

canonical conception) and does not distinguish the perspectives of the biblical authors from that of God (e.g., 49), does little to further our perception on this topic.

In his second comparative section (chaps. 5–7), after a discussion of parallels in Luke–Acts, U. treats literary parallels and succession narratives in Greco-Roman and Jewish historical accounts, respectively, and then proposes that parallels between Jesus in the Gospel and Peter and Paul in Acts resemble the Deuteronomic historian’s portrayals of succession in the cases of Moses–Joshua and Elijah–Elisha. Various elements of U.’s argument appear tenuous. For example, he views Jesus’ statement about preaching in “other cities also” (Lk 4:43) as pointing to the later itinerant missions of Peter (Acts 9:39) and Paul (Acts 13–21) (124–29). Further, U. takes the conflict with religious leaders in Luke 20:1 and Acts 4:5–6 to indicate that Peter in the latter passage is “the ‘new Jesus,’ a successor who continues Jesus’ task” (135). No one would deny the extensive, intentional parallels between Jesus and Peter or Paul. U.’s insistence, however, that Peter and Paul not only replicate and continue Jesus’ activities (as has long been recognized) but also alone succeed him ignores the broader Lukan conception of the task of the apostles (explicit at Acts 1:8; cf. Lk 24:44–49) and suggests a predecessor–successor equivalency that arguably overstates the Lukan correspondence.

The final set of comparisons (chaps. 8–10) concerns the place of land, genealogies, and the reign of the gods/God in Greco-Roman and Jewish historical accounts, respectively, and what these themes signify in Luke–Acts. U. suggests that geographical movement in Luke–Acts announces the territorial sovereignty of the God of Israel over against earthly rulers, notably the Roman emperor. One strand of his argument holds that Jesus’ baptism, genealogy, and temptation in Lk 3:21–4:13 portrays “Jesus as the legitimate heir and rightful possessor of his Father’s territories” (205). U.’s evidence for this construal depends in part on information he derives from the larger contexts of scriptural quotes or allusions in Luke’s text (i.e., material *not* cited by Luke). A variety of additional arguments are proffered but fail to secure the plausibility of U.’s reading. He nowhere asks about the viability of such a literary-theological construction in the period after 70 CE, when the reality of Jerusalem’s destruction by Rome would seemingly render such an obscure vision of God’s territorial supremacy an odd exercise in theodicy.

While U. displays a commendable grasp of recent scholarship and demonstrates broad knowledge of the extensive possibilities for Luke’s intertextual recourse to Israel’s Scriptures, the particular patterns and emphases he detects largely appear to be an overinterpretation of Luke’s text.

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Practices of Power: Revisiting the Principality and Powers in the Pauline Letters. By Robert Ewusie Moses. Emerging Scholars Series. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014. Pp. xi + 293. \$59.

In this revised dissertation, Moses proposes “practice” as a category for understanding and analyzing the world of spiritual powers presumed in the Pauline letters. These

hostile forces—summarized comprehensively as “principalities” and “powers” (*dynameis*)—refer to spiritual entities with intellect and will (e.g., Satan, demons), and to personifications of abstract nouns (e.g., Sin and Death). M. asserts that, for Paul, these malevolent spiritual forces permeate all aspects of existence: cosmic, personal, political, and social. The apostle’s varying terminology, including his use of personification, conveys the mysterious quality of these realities, as well as the fact that they defy perception and classification. Nevertheless, they are real.

M.’s unique contribution is to approach “Paul’s view of the powers through investigating the actual practices that Paul recommended to the early congregations in his letters” (5). He defines “practices of power” as those activities that deliver and safeguard believers from the malevolent spiritual forces. Examples include baptism, proclamation of the gospel, and discipline of erring members. There are also practices that expose people—nonbelievers and even believers—to enslavement to the evil powers, such as partaking in pagan sacrificial meals, and—for Gentile believers—taking on practices of the Jewish Law.

Drawing on the work of Alasdair MacIntyre and Pierre Bourdieu, M. highlights two elements inherent in Paul’s promotion of certain practices. First, practices are bound up in narratives—in this case, the narrative of what God has done through Jesus and the outpouring of the Spirit. In particular, M. highlights the story of the cross, where Jesus encountered, unmasked, and defeated the principalities and powers (see Col 2:15). Second, practices are to inculcate habituated dispositions that enable believers to orient their lives in order to be safeguarded from the powers from which they have been delivered. Crucial for M. is that reception of the Christian gospel brings with it a new epistemology (2 Cor 5:16), one that includes recognition of the spiritual powers for what they are and do. It is this recognition—ongoing in its significance—that modern, demythologizing treatments fail to take into account.

The heart of M.’s book is his extended study of key Pauline texts. In chapter 4, M. analyzes Romans 5–8 for Paul’s understanding of personified Sin, and how baptism delivers the baptized from its clutches through participation in Jesus’ death on the cross. Chapter 5 examines two passages from 1 Corinthians: 1:18–2:16, where M. persuasively argues that the “rulers of this age” refers to spiritual powers (and not to the human authorities who put Jesus to death); and 5:1–10, the pericope about the incestuous man. The practices treated here are preaching that is focused on the cross—where Jesus defeated the powers—and expulsion, respectively.

In chapter 6, M. wades into the controverted waters of what Paul means by *stoicheia*, the “elemental spirits,” in Galatians (4:3, 9). Skillfully weighing evidence from an array of sources (both Jewish and Greco-Roman), M. contends that *stoicheia* refers both to the basic elements (water, air, fire, and earth) and to the demonic powers that lie behind them; in short, it points to the Galatians’ idolatrous practices that led to their prior enslavement. Chapter 7 is a reading of Colossians, using the Christ-hymn (1:15–20) as the interpretive key. A new element here is that the principalities and powers are presented as being created in Christ and as among “all things” that have been reconciled.

Overall, M.’s exegetical analysis is impressive and persuasive. He offers several insights into texts. For instance, he carefully demonstrates Paul’s logic in Galatians

4:1–11, where Paul attempts to dissuade the Galatians from taking on the practice of Jewish laws. He shows with precision the steps Paul takes to argue that being “under the law” is tantamount to being “under the *stoicheia*.” Not surprisingly, given that he is a student of Richard B. Hays, M. also frequently suggests how OT texts lie in the background of Paul’s exposition (e.g., Ps 89:32–33 and Job 2:4–6 behind 1 Cor. 4:18–21 and 5:5, respectively).

At times M. takes a contended exegetical position for which he does not fully argue, but this is easily forgiven. Too many dissertations are myopic in their focus on a single text. M.’s expansive coverage is a breath of fresh air. And his focus on practice for illuminating Paul’s understanding of spiritual powers is innovative and helpful. My main critique is that M. too narrowly concentrates on occasional or dramatic practices—like baptism or punishment. While he frequently mentions the formation of a Christian *habitus*, he does not cover the quotidian practices involved to cultivate it (e.g., prayer and teaching). Nevertheless, this volume is well worth reading.

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Kierkegaard’s Concept of Faith. By Merold Westphal. Kierkegaard as a Christian Thinker. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014. Pp. x + 284. \$35.

This volume provides an excellent tour of the main parts of the Kierkegaardian corpus concerned with faith. In it, Westphal lucidly guides readers through the ways three of Kierkegaard’s pseudonyms approach the concept: Johannes de Silentio, Johannes Climacus, and Anti-Climacus. Dealing with Kierkegaard and his pseudonyms is often anything but straightforward (scholarly opinion varies widely over the sense in which Kierkegaard actually intended his writings to be read, pseudonymous or not), but W. takes him at his word: the pseudonyms form a coherent whole, whose common goal is to describe “what it means to become a Christian in Christendom” (7). Consequently, W.’s attention in this book never strays far from the topic stated in the title, and the result is a beautifully illuminating picture of faith through the eyes of these three pseudonyms, approachably presented and formidably supported.

One of the common threads that runs throughout most of the book is W.’s insistence that Kierkegaard is not an irrationalist. Against the backdrop of often-popular but ultimately inadequate characterizations of Kierkegaard as rejecting reason in favor of a kind of blind faith, W. argues convincingly that faith in Kierkegaard does not abolish reason, but relativizes it. The concept of reason itself is hardly consistent throughout philosophical reflection, and the plurality of ways of envisioning reason makes it “anything but self-evidently absolute” (225). This comes as a breath of fresh air for those who suspect (quite rightly, as W. shows) that there is far more to Kierkegaard on faith than simply saying no to Hegel. Reason is not abolished in Kierkegaard, but the