophon's account was largely disregarded, though several modern and contemporary interpreters still advocate for or notice it. For instance, the identification of Darius the Mede with Cyaxares II has been suggested by Richard A. Taylor, Gerhard F. Hasel, Charles L. Feinberg, and C. F. Keil and mentioned by John Goldingay, Andrew E. Hill, and Peter A. Stevenson, among others. In the last twenty years, stronger historical research has surfaced to support Xenophon's narrative and to account for the data presented by the

cuneiform records. One such work is S. Douglas Waterhouse's short article, "Why Was Darius the Mede Expunged from History?" in *To Understand the Scriptures: Essays in Honor of William H. Shea*, ed. David Merling (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Institute of Archaeology, 1997), 173–190. Another important work is Steven D. Anderson's 2014 PhD dissertation (see his update, *Darius the Mede: A Reappraisal* [Grand Rapids: CreateSpace, 2014]), in which he critically examines the accounts of Herodotus and Xenophon while also assessing many other sources. Anderson argues convincingly for Xenophon's basic narrative and for the identification of Darius the Mede as Cyaxares II. Thus, in reviewing this historical issue, both Waterhouse and Anderson offer more viable scenarios for those pursuing a canonical reading of the book of Daniel.

Ronald W. Pierce's *Daniel* is an accessible and clearly written commentary. Readers who are looking for readily available information without excessive technicality may benefit from this user-friendly volume. Readers will also enjoy the large collection of images which illustrate the original context of the book of Daniel. A couple of potential drawbacks might be the methodological and historiographical considerations. Methodologically speaking, while the commentary attempts to offer a canonical reading of Daniel, in some instances, the author's interpretation will privilege extra-biblical sources. Historiographically, the Herodotean narrative that is used as the framework for this volume is, at times, incompatible with the historical data provided by Scripture in general and with the book of Daniel in particular. Despite these issues, Pierce's work hints at some inconsistencies within the traditional Roman views, and thus suggests the need for further study and constructive dialogue.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

FLAVIO PRESTES III

Porter, Stanley E. *The Apostle Paul: His Life, Thought, and Letters*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. xiv + 473 pp. Softcover. USD 40.00.

As the subtitle and the first paragraph of this book indicate (ix), Stanley E. Porter, by commenting on Paul's life, thought, and letters, attempts to differ from other recent publications on Paul that focus only on one of these three aspects. However, there have been at least two significant recent publications in Pauline scholarship that cover the same ground as Porter's book, namely, Udo Schnelle's *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), and especially his revised and enlarged second edition in German, *Paulus: Leben und Denken*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014) and the edited volume by Friedrich W. Horn, *Paulus Handbuch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

Further along in the preface, Porter clearly situates his work within Pauline scholarship. He "endorse[s] and even further support[s] traditional views of Pauline scholarship. These include the number of authentic Pauline letters, the major contours of Paul, the unity of the individual Pauline letters, Rome as the place of Paul's major letter-writing imprisonment, Galatians as the first letter to be written, to name just a few" (x). In addition, Porter also

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takes a stand against the new perspective in Pauline scholarship and argues that “in Paul’s eyes, Judaism would at best be characterized as a system that depended upon grace *and* works” (119, emphasis original). In following a traditional reading of Paul, he clearly differs from the publications mentioned above, since they represent a critical standpoint.

The book is divided into two major parts, “The Pauline Tradition” and “The Pauline Letters.” Each part consists of six chapters. Whereas the first part focuses on Paul’s life and thought, as well as issues regarding the form of his letters and the formation of the Pauline corpus, the second part provides a discussion of the introductory questions and a summary of each of the thirteen letters that Porter considers authentic. Major portions of this book’s material have been previously published as two chapters in Lee Martin McDonald and Stanley E. Porter, *Early Christianity and Its Sacred Literature* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000). Since this book is no longer in print, Porter decided to edit this material, update its bibliography, and add discussions on recent issues and summaries of all Pauline letters, which eventually led to this publication (xii).

A brief comparison of *Early Christianity and Its Sacred Literature* (2000) and *The Apostle Paul: His Life, Thought, and Letters* (2016) indicates that Porter edited the main text only minimally. Except for the added summaries of each epistle, the text is basically identical. His footnotes in the first part of the book, however, are significantly updated with literature published after 2000. In these footnotes lies the real value of this volume. Porter provides access to relevant literature on almost anything that has been discussed recently in scholarship regarding Paul’s life and work. Unfortunately, he did not have the same vigor for updating the footnotes in the second part. Some discussions, like those on the unity of 2 Corinthians or on the authorship of Colossians, remain almost completely without footnotes.

Porter claims to contribute unique insights in the following areas: First, Paul “had at least seen and heard Jesus during the course of Jesus’s earthly ministry.” Second, “Paul, not one of his closest followers or a later associate, had a major role to play in the initial gathering of the Pauline letter collection.” Third, “there is significant evidence . . . that pseudepigraphal authorship was not widely accepted in the ancient world.” Fourth, Porter adopts “differing views on Pauline chronology.” Fifth, he claims to bring together Paul’s Greco-Roman background and his Jewish heritage “in a unique way.” Sixth, he believes “that there is greater continuity between the Paul we observe in and through his letters and the Paul depicted in the book of Acts.” Last, he proposes a differentiation of “two major levels of his [Paul] theological thought—the assumptions that he brings to his thought and the developed thoughts that elaborate his major ideas” (xi). To evaluate Porter’s claim of unique contributions, it seems to me that his first and second points are unique, whereas his material from the third point onwards is also found in other Pauline scholarship that has adopted a more traditional point of view, such as, the introduction by D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo (*An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005]), whose first



edition was published back in 1992. Therefore, I only will discuss the first two points in detail.

Reading Porter's argumentation for his unique contributions regarding the relationship of Paul and Jesus and the formation of the Pauline corpus, I was not convinced by either one. Porter believes that Paul most likely met Jesus in person, which would have implications on the question of continuity and discontinuity between Jesus's and Paul's theology (33–38). He believes that their parallel lives, the dialogue on the street to Damascus, and Paul's statements in 1 Cor 9:1 and 2 Cor 5:16 all indicate that Paul must have known Jesus in person before his crucifixion. Whereas the parallel lives of Jesus and Paul may provide the necessary ground for such a speculation, Porter's attempt to prove this speculation on an exegetical level, based on the mentioned passages, remains only an attempt. There are stronger ways to prove the continuity between Jesus's and Paul's theology than Porter's attempt to prove the speculation that they knew each other in person.

Similarly speculative is Porter's argument that Paul initiated the collecting of his own epistles to form the Pauline corpus. Besides the assumption that Paul followed the custom of his times, keeping a copy of each letter for himself, Porter's only argument is  $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ , a papyrus dated around 200 CE, containing most of the Pauline epistles with the exception of 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, and the Pastoral Epistles. Porter argues that the condition of the manuscript indicates that, at one point, it might have included the missing epistles (170, 176). However, this papyrus simply cannot serve as proof that Paul, who died, at best, a century earlier, initiated the collection of the letters. In addition, if this papyrus has Hebrews between Romans and 1 Corinthians, it makes me wonder why Porter argues that Hebrews "is not Pauline in the same sense as the other thirteen letters" (177n67).

The second part of the book contains Porter's discussions on the thirteen epistles that claim Pauline authorship. Porter aims "not so much to convince the reader of any one position as to present each reader with sufficient data to arrive at their own informed decision" (183–184). Reading the second part, Porter indeed covers all the major critical issues and presents each viewpoint in a fair and comprehensive way. However, readers should know that Porter allows himself to "take position and draw conclusions" (183). In doing so, the way he presents the data understandably favors mostly the traditional position, with the exception of advocating the south Galatia hypothesis and, thus, an early dating of Galatians.

Readers of this volume definitely get a well informed and comprehensive introduction to Paul's life, thought, and letters. Thus, this volume fits any need of an introduction to Pauline Theology from a traditional viewpoint. The only downside I can think of, besides my disagreements with some of Porter's unique contributions, is that Porter does not go beyond the data that is found in other introductions to the New Testament with a traditional approach. Overall, those volumes have the advantage over this work in that they cover relevant material beyond Paul and the Pauline corpus, such as the

Gospels, the synoptic problem, Acts, the general Epistles, Revelation, and the process of the formation of the New Testament canon.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

DOMINIC BORNAND

Provan, Iain. *Discovering Genesis: Content, Interpretation, Reception*. Discovering Biblical Texts. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. ix + 214 pp. Softcover. USD 22.00.

Iain Provan's introduction to the first book of the Judeo-Christian canon is to be commended for some achievements, of which the most important is its selective—nevertheless wide—presentation of Genesis's reception history. As such, it is not alone in the contemporary scholarly panorama. It follows the same lines as the third section of Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen, eds., *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, VTSup 152 (Leiden: Brill, 2012); and Peter Thacher Lanfer, *Remembering Eden: The Reception History of Genesis 3:22–24* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Unlike these authors, however, Provan seeks to introduce the reader to what he calls the “literal sense” of Genesis's text. In the process, Provan aligns his work with theoretical conventions accepted in some contemporaneous works. He is in line, for example, with John Walton's avoidance of reading Genesis as speaking to modern notions regarding history and historiographical causality in *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), and with Robert Alter's view of Genesis as representing a high level of literary artistry in *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

The introduction of the book proposes a literary structure of twelve acts within Genesis, based on the *toledot* formulae, which serves as an outline for Provan's further exploration of Genesis. The next two chapters are dedicated to discussing the history of the interpretation of Genesis from the earliest stages of its reception to modern interpretation. These chapters show a selective approach to the data, betraying the author's project of demonstrating an interpretative concern with the literal sense of Genesis throughout the ages. The fourth chapter is designed to place Genesis in history and time. Chapters 5–11 unpack Provan's reading of Genesis's proposed twelve-act structure, and further display the reception history of specific passages.

The assessment of primary sources in regard to the reception of Genesis is an important feature of this book. I agree with the scholars who endorse the book on the back cover, that this characteristic is to be received as a real contribution. Provan extends his analysis to the visual arts, which allows the reader to assess the impact of Genesis—mainly—on Western culture. I find, however, that this is not the first impression for the unaware reader. The chapters dedicated to the discussion of the interpretation of Genesis are, rather, a presentation of the overall lines of interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in history and only somewhat focused on texts from Genesis. I was not able to see a real contribution in this area until I reached the chapters dealing with the textual commentary, where Provan discusses the reception history

Gospels, the synoptic problem, Acts, the general Epistles, Revelation, and the process of the formation of the New Testament canon.

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The assessment of primary sources in regard to the reception of Genesis is an important feature of this book. I agree with the scholars who endorse the book on the back cover, that this characteristic is to be received as a real contribution. Provan extends his analysis to the visual arts, which allows the reader to assess the impact of Genesis—mainly—on Western culture. I find, however, that this is not the first impression for the unaware reader. The chapters dedicated to the discussion of the interpretation of Genesis are, rather, a presentation of the overall lines of interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in history and only somewhat focused on texts from Genesis. I was not able to see a real contribution in this area until I reached the chapters dealing with the textual commentary, where Provan discusses the reception history

in detail. This strategy would be more effective if it were made explicit in the introduction, allowing for a more efficacious plan of reading.

Although I did not find myself agreeing with all of his interpretations, Provan's reading of Genesis is insightful in various areas. He sets himself toward a more synchronic reading of the text, unpacking interesting intra-textual correlations and refined word studies. Synchrony for him, however, seems to operate within an intentional response of sixth-century BCE authors who reacted to religious notions that were present in the Exile, during what Karl Jaspers called the "Axial Age" ("The Axial Age of Human History: A Base for the Unity of Mankind," *Commentary* 6.5 [1948]: 430–435). The Axial Age comprises the deep religious innovations that happened between the eighth and the second centuries BCE in several cultures around the world. However, I find that this proposal operates more on a theoretical level than on an objective level regarding Genesis, since the linguistic patterns provided and/or resemblances with this innovative spirit are not distinctive to this alleged relation. They work well with the assumption of a much older setting, as Jacques B. Doukhan has just proposed in *Genesis, Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary* 1 (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2016), and Duane A. Garrett already postulated in *Rethinking Genesis: The Sources and Authorship of the First Book of the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991).

The Axial Age concept allows Provan to solve direction-of-dependence issues between Genesis and other texts. For example, it offers the basis for claiming that Genesis used temple texts for its depiction of the Garden of Eden, and not the other way around (56–57). The concept does not, however, satisfactorily support Provan's literal reading of other texts, since it seems improbable that sixth-century authors would be reacting to old Egyptian forms of religion alongside "newer" Babylonian ones, even if they had received texts from a hypothetical older Mosaic Yahwistic tradition (56). If such is the case, as Provan suggests, against which background is the literal meaning to be seen? Is it to be read against the old setting, of which we cannot be sure the last authors were fully aware, or against the new setting in Exile? In other words, the reception of an old story does not necessarily implicate a full awareness of specific historical issues of older settings by the receiver, which potentially disrupts an attempt to assess Genesis's literal meaning.

The book offers an effective strategy for an introduction to the text of Genesis. It uses a topical approach, displaying the main issues regarding each of the individual passages. Each topic is presented in connection with a close reading of the given passage. I find Provan's reading insightful at several points: for example, his view of the extensive nature of YHWH's blessing over the Sabbath (67), his debate on the anachronistic nature of the hierarchical reading of the creation of Adam and Eve (87), and the demonstration of parallel language between the creation and the flood accounts (112). Furthermore, despite the analysis of Hebrew terms and sentences and his fine argumentation, the book is very accessible in language and content, making it a good introduction for the reader with some knowledge about other possibilities for

the milieu of Genesis. Nevertheless, the critical reader will benefit from the massive amount of information that Provan condenses into such a small space.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

FELIPE MASOTTI

Rodríguez, Ángel Manuel, ed. *Worship, Ministry, and the Authority of the Church*. Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology 3. Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2016. xiii + 429 pp. Softcover. USD 19.99.

*Worship, Ministry, and the Authority of the Church* is the third volume that the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) has produced in its series, Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology. The first volume, *Toward a Theology of the Remnant* Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology 1 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), and the second, titled *Message, Mission, and Unity of the Church*, Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology 2 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2013), were edited by Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, a Seventh-day Adventist theologian, who began his work for the BRI in 1992 and served as director from 2001 to 2011. Rodríguez explains that it is not the purpose of this series to formulate “an integrated ecclesiology,” but to provide “guidance and certain biblical and theological parameters within which such an Adventist ecclesiology could be formally developed” (1). As evident by its title, this third volume, which is herein reviewed, reflects on the topics of worship, ministry, and authority.

These three topics are analyzed historically, theologically, and exegetically throughout seventeen chapters. The first four cover the theology of worship in different moments in history. Sergio E. Becerra wrote the first two chapters, which focus on worship in relation to the Magisterial Reformers and sixteenth-century Anabaptist reformers, respectively. Becerra outlines aspects of worship that Adventists should emphasize and things that they should avoid. Theodore N. Leverov authored chapter three, which centers on worship in the Adventist Church from 1845 to the 1900s. He notes that Adventist worship has evolved over time and stresses that worship must remain flexible in Adventist churches around the world. Denis Fortin’s chapter emphasizes three key concepts that Ellen G. White used to articulate her understanding of worship and liturgy.

The next four chapters focus on the theology of worship. In chapter five, Daniel Oscar Plenc lays the groundwork for an Adventist theology of worship with eight key elements for a theology of worship and seven principles for liturgical practice. Rodríguez wrote the sixth chapter, which is focused on the theological significance of various elements of Adventist worship. Next, Sung Ik Kim argues that it is necessary to contextualize worship so that postmodernists will find it attractive, which requires a continual evaluation of liturgy, traditions, music, doctrine, fellowship, and the use of technology. In chapter eight, Norman Gulley focuses on baptism, foot washing, and the Lord’s Supper, stressing that these ordinances should not be viewed sacramentally, but should be “entered into within the context of the cosmic controversy” (209).

The last nine chapters are focused on the topic of authority in the church. Frank M. Hasel writes on apostolicity in chapter nine and Ekkehardt Mueller

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addresses the priesthood of all believers in chapter ten. In chapter eleven, Jerry Moon, Jesse Tennison, and Denis Fortin focus on the nature, function, and authority of the Adventist minister in Ellen White's writings. Teresa Reeve authored chapters twelve and thirteen, which are devoted to the authority of the church in the New Testament. Miroslav Kiš argues, in chapter fourteen, that church discipline should not permanently separate anyone from church fellowship or Christ, but that the church must lovingly fight to restore all relationships.

Rodríguez also authored chapter fifteen, in which he argues that General Conference sessions are the "final authority" in the Adventist Church. Eugene Zaitsev follows this with a chapter on unity and authority in the Orthodox Church, utilizing the concept, *sobornost*, or conciliarity, as a tool for thinking of General Conference sessions as the final authority in the Adventist Church. Finally, Lowell C. Cooper outlines some trends and factors that will continue to affect Adventism and stresses that the organizational structure must remain adaptable to readily facilitate the mission of the church.

*Worship, Ministry, and the Authority of the Church* concludes with three consensus statements in different appendices. The first two were prepared by the Global Mission Issues Committee (ADCOM-S), edited by the BRI, and approved by the General Conference Administrative Committee in 2003. The first is titled, "Guidelines for Engaging in Global Mission: Forms of Worship, Contextualization and Syncretism," and the second is called, "A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music." The final appendix features the "Consensus Statement on a Seventh-day Adventist Theology of Ordination" that was prepared by the Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC) in 2014.

The BRI Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology series has helped fill an important gap in Seventh-day Adventist theology. These three volumes fit nicely with other recent works on ecclesiology, such as Norman Gulley, *The Church and the Last Things*, vol. 4 of *Systematic Theology* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2016). As Rodríguez has stressed, the work of crafting an Adventist ecclesiology is far from complete, but the process has begun. In addition to theologians and biblical scholars, more historians need to take up this task, so that Adventist theological perspectives are contextualized in each stage of ecclesiological evolution over the past 170 years.

*Worship, Ministry, and the Authority of the Church* is informative, well organized, and raises questions for further investigation. For example, numerous forms of worship found in the Bible are praised, such as congregational singing, the use of musical instruments, returning tithes and offerings, preaching the Word, and various prayer positions (kneeling, standing, sitting down, and prostrating the body), while other biblical expressions of worship are condemned, such as religious dancing. An exegetical argument for rejecting this aspect of worship is not outlined in the book and it seems that passages in Scripture that affirm religious dancing as a legitimate act of worship are intentionally ignored (e.g., Exod 15:20; 2 Sam 6:14; 1 Chr 15:29; Ps 30:11; 149:3; 150:4). Though certain Adventist cultures and subcultures condemn religious dancing, others do not. Since this practice is affirmed in Scripture,

perhaps Adventist ecclesialogists need to outline a theology of worship that is principle-based. For better or worse, culture plays a role in establishing the worship norms for communities around the world. It therefore seems necessary to understand more about the relationship between culture and religion before an Adventist ecclesiology can be fully developed.

The role of culture is intimately connected with emotional performances in worship. The concept of emotion and the body is mentioned, but not unpacked (cf. 146–147). A number of scholars have advanced the study of emotion in recent years and their work could bolster the study of emotion in relation to Adventist worship. In particular, Arlie Russell Hochschild's concept of "feeling rules," William M. Reddy's concepts of "emotional regimes" and "emotional refuges," Barbara H. Rosenwein's concept of "emotional communities," and Geoffrey M. White's concept of "emotive institutions" could enable scholars to provide a richer analysis of, and theology for, worship in the church in relation to Adventism's cultures and subcultures. Globalism seems to be Adventism's greatest blessing and challenge, and further study is needed to address the maintenance of unity amidst such great diversity.

Like any good book, *Worship, Ministry, and the Authority of the Church* raises further questions while addressing others. The chapters are thought provoking and foundational. Worship, ministry, and authority are important topics for study, especially as Seventh-day Adventism grows in its diversity. This book, therefore, receives my full recommendation and should be studied by church leaders and members alike as the church articulates its ecclesiological identity in the world.

Tallahassee, Florida

KEVIN BURTON

Strawn, Brent A., ed. *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Law*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. xxxviii + 555, xxiv + 545 pp. Hardcover. USD 395.00.

The *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Law (OEBL)* is part of the recently launched Oxford Encyclopedias of the Bible series. This new reference work appears in "two-volume sets, each of which is devoted to a particular subject or approach" (1:xi). So far, sets on the Books of the Bible (2011), Archaeology (2013), Biblical Interpretation (2013), Ethics (2014), Gender Studies (2014), Theology (2014), Arts (2015), and Law (2015) have been released. The chosen format allows for articles that are longer than those typically found in traditional Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias. This results in a more in-depth analysis of a given subject and gives unique value to this reference work series.

Brent A. Strawn is the editor-in-chief of the *OEBL* and currently works as an Old Testament professor and Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. In the preface, Strawn justifies the *raison d'être* of this particular encyclopedia by pointing out the deep interconnections between the Bible and the law throughout history. The contributors of the more than 130 articles were asked to pay attention to: (a) Biblical law: Content, collections, genres; (b) The (ancient) contexts of



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biblical law; and (c) The afterlife and influence of biblical law. Since *OEBL* claims to cover both content and methodology of current scholarship, Strawn and his editorial team attempted “to make the work one of lasting significance—especially for its intended audience” (1:xvi), namely, “students, researchers, and academics but also, given the nature of the topics at hand, those with more practical interests, including lawyers, clergy, policy makers, journalists, and the like” (ibid.).

The *OEBL* stands out for the excellent style and layout of its articles. Unlike other encyclopedias, the *OEBL* avoids the frequent use of abbreviations and technical terminology. Thus, the articles can serve readers who need an introduction to a given field. The page layout of the articles allows for a smooth reading experience, with a comfortable combination of font size, spacing, and kerning, along with ample margins for commenting, if needed.

In regard to its user-friendliness, however, the *OEBL* leaves much to be desired. The editors include three tools for the reader to use for accessing the encyclopedia’s information: (a) a list in the front of the first volume of each article included in both volumes (1:ix–x); (b) an index at the end of the second volume (2:443–545), and (c) a topical outline, also at the end of the second volume, that lists each entry and subentry to one or more of the following topics: “Later Legal Traditions (Non- or Postbiblical),” “Legal Texts,” “Overviews,” “Organizations and Procedures,” “Selected Legal Topics,” and “Types of Law” (2:433–436). Unfortunately, three editorial decisions significantly decrease the user-friendliness of these tools. First, the list of all articles is not reprinted in the front pages of the second volume. Thus, to find out whether an article of interest between letter M–Z (vol. 2) is included in the *OEBL*, the user is forced to open the first volume. Second, volume and page numbers are lacking in the list of articles, as well as in the topical outline. If the editors had provided volume and page numbers, it would be easier for the readers to find the articles they are looking for. Third, the layout of the index is confusing and when searching for a particular entry, the reader almost certainly gets lost. This happens because many of the entries have numerous subentries on more than one level. Although they are marked by indentation, the number of subentries in a column normally exceeds the main entries, which makes it difficult to orient oneself within the index. In addition, the headings that indicate a new letter are indistinguishable from the normal entries regarding their font formatting, which makes it hard to recognize when a letter changes. These may appear to be minor issues, but only until you actually have to access information provided in one of these big, heavy volumes do you come to realize the necessity of these tools.

Regarding the content and article selection, *OEBL* presents an incomparable variety of entries on the interconnection of the Bible and law. The articles fulfill the editor’s promise of presenting content and methodology of current scholarship. This becomes evident throughout the encyclopedia in the authors’ critical standpoint on questions of the formation of the biblical texts, as well as the historicity of the events described in these texts. However, readers of the *OEBL* will also come across absences of expected articles,

missing blind entries/cross references, and, occasionally, articles lacking important content. Some of these absences are of such gravity that the *OEBL*, as it currently appears in print, remains imperfect.

Regarding missing key articles, the absence of an article on the law in Jewish Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha is a major oversight. Since the rise of the *New Perspective on Paul* around 1977, it is well known that this body of literature contains significant material on the law, relevant for New Testament studies. Another major absence is that no article deals with the law in Greek Philosophy. Thus, the whole discussion of natural law and positive law that was initiated by the pre-Socratic philosophers, continuing through the stoics in the Greco-Roman period, remains untouched, though it contributes significant background material for the discussion on the law in the New Testament. Strawn seems to justify these absences by stating in the preface that

not all of the articles that were originally envisioned or hoped for were able to be contracted; similarly, not all of the articles that were originally assigned were eventually delivered. It is possible that in electronic versions of *OEBL*, especially using *Oxford Biblical Studies Online* [an online source database that requires individuals to subscribe at a rate of USD 29.95 each month or USD 295.00 annually], some of these omissions will be rectified (1:xvi).

Checking the table of contents of the current online version (July 2017) under <http://www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com>, no change regarding the articles seems to have taken place.

The encyclopedia also lacks important blind entries/cross references. The editor included entries entitled “Law in Prophets,” and “Law in Writings,” however, no blind entry/cross reference is provided with the title “Torah” or “Pentateuch,” neither are entries provided on “Law in the Gospels,” or “Law in Pauline Writings.” It may make sense that the Pentateuch is covered under “Biblical Law, Old Testament” and Paul’s view on the law under “Biblical Law, New Testament.” However, the fact that the main entry “Early Christianity,” covers the discussion on the Gospels’ content in relation to the Law, seems to me far beyond a reader’s intuition. This type of misdirect could be solved by adding a few more intuitive blind entries/cross references to the encyclopedia, making it more complete.

In relation to omissions in the actual content of the articles, the articles on the Decalogue and Civil Law serve as examples. Whereas the author of the Decalogue article, Edward L. Greenstein, presents a well informed summary on all kinds of issues discussed therein from a scholarly perspective, he completely misses addressing the reception and importance of the Decalogue in New Testament times. George P. Fletcher’s article on civil law lacks any connection to the Bible, but rather discusses the difference between common law and civil law in modern times. It leaves the reader to question why this article has been included in this particular encyclopedia.

In summary, the *OEBL* is a good place to go when one wants a well informed overview on a topic covered by an article, and the bibliography at the end of each article provides an additional reading list. However, users of this encyclopedia should also be aware that the *OEBL* may not be sufficiently

comprehensive. This is really a drawback of the encyclopedia, leaving one to wonder whether the editors met their goal in making this work “one of lasting significance” (1:xvi). Given the price and the current status of this encyclopedia, I am hesitant to recommend the *OEBL* without any reservations. It is, however, definitely a “must have” for any serious research library, due to its unique nature.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

DOMINIC BORNAND

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *Biblical Authority After Babel: Retrieving the Solas in the Spirit of Mere Protestant Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2016. xii + 288 pp. Hardcover. USD 21.99.

Evangelical theologian Kevin Vanhoozer is Research Professor of Systematic Theology at Trinity Evangelical Theological Seminary in Deerfield, Illinois. *Biblical Authority After Babel* is the most recent of his works in the area of systematic theology. His previous publications, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Doctrine* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), and *Theology and the Mirror of Scripture: A Mere Evangelical Account* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), a book co-authored with Daniel J. Treier, provide useful background for the present work.

Vanhoozer begins the book by asking, “Should the Church repent or retrieve the Reformation?” (1) His answer is: retrieve. This proposal is a reaction to the tough criticism that non-sympathizers of the Protestant Reformation have repeatedly expressed, maintaining that secularism, skepticism, and schism have been its unintended consequences. Although Vanhoozer believes these criticisms to be ultimately misguided, he recognizes that interpretive disagreements among Protestant Christians have obscured the Reformation’s latent potential and particularly focuses on addressing this issue. In fact, he essentially argues that revisiting historical Protestantism through a creative retrieving (ressourcement) of the five Reformation *solas* can provide for a present-day normative Protestantism, “mere Protestant Christianity” (3), which can help solve the problem of interpretive authority, thus providing an alternative to the problem of pervasive interpretive pluralism. The argument mostly focuses on the central roles that *Sola Scriptura* and the concept of a “priesthood of all believers” have played in inciting interpretive pluralism and aims to show how these concepts lose their potential for divisiveness if understood along with the rest of the *solas*.

The introduction and conclusion contain insights crucial to understanding the rationale for the project of Protestant retrieval. The rest of the chapters develop the retrieval of the *solas*, particularly addressing issues of interpretive authority and leading to the goal of “plural interpretive unity” (223–227). *Grace Alone* communicates how everything—including interpretive authority—exists within the Triune God’s economy of grace. *Faith Alone* involves trusting the testimony of the Triune God as enclosed in Scripture,

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as well as the testimony of divinely authorized interpreters comprising the testimony of the church at large. *Scripture Alone* describes Scripture as holding supreme, magisterial authority. The church holds ministerial interpretive authority, ultimately preserved within church tradition. *Christ Alone* is the head of the church and has invested interpretive authority upon His earthen body, the church. *The Church Alone*, marginally added as an unofficial *sola*, clarifies how interpretive unity in the context of the royal priesthood of all believers discourages both the vesting of interpretive authority upon a Roman magisterium, as well as upon autonomous individuals apart from their church community. The royal priesthood of all believers is thus explained as a pattern of authority within interpretive communities. Finally, *For the Glory of God Alone* entreats church communities to avoid interpretive isolation and publicly display a united front by joining the conversation towards interpretive unity within larger conferences of churches committed to rightly communicating and preserving the Gospel for God's glory.

Woven throughout the book is Vanhoozer's main illustration for plural interpretive unity: "Evangel Way" (33). Each surrounding home represents a church, denomination, or confessional tradition, stressing how these are not necessarily expected to inhabit the same "house," but rather to be good neighbors on the same street. Homeowners often invite each other over for supper (Lord's Supper) in a spirit of fellowship and mutual understanding, enjoy camaraderie during block parties, and even manage to keep a neighborhood watch, all despite their non-essential disagreements. According to Vanhoozer, this kind of Protestant unity avoids the extremes of individual interpretive anarchy (families live together in homes) and magisterial authority of the Church (homes remain separate as such). Another way that he illustrates his proposal is with Babel representing the "towering Roman uniformity" (229) and Pentecost, the reversal of Babel, representing Protestantism. This is why he also describes plural interpretive unity as "Pentecostal unity" (223). Ultimately, Vanhoozer concludes that the trans-denominational structure of evangelicalism is most compatible with mere Protestant Christianity's plural interpretive unity.

*Biblical Authority After Babel* is richly supported with relevant primary and secondary sources, as well as biblical references. The author, well informed and articulate, efficiently brings countless concepts into a coherent whole. With considerable expertise, Vanhoozer continues a longstanding discussion while also opening a new phase in the conversation through the concept of mere Protestant Christianity.

There is more to commend. First, Vanhoozer successfully argues that the Reformation did not release interpretive anarchy into Christianity, as its critics believe, but instead opened up an opportunity for a deeper understanding of the Gospel and for the practice of charity among Christians, despite the disagreements. This element of his "creative retrieval" provides Protestant Christians a sense of renewed confidence, reminding us that we can still hold our heads up high. It also provides a well founded appeal for a much needed charitable attitude over against the divisiveness, defensiveness, and suspicion too often manifested among Protestant Christians. Others have voiced this

appeal before, but the significance of this particular proposal is the robust and articulated theological system that Vanhoozer provides to support it. Additionally, the wisdom of formulating it through the *solas* is that it already builds upon basic elements widely agreed upon among Protestants. Further on, his constructive approach to the *solas* is refreshing in comparison to the apologetic spirit in which they are usually reviewed (as wholesome theology should not be built only on the basis of negations).

That being said, the process of “creative retrieval” of the *solas*, in which determinations are made as to what presently constitutes the non-negotiables of mere Protestant Christianity, seems more challenging. Let me explain why. The creative retrieval process consists in interpreting, from the present viewpoint, what the reformers meant. Even if one is not an expert in the field, one can imagine that interpretation of the reformers’ vast and varied works is not necessarily a debate-free zone. Thus, it is up to the reader to be conversant with the primary sources, as well as the discussions around them, in order to better understand how the author positions himself in his retrieval. Moreover, while the works of Luther and Calvin, for example, are referred to often, other reformers’ works are not significantly featured. The reader is left wondering whether this omission might make a difference in the conclusions arrived at in the retrieval of the *solas*, as well as whether this retrieval exercise comes out of a certain tradition within Protestantism, with certain attached presuppositions.

Yet another question comes to mind. If, hypothetically speaking, in the process of a charitable dialogue during supper, some homes on Evangel Way were to challenge some of the elements portrayed here as constituting the *solas* of mere Protestant Christianity, could these homes remain on Evangel Way? (Since the *solas* are hereby described in fairly elaborate detail, some of the more detailed components could maybe spark some discussion as to whether or not they are core elements.) If so, would they simply hold longer, harder conversations until interpretive agreement was achieved? In the meantime, would they have an indeterminate place around the table and in the neighborhood? Would there be a point where a definitive impasse could be identified, resulting in eviction? More concretely, is mere Protestant Christianity, as defined and described by the creative retrieval portrayed in this book, essentially a final word on what constitutes the core of Protestantism, or is it more of an initial, adaptable suggestion?

Answers to these questions, although important, do not seem to be entirely clear from the reading. Although, perhaps the answers have been partly provided by Vanhoozer’s recognition that his retrieval of the *solas* can “help evangelicals *inch closer* to the unitive interpretive plurality,” which he sees as an “*unrealized hope*” (234; emphasis added). In this sense, Vanhoozer’s proposal for mere Protestant Christianity could be considered a valuable new direction that offers deeper insights and higher standards for the conversation to continue honestly, prudently, and charitably, as he rightly suggests.

*Biblical Authority After Babel* is a heavyweight academic work written with proficiency, but in an approachable, and even witty, style. Experts in areas, such as the Protestant Reformation, contemporary evangelical hermeneutics,

or ecclesiology, will be best served by the book. Those who understand the relevance of the topic, but find the reading intimidating, can still reinforce their understanding by paying special attention to, and often revisiting, the twenty theses or main arguments that are distributed throughout the book, always in the last section of each chapter. This is a recommended work for all evangelical Christians interested in the present state of Protestantism, particularly in the sub-topic of interpretive authority.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

IRIANN MARIE HAUSTED

Widder, Wendy L. *Daniel*. The Story of God Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016. 288 pp. Hardcover. USD 29.99.

Wendy Widder is the author of a new commentary on the book of Daniel, which is part of a new commentary series by Zondervan, entitled *The Story of God Bible Commentary*. The general editors of the series are Tremper Longman III and Scot McKnight, who have considerable experience as editors and authors. The purpose and aim of the series is to explain the Bible within its ancient context and show what it means for readers today, with special emphasis on its connection to Christ. Its audience is primarily clergy, but it intends to be accessible to laity also.

Widder has not published extensively on the book of Daniel, but she has taught several college level courses on the subject. Despite this disadvantage, she is to be commended for her measured and genial tone throughout the book. She competently addresses the major issues within the text and admirably connects the text to modern Christian living. However, her non-traditional interpretation of certain key chapters is not sufficiently supported with evidence from the text and raises important theological questions and concerns. She also does not consistently connect the text to Christ, which is one of the main aims of the commentary series.

The layout of the book is common to the commentary series. There is an introductory section that treats the introductory data for the biblical book. Next, each chapter of the biblical book is analyzed according to a set structure. First, there is a section titled, "Listen to the Story," which includes the biblical text from the NIV 2011 and relevant intertextual data. Then, the author analyzes the meaning of the text within its ancient context in the section titled, "Explain the Story." Finally, in the section titled "Live the Story," the author attempts to connect the text to the modern reader and apply it to the life of the believer and the church today.

In the introduction, Widder gingerly addresses the many thorny introductory issues of the book, such as authorship, date, and canon. Widder approaches these controversial issues tactfully and carefully. She accepts the traditional sixth century date of the book, but refrains from a negative appraisal of a second century date for the book. She accepts the veracity of Daniel as a historical figure, but states that it is impossible to definitively know who compiled the book. Widder eschews easy answers to these complex questions, but it is unclear whether her hesitation to commit to a certain



or ecclesiology, will be best served by the book. Those who understand the relevance of the topic, but find the reading intimidating, can still reinforce their understanding by paying special attention to, and often revisiting, the twenty theses or main arguments that are distributed throughout the book, always in the last section of each chapter. This is a recommended work for all evangelical Christians interested in the present state of Protestantism, particularly in the sub-topic of interpretive authority.

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explanation is the result of an attempt to honestly wrestle with these demanding and perplexing quandaries, or due to her lack of extensive experience with the book.

In chapter one, as well as three through six, Widder follows the delineation outlined for the commentary series, which is noted above. She offers pertinent intertextual links to each chapter, extensively summarizing the texts. Next, she analyzes the chapter within its ancient context. Her exegetical analysis follows the standard outline of each chapter. She addresses the common problems that other commentators have discussed in these chapters and presents the various arguments. At times, she thoughtfully reaches her own conclusions, but at other times she inordinately relies on the commentaries of John Goldingay and Ernest Lucas. Finally, Widder then offers devotional thoughts and ideas for each chapter. Widder is at her best in chapter six, where her devotional thoughts connecting the text to contemporary life are exceptional. The section on “Successful Suffering” in “Live the Story” is especially meaningful.

In chapters two and seven through twelve, Widder addresses the dreams and visions of the book, continuing the outlined delineation for the commentary series. In chapter two she presents the two main views and lays out her position regarding the four-kingdom schema, which is the foundation for her interpretive approach for chapters seven through twelve. She presents the Greek and Roman views associated with the four kingdoms. Widder states that both views have their adherents and that, “Traditionally, interpreters have divided along party lines: traditionalists opt for the Roman view, and non-traditionalists hold the Greek view” (53). However, she further states and agrees with Longman that the Greek view has “strong evangelical arguments” in its favor (53). Yet, Widder does not offer such arguments as evidence for this view, which she accepts. She generally states her position without sufficient defense or support from the text. Also, she often does not enumerate the problems with the Roman view. This is puzzling and impairs her argument, therefore, it is difficult to see her negation of the traditional view as warranted.

The most problematic aspect of Widder’s interpretive approach is found in Chapter Nine. Her interpretation of Dan 9:24–27, in which she abandons the traditional Christological interpretation for one that focuses on the Maccabean crisis of the second century, raises foundational questions about the messianic prophecy itself and the prophetic certainty of the coming of Christ. It is evident that Widder does not seek to challenge the authenticity of the New Testament’s prophetic fulfillment of Christ’s first coming, nor does she seek to challenge the authenticity of Old Testament messianic prophecy. Yet, by abandoning the traditional interpretation, especially without detailed exegetical support, she undercuts a significant text for Old Testament messianic prophecy. This is perplexing, since one of the goals of the commentary series is to identify Old Testament “trajectories (historical, typological, and theological) that land in Christ in the New Testament” (xiv). One would assume that this text would be central to this goal or that Widder would at least give more exegetical support for her interpretation over against the traditional one.

Interestingly, one of the major flaws of this commentary is that it fails to consistently connect the chapters to Christ, which is part of the main purpose and aim of the commentary series. According to the introduction to the series, each book will “read the text in the light of the death and resurrection of Jesus. No other commentary series does this important work consistently in every volume” (xv). Widder does well in connecting the text to modern Christian life, but it is not clear how she consistently reads the text “in the light of the death and resurrection of Jesus.” It was not clear from the commentary how the book of Daniel consistently “anticipates the gospel” (ibid.).

Widder is to be commended for her knowledge of the issues concerning the book of Daniel and for her attempt to refrain from tendentious polemics. Her writing is exceptional and she competently presents the stories in their ancient contexts. In addition, she offers thought-provoking and meaningful connections to the text and modern Christian living. However, Widder’s non-traditional interpretive approach toward the dreams/visions contradicts traditional interpretations with little exegetical support. Also, her interpretation of Dan 9:24–27 raises several Christological questions. Finally, she does not consistently demonstrate how the text “anticipates the gospel” (ibid.). Overall, the purpose and aim of the new commentary series is a welcome addition to the genre and Widder’s work is commendable, but the complexity of the book of Daniel can be a quandary to any commentary series.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

LAURA K. MORROW

Wright, Christopher J. H. *Hearing the Message of Daniel: Sustaining Faith in Today’s World*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017. 248 pp. Softcover. USD 17.99.

Christopher Wright is International Ministries Director of the Langham Partnership and a mentee of the great Christian preacher John Stott. He often preaches on Daniel, though he has previously written books on other biblical topics, such as *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament* (1995) and *The God I Don’t Understand* (2008). In *Hearing the Message of Daniel*, Wright, with the help of what some would call “pastorally informed imagination,” draws lessons from Daniel’s book and presents them to pastors, small group leaders, and Christians in general. On a previous occasion, I had a chance to review *Preaching Christ from Daniel*, by Sidney Greidanus, AUSS 51.2 (2013), but it is obvious that Wright’s book, though smaller in size, takes a broader view of homiletical gems from Daniel’s book.

The chapter titled “Compromise or Confrontation” presents the story from Dan 1. The subtitles in this chapter are very descriptive of the lessons the author does not want us to miss: “They Said ‘Yes’ to a Pagan Education,” followed by “They Said ‘Yes’ to a Political Career,” then “They Said ‘Yes’ to a Change of Name,” and finally “They Said ‘No’ to the King’s Food.” The author could have mentioned the young Hebrews’ resistance to the giving of the new (Babylonian) names, something that is evident in the intentional corruption of the names Bel-te-Shazzar and Abed-Nego.

Interestingly, one of the major flaws of this commentary is that it fails to consistently connect the chapters to Christ, which is part of the main purpose and aim of the commentary series. According to the introduction to the series, each book will “read the text in the light of the death and resurrection of Jesus. No other commentary series does this important work consistently in every volume” (xv). Widder does well in connecting the text to modern Christian life, but it is not clear how she consistently reads the text “in the light of the death and resurrection of Jesus.” It was not clear from the commentary how the book of Daniel consistently “anticipates the gospel” (ibid.).

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After reviewing the story of Dan 2, Wright concludes that Daniel's interpretation of the king's dream is more than a timetable for history. It is a theology of history. This theology informs us that heads of gold have a precarious future if they rest on the feet of clay, so the succession of human kingdoms will end with the coming kingdom of God. This eternal kingdom "is not just an escape to heaven but the establishment of the rule of God over the earth itself" (59).

"Bow or Burn" deals with the story from Dan 3. The author rightly points out that, "The world can demand a high price from those who refuse to do things its way" (65). God's servants may face terrifying threats—one minute a respectable job in high office, next minute hauled to face the flames of instant execution. "Believers can never afford to relax" (73). He missed, however, an important lesson from this story and it is the one that says how God does not save his servants *from* the fire of the furnace, but *through* it or *in the midst* of it.

Daniel 4 is a powerful testimony by a king who is not just the subject but also the speaker in this story. All this adds rhetorical power to the whole chapter. Nebuchadnezzar was quite happy for the gods to rule in heaven, just so long as it was clear who ruled on earth. Wright concludes this chapter with the following lesson: When people praise you, don't let it sink into your inner thoughts and breed the cancer of pride. He quotes Stott's famous saying: "Flattery is like cigarette smoke. It does you no harm if you don't inhale."

Another insight from Dan 4 has to do with Daniel's remarkably redemptive attitude toward the king in this chapter: Daniel became a resident in Babylon by force and he could be described, at best, as "a conscript missionary" to that city. In spite of this, Daniel did not harbor permanent hatred toward his superiors or neighbors, but rather loved his enemies and prayed for them, as instructed by Jeremiah (ch. 29). Wright says, "It is hard to go on hating somebody you're praying for every day" (98). Another insightful comment is about the king's boastful words of how he had built the city of Babylon by the power of his might. Wright reminds us that the king had *not* built the city. Babylon was rather built by the sweat of the nameless thousands of oppressed slaves, immigrants, and other poor sections of the nations.

The author draws several lessons from the story of Belshazzar's feast. There is no forgiveness where there is no repentance! He says that it is a very serious and dangerous thing to go on doing what you know to be wrong. Then he goes on to say that it is typically human to take credit for success and blame God for disaster. In Dan 6, the prophet is described as a person whose life of prayer was not escapism out of the daily grind of political administration. Rather, Daniel's daily prayer was his means of bringing the power and presence of Israel's God into his immediate work.

In dealing with Dan 7, the author dwells on the contrasts between the beasts, on the one hand, and the vision of God and "a man" on the other. While bestial rule is terrible it is also temporary. God and man's rule, however, will be heavenly and eternal. In this chapter of Daniel, God reveals the future which is under His control. Wright reminds us that the purpose of apocalyptic visions in Daniel and Revelation is more than making predictions.

It is “unveiling” or showing “the reality of what is going on in the present” (167). The timeless reality is that God is still on the throne. Wright calls the Ancient of Days “the Auditor-in-Chief,” the One to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden. As for the Son of Man, the saints share with him identity, destiny, suffering, then vindication and eternal reign.

The closing comment in Dan 8 is noteworthy: Although the vision was beyond understanding and it made the seer exhausted for several days, Daniel still got up and went back to his day-to-day work (Dan 8:27). In this regard, Daniel presents a good example to the reader of the book on how to be a diligent student of the prophetic work and at the same time remain active in one’s daily activities. In commenting on Dan 9, Wright sees no problem in identifying Cyrus the Great with Darius the Mede. He also describes the conflict in Dan 10–12 as “cosmic,” though surprisingly he seems certain that the Anointed One from Dan 9:25 and 26 should not be identified with Jesus Christ.

When dealing with historical applications of Daniel’s visions, Wright, first of all, proposes that the prophetic imagery “fits more than one regime or individual tyrant in the long history of Jews and Christians” (160). Yet, I feel that a disproportionate amount of attention is given to Antiochus IV Epiphanes in this book at the expense of many other examples of intolerance and persecution in the history of the three monotheistic religions. One could also question the author’s statement that Dan 8 binds the Medes and Persians together, though Wright acknowledges that early Christian interpretations identify the last earthly kingdom with the Roman Empire.

Toward the end of his book, the author reminds us again of prophetic “theology of history” described by him as “an underlying pattern within history.” Considering the big picture painted by biblical prophets, Wright rightly stresses that empires rise and fall as they successively overarch themselves in arrogance. Fortunately, in the end they are completely overthrown by God.

Wright’s work is a stimulating reflection on Daniel’s book and I recommend it to all who are interested in biblical preaching.

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