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Reformation
& Revival



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The Sermon on the Mount is not soporific sentimentality designed to induce a kind of feeble-minded do-goodism. Nor do these chapters tolerate the opinion that Jesus' views on righteousness have been so tempered with love that righteousness slips to a lower level than when its standard was dictated by law. Instead, we discover that the righteousness demanded by Jesus surpasses anything imagined by the Pharisees, the strict orthodox religious group of Jesus' day. Christ's way is more challenging and more demanding—as well as more rewarding—than any legal system can ever be.

Donald A. Carson

Book Reviews

All Things New: The Significance of Newness for Biblical Theology

Carl B. Hoch, Jr.
Grand Rapids: Baker (1995).
365 pages, paper, \$17.99.

Carl Hoch has written, without doubt, one of the most important and useful volumes of biblical theology that I have read in years. He is fair, evenhanded in his arguments, and always attempts to remain honest with the text. In addition, he plainly has no theological axes to grind. His love for truth shines brightly as he willingly tests his own presuppositions. This is a rare volume of serious but accessible theology. It should be read by all who are willing to pursue the concept of “newness” in the new covenant.

When Hoch began research several decades ago which eventually led to this volume, he discovered that only one substantial book on the subject of “newness” in the New Testament had been previously written. As productive as the field of biblical theology has been over the last four decades or so, it is quite amazing that this is only the second serious study of this revealed truth to be undertaken by a biblical scholar.

All Things New takes an interesting, and necessary, approach to its subject. It begins with a rigorous analysis of eleven things called “new” which are found within the New Testament. These include—new wineskins, new teaching, new covenant, new commandment, new creation, new man, new song, new name, new Jerusalem, new heaven, and new earth. Hoch rigorously analyzes each of these “new” things through its biblical use and context. He leaves no important stone unturned in the pursuit. The one word which describes his findings throughout would be “uniqueness.”

The New Testament is *genuinely* “new.” In the *Preface* Hoch writes:

I was not prepared, however, for the discovery I made when I began to look for scholarly works on the subject of newness and other topics covered in this book. I found that only one substantial work has been devoted to newness, the volume by Roy Harrisville published by Augsburg Publishing House in 1960. It was distressing to find commentaries and other theological literature not developing the theological significance of such basic concepts as *new teaching, new covenant, new commandments* . . . A plethora of literature on the church as a *new Israel* [hardly a biblical expression] was available, but otherwise discussion was limited to historical and literary concerns. . . . Recent writing on the new covenant has helped to expand the discussion on that theme. But much work remains to be done on that topic along with other topics addressed in this book (p. 7).

Yes, “much work remains to be done,” but Carl Hoch will give us a huge head start. His work is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive, but it does set the proper direction for further work. This work should explore a host of related topics much more fully. Both pastors and scholars should make it a priority to pursue further understanding of the new covenant, especially given the massive amount of New Testament material that we have upon this theme. Hoch will provide you direction if you want to pursue this theme in any number of directions; e.g., the law, the work of the Spirit, etc.

To think of the new covenant as simply a “newer covenant,” or merely a newer version of an older covenant, is clearly mistaken. Hoch should convince all who lay their presuppositions aside long enough to hear the text.

(Others, I am afraid, cannot be convinced.) This *newness* of the new covenant must not be just a theological concern for the technically trained scholar. It is a theme so vital that it requires each person to understand the new covenant better. This theme will bring with it a *practical* newness to those who live under the covenant, namely every Christian man and woman. This practical newness includes freedom in Christ, life in the Spirit, and warfare against the flesh. Each of these receives significant treatment by Hoch and will yield benefits to the reader.

Two very helpful appendices are included— “The Israel Problem: Is the Church the New Israel?” and “The Term Israel in the New Testament.” These are immensely profitable studies as well and will guide the reader to think more biblically about these oft-misused terms. Hoch causes both dispensationalist and covenant theologian alike to think more carefully in an area where immense controversy has often reigned. In fact Hoch’s entire book is calm, measured and careful. This feature makes it a particularly useful tourguide through the minefield of hermeneutical strife.

It will not surprise those who know Dr. Hoch, and his immense love of books, to find an extensive bibliography included as well. This portion could only have been improved had Hoch offered annotations and some personal direction regarding which books he found the most useful, etc.

All Things New should be used by seminary professors in classes on the theology of the New Testament. I can see it as required reading alongside the modern classics of George Eldon Ladd, F. F. Bruce and Herman N. Ridderbos, all volumes I prize highly. But this kind of recommendation should not put off the “average” reader. Any serious Christian layman or church leader who thinks biblically, and all should as biblically as possible, would profit from

this book. If you have benefited from this issue of *Reformation & Revival Journal*, and think your own understanding of the new covenant needs further development, try Hoch. *All Things New* will take you to the fitness center for a workout but your spiritual life will profit by the exercise. This book will, I expect, profoundly alter your understanding of the new covenant. At the same time, I pray that it will work its message down into your conscience. The benefits might well surprise you. I believe you will thank me for my personal recommendation when you find out that the entire effort was well worth your valuable time.

Editor

A Passion for God: Prayer and Meditations on the Book of Romans

Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr.
Wheaton: Crossway Books (1994).
215 pages, cloth, \$15.95.

B. B. Warfield, in his opening address delivered to incoming students at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1903, remarked that "intellectual training alone will never make a true minister; that the heart has rights which the head must respect; and that it behooves us above everything to remember that the ministry is a spiritual office." The great Princetonian, in the course of the lecture,¹ provides us with a remarkable catalog of aids to devotional study of Scripture, particularly those drawn from the vast ocean of biblical substance, the Puritans. I am sure that Warfield would heartily approve of Ray Ortlund, Jr.'s devotional gem, *A Passion for God: Prayer and Meditations on the Book of Romans*.

There is no shortage today of books claiming to be devotional aids (or "inspirational," as they are more commonly

referred to). Browse through most Christian bookstores and you will be confronted by a myriad of titles under this rubric, the vast majority of which are sadly lacking in biblical balance and theological soundness. Some are downright awful and do more harm than good to those famished souls who read them.

Such is not the case with Ortlund's book. It truly deserves the name "devotional" and is equally entitled to rank alongside those masterpieces that attracted the praise of Warfield. In addition to throwing additional light on the meaning of the text of Romans, Ortlund pauses after each section of Paul's epistle to offer a prayer of confession and thanksgiving. This is followed by an extended quotation from one of our noted Christian forebears. This will serve, in many ways, to usher readers into the presence of some of the great Puritan writers such as John Owen, Thomas Manton, Thomas Goodwin, et al., as well as noted figures like J.C. Ryle, Horatius Bonar, Blaise Pascal and J. Gresham Machen.

This is a wonderful book and one that I would not hesitate to give to anyone for devotional reading. It may well serve to introduce people who might never be exposed to that treasure house of devotional classics that are rarely promoted, much less read.

Gary L. W. Johnson
Mesa, Arizona

Endnote:

¹ "Spiritual Culture in the Seminary." It can be found in his *Selected Shorter Writings II*, ed. John E. Meeter, (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1973), 468-96.

***The Life and Works of Joseph Kinghorn
(Volume One)***

Compiled and ed. Terry Wolever
Springfield, Missouri: Particular Baptist Press (1995).
530 pages, cloth, \$24.50.

With the creation of the Particular Baptist Press, Gary Long and Terry Wolever hope to do for Baptists what the Banner of Truth has done for Presbyterians and others of the paedo-Baptist persuasion: republish and reprint many of our now-forgotten and out-of-print evangelical Calvinistic Baptist forefathers from an earlier and better era. They currently have about 40 titles in hand, lacking only the financial resources to get them back into print.

Their initial offering is the first of four volumes titled, *The Life and Works of Joseph Kinghorn*. I had never heard of Joseph Kinghorn; I purchased the book only out of curiosity and a love for all things Calvinistic. What I discovered was a treasure. The book is written in the style of A. T. Robertson's *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus*. It is principally a collection of Kinghorn's correspondence interspersed with the editor's narration which keeps the life story on track.

Kinghorn was a Particular Baptist pastor in Norwich, England, during the late 1700s and early 1800s. He spent more than 40 years with the same congregation, which says something for the character of the man and his ministry. One of the most fascinating parts of his life was his association with the early members of the Baptist Mission Society. He was a supporter of Carey and the others in their work in India, and several letters are given to the subject.

He was a strong supporter of theological education in England, especially work that aimed for the education of young ministers in the north of England. He was often pur-

sued as a potential tutor (professor) for such enterprises, but he always declined, believing God meant him for the pastorate. His scholarly pursuits would have equipped him for such a theological career. He was particularly gifted in languages and was a close student of the Old Testament and rabbinical texts.

One of the most fascinating elements of his ministry was his debate and discussion with his good friend, Robert Hall, on the issue of open or closed communion. Hall was an ardent open communionist (as was C.H. Spurgeon), but Kinghorn took the opposite position. He was convinced that believer's baptism must precede participation at the Lord's table. A future volume in this series will carry the complete correspondence and debate between the two men. Regardless of our theological positions most Baptist churches today practice open communion, that is, they serve the elements and let the person in the pew decide whether or not to participate. Given the ambiguities of our practice, perhaps this is an issue we need to review. What a better way than to hear again the voices of Hall and Kinghorn as they debate the issue.

Another problem, which those of us who practice believer's baptism face from time to time, is the matter of rebaptism. Typically an adult comes to us indicating that he was baptized as a child, but has now come to believe that he was not genuinely converted at the time. Having now come to faith in Christ he presents himself for baptism. It has become our regular practice to rebaptize such people on their new confession. Some individuals have baptized two, three, even four in this manner. In a brief, but tantalizing, footnote we discover that Kinghorn did not practice rebaptism as I described it. He believed that baptism was a profession of faith in Christ. Even though the individual was not genuinely converted, it was nonetheless a profession and did not, therefore, have to be repeated

when genuine conversion had taken place. That was a new thought to me. I hope future volumes in the Kinghorn series will uncover further discussion on this issue. It is certainly a dilemma we face in the church today.

I encourage you to buy this book, especially if you are Baptist. We have a rich heritage of Reformed Baptist life, and we need to reacquaint ourselves with it. Particular Baptist Press has put us on the right track with this initial volume. May this be the first of many more.

Jack Fritts
Belleville, Illinois

Here We Stand: A Call from Confessing Evangelicals

James Montgomery Boice and Benjamin E. Sasse, eds.
Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996.
196 pages, cloth, \$16.99.

“Here I stand” are words that belong to Martin Luther as he faced the invitation to recant his Protestant beliefs. Cambridge, Massachusetts, was the location of the development and signing of the *Cambridge Platform* (1646), the manual of American Congregationalism, an historic faith of the Puritans and Pilgrims who wrested a new civilization from a new continent, building on the foundation of the Protestant Reformation. The *Barmen Declaration* was produced in Nazi Germany by a group of confessing churches to counter the state-driven effort to obscure the gospel by turning it into a self-serving, feel-good expression of German nationalism. Dietrich Bonhoeffer described this new, nationalized gospel as cheap grace. *Here We Stand* falls in this historic tradition, calling Christians to reclaim the Reformation foundation that is being similarly obscured in our day by a host of modern developments.

The Cambridge Declaration, the centerpiece of *Here We Stand*, delineates the central doctrines of the Reformation—Scripture alone, Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone, all and only for the glory of God alone. It is a clarion call and a kind of theological guide whose purpose is to put churches back on the evangelical theological track. The thesis is that contemporary Christianity suffers several erosions of doctrine—the erosion of authority, of Christ-centered faith, of the gospel, of faith itself, and of God-centered worship. *Here We Stand*, then, is a further explication of the *Cambridge Declaration* and its practical implications.

Beyond a mere litany of what is wrong and a “woe is us” attitude, David Wells opens the discussion with a call to seize the opportunities that the collapse of Protestantism offers for the recovery of the faith.

I contend that the loss of our moral center, which is one of (modernity’s) chief consequences, is at the heart of the unraveling of our society. Its final and most destructive outcome, which is now upon us, is that we have lost our ability to discern between, or even to talk meaningfully about, Good and Evil. And while this collapse into cynicism and moral chaos bodes poorly for the future of American life, it is opening opportunities for the Christian faith that have not been present in this way, at least during the twentieth century and, perhaps, for an even greater period (p. 29).

Yes, things are deteriorating, but there is a window of opportunity that has opened before us.

Ervin Duggan reminds us that we must not get distracted by concerns of mere social reform:

Christian theologians and Christian reconstructionists are seeking to establish, through coercive legal and political

means, a political simulacrum of the kingdom of God, as surely as mainline “fraternal workers” sought to establish their version of that kingdom arm in arm with the Sandinista Party. In the process, they abandon the eternal for the evanescent, exactly as their mainline counterparts have done; they distract themselves and their flocks from the legitimate mission of the church in this world; and they bid—unwittingly, perhaps, but blasphemously nonetheless—to substitute political coercion for the free working of God’s grace (p. 51).

R. Albert Mohler, Jr., contends for the truth by revealing the academic roots of postmodernism that have invaded college campuses:

Standing behind these postmodern proposals are not merely the New Yale theologians, Clifford Geertz, or even (Ludwig) Wittgenstein—it is Nietzsche. The acids of modernity burn down to the vapors of nihilism. The ambiguities of pervasive relativisms are too much for us to bear, and relativism becomes nihilism. Now, nihilism is present even within the evangelical academy (p. 67).

Mohler recommends a practical antidote for postmodernism. “(W)e must come to the Scriptures, not with a post-modern hermeneutic of suspicion, but with a faithful hermeneutic of submission” (71). In other words, we must trust God’s word, and not doubt it.

Gene Edward Veith demonstrates the importance of catechetical as opposed to modern teaching methods. He argues that the techniques of modern education actually undermine the discipline required for classical learning, and carries this analysis into the deterioration of discipline in the workplace. The earlier disciplines of classical learning developed into an attitude toward work as a godly voca-

tion or calling, where the contemporary methods of modern education have nearly destroyed self-discipline.

Michael Horton argues that historical creeds and confessions can be ignored only by an unbridled audacity, a pride of monumental proportion. To ignore the saints who have preceded us is to place ourselves above the time-tested testimony of other faithful Christians. It is to ignore the best insights and advice of faithful friends.

We have creeds, confessions, and catechisms, not because we want to arrogantly assert ourselves above Scripture or other Christians, but for precisely the opposite reason: We are convinced that such self-assertion is actually easiest for us when we presume to be going to Scripture alone and directly, without any presuppositions or expectations. . . . Fearful of our own weaknesses in judgment and blind spots due to our own acculturation, we go to Scripture with the wider church, with those who have confessed the same faith for centuries (p. 107).

Sinclair Ferguson points out the modern passion for recovery from a variety of ills, and the simultaneous popular distaste for the personal repentance that is required for recovery. “For Calvin, repentance is really the personal, concrete expression of divine regeneration and renewal. He defines regeneration as repentance” (p. 134). How does this work? In critiquing the modern understanding of repentance as a “single act, severed from a life-long restoration of godliness,” he concludes, “The ‘altar call’ has replaced the sacrament of penance. Thus repentance has been divorced from genuine regeneration, and sanctification severed from justification” (p. 137).

Robert Godfrey, comparing contemporary and traditional forms of worship, observes that “Music seems to have become for some a new sacrament, mediating the presence

and experience of God, establishing a mystical bond between God and the worshiper" (p. 162). Anyone familiar with the "praise and worship" movement must be familiar with this dynamic. Calling attention to the context of contemporary worship, he remarks that

... these changes represent an acceleration and extension of changes that have been taking place in evangelical worship for around two hundred years. Particularly the rise of revivalism as the dominant form of evangelicalism in nineteenth-century America established tendencies in worship that have culminated in what we see today (p. 163).

In an effort to apply these insights to modern life, James Boice offers, "Preoccupation with self is the chief sin of the modern world" (p. 175). While most Christians will agree in theory that God is sovereign, they choke on its corollary doctrine,

... namely, that if God is sovereign over all things, then we are not, not even over the affairs of our personal lives. We are not in a position to determine what our lives should be or even what our true needs are, and we are certainly not to suppose even for an instant that the world revolves around ourselves (p. 176).

Needs-driven churches provide self-centered ministries, whereas theologically driven churches provide God-centered ministries. Boice continues:

Worship should not be confused with feelings. It is true that the worship of God will affect us, and one thing it will frequently affect is our emotions. At times tears will fill our eyes as we become aware of God's great love and grace toward us. Yet it is possible for our eyes to fill with tears and

for there still to be no real worship simply because we have not come to a genuine awareness of God and a fuller praise of himself in his nature and ways.

True worship occurs only when that part of man, his spirit, which is akin to the divine nature (for God is spirit), actually meets with God and finds itself praising God for his love, wisdom, beauty, truth, holiness, compassion, mercy, grace, power, and all his other attributes (p. 189).

Here We Stand is grist for the revival mill. Pastors and church leaders would be well blessed to make it the object of common study, prayer, teaching, and preaching. The powerful hope that is generated by the mere title of the book is that God's faithful never stand alone, but are united by the One who calls for faithfulness.

Phillip A. Ross
Marietta, Ohio

Worship in Spirit and Truth

John Frame

Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian & Reformed (1996).

171 pages, paper, \$10.00.

In most well formulated books, the project and the main themes are laid out very early and then developed. Frame's *Worship in Spirit and Truth* follows this structure.

First, the project: "Part of my motivation was a concern to preserve for my local congregation and others like it the freedom to worship God in its accustomed style—one that is nontraditional, but, in my judgment, fully scriptural" (xii). Ironically, anything that is "preserved" is *de facto* "traditional." So we are dealing here with a case of "my tradition, not yours." This wrinkle notwithstanding, the attempt

to show that his nontraditional tradition is biblical occupies a considerable portion of the book, and therefore makes the book worth reading. It is one of life's many ironies that when we focus our attention on being nontraditional (and thus contemporary) we form new traditions that quickly become dated. One need only think of all the revivalist music that causes most of us to hold our noses. Once upon a time, it too was nontraditional.

The other main theme is the treatment of the "regulative principle of worship." He says,

In my view, the *Westminster Confession* is entirely right in its regulative principle—that true worship is limited to what God commands. But the methods used by the Puritans to discover and apply those commands need a theological overhaul. Much of what they said cannot be justified by Scripture (xiii).

He calls the early Puritan application of the regulative principle, "minimalist," a term borrowed from James Jordan to describe the austere practices that "excluded organs, choirs, hymn texts other than the Psalms, symbolism in the worship area, and religious holidays except for the Sabbath" (xii). He notes that this ethos still hangs over conservative Presbyterian churches and seminaries, though in practice it is seldom maintained.

Our task as readers is to determine if his understanding of Scriptures and of the regulative principle is correct. If it is, then do his applications necessarily follow?

Frame maintains that though the Puritans were minimalists in their worship practices, "the *Westminster Standards* actually contain very little of the Puritan theology of worship" (xii). Further, "the Puritan and Scottish divines who wrote the Westminster standards were wise not to include in them all of their ideas on worship."

So, let's examine what little they did include:

The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear, the sound preaching and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith and reverence, singing of psalms with grace in the heart; as also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ, are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God . . . (*WCF XXI.5*, italics mine).

Of course the fundamental principle of reading any book is that it must be read as the author intended it to be read, and the *Westminster Confession of Faith* is no exception. The Westminster Divines footnoted this passage with Colossians 3:16 which mentions Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and yet in their own formulation, reduced it to "Psalms." What did "Psalms" mean in mid-seventeenth century parlance?

The same Westminster Divines who produced the *Confession of Faith* and the *Catechisms* also produced a metrical psalter in 1650. Furthermore, metrical psalmody exercised unchallenged hegemony in Reformed churches from the time of Calvin until 1690 when a precocious fifteen-year-old named Isaac Watts recognized that the Psalms were not overtly Christ-centered. Since that time, by and large, the Reformed church has gradually embraced the work of Isaac Watts, Horatius Bonar, and others until Christ-centered hymns have become the majority report (though recently hymnody has become progressively more self-centered). There is a very small handful of minor exceptions to this reading of history such as Richard Baxter's *You Holy Angels Bright* from 1672. Still, it is based on Psalm 148. All this to say, the Westminster Divines knew nothing but metrical psalmody, and they prescribed metrical psalmody in their confessional statement. They were minimalists, and they

prescribed minimalism. Unpleasant as this may seem, it is the historic fact. Any assertion to the contrary is historic revisionism. Of course this could place a person who “subscribes enthusiastically to the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Catechisms*” (xiv) on the horns of a dilemma. As people of the Word however, the meaning of words is very important to us, and we must guard against revisionism of all sorts. I hesitate to accuse Frame of deliberate deception, for I am not privy to the thoughts and intents of his heart. Still, the worldly air we breathe is that of spin-doctoring and of that oxymoron, “truth-in-advertising.” Unless we consciously guard against the present manifestations of worldliness, we will unwittingly fall prey to them.

I happen to agree with John Frame and James Jordan that minimalism is wrong. Still, I find it deeply disturbing that Frame has taken us through revisionistic acrobatics in order to use the *Confession* as an *imprimatur* of his own worship practices. Such a treatment runs the risk of rendering the whole *Confession* impotent. If he uses this document as a rubber stamp to do that which is right in his own eyes on the subject of worship music, what is to prevent someone else from using it in the same way for relationship to the civil magistrate or of repentance unto life? This really has the same dynamic as the battle over the inerrancy of Scriptures. And because symbolic documents are not inerrant canonical Scripture, they do contain errors. We must be prepared to state specifically where they are wrong, *so that where they are right undergirds our communal faith*.

Frame tackles the problem of the regulative principle of worship by an examination of what “worship” is. Robert Rayburn (*O Come, Let Us Worship*) spent a similar amount of space on this word. I think this is because the word has become descriptively useless in our time. It means far too many things to too many people, and so means nothing

that can communicate effectively. The Puritans restricted it to the realm of that which we do with the regular assembling of the brethren. Frame takes exception to this usage and expands it to all of life. Having executed this deft move, he is able to show that the Bible says little explicitly about what occurs in our regular assemblies. Thus the regulative principle “is a charter of freedom” (p. 45) that “sets us free, within limits, to worship God in the language of our own time, to seek those applications of God’s commandments which most edify worshipers in our contemporary cultures” (p. 46).

So what does it mean to “edify worshipers in our contemporary cultures”? Throughout the book, Frame talks more about 1 Corinthians 14 than any other portion of Scripture. The admonition to prophecy instead of speaking in unknown tongues (verses 1-25) is reduced to a need to be “intelligible.” This is an important word in this book, and it is extended away from the explicit content of 1 Corinthians 14 to mean doing whatever it takes to reach people, i.e., use the styles they like. Now there may be some merit to this idea, but 1 Corinthians 14 does not say, “use the favorite style.” It does say, speak in a known spoken language. I linger on this point because musical style is not language, and speaking of music as “language” is a nineteenth-century accretion to our thoughts, not a biblical one.

Frame uses the second half of 1 Corinthians 14 to show a rather loose, democratic feeling to gathered worship. Oddly enough, he cites verse 26 as evidence. Here we find Paul throwing his hands up in exasperation, noting that all the parishioners show up with their own Psalms, doctrines, revelations and interpretations. Frame merely sees the apparent diversity as a seal of approval of democracy in the events of gathered worship. In the same way, under the heading “Spontaneous Worship,” Frame says, “The Psalms are full of prayer to God in the midst of difficult situations

and praise to him in response to deliverance. Worship is something natural (*i.e.*, “spontaneous”) to God’s people” (p. 17, italics mine). The Psalms are tightly woven aesthetic objects. They are anything but spontaneous and shaken out of the sleeve. Likewise, the second half of 1 Corinthians 14 is not about democracy, it’s about order! In all, the treatment of 1 Corinthians 14 is a bit like the treatment of the *Westminster Standards*. We wince and show contempt when our liberal brethren tell us the gospel is Habitat for Humanity and saving the Mendocino Spotted Slug, and yet, they arrive at that position in the same way Frame moves from revealed Scripture to “intelligibility” to style.

Ironically, Frame’s application of “intelligibility” bears a peculiar resemblance to Calvin’s practice. Calvin approved the reduction of the Psalms into regular meter and rhyme schemes, texts to be subsequently set against French dance tunes. The French language may accommodate this practice more mellifluously than English. One can only wonder how pleased Calvin would have been with our English language psalters that resemble Hallmark Card poetry. Nevertheless, it must be said that Calvin’s strategy was the original seeker-sensitive maneuver. Luther did something similar even earlier (e.g., “From the Depths of Woe,” 1523), though Luther’s practice was far more broad, and he did not exclude the singing of literal biblical Psalms. Moreover, Luther composed his tunes, and therefore had more control over the end effect. Both Luther and Calvin were moved by a desire to reach the common man with means the common man could embrace. Most probably, Calvin would not have approved of the ongoing preservation of the mid sixteenth-century metrical Psalms. After all, seeker sensitive in 1550 is not seeker sensitive in 1997. Those who preserve Calvin to the letter probably deny the spirit. Would Calvin, on the other hand, have approved our present accommodations to our culture? Probably not. The

trouble with comparing sixteenth-century popular culture with late twentieth-century popular culture is that it is the proverbial case of comparing apples with oranges. Those who bring Calvin’s cultural assumptions into our time are going to make some regrettable mistakes, for sixteenth-century popular culture was a true folk culture with all the attendant accountability and basic Christian presuppositions. While it was true that a tune could migrate from the pub to the church, it was equally true that a tune could migrate in the opposite direction. The pub and the church of the sixteenth century were not antithetical folk institutions as they usually are today. Indeed, the last time I walked past the Side-Track Tap, I did not hear Jars of Clay or Carman blaring out of the juke box. (One friend—who shall remain unnamed—noted that we go there to escape that music!) Twentieth-century popular culture is a commercial culture with accountability to the shareholder, and since when did the church and the shareholder serve the same goals? Our parishioner today arrives at the regular assembling of the brethren conditioned to serve commercial interests. As important as our discussions of the regulative principle are, this current cultural phenomenon is where the real work is to be done.

The last chapter of *Worship in Spirit and Truth* offers an actual worship service format that exemplifies the principles of the book. There is very little that attaches it to any theological tradition. One could just as easily take this service into many Evangelical Free, Community, Bible, or Methodist churches. There is one vestige of Puritanism, however: “We did not have a formal recitation of a creed in this service, although we have done that when the preacher thinks it especially appropriate. We do not want such recitations to become ‘vain repetitions’; the creeds are too precious to be taken for granted” (p. 150). There are a couple of problems here. The first is the extension of this idea

“vain repetition,” a reference from Matthew 6:7 where Jesus is commanding us not to badger God, thinking this will effect the fulfillment of our requests because our Father knows our needs *and fully intends to take care of us before we ask*. Matthew 6:7 is not about how often one says a creed.

Equally troubling, however, is the posture towards repetition, and this probably has its genesis in the presuppositions of Romophobia that were so highly motivational in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. What is the purpose of a creed? How infrequently must one say a creed for it to remain “precious”? Is it necessary that a creed be “precious”? Is “precious” important, and if so, shouldn’t we read Scriptures and recite catechisms less frequently so that they would remain “precious”?

I insist that my kids say the creed almost daily. Is it “precious” to them? Probably not. Still, it shapes all their thinking. Before the invention of the printing press (ca. 1454) most people could think only creedally. The memorization capacity of some of the ancient and medieval people was staggering compared to that of our modern minds. Are we necessarily more wise because we can shove Encarta into the CD ROM? The discipline of memorizing and recitation may not be “intelligible” to modern man, but perhaps this is because God is removing His gracious hand from our society. Apropos Romans 1, God seems to withdraw grace (all grace, both common and saving) when a society fails to thank and glorify him. Modernity is, after all, very proud of its independent accomplishments.

So is this a book worth reading? And who should read it? Frame says in the introduction, “This present book is a revised version of the adult Sunday school lessons on the subject that I have taught at New Life, and I hope that other churches will find it useful for such classes” (pp. xiii-xiv). This is exactly not how it should be used. It is my experi-

ence that the usual adult Sunday school class does not exercise the acumen necessary to ferret out the problems in this book while receiving what is good. The insights are very good. The applications are not. What Frame has to say about the inconsistencies of Puritanical regulative principle practices is very useful probably to the seasoned teaching elder, and in that spirit, I am grateful to Professor Frame for this book. I only wish that he had developed this more thoroughly while avoiding the problematic areas that dominate the text.

Leonard R. Payton
Austin, Texas

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In the Face of God

Michael Horton
Dallas: Word (1996).
241 pages, cloth, \$18.99.

In a day when some attempts to make the Almighty a tame deity, Michael Horton declares, to our great refreshment, that intimacy with the immortal, Holy God can be hazardous to your health. Subtitled *The Dangers and Delights of Spiritual Intimacy*, this book provokes us to confront the truth that Christian culture is not in danger of making God too distant, but of making Him so immanent He is innocuous.

Horton writes because of “a growing concern that our culture is being swept into a new era of . . . superstition, and because . . . even contemporary evangelical Christians are not sufficiently resisting the fads of our age” (p. xv). Lest anyone declare the book to be simply a reactionary tirade against modern Christianity, Horton reminds us that the problems are historic in root: “It is a rather serious business to say that the chief heresy that occupied the atten-

tion of New Testament writers now influences modern culture, including liberal and evangelical Protestantism" (p. 51).

Horton does, however, so thoroughly confirm and document the presence of this heresy, Gnosticism, in the fertile soil of American Christianity, that we cringe.

For those unfamiliar with Gnosticism, he cites its characteristics: (1) the subjective over the objective, (2) the secret and private over the public, (3) mystical experience over critical understanding, (4) the feminine over the masculine, (5) spirit over matter, (6) eternity over time, (7) direct encounters with God over events mediated by matter and history, (8) spiritual techniques for gaining access to and control over the secrets of the universe, and (9) salvation from the body, time, institutions, and escape into a realm of pure spirit (p. 46).

Horton, not satisfied with diagnosis only, prescribes for a healthy spiritual life. The medicine? A strong dose of what Luther called the "theology of the cross" rather than the "theology of glory" (p. 69). Magical concepts of "power words," "formulas," and "secrets" will poison instead of cure. The "message of the cross" (1 Cor. 1:18) is needed by sinner and saint:

Defeat, humiliation, despair tell the story of the crucifixion—the very antithesis to worldly expectations. And yet it was in this event that God disclosed himself for all to see. From the perspective of unbelief, there could not have been a darker moment. But from the vista of faith, a new world was being born—a new age of God's kingdom, the dawn of salvation (p. 81)

Horton is not a stale academic; his wit is evident in chapter titles such as "How to Be Too Spiritual" and "Age of the Spirit or Spirit of the Age?" There are two appendices worth

the price of the book. The first deals with the ever-sensitive issue of Christian music. The second anticipates the reader's objections and attempts to answer them.

Horton's work is provocative. Echoing in these pages is the voice of the monk from Wittenberg. It appears Horton welcomes the comparison and doesn't fear strong reactions.

Douglas R. Shivers
Springfield, Missouri

Entertainment Evangelism: Taking the Church Public

Walt Kallestad
Nashville: Abingdon Press (1996).
144 pages, cloth, \$12.95.

Let me first state some personal convictions, lest someone think that this review is just another jeremiad against the contemporary church growth movement: (1) no one desires to intentionally be boring, and no genuine lover of Christ wants to be involved in boring worship, and boring worship or evangelism is a blasphemous thing considering the majesty of God; (2) the gospel must be presented in culturally relevant ways; (3) we should not make unbelievers cross language or cultural barriers to come to faith in Christ, and (4) there is no place within the church for that which is third rate, if the resources, gifts and the talents are there for that which is first rate. Enough said.

In the introduction to this book, the author asks: "If we in the church have the most important and exciting news in all history, then why don't we find the most creative, innovative and irresistible ways to capture people's attention so they will line up to hear, see and experience it?" (p.7) My answers to this and many of Kallestad's ponderings is sim-

ply this—"est the cross of Christ be emptied of its power" (1 Cor. 1:17), and "so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom but on God's power" (1 Cor. 2:5).

In spite of the detour signs from the apostle Paul, Kallestad hits the gas and we're off cruising down the "if-it-works (i.e., entertains)-it-must-be-good" highway. Along the way the billboard truths of pragmatism are displayed for us, from the likes of Walt Disney, George Barna, Peter Drucker, Lyle Schaller, and Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream. Scripture, dabbled in occasionally, is usually used as a launching pad to pragmatic entertainment "theology." Throughout the book, Kallestad makes no real distinction between evangelism and worship. The title leads one to believe that it is focused on evangelism. It is actually focused on making worship entertaining, so that people will come. The philosophy is this, "If we entertain them they will come." This blurring of evangelism and worship makes the book a bit more complicated to review. Indeed, after finishing the book, the title became even more curious for me. This is really a book about how Kallestad grew his church through sociological, managerial, Disney-like "imagining" and marketing strategies. Very little is mentioned about what "entertainment evangelism" actually is. He gives us no real examples other than different styles of service, some drama, and a dumbed-down preaching method.

I have great sympathy, in a certain sense, with many of Kallestad's frustrations of a church refusing to change, "just because we've always done it that way." What pastor hasn't run into an unthinking, and uncritical adherence to tradition? Or what pastor hasn't encountered resistance to change, whether it is biblical change or not? I can't help but wonder if the traditional, liturgical denomination that Kallestad is in has caused a greater swinging of the pendulum toward the "if-it's-new-it-must-be-true" mindset. One might indeed agree that some change is needed in his

church regarding style. However, an "entertaining" style is but a painted lady, and not the beautiful bride of true worship.

Kallestad asks this question early on, "Why should not the church develop a style of engaging worship, music and entertainment that can compete with anything on the market in terms of quality, yet springs from far different values and theological commitments?" (p. 9). To answer this question it will be helpful to define Kallestad's key term of "entertain" by the standard Funk and Wagnall definition: "to amuse or to divert." The simple fact is, certain truths can never be entertaining. Was Isaiah entertained before the throne in Isaiah chapter six? How can we make people feel amused and diverted about repentance, holiness, and "Search me, O God and see if there be any wicked way in me"? How can the cross ever be something that amuses? Nowhere in the Scripture is the cross ever associated with anything coming close to amusement.

We are told that "Entertainment evangelism is not the message" (p. 25), much to the chagrin of Marshall McLuhan who told us that the medium is the message. I would clarify McLuhan by saying that the medium is always a powerful part of the message—often changing the message entirely. This truth was illustrated for me recently as I listened to a Christian radio station play an instrumental version of Luther's "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." This version was done in a "light jazz" style. Now I like "light jazz," but it is impossible to convey the message of a battle song in a light, bouncy tune. The medium changed the message. In the same way entertainment, without question, changes the message of the gospel. It takes the edge off the heart-ripping truths, and romanticizes the love of God at Calvary.

There seems to be the assumption that we live in a different age than in New Testament times, and new times call for new methods. In one sense this is true. Yet Paul had the

option to “take the church public” in his own day, and could have used Kallestad’s rationales for doing so. Certainly the Greeks loved the theater, and Paul could have reasoned this would be the best way to get the pagan Greeks to come to church in Ephesus. Paul deliberately chose not to. Greeks also loved flowery rhetoric, but he deliberately “set forth the truth plainly.”

The issue of boredom in the church is not solved by entertainment. Sooner or later bored people will be bored with entertainment. Witness the advent of 500-channel satellite television, and still the words are heard, “There’s nothing on.” I fear that there is a massive yawn coming from those who have been entertained in our churches for the last decade or so. The signs are already there that they are beginning to say, “Been there, done that, there’s nothing on.”

I hear many of Kallestad’s questions regarding boredom in the church, and they cause me to evaluate what I am doing in worship. Worship can indeed be done in boring ways. Hymns can be sung as funeral dirges, the repetition of a chorus six times can be painful, messages can be preached with no heat and no meat, and worship leaders can lead as though they are directing traffic. However, the problem is not essentially a problem of style. Boredom is ultimately the result of a lack of heart and a lack of mind (spirit and truth) on the part of the worshipers or leaders or both. Boredom is relieved by amusement, but not cured. The cure comes only by being satisfied with the living God and by a white-hot biblical worship of an almighty, three-times holy God, who has condescended to be crushed at Calvary for my sin, so that I might live. This worship comes through the Word preached, taught and read, and through Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs—especially new songs. The cross will never be entertaining, but it is never boring when preached in the power of the Spirit!

In chapter two, Kallestad calls on the Holy Spirit to put His stamp of approval on entertainment theology. We are told that “Our vision was God’s doing. The Spirit of God supplied power, a power greater than all our frustrations and limitations” (p. 53). What is curious here is that Kallestad uses a quote from Luther to justify his plan as coming from God. He says that he was influenced by Martin Luther to justify his plan as being of God. He says that he was influenced by Martin Luther’s interpretation of the Apostles’ Creed where Luther comments, “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ or come to him, but that the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the one true faith” (p. 52). Luther’s bold-faced, God-centered statement of election is somehow made to rubber stamp this book by saying in effect, “God gave us this plan.” Maybe, maybe not.

The final chapter of this book is perhaps the most disappointing. It promises to give us a theology of entertainment evangelism, but it gives us only a fleeting glance at John 1:14, and is utterly devoid of any scriptural argumentation. In one of the final sentences of this book, Kallestad tells us where the power is for the gospel to go forth when he writes, “With all the technology and creative breakthroughs rushing through our world, we have a realistic hope that the world can be eternally changed” (p. 139). If only Paul had a computer, a praise band, or a drama director, just imagine where the church would be today! (They may have a place in the church, but none are the hope of its success.)

Those enamored with technique-oriented, church growth strategies, will not find much here that is all that new, and they will even find the book a bit “light.” It never gives much that is really innovative other than varying worship styles with contemporary music and some drama.

This may be to Kallestad's credit as he does not give us "professional wrestling matches" or "dog and pony show" ideas for Sunday morning. Yet, at the end of the day, there is no reason why we should not pursue these avenues under his plan.

This reviewer would never argue that the church should not at times change its style to fit a culture, or improve its method, or that it should ever do things that are sloppy or shoddy. Yet, I would never make style "king," nor seek to entertain in worship. The church has tried power evangelism, entertainment evangelism, video evangelism. What is next? All of this has caused me to lament my own question, more than any posed in this book, "Where are the Reformed evangelists?" Lord, send us some!

Bob Dalberg
Ely, Minnesota

***To a Thousand Generations—Infant Baptism:
Covenant Mercy for the People of God***

Douglas A. Wilson
Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press (1996).
123 pages, paper, \$7.50.

In this readable book Douglas Wilson argues for infant baptism, and he does so, at least to my mind, very convincingly. I should know—it was the argumentation of this book which pushed me into a covenantal position some three years ago. However, it should be noted that there are underlying strengths to the book which make it of unique value, even to those Baptists who never change their position. It is about infant baptism, but it is about so much more than that. It is about the unity of the covenants, and a sound biblical view of parents and children. It is about how God taught His people to think about their children for cen-

turies, and it is about biblical interpretation which is not merely grammatical but also historical. And it is about rightly framing the questions which our first-century forebears debated, rather than imposing our twentieth century-debates upon the Scriptures.

Although this is a small book, readers will do well not to assume it is a "quick-read." The logic is consistent and very tightly packed; no paragraph allows a "breather." Having read the unpublished manuscript, I am amazed again at what Douglas Wilson has managed to pack into 123 pages. Of course Wilson has taught logic for some time, and it is logical—biblical logic—of which the reader gets a plate-full in this little volume.

This book is not for the person who has a mere casual interest in the debate over baptism. Neither is it for those who are happy to denounce caricatures of the paedobaptist position, or content to hide behind warnings about "the slippery side" into nominalism. And if you are given to nightmares concerning all of the people you would offend if you changed your position, perhaps you should stop reading this review. There—you're hooked.

One of the great strengths of the book is its presentation of the unity of the covenants and their culmination in the new covenant. Those raised in dispensationalism will find this exercise particularly helpful in counteracting the lingering fragmenting effects of that school of thought. Those concerned about preserving the uniqueness and distinctiveness of new covenant glories will not be dissatisfied, as those glories are shown to illuminate the whole of the Scriptures. As Wilson so effectively puts it, "Moses was a Christian." The discussion of the meaning of circumcision is of course central, and is also very helpful. Wilson's argument shows that when circumcision is seen in its full evangelical significance—a sign of the Christ who was to come, the sign of the righteousness of another—we are then

helped also to see the sign of baptism in its true significance. It is not a sign of my faith. It is rather a sign of the righteousness which I have by faith. It is a sign of Christ and His righteousness.

Considerable space is devoted to establishing the proper foundation or lens through which the New Testament data should be read. Once in place, the force of the author's argument is formidable. When we finally learn to think as a first-century Christian Jew (rightly, evangelically) thought about the promises of God and the significance of circumcision and the covenantal status of his children, we are then prepared to understand why he would continue to circumcise his children and why also he would (no apology necessary) present his children to be baptized. He knew the sign of circumcision was no mere cultural badge, but a sign rich with covenantal significance, and he understood the sign of baptism to be largely of the same significance. (We might also add that we are prepared to understand why the apostles would not flinch either!) We are also helped to see precisely why believing Gentiles were not to have their children circumcised (not because they were children, but because they were Gentiles), and why it is entirely proper for a man's household to be baptized with him. Do you follow? Well you'll have to read the book. So much here depends upon understanding accurately the questions with which the early church wrestled, and our author does much to elucidate these matters for us.

Along the way various other passages are wonderfully illuminated. The "branches" which do not bear fruit (John 15), and the branches broken off of the fig tree (Romans 11), can cause you "fits" if you don't think covenantally enough about the new covenant. But you, dear reader, no doubt have all of this figured out already. In addition there is a very helpful chapter addressing the mode of baptism.

In short, Wilson argues that there is a way to hold to a

paedo-Baptist position which is thoroughly biblical and evangelical, and I think he wonderfully makes his case. Ah, but of course I am biased. Get the book, and read it at least three times.

Bruce Hollister

Joliet, Illinois

Some Christians to the Lord regard a day,
And others to the Lord regard it now;
Now, though these seem to choose a diff'rent way,
Yet both, at last, to one same point are brought.

He that regards the day will reason thus—
“This glorious day our Saviour and our King
Perform'd some mighty act of love for us;
Observe the time in mem'ry of the thing.”

Thus he to Jesus points his kind intent,
And offers prayers and praises in his name;
As to the Lord above his love is meant,
The Lord accepts it; and who dare to blame?

For though the shell indeed is not the meat,
'Tis not rejected when the meat's within;
Though superstition is a vain conceit,
Commemoration surely is no sin.

He also, that to days has no regard,
The shadows only for the substance quits;
Towards the Saviour's presence presses hard,
And outward things through eagerness omits.

For warmly to himself he thus reflects—
“My Lord alone I count my chiefest good;
All empty forms my craving soul rejects,
And seeks the solid riches of his blood.

“All days and times I place my sole delight
In him, the only object of my care;
External shows for his dear sake I slight,
Lest ought but Jesus my respect should share.”

Let not the observer, therefore, entertain
Against his brother any secret grudge;
Nor let the non-observer call him vain;
But use his freedom, and forbear to judge.

Thus both may bring their motives to the test;
Our condescending Lord will both approve.
Let each pursue the way that likes him best;
He cannot walk amiss, that walks in love.

Joseph Hart