

*Exploring Our Hebraic Heritage: A Christian Theology of Roots and Renewal.* By Marvin R. Wilson. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014. Pp. xxviii + 304. \$22.

Twenty-five years after publishing *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, Wilson offers here a sequel to that work. While in that prior work, he set out an overview of Jewish–Christian relations and an accounting of multiple points of resonance between the two traditions, in this volume he argues for the necessity of a deep Christian engagement with the Jewish tradition for the sake of ecclesial vitality and renewal. W. writes, “If the withered or rotted roots of today’s church are to become revived through a new understanding of the church’s Hebraic beginnings, the church must nourish itself from the sources, those central documents vital to Hebraic thought and life that have shaped Judaism over the centuries” (38). Underlying this thesis is the assumption that Christianity is most authentic when it is in dialogue with its Jewish roots. As a corollary, a healthy Christianity is one that treats Jews and the Jewish tradition with respect and mutuality. For W., “Christianity is not a total annulling of Judaism but an expansion and reinterpretation of it” (42). Ideally, Jews and Christians are to collaborate with and not rival each other.

Wilson divides his book into five sections. The first, on the Hebrew Scriptures, argues for always maintaining the Hebrew Scriptures as central to Christian ethics. Moreover, W. argues that Christians ought to learn more about later rabbinic literature, since it offers insights into how Jews historically interpreted Scripture and provides a context for understanding Jesus as a Jewish teacher. In the second section on the shared patriarch Abraham, W. takes a strong anti-supersessionist stance. Rather than claiming the Abrahamic promises to the exclusion of Jews, Christians must understand that “Israel is the people we join” (66). The work of Jesus fulfilled the Abrahamic promises so that the church comes to belong to Israel without displacing the Jewish people as the primary group identified as Israel. The third and fourth sections concern God and the worship of God, with the fifth, and final, section turning to the future of Jewish–Christian relations. In this section, W. again rejects the long tradition of Christian supersessionism. Using the work of the Jewish theologian Michael Wyschogrod, Wilson believes that Christians should understand themselves as adopted members of Israel—grafted into the olive tree—but not core members of it.

In theological terms, W.’s efforts to have his Christian readers identify spiritually as partners with Judaism while resisting supersessionist thought is the most stimulating part of this book. While often referencing the importance of engaging with rabbinic literature, W. mostly focuses on the Hebrew Scriptures with rarer expeditions into rabbinic texts (with the exclusion of *Pirkei Avot*) and a stronger engagement with Abraham Joshua Heschel’s thought. The book as a whole has a strongly Protestant evangelical flavor and will likely find its strongest reception among readers from that tradition. Although the evangelical perspective on Jewish–Christian relations is welcome, a deeper engagement with scholars from this Christian tradition, such as Kendall Soulen, or with Peter Ochs’s assessment of Christian postliberal theologians, would have provided a more sustained theological discussion. W.’s biblically grounded argument for a nonsupersessionist identification of the church with the mission of the Jewish

people, both carrying the mantle of Israel with differing valences to that title, is a helpful contribution that provides a foundation for future investigation and development.

Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski  
Seminary of the Southwest, Austin

*Traces of the Trinity: Signs, Sacraments, and Sharing God's Life.* By Andrew Robinson. Cambridge, UK: James Clarke, 2014. Pp. xi + 178. £19.50.

The impetus for this book was a review by Keith Ward of Robinson's previous work, *God and the World of Signs* (2010), which draws heavily on the semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce. Ward thought the book relied too much on Peirce and wished R. had espoused his own account, which perhaps would be both more promising and less cryptic than the sometimes abstract vocabulary of Peirce's work. The book attempts to do just that by (1) offering a semiotic model of the Trinity, (2) showing how this model facilitates understanding of participation in God's life, and (3) proposing a "way of seeing" the world as bearing traces of the triune God.

R. combines technical sophistication with clear prose accessible to nonspecialists as well as specialists. The material he treats might be expanded to fill several volumes of a semiotic systematic Christian theology. Topics include: the Trinity, Incarnation, the problem of evil, atonement theory, ecclesiology, spirituality, theological anthropology, metaphysics, relationality, linguistic functionality, sacraments, semiotics, divine presence, spirituality, and more. R. suggests that the fundamental structure of reality is semiotic. Signs, which have the same basic structure as all reality, connect us to that reality. We constantly engage in the activities of making and interpreting them.

Three "elemental grounds" surface when the sign-object relation and interpretation are examined: quality, otherness, and mediation. These three not only underpin the structure of signs but also resonate with the three Persons of the Trinity, thereby informing R.'s "semiotic model of the Trinity" (158). In turn, this semiosis of the Trinity "models *perichoresis*" (158) or the mutual indwelling dance of the trinitarian persons. Further, this "dance of signs" (159) is characteristic of all reality, including humans and other living things going as far back as the simplest organisms. This text virtually sings in part III where R., a general practitioner of medicine and trained in the sciences, draws on the fields of hard science and medicine to demonstrate his semiotic view of reality. He intelligently shows how the origin of life and the increasingly emergent complexity of organisms reflect the capacity of all life (especially human life) to practice signification.

Not surprisingly, and as the title suggests, R. understands the world to "bear the imprint of" the creative activities of the Trinity (125). He refers to these imprints as "vestiges," and suggests they offer a more coherent understanding of the Trinity's creative work in the world without denying the absolute transcendence and radical immanence of God in creation. R. finds "it more attractive to conjecture that the