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Review of Mark Scarlata, Sabbath Rest: The Beauty of God's Rhythm for a Digital Age

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The volume begins with an orientation chapter from Brian Rosner: 'The Household Setting of Paul's Pastoral Practice and Its Biblical and Jewish Roots'. Rosner gives an overview of the *status quaestionis*, the key Pauline passages, and some of the previous scholarship. He focuses on the familial aspect of Paul's pastoral discourse and deals with the objection that such language is purely metaphorical. He argues that such family imagery primarily derives chiefly from Jewish sources and the Jesus tradition rather than Graeco-Roman philosophy.

The coverage of texts featuring Paul – including Acts and the Pastoral Epistles – is extensive. Each of the next ten essays treats an individual letter (group): Acts (Thompson), Romans (Kruse), 1 Corinthians (Malcolm), 2 Corinthians (Barnett), Galatians (Bird and Dunne), Ephesians (Orr), Philippians (Harris), Colossians (Malone), 1 Thessalonians (Burke), Pastorals (Yarbrough). There is a healthy range of perspectives and styles. Some pieces, notably those on Galatians and 1 Thessalonians, are more scholarly and would be worthy of any major New Testament journal. Some which focus on contemporary application than finer exegetical points are perhaps more geared towards practitioners rather than scholars. Some will regret that there is only one essay from a female scholar, Sarah Harris, who argues that the disagreement between Euodia and Syntyche is the central concern of Philippians. In most cases, the relevant passages are well-analysed, although I wonder if, for instance, Malcolm's contribution could have ventured past 1 Corinthians 1-4 into later chapters, where there are clear pastoral themes (e.g., prophecy as *paraklesis* and *paramuthia*, resurrection hope). The final three chapters provide some fruitful insights from somewhat different angles: the Church of England's First Ordinal (Patrick), Augustine (Bain), the ministries of George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards (Bezzant).

These articles are a welcome contribution on an underappreciated aspect of Paul. My main criticism is that the Graeco-Roman context has been overlooked: the influential studies of Malherbe are only briefly considered; and the important ancient notion of psychagogy is only mentioned once in passing – in relation not to Paul but to Augustine. This was a missed opportunity. Although the collection does not pretend

to be top-tier scholarship, experienced Pauline scholars could certainly profit from it, even if they do not share the faith perspectives of the writers or the conservative views on Pauline authorship. Perhaps most importantly, these contributions will no doubt refresh the spirits of the target audience: Christian pastors, seminarians, and informed laypeople.

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SABBATH REST

Mark Scarlata, *Sabbath Rest: The Beauty of God's Rhythm for a Digital Age* (London: SCM Press, 2019. £12.99. pp. 128. ISBN: 978-0-334-05806-9).

In an age where rest from constant activity seems impossible, given our attachment and dependence on digital devices, Mark Scarlata offers some reflections on the spiritual discipline of Sabbath observance to rediscover the beauty of rest and offers 'a compelling case for why the Sabbath remains critical to the life and witness of God's people today' (p. x). Beginning with the Augustinian principle of our human longing for rest in God, Scarlata believes God instituted the Sabbath as a day of rest to facilitate the fulfillment of this human desire. Following a brief study of the biblical meaning of Sabbath rest in the Old Testament, and its possible meaning in Second Temple Judaism and in relationship to Jesus' teachings in the New Testament, Scarlata asks 'how does the command for Sabbath rest relate to the new community in Christ' and whether Christians ought to follow the command for rest as well (p. 13). He presents a very good historical survey of the question of the change from Sabbath observance in the early Jewish Christian community to Sunday observance in later Gentile communities. Although brief, this survey covers the essential points of this change and is mindful of the diverse forms of Second Temple Judaism portrayed in the New Testament. Readers get a sense that biblical authors were not averse to all forms of Judaism. The concept of Sabbath, therefore, should not be *de facto* rejected as is often

presented in some replacement theologies. While the concept of Sabbath is fulfilled in the life of Jesus, it nonetheless remains spiritually meaningful and reveals God's rest, healing and wholeness 'now made available to all who receive it' (p. 25).

Scarлата advocates for a return to the discipline of Sabbath observance (a 24-hour period of rest each week) on the basis of four meaningful attributes of the beauty of the Sabbath. In these chapters, he mirrors positively the many contributions of other authors on a theology of Sabbath (Brueggemann, Tonstad, Bacchiocchi). Sabbath is first a reminder of God's good creation (Gen. 2:1-3) and that God's rest is an invitation for humankind to also rest from work and busyness. Sabbath is a solution to restlessness by creating holy time for peace (pp. 36-60). Sabbath-keeping is also a reminder of God's salvation and liberation from slavery, first for the ancient Israelites and still today for all humankind, 'as an act of defiance and resistance to the frenetic pace and consumption of the modern world' (p. 72). Thirdly, the community aspects of God's grace in the story of the miracle of the manna (Exod. 16) reminds us that the Sabbath is a continual invitation to trust in God's gift of food with our families, friends and strangers (p. 96). Lastly, the many allusions to Sabbath in the Old Testament prophets point to the culmination of history in the wholeness and restoration of all creation (p. 120). Sabbath is thus one of God's great gifts, at once ignored, unknown or forgotten, to a restless humanity in need of grace and peace.

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EVANGELICAL REFLECTIONS ON ECCLESIOLOGY AND MISSION

Jason S. Sexton (ed.), *Four Views on the Church's Mission*, Counterpoints: Bible and Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017. £10.99. pp. 208. ISBN: 978-0-310-52273-7).

In this recent addition to Zondervan's *Counterpoints* series, Jason Sexton facilitates a timely conversation between Jonathan Leeman, Christopher Wright, John Franke, and Peter Leithart over the nature and task of the church's mission. Sexton

describes the book as resulting from 'a dust-up' in evangelical circles caused by Ed Stetzer's review of Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert's soteriologically-minded 2011 work, *What Is the Mission of the Church?*—which itself was a critical response to the works of Wright (pp. 12-13). Along such lines, for evangelicals today, the debate about the church's mission is said to hinge upon the extent of its expansiveness beyond the soteriological tasks of evangelism and discipleship (p. 13). Whereas Leeman was chosen to represent the allegedly 'reductionist' (not to mention 'fundamentalist') soteriological view (ch. 1) and Wright his own 'expansively comprehensive' participatory view (ch. 2), Franke's contextual view, in which the church's mission expresses itself differently in different contexts (ch. 3) and Leithart's sacramental view (ch. 4) are also offered as perspectives for consideration. Like other volumes in the series, each main chapter is immediately followed by brief responses from the other contributors. What is unfortunately lacking is a response to the responses from the main chapters' authors—a missing element that would more effectively bring closure to each section.

Of the four essays, Wright's and Leithart's essays are the most compelling and should ideally be seen as complementary (as their responses to each other implicitly indicate) (pp. 103-6; 183-7). Specifically, Wright's 'fully biblical' classification of mission into the three domains of 'cultivating the church', 'engaging society', and 'caring for creation' (p. 81) finds a missing link in Leithart's impassioned plea to not forget the sacraments and their all-encompassing ecumenical and political implications for creation, humanity, and the nations (ch. 4). Meanwhile, Franke's emphasis upon the church's 'Spirit-intended plurality' (p. 132) begs the question of what distinguishes both Christianity and the church while Leeman's argument—though commendably 'broader' than the overly 'narrow' account of DeYoung and Gilbert—curiously has no place for the church's prophetic office (cf. pp. 18-19, 41) and also inappropriately hints at supersessionism (observations Wright also makes in his brief response) (cf. pp. 46-52).

Finally, Sexton rightly acknowledges that the book carries 'real limitations' insofar as its contributors are all 'Anglophile males' from the North