theology. In keeping with his reputation, this author exemplifies the best of theological method. Moreover, while displaying exacting scholarship, he demonstrates admirable charity towards those whom he critiques, affirming the value of their work. This book serves as a substantial addition to the classic works on the Holy Spirit, such as Sinclair Ferguson's and John Walvoord's, as well as Stanley Burgess's three-volume history of pneumatology. However, this important treatise is by no means easy reading. The book is suitable for theologically educated and engaged pastors, and scholars in the field of biblical, historical, and systematic theology. It is also an ideal text for advanced seminary courses in pneumatology. *The Holy Spirit in Biblical Teaching, through the Centuries, and Today* will prove to be a classic work in theological studies as it provides a basis for further dialogue and scholarly engagement.

André A. Gazal

The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible, by Michael S. Heiser. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015. 368 pp. $27.95.

The Unseen Realm is a biblical theology of the spirit realm. It is based upon a close reading of the Bible in its ancient contexts (i.e., ANE and Second Temple texts). It grows out of the author's dissertation, published articles (e.g., in *Bibiliotheca Sacra*, the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, and the *Bulletin for Biblical Research*), and ministry to people who hold worldviews grounded in the paranormal, occult, and esoteric beliefs. Thus, it represents an effort to apply top-tier scholarship to biblical theology and then make this theology available to the church at large. Author Michael Heiser holds a Ph.D. in Hebrew Bible and Semitic Languages from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and is Scholar-in-Residence at Faithlife Corporation.

Heiser begins with a two-part thesis: first, that God created both spirits and humans to image him (Gen 1:26–27), each in their respective realm, each free to love and obey God and, second, that recovering a worldview incorporating such a theology greatly contributes to understanding God, his Word, and his mission in the world.

In Heiser's view, God created humans "a little lower than the *elohim*" ["gods, spirits"] (Ps 8), but gave to humans, not to the heavenly spirits, authority over planet Earth as his royal vice-regents (Gen 1:26–27). In what may have been a case of jealousy, one of these spirits [*hannachash* "the serpent"] tempted the first couple in an effort to thwart God's plans. From then on, the storyline of the Bible records God's progressive efforts to defeat the forces of evil and reclaim not just humanity, but all of creation for himself. A major change came when God disinherited the nations at Babel (Gen 11) because they refused to obey him. He assigned powerful heavenly spirits (*beney elim*, "sons of God") to rule

over them, based on geographical regions (Deut 32:8; 4:19–20; cf. Gen 10). God subsequently created a new nation—Israel—to image him and to bring the nations back to him. The rebellious spirits over the nations continue to resist God and his rule (Ps 82; Dan 10:13, 20), which provides the background of spiritual warfare (e.g., Eph 6). Jesus's coming to earth as a human was accompanied by many direct attacks on his spiritual foes. His final coming will involve both heavenly spirits and glorified humans. Faithful human believers will judge and replace rebellious heavenly council members (1 Cor 6:3) and then rule and reign with Christ forever.

The book itself is composed of eight sections divided into 42 chapters. Each section ends with a well-written summary. Part One (chaps. 1–2) gives the author's biographical background that served as the catalyst for the book. Part Two (chaps. 3–9) introduces the spirit realm within the context of God's heavenly council of spirits ("angels"). It shows the parallel between the *imago dei* of humans and the role of angelic beings as fellow ministers of God. Part Three (chaps. 10–15) deals with the fall of humans and the character of the snake in relation to the implied fall of a heavenly being in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. Part Four (chaps. 16–22) treats God's relationship to Israel, beginning with the call of Abraham. Israel became the means for God to begin reclaiming the rebellious nations of the world. The relationship of the church to ethnic Israel is seen in this light. Part Five (chaps. 23–25) examines the giants encountered during Joshua's conquest in light of intertextual links to the *nephilim* of Genesis 6. Part Six (chaps. 26–30) covers the prophetic function of standing in God's council and relates this to Daniel 7 and to prophecies about Jesus. Part Seven (chaps. 31–38) investigates the OT roots for the development of NT Christology, as well as Christ's coming and the NT passages related to spiritual warfare. It also posits that spiritual warfare provides the reason for so many prophecies being cryptic (i.e., if the rebellious spirits had known God's plans exactly, they would not have inspired people to kill Jesus [1 Cor 2:8]). Part Eight (chaps. 39–42) applies these ideas to eschatology, showing that Christians will judge and even replace the unfaithful heavenly council members as part of ruling and reigning with Christ. All in all, there is a wealth of material here, much more than the above summary would suggest.

Perhaps Heiser's primary contribution is that he develops a genuine alternative to mainstream scholarship. Most mainstream OT scholarship on this topic regards the heavenly council as clear evidence for the evolution of Israelite faith from Canaanite polytheism to monotheism (see Heiser's articles in *BSac* and *BBR*). Heiser makes no attempt to integrate the findings into any pre-existing theological system, whether dispensational or Reformed. Thus, although the findings do support certain Baptist and dispensational claims (e.g., baptism is a sign of loyalty to Jesus, ethnic Israel has a literal future in God's plan), they also cut across all systems at some point or other (e.g., the battle of Armageddon takes place at Jerusalem, following Zechariah 14, not in the plain of Megiddo).

Although it would be easy to criticize this book for not being exhaustive in its treatment or for not being a systematic theology per se, such criticism would be unfair because the book does not claim to be exhaustive, and its explicit purpose is to provide *biblical* theology. Its goal of propounding a comprehensive, coherent model based on the biblical material in context is much more modest but is sufficient.

In short, this carefully-researched book synthesizes a large amount of biblical and hard-to-find scholarly data in order to develop both old and new ideas into a comprehensive model of the spirit realm. It is surprisingly easy to read, and I recommend it to anyone who is willing to read the Bible on its own terms—from lay people to scholars.

Stephen L. Huebscher

Covenantal Apologetics: Principles and Practice in Defense of Our Faith, by K. Scott Oliphint. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013. 277 pp. $19.99.

Because Cornelius Van Til is both a towering figure in modern apologetics and also notoriously challenging to understand, several authors have attempted to write popularizations of his thought. Supplementing useful works from Greg Bahnsen, John Frame, and Richard Pratt, Scott Oliphint offers what he calls a *translation* (rather than *introduction*) of Van Til: his aim is to "translate much of what is *meant* in Van Til's own writings from their often philosophical and technical contexts to a more basic biblical and theological context" (26). Oliphint's volume is a valuable contribution to this goal.

Happily, Oliphint avoids a problem characteristic of many works on Van Til's apologetic: that of spending more time defending Van Til's apologetic than defending Christianity. Oliphint closes several chapters with sample conversations with various forms of unbelief (atheism, Islam, etc.). This is a great virtue; as Oliphint says, "An apologetic that can do little more than continually talk about itself is not worth the effort exerted or ink spilled over it" (25).

Holding the entire volume together is Oliphint's list of "The Ten Tenets" of covenantal apologetics. These tenets are entirely theological in nature; they function as the most basic commitments needed to develop a robustly Christian apologetic. The common theme of the Ten Tenets is *covenant*, from the Triune God's voluntary condescension (in tenet one) to the claim that all facts are what they are because of God's covenantal plan (in tenet ten).

This emphasis on the covenantal grounding of apologetics gives rise to one of Oliphint's more ambitious proposals: that Van Til's apologetic be referred to as *covenantal apologetics* rather than *presuppositionalism*. Oliphint hopes to move away from this popular nomenclature, as he believes that it is misleading in some important ways. Primarily, his concern is that it suggests a kind of relativism that is utterly foreign to Van Til's apologetic project.