

BOOK REVIEWS

Did God Have A Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel. By William G. Dever. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, xvi + 344 pp., \$25.00.

This book, which completes Dever's trilogy on Israelite history, society, and religion, seeks to reconstruct the practice of religion "from the ground up," that is, by depending primarily on archaeological data. Dever begins by defining his task and approach in "Defining and Contextualizing Religion" (chap. 1). In "The History of the History: In Search of Ancient Israelite Religions" (chap. 2) and "Sources and Methods for the Study of Ancient Israel's Religions" (chap. 3), Dever reviews scholarly approaches to Israelite religion, considers the biblical sources, and argues for the primacy of archaeology in reconstructing the religion of ancient Israel. In "The Hebrew Bible: Religious Reality or Theological Ideal" (chap. 4), he reviews cultic terminology and activities in the Hebrew Bible. Chapters 5–7 make up the core of the book. These cover "Archaeological Evidence for Folk Religions in Ancient Israel" (chap. 5), "The Goddess Asherah and Her Cult" (chap. 6), and "Asherah, Women's Cults, and 'Official Yahwism'" (chap. 7). "From Polytheism to Monotheism" (chap. 8) and "What Does the Goddess Do To Help?" (chap. 9) summarize the arguments of the book.

Dever's stated goal is to take popular religion "fairly into account" (p. 47), which apparently means to "restore" it "to a position of respect" (p. 249). The brunt of his book is devoted to an examination of the data related to folk religion in ancient Israel, particularly inscriptions related to "Yahweh and his Asherah" (pp. 110–251). Dever concludes that the real religion of ancient Israel was "largely [a] domestic religion," with a "major emphasis on women's cults and their role in family rituals" (p. 251). Exclusive Yahwistic monotheism, on the other hand, was an artificial construct that only originated in the Babylonian exile (p. 252).

Dever undertakes his task with the characteristic wit and acerbic style for which he has become known. He notes repeatedly that he has been an "opponent" of "Biblical Archaeology" for 30 years (pp. 79–80, 151, 170, 253) and styles himself as the herald of this new vision of ancient Israelite religion, an approach for which he has been criticized before (cf. J. Maxwell Miller, review of *What Did the Biblical Writers Know & When Did They Know It?* by William Dever, *BASOR* 329 [2003] 86–87). Dever styles himself as a pioneer (pp. 40, 131, 167, 175, 188, 194, 197, 201, 204, 206, 220, 303) and the first to identify an actual "cult of Asherah" (pp. 43, 79). In fact, while Dever did discover the Khirbet el-Qôm inscription, he published it without combining the letters that were later taken to form "his Asherah" (W. G. Dever, "Iron Age Epigraphic Material from the Area of Khirbet el-Kom," *HUCA* 40–41 [1969–70] 158). Dever did argue specifically for an actual "cult of Asherah" in 1982 ("Recent Archaeological Confirmation of the Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel," *Hebrew Studies* 23 [Madison, 1982] 37–43) and 1984 ("Asherah, Consort of Yahweh? New Evidence from Kuntillet 'Ajrud," *BASOR* 255 [1984] 21–37), but these articles appeared concurrently with others by P. Beck (1982), J. A. Emerton (1982), and were preceded by publications by A. Lemaire (1977), Z. Meshel (1978), and M. Gilula (1978–79), all of which were exploring varying aspects of the perception and role of Asherah in ancient Israel.

Dever describes himself as a “former Christian turned secular humanist” (p. 46). He sees this lack of commitment to a particular confessional tradition as evidence of his neutrality, which he claims as one of his special qualifications for reconstructing ancient Israelite religion (pp. 8, 39, 79–80, 87–89, 185). Despite these claims to neutrality, however, Dever argues that God’s election of Israel alone is “debatable on moral grounds” (p. 91); the clergy of the Jerusalem Temple were “oppressive” for trying to regulate worship practices (p. 240); and that Yahweh was a distant, unapproachable, angry deity (p. 251). Dever questions “the very notion of syncretism” as a concept (p. 269), suggesting there is nothing wrong with bawdiness (p. 271) or multiple deities (p. 296). He views biblical scholars as “elitists” (p. 304), and, in the end, the “Book Religion” of ancient Israel was simply a “burden” (p. 316). Dever sees the biblical authors as having tried to “hide” folk religion (pp. 7, 12, 47–51, 63–76, 98, 122, 131, 145, 150, 184–85, and all of chapter 8), which was, in certain respects, morally superior to monotheistic Yahwism (p. 298). The Hebrew Bible was compiled by “extremists” (p. 299), who not only effectively suppressed popular religion, but who also effectively tricked modern scholars who, up until now, have “bought into” their ideology (p. 209).

In his final chapter, Dever writes that “some of orthodox or even conservative persuasion will tend to reject out of hand everything that I have said here. It cannot be true, because ‘biblical religion’ *has* to be monotheistic; the Bible says so. (This is simply the typical fundamentalist protest: ‘My mind is made up, don’t confuse me with facts.’)” (p. 312). While readers of this *Journal* will certainly find many of Dever’s arguments objectionable, they can acknowledge that Asherah images were made in ancient Israel, both by individuals and by commission of the government. The Bible says as much (e.g. 1 Kgs 16:32–33; 2 Kgs 18:3–4; 23:4ff.), a fact that has been acknowledged for many years (e.g. W. L. Reed, *The Asherah in the Old Testament* [Fort Worth, 1949]). While this may be “disturbing to some” (p. 215), evangelicals can recognize in Yahweh’s persistent faithfulness to his covenant promises—despite Israel’s repeated lapses into idolatry—evidence of Yahweh’s grace and unending love for his people.

For an objective presentation of religion in ancient Israel, *Did God Have A Wife?* is not the book to choose. That said, the book is of value for its summary of scholarly literature and for bringing together so much archaeological data related to aberrant Yahwism in one volume. It is important for evangelical historians and archaeologists dealing with ancient Israel to grapple with this data and its implications for our understanding of ancient Israelite religion. In the end, it is not entirely clear whether Asherah should be understood as a consort of Yahweh or as a hypostatization of his “feminine” aspects or his “available presence,” an ambiguity Dever acknowledges (pp. 195, 236).

Ralph K. Hawkins
Bethel College, Mishawaka, IN

Holy People, Holy Land: A Theological Introduction to the Bible. By Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005, 266 pp., \$15.99 paper.

Holy People, Holy Land is a look at the unfolding achievement of God’s work and of God’s people down through the ages from the beginning of time to the culmination of the ages. Dauphinais and Levering, theology professors at Ave Maria College in Naples, Florida, have written a theological approach to studying the Bible from a Roman Catholic perspective built on the following theme: “What we mean by ‘holy land,’ then, is the spiritual condition of dwelling with God, in the interior presence of God, a spiritual condition that elevates and perfects our bodily nature as well. Holy Land is the divine in-

dwelling that makes us 'holy people' who live in God. People become holy by dwelling with God, in communion with his creative wisdom and love. 'Holy people' describes human beings who are without guilt or impurity, full of righteousness and justice, who can stand before God and each other without shame. As the covenantal history will make it increasingly clear, 'holy land' refers to the indwelling of God, to a place—ultimately man himself—made holy because God himself dwells there" (p. 32).

The logical sequence of this book develops a series of unifying themes of Scripture beginning with the Garden of Eden and its loss and traces God's covenant blessings through the lives and works of Abraham, Moses, and David. Chapter 5 bridges the transition looking at Psalms and Prophets: New King, New Temple, and New Covenant. Law and sacrifice of the Old Covenant give way to the theme of grace and forgiveness in the New Covenant.

The authors' theological survey of the NT includes the Gospel of Matthew as they address the King and his Kingdom; the Gospel of John the Temple of the Trinity; the Pauline epistle to the Romans with the theme of the Righteousness of God and the Body of Christ; the epistle to the Hebrews highlighting the Priest-King of the New Covenant; and the book of Revelation focused on the Lamb as king and temple. Christ was the fulfillment of the Law; he perfected justice and is now the true temple.

Each chapter skillfully weaves the covenantal promises and blessings to God's people progressively through the unfolding of Scripture. Dauphinais and Levering blend the OT themes of promise with the NT themes of grace and divine love.

The unifying theme of this work focuses on "holiness" both of God and of those who dwell in God. This common thread runs through the pages of Scripture—beginning in a garden and ending at the throne in heaven. God has continued to seek out his "holy people" who dwell in "holy land."

If this had been my first reading of a serious work on a theological understanding of the Bible, *Holy People, Holy Land* would have been convicting and convincing with the authors' symbolic symmetry of equating Holy Land to a place where God is indwelling his people, not relegated to a Promised Land in the Middle East. The authors support their arguments with considerable footnotes that include early classics such as Aristotle, Athanasius, Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Thomas Aquinas, but also more recent sources such as N. T. Wright, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and John Paul II.

This book offers a covenantal approach to looking at the Bible theologically through the eyes of Roman Catholic scholars. Although my own background of conservative evangelical Protestantism ran interference confronting the overly symbolic use of the expression "Holy Land," this work proved to be challenging and provocative.

For me, "Holy Land" has always been seen as measurable real estate in the Middle East, and the re-creation of the state of Israel was the direct fulfillment of prophecy. This aspect is not satisfactorily addressed by the authors, nor was it their intention to pen an eschatological work. A hard-line dispensationalist would take issue with the general theme of this book and could possibly miss out on seeing the unifying flow of redemptive history throughout the ages. Overall, *Holy People, Holy Land* is an engaging worthwhile investment, especially for any conservative evangelical Protestants who need a better understanding of contemporary Roman Catholic theological works.

In conclusion, we find unity with the authors as they seek to respond to the question of how we can strive to be a holy people: "The demands of holiness and transformation would lead us to complete despair if we trusted ourselves for our salvation. Only because our salvation is complete in Jesus Christ and made present to us through the Church, can we experience the joy and confidence of the new covenant" (p. 255).

John Easterling, Professor of Intercultural Studies
Northwestern College, St. Paul, MN

Your Old Testament Toolbox: Study Helps for the Hebrew Scriptures. By Thomas Vernon Taylor. Port Colborne, ON: Gospel Folio, 2005, v + 280 pp., \$15.95 paper.

Those unacquainted with the Howard G. Hendricks of the east coast are in store for a real treat in this book. Here in this volume is the pure and unvarnished Tom Taylor in his inimitable clear, concise style presenting a true workbook, textbook, OT introduction, and study written for three levels of understanding: the beginner; the intermediate; and the advanced. This text is adaptable for high school, college, or even seminary instruction.

Thomas Vernon Taylor is Professor Emeritus of Church History and Old Testament at Biblical Theological Seminary in Hatfield, Pennsylvania. His teaching career began at Faith Theological Seminary and continued at Biblical. His total instruction time has been 37 years. He reflects the same depth of devotion to the biblical text as that of his mentor, the late Dr. Allan A. MacRae, former president of both Faith and Biblical Theological Seminaries.

Your Old Testament Toolbox develops the major discussions of History and Biography, Poetry and Metaphors, Proverbs, and Prophecy. OT history is divided into the three levels mentioned above. At the beginning level, a survey of Bible history is given along with the plan of redemption. At the intermediate level, there is provided an understanding of the covenants and the promises of God with types and symbols. At the advanced level, there are advanced principles of history, detailed Near Eastern history, and guidelines for understanding Biblical Hebrew.

OT poetry is developed in both a general and a specific sense for each biblical book. At level one, the author evaluates the basic critical data. At level two, literary features and functions are discussed. At level three, we see formal organization of the use of Biblical Hebrew in its relationship to poetry, meter, and understanding complex metaphors.

OT prophecy is devoted to the thematic exposition of introductory materials, messianic prophecy, national, kingdom, situation, personal, and international prophecies in the same three tiered format.

A fourth section delineates individual objects constituting the study of a person, the study of an event, or an object and an institution. Taylor combines this with the basic hermeneutics of a word, text, theme, and teaching in the same three-leveled approach.

The fifth section discusses biblical phenomena such as: miracles, signs, and wonders. Taylor under the same heading notes the study of dreams and visions. A sixth section is furnished with frugal endnotes further amplifying the discussions. A final section is provided with three appendices including: speech figures and devices; a suggested bibliography; and special study helps.

This volume does not pretend to be as exhaustive as R. K. Harrison, nor is it replete with the academic sophistication of Archer, Dillard and Longman, or Walton. It runs along the lines of either Unger's introduction or E. J. Young's.

The approach is balanced. The author has his own axes to grind, but these are sublimated in order that the introductory material's worth is not diminished by the reader who may prefer the view not taken by the author. The general reader in most cases will not find the author's catalogue of preferred views on exegetical, or even at times theological, nuances.

Taylor's volume is a warm, down-to-earth work, reflecting careful research but refraining from showing all the technical nuances of elaboration of documentation, and refraining from the grocery list approach to the explanation of biblical passages.

Taylor's purpose is true to providing a refreshingly honest approach to OT studies with the constant eye of the historian. His volume is well written for those with the 30-second sound bite span of mental concentration. In a day when most works obfuscate

to confuse, rather than clarify, Taylor's points of obfuscation are meant to elucidate the main purpose of the text. His views on modern dispensationalism in relation to covenant theology are nowhere discussed, yet the air of the Westminster Confession and Reformed distinctive is not absent. Dr. Taylor's background with the Brethren is not fully explicated, and hence both dispensationalists of any variety and the staunchest covenant theologian will appreciate his style in the manner of Berkhof.

It is most unfortunate that this volume was not published by one of the major evangelical publishing houses, for it serves as an excellent textbook for high school, college, and seminary instruction. Tom Taylor's book *Your Old Testament Toolbox* should be purchased by all teachers of the OT, at least for practical examples in the presentation of complex OT themes in an appealing manner in spanning the gap of scholarship to those of various target audiences.

It is hoped the author will produce more volumes in the manner and style found in this volume. If there is a minor negative criticism it would be that the volume lacks any of the author's vast repertoire of stories and life experiences, or that it is devoid of his superb sense of humor.

Earl Leroy Brown Jr.
Philadelphia, PA

Encounters with Biblical Theology. By John J. Collins. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005, ix + 243 pp., \$22.00.

John J. Collins has been thinking and writing about biblical theology for some time. The essays collected in this volume come from an almost 30-year period between 1977 and 2004, relatively evenly spread over this period. They reflect on the whole sweep of the movement, beginning with Johann Philip Gabler in 1787 and ending with the issue of postmodernity. Yet the work also follows Collins's own interests, seen in the five-part division: theoretical issues; topics in the Pentateuch; wisdom and biblical theology; apocalyptic literature; and Christian adaptations of Jewish traditions, the last part being the shortest. It is a tribute to Collins that the work feels unified despite being composed of originally separate essays.

Collins's thesis is that biblical theology in any sense is only possible if one looks at the text as a type of fiction that is capable of being sorted through and read for contemporary reflection and inspiration. This is because of (1) the wide variety in theologies of the various texts; and (2) the fact that one cannot base theology on history since virtually all biblical history is in question. Some of the readers of this *Journal* will surely object to the latter assumption, but the former is also a significant challenge. For example, are Deuteronomy 30, Job, and James 1:13–14 able to be harmonized without imposing an extrabiblical theological grid on the texts? This consciously postmodern analysis is surely salutary for evangelicals who have embraced modernism too enthusiastically (and for many who are not evangelicals, as we get portions of his *The Bible after Babel: Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age*).

Collins also asks whether every biblical text is capable of theological use, using the binding of Isaac (Genesis 22) as his example. He points out how authors from across the spectrum have minimized the command of human sacrifice with the willingness to do so being praised in the text. Could the evangelical desire to jump to typology make us miss the horror of the text? Is Leonard Sweet correct in *Out of the Question . . . into the Mystery* that the ideal response would have been for Abraham to have questioned God? Does not even that critical use (of Abraham) bowdlerize the stark divine command

of human sacrifice? In raising such questions Collins makes every reader think about what the text really says, and for that we should be thankful.

This is not an easy book, but it is a good book. When he discusses a topic, Collins surveys the discussion of that topic to date, which will make some readers aware of the current state of discussion. He is also aware of the theological use of the text. For example, when he talks of apocalyptic, he discusses its *Wirkungsgeschichte*, as his paralleling of the Millerite use of Daniel with modern fundamentalist and liberal (his terms) use shows. It is not that he is negative, for he can be appreciative (and believes apocalyptic should be evaluated both positively and negatively). And when it comes to Jesus, he may surprise readers with his conclusions about Jesus and Second Temple messianic expectation. In other words, he comes to challenging rather than predictable positions.

Collins does not pretend he is without his own biases; the book is written from his perspective and with his interests. Yet he gathers a lot of insight and challenge into a relatively small space (189 pages of text). The essays are compact and so could be used for class reading. The book is not a complete text on biblical theology, but it is an encounter, not only with the theology in the text itself, but also with the contemporary application of those texts. If taken as such it is a very helpful book, if not for class use, certainly for informing lectures and as literature supporting research papers. As we have been grateful to Collins in the past (e.g. when studying apocalyptic), so we should continue to be grateful to him now, even if he makes us uncomfortable at times.

Peter H. Davids

St. Stephen's University, St. Stephen, New Brunswick, Canada

What Have They Done to the Bible? A History of Modern Biblical Interpretation. By John Sandys-Wunsch. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2005, xvii + 378 pp., \$39.95.

Well researched but straightforward and laced with humor, this book is fun to read. It is also sobering. The author's objective is to describe what happened in biblical studies over a 400-year stretch (AD 1500–1900). He gives attention both to how the Bible was viewed as authority and how approaches to exegesis and hermeneutics varied. His survey is structured according to six eras, beginning with the renaissance up to the present day. His lengthiest treatment is of the eighteenth century, the most critical, complex, and direction-setting period. The nineteenth century is only briefly sketched. The book is focused on select eras; contrast the sweep of twenty-one centuries in William Yarchin's *History of Biblical Interpretation: A Reader* (Hendrickson, 2004).

Early on, the Bible was considered the major source for information in matters linguistic, cultural, and scientific. Over the centuries it has been "dethroned" under a variety of influences, which Sandys-Wunsch traces. The authority question arises because of text variations, historical "inaccuracies," miracles, and other factors. During the renaissance debates turned on language and textual variants; some claimed that even Hebrew vowel pointings were inspired. Advances in cosmological understandings challenged stories of the sun standing still, while geological studies raised questions about Noah's flood. Later, interest in history surfaced a host of issues, sometimes addressed in sophisticated fashion and sometimes ludicrously.

The works of significant but now largely unknown biblical scholars are presented in crisp summaries of three to four pages in length. One reads of John Spencer (1630–1693), whose "superb work" on Hebrew ritual is "unjustly neglected in modern dis-

cussions" (p. 136); of G. Vico (18th century) who "was to have an extraordinary effect on biblical studies" (p. 187); of "two giants in the land" in the mid-eighteenth century: Johann Semler, who asked about the historical circumstances that gave rise to a document; Johann Michaelis, who wrote a book on the laws of the Bible but started by showing how laws work; J. G. Eichhorn (pp. 247–51) and H. S. Reimarus. The impact on biblical interpretation of scholars like Benedict Spinoza, Thomas Hobbes, Soren Kierkegaard, and of movements such as the Pietists is also discussed.

Scholars long dead are named and come to life via their arguments but also via characterizations and anecdotes. According to Sandys-Wunsch, Voltaire hardly had a good understanding about the OT though he pontificated about it, much like the poorly-informed tourist who accuses kilted Highland Scots of cross-dressing (p. 218).

Not infrequently the author cites common but erroneous scholarly claims. He challenges the distinction between "pre-critical" and "critical" by showing that long before Jean Astruc, scholars recognized various names for God in the Pentateuch and had alternate theories to its Mosaic authorship. G. Postel (d. 1581) knew about Samaritan manuscripts. Others wrestled with two creation accounts, numerical discrepancies, and multiple Gospel accounts. Citing a recent dictionary about Richard Simon as the first to pay attention to Masius's arguments, Sandys-Wunsch notes, "This is demonstrably not the case" (p. 58). J. P. Gabler (whose 1787 Latin lecture about distinctions between systematic and biblical theology Sandys-Wunsch has translated) is presented, not so much as seeking the independence of biblical theology as defending the discipline of dogmatics (p. 261).

Sandys-Wunsch, an Anglican priest, is currently a research scholar at the University of Victoria and was formerly a professor and administrator in Canada and England. He is at home in Latin as well as several European languages. Elsewhere he notes that he has tried to read an author's works in the original language if possible. This well-documented book, researched over a thirty-year period, represents prodigious work. A sanguine assumption throughout, hardly shared by all, is that changes in biblical interpretation represent progress. It may be in the nature of the case that the challengers of traditional positions garner more attention than those making defenses. To his credit, the author tries hard to give a balanced treatment of each. He is uncomfortable with doctrinal notions of biblical infallibility (p. 336), but evangelicals should not for that reason dismiss his largely historical work.

The strength of the book consists in the concise and interesting descriptions of scholars, issues, and arguments. Caring about context, Sandys-Wunsch introduces each era with brief but trenchant depictions of cultural forces of the time. In discussing biblical scholarship of a given period, specific passages come into view (e.g. the *Comma Johanneum*, 1 John 5:7, pp. 53, 68). He claims, "How the prophets are seen is often a useful indication of where exegesis is going" (p. 203). Especially fascinating is the case study of the book of Revelation in the eighteenth century. Here the author identifies seven categories of interpretation: "the prophetic, the Protestant mathematical, the Chamber of Commerce, the Roman Catholic, the antagonistic, the scholarly, and the aesthetic" (p. 263). The Scripture index is a real plus, as are the indices of scholars (seven double-columned pages), not to mention a reference list of sources for each chapter.

The book calls for sober reflection for all those who work at interpreting the Bible. Evangelicals might well take note how the defense of indefensible positions looks in retrospect. Some lost causes of the past continue with an afterlife. This work is anything but antiquarian; rather, it holds up the work of past biblical scholars as a mirror. Santayana's adage applies: Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. It is one thing to begin studies of the Pentateuch with Graf-Wellhausen or studies of the life of Jesus with David Strauss or Ernest Renan. It is another to read

a book that, building on centuries of interpretation, essentially ends with Wellhausen and Strauss. If the current mantra for biblical interpreters of “context, context, context” is to be followed, then a reach for this book is essential.

Elmer A. Martens
Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, CA

Effective First-Person Biblical Preaching. By J. Kent Edwards. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005, 190 pp., \$24.99.

How do we preach well and accurately on the numerous narrative passages in the Scriptures? Do we simply attempt to mimic what we do in the epistles and discourses or is there an alternate approach that might better reflect the nature of a narrative? Kent Edwards, professor of preaching and director of the Doctor of Ministry program at Talbot School of Theology, believes there is a better way. This book is the result of his deliberations and practices in preaching narrative literature, specifically narrative sermons presented in the first person.

The main text of the book is relatively short, running only about 140 pages. It is divided into three sections: Steps in the Exegetical Task; Steps in the Homiletical Task; and Questions and Alternatives. These sections are augmented by two appendixes: Examples of Narrative Preaching and Implementation Worksheets. The book also features Scripture and subject indexes.

Relating to the exegetical task, Edwards leads the reader through eight steps to assure a full understanding of the biblical story. These processes are more hermeneutical than exegetical, though the latter is not ignored. These are followed by fifteen steps relating to the homiletical process, some of which (e.g. props and costumes) may take only moments. Edwards is a proponent of the “big idea” approach to preaching in the tradition of Haddon Robinson (who wrote the book’s foreword). This is apparent in the first two sections of the book. As a result, the author is not merely advocating a sermon that tells an interesting story, but a story sermon with a “big idea” to be impressed upon the hearers. Thus this approach can indeed be called preaching. In the third section, Edwards deals with some practical questions preachers tend to raise about this style of preaching and then offers some approaches other than doing narratives in the first person.

The three sermon models are a helpful addition to the book. These are messages previously preached by Edwards himself (Samson); Don Sunukjian of Talbot (Mephibosheth); and Alice Matthews of Gordon-Conwell (Mary of Bethany). They model well how a first-person narrative sermon can accurately reflect the biblical narrative, be interesting, and be applicational. An added feature is a CD/DVD that features a first-person narrative on David but told from the perspective of one of his brothers.

Although the book is relatively brief, a lot of thoughtful material is packed into it. It is well written and nicely organized. It will stimulate the preacher who reads it to be more creative in sermon building. It will also inspire preachers to be more faithful in dealing with the huge amount of the Bible that is written in narrative and to do so in a way that honors the intent of the text while holding their audience’s interest. Finally, it is a profitable read for any preacher whether or not first-person preaching is the goal. The thoughtful reader will be able to apply the message of the book in other ways as well.

Donald L. Hamilton
The Seminary at Columbia International University, Columbia, SC

Rethinking the Pentateuch: Prolegomena to the Theology of Ancient Israel. By Antony F. Campbell and Mark O'Brien. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005, xv + 183 pp., \$29.99.

As the title's allusion to Wellhausen's landmark monograph indicates, *Rethinking the Pentateuch* takes aim at the long-held convictions formulated in the Documentary Hypothesis (assuming there is such a thing as a Documentary Hypothesis). While there has been no shortage of recent works that recognized the failure of the source-critical approach in adequately addressing the textual features of the Pentateuch, full-fledged alternative models remain a rarity. In light of this scenario, the authors propose a radical two-pronged paradigm shift.

A brief introduction provides an outline for the authors' constructive approach. On the one hand, the book advocates a "user-centered" focus in evaluating Pentateuchal material, thus challenging common "reader-centered" advances. The second shift is interpretative, urging us to move away from viewing the Pentateuch as a record of Israel's past to construing it as a record of Israel's reflection on the present. These two concerns are then discussed in more detail in the following two main chapters of the work, respectively. Four appendices offer intensive case studies, the final one featuring a complete linear outline of the biblical text for Genesis-Exodus and Numbers 1-24, indicating both provenance and function of each textual unit.

The work's "user-centered" approach assumes the presupposition that Pentateuchal traditions were written for users (not readers) as a base for storytelling. In this sense, users are ancient narrators or orators who mediated the texts to their contemporaries. The Pentateuch's present form is the end product of a writing process that never lost sight of the user's operations, and the text itself is replete with references indicative of this "text-as-base-for-user" approach. Since, then, the text was composed for users, the authors and editors of the various text units (e.g. creation account, flood account, etc.) were keen on providing variant versions of stories that were intended to afford options for users who activated them as the situation required. Even though the final product is a single canonical text, at an earlier stage in the process the relevant traditions (sometimes even contradictory) were presented to the ancient user for selection and expansion. Campbell and O'Brien maintain the variants were not only preserved but textually marked for identification. Therefore, specific textual features such as doublets and style (choice of vocabulary), which used to be regarded as betraying underlying documentary sources, can now be explained in terms of the intentional preservation of variants within a given block of tradition.

The second paradigm shift emerges in chapter 3 and involves a conscious trading of history for theology. As the "text-as-base-for-user" approach is brought to bear on the various text units of the Pentateuch, Campbell and O'Brien identify the individual stories and narratives that underlie the present text. Accordingly, Genesis combines four groups of stories: (1) stories of humanity, Genesis 1-11; (2) Abraham cycle; (3) Jacob cycle; (4) Joseph story. The analysis of Exodus and Numbers builds on two narrative versions of the exodus from Egypt, whereas Deuteronomy is understood as an exhortation to ideal living corresponding with the ideal world of Genesis 1-2. Leviticus, having its own integrity, bespeaks postexilic concerns of worship and has found its way into the mix at a rather late stage. Campbell and O'Brien do not put any stock in the historicity of the events related in the text, but describe the Pentateuch as the "originating myth of ancient Israel" (p. 105). As such, the traditions were created in an effort to formulate a plausible national identity with little or no concern for historical grounding. The myth was "made" to offer Israel the chronicles of what constituted them as a distinct people.

The book provides a much anticipated alternative to the Documentary Hypothesis. However, it also raises a number of problems of its own. Although the authors make

a cogent case for abandoning the source-critical approach, the identification of story variants within their unique proposal will often be unmistakably reminiscent of the former and so stands exposed to the same kinds of challenges. Variants such as the "Exodus Narrative" (ExN) and the "Sanctuary Narrative" (SaN) are sorted out on the basis of criteria that focus on stylistic tendencies (specific vocabulary) as well as doublets and repetitions. For example, the authors claim that throughout the ExN and the SaN, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is "noted consistently with two different Hebrew verbs, one for each source (for the ExN, root: *k-b-d*; for the SaN, root: *h-z-q*)" (p. 75). A writer's consistent use of a particular verb to the exclusion of alternatives assumes an extraordinarily wooden style on the part of the writer, especially in cases where repetitive notices (here the hardening of Pharaoh's heart) are a frequent feature of the text. Moreover, a closer look at the evidence reveals that the alleged stylistic "consistency" is not quite as consistent as Campbell and O'Brien would have it. SaN has *qšh* instead of *hza* in Exod 7:3 (as noted on p. 77), and ExN features *hza* for the "typical" *kbd* in Exodus 4:21. The fact that Campbell and O'Brien conveniently see 4:21–23 within this section of the ExN (here: 3:1–4:31) as an enhancement (i.e. an editorial expansion on what was already in place) fails to convince, all the more so, since recourse to relegating contrary evidence to the category "enhancement" occurs elsewhere (e.g. ExN, Exod 9:35 [*hza*]; ExN, Exod 10:20 [*hza*]). A similar case obtains for the noun *môpêl* ("miracle"), said to be a typical "SaN term" (p. 75), though it is also found in ExN (Exod 4:21, listed as "enhancement"). Inasmuch as the noun's total references in the relevant texts is no more than 5, one wonders whether the evidence has not been over-interpreted.

Serious concerns also remain at a more fundamental, conceptual level. Viewed from a distance, the analysis will often require painstaking attention to the biblical references on the part of the reader due to the fragmentation of the text down to parts of individual verses. If, as the authors would assert, the form of the text of the Pentateuch is such as to offer options and variants and that "present text" interpretation without these choices may run counter to the nature of the text, then at the very least, the task of the reader/user has not been made very easy. The alleged variants are not nearly as accessible or identifiable as the authors see them.

Finally, the wholesale abortion of the historical inquiry seems troubling. Of course, one must concede that we cannot always draw a straight line from truth to reality. A story may well be fictitious, it may even communicate truth as "myth," but it remains that the Pentateuch transmits a host of textual signals that tell us that the text wants to be read as history. While details are open to debate, the reader is not free to ignore the text's fundamental claims to historicity without being in danger of misreading it.

Evangelicals who follow the development of Pentateuchal studies will do well to investigate Campbell's and O'Brien's work. Its theological observations are helpful in enhancing our understanding of the text, even though the authors unnecessarily advance their insights at the expense of even the most fundamental historical claims.

Martin Emmrich
Grace Presbyterian Church, Wasilla, AK

How to Read Genesis. By Tremper Longman III. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005, 192 pp., \$15.00 paper.

In *How to Read Genesis* Longman seeks to give a brief yet comprehensive primer for interpreting the book of Genesis. Rather than multiplying dogmatic assertions or attempting to address all the difficulties found in Genesis, Longman alternatively seeks

to “stimulate readers into thinking through these issues for themselves” (p. 9). Longman is successful in his aim.

How to Read Genesis is organized in five sections: Reading Genesis with a Strategy (chap. 1); Reading Genesis as Literature (chaps. 2–3); Reading Genesis in its Own World (chaps. 4–6); Reading Genesis as God’s Story (chaps. 7–9); and Reading Genesis as Christians (chap. 10).

In section 1 (chap. 1: Understanding the Book of Beginnings), Longman stresses the importance of approaching Genesis holistically, viewing the book as the first of a five-chapter Pentateuch. He is to be commended for clearly delineating the presuppositions of his approach to the text. Longman is careful to alert readers regarding both the limitations and strengths of his hermeneutic. Theologically, he reads Genesis as a conservative Protestant; literarily, he reads tending toward continuity and coherence rather than disunity and multiple authorship; historically, he believes in both the historical veracity of Genesis and its spiritual value for modern Christians. Longman is not given to the documentary hypothesis nor postmodern hermeneutics but rather espouses a grammatical-historical approach, placing the original author’s intention at the center of the aim of interpretive strategy. Longman’s high view of Scripture is evident in his simple but revealing comment that “[o]ne important principle of interpretation is to recognize that not all of our questions can be answered” (p. 20).

In section 2 (chap. 2: Who Wrote Genesis? and chap. 3: The Shape of the Book of Genesis), Longman spends ample time addressing the two competing theories of the composition of the Pentateuch: Mosaic authorship vs. the documentary hypothesis. Longman approaches Genesis as the coherent work of a single author, and although he espouses that Genesis (and the whole Pentateuch for that matter) was written by Moses with minor redaction from an unknown source possibly around the time of the exile, he gives an even-handed treatment to critical approaches to the text.

In section 3 (chap. 4: Myth or History?; chap. 5: Noah and Utnapishtim; and chap. 6: Abraham and Nuzi), Longman is careful to make the distinction that the original author of Genesis does not himself focus on arguing for the veracity of the historical account but rather that the author focuses upon the fact that there are certainly theological implications for the events he has recorded. Longman’s treatments of the historiographic aspects of Genesis in general (pp. 60–63) as well as the narrative in specific (pp. 64–67) are especially erudite. He also dispenses valuable context information regarding ANE history, culture, and religion. He responsibly touches on Egyptian, Akkadian, and Ugaritic examples. His synthesis is concise while his conclusions are powerful and thought-provoking. Longman’s comments on Genesis’s treatment of the creation of man, the nature of Yahweh shown through the flood narrative, and various second millennium BC customs (e.g. household-servant adoption, passing through a divided animal, taking a second wife) in light of the broader ANE are certainly helpful to the modern reader.

In section 4 (chap. 7: The Primeval History; chap. 8: The Patriarchal Narratives; and chap. 9: The Joseph Story), Longman turns to a more detailed approach, commenting more particularly on the text of Genesis. The strength of his commentary resides in his literary treatment of the text. Longman successfully indicates word plays and literary structures throughout the narratives of Genesis with the aim of understanding the original author’s intended message.

In section 5 (chap. 10: The Christological Difference), Longman addresses the issue of relevance for the modern reader. His treatment of the *proto-evangelium* (Gen 3:15) is a fairly representative sample of his hermeneutic. Here, Longman addresses Genesis 3:15 both in its OT context (i.e. the seed as representative of the Sethite line and the serpent being identified with the Canaanites) and in its larger biblical context (Rom 16:20; Heb 2:14–15; Rev 12:7–9) as expositional to the character and calling of Jesus.

How to Read Genesis presents few difficulties to its audience. Longman has attempted to address difficult issues and has done so in an interesting way. His hermeneutic does seem to succeed in striking the balance between the practical and academic. However, when he errs, he does so by being too practical. For example, although Longman does give both sides of the Mosaic authorship debate, he does little to fortify his argumentation in favor of the Mosaic view (pp. 54–57). Although his presentation of the material is generally coherent and easy to digest, more citations would be helpful.

In conclusion, Longman's *How to Read Genesis* represents a balanced treatment of the text of Genesis. Although Longman seems to favor literary approaches in his hermeneutic (literary approaches have not been completely embraced by conservatives), he does do justice to the historical and theological aspects of the text. *How to Read Genesis* is ideal for laypeople as an orientation to more comprehensive Bible study. There is also certainly place for this book in undergraduate curriculums (given that it is accompanied by a more expositional/exegetical work).

Nigel C. Black
The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC

Exodus Through the Centuries. By Scott M. Langston. Blackwell Bible Commentaries. Malden: Blackwell, 2006, xiv + 294 pp., \$44.95 paper.

This work is one of the first to appear in the new Blackwell Bible Commentaries series. The volume on Revelation appeared in 2003, the one on John's Gospel in 2004, and the one on Judges in 2005. An additional twenty-one volumes, covering most of the OT and NT, are listed as forthcoming. The volume *Exodus Through the Centuries* shares the general characteristics of the series. It is not a commentary in the usual sense of the word. There is no dealing with issues of Hebrew grammar and syntax. There is no discussion of history of traditions or the prehistory of the text. Instead, this series, and this commentary in particular, identifies itself as "devoted primarily to the reception history of the Bible." What that means is that it is sort of a history of interpretation, but sort of not. As Langston's introduction says, "This is a book about how readers have experienced the book of Exodus."

Langston proceeds to discuss briefly the type of material considered for the commentary, dividing them among "Jewish and Christian Uses," "Political and Social Uses," "Oppressive and Contradictory Uses," and finally "Artistic Uses." He divides Exodus into eight larger sections of unequal length, most of which are then further subdivided for the sort of history of interpretation. In each section, the discussion unfolds in a roughly chronological fashion. For instance, the seventh section, which includes the Ten Commandments, begins with a summary of ancient Jewish treatments of the law, moving on to the use of the law in early Christianity. Then a brief section on medieval law and its relation to the Ten Commandments is followed by a longer discussion of the law in medieval Judaism. This is followed by an equally long treatment of the law in medieval Christianity. There follows a discussion of the law in Reformation times and in early modern Christianity. The section on the Ten Commandments concludes with the modern period, made up of a ten-page discussion of societal uses (including some discussion of the movie versions of *The Ten Commandments* and the recent dispute in Alabama over Roy Moore), and a two-page discussion of religious uses, focusing primarily on the issue of Sabbath observance.

There are two things the commentary makes clear. First, where the Bible is silent, its readers will fill in the gaps. For example, in the Bible, Pharaoh's daughter is

mentioned in one paragraph (2:5–10), and nothing is said about her except that she finds Moses and adopts him as her son. But even by the time of Philo, she had been supplied with a name and a full history, and there develops an entire discussion about her character and motivations. She has also been represented in art. Three of these pictures, one each from the seventeenth, eighteenth, and twentieth centuries, are shown, and their elements discussed. Other characters and events that appear in the narrative receive similar treatment.

The second thing Langston makes clear is that the Bible can be, and has been, appropriated to support any number of causes, even those that might be considered mutually contradictory. For example, at the time of the Civil War, Henry Ward Beecher of Brooklyn, New York depicted the Northern cause in terms of the Israelites caught between the Egyptian army and the Red Sea. A few months later, Benjamin Morgan Palmer of New Orleans, Louisiana “compared the Confederacy’s situation to that of the fleeing Israelites” (see pp. 144–47 for quotations from the sermons). Interpretations of the Ten Commandments have been used to support segregation and to critique Hitler’s Nazism (pp. 210–13).

The book is full of interesting information, gathered from an impressive variety of sources; the bibliography itself is some 25 pages long. But I am unclear as to who these commentaries are intended for, beyond the vague statement in the editor’s preface that it is “a much-needed resource for all those interested in the influence of the Bible on Western culture.” The academic in biblical studies might find some useful material here. The college instructor who teaches the history of western civilization might find some useful material here. The educated reader might find the material interesting, but is not likely to pay the publisher’s price for the privilege. In short, as interesting as it is, I find myself unable to recommend the book. It is a book, and ultimately a series, without an audience, except in some limited section of academic esoterica.

Benjamin Shaw
Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Greenville, SC

The End of Wisdom: A Reappraisal of the Historical and Canonical Function of Ecclesiastes. By Martin A. Shields. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006, 250 pp., \$37.50.

The book of Ecclesiastes (hereafter referred to as Qoheleth) has often provided its readers copious difficulties over both its teachings and its text. No consensus has ever emerged among scholars concerning its interpretation. Martin Shields’s novel approach is that the epilogist (the author of 12:9–14) employed the teachings of Qoheleth to draw the audience away from traditional (or wayward) Wisdom ideas. “In using Qoheleth’s words to disclose the failings of speculative wisdom, the epilogist presents a unified work possessing a specific overarching purpose of deterring prospective students of speculative wisdom from embracing the wisdom movement and pointing them to their religious heritage, which offered a way out of the senseless and futile world of the sages” (p. 238).

Shields understands “Wisdom” to be a religious world view that can successfully provide answers to life’s mysterious events, both good and bad. In this view, the sage can know how to effect God’s blessings and bring prosperity upon himself. The epilogist used Qoheleth’s sayings (1) to promote the idea that it is impossible to make sense of God’s activities; and (2) to offer instead an alternative in 12:9–14 to Qoheleth’s “all is senseless.” For the epilogist, the proper approach is not in speculative wisdom but in fearing God and keeping His commandments. This is not to say, however, that he is presenting an epilogue that is simply juxtaposed to Qoheleth’s main work; rather, “the voice

of the epilogist also intrudes into the work in Qoh 1:1–2; 7:27; and 12:8” (p. 47). Nonetheless, the vast majority of Qoheleth belongs to Qoheleth, and in Shields’s view the epilogist put the sage’s teachings into the present form.

The author concluded that the sages misread teachings about wisdom: “In a history of this sort, the beginnings lie in the wisdom of Proverbs, whose terse nature readily permits a naïve, mechanistic (mis)interpretation of the world” (p. 238). At a later period (pre-exilic also?), books like Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon as well as pharisaical Judaism emphasized instead the study of Torah (p. 238). As Shields admits, however, the literary evidence in the Hebrew Bible for such a historical development is scant. Nonetheless, even into NT times, it was still commonly held that when people experienced misfortune, it was because of sin (Luke 13:1–5; John 9:2); that is, the retribution principle applied indiscriminately.

In order to read Ecclesiastes (i.e. Qoheleth and the epilogist) in this fashion, Shields must emphasize a consistent contrast between the teachings of Qoheleth (i.e. 1:3–12:8) and the rest of the Hebrew Bible. Since Qoheleth is discrediting the idea that knowing wisdom, which is grounded in the retribution principle (“the world operates via an underlying moral order,” p. 239), can make sense of life’s experiences, then his teachings are read in nearly every case as antithetical to the wisdom of Proverbs. This reading has led to what seems to be some forced exegesis in parts of his commentary. For example, Shields consistently renders the common word for “evil or calamity” (over 30 times in noun form in the book) as “evil” rather than “calamity.” In so doing, he creates an image of a God who is deterministic and (by Shields’s reading) who does evil. His persistence in choosing “evil” over “calamity” ignores the fact that the prophetic literature contains specific examples where God is the author of “calamity” (but not evil) as in Isaiah 45:7: “The one forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity” (NASB). Lamentations reflects the same tradition: “Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both good and ill go forth?” (Lam 3:38 NASB). Another example of an interpretation that seems forced on the text is Shields’s interpretation of “fear.” In order to situate Qoheleth outside the Wisdom tradition, Qoheleth’s frequent reference to “fear” is consistently interpreted as a non-productive and negative word. However, given the fact that “fear” is one of the epilogist’s two behaviorisms for relating properly to God, it is difficult to believe an ordinary reader would have been able to recognize such a distinction in the same book. If indeed Qoheleth had given these common wisdom vocabulary and/or themes new contexts, one would have thought his message could have been delivered more effectively by utilizing other vocabulary. By employing common wisdom language, Qoheleth’s real message, according to Shields, has consequently been obscured until the present.

In conclusion, Shields delivers his thesis well and his exegesis alone is worth the price of the book. He interfaces with all the major commentaries and authors on the book. The author chooses in most cases to work with the Masoretic text rather than emend the sometimes obscure Hebrew of Qoheleth. While I am not convinced by Shields’s central thesis, the volume is a welcome addition to the works on this difficult book. Using the book would have been made easier and more efficient if a bibliography had been added. When an author was cited who had previously published multiple works on Qoheleth, it became laborious to track one’s way through the citations to find the full bibliography (especially for journals).

With this criticism set aside, however, the book is a must for anyone who works with the Hebrew text. Shields is to be congratulated for his contribution to the challenging task of understanding Qoheleth.

Donald Fowler
Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

Song of Songs. By Robert W. Jenson. Interpretation. Louisville: John Knox, 2005, x + 106 pp., \$24.95.

It comes as no surprise that Robert W. Jenson, a well-known theologian, would offer a "spiritual" reading of the Song of Songs. (He adopts the term "allegory" only as a concession to modern parlance.) However, a surprise awaits those who are tempted to dismiss this commentary because they believe the book is strictly about human love and sexuality. Jenson states that this book "provides the chief biblical resource for a believing understanding of human sexuality, of the *lived meaning* of 'Male and female he created them'" (p. 14, italics original). His path from a spiritual hermeneutic to this type of statement is at least interesting, if not intriguing.

In the introduction, Jenson explains his rationale for interpretation and his plan for the commentary. He argues that the biblical book requires a spiritual reading due to several considerations. First, interpreting the book with reference only to human lovers is a modern penchant that ignores the history of interpretation and is assumed rather than defended. Second, some of the poems are "bizarre" but "become plausible when construed as invitation to theological allegory" (p. 7). Finally, and decisively for Jenson, the Song of Songs is part of the canon. "[T]he canonical entity is about the love of Israel and the Lord, and to read it by construing theological allegory is to read what we may call its canonical plain sense" (p. 8).

Jenson identifies 31 poems in the Song of Songs and comments on each poem in three sections. "A first section will offer such explanations of the overt story as seems needed and possible. A second section will propose theological allegory" (p. 14). Jenson then takes an interesting turn. He states that the early and medieval exegetes stopped with the theological reading, because "to go back and consider bodily matters would be a relapse" (p. 13). But for Jenson true theological analogies "work both ways" (p. 13). Not only do they teach us something about God, but they also "show us the truth of the human matters invoked to do this" (p. 13). Thus, by means of the third category ("human sexuality as the analogue"), Jenson addresses the question of human sexuality and in the process provides some biting critiques of its contemporary abuse.

Readers who are convinced that the Song of Songs is strictly about human love may find the third category valuable. Pastors may welcome the volume, since it is intended to meet the need "for a contemporary expository commentary" (p. v), and it is therefore not technical. Other strengths of the book are its concise presentation and the inclusion of material from the Church fathers. All of these strengths have less value, of course, if the Song of Songs should not be construed as an allegory. However, I hesitate to criticize Jenson on this point, since it is not his goal to provide a definitive answer to this question. In fact, he admits that the support he provides for an allegorical interpretation is not conclusive (p. 8).

Setting the question of allegory aside, the most important weakness of this commentary is Jenson's "agnosticism" regarding the overall structure of the book (p. 4). He consequently comments on the poems in a relatively isolated fashion, ignoring the significance of repetitions in the book. For example, instead of commenting on 8:3-4, Jenson sends the reader to the comments on 2:1-7, as if the repetition was simply an accident. Jenson's "agnosticism" is especially disappointing since he desires to comment on the "canonical entity." The author highlights some important details in support of an allegorical reading, details that should not be ignored. Perhaps by integrating these details into the overall structure of the book we can find the argument of the book that is neither allegorical nor strictly limited to human relationships.

Kent A. Reynolds
Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah. By Daniel J. Simundson. Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon, 2005, ix + 350 pp., \$ 32.00 paper.

Theological erudition in a postmodern age encounters inflationary deficits of monumental proportions. This observation is as much a truism for theological analysis as it is of over-inflated economics in society, true on the whole since the days of taking the monetary standard off the fixities of intrinsic metal value such as gold or silver. The reduction of theology to philosophical linguistics confirms the old dictum "A text without a context is a pretext" (Elijah Porter Barrows, *Companion to the Bible* [New York: American Tract Society, 1867] 531). Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892) expressed similar sentiments in 1876 in his assessment of an erudite writer: "[He] occasionally succeeds in elucidating obscurities, but frequently his treatment of the text reminds one of the old army surgeons who cut and hacked their patients without mercy" (*Commenting and Commentaries* [London: Banner of Truth, repr.1969] 132 entry 823).

Daniel J. Simundson taught 31 years at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN. His other published works include *Faith under Fire*; *The Message of Job*; and *Micah* (NIB). His latest contribution serves as a current illustration of the aforementioned theological devaluation in theologically inflated times.

To cover some 591 verses in the English text of the total 1040 for the Minor Prophets, Simundson has 347 pages of commentary. His select bibliography frugally mentions evangelical critical commentaries, and his annotations are charitable, but lavishly slanted towards non-evangelical volumes. Surprisingly, the works of Thomas McComisky or even an honorable mention of James Montgomery Boice's expositional commentary are excluded. After reading and rereading this volume of Simundson's, I conclude the work appears to be a careful redaction of the works of James Limburg, James L. Mays, and Hans Walter Wolff.

Throughout the work analysis is allotted to literary, exegetical, and theological analysis. On the whole, although both works are dated, McComisky does better justice to the literary and exegetical, whereas Boice excels Simundson in theological and practical application of the text. Simundson's annotations in his bibliography appreciate other fine bibliographies.

As one reads this volume, the old interplay of brevity and obfuscation are impressively intensified (e.g. p. 37). No attempt is made to resolve the dilemma of God's command to Hosea and its ramifications theologically for us. Neo-orthodox paradox seems to be the interplay between antinomies (e.g. pp. 38–40). No attempt is afforded to resolve such comments as "God both punishes and is merciful" or "God's love is both conditional and unconditional."

The primary English translation for the base of this commentary is the NRSV. If this commentary were intended to be truly ecumenical, would not the ESV of 2001 be a better textual base? The NIV may have been the author's concession to evangelicals, but the ESV would have been a better textual choice, for it includes the better NRSV renderings without the questionable emendations of the text presupposed in it.

If one is seeking resolution to problem passages or answers to such, this volume is disappointing. Where the text strongly favors Calvinism (e.g. p. 117), the author mildly suggests it. For readers who desire a good theological analysis of Hosea, Boice is still bar none. Those seeking the resolution of the Amos 9 citation in Acts 15 or the resolution of the Joel citation in Acts 2 will not find such in Simundson's volume. A thorough discussion of the Day of the LORD and its interrelation between current events, judgment, and the eschaton also does not appear in Simundson's work. There is no real interaction between early and late date for the book of Obadiah; the late date is merely assumed (p. 244). On the classification of the book of Jonah one is referred to Salter's work, pp. 41–50 (p. 256). Open theists will enjoy Simundson's nebulous discussion as

to whether God repents or not (pp. 260–62). The debate as to the when and what of Jonah's prayer is not resolved in this volume (pp. 270–74). Finally, it is very disappointing that the key matter of the messianic prophecy in Micah is apparently downplayed for the sake of brevity (cf. Boice 2.344–46).

Daniel J. Simundson's commentary is a conscientious, concisely-written compendium of non-conservative scholarship's consensus. I would recommend this work as a second read for those for whom English is a second language, with the caveat that it must be used in conjunction with a conservative introduction to the prophets (e.g. Hobart Freeman), or the aforementioned commentaries of McComisky and Boice. Simundson's commentary, much like the GNB, the NRSV or the old RSV, is a valuable tool if used correctly in the hands of a skillful exegete.

If validity can be made to this analogy, I find the work of Daniel J. Simundson as contemporary a commentary to our day as the respective works in the Cambridge Bible by John James Stewart. Perowne, ed. (1823–1904), and the respective authors Thomas Kelly Cheyne (1841–1915), Samuel. Rolles Driver (1846–1914), and Thomas Thomason Perowne (1824–1913), were to their day. The ravages of time will determine Simundson's timely enduring significance as it has with the fate of these infrequently referenced volumes.

Earl Leroy Brown Jr.
Philadelphia, PA

Tradition Kept: The Literature of the Samaritans. By Robert T. Anderson and Terry Giles. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2005, xvi + 432 pp., \$34.85.

Tradition Kept is the sequel to *The Keepers: An Introduction to the History and Culture of the Samaritans* by Robert T. Anderson and Terry Giles (Hendrickson, 2002). Whereas *The Keepers* presents the history and religion of the Samaritans from antiquity to the present, *Tradition Kept* introduces the leading writings of the Samaritans. These two books are titled according to the Samaritans' self-designation "keepers" (*shomerim*). Anderson has published several writings along these lines, technical and semi-popular, including the article on the "Samaritans" in *ABD* 5.940–47. Both *The Keepers* and *Tradition Kept* have separate chapters on the main segments of the Samaritan traditions, and both make use of the so-called Chamberlain-Warren Collection of Samaritan manuscripts and artifacts housed at Michigan State University where Anderson taught.

Tradition Kept is divided into two halves: (1) "The Samaritan Story," with chapters on the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Samaritans' post-biblical histories (the Pentateuch is the full extent of the Samaritan canon and their post-biblical histories begin with the end of Moses' career); and (2) "Samaritan Theology and Worship," with chapters on other Samaritan religious, liturgical, and miscellaneous writings. Anderson and Giles are writing for the student reader in a concise, somewhat lively style with abundant illustrations. While most of the chapters take the form of an anthology, with extensive selections from the primary sources following a brief introduction, the chapter on the Samaritan Pentateuch is mainly introduction with excerpts from the Samaritan Pentateuch along with the respective passages from the MT and/or 4QExod for comparison. The text, especially the chapter on the Samaritan Pentateuch, assumes the reader has the basic knowledge of a student of the Hebrew Bible and NT. The reader is expected to know introductory Hebrew and to possess a beginning understanding of text-critical issues taught in most second-year classes on biblical Hebrew. Also, the reader needs to have at least general familiarity with the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Septuagint. This is

not to say the material is technical—it is not. Rather, the authors are trying to explain in a student-friendly manner the writings of the lesser known Samaritan sectarians among the Second Temple Judaism. I will give some attention to the chapter on the Samaritan Pentateuch because of its relevance to studies on the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, briefly make note of selected elements of the other chapters that are concerned with Samaritan writings from late antiquity onward, and make a few concluding comments.

Anderson and Giles argue for the study of the Samaritan Pentateuch not merely as a vehicle toward text criticism of the Hebrew Bible but as a significant document in its own right. They rightly move past the shortcomings of the antiquated approach to the Samaritan Pentateuch as a pretext for affirming the superiority of the MT. Moreover, they situate the manipulation of the “evidence” of the Samaritan Pentateuch by Catholics and Protestants in the service of their respective preferences of the Septuagintal and Masoretic text traditions. They also explain, in ways helpful to the student, how the text-critical approach of Gesenius set the stage for all subsequent comparative studies using the Samaritan Pentateuch.

Anderson and Giles in both their explanation and illustration rigorously avoid the idiosyncratic theorizing characteristic of much work on the “text types” of the Hebrew Scriptures within the Second Temple situation. They somehow avoid the limitations of many of the bolder proposals of the place of the Samaritan Pentateuch by Frank M. Cross, Bruce K. Waltke, and others, even while introducing readers to these discussions and their relevance. Waltke’s work emphasizes the similarities between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint over and against the earlier, superior MT text type, and Cross sees the Samaritan Pentateuch and 4QExod-Lev^f as emerging from a Palestinian text type, a text type separate from the Septuagintal tradition and proto-Rabbinic Recension that formed the basis of the MT (see Waltke’s dissertation and his “Samaritan Pentateuch,” *ABD* 5.932–36; Cross, *From Epic to Canon* [Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998] 200–202, 207–18). Anderson and Giles use some of the findings of Waltke, Cross, and others, while following the view that the Samaritan and Qumran sectarians used a common text type, one closely related to the proto-MT text type, for their respective pentateuchal bases (Anderson and Giles especially rely upon Judith E. Sanderson, *An Exodus Scroll from Qumran: 4QpaleoExod and the Samaritan Tradition* [Scholars Press, 1986]). Most of these theories are attested in the footnotes while explained in accessible terms in the text.

Anderson and Giles introduce student readers to the common distinctions of 4QExod and the Samaritan Pentateuch, and then to the further distinctions in only the Samaritan Pentateuch. They present many examples of the Samaritan Pentateuch’s expansionistic passages concerning Mount Gerizim as God’s chosen place for his dwelling, including a detailed and illuminating discussion of Exodus 20. The tenth commandment in the Samaritan Pentateuch is worship at Mount Gerizim.

In subsequent chapters Anderson and Giles briefly introduce and present lengthy sections of the “Samaritan Joshua” (a history from Joshua through the Roman occupation of the land of Israel) and other Samaritan histories up through modern times. Readers can hear of the wicked ways of Samuel, David, and Elijah (who died by drowning in the Jordan River), each of whom rejected God’s will for faithful Samaritan-style devotion centered at Gerizim. In the Samaritan tradition, Sanballat the Levite is the hero, working against the fraudulent Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah (*contra* Nehemiah 2, etc.). The problem with Ezra is his use of a Pentateuch with alterations favoring Jerusalem against God’s will for Gerizim. The problem with Zerubbabel is his use of “certain books written after the days of Moses” (the other books of the Judaic Bible) that wrongly affirm Jerusalem (p. 130). Samaritan histories from much later also deal with

Jesus of Nazareth, conceived out of wedlock by Joseph the carpenter and his bride-to-be Mary. The Jesus of Samaritan history is crucified and buried (without the involvement of any Samaritans) along with his twelve disciples. Many other colorful anti-Judaic and anti-Christian traditions make clear the defensive and tenacious faith of the Samaritans. The lengthy chapters dealing with Samaritan theology and liturgy could benefit the motivated student but may need study questions to provide guidance (study questions are not in the text).

Anderson and Giles attempt to fill a longstanding hole by treating the Samaritan writings as a subject for student inquiry. The chapter on the Samaritan Pentateuch is especially welcome in beginning to cure a much neglected part of studies of Second Temple Judaic tradition. The value of the chapter on the Samaritan Pentateuch, in spite of its selective illustrations and occasional preachy tone on the importance of the Samaritan Pentateuch, accents the need for student-oriented writings on the pentateuchal witnesses at the turn of the era.

Gary Edward Schnittjer
Philadelphia Biblical University, Philadelphia, PA

John Marco Allegro: The Maverick of the Dead Sea Scrolls. By Judith Anne Brown. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, xvi + 288 pp., \$25.00.

This book, a biography of John Marco Allegro written by his daughter, is the eighth volume in the Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature series. The first nine chapters give an overview of Allegro's early life, and the final seven chapters are essentially a summation of Allegro's published works.

Allegro's magnum opus, *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970), was the culmination of twenty years of study. In this work, Allegro argued that fertility was the common denominator of all primitive religion and that ancient people sought to understand the nature of the divine through various means, most especially through hallucinatory drugs such as those they found in certain fungi (pp. 185–86). In *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross* Allegro sought to “trace the expression of this simple philosophy through the sacred literature of the ancient world” (p. 186), a task he pursued “primarily through analyzing words” (p. 187). Allegro traced these ideas through Sumerian into Semitic or Indo-European languages, and into the OT and NT, which he believed could now be explained by this grand, unifying theory of religion that revealed the NT to be “a cover story for instruction in drug lore” (p. xiii). Allegro believed that “his theory established that the church was irrelevant to modern civilization” (p. 201). While Allegro had apparently imagined this book would be the tool with which he hoped “to launch his name upon history as a world thinker,” it instead “ruined his career” (p. 185). “The reaction was almost universal outrage” (p. 203). *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross* was written off as “a sensationalist lunatic theory” (p. 213), and Allegro's use of philology was substantively criticized (p. 208).

Allegro articulated his ideas about Jesus and early Christianity most fully in his later work, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Myth* (Newton Abbot: Westbridge, 1979), in which he argued that Gnostic Christianity arose from the Essene movement and that the historical Jesus never existed but was, instead, an adaptation of the Teacher of Righteousness of Qumran (pp. 230–55). The book was basically ignored by the scholarly community, and out of frustration Allegro entered a Ph.D. program in English at Manchester University. However, this course of study turned out to be “too

peaceful” for Allegro, who dropped out “to plan lectures, write articles, and earn his living” (p. 258), all in “feverish bursts” (p. 258). Additional books followed on a variety of subjects, as well as Allegro’s spearheading of the campaign for the publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls (pp. 264–70). In the mid-1980s, Allegro returned to philology, seeking to take the ideas of *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross* further, a task that engrossed him until his death in 1988.

A biography of John Marco Allegro makes an unusual addition to Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature, a series designed “to make the latest best Dead Sea Scrolls scholarship accessible to scholars, students, and the thinking public. The volumes that are projected . . . will seek to clarify how the Scrolls revise and help shape our understanding of the formation of the Bible and the historical development of Judaism and Christianity” (series summary by the editors in the front matter of the volume). The editors, however, “harbor strong reservations on any number of John Allegro’s views” (p. x). Because of their reservations, the editors provide an extended foreword in which they suggest reasons for the inclusion of such a volume (pp. ix–xiii), among them being the fact that Allegro was one of the original team of editors set up by Father Roland de Vaux and that his story is an integral part of the “modern history” of the Dead Sea Scrolls. By this they mean “the discovery of the Scrolls in 1947 . . . the acquisition of these precious documents by Jordan and Israel, the appointment of the first editorial team, and the convoluted story of—or battle for—their publication” (p. ix). Indeed, *John Marco Allegro* does make for absorbing reading and, through its utilization of the correspondence Allegro preserved from the early years, it provides an intriguing window into the early history of Dead Sea Scrolls studies. The editors recognize the importance of Allegro’s early photographic records of the scrolls, his early call for the preservation of the scrolls, and his initiation of the controversy over the long delays in the publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls (pp. xi–xii).

For readers of this *Journal*, one of the most fascinating aspects of this book may be the window it provides into Allegro’s spiritual journey. As a young man, Allegro was deeply religious. He formed a Methodist group on board his ship while serving in the Royal Navy (p. 8) and began to consider a call to ministry in 1945 (p. 9). While studying biblical languages in the course of his theological studies, Allegro began to have doubts about his faith based on the fluidity of language (p. 20). He abandoned his ministerial training and, in 1949, transferred into a program in Semitic studies (pp. 20–21). Allegro still attended church occasionally in 1954, but by 1956 he had begun to see his scholarship as undermining the church (p. 75). Before the publication of *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross* in 1970, Allegro resigned from his teaching post at Manchester University and moved his family from Derbyshire to the Isle of Man, a haven for writers and artists, where he hoped “to strike out as an independent writer and broadcaster” (p. 214). There, he wrote *The End of a Road* (MacGibbon & Kee, 1970), which was based on the assumption that *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross* had effectively “demolished the church’s pretensions to moral authority” (p. 215). He argued, “Now at last we can stand on our own feet. The props of religion can be thrown aside, the bishops banished from the legislature to their cathedrals and palaces to superintend their fabric funds and tea parties, and we can tackle the problems that confront twentieth-century society in the light of what we want that world to be” (p. 216). In a subsequent work entitled *Lost Gods* (Joseph, 1977), Allegro argued that “God is Man’s response to a legacy of evolutionary discontent” (p. 223). Allegro “began to feel out of touch with the world” (p. 226) and began frequenting parties in Manchester and having affairs (p. 227). Allegro finally left his family and moved off the island, feeling that he “was obliged to follow no conventions” (p. 229). His last book, *The Tyranny of the Creed*, was returned by Manchester University Press, whose reader “felt it likely to be one-sided in attacking the church” (p. 272). Allegro’s journey from ministerial candidate to opponent of the church may be

somewhat “disturbing,” but it is illustrative of biblical teachings on pride and humility (e.g. Prov 11:2).

Ralph K. Hawkins
Bethel College, Mishawaka, IN

Jesus in Context: Background Readings for Gospel Study. Edited by Darrell L. Bock and Gregory J. Herrick. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005, 286 pp., \$22.99 paper.

One of the editors of this book should be well known to the readers of this *Journal*, not only for his many books but also for his past presidency of ETS. Darrell Bock is currently Research Professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. His co-editor, Greg Herrick, has completed his Ph.D. at Dallas Theological Seminary and works as a researcher and writer with the Biblical Studies Foundation. This book is a supplement to Bock's recent work, *Jesus according to Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002). The justification for the volume is described best by the editors themselves: “*Jesus according to Scripture* travels through the Gospels, scene by scene, explaining the meaning of the text with references to the words and works of Jesus. In the course of the discussion, many Greco-Roman and Jewish sources are referred to that offer relevant background to the biblical text. However, due to space limitations, the extrabiblical texts themselves could not be included in that volume. The present volume, *Jesus in Context*, supplies the texts cited in *Jesus according to Scripture* and, to facilitate cross-referencing, includes the number of the unit where the reference appears in *Jesus according to Scripture*” (p. 13). Thus this volume is a compilation of ancient pagan, Jewish, and Christian texts to provide illuminating backgrounds for specific passages discussed in *Jesus according to Scripture*. It provides the full texts of all the extrabiblical references in the book.

The book is user-friendly in both its form and content. It includes first a table referred to as “Canonical Guide to the Readings,” where the primary Gospel passages (i.e. those elucidated by the readings according to the section headings throughout the book) are identified and listed in canonical order in the table. The book also includes a “Cross-Reference Table,” which indicates where a unit from *Jesus according to Scripture* appears in *Jesus in Context*. The content of the book is divided into four parts like Bock's previous book, preceded by an introductory section in which Bock and Herrick list and briefly explain all the major ancient extrabiblical sources available to us. The editors divide these sources into two major groupings, sources that predominantly predate or are contemporary with the arrival of Jesus and those that follow him. The first part of the book is referred to as “Overviews of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.” In this part, the editors provide the quotations to the extrabiblical references mentioned in the section of *Jesus according to Scripture* where Bock briefly discusses certain introductory issues such as authorship, date, provenance, theology, etc. The second and third parts, the major portions of the book, provide the quotations to the extrabiblical references to the Synoptic Gospels (part 2) and the Fourth Gospel (part 3). The fourth and last part of the book is referred to as “A Theological Portrait of Jesus,” where the editors provide the quotations to the extrabiblical references mentioned in the corresponding section in *Jesus according to Scripture*.

A few examples of the extrabiblical quotations provided by the editors will suffice in describing the importance of this book for shedding light on the biblical texts. First, with regard to the Sabbath controversy recorded in the Synoptic Gospels in which the Pharisees objected to Jesus' disciples plucking grain on the Sabbath (Mark 2:23–28;

Luke 6:1–5; Matt 12:1–8), the editors provide the passage from the Mishnah that lists all the prohibitions in Jesus' day concerning what was considered "work." Second, in giving the background behind Jesus' well-known saying in the Sermon on the Mount, "You have heard it said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt 5:27–30; Mark 9:43, 45, 47), the editors provide quotations from ancient sources like Sirach and Qumran that reveal a widespread conviction about the evil of sexual immorality. Third, on the controversial subject of divorce where Jesus said, "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery" (Matt 5:31–32; Luke 16:18), the editors provide the texts from the Mishnah and Josephus, where three different approaches to divorce within Judaism are explained.

A couple of examples will be given from the section on the Fourth Gospel. First, in reference to Jesus' sign-miracle of feeding the five thousand on the Passover in John 6, the editors provide quotations from such sources as 2 Baruch and Sirach that highlight certain Jewish expectations for the Messiah to give manna in the eschatological consummation. It is little wonder, then, that the apostle John adds that, after having seen Jesus' miracle, the people tried to make Jesus king by force (John 6:15). Second, with regard to Jesus' "I am the light of the world" claim in John 8 during the Feast of Tabernacles, the editors provide quotations from extrabiblical references that highlight the symbolic importance of light and water during this important feast and the reason why Jesus chose that setting to deliver his discourse and perform its accompanying miracle of healing the man born blind (John 9).

The above examples offer some indication of the importance of the book. The quotations of extrabiblical references compiled by the editors provide easy access to invaluable information that sheds light on biblical texts in the Gospels. The significance of this book is summarized succinctly by Craig Blomberg in his endorsement of it: "How often, when reading a commentary or work on the historical background of a portion of Scripture, have you seen a plethora of references to ancient extrabiblical sources and wondered what they actually said? Few readers, even scholars, have the time to look up many of these, even if they have access to the primary literature. Bock and Herrick have supplied scholars and laypeople alike with an invaluable tool. *Jesus in Context* introduces and presents the full texts of all the extrabiblical references in Bock's *Jesus according to Scripture*. One gets almost an entire course in the ancient historical, religious, and philosophical thought outside the Bible that is most relevant to interpreting the Gospels." I gladly echo this hearty endorsement of the book.

Stephen S. Kim
Multnomah Biblical Seminary, Portland, OR

The Gospel of Matthew. By John Nolland. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, xcvi + 1481 pp., \$80.00.

John Nolland, Academic Dean and Lecturer in New Testament Studies at Trinity College, Bristol, England, and author of the three-volume Word Biblical Commentary on Luke, has produced this much-awaited commentary on Matthew after ten years of his characteristically careful research and reflection. While Nolland's primary interest is engagement with the text itself, he appropriately interacts with scholarship where it is particularly important for the purposes of the pericope in question. Nolland's

concern “is with the story Matthew has to tell and how he tells it” (p. xvii). Throughout, Nolland invests heavily in historical background. His work is broadly redaction critical as he assumes Matthew had Mark at his disposal, or something much like it. Yet he also considers the possibility that Matthew may have had an oral version or even versions of Markan units available to him. Nolland shows little concern for source matters and tradition history but makes extensive use of narrative criticism, with particular attention to the Gospel’s rhetorical impact on the reader.

Readers of this *Journal* will appreciate Nolland’s critique of the unwarrantedly negative inclination of approaches to Historical Jesus studies: “So often critical scholarship assumes that if something could have been made up by early Christians, then it must have been made up by early Christians. But that is to show undue skepticism. Early Christian tridents were no narrow literalists, and they were quite capable of embellishing and creating symbolic narratives, but they operated with a sense of integrity and responsibility which is often not adequately reckoned with” (p. 13). This assertion is helpful in addressing the issue of what one can and cannot expect of the Gospels in terms of Historical Jesus questions. Because Nolland finds no data in Matthew that encourages the claim that it was written in light of the destruction of the temple, his commentary uniquely dates the first Gospel within the eyewitness period (pp. 14–17), specifically before the beginnings of the buildup to the Jewish War (prior to AD 70; p. 17).

Governing Nolland’s exegesis throughout the commentary is his view that the “story of Jesus is told as a continuation—indeed, as some kind of culmination—of the long story of God and his people. The Gospel of Matthew is not a freestanding story, but a story that must be set into a larger frame supplied by the history of God’s prior dealings with his people” (p. 19). Therefore it is important to Nolland to examine Matthew’s narrative technique and his interpretation of the OT and other Jewish traditions. This leads to an elucidation of Matthew’s theology, though with the caution that “Matthew does not write to have people engage with his theology, but rather to engage with Jesus” (p. 38). Nevertheless, Nolland stresses that the first Gospel is rooted in Jewish monotheism, the need for God’s people to be saved from their sins, and the hope of restoration of the kingdom. This restoration, however, must be seen through and must wait for the suffering and vindication of Jesus. Jesus’ death is viewed as the saving event. This discussion is followed by an annotated structural outline of Matthew (pp. 44–62) and the commentary proper (pp. 63–1272).

Nolland’s format is quite straightforward. At 5:17 (pp. 217–19), for example, he provides a title for the pericope (“Introduction to Jesus’ Vision of Abundant Righteousness,” p. 215), followed by his own translation, textual notes, and bibliography of works particular to that pericope. Discussion begins with parallels in Matt 10:34, Luke 16:17, and the likelihood of a pre-Matthean tradition. Nolland has a keen sense of the literary integrity and continuity of the first Gospel, articulating the unexpectedness of Jesus’ denial in 5:17 within the narrative context. Rather than becoming unnecessarily bogged down in source-critical speculation, Nolland focuses upon the literary integrity of the whole Gospel throughout his work, paying close attention to how a particular pericope relates to surrounding material in the narrative flow of the Gospel. The commentary, at this point, discusses the nature of the Jewish abhorrence of attempts to “annul” (καταλῦσαι) the Law, citing Second Temple Jewish texts. Nolland continues by examining the passage’s reference to the Law and the Prophets and discusses the alternative of annulling, to “fulfill” (πληρῶσαι). In defining this elusive term, the author rightly begins by underscoring the importance of its contrastive role with annulment and the importance of its illumination for the following context (5:21–48). That Jesus functions as a teacher throughout the Sermon on the Mount suggests to Nolland that fulfillment language here “must focus primarily on what Jesus offers as a teacher” (p. 218). This allows him to dismiss scores of potential meanings of “fulfill,” associate the term with its use

in 3:15, and conclude that the “fulfillment language represents a claim that Jesus’ programmatic commitment, far from undercutting the role of the Law and the Prophets, is to enable God’s people to live out the Law more effectively,” which then “gains clarity only through the analysis of the antitheses to come” (p. 219). As a result, Jesus “offered . . . a new depth of insight into what the Law requires over what he (Matthew) considered to be a general superficiality” (p. 219).

Several items are worth commenting upon here. First is the importance of Nolland insisting on a contextual reading of fulfillment language rather than letting a landslide of lexical data manipulate the context. Second, a reader may be frustrated that Nolland’s documentation of various interpretations of this text is sparse, since Nolland’s is decidedly a commentary on the text rather than a venue for chronicling scholarly debates and discussions of issues. Nevertheless, the careful reader is aware that Nolland has surely researched them thoroughly and thought about them carefully. The reader is left with the fruit of that effort. Those looking for a thorough documentation of each view, who holds it and why, should consult other commentaries. Third and finally, Nolland underscores an interpretation of the pericope within the flow of the narrative context (esp. 5:21–48). The volume concludes with a bibliographical appendix (pp. 1273–1468), and with indices of subjects (pp. 1469–71), modern authors (pp. 1472–75), biblical and other ancient sources (pp. 1476–80), and key Greek words (p. 1481).

In some respects, the present volume is unique among recent commentaries on Matthew. On the one hand, the emphasis Nolland places on addressing the text precludes careful documentation of critical scholarly discussion. On the other hand, it is clear that such accounting of scholarly debate has been done, for example, in the encyclopedic commentary of Davies and Allison in the ICC series. The latter, as with the commentary by Luz, provides remarkably thorough exegesis and critical interaction, but at the expense of elucidating the comprehensive narrative whole of the Gospel. Hagner’s WBC volumes remain valuable but lack the advantage of modern narrative and rhetorical sensitivities to which Nolland attends so well. Moreover, Nolland writes in such a way as to invite the reader into the story of Jesus through the text of Matthew’s Gospel. His is a refreshingly clear and accessible contribution that depicts the fruit of very careful, learned, and reasoned scholarship at its finest.

Daniel M. Gurtner
Bethel Seminary, St. Paul, MN

Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, Formation. Edited by Craig G. Bartholomew, Joel B. Green, and Anthony C. Thiselton. Scripture and Hermeneutics Series 6. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005, xxi + 484 pp., \$39.99.

This collection of essays is volume 6 in the Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, which is edited by Craig Bartholomew and Anthony Thiselton and published jointly by Zondervan (US) and Paternoster (UK). The volumes in the series present the results of the annual Scripture and Hermeneutics Seminar headed by Craig Bartholomew. This is the first volume to focus on a specific biblical text, the Gospel of Luke. The essays in general are engaging and insightful, with a number of contributions by top Lukan scholars, including Joel Green, David Moessner, I. Howard Marshall, John Noland, Max Turner, François Bovon, and Mikeal Parsons.

The introductory essay by Anthony Thiselton goes well beyond a summary of contents, placing each essay in its broader hermeneutical, historical, and theological context and interacting with a wide range of secondary literature, as well as the earlier volumes

in the series. The subsequent essays are arranged in four (rather amorphous) sections: (1) Narrative, History, and Theology (chaps. 2–5); (2) Language, Parables, and Ways or Levels of Reading Luke (chaps. 6–9); (3) Distinctive Theological Themes in Luke-Acts (chaps. 10–13); and (4) Issues in Reception History and Reception Theory (chaps. 14–16). An afterword by Joel Green summarizes the results and suggests the road ahead.

Joel Green's introductory essay to part 1, "Learning Theological Interpretation from Luke" (chap. 2), seeks to establish the relationship between narrative, theology, and history in Luke's enterprise. Green's thesis is that Luke, in his narrative representation of history, "engages in interpretation of Israel's Scriptures in order to reform the theological imagination of his Model Readers" (p. 56). Against those who simply mine Luke's Gospel for historical "facts" or set theology over against history, Green rightly asserts that "Luke the narrator is Luke the theologian" and that Luke's historiography is intended to draw readers into his narrative world and in this way shape their worldview and their perspective on salvation history.

In chapter 3 David Wenham seeks the historical purpose of Luke-Acts. Noting key Lukan themes, such as the strong Jewish roots of the Gospel, the defense of the Gentile mission, and the assertion of Christian innocence in the context of Roman law, Wenham suggests a plausible historical context and purpose for Luke's enterprise in the growing conflict between Jews and Christians evident in the expulsion of Jews from Rome by Claudius (AD 49) and continuing into the 60s of the first century. Wenham's essay is followed by a response from F. Scott Spencer. While affirming Wenham's Lukan themes (and adding a few others), Spencer (appropriately in my opinion) cautions against the tendency to propose a specific historical context and then interpret the text accordingly. Too often this results in a circular reading: "By locking too early in the interpretive process on an event or other piece of evidence outside a narrative that happen to correspond with some feature(s) within the story, and then hypothesizing that external matter as a *primary, precipitant cause* for writing the story, the reader's vision may become skewed in one direction, to the neglect of other dynamic vectors in the story" (p. 122).

In chapter 5 David Moessner provides an insightful essay examining Luke's Gospel in the context of ancient narrative theory (as posited in Aristotle's *Poetics* and other later Hellenistic works), which integrated a trialectic hermeneutic of authorial intent (purpose), narrative structure (poetics), and audience impact (comprehension). He criticizes the (post)modern hermeneutical approaches of both redaction criticism and reader-oriented criticism, which have disengaged these dynamic components from one other. He illustrates this with reference to Luke's portrayal of the death of Jesus, showing that the redaction-critical claim that Luke shows no interest in Mark's atonement theology collapses when Luke-Acts is read in the context of this integrated Hellenistic narratology.

In chapter 6 I. H. Marshall tackles the challenging question of the political and eschatological language of Luke. How are we to take the seemingly political messianic language found in the Lukan birth story and the apocalyptic and eschatological language in Jesus' teaching in the Gospel? Marshall argues that the military language of Luke 1–2 must be understood metaphorically (of the spiritual mission of Jesus and growth of a spiritual kingdom) but that the eschatological language should be seen as literal (though not apocalyptic), referring to the future coming of the Son of Man to judge and to save. Yet this eschatological emphasis recedes into the background in Acts, where it is overshadowed by the ongoing mission of the church.

John Nolland (chap. 7) examines the role of money and possessions in Luke's parable of the prodigal son, responding especially to the claim of David Holgate that the parable is to be read against the background of the *topos* "on covetousness" in Greco-Roman moral philosophy. Nolland responds by demonstrating (1) that the prominent role God plays in most of the Lukan parables overrules a predominantly ethical concern; and (2) that, while the themes of money and possessions appear frequently, few of the

parables are specifically *about* money and its use. Money and possessions merely serve as an example with reference to a larger concern. In the case of the prodigal this concern is the father's (God's) desire to restore his lost son. In chapter 8 Stephen Wright responds to Nolland by reflecting on some of the hermeneutical issues raised by Nolland's discussion. Particularly significant here is Wright's emphasis on the nature of the parables as richly suggestive texts which may function on various levels depending on the context and perspective from which they are viewed.

In chapter 9 Michael Goheen investigates a missional reading of Luke through a critical evaluation of the work of David Bosch. Bosch, who taught missiology at the University of South Africa until his death in 1992, was one of the leading missiologists of the latter part of the twentieth century. Goheen's chapter is full of insights concerning Bosch's method of "critical hermeneutics" and especially his interpretation of the missional theology of Luke-Acts. Perhaps the most significant is Bosch's claim that mission is as broad as the salvation of the kingdom. Bosch defined mission as "the totality of the task which *God* has sent his *Church* to do in the *world*" (p. 251). Mission ultimately means incarnating the gospel in time. Goheen provides a critical assessment of the strengths and gaps in Bosch's theological vision and seeks to assess his contribution in the larger context of hermeneutic theory and Lukan purpose.

Part 3 of the volume (chaps. 10–13) concerns distinctive theological themes in Luke-Acts. Max Turner (chap. 10) brings his exegetical and theological skills to an area he has trodden well in the past—the role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts. One of the most distinctive of Turner's many contributions is that, while the Spirit in Luke-Acts is especially the "Spirit of prophecy," Luke has a very broad understanding of this concept, "one which includes both marked ethical/soteriological influence and acts of creative power" (p. 273). In chapter 11 Scott Hahn discusses the role of kingdom and church in Luke-Acts. Acknowledging those scholars who have seen a strong royal-Davidic strain in Luke's Christology, Hahn seeks to go further, demonstrating how this Davidic messianism translates into a Davidic kingdom. He concludes that for Luke the Davidic kingdom is present already because it was conferred on the disciples at the Last Supper. Their rule over Israel is manifested in their rule over the church. "The renewed kingdom of David, of which the church is the visible manifestation, exists simultaneously in heaven and on earth, as its citizens move from one sphere to the other" (p. 320).

In chapter 12 Charles Scobie illustrates a canonical approach to interpreting Luke by examining the journey motif as a hermeneutical key. While all agree that the travel narrative has an important theological function in Luke's Gospel, it also plays an important canonical role, as "readers are reminded of the continuity of salvation history, going back to the great journeys of faith in the Old Testament, especially the exodus" (p. 346). Chapter 13, by Craig Bartholomew and Robby Holt, takes up the widely acknowledged importance of prayer in Luke-Acts and seeks to apply this theme to the Lukan drama of redemption. For Luke, "prayer is a God-given and therefore indispensable means to grasp and live within this drama [of redemption]" (p. 362).

Part 4 pursues the volume's canonical interests by dealing with the reception history of the Gospel. In chapter 14 François Bovon examines the reception and use of the Gospel in the second century, noting ways in which Luke was read and used. Some second century sources approached Luke as a Gospel to serve prior interests or to weave new stories of their own. Others read Luke as a normative text for preservation and comment. In chapter 15 Andrew Gregory responds to Bovon, especially engaging the question of how much second-century authors were interested in Luke's text and how much they were interested in the world behind the text. The last chapter in this section, by Heidi Hornik and Mikeal Parsons, is in fact part of a larger three-volume project entitled *Illuminating Luke*. In the present volume it advances the interest in canon and

reception history by examining ways in which Luke's subjects were portrayed in Italian Renaissance and Baroque painting.

While it is difficult to render a single verdict on a collection of this length and diversity, a few comments are in order. The book's greatest strength is the degree to which the essays engage in contemporary hermeneutical concerns related to narrative theology, the dynamic interplay of author, readers, and texts, and canon and reception history. While all such collections are (by nature) uneven in quality, most of these essays are well written and some are groundbreaking ("mini-masterpieces" as Gerald O'Collins says in his endorsement on the cover). The book would be an excellent text for seminary electives on Luke-Acts, NT theology, or advanced hermeneutics.

In 1968 the collected essays in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, edited by L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn, summarized the state of Lukan studies and set the stage for scholarly discussion for the next three decades. The essays in this volume could do the same for the next generation, providing a reassessment of Luke-Acts more attuned to the hermeneutical and canonical questions of today.

Mark L. Strauss
Bethel Seminary San Diego, San Diego, CA

Lukan Theology in the Light of the Gospel's Literary Structure. By Douglas S. McComiskey. Paternoster Biblical Monographs. Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004, xvii + 388 pp., \$39.99 paper.

With this revision of his 1997 doctoral dissertation (University of Aberdeen), Douglas S. McComiskey makes available to a wider audience his conclusions on the structure of the Gospel of Luke. The three chief benefits of McComiskey's work are: (1) the development of tests for authorial intentionality with regard to literary structures; (2) the establishment of a four-cycle literary structure for Luke 4:14–24:53; and (3) a new literary argument for Markan priority in addressing the Synoptic Problem.

Many have observed literary parallels in Luke and Acts and have offered various theories (historical, theological, and/or literary) regarding the author's motives for such occurrences. Since the mere existence of a parallel is not proof that the author intentionally constructed it as one, McComiskey attempts to take this kind of research to the next level by offering eleven tests for the authorial intentionality of observed parallels or patterns. He validates these tests by successfully applying them to the "universally recognized" Lukan parallelism within Luke 1:5–38. Using these tests for intentionality, he then examines the Lukan parallels and patterns observed by Robert C. Tannehill (chap. 1) and Charles H. Talbert (chap. 2) regarding the literary structure of Lukan writing and affirms many of them as intentional.

McComiskey's eleven tests are as follows (*passim*, but see esp. pp. 12–13): (1) Restriction to passages: "The greater the restriction of elements of correspondence to the relevant passages, the greater is the probability of authorial intent"; (2) Number of features: "The greater the number of reasonable parallel features between parallel passages, the greater is the probability of intent"; (3) Number of panels/passages: "Similarly, the greater the number of parallel passages (or panels) that match a proposed pattern or grouping of features, the greater is the case for intention"; (4) Attracts attention: "An element of correspondence that attracts the reader's attention contributes to the probability of intent"; (5) Constructive complexity: "Parallelism between complex units, such as combined pericopes, that appears constructive rather than random or

coincidental increases the probability of intent”; (6) Redaction criticism: “If redaction critical observations yield evidence of Lukan adjustment to include or create the elements that constitute the literary device, the probability of intent is greater insofar as there are no superior reasons for the observed redaction”; (7) Important themes: “If the elements of correspondence that constitute the literary device are related to important Lukan themes, the probability of intent is enhanced”; (8) Historical/genre expectation: “Intent is more certain if there is no clear historical or genre expectation for the inclusion of the features in question and their sequence, if parallelism of sequence is observed”; (9) Common expression: “If a sequence or grouping of features in parallel is uncommon in other relevant literature, then the likelihood of coincidence due to common expression is diminished”; (10) Contiguity: “If the passages that constitute parallel groupings of passages are contiguous within the groupings, and not distributed broadly throughout the text, then selectivity on the part of the reader is diminished”; and (11) Cumulative case: “The probability of intent increases as more of the above tests are passed.”

After establishing a precedent for the use of multiple-cycle literary structures in ancient authors (chap. 3), McComiskey proposes a four-cycle structure for the Gospel of Luke (4:14–24:53; after the prologue of Luke 1:1–4 and the parallels between John the Baptist and Jesus in Luke 1:5–4:13) with each cycle composed of the same twelve successively occurring strata (chap. 4). Since his four-cycle structure holds up under the eleven tests for authorial intent even better than the universally recognized Lukan parallelism of Luke 1:5–38, it seems that McComiskey’s proposal should win the day as the overarching intentional structure of the Third Gospel. The resulting structure and strata for the Gospel of Luke can be summarized as follows (see detailed charts and notes on pp. 28–31, 206–9, 264):

	<i>Cycle 1</i>	<i>Cycle 2</i>	<i>Cycle 3</i>	<i>Cycle 4</i>	<i>Mark</i>
Stratum 1:	4:14–15	9:51	13:22	19:28	11:1a
Stratum 2:	4:16–30	9:52–62	13:23–35	19:29–44	11:1b–10
Stratum 3:	4:31–7:50	10:1–11:26	14:1–14	19:45–20:8	11:11–33
Stratum 4:	8:1–21	11:27–36	14:15–35	20:9–18	12:1–11
Stratum 5:	_____	11:37–54	15:1–16:31	20:19–44	12:12–37a
Stratum 6:	_____	12:1–21	17:1–4	20:45–47	12:37b–40
Stratum 7:	8:22–25	12:22–34	17:5–19	21:1–4	12:41–44
Stratum 8:	8:26–56	12:35–40	17:20–18:8	21:5–38	13:1–37
Stratum 9:	9:1–17	12:41–48	18:9–17	22:1–30	14:1–25
Stratum 10:	9:18–21	_____	18:18–28	22:31–34	_____
Stratum 11:	9:22–27	12:49–53	18:29–34	22:35–24:53	14:26–16:8
Stratum 12:	9:28–50	12:54–13:21	18:35–19:27	_____	_____

(1) Stratum 1: the key feature is the phrase “to Galilee” in cycle 1 and “to Jerusalem” in cycles 2–4; (2) Stratum 2: the key feature is the prophetic status of Jesus with reference/allusion to the Elijah-Elisha narrative; (3) Stratum 3: a variety of features have to do with Jesus’ authority in general, his comparison to John the Baptist or his authority to heal, to choose disciples, to forgive sins, to interpret Scripture, and to teach; (4) Stratum 4: the key features are Jesus teaching a crowd of non-disciples and parables representing Jesus as God’s messenger; (5) Stratum 5: the key feature is Jesus personally confronting Jewish leaders; (6) Stratum 6: the key feature is Jesus warning

against being like the religious leaders; (7) Stratum 7: the key feature is Jesus encouraging the disciples to have greater faith; (8) Stratum 8: the key feature is Jesus delivering an eschatological discourse; (9) Stratum 9: the key feature is Jesus addressing the twelve regarding their role; (10) Stratum 10: the key feature is Peter verbalizing faith and commitment to Jesus; (11) Stratum 11: the key feature is Jesus predicting his passion and resurrection in the context of the cost of discipleship; (12) Stratum 12: no apparent features linking the passages in this stratum with the possible exception of the reappearance of healing stories (see Stratum 3) and talk about the timing of the kingdom.

Markan priority is not required for McComiskey's observations of Lukan structure. Conversely, however, McComiskey's observations of Lukan structure make a strong case—perhaps even stronger than other arguments—for Markan priority as the solution to the Synoptic Problem. Paying particular attention to introduction formulae, McComiskey argues that “Luke developed cycles 1 through 3 based on the sequence of narrative features in cycle 4. This sequence of features existed in the parallel Markan material and was taken over intact by Luke” (p. 234). Mark's is the only other Gospel to have the sequence of features that Luke repeats, and, outside the fourth cycle, Markan material that would upset the pattern is removed or transposed in Luke (see esp. p. 265). While there are a few gaps in the cycles and Stratum 12 appears to be a leftover level for each cycle, McComiskey can boldly declare, “There is no extraneous material within strata 1 through 11” (p. 267).

There is still plenty of subjectivity in applying McComiskey's tests for intentionality. Statements such as, “This test allows for Lukan intent” (p. 107), are a bit weak. As it is, the very existence of the text “allows for” the author's intentional activity; the project at hand calls for something stronger than this. Furthermore, like the criterion of dissimilarity in historical Jesus studies, McComiskey's tests for authorial intent are useful for what they can affirm but not at all conclusive for what they do not affirm. He shows awareness of this, commenting that “our tests do not deny the intentionality of patterns that perform poorly. Rather, they determine those in which we may have more confidence” (p. 78). These limitations aside, McComiskey's work does indeed advance the investigation of literary structure in general, and he presents one of the strongest cases for authorially intended structure in Luke's Gospel in particular.

McComiskey's work suffers from the common struggles experienced in converting dissertations to more accessible publications. These include an imbalance in chapter emphases, which often involve the inclusion of extraneous material, and a presumption upon the level of expertise required of the reader. As for its imbalance, it seems odd that the proposed four-cycle structure for the Gospel of Luke does not come into play until chapter 4 (p. 204), by which time the reader may have forgotten that the four-cycle proposal is “the heart of this book” (p. 76). Furthermore, despite the title of the book, Lukan theology receives very little treatment—less than twenty pages (pp. 302–19), where salvation is argued to be the central motif and the thrust of the Gospel's structure. Readability is a particular struggle for this volume, especially due to the nature of the subject matter. Because the book is sometimes tedious in its verbal analysis of structure, it can have a kind of “in-house” feel about its language, so that the non-Gospel scholar might feel left out or a bit in a fog. Nevertheless, if read slowly (intentionally!), the informed NT student will be able to comprehend easily enough the basics of McComiskey's tests and their applications. This volume may best be read with the text of Luke (and perhaps a synopsis) open at the same time.

Thus, while McComiskey provides us with an intriguing and convincing presentation regarding the principles of selectivity for the author of the Third Gospel, his work suffers from some typical selectivity problems of the dissertations-made-popular genre. This difficulty, however, should not prevent the students and scholars of Gospel research

from taking advantage of McComiskey's significant step forward in the analysis of the Gospel of Luke and the Synoptic problem.

Douglas S. Huffman
Northwestern College, St. Paul, MN

Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology. By Udo Schnelle. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005, 695 pp., \$49.99.

The author is Professor of New Testament at the University of Halle. Although better known as a scholar of the Gospel and Letters of John, he has published several articles and three books on the life, letters, and theology of Paul. The clearly stated goal of the book is to present a comprehensive introduction to the life and thought of Paul. Schnelle seeks to analyze carefully Paul's letters and documents, comment on all important positions in Pauline research, and outline his own position on points of controversy. Space does not permit a chapter by chapter analysis of the book. This review will discuss some of the more important arguments raised by Schnelle in this work.

Schnelle argues that Paul's Damascus road experience should be interpreted in "Christological-soteriological terms." Although Schnelle is not specific in describing the nature of the experience, he denies that it was a mere psychological or internal experience or that it can be confirmed by history. Paul "understood the resurrection of Jesus obviously as an authentic event *sui generis*, not subject to historical demonstration as an event in space and time" (p. 93). Schnelle rejects the historicity of the Acts accounts of the Damascus road experience. The experience narrated by Paul in his letters may have included an "audition," by which Schnelle seems to mean an audible divine call. Although the experience did not give Paul the whole of his theology or his doctrine of justification, it did reveal the resurrected Jesus as the "second power" of heaven and demonstrate that believers participate in his reign. It also identified Paul as the one who must preach the gospel through which God would save those who believe.

Schnelle counters Bultmann's theory of a radical dichotomy between the Jesus of history and the exalted Christ of the Pauline kerygma. Although Schnelle acknowledges that Paul did not give the attention to the teachings and deeds of the Synoptic tradition that one might expect, he emphasizes that "the earthly Jesus does not fade from view in Paul's theology but is interpreted in light of Easter" (p. 106). Schnelle also rejects J. Becker and K. Berger's theories that view Pauline theology as "nothing more or less than an explication of the kerygma of the Antioch church" (p. 117). He repudiates attempts to reduce Paul's theology to a mere rehearsal of the views of others.

Schnelle introduces and surveys the seven Pauline letters that he regards as authentic: 1 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, Philippians, and Philemon. He discusses the background of these churches and Paul's relationship to them. He offers a chapter-by-chapter and sometimes paragraph-by-paragraph exposition of the letters and discusses their major theological emphases. Some of his treatment is as detailed as a brief commentary, and readers will find helpful information in Schnelle's discussion of controversial texts.

After a thorough discussion of the seven letters that he deems authentic Schnelle attempts to synthesize and systematize the theology of Paul in the final third of his book. He devotes chapters to Paul's theology, Christology, soteriology, pneumatology, anthropology, ethics, ecclesiology, and eschatology. In each section, the author traces influences on Paul's thought, giving special attention to the views of Hellenistic philosophers. He offers a diachronic description of Paul's view, showing developments,

changes, and reversals in Paul's thought as his theological views matured in the face of new challenges. He then attempts to give a synchronic description of Paul's views.

An extensive discussion of Schnelle's views is not possible in a review of this length. Thus, the remainder of this review will focus on elements of Schnelle's discussion that are important in current debates. First, Schnelle's conviction that Paul held a relatively high Christology is particularly refreshing. He states, "Jesus Christ participates in the very being of God; the Son is the revelation of the true being of the Father" (p. 398) and "God and Jesus were thought of together; the Son participates fully in the deity of the Father" (p. 411). He goes so far as to describe Jesus as the "crucified God of Paul" (p. 400) and states: "Paul encourages his hearers to accept a new view of the world, a new God. This God is one but not alone; this God has a name and a face: Jesus Christ" (p. 408).

Schnelle rejects David Friedrich Strauss's subjective-visions hypothesis regarding the resurrection of Jesus. However, he also rejects Wolfhart Pannenberg's theory, which sees the resurrection as an objective and real event. Schnelle proposes that Paul viewed the resurrection of Jesus as a "transcendent event deriving from God that generated the disciple's transcendent experiences" (p.429). Because the resurrection transcended normal human experience, it is not subject to scientific verification. However, when one's theory of history allows the intervention of God, it is possible to affirm the reality of the resurrection. Special experiences of transcendence can be coordinated with categories of reality, even if they cannot be subordinated to categories of reality. Schnelle's discussion of Paul's view of justification and the Torah is significantly influenced by the work of Sanders and Räisänen. Schnelle argues that Paul's view of the Law was developed from solution to plight, that Paul's teaching about the Law included that it was instituted by demons, and that Paul's treatment of the Law was hopelessly inconsistent. This inconsistency arose because Paul's lines of argument were conditioned by differing situations rather than by lengthy reflection on the significance of the Torah.

Schnelle acknowledges that Paul viewed Jesus' death as substitutionary (pp. 443–51) but insists that "Paul never understands the death of Jesus as an appeasement of the wrath of God" (p. 450). The key to Pauline soteriology is the believer's union with Christ and participation in Jesus' death and resurrection. Schnelle suggests that the eschatological presence of God's salvation in Jesus Christ is the basis and center of Pauline thought (p. 389).

Schnelle briefly weighs in on the debate regarding the meaning of the phrase "the faith of Jesus Christ" in such texts as Gal 2:16, 20; 3:22, 26; and Phil 3:9. He concludes that the evidence best supports the interpretation that reads "of Jesus Christ" as an objective genitive.

Schnelle emphasizes Paul's sacramental view of baptism with such statements as "Paul consciously points to baptism as the locus of redemption and righteousness" and "Paul's point of departure is the status of the Corinthians as persons who have been baptized and are therefore justified, sanctified, and redeemed" (p. 201). Schnelle acknowledges that the "salvation mediated by the sacraments does not happen apart from expression in concrete ethical decisions" (p. 214). His sacramental theology is slightly mitigated by his observation that "[f]aith, the gift of the Spirit, and baptism constitute one holistic event" (p. 466). However, he does not adequately account for Paul's adamant rejection of Corinthian sacramental views in 1 Cor 9:24–10:13.

Readers of this *Journal* will profit from reading Schnelle's work. They will be grateful for Schnelle's extensive use of primary sources from the Hellenistic world that illuminate Paul's life and theological milieu. They will also appreciate that Schnelle's work argues for a Christology that is significantly higher than is suggested by other contemporary works like Dunn's *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). They will likely be disappointed by Schnelle's reduced Pauline corpus and his doubts about the historical reliability of Acts, as well as certain theological tendencies.

Thus Schnelle's work is unlikely to rival strong evangelical favorites like Bruce's *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Eerdmans, 1977) or more recently Schreiner's *Paul: Apostle of God's Glory in Christ* (InterVarsity, 2001).

Charles L. Quarles
Louisiana College, Pineville, LA

Paul: Pioneer for Israel's Messiah. By Jakob Van Bruggen. Translated by Ed M. van der Maas. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2005, xix + 411 pp., \$19.99 paper.

Dutch scholar Jakob Van Bruggen synthesizes in this work the fruit of his life-long interest in the apostle Paul. The book's intended audience is framed broadly: "all . . . who want to get a clearer perspective on . . . the apostle Paul" (p. xviii). Its intended use is also defined: as a textbook and reference work to aid in understanding commentaries on Paul's teaching and letters.

The author highlights three unique features that justify the writing of another Pauline introduction. First, he adopts a positive stance toward "the *totality* of the historical sources" (p. xviii; this and all subsequent italics are his). Modern scholarship has illegitimately silenced some NT voices as witnesses to the life and teaching of Paul, according to Van Bruggen. Instead, we must listen "to *all* the sources [i.e. the book of Acts and the entire Pauline corpus] in order to arrive on the basis of the *diversity* of these sources at a cautious reconstruction of the real Paul" (p. xvii). Second, he presents issues of introduction, such as the life, letters, and teaching of Paul as an "integrated whole," in contrast to introductions treating these in isolation. Third, he challenges some of the assured results of modern scholarship, which have too readily been accepted as fact (relationship of Acts 15 to Galatians 2; dating of 1 Timothy and Titus; relation of Paul's gospel to his Jewish roots; Paul's stance on the law, etc.).

The book is divided into two parts with three appendices. The first part, "Paul the Pioneer," narrates the course of Paul's life and stations of ministry, interweaving brief introductions to Paul's letters as they arise in Van Bruggen's reconstructed chronology. Throughout this section and throughout the book the author repeatedly underscores that the apostle Paul was a *pioneer* for Israel's Messiah, who was "adventurous, unpredictable, nonlinear, full of risks" (p. xvii).

The second part of the book, "Paul the Apostle," explores questions regarding Paul, his mission, and his message. Chapter 15, "Paul in the Constellation of the Apostles," discusses Paul's relationship to the other apostles as well as the message they preached. In both cases he sees no fundamental conflict. Differing audiences and subject matter do not negate essential unity. Chapter 16, "God's Envoy to the Nations," wrestles with Paul's mission to the Gentiles, the nature of "my gospel," and the understanding of the Jewish law for the Jewish believer. Similarly, chapter 17, "Gospel without Law for Gentile Christians," examines the Gentile believers' relationship to the Jewish law. The final chapter, "In Prayer for Israel," explores Paul's understanding of Israel vis-à-vis the church: Israel is not set aside but is "expanded" to include the Gentiles. It is at times unclear whether he is referring to national or spiritual Israel.

The three appendices amount functionally to "Part 3" of the book. In appendix 1, "The Chronology of Paul's Life," the author finally ties together what he has asserted, hinted at, and occasionally argued in the body of the book. Here he provides a complete and sustained argument for acceptance of all the letters of Paul and the book of Acts as reliable sources to reconstruct the life and ministry of Paul. He sketches out the de-

velopment of the “new chronology” of Paul with its hyper-skepticism of Acts. Such skepticism is unwarranted since the reliability of Acts as an accurate geographic and historic record has been substantiated both by numerous scholars (W. M. Ramsay, C. J. Hemer, E. E. Ellis, A. D. Baum, and Van Bruggen’s own writings). Van Bruggen’s exceptionally detailed and at times original historic reconstruction of the chronology of Paul’s life will surely test the cognitive abilities of both lay person and scholar alike, as they work through a barrage of historic detail presented in dense form.

The second appendix, “Bibliography of the Apostle Paul,” adds no new information, being simply a list of bare-bone details concerning each of Paul’s letters previously discussed in the first half of the book. The final appendix, “Jewish Religion and the Law,” grapples with whether “merit” within Judaism is to be understood in the realm of ethics or soteriology. Following Friedrich Avemaria’s work *Torah und Leben*, Van Bruggen argues (1) that it is inaccurate to portray Judaism as “one-sidedly” legalistic; and (2) that within Judaism good works were highly regarded and “accorded a measure of merit.” This pattern, Van Bruggen holds, is evident in the non-Pauline writings of the NT. This leads him to conclude that this pattern continues in Paul’s writings. Thus, Paul’s references to “good works” should not be read as reacting to “the too-dominant place of merit in Jewish soteriology” (p. 316). On this point, Van Bruggen’s argument aligns with the new perspective on Paul without ever referencing it as such.

Van Bruggen’s work has many positive aspects and some that will surely be challenged. Space permits noting only a few of each. On the positive side, he is to be commended for his defense of the biblical record’s historical reliability. His integrated presentation of Paul’s life and message into one flowing narrative is commendable; much can be gained from weaving the bits of Paul’s life and message into one overarching whole—even if one may not agree with some of the details. In addition, Van Bruggen covers the highlights and major issues of Paul’s life and message in a helpful and at times illuminating way. His discussion of the law in chapter 17 is especially helpful and easy to follow. From a scholarly point of view, appendix 1 is a solid piece of historical reconstruction that deserves careful study. Although his reconstruction may at points be challenged, his presentation is a model of careful research and concise presentation.

There are a few matters with which to quibble. By far the biggest has to do with the main intention for writing the book. Since Van Bruggen reconstructs the life and message of Paul based on a positive stance toward the entire NT record, the informed reader instinctively expects justification for this early in the book. While some issues are addressed and well argued in the body (and endnotes), the full justification for his positive stance is delayed until one arrives at appendix 1. While Van Bruggen explains his writing strategy early on, and while this strategy may be fitting for the average reader, for the scholar accustomed to having each move defended along the way, this makes for a frustrating read.

Scholars may also take issue with at least two of Van Bruggen’s conclusions. He argues vigorously that the Jerusalem visit in Galatians 2 must be the one mentioned in Acts 18:22. He also holds that Galatians and Romans are addressed to exclusively Gentile audiences (p. 223). This conclusion necessarily skews and weakens Van Bruggen’s interpretation of these two letters.

There are some minor quibbles as well. The book is somewhat uneven: some issues receive in-depth treatment, while others receive cursory treatment—with no explicit reason given for these decisions. Correspondingly, there are unexpected shifts between an academic writing style and a popular—almost “preachy”—style. Van Bruggen’s treatment of the Pauline letters was sketchy and unsatisfying. A few times, Greek and Latin terms were not adequately introduced, which may leave those without knowledge of those languages somewhat puzzled. These quibbles aside, Van Bruggen provides the

reader with many helpful insights into the life and letters of Paul on the basis of a positive stance toward Scripture.

Victor A. Copan
Palm Beach Atlantic University, West Palm Beach, FL

Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation. By Mark Reasoner. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005, xxvii + 194 pp., \$24.95 paper. *Reading Romans through the Centuries: From the Early Church to Karl Barth.* Edited by Jeffrey P. Greenman and Timothy Larsen. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005, 223 pp. \$24.99 paper.

Paul's letter to the Romans is rivaled perhaps only by the Gospel of John as the most influential NT text in the history of Christianity. While it has been the object of considerable attention by each generation of the church for the last two millennia, this last generation has witnessed Paul's epistle becoming an especially intense battleground. This is driven by the explosion in Pauline studies occasioned by what has been called the "new perspective" on Paul, re-examining his relationship to Judaism and related issues such as justification by faith and its place in Paul's thought generally. This discussion has raised questions as to whether Paul's thought is oriented by eschatology or soteriology, or whether these are not actually the same thing in his theology—and, more interestingly, whether Paul even has what may be called a "theology."

Now, with this debate waning somewhat and with a potentially fruitful discussion emerging on latent anti-imperial rhetoric in Paul's letters, it is encouraging to be well served with works investigating the history of the interpretation of Romans, two offerings of which are here reviewed. It is helpful to gain a wide vision of the field, to find models of theological interpretation and exegesis, and to make note of readings that ought to be regarded with more or less skepticism. Current proposed readings that have little historical precedent must not be ruled out immediately, but it would be wise to hold them a bit lightly. Then again, there are readings that run down well-worn paths but also bring with them longstanding problems. Just because an interpretation has a long pedigree does not mean it more faithfully captures Paul's thought. All this is just to say that in our day, with historical awareness in general at a low ebb, it is utterly necessary for interpreters of Paul to be conversant with the history of interpretation.

The organization of the two books is different, which makes reading them in tandem quite useful. The title of Reasoner's volume points to the route he traces beginning with Origen, who saw Paul's major concern as having to do with the relationship between the Jews and the *ethnē* (Reasoner leaves this term untranslated, referring, of course, to "non-Jews who name Jesus as their Christ," p. xx). He moves to Augustine, who initiated the long history of Romans being read in the Western church as involving answers to questions regarding the status of individuals before God. This perspective held hegemony until the initiation of Barth's project early in the twentieth century of turning the Enlightenment on its head and reading Paul as announcing the radical invasion of God's grace to vindicate the righteousness of God. The last third of the previous century, of course, saw a return to Origen's viewpoint on the relationship of the Jews to the *ethnē* with "new perspective" concerns on the removal in Christ of Jewish badges of identity for the people of God. Reasoner views this final return to Origen especially through the narrative approaches of N. T. Wright and Katherine Grieb.

Reasoner structures his book around twelve "loci," major interpretive points throughout Romans, and surveys how significant interpreters handle the exegetical and theological challenges. For the amount of ground Reasoner attempts to cover, this approach

is as good as any other. In fact, it ends up working quite well, allowing him to cover pivotal portions of the letter and also to give readers a sense of how influential figures in the history of interpretation read each section. A further benefit is that it is highly accessible, so that students of Romans wanting to know how Barth read Romans 7 will find such a discussion easily.

The drawback, however, is that at times his discussion is somewhat clipped instead of woven together more organically, so that the reader is given a fuller sense of how a certain figure read the entirety of the letter. Of course, any attempt to wrestle with the amount of material Reasoner handles and to make it accessible and coherent would have presented anyone with difficult options. In this light, Reasoner's efforts are to be commended, and his volume becomes something of an indispensable reference work that will serve students and scholars quite well. Furthermore, though he uses endnotes rather than footnotes, Reasoner points his readers to discussions elsewhere at each point, so that those desiring more extensive works will find them with little difficulty. It is also worth mentioning that what makes Reasoner's volume especially valuable is his upbringing in Japan as the son of missionaries, which keeps him from being hemmed in by inherited Western readings and allows him to have a detached perspective from which to view the history of interpretation with some objectivity.

The Greenman and Larsen offering is an edited volume containing essays presented to a conference called "Reading Romans" at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto in 2002. Essays are written on various major figures throughout the history of the Christian church mainly by church historians. Since each author inevitably has different concerns, the results are somewhat varied. Victor Shepherd's discussion of Wesley has little, if anything, to do with Romans. However, he does discuss Wesley's view of the relationship between faith and works vis-à-vis the Law of God, which makes for interesting reading, considering contemporary evangelical confusion on such issues. David Demson's chapter on Calvin is also somewhat of a disappointment, since one would have expected a robust discussion of how this most pivotal figure came to grips with Paul's letter and how it shaped Calvin's theology and his theological legacy. Demson, in an essay that is the shortest in this volume, sets out to argue that, for Calvin, the mercy of God is the central organizing impulse in the gospel. While this is a fair point to argue, and Demson certainly makes his case, one might be forgiven, with so much to work with in Calvin, for expecting something more on the subject.

This is probably the most puzzling thing about these two books, that there is so little on Calvin, whereas I would have thought that the master exegete would have figured prominently. How did Calvin handle Romans vis-à-vis various theological trajectories that have him as fountainhead? Especially given the nature of his pastoral role in Geneva, I would have expected a discussion of his understanding of Romans 13, but this is not addressed.

Other essays in the volume, however, do not disappoint. Mark Noll's chapter on Charles Hodge makes for fascinating reading, demonstrating how his commentary on Romans was a polemical work thoroughly immersed in and determined by the debates and questions of the day, aimed at defending points of Reformed doctrine in a decidedly American context.

Pamela Bright's chapter on Augustine is a case study, in many ways, in the theological interpretation of Scripture, since Augustine's reading of Romans was an appropriation of Scripture to speak to the controversies in which he was engaged. This led, of course, in many ways to a "psychological" reading of Romans, an analysis of the individual, highlighting the struggle between merit and grace. Augustine, as Bright notes, did not write a commentary on Romans, having begun such a project but having also quit after seven verses. His handling of this epistle from then on took place in polemical conversation. At this point, these two books complement each other wonderfully,

especially since some involved in the debate over “new perspective” readings of Paul have looked back to Augustine to gain some traction in the discussion. It is worth making such a move, but with the knowledge that Augustine provides a model perhaps less for exegesis than for theological interpretation.

John Webster’s chapter on Karl Barth’s Romans commentary is a brilliant defense of the notion that Barth’s commentary is indeed a commentary. This may seem a tautologous task, since in many quarters Barth’s commentary is not regarded as a typical or useful commentary because it is far too theologically oriented. Yet Barth’s concern was not merely to handle certain grammatical points of interest or to move from one discussion of structure to the next. Indeed, while coming to grips with the literal sense was vital for Barth, he viewed it as only a first step toward the more profound and important matter of understanding the divine word in the written text. Especially for evangelicals, who historically have had an uncritical allergy to Barth, this compelling essay ought to be required reading.

Together, these two books provide a help for students who are convinced that there is any such thing as a timeless and cultureless reading of Romans. Instead, Paul’s announcement of the radical invasion of God’s grace must find fresh articulation in each generation. Interpreters of Scripture must be in conversation with how the text has been read and heard in the past by the people of God and how the church has wrestled with challenges in light of the word of God. With regard to Romans, students of Paul are well served by these two works, along with the recent volumes emerging from the SBL group on reading Paul’s letter through history and culture.

Timothy G. Gombis
Cedarville University, Cedarville, OH

1–2 Corinthians. By Craig S. Keener. New Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, xii + 299 pp., \$21.95 paper.

With this volume, Craig Keener provides one of the first glimpses at this new series, which desires to revitalize the little handbooks (Cambridge Bible Commentary) popular 40 years ago. While they continue to be easy-reading, paragraph-by-paragraph commentaries, the expectation is that authors will overlay this approach with up-to-date perspectives from contemporary biblical research, especially the fields of rhetorical, social-scientific, and narrative criticism. For these goals, the editors could not have made a better choice for 1 and 2 Corinthians than Keener, who demonstrated his broad grasp of Greek and Jewish culture and texts relevant to NT studies in his *IVP Bible Background Commentary* (InterVarsity, 1993) and his exegetical acumen in his commentaries on John (Hendrickson, 2003) and Matthew (InterVarsity, 1997). Other volumes available in this series include Exodus (Carol Meyers), Judges and Ruth (Victor H. Matthews), James and Jude (William F. Brosend II), and Revelation (Ben Witherington III), with many more anticipated in the next few years.

Typical of many other commentaries today, the intended readership is broad—ministers, students, scholars—but this commentary appears to be most suited for ministers and undergraduate students. The introductions, separate for 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, are brief but cover the necessary bases. The “Suggested Reading” lists that appear after the introductions are selective, nicely annotated, and include monographs and articles. (Keener reveals here that the strength he brings to his task lies in 1 Corinthians, since the “Suggested Reading” list and annotations run nine pages for 1 Corinthians and only three pages for 2 Corinthians.) Each section begins with the

verses translated (NRSV). When Greek appears, it is transliterated. Given less than 300 pages for 1 and 2 Corinthians combined (the second and third largest epistles of the NT), the commentary sections provide mostly an overview perspective and only dip in to exegesis at the most crucial places. Many sections of 10–12 verses necessarily are covered in a page or two. In addition to commentary, various features are inserted regularly. Some, called “A Closer Look,” afford exposure to crucial background information. Others, called “Bridging the Horizons,” provide Keener the opportunity to contemporize the message of the book at that point. Many of the most refreshing insights of the commentary are found in these additional units.

Overall, then, this volume (and the series) seems best regarded as a handbook more than a commentary—a very good handbook, though. For those familiar with Ben Witherington III’s social-rhetorical commentaries, the tone of this commentary will sound familiar, despite being briefer and sculpted somewhat differently. This is not surprising, since Witherington is the general editor of this series. It also is comparable with the Interpretation series but with more academic pop to it.

In his introduction to 1 Corinthians, Keener distances himself from those who would read 1 Corinthians as Paul’s reaction to early Gnosticism or “overrealized eschatology” in favor of understanding Paul’s ideas as framed from the Greek moral and philosophical climate, particularly Stoicism and Platonism. This becomes evident in the commentary in its abundance of citations and references to this literature, over 200 to Cicero alone. Despite recognizing the value of applying ancient rhetoric as a means of understanding Paul in places, Keener also distances himself from those who want to read and outline 1 Corinthians as if it were based on a rhetorical handbook, “because letters are not speeches” (p. 3). However, he does apply broad rhetorical categories much more to 2 Corinthians than to 1 Corinthians. Finally, he is reluctant to identify one group as the root of all the problems in 1 Corinthians, but he does conclude that “some socially ‘strong’ elite members” seemed to be the focus of Paul’s criticisms about the Lord’s supper, women wearing head coverings, the eating of idol meat, and the resurrection of the body, and these also preferred Apollos to Paul (p. 10).

Again, in his introduction to 2 Corinthians, Keener is reticent to pinpoint Paul’s opponents, denying that they should be designated Gnostics or identified with Paul’s Judaizing opponents in Galatians. He adds that if they were somehow related to those in Galatia, “they have changed their strategy for a more Hellenistic-Roman church” (p. 145), which is precisely what I think happened. Positively, he identifies them as “rhetorically proficient” and maintains that they urged different criteria for evaluating apostleship than Paul did (p. 145). Despite the history of partition theories for 2 Corinthians, Keener leaves “the burden of proof heavily on supporters of partition” (p. 149), since 2 Corinthians 10–13 can be explained as “a rhetorically prudent strategy” for Paul to save his strongest criticism of the Corinthian church, involving “their toleration of rival teachers,” for the conclusion of the letter (p. 149). Keener supports Pauline authorship of both 1 and 2 Corinthians without discussion and, surprisingly, never discusses the date of composition for either.

On 1 Corinthians, Keener makes a number of interesting notations. Regarding the baptisms in 1:13–15, he suggests it is unlikely those mentioned were mindful of ever being baptized in someone’s name (p. xx). Regarding the tricky phrase, “nothing beyond what is written,” in 4:6, he advocates that it refers to not boasting beyond one’s God-determined station (p. 45). Regarding the “perfect” in 13:10, he concludes that the ending of the gifts occurs at Christ’s coming based on the expectation of seeing God “face to face” (p. 109). Regarding the restriction of women in 14:34–35, he is not persuaded that this is a textual aberration but considers it a parenthetical digression based on the social inappropriateness, in both Jewish and Gentile contexts, for women to question or comment on public lectures (pp. 119–20). His “Closer Look” at the need for head

coverings within his discussion of 1 Cor 11:2–16 notes that in the ancient world a woman's hair was an object of male sexual desire and thus required covering (p. 91). His "Closer Look" at the Lord's supper within his discussion of 1 Cor 11:17–34 reveals that the maximum room for gatherings in the largest homes would be 50, with those of higher social station gathered in the more comfortable triclinium and the overflow in the atrium (p. 97). His "Bridging the Horizons" comments on 1:26–31 include a revealing narration of his own personal conversion from intellectual atheism to true Christianity, which involved "embracing the very shame against which I had once revolted" (p. 33).

On 2 Corinthians, along with mostly solid observations, Keener once again provides an appropriate glimpse into his personal life when penning a "Bridging the Horizons" unit regarding 2 Cor 11:1–21a (p. 230). He reflects that at a time when he ministered in a poor community neighbors could not believe he was a minister because he did not look like one in terms of his clothes (no suits) and transportation (no car), despite the fact that he knew the message of the gospel was at the heart of what he was doing. However, despite the great value of the "Bridging the Horizons" feature in providing personal and contemporary contextualizing of the biblical message, Keener on at least one occasion takes an ill-advised turn. On sacrificial giving in 2 Cor 8:1–15, he comes far too close to communicating that the September 11 World Trade Tower tragedy was somehow related to America's overindulgence of resources and blind eye to the heart-wrenching poverty around the world (p. 207).

In terms of exegesis in 2 Corinthians, the biggest question mark is in regard to his handling of 5:2–5. Though not unusual, he determines to interpret this passage by means of prioritizing 1 Cor 15:42–57, saying, "It is unlikely that Paul would have changed his view from 1 Cor 15:51–54 without pointing this out" (p. 179). Thus, the heavenly body of a believer cannot be said to be received at death but only in a corporate setting at the coming of Christ. Yet Paul nowhere announced "a change" in any of his theological views. For this reason expecting such a signpost here is unwarranted. We do know, however, that his theology developed as he reacted to various issues and problems he encountered. Here in 2 Cor 5:1–10, part of what he reacted to, as Keener agrees, was the likelihood that he would die before the *parousia*. Why can the passage not be taken at face value as a new wrinkle in his developing understanding of death without diminishing its meaning by overlaying it with what Paul said previously about the coming of Christ, something *he* does not do in the passage? We simply do not know how he might resolve what he says here with what he said in 1 Corinthians 15.

Overall, people will find this commentary and this series useful. It really does pack a lot of information into a few pages. Ministers, in particular, will find the density of exegesis, background, social and rhetorical information, and application an efficient use of their limited preparation time.

William R. Baker
Cincinnati Bible Seminary—Graduate Division of Cincinnati Christian University,
Cincinnati, OH

The Mission of the Church in Paul's Letter to the Philippians in the Context of Ancient Judaism. By James Ware. NovTSup 120. Leiden: Brill, 2005. xv + 380 pp. \$179.00.

In this fine book, James Ware presents one of the most helpful biblical theological studies related to mission that has been published in recent decades. The work is clearly written, cogently argued, and helpfully summarized. For persons interested in a biblical theology of mission, the bibliographic material alone makes this book worth consulting.

A revision of his 1996 Yale dissertation completed under the supervision of Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Mission of the Church* deserves to be listed among the recent spate of excellent missions-related studies by Eckhard Schnabel (*Early Christian Mission* [InterVarsity, 2004]), John Dickson (*Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities* [Mohr-Siebeck, 2003]), and Andreas Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien (*Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* [InterVarsity, 2001]). Ware currently serves as Associate Professor of Religion at the University of Evansville in Evansville, Indiana, where he has taught since 1995.

The book divides nicely into two parts. In the first half, Ware attempts to present a comprehensive picture of the state of mission within Second Temple Judaism. He defines mission as: "the consciousness of a divine commission or command to bring about the conversion of others through proclamation of the message and associated activities" (p. 9). Ware concludes that, while Second Temple Judaism showed interest in the conversion of Gentiles and their subsequent instruction, there is no evidence that Jews saw themselves as under divine obligation to missionize actively, nor were they involved in such activity. Under the influence of Isaiah 40–55, Second Temple Judaism consistently understood the conversion of the Gentiles as a divine act, accomplished during the establishment of God's eschatological reign. Present-day conversions of Gentiles were welcomed, but not actively sought, as a prolepsis of the coming pilgrimage of the nations to Zion. In presenting this thesis, Ware attempts to hold apparently conflicting evidence in tension that has pushed some interpreters to deny a Jewish interest in Gentile conversion altogether (M. Goodman) and still others to argue for a widespread mission of Jews to Gentiles (L. Feldman).

In the second half of the book, Ware carefully studies Philippians to show how its dominant theme—the Philippians' partnership in the gospel (Phil 1:5)—is developed. Both in broad structure and at the level of individual words and phrases, Ware seeks to show that Paul writes the Philippians to encourage them in faithful active missionizing as they undergo persecution and face the danger of disunity. Paul presents both himself (1:12–13) and the ordinary Roman Christians (1:14–15) as paradigms of faithfulness to proclaim the gospel amidst adversity. Commands for the Philippians to "work out their salvation" (2:12) must be understood within the broader context as primarily a call to gospel advancement in the face of suffering (1:28–30; 2:16). Finally, Bowers presents the most detailed and up-to-date study of ἐπέξοντες to argue that λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέξοντες (2:16) should be translated as "holding forth the word of life"—a rare but explicit Pauline imperative to congregational evangelism.

Ware argues that Paul's expectation of an active congregational missionary role has both continuity and discontinuity with Second Temple Judaism. The church's missionary role is in continuity in that it is rooted in an understanding that the ingathering of the nations will happen during the eschatological reign of God (Isaiah 40–55, as reflected in Paul's allusion to Isaianic texts in the Christ hymn of Phil 2:5–11). Discontinuity is found in Paul's messianic and pneumatic application of the Isaianic texts to the reign of Jesus and the activity of his followers. Now that the eschatological reign of God is inaugurated in Jesus and this "light to the Gentiles" shines through his Spirit-endowed followers, the continued illumination of the darkened world through Christ's followers is a necessary corollary.

Except for Paul's approval of the gospel's advance through the Thessalonians in 1 Thess 1:8, Ware acknowledges that scant evidence exists to show that Paul expected an active missionary role for his congregations. Still, Ware argues, the book of Philippians provides sufficient and clear evidence that Paul did conceive of and even command an active missionary role for local Christian congregations. The occasional nature of Philippians (i.e. addressing the threat of disunity and the presence of persecution) explains why the congregation's missionary role is dealt with more explicitly here and

not elsewhere in the Pauline corpus. Ware's thesis is in marked contrast to the recent writings of Paul Bowers, who argues that Paul did not conceive of an active congregational missionary role, or John Dickson, who contends that Paul expected centrifugal missionary advance through recognized evangelists and co-workers (not ordinary Christians).

Overall, I found Ware's handling of both Second Temple Jewish literature and the Pauline writings excellent. A few criticisms will now be offered on minor points. To begin with, Ware's definition of "mission" as including a "consciousness of a divine commission" prevents him from considering sufficiently passive or spontaneous missionary expressions that surely should be included in a full consideration of Paul's theology of the gospel's advance. Furthermore, Ware too quickly limits Paul's explicit congregational missiological reflection to the book of Philippians. Ware's failure to trace out a broader Pauline theology of congregational mission presents a truncated view. Other recent studies point to the need to take account of Paul's explicit instructions to imitation (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1), his command to the Ephesians that they stand with "feet fitted with the readiness of the gospel of peace" (Eph 6:15) and the apostle's frequent depiction of the gospel as the dynamic word of the Lord that progresses actively through both himself and his congregations. Recent studies by Peter T. O'Brien (*Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul* [Baker, 1995]) and myself (*Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission: Did the Apostle Paul Expect the Early Christian Communities to Evangelize?* [Paternoster, 2006]) argue that this dynamic understanding of the gospel has both ample OT precedent (Isa 55:10–11; Jer 23:29) and is consistently found throughout Paul's writings (e.g. Rom 1:16; 15:18–19; 1 Cor 1:17–25; 9:12; 14:36; Col 1:5–7; 3:16–17; 1 Thess 1:5–8; 2:13–16). While Paul's use of Isaiah 40–55 in Philippians certainly demonstrates the variety and depth of the apostle's missiological reflection, I question whether it is the most convincing overarching theological basis for Paul's theology of congregational mission.

Some readers will find Ware's treatments of particular texts less convincing. For example, in arguing that an active role of mission for Jews is not found in the OT, he dismisses Jonah's proclamation in Nineveh as a call to "repentance" rather than "conversion" (p. 71). Also, can Jesus' statement in Matt 23:15 be so quickly subsumed under the Jewish desire to *instruct further* Gentiles who convert on their own initiative to Judaism (pp. 53–54)? While Ware's overall understanding of Jewish mission seems largely correct, possibly more room should be made for a "variegated Judaism"—similar to recent scholarship's understanding of Second Temple Judaism's approach to the law and salvation (cf. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, *Justification and Variegated Nomism* [2 vols.; Baker, 2001, 2004]).

The most regrettable feature of this book is its price—\$179.00. Few will have access to this fine tome except through a seminary or university library. This is unfortunate, as the book would make a nice supplementary text for an upper-level biblical theology or missiology class.

Robert L. Plummer
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY

What Are They Saying about the Letter to the Hebrews? By Daniel J. Harrington. New York: Paulist, 2005, v + 96 pp., \$12.95 paper.

What commentaries are the most helpful in the study of Hebrews? What books are available for special studies on Hebrews on topics such as authorship, audience,

destination, theology, and the use of the OT? In this book Harrington seeks to answer these questions by providing a survey of recent scholarship on the book of Hebrews from 1975 to 2003. The purpose of the book is to inform the readers about what resources are available to them (both commentaries and monographs) and where progress has been made in recent scholarship on the book of Hebrews. He indicates that his primary method of writing is descriptive rather than critical.

Chapter 1 examines some of the important commentaries available. For someone reading Hebrews for the first time he recommends Donald A. Hagner's *Encountering the Book of Hebrews* (Baker, 2002), because it is intended for college-level Bible courses and the expositions are accompanied by photographs, illustrations, and study questions. For full-scale commentaries he recommends *Epistle to the Hebrews* in the Hermeneia commentary series by Harold W. Attridge; *Hebrews 1–8* and *Hebrews 9–13* in the Word Biblical Commentary series by William L. Lane; and *Hebrews* in the Anchor Bible commentary series by Craig R. Koester. For the actualization of Hebrews (i.e. the practical application of Hebrews) his choices are: *Hebrews* in the Interpretation series by Thomas G. Long; "Letter to the Hebrews," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (vol. 12, pp. 1–173) by Fred B. Craddock; and *Hebrews* in the NIV Application Commentary series by George H. Guthrie. I am in general agreement with the choice of the commentaries Harrington has made for different purposes and audiences. In addition, the overview and description of the strengths of these works are helpful. Yet for full-scale commentaries I think he should have included *The Epistle to the Hebrews* in the New International Greek Testament Commentary series by Paul Ellingworth, because it is a significant contribution to the study of Hebrews.

Chapter 2 is entitled "The Mysteries of Hebrews." Here Harrington presents scholarly works pertaining to historical backgrounds, religious and sociological settings, literary matters, and the authorship of Hebrews by a woman. Harrington makes a balanced analysis of works on historical and intellectual backgrounds. He evaluates *The Intermediary World and Patterns of Perfection in Philo and Hebrews* by Kalyan Kumar Dey (Society of Biblical Literature, 1975), who argues that Hebrews belongs to the world of Hellenistic Judaism represented by Philo; and *The Beginnings of Christian Philosophy: The Epistle to the Hebrews* by James W. Thompson (Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1982), who situates the author of Hebrews within the framework of Greek philosophy before and after Philo (p. 20). Then he brings in L. D. Hurst's work, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: Its Background of Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), which argues that "the Old Testament and its developments in Jewish apocalypticism constitute the most important 'background' for reading Hebrews" (p. 22). With regard to the literary matters, Harrington identifies four important scholarly works published in the past few decades: *Structure and Message of the Epistle to the Hebrews* by Albert Vanhoye (Editrice Pontificio Istituto biblico, 1989); *The Rhetorical Composition and Function of Hebrews 11 in Light of Example Lists in Antiquity* by Michael R. Cosby (Mercer, 1988); *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis* by George H. Guthrie (Brill, 1994); and *Understanding the Book of Hebrews: The Story behind the Sermon* by Kenneth Schenck (Westminster John Knox, 2003). As for his evaluation of *Priscilla's Letter: Finding the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews* by Ruth Hoppin (Christian Universities Press, 1997), Harrington is more critical with it than with other books. His conclusion is that Hoppin's work has also contributed to our appreciation of the mystery of Hebrews because it did not succeed in persuading other scholars with regard to the basic questions concerning Hebrews.

In chapter 3 Harrington deals with the use of the OT in Hebrews. He holds the view that "early Christian works like Hebrews developed a Christ-centered hermeneutics of the Old Testament" (p. 41). He illustrates this point by classifying the monographs in this area into three categories: (1) biblical hermeneutics (e.g. *Hebrews and Herme-*

neutics: *The Epistle to the Hebrews as a New Testament Example of Biblical Interpretation*, by Graham Hughes [Cambridge University Press, 1979], who proposes that the author of Hebrews intended to present a hermeneutical reflection on how the work of Jesus signifies the end of Jewish institutions); (2) biblical figures (e.g. *Jesus and Isaac: A Study of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the Light of the Aqedah*, by James Swetnam [Biblical Institute Press, 1981], who interprets Jesus' death and resurrection in light of the story in Gen 22:1–19); and (3) biblical texts (e.g. *Early Jewish Hermeneutics and Hebrews 1:5–13*, by Herbert W. Bateman [Lang, 1997], who seeks to understand early Jewish biblical usage and practices by applying these hermeneutical principles to the catena of quotations in Heb 1:5–13). Although there may be overlaps of literature among these divisions, they are nevertheless helpful guidelines for the discussion of the use of the OT in Hebrews.

Chapter 4 focuses on the theology of Hebrews. I concur with Harrington's opinion that the author of Hebrews "stands beside Paul and John as one of the great theologians of the New Testament" (p. 64). He begins with an analysis of *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews* by Barnabas Lindars (Cambridge University Press, 1991) for a general survey of the theology of Hebrews. Then Harrington discusses the literature on specific themes: (1) wandering and rest (Ernst Käsemann, *The Wandering People of God: An Investigation of the Letter to the Hebrews* [Augsburg, 1984]); (2) priesthood and sacrifice (John M. Scholer, *Proleptic Priests: Priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews* [JSOT, 1991]); (3) perfection (David Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection* [Cambridge University Press, 1982]); (4) new covenant (Susanne Lehne, *The New Covenant in Hebrews* [JSOT, 1990]); (5) sacred space (Marie E. Isaac, *Sacred Space: An Approach to the Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* [JSOT, 1992]); (6) suffering (N. Clayton Croy, *Endurance in Suffering: Hebrews 12:1–13 in Rhetorical, Religious, and Philosophical Context* [Cambridge University Press, 1998]); and (7) faith (Victor [Sung-Yul] Rhee, *Faith in Hebrews: Analysis within the Context of Christology, Eschatology, and Ethics* [Lang, 2001]).

One of the weaknesses of Harrington's work is that it typically fails to bring out the weak points of books. I think the reason has to do with the nature and the purpose of Harrington's book. As I mentioned earlier, Harrington's intention is to provide a good summary of recent works on Hebrews. However, in the discussion of *The Wandering People of God* by Käsemann, he takes a more critical approach in his evaluation and discusses the strengths and weaknesses of it (p. 68).

In chapter 4 Harrington makes one mistake while examining *Endurance in Suffering* by Croy. He presents an accurate summary of Croy's argument in Heb 12:1–3 that "the sufferings of Christ are portrayed not so much as a martyrdom but more as part of an athletic struggle or contest" (Harrington, p. 83). Yet in quoting Heb 12:2, he indicates that the author of Hebrews uses the Greek word *πρόδρομος*. In fact, the word employed by the author in this verse is *ἀρξηγός*. My examination of Croy's work shows that he uses the term correctly (Croy, p. 175). The same word, *πρόδρομος*, is also used in Heb 6:20 to describe Jesus as a forerunner (NASB).

In pointing out this error, however, I am not in any way discrediting the good contribution Harrington has made in his book. My overall evaluation of Harrington's work is positive. His work will help students of Hebrews gain an overview of important commentaries and an understanding of the main points of technical scholarly works on Hebrews. In addition, Harrington's five suggestions for further research and his top five picks among the books he examined in the "Final Thoughts" section are worth noting.

Victor (Sung-Yul) Rhee
Talbot School of Theology/Biola University, La Mirada, CA

Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach. By Frank Thielman. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005, 798 pp, \$34.99.

Frank Thielman, Presbyterian Professor of Divinity at Beeson Divinity School, is well known to many readers of this *Journal*, since he has previously contributed to biblical studies in important ways. His volume on the theology of the NT adds to his growing list of contributions, not only in the academy but also for the church.

The subtitle, "A Canonical and Synthetic Approach," accurately describes Thielman's approach. He seeks to avoid the divorce of history and theology, asserting, contra Gabler, Wrede, Räisänen, and others, that good theology and good historiography are not only compatible but that each one demands the other. However, Thielman's motivation seems to be primarily catechetical. This is seen both in his affirmation that the legitimacy of NT theology arises properly from within the community of faith and in his approach to the materials and issues within the project. In other words, historical reconstructions are not a preoccupation within the book. Little concern is given to issues such as authorship and dating of materials. The author gives a brief, plausible sketch of the historical setting in each instance, which then enables a quick transition to the contents of a given work.

Thielman attempts to demonstrate the coherence of the NT writings by isolating the central strands around which the multicolored threads are woven. Thus, the theological unity of the NT is synthesized by five issues that emerge with prominence—the significance of Jesus, faith as the proper human response to God's gracious initiative in Jesus, the eschatological presence of God through the outpouring of his Spirit, the church as the people of God, and the consummation of all things. Each theme is teased out in some detail in the concluding chapter in a manner that demonstrates that this synthetic vision of the NT revolves around a Christological axis.

As noted above, Thielman affirms that good theology demands equally good historiography. After all, the theology of the NT is historically rooted. However, Thielman also leaves no doubt that there is also a fundamentally different starting point for the theologian versus the *uncommitted* historian. Both the uncommitted historian and the historically uncritical theologian are crippled in their attempts to do NT theology. Thielman's perspectives here are his way of responding to the more radical claims that NT theology is in and of itself an illegitimate undertaking. According to Thielman, the truth of the matter is quite to the contrary.

Thielman also seeks to avoid a canon within the canon by striving to give all NT writings an equal hearing. In order to avoid this pitfall, he suggests that the way forward revolves around the aforementioned "principal theological themes" (p. 38), from which divergence is theologically significant. The undeniable diversity within the NT owes much to the "contingent nature of the New Testament writings" (p. 38). This contingency is due both to the historical particularity of the writings and to the inescapable NT affirmations of both God's nearness and transcendence. This combination inevitably results in diversity, but one which, again, is resolved or synthesized by recognizing the common theological themes and commitments.

The book is organized around a combination of quasi-canonical (e.g. the Gospels precede the letters), quasi-chronological (e.g. Mark precedes Matthew, 1 and 2 Thessalonians begin the Pauline literature) and quasi-thematic (e.g. Jude and 2 Peter are treated prior to Hebrews and 1 Peter) factors. The introduction discusses a few methodological challenges and gives an overview of the book. This is followed by three major sections: the Gospels and Acts (chaps. 2–7), the Pauline letters (chaps. 8–22), and the non-Pauline letters and the Revelation of John (chaps. 23–33). Each section has both an opening chapter discussing the challenges of the literature within it and a concluding

chapter discussing the collective results of Thielman's individual portrayals. There is a separate chapter for each NT book, with the lone exception that Luke and Acts are covered in a single chapter. The final chapter of the book draws together the theological factors that provide the unity of the NT. There are understandable and admitted oddities within the arrangement, but none that adversely affect the outcome.

Thielman reflects a deep confidence in the NT witness of the Christ event. From the earliest stages of the church, there was an attempt to provide and preserve a singular Gospel witness, though manifested in four individual Gospel accounts. The four canonical Gospels are the earliest such witnesses and thus provide a competent basis for a truthful historical account. They have an explicitly perceptible theological unity, and, in fact, the pluriform witness has been regarded from the earliest occasions as theologically and apologetically advantageous. Tatian's *Diatessaron* never completely replaced the four-fold Gospel. The early church consistently rejected anti-Christian criticisms of the four Gospels, the rationale for which remains historically and theologically relevant.

Thielman rejects the longstanding pejorative use of "salvation history" and regards the phrase instead as a positive and helpful rubric, though, he does not engage in a sustained use of this rubric to describe his understanding of NT theology. It appears most explicitly in his discussion of Luke-Acts.

In contrast to much modern scholarship, Paul is understood as a consistent and coherent theological thinker. Thielman even rejects the idea that Paul's letters betray substantive theological development during his apostolic ministry. What about the knotty problem of *a/the* center of Paul's theology; can one be detected? Thielman proposes "*God's graciousness toward his weak and sinful creatures*" (p. 232, italics his) as an adequate and appropriate ground and organizing center for Paul's theology. This is articulated later in a salvation-historical sense culminating in the Christ event.

Thielman's reading of Paul is primarily animated by traditional perspectives, but he does tip his hat to the positive contributions of the so-called new perspective. Thielman articulates those contributions as no less than a needed emphasis on "the inclusiveness of the gospel" (p. 273), wherein the "corporate and ethnic dimensions of Paul's theology" are properly stressed (p. 274).

The strengths of this book are its clarity, approachability, and keen focus on the contents of the NT. The author approaches the task in a careful manner and consistently comes to judicious conclusions. Thielman is a smooth writer, even if not an exhilarating one. The book is a great choice for serious students of the NT at the formative stage of theological thinking. Herein lays a sound and stable foundation for understanding the NT. I readily recommend it for beginning courses in NT, both introduction and theology, as well as for advanced lay persons wanting to develop further in their understanding.

However, this book is a good example of strengths that are also weaknesses. There are numerous places throughout the book where a careful reading between the lines or reading certain strategic footnotes exposes important points. Unfortunately the points are often too implicit, spread too thin, or stated too blandly to expect them to be perceived by the average student. For example, much could have been gained by a more focused and explicit treatment of the dominical and apostolic use of Israel's Scriptures. Similarly, even though Thielman consciously avoids preoccupation with historical reconstructions, a brief treatment of the issues surrounding Gospel origins/formation leaves a glaring gap, especially since this helps tie together the teaching ministry of Jesus with the same of the apostles. Add to these and similar concerns the very brief discussion of methodology, too brief to my mind, and it seems clear that the book has limited value for advanced discussions of the topic.

The book is well produced, with very few errors. Even though this work may not advance the discussion much concerning various problems and issues within NT the-

ology, it should be well received and widely used by students early in their formative stages.

B. Paul Wolfe
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX

Where Is The God of Justice? By Warren McWilliams. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005, 189 pp., \$16.95.

Warren McWilliams is the Auguie Henry Professor of Bible at Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, OK. Since 1976, he has taught Bible, theology, and ethics at the collegiate level. He is a graduate of OBU, the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Vanderbilt University. In this book, McWilliams provides an introduction and survey of biblical teachings on suffering and providence. The book was written as a resource for pastors, counselors, students, and people who struggle with questions about God, evil, and suffering (theodicy).

The title for the book, *Where is the God of Justice?* is taken from Mal 2:17 as an introduction to the issue of theodicy. The author focuses on a theology of suffering that is practical rather than philosophical and theoretical. He identifies his approach as “a faith seeking understanding” (p. xv) stance, as opposed to a “detailed Christian apologetic for God’s goodness (p. xvii). McWilliams describes the book as “more exploratory than dogmatic” (p. x) to encourage readers to think about the various issues related to suffering.

The book is divided into two sections. In Part 1, the author reviews biblical perspectives on perennial questions about suffering. He is careful to review the various approaches to answering the tough questions about the causes of suffering in the world. In the first part of the book, he explores four questions: “Is Suffering a Punishment for Sin?”; “Does God Cause Tornados?”; “Does God Suffer?”; and “How Long, O Lord?” These questions receive adequate review by exploring biblical texts, providing practical examples of suffering, and summarizing classical responses to these questions without heavy dogmatism. McWilliams gives his personal views and at the same time provides alternative interpretations other scholars hold.

In Part 2 of the book, McWilliams reviews specific aspects of suffering through the various stages of life. He labels this section as “suffering from the womb to the tomb.” In these ten chapters, he examines various topical categories, such as infertility, illness, poverty, aging, death, and grief. One of the more unique aspects of this section is a chapter on “Animal Suffering.” The final chapter contains suggestions for the reader to consider when responding to the various types of suffering in the “real world.” Throughout the book and especially in the final chapter, the author identifies practical ways to deal with suffering as individuals and as a community of faith. Weaving biblical illustrations and contemporary applications, he raises questions to consider and provides directions for the reader to ponder in times of trial. McWilliams affirms that suffering is present as a “result of human sin,” because of the “reality of Satan,” for the testing of one’s faith, “due to natural forces,” and for “redemptive or sacrificial” reasons (pp. 183–84). He concludes the book with a warning about “a monergistic view of God” (p. 185) and by affirming a Christological perspective. McWilliams’s final words are focused on the life, suffering, and teachings of Jesus Christ.

This book is a good introduction to the subject of theodicy. The practical aspects of the book make it appealing for students beginning to consider the issues related to God,

providence, evil, and suffering. In the footnotes and index, readers will find an adequate bibliography for further study of the various subjects introduced in the book. The theological tone of the book also seems solid from an evangelical Christian perspective. The book also could be used to encourage and help people who are struggling with questions about the goodness of God in relationship to pain, suffering, and evil.

One distinctive of McWilliams's book is a rejection of what he calls "monergism," the theological view that "God is the only true cause of events" (p. 21). He admits that God's relationship to world events, such as natural disasters, is "complicated" and "controversial" (p. 20). He rejects a strong Calvinistic view for a more moderate view that he terms "divine self-limitation" (p. 23). At the same time, he believes God is infinite, sovereign, and omnipotent. He affirms God can use natural disasters for his purpose but that he "created a world with some contingency in it," and that God "does not micromanage all events, even though He is aware of and concerned about all events" (pp. 24–26).

Overall, this book is a good introduction to the questions about God and suffering. It is an easy read and is not intended to be exhaustive or comprehensive in scope. C. S. Lewis is frequently quoted throughout the book as a primary source along with a broad spectrum of scholars. One weakness is the lack of biblical support for the idea of God's "self-limitation." The author has a definite lean away from a classical reformed position.

Jerry Peele

First Baptist Church, Eastman, GA

The Last Word: Beyond the Bible Wars to a New Understanding of the Authority of Scripture. By N. T. Wright. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005, 160 pp., \$19.95.

I appreciate Bishop N. T. Wright's willingness to address the church through writing popular books. Wright is the consummate scholar and is perfectly capable of the kind of writing that would only be accessible to specialists in the field of NT studies. Yet over the years he has included among his prolific output books addressed to interested lay people. His recent short work, *The Last Word: Beyond the Bible Wars to a New Understanding of the Authority of Scripture*, is one such book.

The main thrust of Wright's argument in *The Last Word* is that Christians must understand the "authority of Scripture" as a shorthand for "the authority of God exercised through scripture" (p. 25). In chapter 1, Wright says that the book aims to answer three important questions: (1) In what sense is the Bible authoritative? (2) How can the Bible be appropriately understood and interpreted? and (3) How can the Bible's authority be brought to bear on the church and the world? (p. 19). In chapters 2–6, Wright takes a look at the critical moments in the history of Israel and the Church and notes how the authority of Scripture was appropriated in each respective era. Chapter 7 deals with right- and left-wing misreadings of Scripture, and chapter 8 concludes with Wright's constructive proposal: "'the authority of scripture,' when unpacked, offers a picture of God's sovereign and saving plan for the entire cosmos, dramatically inaugurated by Jesus himself, and now to be implemented through the Spirit-led life of the church *precisely as the scripture-reading community*" (p. 114).

There is much to commend in this short work. I appreciate Wright's defense of the biblical canon against recent assaults by the likes of Bart Ehrman and Elaine Pagels. I also appreciate Wright's insistence upon an author-centered hermeneutic. He says that Scripture must be interpreted in its literal sense in order for its authority to be realized

in the life of the church. By literal sense, Wright means what the Reformers meant, “the sense that the first writers intended” (p. 73; cf. 135); thus, the work of grammatical-historical exegesis is of utmost importance. This approach to the Bible leads us, Wright suggests, to stop treating the Bible like a repository of timeless truths. Instead, we should come to Scripture as a story of the divine drama of redemption that has reached its climax in Jesus Christ. In all of this, Wright’s critical realist approach offers a healthy corrective to the excesses of postmodern skepticism.

Yet for all the good contained in this little book, there are some weaknesses. In *The Last Word*, Wright does indeed get beyond the Bible wars. As a matter of fact, he “gets beyond” them by avoiding them. I think this observation is true at least with respect to the issue of inerrancy, which has been the watershed issue of the Bible wars in North America for the past several decades. Notwithstanding a few possible oblique and critical references to those who hold to inerrancy, Wright does not render an opinion on the issue. This lacuna is a shortcoming indeed given the fact that many evangelicals have been arguing for years that the Bible’s authority depends on whether or not it errs in what it asserts. (See the “Short Statement” in the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* [1978], article 5: “The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible’s own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.”) Yes, Wright gets beyond that battle, but only because he does not show up for the fight.

Perhaps his reticence to engage this issue explains why Wright never quite gets around to explaining clearly what he thinks about the status of Scripture as the Word of God. In his critique of fundamentalism, Wright seems to imply that he does not appreciate the quirky inerrantists and their hermeneutical approaches. But he never sets out clearly (or at least in full) what his view is on the matter. Indeed, a number of his statements leave one wondering if “the authority of God exercised through scripture” reflects a Barthian perspective or something else altogether.

For instance, consider his remarks on the inspiration of Scripture. Wright defines this as “a shorthand way of talking about the belief that by his Spirit God guided the very different writers and editors, so that the books they produced were the books God intended his people to have” (p. 37). Yet on the very next page Wright says that even OT Israel did not identify God’s “word” with “the written scriptures” (p. 38). He continues: “We cannot reduce ‘thus says YHWH’ to ‘thus says Jeremiah’. . . . We have for too long been in thrall to philosophers like Feuerbach, who wanted to reduce all talk of God to talk of humans and their experiences” (p. 39). Reading statements like these makes one wonder if Wright thinks Feuerbach is somehow responsible for what we find in Psalm 119, where the psalmist clearly treats the human words of Scripture as God’s very words. Indeed, this is but one of many texts that we read in both the OT and NT that speak of the words of Scripture as if they were God’s own words (e.g. Nehemiah 8; Matt 19:4–5; Acts 4:25; 28:25; Rom 3:2; 1 Cor 6:16; 2 Cor 6:16; 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:5–13; 8:5, 8; 2 Pet 1:20–21; 3:16). Wright does not do justice to how the writers of Scripture talked about other Scripture.

Given the fact that he is unclear about the status of Scripture as God’s word, it is not surprising that when Wright finally does get around to commenting on 2 Tim 3:16–17, he says that this text “was written, not so much to give people the right belief about scripture, as to encourage them to study it for themselves” (p. 133). In other words, Wright downplays the importance of believing the “scripture” (*graphē*) to be “God-breathed.” Yet, it could be argued that in this passage, Paul makes having a right belief about Scripture (namely, that it is “God-breathed”) the ground of its usefulness to the Christian. At the very least, the two are closely connected.

Another shortcoming is not so much a weakness as it is a detour. I notice that Wright returns to a theme time and again that does not properly have to do with the authority of Scripture *per se*. It is his thesis that the Bible (not least Paul's writings) offers a critique of pagan empire (e.g. pp. 13, 47, 89, 99, 100, 112, 115, 131). The clear implication is that the Bible has a particular rebuke for what Wright calls America's "de facto world empire." Wright thinks that the Enlightenment project has bequeathed to the world a series of failed attempts to solve the world's problems and that America and its current "empire" is just the latest expression of that failure. As Wright explains: "The Enlightenment failed to deliver the goods. People not only didn't stop fighting one another, but the lands of the Enlightenment became themselves embroiled in internecine conflict, while 'rational' solutions to perceived problems included such Enlightenment triumphs as the Gulag and the Holocaust. The greatest of the Enlightenment-based nations, the United States of America, has been left running a de facto empire which gets richer by the minute as much of the world remains poor and gets poorer" (p. 13). He goes on to claim that America, "the great world empire of our own day, proceeds to impose its economic, political, military and cultural will on the world" (p. 100). It is true that this kind of counter-imperial (and thus anti-American) interpretation of the NT is all the rage in certain sectors of NT scholarship. (Wright, along with Richard Horsley, John Dominic Crossan, Jonathan Reed, and others, is considered to be one of the chief proponents of counter-imperial readings of the NT, as is evidenced by his many writings and his participation in Richard Horsley's "Paul and Politics Group" of the Society of Biblical Literature. For more on this movement, see Richard Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* [Fortress, 2003]; Richard Horsley, ed., *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* [Trinity, 1997]; Richard A. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl* [Trinity, 2000]; John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus' Apostle Opposed Rome's Empire with God's Kingdom* [HarperSanFrancisco, 2004].) But the implications of this thesis are far from settled and do not in any case help to advance Wright's argument in this book.

Interestingly, Wright indicates that this imperial, Enlightenment outlook is characteristic of American fundamentalism. Perhaps it is for this reason that Wright rarely misses a chance to engage in his own brand of polemics against conservative North-American evangelicals who, he claims, "choose to ignore" the Bible's authoritative teaching on loving one's enemies, economic justice, and on opposing the death penalty (pp. 92–93). Disparaging American foreign policy and conservative evangelicals in America might give Wright credibility with liberal academics, but I suspect it will only serve to alienate large portions of his audience while detracting from the larger case that he is making about the authority of Scripture. Or, it will appeal to the ranks of emergent church members who seemingly have latched on to Wright and his critique of traditional evangelical Christianity.

Nevertheless, Wright might have had more success with this line had his description of fundamentalists not been so given to overstatement. The majority of evangelicals in America do hold to the inerrancy position, but they do not all fit into the fundamentalist picture that Wright draws. The hermeneutical errors that he charges against fundamentalists are not shared by all inerrantists. I am not sure, therefore, that Wright understands theological conservatives in North America as well as he thinks he does. If his list of "Misreadings of the Right" is any indication (pp. 106–8), I would have to say that he has a better handle on caricature than he does on reality.

I generally enjoy N. T. Wright's work, and my reading of *The Last Word* was no exception. Yet I think he left a few too many things undone in this book. He does warn the reader at the outset that "the present book makes no pretense at completeness" (p. xii). But one wonders why he had more to say about counter-imperial readings of

the NT than he does about the question of inerrancy and how it relates to the authority of Scripture. If the authority of Scripture has anything to do with the Scripture's right to command belief and action, then surely Wright could have dwelt a little more on the status of Scripture as God's words. Unfortunately, it appears that Wright was a little too eager to get beyond the Bible wars to engage such questions. Readers, therefore, will likely be tempted to get *beyond* Wright's book if they want to find the answers.

Denny Burk
Criswell College, Dallas, TX

The God Who Believes: Faith, Doubt, and the Vicarious Humanity of Christ. By Christian D. Kettler. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2005, xiv + 194 pp., \$24.00 paper.

The God Who Believes is a theology of x worked out in light of y , where x is a specific doctrine and y is an influential approach serving as a point of departure. In this instance, x is faith and doubt and y is T. F. Torrance's work on the vicarious humanity of Christ. There are definite advantages to this kind of theology, like the ability to uncover fresh aspects of truth or to see old things from a new perspective. Torrance and Ray S. Anderson disciple Christian D. Kettler's book benefits from these effects. But there is also a possibility that the foundational reference may be overextended, and *The God Who Believes* does not escape this danger. For this and other reasons Kettler attains a decidedly mixed result.

The work's greatest asset is certainly the importance of its subject matter. The relationship between an individual's personal faith (or lack thereof) and Christ's perfect faith is a topic ripe for further elucidation in a variety of venues. And although one is left wishing that Kettler had been clearer and gone further in explaining the intricacies of this complex theological puzzle, he has at least contributed to the discussion. Another good point is in the basic animus of Kettler's position: Christ did not live his life and die his death for every human shortcoming save the sin of doubt. Faith can never be complete in this world, and Christians often fail to believe as thoroughly as they ought to. Kettler rightly reminds us of the good news that there are resources in Christ to address our doubts, and they ought to be appropriated. The question then becomes, in what manner and to what degree is our own belief related to Christ? Kettler signals his answer thus: "Can we say that *Jesus believes*, not just as an example of a believer, but *believes for me and in my place, vicariously*, so that I can be helped in my unbelief (Mark 9:24)?" (p. xii).

Kettler, following the Torrances and Anderson, underscores that Christ lived a fully human life, in all of its implications, on our behalf. But Kettler suggests that Christ even *doubted* on our behalf: "Jesus the Son of God must walk the path of sinful humanity, sharing our stories, including our doubts and fears. . . . Must Jesus doubt with us as well?" (pp. 27–28). Kettler is a little tentative here, and leaves us wondering what precisely he means. He ostensibly removes this uncertainty later in the book by asking and answering: "Did Jesus, then, doubt? No, not in the sense that doubt is contrary to absolute faith in the Father and his purposes. Yes, he did, in the sense that he took upon our doubt, our fallen human nature, in order to heal and redeem it through solidarity with us" (pp. 51–52). But this statement merely adds to our confusion. If Kettler means only that Christ took on our doubt as one more category of failure to bear on our behalf, then why this previous language about "sharing . . . our doubts" and "doubt[ing] with us?" We do not say that Jesus "murdered with us" or "shared in our lies," because we know that this language says too much.

But, of course, the force of this objection rides on the question of whether doubt is in fact a virtue or vice, the subject of Kettler's second chapter. After an enthusiastic discussion on the benefits of doubting, he duly notes that "[d]espite all the claims for the virtue of doubt, the New Testament does not seem to acknowledge them" (p. 43). Although he thus recognizes that the Bible lacks a single instance where doubt is portrayed as something positive, Kettler does not seem to appreciate the extent to which this causes problems for his thesis. If doubt is actually a sin, denounced not only by Kierkegaard but also by God, then Kettler's provocative suggestion that Christ actively shared in our doubt is in trouble. But rather than resolving this critical difficulty, Kettler essentially allows the virtuous and vicious sides of doubt to coexist paradoxically. This may satisfy some, but others may think Kettler is simply taking a good idea (the vicarious humanity of Christ) too far.

Kettler's account of faith and doubt is peppered with references to popular and haute culture, giving it a distinctly literary flavour. In particular, *The God Who Believes* practically (and admittedly, pp. xi–xii) revolves around Wendell Berry's novel *Jaber Crow*; there are occurrences, usually multiple ones, on fifty-seven of Kettler's one hundred ninety-four pages. References to this work are so pervasive that Kettler necessarily involves his own fortunes with his reader's attitude about the novel and its protagonist. Some may find the story—of the young man Jaber who undergoes a crisis of belief, drops his plans for pastoral ministry in order to become a barber, and becomes married in his imagination to an already married woman—compelling. Others may find the incessant exemplifying of someone who finds meaning in a theoretical yet adulterous relationship (Kettler states the obvious: "Jaber Crow's love for Mattie is perhaps unwise, even unethical" [p.114]) somewhat annoying.

The God Who Believes is marked by an apologetic interest stemming from the author's personal history with issues of doubt. Accordingly, one of the book's strengths is Kettler's warm pastoral concern (Kettler is an ordained minister in the PCUSA as well as a professor of theology at Friends University) for those in similar situations. There is sometimes a stylistic uneasiness between Kettler's inclination to reach out to a broader audience and his instinct to do academic theology, but these are nonetheless laudable concerns for constructive theology.

Kettler's Christocentric theodicy in Chapter 5 is well researched and heartfelt. Whether one finds it helpful will depend largely upon one's prior positions on open theism and divine providence, but most should appreciate at some level Kettler's dogged determination to make Christ the answer to the problem of evil: "Christ's faith, obedience, and prayers present us the true order by which evil is confronted and defeated" (p. 162).

In all of Kettler's insistence upon the vicarious faith of Christ, the question eventually becomes, is there anything special or crucial about personal faith at all? What, if anything, is contingent on faith in Christ? The book closes with a discussion that hinges on this question: "Should they [victims of unfavourable circumstances] be pressured to memorize the Nicene Creed or recite the Four Spiritual Laws? How much do they have to understand of good evangelical doctrine to be saved? Should they just blindly obey their religious pastor, priest, rabbi, or imam? Or has Someone else believed for all of us in the poverty of our twisted and grim existences? The good news of Jesus Christ says, 'Yes, someone has'" (p. 194). These are the words of someone who has become deeply disillusioned with fundamentalism, but they are not easily reconciled with the theology of the NT (cited countless times throughout, but noticeably absent here).

William Schweitzer
University of Edinburgh, Scotland

God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology. By Michael Horton. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006, 204 pp., \$19.95.

Representative Reformed spokespersons have described Michael Horton's book, *God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology*, as a "masterful survey of the covenantal frame of God's self-disclosure" (J. I. Packer), "a rigorous and articulate defense of a traditional view of covenant theology" (Bryan Chapell), "a clear guide to an essential topic" (Gerald Bray), and "the ideal introduction to covenant theology" (Philip Ryken). These endorsements have been provided by the Baker Publishing Group. After reading these words of high praise and commendation, one wonders if anything more can or should be said! Given the importance of the subject and the present-day controversy swirling around it, we are obliged to say more by way of assessment and critique.

As preface to my review of Horton's timely and attractive topic, I would emphasize for the sake of our readers that a great deal of diversity is to be found in the Reformed covenantal tradition: The theological streams include, principally, Continental Reformed theology, (pietistic) Puritanism, and the Dutch-Reformed tradition. By reason of crossover and admixture, elements of these three distinctive traditions can be found among many modern-day expositors of covenant theology (otherwise known as "federalism"). Despite differences in formulation and emphasis, an underlying agreement or consensus stands. When we speak of "the Reformed perspective" on the theology of the covenants within international Calvinism, we are distinguishing it from other, competing perspectives, e.g., that of neo-orthodoxy and postmodernism (non-foundationalism). According to the school of neo-orthodoxy, there is no contrast between law and gospel ("grace"). This crucial element in the teaching of historic Protestant-Reformed orthodoxy has been jettisoned to one degree or another in the thinking of T. F. Torrance, Sinclair Ferguson, and Carl Trueman, as well as in G. C. Berkouwer and Herman Ridderbos. Postmodernist assumptions have led John Franke and, to a lesser extent, Keven Vanhoozer, to question the validity of the older Protestant dogmatics (i.e. scholastic orthodoxy), which has based the confessional teachings of the church on an authoritative reading/interpretation of the Bible. (Accordingly, the Protestant creeds are considered to be secondary norms for Christian life and faith.) The postmodern philosophy of language, or linguistic analysis, when applied to biblical interpretation, insists that church doctrine can only be a provisional and relative approximation of the truth of God. The illuminating work of the Spirit is circumscribed by the finite, fallible capacity of the human interpreter. (Lost here is the doctrine of Scripture's perspicuity.)

Happily, Horton seeks to traverse a different path by following in the steps of classical Reformed theology. Aiming for a mature statement of covenant theology, the author introduces his readers to six major aspects of the subject: (1) a systematic overview of the Bible in terms of "the big idea," wherein covenant is seen as the architectonic principle of biblico-systematic theology (what involves the interpretive movement from Scripture to system); (2) a summary of the covenants in the OT and NT, utilizing the traditional Protestant antithesis between the law and the gospel; (3) a discussion of the role and significance of common grace in the wider field of redemption in the postlapsum world (where the wheat and tares grow together until the final harvest); (4) an explanation of the relationship between (theocratic) Israel and the church; (5) a description of the covenantal signs and seals of the kingdom of God; and (6) the case for the necessity of good works in the Christian life, good works being the fruit and evidence of the believer's state of justification.

In the course of discussion some attention is paid to the history of doctrinal development (ancient to modern times). Above all else, however, this book addresses the topic of covenant theology from the vantage point of the Westminster tradition, as that has

been borne by the Westminster Seminaries in Philadelphia and Escondido, CA. In this regard, however, apologist Horton falls short in adequately introducing his readers to the *defense* of Reformed covenant theology. The author's mainly positive reading of covenant theology (one that is, for the most part, non-controversial) can readily be misread, given the fiercely disputed nature of the subject within the Westminster community (and far beyond). Nothing is to be gained by shielding readers from the unpleasant, wearying side of this ongoing struggle for the propagation of the gospel of grace in our day. With a view to this objective—clarification and resolution of disputed issues in contemporary Reformed covenant theology—we are hopeful that Horton's explication will make a contribution. Better yet, it is hoped that the collegial society of evangelical Bible interpreters and theologians (otherwise known as the Evangelical Theological Society) will continue to provide a forum to discuss and debate the critical issues raised in this dispute for the sake of authentic evangelicalism.

Though not a central dogma, the biblical doctrine of the covenants (plural) is formative in the exposition of Scripture. Horton, like the present reviewer, is indebted to the work of Meredith G. Kline, who stands in the line of dogmatician and biblical theologian Geerhardus Vos and historic Reformed federalism. (I have elaborated on the relationship between Vos and Kline in my paper "New Vistas in OT Narrative: Geerhardus Vos and Meredith G. Kline as Exemplary Reformed Interpreters," read at the April 2005 Eastern regional meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society.) Horton instructs his readers concerning the origination of Scripture as a covenantal document within the context of the ancient Near Eastern world, specifically, in terms of the role and prominence of suzerainty treaties and grants. All this is familiar territory for OT interpreters. (The author refers also to the works of G. E. Mendenhall, W. Eichrodt, G. von Rad, and D. R. Hillers, among others.) Horton proceeds to distinguish between law covenants (like the one made with Israel at Mount Sinai) and promise covenants (like the ones made with Abraham and David).

With respect to interpretations emanating from the Westminster school(s) in recent decades, here is where matters become far more complicated and convoluted. For Horton, as a follower of Kline, it will not do to ignore the changes that have taken place in Kline's thinking over the course of five decades. The discussions of covenant theology that were provoked by the controversial teachings of Norman Shepherd in the 1970s (prior to his dismissal from Westminster Seminary in 1982 for doctrinal error) provided the context for vigorous, renewed study of covenant theology—both from the standpoint of the biblical text and the history of Reformed doctrine. Out of this came needed clarification and modification of traditional teaching. (I have labored to develop and articulate these changes in the work I first began at Westminster in 1973.) Horton is selective in his engagement with the seminary controversy. Foremost in this introduction to Reformed federalism is Horton's treatment of the differences in theological formulation between Kline and O. Palmer Robertson. What is notably missing, however, is any explicit mention of the views of Shepherd (although there are allusions to them). Nor does Horton interact adequately with the New Perspective (e.g. the views of E. P. Sanders, J. D. G. Dunn, and N. T. Wright) or with the Federal Visionists (e.g. the writings of A. Sandlin and S. Wilkins). These are matters too important to sidestep.

Given Horton's and Karlberg's attraction to the Vos-Kline tradition, one that is consistent with historic Reformed teaching, a few observations and clarifications are to be noted in this review. When Kline speaks of the necessity of an appropriate measure of national fidelity on the part of theocratic Israel under the old, Sinaitic covenant—what is a covenant of works (*of sorts*)—it is a matter of the retention of the typological kingdom of God (life in the land of promise), not the reception or maintenance of spiritual salvation (what is grounded exclusively upon the obedience of the true Servant of the Lord, David's greater Son, the One greater than Moses). This point must not be missed: The

obedience required of the saints of God under the old covenant (which falls under the rubric of the covenant of grace, extending from the Fall to the consummation) is identical to that under the new covenant (call it the “obedience of faith,” as termed by the apostle Paul). In terms of the Mosaic economy of redemption, obedience to the Law of Moses (individually or corporately) may—for typological purposes—represent or typify the (future) meritorious work of Christ secured for the elect of God in atonement for sin, in the once-for-all accomplishment of redemption (i.e. spiritual salvation). Under the new covenant, the obedience or disobedience of sinners redeemed by grace is no longer judged according to the strictures of the old, Mosaic Law. The people of God are now under grace, not law. This is one of the implications of the transition in covenantal history—from shadow to reality.

It is misleading to describe the Mosaic covenant as a “temporal covenant” (p. 38). It is temporal in one regard, eternal in another (as part of the ongoing administration of the covenant of grace). Likewise, the contrast between the external and internal writing of the Law requires careful explication. For the saints under the old covenant (the elect of God), there is the Spirit’s writing of the law upon the tablets of flesh, upon the heart. (Reformed soteriology requires nothing less.) The contrast drawn in these terms by the OT prophet Jeremiah (and cited by NT writers) pertains to the peculiar, typological arrangement within the Mosaic economy, what is lacking altogether in the new. This explains the external/internal contrast. (Likewise, the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost does not imply that the Spirit did not work effectively among the elect under the old covenant.) This teaching on the continuity/discontinuity between the old and new covenants continues to divide Reformed and dispensational interpreters. (It should not divide Reformed interpreters, though such is regrettably the case in contemporary exposition. Many have succumbed to a dispensational understanding of the Spirit’s work in the two economies.)

The Reformed theology of the covenants, true to Scripture, must come to grips with the distinction between the holy and the common. Both the ancient Israelite theocracy and the NT church are holy institutions, set apart from the world. Hence, for example, the Sabbath ordinance (what is a sign of the covenant) belongs only to the people of God, not to unbelievers. It would be mockery for the ungodly to observe God’s Sabbath ordinance when they remain outside the covenant (as covenant breakers in Adam). Included in this distinction between the holy and the common is the difference “between God’s general care for the secular order and his special concern for the redemption of his people” (p. 116). Horton explains: “What happens ‘east of Eden’ is this: culture is no longer sacred but secular, yet the secular is not literally ‘godless,’ a realm beyond God’s concern and involvement” (p. 118). Presumably, Horton means to say that God’s common grace is manifested in the world of humankind generally. Good acts are performed by the ungodly, though of no benefit whatsoever for spiritual salvation (hence Luther’s distinction between civil and spiritual righteousness). Thinking through this doctrine consistently means (among other things) that the diaconal work of the church is restricted to the family of God, not to those outside the covenant community (the world-at-large). God’s care for all peoples manifests itself in the institution of the state overseeing the welfare of its citizens. The fact that Christians have responsibilities in both kingdoms does not legitimate community programs conducted by the church to meet societal needs (including collaborative faith-based government initiatives). We must not confuse God’s general providence of the affairs of the world with his special governance and superintendence of the church. There is a proper separation of church and state, each having its distinct function and purpose as ordained by God.

Lastly, by way of clarification (and correction), greater care must be given to the explication of the nature and significance of the sacraments. Recent Reformed expositions of the Eucharist have labored hard to explain how Christ is *really* communicated in the

sacrament (cf. especially the teaching of the Federal Visionists). Horton tells us that the reality of grace (in the person and work of Christ) is “not only signified but is actually communicated and certified by the sacraments” (p. 152). Horton takes up Ridderbos’s rebuke of those who “spiritualize” baptism, failing to realize that baptism “[actually] brings us to Christ’s death” (p. 155). The sacraments of the church do none of this. Only sacramentally speaking are we united to Christ in baptism and renewed in the Eucharist. Christ is truly present in the sacrament (by the presence of faith exercised by the recipient); but he is not present *ex opere operato* (by the working of the sacrament). Christ is present in the bread and the wine sacramentally speaking, not “actually.” There is a big difference here. Preferable is Horton’s assertion: “The benefits offered by the sacraments are the same as those offered by the gospel itself: Christ and all his treasures. The sacraments signify and seal to the individual believer the promise that is heard in the preaching of the gospel” (p. 167). It is the true, spiritual presence of Christ in Word and Spirit—in the gospel and in the sacrament. The sacraments are outward, visible signs and seals of God’s saving grace to the elect (as Kline stresses, election is the proper purpose of redemptive covenant). We are not to conclude, however, that the sacraments are mere outward signs and seals. Grace is truly (“actually”) communicated through union with Christ by the Spirit of God: Baptism sacramentally marks the beginning of spiritual union with Christ, and the Supper reminds us of our continual need to feed upon Christ in the bonds of Christian love and fellowship.

The only question remaining is that addressed to contemporary readers and disputants: Does Reformed federalism continue to speak to the issues of the day, as raised most recently by advocates of the New Perspective and by the Federal Visionists? Bryan Chapell himself has offered a generous critique of the New Perspective. Because the time-tested results of that teaching are not yet in, it is too soon for him to offer a definitive judgment. And so, in the meantime, Chapell commends Horton’s presentation as “a traditional view” of Reformed teaching on the covenants. What is urgently needed today is an informed response to the challenges facing the churches, Reformed and evangelical. Perhaps Horton can help others to provide just that.

Mark W. Karlberg
Warminster, PA

The Covenant of God and the Children of Believers: Sovereign Grace in the Covenant.
By David J. Engelsma. Grandville, MI: Reformed Free, 2005, x + 239 pp., \$23.95.

“The place of children in the covenant is still controversial in Reformed churches. There is sharp disagreement over the meaning of infant baptism and the proper rearing of the baptized children of believing parents. This is shameful” (p. ix). So begins David Engelsma in *The Covenant of God and the Children of Believers*, much of which was previously published in the *Standard Bearer*, the magazine of the Protestant Reformed Church. Controversy continues to loom large among all branches of Christianity, not only within the Reformed camp. Although Engelsma primarily engages the Dutch Reformed tradition (Continental European and North American), his analysis is of wide-ranging interest across the evangelical Protestant theological spectrum. And although the author is quite dismissive of Baptist thinking on the subject, perhaps we might give him reason to reconsider—for the sake of unity in truth, and truth in unity (as witness to genuine Reformed catholicity). Indeed, the Reformed Baptist tradition has something substantive to contribute in the ongoing debate.

Publication of this book is part of the resurgence of interest in the theology of the sacraments (including, more broadly, the theology of the covenants). Engelma's discussion offers a valuable contribution, even though his own view is contradictory in places and also speculative, for example, with regard to knowledge of those numbered among the elect of God. Regrettably, Engelsma's critique of other positions at times lacks balance and sobriety. This does not help foster constructive dialogue. More importantly, Engelma's denunciation of teaching that is truly heretical is apt to lose its sting for most readers.

The study is divided into six parts. Part One lays out Engelma's formulation of what he understands to be the Reformed doctrine of children in the covenant. This is followed by an analysis of objections to this view (represented as the teaching of the Protestant Reformed Church, of which Engelsma is a member). Parts Two through Four contain Engelsma's response to objections from the Baptist, the Netherlands Reformed Church, and the Canadian Reformed ("Liberated") Church. Parts Five and Six engage the contemporary scene, addressing the controversy now raging in evangelical Reformed Protestantism. Here the author delves insightfully, though briefly, into the teaching of the New Perspective on Paul, the Federal Visionists and, most notably, the teaching of Norman Shepherd. The roots of the modern-day heresy (the focus of Parts Five and Six) are located in previous Reformed thinking (the focus of Parts Two through Four). With regard to teaching critiqued in the opening section, Engelsma dismisses most of it as not in any legitimate sense Reformed. Here we will have to part company with the author. Much of the thinking laid out in this portion of the book falls within the parameters of Reformed teaching, however inconsistent and incoherent that teaching may be at times. Four appendices, containing book reviews, reinforce the argument of the book and provide the reader additional resource material.

In terms of his conceptualization of the covenant of God, Engelma states: "The covenant is the relationship of friendship between the triune God and his chosen people in Jesus Christ" (p. 4). This will not do, if we take seriously the doctrines of creation, Fall, and redemption. It would be better to define covenant "as a relationship, as a bond of communion" (p. 5); better yet, covenant is a relationship *under sanctions* (something that mostly eludes Engelsma's thinking). Our author locates the essence of the covenant in the creature's (or the believer's) enjoyment of God—as recipient of his love, communion, and fellowship. More supremely, we are told, covenant life is participation in the trinitarian life of God, who is himself life-in-community (by way of the interpenetration of the three persons of the Godhead in eternal self-subsistence). Covenant "is the revelation to us and the sharing with us of God's own inner, trinitarian life. God's own life is friendship. The life of God is family friendship" (p. 8). To the contrary, covenant pertains to God in relation to his creation—a relationship first established under dual sanctions, the blessing and the curse. Relationship in covenant is not applicable to the trinitarian life of God as Family—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Actually, the theological term is "Trinity," not "Family," though the latter is the popular one today. Perhaps it sounds more inviting for those eagerly seeking to be adopted into the family of God!)

The central focus of Engelsma's treatise is the question regarding the place of children in the covenant (more precisely, in the covenant of grace): "The children of believers are included in the covenant as children, that is, already at conception and birth. They receive forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus, the Holy Spirit of sanctification, and church membership—as children" (p. 10). This surely sounds like the doctrines of presumptive regeneration, eternal justification, and sacramentalism—at least with respect to the *children of godly parents*, as Engelsma continually qualifies. Yet, these are teachings that Engelsma (rightly) renounces. Clearly, there are a number of very important issues that must be untangled and clarified.

According to Engelsma, there is no promise that all baptized children are saved: the promise of God is extended only to the elect children of godly parents. But how do we know if the parents who bring their children for baptism are godly or not? Presumably, Engelsma would answer: God alone knows. That answer would be correct. What *is required* is a credible profession of faith on the part of the parent(s). Contrary to the explicit teaching of scriptural texts cited by Engelsma himself on many occasions, the election of God is according to his own sovereign good will and determination (see, e.g., Romans 9). There simply is no guarantee that the children of godly parents are saved (i.e. numbered among the elect). The household principle that informs the administration of redemptive covenant in its historical outworking is not identical with the principle of sovereign, electing grace. All this is to say that redemptive covenant is broader than election. Denial of this fundamental truth lies at the root of Engelsma's covenant confusion. (Here is where the Baptist tradition is rightly critical of Reformed teaching—more precisely, one strand of Reformed thinking.)

Just a word about the Reformed confessions: Invariably these contain here and there theological inconsistencies and contradictions requiring correction and reformulation. This is not the place to address shortcomings, as I see them. The problem in Engelma's argument is that he has been selective in his own reading of confessional Reformed theology. The issues are far more complex and ambiguous than Engelsma would have his readers believe. The reality of this circumstance in history of Reformed doctrine gives license to Norman Shepherd and others to assert what they understand to be the "true intent" of the framers of the confessions—a highly speculative enterprise, to be sure. Better that we content ourselves with what actually lies before us on the written page. And, as Engelma would fully agree, in the final place it is the teaching of Scripture, not the secondary standards of the church, that is decisive.

Engelsma explains: "It is the *covenantal election of God* that determines the viewpoint that believing parents and churches take toward the children and that governs the approach in rearing them" (p. 21, emphasis mine). What in the thinking of Engelsma is covenantal election, and how does it differ from the view of Shepherd? How does sovereign, decretive election relate to redemptive covenant in its historical outworking? One of the favorite texts among disputants is Ephesians 1. The question is this: Is Paul's address to the elect saints at Ephesus from the standpoint of decretive election, or is it in terms of covenantal election, that is, (external) membership in the covenant community? The latter view maintains that one can be numbered among the elect today, but may fall from grace tomorrow (by defection from the covenant). As I read Scripture, the church of Christ is composed of both elect and non-elect (both the wheat and the tares). The tendency among many theologians is either to equate membership in God's covenant with decretive election or to distinguish two kinds of election, decretive and covenantal, the latter being losable, as in the case of ancient, theocratic Israel. (On this latter view, covenantal election is equated with Israel's national election under the old economy.) Neither view will do: The covenant of God in the history of redemption is broader than election. Yet it must be said, the proper purpose of redemptive covenant is election unto salvation. (Baptism, like the preaching of the Word, is a genuine means of grace.)

In my estimate, it is primarily with the theological position of the Canadian Reformed Church that substantive differences come into sharp focus. The issue, once again, is the doctrine of election and the covenants. The "liberated" theologians will have no part of that teaching which defines the blessing of redemptive covenant in terms of sovereign, decretive election (wherein salvation is fixed and cannot be lost). This "election theology of the covenant" is forthrightly repudiated. Given that God alone knows who the elect actually are, we are told that we must refrain from viewing individuals in the covenant

community as truly elect or reprobate. Taking our cue from the apostle Paul (as read by the “liberated” theologians), we are to regard church members as elect *from the standpoint of the historical covenant*. We are not to contemplate individual election *from the standpoint of God’s eternal foreordination* (which is unavailable to us). Doubtless, one of the sources for Shepherd’s radical reformulation of covenant theology is this contention of the “liberated” Reformed churches favoring the doctrine of “universal, resistible, losable grace in the covenants” (p. 99). Engelsma adds: “Imbedded deeply in the very heart of ‘liberated’ covenant doctrine is a fatal weakness regarding, if not antipathy to, God’s eternal election. This comes out in ‘liberated’ theologian and founding father Benne Holwerda’s astounding teaching that virtually every New Testament mention of election, including Ephesians 1:4 and Romans 9:11, refers, not to God’s eternal decree, but to an act of God in time” (p. 128).

Well into the book Engelsma asserts: “An ‘election theology’ of covenant demands a distinction between being in living covenant fellowship with God by covenant grace and merely being in the sphere of the covenant by natural birth” (p. 125). This assertion conflicts with Engelsma’s earlier insistence that redemptive covenant be defined in terms of sovereign election and with his rejection of the distinction between external and internal membership in the covenant. Our author cannot have it both ways. Having boxed himself into a corner, Engelsma finds no other recourse than the standard distinction between the external/internal spheres of the covenant. Thus, he writes: “However one may choose to name it, the distinction between being in the covenant and being in the sphere of the covenant is biblical” (p. 126).

The remaining hundred pages of the book expose heretical teachings taking residence in Reformed churches and educational institutions to a very alarming degree. Not only advocates of the New Perspective on Paul, the Federal Vision, or the Shepherd-Gaffin formulation (i.e. the New Westminster school), but advocates of openness theism are charting a radically different course for present-day Reformed evangelical theology. As Engelsma notes, “Central in the contemporary debate is biblical justification” (p. 148). My book *Gospel Grace: The Modern-day Controversy* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003) tackles this issue, with special attention to the teaching of the New Westminster school. I strongly differ with Engelsma’s attempt at harmonizing Paul and James (by speaking of two *kinds* of justification, rather than two *aspects*, the constitutive and the demonstrative) and with his exegesis of Rom 2:13 (which I understand to teach two actual classes of individuals, the godly and the ungodly). These differences aside, I concur fully with Engelsma when he writes, “There is no excuse for Reformed people to be deceived by Shepherd and his allies” (p. 151). The effect of all this false teaching is an accelerating rapprochement between Rome and Protestants (or those who once expounded and defended the Protestant faith). As Engelsma correctly points out, “The clear and necessary implication of Shepherd’s rejection of Luther’s ‘alone,’ of course, is that one is not justified by faith alone. Rather, as Rome has always taught, one is justified by faith *and by works of some sort*, though not ‘works of the law’” (p. 165).

Engelsma laments the fact that many who repudiate these heretical teachings are unable to offer a thorough critique because they do not define the covenant as he and the Protestant Reformed Churches do. “They do not get to the root of the evil. They cannot. With the rare exception, they are themselves committed to a conditional covenant” (p. 181). As a leading critic of the New Theology, I am dismayed in reading Engelsma’s final assessment of the current dispute and deeply lament the fact that exegetes and theologians—those standing in the tradition of historic Protestant-Reformed Orthodoxy—cannot rise above partisan differences to denounce with one clear voice what is clearly heretical in our theological circles. The reason for this inability to come together is quite simple: We cannot agree on the biblical concept of (redemptive) covenant. In my

judgment, it is necessary that faithful interpreters of Scripture come to recognize that redemptive covenant is broader than sovereign, decretive election. Only then can we legitimately and consistently oppose the view positing a faulty distinction between external and internal membership in the covenant community. And only then can we understand aright the “household principle” in the administration of the covenant of grace in redemptive history—in its progressive unfolding (including the process of differentiation between the elect and non-elect).

Engelsma concludes: “There is one, and only one, doctrine of the covenant that magnifies and safeguards the sovereign grace of God in his work of salvation in the sphere of the covenant. This is the teaching that the grace of God *in the sphere of the covenant*, as everywhere else, is particular. God’s gracious covenant and covenant grace are for the elect alone” (p. 202). Previously we were told to distinguish between (true) membership—*in the covenant*—and what, ultimately, is hypocritical membership—*in the sphere of the covenant*. Part of the blame for this confusion in formulation rests with the statement made in the *Westminster Larger Catechism*: “The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as the seed” (quoted on p. 205). Better is the Reformed doctrine of the covenant of redemption that recognizes the vital distinction between the eternal covenant between the Father and the Son (in the Spirit) on behalf of the elect and the historical administration of redemptive covenant (the covenant of grace) made with elect and non-elect. The operation of the “household principle” in the administration of God’s covenant is conclusive. All this to say, even the theology of the Westminster divines can be improved upon in terms of clarity and consistency!

I do have to wonder when Engelsma writes, “As a Reformed minister and parent, I have no interest whatever in conversion as the basis for viewing baptized children as God’s dear children, loved of him from eternity, redeemed by Jesus, and promised the Holy Spirit, the author of faith” (p. 86). Is conversion not necessary for baptized children? Earlier in the treatise, Engelsma answered in the affirmative. Because we do not know if a baptized child is saved, we are to commend to him or her the life of faith and repentance (conversion may be sudden or imperceptible). We cannot presume the regeneration of the baptized infants of godly parents, anymore than we can presume the regeneration of adults who are baptized on the basis of a good confession. Engelsma is wrong to say that his view regarding the infant baptism of the elect children of godly parents is “traditional, confessional Presbyterian (Reformed) doctrine” (p. 222). This simply is not so! And even if it were, it is not biblical! (Like Engelsma, I am not commending revivalism as advocated by pietistic Puritans and Dutch precisionists—Jonathan Edwards’s ministry as illustrative. We are to nurture our children—and adults—in the faith of our fathers, knowing that the regenerating and renewing work of the Spirit is requisite for true growth in grace.)

Furthermore, I have to wonder when Engelsma writes, “If the Reformed churches face these questions [raised in the book], they will also be led to consider whether the covenant is a warm, living relation of love, rather than a cold contract; whether the covenant in Scripture is itself the highest good—the very blessedness of salvation—rather than a mere means to some other end; and whether Christ is the head of the covenant of grace” (pp. 181–82). The implied caricature of alternative views will not do, neither in terms of the teaching of Scripture, nor in terms of the history of Reformed doctrine.

Lastly, by way of critique: Engelsma’s rhetoric is, in places, comparable to that frequently used by Shepherd. There is need to move beyond this polemical style to forthright, theological statement that is exegetically faithful to Scripture in its totality and comprehensiveness (i.e. exegesis that combines the fruits of biblical and systematic theology). Proof-texting merely points readers to a particular exegetico-theological tra-

dition, however consistent or eclectic that tradition might be. Commendably, Engelsma does not mince any words when it comes to heretical teaching. One can only hope that discerning readers will weigh carefully the criticisms offered in this book, sweeping as they are, and properly identify the true miscreants in this present-day battle for the gospel of particular, sovereign grace—the gospel of justification by faith alone.

Additional space here would permit comment on other related issues, such as the role and importance of Christian nurture (including the place of evangelism in Christian schools), the necessity of church discipline (including excommunication when requisite), the question whether the covenant is conditional or unconditional (including the matter of the warnings against covenant unfaithfulness, specially as addressed in the Letter to the Hebrews), the extent and efficacy of the atonement, federal headship, the sole instrumentality of faith in soteric justification, the assurance of believers, and the perseverance of the saints. Much is at stake in our systematic formulation of the theology of the covenants. The subject of infant baptism simply opens up an array of crucial issues, as it has always done.

Mark W. Karlberg
Warminster, PA

The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God. By Robert Louis Wilken. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004, 368 pp., \$19.00.

Robert Louis Wilken, William R. Kenan Professor of the History of Christianity at the University of Virginia, has long been one of the preeminent patristic scholars in the English speaking world, and arguably the dean of American specialists in the thought of the early Christian Fathers. In *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought*, Wilken shows how early Christians *thought* about what they believed. He distills his vast knowledge and love for the early church, and especially its most potent and insightful thinkers, into a work that is often almost poetic in expression and deceptively accessible—its straightforward narrative form often belies the deep, rich background and knowledge Wilken brings to the task.

Wilken's expressed intention for this book, as reflected in the title, is to show, via its formative bishops and theologians, that Christianity is "inescapably ritualistic," "uncompromisingly moral," and "unapologetically intellectual." For all that is Christian, the life, the community, the high moral call, Christianity is a "way of thinking about God, about human beings, about the world and history." What Wilken wants to show in the lives of the early, formative Christian theologians is that, for Christianity, thinking is part of believing. For that reason he aims to portray the pattern of Christian thought as it took shape in the early Christian centuries.

As Wilken explores this pattern of early Christian thought, he points out early on that it was always grounded in reflection on the Church's sacred book, inspired Holy Scripture, but with reflection that was inevitably Christ-shaped and redemptocentric (the *regula fidei*). But Wilken here approaches patristic thought by a series of doctrinal foci, early bishops and/or theologians whose insightful Christian reflections on that particular question, issue, or doctrine was formative for the church as a whole. Important to the argumentation are Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius, Basil of Caesarea, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, and Cyril of Alexandria. But of special importance at several junctures throughout are Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, and Maximus the Confessor. For Wilken, Augustine finally stands out as the giant among giants in

his depth of thought, his wide ranging discussion, and his elegance of argument. Thus, for example, chapters deal with how God is known (“Founded on the Cross of Christ”), worship and sacraments (“An Awesome and Unbloody Sacrifice”), the Holy Scriptures (“The Face of God for Now”), and the Trinity (“Seek His Face Always”) through faithful thinking into the revealed Word by Origen, Justin, Augustine, Igratus, Chrysostom, Clement, Irenaeus, or Cyril of Alexandria. But always so important to Wilken’s depiction of such patristic reflection on Scripture, within the developing faith (*regula*) of the church, is that it be narratively seen and heard within the circumstances and relations in which the Fathers worked and lived. In this way, Wilken weaves together Christian life, thought, and community—all so integral to the early church. And, by example, Wilken is pointing out what should be the case now. The narrative form also allows Wilken to describe how Christians were seen by contemporary “Romans” who were often openly hostile to the faith.

But by means of such winsome and often glossy portrayals, Wilken is really doing more, though usually indirectly and off to the side. These substantive but almost simply presented narrative theology “bites” or *loci* are clearly formed in order to present apologetically the very best intellectual face of early Christianity. The Fathers, even (and this is difficult) Cyril of Alexandria, are made to be wholly charming in life and thought; the warts all but gone. The few that remain are turned into beauty marks. But this is, to an extent, a worthy endeavor. Those interested but outside the Christian faith may thereby be given a different way of seeing the faith and the faithful. Also, behind much of this book looms the ponderous influence of Adolf von Harnack. Long has Harnack’s contention held sway that the development of early Christian thought represented the hellenization of Christianity. But Wilken says this view has outlived its usefulness and much that he presents embodies rather the Christianization of Hellenism. Given the assumption of the Spirit’s effects in early Christian thought, the leading intellectual lights of the church are placed front and center, but always as men of the church and as redemptive agents of and within culture, each and all expressing by means of faithful thinking in and out of “the faith” Augustine’s *credo ut intellegam* or later Anselm’s *fides quaerens intellectum*. Indeed, this work bears the earmarks of being Wilken’s own confession of faith via his patristic heroes.

There is much to appreciate in this learned, personally and doctrinally oriented, but amazingly accessible (almost “homely” in the best sense) volume. Wilken is absolutely right about the need to make the potent Christian thinking of the Fathers a significant constructive aspect of Christian thought and life now and always. As he puts the point at the beginning, “any interpretation of the Bible that ignores its first readers is doomed to end up with a bouquet of fragments that are neither the book of the church nor the imaginative wellspring of western literature, art and music.” As Wilken sets doctrines and early Christian thought within its context and the church’s life, he thereby makes clear how theology is hammered out on the anvil of history. Wilken makes it a repeated point to take seriously criticisms directed against the Christian faith (e.g. Celsus, Galen), finding these to be contextually useful to the church. Not only were these criticisms answerable, Wilken maintains; he adds that Christianity repeatedly proved to be more intellectually, morally, and spiritually vibrant than its rivals. Like Wilken, all Christians should be sensitive and appreciative of their most informed critics, for these help mirror Christianity back to itself in context. To pursue this one should study Wilken’s earlier volume, *Christians as the Romans Saw Them*.

Yet I do have concerns about what Wilken has done here. As an ex-Lutheran convert to Roman Catholicism, Wilken reflects a low-key, usually indirect anti-Protestant point of view. He not only chooses Fathers who are of doctrinal usefulness to him and his particular intellectual point about Christian faith, but Wilken is always redacting their

thought in order to portray both the thinker/theologian and his thought well within the agenda of the desired argument. Wilken also quickly excuses, defends, or gives fresh “spin” to the wrongs or misdirection of the Fathers, whether this be Tertullian or especially Cyril of Alexandria (a Father who, to my mind, had much to learn about ethics). Often when Wilken appears to be essentially quoting a Father, he is actually engaging in Bultmann-like demythologizing of the context into modern form—probably for apologetic purposes. Gregory of Nyssa becomes Jeffersonian (minus Gregory’s view of the effects of sin) and Basil his brother becomes a proto-Darwinian. While I believe Wilken is largely right about Harnack, he does underplay the effects of Hellenism, and so dualism, on early Christian thought (especially within the Alexandrian and neo-Platonic mystical traditions). Often one finds a *tertium quid*. Therefore, it must be admitted that Wilken is often too idealistic, even hagiographic, when giving narrative form to the lives and thought of these eminent early Christian leaders. They *are* heroes of the faith. They are *my* heroes. But there was significant “bathwater” ebbing around the lives of some of these extraordinary patristic “babies.” This cannot be sloughed off or the narrative is to that extent falsified. These were not superhuman, despite Wilken’s regular flights of praise when describing their intellectual or moral exploits.

I must recommend Robert Wilken’s *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought* as a work that properly brings the Fathers back in from the periphery of Christian consideration and recognizes them as real examples of moral and intellectual Christian life. Thinking is a crucial aspect of believing for Christians. We must embrace faith seeking understanding. Yet this work is difficult to categorize. Its usability as a textbook is questionable. But, again, recommended.

John Douglas Morrison
Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

A History of Apologetics. 2d edition. By Avery Cardinal Dulles. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005, 417 pp., \$18.95.

The first edition of this book came out while I was midway through my doctoral program at Southwestern Seminary. I read it then, but I remember being disappointed that evangelicals were not really covered, even though we had numerous excellent apologists working in those days. I would not say that I think every flaw has been corrected in this second (my *Classical Readings in Christian Apologetics* is not even included in the bibliography), but the rather extensive updating does include a section (accurately done) on evangelical Protestants who have written apologetic works. Dulles is Roman Catholic, and the first edition was clearly from that tradition. This new edition is much broader, fairer to the various traditions, and more inclusive.

I remember thinking that the critical stance taken toward the NT was less conservative than I would have hoped. The second edition still falls to the prevailing stance of the so-called mainstream, but I was impressed with the wide-ranging scholarship that Dulles consults. I believe a better exegesis would actually strengthen his case. The NT books were written earlier than he thinks they were, but I do agree that for the most part they were written to believers rather than to unbelievers. So the NT books are strongly apologetic, in that they defend the faith and provide answers to skeptics, but they are not primarily evangelistic, that is, messages directed to unbelievers.

The early apologists often defended Christians from government policies of persecution (often based upon misrepresentations of Christian faith and practice, such as

cannibalism, incest, and atheism). The Muslim threat drew another kind of apologetic, one in which common beliefs (one God) were affirmed but also Christian distinctives (love for enemies, Christ as the unique Son of God) were defended.

There are few books that even attempt to summarize the history of apologetics. Nothing else is so comprehensive as this one. Surprisingly (but I was glad to see it), Timothy George wrote a very complimentary Foreword to the book. He, too, expressed deep appreciation to Dulles for the quality of this work.

My apologetics students are now being required to read this book. It will save them years of study in the historical documents. Dulles gets the evangelical distinctions and methodological categories right. He, of course, does the same thing for the Catholic traditions. Dulles does not make it clear, however, how much impact the conservative battles over biblical inerrancy in the late twentieth century had on the development of apologetic writing. He does not, in my view, give the evidentialists as much credit as they are due. We evidentialists need to do a better job of explaining our epistemology. I am making a note to work on that.

Dulles has given the world church a marvelous summary of a crucial, though often misunderstood and misrepresented, intellectual tradition. Without the apologists, Christian faith would often be reduced to faith only, belief without evidence. How would Christianity survive intellectually if that became its "best" defense?

I do not expect all Christians to read a full history such as the one Dulles has given us. But church leaders should know what has been done before our time in order for us to be effective in our time. This volume can be highly recommended to evangelical leaders, such as those who read this *Journal*. Valid and effective apologetics is one of the great needs of our day around the world.

L. Russ Bush

Center for Faith and Culture, Wake Forest, NC

Christianity Reborn: The Global Expansion of Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century. Edited by Donald M. Lewis. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004, x + 324 pp., \$40.00 paper.

Donald M. Lewis, this volume's editor, comments in his introduction, "Three religious movements in the world today can claim to be global faiths: Roman Catholicism, Islam, and evangelicalism. Of these three, it is perhaps surprising that the evangelical movement is so little studied and poorly understood" (p. 1). Why the neglect? Lewis suggests two intertwined causes: the belief, still common among academics, that evangelicalism is "more a movement of the past than the wave of the future" (p. 1); and these academics' expectation that as Western colonialism faded after World War II, third world evangelicalism, taken to be an aspect of that colonialism, would fade as well (p. 2). Far from fading, evangelical Christianity has experienced a post-colonial surge of growth across East Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America. In the global North, where evangelicalism has more than held its own, our community has reacted to scholarly misunderstanding by producing its own scholars; over the past quarter-century, our story has been eloquently told by the likes of Mark Noll, George Marsden, and David Bebbington. In the global South, though, where the evangelical community is still quite young, its story remains largely untold and thus unknown. For a course on global evangelicalism that I teach, I have had great difficulty finding texts that would familiarize my students with developments outside the English-speaking world.

Perhaps the situation is beginning to change, though. This book is not itself a history of third world evangelicalism, but it does help lay a foundation for such histories yet

to be written. Most of its chapters were originally presented at a consultation of the Currents in World Christianity Project held at St. Catherine's College, Oxford, in July 1999. Ten scholars augment basic description with cutting-edge analysis, and it is very encouraging that several of these scholars are themselves third world evangelicals. The book is divided into five sections: as a kind of prelude, the first presents wide-ranging surveys of evangelicalism during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries; the second, third, and fourth sections narrow the geographical focus, offering studies of Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and Latin America; and the fifth and final section presents another global survey as a kind of summary. Not all of the book's chapters meet the same high standard, but most of them make solid contributions to the literature, and several offer important interpretive insights that should draw the attention of non-evangelical academics.

W. R. Ward's opening study, "Evangelical Identity in the Eighteenth Century," returns to terrain that he has already surveyed in two trailblazing books, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge University Press, 1992) and *Christianity under the Ancien Régime, 1648–1789* (Cambridge University Press, 1999). Ward notes Bebbington's oft-cited fourfold characterization of evangelicalism as distinguished by conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism (*Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p. 3), but he also notes that these attributes have never been unique to evangelicalism, instead reflecting its continuity with historic Christianity. What was truly distinctive about eighteenth-century evangelicalism, differentiating it from the common orthodoxy of the day? He points to three marks: its eschatological "hope for better times" (p. 13), reflected in the premillennialism of Cotton Mather as well as the postmillennialism of Jonathan Edwards; its reliance on small-group fellowships, *collegia pietatis*, as it shifted from a top-down to a bottom-up strategy of church renewal; and its attraction to the writings of Catholic mystics like Miguel de Molinos and François Fénelon. Ward seasons his analysis with fascinating historical details as well as telling observations; for example, he notes evangelicals' "empiricism" as they escaped what came to be seen as mysticism's "blind alley" in preparation for the "globalization" (p. 30) of the next century.

The latter development is the focus of Mark A. Noll's article, "Evangelical Identity, Power, and Culture in the 'Great Nineteenth Century.'" Noll notes the eagerness of evangelicals as disparate as the Anglican Zachary Macaulay and the Restorationist Barton Stone to forsake "traditional authorities . . . including the authority of evangelical tradition" in favor of "self-created evangelical authority" (p. 41). He is saddened by the elevation of power over principle that led members of the Evangelical Alliance to allow the issue of slavery to derail their plans for global cooperation in the 1840s and four decades later induced a wave of Keswick-influenced Anglican missionaries to overthrow the work of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther's historic Niger Mission. And he is intrigued by attempts at tackling cultural challenges head-on such as the ill-starred 1841 British anti-slavery expedition to the Niger River Delta and Protestant missionaries' decision in the 1880s regarding translation of the word "God" in their Korean edition of the Bible. The latter, he observes, led to unintended consequences, as "elements of Korean culture that the missionaries thought had been discarded" were instead retained in mature Korean Christianity, giving rise to "forms of the faith that missionaries [might not have] recognized as Christian maturity" (p. 51). Unintended consequences are also a theme of Brian Stanley's article, "Twentieth-Century World Christianity: A Perspective from the History of Missions." Stanley focuses on the landmark 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, noting that many of its participants' prophecies concerning the church's future were indeed fulfilled, though often in ways that they could not have foreseen. Especially astute are his remarks about the unanticipated alternative forms of Christianity that have accounted for much of the church's post-Edinburgh growth.

The first of three articles focusing on Asia is Philip Yuen-sang Leung's essay, "Conversion, Commitment, and Culture: Christian Experience in China, 1949–99." Leung uses the story of Lazarus as a metaphor to describe the Chinese church under Communist rule: seriously ill in the years after 1949, practically dead during the Cultural Revolution, brought back to life in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and subsequently experiencing vigorous growth (p. 88). He notes Chinese Christians' early division into two camps, with "Marys" like Wang Mingdao "more interested in . . . spiritual life" and "Marthas" like Bishop K. H. Ting "show[ing] greater interest in social and political movements" (p. 89). This division continues today, the latter group being associated with the officially sanctioned Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) and the former with the frequently persecuted house-church movement. Yet Leung points to a recent study of TSPM church members which finds that they, like house church members, are mainly concerned with issues related to salvation and personal discipleship rather than social concerns. As "members of one big family," he urges, "Martha should embrace Mary" (p. 107). Robert Eric Frykenberg's article, "Gospel, Globalization, and Hindutva: The Politics of 'Conversion' in India," describes a rather different situation. Indian Christians are persecuted not by government officials but by local mobs convinced that evangelists and their converts are engaged in a "sinister attempt to undermine and destroy the very foundations of India's cultural and national unity" (p. 130). In Frykenberg's view, this tragic misunderstanding is at least partly due to the militarist rhetoric of some misguided Christian missionaries. He warns against globalization's "dumbing down [and] homogenization of the gospel message" (p. 129) and stresses the importance of recent indigenous expressions of Indian Christianity such as the independent church movement, Pentecostalism, and the swelling ranks of so-called "churchless believers." Allan K. Davidson's article, "'The Pacific Is No Longer a Mission Field?' Conversion in the South Pacific in the Twentieth Century," which questions the need for such movements in Oceania, seems out of place in this volume.

In "Conversion and Social Change: A Review of the 'Unfinished Task' in West Africa," Jehu J. Hanciles, a young African scholar, considers the making of converts in the traditional churches planted by Western mission agencies during the colonial era; in African Independent (or Initiated) Churches (AICs) planted by Garrick Sokari Braide, William Wadé Harris, and the many who have followed in their footsteps; and in the Pentecostal and Charismatic congregations and denominations that have multiplied among middle-class Africans since the 1970s. Hanciles comments on African Christianity's amazing growth over the course of the twentieth century, but he balances ballooning overall numbers against what he sees as the "tardiness of Christian expansion" in West Africa (p. 179), closing with a rather pessimistic assessment of the current situation: "[T]he continent's emergence as a major heartland of Christianity coincides with its economic marginalization in the global arena" (p. 180). Afrikaner scholar Marthinus L. Daneel adopts a more optimistic stance in his article, "African Initiated Churches in Southern Africa: Protest Movements or Mission Churches?" While many scholars have seen AICs as primarily responding to and even protesting against the deficiencies of more traditional mission-planted churches, Daneel stresses AICs' historic roots in and ongoing ties to those churches. His characterization of AICs as "inculturated extensions of the Christian family of churches" (p. 216 n. 76) is helpful, though his positive assessment of some AIC leaders' public participation in traditional African religious rituals will alarm many readers of this book.

Paul Freston's article, "Contours of Latin American Pentecostalism," is the volume's longest and also one of its finest. Freston offers a capsule history, an array of statistics describing the current situation, and a survey of the literature as well as his own trenchant assessment. Against conspiracy theorists who ascribe Pentecostals' rapidly swelling ranks to the baleful influence of bountifully funded American missionaries, he

cites the counterintuitive conclusion of Brazilian scholar Rubem César Fernandes that “the churches which grow most owe little to international missions” (p. 250). He notes that across Latin America there is a strong correlation between a community’s poverty and its openness to religious change: “The needier the district is, the higher the percentage of Protestants” (p. 231, referring to Brazil; see pp. 239–40 on El Salvador). Cultural factors also play a role in the growth of Pentecostalism, which does best where institutional Catholicism is weak yet society itself remains fundamentally religious (p. 254). Pentecostals’ “tendency to schism,” so often decried by Catholics and even by their fellow Protestants, turns out to be an important key to their vitality in this context, as “competition stimulates innovation . . . and localized supply” (pp. 232, 255). David Martin’s concluding essay, “Evangelical Expansion in Global Society,” makes the same point in a broader context. Martin argues that the emergence of global evangelicalism and especially of its “potent Pentecostal mutation” is inseparably linked to “the emergence of a global society” (p. 273). Evangelical Christianity is both a manifestation of and a powerful response to modernity, “unit[ing] the despised peripheries of the North Atlantic to the poor and the ethnically marginalized groups of the South Atlantic and elsewhere” (p. 293).

This excellent volume is part of an important series, *Studies in the History of Christian Missions*, edited for Eerdmans by Frykenberg and Stanley. I have already added it to the list of textbooks for my course on global evangelicalism. If you teach such a course, you should do the same. If you do not teach such a course, perhaps you should.

George W. Harper
Evangelical Theological Seminary, Osijek, Croatia

Studies in Early Christianity. By François Bovon. Translated by Laura Beth Bugg, *et al.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003, v + 336 pp., \$22.00 paper.

Studies in Early Christianity contains assorted essays by French scholar François Bovon, all of which have been translated into English. The book is divided into three sections with Part One devoted to studies in Luke-Acts, while Part Two is dedicated to NT theology and Part Three the apocryphal and patristic literature. Each section contains essays that focus upon subject matters with similar themes, but neither they nor the entire book promotes a singular thesis. Bovon’s work as a whole, however, is based upon the conviction that the NT contains historically accurate data and distorted memories created from the early church’s needs and biases. Because of the format of the book, it seems more efficient to provide critique while reviewing each essay than to review many unrelated essays and then return later to provide their evaluations.

In his introductory essay Bovon posits that the heritage of the church, that is, its Scriptures and histories, are products of the early church’s “memorializing” of the apostolic generation. He contends that this process “explains not only the collection and preservation of memories, but also their transformation and, finally, the constitution of newly created ad hoc memories” (p. 2). He argues that the church created these memories because “the words, attitudes, and reactions of the first Christian generation became archaic and were no longer bearable to the generations that followed” (p. 2). Bovon describes himself as against scholars such as Rudolf Bultman and Günther Bornkamm because he believes that in the NT there exists some historical material that provides conditions that were favorable for the formation of traditions that accurately reflect the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. According to Bovon, however, these memorizations were not free from being “partisan” (p. 6). Such opinions make it clear that Bovon

approaches the Scripture from a philosophy of religion paradigm that many scholars will find lacking significant historical foundation. He concludes his initial essay by arguing that after a period of time the early church, because of its “misogynistic attitudes” and disinterest (pp. 12–13), forgot many apostolic memories and the significance that women played in the church’s initial witness. Without question the early church lost material, both oral and written, that would have provided insights into the life of the apostolic generation. Forgetfulness due to “lack of interest,” however, does not seem to be a reasonable explanation. What is interesting, however, is Bovon’s omission of any discussion regarding the impact that persecution played upon the memory of the early church. Clearly, the martyrdom of church leaders—both men and women—and book burnings had as much or more impact upon the survivability of historical materials than disinterest.

In chapter two, Bovon provides a “Retrospect and Prospect” concerning his studies of Luke’s writings. This essay briefly surveys past NT scholarship and afterwards interacts with the current debates in Lukan research. Regarding Lukan studies, Bovon claims skepticism about the “historical-critical method” and the “excesses of redaction criticism” (p. 26). What makes this assertion so ironic is that Bovon’s essays are plagued by both and are often sustained only by his own subjective decisions. His subjectivity is seen in his assertion that Acts 13:38–39 and 15:10–11 “should not be understood . . . against the background of Pauline Theology”; instead, they spring from the “Lukan community” (p. 30). (Strangely, Bovon does not address the fact that the dialogue in Acts 15:10–11 is attributed to Peter and not Paul.) Bovon promotes this conjecture because he believes Luke was an “indirect pupil” of Paul (pp. 32, 70), who wrote Acts about AD 90. In spite of his rather undisciplined approach to the writings of Luke, Bovon appears almost evangelical regarding Luke’s purpose for his gospel (p. 37). His other essays, however, inspire little confidence that he values Luke’s writings as historically accurate.

Bovon’s third chapter is devoted to the meaning of “wind” (*notos*) as found in Luke 12:54–56. His survey of this theme in biblical and extrabiblical literature is quite interesting and well done; however, it suffers from a common failing of some NT scholarship that believes there are significant theological meanings to be found in the most insignificant details. Bovon contends that by employing the word *notos*, Luke adapted his source (Q) to fit “the meteorological situation” of his community in order to communicate an apocalyptic theme (p. 43). He apparently believes that the wind does not blow from the south in Palestine, thus making it hotter (*kausōn*), although it does so in Greece and Egypt. Finding this assumption rather odd, I googled a weather station in Jerusalem and discovered that in fact the wind does occasionally blow from the south, and when it does, the people of Palestine can expect the temperature to rise (www.Today.az/news/society/23147.html; accessed on February 11, 2006). It appears, therefore, that Luke has not redacted his source; instead, he has accurately translated a first *Sitz im Leben* saying of Jesus. Even with this misunderstanding of weather patterns in Palestine, this essay is one of Bovon’s better studies.

Chapter four is Bovon’s attempt to discover Luke’s redactions in Luke 18:1–8. Unfortunately, many of his assumptions are based upon arguments from silence because there is no surviving source material to which to compare Luke’s account or to evaluate Bovon’s conclusions. Regarding Luke’s sources, Bovon states, “Their memory is not motivated by love for anecdotes of historical evidence. It is highly partisan, selective memory that interprets the story before elaborating on it” (p. 57). For Bovon it is never a possibility that the primary motivation of Jesus’ disciples was to preserve and transmit accurately the sayings and meanings of Jesus. As a result, this essay is an excellent example of the “excesses of redaction criticism” (p. 26).

Bovon discusses the place of the law in Lukan writings in chapter five. This brief essay is insightful and sufficiently surveys the law as found in both of Luke’s works.

Bovon argues, however, that from Luke's perspective, two modes of salvation are found in the Scriptures. In the dispensation of the OT "obedience to the law leads to salvation and eternal life" (p. 63). With the arrival of Jesus, however, salvation comes through submission and faith in a personal God. It is unlikely, however, that Luke ever thought obedience to the Mosaic Law brought salvation (see Luke 18:1-27), and Bovon's essay does little to prove his theory. His article does show that Luke valued the law and perceived that it as "useful" to his audience (p. 73). In chapter seven, Bovon discusses the same theme while employing different synoptic passages, where again he convincingly argues for the importance of the OT to the early church.

In chapter six Bovon approaches Luke's passion narrative using both a synchronic and diachronic method. His synchronic approach is performed via a literary-critical perspective. Unfortunately, as Bovon analyses Luke's Gospel, Luke begins to morph into a late twentieth-century postmodern author who intends the "swords" in Luke 22:35-38 and 49 to be understood as metaphors for the disciples' anxieties and who sees all the different "crowds" in Luke's Gospel as a singular developing character. It is doubtful, however, that Luke ever intended the crowds to be viewed as a single character, or to even be thought of as a flat or round character for that matter. It is also more reasonable to conclude that, for Luke, the swords were only swords. Luke was a first-century author, and it is insensitive to his literary culture, not to mention anachronistic, to approach his work as if he wrote with postmodern literary theory in mind. Bovon's diachronic approach to Luke's passion narrative is insightful and intriguing. He argues well that Mark's Gospel was a source for Luke's passion narrative, providing compelling proofs by comparing Luke's material with Mark's. Regarding the passion narrative, Bovon rejects the idea that Luke depended upon Q, arguing instead that he employed a third unknown source. The second portion of this chapter is brief but thorough and can be an important source for understanding the origins of the passion narratives.

Bovon concludes the first section with an essay discussing inspiration and hermeneutical issues regarding the Scriptures. He argues that readers can determine their own meanings, and that for Luke, what the Spirit spoke through oral transmission was more important than what was written. He also contends that what the Holy Spirit spoke in the past "is not timeless truth," although the application of the Spirit's words "remains applicable now" because the "contextual saying can again be repeated" (p. 119). From my perspective, this serves as a sufficient definition of "timeless truth."

Bovon opens his section on NT theology with an essay about the development of parables in the Gospels. For Bovon, the interpretations of the Parable of the Sower in Mark 4:13-20 and the Parable of the Wheat and Tares in Matt 13:36-43 are lines of "exegetical development" that reflect the "Christian conviction" that the "true meaning of a parable is provided through a second sense of Scripture" (p. 123). He contends that "every reading of the text also has its own advantage and legitimacy," which he categorizes as historical, aesthetical, and theological (p. 125). Clearly, he believes that the interpretations of the parables above are later inventions of the early church rather than Jesus' explanations of his own meanings. For Bovon, the church is more theologically creative and astute than Jesus, whom the church memorialized as a master teacher. In chapter ten Bovon discusses the three specific communities of the first century church that influenced the development of the church's "common faith." The first is "the Church of Q" (p. 137), of which Bovon discovers evidence in Luke 10:22. This particular community identified itself by the "eschatological title" of "infants" (p. 138). Regarding the existence of the Q community, Bovon bases his arguments upon his discovery of redacted material found in the Synoptic Gospels. It seems hard to accept, however, that if Luke wrote Acts in the AD 90s, as Bovon contends, he would leave virtually no trace of this influential community in his history of the first-century church. The second is the Johannine community or, as Bovon labels it, "the Church of the Book

of Revelation" (p. 140). Bovon contends that this community is contemporaneous with the time of Luke's writing of Acts. Strangely, Bovon follows this discussion with an analysis of the "Pauline Church" (p. 141), which according to Bovon predates the Johannine community by thirty to forty years. What is most damning about Bovon's approach to the first-century church's development is that it is completely absent in the book of Acts. In Acts, Luke does not present the church as a segmented group of influential communities coming together by the end of the first century, but rather as a relatively united church whose center is in Jerusalem but whose influence is expanding westward all the way to the city of Rome. Bovon apparently chooses to approach the history of the first-century church with little regard to the primary source.

Bovon discusses the authority that dreams had in the early church in chapter eleven. The essay is well done, though Bovon argues that dreams had more authority than one might safely conclude. With chapter twelve Bovon argues that the structure of the NT canon was not an invention of Marcion but rather a logical configuration that was theologically predetermined. Though many scholars might appreciate Bovon's thesis, this particular essay does little to prove his point. Instead, it seems to be another opportunity for him to promote conjectures that lack any historical bases, for example, that the "emerging church . . . was at first distrustful" of the apostolic traditions (p. 170) and that Mary Magdalene was an apostle. In chapter thirteen Bovon confronts the Pauline theology of Israel. Although recognizing that Paul understood Israel as an ethnic reality, Bovon at times confuses Israel with the church, basing this opinion upon a superficial of exegesis of Gal 6:16. He concludes this essay with an admonition for the church to embrace Judaism as "legitimate continuity of the Hebrew religion" (p. 190). Disenchanted with the current state of religious tolerance, he asks, "Could it not be envisioned in our so-called 'postmodern' period that theologians propose to their churches the acceptance of a new position: to renounce the hope of Israel's conversion by releasing its neck from 'christological' strangulation?" (p. 190). Bovon recognizes that the NT canon is a formidable obstacle to allowing such a change to occur. In his opinion, however, it should occur because the canonization of certain NT books has made racial "violence normative" (p. 191). With such biases it is clear that Bovon has no qualms mixing polemics with scholarship.

Bovon begins his third section with an essay that surveys patristic and apocryphal interpretation of the missionary texts that are found in the canonical gospels. Here he provides examples from several apocryphal books and from the sermons of Cyril, John Chrysostom, and the Venerable Bede. The article is well written and provides an interesting overview of the of the patristic church's loyalty to the Gospels and its embellishment of the missionary endeavors of the apostles. Chapter fifteen provides the clearest explanation of Bovon's theory regarding the evolution of the NT canon. Here he argues that the transmission of the canonical Gospels is parallel to that of the apocryphal books of the second century. To explain his conjecture, Bovon provides a comparison of the *Acts of Philip Martyr* from different surviving manuscripts. He contends that like the authors of apocryphal and heretical works, the Gospel writers freely manipulated their sources. He affirms, therefore, that from a "historical perspective" we can conclude that Marcion only "corrected" his gospel (p. 223). Bovon incorrectly labels his perspective "historical" because it lacks absolutely any historical evidence to support it. Conversely, while defending his opinion as historical, he ignores all evidence that can be gleaned from later church histories that are contrary to his opinion. Bovon's position is essentially based upon manuscript evidence of a period from which we have virtually no manuscript evidence to test his theory, that is, from the late first century to the mid-second century. (Examples of the earliest manuscript evidence are \mathfrak{P}^{46} , \mathfrak{P}^{52} , \mathfrak{P}^{64} , and \mathfrak{P}^{90} , and Bovon's position depends completely upon manuscript evidence that pre-

dates these papyri.) Consequently, his scholarship is largely grounded upon a period to which scholars have no physical access.

In chapter sixteen Bovon analyses the theme of suspended time in the story of Jesus' birth found in the eighteenth chapter of *Protevangelium Jacobi*. Bovon's analysis provides a helpful introduction to this apocryphal book as well as to the themes of suspended time and birth narratives, all the while recognizing the dependence of the apocryphal writings upon the canonical gospels. Similarly in chapter seventeen, Bovon provides an excellent introduction to the *Acts of Andrew*. Here he gives a succinct survey of the book's history, structure, and dominant themes while attempting to accurately communicate the authorial intent. Bovon speculates that this book may find its origin in an early Gnostic tradition, but concludes that the question is open as to whether this sixth century work should be located within a religious or philosophical tradition. In chapter eighteen Bovon provides an excellent introduction to narratives about the apostles that are found in several apocryphal books, for example, *The Acts of Thomas* and *The Acts of Peter*. The essay is very interesting and well written. However, it lacks any acknowledgment that several of these books are Gnostic works and, therefore, could lead the reader to assume that the patristic church viewed these books as historically reliable.

Chapter nineteen is a very brief article in which Bovon convincingly argues that Origen, in *On the Passover* 36.6, employed a quote from the apocryphal *Acts of Paul*, a reference that several scholars have identified as a quote of 1 Cor 7:29. Chapter twenty is an excellent essay that discusses how Eusebius's eschatology influenced his *Chronikon* and *Historia ecclesiastica*. Throughout the essay Bovon interacts with Jean Sirinelli, Franz Overbeck, and others while providing a comprehensive explanation of how Eusebius's theology influenced his work of interpreting secular and ecclesiastical history. His discussion is insightful and cogent. The essay that comprises chapter twenty-one is a rather technical discussion of Thomas Aquinas's employment of St. Cyril's commentary on Luke in his book *Catena aurea*. By comparing Aquinas's work with other Greek and Syriac exegetical commentaries, Bovon shows that although theologians of the East and West were separated by language during the medieval period, it should not be assumed that they were unable to access each other's works, nor were they opposed to employing them in their own works. Bovon ends his book with an essay asserting that within the church, the apocryphal works co-existed equally with the canonical books. He argues that "[s]cholarly investigation reveals that the two have been side by side since the very beginnings of Christianity: the apocryphal authors showed respect for canonical writings and then, respectively, the reader of canonical writings venerated the apocryphal legends" (p. 301). Bovon attempts to provide proof for his position with an example drawn from the author of the Muratorian Canon. He writes: "The Muratorian Canon follows suit when it appeals to *apocryphal legends* in order to justify the choice of the Gospels" (p. 298; my emphasis). As I read such a statement I am left to wonder if Bovon has forgotten what the word "apocryphal" has come to mean? The word connotes "doubtful" or "spurious." If the author of the Muratorian Canon appealed to a "legend" to validate the authenticity of the four canonical Gospels, he certainly did not employ a source that he understood as "spurious." Scholars in general recognize that the patristic church saw some value in some apocryphal books. Bovon, however, has greatly overstated the importance that the early church placed upon apocryphal works in relation to the NT canon.

In summary, François Bovon's book is not one that I can recommend. Many of the positions are unsubstantiated, anachronistic, and poorly defended, while the positive contributions are minimal. It is interesting that although Bovon states that his purpose in this book is to analyze the church's "memorializing" of its founding leaders, he never interacts with Irenaeus's memory of Polycarp nor of Polycarp's memory of the apostle

John, memories which confirm the unadulterated transmission of the apostolic faith (see Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.3.4; and Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* V.10.4–8). Such oversights jeopardize the reception of this book as a positive contribution to the subject that Bovon attempts to address.

Monte A. Shanks
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY