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Miller, Patrick D. *The Ten Commandments: Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church*. Louisville: Westminster John Know Press, 2009. Pp. xv + 477. ISBN:978-0-664-23055-5. Alk. Paper. \$39.95.

The Ten Commandments is a new book in the Interpretation commentary series written by Patrick D. Miller, the professor of Old Testament Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. He is the editor of *Theology Today* and coeditor of the Interpretation Commentary series and the Westminster Bible Companion series.

As the author himself acknowledges, this book grew out of the course of Old Testament ethics which he taught in a seminary for a number of years, but it is not a textbook on ethics. The main goal that the author pursues is to reveal the meaning and essence of each of the Ten Commandments.

The methodology that the author uses is worth to be mentioned. Miller does not consider just the text of the Commandments, but he analyzes the Commandments from different angles such as (1) analysis of the texts (Exodus and Deuteronomy's variant and difference between them); (2) trajectory of the Commandment analyzing how each Commandment is expanded and explained in other biblical passages; (3) stories of the Commandments illustrating the meaning of the Commandments (e.g. the killing of Naboth by Ahab and Jezebel – the illustration on the theme of the 6th Commandment; Ruth's care about Naomi – the vivid explanation what it means to honor the parents); (4) formulation of the Commandment in the opposite way (if the Commandment is given in a negative way, e.g. "You shall not..." the author tries to understand how this precept could sound positively and vice versa). This approach to the exposition of the Commandments helps to avoid to fall into the trap of eisegesis or implementation of foreign ideas to the meaning of the Commandments.

The author's explanation of the third commandment includes a helpful illustration of his method. At first he mentions several translations, which reflect different understandings of the Commandment. Then, the author diligently studies the meaning of the text of the third commandment especially the meaning of the phrase "in vain." Following this analysis, Miller tries to understand how this commandment is explained within other

texts (trajectory of the commandment) and then he draws an important conclusion, that it deals not only with an oath and swear but with the piety and holiness ethics of the people of God. This analysis shows that the third commandment contains a deeper meaning than interpreters used to think. The author also considers the question of the use and misuse of the name of God including pronouncing the Tetragrammaton and the name of Jesus, an analysis that is very helpful in further understanding the meaning of the third commandment. In addition, the work of the author is highly enriched by the numerous quotations of scholarly works from the time of the Reformation until our days, which illuminate the understanding of the commandments.

Some controversial conclusions seem to be contained in this work. For example, when he discusses the Fourth commandment (Keeping the Sabbath) he very clearly explains the importance of this commandment for the Israelites, the social significance of this commandment ("providing rest for those who unable to secure it for themselves"), and moral dimension of it; he also points out that Jesus and his disciples also kept this day as holy and after that he argues that the Sabbath is still valid today. This chain of consideration is solid and logic, but when the author analyzes an issue of the transition from the Sabbath to Sunday he does not provide any biblical argument supporting the keeping of the Sunday. His reference to Rev 1:10 cannot be sufficient evidence in favor of the issue because the phrase "the Lord's day" in this verse is ambiguous and could be interpreted differently. Furthermore, the author himself acknowledges that the move from the Sabbath to Sunday is rather a question of historical studies than of the biblical theology (p. 163). Doing this he admits that there is no any biblical evidence supporting this transition. So, all his attempts to find a connection between the biblical Sabbath and the Church's Sunday are not very effective.

Another issue which could be mentioned here is a question of the same sex relationship. Analyzing the trajectory of the 7th Commandment the author discusses two texts from the book of Leviticus (18:22; 20:13). According to the author these verses which prohibit the homosexual relationship could not be applied to the "same-sex relations occurring within a continuing relation of affection and commitment and responsibility for each other" (p. 293) and only forbid a momentary homosexual act. Trying to prove this position the author uses two kinds of arguments. At first, he tries to make this precept not so strict arguing that it does not belong to the Ten Commandments and that is why it does not have the same force. But doing so he contradicts himself and his methodology because he analyzes this issue in the section "Trajectory of the Commandment" and it means that these texts deal with the same question. At second, he points out that this prohibition is given together with the prohibition of having

an intercourse with animals and because it is impossible to have a marriage relationship with animals he concludes that this precept forbids only sexual relationship outside a marriage. He also observes that in the Old Testament there is no any taboo for the female same-sex relationship so, he uses this fact to support his position. But all these arguments are not very convincing. The text of Lev 18:22 and 20:13 could be understood as a general prohibition; there is no any hint indicating that there could be an exception from this rule. The fact that there is no female same-sex prohibition is not important. All Ten Commandments are addressed only to the male auditorium but it does not mean that their application is limited only to men.

Although there are some ideas in the book which I cannot agree with, I appreciate the author's attitude toward the commandments: P. Miller always emphasizes that these precepts are still valid in our life and should be practiced by Christians. The book is written with a very readable language. If the author mentions some Hebrew or Greek words he explains in details their meaning and peculiarities of their usage, so even a person who does not have any knowledge of ancient languages can easily understand the issue. So, this book could be recommended to a very broad audience.

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