

I would recommend this book especially to Seventh-day Adventist scholars because Miller never became a Sabbatarian Adventist. In many denominational texts Seventh-day Adventists begin with Miller and transition quickly to Hiram Edson, O. R. L. Crosier, and F. B. Hahn, and the rise of the Sabbath and Sanctuary Conferences with little if any discussion about the fate of Miller. He died only five years after the Great Disappointment. Ellen White attributes Miller's non-acceptance of the Sabbath to the influence of Himes and his cohorts who closed Miller's eyes to progressive truth. She wrote, however, that angels guard "the precious dust of this servant of God" until the resurrection (White, *Early Writings*, 258). Encouraged by her endorsement, Seventh-day Adventists since that time have adopted Miller as one of their pioneers. This helps to explain why Seventh-day Adventists, under the aegis of Adventist Historic Properties (now Adventist Heritage Ministry), beginning in 1983, have preserved his home as a museum (Rowe states that during Miller's own lifetime his farm had already become a shrine).

Rowe does a great service in that he portrays Miller as the Sunday-keeping preacher, hog-raising farmer, tobacco-using man that he was. This may offend the sensibilities of some Seventh-day Adventists, but ultimately our understanding will be more accurate as a result of Rowe's keen historical and cultural analysis. Finally, this book has a use in the classroom. As a relatively short read, *God's Strange Work* could be assigned as a basic text or supplementary reading for Adventist history courses.

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Skinner, E. Benjamin. *A Crime So Monstrous: Face-to-Face with Modern-day Slavery*. New York: Free Press, 2008. 328 pp. Hardcover, \$26.00.

E. Benjamin Skinner is a graduate of Wesleyan University and a journalist who has reported on important topics from around the globe—Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East—for *Newsweek* International, *Travel + Leisure*, and *Foreign Affairs*. *A Crime So Monstrous* is his first book.

Skinner draws a stark and graphic portrayal of the lingering problem of global slavery. What makes the book so difficult to put down is his ability to weave a pitiful story of the deplorable conditions under which men, women, and children are forced to live in, even in Western nations such as the Netherlands and the United States. Richard Holbrooke, who provides the Foreword to the book notes: "Of course, we all know what slavery is. We've read about it in countless history books, seen it in documentaries and movies. Slavery is awful. Slavery is inhuman. Slavery is dead" (xi). However, the reality is, as Skinner so ably demonstrates, is that "slavery is far from being banished" (xi). Unfortunately, he unabashedly shows that even after the fall of major ideologies that supported slavery (Imperial Great Britain prior to 1807, the United States of America prior to 1863, Imperial Japan prior to World War II, the Hitler regime), "There are more slaves today than at any point in human history" (xv). A conservative figure, Skinner believes, is 27 million slaves, a number pointed out by Kevin Bales in his 1999 book

*Disposable People*. Bales defines slaves to be “human beings forced to work, under threat of violence, for no pay.” Skinner compares this number with the approximately 3.8 million slaves in the United States in 1861. While this number in and of itself is shocking, to think that there are 27 million slaves in today’s enlightened cultures almost leads one to doubt the veracity of Skinner and Bales’s estimates.

But then there is the evidence.

*A Crime So Monstrous* is divided into ten chapters, in which Skinner leads his readers on a journey through the underworld of modern-day slavery. In the course of five years, he journeyed to twelve countries, recording interviews with “over a hundred slaves, slave dealers, and survivors” (xvii). Chapter 1, “The Riches of the Poor,” documents his journey to Haiti. Haiti suffers from an unemployment level exceeding 70 percent. Skinner notes that there more than 10,000 street children alone, “mostly boys as young as six, some selling unprotected sex for \$1.75.” He goes on to chronicle that “Haiti has the highest prevalence of HIV infection outside of sub-Saharan Africa, and Haitians who believe sex with virgins protects against, or even cures, AIDS have driven up the price of such intercourse to \$5.00. Haiti has become a magnet for sex tourists and pedophiles” (4). Only five hours by plane from the United Nations headquarters, a child can be purchased: “Your slave will come in any color you like, as Henry Ford said, as long as it’s black. Maximum age: fifteen. He or she can be used for anything. Sex or domestic labor are the most frequent uses, but it’s up to you” (1). How do you procure a child? Find a dealer and place your order. The youngest slaves are seven years of age—they are the easiest to beat into submission and the least likely to run away. After the order is placed, the slave dealer then begins to work at convincing an impoverished family to give up its child. Skinner notes that “Normally, all it takes is the promise that the child will be well nourished and educated” (7-8). Parents are rarely paid. “They yield their children because courtiers dangle the promise of school like a diamond necklace” (8). In a country where more than 80 percent of schools are private and even public schools cost \$385 per year, there is no way for children in such impoverished circumstances to attend school (8). Only rarely are slave children afforded the luxury of attending school. Most never attend at all.

In chapter 2, “Genesis: A Drama in Three Acts,” Skinner outlines America’s hidden war on slavery as a drama. Act 1 finds the Clinton administration, under the pushing and prodding of Michael Horowitz and “a core group of Evangelical activists,” making “global abolition a national foreign policy” (49). In Act II, Scene I, Horowitz marshaled his forces to outlaw sex trafficking. In 2000, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act was passed, providing “a remarkably comprehensive agreement on the final definition of trafficking, which included those forced into domestic, agricultural, or other forms of labor, as well as prostitution” (53).

In chapter 3, “Those Whom Their Right Hands Possess,” Skinner details his investigation into the slave trade in Sudan. In Bahr el Ghazal, on the frontline in the Sudanese civil war between Sudan’s Arab north and predominantly Dinka

south, Skinner graphically describes the subjugation of the Dinka people by the Arabs from the north. The story of one family, the Muong family, is a horrific tale of brutality: the children were forced to cultivate crops that they did not eat, carry loads of water that bowed their spines, and endure beatings. The only pay that the family received was “table scraps and leftovers.” The mother was subjected to repeated sexual assaults (65).

Skinner notes that “Much of the bondage that persists in Sudan is a mystery. A good deal of it looks like the kind of horror dutifully recited during CSI [Crime Scene Investigation] redemptions. Forcing someone to work for no pay under threat of violence is a barbaric crime against humanity. But the decision matrix for slaves in Sudan is a difficult one, and escape is frequently a terrifying option” (101). Skinner notes further that “Sudan and Mauritania are the only two countries where racialized chattel slavery persists. They are also the two poorest countries in the Arab world. This is no coincidence” (101).

In chapter 4, “A Moral Law That Stands Above Men and Nations,” Skinner outlines the enormity of the task given to America’s anti-slavery czar, John Miller. Miller first had to learn his subject. Horowitz had helped to broaden Miller’s understanding of slavery and it now included the plights of young Asian and European girls who were forced to endure “grotesque abuse at the hands of traffickers. Many left bondage only when they became HIV-positive” (105). Miller’s second task was to demonstrate to the world what slavery really was—a daunting task because most people were inclined to think of slavery in pre-Civil War terms. In stark contrast to the Clinton years, George W. Bush’s administration gave little support to the abolition of global slavery. Skinner notes that from the end of 2004, “Bush referred to it [slavery] in a half-dozen lower-profile speeches, trafficking was, in the president’s deathless prose, a ‘cram-in.’ In his 2004 General Assembly address, Bush devoted just three sentences to contemporary slavery. In 2005 and 2006, he did not mention the crime at all” (114-115). Sadly, “After 2003, the spotlight faded. From then on, John Miller would fight a hidden war” (115).

In chapter 5, “A Nation Within a Nation,” Skinner focuses on the slave trade in Europe. Young women are lured from their homes, families, and countries in Eastern Europe in the hopes of finding a better life in Western Europe, particularly the Netherlands. Skinner proposes that “Beginning in the 1990s, human trafficking metastasized faster than any other form of slave-trading in history. As many as 2 million people left their homes and entered bondage every year. Some crossed international borders; many did not. Human beings surpassed guns as the second most lucrative commodity for crime syndicates of all sizes, netting around \$10 billion annually” (143).

In chapter 6, “The New Middle Passage,” Skinner describes the “new Middle Passage: a slave trail that began across Romania’s northeast border in Moldova, a country that used to be the Soviet Union’s smallest republic. Now the nation was Europe’s largest source of sex slaves” (153). From there the trail led to the breakaway region of Transnistria to Ukraine, then across the Black Sea to Turkey. Even in comparison to the horrors of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century slavery conditions, Skinner notes that the slave owners had

recognized the worth of their product. However, times have changed. “Today Ukrainian women generally cost more than Moldovan women; who cost more than Nigerian women; who cost more than Chinese women; who cost more than Cambodian women. But all were cheap and . . . ‘disposable’” (174).

The new Middle Passage finally ended in the Netherlands. Skinner reports that Michael Horowitz once registered his opinion of Dutch attitudes toward slavery with the U.S. House International Relations Committee, stating: “Now, that country, which shall remain nameless, whose name—whose major city is Amsterdam, has been a kind of symbol for this evil” (183). “For the American neo-abolitionists, Amsterdam was a latter-day Sodom. In addition to prostitution, gay marriage was legal in the Netherlands, and on the day that I [Skinner] arrived in that country, the Charity, Freedom and Diversity Party announced its goal to legalize pedophilia, child pornography, and bestiality” (184).

In chapter 7, “John Miller’s War,” Skinner details Miller’s continued war against slave trafficking. “The biggest guns in Miller’s arsenal were economic sanctions” (194). Skinner notes that “In 2001, the United States assessed twenty-three countries as grossly inadequate in combating modern-day slavery. Each year, that number dropped steadily until, by 2006, only twelve countries were placed in Tier Three” (194). The problem, however, was that when the U.S. would vote “no” on applications to the World Bank from those declared Tier Three, “that didn’t mean that other countries would not override the American vote” (195).

In chapter 8, “Children of Vishnu,” Skinner moves his investigation of the slave trade to India. He reports that “While government estimates differ wildly—from zero to millions—most observers put the number of Indian slaves at between 10 and 20 million. Take the smallest estimate of slaves in South Asia—principally in Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh—and it blows away estimates for the rest of the world combined. There are so many slaves, and so few who give a damn about them” (207).

In chapter 9, “Revelation: Angels with Swords of Fire,” Miller declared war with India, doing so “because he interpreted American law literally, and because he saw no other path to freeing millions of slaves” (252). In 2006, Condoleezza Rice had delivered a speech at the June meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. The climax of her speech came when she uttered the following:

If not for America, then who would rally a great coalition and work to end the horrific international crime of human trafficking? Slavery did not end in the nineteenth century. It remains a tragic reality for thousands of people, mostly women and young girls, who are stolen and beaten and bought and sold like freight. Under President Bush’s leadership, the United States has launched a new abolitionist movement to end the illicit trade in human beings. We are rooting out the perpetrators and helping to care for their victims. We are calling to account any nation that turns a blind eye to human trafficking. And we have made this promise to every person still held captive: So long as America has anything to say about it, slavery will have no place in the modern world (257).

While Miller took Rice at her word, Rice, on the other hand, “refused to demote India from the toothless ‘Watch List’ of Tier Two. . . . America would

not call to account a nation that had turned a blind eye to the bondage of millions of its own citizens” (259).

In the final chapter, “A Little Hope,” Skinner tells the story of a young Haitian girl, Little Hope, who somehow managed to survive the brutalities of enslaved existence. After an incredibly difficult early life, which culminated in the death of her sole protector, her mother, an American woman named Marie Pompee took interest in the nearly starved child, sending her clothes, feeding her, and in general bringing her lifestyle to its highest level. Marie promised the now nine-year-old that she would bring her to America. “For the first time since her mother died, the girl felt hope. Perhaps sensing her optimism, Marie quickly put the girl in her place”: “If I bring you to America, you will be my slave” (264).

Little Hope’s slavery in the U.S. was made even more difficult by being raped by Marie’s son. At last, one day, while watching a T.V. commercial, Little Hope noticed a modeling agency ad. Longing to have a better life, she called the agency, where she met Cataline Restrepo, an intern at the agency, became a confidant. Gradually, over the weeks, Little Hope opened up more and more to her new-found friend. At last the day came when she was able to tell Restrepo about the rapings. Through much diligence, Restrepo was finally able to convince local police to act in Little Hope’s behalf, freeing her from the bondage of slavery.

Skinner notes that Little Hope is not alone in her slavery in the U.S.:

With an average term of enslavement lasting at least three years, there are now some 50,000 slaves in the United States. Most victims come from Asia or Mexico, although several thousand are Eastern European, Central American, or African. Nearly all came to American shores willingly, desperate for prosperity and liberty, blending seamlessly with 60 million others who enter the country every year. Some come legally, though most disappear amid an already invisible group: the roughly 12 million illegal immigrants in the United States. Too often, they find that the bondage they fled in their homelands still festers in the “land of liberty” (265).

American abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison once noted of slavery that “This is an act so unnatural, a crime so monstrous, a sin so God-defying, that it throws into the shade all other distinctions known among mankind” (229). The British poet, Robert Burns, makes a fitting tribute to those who languish yet in slavery in his poem “Man Was Made to Mourn” (1785):

Many and sharp the num’rous ills  
 Inwoven with our frame!  
 More pointed still we make ourselves  
 Regret, remorse, and shame!  
 And Man, whose heav’n-erected face  
 The smiles of love adorn,—  
 Man’s inhumanity to man  
 Makes countless thousands mourn!  
 See yonder poor, o’erlabour’d wight [derog. for working man],  
 So abject, mean, and vile,  
 Who begs a brother of the earth

To give him leave to toil;  
 And see his lordly fellow-worm  
 The poor petition spurn,  
 Unmindful tho' a weeping wife  
 And helpless offspring mourn.  
 If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave—  
 By Nature's law design'd—  
 Why was an independent wish  
 E'er planted in my mind?  
 If not, why am I subject to  
 His cruelty, or scorn?  
 Or why has Man the will and pow'r  
 To make his fellow mourn?  
 Yet let not this too much, my son,  
 Disturb thy youthful breast:  
 This partial view of human-kind  
 Is surely not the last!  
 The poor, oppressed, honest man,  
 Had never, sure, been born,  
 Had there not been some recompense  
 To comfort those that mourn!

Some one hundred years later, Ellen White would echo Burns's sentiments, stating: "The inhumanity of man toward man is our greatest sin." "We need," she pressed, "more Christlike sympathy; not merely sympathy for those who appear to us to be faultless, but sympathy for poor, suffering, struggling souls, who are often overtaken in fault, sinning and repenting, tempted and discouraged. We are to go to our fellow-men, touched, like our merciful High Priest, with the feeling of their infirmities" (*Gospel Workers*, 140).

Skinner's *A Crime So Monstrous* should be required reading for all Christians.

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Thiselton, Anthony C. *1 Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical and Pastoral Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006. 325 pp. Hardcover, \$30.00.

Thiselton's *1 Corinthians* is a rich reservoir of sermonic ideas and spiritual insights. This remarkable commentary confronts the reader, page after page, with powerful and fresh insights. This commentary, however, is more than simply a welcome resource for the clergy and lay leaders. It is a rich resource of reflection and thought for seasoned exegetes as well, especially for those looking to engage the spiritual side of Scripture. The book is a short work, especially if one excludes from consideration the large blocks of primary text and the "Possible Reflection" sections. In the brief space allotted to exegesis and commentary, Thiselton offers masterful and insightful synopses of scholarly debates as well as an expert reading of the text. As the title suggests, this commentary is in a way a shorter version of his much longer *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC