

the awesome realm they love, see, and reflect on. This crucial epistemological distinction not only creates the space for the dialogue of theology and evolution to be fruitful, but also shows us how to be properly observant and generous as we develop our own thinking.

J.'s trinitarian God is not an arbitrary potentate who intervenes here and there to fix a few of the many messes in the world, but the profound, immutable Love whose greatest gift to the beloved creation is the fecund, immanent creativity and novelty that results from the interaction of evolving law and unpredictable chance. A miracle is not divine violence done to thwart the laws of the created world, but the very Presence that unflinching and intimately loves the creation into relatively autonomous being.

This work in systematic theology does not directly address the reasons one might offer to argue for accepting this view of God and the world. But as Bertrand Russell noted over a century ago, the world that science shows us portrays life that is painfully brief and ultimately meaningless. What J.'s dialogue with Darwin shows is that the beauty of the tree of life and the tangled bank teeming with life forms need not be observed as a hopeless beauty signifying nothing, but can be beheld as a tragic beauty created by Love, sustaining a hope for ultimate meaning. One can bet on God and yet accept the world that contemporary evolutionary theory displays without sacrificing either faith or reason. For compellingly showing how we Christians today can reasonably shape our deepest commitment, we are all very much in J.'s debt.

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*Asketischer Protestantismus und Kapitalismus: Schriften und Reden 1904–1911.* By Max Weber. Edited by Wolfgang Schluchter, assisted by Ursula Bube. Max Weber Gesamtausgabe I/9. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2014. Pp. xx + 994. €389.

That Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* is world famous does not mean that it is not misunderstood. That it is frequently misunderstood is amply demonstrated by the long history of mistakes in interpreting his thesis, a history that dates to the book's initial publication in 1904 and 1905. Now we are fortunate to have the volume in the Max Weber Gesamtausgabe that is devoted to the first publication of *Protestant Ethic*. We are fortunate because it is a critical edition and because it is edited by Wolfgang Schluchter. Probably no one who knows as much about Weber's sociology of religion as S. who, with assistance from Ursula Bube, had put enormous effort into introducing and editing the early version of the *Protestant Ethic*.

S. reminds us that many of the problems with understanding the *Protestant Ethic* can be traced back to Talcott Parson's 1930 translation of it. S. does not dwell on the errors in the translation because they are sufficiently well known; rather, he concentrates on the fact that in Parson's edition the *Protestant Ethic* appears as a book, whereas it was originally published as two separate essays. Furthermore, the publications of the essays were separated by almost a year, during which Weber made a

months-long trip to the United States. S. notes that Parsons inserts a “Preface” to the *Protestant Ethic* that is actually from the 1920 edition of Weber’s *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religion*. S.’s point is that this insertion highlights Weber’s later emphasis on rationality that was not so critical to his original essays.

One value of this edition of the *Protestant Ethic* is that it follows the original by dividing it into its two separate essays. The first one from 1904 sets out the problem: how did the “spirit” of capitalism develop (123–215)? Weber noted that Werner Sombart had investigated the genesis of modern capitalism but had claimed that religious beliefs played no part in its development. Weber shows that Sombart erred, and that religious beliefs played an enormous role. He ends part I by discussing how Luther’s use of the term *Beruf* (calling) had a determining role in how Protestants related to the concept of work. In part II, Weber traces much of the effort to the accumulation of money in Calvin’s doctrine of predestination. No one could be certain whether he or she belonged to the elect; successful work, however, strongly indicated that one did belong and was a way to glorify God. As Weber showed, the theological impulse to asceticism was replaced by a moral justification; these are lost in modern capitalism.

The volume contains much more than just the *Protestant Ethic*; it includes the criticisms leveled at Weber during 1907 to 1910 as well as Weber’s responses, which are heavily annotated (462–740). Perhaps most importantly, it contains an 89-page introduction in which Schluchter covers almost all the important points regarding the *Protestant Ethic*: its historical, economic, and sociological aspects, as well as the development of Weber’s texts. More than 200 pages are devoted to a bibliography, glossary, and indexes. The volume also includes Weber’s essay on churches and sects in North America, the coverage of his Heidelberg lecture on Protestant asceticism, as well as his comments made in the debate concerning Ernst Troeltsch’s speech on natural law at the first conference of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie.

The book is not perfect. It would have been better had S. expanded on some of Weber’s most cited comments: “no one could help him. No preacher . . .,” and the “iron cage” (*stahlhartes Gehäuse*) (259–60; 422); elaborated on the role that Martin Offenbacher’s dissertation played in Weber’s contrast between Catholics and Protestants (46–48); and explored more thoroughly the important theological contexts of the *Protestant Ethic*. Weber’s theology experts, Mathias Schneckenberger, Max Scheibe, Albrecht Ritschl, Julius Köstlin, Karl Bernhard Hundeshagen, and Heinrich Heppe, all deserve far more attention than they are given; only Troeltsch is accorded the attention he deserves. These complaints, however, are rather minor.

In past decades a number of German editions of the *Protestant Ethic* have appeared; and while each has something to recommend it, not one can compare to this volume. S. and B. have provided copious historical context, editorial clarification, and other relevant information. These contributions coupled with the complete texts and the textual accuracy make this a critically important work. Anyone who seeks a full and correct understanding of Weber’s *Protestant Ethic* needs to read this volume.

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