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New Orleans, LA
- **ETS** November 19-21,
San Diego, CA
- **AAR & SBL** November
22-25, San Diego, CA
- **SCE** January 8-11, 2015,
St. Louis, MO

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A Groundbreaking Discovery from J. B. Lightfoot

Joseph Barber Lightfoot (1828–1889) was one of the great biblical and patristic scholars of the nineteenth century in any language, and certainly in English. He is known especially for his writings on Paul's letters and the Apostolic Fathers. Recently, thanks to the work of Ben Witherington III and Todd D. Still, and the assistance of Jeanette Hagen, Lightfoot's commentary notes on Acts, John, 1 Peter and 2 Corinthians have been examined and transcribed for the first time. They will appear in a three-volume series entitled The Lightfoot Legacy. The first volume, The Acts of the Apostles, will appear this winter, with subsequent volumes appearing in the following winters. Recently, the IVP Academic editor for the project, David Congdon, discussed this exciting publishing event with Witherington and Still.

Congdon: Could you briefly tell me how this project started?

Witherington: In 1978 I was wandering around Durham Cathedral Library and saw a case with handwritten notes on Acts 15 and assumed there must be more. I told my Durham professors about this in the 1980s but no one did an adequate check before Bruce Kaye and G. R. Treloar, who were only interested in writing about Lightfoot as a historian. So finally I went and rummaged through everything they had, which

included some 1,500 handwritten pages on Acts, John, 1 Peter and 2 Corinthians—all untranscribed and all unpublished. I felt like I hit the motherload since he was the greatest commentator of the nineteenth century.

Congdon: After this discovery, what happened next? Is this where Todd entered the picture?

Witherington: What happened at first was that I examined the extent of what was in the notebooks. There were also two large blue loose-leaf binders full of deteriorating pages.

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Barth and Plantinga: Unlikely Allies in Epistemology

Karl Barth and Alvin Plantinga are two of the most important and dominating figures within their fields—Christian theology and Christian philosophy, respectively. While approaching matters from different disciplines and with different theological perspectives, both thinkers are profoundly engaged with the epistemological problem. In Theology's Epistemological Dilemma, the newest volume in IVP Academic's Strategic Initiatives in Evangelical Theology series, Kevin Diller explores the epistemic problem and the ways Barth and Plantinga address it. The result will be of interest to theologians and philosophers from all traditions. David Congdon interviewed Diller to hear more about this interdisciplinary study.



Kevin Diller

Congdon: Tell me a bit about your background. What led to your interest in the dialogue between theology and philosophy?

Diller: St. Augustine apparently said that “if faith is not a matter of thought, it is of

no account.” I'm not sure he's right about that, but from a very young age I've been

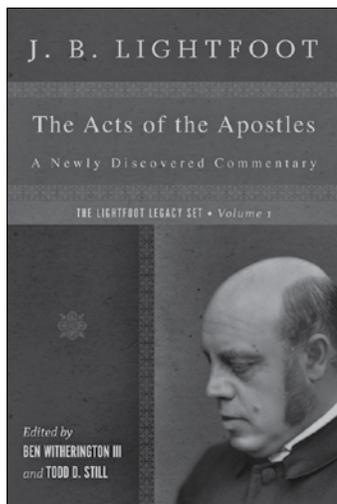
captivated by the questions of faith. As far back as I can remember, the great things of the gospel have seemed true to me and as a consequence have held the place of deepest significance in my life; and yet, from a young age I was preoccupied with rational objections to my religious beliefs. These longstanding interests grew in such a way so as to motivate me to devote a good portion of my adult life to the study of theology and philosophy. In so doing, I have had the privilege of

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I had to wear gloves and turn pages on a pillow to prevent crumbling. I couldn't take anything out of the reading room and only the librarians could make copies or digital images. On top of this, the reading room had limited hours. Thus most of the transcribing had to wait until digital images could be made over the summer. On top of all this, once I had alerted the librarian to what was there, they took it all away for restoration. One can only double check the digital images to see if I transcribed correctly.

Still: Ben and I have been good friends for a number of years now. We have visited one another at our respective institutions and in each other's homes (and golf courses!) and stay in consistent contact. When Ben was in Durham this past summer, we were in communication about another project, a festschrift for



one of my Baylor colleagues. It was at this point that Ben shared with me via email regarding the Lightfoot largesse he had found. In response, I shared with Ben that I was something of a "Lightfootphile" and how over the years

als, proofreading and communicating with library staff).

Congdon: Could each of you tell me one thing that has most surprised you about these materials, particularly Lightfoot's commentary on Acts?

“Lightfoot kept revising and adding to this material. . . . It is as if he knew someone might find all this and one day publish it.”

I had consulted and recommended his various commentaries. At this point, the project began to percolate.

Not long thereafter, I, too, was able to visit Durham Cathedral Library and with the kind help of Dr. Catherine Turner and Ms. Jeanette Hagen saw what Ben had seen. At that point, I shared with Ben that I thought there were materials sufficient for three volumes—one on Acts, another on John, and yet a third on 2 Corinthians and 1 Peter respectively. In short order, through the generosity of Asbury Seminary, Baylor University and my father (Willard Still), we were able to secure the monies necessary to digitalize all the relevant notebooks and loose-leaf pages that Ben had identified and to remunerate Jeanette Hagen, a PhD candidate in New Testament at Durham University, for her assistance (in transcribing a fair share of the Acts materi-

Witherington: For me it's that Lightfoot kept revising and adding to this material, including adding references to scholarly literature (for decades!) when he was only using it for lectures at Cambridge. It is as if he knew someone might find all this and one day publish it.

Still: Into his learned exegetical lecture notes, Lightfoot will sometimes weave poignant theological and homiletical statements. Encountering such remarks is like coming across the surprise in a box of Cracker Jacks! To take but one example, when commenting upon Nicolas (one of the seven named in Acts 6) and his ostensible connection with the Nicolaitans (cf. Rev 2:6, 15), Lightfoot remarks, "Whether [Nicolas] was really the founder of the sect or whether some of his acts or words were perverted and misapplied by the Nicolaitans, it is impossible to say. But the former

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participating in conversations between Christian theologians and Christian philosophers. Theologians and philosophers all too often occupy separate spheres of the Christian academic world. My interest in the continued dialogue between theology and philosophy stems from a conviction that, for the Christian mind, theology and philosophy are fundamentally (though asymmetrically) interdependent.

Congdon: And what led you to look at

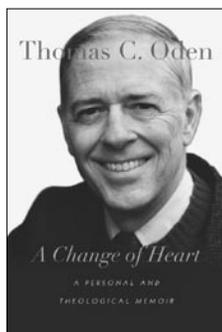
Karl Barth and Alvin Plantinga in particular?

Diller: To begin with, I have personally found the writings of Barth and Plantinga to be very helpful in clarifying how it is that we might come to know God. They are also iconic and massively influential figures who represent, in a way, these often separate spheres of theology and philosophy. They are not often brought into conversation; in fact many academic readers I think would be

intrigued by the notion that these particular figures could be brought together in a compatible and complementary way. And yet as I read them side by side I was struck by just how deeply in agreement they are on answers to key epistemological/revelational questions. The unified response Barth and Plantinga give to these key questions I find to be extremely important and helpful to a multitude of issues further out on the branches. And a study like this, it seemed to me, might

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Tom Oden's Drastic Theological Turnaround



Tom Oden's theological career has run through a wide swath of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century theological trends. How did a "movement theologian" of the sixties become a paleo-orthodox theologian? In Oden's memoir, *A Change of Heart*, he tells us the turnaround came around 1970, when the young professor got to know his senior colleague at Drew

University, the Jewish scholar Will Herberg.

The critical moment came over lunch: "Will was trying to show me that the errors I was making were much deeper than I had realized. I tried to defend myself. Suddenly my irascible, endearing Jewish friend leaned into my face and told me that I was densely ignorant of Christianity, and he simply couldn't permit me to throw my life away. Holding one finger up, looking straight at me with fury in his eyes, he said, 'You will remain theologically uneducated until you study carefully Athanasius, Augustine and Aquinas.' In his usual gruff

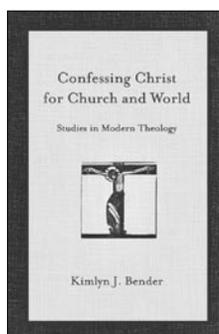
voice and brusque speech, he told me I had not yet met the great minds of my own religious tradition. . . . I would have to go to a quiet place and sit at the feet of the great minds of ancient Christianity to discover who I was. Herberg reminded me that I would stand under divine judgment on the last day. He said, 'If you are ever going to become a credible theologian instead of a know-it-all pundit, you had best restart your life on firmer ground. You are not a theologian except in name only, even if you are paid to be one.'"

Read the book for the rest of the story! ■

Conversations with Karl Barth

Since the 2005 publication of *Karl Barth's Christological Ecclesiology*, Kimlyn Bender has established himself as one of the most sensitive and thoughtful interpreters of Barth's theology, particularly on issues of ecclesiology and Christology.

In *Confessing Christ for Church and World*, a collection of both old and new essays, Bender brings Barth's theology into dialogue with a variety of interlocutors and topics, some familiar and others more surprising. Among the more familiar top-



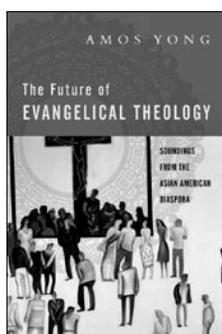
ics include essays engaging Barth on Scripture and another on Roman Catholicism.

More unexpected are the essays bringing Barth into a fruitful fellowship with Baptists and another on how Barth might respond to Bart

Ehrman on the issue of canon. Bender examines the debate between Barth and Adolf von Harnack, as well as Barth's often ignored Gifford Lectures. A further essay explores Barth on the question of atheism, which illustrates Barth's readiness to hear criticisms of Christianity and his refusal to be reactionary. Students and scholars of modern theology will find this volume to be a rich resource for thinking about what it means to be faithful to Christ in the world today. ■

Asian American Contributions to Global Theology

Global Christianity is undergoing major changes, and with those changes come necessary shifts in theology. Evangelical theology, particularly as practiced within North America, has been slow on the uptake, often even resistant to the implications of the



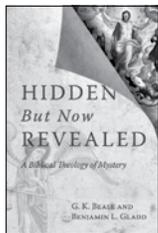
emerging global context for evangelical thought and practice. Distilling years of previous work, Amos Yong argues that Asian American

experiences have much to contribute to the wider evangelical theological conversation, not because an Asian American perspective is a uniquely normative viewpoint, but because the task of developing an Asian American evangelical theology is representative of the larger global challenge facing evangelicalism today.

In contrast to approaches rooted in critical theory or postmodern philosophy, *The Future of Evangelical Theology* makes a distinctively theological argument for embracing the particular experiences and perspectives of Asian Americans in our theological reflection.

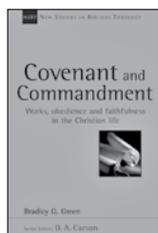
Drawing especially on the day of Pentecost narrative, Yong argues that the outpouring of Christ's Spirit upon all flesh means that the evangelical church has to attend to the multiplicity of voices that shape the global theological conversation. This leads him to develop an evangelical theology of migration, informed especially by the Chinese American experience. Bringing together evangelical, pentecostal and missional theology, Yong's book is a major contribution that sets the agenda for Asian American and North American evangelical theology in the twenty-first century. ■

New & Noteworthy



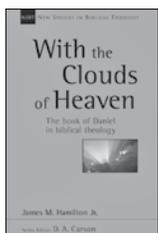
In *Hidden but Now Revealed*, Greg Beale and Benjamin Gladd give us a full-scale biblical-theological study of divine mystery. They trace the theme

through its every occurrence in the New Testament, studying the relationship between the Old and New Testaments as it turns on the idea of mystery, with the key being found in the book of Daniel.



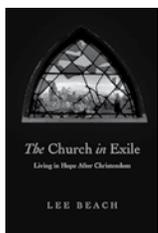
The subtitle, *Works, obedience and faithfulness in the Christian life*, nearly says it all. In *Covenant and Commandment*, Bradley G. Green navigates his way through Scripture and

between his partners in theological debate, engaging the evidence and alternative views with clarity and generosity of spirit. There is something to engage and instruct everyone in this NSBT volume.



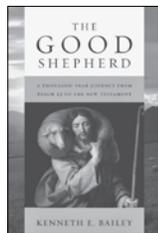
With the Clouds of Heaven is James M. Hamilton's contribution to the NSBT series, and he deploys a robust defense of a traditional understanding of the author-

ship and setting of Daniel as he works out a biblical theology of the book. Hamilton studies the antecedent biblical sources Daniel took up in writing and then traces out how the book was used by later biblical writers.



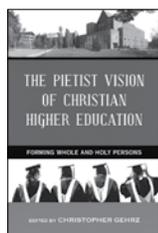
Christianity is losing its cultural influence and power. In *The Church in Exile*, Lee Beach argues that we should be glad for this as it allows the church to fulfill God's

call to be a light to the nations without getting subsumed by a world that is not our home.



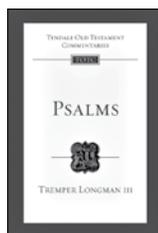
In *The Good Shepherd* Kenneth Bailey shares his insight into Middle Eastern culture and shepherding customs to trace the Good Shepherd motif from Psalm 23 to

Jesus. He explores nine major biblical episodes to illuminate this image in ways that inform our understanding, helping us better appreciate this beloved theme.



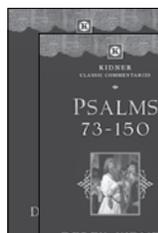
Bringing together leading scholars in the Pietist tradition, including Janel Curry, Roger Olson, Jenell Paris and Christian Collins Winn, *The Pietist Vision of Christian Higher*

Education presents, for the first time, a distinctively Pietist approach to Christian higher education that emphasizes the transformation of the whole person for service to God and neighbor.



Tremper Longman, who has devoted much of his scholarly career to Old Testament wisdom and poetry, now gives us *Psalms* in the revised Tyndale Old

Testament Commentary series. Longman explores the use of Psalms in the New Testament and provides a christological reading. For a one-volume commentary on Psalms, it is hard to imagine a more satisfying choice.



Even while the TOTC is being revised, the legacy of the original series continues. Derek Kidner was the original master craftsman of the compact commentary, and his

two-volume vintage commentary *Psalms 1-72* and *Psalms 73-150* now joins *Jeremiah* in the Kidner Classic Commentaries.

J. B. Lightfoot, continued from page 2

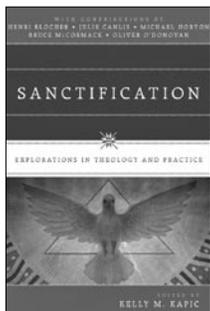
supposition is not impossible. If there was a traitor among the twelve, there may well have been a heretic among the seven" (Lightfoot, *Acts*, p. 104).

Congdon: It's clear how valuable this project is for church historians and biblical scholars. But what would you say to the pastor or the seminarian who is looking for resources on Acts and who may not know much about J. B. Lightfoot? What is the abiding value of this work for the church today?

Still: Given Lightfoot's immense erudition, encyclopedic knowledge and scholarly productivity, it is easy to forget that he was, among other things, a preacher and minister. Not only did Lightfoot devote the last ten years of his life (1879–1889) serving as the bishop of Durham, he also dedicated a large swath of his life to training ministers and to writing and teaching in the service of the church. The work of Lightfoot, not least on Acts, serves as both a resource and a model for those who are seeking to divide rightly the word of truth (2 Tim 2:15).

Witherington: I would say that a clear understanding of the character of earliest Christianity—its beliefs, its practices, its struggles and challenges—are essential if we are to understand who we are as Christians and who we ought to be and to be about. The church today is suffering from a sort of amnesia; it has forgotten the rock from which it was hewn, and so it fails to understand its own identity. The past, as Lightfoot would say, is not mere prologue; it is the foundation of our faith and on it we must stand. Lightfoot reminds us again and again that history matters, that nothing can be theologically true that is historically false, that a gnostic sort of spirituality that divorces itself from the original Greek text and context of Acts is not a Christian approach to spiritual formation but a heresy against which the church fathers fought vigorously. ■

Resurrecting the Study of Holiness



The doctrine of sanctification is a topic of growing interest and debate within the church today, especially in the field of Reformed theology. Protestants have (stereo)typically emphasized justification “by faith alone,” over “works-righteousness,”

while the topic of sanctification has often been treated with suspicion. As many of those old anxieties fade away, the doctrine of sanctification is finding a more receptive hearing, given how interconnected holiness is with other topics like ethics, ecclesiology and eschatology. There is a certainly a pressing need for renewed engagement with this doctrine.

Sanctification: Explorations in Theology and Practice, edited by Kelly Kopic,

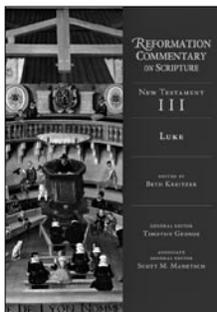
brings together some of the most learned theologians writing today, including Michael Horton, Bruce McCormack, Oliver O’Donovan, Julie Canlis and Henri Blocher, who explore sanctification in biblical, historical, dogmatic and pastoral perspective, considering key topics such as the image of God, union with Christ, Christian ethics and suffering. *Sanctification* is a work of vital and timely scholarship for both church and academy. ■

From the Mouths of the Reformers

The latest addition to the Reformation Commentary on Scripture (RCS) series, this edited volume on the Gospel of Luke brings together commentary from a diversity of Reformation-era voices, much of which is appearing for the first time in English.

Like other volumes in the RCS series—and like the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture series before it—*Luke* offers readers insight into how Christians of previous generations have read and understood

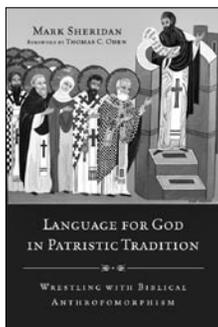
Scripture. Readers are able to discover how Christians interpreted Scripture during an era of church history that was marked by both spiritual renewal and doctrinal controversy.



Edited by Beth Kreitzer, this volume, which is the seventh RCS volume of the planned twenty-eight, includes both well-known and

lesser-known voices from a variety of theological traditions, including Lutheran, Reformed, Anabaptist and Anglican commentators. This multiplicity of voices not only enhances our understanding of the Reformation, but also gives us insight into the unique elements of Luke’s account of Jesus Christ, who was born in the days of Caesar Augustus, told the parable of the prodigal son and revealed himself to his disciples on the road to Emmaus. ■

Anthropomorphism Through Ancient Eyes



For centuries, readers of the Bible have struggled to know how to handle the highly anthropomorphic and anthropopathic descriptions of

God. What does it mean to say that “God planted a garden” (Gen 2:8) or that God was “walking in the garden” (Gen 3:8)? Ancient Jewish and Christian theologians responded to these passages by drawing on the Greek philosophical tradition, which sharply distinguished between God

and human beings. They found support for this in a passage such as Numbers 23:19: “God is not a human being, that he should lie, or a mortal, that he should change his mind.”

In this comprehensive study of ancient theological interpretation of Scripture, Mark Sheridan explores the way ancient philosophers and theologians dealt with biblical language for God deemed unfitting or inappropriate. Beginning with Xenophanes and Plato, Sheridan covers a wide range of Jewish and Christian thinkers, including Philo, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and John Chrysostom.

Rather than reject the Bible as mere stories—or fall into the heresy of Marcion—ancient Jewish and Christian theologians read these texts allegorically in order to discover the truth contained within them. Sheridan also brings the patristic tradition into conversation with modern interpreters to show the abiding significance of its theological interpretation for today.

In addition to numerous textual examples, the book’s appendix outlines the presuppositions, criteria and rules of ancient Christian hermeneutics. *Language for God in Patristic Tradition* is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in patristic theology and biblical interpretation. ■

Epistemology, continued from page 2

also help to demonstrate the nature of that fruitful interdependence between theology and philosophy.

Congdon: Could you briefly summarize why Plantinga and Barth are generally thought to be incompatible?

Diller: Karl Barth is known to have strong and uncompromising views about the potential for human constructs and reasoning to turn theology into idolatry. In the realm of the Christian philosophers, Barth is routinely taken to represent an extreme case of “philosophobia”. On the other hand, the theologians that are more familiar with Barth often see Plantinga as a representative of a kind of theological naiveté and a philosophical triumphalism reminiscent of rationalist apologetics. Exaggerating these differences is the unfortunate and misleading analytic/continental partisanship in philosophy. Plantinga is recognized as an analytic philosopher and since Christian theology has historically engaged more closely with continental philosophy, both sides tend to start with a certain degree of inherited distaste.

Congdon: Can you say more about the analytic/continental divide? Why has there been this partisanship, and what’s misleading about it?

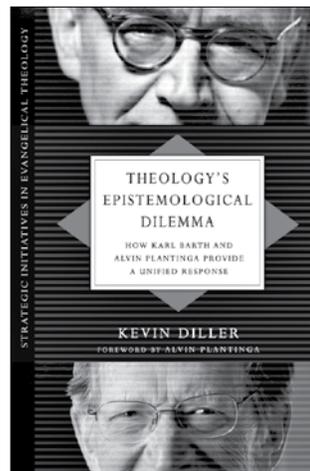
Diller: My sense is that this divide is the lingering consequence of geographical separation. Camps naturally develop as a result of shared ideas, traditions, vocabularies and styles. It can be misleading in a number of ways. It can be easy for analytic philosophers to assume that the continental approach is confusing and lacks argumentative rigor. Those who prefer the continental mode may see the analytic school as dry, linear and reductionist. These are misleading caricatures that have all too often provided a justification for ignoring one side or the other. Now, I’m not suggesting it is all a matter of translation and differences in taste. I think it is possible to identify differences that amount to genuine strengths and weaknesses, and this makes bridging the divide all the more potentially fruitful. I’m quite sympathetic to the aversion to a dry and overly self-assured style that might seem to assume that everything can be reduced to propositions. To

maintain a barrier on the basis of this aversion, however, is to miss out on the valuable contributions Christian analytic philosophers can make to theological discussions.

The same is true in the other direction: Christian theologians have an extremely important role to play in informing, anchoring and chastening Christian analytic philosophers as they work on theological questions.

Congdon: That’s very helpful. But what about those readers not invested in these partisan debates within philosophy? What’s the importance of your study for the life of the Christian in the church?

Diller: The central question of the book is about how fallible and limited human beings like us could have any confidence that we have a knowledge of God. That’s a question of enormous importance for the life of the church. The church faces challenges on every side to its central claim that God makes himself known in Jesus Christ. Though the title of the book points to a dilemma for theology, this is a crucial question for every believer. Can we have confidence in divine revelation? We are perhaps more aware than ever of the dangers of religious dogmatism and of our own propensities for self-deception and over confidence. We face a dilemma. How do we have the proper kind of humility about what we claim to know, and yet still have a firm confidence in who God has revealed himself to be? Should we keep faith separated from the life of the mind? Should we try to demonstrate the truth of faith with philosophical arguments? In the book, I argue that Karl Barth shows us how Christian theology responds to this dilemma, while Alvin Plantinga agrees and provides a philosophical defense of that response. ■


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