from religion" (215). In other words, we find here an instance of what the philosopher Hent de Vries calls "breaking back through" to religion: the redeployment of religious concepts — here "conversion" — to redirect the critical force of modern thought by reading the "secular" through the "religious." As Scherer puts it, it is "one way of drawing on the resources of 'religious' and 'spiritual' traditions to rethink problematic categories of 'the political'" (4). Such a reading exposes more clearly the complex interweaving of the religious, political, and critical and helps to reorient the way we might imagine these formations and their related institutions in the future.

***Statecraft and Salvation: Wilsonian Liberal Internationalism as Secularized Eschatology*. By Milan Babík. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013. 277 pp. $49.95 cloth**

doi:10.1017/S1755048314000121

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Woodrow Wilson understood politics as a spiritual task to fulfill prophecy and create the utopia promised by God. The failure of the United States to join the League of Nations crushed the president because he had such supreme confidence in its success. When Congress refused to authorize the Treaty of Versailles, Wilson summoned his rapidly fading strength to spread his good news to the nation, trusting the people — where he believed the true power of democracy and American exceptionalism rested — to understand the scope of his plans. Since God intended the United States to lead a more peaceful global society, Wilson could not fail. Except that he did.

Most scholars of American history agree that Wilson saw the world through religious lens. Milan Babík defines Wilsonian liberalism and related political actions as "secularized eschatology." Wilson believed humankind could create a peaceful society with the blessing of a Christian God and sought to create it through foreign policy. But aside from the new label, this is nothing new. Malcolm Magee's *What the*

World Should Be argued that Wilson's belief in Christian providence and a Presbyterian sense of order and history shaped nearly every decision he made as the president of Princeton University and the United States. Andrew Preston's well-received *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith* expanded that focus to discuss the milieu of Protestant theologians and social activists who held similar visions.

Babík successfully shows how Wilson's "international political utopianism" grew out of a "patriotic American Protestant eschatology" that understood history as a redemptive process (3). The third and fourth chapters of *Statecraft and Salvation* trace a lineage of millennialism in America from the Puritans to Wilson. America's role in the eschaton was as central to this ideology as the promise of a peaceful utopian future. Babík's overall points about the roots of American providential beliefs are sound and he uses primary quotations to good effect, but his narrative of American religious history neglects dominant theses developed in American religious history in recent decades. I will limit myself to one telling example. His assumption of the collectivity of the Great Awakening relies on the second edition of Winthrop Hudson's *Religion in America* from 1973. Had he even referred to the eighth edition revised by John Corrigan, he would have encountered Jon Butler's landmark thesis from 1982 challenging the very occurrence of a cohesive revival sweeping the colonies. The rich, abundant scholarship of American religious historians would have provided needed nuance to this narrative.

The book's central thesis — that Wilson's grand concept of international relations stemmed from a particularly American Protestant ideology of Christian providence and American exceptionalism — is succinctly argued in the book's final two chapters. Babík's contribution to that thesis is an emphasis on utopianism and American liberalism, neither of which are satisfactorily defined. As the heart of his study, two chapters were inadequate to do his argument justice. I wanted to know how Wilson's ideas compared to America's multitude of utopic and pre- and postmillennial imaginaries. Similarly, how did Wilsonian liberalism relate to the traditions explored in William Hutchison's *Between the Time* and Leigh Eric Schmidt and Sally M. Promey's *American Religious Liberalism*? The social gospel is mentioned, if not defined, but it remains unclear how Wilson fit — if he did at all — among the dwindling social gospel movements in America. What made him retain that optimism when other Christians lost hope during the war? Babík notes the unexceptional nature of Wilson's ideology, but does not inspect Wilson's contemporary ideological compatriots of peace in any detail. Babík relied on the

69 volumes of Wilson's published papers, but I wondered if Wilson's scholarly publications on American history might elucidate these claims further.

An emphasis on a contested form of secularization theory distracts from Babik's interpretation of Wilson's policies. In order to discuss the president's secularized eschatology, Babík begins the book with an analysis of secularization theory. Setting aside sociological theories of secularization shaped by Peter Berger and Charles Taylor, Babík uses German intellectual Karl Löwith's work to define secularization theory as "the thesis that the modern idea of history as progress rests on hidden biblical presuppositions and represents a secularized extension of the eschatological myth of salvation driven by divine providence" (19). Wilson may have agreed that a belief in providence undergirds our modern idea of progress, but Babík devotes a chapter to a nuanced critique of Löwith's ideas purportedly to establish a theory on which to judge Wilson's approach to global politics. The validity of Löwith's secularization theory seems to be a separate argument altogether. If the aim of the book, as described in the introduction, is to explore Wilson's secularized eschatology, a definition of what Babík means by secularized theology would be sufficient.

Babík positions his work between international relations and intellectual history, contributing to growing scholarship on religion and American foreign policy. To engage with IR, he uses realist E. H. Carr's "quasi-Marxist" critique of Wilson's utopianism as a foil. Carr depicted world government and ideologies of peace as a guise under which to impose the agenda of powerful nations (6). Babík agrees that a danger existed within liberal internationalists' assumption of a global "harmony of interests," but seeks to expose the religious underpinnings of Wilson's policy that sanctified his global paternalism. An examination of how Wilson's faith influenced his interventions in Mexico, Haiti or Nicaragua could strengthen this point. Additionally, a consideration of Wilson's profound racism in relation to his eschatology might help readers understand how the president rationalized placing a totalizing "liberal" policy upon foreign peoples. Babík identifies his critique of Carr as part of the significance of this work: it fills a gap within the intellectual history of secularization theory that has focused on totalitarianism, overlooking the role of liberal progress during the same period.

The value of Babík's thesis can be found in the lingering strains of Wilsonian liberalism found in today's politics as the United States continues to assume responsibility for global peacekeeping. His clear organization and fluid writing made the book a pleasure to read.