

again, Loader fails to notice Paul's use of the LXX.

Another point neglected by Loader is the omission of the commandment against coveting in Matt 19, Mark 10, and Luke 18. Loader does not consider why this commandment was left out of these lists. Instead, the reader is left to ponder or to resolve this and other similar questions by consulting other commentators.

Loader's study on the influence of the LXX in the NT and other writings is indeed interesting, as much for the raw material of the selected texts, as for his analysis. It is a commendable—if incomplete—effort. Fortunately, the book is not particularly expensive and is a useful stimulus for the careful reader where Loader's analysis falls short.

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Noll, Mark A. *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004. 330 pp. Hardcover, \$23.00.

Mark Noll has written a book on the Great Awakening and its aftermath that is encyclopedic in its scope, evenhanded in its presentation, lively in its pacing, but also possessed of soul and spirit. Both Wesley and Whitefield would surely approve of the manner in which the intellect is informed and the soul moved by this inspired, if slightly overambitious, recounting of the beginnings of modern evangelicalism.

Noll begins by tracing the political, ecclesiastical, and spiritual landscape prior to the Great Awakening, noting in particular the spread of British influence overseas and the footholds made by Dissenters in the Anglican establishment. It is here that one of the book's few weaknesses emerges. Noll tries, but arguably fails, to fully come to grips with the definition of "evangelicalism," an admittedly amorphous concept. Noll suggests, in turn, that "evangelicalism" may be defined as a core of beliefs involving conversion, the cross, and holy living; a heart experience of religious renewal; and an attitude that disregards traditional denominational boundaries and structures, i.e., a sort of eighteenth-century "ecumenism."

Noll discusses the issue of beliefs in the Introduction. However, his primary focus is on the question of heart experience and the issue of "ecumenism." One is left with the impression that the path to widespread revival involves a willingness to discard denominational barriers and seek for the experience of religious renewal on the basis of a few shared beliefs about the new birth and the atonement. This is a conclusion that Edwards, Whitefield, and Wesley—the primary theologians of the Awakening—would not have endorsed. Noll probably does not endorse it either. But his choice to not deal with the theological framework of the movement more extensively pushes the message of the book in that direction.

Noll deals with the heart of his topic, the unfolding of the Great Awakening, in an essentially chronological, narrative fashion. He expertly weaves personalities, events, and theologies together as they appear on the time horizon. Deftly moving from the young Wesleys at Oxford to the Moravians in Saxony, Jonathan Edwards in New England and back to Whitefield in Oxford, Noll sketches mini-biographies of important figures, yet keeps the flow of historical events moving rapidly forward. The unfolding of the Awakening never bogs down—a fate to be

avoided by summary histories and revivals alike.

Halfway through, Noll interrupts his story-telling to insert a chapter on "Explanations" of the causes for the Awakening. This is a weaker chapter, as Noll seems unwilling to exclude any proffered cause. He examines, in turn, the Holy Spirit, the role of great men, the flow of history, shifting societal structures, socioecclesiastical status, intellectual evolution, and psychological forces—all causes proposed by various historians. He bravely accepts that all these causes may well have played a role in bringing about the Great Awakening.

One is tempted to rejoin that accepting all explanations makes any particular explanation somewhat vacuous. In fairness, Noll's primary point seems to be that one can accept spiritual explanations for revival and still acknowledge that conventional historical conditions also play a role. Simply put, God works with and through history, not apart from it. But surely one could make this point *and* say that the psychological tension caused by the clash of materialism and authority in colonial America is a far-fetched explanation that involves too many unknown and unknowable variables to be a useful analysis.

Noll continues by looking at the later development and maturing of the Awakening. He traces with particularity the impulses that the revival brought to different existing denominations, as well as the new denominations created in its wake, most notably, Methodism's split from Anglicanism. This section is one of the few departures from the theme of "ecumenism" throughout the book. At the end of the book, he again leaves his chronological scheme to examine evangelicalism's role and impact "In the World," followed by the final chapter on "True Religion."

These two chapters balance each other, as the latter chapter's recognition that evangelicalism is concerned primarily with individual spiritual renewal does not obscure the former's acknowledgment that evangelicals did have an often-profound impact on society. Opposition to slavery, championing of religion and education among the poor and oppressed classes, the running of orphanages and schools, and even the creation of a firewall against the type of revolutionary fervor and class warfare that engulfed France are all benefits to society attributed to evangelicalism.

These chapters are probably beyond the scope of the book. Telling the story of the Great Awakening and the beginning of evangelicalism in less than three hundred pages is challenge enough. Trying to provide explanations about evangelicalism's impact on society is probably overly ambitious and detracts from time that could have been spent by examining more fully the period's theological framework. These topics deserve a book of their own, which, if we are lucky, the prolific Mr. Noll may soon write for us.

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Olson, Roger E. *The Westminster Handbook to Evangelical Theology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004. 329 pp. Paper, \$39.95.

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